

Wesley Stories and Incidents

Anecdotal

Selected from This Journal

"Sinner Enough."

One man, who passed for a brave fellow, and who boasted that for thirty years he had never entered a church, came out of curiosity to hear John Wesley. Seeing him stand motionless as a statue and evidently absorbed in thought, the preacher went up to him and asked abruptly, "Sir, are you a sinner?"

He replied with a deep and broken voice, "Sinner enough," and continued staring upwards, till his wife and a servant put him into his carriage and carried him home. Ten years later Wesley saw him again and learned from his own lips that from that time forward he had become a changed man, and that he was now rejoicing in God.

No Change in the Programme.

A lady once said: "Mr. Wesley, supposing that you knew you were to die to-morrow night at twelve o'clock, how would you spend the intervening time?" "Why, madam," said he, "just as I intend to spend it now. I should preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five to-morrow morning. After that I should ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I should then repair to friend Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, converse and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at ten o'clock, commend myself to my Heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in glory."

Taking Off the Old Methodist.

A young lawyer of brilliant talents and aristocratic relations was in the habit of meeting with gay associates at a coffee-house in London. He was the wit of the company, and his companions sent him to hear Wesley preach that he might mimic him. Just as he entered the place of worship Wesley announced his text: "Prepare to meet thy God." It struck the young man's conscience. He listened with emotion to the sermon, and thenceforward the career of his life was changed.

On returning to the coffee-house his companions asked him if he had "taken off the old Methodist."

"No, gentlemen," was the reply, but he has taken me off."

He retired from their circle to return no more. He at once owned his Methodist principles and became one of Wesley's most successful preachers. His name was Rev. Martin Madan.

The Quaker Helped.

In December, 1742, Mr. Wesley bought a site in Newcastle just outside the gate of Pilgrim Street, for a meeting-house. During his sermon, on the occasion of the laying of the corner-stone, December 20, he was compelled to stop three or four times so that the people might engage in prayer, and give thanks to God. The building was to cost \$3,500, toward which Wesley had less than \$7.00. Many thought it would be impossible to raise the money to complete the building, but Wesley wrote: "I was of another mind; nothing doubting, but, as it was begun for God's sake, he would provide what was needful for the finishing of it."

He began to build with only twenty-five shillings on hand. Shortly afterward

he received the following letter from a Quaker who had heard of the scheme:

"Friend Wesley; I have had a dream concerning thee. I thought I saw thee surrounded with a large flock of sheep which thou didst not know what to do with. My first thought when I awoke was that it was thy flock at Newcastle, and that thou hadst no house of worship for them. I have enclosed a note for £100, which may help thee to provide a house."

Had a Better Horse.

John Wesley was undoubtedly a serious man, but he was not altogether without a sense of humor. One illustration of this is given in his Journal: "The next afternoon I stopped at Newport-Pagnell, and then rode on till I overtook a serious man, with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were, therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him. He was quite uneasy to know whether I held the doctrines of the decrees as he did; but I told him over and over that we had better

what evil they had done. The accusers were not quite ready with the answer until one of them said, "Why, they pretended to be better than other people; and, besides, they prayed from morning to night." The magistrate asked: "But have they done nothing beside?"

"Yes, sir," said an old man; "an't please, your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! And now she is as quiet as a lamb."

"Carry them back, carry them back," replied the Justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in town."

Did Not Expect to See Him

One day, after Whitefield's death, John Wesley was asked by a godly sister:

"Mr. Wesley, do you expect to see Mr. Whitefield in heaven?"

A lengthy pause followed, after which Wesley replied with all seriousness, "No, madam."

His inquirer at once replied, "Ah, I was afraid you would say so."

To which Mr. Wesley added, "Do not



"JOHN WESLEY THE BETTER MOUNTED OF THE TWO."

keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another. And so we did, for two miles, till he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him I was John Wesley himself. Upon which he would gladly have run away outright. But being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavored to show him his heart, until we came into the street of Northampton."

The picture of the Methodist preacher keeping up with the unhappy Calvinist, against his will, and thus getting even with him, is positively unique.

The Magistrate was Pleased.

Mr. Wesley frequently had to suffer the ignominy of being arrested for preaching to the multitudes. The responsibility for the riots caused by the "fellows of the lower sort" was often laid upon the preacher's shoulders. Upon one occasion he and several of his followers were brought before the magistrate, who asked

misunderstand me, madam; George Whitefield was so bright a star in the firmament of God's glory, and will stand so near the throne, that one like me will never catch a glimpse of him."

Wesley as a Doctor.

Having studied medicine in an irregular kind of way, Mr. Wesley decided to try his skill as a practitioner. He hired a room in London, in which he opened an apothecary shop. The poor were invited to come to him at certain hours of the day, with a promise of advice and medicine gratis. The first man who came had a severe cough.

"What complaint have you?" said Wesley.

"Oh! sir, a cough—a very sore cough. I get no rest, day or night."

"How long have you had it?"

"About sixty years. It began when I was eleven years old."

Ridiculous as his position appeared at that moment, Wesley did not laugh. He feared, says he, "that not curing him might discourage others. However, I looked up to God, and then gave the