

parable was inverted and that the 99 sheep were lost in the wilderness, while there was only one fat, well-wooled sheep in the fold, and the fat, drowsy shepherd slumbered in indifference and expected the 99 lost sheep to seek him if they wanted his ministry. It was among these that the revival first began.

The great revival begun in 1739 continued almost to the end of the century. It spread through England and Wales. It reached Ireland in due time, and even Scotland was not untouched, while distant America, under Whitefield's passionate preaching, was kindled into new life and the way was prepared for the planting of the new church that was destined to lead the Protestantism of the North American continent.

John Richard Green thus describes the three men to whom this great evangelical movement was due. "Of the three, Whitefield was the most brilliant preacher. Charles Wesley was the sweet singer of the movement. His hymns expressed the fiery conviction of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England. But it was his elder brother, John Wesley, who embodied in himself not this or that side of the vast movement, but the very movement itself. In power as a preacher he stood next to Whitefield; as a hymn writer he stood second to his brother, Charles. But while combining in some degree the excellences of either he possessed qualities in which both were utterly deficient: an indefatigable industry, a cool judgment, a command over others, a faculty of organization, a singular union of patience and moderation, with a power of leadership that marked him as a ruler of men."

Space would fail to trace the Methodist movement in detail through the long life of Wesley. He was indeed the embodiment of the whole movement. Without John Wesley it would have taken no permanent shape, nor would it have achieved any definite results. One thing, above all others, we need to note: he made preaching the principal agency of the revival. He did not confine himself to this. He built schools, he organized societies, he published books, he waged great controversies; he was tireless in correspondence and conversation. But these were not his most effective instruments. Wesley's supreme instrument was preaching. "It pleased God, again, by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." It is hardly fair to say that John Wesley was not so great a preacher as Whitefield. He was a greater preacher when we consider the number of sermons he preached, the number of persons he reached, and all his other abundant labors.

Wesley preached his first open-air sermon on April 2nd, 1739, and his last October 7th, 1790. Between those dates lie fifty-one years filled with a strain of toil almost without parallel in human experience. In those fifty-one years he preached 42,400 sermons, an average of fifteen a week. He travelled 250,000 miles in his itinerant work. He had the brain of a statesman, the culture of a scholar, the message of an Apostle, and the glowing and tireless zeal of a preaching friar of the middle ages. He never wearied, never faltered, never turned aside. His comrades lagged behind him, his friends forsok him, his enemies persecuted and maligned him, but none of those things moved him. He made twenty-one tours through Scotland, and crossed St. George's Channel forty-two times as a missionary to Ireland. "In range, speed, intensity and effectiveness Wesley must always remain one of the greatest workers known to mankind. He seemed to live many lives in one, and each life was of amazing fullness. He preached more sermons, waged more controversies, travelled more miles, published more books, wrote more letters, built more churches and influenced more lives than any other man in English history. And

through it all he had no time to be in a hurry." The secret of it was found in his good health, his temperate habits, his long days (he rose at four and retired at ten), his rapid-moving mind, and his conscientious economy of time. He never wasted half an hour of time or so much as a leaf of paper. Then, too, he was bound by no domestic ties. Wesley was not meant for a domestic man. Throughout his long life he mingled freely with good women and paid them chivalrous respect, but his excursions into the realm of courtship were ludicrous and lamentable failures. His marriage was the mistake of his life. Perhaps it was destined to be so. He was married to his work.

Paradoxical as it may seem, John Wesley never meant to found a Church. He was forced to do so by circumstances. From the first the Anglican Church (that gave him ordination, and that now acknowledges him as one of the greatest men that was ever in her communion) refused to recognize his work. The brutal mob that persecuted the field preachers were encouraged by many of the clergy. The equally brutal magistrates who tried and fined these earnest evangelists were commended. Wesley's converts were refused the sacrament. What could he do? Step by step he moved, reluctantly, carefully but irrevocably towards separation. Provision must be made for the thousands who had been won from vice and degradation to pure living and good citizenship, and Wesley made such provision as the time and his wisdom determined. And so he gave the world the Methodist Church.

But it has been said that the least result of Wesley's work was the Methodist Church. His influence upon the whole life of the nation can hardly be overestimated. All the Churches were awakened to a new life. The evangelical movement within the Established Church may be traced directly to Wesley's work. The modern Sunday school was a child of the Wesleyan revival. Modern missions took their rise as a direct outcome of his work. He was the friend of the poor and the oppressed. Modern philanthropic enterprises began at this time as an outcome of the social conscience Wesley had awakened. Prison reform and the abolition of slavery naturally followed. Education received an impetus. In a word a new England came into being. The moral tone of all classes of society was elevated. The industrial population that was fast becoming a menace to society when Wesley began his work were transformed into intelligent, God-fearing, law-abiding citizens. It is the opinion of sober historians that Wesley saved England from such a revolution as drenched France in blood at the close of the 18th century. But as Dr. Fitchett has said: "If John Wesley himself, the little, long-nosed, long-chinned, peremptory man who, on March 9, 1791, was carried to his grave by six poor men, leaving behind him nothing but a good library of books, a well-worn clergyman's gown, a much-abused reputation, and the Methodist Church, could return to this world just now, when so much admiring ink is being poured upon his head, he would probably be the most astonished man on the planet. For if Wesley has achieved fame he never intended it."

The Sigh for Peace

If you put your ear on the breast of the world its heartbeat is like the sobbing of a restless sea. Like the sighing winds in the pines, the one mournful note of earth is humanity's cry for peace and quietude. It is said an Eastern king sought long and in vain for the secret that would bring him peace. The cry of his soul was for peace amid all the changing conditions and circumstances of life. His little child found the secret. She gave him a ring in which were cut the Arabic words: "This, too, shall pass away." The king never forgot it. He was wonderfully helped by it. "This, too, shall pass away"—that's the secret of endurance. To find it out is to keep hope. It will give strength in life's greatest trial. It will make us strong amidst life's severest struggles.