

## The Sermon

**Minister :** Let us, in common with our brethren the people called Methodists in every land, now dedicate ourselves afresh to the service of Almighty God.

*There shall follow an interval of Silent Prayer, after which the people shall unite with the Minister in saying :*

**All :** Almighty God, who didst raise up Thy servants *John* and *Charles Wesley* to proclaim anew the gift of redemption and the life of holiness, be with us their children, and revive Thy work among us ; that inspired by the same faith, and upheld by the same grace in word and sacrament, we and all Thy people may be made one in the unity of Thy church on earth, even as in heaven we are made one in Thee, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hymn 386 :

L.M.

3 Jesus, confirm my heart's desire  
To work, and speak, and think for  
Thee ;  
Still let me guard the holy fire,  
And still stir up Thy gift in me.

1 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 !

4 Ready for all Thy perfect will,  
My acts of faith and love repeat,  
Till death Thy endless mercies seal,  
And make the sacrifice complete.  
Amen.

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

*Charles Wesley*

Benediction.

NOTE.—This Order is intended for the main service on Aldersgate Sunday, which will in most churches be held in the evening. For use on other occasions it may need some adaptation. Adaptation might also be necessary where both Wesley Day and Aldersgate Sunday are observed.

*Alternative Lessons and Hymns recommended :*

Psalm 130 ; Isaiah 40:1-11, 27-31 ; Romans 5:1-11. Hymns 263, 371, 578.

## AN ORDER OF WORSHIP

## FOR

## ALDERSGATE SUNDAY

## RESOLUTION OF THE EIGHTH WORLD METHODIST COUNCIL :

“ This World Methodist Council, meeting at Oxford in 1951, commends to the Methodist people everywhere the annual observance of *Aldersgate Sunday* (the Sunday falling upon or immediately preceding Wesley Day, 24th May) as an occasion for remembering the faith of our founders and for rededicating ourselves in universal fellowship to the spreading of scriptural holiness throughout the world.”

**Minister :** There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.

Hymn 363 :

D.S.M.

1 SPIRIT of faith, come down,  
Reveal the things of God;  
And make to us the Godhead known,  
And witness with the blood.  
'Tis Thine the blood to apply,  
And give us eyes to see  
Who did for every sinner die  
Hath surely died for me.

2 No man can truly say  
That Jesus is the Lord,  
Unless Thou take the veil away,  
And breathe the living word ;  
Then, only then, we feel  
Our interest in His blood,  
And cry, with joy unspeakable :  
Thou art my Lord, my God !

3 O that the world might know  
The all-atoning Lamb !  
Spirit of faith, descend, and show  
The virtue of His name ;  
The grace which all may find,  
The saving power impart ;  
And testify to all mankind,  
And speak in every heart.

4 Inspire the living faith,  
Which whosoe'er receives,  
The witness in himself he hath,  
And consciously believes ;  
The faith that conquers all,  
And doth the mountain move,  
And saves whoe'er on Jesus call,  
And perfects them in love. Amen.

*Charles Wesley*

*While all remain standing, the Minister shall say :*

**Minister :** Let us proclaim the promises of God, declared in Holy Scriptures, and set forth in the sermons of John Wesley.  
By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves : it is the gift of God.

**People :** *Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift.*



Minister : There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.

People : We walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

Minister : Ye have not received the spirit of bondage again unto fear.

People : We have received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father.

Minister : The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirits.

People : We are the children of God.

Minister : He that is born of God doth not commit sin : He cannot sin because he is born of God.

People : We must be born again.

Minister : Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be.

People : We know that we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

All : Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Minister : Let us pray.

*Then shall the Minister lead the congregation in extempore prayer ; or the following petitions may be used by all :*

Minister : Let us give thanks to God for our Methodist forefathers.

All : Eternal God, we give Thee humble and hearty thanks for Thy servants John and Charles Wesley, and for all those human instruments through whom Thou didst lead them into Thy saving truth. We thank Thee for the power of their preaching, the challenge of their dedicated lives, and the continued inspiration of their hymns. We praise Thy holy name for the multitude of those in many lands who through their ministry have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ. Grant that we their children may prove worthy of the glorious heritage bequeathed to us, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Minister : Let us pray for the people called Methodists throughout the world.

All : O Lord God, who didst reveal Thy salvation to our fathers and didst strengthen them to proclaim Thy word to the uttermost parts of the earth, we pray Thy blessing upon the people called Methodists in every land. Grant that, their wisdom and faith being deepened in mutual understanding and fellowship, they may be enabled to obey Thy call to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world, ever praising Thee for what Thou hast wrought, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Minister : Let us ask God's forgiveness for the sins which have marred our witness

All : Our Heavenly Father, Who by Thy love hast made us, and through Thy love hast kept us, and in Thy love wouldst make us perfect, we humbly confess that we have not loved Thee with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, and that we have not loved one another as Christ hath loved us. Forgive what we have been ; help us to amend what we are ; and in Thy Spirit direct what we shall be ; that Thou mayest come into the full glory of Thy creation, in us and in all men, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Minister : Let us pray for a catholic spirit.

All : God of our fathers, Who hast made the Methodists of the world to be one people, we pray Thee for a Catholic spirit that we may walk the royal way of universal love. Take from us all false pride of names and sects and parties, that we may be the friends of all, the enemies of none. Teach us to long for the welfare of all Christian people, to spend and be spent on their behalf, until all hurtful divisions are destroyed and Christ is all in all, Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Minister : Let us unite in the prayer which makes of one family all the faithful on earth and in heaven.

All : Our Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Hymn 720 :

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| <p>1 CHRIST, from whom all blessings flow,<br/>Perfecting the saints below,<br/>Hear us, who Thy nature share,<br/>Who Thy mystic body are.</p> <p>2 Join us, in one spirit join,<br/>Let us still receive of Thine ;<br/>Still for more on Thee we call,<br/>Thou who fillest all in all.</p> <p>3 Move, and actuate, and guide :<br/>Divers gifts to each divide ;<br/>Placed according to Thy will,<br/>Let us all our work fulfil ;</p> | <p>7 7.7 7.</p> <p>4 Sweetly may we all agree,<br/>Touched with loving sympathy :<br/>Kindly for each other care ;<br/>Every member feel its share.</p> <p>5 Love, like death, hath all destroyed,<br/>Rendered all distinctions void ;<br/>Names, and sects, and parties fall :<br/>Thou, O Christ, art all in all.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Charles Wesley</p> |
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*Here shall be read the First Lesson. Isaiah 51: vv. 1-6.*

*Here may follow an Anthem, "Out of the Deep"\*, or the Hymn 359, "Out of the depths I cry to Thee".*

\*The setting which Wesley heard at St. Paul's was Croft's.

*The Offertory may be taken here or following the Sermon.*

*Then shall follow the Second Lesson. Romans 5: vv. 1-11.*

Hymn 387 :

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| <p>1 MY God ! I know, I feel Thee mine,<br/>And will not quit my claim,<br/>Till all I have is lost in Thine<br/>And all renewed I am.</p> <p>2 I hold Thee with a trembling hand,<br/>But will not let Thee go,<br/>Till steadfastly by faith I stand<br/>And all Thy goodness know.</p> <p>3 Jesus, Thine all-victorious love<br/>Shed in my heart abroad ;<br/>Then shall my feet no longer rove,<br/>Rooted and fixed in God.</p> | <p>c.m.</p> <p>4 O that in me the sacred fire<br/>Might now begin to glow,<br/>Burn up the dross of base desire,<br/>And make the mountains flow !</p> <p>5 O that it now from heaven might fall,<br/>And all my sins consume !<br/>Come, Holy Ghost, for Thee I call,<br/>Spirit of burning, come !</p> <p>6 Refining Fire, go through my heart,<br/>Illuminate my soul ;<br/>Scatter Thy life through every part,<br/>And sanctify the whole. Amen.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Charles Wesley</p> |
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Minister : Let us now recall the experience which in the providence of God called into being the Methodist Church, as it is recorded for us in the Journal of John Wesley for 24th May, 1738.

" By the Grace of God I resolved to seek faith unto the end, by absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works of righteousness [and] by adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace continual prayer for this very thing, justifying faith ; a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me ; a trust in Him as my Christ, as my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

" I continued thus to seek it . . . till Wednesday, May 24th. I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on those words : ' There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' Just as I went out, I opened it again on those words, ' Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, ' Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord . . . '

" In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt 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."

On this momentous day Charles Wesley was an invalid in the house of John Bray in Little Britain, also in Aldersgate Street. He was a triumphant invalid, however, for three days earlier, on Whitsunday, 21st May, he himself had entered into the joy of salvation, and had written one of his earliest hymns under the inspiration of this experience. In his Journal for 24th May he wrote : " Towards ten, my brother was brought in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared, ' I believe ! ' We sang the hymn with great joy, and parted with prayer."

Let us now sing the Wesleys' Conversion Hymn.

Hymn 361 :

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| <p style="text-align: center;">8.8.8.8.8 8.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Wesleys' Conversion Hymn.<br/>Whitsuntide, 1738.</p> <p>1 WHERE shall my wondering soul begin ?<br/>How shall I all to heaven aspire ?<br/>A slave redeemed from death and sin,<br/>A brand plucked from eternal fire,<br/>How shall I equal triumphs raise,<br/>Or sing my great Deliverer's praise ?</p> <p>2 O how shall I the goodness tell,<br/>Father, which Thou to me hast showed ?<br/>That I, a child of wrath and hell,<br/>I should be called a child of God,<br/>Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,<br/>Blest with this antepast of heaven !</p> | <p>3 And shall I slight my Father's love<br/>Or basely fear His gifts to own ?<br/>Unmindful of His favours prove ?<br/>Shall I, the hallowed Cross to shun,<br/>Refuse His righteousness to impart,<br/>By hiding it within my heart ?</p> <p>4 Outcasts of men, to you I call,<br/>Harlots, and publicans, and thieves !<br/>He spreads His arms to embrace you all ;<br/>Sinners alone His grace receives :<br/>No need of Him the righteous have ;<br/>He came the lost to seek and save.</p> <p>5 Come, O my guilty brethren, come,<br/>Groaning beneath your load of sin !<br/>His bleeding heart shall make you room,<br/>His open side shall take you in ;<br/>He calls you now, invites you home :<br/>Come, O my guilty brethren, come !</p> |
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Charles Wesley