

only additional preferment which he ever obtained. His prospects, at one time appeared to brighten; but the dissenters resented his desertion, and had interest enough to thwart his plans. His second son, John, the founder of the Methodists, was born at Epworth on the 17th June, 1703. When John was six years of age, the parsonage-house was set on fire; in the confusion, he was left behind in the nursery, and did not awake till the stair-case had fallen in, and the flames already blazed in the room. No ladder could be procured—and he was saved with great difficulty. He ever remembered this deliverance with the greatest gratitude; and in reference to it, he had a house in flames engraved as an emblem under one of his portraits, with the motto “Is not this a brand plucked out of the burning.”

In 1715, while John was at school, a singular circumstance happened to the family, which became the subject of his serious attention at a latter period of his life, and is recorded minutely by Mr. Southey in an Appendix. This circumstance was, a loud and long continued knocking in different parts of the house—the cause of it was never discovered, and the family seem to have been satisfied that it was preternatural. Wesley was evidently of the same opinion; and Mr. Southey, though aware that he must expect to be ridiculed for not treating the story as utterly incredible and absurd, maintains that the testimony upon which it rests, is far too strong to be set aside upon account of the strangeness of the relation. We are unable to discover where this strength lies. If due allowances be made for imagination and exaggeration, all that remains might have been contrived by the servants or the daughters: the latter were told by their father that their lovers had probably something to do with the mystery; and though this opinion was afterwards rejected, it was never disproved; the outside of the house was never watched, nor was any sufficient investigation ever instituted. It was plainly a Jacobite goblin, and was particularly outrageous when Mr. Wesley prayed for the king. Mrs. Wesley and her sons were of the same politics as *Jeffery*, (the name by which the spirit was known in the house) and we presume that the daughters also took part with their mother, who had once been separated from her husband in consequence of political disputes. The oldest son, Samuel, was in London, and, upon being informed of this last circumstance, he observed, “As to the Devil's being an enemy to King George, were I the King