

of operation," to one fixed plan, in this matter they freely proclaimed the whole Gospel of Christ. And it came to the souls of the men of that time like refreshing showers to the parched earth—or rather it came like the Mind of God to the dry bones of the prophet's vision, causing "a noise and a shaking" but bringing with it life. They preached at first in such churches as were opened to them (let it be borne in mind that they were ordained ministers of the Church of England) but their preaching soon began to give offence. They preached a doctrine which had not been heard of for a long time "Justification by faith," and as there is always a great number of persons in the English Church who are fully persuaded that anything to which they have not been accustomed must be wrong, there were many voices clamorous against those new-fangled innovators with their strange notions. What! shall it be said that we and our forefathers have not had full and complete knowledge of what our Church teaches? If these new ideas once begin who can tell where they will end? let us leave things alone as they were; make no change; it was well enough in the old times. These new ideas must be popish (so some of them really said) and the British Protestant will endure no Popery. So said the obstructors of that day. But there was another cause of offence. The poor, the publicans and sinners pressed to hear the Wesleys, and when it was known that one of them was to preach, the church would be crammed, and the regular pew-holders who had been able to take their Sunday nap in their pews regularly for years undisturbed, found themselves crowded out by the thronging multitudes. The crowding and the heat were insufferable. Charles Wesley was a Curate at Islington. His church-wardens were determined that they would "stand it" no longer, so they hired men to stand at the pulpit stairs and forcibly prevent his entering. They pressed the Vicar (who seems to have been a moderate man) so hard that he at length dismissed his Curate. The matter was laid before the Bishop of London, who approved of the course adopted by the church-wardens in defence of the purity of the faith. And now the Wesleys were driven to follow the example that Whitfield had already set them, and preach in the open air. At first they were loth to do this; strong lovers of order, they had an abhorrence of anything at all irregular "Till lately," says John Wesley in the year 1739, "I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church." It seems hard to understand now how they could have felt any difficulty about field-preaching, or how any body could object to it, but they overcame their scruples at last, and went out by the waysides. Numbers flocked to hear them—on one occasion, C. Wesley preached at Moorfields to an assemblage of ten thousand souls, soon after on Kensington Common to twice that number. Anything like a detailed account of their labours would require more space than our limits allow; one or two short accounts from the journal of Charles Wesley must suffice as an example of the rest: "At Runeville the minister lent me his pulpit. I stood at the window which was taken down and turned to the larger congregation of above two thousand in the churchyard. They appeared greedy to hear. In the afternoon I preached again to a Kensington congregation. The church was full as it could hold. Thousands stood in the churchyard. It was the most beautiful sight I ever beheld. The people filled the gradually rising area, which was shut upon three sides by a vast perpendicular hill. On the top and bottom of this hill was a circular row of trees. In this amphitheatre they stood deeply attentive, while I called upon them in Christ's words, 'Come unto me all that are weary.' The tears of many testified that they were ready to enter into that rest. God enabled me to lift up my voice like a trumpet." Imagine that scene repeated hundreds of times in England, Wales, Ireland, the earnest preacher, the weeping hearer; it was to be seen in