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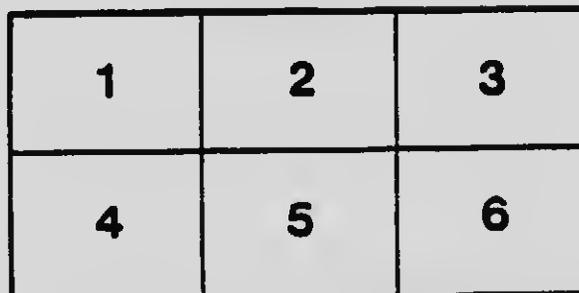
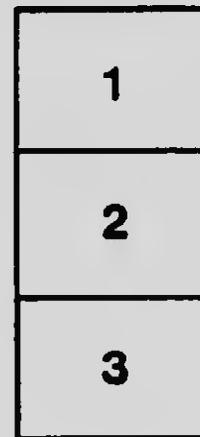
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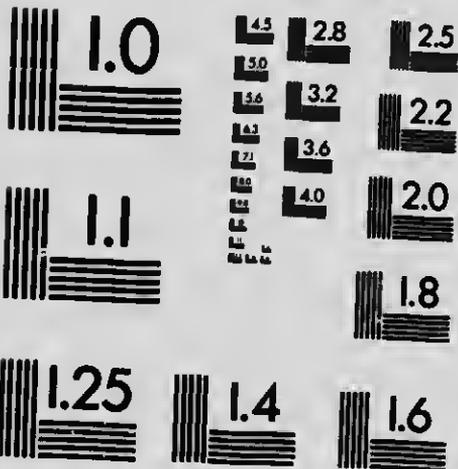
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John Wesley

THE  
Young People's Wesley

By W. McDONALD

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

By BISHOP W. F. MALLALIEU, D.D.

---

"The best of all is, God is with us."—*Wesley*



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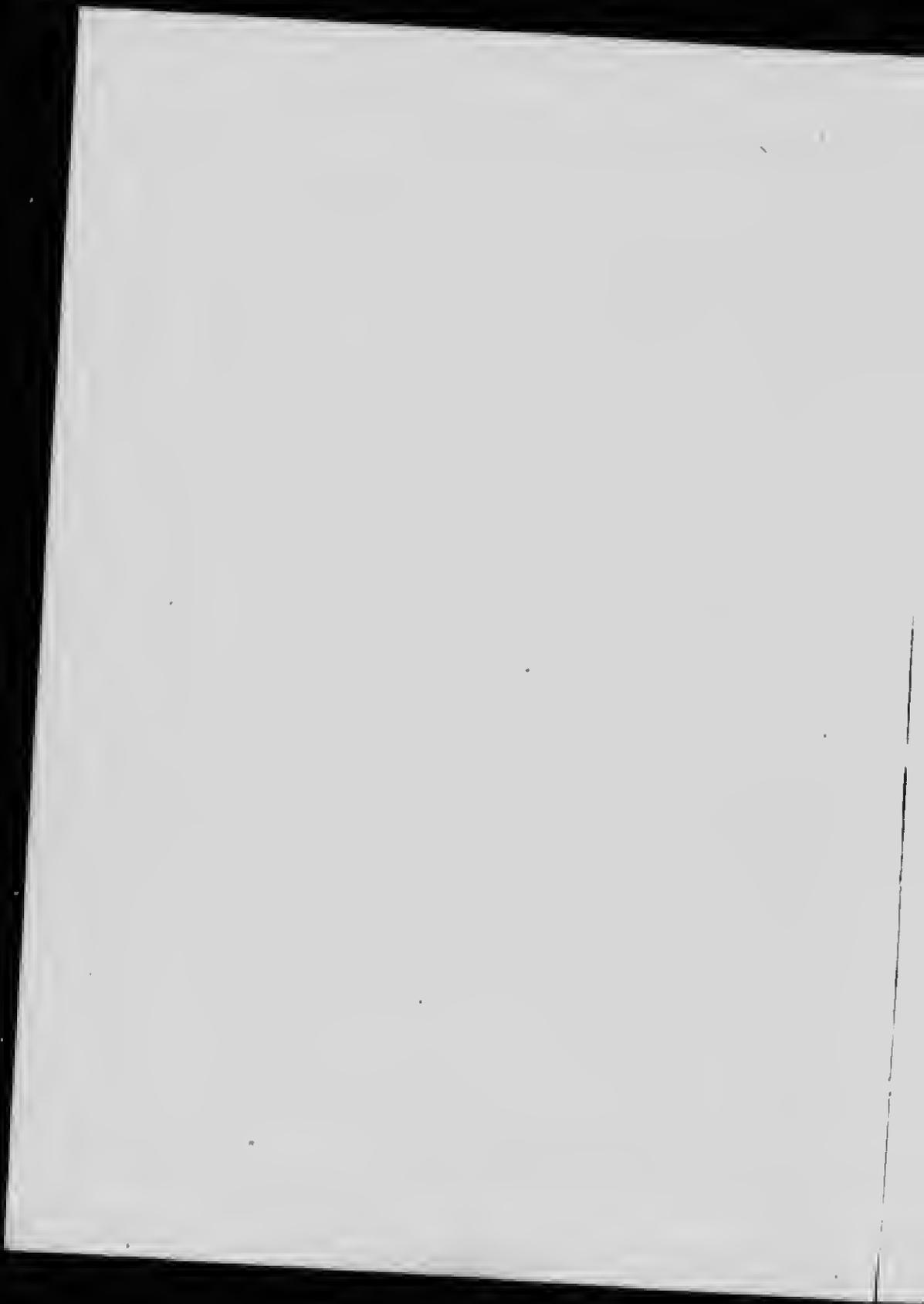
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AFFECTIONATELY  
**Dedicated**  
TO  
ALL THE MEMBERS OF JOHN WESLEY'S  
WIDELY EXTENDED  
AND CONSTANTLY INCREASING  
PARISH.



## PREFACE.

---

My sole object in the preparation of this little volume has been to meet what I regard as a real want—a Life of John Wesley which shall include all the essential facts in his remarkable career, presented in such a comprehensive form as to be quickly read and easily remembered by all; not so expensive as to be beyond the reach of those of the most limited means, and not so large as to require much time, even of the most busy worker, to master its contents. I have sought to give my readers a faithful view of the man—his origin, early life, conversion, marvelous ministry, what he did, how he did it, the doctrines he preached, the persecutions he encountered, and his triumphant end.

This revised and enlarged edition will be found to contain many interesting features not found in the first edition. I have added, also, a brief account of the introduction of Methodism into America, as well as John Wesley's influence at the opening of the twentieth century. For this interesting chapter I am indebted to Rev. W. H. Meredith, of the New England Conference, who kindly consented to

**Preface.**

assist me, in view of the pressure to get the manuscript ready on time.

It will appear, from all that has been said, that Mr. Wesley was the most remarkable character of the last century; and the influence of his life is more potent for good to-day than ever before, and must continue to augment—if his followers are true to their trust—till the end of time.

WILLIAM McDONALD.

## CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE, . . . . .	5
INTRODUCTION, . . . . .	9
<b>CHAPTER.</b>	
I. BORN IN TROUBLOUS TIMES, . . . . .	18
II. THE WESLEY FAMILY, . . . . .	20
III. WESLEY'S EARLY LIFE, . . . . .	39
IV. EPWORTH RAPPINGS, . . . . .	41
V. ORIGIN OF THE HOLY CLUB, . . . . .	49
VI. WESLEY IN AMERICA, . . . . .	58
VII. WESLEY'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE, . . . . .	71
VIII. WESLEY'S MULTIPLIED LABORS, . . . . .	83
IX. WESLEY'S DOMESTIC RELATIONS, . . . . .	98
X. WESLEY'S PERSECUTIONS, . . . . .	101
XI. WESLEY AND HIS THEOLOGY, . . . . .	115
XII. WESLEY AS A MAN, . . . . .	132
XIII. WESLEY AS A PREACHER, . . . . .	136
XIV. WESLEY AS A REFORMER, . . . . .	144
XV. WESLEY AND AMERICAN METHODISM PRIOR TO 1766, . . . . .	153
XVI. WESLEY AND AMERICAN METHODISM, . . . . .	161
XVII. WESLEY APPROACHING THE CLOSE OF LIFE, . . . . .	173
XVIII. WESLEY AND HIS TRIUMPHANT DEATH, . . . . .	179
XIX. WESLEY'S CHARACTER AS ESTIMATED BY UNBIASED JUDGES, . . . . .	185
XX. THE GREATER WESLEY OF THE OPENING CENTURY, . . . . .	193
CONCLUSION, . . . . .	203

# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

	FACING PAGE
PORTRAIT OF JOHN WESLEY, . . . Frontispiece	
AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF THE EPWORTH RECTORY.	16
THE WESLEYAN MEMORIAL CHURCH, EPWORTH, ENGLAND, . . . . .	32
JEFFREY'S A. TIC ROOM, WHENCE THE MYSTERIOUS NOISES CAME, . . . . .	48
WESLEY'S ARMCHAIR, . . . . .	64
WESLEY'S CLOCK, . . . . .	96
SAMUEL WESLEY'S GRAVE, UPON WHICH JOHN PREACHED HIS FAMOUS SERMON, . . . . .	112
WESLEY'S TEAPOT. WESLEY'S BIBLE AND CASE, .	144
ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH AT EPWORTH. EPWORTH MEMORIAL CHURCH AT CLEVELAND, O., . . .	160
THE ROOM IN WHICH WESLEY DIED, . . . . .	176
JOHN WESLEY'S GRAVE, . . . . .	192

## INTRODUCTION.

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WHAT, another Life of John Wesley! Why not? This time a "Young People's Wesley." If ever the common people had an interest in any man, living or dead, that man is John Wesley. It is true that we already have many "Lives" of this remarkable man. They range from the massive volumes of Tyerman down to the booklet of a few pages. The truth abides that of making many books there is no end, and so more Lives of Wesley will be written from time to time as the years and centuries come and go. The reason of this is that John Wesley is one of the greatest men of all the Christian centuries. When we undertake to enumerate the five greatest men that the English race has ever produced we must of necessity include the name of John Wesley. As the distance increases between the present time and the days of his protracted activity the grander does he appear. The majority of the men of his day and generation did not comprehend him. They could not, for the plan of his aspirations and achievements was far above their thinking or living. They did not realize his greatness; they did not foresee the

## Introduction.

influence he was destined to exert on all future generations. He has been dead more than a hundred years, and yet to-day he is larger, vaster, and more powerful in the wide realm of intellectual and spiritual activities than he was at any time during his long and vigorous life. So far as we can judge, this development of the stature of this wonderful man will continue for ages.

Remember that John Wesley was well bred. On both his father's and mother's side he inherited the qualities of the best blood of England. So far as we know, his ancestry was purely Saxon, and of the best type of English-Saxon lineage. On sea or land, in military affairs, as a diplomat or statesman, he would have been eminent. He was one of the most thorough and comprehensive scholars of his century. He was fully abreast of his times in all matters of natural science; he was a linguist of rare excellency; he was a metaphysician; he was at home in philosophy. He had the rare ability of using all he knew for the best and highest purposes. He was a real genius, not a crank. A genius utilizes environment; a genius dominates circumstances; a genius makes old things new; a genius pioneers mankind in its career of progress. Because of these qualities and characteristics, men will never tire of reading the life, and men will never stop

writing the life, of this man. Born in the humble rectory of Epworth, in the midst of the fens of Lincolnshire, his name and fame reach to the ends of the earth. Men know him not for what he might have been, but for what he was—a friend of all, and a prophet of God.

Just now when the common people are more and more educated, and nearly all of them are readers of books, and many of them interested in good books, it is important that we have a Life of Wesley that is perfectly adapted to those who are not critical historical students, but rather to those who want the gist of things, who want the substantial and essential facts in compressed shape.

It is believed that this volume will meet all these requirements, and that a careful perusal of its pages will put any person of ordinary intelligence in very close touch with one of the greatest religious and social reformers the world has ever known. This volume is one that might be read with great profit by every member of our Church, and by all Methodists everywhere. Especially would its reading help all our young people, and particularly the members of our Epworth League. It is certain that its reading would give them clear, definite, and correct views of the life and work of the founder of Methodism; and such views would be sure to lead to a more healthful and vigorous personal religious experience, and would en-

courage all heroic aspirations for the highest attainments in holy living, and excite the most ardent and persistent efforts for the salvation of all men. John Wesley knew that humanity had been redeemed by the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus Christ. He knew that every redeemed soul might be saved. He knew that it was his business to bring redeemed humanity to the feet of its Redeemer. Would that all his followers might share in this threefold knowledge; and that by the reading of this volume all might be led to consecrate themselves to the accomplishment of the supremely glorious task at which John Wesley wrought until he ceased at once to work and live. O, that all Methodists might follow John Wesley even as he followed Christ!

W. F. MALLALIEU.

Auburndale, Mass., April 8, 1901.

# The Young People's Wesley.

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## CHAPTER I.

### BORN IN TROUBLOUS TIMES.

DURING the latter part of the seventeenth and the first part of the eighteenth century England was the theater of stirring events. War was sounding its clarion notes through the land. Marlborough had achieved a series of brilliant victories on the Continent, which had filled and fired the national heart with the spirit of military glory.

The English, at that time, had an instinctive horror of popery and power. James II, cruel, arbitrary, and oppressive, had been hurled from the throne as a plotting papal tyrant, and his grandson, Charles Edward, known as the Pretender, was making every possible effort to regain the throne and to subject the people to absolute despotism. To add to their dismay, the fleets of France and Spain were hovering along the English coast, ready, at any favorable moment, to pounce upon her. The means of public communication by rail-

road and telegraph were unknown. There were few mails, and reliable information could not be readily or safely obtained. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that strange and exaggerated reports should have kept the public mind in a state of great excitement and general consternation.

It was also, pre-eminently, an infidel age. Disrespect for the Bible and the Christian religion prevailed among all classes. Hobbes, with his scorpion tongue; Toland, with his papal-poisoned heart; Tindal, with his infidel dagger concealed under a cloak of mingled popery and Protestantism; Collins, with a heart full of deadly hate for Christianity; Chubb, with his deistical insidiousness; and Shaftesbury, with his platonic skepticism, hurled by wit and sarcasm—these, with their corrupt associates, made that the infidel age of the world. Christianity was everywhere held up to public reprobation and scorn.

It is true that Steele, Addison, Berkeley, Samuel Clarke, and Johnson exposed the follies and sins of the times, but the character of these efforts was generally more humorous and sarcastic than serious. Occasionally they gave a sober rebuke of the religion of the day. Berkeley attacked, with his keen logic and finished style, the skeptical opinions which prevailed. Most of his articles were on the subject of "Free Thinking." Johnson, the great

moralist, stood up, it is said, "a great giant to battle, with both hands against all error in religion, whether in high places or low."

These men, and Young, with his vast religious pretentiousness, are said to have walked in the garments of literary and social chastity; but Swift, greater intellectually than any of them, and a high church dignitary to boot, would have disgraced the license of the "Merry Monarch's" court and outdone it in profanity. Even Dryden made the literature of Charles II's age infamous for all time.

"Licentiousness was the open and shameless profession of the higher classes in the days of Charles, and in the time of Anne it still festered under the surface. Gambling was an almost universal practice among men and women alike. Lords and ladies were skilled in knavery; disgrace was not in cheating, but in being cheated. Both sexes were given to profanity and drunkenness. Sarah Jennings, Duchess of Marlborough, could swear more bravely than her husband could fight. The wages of the poor were spent in guzzling beer, in wakes and fairs, badger-baiting and cock-fighting."\* And yet the reign of Anne claims to have been the golden age of English literature. It did show a polish on the surface, but within it was "full of corruption and dead men's bones."

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\* *Some Heretics of Yesterday*, pp. 294, 295.

Added to this, the Church, which should have been the light of the world, was in a most deplorable state. Irreligion and spiritual indifference had taken possession of priest and people, and ministers were sleeping over the threatened ruins of the Church, and, in too many instances, were hastening, by their open infidelity, the day of its ruin. The Established Church overtopped everything. She possessed great power and little piety. Her sacerdotal robes had been substituted for the garments of holiness; her Prayer Book had extinguished those earnest, spontaneous soul-breathings which bring the burdened heart into sympathetic union with the sympathizing Saviour. Spirituality had well-nigh found a grave, from which it was feared there would be no resurrection. Isaac Taylor says: "The Church had become an ecclesiastical system, under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism;" and "Noneonformity had lapsed into indifference, and was rapidly in a course to be found nowhere but in books." In France hot-headed, rationalistic infidelity was invading the strongholds of the Reformation, and French philosophers were spreading moral contagion through Europe, which resulted in the French Revolution. The only thing which saved England from the same catastrophe was the sudden rise of Methodism, which, as one writer says, "laid hold of the lower classes and



AN UNUSUAL VIEW OF THE EPWORTH RECTORY.



converted them before they were ripe for explosion." When preachers of the Gospel celebrated holy communion and preached to a handful of hearers on Sabbath morning, and devoted the afternoon to card-playing, and the rest of the week to hunting foxes, what else could have been expected? It is doubtful if in any period of the history of the Church the outlook had been darker.

The *North British Review* says: "Never has a century risen on Christian England so void of soul and faith; it rose a sunless dawn following a dewless night. The Puritans were buried, and the Methodists were not born." The Bishop of Lichfield said, in a sermon: "The Lord's day now is the devil's market day. More lewdness, more drunkenness, more quarrels and murders, more sin is conceived and committed, than on all the other days of the week. Strong drink has become the epidemic distemper of the city of London. Sin in general has become so hardened and rampant that immoralities are defended, yea, justified, on principle. Every kind of sin has found a writer to teach and vindicate it."

"The philosopher of the age was Bolingbroke; the moralist was Addison; the minstrel was Pope; and the preacher was Atterbury. The world had an idle, discontented look of a morning after some mad holiday."

Over this state of moral and religious apostasy a few were found who made sad and bitter lamentations. Bishop Burnet was "filled with sad thoughts.", "The clergy," he said, "were under more contempt than those of any other Church in Europe; for they were much more remiss in their labors and least severe in their lives. I cannot look on," he says, "without the deepest concern, when I see imminent ruin hanging over the Church, and, by consequence, over the Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows, but that which heightens my fears arises chiefly from the inward state into which we are fallen."

Bishop Gibson gives a heart-saddening view of the matter: "Profaneness and iniquity are grown bold and open." Bishop Butler declared the Church to be "only a subject of mirth and ridicule." Guyes, a Nonconformist divine, says that "preacher and people were content to lay Christ aside." Hurrian, another Dissenter, sees "faith, joy, and Christian zeal under a thick cloud." Bishop Taylor declares that "the spirit was grieved and offended by the abominable corruption that abounded;" while good Dr. Watts sings sadly of the "poor dying rate" at which the friends of Jesus lived, saying: "I am well satisfied that the great and general reason of this is the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men,

and the little success that the administration of the Gospel has made of late in the conversion of sinners to holiness."

This was the state of the English Church, and of Dissenters as well, at the opening of the eighteenth century. And well it might be when, as has been said, the philosopher of the age was Bolingbroke, the moralist was Addison, the minstrel was Pope, and the preacher was Atterbury. But when darkness seems most dense the day-star of hope is near to rising.

On the 17th of June, 1703, was born in the obscure parish at Epworth, of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, John Wesley, the subject of this sketch. He was one of nineteen children. The names of fifteen have been recorded; the others, no doubt, died in infancy. Of these fifteen, John was the twelfth. He was born in the third year of the eighteenth century. His long life of eighty-eight years covered eleven of the twelve years of Queen Anne's reign, thirteen of that of George I, thirty-three of George II, and more than thirty of George III. This remarkable child was to more than revive the dead embers of the Reformation; he was chosen of God to inaugurate a spiritual movement which was to fill the world with the spirit of holy being and doing, and bring to the people ransomed by Jesus, in every clime and of every race "freedom to worship God."

## CHAPTER II.

### THE WESLEY FAMILY.

SAMUEL WESLEY, father of John, was for forty years rector of Epworth Parish. He was an honest, conscientious, stern old Englishman; a firmer never clung to the mane of the British lion. He was the son of John Wesley, a Dissenting minister, who enjoyed, for a time, all the rights of churchmen. But, after the death of Cromwell, Charles II, whom the Dissenters had aided in restoring to the throne, and who had promised them toleration and liberty of conscience, on his return, finding the Church party in the ascendancy, violated his pledge and approved of the most cruel and oppressive laws passed by Parliament against Dissenters. By one of these inhuman acts more than two thousand ministers, and among them many of the most pious, useful, learned, and conscientious in the land, were deprived of their places in the Church, of their homes and support, and were compelled to wander homeless and friendless, without being allowed to remain anywhere, until they found rest in the grave.

“Stopping the mouths of these faithful

men," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "was a general curse to the nation. A torrent of iniquity, deep, rapid, and strong, deluged the whole land, and swept away godliness and vital religion from the kingdom. The king had no religion, either in power or in form, though a papist at heart. He was the most worthless that ever sat on a British throne, and profligate beyond all measure, without a single good quality to redeem his numerous bad ones; and Church and State joined hand in hand in persecution and intolerance. Since those barbarous and iniquitous times, what hath God wrought!"\*

Mr. Wesley had been for some years pastor of Whitechurch, Dorchestershire, and was greatly beloved by his people. But the law forbade anyone attending a place of worship conducted by Dissenters. Whoever was found in such an assembly was tried by a judge without a jury, and for the third offense was sentenced to transportation beyond the seas for seven years; and if the offender returned to his home before the seven years expired he was liable to capital punishment. This was an example of refined cruelty. The minister who had grown gray in the service of his Lord, whose annual income was barely sufficient to meet the pressing needs of his family, was turned adrift upon the world without support,

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\* *Wesley Family*, vol. 1, p. 65.

and the poor man was not permitted to live within five miles of his charge, nor of any other which he might have formerly served. As Mr. Wesley could not teach, or preach, or hold private meetings, he, for a time, turned his attention to the practice of medicine for the support of his family.

He bade his weeping church adieu, and removed to Melcomb, a town some twenty miles away. He had preached for a time in Melcomb before he became vicar of Whitchurch, and hoped to find there a quiet retreat and sympathizing friends. But his family was scarcely settled when an order came prohibiting his settlement there, and fining a good lady twenty pounds for receiving him into her house. Driven from Melcomb, he sought shelter in Preston, by invitation of a kind friend, who offered him free rent. Then came the passage of what was known as the "five-mile act," which required that Dissenting ministers should not reside within five miles of an incorporated town. Preston, though not an incorporated town, was within five miles of one. Finding no place for rest from the relentless persecution of the Established Church—persecution as cruel as Rome ever inflicted, save the death penalty, and that was imposed under certain conditions—he concluded to leave his home for a time and retire to some obscure village until he could, by prayer and delibera-

tion, determine what to do. Here, alone with God, his decision was made. He fully decided that he could not, with a good conscience, obey the law of Conformity, as it was called. Conformity was to him apostasy.

Mr. Wesley determined to remove to some place in South America, and, if not there, to Maryland. He hoped, by so doing, to find a quiet home for himself and family. In Maryland, settled and ruled by Catholics, he could enjoy freedom to worship God, but not in oppressive, Protestant England, just rescued from the domination of Rome.

No one can adequately comprehend how such a removal would have affected the religious life of the world. But the good man finally determined to abandon his plan and remain in his native land and do the best he could. God, without doubt, was in that decision. But he felt that God had called him to preach, and preach he would.

In spite of every precaution, he was frequently interrupted, suffering imprisonment for months together, and at four different times within a few years. At last, by frequent imprisonment, poverty, and failing health, the poor man's crushed spirit could stand it no longer, and he died at the early age of forty-two years, leaving wife and children homeless and helpless. All this the grandfather of John Wesley endured for conscience' sake. He was

a graduate of Oxford; as a classical scholar he had few equals—a man of deep piety and distinguished talents. His father, Bartholomew Wesley, had early dedicated his son to the Gospel ministry, and God seems to have accepted the dedication. And because he conscientiously objected to conducting public worship strictly according to the Prayer Book, the unchristian laws regarding Conformity were enforced, and the tears, blood, and suffering which befell those godly men lay at the door of the Established Church. Cruel persecution marked this man for its prey even after death. When his inanimate body, followed by weeping wife, little children, and sympathizing neighbors, was borne on a bier to the gates of the consecrated burial place of Preston, the gates were closed against it by order of the minister of the Established Church. So the remains of this good and great man were deposited in an unknown and unmarked grave.

Samuel Wesley was sixteen years old at the time of his father's death. He had been under the careful tuition of his learned father, and under such training his mind had become highly educated for one of his years. He had a genius for poetry, and possessed a highly sensitive nature. His associations with Dissenters were not the most favorable, and what he saw and heard at the meetings of what was known as the "Calf's Head Club" disgusted him.

Added to this, he was not pleased with the school of the Dissenters in which he was being educated, and, being not a little impulsive and hasty in his decisions, he concluded that all Dissenters were of the same character. He determined to examine the grounds of Dissent and Conformity, and, as might be expected, being more or less controlled by youthful prejudice, he concluded to renounce his former opinions and the faith of ancestors, and unite with the Established Church. And, as is often the case in such sudden changes, he did not stop until he had become a high churchman. But, notwithstanding his change, he had too much good practical common sense to carry out his theory. While it is true that he became a high Tory, he possessed too much benevolence, and too nice a sense of right, to give countenance to arbitrary power, such as had been exercised toward his ancestors. He could not forget what his honored father had suffered at the hands of churchmen.

Having become a churchman, at the age of sixteen he left his home for Oxford University. He traveled all the distance on foot, with only about thirteen dollars in his pocket and with no hopeful outlook for further supplies. And from that time until he graduated he received from his friends but a single crown (\$1.20). But, Yankee-like, he made everything turn to his advantage. Being a bright scholar, he

composed college exercises for those students who, it is said, "had more money than brains;" he read over lessons for those who were too lazy to study, and gave instruction to such as were dull of apprehension. He wrote also for the press, and left the university, at the close, with four times as much money as he had when he entered.

After his graduation he went to London and was ordained. He served one year as curate in London, one year as chaplain on shipboard, and two years more as curate in London.

When James II was expelled, and William and Mary were called to the throne, Mr. Wesley was the first man to write in their defense. For this timely support Queen Mary appointed him rector of Epworth, Lincolnshire, which position he held to the end of his life. The village was far from being attractive, and the people were generally hard cases; but he was a faithful pastor there for forty years. He was always poor, but always honest. He was frequently in jail for debt, and as often relieved by donations from the Duke of Buckingham, the Archbishop of York, the queen, and others. "No man," he says, "has worked truer for bread than I have done, and no one has fared harder."

In politics Mr. Wesley was no conservative. Whatever he did, he did with his might. He espoused the cause of William, Prince of

Orange, regarding him as a perfect antitype of Job's war horse, and for such heroic support he received the anathemas of his parishioners; they stabbed his cow, cut off his dog's legs, burned his flax, and twice fired his house. But still he had the courage of his convictions. As an example of his moral courage the following story is told of him: Mr. Wesley was in a London coffee house taking refreshments. A colonel of the guards, near by, was uttering fearful oaths. Wesley, a young man, was greatly moved, and felt that a rebuke was demanded. He called the waiter to bring him a glass of water. He did so, and in a loud, clear voice Wesley said, "Carry this to that young man in the red coat, and request him to wash his mouth after his oaths." The colonel heard him, became much enraged, and made a bold attempt to rush upon his reprover. His companion interfered, saying, "Nay, colonel, you gave the first offense. You see, the gentleman is a clergyman." The colonel subsided, but did not forget the reproof. Years after he met Mr. Wesley in St. James Park, and said to him: "Since that time, sir, thank God! I have feared an oath and everything that is offensive to the Divine Majesty. I cannot refrain from expressing my gratitude to God and to you." Samuel Wesley possessed many virtues, with some faults. He was often impetuous, hasty, and sometimes rash. In the heat of contro-

versy, in which he at times engaged, he was often unsparing in his invectives. But this must be set down, in part, to the spirit of the time. He was a faithful pastor and a fine oriental scholar. Mr. Tyerman says, "He was learned, laborious, and godly." He had the reputation of being a good poet, a fair commentator, and an able miscellaneous writer.

#### SUSANNAH WESLEY.

Susannah Wesley, mother of John Wesley, was in most respects the perfect antipode of her husband. She is said by some to have been beautiful, and by all to have been devout, energetic, and intelligent. She had mastered the Greek, Latin, and French languages, and was the mother of nineteen children. And such a mother, for the careful, wise, religious training of her children, modern times has never furnished a superior.

She was the daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, one of the many sufferers under the cruel law of Nonconformity; but he does not seem to have suffered as severely as John Wesley, whose fate we have recorded. It must have been that he, for some cause, was more fortunate than his contemporary. Miss Annesley became the wife of Samuel Wesley at the age of nineteen years. It seems quite remarkable that Samuel Wesley and his wife

should have both been connected with Dissenters, and their parents, on both sides, should have suffered by the oppression of the Established Church, and that both of them, while young, should have left the Dissenters and joined the Establishment. It could not have been the result of careful investigation, but, more likely, of youthful prejudice.

Mrs. Wesley was a noble woman. Of her Dr. Adam Clarke says: "Such a woman, take her all in all, I have never read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Many daughters have done virtuously, but Susannah Wesley has excelled them all." She was the sole instructor of her numerous family, "and such a family," continues Dr. Clarke, "I have never read of, heard of, or known; nor since the days of Abraham and Sarah, Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there been a family to which the human race has been more in debt."

Many have supposed that Samuel Wesley was a sour and disagreeable husband. But he was one of the kindest of husbands, and his children are said to have "idolized" him. His affection for his wife is seen in a portrait he gives of her, a few years after their marriage, in his *Life of Christ*, in verse:

"She graced my humble roof, and blest my life;  
Blest me by a far greater name than wife;  
Yet still I bore an undisputed sway,  
Nor was 't her task, but pleasure, to obey.

Scarce thought, much less could act what I denied,  
 In our lone home there was no room for pride.  
 Nor did I e'er direct what still was right;  
 She studied my convenience and delight;  
 Nor did I for her care ungrateful prove,  
 But only used my power to show my love.  
 Whate'er she asked I gave, without reproach or  
 grudge,  
 For still she reason asked, and I was judge.  
 All my commands, requests at her fair hand,  
 And her requests to me were all commands.  
 To other households rarely she'd incline,  
 Her house her pleasure was, and she was mine.  
 Rarely abroad, or never, but with me,  
 Or when by duty called, or charity."

Mrs. Wesley's attachment to her husband  
 was undying. When some disagreement oc-  
 curred between her brother and her husband  
 Mrs. Wesley took the side of her husband, and  
 wrote to her brother as follows: "I am on the  
 wrong side of fifty, infirm and weak, but, old  
 as I am, since I have taken my husband for  
 better, for worse, I'll keep my residence with  
 him. Where he lives, I will live; where he  
 dies, I will die, and there will I be buried.  
 God do unto me, and more also, if aught but  
 death part him and me."

In giving directions to her son John in re-  
 gard to the right or wrong of worldly pleasure  
 she says: "Take this rule: Whatever weakens  
 your reason, impairs the tenderness of your  
 conscience, obscures your sense of God, or  
 takes off the relish for spiritual things—in

short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself." Did ever divine or philosopher state the question more clearly? Whoever follows these directions will not err in regard to the question of amusements.

Such a woman as this is worthy to be the mother of the founder of Methodism, for had not Susannah Wesley been the mother of John Wesley it is not likely that John Wesley would have been the founder of Methodism. We shall have occasion to speak of this woman and her husband further on.

## CHAPTER III.

### WESLEY'S EARLY LIFE.

DURING the first eleven years of Wesley's life two events occurred worthy of note. At the age of five he was rescued from the burning parsonage almost by miracle. On a winter night, February 9, 1709, while all the family were wrapped in slumber, the cry of "Fire! fire!" was heard on the street. The rector was suddenly awakened, and, though half naked, sought to arouse his family. He rushed to the chamber, called the nurse and the children, and bade them "rise quickly and shift for themselves." After great effort they succeeded in making their escape from the burning house. They are all safe except "Jack." He had not been seen by anyone. In a few moments his voice was heard, crying for help. The flames were everywhere. The father, greatly excited, attempted to rush upstairs, but the flames drove him back. He fell on his knees and commended the soul of his boy to God.

While the father was on his knees the boy had mounted a trunk and called from the window. There was no time for ladders, for the



THE\_WESLEYAN\_MEMORIAL\_CHURCH, EPWORTH, ENGLAND.



house was nigh to falling. One cried, "Come here! I will stand against the wall, and you mount my shoulders quickly." In a moment it was done, and the child was pulled through the casement, and the next moment the walls fell—inward, through mercy—and the child, as well as the one who rescued him, was saved. His father received him as "a brand plucked from the burning," and in the joy of his heart cried out: "Come, neighbors, let us kneel down, and give thanks to God! He has given me all my children. Let the house go; I am rich enough."

There is no doubt but that some of his dastardly parishioners fired his house, and now house, books, furniture, manuscripts, and clothing were all gone. But this foul act made him many friends. A new house was built, but it was many years before he recovered from the loss, if, indeed, he ever did.

John's wonderful escape deeply impressed his mother that God intended him for some work of special importance in the history of the Church and the world, and she felt that she ought to devote special attention to him and train him for God.

At eight years of age John contracted that most dreaded disease, smallpox. His father was from home at the time. Mrs. Wesley, writing, says: "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man—and, indeed, like a Chris-

tian—without any complaint; though he seems angry at the smallpox when they are sore, as we guess by his looking sourly at them; for he never says anything." Brave boy!

CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL.

Passing from the watchful eye of his father and the tender, loving, and almost unexampled care and instruction of his mother, he entered, at about the age of eleven, the famous Charterhouse School, London. This was built originally for a monastery. It was purchased by Thomas Sutton, Esq., and under a charter from King James he established a school for the young. In this school forty-four boys, between the ages of ten and fifteen, were gratuitously fed, clothed, and instructed in the classics. Here such notables as Addison, Steele, Blackstone, Isaac Barrows, and others were educated.

Young Wesley was largely aided in securing this position by the Duke of Buckingham, who seems to have been a fast friend of the family. He secured for him a scholarship, which gave him about two hundred dollars a year. By the direction of his father he ran around the playgrounds three times every morning for the benefit of his health. It was a school of trial. Being a charity scholar, he did not escape the taunts of his fellow-students more highly favored than he; but he

bore all with meekness, patiently suffering wrongfully. He remained there some six years, and, though a mere youth, he distinguished himself in every branch of scholarship to which he turned his attention.

Mr. Tyerman, who seems to have searched for every spot on this rising sun, is bold to say that Wesley "lost the religion which had marked his character from the days of his infancy. He entered the Charterhouse a saint, and left it a sinner." We cannot find this marked change on the record with the clearness with which it appears to Mr. Tyerman. There is no evidence that Wesley had ever known the converting grace of God up to this time, and, if not, we are unable to see how he could have lost it. That he was a sinner at this time there can be no doubt. But, while he confesses that he was a sinner, he declares that his "sins were not scandalous in the eyes of the world." Instead of being the wicked boy that Mr. Tyerman represents him to have been, he declares: "I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers morning and evening. And what I now hoped to be saved by was: (1) Not being as bad as other people; (2) Having still a kindness for religion; and (3) Reading my Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers." Should an unconverted young man in these times, in passing through our high schools or seminaries, give evidence

that he read his Bible, prayed morning and evening, attended church regularly, joined in all the devotions, went to the sacrament, and manifested a kindness for religion, who would say that "he entered the school a saint, and left it a sinner"? There is no evidence that Wesley, during his six years' course at the Charterhouse, ever contracted vicious habits or became a flagrant sinner. The wonder is that, with such corrupt and corrupting influences surrounding him, he had not been morally ruined.

#### CHRIST COLLEGE.

At the age of seventeen he entered Christ College, Oxford, one of the noblest colleges of that famous seat of learning, where he remained five years, under the care of Dr. Wigon, a gentleman of fine classical attainments. His excellent standing at the Charterhouse gave him a high position at Oxford. His means of support were very limited. His mother laments their inability to assist him. In a letter to him she says:

DEAR JACK: I am uneasy because I have not heard from you. If all things fall, I hope God will not forsake us. We have still his good providence to depend on. Dear Jack, be not discouraged. Do your duty. Keep close to your studies, and hope for better days. Perhaps, after all, we shall pick up a few crumbs for you before the end of the year. Dear Jack, I beseech Almighty God to bless thee.

SUSANNAH WESLEY.

This indicates the great financial embarrassment in which they were often found, as well as their abiding trust in God.

His mother seems deeply concerned for his religious life. She writes, "Now in good earnest resolve to make religion the business of life; for, after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary. All things besides are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a strict examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have it, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have it not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in any tragedy."

His brother Samuel writes hopefully to his father: "My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from believing your third son a scholar. Jack is a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can."

At the age of twenty-one, while yet a student at Oxford, "he appears," says a writer of the time, "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments." Alexander Knox says: "His countenance, as well as his conversation, expressed

an habitual gayety of heart, which nothing but conscious innocence and virtue could have bestowed." Then, referring to him in more advanced life, he says: "He was, in truth, the most perfect specimen of moral happiness I ever saw; and my acquaintance with him has done more to teach me what a heaven upon earth is implied in the maturity of Christian piety than all I have elsewhere seen or heard or read, except in the sacred volume." "Strange," says another writer, "that such a man should have become a target for poisoned arrows, discharged, not by the hands of mad-cap students only, but by college dignitaries, by men solemnly pledged to the work of Christian education!"

About this time Wesley became Fellow of Lincoln College, and his brother Charles, who was five years younger, became a student of Christ Church College. He had prepared for college at Westminster grammar school, and was a "gay young fellow, with more genius than grace," loving pleasure more than piety. When John sought to revive the "fireside devotion" of the Epworth home he rejoined, with some degree of earnestness, "What! would you have me be a saint all at once?"

In September of 1725 John was ordained deacon by Bishop Potter, and in March of the following year was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, with which his aged father seems to

have been greatly delighted, saying, "Wherever I am, Jack is Fellow of Lincoln!"

#### HIS FATHER'S CURATE.

His father's health failing, John was urged to become his curate. He responded to his father's request, but does not seem to have had a very high appreciation of his father's flock, for he describes them as "unpolished wights, as dull as asses and impervious as stones." But for about two years he hammers away, preaching the law as he then understood it, confessing that "he saw no fruit for his labor."

He then returned to Oxford as Greek lecturer, devoting himself to the study of logic, ethics, natural philosophy, oratory, Hebrew, and Arabic. He perfected himself in French, and spoke and wrote Latin with remarkable purity and correctness. He gave considerable attention to medicine. In this way Providence was fitting him for the great work of which he was to be the God-ordained leader. About the time that Wesley entered upon his ministry, by episcopal ordination, and commenced his lifework, Voltaire was expelled from France and fled to England. During a long life he and Wesley were contemporaries. Mr. Tyerman gives a graphic description of these two remarkable men. "Perhaps of all the men then living," he says, "none exercised so great an influence as the restless philosopher

and the unwearied minister of Christ. Wesley, in person, was beautiful; Voltaire was of a physiognomy so strange, and lighted up with fire so half-hellish and half-heavenly, that it was hard to say whether it was the face of a satyr or man. Wesley's heart was filled with a world-wide benevolence; Voltaire, though of a gigantic mind, scarcely had a heart at all—an incarnation of avaricious meanness, and a victim to petty passions. Wesley was the friend of all and the enemy of none; Voltaire was too selfish to love, and when forced to pay the scanty and ill-tempered homage which he sometimes rendered it was always offered at the shrine of rank and wealth. Wesley had myriads who loved him; Voltaire had numerous admirers, but probably not a friend. Both were men of ceaseless labor, and almost unequaled authors; but while the one filled the land with blessings, the other, by his sneering and mendacious attacks against revealed religion, inflicted a greater curse than has been inflicted by the writings of any other author either before or since. The evangelist is now esteemed by all whose good opinions are worth having; the philosopher is only remembered to be branded with well-merited reproach and shame." Voltaire ended his life as a fool by taking opium, while Wesley ends his life in holy triumph, exclaiming, "The best of all is, God is with us."

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE EPWORTH RAPPINGS.

It does not seem as if a Life of John Wesley would be complete without an account of what was known as the "Epworth rappings," which occurred in the home of Samuel Wesley in 1716, while John was at the Charterhouse School, London. They occasioned no little speculation among philosophers and doubters in general, not only at the time they occurred, but down to the present day. A brief description of these strange noises, and how they were regarded at the time, may be proper in this place.

On the night of December 2, 1716, Robert Brown, Mr. Wesley's servant, and one of the maids of the family were alone in the dining room. About ten o'clock they heard a strong knocking on the outside of the door which opened into the garden. They answered the call, but no one was there. A second knock was heard, accompanied by a groan. The door was again and again opened, as the knocks were repeated, with the same result. Being startled, they retired for the night.

As Mr. Brown reached the top of the stairs

42      **The Young People's Wesley.**

a hand mill, at a little distance, was seen whirling with great velocity. On seeing the strange sight he seemed only to regret that it was not full of malt. Strange noises were heard in and about the room during the night. These were related to another maid in the morning, only to be met with a laugh, and, "What a pack of fools you are!" This was the beginning of these strange noises in the Epworth parsonage.

Subsequently, knocking was heard on the doors, on the bedstead, and at various times in all parts of the house.

Susannah and Ann were one evening below stairs in the dining room and heard knockings at the door and overhead. The next night, while in their chamber, they heard knockings under their feet, while no person was in the chamber at the time, nor in the room below. Knockings were heard at the foot of the bed and behind it.

Mr. Wesley says that, on the night of the 21st of December, "I was wakened, a little before one o'clock, by nine distinct and very loud knocks, which seemed to be in the next room to ours, with a short pause at every third knock." The next night Emily heard knocks on the bedstead and under the bed. She knocked, and it answered her. "I went down stairs," says Mr. Wesley, "and knocked with my stick against the joists of the kitchen.

It answered me as loud and as often as I knocked." Knockings were heard under the table; latches of doors were moved up and down as the members of the family approached them. Doors were violently thrust against those who attempted to open or shut them.

When prayer was offered in the evening, by the rector, for the king, a knocking began all around the room, and a thundering knock at the *amen*. This was repeated at morning and evening, when prayer was offered for the king. Mr. Wesley says, "I have been thrice pushed by an invisible power, once against the corner of my desk in my study, and a second time against the door of the matted chamber, and a third time against the right side of the frame of my study door, as I was going in."

Mr. Poole, the vicar of Haxey, an eminently pious and sensible man, was sent for to spend the night with the family. The knocking commenced about ten o'clock in the evening. Mr. Wesley and his brother clergyman went into the nursery, where the knockings were heard. Mr. Wesley observed that the children, though asleep, were very much affected; they trembled exceedingly and sweat profusely; and, becoming very much excited, he pulled out a pistol and was about to fire it at the place from whence the sound came. Mr. Poole caught his arm and said: "Sir, you are convinced that this is something preternatural. If so, you

cannot hurt it, but you give it power to hurt you." Then going close to the place, Mr. Wesley said: "Thou deaf and dumb devil, why dost thou frighten these children, who cannot answer for themselves? Come to me in my study, who am a man." Instantly the particular knock which the rector always gave at the gate was given, as if it would shiver the board in pieces. The next evening, on entering his study, of which no one but himself had the key, the door was thrust against him with such force as nearly to throw him down.

A sound was heard as if a large iron bell was thrown among bottles under the stairs; and as Mr. and Mrs. Wesley were going down stairs they heard a sound as if a vessel of silver were poured upon Mrs. Wesley's breast and ran jingling down to her feet; and at another time a noise as if all the pewter were thrown about the kitchen. But on examination all was found undisturbed.

The dog, a large mastiff, seemed as much disturbed by these noises as the family. On their approach he would run to Mr. and Mrs. Wesley, seeking shelter between them. While the disturbances continued the dog would bark and leap, and snap on one side and on the other, and that frequently before any person in the room heard any noise at all. But after two or three days he used to tremble and creep away before the noise began; and by this the fam-

ily knew of its approach. Footsteps were heard in all parts of the house, from cellar to garret. Groans and every sort of noise were heard all over the house too numerous to relate. Whenever it was attributed to rats and mice the noises would become louder and fiercer.

These disturbances continued for some four months and then subsided, except that some members of the family were annoyed by them for several years.

Mr. Wesley was frequently urged to quit the parsonage. His reply was eminently characteristic: "No," said he, "let the devil flee from me. I will never flee from the devil."

Every effort was made to discover the cause of these disturbances, but without satisfactory results, save that all believed they were preternatural. The whole family were unanimous in the belief that it was satanic.

A full account of these noises was prepared from the most authentic sources by John Wesley and published in the *Arminian Magazine*. Dr. Priestley, an unbeliever, confessed it to have been the best-authenticated and best-told story of the kind that was anywhere extant; and yet, so strongly wedded was he to his materialistic views, he could not accept them, nor find what might be regarded as a common-sense solution of them. He thought it quite probable that it was a trick of the servants,

assisted by some of the neighbors, and that nothing was meant by it except puzzling the family and amusing themselves. But Mrs. Wesley and other members of the household declared that the noises were heard above and beneath them when all the family were in the same room.

Dr. Southey, though he does not express an opinion of these noises in his *Life of Wesley*, in a letter to Mr. Wilberforce avows his belief in their preternatural character. In his *Life of Wesley* he does say, "The testimony upon which it rests is far too strong to be set aside because of the strangeness of the relation."

Dr. Priestley observes in favor of the story that all the parties seemed to have been sufficiently void of fear, and also free from credulity, except the general belief that such things were supernatural. But he claims that "where no good end is answered we may safely conclude that no miracle was wrought."

Mr. Southey replies to Priestley thus: "The former argument would be valid if the term 'miracle' were applicable to the case; but by 'miracle' Mr. Priestley intends a manifestation of divine power, and in the present case no such meaning is supposed, any more than in the appearance of departed spirits. Such things may be preternatural and yet not miraculous; they may be in the ordinary course of

nature, and yet imply no alteration of its laws. And in regard to the good end which it may be supposed to answer, it would be end sufficient if sometimes one of those unhappy persons, who, looking through the dim glass of infidelity, sees something beyond this life and the narrow sphere of mortal existence, should, from the well-established truth of such a story (trifling and objectless as it may appear), be led to conclude that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in their philosophy.\*

Mr. Coleridge finds a satisfactory solution of this knotty question in attributing the whole thing to "a contagious nervous disease" with which he judged the whole family to have been afflicted, "the acme or intensest form of which is catalepsy." The poor dog, it would seem, was as badly afflicted as the rest.

This notion does not need refutation. Dr. Adam Clarke, who collected all the accounts of these disturbances and published them in his *Wesley Family*, claims that they are so circumstantial and authentic as to entitle them to the most implicit credit. The eye and ear witnesses were persons of strong understanding and well-cultivated minds, untingered by superstition, and in some instances rather skeptically inclined.

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\* *Life of Wesley*, pp. 24, 25.

These unexplained noises in the Epworth rectory found their counterpart in what was known a little earlier as "New England witchcraft," and in our times as the Rochester and Hidsville knockings in 1848, which have ripened into modern Spiritualism, which, if real, is satanic.

There is but little doubt that these remarkable occurrences at his Epworth home made a deep and lasting impression on John Wesley's mind and life. There was ever present to his mind the reality of an invisible world, and he was convinced that satanic as well as angelic forces were all about us, both to bless and to ruin us if permitted to do so by Him who rules all the world.

## CHAPTER V.

### ORIGIN OF THE HOLY CLUB.

It was while he was a member of Lincoln College that that unparalleled religious career of Mr. Wesley, which has always been regarded as the most wonderful movement of modern times, began. "Whoever studies the simplicity of its beginning, the rapidity of its growth, the stability of its institutions, its present vitality and activity, its commanding position and prospective greatness, must confess the work to be not of man, but of God."

The heart of the youthful collegian was profoundly stirred by the reading of the *Christian Pattern*, by Thomas à Kempis, and *Holy Living and Dying*, by Jeremy Taylor. He learned from the former "that simplicity of intention and purity of affection were the wings of the soul, without which he could never ascend to God;" and on reading the latter he instantly resolved to dedicate all his life to God. He was convinced that there was no medium; every part must be a sacrifice to either God or himself. From this time his whole life was changed. How much he owed under God to these two works eternity alone will

reveal. Law's *Call and Perfection* greatly aided him.

A little band was formed of such as professed to seek for all the mind of Christ. They commenced with four; soon their number increased to six, then to eight, and so on. Their object was purely mutual profit. They read the classics on week days and divinity on the Sabbath. They prayed, fasted, visited the sick, the poor, the imprisoned. They were near to administer religious consolation to criminals in the hour of their execution. The names of these remarkable religious reformers were: John and Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, William Morgan, George Whitfield, John Clayton, T. Broughton, B. Ingham, J. Harvey, J. White-lamb, W. Hall, J. Gambold, C. Kinchin, W. Smith, Richard Hutchins, Christopher Atkinson, and Messrs. Salmon, Morgan, Boyce, and others.

As might have been expected, they were ridiculed and lampooned by those who differed from them, and who could not comprehend the motive to such a religious life. They were called in derision "Sacramentarians," "Bible Bigots," "Bible Moths," "The Holy Club," "The Godly Club," "Supererogation Men," and finally "Methodists." Their strict, methodical lives in the arrangement of their studies and the improvement of their time, their serious deportment and close attention to religious

duties, caused a jovial friend of Charles Wesley to say, "Why, here is a new sect of Methodists springing up!" alluding to an ancient school of physicians, or to a class of Nonconforming ministers of the seventeenth century, or to both, who received this title from some things common to each. The name took, and the young men were known throughout the university as the Methodists. The name thus given in derision was finally accepted, and has been retained in honor to this day by the followers of Wesley.

A writer in one of the most respectable journals of the day, in describing these inoffensive men, employed the most unwarrantable language. It was affirmed that they had a near affinity to the Essenes among the Jews, and to the Pictists of Switzerland; they excluded what was absolutely necessary to the support of life; they afflicted their bodies; they let blood once a fortnight to keep down the carnal man; they allowed none to have any religion but those of their own sect, while they themselves were farthest from it. They were hypocrites, and were supposed to use religion only as a veil to vice; and their greatest friends were ashamed to stand in their defense. They were enthusiasts, madmen, fools, and zealots. They pretended to be more pious than their neighbors. These were but the beginning of sorrows, as we shall see later.

Wesley says: "Ill men say all manner of evil of me, and good men believe them. There is a way, and there is but one, of making my peace. God forbid I should ever take it."

"As for reputation," he says, "though it be a glorious instrument of advancing our Master's service, yet there is a better than that—a clean heart, a single eye, a soul full of God." What words are these for a minister of the Lord Jesus! It implies heroic, unselfish devotion to a glorious object. He had discovered the secret of success.

What golden words are these: "I once desired to make a fair show in language and philosophy. But that is past. There is a more excellent way; and if I cannot attain to any progress in one without throwing up all thoughts of the other, why, fare it well." This gives the reader an idea of the motive which governed him to the end of life.

In the midst of these scenes of persecution Wesley addressed a letter to his venerable father, still living at Epworth, asking his advice. The old man urged him to go on and not be weary in well-doing; "to bear no more sail than necessary, but to steer steady. As they had called his son the father of the Holy Club, they might call him the grandfather, and he would glory in that name rather than in the

title of His Holiness." These were noble words from sire to son at such a time and in such a conflict.

In years after, when looking back upon the scenes of Oxford and that mustard-seed beginning, Wesley said: "Two young men, without name, without friends, without either power or fortune, set out from college with principles totally different from those of the common people, to oppose all the world, learned and unlearned, to combat popular prejudices of every kind. Their first principle directly attacked all wickedness; their second, all the bigotry in the world. Thus they attempted a reformation not of opinions (feathers, trifles not worth naming), but of men's tempers and lives; of vice of every kind; of everything contrary to justice, merey, or truth. And for this it was that they carried their lives in their hands, and that both the great vulgar and the small looked upon them as mad dogs, and treated them as such." Such was the beginning of the religious career of this wonderful man. Wesley refers to three distinct periods of the rise of Methodism. He says: "The first rise of Methodism was in November, 1729, when four of us met at Oxford. The second was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house. The last was at London, May 1, 1738, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every

54      **The Young People's Wesley.**

Wednesday evening, in order to free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer. God then thrust us out to raise a holy people."

It would be interesting to follow these men and learn the results of their lives; but our space does not permit. We refer the reader to that most excellent work, *The Oxford Methodists*, by Tyerman. Of Robert Kirkham little or nothing is known. William Morgan died while a mere youth, and died well. John Clayton became a Jacobite Churchman, and treated Wesley and his brother Charles with utter contempt. Thomas Broughton became secretary of the "Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge," and was faithful to his trust till death. He died suddenly upon his knees, on a Sabbath morning just before he was to have preached. James Harvey, author of *Meditations*, was a man of beautiful character, but opposed Wesley's Arminian views. Charles Kinchin, unlike most of the "Holy Club," remained the fast friend of Wesley until death. John Whitelamb married John Wesley's sister Mary, who died within one year, leaving her husband broken-hearted and despondent. He seems to have lost much of his early devotion, causing Mr. Wesley to say, "O, why did he not die forty years ago?" Wesley Hall married John Wesley's sister Martha, a lady of superior talents and sweetness of disposition.

Wesley regarded Hall as a man "holy and unblamable in all manner of conversation." After some years Hall went to the bad. He became, first, a Dissenter, then a Universalist, then a deist, after that a polygamist. He abandoned his charming wife, nine of his ten children having died, and the tenth soon followed. He went to the West Indies with one of his concubines, living there until her death. Broken in health and awakened to his terrible condition, he returned to England, where he soon after died. His lawful and faithful wife, hearing of his condition, like an angel of mercy hastened to his bedside. He died in great sorrow of heart, saying—and they were his last words—"I have injured an angel, an angel that never reproached me." Wesley says: "I trust he died in peace, for God gave him deep repentance." John Gambold became a Moravian bishop, and was so opposed to Wesley that he frankly told him he was "ashamed to be seen in his company." Wesley, however, always held him in high esteem. Of Richard Hutchins little is known, except that he was rector of Lincoln College, and never seems to have opposed the Wesleys. Christopher Atkinson was for twenty-five years vicar of Shorp-Arch and Walton. His last words were, "Come, Lord Jesus, and come quickly." Charles Delamotte was one who accompanied the Wesleys to Georgia. Little further is

known of him, except that he became a Moravian and died in peace at Barrow upon the Humber.

Here ends our account of the "Holy Club." All of them maintained a correct life except Hall. They were nearly all Calvinists, and in this they came in conflict with Wesley. Had they remained with Wesley, what a record they might have made! We trust their end was peace.

#### A TRIUMPHANT DEATH SCENE.

Go with me to the Epworth rectory. The venerable Samuel Wesley is dying; no, not dying, but languishing into life. John and Charles have been summoned from Oxford, and they are at the bedside. The faithful wife is so overcome that she cannot be present to witness the dying scene.

John sympathetically inquires, "Do you suffer much, father?" The dying man responds, "Yes, but nothing is too much to suffer for heaven. The weaker I am in body the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God." The dying saint lays his trembling hand on the head of Charles, and, like a true prophet, says, "Be steady! The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom. You shall see it, though I shall not." John inquires again, "Are you near heaven?" The dying rector joyfully responds, "Yes, I am." "Are all the

consolations of God small with you, father?" The emphatic answer is, "No! no! no!"

He then called his children each by name, and said to them, "Think of heaven; talk of heaven! All the time is lost when we are not thinking of heaven." The hour came for his departure. The children knelt beside his bed; John prayed. As the prayer ended, in a feeble whisper the rector said, "Now you have done all." Again John prayed, commending the soul of his honored father to God. All was silent as the tomb. They opened their eyes, and the rector was with the Lord, "beholding the King in his beauty." "Can anything on earth be more beautiful," says one writer, "than such a death? It was indeed fitting that this tried, scarred Christian warrior should pass thus peacefully to his reward."

"Now," said his widow, in great sorrow, "I am appeased in his having so easy a death, and I am strengthened to bear it."

On the very day of the rector's funeral a heartless parishioner, to whom the rector owed seventy-five dollars, seized the widow's cattle to secure the debt. But it was such a deed as his godless people were ever ready to perpetrate. John came to the relief of his poor mother, and gave the woman his note for the amount.

Wesley is again at Oxford, intent on service for his Lord.

## CHAPTER VI

### WESLEY IN AMERICA.

ONE of the most remarkable chapters in the life of John Wesley relates to his mission to America.

There was a tract of land in North America, lying between South Carolina and Florida, over which the English held a nominal jurisdiction. It was a wild, unexplored wilderness, inhabited only by Indian tribes. Under the sanction of a royal charter in 1732 a settlement was made in this territory, and as a compliment to the king, George II, it was named Georgia.

The object of such a settlement was twofold: first, to supply an outlet for the redundant population of the English metropolis; and, secondly, to furnish a safe asylum for foreign Protestants who were the subjects of popish intolerance. No Roman Catholic could find a home there. James Edward Oglethorpe, an earnest friend of humanity, was appointed the first governor of the territory, and he and twenty others were named as trustees, to hold the territory twenty years in trust for the poor.

The first company of emigrants, one hun-

dred and twenty-four in number, had already landed at Savannah and were breathing its balmy air, and the enthusiastic governor was on his return to inspire in the mind of the English people increased confidence in the new enterprise.

Having long been a personal friend of the Wesley family, Oglethorpe knew well the sterling worth of the two brothers, John and Charles, who were still at Oxford. An application was made to some of the Oxford Methodists to settle in the new colony as clergymen. Such sacrifices as they were ready to endure, and such a spirit as seemed to inflame them, were regarded as excellent qualities for the hardships of such a country as Georgia. Mr. Wesley was earnestly pressed by no less a person than the famous Dr. Burton to undertake a mission to the Indians of Georgia, Dr. Burton telling him that "plausible and popular doctors of divinity were not the men wanted in Georgia," but men "inured to contempt of the ornaments and conveniences of life, to bodily austerities, and to serious thoughts." He finally consented, his brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte joining him.

When the project was made public it was regarded by many as a Quixotic scheme. One inquired of John: "Do you intend to become a knight-errant? How did Quixotism get into your head? You want nothing. You have a

good provision for life. You are in a fair way for promotion, and yet you are leaving all to fight windmills."

"Sir," replied Mr. Wesley, "if the Bible be not true, I am as very a fool and madman as you can conceive. But if that book be of God, I am sober-minded; for it declares, 'There is no man that hath left houses, and friends, and brethren for the kingdom of God's sake, who shall not receive manifold in this present time, and in the world to come everlasting life.'"

He submitted his plans to his widowed mother, asking her advice. She replied, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice to see them all so employed." His sister Emily said, "Go, my brother;" and his brother Samuel joined with his mother and sister in bidding him God-speed.

All things being in readiness, on the 14th of October, 1735, the company embarked on board the *Simmonds*, off Gravesend, and after a few days' detention set sail for the New World.

This was a voyage of discovery—the discovery of holiness.

"Our end in leaving our native land," Wesley says, "was not to avoid want, God having given us plenty of temporal blessings; nor to gain the dung and dross of riches and honor; but simply to save our souls, to live wholly to the glory of God."

Wesley hoped by subjecting himself to the

hardships of such a life to secure that holiness for which his soul so ardently longed. He had no clear conception as yet of the doctrine of salvation by faith alone. He hoped by spending his life among rude savages to escape the temptations of the great metropolis. In the wilds of America he could live on "water and bread and the fruits of the earth," and speak "without giving offense." He justly concluded that "pomp and show of the world had no place in the wilds of America." "An Indian hut offered no food for curiosity." "My chief motive," he says, "is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen." "I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I do there." "I hope," he continues, "from the moment I leave the English shore, under the acknowledged character of a teacher sent from God, there shall be no word heard from my lips but what properly flows from that character."

But Wesley could not get away from himself. The greatest hindrance to holiness was in his own heart. He had looked for holiness in works, sacrifices, austerities, etc., but had failed to see that it was by faith alone.

The voyage, though of almost unparalleled roughness, was of infinite profit to Wesley. A company of Moravians, with David Nitschmann as their bishop, were passengers, bound

to the New World, fleeing from popish persecutions. Wesley, observing their behavior in the midst of great peril, was convinced that they were in possession of that to which he was a stranger. Ingham represented them as "a heavenly minded people."

Fifty-seven days of sea life brought them within sight of the beautiful Savannah. Soon they were kneeling upon its soil, thanking God for his merciful care and providential deliverance.

An event occurred on the voyage to Georgia illustrating Wesley's character. General Oglethorpe had become offended at his Italian servant. Hearing a disturbance in the cabin, Wesley stepped in. The general, observing him, and being in a high temper, sought to apologize. "You must excuse me, Mr. Wesley," he said; "I have met with a provocation too great for a man to bear. You know I drink nothing but Cyprus wine. I provided myself with several dozens of it, and this villain, Grimaldi, has drank nearly the whole lot of it. I will be avenged. He shall be tied hand and foot, and carried to the man-of-war. [A man-of-war accompanied the expedition for protection.] The rascal should have taken care how he used me so, for I never forgive." Wesley, fixing his eye upon the general—an eye that seemed to penetrate his soul—said, "Then I hope, general, you never sin!"

The general's heart was touched, his conscience smitten. He stood speechless before the youthful evangelist for a moment, and then threw his bunch of keys on the floor before his poor, cringing servant, saying, "There, villain, take my keys; and behave better in the future." Wesley, it seems, had the moral courage, which probably no other man possessed on that ship, to reprove General Oglethorpe to his face.

Soon after landing in Georgia, Wesley met Spangenberg, the Moravian elder, and desired to know of him how he should prosecute his new enterprise. The devout man of God saw clearly the need of the young evangelist, and inquired of him: "Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Wesley seemed surprised at such questions. Spangenberg continued, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" Wesley replied, "I know him as the Saviour of the world." "True," responded the Moravian elder, "but do you know that he saves you?" Wesley replied, "I hope he has died to save me." Spangenberg gravely added, "Do you know yourself?" Wesley answered, "I do;" and here the interview ended.

Charles Wesley was Oglethorpe's secretary, in place of Rev. Samuel Quincy, a native of Massachusetts, who retired from the office, de-

siring to return to England, where he had been educated. Ingham seems to have attached himself to Charles Wesley, and devoted himself to the children and the poor, and was the first to follow Charles to England. Delamotte was impelled to go to Georgia from his love of John Wesley and his desire to serve him in any capacity; and he never left him for a day while Wesley remained in America. He was the last to leave the colony. John Wesley was the sole minister of the colony, and stood next to Oglethorpe himself.

The Georgia to which Wesley came was very different from the Georgia of to-day. It had only a few English settlements, the most of the territory being the home of savage Indians. These tribes being at war with each other, all access to them was cut off. Not being able to extend their mission among them, Wesley and his colaborers turned their attention to the whites, hoping that God would before long open their way to preach the Gospel to the Indians. In the prosecution of their mission they practiced the most rigid austerities. They slept on the ground instead of on beds, lived on bread and water, dispensing with all the luxuries and most of the necessities of life. They were, in season and out of season, everywhere urging the people to a holy life. Wesley set apart three hours of each day for visiting the people at their homes, choosing



WESLEY'S ARM-CHAIR.



the midday hours when the people were kept indoors by the scorching heat.

Charles Wesley and Mr. Ingham were at Frederica, where the people were frank to declare that they liked nothing they did. Even Oglethorpe himself had become the enemy of his secretary, and falsely accused him of inciting a mutiny.

Their plain, earnest, practical public preaching and private rebukes aroused the spirit of persecution, which broke upon them without mixture of mercy. Scandal, with its scorpion tongue; backbiting, with its canine proclivities; and gossip, which also does immense business on borrowed capital—these ran like fires over sun-scorched prairies, until these devoted servants of God were well-nigh consumed.

At Frederica, Charles narrowly escaped assassination. So general and bitter was the hate that he says: "Some turned out of the way to avoid me." "The servant that used to wash my linen sent it back unwashed." "I sometimes pitied and sometimes diverted myself with the odd expressions of their contempt, but found the benefit of having undergone a much lower degree of obloquy at Oxford."

While very sick he was unable to secure a few boards to lie upon, and was obliged to lie on the ground in the corner of Mr. Reed's hut. He thanked God that it had not as yet become

a "capital offense to give him a morsel of bread." Though very sick, he was able to go out at night to bury a scout-boatman, "but envied him his quiet grave." He procured the old bedstead on which the boatman had died, upon which to rest his own sinking and almost dying frame; but the bedstead was soon taken from him by order of Oglethorpe himself. But through the mercy of God and the coming of his brother and Mr. Delamotte he recovered.

After about six months (February 5 to July 25) spent in labors more abundant, and almost in stripes above measure, Providence opened his way to return to England as bearer of dispatches to the government. He took passage in a rickety old vessel with a drunken captain, and all came near being lost at sea. The ship put into Boston in distress, and there Charles Wesley remained for more than a month, sick much of the time, but preaching several times in King's Chapel, corner of School and Tremont Streets, and in Christ Church, on Salem Street. This latter church remains as it was when Wesley occupied its pulpit.

John remained in Georgia—at Frederica and Savannah—battling with sin and Satan, with a Christian boldness which might almost have inspired wonder among the angels. His life was frequently threatened at Frederica,

and at Savannah there was no end to the insults he endured. Hearing of his conflicts, Whitefield writes to him to "go on and prosper, and, in the strength of God, make the devil's kingdom shake about his ears."

Through the cunning craftiness and manifest hypocrisy of one Miss Hopkey, niece of the chief magistrate, and a lady of great external accomplishments, he came near being ruined. She sought his company; bestowed on him every attention; watched him when sick; was always at his early morning meetings; dressed in pure white because she learned that he was pleased with that color; was always manifesting great interest in his spiritual state; and all, without doubt, to cover up deeper designs. Mr. Wesley, always unsuspecting and confiding, became strongly attached to her for a time, but was subsequently convinced that God did not approve of an alliance in that direction, and at once determined to cut every cord which bound them. At this the lady became greatly exasperated, and within a few days was married to another man—Williamson—and then, with her husband and uncle to aid her, she sought in every way the overthrow of Mr. Wesley.

Mr. Tyerman seeks to make this case, as, in fact, many others, turn to the disadvantage of Wesley. He will have it that Wesley had promised to marry Miss Hopkey, though

Henry Moore declares that Wesley told him that no such thing ever occurred. Mr. Tyerman gives credit to the testimony of the hypocritical Miss Hopkey rather than to that of Henry Moore and John Wesley.

After a time Wesley, for just causes, excluded Mrs. Williamson from the Lord's table, and gave his reasons for so doing. For this he was prosecuted before the courts, a packed and paid grand jury bringing against him ten indictments, and the minority presenting a strong counter report. The case never came to trial, though Wesley made seven fruitless efforts to have it tried.

The prejudice excited against him by the chief magistrate and others became so strong that he could accomplish but little good among the people.

In the midst of these conflicts he held every Sunday, from five to six, a prayer service in English; at nine, another in Italian; from 10:30 to 12:30 he preached a sermon in English and administered the communion; at one he held a service in French; at two he catechised the children; at three he held another service in English; still later he conducted a service in his own house, consisting of reading, prayer, and praise; and at six attended the Moravian service.

He finally resolved, as his mission seemed at an end, to leave Georgia and return to

England. His public announcement of his purpose created great excitement among all classes. The magistrate forbade his departure. Williamson demanded that he give bail to answer the suit against him; but this he refused to do, telling them that he had sought seven times to have the case tried, but in vain, and that for the balance they could look after that. On the same night, after public prayers, with four men to accompany him, Wesley left Savannah, December 2, 1737, never more to return. They took a small boat to Perrysburg, a distance of some twelve miles. They then made their way on foot through swamps and forests, suffering untold hardships from cold, hunger, and thirst for four days, when they safely arrived at Port Royal. Here Delamotte joined them, and all took boat for Charleston, where they arrived after four more days of toil.

After spending a few days in Charleston Mr. Delamotte returned to Savannah, and on the 22d day of December Mr. Wesley set sail for England, where he safely arrived on the first day of the following February, the next day after Mr. Whitefield had sailed for America.

Mr. Wesley did not regard his mission to America as a failure. He blessed God for having been carried to America, contrary to all his preceding resolutions. "Hereby I trust

**The Young People's Wesley.**

He hath, in some measure, *humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart.*"

Mr. Whitefield writes, on his arrival in Georgia: "The work Mr. Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people; and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither man nor devils will ever be able to shake. O, that I may follow him as he followed Christ!"

## CHAPTER VII.

### WESLEY'S RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE.

Mr. WESLEY'S religious experience deserves special notice. If he was raised up by God for any purpose, it was to revive spiritual Christianity, which included justification by faith, entire sanctification, and the witness of the Holy Spirit. To understand his own experience on these doctrines is the object of this chapter.

Let us first notice the external religious life which Mr. Wesley maintained prior to the wonderful change which occurred soon after his return from America. From his journals we learn that he said prayers both public and private, and read the Scriptures and other good books constantly. He experienced sensible comfort in reading à Kempis, resulting in an entire change in his conversation and life. He set apart two hours each day for religious retirement, and received the sacrament every week. He watched against every sin, whether in word or deed. He shook off all his trifling acquaintances, and was careful that every moment of his time should be improved. He not only watched over his own heart, but

urged others to become religious. He visited those in prison, assisted the poor and sick, and did what he could with his presence and means for the souls and bodies of men. He deprived himself of all the superfluities and many of the necessaries of life that he might help others. He fasted twice each week, omitted no part of self-denial which he thought lawful, and carefully used in public and private at every opportunity all the means of grace. For the doing of these things he became a by-word, but rejoiced that his name was cast out as evil. His sole aim was to do God's will and secure inward holiness. Sometimes he had joy, sometimes sorrow; sometimes the terror of the law alarmed him, and sometimes the comforts of the Gospel cheered him. He had many remarkable answers to prayer, and many sensible soul comforts.

Let us next notice Mr. Wesley's estimate of his own religious state at this time.

He found that he had not such faith in Christ as kept his heart from being troubled in time of danger, for in a storm he cried unto God every moment, but in a calm he did not. His words he discovered to be such as did not edify, especially his manner of speaking of his enemies. By these he was convinced of unbelief and pride. He gives a dark picture of his state at this time, much darker than the light of after years justified. "I went to America,"

he says, "to convert the Indians, but O, who shall convert me? O, who will deliver me from this fear of death?"

On landing in England he writes: "It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgia Indians the nature of Christianity, but what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why, what I least of all expected—that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God."

He further says: "This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth—that I am fallen short of the glory of God, alienated from the life of God; I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell."

In later years, when carefully reconsidering his early experience, Mr. Wesley was not disposed to form the same severe judgment of his religious state. He wisely added several qualifying remarks which should not be omitted when his early language is employed. He could not say that he was not converted at this time, or that he was a child of wrath. To the expression, "I was never myself converted to God," is added this note: "I am not sure of that," strongly intimating that he believed he was then converted.

To the expression, "I am a child of wrath, an heir of hell," is added this note: "I believe

not." It seemed to his own mature judgment that he was not the wretched sinner he had fancied himself to be in those sad hours of his early history. He says, "I had then the faith of a *servant*, though not that of a *son*." What he means by this expression may be gathered from a sermon which he preached some fifty years later. He says: "But what is the faith which is properly saving? what brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God and the things of God as even in its infant state enables everyone that possesses it to fear God and work righteousness. And whosoever in every nation believes thus far, the apostle declares, is accepted of him. He actually is at that very moment in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a *servant* of God, not properly a *son*. Meantime let it be well observed that the 'wrath of God' no longer abideth on him.

"Indeed, nearly fifty years ago, when the preachers commonly called Methodists began to preach that grand scriptural doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprised of the difference between a servant and a child of God. They did not clearly understand that everyone who feareth God and worketh righteousness is accepted of him. In consequence of this they are apt to make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad.

For they frequently asked those who feared God, 'Do you know that your sins are forgiven?' And upon their saying 'No,' immediately repeated, 'Then you are a child of the devil.' No, that does not follow. It might have been said (and it is all that can be said with propriety), 'Hitherto you are a *servant*; you are not a *child* of God.' The faith of a child is properly and directly a divine conviction whereby every child of God is enabled to testify, 'The life that I now live I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' And whosoever hath this, the Spirit of God witnesseth with his spirit that he is a child of God."

Again he says: "The faith of a servant implies a divine evidence of the invisible world so far as it can exist without living experience. Whoever has attained this, the faith of a servant, 'feareth God and escheweth evil;' or, as is expressed by St. Peter, 'feareth God and worketh righteousness.' In consequence of which he is in a degree, as the apostle observes, 'accepted with him.' Elsewhere he is described in these words: 'He that feareth God and keepeth his commandments.'"

A careful examination of these quotations will convince anyone that the difference in Mr. Wesley's opinion between being a *servant* and a *son* is not that one is converted and the other is not, not that one is accepted by God

and the other rejected, but that one has the direct witness of the Spirit that he is a child of God and the other has not. This was Wesley's religious state when he returned to England. He was not that lost soul, that heir of hell, which he reckoned himself to be, but an accepted servant of God without the direct witness of the Spirit to his sonship.

Meeting Peter Böhler, February 7, 1738, he (Böhler) was made the instrument of a great blessing to his soul. Böhler was a Moravian, nine years the junior of Wesley; a most devout man, deeply versed in spiritual things, and well qualified to lead the earnest Oxford student into the path of peace. Wesley was astonished at the announcement of Böhler that true faith in Christ was inseparably attended by dominion over sin, and constant peace arising from a sense of forgiveness. He could in no way accept the doctrine until he had first examined the Scriptures and had heard the testimony of three witnesses adduced by Böhler. But what staggered him most was the doctrine of instantaneous conversion. This he could not accept. But a careful appeal to the Bible and the testimony of Böhler's witnesses settled the question. Thus "this man of erudition," says Mr. Tyerman, "and almost anchorite piety sat at the feet of this godly German like a little child, and was content to be thought a fool that he might be wise."

But the time drew near when the veil was to be rent, and he who had been for half a score of years a seeker was to behold the glories of the inner temple. His brother Charles had already received the gift of the Spirit, and Whitefield was rejoicing in the same blessing; but John still lingered. He became so oppressed with his spiritual state that he thought of abandoning preaching; but Böhler said: "By no means. Preach faith till you have it, and then because you have it you will preach it." So he began. He uttered strong words at St. Lawrence's and St. Catherine's, and was informed that he could preach no more in either place. At Great St. Helen's he spoke with such plainness that he was told he must preach no more there. At St. Ann's he spoke of free salvation by faith, and the doors of the church were closed against him. The same result attended his preaching at St. John's and St. Bennett's, until he found the words of a friend addressed to his brother true in his own case, that "wherever you go this 'foolishness of preaching' will alienate hearts from you and open mouths against you."

The simplicity of faith staggered the youthful philosopher. Böhler, in writing of the Wesleys to Zinzendorf, says: "Our mode of believing in the Saviour is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to

10      **The Young People's Wesley.**

it; if it were a little more artful, they could much sooner find their way into it."

Wesley's distress of soul continued until the 24th of May. At five in the morning of that suspicious day he opened his Testament and read: "These are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye may be partakers of the divine nature." Later in the day he opened the word and read: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." Having attended St. Paul's Cathedral in the afternoon, where the anthem was a great comfort to his soul, he went with great reluctance to a society meeting at night at Aldersgate Street. There he found one reading Luther's preface to the Romans; and at about a quarter before nine, while the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ was being described, "I felt," he says, "my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ—Christ alone—for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and then I testified openly to all there what I now felt in my heart."

From this moment a new spiritual world opened upon the mind and heart of John Wesley. He not only began at once to pray for those who had ill-used him, but openly testified to all present what God had done for his soul.

And from that hour onward, for fifty-three years, he bore through the land a heart flaming with love.

In 1744, more than six years subsequent to that blessed experience at Aldersgate, Mr. Wesley relates another experience which we must not overlook. It is related in these words: "In the evening while I was reading prayers at Snowfield I found such light and strength as I never remember to have had before. I saw every thought, as well as action or word, just as it was rising in my heart, and whether it was right before God or tainted with pride or selfishness. I never knew before—I mean not at this time—what it was to be still before God. I waked the next morning by the grace of God in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein; so that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found him in every place, and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have lived to-day.'"

In 1771, referring to this experience, he says: "Many years since I saw that 'without holiness no man shall see the Lord.' I began by following after it, and inciting all with whom I had any intercourse to do the same. Ten years after God gave me a clearer view than I had before of the way how to attain

it; namely, by faith in the Son of God. And immediately I declared to all, 'We are saved from sin, we are made holy, by faith. *This I testified in private, in public, in print; and God confirmed it by a thousand witnesses.* I have continued to declare this for about thirty years; and God has continued to confirm the work of grace.'

These experiences flamed out in his whole life. He claimed that he knew whereof he affirmed. While he advocated strongly the doctrines of Christianity, he was most earnest in promoting the experience of personal holiness.

A question has been propounded here eliciting much controversy, namely, "Did Mr. Wesley ever profess to have experienced the blessing of entire sanctification?" It does not appear to us to be a question of as much importance as many seem to imagine. The more important question is: Did Mr. Wesley believe and teach that such an experience was possible in this life? Did he encourage his people to seek such a blessing, and, when obtained, profess it in a humble spirit? This question among others was submitted to Dr. James M. Buckley: "Have we any record of Mr. Wesley's professing to be entirely sanctified; if so, where may it be found?" His answer will be regarded as entirely satisfactory to all unprejudiced minds.

"This question reappears from time to time, as though of great importance. We know of no record of his explicitly professing or saying in so many words, 'I am entirely sanctified;' no record of uttering words to that effect. But we have no more doubt that he habitually professed it than that he professed conversion. The relation John Wesley sustained to his followers, and to this doctrine, makes it certain that he professed it, and almost certain that there would be no special record of it.

"1. All Wesley's followers assumed him to be what he urged them to be. Before they were in a situation to make records his position was so fixed that to record his descriptions of this state would have been unthought of.

"2. He preached entire sanctification, and urged it upon his followers.

"3. He defended its attainability in many public controversies.

"4. He urged and defended the profession of it, under certain conditions and safeguards; made lists of professors; told men they had lost it because they did not profess; and said and did so many things, only to be explained upon the assumption that he professed to enjoy the blessing, that no other opinion can support it."<sup>\*</sup>

Soon after this experience at Aldersgate Chapel Mr. Wesley made a journey to Herrn-

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<sup>\*</sup> *The Christian Advocate.*

hut, Germany, to visit the Moravian brethren, but soon withdrew from them because of their errors in doctrine. He antagonized the dogma of Zinzendorf, that men are entirely sanctified at the moment when they are converted. His opinion of the count differed materially from his estimation of Böhler.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### WESLEY'S MULTIPLIED LABORS.

No sooner had Mr. Wesley experienced the transforming power of grace than he hastened to declare it to all, taking "the world" for his "parish."

After confessing to those immediately about him what God had done for his soul he flew with all possible speed to declare it to the miners in their darkness, to the Newgate felons in their loathsome cells, to the wealthy and refined worshipers at St. John's and St. Ives', offering in burning words a common salvation alike to the Newgate felon and to the St. John's and St. Ives' aristocracy.

Mr. Wesley was a most pertinacious adherent of the English Establishment, and never dreamed of attempting the salvation of souls by preaching the Gospel outside of her church walls until he was ruthlessly expelled from all her pulpits. But he had firmly resolved that neither bishops, nor curates, nor church wardens should stand between him and duty. But what to do and where to go he did not know. Every door seemed closed against him, and almost every face save the face of God frowned



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upon him. But while God smiled he knew no fear. In his extremity he took counsel of Whitefield, resulting in a firm purpose to do the work to which Providence seemed to have clearly called them. Churches were closed, to be sure, but the unsaved and perishing were everywhere except in the churches, and to reach and to save them they betook themselves to the wide, wide world. They were now seen in hospitals, administering spiritual comfort to the sick; in prisons, offering eternal life to condemned felons; at Kingswood, calling the dark colliers to a knowledge of the truth. In these places unfrequented by sacerdotal robes the Gospel of the grace of God was carried by these unhonored servants of Jesus. But soon prisons and hospitals were denied them, and then they fled to the fields and to the streets of the cities, choosing for their pulpits the market-house steps, a horse-block, a coal heap, a table, a stone wall, a mountain side, a horse's back, etc.

The colliers of Kingswood had no church, no Sabbath, no Gospel. They were the most corrupt, degraded, blasphemous class to be found in England. Southey describes them as "lawless, brutal, and worse than heathen." They seemed to have been forsaken of God and man. This was a fit place to test the power of "the Gospel of the grace of God." The intrepid Whitefield was the first to break the

ice. "Pulpits are denied," he says, "and the poor colliers are ready to perish." So he unfurled the Gospel banner "with a mountain for his pulpit," he says, "and the broad heavens for a sounding-board."

The Wesleys are lifting up their voices like trumpets in all parts of the kingdom. They are threading their way along the mountains of Wales, where the people know as little of Christianity as do the wild Indians of our Western plains. They are seen in Ireland, in all her towns and cities, calling her papal-cursed sons to a knowledge of Jesus. Again their voices are heard amid the hills and vales of Scotland, urging her stern clans to accept Jesus by faith alone. Then they are surrounded by tens of thousands of besmeared miners who are weeping for sin and rejoicing in deliverance from it.

Mr. Wesley and John Nelson for three weeks labored to introduce the Gospel into Cornwall. During this time they slept on the floor. Nelson says that Mr. Wesley had his great coat for his pillow, while Nelson had Burkitt's *Notes on the New Testament* for his. After they had been there nearly three weeks, one morning about three o'clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and finding Nelson awake, clapped him on his side, saying, "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but one side."

As they were leaving Cornwall Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick blackberries, saying, "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw to get an appetite and the worst place to provide means to satisfy it." Still they courageously pushed forward, with the one purpose of saving men.

That we may aid the reader in getting a clearer and more comprehensive conception of the immense amount of labor performed by Mr. Wesley, we will arrange it under distinct heads:

1. His travels were immense. He averaged, during a period of fifty-four years, about five thousand miles a year, some say eight, making in all at least some two hundred and ninety thousand miles, a distance equal to circumnavigating the globe about twelve times. It must not be forgotten that most of this travel was performed on horseback. Think of riding around the globe on horseback twelve times!
2. The amount of his preaching was unparalleled. Mr. Wesley preached not less than twenty sermons a week—frequently many more. These sermons were delivered mostly in the open air and under circumstances calculated to test the nerve of the most vigorous frame. He did, in the matter of preaching, what no other man ever did—he preached on an average, for a period of fifty-four years,

fifteen sermons a week, making in all forty-two thousand four hundred, besides numberless exhortations and addresses on a great variety of occasions.

A minister in these times does well to preach one hundred sermons a year. At this rate, to preach as many sermons as Mr. Wesley did, such a minister must live and preach four hundred and twenty-four years. Think of a minister preaching two sermons each week day and three each Sabbath for fifty-four years, and some idea can be formed of Mr. Wesley's labors in this department.

3. His literary labors were extraordinary. While traveling five thousand miles and more a year, or at least about fourteen miles a day, and preaching two sermons, and frequently five, each day, he read extensively. He read not less than two thousand two hundred volumes on all subjects, many of the volumes folios, after the old English style. His journals show that he read not only to understand, but to severely criticise his author as well.

The number of his publications will scarcely be credited by those who are not familiar with them, especially when we consider the amount of time he spent in traveling and preaching, and the urgency of his engagements, both of a public and private nature.

He wrote and published grammars of the

Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, and English languages.

He was for many years editor of a monthly periodical of fifty-six pages, known as the *Arminian Magazine*, requiring the undivided attention of any ordinary man in these times.

He wrote, abridged, revised, and published a library of fifty volumes known as the *Christian Library*, one of the most remarkable collections of Christian literature of the times. He subsequently reread and revised the whole work with great care, and it was afterward published in thirty volumes—a marvel of excellence and industry.

He published an abridgment of Mosheim's *Ecclesiastical History*, with important additions, in four volumes.

He published an abridgment of the *History of England*, in four volumes.

He compiled and published a *Compendium of Natural Philosophy*, in five volumes.

He arranged and published a collection of moral and sacred poems, in three volumes.

He published an abridgment of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, with notes. He published an abridgment of Young's *Night Thoughts*.

He wrote and published a commentary on the whole Bible in four large volumes, but the portion on the Old Testament was rendered almost worthless by the abridgment of the

notes by the printer in order to get them within a given compass.

He compiled a complete dictionary of the English language, much used in his day. He compiled and published a history of Rome. He published selections from the Latin classics for the use of students.

He published an abridgment of Goodwin's *Treatise of Justification*. He abridged and published in two volumes Brooke's *Fool of Quality*.

He wrote a good-sized work on electricity. He prepared and published three medical works for the common people; one entitled *Primitive Physic* was highly esteemed in the old country. He compiled and published six volumes of church music. His poetical works, in connection with those of his brother Charles, are said to have amounted to not less than forty volumes. Charles composed the larger part, but they passed under the revision of John, without which we doubt if Charles Wesley's hymns would have been what they are—the most beautiful and soul-inspiring in the English language.

In addition to all this there are seven large octavo volumes of sermons, letters, controversial papers, journals, etc. It is said that Mr. Wesley's works, including translations and abridgments, amounted to more than two hundred volumes, for we have not given here

a complete list of his publications. To this must be added:

4. His pastoral labors. It is doubtful if any pastor in these times does more pastoral work than did Mr. Wesley. He speaks frequently of these labors. In London he visits all the members, and from house to house exhorts and comforts them. For some time he visited all the "Bands" and "Select Societies," appointing all the band and class leaders. He had under his personal care tens of thousands of souls.

To these multiplied labors he added the establishment of schools, building of chapels, raising of funds to carry on the work, and a special care over the whole movement. It may be affirmed that neither in his travels, his literary labors, his preaching, nor in his pastoral supervision of the flock of Christ has he often, if ever, been surpassed. "Few men could have traveled as much as he, had they omitted all else. Few could have preached as much without either travel or study. And few could have written and published as much had they avoided both travel and preaching." It is not too much to say that among uninspired men one of more extraordinary character than John Wesley never lived!

It may be asked, How was he able to accomplish so much? He improved every moment of every day to the very best advantage.

Mr. Fletcher, who for some time was his traveling companion, says: "His diligence is matchless. Though oppressed with the weight of seventy years and the care of more than thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labors, all the young ministers of England, perhaps of Christendom. He has generally blown the Gospel trumpet and ridden twenty miles before the most of the professors who despise his labors have left their downy pillows. As he begins the day, the week, the year, so he concludes them, still intent upon extensive services for the glory of the Redeemer and the good of souls."

In order to save time he, in the first place, ascertained how much sleep he needed; and when once settled he never varied from it to the end of life. He rose at four in the morning and retired at ten in the evening, never losing at any time, he says, "ten minutes by wakefulness." The first hour of each day was devoted to private devotions; then every succeeding hour and moment was employed in earnest labor. His motto was, "Always in haste, but never in a hurry." "I have," he says, "no time to be in a hurry. Leisure and I have taken leave of each other."

He makes the remarkable statement that ten thousand cares were no more weight to his mind than ten thousand hairs to his head. "I

92      **The Young People's Wesley.**

am never tired with writing, preaching, or traveling."

With all his travel, labor, and care, he declares that he "enjoyed more hours of private retirement than any man in England."

At the beginning of his extraordinary career he became the most rigid economist. Having thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two. The next year he received sixty pounds; he still lived on twenty-eight, and gave away thirty-two. The following year, out of ninety pounds, he gave away sixty-two, and the next year ninety-two pounds out of one hundred and twenty.

## CHAPTER IX.

### WESLEY'S DOMESTIC RELATIONS.

DIVINE Providence seems to indicate that some men are ordained or set apart to celibacy; that the special work to which they are particularly called is such as to make it necessary that they should abstain from that otherwise legal, sacred, and highly honorable conjugal relation. Not that this duty is restricted to any order of the clergy—as in the Romish Church—but to particular persons in all the Churches who are divinely selected for special work. This was the case with Elijah and Elisha, with John the Baptist and St. Paul. To John Wesley in the Old World, and Bishop Asbury in the New, Providence seems to have indicated this course of life, though Wesley was slow to see it, and did not until his sad experience made it clear to him.

Though the world was his parish, he had a heart of love which craved deep, pure, soul companionship. He was made to love. Though he was a lamb in gentleness, he was a lion in courage. He was as daring as Richard the Lion-hearted, or as Ney or Murat, in the bat-

tle, yet he had a heart as simple as a child and as affectionate as an angel. He loved everybody. He was strongly attached to his mother, his sisters, and brothers. He clung ardently to his old associates, though they sometimes ill-treated him. With such a man a homeless, single life could only be submitted to under a sense of imperative duty.

After forty-seven years of single life, being of the opinion that he could be more useful in the married life than to remain single, and after first consulting his lifelong friend, Rev. Mr. Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, who fully approved his course, he then looked about to see who was a suitable person to become his helpmate. After a time he firmly believed he had found the proper one in the person of Mrs. Grace Murray, of Newcastle. She was the widow of Alexander Murray, of Scotland.

Mrs. Murray had been converted, while on a visit to London, under the ministry of Mr. Whitefield and the Wesleys. She at once joined the Methodists, abandoned all worldly and fashionable society, and devoted herself to the cause of God. It is true she was not allied to the aristocracy, and her husband followed the sea. Her husband, when he learned of her change, became greatly enraged, thinking all his pleasures were at an end, and threatened, if she did not abandon the Methodists and return to her former course of life,

that he would commit her to the madhouse. This nearly broke her heart, and under its influence she became prostrated and sick night unto death. Her husband, seeing the effects of his treatment, relented, and invited the Methodists to come to his house and pray for his dying wife. Under a change of treatment, and the blessing of God, she recovered. The husband soon after left for a sea voyage, was taken sick, died, and was buried in the ocean. She sadly mourned his untimely death, for, in the main, he was a kind husband.

It was about this time that Mr. Wesley became acquainted with her, and recognized in her a valuable helper. She seems to have been a charming lady. Her deep piety, simplicity of character, amiable disposition, remarkable zeal, and active charity attracted his attention. He maintained at Newcastle a Preachers' House for himself and his preachers while in the city. He had there, also, an asylum for orphans and widows, for whom he made provision. Over this institution he installed Mrs. Murray as housekeeper. Finding her admirably suited to this work, especially among females, he appointed her class leader. She then, under his direction, visited the female classes in Bristol, London, etc. Her duty was to regulate the classes, organize female bands, and inspire her sisters to deeper piety and more active benevolence. Her devotion and

unassuming manners won the affection of the people. They hailed her coming with a thousand welcomes, and parted with her with regret.

Mr. Wesley observed her spirit and labors, and began to feel that she was the providential companion for him—a real helpmate. Her tastes, temperament, and mission seemed to be one with his own. Without hesitation or reserve he offered her his hand. It was accepted with great cheerfulness. She declared herself ready to go with him to the ends of the earth, and esteemed it a great honor to be allied to him.

The marriage was to be celebrated in October, 1749. But on the first day of that month he met Charles Wesley and Mr. Whitefield at Leeds, and received the astounding intelligence from them that Grace Murray was married the night before, at Newcastle, to John Bennett—one of Wesley's preachers—and that they had been present and witnessed the marriage ceremony.

This singular affair has never been satisfactorily explained. It is evident that Charles Wesley and Mr. Whitefield for some cause encouraged the marriage of Mrs. Murray with Mr. Bennett; but what their motive could have been is not known. Several reasons have been given, but none seem worthy of the men. Whatever their motive, it must be acknowl-



WESLEY'S CLOCK.



edged to have been entirely unjustifiable. The conduct of the lady was equally inexplicable, and must ever remain so.

In this trying affair we cannot but admire the conduct of Mr. Wesley. Knowing the part that Mr. Whitefield had taken in the matter, he went the next morning to hear him preach, and speaks in high terms of his sermon. The day following he preached himself at Leeds in the morning, and in the afternoon met Mr. and Mrs. Bennett, and of the meeting he writes to a friend, "Such a scene I think you never saw." They never met again, except in London in 1788, when Mr. Wesley was eighty-five years of age, and when Mrs. Bennett had been a widow for nearly twenty-nine years. The meeting was brief, and no mention was made of former years.

Mr. Bennett was treated by Mr. Wesley with the utmost kindness. He, however, became an enemy of Mr. Wesley, withdrew from the Connection, and joined the Calvinists. He lived ten years, and died, leaving Mrs. Bennett a widow with five children, the eldest not eight years old. She lived a widow for nearly forty-four years. She subsequently returned to the Wesleyan Methodists, held class meetings in her house, and had the reputation of being a woman of excellent character and deep piety. She died February 23, 1803. Her last words were, "Glory be to thee, my God; peace thou

givist." Dr. Bunting preached her funeral sermon. Whoever reads Mr. Tyerman's account of these events should also read Dr. Rigg's *Living Wesley*, in order to get an unbiased account of this transaction.

Mr. Wesley, baffled in his first attempt, and still believing it was his duty to marry, made a second effort; and this time he offered his hand to Mrs. Vazeille, the widow of a London merchant. She readily accepted the proposal, and the marriage was at once consummated. Says a recent writer, "He married a widow, and caught a tartar." She was a lady of independent fortune, with four children. Mr. Wesley declined to have anything to do with her wealth, and had it all settled upon herself and her children.

She was a woman of good standing in society, and was supposed to be a suitable person for the position she assumed. She was agreeable in person and quite faultless in manner, and could easily make herself useful to all classes. But appearances are said to be deceptive; at least it proved so in this case. She seems to have possessed a temper which, when aroused, was utterly uncontrollable.

Not four months of married life had passed before she began to complain of her husband. Before their marriage she agreed that he should not be expected to travel a mile less, or preach one sermon less, than before their

union. But now she began to complain of everything—long journeys, bad roads, and poor fare. She was not willing to remain at home, for then she was without the attention she had a right to receive; and when he was at home he was preaching two or three times a day, visiting the sick, looking after the societies, and carrying on extensive correspondence.

From fancying herself neglected by her husband she became jealous of him—a most absurd and insane idea. But on this her insanity knew no bounds. She is said to have traveled a hundred miles in order to intercept him at some town, and watch from a window to ascertain who might be in the carriage with him. She went so far as to open his private letters and abstract his papers and place them in the hands of those who would use them to his damage. She would add to his letters—usually those from his female correspondents—to make them appear to contain words of questionable character. She used the newspapers to blacken his reputation. She went so far at times as to lay violent hands upon him, tear his hair, and otherwise abuse him. Said Mr. Hampson (who was not one of Mr. Wesley's warmest friends) to his son one day: "Jack, I was once on the point of committing murder. When I was in the north of Ireland I went into a room, and found Mrs. Wesley flaming with fury. Her husband was on the floor, where she had

been trailing him by the hair of his head; she herself was still holding in her hand venerable locks which she had plucked up by the roots. I felt," said the gigantic Hampson, "as though I could have knocked the soul out of her." Even Southey says: "Fain would she have made him, like Mark Antony, give up all for love; and, being disappointed in that hope, she tormented him in such a manner by her outrageous jealousy and abominable temper that she deserved to be classed in a triad with Xantippe and the wife of Job as one of the three bad wives." But finally she gathered up a quantity of his journals and other papers and left him, never to return. The only record which the good man makes is this: "I did not forsake her; I did not dismiss her; I will not recall her."

Wesley may not have been in all respects in this matter faultless. But no one could ever affirm that he was wanting in genuine affection. Charles Wesley, who knew the inwardness of all John's domestic troubles, affirms that "nothing could surpass my brother's patience with his perverse, peevish spouse."

Mrs. Wesley died in 1781, and the church people had it inscribed upon her tombstone that she was "a woman of exemplary piety." "But," says the late Professor Sheppard, "you know a tombstone is like a corporation—it has no body to be burned, and no soul to be damned."

## CHAPTER X.

### WESLEY'S PERSECUTIONS.

HAD the immense labors of John Wesley noted in a former chapter been performed under public patronage, cheered on by all, they would have seemed less arduous. Men may prosecute a reform when public opinion favors it with comparative ease, but with less entitlement to honor than he has a right to claim who does it in the face of passion and interest. The labors of John Wesley were prosecuted in the teeth of opposition such as seldom falls to the lot of man to endure. And what made it more dastardly and cruel was the fact that it was instigated and principally conducted by the officials of that Church of which he was a worthy member and ordained minister to the day of his death.

It is a sad fact, but nevertheless true, that most of the opposition and persecution encountered by reformers and revivalists have come from the churchmen of the times. It has been the Church opposing those who were honestly seeking her own reformation. When the Church substitutes forms for godliness, and devotes herself to ecclesiasticism instead of

soul-saving, and place-seeking takes the place of piety, she is ready to resist all efforts for her restoration to spirituality as irregular and offensive.

No sooner had Wesley exposed the sins of the Church, especially those of the pulpit, than the pulpit denounced him; and the press, taking its keynote from the pulpit, thundered as though the "abomination of desolation" had actually "taken possession of the holy place." Then the idle rabble rushed to the front, and mob violence and mob law were the order of the hour.

The flaming denunciations of the pulpits of the Establishment against Mr. Wesley and his people have never been surpassed in the history of the English nation. Wesley says: "We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds we were painted as unheard-of monsters. But this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear to ourselves, so we might finish our course with peace."

The Wesleys were represented as "bold movers of sedition and ringleaders of the rabble, to the disgrace of their order." They were denounced by learned divines as "restless deceivers of the people," "babblers," "insolent pretenders," "men of spiritual sleight

and cunning craftiness." They were guilty of "indecent, false, and unchristian reflections on the clergy." They were "new-fangled teachers," "rash, uncharitable censurers," "intruding into other men's labors," and running "into wild fancies until the pale of the Church is too strait for them." They were "half dissenters in the Church, and more dangerous to the Church than those who were total dissenters from it."

Bishop Gibson declared that they endeavored "to justify their own extraordinary methods of teaching by casting unworthy reflections upon the parochial clergy as deficient in the discharge of their duty, and not instructing the people in the true doctrines of Christianity."

Even Dr. Doddridge is not at all "satisfied with the high pretenses they make to the divine influence." Dr. Trapp is bold in pronouncing them "a set of crack-brained enthusiasts and profane hypoerites."

The *Weekly Miscellany* denounces Wesley as the "ringleader, fomenter, and first cause of all divisions and feuds that have happened in Oxford, London, Bristol, and other places where he has been." He manages by "preaching, bookselling, wheedling, and sponging to get, it is believed, an income of £700 a year, some say £1,000. This is priestcraft to perfection."

Further on in life he is accused of "making unwarrantable dissensions in the Church," and "prejudicing the people wherever he comes against his brethren the clergy." He is a "sower and ringleader of dissension, endeavoring with unwearied assiduity to set the flock at variance with their ministers and each other," assuming to himself "great wisdom and high attainments in all spiritual knowledge." "You go," says this writer, "from one end of the nation to another lamenting the heresies of your brethren, and instilling into the people's minds that they are led into error by their pastors."

"It was Mr. Wesley's fidelity," says Mr. Tyerman, "far more than the novelties of his doctrines and proceedings that brought upon him the persecution he encountered."

The former friends of Wesley now turned against him on points merely doctrinal. No one can read the invectives of Sir Richard and Rev. Rowland Hill, Sir Walter Shirley and Rev. Augustus Toplady, without feelings of great astonishment. When Mr. Wesley had passed his threescore years and ten Mr. Toplady, a young man of thirty, attacked him in the most violent manner, employing epithets of the most abusive character. We select the following as samples from the many. Wesley is accused of the "sophistry of the Jesuit and the dictatorial authority of a pope." He is a

"lurking, sly assassin," guilty of "audacity and falsehood;" a "knave," guilty of "mean, malicious impotence." He is an "Ishmaelite," a "bigot," a "papist," a "defamer," a "reviler," a "liar," without the "honesty of a heathen;" an "impudent slanderer," with "Satanic guilt only exceeded by Satan himself, if even by him." He is an "echo of Satan."

Robert Hall well said, "I would not incur the guilt of that virulent abuse which Toplady cast upon him [Wesley], for points merely speculative and of very little importance, for ten thousand worlds."

*Poets* who should have sung for Jesus prostituted their gifts and burdened their songs with the bitterest invectives against Wesley and his people.

One entitles his poem "Perfection: a practical epistle, calmly addressed to the greatest hypocrite in England—that person being John Wesley."

Another poem was entitled "Methodism Displayed: a satire, illustrated and verified from John Wesley's fanatical Journals."

Another, entitled "The Mechanic Inspired: or, The Methodists' Welcome to Rome." As a specimen of this delectable production we give the following stanza:

Ye dupees of sly, Romish, Itinerant liars,  
The spawn of French prophets and mendicant friars;  
Ye pious enthusiasts! who riot and rob  
With holy grimace and sanctified sob.

106      **The Young People's Wesley.**

Another, "The Methodist and Mimic."  
Still another, "The Methodist, a p. em." In  
this production Mr. Wesley is described as  
being nursed on "demoniac milk," and as one  
who

Had Moorfield trusted to his care,  
For Satan keeps an office there.

Another, entitled "The Troublers of Israel;  
in which the principles of those who turn the  
world upside down are displayed."

Another, in which the writer exhorts Wes-  
ley to

Haste hence to Rome, thy proper place,  
Why should we share in thy disgrace?  
We need no greater proof to see  
Thy blasphemies with his agree.

And yet another, entitled "Wesley's Apos-  
tasy," etc., in which occurs this verse, among  
others equally bad:

In vain for worse may Wesley search the globe,  
A viper hatched beneath the harlot's robe;  
Rome in her glory has no greater boast,  
Than Wesley aims—to all conviction lost!

This may answer for the poets, though their  
number is nearly legion.

Artists employed their God-given powers in  
traducing Wesley and his people.

William Hogarth published a painting and  
engraving entitled "Credulity, Superstition,  
and Fanaticism, being a satire on Methodism."

*Comedians*, who are generally ready to lend themselves to any vile work, employed the stage to blacken the character of Wesley.

Samuel Foote, an actor, wrote a play entitled "The Minor, a Comedy," in which the Methodists were ridiculed and slandered.

Samuel Pottenger wrote a play entitled "The Methodist, a Comedy." Another was soon after produced—"The Hypocrite, a Comedy," as it was performed in the Theater Royal, Drury Lane."

Thus *pulpit, press, pencil, and stage* united to crush Wesley and his people. No means were left untried. Though they followed him through all his active ministerial life, yet the gates of hell did not and could not prevail against him and his work.

#### MOB VIOLENCE.

WHEN pulpit, press, and stage combine to crush vital Christianity they soon arouse an ally in the ignorant, restless, unholy masses, ever ready to aid in forwarding the work of the Prince of Darkness.

When pulpits in London, Bristol, Bath, and, in fact, everywhere were closed against Wesley one of two ways was open before him—he must either abandon the work to which he was sure God had called him, or he must break over ecclesiastical rules and go outside the churches. He was not long choosing.

A good-sized volume could be filled with accounts of mob violence which came upon Wesley and his people, but we have space for a few cases only, which must be taken as samples of the many.

While preaching at Moorfield a mob met him, broke down the table on which he stood, and in various ways abused and insulted him. Nothing daunted, he mounted a stone wall near by and exhorted the people until silence was restored. He often found himself here in the midst of a sea of human passion, the crowds frequently numbering from twenty to forty thousand.

At Sheffield hell from beneath seemed moved to meet him at his coming. As he was wont to do, he took his stand out of doors and faced the crowd. In the midst of his sermon a military officer rushed upon him, brandishing a sword, and threatening his life. Wesley faced him, threw open his breast, and bade him do as he liked. The officer cowered.

The preaching house was completely demolished over the heads of the devout worshipers. Wesley says: "It was a glorious time. Many found the Spirit of glory and of God resting upon them." The next day, nothing daunted, he was in the midst of the town, preaching the great salvation. The mob assembled, followed him to his lodgings, smashed in the windows, and threatened to take his life. But while the

mob was howling without like beasts of prey Wesley was so little disturbed that he fell into a quiet slumber.

At Wednesbury an organized mob went to nearly all the Methodist families in town, beating and abusing men, women, and children. They spoiled their wearing apparel and cut open their beds and scattered the contents, leaving whole families houseless and homeless in midwinter and under the peltings of a pitiless storm. The people were informed that if they would sign a paper agreeing never to read or sing or pray together, or hear the Methodists preach again, their houses should not be demolished. A few complied, but the greater number answered, "We have already lost our goods, and nothing more can follow but the loss of our lives, which we will lose also rather than wrong our consciences."

A few days after, Wesley rode boldly into Wednesbury, and in a public park in the center of the town proclaimed to an immense crowd "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to-day, and forever." The mob assembled, arrested him, and dragged him before a magistrate, who inquired, "What have Mr. Wesley and the Methodists done?"

"Why, plaze your worship," cried one, "they sing psalms all day and make folks get up at five o'clock in the morning. Now, what would

your worship advise us to do?" "Go home," replied the magistrate, "and be quiet."

Not satisfied with this, they hurried him off to another magistrate. A few friends followed, but were soon beaten back by a Walsall mob, which rushed upon them like wild beasts. All but four of Wesley's friends were vanquished. These stood by him to the last. One of these was a brave woman whose English blood boiled over. She is said to have knocked down four Walsall men one after another, and would have laid them all sprawling at her feet had not four brawny men seized her and held her while a fifth beat her until they were quite ashamed to be seen—five men beating one woman!

The mob tried to throw Wesley down, that they might trample him under their feet. They struck at him with clubs, and must have nearly killed him had they hit him. They cried, "Knock his brains out!" "Drown him!" "Kill the dog!" "Throw him into the river!" One cried, "Crucify him! crucify him!"

During all this Wesley was calm. It only came into his mind, he says, that if they should throw him into the river it might spoil the papers in his pocket. He finally escaped out of their hands, and, meeting his brother at Nottingham, Charles says that he "*looked like a soldier of Christ*." His clothes were torn to tatters." Subsequently the leader of that mob was converted, and being asked by Charles

Wesley what he thought of his brother, "I think," said he, "that he was a *mon* of God, and God was with him, when so many of us could not kill one *mon*!"

While preaching at Roughlee a drunken rabble assembled, led on by a godless constable. Wesley was arrested and taken before a magistrate. On the way he was struck on the face and head, and clubs were flourished about his person with threats of murder. The justice demanded that he promise not to come to Roughlee again. Wesley answered that he would sooner cut off his head than make such a promise. As he departed from the magistrate the mob followed, cursing him and throwing stones. Wesley was beaten to the earth and forced back into the house. Mr. Mackford, who came with Mr. Wesley from Newcastle, was dragged by the hair of his head, and sustained injuries from which he never fully recovered. Some of the Methodists present were beaten with clubs, others trampled in the mire; one was forced to leap from a rock ten or twelve feet high into the river, and others escaped with their lives under a shower of missiles. The magistrate witnessed all this with apparent satisfaction, without any attempt to stay the murderous tide.

At another place a crowd assembled, arrested a number of Methodists, and dragged them before a magistrate, who inquired, "What hav"

the Methodists done?" "Why, your worship," said one, "these people profess to be better than anybody else. They pray all the time, by day and by night." "Is that all they have done?" asked the magistrate. "No, sir," answered an old man, "may it please your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went with them she had such a tongue! Now she is as quiet as a lamb." "Carry them back, carry them back," said the magistrate, "and let them convert all the scolds in town!" At Bristol the mob cursed and swore and shouted while the preacher declared the Gospel. A Catholic priest in the congregation shouted, "Thou art a hypocrite, a devil, an enemy to the Church."

These are a few examples of what occurred almost daily, and that for many years. At Poole, at Lichfield, at St. Ives, at Grimsby, at Cork, at Wenlock, at Athlone, at Dudley, and at many other places he encountered similar opposition, until the presence of a Methodist preacher was the signal for a mob. Many of the preachers were impressed into the army on the pretense that their occupation was irregular and their lives vagabondish. But wherever they went they were true to God and to the faith as they felt it in their hearts.

The cause of all this opposition was the preaching of justification by faith, entire sanctification, and the urging of clergy and laity to

a holy life. Thomas Olivers tells Richard Hill that the man he had maligned was one who had published a hundred volumes, who had traveled yearly five thousand miles, preached yearly about one thousand sermons, visited as many sick beds as he had preached sermons, and written twice as many letters; and who, though now between seventy and eighty years of age, absolutely refused to abate in the smallest degree these mighty labors; but might be seen at this very time, with his silver locks about his ears, and with a meager, worn-out, skeleton body, smiling at storms and tempests, at such difficulties and dangers as "I believe would be absolutely intolerable to *you*, sir, in conjunction with any *four* of your most flaming ministers."

Such is John Wesley in his persecutions. We who claim to be followers of Wesley, and who glory in the rich fruit of these unexampled labors, sufferings, and sacrifices, might with propriety inquire whether we would be willing to endure such toil and "despise such shame," that we might transmit to the children of a future generation the rich inheritance which we enjoy.

The Church needs such men in these times—genuine reformers, men who will dare to proclaim the whole counsel of God, though for doing so they may be maligned, traduced, misrepresented, and their names even cast out as

evil; men who will lovingly but unflinchingly face the incoming tide of worldliness with the old Wesleyan weapons of faith and prayer until holiness triumphs.

Writing to Alexander Mather, Wesley says: "Give me but one hundred men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will overthrow the kingdom of Satan and build up the kingdom of God upon earth."

## CHAPTER XI.

### WESLEY AND HIS THEOLOGY.

MR. WESLEY was well versed in every phase of the theology of his times. Indeed, he was one of the best-read men of his age. That system of scriptural truth which he formulated has stood the test of the most searching criticism, being bitterly assailed on all sides. His theology has the advantage of having been forged in the hottest fires of controversy which have been witnessed during the last two centuries. And it is not presumption in us to say that it has revolutionized, in some marked features, the religious opinions of orthodox Christendom. This is manifest to all who have carefully observed the drift of religious sentiment.

The Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England seem framed to meet different forms of religious faith, as the seventeenth and thirty-first articles clearly show.

Among the regular clergy were many high-toned Calvinists, and nearly all Dissenters were of the same faith.

In 1770 Wesley's Conference met, and after a long and earnest discussion of the subject

came to the decision that they had "leaned too much toward Calvinism." When the Minutes of this Conference were made public they created great excitement, for it was a blow at the prevailing belief of the times. Three classes rushed to the defense of what they regarded as truth: 1. The Calvinistic Methodists, who had been associated with Wesley, and regarded him as their leader. 2. The Church party, strong and influential. 3. The Dissenters; these were nearly all Calvinists. Between these parties there had been formerly no special sympathy, but they united to antagonize Wesley.

Against all these Wesley stood, as he says, "*Athanasius contra mundum*" ("Athanasius against the world"). With him was associated Rev. John Fletcher, the saintly vicar of Madeley. As a controversialist he was peerless, and as a saintly character modern times have not produced his superior.

The conflict was long and bitter. It was conducted on the one side by Rev. and Hon. Walter Shirley, Hon. Richard Hill, his brother, the famous Rowland Hill, Rev. Mr. Beveridge, and Rev. Augustus Toplady; and on the other side by Mr. Wesley, but mainly by Mr. Fletcher. It was admitted by all fair-minded men that the Damascus blade of the hero of Madeley won in the conflict and was master of the situation. Fletcher's *Checks to*

*Antinomianism* was the result. These have stood for more than a hundred years a bulwark against the baneful errors which they seek to overthrow. These plumed warriors have long since adjusted their dogmatic differences, for harmony is the law of that world in which they live.

We shall proceed to give a brief statement of the fundamental doctrines held and advocated by Mr. Wesley, omitting any merely speculative opinions regarded by him as nonessential:

#### I. THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

While Mr. Wesley had charity for doubters, he held with great firmness *the supreme divinity and Godhead of Christ*. "The Word existed," he says, "without any beginning. He was when all things began to be, whatever had a beginning. He was the Word which the Father begat or spoke from eternity." "The Word was with God, therefore distinct from God the Father. The word rendered *with* denotes a perpetual tendency, as it were, of the Son to the Father in unity of essence. He was with God alone, because nothing beside God had then any being. And the Word was God—supreme, eternal, independent. There was no creature in respect of which he could be styled God in a relative sense. Therefore he is styled so in the absolute sense."\*

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\* *Works*, vol. ii, p. 24.

## II. THE FALL AND CORRUPTION OF MAN.

In regard to the fall and consequent corruption of human nature, Mr. Wesley accepted the faith of the Church of England, which is as follows: "Original, or birth, sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk), but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature is inclined to evil, and that continually." He taught that sin was both *original* and *actual*, sin of the *heart* and sin of the *life*, or *outward* sin and *inward* sin.

Of actual, or outward, sin he says: "Nothing is sin, strictly speaking, but a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Therefore, every voluntary breach of the law of love is sin, and nothing else, if we speak properly." Speaking of a believer being freed from the actual commission of sin, he says: "I understand this of 'inward sin,' any sinful temper, passion, or affection, such as pride, self-will, love of the world." Mr. Wesley's views on this subject cannot be harmonized, except we admit his definition of sin—sin as an *outward* act, expressed by the voluntary commission of sin; and sin as a *state* or *condition* of the heart, expressed by the text, "All unrighteousness is sin."

Mr. Wesley's view of sin is no Unitarian view, but sin in all its destructive effects upon the human heart, holding it in its "unwilling grasp;" the soul "drinking in iniquity like water;" the "soul dead in trespasses and sin," and being "dragged at sin's chariot wheels," until in utter despair he cries, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?" At this point there comes deliverance to the soul.

### III. GENERAL OR UNIVERSAL REDEMPTION.

By this Mr. Wesley meant that the atonement was for each member of the human family, except when rejected by voluntary choice. As a consequence of this doctrine of general redemption he lays down two axioms, of which he never loses sight in his preaching. Says Mr. Fletcher: 1. "All our salvation is of God in Christ, and therefore of *grace*; all opportunities, inclinations, and power to believe, being bestowed upon us of mere grace—grace most absolutely free." 2. "He asserted with equal confidence that, according to the Gospel dispensation, all our damnation is of ourself, by our obstinate unbelief and avoidable unfaithfulness, as we may neglect so great salvation." These points he made clear from the Word of God.

It must be admitted that Calvinism has greatly changed in the last hundred years, both in Europe and America. We doubt if

any can be found who would attempt, in these times, to defend the doctrine which Messrs. Shirley, Hill, and Toplady attempted to defend in Wesley's time. Mr. Toplady said: "Whatever comes to pass, comes to pass by virtue of the absolute, omnipotent will of God, which is the primary and supreme cause of all things." "If so, it may be objected," he says, "that whatever is, is right. Consequences cannot be helped." "Whatever a man does," he says, "he does necessarily, though not with any sensible compulsion; and that we can only do what God, from eternity, willed and foreknew we should." Surely, this does not differ from "whatsoever is, is right."

The doctrine of foreknowledge, with Mr. Toplady, included the doctrine of election and decrees. He said: "As God does not will that each individual of mankind should be saved, so neither did he will that Christ should properly and immediately die for each individual of mankind; whence it follows that, though the blood of Christ, from its intrinsic dignity, was sufficient for the redemption of all men, yet, in consequence of his Father's appointment, he shed it intentionally, and therefore effectually and immediately, for the elect only."

Mr. Wesley said, in reply to these strange utterances, that their doctrine represented Christ "as a hypocrite, a deceiver of the people,

a man void of common sincerity; for it cannot be denied that he everywhere speaks as if he was willing that all men should be saved—provided the possibility. Therefore, to say that he was not willing that all men should be saved—that he had provided no such possibility—is to represent him as a hypocrite and deceiver.” “You cannot deny,” says Wesley, “that he says, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ If you say unto me, He calls those that cannot come, those whom he knows to be unable to come, those whom he can make able to come, but will not, how is it possible to describe greater insincerity? You represent him as mocking his helpless creatures by offering what he never intended to give. You describe him as saying one thing and meaning another—as pretending a love which he had not. Him, in whose mouth was no guile, you make full of deceit, void of common sincerity.”

In this manner the conflict went on until the theology of the ages, on this subject, has been revolutionized.

The Wesleyan doctrine of foreknowledge and free agency may be stated in a few words. It is, in substance, as follows:

1. The freedom of a moral agent is freedom to follow his own choice, where he is held responsible for his conduct.

2. The forcknowledge of God is a divine perception of what that agent will choose to do in a given case of responsibility. In this there is no conflict between freedom and foreknowledge.

We admit that God saw sin as a certainty, but that perception did not make sin a certainty. The freedom of the agent does not destroy the knowledge of God, nor does the knowledge of God destroy the freedom of the agent. God's knowledge of the certainty does not cause the certainty. His knowledge of what an agent will choose to do depends on the certainty that he will do it, and until the certainty exists God cannot know it, as neither God nor man can know anything where there is nothing to know. The knowledge may follow after, go before, or accompany an event, but gives no existence or character to the event, any more than a light shining around a rock gives character or existence to the rock.

#### IV. THE NEW BIRTH.

The new birth, according to Wesley, includes pardon, justification, regeneration, and adoption. These are coetaneous—received at one and the same time. But they are always preceded by conviction of sin, repentance, and submission to God by faith.

Mr. Wesley says that whosoever is justified is born again, and whosoever is born again is

justified, that "both these gifts of God are given to every believer at one and the same moment. In one point of time his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God."

Mr. Wesley taught that the new birth put an end to the voluntary commission of sin. This change is really a "new creation;" it removes the "love of sin," so that "he that is born of God does not commit sin." Sin, though it may and does *exist*, does not reign in him who is born of God. It has no longer dominion, though it may have a being, in his heart, requiring a still further work of grace. This wonderful change is effected by faith in the atoning sacrifice. It must be by faith alone. And such a doctrine is very full of comfort.

#### V. THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

This doctrine, as well as justification by faith, was strongly contested in Wesley's time, and the contest has not fully subsided. Many argue that there is no *direct* witness of the Spirit except what comes through the *Word*, and hence is an inference, which we draw by a process of reasoning. The Word of God, it is claimed, gives us certain marks of the new birth. We recognize such internal evidence, hence we infer that we are justified, or born again. This is Wesley's *indirect* witness, or the witness of our own spirit. But he claimed that God, by his own Spirit, gives us a *direct*

witness; that the "Spirit of God witnesses with *our* spirit that we are the children of God." And here is his incomparable definition of this soul-cheering truth: "By the witness of the Spirit I mean an inward impression of the soul, whereby the Spirit of God immediately and directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me and given himself for me; that all my sins have been blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

Twenty years later, speaking of this definition, he said: "I see no cause to retract any of these suggestions. Neither do I conceive how any of those expressions may be altered so as to make them more intelligible."

This constitutes the *direct* witness of the Spirit.

The *indirect* witness, or the witness of our own spirit, including the fruit of the Spirit, is subsequent to this direct witness. The one is the tree, and the other its fruit.

#### VI. FINAL PERSEVERANCE OF THE SAINTS.

While Calvinism has modified its faith in regard to many things, it still adheres to its original belief in this dogma. It is stated in these words in their Confession of Faith: "They whom God has accepted in his beloved, effectually called, sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from the

state of grace, but shall certainly persevere to the end, and be eternally saved." It is further declared that "this perseverance of the saints depends not upon their own will, but upon the immutability of the decree of election," etc. They say, also, that "the perseverance of the saints is one of the Articles by which the creed of the followers of Calvin is distinguished from that of Arminius."

Mr. Wesley as well as Mr. Fletcher opposed this doctrine. They declared with all the force of scriptural authority that "if the righteous turn away from his righteousness and commit iniquity, his righteousness shall no longer be remembered, but for his iniquity that he hath committed he shall die for it." They insisted that if "every branch in Christ that did not bear fruit was to be cut off and cast into the fire and burned," the apostasy of a believer may be final. They insisted that "if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," etc.; that we might so far backslide as that another "might take our crown." They went everywhere declaring that the only safeguard against final apostasy was to be "faithful unto death."

VII. ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION OR CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

Mr. Wesley declared that this was "the grand depositum which God had lodged with the people called Methodists, and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appears to have raised them up." His opponents charged him with preaching perfection. They said, derisively, "This is Mr. Wesley's doctrine! He preaches perfection!" "He does," responds Wesley, "yet this is not *his* doctrine any more than it is yours, or anyone's else that is a minister of Christ. For it is his doctrine, peculiarly, emphatically his; it is the doctrine of Jesus Christ. These are his words, not mine: 'Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.' And who says ye shall not; or, at least, not till your soul is separated from your body?"

It is true Wesley used the term "perfection," but it was not the only word he used to set forth this truth, but such terms as "perfect love," "full salvation," "full sanctification," "the whole image of God," "second change," "clean heart," "pure heart," "loving God with all the heart," etc. He says: "I have no particular fondness for the term perfection. It seldom occurs in my preaching or writing. It is my opponents who thrust it upon me continually, and ask what I mean by it. I do not

build any doctrine thereupon, nor undertake critically to explain it." "What is the meaning of perfection? is another question. That it is a scriptural term is undeniable; therefore none ought to object to the term, whatever they may as to this or that explication of it." "But I still think that perfection is only another term for holiness, or the image of God in man. 'God made man perfect,' I think, is just the same as 'He made him holy,' or 'in his own image.'"

It does not come within our plan or purpose to give a detailed exposition of Christian perfection, but simply to call the reader's attention to the truth as the central doctrine in Mr. Wesley's system of religious faith. With him it was deliverance from *inbred*, as well as *actual*, sin. It was not sin *repressed*, but sin exterminated, deliverance from sin. His standing definition was the following: "Sanctification, in a proper sense, is an instantaneous deliverance from all sin, and includes an instantancous power, then given, always to cleave to God. Yet this sanctification does not include a power never to think a useless thought, nor ever speak a useless word. I myself believe that such a perfection is inconsistent with living in a corruptible body; for this makes it impossible always to think aright. While we breathe we shall more or less mistake. If, therefore, Christian perfection includes this, we must not expect it until after death." He

says again that "the perfection he believes in is 'love dwelling alone in the heart.'" It is "deliverance from evil desires and evil tempers" as well as from "evil words and works." "I want you to be all love. This is the perfection I believe and teach. And this perfection is consistent with a thousand nervous disorders, which that high-strained perfection is not. Indeed, my judgment is (in this case particularly) to overdo is to undo; and that to set perfection too high (so high as no man that we ever heard or read of attained) is the most effectual (because unsuspected) way of driving it out of the world."\* "Nor did I ever say or mean any more by perfection than the loving God with all our heart, and serving him with all our strength; for it might be attended with worse consequences than you seem to be aware of. If there be a mistake, it is far more dangerous on the one side than on the other. If I set the mark too high, I drive men into needless fears; if you set it too low, you drive them into hell fire."†

It is not for us to defend these views, but simply to record them, as the theological faith of the founder of Methodism, and that which the Methodist Church in all the world has professed to believe and teach.

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\* *Works*, vol. vi, p. 718.

† *Ibid.*, p. 525.

## VIII. THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

Mr. Wesley taught the doctrine of the general resurrection of the human body. "The plain notion of a resurrection," he says, "requires that the selfsame body that died should rise again. Nothing can be said to be raised again but that body that died. If God gives to our souls a new body, this cannot be called a resurrection of the body, because the word plainly implies the fresh production of what was before."\*

While he holds that the same body is to be raised, it is not a *natural*, but a *spiritual*, body. "It is sown in this world a merely *animal body*—maintained by food, sleep, and air, like the body of brutes. But it is raised of a more refined contexture, needing none of these animal refreshments, and endued with qualities of a spiritual nature like the angels of God." "We must be entirely changed, for such flesh and blood as we are clothed with now cannot enter into that kingdom which is wholly *spiritual*."† He speaks of the *place* from which the dead rise as evidence of its being the same body that died (John v, 28). "The hour is coming when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice and shall come forth." "Now, if the same body do not rise again, what need is there of opening the graves

\* *Sermons*, vol. ii, p. 50.† Wesley's *Notes* on 1 Cor. 15.

at the end of the world?" The graves can give up no bodies but those which were laid in them. If we were not to rise with the very same bodies that died, then they might rest forever.

Mr. Wesley taught, in harmony with the Scriptures, the doctrine of

#### IX. GENERAL JUDGMENT.

This, Mr. Wesley claimed, would take place at the *second coming of Christ*, at the end of the world, "when the Son of man shall come in his glory." "The dead of all nations will be gathered before him." This he calls "the day of the Lord, the space from the creation of men upon the earth to the end of all things;" "the days of the sons of men, the time that is now passing over us. When this is ended the day of the Lord begins." "The time when we are to give this account" is at the second advent, "when the great white throne comes down from heaven, and he who sitteth thereon, from whose face the heavens and earth shall flee away." It is "then the dead, small and great, stand before God, and the books will be opened." "Before all these the whole human race shall appear," etc.\*

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\* *Works*, vol. 1, p. 454.

X. ETERNAL REWARD AND PUNISHMENT.

Mr. Wesley taught that men would be both punished and rewarded at the judgment, and that both reward and punishment would be eternal. "Either the punishment is strictly eternal, or the reward is not, the very same expression being applied to the former as to the latter. It is not only particularly observable here (1) that the punishment lasts as long as the reward, but (2) that this punishment is so far from ceasing at the end of the world that it does not begin till then."\* "The rewards will never come to an end unless God comes to an end and his truth fail. The wicked, meantime, shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."

These are the doctrines of universal Methodism, as expressed in its creed. Methodism accepts the doctrines inculcated by John Wesley.

Our space does not allow us to do more than to state these doctrines in the briefest form. Wherever they are faithfully preached they become effectual to the saving of men. It is hoped that Methodism will abide by its doctrinal *creed*, for by it all its victories have been achieved.

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\* Notes on Matt. 25. 41.

## CHAPTER XII.

### WESLEY AS A MAN.

WE are always more or less curious about the personal appearance of a distinguished character—the eye, the voice, the gesture, etc.

We are told that Mr. Wesley's figure was, in all respects, remarkable. He was low of stature, with habit of body almost the reverse of corpulent, indicative of strict temperance and continual exercise. His step was firm, and his appearance vigorous and masculine; his face, even in old age, is described as remarkably fine—clear, smooth, with an aquiline nose, the brightest and most piercing eye that could be conceived, and a freshness of complexion rarely found in a man of his years, giving to him a venerable and interesting appearance. In him cheerfulness was mingled with gravity, sprightliness with serene tranquillity. His countenance at times, especially while preaching, produced a lasting impression upon the hearers. They were not able to dispossess themselves of his striking expression.

While preaching at Langhamrow a young man who was full of hilarity and mirth had,

on his way to church, kept saying to his companions, with an air of carelessness, "This fine Mr. Wesley I shall hear, and get converted." He did hear him, but he had never gazed upon such a countenance before. It put him in a more serious frame of mind, and for a long time, day and night, whether at home or abroad, that wonderful countenance was before him so full of solemnity and benignity. It was the means of his conversion, and he became a worthy church member and useful class leader.

In dress Mr. Wesley was the pattern of neatness and simplicity, wearing a narrow plaited stock, and coat with small upright collar, with no silk or velvet on any part of his apparel. This, added to a head as white as snow, gave to the beholder an idea of something primitive and apostolic.

The following description of him is given by one who, though not a Methodist, could properly appreciate true greatness: "Very lately I had an opportunity for some days together to observe Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavored to consider him not so much with the eye of a friend as with the impartiality of a philosopher. I must declare every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed

how fully he enjoyed the remembrance of a life well spent. Wherever he was he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanor, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety."

In social life Mr. Wesley was a finished Christian gentleman, and this was seen in the perfect ease with which he accommodated himself to both high and low, rich and poor. He was placid, benevolent, full of rich anecdotes, wit, and wisdom. In all these his conversation was not often equaled. He was never trifling, but always cheerful. Such interviews were always concluded by a verse or two of some hymn, adapted to what had been said, and prayer.

There was no evidence of *fret*. He used to say, "I dare no more fret than curse or swear." "His sprightliness among his friends never left him, and was as conspicuous at eighty-seven as at seventeen." He was at home everywhere, in the mansion or in the cottage, and was equally courteous to all. The young drew to him and he to them. "I reverence the young," he said, "because they may be useful after I am dead." Bradburn, one of his most intimate friends, said: "His modesty prevented him saying much concerning his own religious feelings. In public he hardly ever spoke of the

state of his own soul; but in 1781 he told me that his experience might, almost at any time, be expressed in the following lines:

"O Thou who camest from above,  
The pure celestial fire to impart,  
Kindle a flame of sacred love  
On the mean altar of my heart.

"There let it for thy glory burn,  
With inextinguishable blaze;  
And trembling to its source return,  
With humble prayer and fervent praise."

This may not be sufficiently definite for some, but it is quite as much so as genuine Christian modesty would approve. But it is evident that he always possessed the "pure, celestial fire," and that its "inextinguishable blaze" bore him on to deeds of heroic daring unparalleled in modern times.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### WESLEY AS A PREACHER.

MR. WESLEY, it has been said, "was no stormy and dramatic Luther. He was no Cromwell, putting his enemies to the sword in the name of the Lord. He was no Knox, tearing down churches to get rid of their members. He was no Calvin; he did not burn anybody for disagreeing with him."

Mr. Wesley was styled "the mover of men's consciences." His preaching was simple—a child could easily understand him. There were no far-fetched terms, no soaring among the clouds. All was simple, artless, and clear. He declares that he could no more preach a fine sermon than he could wear a fine coat.

George Whitefield was regarded as the prince of modern eloquence. Dr. Franklin (no mean judge) accorded him this rank. Charles Wesley was but little inferior to Whitefield as a pulpit orator; while Fletcher was not inferior to either. Mr. Wesley regarded him as superior to Whitefield. "He had," says Wesley, "a more striking person, equally good breeding, and winning address; together with a rich flow of fancy, a strong understanding, and a far greater treasure of learning both in language, philosophy, philology, and divinity, and above all (which I can speak with greater assurance,

because I had a thorough knowledge both of one and the other), a more deep and constant communion with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ."

These were mighty men. The multitudes that listened to them were swayed by their eloquence and power as is the forest by a rushing, mighty wind. Their earnest appeals drew floods of tears from eyes unaccustomed to weep.

We are not informed that Mr. Wesley often wept while preaching, and yet no such effects were produced by Whitefield's preaching as were witnessed under Wesley's. Mr. Southey admits that the sermons of Wesley were attended with greater and more lasting effect than were the sermons of Whitefield. Men fell under his words like soldiers slain in battle. While he was calm, collected, deliberate, and logical, he was more powerful in moving the sensibilities as well as the understanding of his hearers than any other man in England. Marvelous were the physical effects produced by his preaching.

We are told that "his attitude in the pulpit was graceful and easy; his action calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive," and his command over an audience was very remarkable. He always faced the mob, and was generally victorious at such times. In the midst of a mob he says: "I called for a chair; the

winds were hushed, and all was calm and still; my heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every word." There must have been, in such preaching, that which seldom falls to our lot to hear. Beattie once heard him preach at Aberdeen one of his ordinary sermons. He remarked that "it was not a masterly sermon, yet none but a master could have preached it."

The account of Wesley preaching at Epworth on his father's tombstone is inspiring. He was refused the church where his honored father had preached thirty-nine years, and for three successive nights he stood upon his father's tombstone and preached to a large company of people. "A living son," says Tyerman, "preaching on his dead father's grave, because the parish priest refused to allow him to officiate in the dead father's church." "I am well persuaded," said Wesley, "that I did more good to my Lincolnshire parishioners by preaching three days on my father's tomb than I did by preaching three years in his pulpit." During the preaching of these sermons, it is said, the people wept aloud on every side, and Wesley's voice at times was drowned by the cries of penitents, and many in that old churchyard found peace with God. On another evening many dropped as dead

men under the word. A clergyman who heard Wesley preach on that occasion, in writing to him, said: "Your presence created an awe, as if you were an inhabitant of another world."

Who remembers the name of Rector Romley, that ecclesiastical pretender who arrogated to himself such authority? His name has long since passed into comparative oblivion, while that of Wesley, whom he despised, shines as a star of the first magnitude, and shall shine on until the heavens shall pass away. A few years later Romley lost his voice, became a drunkard, then a lunatic, and thus died.

A late writer, not a Methodist, gives a glowing description of Wesley and his conflicts:

He was the peer, in intellectual endowments, of any literary character of that most literary period. No gownsmen of the university, no lawned and mitred prelate of his time, was intellectually the superior of this Itinerant Methodist—a bishop more truly than the Archbishop of Canterbury himself in everything but the empty name. The hosts of literary pamphleteers and controversialists that rained their attacks upon his system, in showers, were made to feel the keenness of his logic and the staggering weight of his responsive blows. It is a fine sight to look upon, from this distance, that of this single modest man, an unpretentious knight of true religion and consecrated learning, beset for forty years by scores, yes, hundreds, of assailants, armed in all the ostentation of churchly dignity, shooting at him their arrows of tracts and sermons; newspaper writers pouring upon him their ceaseless squibs; malicious critics assailing his motives and

his methods with innuendoes and false suggestions; ponderous professors tilting at him with their heavier lances of books and stately treatises; and he, alone, giving more than thrust for thrust, and his brother Charles furnishing the inspiring accompaniment of martial music until one man had chased a thousand, and two have put ten thousand to flight.\*

Speaking of the physical effects produced by Mr. Wesley's preaching, the same writer says:

Wealey is in Briatol for nine months—such a nine months Briatol never saw before. No! nor England, nor the world since the day of Pentecost. Wealey's notions of propriety were destined to be still further shocked. Among the multitudes that thronged around him strange physical demonstrations began to appear. They shocked even Whitefield when he heard of them, and he remonstrated with Wealey for seeming to permit or encourage them. Men were smitten by his words as a field of standing corn by a tempest. Intense physical agony prostrated them upon the ground. They stood trembling, with fixed eyeballs staring as though they were looking into eternal horror. Some, who seemed utterly incapable of anything like enthusiasm, were struck as dead. Others beat their breasts and begged for forgiveness for their sins. Others were actually torn and maimed in unconscious convulsions. The story of the demoniac in the gospels was, to all appearances, realized over and over.

And again, under his assurance of full forgiveness and free salvation, the storm would give way to a calm, and these same persons would be at peace, clothed and in their right minds. Wealey was helpless; never was more honest and straightforward in generous work. He was himself amazed, almost terrified; but, "I have come to the conclusion," he says, "that we must all suffer God to carry on his own work in the way that pleaseth him. I am not anxious to account for this." Wesley's attitude was

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\* *Some Heretics of Yesterday*, p. 300.

the right one. Wesley was preaching to men and women who were densely ignorant, in many cases, of the nature of sin, and of the story of God's redemptive mercy. His words to them were as truly the opening of an apocalypse as when John saw the vision of his Lord, and "fell at his feet as dead."

No wonder such signal effects moved England, Ireland, and Scotland, and, in many instances, America.

The venerable Rev. Thomas Jackson says: "No man was accustomed to address larger multitudes or with greater success, and it may be fairly questioned whether any minister in modern ages has been instrumental in effecting a greater number of conversions. He possessed all the essential elements of a great preacher, and in nothing was he inferior to his eminent friend and contemporary, George Whitefield, except in voice and manner. In respect of matter, language, and arrangement, his sermons were vastly superior to those of Mr. Whitefield. Those who judge Wesley's ministry from the sermons which he preached and published in the decline of life greatly mistake his real character. Till he was enfeebled by age his discourses were not at all remarkable for their brevity. They were often extended to a considerable length. Wesley the preacher was tethered by no lines of written preparation and verbal recollection; he spoke with extraordinary power of utterance out of the fullness of his heart."

Dr. Rigg says: "In regard to Wesley in his early Oxford days, calm, serene, methodical as Wesley was, there was a deep, steadfast fire of earnest purpose about him; and notwithstanding the smallness of his stature there was an elevation of character and of bearing visible to all with whom he had intercourse, which gave him a wonderful power of command, however quiet were his words, and however placid his deportment. But the extraordinary power of his preaching, while it owed something, no doubt, to this tone and presence of calm, unconscious authority, was due mainly, essentially, to the searching and importunate closeness and fidelity with which he dealt with the consciences of his hearers, and the passionate vehemence with which he urged and entreated them to turn to Christ and be saved. His words went with a sudden and startling shock straight home into the core of the guilty sinner's consciousness and heart."

Dr. Abel Stevens says: "As a preacher he remains a problem to us. It is at least difficult to explain, at this late day, the secret of his great power in the pulpit. Aside from the divine influence which is pledged to all faithful ministers, there must have been some peculiar power in his address which the records of the times have failed to describe; his action was calm and natural, yet pleasing and expressive; his voice not loud, but clear, agree-

able, and masculine; his style neat and perspicuous."

Cowper says he

"Could fetch the records from earlier age,  
Or from philosophy's enlightened page  
His rich materials, and regale your ear  
With strains it was a privilege to hear.  
Yet, above all, his luxury supreme,  
And his chief glory, was the Gospel theme:  
There he was copious as old Greece or Rome,  
His happy eloquence seemed there at home;  
Ambitious not to shine or to excel,  
But to treat justly what he loved so well."

Dr. Rigg says: "In his more intense utterances logic and passion were fused into a white heat of mingled argument, denunciation, and appeal, often of the most personal searchingness, often overwhelming in its vehement home thrusts."

Dr. Whitehead says: "Wesley's style was marked with brevity and perspicuity. He never lost sight of the rule laid down by Horace:  
'Concise your diction, let your sense be clear,  
Not with a weight of words fatigue the ear.'

His words were pure, proper to the subject, and precise in their meaning."

Mr. Wesley studied human character, and sought to adapt his preaching to the masses. One day he was passing Billingsgate market, with Bradford, while two of the women were quarreling furiously. His companion urged him to pass on, but Wesley replied, "Stay, Sammy, stay and learn how to preach."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### WESLEY AS A REFORMER.

#### SLAVERY.

THOSE moral reforms which have shaken the nations and in some cases revolutionized governments were scarcely known in the days of Wesley. He saw the coming storm and blew a trumpet-blast which gave no uncertain sound. In some of these reforms he was a hundred years in advance of his time.

Slavery, in Wesley's time, was strongly supported by the English government. She had enriched herself from the African slave trade. Her great maritime cities were built on the bones, sinews, and flesh, cemented by the blood, of oppressed bondmen. To oppose slavery was to oppose the government. Wesley met this gigantic evil with Christian courage. What was true of England was also true of her colonies. He united with Sharp, Clarkson, Wilberforce, and others to oppose the evil. He represented the slave trade as "that execrable sum of all villainies, commonly called the slave trade." American slavery he declared was "the vilest that ever saw the sun." No addresses delivered on the subject, during the



WESLEY'S TEA-POT.



WESLEY'S BIBLE AND CASE.



days of the greatest antislavery excitement, exceeded in severity those which fell from the lips and were produced by the pen of John Wesley. His *Thoughts on Slavery* was the keynote of the movement.

Wesley's last letter, written only four days before his death, was addressed to Wilberforce, urging him to persevere in the work. It is as follows:

LONDON, February 26, 1791.

DEAR SIR: Unless the divine Power has raised you up to be an *Athanasius contra mundum* (Athanasius against the world), I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils. But "if God be for you, who can be against you?" Are all of them together stronger than God? O, "be not weary in well-doing." Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery (the vilest that ever saw the sun) shall vanish away before it.

Reading this morning a tract written by a poor African, I was particularly struck by this circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress; it being a law, in all our colonies, that the oath of a black against a white goes for nothing. What villainy is this!

That He who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things is the prayer, dear sir, of

Your affectionate servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

He represents the slave trade as exceeding in barbarity whatever Christian slaves suffered in Mohammedan countries.

Whitefield's letter to Wesley, in 1751, is a clear defense of slavery in the colonies. He quotes Abraham, who had slaves "bought with his money" and "born in his house." The same argument was employed in later years. Whitefield added to his approval of the slave trade the fact that he became himself a slaveholder. At the time of his death, in 1770, he was the owner of seventy-five slaves, who were connected with his Orphan House plantation, near Savannah, Ga. It is not surprising that God should have swept the whole concern, by fire and flood, from the face of the earth.

"Let it be noted," says Mr. Tyerman, "that besides all his other honors John Wesley, the poor, persecuted Methodist, was one of the first advocates on behalf of the enthralled African that England had, and that, sixty years before slavery was abolished in the dominions of Great Britain, he denounced the thing in the strongest terms it was possible to employ." Mr. Wesley's *Thoughts on Slavery*, an octavo of fifty-three pages, issued in 1774, did more to awaken England to the horrors of the African slave trade than any other work on the subject. The writer says, "No more severe arraignment of slavery than this was ever written." This American scourge,

through the influence of Wesley's early American preachers, who caught their inspiration from his *Thoughts*, felt the force of his burning words until that form of slavery, which he declared to be "the vilest that ever saw the sun," was a thing of the past. For two hundred and more years it drifted down, gradually, like other forms of barbarism, into the clear light of a better civilization, to be finally put to death by the Gospel of Methodism. It is true that *Uncle Tom's Cabin* did much, but Wesley's *Thoughts* prepared the way for this wonderful book. Mr. Wesley must ever be known as the man through whose influence slavery found a grave, from which Heaven forbid it should ever have a resurrection!

#### TEMPERANCE.

In regard to the temperance reform Mr. Wesley was as fully pronounced as on the subject of slavery. Liquor drinking was practiced by all classes, from the archbishop to the meanest street scavenger. Ministers by the hundred drank to intoxication, and in their drunken sprees would head mobs in their assaults on Wesley and his helpers. Wesley thundered away at liquor selling and drinking like a modern prohibitionist. Take the following from one of his sermons as an example:

Neither may we gain by hurting our neighbor in his body. Therefore we may not sell anything which

tends to impair his health. Such is eminently all that liquid fire called drams of spirituous liquors. It is true they may have a place in medicine—may be used in some bodily disorders—although there would rarely be occasion for them were it not for the unskillfulness of the practitioner. Therefore such as prepare and sell them only for this end may keep their conscience clean. But who are they who prepare and sell them only for this end? Do you know ten distillers in England? Then excuse these. But all who sell them in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners in general. They murder his majesty's subjects by wholesale; neither do their eyes pity or spare. They drive them to hell like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men? Who, then, would enjoy their large estate and sumptuous palaces? A curse is in the midst of them. A curse cleaves to the stones, the timbers, the furniture of them. The curse of God is in their gardens, their walks, their groves; a fire that burns to the nethermost hell! Blood, blood, is there! The foundation, the walls, the roof, are stained with blood! And canst thou hope, O man of blood, though thou art "clothed in scarlet and fine linen, and farest sumptuously every day"—canst thou hope to deliver thy fields of blood to the third generation? Not so! There is a God in heaven; therefore thy name shall be blotted out. Like as those whom thou hast destroyed, body and soul, thy memory shall perish with thee.\*

\* He introduced into his Discipline a rule prohibiting the "buying or selling of spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity." He went for "prohibiting forever, making a full end of that bane of

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\* Wesley's *Works*, vol. 1, p. 344.

health, that destroyer of strength, of life, and virtue—distilling." These are his own words. He was a prohibitionist in principle, and in this respect was in advance of many would-be temperance men of these times. To one of his preachers he says: "Touch no dram. It is a liquid fire. It is a sure, though slow, poison. It saps the very spring of life."

## TOBACCO.

Mr. Wesley sought a reformation on the tobacco question. He believed that the use of the weed was unchristian. He exhorts his people: "Use no tobacco. It is an uncleanly and unwholesome self-indulgence; and the more customary it is the more resolutely should you break off from every degree of that evil custom. Let Christians be in this bondage no longer. Assert your liberty, and that all at once; nothing will be done by degrees."\*

Such were the teachings of John Wesley on these subjects—teachings which we regard as very remarkable for those times, and fully up to the present.

## JOHN WESLEY AND JOHN HOWARD MEET.

In 1787 Mr. Wesley met John Howard, the father of prison reform. He says: "I had the pleasure of a conversation with Mr. Howard, I think one of the greatest men in Europe."

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\* *Works*, vol. vi, p. 746.

Nothing but the almighty power of God can enable him to go through his difficult and dangerous employment. But what can harm us if God be on our side?" He says again: "God has raised him up to be a blessing to mankind."

#### FEMALE PREACHERS.

It is true that Wesley did not believe that female preaching was authorized by the New Testament, except under extraordinary circumstances. He tells Sarah Crosby that he thinks her case rests on her having an "extraordinary call." He was persuaded, also, that every local preacher had a similar call. If it were not so, he could not countenance their preaching at all. "Therefore I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation;' yet in extraordinary cases he makes a few exceptions, at Corinth in particular."

Mrs. Crosby said: "My soul was much comforted in speaking to the people, as the Lord has removed all my scruples respecting the propriety of my acting thus publicly."

"I think you have not gone too far," said Wesley, though she had preached to hundreds. "You could not well do less. All you can do more is, when you meet again tell them simply:

'You lay me under a great difficulty. The Methodists do not allow of women preachers; neither do I take upon me any such character. But I will just nakedly tell you what is in my heart.' I do not see that you have broken any law. Go on, calmly and steadily." She obeyed, and went on till death. Others followed in the footsteps of Sarah Crosby. Mrs. Fletcher preached, and Hester Ann Rogers really did the same.

It is true that female preaching was never sanctioned by the Wesleyan Conference, but it was substantially practiced to the end of Wesley's life. He broke the bands which had bound women, and which in many Churches bind them still, and allowed her to be a public advocate of spiritual religion—to tell what great things God had done for the soul.

Speaking of Susannah Wesley, a recent writer of the Congregational Church says: "The Methodist Church owes its system of doctrine quite as much, I think, to Susannah Wesley as to her illustrious son. To the instruction of a woman she added the logic of a gownsman and the love of a saint. Fincr letters were never written. It is not to be wondered at that Methodists have been pioneers in the enfranchisement of female speech, that they have believed in it and practiced it from the first. They would have disgraced their origin otherwise."

It will be seen that Methodism has inaugurated, really, all the great moral reforms of the last hundred and fifty years. The great missionary movement, which has sent evangelistic agencies into all the earth, had little or no life when Methodism was born. Since that time, what hath God wrought!

## CHAPTER XV.

### WESLEY AND AMERICAN METHODISM PRIOR TO 1766.

THE real advent of Methodism into America is a subject demanding special consideration. It has been generally supposed that its first introduction was in 1766 by Barbara Heck and Philip Embury, who inaugurated religious services at that time in the city of New York. But it has always seemed to us that Methodism was introduced much earlier.

There had been no less than five members of the "Holy Club"—the Oxford Methodists' fraternity—preaching in America prior to 1766, namely, John and Charles Wesley, Benjamin Ingham, Charles Delamot, and George Whitefield. Whatever may be said of the four former, it is certain that George Whitefield was here, from 1740, preaching as a flaming Methodist evangelist from Maine to Georgia. These men all accepted Wesley as their leader, and looked to him for counsel.

Mr. Whitefield's first visit to America was undertaken with the express purpose of assisting Wesley in his great work. But Wesley had left the field before he arrived. George

Whitefield was an Oxford Methodist, a member of the Holy Club, and possessed an undying love for Wesley. He was known in Georgia, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, and New England as a Methodist, and until, in after years, he drew away from Wesley for a time, on some doctrinal question, he was in fullest accord with him. Whatever he did in America during his first and second visits was done as a Methodist. It must be confessed that Whitefield did a marvelous work in all parts of the country years prior to 1766. He was known in New England as a Methodist, and the first Methodist chapel ever erected in this land was built in Boston, the land of the Pilgrims. Charles Wesley stopped in Boston several weeks, on his way from Georgia to England, and preached several times in Dr. Cutler's Church on Salem Street, known as Christ Church, and also in King's Chapel. He also was known as an Oxford Methodist. When Whitefield first entered New England he had not separated from Wesley. He had been to England since his first visit, and had been led, like the Wesleys, into the experience of salvation. He at once entered into their labors, and had inaugurated outdoor preaching at Bristol. It was not until he had visited New England a second, perhaps a third, time, and had adopted the views of Calvin as held by New England divines, that he drew away

for a time from Wesley. In Pennsylvania, in New Jersey, and in New York God wrought wonders by this flaming Methodist evangelist.

The Puritans, who first settled New England, held orthodox views on the subject of justification by faith and regeneration by the Holy Spirit. This was their faith for more than half a century. But when they began to decline, legal forms were substituted for spiritual power. The "halfway covenant," as it was called, was introduced, and under it persons became members of the Church without conversion, and it was not even deemed an essential qualification for a minister of the Gospel that he be converted. The Church and State were united, and the courts by legal enactments compelled every man, no matter what his religious faith, to sustain a Church whose creed he did not believe. The same state of things existed in Virginia, where Episcopal rule obtained. The whole land seemed a "valley of dry bones." There was one light in New England. In the obscure town of Northampton Jonathan Edwards was preaching with marvelous effect, and his influence was felt all along the valley of the Connecticut; but it had not reached Boston. There was one man in Boston who waited for the salvation of Israel—Rev. Benjamin Coleman, pastor of Brattle Street Church. He had heard of the work in Northampton, and

also of Whitefield, the youthful evangelist in the South, and longed to witness the like in Boston before he went hence, for he was now seventy years of age. He wrote to Whitefield at Savannah; the latter, anxious to visit the land of the Pilgrims, came in the demonstration of the Spirit, and such a revival as attended his ministry New England had never witnessed. A writer of some note gives the following description of his coming: "At the close of a beautiful autumn day, in 1740, Whitefield had arrived within full view of the city of Boston. Its spires were gleaming in the rays of the setting sun. Its neat, white dwellings were reflected from the mirror surface of the quiet waters, which nearly surrounded the whole site. Its attendant villages loomed up around the whole horizon. Withdrawing his eyes from the first glance at the city, which lay in full view from the hill on which he stood, he looked down the road before him, and saw a multitude of people—officers of the government, ministers of the Gospel, citizens, ladies, and children—who had all come forth to meet the accomplished stranger, and conduct him, amidst smiles and blessings, to the city. It must have been an interesting hour to the youthful hero of the cross. Three thousand miles from his native land, among entire strangers, he was welcomed to the renowned city of the Puritans

with demonstrations of honor which Alexander, or Cæsar, or Napoleon might have coveted. He was coming among them, not the gray-haired veteran hero of a thousand battles, not the brave warrior from the fields of victory, not the monarch with patronage and power in his hand, but the sincere-hearted, pure-minded, and eloquent-tongued Methodist missionary, who had drank from the pure fountain of evangelical truth, and had now come to lead the thirsty Pilgrims of New England to the garden of the Lord,

“ ‘Where living waters gently pass,  
And full salvation flows.’ ”

It must be remembered that this most remarkable man was but twenty-six years old, and yet England and America had been thrilled by the power of his unexampled eloquence.

The next day he preached in Brattle Street Church, then in other churches, hoping to afford the people an opportunity to hear. But the multitudes were so great that no church could accommodate them, so he resorted to the open field, as usual. Boston Common was thronged with thousands, while three times each day he preached to them with an eloquence which Boston had never before heard. Hundreds were won to Jesus, and many ministers were aroused and made clearly conscious of their need of salvation. He visited some of the adjacent towns, especially Cam-

bridge. His eloquent appeals aroused Harvard College from its sleep of a century, and there occurred in that institution what never happened before or since—a genuine revival of religion. It was a wonder then; it would be more so now! Dr. Coleman, a graduate of Harvard, wrote at the time: "The college is entirely changed. The students are full of God, and will, I trust, come out blessings to their generation. Many of them appear truly born again, and have proved happy instruments of conversion to their fellows. The voice of prayer and of praise fills their chambers; and sincerity, fervency, and joy, with seriousness of heart, set visibly upon their faces. I was told yesterday that not seven out of the hundred in attendance remained unaffected." "That was," says one writer, "a strange day for Harvard."

This was the introduction of Methodism into New England, and Whitefield at the time was a Methodist evangelist.

We have said that the first Methodist chapel ever erected in America was built in Boston. Where is the proof? We submit the following facts: While attending the Methodist Ecumenical Conference in London, in 1881, Rev. Dr. Allison, of Nova Scotia, had occasion to examine the archives of the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," under whose auspices both Wesley and White-

field came to America. Dr. Allison tells us that, in the course of his examination, he found letters written by John Wesley while in Georgia. He discovered, also, a most important letter written by Dr. Cutler, of Boston, dated "Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony, July, 1750," in which he says: "There are in Boston at this time fourteen independent chapels and one or two churches." He further adds: "There is, in an obscure alley, a Baptist chapel, and just now there has been built a Methodist chapel, a form of religion which I think will not soon die" (Conference report, p. 93). But who was this Dr. Cutler who wrote the letter from Boston in 1750? He was Rev. Timothy Cutler, first rector of Christ Church, Salem Street, Boston. He was president of Yale College as early as 1720. In 1722 he, with six others, mostly Congregationalists, withdrew, and united with the Episcopal Church. He immediately sailed for England, where he received Episcopal ordination and the title of Doctor in Divinity, and was sent by the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" as a missionary to Boston. It was under his ministry that Christ Church was erected, and it was in this church that Charles Wesley, an Oxford Methodist, preached in 1736 several times, during his detention here while on his way from Georgia to England. He speaks of preach-

ing in Dr. Cutler's church as well as in King's Chapel.

Here is this Episcopal rector, in 1750, eighteen years before a Methodist chapel was erected in New York or Sam's Creek, Maryland, reporting there was then a Methodist chapel in Boston! Dr. Cutler says it "had been built."

Who built this chapel, whether English Methodist soldiers or some of Whitefield's followers, who might have been pressed out of the dead churches, we do not know, but it was a *Methodist* chapel. It might have been the former; it may have been the latter. We admit the work did not abide. But that was not the first time that Methodism failed in Boston. Boardman came to Boston, and is said to have formed a class here in 1770, or near that time. But when Freeborn Garrettson visited Boston, in 1787, no trace of Boardman's class could be found. When William Black came, a few years later, he found no trace of Freeborn Garrettson's work; and though Mr. Black had a great revival, when Jesse Lee came, in 1798, no fruit of Mr. Black's labors were found. It still remains true, on the authority of Dr. Cutler, who wrote from personal observation, that there was a Methodist chapel in Boston in 1750; and, if so, it was the first ever erected in America.



ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH AT EPWORTH.



EPWORTH MEMORIAL CHURCH AT CLEVELAND, O.



## CHAPTER XVI.

### WESLEY AND AMERICAN METHODISM.

So far as we are able positively to determine Methodism in America originated with immigrants from Ireland. To Barbara Heck must be given the honor of delivering the first Methodist exhortation, which aroused Philip Embury to return from his backslidings to God and give himself to the work of the ministry of Methodism. Blessed be the name of Barbara Heck! An angel would rejoice to share her honors! Who can estimate the value of that earnest personal appeal to that card-playing company?

Soon a cry reached the ear of England's "flying evangelist" that a fire had been kindled in America, where thirty years before he had sought in vain to plant a Gospel the power of which he did not feel. Thomas Ball, of Charleston, speaks of the sheep in the wilderness needing a shepherd. "They have strayed," he says, "from England into the wild woods here, and they are running wild after the world. They are drinking their wine in bowls, and are jumping and dancing, and serving the devil in groves and under the green trees. And are not these lost sheep? And will none

of the preachers come here? Where is Bromfield? Where is John Pawson? Where is Nicholas Manners? Are they living, and will they not come?" This was the cry in and from the wilderness. A call for assistance came also from Philip Embury.

Wesley's Conference met in 1769 in Leeds. Mr. Wesley put the question: "We have a pressing call from our brethren in New York, who have built a preaching house, to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?" When was ever such a question asked, or call made, and Methodist preachers not ready to respond, "Here I am, send me"? An answer came from Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmore, who were willing to face the perils of sea and land to "save the wandering souls of men." The Conference took a collection of twenty pounds to pay their passage, and fifty pounds toward paying the debt on the "preaching house," as an expression of their love for the American brethren. Before these godly men had reached our shores Captain Webb, late from England, and barracks master at Albany, had heard of the work in New York, and, being a local preacher among the Wesleyans, joined Embury and his company and preached to the people in his military regimentals, full of faith and power—preached with a zeal which attracted hundreds to the Methodist faith.

On the arrival of Boardman and Pilmore—

men of God—the work prospered. Boardman preached in New York, extending his labors as far east as Boston. Pilmore went to Philadelphia, but extended his labors south as far as Charleston, S. C. The ministry of these holy men was greatly blessed to the people, and new societies were formed as the work extended.

Two years later Wesley made another call, and a response came from Francis Asbury and Richard Wright. And never did Providence seem to overrule in a more manifest manner than in the selection of Mr. Asbury. But for him it does not seem that one vestige of Methodism would have survived the War of the Revolution. He navigated the Methodist ship through that fearful storm with consummate skill. It is true that he was arrested and fined twenty-five dollars for preaching, but he held his place. He was obliged to seek shelter in the hospitable home of Hon. Thomas White, of Delaware, where he remained, partly concealed, for nearly two years. The military authorities then discovered that he was a friend and not a foe to American independence, and he was thereafter allowed to exercise his ministry without annoyance. No peril could deter him from his purpose. "In passing through the Indian country, west of the mountains," he is said to have "often encamped in the wilderness, where no one ventured to sleep

except under the protection of a trustworthy sentinel." He possessed the zeal, industry, and patience of an apostle. He may truly be said to be the father of American Methodism. He lived in the affections of a grateful people and walked in the constant light of perfect love.

On his coming to America he found only 14 itinerant ministers, with a few local preachers, and 371 members. At his death there were nearly 700 itinerants, 2,000 local preachers, and 214,000 members. When unable to preach but little he filled his carriage with Bibles and Testaments, and scattered them as he went, saying, "Whatever I have been doing heretofore, now I know I am sowing good seed."

**DR. THOMAS COKE.**

This is a name that must ever stand high in the annals of American Methodism. Born in Wales in 1747, a graduate of Oxford University, and settled over South Petherton Parish, Somersetshire, he became acquainted with the Methodists, and, imbibing their spirit, his ministry became truly spiritual and faithful—so much so that it excited so much opposition that he was dismissed from his curacy. He naturally sought counsel of Wesley. Mr. Wesley says, August 18, 1776: "I went to Kingston with Mr. Brown. Here I found a

clergyman, Dr. Coke, late a gentleman and commoner of Jesus College, Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose to see me. I had much conversation with him, and a union then began which I trust shall never end." Dr. Coke was of great service to Mr. Wesley in many ways, preaching in London and in other parts of England and Ireland, and under Mr. Wesley's direction he held the Irish Conference in 1782.

In 1784 Dr. Coke was ordained by Mr. Wesley as general superintendent and sent to America, with Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vassey, to establish a Methodist Church, and to ordain Francis Asbury to the same office of superintendent that they might conjointly take charge of the American work. They arrived in America in 1784, and, having conferred with Mr. Asbury and other ministers, a general convention of ministers was called, to meet on Christmas, for the purpose of organizing the Church.

They assembled in Baltimore, and decided to organize an independent Church to be called the "Methodist Episcopal Church." They elected Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury bishops instead of general superintendents. And so, on that Christmas Day, 1784, the Methodist Episcopal Church became a fact for all coming time.

Dr. Coke has the honor of being the first

Protestant bishop in America, with the exception of some visitors who had been sent here by the Moravians.

Dr. Coke very soon returned to England. He designed, at first, to make America his home; but such were the urgent necessities of the work in England, especially after the death of Wesley, that the General Conference permitted him to remain there, but not to exercise his episcopal functions outside of America. He resided for many years in England. He established missions in the West India Islands. He presided for many years in the Irish Conference, and frequently in England. He made several visits to the United States, the last being in 1804. On that occasion he went as far east as Boston, spending a full week in Providence, R. I. An incident illustrating his humility and undying love for the Church of his choice occurred on his visit to Providence. A gentleman in New York had requested James Burrill, Esq., a lawyer and a highly respectable citizen of Providence, to receive Dr. Coke with the honors due an English bishop, though he was not an English bishop. Rev. Thomas Lyell accompanied Dr. Coke from Newport to Providence. A crowd had assembled on the wharf to see and welcome a bishop. Arrangements had been made for Dr. Coke's entertainment at the palatial residence of John Enos Clark, Esq., a wealthy

citizen of Providence, and Mr. Clark's carriage was in waiting. As Dr. Coke landed he inquired of Messrs. Clark and Burrell if there were any Methodists in the town. They knew of none. Mr. Shubal Cady, the class leader, being present, came forward and said, "There is a small class." He then asked, "Where do the Methodist preachers stop when they come to town?" He was informed that they stopped with Mr. Benjamin Turpin, a Quaker gentleman. Dr. Coke then expressed a desire to stop there, if convenient. Mr. Turpin, being present, assured him that he would be pleased to entertain him, though his accommodations were greatly inferior to those of Mr. Clark. Mr. Clark's carriage conveyed the bishop to the residence of Mr. Turpin, where he remained during his stay in Providence.

Dr. Coke was invited to preach in the churches. But before he consented he inquired where the Methodist ministers preached when they came to town. Being told that they preached in an old Town House, he refused all other invitations until he had first preached where they did. He knew that Methodism was weak and despised in Providence, and he was determined that the Methodists should receive the benefit first of whatever influence his position gave him. With him it was Methodism first, then a world-wide fraternity with all the family of God.

The missionary spirit dominated Dr. Coke. "He was himself a missionary society." In all his journeys he paid his own expenses. At the age of nearly seventy he proposed to the Wesleyan Conference to go personally to the East Indies and establish a mission. The Conference objected on account of expense. He offered to bear the entire expense himself, to the amount of thirty thousand dollars, and the Conference finally consented. He selected six men to accompany him, and sailed for the Indies. A few days before they expected to land Dr. Coke was found dead one morning in his stateroom. The mission was established, though Dr. Coke was with the glorified. He was buried in the Indian Ocean, where, in after years, Dr. Judson, the great Baptist missionary, rested from his labors.

It has been said, "No man in Methodism, except Wesley, did more for the extension of the work through the world than Dr. Coke." Mr. Asbury says, "He was a minister of Christ, in zeal, in labor, and in services, the greatest man of the last century."

Bishop Asbury continued his labors with marvelous success until March, 1816, when, in great weakness, he preached his last sermon, Sunday, March 24. Hoping to attend the General Conference, which met in Baltimore, May 1, he succeeded in reaching Spottsylvania, and there, on the afternoon of the following Sun-

day, he fell asleep in Jesus. Dr. Cōke died three years before Mr. Asbury. These were great, good, and honored men.

Methodism spread from its first introduction. Robert Strawbridge, accompanied by Robert Williams and John King, was the first to enter Maryland. Captain Webb was the first to introduce Methodism into Pennsylvania. Freeborn Garrettson, assisted by William Black, was the first to enter New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Boardman, Jesse Lee, and Freeborn Garrettson were the first to enter New England, including Massachusetts, Maine, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. Francis Clark, a local preacher, was the first to enter Kentucky, in 1782. The first Conference preachers were James Haw and Benjamin Ogden. We do not know who first entered Indiana. Lorenzo Dow was the first to carry Methodism into Alabama, in 1803 or 1804. Jesse Lee was the first to enter Florida, then Spanish, in 1807; he crossed the St. Mary's River in a small boat, knelt down in the woods, and implored God to claim the territory for himself. In 1823 J. N. Gallen was appointed to St. Augustine. E. W. Bowman was the first to enter Louisiana, in 1805, where the people were said to know "nothing of God or religion." Joseph Pilmore was first to enter South Carolina, in 1773; in 1785, Asbury, not to speak of Wesley, in 1736. In 1769 Robert Wil-

liams, a local preacher, was first to enter Virginia and preach his first sermon at Norfolk. Joseph Tillard was the first Methodist preacher to enter Illinois; he formed the first class. Nathan Bangs preached the first Methodist sermon in Detroit, Mich., and William Mitchell organized the first class. Beverly Allen preached first in Georgia, in 1785. In 1835 L. Stevens entered Iowa. In 1849 William Roberts and J. H. Wilber, on their way to Oregon, spent some time in San Francisco, and in 1849 Isaac Owen and William Taylor were sent as missionaries to California. Wisconsin first heard the Gospel from John Clark.

We have thus given the dates of the introduction of Methodism into the several States, and the names of the preachers so far as we are able to ascertain. There may be some mistakes in these dates and names, but they are substantially correct.

But this work was not prosecuted without fearful persecution. Not all suffered equally. Freeborn Garrettson, in a letter to Mr. Wesley, says: "Once I was imprisoned, twice beaten, left on the highway speechless and senseless (I must have gone to the world of spirits had not God sent a good samaritan that took me to a friend's house); once shot at; guns and pistols presented to my breast; once delivered from an armed mob, in the dead of night, on the highway by a flash of lightning;

surrounded frequently by mobs; stoned frequently. I have had to escape for my life at the dead of night. O, shall I ever forget the divine Hand which has supported me?" Of his sufferings and labors in Nova Scotia he writes: "I have traveled mountains and valleys frequently on foot, with my knapsack on my back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness when it was not expedient to take a horse; and I had often to wade through morasses, half a leg deep in mud and water, frequently satisfying my hunger with a piece of bread and pork from my knapsack, quenching my thirst from a brook, and resting my weary limbs on the leaves of the trees. Thanks be to God! He compensated me for all my trials, for many precious souls were awakened and converted to God." These holy men cared not how they lived, what trials they endured, what hardships they suffered, so that souls were won to Christ. These were but few of their sufferings.

One has said: "They braved the rigors of severe winters, and the perils of flood and forest; they slumbered on hardest pillows and housed in lowliest hovels. But in their work they were joyous; in their trials they were patient; in their homes they were contented; in their journeyings the woods echoed their songs; in their pulpits they had power with man; in their persecutions they prayed for



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their enemies; in their old age they testify they have not followed 'cunningly devised fables;' in their death hour they are borne up on their shields, 'where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.' And in their final home, 'These are they who came up out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb; thenceforth they are before the throne.' " We are now reaping the fruit of their toil and enjoying the rich heritage they have bequeathed to us.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### WESLEY APPROACHING THE CLOSE OF LIFE.

THOUGH persecution and opposition followed John Wesley from the day he lifted up a standard of holiness within the classic walls of Oxford to the hour that God's chariot bore him to the city of the Great King, he never faltered in his purpose nor abated his zeal for an hour. As his end drew near, the opposition which had been so relentless began to give way. In many places it became greatly modified, and in others nearly extinct. That a great change had come began to be manifest in public opinion and feeling. Mob violence, which once swept everything, had entirely subsided, and towns and cities which once welcomed him with brickbats and rotten eggs now hailed him as the greatest of modern evangelists. Many who bade him depart out of their coasts as a crazy fanatic now thought it an honor to welcome him as a man of many virtues and unparalleled labors. In 1789, visiting Falmouth, Mr. Wesley says: "The last time I was here, above forty years ago, I was taken prisoner by an immense mob, gaping and roaring like lions. But how is the tide turned!

High and low now lined the street, from one end of the town to the other, out of stark love, gaping and staring as if the king were going by."

Wesley outlived all his early colabors. He saw them fall one by one, until he stood alone of them all, waiting and watching, but pressing toward the mark for the prize.

The first to fall was the zealous, deeply consecrated, and profoundly intellectual Walsh, at the age of twenty-eight, one of the best biblical scholars of his day. His last words were, "He's come! He's come!" and a cloud received him from human sight. Of him Wesley said: "Such a master of Bible knowledge I never saw before and never expect to see again. If he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek word in the New, Testament, he could tell, after a little pause, not only how often the one or the other occurred in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place."

Next to follow him was the earnest, fearless, honest Grimshaw, exclaiming: "I am happy as I can be in this world, and as sure of heaven as though I were there. I have my foot on the threshold already."

Next fell Whitefield, in America, one of the most eloquent and effective preachers that ever lifted up his voice among men, by which Wesley was greatly moved.

Then followed the amiable, venerable Peronet, of Shorcham, whom Charles Wesley was wont to call "the Archbishop of Methodism."

Then fell the most saintly man of his time—a real translation—the seraphic Fletcher, shouting, "God is love! O, for a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" Mr. Wesley says of him: "For many years I despaired of finding an inhabitant of Great Britain that could stand in any degree of comparison with Gregory Lopez or Mons. de Renty. But let any impartial person judge if Mr. Fletcher was at all inferior to them. Did he not experience deep communion with God, and as high a measure of inward holiness as was experienced by either one or the other of those burning and shining lights? And it is certain his outward light shone before men with full as bright a luster as theirs. I was intimately acquainted with him for thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night, without the least reserve, during a journey of many hundred miles, and in all that time I never heard him speak an improper word or saw him do an improper action. To conclude, within fourscore years I have known many excellent men, holy in heart and life, but one equal to him I have not known; one so uniformly and deeply devoted to God, so unblamable a man in every respect I have not found

either in Europe or America. Nor do I expect to find another such on this side eternity."

Next came the sad tidings of the death of his brother Charles, but little, if at all, inferior to Whitefield as a preacher, and whose sacred lyrics will live so long as human hearts are melted and charmed by the power of song. Just before the silver cord was loosed he requested his wife to write—it was his last:

"In age and feebleness extreme,  
Who shall a sinful worm redeem?  
Jesus, my only hope thou art,  
Strength of my falling flesh and heart:  
O could I catch one smile from thee,  
And drop into eternity!"

At the very moment that Charles was bidding adieu to earth John was at Shropshire, and the congregation was engaged in singing:

"Come, let us join our friends above  
That have obtained the prize,  
And on the eagle wings of love  
To joys celestial rise.  
Let all the saints terrestrial sing,  
With those to glory gone;  
For all the servants of our King,  
In earth and heaven, are one.

"One family we dwell in him,  
One church above, beneath,  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream, of death.  
One army of the living God,  
To his command we bow;  
Part of his host have crossed the flood,  
And part are crossing now."



THE ROOM IN WHICH WESLEY DIED.



Thus friend after friend departed, but Wesley pressed forward with a zeal which knew no abatement until eighty and seven years had passed over him.

On his last birthday he writes: "This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eye did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated. But last August I found almost a sudden change—my eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me; my strength likewise quite forsook me and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot, only it seems nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more and more till

"The weary springs of life stand still at last."

He attended and presided at his last Conference, held at Bristol, July 26, 1790. Anxious to devote every hour and moment to the service of the Master, he visits Cornwall, London, and the Isle of Wight, and then returns to Bristol. He is again in London, and then he is seen standing under the shade of a large tree at Winchelsea, preaching his last outdoor sermon. Though unable to preach longer in the open air, he still continues to preach "the glorious Gospel of the blessed God." At Colchester rich and poor, clergy and laity, throng to hear him in wondering crowds. At Nor-

wich, where once mob violence swept everything, he is received as an angel of mercy. At Yarmouth the house is thronged. At Lynn all the clergymen in the town, save one who was lame, came out to hear him.

Again he is in London preaching in all his chapels, and even making preparations to visit Ireland and Scotland, but these last visits his failing strength will not allow. Well does Tyerman call him "the flying evangelist."

The shadows are lengthening, and he seems conscious that his end is near. He preaches his last sermon at Leatherhead, Wednesday, February 3, 1791, from Isa. lv, 6: "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." He concluded the sermon by singing one of Charles Wesley's hymns:

"O that without a lingering groan  
I may the welcome word receive;  
My body with my charge lay down,  
And cease at once to work and live!"

On that day fell from his lips a Gospel trumpet which had sounded the word of life more frequently and effectually than was ever known to have been done by an uninspired man.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### WESLEY AND HIS TRIUMPHANT DEATH.

WESLEY had reached his home—City Road—the proper place from which to be translated to his heavenly mansion. He is waiting for the chariot. His friends are deeply anxious. Joseph Bradford sends the following dispatch to the preachers:

“Dear brethren,     Wesley is very ill.  
Pray! Pray! Pray!”

Looking over the whole of an extended life of unparalleled labor and suffering, he exclaims:

“I the chief of sinners am,  
But Jesus died for me.”

The day following he was heard to say, “There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus.”

He frequently, with full heart, sang Watts’s rapturous hymn, beginning:

“I’ll praise my Maker while I’ve breath.”

The tide of life is rapidly ebbing, but light from the realms above reveals to his enraptured soul the glories of his eternal home. Collecting all his remaining strength, he joyfully exclaims, “The best of all is, God is with us.”

The chamber where the good man gathered up his feet in death seemed radiant with the divine glory. A few of his preachers and intimate friends were there—Bradford, long his traveling companion; Dr. Whitehead, afterward his biographer; Rogers and his devoted wife, Hester Ann, who ministered to him in his last hours; the daughter of Charles Wesley; Thomas Rankin; George Whitefield, his book steward; and a few others. They knelt around the couch of the dying saint. Bradford prayed. Then with a low but almost angelic whisper he said, "Farewell." It was his last. And at the moment Bradford was saying, in a petition which must have reached the throne of God, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and this heir of glory shall come in." While they thus lingered "the weary wheels of life" stood still, and the unparalleled career of John Wesley was ended at 10 A. M., March 2, 1791.

Hester Ann Rogers, who was present, says: "And while he could hardly be said to be an inhabitant of earth, being now speechless, and his eyes fixed, victory and glory were written on his countenance, and quivered, as it were, on his dying lips. No language can paint what appeared in that face! The more we gazed upon it the more we saw heaven unspeakable."

Thus lived and died the founder of the Methodist denomination.

## Wesley and his Triumphant Death. 181

It was remembered that when the mother of Wesley was dying she said, "Children, as soon as I am dead sing a song of praise." So, as Wesley himself ceased to breathe, his friends, standing about his lifeless form, sang:

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,  
Lo! the Saviour stands above;  
Shows the purchase of his merit,  
Reaches out the crown of love."

He had requested in his will, and, in the name of God, most solemnly adjured his executors scrupulously to observe it, that six poor men should carry his body to the grave, and should receive one pound each for the same. He requested that there should be no display, no hearse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of those who loved him and were following him to Abraham's bosom. All these directions were strictly observed.

He was buried in the cemetery of the City Road Chapel.

Mr. Wesley's death attracted public notice beyond any former example not only in London, but throughout the United Kingdom. Thousands of his people, with the traveling preachers, went into mourning for him. The pulpits of the Methodists and of many other denominations were draped in black, and hundreds of sermons were preached on the subject of his death.

His indefatigable zeal had long been witnessed by all classes; but his motives had been variously estimated. Some attributed it to love of popularity, others to ambition, and others to love of wealth; but it now appeared that he was actuated by a pure regard for the immortal interests of mankind. Many ministers, both of the Establishment and among Dissenters, spoke with great respect of his long, laborious, devoted, and useful life, and earnestly exhorted their hearers to follow him as he followed Christ.

"He was a man," says Lord Macaulay, "whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

The ardor of his spirit was never dampened by difficulties nor subdued by age. The world ascribed this to enthusiasm, but he ascribed it to the grace of God. Whatever it was, it has commanded the respect of the present generation. He who was expelled from all the churches as a madman and a fanatic is now deemed worthy of a most eligible niche in England's grandest cathedral.

Dr. Watts's admirable elegy on Thomas

## Wesley and his Triumphant Death. 183

Gouge has been applied to the death of Wesley:

"The muse that mourns a nation's fall  
Should wait at Wesley's funeral;  
Should mingle majesty and groans,  
Such as she sings to sinking thrones;  
And in deep-sounding numbers tell  
How Zion trembled when this pillar fell;  
Zion grows weak, and England poor,  
Nature herself, with all her store,  
Can furnish such a pomp for death no more."

On the monument in Westminster Abbey is the simple inscription:

JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

BORN JUNE 17, 1703; DIED MARCH 2, 1791.

CHARLES WESLEY, M.A.

BORN DECEMBER 17, 1707; DIED MARCH 29,  
1788.

This is engraved upon the tablet:

"I look upon all the world as my parish."

"The best of all is, God is with us."

"God burles his workmen, but carries on his work."

The first two were the utterances of John, and the last of Charles, Wesley.

The following poem was written by the "Bard of Sheffield," Hon. James Montgomery,

184      **The Young People's Wesley.**

on the first centennial of Wesleyan Methodism,  
1836. It is a beautiful tribute:

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.**

One song of praise, one voice of prayer,  
    Around, above, below;  
Ye winds and waves the burden hear,  
    A hundred years ago!

A hundred years ago! What then?  
    There rose the world to bless  
A little hand of faithful men—  
    A cloud of witnesses.

It looked but like a human hand;  
    Few welcomed it, more feared.  
But as it opened o'er the land  
    The hand of God appeared.

The Lord made bare his holy arm  
    In sight of earth and hell;  
Fiends fled before it with alarm,  
    And alien armies fell.

God gave the word, and great has been  
    The preachers' company.  
What wonders have our fathers seen!  
    What signs their children see!

One song of praise for mercies past,  
    Through all our courts resound;  
One voice of prayer, that to the last  
    Grace may much more abound.

All hail! a hundred years ago!  
    And when our lips are dumb,  
Be millions heard rejoicing so,  
    A hundred years to come.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### WESLEY'S CHARACTER AS ESTIMATED BY UN- BIASED JUDGES.

REV. DR. RIGG, author of *The Living Wesley*, says: "No single man for centuries has moved the world as Wesley moved it; since Luther, no man."

Dr. Abel Stevens, the historian of Methodism, says Mr. Wesley "possessed, in an eminent degree, one trait of a master mind—the power of comprehending and managing at once the outlines and details of plans. It is this power that forms the philosophical genius in science; it is essential to the successful commander and great statesman. It is illustrated in the whole economical system of Methodism."

Bishop Coke, in speaking of Mr. Wesley's unbounded benevolence, says: "Sometimes, indeed, the love which believeth and hopeth all things, of which he had so large a share, laid him open to imposition, and wisdom slept at the door of love; if there was any fault in his public character, it was an excess of mercy."

Mr. Lecky (no mean judge) has this to say: "The evangelical movement which directly or

indirectly originated with Wesley produced a general revival of religious feeling which has incalculably increased the efficiency of almost every religious body in the community, while at the same time it has materially affected party politics."

In Green's *History of the English People* he speaks of Wesley and Whitefield thus: "In power as a preacher Wesley ranked next to Whitefield; as a hymn writer he stood second to his brother Charles. But, combining in some degree the excellences of either, he possessed qualities in which both were utterly deficient—an indefatigable industry, cool judgment, command over others, a faculty of organization, and a union of patience and moderation, with an imperious ambition which marked him as a ruler of men." "If men may be measured by the work they have accomplished, John Wesley can hardly fail to be recorded as the greatest figure that has appeared in the religious world since the days of the Reformation."

When Dean Stanley, in 1876, unveiled the memorial tablet erected in Westminster Abbey to the memory of John and Charles Wesley, consisting of medallion profiles of these great men, he said: "John Wesley is presented as preaching on his father's tomb, and I have always thought that it is, as it were, a parable which represented his relation to national in-

stitutions. He took his stand on his father's tomb—on the venerable and ancestral traditions of the country and the Church. That was the stand from which he addressed the world; it was not from points of disagreement, but from the points of agreement, with those in the Christian religion that he produced those great effects which have never since died out in English Christendom. It is because of his having been in that age, which I am inclined to think has been unduly disparaged, the reviver of religious fervor among our churches that we all feel we owe him a debt of gratitude, and that he ought to have this monument placed among those of the benefactors of England. These men had a perfect right to this national and lasting honor."

Mr. Augustin Birrell, queen's councilor and member of Parliament, in a lecture before the Royal Institute of London, says of John Wesley: "The life of John Wesley, who was born in 1703 and died in 1791, covered, practically, the whole of the eighteenth century, of which he was one of the most remarkable and strenuous figures, and his Journals were the most amazing records of human exertion ever penned by man. Those who have ever contested a parliamentary election know how exhausting was the experience; yet John Wesley contested the three kingdoms in the cause of Christ, and during the contest, which lasted forty-four

years, he paid more turnpike toll than any man who ever lived. His usual record of travel was eight thousand miles a year [we think this an overestimate], and even when he was an old man it seldom fell below five thousand miles. Wesley was a great bit of the eighteenth century, and was, therefore, a great revealing record of the century. He was a cool, level-headed man, and had he devoted his talents to any other pursuit than that of spreading religion he must have acquired a large fortune; but from the first day of his life, almost, he learned to regard religion as his business."

"A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton," says Dr. Dobbins, "a greater theologian than Calvin, a greater philosopher than Bacon, a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame; but a more distinguished revivalist of the churches than John Wesley, never."

"Taking him altogether," says Mr. Tyerman, "Wesley is a man *sui generis*. He stands alone; he has no successor; no one like him went before; no contemporary was a coequal. There was a wholeness about the man such as is rarely seen. His physique, his genius, his wit, his penetration, his judgment, his memory, his beneficence, his religion, his diligence, his conversation, his courteousness, his manners, and his dress made him as perfect as we ever expect man to be on this side of heaven." He

arose with the lark, traveled with the sun, preached like an angel through three kingdoms, claimed the world for his parish, and died like a hero, shouting, "The best of all is, God is with us."

Wilberforce said, "I consider Wesley as the most influential mind of the last century—the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or perhaps millenniums, hence, if the present race of men should continue so long."

No more graphic description of the Wesleyan movement has appeared than that given by F. W. Farrar, Dean of Canterbury. He says:

John Wesley found a Church forgetful and neglectful of its duties, somnolent in the plethora of riches, and either unmindful or unwisely mindful of the poor. He found churches empty, dirty, neglected, crumbling into hideous disrepair; he found the work of the ministry performed in a manner scandalously perfunctory. . . . But John Wesley, becoming magnetic with moral sincerity, flashed into myriads of hearts fat as brawn, cold as ice, hard as the nether millstone, the burning spark of his own intense convictions, and thus he saved the Church. . . .

Although the world and the Church have learned to be comparatively generous to Wesley, now that a hundred years have sped away, and though the roar of contemporary scandal has long since ceased, I doubt whether even now he is at all adequately appreciated. I doubt whether many are aware of the extent to which to this day the impulse to every great work of philanthropy and social reformation

has been due to his energy and insight. The British and the Foreign Bible Society, the Religious Tract Society, the London Missionary Society, even the Church Missionary Society, owe not a little to his initiative. The vast spread of religious instruction by weekly periodicals, and the cheap press, with all its stupendous consequences, were inaugurated by him. He gave a great extension to Sunday schools and the work of Robert Raikes. He gave a great impulse both to national education and to technical education, and in starting the work of Silas Told, the foundry teacher, he anticipated the humble and holy work of John Pounds, the Portsmouth cobbler. He started in his own person the funeral reform, which is only now beginning to attract public attention, when in his will he directed that at his obsequies there should be no hearse, no escutcheon, no coach, no pomp. He visited prisons and ameliorated the lot of prisoners before John Howard; and his very last letter was written to stimulate William Wilberforce in his parliamentary labors for the emancipation of the slave. When we add to this the revival of fervent worship and devout hymnology among Christian congregations, and their deliverance from the drawling doggerel of Sternhold and Hopkins, and the frigid nullities of Tate and Brady, we have indeed shown how splendid was the list of his achievements, and that, as Isaac Taylor says, he furnished "the starting point for our modern religious history in all that is characteristic of the present time."

And yet, in this long and splendid catalogue, we have not mentioned his greatest and most distinctive work, which was that through him to the poor the Gospel was again preached. Let Whitefield have the credit of having been the first to make the green grass his pulpit and the heaven his sounding-board; but Wesley instantly followed, at all costs, the then daring example, and through all evil report and all

furious opposition he continued it until at last at Kingswood, at the age of eighty-one, he preached in the open air, under the shade of trees which he himself had planted, and surrounded by the children and children's children of his old disciples, who had long since passed away. Overwhelming evidence exists to show what preaching was before and in his day; overwhelming evidence exists to show what the Church and people of England were before and in his day—how dull, how void, how soulless, how Christless was the preaching; how torpid, how Laodicean was the Church; how godless, how steeped in immorality was the land. To Wesley was mainly granted the task, for which he was set apart by the hands of invisible consecration—the task which even an archangel might have envied him—of awakening a mighty revival of the religious life in those dead pulpits, in that slumbering Church, in that corrupt society. His was the religious sincerity which not only founded the Wesleyan community, but, working through the heart of the very Church which had despised him, flashed fire into her whitening embers. Changing its outward forms, the work of John Wesley caused, first, the evangelical movement, then the high church movement, and, in its enthusiasm of humanity, has even reappeared in all that is best in the humble Salvationists, who learned from the example of Wesley what Bishop Lightfoot called "that lost secret of Christianity, the compulsion of human souls." Recognizing no utterance of authority as equally supreme with that which came to him from the Sign of conscience, Wesley did the thing and scorned the consequence. His was the voice which offered hope to the despairing and welcome to the outcast. . . . The poet says:

"Of those three hundred grant but three  
To make a new Thermopylæ."

And when I think of John Wesley, the organizer,

192      **The Young People's Wesley.**

of Charles Wesley, the poet, of George Whitefield, the orator, of this mighty movement, I feel inclined to say of those three self-sacrificing and holy men, Grant but even one to help in the mighty work which yet remains to be accomplished! Had we but three such now,

“Hoary-headed selfishness would feel  
His deathblow, and would totter to his grave;  
A brighter light attend the human day,  
When every transfer of earth's natural gift  
Should be a commerce of good words and works.”

We have, it is true, hundreds of faithful workers in the Church of England and in other religious communities. But for the slaying of dragons, the rekindlement of irresistible enthusiasm, the redress of intolerable wrongs, a Church needs many Pentecosts and many resurrections. And these, in the providence of God, are brought about, not by committees and conferences and common workers, but by men who escape the average; by men who come forth from the multitude; by men who, not content to trudge on in the beaten paths of commonplace and the cart-ruts of routine, go forth, according to their Lord's command, into the highways and hedges; by men in whom the love of God burns like a consuming flame upon the altar of the heart; by men who have become electric to make myriads of other souls thrill with their own holy zeal. Such men are necessarily rare, but God's richest boon to any nation, to any society, to any Church, is the presence and work of such a man—and such a man was John Wesley.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE GREATER WESLEY OF THE OPENING CENTURY.

WHEN on March 2, 1791, John Wesley closed his eyes to earth and opened them in heaven the visible results of his life were already great. At the opening of this new century they are greater. Only a few rods from where he his "body with his charge laid down, and ceased at once to work and live," is Wesley's Chapel, City Road, the head center of universal Methodism. Standing on the walls of this Zion in 1791 and looking around, what would we see?

Confining our vision within the bounds of Great Britain and Ireland, we would see this chapel surrounded by 644 others, "wholly appropriate to the worship of God." These chapels are ministered unto by 294 itinerant preachers, and have an enrollment of 71,668 members of the societies.

Extending our vision to the regions beyond, in the Wesleyan Methodist missions in France, the West Indies, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland, we would see in 1791 an enrolled membership of 5,300, looked after by 19 ministers; giving as the total of Wesleyan

Methodists at that time 76,968, and 313 ministers.

In addition to the home and foreign work of which John Wesley was the head, and City Road Chapel the center, was the Methodism of the United States, which in 1790 reported 43,265 members and 198 ministers, and which was known as "The Methodist Episcopal Church of America." So that we would see as the total of Methodists in the world at Wesley's last Conference, in 1790, 120,233 members, and 511 ministers. Besides these, a great number who, from 1739 to 1790, saved by Methodist agency, had been transferred to the Church above.

Let us now in this year 1901 stand again on the walls of this old Methodist cathedral and look around us for the living monument of the greater Wesley. With the March quarterly meetings' returns in our hands we see that in Great Britain alone "the total number of persons meeting in class, seniors and juniors, is 573,140, an increase for the year of 12,937." To these must be added the 46,262 full members and 11,619 "on trial" in the Wesleyan foreign missions reported in 1899. All these are under the government of the mother Conference. Then there are the Irish, French, South African, and West Indian Conferences, which are affiliated to it; and to these must be added the detached bodies, such as the Aus-

tralian Methodist Church, the Methodist New Connection, Wesleyan Reform Union, Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, United Methodist Free Churches, and Independent Methodist Churches, all included in "Old World Methodism," and rolling up the grand totals of 25,675 churches, 1,201,663 members and probationers, and 64,550 traveling and local preachers.

Thus the great Methodism of the Old World in 1791, with its 313 ministers and 76,968 members, in 1901 has become the greater Methodism, with 64,550 preachers and 1,201,663 members.

Let the point of view now be changed from City Road Chapel, London, to John Street Methodist Episcopal Church, in New York city, for a survey of the New World Methodism. To the north is the Methodist Church of Canada, with 11 Conferences and a mission in China, with a ministry, traveling and local, of 4,322, and a membership of 284,901. The missions in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland, in 1791, have thus developed and become the greater Canadian Methodism.

After this telescopic view let the vision be confined to American Methodism. We are still at old John Street Church in New York city. The Methodist tree, planted on this spot in 1766, has spread itself out into 16 branches, which with the parent trunk in-

cludes 9 white and 8 colored growths. The 43,265 American Methodists of 1790 have grown into 5,916,349 in 1901, and the 198 ministers have increased to 37,907, who preach in 54,351 Methodist churches. The Methodists lead the ecclesiastical hosts in America in the matter of members, and stand second only to the Roman Catholics, who count all adherents as communicants. The latter claim 8,766,083 by including all born into their families. Roman Catholicism in America has for its sharpest competitor American Methodism. If the Methodists counted their adherents as the Catholics do they would claim about 18,000,000 over against the Catholics less than 9,000,000.

The names of the branches of the American Methodist family are: 1. The Methodist Episcopal; 2. Union American Methodist Episcopal; 3. African Methodist Episcopal; 4. African Union Methodist Protestant; 5. African Methodist Episcopal Zion; 6. Methodist Protestant; 7. Wesleyan Methodist; 8. Methodist Episcopal, South; 9. Congregational Methodist; 10. Congregational Methodist (colored); 11. New Congregational Methodist; 12. Zion Union Apostolic; 13. Colored Methodist Episcopal; 14. Primitive Methodist; 15. Free Methodist; 16. Independent Methodist; 17. Evangelical Missionary. These all claim to be one in doctrine, one in spirit and aim, and

should be one in piety. Would that they were all one in Church union!

Epworth Leaguers will be more especially interested in the progress of their own Methodist Episcopal Church, which is the oldest daughter, as well as the largest branch, of Wesleyan Methodism. From *The Methodist Year Book*, 1901, we learn that our "lay membership—total of full members and probationers (on partial returns only)—is 2,907,877." Dr. H. K. Carroll in *The Christian Advocate*, January 3, 1901, tells the story of progress so well that we insert the entire article:

Only living things grow. The abundant life of American Methodism, beginning under favorable conditions, made growth natural, luxuriant, and easy. The soil and the sun, the air and the rains, were all that the fresh, vigorous plant needed for a development which has been truly amazing.

Time, 1766; place, New York; a godly woman calling a few backslidden Methodists to their duty; a local preacher; meetings in a sail loft; a new church costing \$3,000. Such was the beginning.

The soil was fallow. It produced rank weeds. There were few husbandmen. Other churches insisted on well-trained men from European schools. Methodism, having no such resources, organized training classes on the field and taught its men at the plow. Such were the conditions.

Time, 1784; place, Baltimore; a plain meetinghouse with stiff benches; 60 preachers in Conference; an independent Church, with a name, an episcopacy, a ministry, the sacraments, a practical system, a doctrinal standard, a ritual. Such was the organization. What has been the growth?

A growth of 2,900,000 in 134 years and of 2,835,000 in the past century. The 65,000 has added to itself

## 198 The Young People's Wesley.

nearly 44 times. The average annual gain has been 28,350.

The percentage of increase is 4,362. If the population of the country had increased in this period at the same rate, it would now be 232,000,000 instead of 76,300,000.

But the gains of the Methodist Episcopal Church have been only a part of the gains of Methodism. Include all branches since 1834, and we have:

The 65,000 has repeated itself about 91 times, or once every 13 months during the last century. The percentage of gain is 8,977. If the population had increased at the same rate it would now be 476,000,000 instead of 76,300,000. The average annual gain has been 58,350.

The gain in preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church is indicated as follows:

The gain for the century is 17,413. The 287 have been multiplied by 62; average annual gain, 174.

The beginning in a small loft in 1766, the erection shortly afterward of a church costing \$3,000, gave no more promise of ecclesiastical wealth than it did of growth in membership. Our 27,000 churches, worth \$116,000,000, show a development of resources as wonderful as a miracle. It takes now between \$23,000,000 and \$24,000,000 a year to carry on the work of the Methodist Episcopal Church, to say nothing about its universities, colleges, and hospitals. The consecration of wealth is truly stupendous. Methodists have not been stingy.

Methodism was ninth among Protestant denominations in number of churches in 1775, and third in number of communicants in 1800. It soon advanced to first place in numbers, and easily holds this place at the end of the century. It was only a handful of corn on the top of the mountains at the beginning. How wonderfully has God multiplied it!

It is pertinent to ask, How did it win its success?

Not by immigration, as many other Churches did. Roman Catholics came here from Europe by hundreds of thousands. The Lutheran, Reformed German, and Presbyterian Churches gained immensely by the streams of immigration. But Methodists and Baptists

have grown out of American soil and drawn their chief strength from the surrounding elements.

Not by proselytism. We have lost hundreds of thousands of converts; we have gained comparatively few in return from the denominations we have fed. We would like to hold all who are converted at our altars, but we do not feel that our losses have impoverished us, though they have enriched our neighbors.

Not because of wealth, social prestige, ecclesiastical antiquity, or what an historian calls "the aristocracy of education and position." Other Churches had these; we began with nothing but a needy field and earnest men, full of the Holy Ghost and flaming with zeal for the Gospel.

Not by our machinery and methods. These were powerful, even providential, aids; but if we ever come to depend on these alone Methodism will be a great system of enginery, with wheels, pulleys, cogs, and joints, all silent and inert, because the boilers are cold. It was not our itinerancy, our class meetings, our Conferences, or our methods which gave us success.

Our hosts have been won, by the power of the Gospel manifested in a real, religious experience, from the vast classes of unconverted persons. We have regarded these, wherever we found them, as legitimate prey. We count it a special honor that our millions are trophies won for Christ from the masses of godless, indifferent, unconverted persons. The late Dr. John Hall once said that he specially honored the Methodist Church for the importance it attaches to conversion. The power of Methodism is spiritual in its nature.

I do not believe a greater boon could be asked for our Church in the twentieth century than that it might continue to regard it as its special task to call men and women to repentance and insist upon an experience such as our fathers enjoyed and we profess.

When John Wesley lay dying in 1791 there were only four Methodist schools in England—three small ones at London, New-

castle-on-Tyne, and Bristol, and the Kingswood School, near Bristol. The latter is still doing most excellent work at Bath. English Methodism has no university or college empowered to grant degrees. It sadly lacks secondary schools. The Leys School at Cambridge is its nearest approach to a reputable American college. But it has a good share in the elementary education of the people. Colonial Methodism excels in respect to secondary and higher education. Of American Methodism in general, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church in particular, it may be said, in this respect, "Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all." Whilst some of our colleges are somewhat prophetic, yet the long list of our institutions and the honorable records they have made place us in the front rank of American educators. It has been well said that "The Methodist Episcopal Church began the century with the ashes of one college." In 1900 it had 56 colleges and universities, 60 academies and seminaries, 8 institutions exclusively for women, 4 missionary institutions and training schools, 25 schools of theology, and 99 foreign mission schools—228 in all. These schools have more than 3,000 instructors, and about 50,000 students. The total value of property and endowment is about \$30,000,000. "The Board of Education" in 1873 began its

noble work of placing the first steps to these institutions very near to the feet of any young man or woman who has the ability to climb them, whether a Methodist or not. President Warren, of Boston University, puts our educational work in the strongest possible light, and in the briefest space, thus: "The Banner Church in Education."

That the Methodist Episcopal Church is indeed "the banner Church in education" the following facts bear witness: .

From 1784, the year of its organization, to 1884, the Methodist Episcopal Church established 225 classical seminaries and colleges; in other words, established a classical seminary or college every fifth month through a hundred toilsome years. No other organization in human history ever made so honorable a record in the higher education, or was entitled to celebrate so jubilant a centennial. If we go back through the stormy period of the Revolution to the first feeble beginnings of American Methodism in 1766, we must add to the above-mentioned 225 institutions belonging to the Church the 58 known schools of more private ownership, to get the true aggregate of Methodist institutions for the higher education, namely, 283, a little more than one for every fifth month through the first 118 years of our existence as a Church, infancy included.

202      **The Young People's Wesley.**

Is it not time to bury the ancient allegation that the early Methodists were indifferent or hostile to learning? If the long-standing slander must live on to the end of time, let us once in a hundred years lift it gently into the pillory of ecumenical publicity and placard it as an instructive example of immortal mendacity.

## CONCLUSION.

What shall we now say of universal Methodism?

Of the millions reached by her ministry we have heard. The sun never sets on her domain, for it is "from the rivers to the ends of the earth." Her people are found in every land and are at home in every zone. "All climates embrace them—the winters of Hudson's Bay, and the sun-scorching plains of India. The Pacific waves break upon their shores, and peaks crowned with eternal snow shadow their dwellings." As she enters upon the twentieth century there should be no "wrinkle upon her brow, no haze in her vision, no stoop to her form, no halt to her step, giving signs of wasted energy or declining vigor;" and this will be her history if the anointing of her founder abides upon her. Her sanctuaries will be Bethesdas, and her prayer meetings Bethels. "She will gather in the street Arab, and send missionaries to Orient fields of toil and death." Her doctrines will be as when Wesley died; her philanthropy as broad, her relations to other churches as catholic, as when he said, "The world is my parish."

Methodism is to be the friend of all and the enemy of none. So long as she maintains her power the world needs her, and she will not perish. So long as she believes in conversion, and effectually preaches it, she will not perish. So long as she believes in holiness of heart, and proclaims it "clearly, strongly, and explicitly," she will not perish. So long as she believes in the Holy Ghost and the baptism of fire, and possesses it in its fullness, she will not perish, but will go forth all aglow with the "dew of her youth bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." She has the true doctrine and a flexible economy; now let her cultivate the spirit and maintain the tireless energy of her founders, and doctrines and Church shall be the doctrines and Church of the future, even till Christ comes.

"When he first the work begun,  
Small and feeble waa hia day :  
Now the word doth awlftly run ;  
Now it wins its widening way :  
More and more it spreada and grows,  
Ever mighty to prevail ;  
Sin'a strongholds it now o'er'throws,  
Shakea the trembling gates of hell."

