

the lordly foundation of Christ Church, Oxford. It was soon time that he should be ordained. He wrote to his father on the subject.

The heroic old man wrote back in a trembling hand. "You see," he said, "Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is but a little way behind him. My eyes and heart are now almost all I have, and I bless God for them." Again he said, "In the first place, if you love yourself or me, pray heartily."

John Wesley became a thorough student of divinity, and gave his whole strength to the work. He took the sacrament weekly and prayed earnestly for inward holiness. In 1725 he was ordained by the then Bishop of Oxford. Next spring he was elected Fellow of Lincoln.

His aged father was greatly elated by this. "What will be my own fate before the summer be over," he wrote, "God knows: wherever I am, my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln."

We must now for a short space turn to his brother, Charles Wesley. When he first came to Oxford, he was neither religious nor anxious to become so. "He pursued his studies diligently," says John, "and led a regular, harmless life; but if I spoke to him about religion, he would warmly answer, 'What! would you have me to be a saint all at once?'"

But when John had left Oxford to be his father's curate, letters reached him from Charles, breathing a very different language. "It is through your means, I firmly believe, that God will establish what He hath begun in me; and there is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you. It is owing, in great measure, to somebody's prayers (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do; for I cannot tell myself how or when I awoke out of my lethargy, only that it was not long after you went away."

Becoming sincerely religious, Charles Wesley sought out for the society of friends like-minded. He and his friends were soon derisively called Methodists. When John Wesley was summoned back to Oxford by his college, he found a small knot of religious friends gathered around his brother. "They agreed to spend three or four evenings in the week together in reading the Greek Testament, with the Greek and Latin classics. On Sunday evenings they read divinity." They then proceeded to deeds of active mercy, to visit the poor in the town and the prisoners in jail.

The Wesleys asked their father for his advice. "I have the highest reason to bless God," was the answer, "that He has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them."

Their numbers slowly increased. From year to year they persevered, though some of their little company fell away in the course of the social persecution to which they were exposed.

At this time his father, feeling himself stricken in years, was anxious that his son John should be his successor, and his parishioners shared the wish of their venerable rector. The request was strongly urged

upon John Wesley, but he did not see his way clear; he should be getting more good, and doing more good, so he thought, in Oxford than in the country. He made up his mind, and all knew that when this was done he was not to be moved.

The good old father died in April, 1735. His sons were with him to the last, and must have learned much from the dying saint which as yet they could only imperfectly comprehend. "The inward witness, son," said the old man eloquent, "this is the proof, the strongest proof of Christianity."

"Are you in much pain?" asked John Wesley.

"God doth chasten me with pain," was the reply, "yea, all my bones with strong pain; but I thank Him for all, I bless Him for all, I love Him for all." And so he fell asleep.

SNEAKING INTO HEAVEN.

THIS is a strange title; but read on, and you will understand why it was chosen.

Some years ago I was called to visit a young man who was fast sinking in consumption. He had been religiously brought up, and his conduct had been always outwardly correct; he had also regularly attended the house of God. But one thing had always been wanting. Though convinced that except he became a new creature in Christ Jesus he could not enter the kingdom of heaven, his heart was still unchanged; and his convictions again and again passed away "as the morning cloud and the early dew."

When sickness came these convictions returned with greater force, and he could no longer forget them. He felt now that he dared not let them pass away. His past life of neglect appeared in its true colours, and the near approach of death filled him with deep concern.

I found him very restless and unhappy. He knew he was a great sinner, and his repentance appeared to be sincere; he knew, too, that Christ was able and willing to save sinners; but he seemed as if he were both unable and even unwilling to accept his salvation.

I felt much for him, and tried to set before him the sufficiency of Christ's salvation, and His complete willingness to receive all who came to Him; but while he listened with apparent pleasure to what I said, his unwillingness to come to Christ still remained. It seemed sometimes as if he did not wish to hope.

After a time I found out the reason. It was this: he was filled with shame and remorse that he had so long rejected Christ in the days of his health. He felt he had been ashamed of Him and His words while he was among men, and now his pride shrank from making Him a refuge in the time of his trouble. He felt as one would feel who had treated a friend with ingratitude and unkindness in the time of prosperity, and whose pride would not allow him to seek his help in the time of need.

Talking with him one day about this, I tried to show him how willing, notwithstanding all, Christ