SECRET OF ITS INFLUENCE

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Bise and Growth of the Methodist Church in the Religious World-Just and Generous Tribute From a Frencher Who Is Not of That Especial Fold of Christ's Kingdom-Wesley Everywhere

ntered according to Act of Parliament of Can-ada, in the year 1904, by William Baily, of To-ronte, at the Dep't of Agriculture. Ottawa.

Los Angeles, Cal., May 1.—On the occasion of the assembling of the Methodist General Conference of 1904 the preacher welcomes the delegates and points out the rise and growth of Methodism and the secret of its far reaching influence upon the religious world to-day. The text is Eackiel xvi, 7, "I have caused thee te multiply as 'the bud of the field." Lord Macaulay, in one of his essays, declares that John Wesley had a greater natural genius for Government than had Richelieu. The great historian-believed that in these words he was giving the eminent divine the highest praise. The whole Christian world is in accord in that estimate, and as it recognizes

whole Christian world is in accord in that estimate, and as it recognizes the achievements of the church which John Wesley founded it thanks and praises God for that beneficent life. The name of John Wesley is everywhere respected by the good and the true. Therefore is it to be wondered at that our people no matter to

true. Therefore is it to be wondered at that our people, no matter to what Protestant church they belong hailed with joyful acclaim the that the Methodist General conference of 1904 was to assemble in the City of the Angels? This conference opens its assain during the

in the City of the Angels? This conference opens its session during the coming week. We, as a people, look forward to its sessions with interest and hope. We believe that by close touch this conference will bless all Protestant churches, no matter to what denomination they belong. It is appropriate to the bloth of the incoming delegates welcome. It is also appropriate to state some of the reasons why the little band of followers with which John Wesley surrounded himself has grown in numbers until to-day it grown in numbers until to-day it out-numbers in membership every other individual Protestant church

other individual Protestant church in America and in the world.

First, her genesis. In order to study the marvelous multiplying power of Methodism let us analyze the conditions attendant upon her birth. We must find upon what troublous waters her cradle was rocked and search out the place of her infancy, even as the Egyptian princess found the future emancipator of the Hebrew race sleeping in a willow basket among the bulrushes of the River Nile, Every great movement in history has been the product of the condition of the time of its birth. God in his providence has ordained that the prevalence of unrighteousness in a nation shall so stir the souls of his people that they will gather in his name around the standard of some leader whom he raises un to wittens for his peace.

standard of some leader whom he raises up to witness for him.

What were the conditions of the mation at the time of the birth of the Methodist church? Did she come into the world as a protest to the sins of a corrupt English court? Oh, yes. In no time of English history sins of a corrupt English court? Oh, yes. In no time of English history have bribery and debauchery run more riot than during Robert Walpole's occupancy of the English premiership. He was the author of the famous and hateful sentence in reference to the House of Commons, "All these men have their price." What Robert Walpole in statecraft could not win by fair means he won by foul, But Methodism came into the world to do a greater work than merely to protest against Governmental depravity. It came, as Josiah Strong has said, as a protest against an Established church, which believed at that time more in outward ceremonies than in spiritual truths. "Isaac Taylor," so records the author of "The Next Great Awakening," "calls the church of this period, "a charge of the protest." cords the author of "The Next Great Awakening," "calls the church of this period 'a fair carcass," and Blackstone says that he went to hear every preacher of note in Lon-don and that there was not one whose discourse indicated whether he was a. follower of Confucius or

MULTIPLY AS THE BUDS

Mohammed of the Christ. The Established church of that time believed in carrying the phylacteries upon the forehead, but not in practicing Christ's spiritual lessons in the life. It was so given over to formalism and rites and ceremonies that it had an avaning to compare the property of the compared to the property of the prop formalism and rites and ceremonies that it had no warning to give even to men in its pulpits who, like the Pharisees of old, were whited sepulchers, fair to the eye, but within harboring decaying corpses and whose private lives were a repulsive stench. "It is the inward witness, son, the inward witness," spake the dying father, Samuel Wesley, to his son John—"this is the strongest proof of Christianity." So John Wesley and his followers resolutely set their faces against the prevalent set their faces against the prevalent set their faces against the prevalent sins of that day. They vehemently declared that the Christian church should not only have a pure creed, but that its members should be men of pure private lives. In the high spiritual standard set before the in-dividual church members we find the thief cause of the marvelous develop-ment of the Methodist church.

ment of the Methodist church. My brother, it is of vital importance that all Protestant churches realize that they are making a fatal error when they in any way com-promise their high spiritual standpromise their high spiritual standards by alliance with sin. The higher the standard of the Christian church the greater will be its success. We do not need to-day churches that honor winebibbing ministers. We do not need churches which, when they have a church sociable, when their young people they may dance and play cards. We do not desire churches whose members in their every day actions are nowise differences. every day actions are nowise differ-ent from the people of the world. One of the reasons why the Christian Endeavor Society, of which Francis E. Clark is the president, is numbering its members by the hundreds of thousands and the millions is because of its ironclad pledge. John Willis Baer, who for lions is because of its ironclad pledge. John Willis Baer, who for so many years was secretary of that young people's Christian organiza-tion, was right when in my presence some years ago he declared, "The high standard of the character of the Endeavoyers; is due to the high

high standard of the character of the Endeavorers is due to the high standard of the society's pledge."

This fact alone does not tell all the story of its marveloug multiplying power. There are many other ing power. There are many other reasons for the growth of Methodism. One of the chief of these is the fact that John Wesley was the emancipator of the laymen, as Martin Luther was the emancipator of the Bible. The English accessisatic opened the er was the emancipator of the Bible.
The English ecclesiastic opened the
dumb lips of the pew. The German
reformer broke the iron clasps holding together the lids of the word of
God, which barred to all but ordained priests access to the life giving message that God sent for the deliverance of all his sinful children. liverance of all his sinful children. John Wesley said to the blacksmith at the forge and the cobbler on his bench and the wife in her kitchen: "Go forth and be my evangelists. You may not be graduates of theological seminaries, but you can testify of Christ's love. Martin Luther said: "There, laymen, is the open Bible. Read it. Ponder it. Study it. Read it with your own eyes and kiss it with your own lips." Do you wonder that when John Wesley built the Methodist church upon an open Bible and then in public meet-

open Bible and then in public meet-ing set all his people testifying of God's word and love he became one of the greatest gospel reformers of

the ages? John Wesley because he sent forth John Wesley because he sent forth the common people preaching and praying everywhere was in derision called a "Methodist." He was sneered at because in his day custom dictated that no man should pray in public unless he read his prayer out of a printed prayer book or speak for Christ unless he was entitled to wear a cassock and bands of an or-dained priest. But John Wesley re-moved these restrictions for the Methodists and sent the laymen forth preaching and praying, as in the lat-ter years Archibald Tait, archbishop of Canterbury, enlisted the services of unordained workers in various branches of church activity and earned for himself the title given him in scorn by a jealous clergy of 'the archbishop of the laity." There, upon his monument in old There, upon his monument in old canterbury, is chiseled in the most beautiful of epitaphs, "The one desire of his life was to make the Church of England the church of the people." Oh, my friends, let us hold fast this liberty of service. The work of propagating the gospel is not committed exclusively to any

one class or profession. The laborers sent forth by Wesley in the eighteenth century, like the laymen enlisted by Archbishop Tait in the nineteenth, had a work to do, and right earnestly and successfully they did it. Let us never allow the pew to again be shackled and its lips sealed with the silence of death. What we need more and more in the beginning of this twentieth century is not a better educated ministry, but one which will start forth a speaking and a testifying pew.

Another great cause for the multiplying power of Methodism is the "class system." This "class system," so-called, dates its historic birth to the 15th day of February, 1742. Like the life of the Wandering Jew, may it never have a death! May this system live on and on until at last earthly time shall cease and the struggles against sin shall be swallowed up in the eternal conquests of heaven!

lowed up in the eternat conquests of heaven!

This was how the famous "class system" of Methodism was born;
John Wesley and his brother Charles were visiting their society in the city of Bristol. A large financial indebtedness hung as an incubus over that society's place of worship. While the members of that society were discussing with the leaders how they should lift the debt a Captain Foy arose and proposed that each member should be taxed one penny a week until the debt was paid. "But that is not fair," some one protestingly said. "Here are some people who are so poor they cannot afford to give even a penny." "Then," said Captain Foy, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything I will call upon them weekly and collect the same, and if they give nothing I will give for them as well as for myself, and each of you can call on eleven of your neighbors weekly, receive what they give and make up what is wanting." No sooner had Captain Foy spoken than in a flash a divine inspiration came to John Wesley. "Yes, yes," said the great leader to himself. "that is to John Wesley. "Yes, yes," said the great leader to himself; "that is just what Methodism needs—a system of caring for its owr, a system by which its members shall not be hearled together a wild animals. herded together as wild animals are herded together as wild animals are herded together, but a system which will single men out and place them in circles of tens, and over these circles shall be placed a separate leader who will have charge of each class. These leaders in turn were to meet and report to their pastors. Their pastors in turn to-day meet and report to their presiding elders and report to their presiding elders. Each man by the "class system" of Methodism is responsible to some in-dividual person of the church.

We see the value of individual responsibility in the temporal world. Why should we not see the same results from the "class system" of Methodism? Your boy is about sixteen years of age. Where are you going to send the lad to college? "Well," you say, "I would like in many ways to send him to one of our great universities, but the trouble is I am afraid. There the boy will only be lost among a crowd of hundreds of other students, and no one will be individually responsible for the lad. I think I shall send him to one of our smaller col-We see the value of individual resend him to one of our smaller col-leges, where he will come in close contact with his teachers, and these teachers will be able to keep their eye upon him." You send your boy to a small college to secure the individual touch of a professor upon the

vidual touch of a professor upon the boy.

Now, the "class system" of Methodism has a double purpose—first, it makes the Methodist convert a member of a great gospel university in which there are hundreds of thousands and millions of members and it gives to that convert the enthusiasm which truly comes from great numbers, and, secondly, it separates the Methodist convert from the masses. It places him in a gospel family for which some one is responsible. It gives to him a separate gospel garden in which to labor. It says: "Old convert, you look after that young man and that young woman. Visit them in their homes. See that they have the right kind of companionship. When they are absent from the house of God learn why they are absent and tell them that they are missed." Individual responsibilities for individuals—that is the great missed." Individual responsibilities for individuals—that is the great multiplying sloggm of the Methodist "class system." For whom, O Christian man, are you responsible in Christ's name?

The Methodist Cherch, in the next place, is a singing church whose place.

tian man, are you responsible in Christ's name?

The Methodist Church, in the next place, is a singing church, whose songs are nearly always keyed to the tune of hope and joy and the glorious harmonies of a blessed hereafter. It is a church whose music is filled with halleluiah chorruses and battle hymns and inspiring marching melodies. It is a church which believes that our thanks and gratitude for blessings received can be returned to God as well when standing upon our feet and, in the words of the psalmist, "singing unto the Lord," as when on bended knee we offer them in silent prayer in the closet. The trouble with many of our churches is they always imagine Christ as keeping step to the allow time of a dirge, but they cannot imagine his moving lips as joining in a wedding march or in the joys of a social gathering.

Daniel Webster once said: "The proof to me that the church was established by God is found in the fact that it has existed in spite of the begowned ministers who have been caged up to preach their sermons behind their repellant pulpits. Any lawyer would be ruined if he were compelled to plead for his client behind a wooden box, as the minister by custom is compelled to plead for his client the hind a wooden box, as the minister by custom is compelled to plead for his client behind a further of the sepulchral and awful hymns with which the choirs used to lead in the song worship. These hymns, for the most part, were all gloom, all darkness, all breathing fire and brimstone and death. When one sang them he could almost feel the hot, hissing fiances of sternal punishment scorching his lips. No such singing as the ancient churches, indulged in , could

do aught but terrorize and make the worshipers tremble with fear. Do you wonder that the churches of old, which sang for the most part the songs of death, should have worshipers who gave only half-hearted voices to their singing? But while the Methodist Church has its songs in the minor key, for the most part the Methodist Church has its songs in the minor key, for the most part the Methodist songs are songs of life and joy and hope. Go if you will with me to any of the great Methodist camp meeting resorts of this country and you will know of what I speak. The mightiest shout ever raised by conquering host upon battlefield was never more triumphant than are the camp meeting songs of Desplaines or Ocean Grove. When the Methodists sing "We are marching to Zion" they sing it in such a way that it seems to fling wide open the gates of the heavenly city.

Lastly, Methodism has had its marvelous and miraculous multiplying power because it has had an inveited.

Lastly, Methodism has had its marvelous and miraculous multiplying power because it has had an infinite field in which to labor. It has worked for the most part among the common people. Certain churches in the world have been known as churches of a class. Some churches have been known as churches which appealed to the greatest amount of brains in almost every Christian community. Other churches have been known as the churches of the aristocracy. But though John Wesley had as much brain as any man of his generation, and though by political preferment he could have reached a position of influence in aristocratic society, yet he chose to cast his lot among the common people. He did not believe there was one gospel for the rich and another for the poor—one for the points. people. He did not believe there was one gospel for the rich and another for the poor—one for the brainy men and another for him of small mental calibre. John Wesley believed all classes should meet as one at the all classes should meet as one at the throne of grace. Therefore, as the common people crowded around him to receive his message, many of the rich and the affluent stayed away. He was truly the missionary to the middle and lower classes. Are we in church work ready to reach out in church work ready to reach out in

middle and lower classes. Are we in church work ready to reach out in Christ's name for the conversion of the same kind of people?

It was said of our Lord that "the common people heard him gladly." Ah, that is the best encomium that can be placed upon the tomb of the founder of Methodism! When Peter Cartwright, many years ago, arose to preach in Tennessee some one whispered to him. "General Jackson to preach in Tennessee some one whispered to him, "General Jackson is in your audience." With that Peter Cartwright turned and said: "I hear that General Jackson is in this audience. But I want to say to General Jackson that Jackson that Jackson that Jackson that Jackson the Jackson that Jackson the Jackson that Jackson that Jackson that Jackson that Jackson the Jackson al Jackson that I have no gospel for him any different from that which I offer to every man." Then, in a voice of thunder, Cartwright cried: "Exof thunder, Cartwright cried: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish! General Jackson, that message is for you. Poor man, that message is for you." So, to-day, John Wesley in his old pulpit, like Peter Cartwright in vision, is stretching out his arms over the whole sinful world crying: "Repent! Repent! Repent!" And at the same time he is calling: "Come to the mercy seat! Come! Come!" God bless John Wesley's memory!

Come! Come!''
God bless John Wesley's memory! God bless all Methodists and Metho-dism! Delegates to the general con-ference of 1904, in Christ's name we bid you welcome. Aye, we open our hearts and greet you with 10,000 Christian salutations. May you always love us in the spirit with which we greet you on this Sabbath day.

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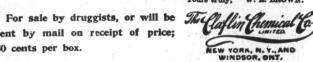
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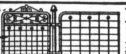
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