

For the first and the last word with reference to John Wesley must be that he was a man of religion. The deepest secret of his success was his faith in God. Without love of man, such a life of unselfish devotion would indeed have been impossible; but without faith in God, this love of man, even in the bravest souls, may lead in such a world as this to despairing pessimism. We must add faith to our love, or we shall lose our hope. Wesley firmly believed that God would, and that, therefore, man could, mend and lift up this bad and broken world. He believed that every human heart, however encased in worldly conventions or sunk in grosser sins, is accessible to the divine grace; that every man will feel some impulse of response to the divine message of warning and love, if only he can be induced to listen to it. And so, not with a sudden flare of youthful enthusiasm, but with a steadfast, lifelong resolution, he gave himself to the work of winning men to righteousness, from the love of sin to the love of God. It was this faith in God and the resulting confidence in the spiritual possibilities of humanity that inspired his unflagging energy and lifted his life to the calm levels of heroism.

And Wesley had little confidence in any other means to uplift and direct mankind, apart from this force of personal religion. It is true, as we have seen, that he was in advance of his age in his advocacy of measures to improve the moral and physical conditions of society; it may perhaps be true, as the most brilliant of recent English historians<sup>1</sup> has said, that the noblest result of the Wesleyan movement was "the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this,

<sup>1</sup> J. R. Green, "Short History of the English People."