

May.

BY R. DECATOR SMITH, JR.

A breeze blown out of Paradise,  
Kisses the apple boughs;  
The dancing shadow's strange device  
With life endows.

And it is faintly musical—  
Sing, echoes, soft and long!  
Come, little birds, and listen all,  
Your lesson song!

'Tis subtle-scented with the sigh  
Blown from a wild rose spray;  
Spring's dearest daughter passes by,  
Delicate May.

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## Pleasant Hours:

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

Rev. W. H. Withrow, D.D., Editor.

TORONTO, MAY 8, 1897.

## THE PERSONAL LABOURS OF JOHN WESLEY.

BY REV. WILLIAM McDONALD, D.D.

From the time when John Wesley "felt his heart strangely warmed" at the meeting at Aldersgate Chapel until he "ceased at once to work and live," there was no break in the chain of his efforts. He seemed equally at home with the Newgate felon, the Kingswood and Cornwall miners, the Moorfield mobs, and the St. John's and St. Ives' aristocracy, for his sole mission in all these places was "to seek the wandering souls of men." The labours of Mr. Wesley—in preaching as an evangelist, in his literary labours, or in the special oversight of his immense flock, including ministers and people—are quite unparalleled in modern times. It was the marvel of the last century, and seems a still greater marvel as the years go by.

When expelled from all the pulpits of the Established Church, of which he was a worthy member, and not knowing where to go or what to do, he took counsel of Whitefield, who had already broken the ice at Bristol, "with a mountain for his pulpit and the broad heavens for a sounding-board." They resolved to go where Providence directed. And here the war began. Wesley seemed borne as on the wings of the wind. He was seen and heard in all parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales. And as he went he sang:

"No cross I shun, I fear no shame.  
All hail reproach, and welcome pain,  
Only thy terrors, Lord, restrain!"

And for fifty-four years the war continued, until he was not, for God took him.

His travels during that period were immense, amounting to about 290,000 miles, or about twelve times the circumference of the globe, making about 5,000 miles a year.

During these years of travel Mr. Wesley preached not less than twenty sermons a week, and often many more. Most of these sermons were preached in the open air, and often amid showers of brickbats, rotten eggs, and personal violence calculated to test the strongest nerves. A Baptist minister recently celebrated the fiftieth anniversary of his pastorate. It was announced, as an unusual fact, that he had preached, on an average, three sermons a week during the fifty years. But John Wesley

preached, on an average, for fifty-four years, three sermons a day. The Baptist clergyman had preached during the time a little over 8,000 sermons. Mr. Wesley preached, in fifty-four years, more than 44,000 sermons. This did not include numberless addresses and exhortations on a great variety of occasions. Think of a minister in these times preaching, on an average, two sermons each week day and three each Sabbath for fifty-four years, and you will get some idea of John Wesley's labours in the simple matter of preaching.

But could he find time to do anything else? Let us see.

For many years he was editor of The Arminian Magazine, a periodical of fifty-six pages—the work of one man in these times.

He wrote and published a commentary on the whole Bible, in four large volumes.

He compiled and published a dictionary of the English language—no small undertaking.

He wrote and published a work of five volumes on natural philosophy.

He wrote and published a work of four volumes on ecclesiastical history.

He wrote and published comprehensive histories of England and Rome.

He wrote grammars of the Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French, and English languages.

He wrote, abridged, revised, and published a library of fifty volumes, known as the "Christian Library," and some time after he re-read, revised, corrected and published the whole in thirty large volumes. This library contains one of the richest collections found in the English language.

He wrote a good-sized work on electricity.

He prepared and published for the common people three works on medicine. He published six volumes of church music.

His poetical works, in connection with his brother Charles, amounted to not much less than forty volumes. Charles wrote most of them, but they passed under the keen revision of John, without which we doubt if Charles Wesley's hymns would have been what they are—the most beautiful and soul-inspiring to be found in the English language.

In addition to these multiplied publications, we have seven large volumes, including sermons, journals, letters, and controversial papers, known as Wesley's Works. It is claimed that Mr. Wesley's works, including abridgments and translations, amounted to at least two hundred volumes. It is difficult to understand how a man could have found time to have accomplished so much literary labour while perpetually on the wing.

In addition to all this, Wesley was a pastor, and did more real pastoral work than nine-tenths of the pastors of these times. One has only to read his journals to be convinced of this. For a time he visited all the class and band meetings, and had special charge of the select societies. He appointed all the class and band leaders, stationed all his preachers, and had a general oversight of the many thousands of his followers.

It would seem that in either his travels, his preaching, his literary labours, or in the supervision of his flock, he has seldom if ever had an equal and never a superior. It does not seem too much to say that among "uninspired men" a more extraordinary character than John Wesley never lived.

How was he able to accomplish so much labour? The answer is, that he improved every moment of every day. Mr. Fletcher, who was for some time his travelling companion, says of him: "His diligence is matchless. Though oppressed with the weight of seventy years and the care of 30,000 souls, he shames still, by his unabating zeal and immense labours, all the young ministers of England, perhaps of Christendom. He has frequently blown the Gospel trumpet and rode twenty miles before most of the professors who despise his labours have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive service for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls."

From four o'clock in the morning until ten at night every moment was fully occupied in loving efforts to save the lost; and he never lost ten minutes from wakefulness at night, as he himself affirmed. His motto was, "Always in haste, but never in a hurry." "Leisure and I have taken leave of each other." "Ten thousand cares are no more to me than ten thousand hairs on my head." "I am never weary with writing, preaching, or travelling"—are a few utterances of this remarkable man. And in the midst of all this wonderful activity he says: "I enjoy more hours of private retirement than any man in England."

Mr. Wesley spent no more time in any one place than was strictly necessary.

He had no time to fritter away in mere social calls, spending an hour here and there in small talk and unprofitable conversation. He had no time to spend in social parties—a practice too common among ministers in these times. With him moments were golden. He prized time more than the miser prizes his gold. He believed that "time mispent is suicide, where more than blood is spilt."

Mr. Wesley believed in, and employed, the press beyond most men of his time. He made it one of the strong arms of his service. He knew that his voice would soon be hushed in the tomb, but what he left in cold type would live through the ages.

Mr. Wesley went to his work joyfully trusting in God. And while pulpit, press, stage and mob hurled their thunderbolts at the head of the unhonoured evangelist, he went on singing,—

"Cover my defenceless head,  
With the shadow of thy wing."

He arose like the lark, travelled with the sun, preached like a divinely commissioned angel, claimed the world for his parish, and died shouting, "The best of all is, God is with us." And when the smoke of battle had passed, his monument was found among the most honoured in England's most sacred Abbey. His like we shall never see again.—Zion's Herald.

## A NARROW ESCAPE.

It was a very stormy evening. The rain came down in torrents. The wind blew around the house and whistled down the chimney and almost made the children shiver as they clustered about the fire. Amy went to the window and peered out, but there was only blackness outside. If it had not been dark she might have seen multitudes of leaves falling from the trees to the ground, and she might have seen plenty of mud, and ever so many wet and dripping things. As it was she had no view at all, so she went back to the fire, making the somewhat pointed remark, "This would be a good night for a story."

The other children applauded as though she had said something quite brilliant, and the story-teller, who had seemed to be reading, though she heard what was going on, laid down her newspaper and her spectacles.

"This evening reminds me," said she, "of something that happened on such a night as this, a great many years ago. On that evening a certain boy named Eddie, who lived in the city of New York, had a very narrow escape. His father and mother were very fond of their children, and besides, they were able to give them many pleasures that others were without. Yet Eddie was not always satisfied with these, and sometimes he indulged in things that were forbidden. You see he had fallen into this habit when he was a little boy, and he had not altogether outgrown it, although he had come to be quite large and ought to have been wiser.

"There was a young man named Clarence Strong, who owned a boat which he was accustomed to sail on the Hudson River. Eddie had been particularly cautioned against going out with him on account of the danger, and it was taken for granted that the boy would mind.

"One day Eddie did not come home after school as he was expected to do. His mother watched for him from the window and wondered why he didn't appear. His brothers came in one after the other and each one inquired, 'Where is Eddie?' but no one could answer the question. The twilight fell and supper-time arrived, but still no Eddie. 'What can delay him?' asked the father, anxiously, as they sat down to the table, but the only response was a troubled look on the mother's face. After supper the other boys were sent out to look for their missing brother. An hour later they came in with the report that some of his playmates had seen him talking with Clarence Strong. They added that it was raining heavily and that the wind was high. Nothing more than this was needed to make the whole family exceedingly anxious, for they feared what proved to be the truth, that Eddie had gone out on the river with Clarence, and that they had encountered the storm.

"There was nothing to do but to sit and wait. Yes, there was one thing more, they could pray. The father led them all in a petition for the safety of the erring one, and He who rules the winds and waves answered the prayer. Late in the evening Eddie appeared drenched to the skin and shivering with cold.

"My son, my son, how glad I am to see you!" exclaimed his mother; "where have you been?" Eddie penitently confessed that he had gone out on the water with Clarence. He said that after the

storm arose the boat became unmanageable and they were very near drowning; but somehow, he didn't really know how, they succeeded in getting back to the city.

"The boy was dried and warmed and sent to bed, where he was obliged to lie all of the next day. He said that he was very sorry for his disobedience, and I think he was, for I do not remember that he ever did anything of the sort again."

"Mustn't he have felt terrible when he was out on the water?" asked Amy. "Yes, indeed," was the reply; "and I think the worst part must have been the knowledge that he got himself into danger through his own fault."

The young listeners sat in silence for nearly half a minute. Then Freddie said, "I will mind, even when I'm as big as a man."

The story-teller kissed him and called him a good boy. Then she went back to her spectacles and her newspaper, and the children played a quiet game until bedtime.—Cousin Lols, in the Christian Intelligencer.

## JUNIOR EPWORTH LEAGUE.

PRAYER-MEETING TOPIC.

MAY 16, 1897.

Samuel sent to reprove Saul.—1 Samuel 15. 12-23.

OCCASION OF THE REPROOF.

Disobedience always leads to bad results. Saul had been elevated to the highest position in the land, and this should have taught him his obligation to Jehovah. Persons in prosperity do not always acknowledge the hand from whence all their blessings come. Saul was commanded to slay not only the Amalekites, but also their king, Agag. Though painful it might be to perform the duty, he should not have hesitated when he knew that in thus acting he was executing the divine will.

SAUL'S EXCUSE.

Verse 13. Saul said he "had performed the divine command." This was a direct falsehood, of which Saul was not ignorant. Probably he thought to deceive Saul, but his sin found him out. "A lie sticks," as a little boy once said. Saul professed to have kept the best of the sheep to offer in sacrifice to God. To obey is better than to sacrifice. Always do that which you know to be right. Do not be like Saul, as he sought to blame the people. Verse 21.

SAMUEL'S FAITHFULNESS.

Though Saul was king, Samuel did not manifest any fear in reproving him for neglect of duty. All those in authority should be equally fearless. If those in influential positions would act in a similar manner, they would be a terror to evil-doers. There is no more noble character mentioned in the Old Testament than Samuel. His course through life, from the time he heard the voice of God, while he was yet a child, until he left the world, is worthy of the most careful study of all classes, more especially those who are ambitious to be prominent men in all the affairs of life. Read carefully 1 Samuel 12. 3. We would be glad if all our young people, more especially the young men and boys, would commit this passage to memory.

SAMUEL NOT AFRAID.

Verse 16. Though Saul was king, and Samuel knew how that he might put him to death, he stands up boldly and delivered the message of God. Here is an example for all Christians. Never be afraid to do right, no matter what may be the consequences.

SAUL'S CHANGED CONDUCT.

Verse 17. Saul was all right when he was humble and little in his own sight. He was another illustration of the truth of the wise man's saying, "Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall." Let all our youthful readers guard against the sin of pride. Do not be proud of anything, or you will be sure to fall into condemnation.

Drunkenness decreases nearly three per cent. per annum in London. This is hopeful. It is also reported that "excessive drinking" among the wealthier classes in Great Britain is disappearing. Another statistical fact which is given in the same line is, that the "prison population" in England has fallen off in late years, and that some of the prisons of Great Britain are empty. To us, these items seem to be linked together closely, and in the way of effect and cause. When there are fewer saloons in our country, there will be more empty prisons.—Presbyterian.