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# John Wesley *the* Methodist

*A Plain Account of*  
His Life *and* Work

*By a* Methodist Preacher

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*With One Hundred Portraits, Views, and Facsimiles*

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You are the heirs of great traditions. You stand in a noble succession.  
But—

“They who on glorious ancestry enlarge  
Produce their debt instead of their discharge.”

You have done so much that you are under awful responsibilities to the nations in which your societies are already planted, and to the nations to which you have still to make known the unsearchable riches of God's grace. Keep faith with your fathers; keep faith with Christ; keep faith with your children and your children's children; transmit to coming generations the Gospel which has already won such splendid triumphs.—*From the address by the Rev. Robert W Dale, of Birmingham, in City Road Chapel, at the centenary memorial of the death of John Wesley.*

# JOHN WESLEY THE METHODIST.

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## CHAPTER I.

### **A Race of Preachers.**

The Wesley Ancestry.—The First John Westley.—Samuel Wesley, Poet and Preacher.—Susanna Annesley.—Piety and Culture.

“**S**O far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been for these thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, *atavus*, *tritavus*, preaching the Gospel, nay, the genuine Gospel, in a line.”

Thus wrote John Wesley to his brother Charles, thirty years after the date of organized Methodism, concerning their ancestry. He could have said with equal truth that his female ancestors were as distinguished as their husbands—his mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother being renowned for their gifts of genius, for their intense interest in ecclesiastical life, and for their suffering in obedience to conscience.

The founder of Methodism was not fully acquainted with the particulars of his remarkable ancestry. But in those rare moments when even the busiest of men naturally inquire about their forefathers he was profoundly impressed that Providence had favored his own household in a singular way. The ancestral line of the Wesleys revealed the fact that the principles of intellectual, social, and religious nobility were developing and maturing into a new form of pentecostal evangelism.

On the southwestern shore line of England is the county of

Dorset, a part of which was called "West-Leas," lea signifying a field or farm. In Somerset, adjoining Dorset, there was a place called Welswey, and before surnames were common we have Arthur of Welswey, or Arthur Wellsesley (Wellesley), and John West-leigh, and Henry West-ley. There were land-owners in Somerset named Westley in the days of Alfred the Great, in the ninth century. Sir William de Wellesley was a member of Parliament in 1339. His second son, Sir Richard, became the head of the Wesleys in Ireland, from whom descended Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington, the conqueror of Napoleon at Waterloo.

We step out on firmer ground and get nearer home in stating that a grandson of Sir William, Sir Herbert, now called Westley, was the father of Bartholomew Westley, and great-grandfather of our own John Wesley.

Bartholomew Westley was about seven years old when James I came to the throne. He entered Oxford as the first on the list of coming students bearing the name of Wesley. After completing the classical course he graduated in "physic," which was his means of livelihood for some years to come. In 1620, at the age of twenty-five, he married the daughter of Sir Henry Colley, of Castle Carberry, Kildare, Ireland, by whom he had one son named John.

Having taken "holy orders," Bartholomew Westley became a Puritan clergyman in the Established Church. In 1640 he was appointed rector of Charmouth, on the English Channel. When the Puritan rectors were ejected by Charles Stuart after the Restoration of 1660 he lost his parish, but continued to preach as a Nonconformist pastor of a portion of his old parishioners. The Royalists stigmatized him as a "fanatic" and a "puny parson," because of his small stature, but he was much beloved by his flock, and much lamented at his death, in 1680, being then about eighty-five years old.

John Westley, son of Bartholomew and Ann, was born in 1636, and was consecrated to the ministry in his infancy. He was educated at New Inn Hall, Oxford University, and was an



Rev. John Westley, M.A.

This likeness of the grandfather of Rev. John Wesley is the earliest known portrait of any member of the Wesley family.

exceptional student. After graduation he began preaching as minister of a congregation at Whitchurch, and as a Nonconformist strenuously defended his right to do so without episcopal ordination. He suffered sorely in the persecuting times of

the Restoration, being driven from his pulpit and thrown into jail. He had married a daughter of Rev. John White, of Dorchester, one of the most celebrated of the Puritan divines, and to them was born, at Whitchurch, in 1662, a son, Samuel. Westley died in 1678 at Preston, being then forty-two years of age, and having suffered many things for his principles of religion and ecclesiastical order. His widow survived him for forty years, and was lovingly cared for by her sons—Matthew, a surgeon of London, and Samuel, the rector of Epworth.

Samuel Wesley was born in 1662, in Dorsetshire, four months after the English St. Bartholomew's Day, upon which his father and his grandfather were ejected from their livings for Nonconformity. His father dying when he was a lad, his education was cared for by his mother, and in 1678 some friends of his family sent him to a Nonconformist academy in London. Here he made the acquaintance of the eccentric bookseller and literary man, John Dunton, afterward the editor of the Athenian Gazette, a precursor of the Tatler and Spectator. Here also he obtained entry, as the son and grandson of distinguished confessors, into the best Nonconformist circles, of which one of the leading families was that of a Rev. Dr. Annesley. One of his schoolfellows was Daniel Defoe. He heard Stephen Charnock and John Bunyan preach, made notes of many sermons, and wrote some verses and unwise lampoons.

He was about twenty years of age when he was asked to answer some strictures made upon the Dissenters, and while studying the subject he decided to leave Nonconformity and go over to the Established Church. With that quick impulse which distinguished all his subsequent life, he rose early one morning and started afoot for Oxford University, entering Exeter College as a servitor, with only two pounds and five shillings in his pocket.

The young collegian met his expenses partly by teaching

and partly by his pen. He collected his poetical pieces, which were published under the title of *Maggots; or Poems on several subjects never before handled*, by a Scholar, London.



Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A., Rector of Epworth.

Detail from the copperplate frontispiece of his Latin Commentary on Job, published in London, 1736.

The claim to novelty for "several subjects" is sustained by the titles of the pieces: *The Grunting of a Hog, A Cow's Tail, A Hat Broke at Cudgels, The Tobacco Pipe, The Tame Snake in a Box of Bran*. This curious book is extremely scarce. It was

published by that odd John Dunton, with whom, as we know, Wesley was acquainted before he went to Oxford. Dunton had married Elizabeth Annesley, the sister of Susanna, who six years afterward became Wesley's wife.

At Oxford Samuel Wesley's character ripened. There was awakened in him a true pastoral feeling of compassion and responsibility by visiting the prisoners in the castle; as his sons did fifty years later, when he wrote to them, "Go on in God's name in the path your Saviour has directed and that track wherein your father has gone before you; for when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited them in the castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day." As quaint old Fuller says, "Thus was the prison his first parish; his own charity his patron presenting him to it; and his work was all his wages."

He took his degree of B. A. in 1688, signing his name Wesley instead of Westley. He received his M. A. degree later from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. Returning to London, he was ordained deacon by the time-serving but able Bishop of Rochester, Dr. Thomas Sprat, whom Dunton eulogized thus:

Nature rejoiced beneath his charming power;  
His lucky hand made everything a flower.  
On earth the king of wits (they are but few),  
And, *though* a bishop, yet a preacher too!

Twelve days after the Prince and Princess of Orange were proclaimed as King William III and Mary, Samuel Wesley was ordained a priest of the Church of England by Bishop Compton, of London, in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn.

Samuel Wesley became "passing rich" on £28 a year as a London curate, then obtained a naval chaplaincy, commenced his metrical Life of Christ, and in 1689 married Dr. Annesley's accomplished daughter Susanna on another London curacy of



**Susanna Annesley, before Her Marriage to Rev. Samuel Wesley.**

From a photograph of the original painting in the Wesleyan Book Room, London.





£30 a year. The young couple commenced their married life in Holborn, in lodgings somewhere near the quaint old houses still standing opposite Gray's Inn Road.

Susanna Wesley, the mother of Methodism, was the daughter of a Puritan minister, who has been called "The St. Paul of the Nonconformists." Her father, Samuel Annesley, nephew of the first Earl of Anglesea, was born at Haseley, in the Shakespeare country, in 1620, and educated at Queen's College, Oxford. He enjoyed great prominence as a preacher until the Restoration drove him from his pulpit in St. Giles, the largest congregation in London. His means saved him from distress, and made him a blessing to many of his dissenting brethren. He gathered a flourishing congregation in London and ministered to it for many years.

Annesley was tall and dignified, and of robust constitution. He had an aquiline nose, a short upper lip, wavy brown hair, and a strong and penetrating eye. Severe persecutions did not disturb the geniality and cheerfulness of his Christian life. When John Wesley had set the Churches of England aflame with the doctrine of Assurance he asked his mother whether her father had ever preached it. She replied that he personally enjoyed it and confessed it for many years, but did not recollect hearing him preach upon it in particular. She therefore presumed he regarded it as a high privilege of a few. How well he lived and died let these words witness: "Blessed be God! I have been faithful in the work of the ministry above fifty-five years."

Shortly before his departure from this world, December 31, 1696, Dr. Annesley said: "Come, my dearest Jesus! the nearer the more precious, the more welcome!" "I cannot express the thousandth part of the praise that is due to thee.

. I will die praising thee. . I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness! Satisfied! Satisfied!"

Dr. Williams, who founded the library now in Gordon Square, preached his funeral sermon, and exclaims: "O how many places had sat in darkness, how many ministers had been starved, if Dr. Annesley had died thirty-four years since! The Gospel he ever forced into ignorant places, and was the chief instrument in the education as well as the subsistence of several ministers."

The second wife of this leading London divine was a daugh-



Birthplace of Susanna Wesley.

Spital Yard, London.

ter of John White, a member of the Long Parliament, and a man of the highest repute. She was a woman of rare accomplishments and remarkable piety. The youngest of her children, Susanna, who became the mother of John and Charles Wesley, was born on January 20, 1669, in Spital Yard, between Bishopsgate Street and Spital Square, London. Her home was probably in the last house, which blocks up the lower end of the yard. Here Susanna Annesley spent her girlhood, studied Church controversies, and asserted her personal deci-

sion, and hence she went forth to her wedding with Samuel Wesley.

“How many children has Dr. Annesley?” inquired a friend of Thomas Manton, who had just baptized one of the family. “I believe it is two dozen, or a quarter of a hundred,” was the startling reply. Susanna, the youngest, was perhaps the most gifted of the many beautiful and well-educated daughters. Her sister Judith was a very handsome and sturdy-minded woman, whose portrait was painted by Sir Peter Lely; Elizabeth, who married John Dunton, was lovely in person and character, and Susanna shared largely in the family gift of beauty. She was slim and graceful, and retained her good looks and symmetry of figure to old age. The best authenticated portrait of her is one that was taken in her old age and engraved under the direction of her son John. It shows “delicate aquiline features, eyes still vivid and expressive under well-marked brows; a physiognomy at once benignant and expressive.” Her letters reveal “a perfect mistress of English undefiled,” some knowledge of French authors, and a logical mind well read in divinity. The secret of her deep spirituality is revealed in one of her letters to her son: “I will tell you what rule I observed in the same case, when I was young, and too much addicted to childish diversions, which was this—never to spend more time in any matter of mere recreation in one day than I spent in private religious duties.”

Bishop McTyeire’s eloquent tribute to her virtues, graces, and gifts does no more than justice to this remarkable woman:

“When I was in Milan I visited the church where Ambrose preached and where he was buried; but I thought more of his patroness, the pious Helena, than of him. I thought of Augustine, and of that mother whose prayers persevered for his salvation; and in the oldest town on the Rhine I could not help being interested in the legend of Ursula and her eleven thou-

sand virgins. But greater than Helena, or Monica, or Ursula, there lived a woman in England, known to all Methodists, and of whom in the presence of those I have mentioned it might be said, 'Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou hast excelled them all.' I mean the wife of the rector of Epworth, and the conscientious mother of his nineteen children; she that transmitted to her illustrious son her genius for learning, for order, for government, and I might almost say for godliness; who shaped him by her councils, sustained him by her prayers, and, in her old age, like the spirit of love and purity, presided over his modest household; and, when she was dying, said to her children, 'Children, as soon as the spirit leaves the body, gather round my bedside and sing a hymn of praise.'"

Susanna Annesley, at the age of thirteen, was interested in the ecclesiastical and doctrinal controversies of the day. With remarkable independence she made up her mind to renounce Dissent and enter the Established Church, one year after Samuel Wesley had come to the same decision. It is possible that the two ecclesiastical conversions were not unconnected. Young Wesley was seven or eight years older than his future bride, and the friendship had already begun which was to ripen into love. In one of her later private meditations she mentions it among her greatest mercies that she was "married to a religious orthodox man; by him first drawn off from the Socinian heresy." The same feeling is expressed in the words of the epitaph from her pen inscribed on Samuel Wesley's tomb at Epworth: "As he lived, so he died, in the true Catholic faith of the Holy Trinity in Unity; and that Jesus Christ is God Incarnate, and the only Saviour of mankind." It was natural that the thoughtful, fervent girl should be strongly influenced by one by whom she had been settled in a belief of such vital importance. "If the Puritans," says Dr. Rigg, "could not transmit to her lover and

herself their ecclesiastical principles, at least they transmitted a bold independence of judgment and of conduct.”

The girl of thirteen expressed her opinions against the Church of her distinguished father, however, with such tact and sweetness of spirit as to win his consent to her confirmation at St. Paul's. She was at once so decided and gentle, and he



A Part of Lincolnshire.

Showing the location of South Ormsby, Epworth, and Scrooby  
(the village of the Plymouth pilgrims).

so tolerant, that the love between the father and daughter never lost its strength and charm.

“The Puritan movement in which she had been reared,” says Buoy, “went with her into the Church of England. She entered it essentially a Puritan, and that stern, heroic faith, softened by the grace of God, held her all her life. There was a providence leading this woman back to Anglicanism as plain as that which led the mother of Moses back to the court of Egypt,

and she, like Jochebed, had her ministry—to train a child who should set the people free.” “The Wesley’s mother,” says Isaac Taylor, “was the mother of Methodism in a religious and moral sense; for her courage, her submissiveness to authority, the high tone of her mind, its independence and its self-control, the warmth of her devotional feelings, and the practical direction given to them, came up, and were visibly repeated in the character and conduct of her sons.”

We left the young curate and his wife in their lodgings in London, where they “boarded without going into debt.” Here their son Samuel was born, who became the poet and satirist of Westminster School and master of Tiverton Grammar School.

In the autumn of 1690 the Marquis of Normanby presented Wesley to the living of South Ormsby, in Lincolnshire, worth £50 a year. Wesley himself describes the parsonage as “a mean cot, composed of reeds and clay.”

His family increased “one additional child per annum.” Again his pen came to the rescue, and Wesley published his *Life of Christ*, dedicating it to Queen Mary. At South Ormsby Wesley also published his treatise on the Hebrew points. Here also he wrote much for “*The Athenian Gazette*; or *Casuistical Mercury*, resolving all the nice and curious questions proposed by the ingenious.” One third of the *Gazette* at this time was from Wesley’s pen.

About the beginning of 1697 Samuel Wesley was presented to the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, “in accordance with some wish or promise of the late queen;” here he continued for thirty-eight years, and here John Wesley was born on June 17, 1703, O. S., the fifteenth of the rector’s nineteen children. John Benjamin appears to have been his full name when christened, but he never used the middle name or initial.

## CHAPTER II.

**The Epworth Household.**

Epworth in Lincolnshire.—The Wonderful Mother.—Pecuniary Difficulties.—“A Brand Plucked from the Burning.”

**L**INCOLNSHIRE, the county of “fen, marsh, and wood,” has, perhaps, been the most assertive of all the seething counties of the eastern coast of the British Isles. In almost every great crisis of English history we find leaders from Lincolnshire. For at least seven hundred years it has been represented in the high places of English life by some illustrious son.

The old market town of Epworth stands on a piece of land once inclosed by five rivers, and called the Isle of Axholme. Its population remains about the same as in the days of the Wesleys, when the parishioners numbered two thousand. They live, for the most part, in the one street that stretches out for two miles. From the time of Charles I down to the first quarter of the eighteenth century the “stilt walkers” had fiercely resisted every effort to drain the fens, and when the work was accomplished by new settlers the older Fenmen burned the crops, killed the cattle, and flooded the lands of the intruders. The turbulent spirit of the Fenmen lingered still among the villagers of Epworth, who were also profligate and vicious in their habits—as Samuel Wesley discovered to his cost during his first twelve years among them.

The exterior of Epworth Church remains much the same as in Wesley’s day. Porches, walls, buttresses, and towers have not been materially altered in the two centuries. Within, the



pews, organ, and decorations are new, the rood screen has been removed, the aisles have been reroofed, and six bells have been hung in the tower.

The first home of the Wesleys at Epworth was a typical country parsonage of the seventeenth century, a homely frame structure, plastered within and roofed with straw. Parker's well-known painting of John Wesley's deliverance from the fire



Church of St. Andrew, Epworth.

Where Rev. Samuel Wesley was rector, 1696-1735, and where John and Charles Wesley were christened.

provides a partially imaginary picture of the house: An old document thus describes it: "It consists of five bays, but all of mud and plaster, the whole building being contrived into three stories, and disposed in seven chief rooms, kitchen, hall, parlour, butterie, and three large upper rooms, and some others of common use; a little garden empailed between the stone wall and the south, a barn, a dove coate, and a hemp kiln."

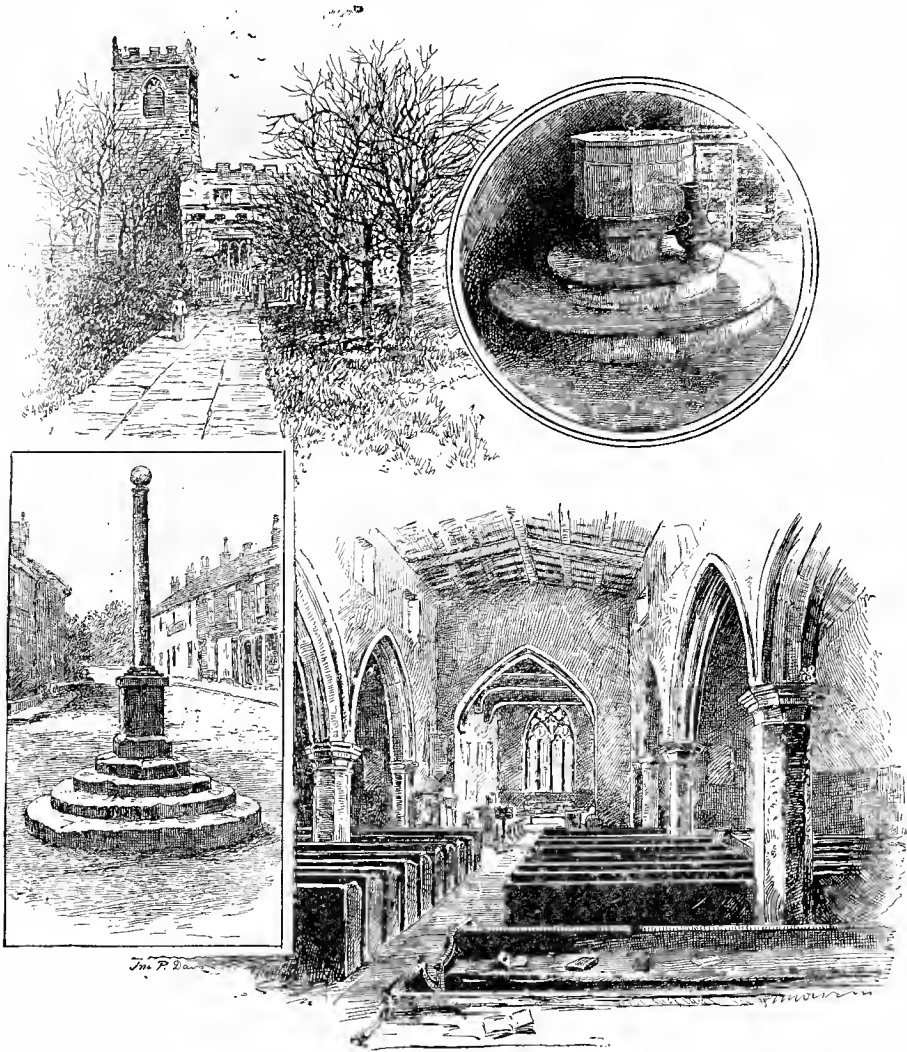
Let us take a look into the interior of the Epworth rectory, for in this household we have, as Stevens well says, the "real

origin" of Methodism. Mrs. Wesley's education in the splendid religious environment of the twenty years' life in her father's house in London, and her diligent self-improvement during her married life, gave superior qualifications for the training of the school in the home. The method of living and the course of study have been given in a letter by the matchless teacher herself. The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable, from their birth; as in dressing, undressing, and changing their linen. When turned a year old they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly. "I insist," she says, "in conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual, but when this is thoroughly done then is a child capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind."

As soon as the child learned to talk, its first act on rising and its last act before retiring were to say the Lord's prayer, to which, as it grew bigger, were added short prayers for parents, some collects, a short catechism, and some portion of Scripture, as memory could bear. That genius of successful management which utilizes every help and helper was shown when, at the regularly designated hour, the oldest took the youngest that could speak, and the second the next, to whom were read the psalms for the day and a chapter in the New Testament. In the morning they were directed to read the psalms and a chapter in the Old Testament. They were taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing, which they did by signs before they could speak.

The exquisite manners of John Wesley came largely from his careful training in childhood. The children were trained to

“civil behavior;” saluting one another by the proper name with the addition of “brother” or “sister,” yet nearly every child had



Glimpses of Epworth.

The long walk to the church.  
The market cross (now shattered).

The baptismal font and ewer.  
Interior of St. Andrew's Church.

a gentle nickname. Each must “speak handsomely for what was wanted,” even to the humblest servant, saying, “Pray, give me such a thing.” Telling the truth brought reward;

rude, ill-bred talk was unheard; and the children were forbidden freedom with the servants in conversation or association, lest something coarse or evil might be projected into their lives. But there was recreation in abundance. They thus grew up in that humble home a healthy, happy, witty band of children.

There was on the calendar of this home "The Alphabet Party." On the fifth birthday of each child, the house having been set in order the previous day for the celebration, the new pupil took the first lesson. To begin the child's education was better than a banquet, and the first effort must, if possible, be a decided success. In the school hours of the learner's first day the alphabet was acquired. The second day spelling and reading began in the Holy Scriptures, with the Book of Genesis. Much stress was laid on good reading and writing. Then came the multiplication table, elementary mathematics, grammar, history, and geography. The drill which John acquired in grammar flowered out into his later authorship of short grammars for the study of English, French, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew. Reading aloud became a specialty with the older children, from such authors as Milton and Shakespeare. John Wesley declared that his sister Emilia was the best reader of poetry that he had ever heard. The wise mother drilled the mental faculties, the "memory drill" being another specialty.

"Why do you go over the same thing with that child the twentieth time?" said the rector impatiently to his wife.

"Because," said she, "nineteen times were not sufficient. If I had stopped after telling him nineteen times, all my labor would have been lost."

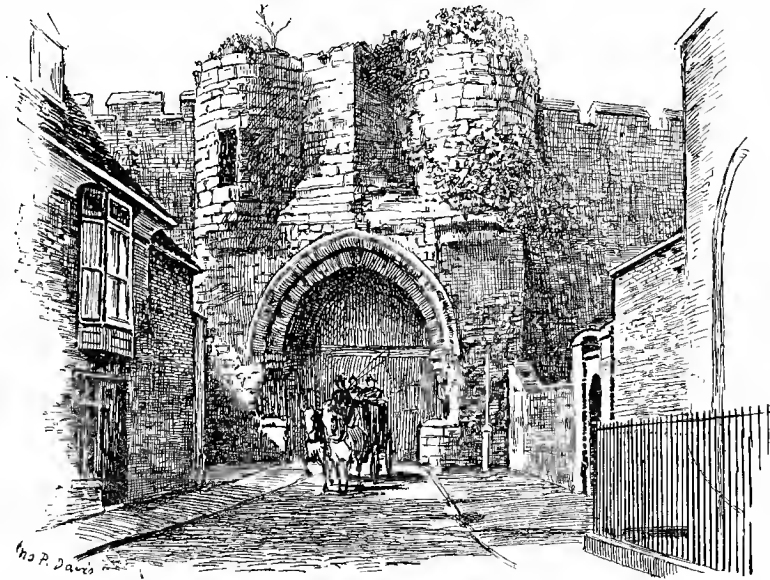
There was even a successful adaptation of university study and method. Mrs. Wesley taught first by talks or lectures, then by text-books, and required essays or papers from the elder scholars. The classics were exalted, and the daughters took the same lessons as their brothers. Mehetabel, the first

one trained by the systematic plan finally adopted, could read in the Greek Testament when only eight years old. The rector rendered assistance in the classics. In the school hours attention was given to the culture of the soul, and there even was a catechism drill in the primary department, and the teaching of Christian doctrines in the higher grades. Then there were Mrs. Wesley's own compositions, so highly commended by Adam Clarke, but lost when the rectory was burned. There were elaborate essays on religious and educational themes which she had prepared as text-books for her home school.

Has there ever been a home school equal to this in Epworth rectory? The stroke of the family clock regulates all things. But morning and evening the glad sound of youthful voices rings out in singing. Around the evening candle sit the happy family, with sewing and witty talk, with many games, with even the sensation of a haunted house; where the ghost is often heard, but never seen, and, better still, never feared. Buoywell says: "Epworth was an ideal home; the family were the embodiment of the name of their church, St. Andrew's; for they were said to have been the most loving family in Lincolnshire."

It was not all sunshine, however, in the Epworth home. The rector grew vexed because his wife would not respond "amen" to his prayer for the king. "Sukey, if we serve two kings, we must have two beds," and, as impulsively as when he left London for Oxford, Samuel Wesley hurried away to the London Convocation, to return only at the death of the king as if nothing unpleasant had ever occurred. There were many conflicts between the rash rector and his ungodly parishioners. They hated him, and he knew not how to win their love. Debts crowded in upon him. In 1705, when John was two years old, his father was arrested in the churchyard for a debt of £30 and hurried off to jail. His good wife sent him her

rings to sell, but he returned them, believing the Lord would provide otherwise. We see him at work among his "fellow-jailbirds" in Lincoln Castle reading prayers and preaching, even securing books to distribute among the prisoners. He writes: "I am now at rest. I am come to the haven where I've long expected to be." And again: "A jail is a paradise in comparison of the life I led before I came hither. No man



The Gateway of Lincoln Castle.

Samuel Wesley was imprisoned here for debt.

has worked truer for bread than I have done, and few have lived harder, or their families either."

But the storm beat more fiercely upon the rectory, for food was hard to find, the crop of the previous year having been a failure. The angry neighbors now burned the flax, stabbed the three cows that had given milk to the family, and wished "the little devils"—the children in the rectory—would be turned out to starve. The delicate, brave-hearted wife toiled on, and kept together the half-fed and half-clothed children.

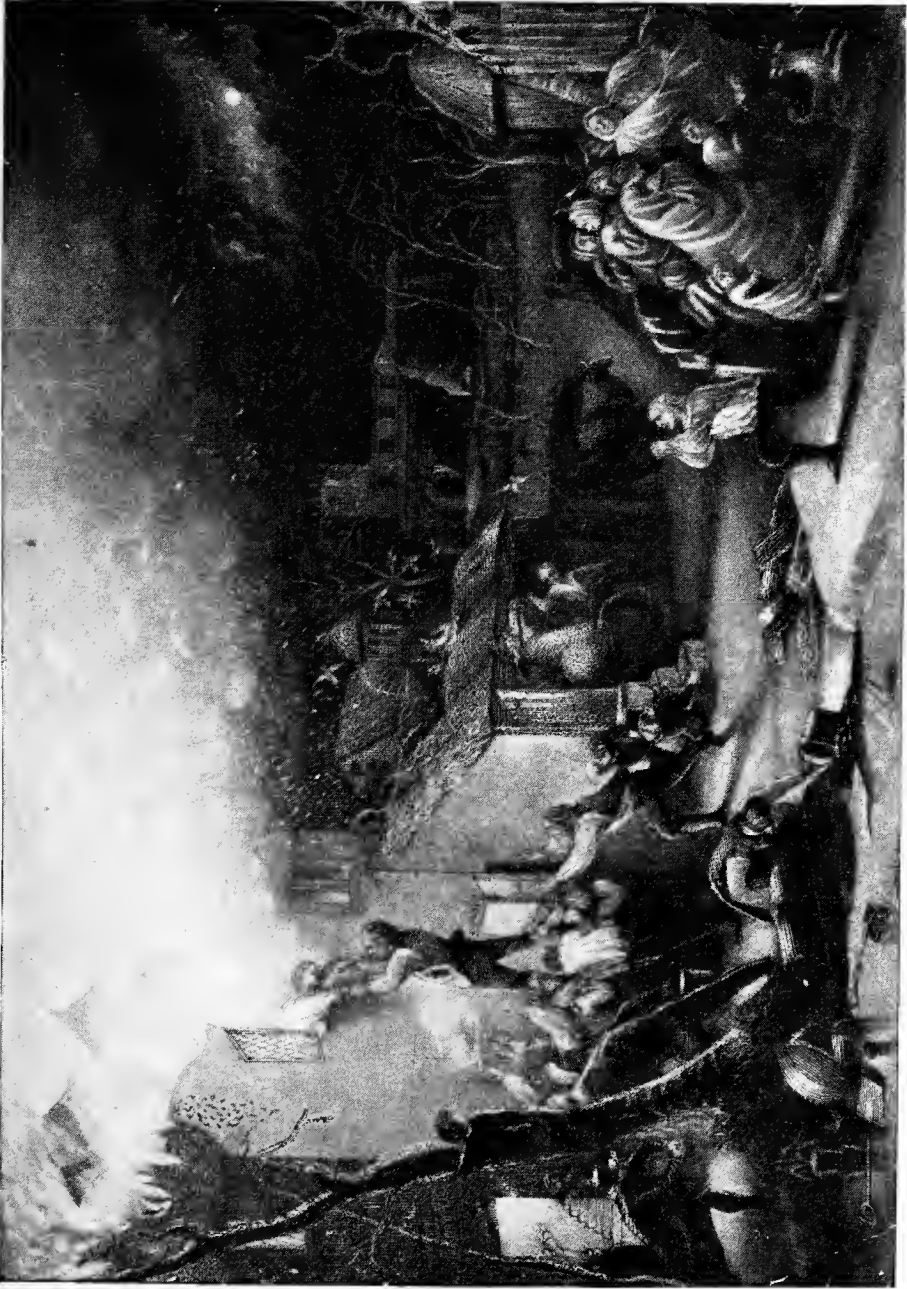
“Tell me, Mrs. Wesley,” said the Archbishop of York, “whether you have ever really wanted bread.”

“I will freely own to your grace,” she replied, “that, strictly speaking, I never did want bread. But then I had so much care to get it before it was eat and to pay for it afterward as have often made it unpleasant to me; and I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to having none at all.”

Friends came to the relief of the rector, and through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham he was presented with £125. After three months' imprisonment he returned to his parish and his books.

Then came the enemy's torch. The rectory went down in ashes, and only the good providence of God saved the lives of John and his mother. It was on Wednesday night, the 9th of February, 1709. Mrs. Wesley was ill in her room, with her two eldest daughters as companions. Bettie, the maid, and five younger children were in the nursery, while Hettie was alone in the small bedroom next to the granary, where the newly threshed wheat and corn were stored. The rector left his study at half-past ten, locked the room that contained his precious manuscripts and the records of the family and parish, and retired to rest in a room near to his wife.

It was a wild night. A howling northeast storm obscured the half moon. The fire crept up the straw roof and dropped upon the bed where Hetty slept. Scorched and alarmed, she ran to her father's room, while voices on the street cried, “Fire! fire!” The father warned his wife and daughters, helped them down stairs, and wakened those in the nursery. Bettie escaped with Charles in her arms, while three children followed. The brave father helped them into the yard and over the garden wall, and back to the house he rushed, trying in vain to find his wife. He tried to reach the study and failed.



The Brand from the Burning.  
Rescue of John Wesley from the fire in the Epworth rectory.





A dismal cry came out from the flames, "Help me!" "Jacky" had awakened to find the ceiling of his room on fire. The distracted father tried to force himself up the stairs, but streams of flame beat him back. He and the children committed the boy's soul to God. Within, Mrs. Wesley, lost in the excitement, sought the opened front doors, but was forced back by the blinding sheet of fire and smoke. At a third effort she was literally blown down by the flames. Calmly she sought divine help. Wrapped in a cloak about her chest, she waded knee-deep through the flames to the door. Her limbs were scorched, and her face was black with smoke, so that when found by her frantic husband he did not know her.

John, not yet six years old, climbed on a chest to the window, and cried to be taken out. One man was helped up over the shoulders of another, and the child leaped into his arms. At the same moment the roof fell in. The boy was put into his mother's arms. The rector, in his search for his wife, found her holding the child, who by this time he had thought was burned to ashes. He could not believe his eyes until several times he had kissed the boy. Mrs. Wesley said to him, "Are your books safe?" "Let them go," he replied, "now that you and all the children are preserved." He called on those near him to praise God, saying, "Come, neighbors, let us kneel down; let us give thanks to God. He has given me all my eight children. Let the house go; I am rich enough."

To John Wesley for more than fourscore years this event was the initial of his vivid reminiscences. There was no place found in his thought from that time onward for a doubt of a Supreme Being whose mercy interposes in moments of danger. The mother's escape was as miraculous as that of her celebrated son. In later years he caused a vignette to be engraved of a burning house, beneath his portrait, and these words underscored: "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?"

The rectory was soon rebuilt in a more substantial manner and on a more commodious plan. While the rector is attending the Convocation in London the good mother holds service with her children on Sabbath afternoons in the kitchen, reading good books and sermons. Neighbors ask the privilege of coming to hear, and there are soon as many as thirty attending



The Present Epworth Rectory from the Garden.

regularly The rector, though displeased with the news, is delighted with the plan on his return. The next year he has a conceited curate, who writes him words of bitter complaint against the sermon-reading wife. She tells her husband of the good work, and that as many as two hundred come to hear. The curate writes him strong words of a "conventicle"—a pestiferous gathering of Dissenters—and the rector in reply

urges his wife to discontinue the meetings. The defense of the mother of Methodism is in these noble words:

It is plain, in fact, that this one thing has brought more people to church than ever anything did in so short a time. We used not to have above twenty or twenty-five at evening service, whereas we have now between two and three hundred, which are more than ever came before to hear Inman in the morning.

Besides the constant attendance on the public worship of God, our meeting has wonderfully conciliated the minds of this people toward us, so that now we live in the greatest amity imaginable; and, what is still better, they are very much reformed in their behavior on the Lord's day; and those who used to be playing in the streets now come to hear a good sermon read, which is surely more according to the will of Almighty God.

I need not tell you the consequences if you determine to put an end to our meeting. If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience; but send me your positive command, in such full and express terms as may absolve me from guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The marvelous service continued to shed its light abroad, for who could resist the words and work of that matchless heroine of the spacious Epworth kitchen?

The fire sadly interfered with the school in the home. The children were received into friendly families until the rectory could be rebuilt, and when they returned their mother had a difficult task to restore order and good manners. She was deeply impressed by John's escape, and two years afterward we find her meditating in the eventide, and writing: "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that thou hast so mercifully provided for than I ever have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."

Much as the Epworth children owed to their mother, they

owed not a little also to their father, "a learned man, a comprehensive thinker, a racy writer and speaker, a brave worker, a manly soul, hasty, impetuous, hot, but loving, liberal, and true." He gave a good example to his own children by his self-sacrificing care for his widowed Nonconformist mother. He never failed, amid all his distress, to make up an annual £10 for her. His letters to his sons at school and college show that he was their friend and teacher. When he was not at Convocation he taught them the rudiments of classics. He imparted to his sons his own love of books, for he was a bibliomaniac of pronounced type. He encouraged his children in a wide range of reading. He criticised the "sorry Sternhold Psalms," and in the same letter expressed his love for music as "a great help to our devotion."

In two of his many enterprises in the press and the pulpit the vigorous rector notably anticipated the principles of his Methodist sons; he was the apologist of the "religious societies" of his day, and he was the advocate of "a broad and comprehensive scheme" of foreign missions. Indeed, he was to the year of his death disposed, could the way be made clear, to go out himself as a missionary to heathen lands.

## CHAPTER III.

**The Gownboy of the Charterhouse.**

A Friendly Duke.—The Charterhouse School.—John's School Days.—  
The Epworth Ghost.—The Brothers at Westminster.

**M**RS. WESLEY gives a characteristic glimpse of her boy John in a letter to her husband in London in 1712: "Jack has bore his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without any complaint, though he seemed angry at the small pox when they were sore, as we guessed by his looking sourly at them, for he never said anything." When John was a child his father once said to him: "Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how very little is ever done in the world by close reason." "Very little indeed," was John's comment in after years.

Mrs. Wesley trained the children to refuse food between meals, and little John's characteristic and polite reply to all kindly offers was, "I thank you; I will think of it." "One pictures John Wesley at Epworth," wrote the present rector, Dr. Overton, "as a grave, sedate child, always wanting to know the reason of everything, one of a group of remarkable children, of whom his sister Martha was most like him in appearance and character; each of them with a strong individuality and a very high spirit, but all well kept in hand by their admirable mother, all precise and rather formal, after the manner of their day, in their language and habits."

As soon as the sons of the Wesleys were old enough to leave home arrangements were made for carrying on their education

in the best schools that the kingdom afforded. Samuel went to Westminster School in 1704, then to Oxford University,



Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham.

The nobleman who nominated John Wesley to a scholarship at the Charterhouse.

returning to the old school as a teacher about ten years later, when his younger brother, John, was entering the Charterhouse. Charles, the youngest son, entered Westminster School in 1716. Thus for four years before John went up to Oxford the three brothers were in London together.

In a letter recently brought to light the rector of Epworth, in attendance upon Convocation in London in May, 1711, writes of the good fortune which was in store for his two elder boys:

I believ 'twill be no unpleasing news to so good a Friend, that my Son is chosen from Westminster to Xtchurch, & the week after Whitsun-week I design to com to Oxford with him, & see him matriculated.

I've a younger son at home whom the Duke of Buckingham has this week writt down for his going into the Charterhouse as soon as he's of age: so that my time has not been all lost in London.

The younger son was John Wesley, who at the age of eight was thus assured a free scholarship in the famous school of the Charterhouse. The nobleman to whose patronage the lad was indebted was the lord chamberlain to Queen Anne. The literary duke had befriended the literary rector before, helping him out of his financial troubles in 1703, and receiving from him an account of the rescue of "Jacky" from the rectory fire. A Latin memorandum in John's own hand records the dates of

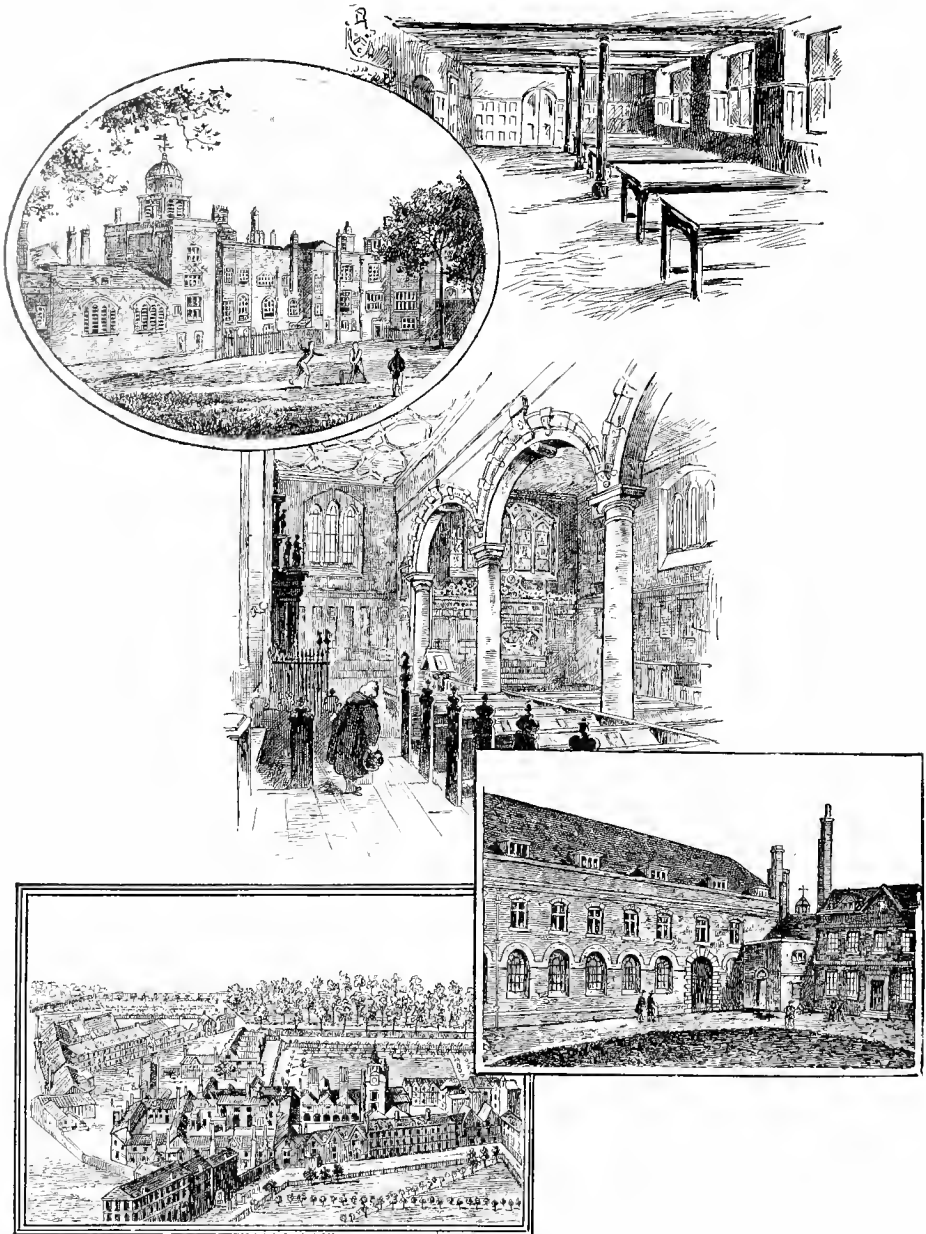
his admission to school and university opportunities: "*Joan. Westley ad nominat. ducis de Bucks admitt. in fundat. Carthus. 28 Jan. 1713-4. Ad. Univ. 24 June 1720.*"

Never had boys a nobler "private education" than the "plain living and high thinking" of the Epworth rectory had afforded the Wesleys. When John went to the Charterhouse he suffered less from the hardships of school life than many who had been reared in the lap of luxury. Already he was "a diligent and successful scholar and a patient and forgiving boy, who had at home been inured, not indeed to oppression but to hard living and scanty fare." Nevertheless, from the Epworth home to the cheerless Charterhouse must have been a trying experience even for a boy like John, who was not yet eleven years old.

The school of the Charterhouse celebrated its one hundredth anniversary the year that little John Wesley came to live within its walls, but its buildings were much more ancient, having been a part of a great Carthusian monastery. Sir Thomas Sutton, one of the merchant princes of Queen Elizabeth's reign, had bought the buildings and established in them a school and a home for old men. Forty-four boys were "on the foundation"—that is, they were educated at the expense of the Sutton fund—and it was as one of these charity scholars that John Wesley gained admission. He had his meals in the gownboys' dining hall, a low-ceiled room, adorned by a carved chimney-piece with the founder's arms sculptured above. Tradition says that it had been the refectory of the lay brothers of the monastery.

Here in Wesley's day discipline was so lax that the boys of the higher form were suffered to rob the small boys of their portions of animal food, and Wesley himself says, "From ten to fourteen I had little but bread to eat, and not great plenty of that. I believe this was so far from hurting me that it laid





The Charterhouse.

The Upper Green—playground.

The boys' dining room.

The chapel in which Wesley worshiped as a boy.

Old view of the Charterhouse.

Schoolroom (the gownboys' dormitory above).

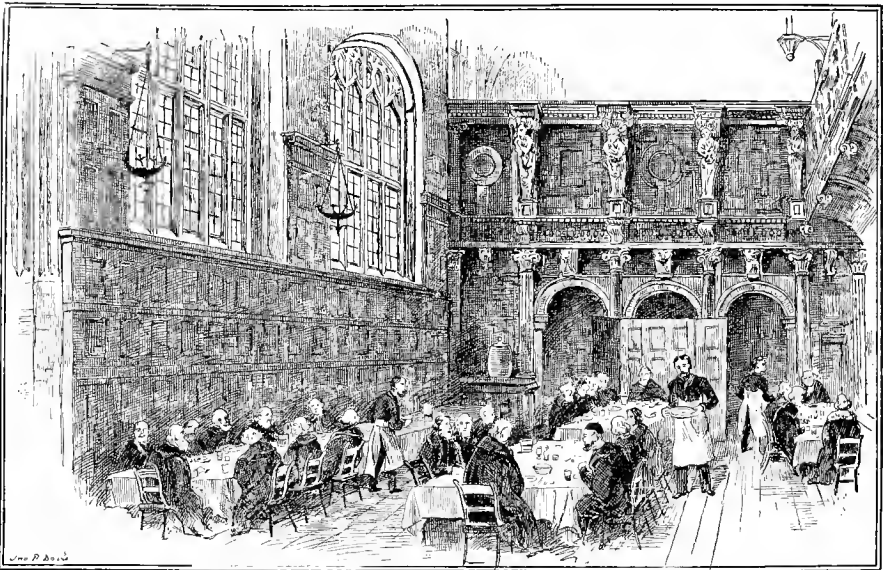
the foundation of lasting health." Isaac Taylor says: "Wesley learned as a boy to suffer wrongfully with a cheerful patience, and to conform himself to cruel despotisms without acquiring either the slave's temper or the despot's." He faithfully obeyed his father's instructions to run round the green three times every morning, "and this," declares a recent writer in the Charterhouse School Magazine, "would amount to one mile, as we know to our cost, having repeatedly done it ourselves in exceedingly bad time." But it is in chapel "that one naturally thinks of the little gownboy in his black cloth gown and knee breeches, sitting in one of the rows of seats which may still be seen just in front of the founder's tomb; and close to his left, in a sort of glorified pepper box of strange construction, sat the great head master, Thomas Walker, who had himself been a gownboy! A little farther away, in the corner near the pulpit, sat, in a similar pepper box, Andrew Tooke, usher, or second master."

Sarah Wesley, the daughter of Charles Wesley, in a letter to Adam Clarke, written from Marylebone in 1809, gives the true version of an anecdote about Tooke and John Wesley which was related to her by her father:

When John Wesley was at the Charterhouse, the schoolmaster, Mr. Tooke, missing all the little boys in the playground, supposed them by their quietness to be in some mischief. Searching, he found them all assembled in the schoolroom around my uncle, who was amusing them with instructive tales, to which they listened rather than follow their accustomed sports. The master expressed much approbation toward them and John Wesley, and he wished him to repeat this entertainment as often as he could obtain auditors and so well employ his time.

Sarah Wesley wrote this letter to confute a malicious version of the story by Nightingale, which represents Wesley as haranguing his schoolfellows from the writing desk and, when rebuked for associating with the smaller boys, replying, "Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven."

Of his religious life as a schoolboy Wesley himself gives us a glimpse. In 1738, after describing his early life at Epworth, he wrote: "The next six or seven years were spent at school, where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures and said my prayers morn-



The Great Dining Hall, Charterhouse.

ing and evening, and what I now hoped to be saved by was, (1) not being so bad as other people; (2) having still a kindness for religion; and (3) reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers." Defective as this was, Rigg justly considers Tyerman's judgment on the schoolboy, based on this confession, too severe—"John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint, and left it a sinner." It is clear that "Wesley never lost, even at the Charterhouse, a tender respect for religion, the fear of God, and the forms of Christian pro-

priety. It was no slight evidence of at least the powerful restraining influence of religion that he passed through such an ordeal as his six or seven years' residence without contracting any taint of vice."

The death of Queen Anne, his father's benefactress, occurred during John Wesley's first year in school, and the excitement which it occasioned must have passed within the school gates. Dr. Sacheverell, the agitator, stirred the populace to riots over the new king's attitude to the Church.

Toward the close of his schooldays Wesley had occasion to visit Sacheverell, who still held the living of St. Andrew's. The boy's early environment must have saturated his mind with Tory and High Church ideas, but his regard for one of their chief exponents received a rude shock when he visited the turbulent and pompous clergyman. "I remember," says Alexander Knox, "Mr. Wesley told us that his father



A Gownboy.

The costume worn by John Wesley as a boy in Charterhouse School.

was the person who composed the well-known speech delivered by Dr. Sacheverell at the close of his trial; and on this ground, when he, Mr. John Wesley, was about to be entered at Oxford, his father, knowing that the doctor had a strong interest in the college for which his son was intended, desired him to call on the doctor in his way to get letters of recommendation. 'When I was introduced,' said Mr. Wesley, 'I found him alone, as tall as a maypole, and as fine as an archbishop. I was a little fellow. He said, "You are too young to go to the university; you cannot know Greek and Latin yet. Go back

to school." I looked at him as David looked at Goliath, and despised him in my heart. I thought, "If I do not know Greek and Latin better than you, I ought to go back to school indeed." I left him, and neither entreaties nor commands could have again brought me back to him.'"

The coffeehouses were the chief social institution of the metropolis. At Smith's coffeehouse, Stockmarket, Samuel Wesley and his colleagues of the Athenian Society used to meet. As young Wesley passed by these he might have caught a glimpse of those famous old Charterhouse boys, Steele and Addison. Just before John was at the school Addison's hymns, "When all thy mercies, O my God," and "The spacious firmament on high," appeared in the *Spectator*, and must have been read with pride by the Charterhouse masters. More than twenty years after (1737) Wesley inserted them in his first Hymn Book, and thus introduced them into the public worship of the churches.

The story of "the rectory ghost" must have at least a word. "Old Jeffrey," as the children named him, did not begin his antics until John had left Epworth for the Charterhouse School. Strange noises were heard at night and during family prayers—knocks and groans and rattling doors and pans; trenchers danced and dogs howled. Clergymen and others urged Wesley to leave the "haunted" parsonage, but he replied, "No; let the devil flee from *me*, I will not flee from *him*." On the general question of apparitions Mrs. Wesley guardedly wrote to "Dear Jacky" in 1719: "I do not doubt the fact, but I cannot understand why these apparitions are permitted. If they were allowed to speak to us, and we had strength to bear such converse—if they had commission to inform us of anything relating to their invisible world that would be of any use to us in this—if they would instruct us how to avoid danger, or put us in a way of being wiser and

better, there would be sense in it; but to appear for no end that we know of, unless to frighten people almost out of their wits, seems altogether unreasonable." There is much of Susanna Wesley's characteristic common sense in these words. The latest biographer of Mrs. Wesley—Eliza Clarke, 1886—states that about a hundred years after the Wesleys had left Epworth strange noises were heard in the rectory, and the incumbent, not being able to trace or account for them, went away with his family and resided abroad for some time. The present rector is of the opinion that 'Old Jeffrey' is, to some extent, answerable for a marked feature in Wesley's character—his love of the marvelous and his intense belief in the reality of apparitions and of witchcraft."



Staircase to the "Haunted" Chamber.

One minor incident, which is linked in a singular way with the history of Methodism, ought not to be omitted. While John and Charles Wesley were at school an explosion took place which John must have heard, for the Charterhouse was not many minutes' walk from the place where it occurred, and which Charles might have heard, as there were few buildings to break the sound, save the quiet hamlet of Charing, between the city proper and Westminster. As the building at which the explosion occurred became, twenty-three years afterward, the first Methodist chapel, the account which appeared in Newsletter of May 12, 1716, has for us a more than ordinary interest:

On Thursday night last, at a quarter past nine, as they were casting three pieces of cannon of an extraordinary size, at Mr. Bayley's, a founder on Windmill Hill, soon after the second cannon was poured into the mould, the same burst (occasioned by some small damp), whereby Mr. Hill, one of the clerks belonging to the Ordnance, was so mangled that he died yesterday morning between three and four o'clock. Mr. Whiteman, who keeps a public-house hard by, and about ten or twelve more being present at this sad accident, were so dreadfully wounded that their lives are despaired of. Several persons of distinction were expected there on this occasion, but happily they did not come.

That explosion was followed by important consequences to the nation and the Church. Vulcan migrated with his molds and sledges from Windmill Hill, Moorfields, to Woolwich, and created the Royal Arsenal. The shattered foundry, after nearly a quarter of a century's abandonment to uselessness and silence, became the mother church of the whole family of Methodist churches in both hemispheres, on all continents, and on many a distant island of the sea.

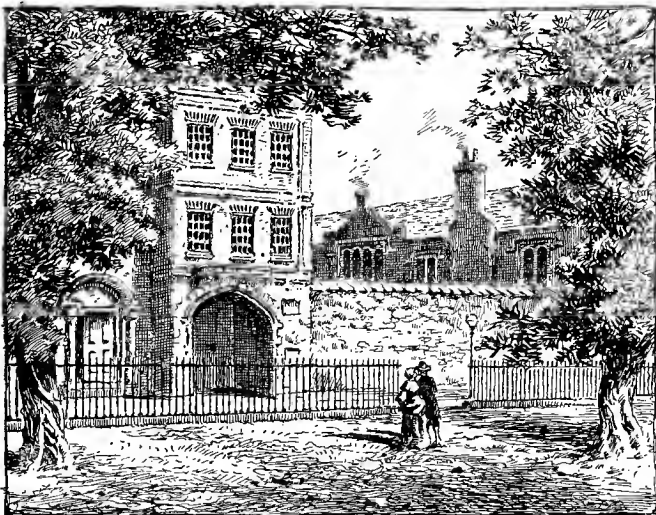
In 1720 John Wesley left the Charterhouse for Christ Church College, Oxford, taking with him a school "exhibition" prize of £40 a year, the equivalent in purchasing power of some £160 at the present day

Wesley looked back upon his years at school "not only without bitterness, but with pleasure." He would have agreed with the later Carthusian, Thackeray, that the pupils educated there "love to revisit it, and the oldest of us grow young again for an hour or two as we come back into those scenes of our boyhood."

We get an interesting record of one of Wesley's later visits in his Journal (1757): "Aug. 8th. I took a walk in the Charterhouse. I wondered that all the squares and buildings, and especially the schoolboys, looked so little. But this is easily accounted for. I was little myself when I was at school, and measured all about me by myself. Accordingly the upper boys . . . seemed to me very big and tall, quite contrary to

what they appear now, when I am taller and bigger than them."

Another link with the Charterhouse is found in Wesley's friendship for Pepusch, the famous musician, "a profound student of the ancient Greek modes and systems," who also advanced English love of music by adapting old national and popular airs to modern words. After his wife's death he left his sumptuous house and took the post of organist at the Charterhouse. Wesley records several visits to him.



Entrance to the Charterhouse.

Contact with the first musicians of their day, including not only Pepusch, but the greater master, Handel, must have done much to form the musical tastes of the two brothers, who were the great leaders of a modern reform in the music for worship in the churches.

To appreciate the astounding energy of the Wesleys in sacred psalmody, and their numerous publications of hymns, often accompanied with music, through all their public career, one must recognize the impulse which they received from this early acquaintanceship with a master.



It must not be supposed that John Wesley had educational advantages beyond his brothers. Samuel had left Epworth at fourteen, and entered Westminster School in London, going thence to Oxford, and after graduation returning to teach at Westminster. He was a fine classical scholar, a poet of taste and talent, and the friend of the great poets of his day. Charles Wesley came to study at Westminster, in 1716, while John was still at the Charterhouse. Samuel found a home for the little boy of nine, and defrayed the expenses of his education until he won a place as king's scholar, in 1721, when his board and schooling became free. A few years later we find him captain of the school, and so becoming the link between the masters and the four hundred boys. Westminster has been particularly rich in poets, and Charles Wesley's best work as a sacred lyrical poet was to bring new honor to the school which trained Ben Jonson, Cowley, Dryden, George Herbert, Cowper, and Southey.

## CHAPTER IV.

**The Crisis at Oxford.**

A Freshman of Christ Church.—No Religious Friends.—Letters from Home.—Choosing a Profession.—The First Convert.—Fellow of Lincoln.—Curate at Wroote.

**J**OHAN WESLEY came up from the Charterhouse School to Oxford University in the early summer of 1720, and matriculated at Christ Church College. With all its fame as the chief English university, Oxford was not at that time an inspiring or stimulating place. Its religion had for the most part hardened into the most inflexible and spiritless forms of High Churchism, and the undergraduate life was rude, gay, and dissolute. Foppery, conviviality, and roistering were not altogether restricted to this class, for the dons were stigmatized as greedy, dissipated, rude, covetous, and stupid. How far the lad from Epworth went with these gay companions we do not know. He afterward accused himself of having been sinful and contented at this period, but the praying mother and the habit of the home which had made him a praying and Bible-reading schoolboy still bound him to these religious observances and probably restrained him from flagrant vice. It was five years, however, before he awakened to the serious purpose of life. He was until then content to stand well in his studies, surpassing all in logical acuteness, and to be a favorite with his fellows.

His contemporary at Christ Church, Badcock, describes him as "the very sensible and acute collegian, baffling every man by the subtleties of logic, and laughing at them for being so

easily routed; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments;" "gay and sprightly, with

These five pounds if you please shall be deducted at Christmas, or if that does not suit with your Convenience shall be returned as soon as possible

I am  
 Your obliged & humble Servt.  
 John Wesley.

For  
 Mr Lyez Treasurer of  
 The Charter-house  
 London.

A Letter from John Wesley at Oxford to the Treasurer of the Charterhouse.

a turn for wit and humor." He wrote sparkling letters to his friends, and his brother Samuel received some stanzas after the Latin, composed as a college exercise, on "Cloe's Favorite

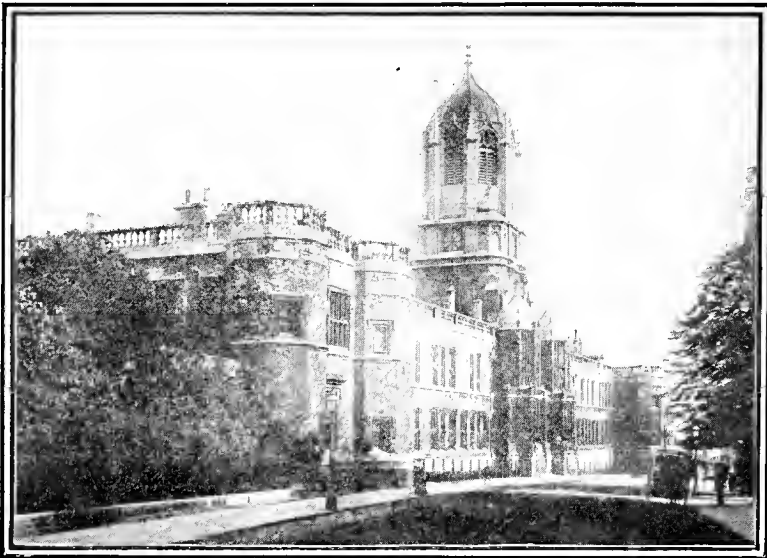
Flea." In more sedate mood he sent verses on the 65th psalm to his father, who was pleased with them, and urged him not to bury his talent. His letters reveal a wealth of family affection and warm interest in all the little details of the home life at Epworth and at Wroote.

In 1724 the family removed to Wroote, the living which his father at this time held with Epworth. Begging for letters from his sisters, he says: "I should be glad to hear how things go on at Wroote, which I now remember with more pleasure than Epworth; so true it is, at least to me, that *the persons, not the place, make home so pleasant.*" His sister Emilia was the eldest of the gifted sisters. "Her love for her mother was strong as death, and she regarded her brother John with a passionate fondness. Though so much younger than herself, she selected him as her most intimate companion, her counselor in difficulties, to whom 'her heart lay open at all times.'" Wesley was a most affectionate brother, and his letters show that he was the opposite of the "semistoical person, destitute of homely warmth and kindness," which some of his critics have supposed him to be.

For the first time Wesley became troubled about his health, and on one occasion, while walking in the country, he stopped violent bleeding of the nose by the somewhat drastic method of plunging into the river. He read Cheyne's Book of Health and Long Life, a plea for exercise and temperance. This book led Wesley to eat sparingly and drink water, a change which he considered to be one means of preserving his health. He had a constant struggle "to make ends meet," although there is no evidence to show that he was extravagant. "Dear Jack," wrote his mother, "be not discouraged; do your duty, keep close to your studies, and hope for better days. Perhaps, notwithstanding all, we shall pick up a few crumbs for you before the end of the year. Dear Jacky, I beseech Almighty

God to bless thee." This letter was written just after he had taken his bachelor's degree, in 1724. Two years later he secured the Lincoln fellowship, which brought him financial relief.

When John Wesley was twenty-two years of age, in 1725, he came to a turning point in his life: he faced the question of his future work. The prospect of taking holy orders awakened



The Front of Christ Church College, Oxford.

The college of Samuel, Jr., John, and Charles Wesley.

his most serious thought, but he realized his spiritual unfitness for the work of the ministry. He had not fallen into flagrant sin; the aristocratic and expensive vice of some of the young noblemen at Christ Church was scarcely possible for him, even had he desired it. The letters of his mother carried always with them the aroma of her tender love and the purity of the Epworth life. He never lost his strong and touching love for his brothers and sisters. His love of learning, stimulated by his father's letters, was a safeguard from idleness.

But the divine fire burned low. John Wesley had become simply the gay collegian, a general favorite in society, a sparkling wit; maintaining a high repute for scholarship, but, according to his own account, comparatively indifferent to spiritual things. He writes: "I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some one or other known sin, though with some intermission and short struggles, especially before and after the Holy Communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year." Late one night he had a conversation with the porter of his college, which began with pleasantries, but ended with a point that deeply impressed the merry student:

"Go home and get another coat," said Wesley

"This is the only coat I have in the world, and I thank God for it," replied the porter.

"Go home and get your supper, then," said the young student.

"I have had nothing to-day but a drink of water, and I thank God for that," rejoined the other.

"It is late, and you will be locked out, and then what will you have to thank God for?"

"I will thank him that I have the dry stones to lie upon."

"John," said Wesley, "you thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie upon; what else do you thank him for?"

"I thank him," responded the good man, "that he has given me my life and being, a heart to love him, and a desire to serve him;" and the porter's word and tone made Wesley feel that there was something in religion which he had not as yet found.

He wrote home in regard to entering the ministry. His father's reply was written with a trembling pen: "You see,"

wrote the old man, "Time has shaken me by the hand, and Death is but a little way behind him. My eyes and heart are now almost all I have left, and I bless God for them." He counseled delay, not liking "a callow clergyman," and fearing, too, that his motive might be "as Eli's son's, to eat a piece of bread." But his mother judged his character better, and marked the change in her son's tone of thought. The rector came around—as he generally did—to the opinion of his wife. The latter writes: "Mr. Wesley differs from me, and would engage you, I believe, in critical learning, which, though incidentally of use, is in nowise preferable to the other (practical divinity). I earnestly pray God to avert that great evil from you of engaging in trifling studies to the neglect of such as are absolutely necessary. I dare advise nothing. God Almighty direct and bless you! . . . Now in good earnest resolve to make religion the business of your life, for, after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary, and all things else are comparatively little to the purposes of life." Then his mother's words become more pointed: "I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation by Jesus Christ. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it will abundantly reward your pains; if you have not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy."

His father again cautioned him against taking up the ministry as a mere means of livelihood, adding that "the principal spring and motive . . . must certainly be the glory of God, and the service of the Church in the edification of our neighbor. And woe to him who with any meaner leading view attempts so sacred a work." The young man was in a mood to heed such noble words.

At this time, and a year later, Wesley came under the influ-

ence of some remarkable books which he never ceased to hold in high esteem, though he found deliverance from their ascetic and mystic tendencies. They were Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* (in Stanhope's translation, *The Christian Pattern*); Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*; and later, Law's *Serious Call*, and *Christian Perfection*.

*The Christian Pattern* profoundly moved the heart of Wesley. It had been his father's favorite book, his "great and old companion." Its sentences make us feel while we read them as though we had laid our hand on the heart, throbbing with sorrows like our own, which beat so many years ago in the old mystic's breast.

Wesley writes in his *Journal*: "The providence of God directing me to Kempis's *Christian Pattern*, I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, very angry at Kempis for being too strict, though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. . . . Meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at and pray for inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much and living so good a life,' I doubted not but I was a good Christian."

Canon Overton marks the irony of the last sentence, and asks if it is not right in this case to defend John Wesley against John Wesley. While thoroughly believing in the reality and importance of the later change, he thinks it cannot be denied that Wesley from this time forward led a most devoted life. Rigg believes he sees here the doctrine of entire Christian consecration and holiness, which afterward developed into the



Methodist doctrine of Christian perfection. Full of spiritual beauty are Wesley's own words: "I saw that simplicity of intention and purity of affection, one design in all we speak and do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed the wings of the soul, without which she can never ascend to God. I sought after this from that hour."

Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying* strengthened the convictions awakened by à Kempis. "In reading several parts of this book," says Wesley, "I was exceedingly affected. . . I resolved to dedicate all my life to God—all my thoughts and words and actions—being thoroughly conscious that there was no medium, but that every part of my life, not some only, must either be a sacrifice to God or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil." Well does Tyerman note that here we have the turning point in Wesley's history. It was not until thirteen years after this that he received the consciousness of being saved through faith in Christ, but from this time his whole aim was to serve God and his fellow-men.

Another result of reading Taylor was the commencement of the famous Journals. They now occupy a well-recognized place in the literature of the eighteenth century, but they were the outcome of Wesley's spiritual resolve to make a more careful use of all his time, and to keep an account of its employment.

Although during the next few years Wesley became an ascetic, with High Church beliefs, strong ritualistic tendencies, and a mystical bias, he was repelled by à Kempis's extreme doctrine of self-mortification, and Taylor's morbid teaching as to the necessity of perpetual sorrowful uncertainty concerning personal salvation. In a letter to his mother he writes:

If we dwell in Christ and he in us (which he will not do unless we are regenerate), certainly we must be sensible of it. If we can never have any certainty of our being in a state of salvation, good reason it is that

every moment should be spent not in joy, but in fear and trembling, and then undoubtedly we are in this life, of all men, most miserable. God deliver us from such a fearful doctrine as this!

Here, in 1725, we have the basis of another of the characteristic doctrines of the coming Methodism—that of a present salvation from guilt and fear through the indwelling of Christ. This was opposed to the Carolan High Churchmanship of Taylor, as well as to Calvinism. But Wesley had yet to learn by experience the power of evangelical faith which laid the foundation of his later teaching on conversion and the “witness of the Spirit.”

In the same memorable year, 1725, Wesley and his mother rejected the doctrine of Predestination, which for centuries had terrified many earnest souls, and narrowed the sympathies and work of the Christian Church. Wesley asks: “How is this consistent with either the divine justice or mercy? Is it mercy to ordain a creature to everlasting misery? Is it just to punish man for crimes which he could not but commit? That God should be the author of sin and injustice—which must, I think, be the consequence of maintaining this opinion—is a contradiction of the clearest idea we have of the divine nature and perfections.” To this his mother replies:

The doctrine of Predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred, because it directly charges the most high God with being the author of sin. I think you reason well and justly against it, for it is certainly inconsistent with the justness and goodness of God to lay any man under either a physical or moral necessity of committing sin, and then to punish him for doing it.

Hugh Price Hughes, in the *Contemporary Review* for March, 1897, declared:

John Wesley killed Calvinism. No really instructed and responsible theologian dares to assert now that Christ died only for a portion of mankind, although the full logical effect of asserting the redemption of the entire race has not yet been universally realized. Little did the young Oxonian dream in 1725 that he and his mother were sowing the seed of

the bitterest theological controversy of his life, over which Methodism would be rent in twain by an irreparable schism, that would unhappily leave the evangelical section of the Established Church on the wrong side of the breach, doomed to the comparative helplessness we witness to-day, although it would burst his fetters and enable him to exclaim, with prophetic truth, "The world is my parish."

In the midsummer of this same year, while preparing for ordination, Wesley won his first convert. He tells his mother: "I stole out of company at eight in the evening with a young gentleman with whom I was intimate. As we took a turn in an aisle of St. Mary's Church, in expectation of a young lady's funeral, with whom we were both acquainted, I asked him if he really thought himself my friend; and, if he did, why he would not do me all the good he could. He began to protest, in which I cut him short by desiring him to oblige me in an instance which he could not deny to be in his own power, to let me have the pleasure of making him a whole Christian, to which I knew he was at least half persuaded already; that he could not do me a greater kindness, as both of us would be fully convinced when we came to follow that young woman." The word went home. Eighteen months afterward the young man died of consumption, and Wesley preached his funeral sermon.

Wesley's earnestness soon exposed him to the raillery of the college wits, and this evoked a characteristic clarion blast from his father: "Does anyone think the devil is dead, or asleep, or has no agents left? Surely virtue can bear being laughed at. The Captain and Master endured something more for us before he entered into glory, and unless we track his steps, in vain do we hope to share that glory with him." As leaders of the militant host of God both the Wesleys owed much of their moral muscle to their father, and that old soldier's words echo in many a war song by Charles Wesley.

John Wesley was ordained deacon by John Potter, Bishop of

Oxford, in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, on Sunday, September 19, 1725, and priest on September 22, 1728. His first sermon was preached at South Leigh, in Oxfordshire, in 1725. Of the fruitlessness of all this early preaching he wrote long afterward: "Preaching was defective and fruitless, for 'from 1725 to 1729 I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of preaching the Gospel, taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no

"Epworth, Aug<sup>t</sup> 23. 1728.

John Wesley M. A. Fellow of  
Lincoln College, was twenty  
five years old the 17<sup>th</sup> of June  
last, having bin baptiz'd  
a few hours after his birth,  
By mee, Sam<sup>l</sup> Wesley  
Rector of Epworth."

Facsimile in the handwriting of Adam Clarke, who adds these words: "Transcribed literatim from Mr. J. Wesley's certificate which seems to have been drawn up & sent to Bp Potter, to ascertain Mr. J. Wesley's age previously to his being ordained. "A. Clarke."

repentance. From 1729 to 1734, laying a deeper foundation of repentance, I saw a little fruit. But it was only a little—and no wonder; for I did not preach faith in the blood of the covenant."

There was great rejoicing in the rectory at Wroote on March 17, 1726, when John Wesley was elected a fellow of Lincoln College. His father had only £5 to keep his family from March until after harvest, but he wrote in high spirits: "What will be my own fate, God knows, before this summer is over—*sed passi graviora* [but we have suffered

heavier troubles]. Wherever I am, my Jack is a fellow of Lincoln.”

For more than a quarter of a century Wesley was connected with Lincoln College, and its name appears on the title pages of all his works. The college was founded in the fifteenth century by two Bishops of Lincoln, who were bent on extirpating the Wyclifite heresies and other opinions dangerous to the Church. Goldwin Smith says: “The two orthodox prelates would have stood aghast if they could have foreseen that their little college of true theologians would one day number among its fellows John Wesley, and that Methodism would be cradled within its walls.”

Wesley's Lincoln apartments are the second-floor rooms on the right, or south, side of the first quadrangle opposite the clock tower. In these rooms the “Holy Club” met in 1729. Hundreds of visitors ramble into this quiet quadrangle to-day, many of them from the colonies and America. They pluck a leaf from the vine, look into the study of the man whose parish was the world, visit the chapel, with its windows of rich stained glass, stand in the pulpit from which Wesley preached, and gaze upon his portrait by Williams, in the dining hall.

Wesley found the moral tone and discipline of Lincoln superior, on the whole, to that of other colleges, and the fellows “both well-natured and well-bred.” He was soon appointed Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes. It became his duty to lecture weekly in the college hall to all the undergraduates on the Greek Testament. The Greek text was the basis of the lecture, but the main object was to teach divinity, not merely a language. As moderator of the classes he presided over the disputations, held every day except Sunday. The disputants argued on one side or the other; the moderator had to listen to the arguments, and then to decide with whom the victory lay. John Locke, at Christ Church seventy years

before, lamented the "unprofitableness of these verbal niceties;" but Wesley writes, "I could not avoid acquiring thereby some degree of expertness in arguing, and especially in discovering and pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art."

He became a hard and wide student, and, indeed, continued such all his life. Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, logic, ethics,



Wesley's Rooms, Lincoln College, and the "Wesley Vine."

metaphysics, natural philosophy, oratory, poetry, and divinity entered into his weekly plan of study. He obtained the degree of Master of Arts in 1727, acquiring much reputation in his disputation for his degree. His financial struggles were over, but he was rigid in his economy and was able to help his father and his family to the end of life. He saved about £2 a year by allowing his hair to grow long, in spite of the protest of his mother, thus escaping the expense of a wig. In a letter to his brother Samuel occurs his well-known sentence: "Leisure and

I have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged me."

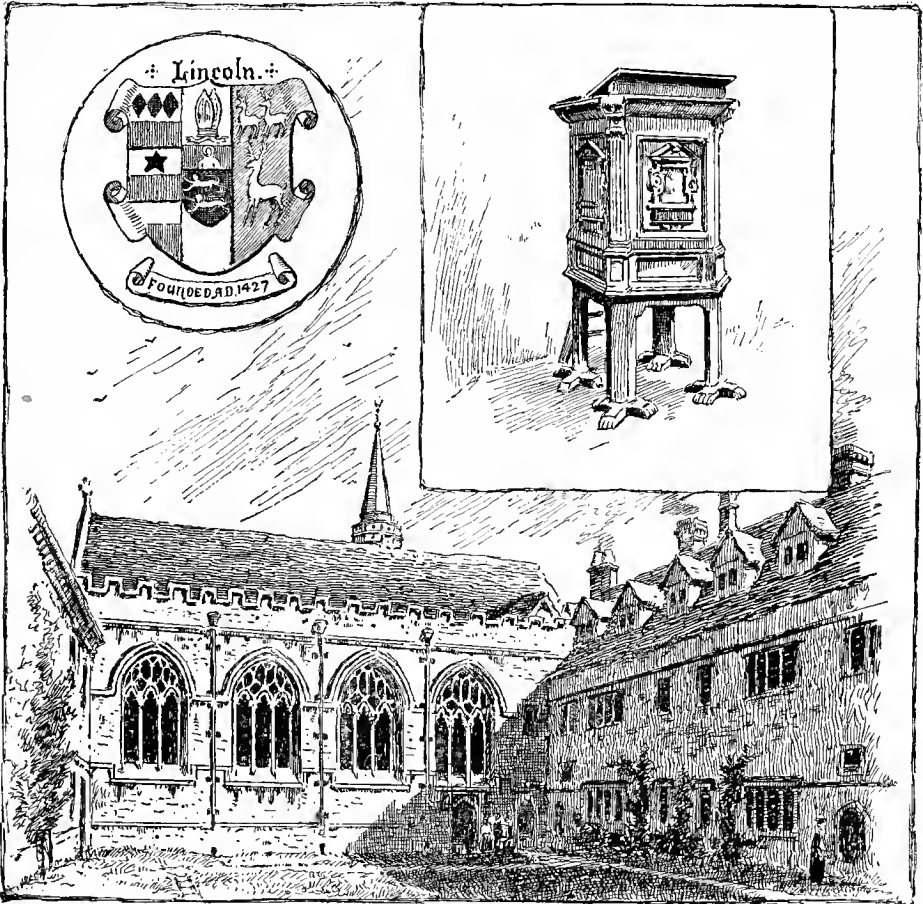
His brother Charles came up from Westminster School to Christ Church soon after John Wesley's removal to Lincoln. When John spoke to him about religion he said, "What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?" and would hear no more. But the heart of John was set upon saintliness. He courteously broke off acquaintanceships which hindered him, after fruitless attempts to bring his companions to his own serious view of life. He now began the system of early rising, which he continued to the end of life. He could say, after sixty years, that he still rose at four o'clock.

His father was now sixty-five years of age, and in feeble health. To fill the small living of Wroote in addition to that of Epworth, he needed a curate. A school in Yorkshire had been offered John, with a good income, and he was attracted by the seclusion it promised, but his mother saw that God had better work for him to do, and, again following her advice, he declined it. He went to Lincolnshire and acted as his father's curate for two and a quarter years, returning at intervals to Oxford. This was the only experience he ever had in parochial work.

Wroote was surrounded by fens, and often had to be reached by boat. During one journey, in 1728, Wesley narrowly escaped drowning, the fierce current driving the boat against another craft and filling it with water. The small brick church in which he preached at Wroote was taken down a century ago and the material used for paving the streets of Epworth. One incident of this period is worth preserving, as it bears upon the organized fellowship of the Methodists. He tells us that he traveled several miles to converse with a "serious man" who said to him, "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve him alone; you must therefore find companions or make them; the Bible knows nothing of

solitary religion." He was recalled to Oxford by the rector of his college in 1729, and found the Methodist movement commenced by his brother Charles.

Wesley was becoming an earnest ascetic ritualist. He held



Sketches of Lincoln College.

Arms of Lincoln College. The chapel, Lincoln College. The pulpit in Lincoln Chapel.

that water should be mixed with the wine in the daily Holy Communion. He advised something near akin to confession, as a racy letter from his sister Emelia shows:

To lay open the state of my soul to you, or any of our clergy, is what I have no inclination to do at present; and I believe I never shall. I shall



not put my conscience under the direction of mortal man as frail as myself. To my own Master I stand or fall. Nay, I scruple not to say that all such desire in you or any other ecclesiastic seems to me like Church tyranny, and assuming to yourselves a dominion over your fellow-creatures which was never designed you by God.

The old Puritan spirit comes out in the letter of this sister, who had the Puritan blood in her veins. Her brother was teaching almost all that a High Anglican of to-day teaches, except that he does not appear to have held to the "conversion of the elements" in the Eucharist. A little later, under the influence of his friend Clayton, he left the guidance of the Bible to follow that of tradition, or such pretended tradition as the Apostolical Constitutions. He says of himself that he "made antiquity a coordinate rule with Scripture."

The strict High Churchman also sought rest for his heart in mysticism. He first read William Law's *Christian Perfection and Serious Call* in 1728 or 1729. These two powerful devotional treatises did not contain the mystical errors of Law's later teaching. Although in later years Wesley diverged widely from Law, he never lost his admiration for the *Serious Call*. A very short time before his death he spoke of it as a "treatise which will hardly ever be excelled, if it be equaled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression or for justice and depth of thought." He owned that Law's two books sowed the seed of Methodism.

Later Law went astray into the fields of mysticism. Wesley visited him at Putney in 1732, and from that period began to read the German mystics. Their noble descriptions of union with God and internal religion deeply impressed him, but he never followed Law into the "unfathomable confusions" of Behmen. He never accepted the theories which deny the necessity of the means of grace. He appears to have extricated himself from the meshes of mysticism during his sojourn

in Georgia, and writes to his brother Samuel: "I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the writings of the mystics; under which term I comprehend all and only those who slight any of the means of grace." He asks his brother to give him his thoughts upon the scheme of their doctrines which he has drawn up, and thinks they may be of consequence "not only to all this province, but to nations of Christians yet unborn." Thus this Christian knight was delivered from this "wandering fire;" he never passed "into the silent life," and we must return with him to Oxford to practice the counsel of the "serious" countryman who told him that "the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion."

## CHAPTER V

**The Holy Club.**

Charles Wesley Begins It.—“Methodists.”—John Wesley its Father.—  
 “Men of One Book.”—Works of Mercy and Help.—The Oxford  
 Methodists.—Whitefield.—Death of the Epworth Rec-  
 tor.—Reserved for a Better Appointment.

**C**HARLES WESLEY came up to Christ Church, in 1726, a bright, rollicking young fellow, “with more genius than grace.” He had objected to becoming “a saint all at once.” But the rebuff did not estrange the brothers, and soon after John went to Wroote, Charles wrote to him in a very changed mood, seeking the counsel which before he had spurned. Lamenting his former state of insensibility, he declared: “There is no one person I would so willingly have to be the instrument of good to me as you. It is owing, in great measure, to somebody’s prayers (my mother’s most likely) that I am come to think as I do; for I cannot tell myself how or why I awoke out of my lethargy, only that it was not long after you went away.” He not only gave himself with zest to his studies, but began to attend the weekly sacrament and induce others to unite with him in seeking true holiness. He and his companions adopted certain rules for right living, and apportioned their time exactly to study and religious duties, allotting as little as possible to sleeping and eating, and as much as possible to devotion. This precise regularity caused a young gentleman of Christ Church to say derisively, “Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up.”

Charles Wesley says that the name of Methodist “was

bestowed upon himself and his friends because of their strict conformity to the method of study prescribed by the university." John Wesley, in an address to George II, designates his societies "the people in derision called Methodists," and in his English Dictionary makes good use of the word. He defines a Methodist as "one that lives according to the *method* laid down in the Bible."

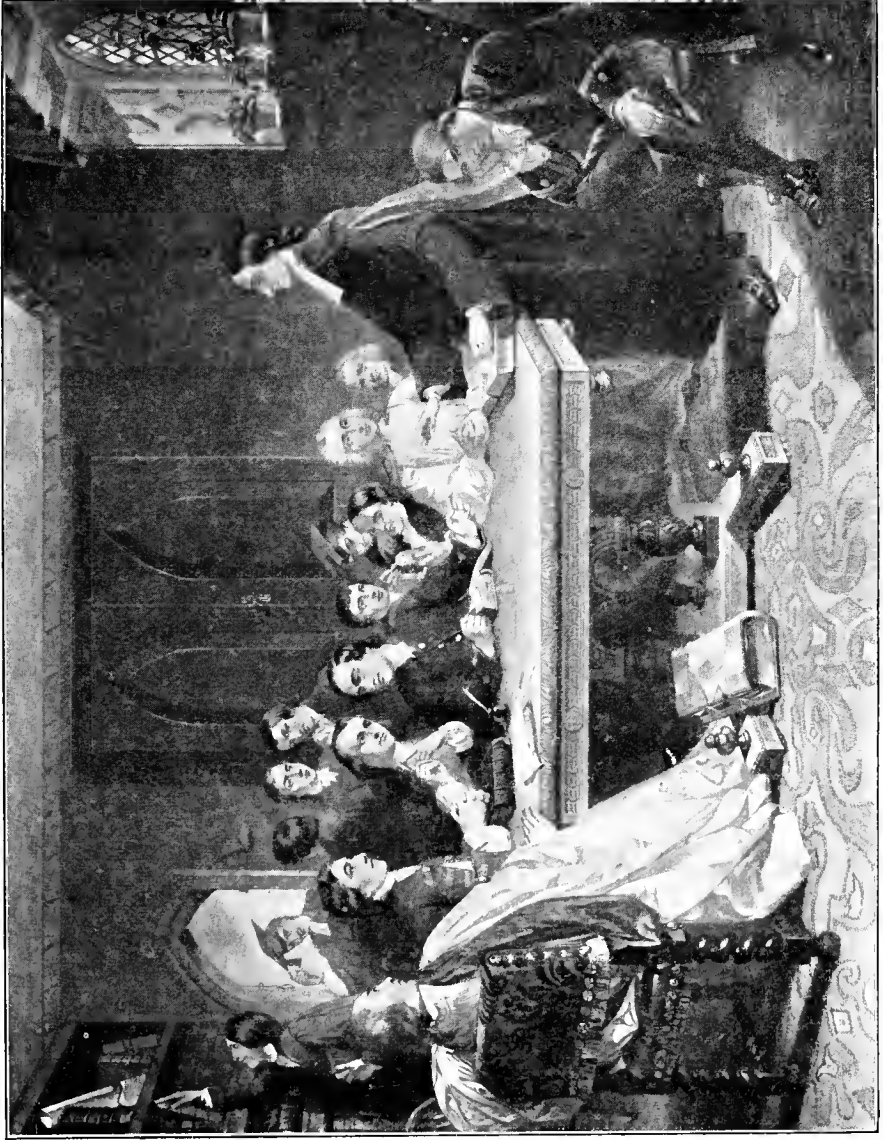
Overton, with an honorable regard for his own college worthy of Wesley himself, says: "A Lincoln man may be pardoned for remarking with satisfaction that Lincoln had nothing to do with the feeble jokes which were made upon these good earnest youths. Christ Church and Merton must divide the honor between them. The Holy Club, Bible Bigots, Bible Moths, Sacramentarians, Supererogation Men, Methodists—all these titles were invented by the fertile brains of 'the wits' to cast opprobrium, as they thought, but really to confer honor upon a perfectly inoffensive band of young men who only desired to *be* what they and their opponents were alike *called*—Christians. An Oxford man may, indeed, blush for his university when he reflects that these young men could not even attend the highest service of the Church without running the gauntlet of a jeering rabble, principally composed of men who were actually being prepared for the sacred ministry of that Church."

When John Wesley returned to Oxford he at once became the leader of this little band formed by his brother. His age, his genius for generalship, his position in the university, his superior learning, made this a matter of course. And Charles rejoiced in this. A more perfect instance of real brotherhood it would be difficult to find in history. The elder always spoke of the work which was being done as their joint work. "My brother and I," is the expression he constantly used in describing it. Charles was by no means the mere "man Friday" of

his brother, as some have supposed. He would not have been a Wesley if he had not given proof of magnificent individuality. It must be remembered that he was the first Methodist. He was to take his full share in the work of the great revival, not only as a poet, but as a preacher. But John Wesley was nicknamed "the Curator of the Holy Club," or, sometimes, "the Father of the Holy Club." The old rector of Epworth, hearing of John's new title, wrote: "If this be so, I am sure I am the grandfather of it; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished than to have the title of 'His Holiness.'"

Gambold says: "Mr. John Wesley was always the chief manager, for which he was very fit; for he not only had more learning and experience than the rest, but he was blest with such activity as to be always gaining ground, and such steadiness that he lost none. What proposals he made to any were sure to charm them, because they saw him always the same. What supported this uniform vigor was the care he took to consider well of every affair before he engaged in it, making all his decisions in the fear of God, without passion, humor, or self-confidence; for though he had naturally a very clear apprehension, yet his exact prudence depended more on humanity and singleness of heart. To this I may add, that he had, I think, something of authority on his countenance, though, as he did not want address, he could soften his manner and point it as occasion required. Yet he never assumed anything to himself above his companions. Any of them might speak their mind, and their words were as strictly regarded by him as his were by them."

The first work of the Holy Club was the study of the Bible. The new movement was spiritual, humanitarian, but, first and strongest of all, scriptural. The searching of the Scriptures was earnest, open-minded, devout, unceasing. Wesley him-



Rev. John Wesley and His Friends at Oxford. [From the painting by Marshall Claxton.]



self said: "From the very beginning—from the time that four young men united together—each of them was *homo unius libri*; a man of one book. They had one, and only one rule of judgment. . . They were continually reproached for this very thing, some terming them in derision Bible Bigots; others, Bible Moths; feeding, they said, upon the Bible as moths do on cloth. . . And indeed, unto this day, it is their constant endeavor to think and speak as the oracles of God." This fundamental fact in the history of Methodism must never be lost to view

At first the friends met every Sunday evening; then two evenings in every week were passed together, and at last every evening from six to nine. They began their meetings with prayer, studied the Greek Testament and the classics, reviewed the work of the past day, and talked over their plans for the morrow, closing all with a frugal supper. They received the Lord's Supper weekly, fasted twice a week, and instituted a searching system of self-examination, aiming in all things to do the will of God and be zealous of good works.

The first flower of the study of the Bible was a new philanthropy. William Morgan, of Christ Church, visited a condemned wife murderer in the castle jail; Morgan also conversed with the debtors in prison, and was convinced that good might be done among them. On August 24, 1730, the brothers Wesley went with him to the castle, and from that time forward the prisoners became their special care. Morgan also began the work of visiting the sick. John Wesley wrote to his father for counsel, and received an inspiring letter: "I have the highest reason to bless God that he has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom he has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them."

The Bishop of Oxford gave the young men his approval, and



the visiting was extended to poor families in the city. Children were also taught. One of these, a poor girl, called upon Wesley in a state of great destitution. He said to her, "You seem half starved; have you nothing to cover you but that thin linen gown?" She replied, "Sir, this is all I have." Wesley put his hand into his pocket, but found it nearly empty. The walls



Bocardo, the Prison, Oxford.

Where the Oxford Methodists did works of "mercy and help."

of his chamber, however, were hung with pictures, and they seemed to accuse him. "It struck me," he says, "'Will thy Master say, "Well done, good and faithful steward"? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! O Justice! O Mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor maid?'"

It was the practice, he says, of all the Oxford Methodists to give away each year all they had after providing for their own necessities. He himself, having thirty pounds a year, lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave away thirty-two. The third year he received ninety pounds and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds, and still lived on twenty-eight as before, giving to the poor all the rest.

While the number of the Methodists was only four at first, in the following year two or three other students desired the liberty of meeting with them, and these were joined by one of Charles Wesley's students. In 1732 Benjamin Ingham, of Queens; Thomas Broughton, of Exeter; John Clayton, of Brazenose; James Hervey, and two or three others, were admitted to the club, and in 1735 George Whitefield, of Pembroke, became a member. The numbers fluctuated, and when the Wesleys sailed for Georgia the Holy Club had thirteen members. In 1733 there were twenty-seven Methodist communicants. During one of Wesley's absences at Epworth the number dwindled to five, but it rallied again when its leader was once more at the front. Of these early Methodists three were tutors in colleges and the rest were bachelors of arts or undergraduates. All were strictly orthodox in doctrine, or counted themselves so; and practically they had all things in common; that is, no one was allowed to want what another was able to spare.

It would be interesting to follow, if space allowed, the subsequent career of the Oxford Methodists. The sympathetic Morgan died of consumption in 1732. Robert Kirkham, whose sister Betty was probably Wesley's first sweetheart, became an Anglican curate. John Clayton became a High Church clergyman, and a powerful preacher, but refused to recognize the

Wesleys after they broke away from Church usages and preached in the open air. Benjamin Ingham's friendship was of better metal. He followed them to Georgia and joined in their later labor. John Gambold, after a brief experience as an Anglican rector, became a Moravian bishop, and wrote many hymns. James Hervey became a charitable country parson of Calvinist creed, who wrote the once popular "Meditations." Thomas Broughton was curate at the Tower of London, and for the better part of his life secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. Charles Kinchin became dean of Corpus Christi College. He was a liberal Churchman, and maintained a close friendship with the Wesleys through life. John Whitelamb, a protégé of Rev. Samuel Wesley, Sr., became his curate, and married his daughter Mary. He was greatly afflicted and spent a life of obscurity as rector of the starveling parish of Wroote, adjoining Epworth.

The Holy Club had one member whose fame in some respects surpassed them all—George Whitefield. He was the son of an innkeeper at Gloucester, and drew ale for the customers until he was fifteen years of age. At the school to which he was sent he made a little stir with his talent for oratory and acting, read Thomas à Kempis, and began to dream of being a minister. At eighteen he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, as a servitor, for which his bartending experience served him well. He was drawn to the Holy Club, but in his poverty dared not join these young gentlemen, though he often gazed at them with deep emotion as they passed through a jeering crowd to receive the sacrament at St. Mary's. At length he made the acquaintance of Charles Wesley, who gave him religious counsel and helpful books, which brought him a powerful religious experience.

He learned that true religion did not consist in going to church, or faithfulness in any external duties, but was a union

C 3

16. *Lectio Grammatica*  
10 *Διδάσκαλος* - A Teacher.  
13 *Και* - Since  
2: *Οὕτως* - Therefore

### Analytica

This Chapter contains IV parts: I  
Christ's conference with Nicodemus, 3-21  
II His removal to Judaea, and baptizing  
there, 22. III John's baptizing in Ephraim,  
occasioning a dispute between his disci-  
ples, and the Jews, 23-25 IV His tes-  
timony concerning the baptism of Christ,  
26-36

### Exegetica.

- 3 "Jesus answered"; yet in less a man  
has a new principle of life given  
him, he cannot acknowledge that  
I am come from God  
5 "Jesus answered". The birth I speak of  
is that wrought by the Holy Ghost in  
Baptism

A Lesson for the Holy Club.

Facsimile of a page of John Wesley's notes on the third chapter of St. John's gospel, prepared for the Holy Club. The manuscript volume is in the possession of the Rev. Charles H. Kelly, of London.



of the soul with God; and that he must be a new creature. It was an era in his history. He says: "I found and felt in myself that I was delivered from the burden that had so heavily oppressed me. The spirit of mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in God my Saviour. The day-star arose in my heart. I know the place; it may perhaps be superstitious, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed himself to me and gave me a new birth." This was in 1735, when he was in his twenty-first year. He was the first of the Holy Club to come into this divine experience. That he did not at once communicate it to the Wesley brothers, who for three years still groped in the twilight of legalism, may be partly owing to the difference which, on account of their superiority in learning and social position, would keep him from presuming to teach them, but still more was it due to the fact that they became at this time separated from him by their preparations for departure to America.

The Father of the Holy Club remained in residence at Lincoln College until 1735. For a time in 1730 he held a curacy near Oxford. He now began to converse in Latin with his brother, a habit which became lifelong. They walked to Epworth, seventy-five miles, on foot, in 1731, and John visited London in that year and the next, calling on William Law, and joining the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. In 1734 his horseback journeys aggregated one thousand miles, and he formed the habit of reading in the saddle. At London he supervised the printing of his father's ponderous treatise on the book of Job.

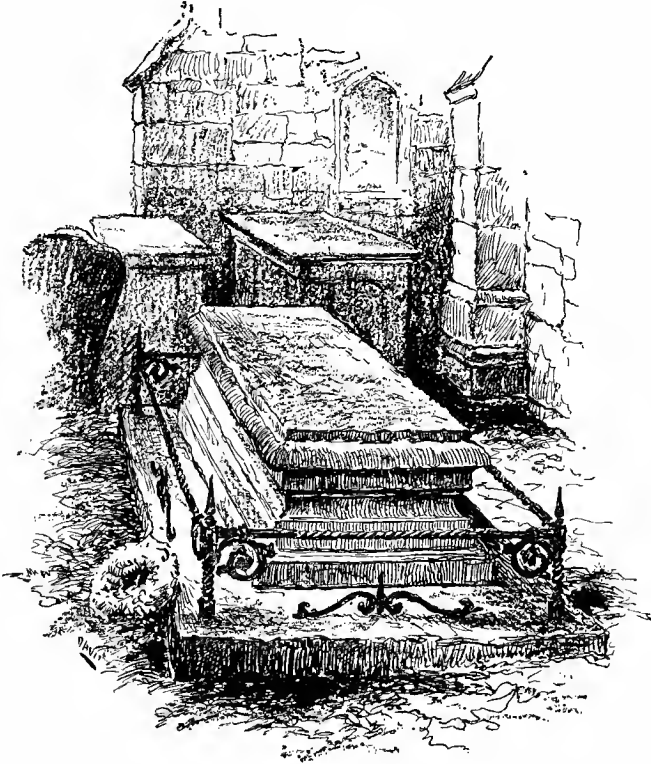
The aged rector of Epworth was fast failing in health, and looked to one of his sons to succeed him in the living and furnish a home for their mother and sisters. The son Samuel thought he could not resign his post as headmaster of Tiver-

ton Grammar School. They both turned to John. He had twenty-six reasons against it, but they were all reducible to two; namely, that he thought he could be more holy and more useful at Oxford. He says: "Another can supply my place at Epworth better than at Oxford, and the good done here is of a far more diffusive nature. It is a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain than to do the same to particular streams."

However, in spite of all this, he seems to have yielded ultimately to the earnest pleadings of his father and brother, and, no doubt, also the united appeals of his mother and sisters, who would otherwise lose their home. He consented to accept the living if it could be procured. But for some reason, probably the reports of his extreme strictness, the application was unsuccessful; the living of Epworth was given to a clergyman who appears never to have resided there, and the work was transferred to a curate. God had something more important for John Wesley.

The good old rector, who had had such a hard struggle all through life, finished his labors April 25, 1735, at the age of seventy-two. His sons were by his side during his last hours. His mind was at rest. He said to John, "The inward witness, son, the inward witness—this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity" But it was some years before this son knew much about that. The day before his death he told Charles, "The weaker I am in body the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God." To the question, "Are you in much pain?" he replied: "God does chasten me with pain, yea, all my bones with strong pain. But I thank him for all, I bless him for all, I love him for all." Laying his hands upon the head of Charles, he said: "Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not." To his daughter Emilia he said, "Do not be con-

cerned at my death; God will then begin to manifest himself to my family." So he peacefully passed away, just before sunset, and was buried "very frugally, yet decently, in the churchyard, according to his own desire." Little did he think to what strange uses his modest tombstone would be put in after years.



Grave of Rev. Samuel Wesley, Sr., in Epworth Churchyard.

The tombstone has a place in Methodist history, since it served John Wesley for a pulpit when he was forbidden to preach in his father's church.

John Wesley again returned to Oxford, whence he was, within a few months, to be removed to a widely different sphere of action. The group of earnest Christians who had composed the Holy Club was soon dispersed. "In October, 1735, John and Charles Wesley and Ingham left England, with a design to go and preach to the Indians in Georgia; but the rest of the gentlemen continued to meet till one and another were ordained



and left the university. By which means, in about two years time, scarce any of them were left."

Whitefield had some oversight of them until, in February, 1738, he also embarked for Georgia. Kinchin, Hutchins, Kirkham, and others were more or less at Oxford subsequently, and rendered valuable service in the outside work; but there was not continuously a sufficient number to maintain the frequent meetings, and the society was thus gradually dissolved. The influence of it remained a while as a sweet savor in Oxford, and was distributed widely by those who left. After Wesley's return from Georgia he met some of them, and wrote: "Soon after I returned to England I had a meeting with Messrs. Ingham, Stonehouse, Hall, Hutchins, Kinchin, and a few other clergymen, who all appeared to be of one heart as well as of one judgment resolved to be Bible Christians at all events, and, wherever they were, to preach, with all their might, plain old Bible Christianity."

The main purpose of these Oxonian Methodists had been to save their own souls and the souls of others. Though the little society passed away, yet through the lives of these three sons of genius and of grace, John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield, first a university was aroused, then a kingdom was set in a blaze, and the nations beyond the seas felt the glow of the divine fires whose new enkindlings had occurred in the Holy Club.

To the two Wesleys, however, the great doctrines of justification by faith and the witness of the Spirit were not yet experimental verities. And they were to learn their practical force not from the voice and pen of any great teacher within their own Church, but from the lips of a humble Moravian preacher, and from the glowing commentaries of the great German reformer.

## CHAPTER VI.

**To America and Back.**

The Missionary Spirit.—Oglethorpe's Philanthropic Colony.—John Wesley, Missioner to Georgia.—The High Churchman at Savannah.—Moravian Influences.—The First Methodist Hymnal.—An Unhappy Ending.

**L**ONG before the dawn of the great societies the missionary spirit was the heritage of the Wesley family. That sturdy Nonconformist, the first John Wesley, had a burning desire to go to Surinam or Maryland. His son Samuel, the Epworth rector, had sympathies that overleaped all parochial boundaries. He devised a great mission for India, China, and Abyssinia, and a year before his death lamented that he was too infirm to go to Georgia. Now the imagination of his Methodist sons is fired with the idea of evangelizing the Indians, and the recently widowed "Mother of Methodism" utters her famous missionary saying.

A royal charter had been granted in 1732 for the establishment of a colony, named after the king, "in that part of Carolina which lies from the most northern part of the Savannah River all along the seacoast to the southward." The founder was General James Edward Oglethorpe, an energetic and humanitarian member of Parliament, who was intent upon reforming the condition of the debtors' prisons and providing a new home in a new world where the released prisoners might find a hopeful refuge.

The two Wesleys, father and son, and many of like mind, took deep interest in the plans for Georgia, which was to be

not only an anti-slavery colony, but which was to be a center of missionary effort among the Indians. Oglethorpe took out his first expedition to Savannah early in 1733. Other distressed people, Salzburghers, German Protestants, and a company of Highland Scots, found settlement there. Certain Moravians, seeking "freedom to worship God," were the fourth to arrive. The Wesleys came with the fifth migration.

When the Georgian trustees were looking for a missionary, some one suggested the name of the zealous young fellow of Lincoln. Oglethorpe liked the idea, but John doubted whether his widowed mother could spare him. He finally went home to ask her. "Had I twenty sons," was her noble reply, ' I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more." Charles decided to go as the general's secretary, and Ingham, of the Holy Club, and a young Londoner joined the mission, for such they considered it.

Wesley's motives are best learned from his own candid words in a letter to a friend. The apparent selfishness of his first motive must be judged in the light of his frank confession of his need of the first qualification for his mission and the higher altruism of his second motive : " My chief motive," said he, " 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. They have no comments to construe away the text ; no vain philosophy to corrupt it ; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths. . They have no party. no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God." " I then hope to know what it is to love my neighbor as myself, and to feel the powers of that second motive to visit the heathen, even the desire to impart to them what I have received—a saving knowledge of the Gospel of Christ ; but this I dare

not think on yet. It is not for me, who have been a grievous sinner from my youth up, . . . to expect God should work so great things by my hands ; but I am assured, if I be once converted myself, he will then employ me both to strengthen my brethren and to preach his name to the Gentiles."

**James Oglethorp, Esq; Member of Parliament for Hallemere in the County of Surrey, embarks on board the Simmonds, Capt. Cornish, for Georgia, this Day.**

*Tuesday Morning James Oglethorpe, Esq, set out by Land for Gravesend, and the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, Student of Lincoln College, Oxon; the Rev. Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ-Church-College, and the Rev. Mr. Ingram of Queen's, in order to embark for Georgia.*

*There were sent along with these Gentlemen, as a Benefaction of several worthy Ladies and Gentlemen, 550 of the Bishop of Man's Treatises on the Sacrament, and his Lordship's Principles and Duties of Christianity, for the use of the English Families settled in Georgia.*

The Newspaper Notice of the Wesleys' Departure for America.

Facsimile from Walker's Weekly Penny Journal, London, October 18, 1735.

The party of "missioners" embarked with Oglethorpe, October 18, 1735, on the Simmonds, a vessel of two hundred and twenty tons. Twenty-six Moravians, under their bishop, David Nitschman, and eighty English colonists were fellow-passengers. Although they started from Gravesend in October, it was December before they left England, and many weeks were spent at

Cowes, on the Isle of Wight, where they had to wait for the man-of-war that was to be their convoy. This gave time for the Methodists to plan their days as carefully as at Oxford. From four to five every morning was spent in private prayer; then for two hours they read the Bible together, comparing it with the Fathers. Breakfast and public prayers filled two hours more. From nine to twelve Charles Wesley wrote sermons, John studied German, Delamotte read Greek, and Ingham taught the emigrants' children; and the remainder of the day was as carefully mapped out, all uniting with the Germans in their evening service.

One event of the eight weeks' voyage made a deep impression on John Wesley. On several occasions there were storms, and he felt restless, and afraid to die. He had made friends with the Moravians and was charmed by their sweet spirit and excellent discipline. He now found that they were brave as well as gentle. One evening a storm burst just as the Germans began to sing a psalm, and the sea broke, split the mainsail in shreds, covered the ship, and poured in between the decks as if the great deep were swallowing them up. The English began to scream with terror, but the Germans calmly sang on. Wesley asked one of them afterward:

“Were you not afraid?”

“I thank God, no,” was the reply.

“But were not your women and children afraid?”

“No,” he replied mildly, “our women and children are not afraid to die.”

At the close of the day's Journal Wesley writes, “This was the most glorious day which I have hitherto seen.”

On February 6, 1736, the Simmonds landed her passengers in Georgia. One of Wesley's first acquaintances was Spangenberg, a Moravian pastor, whose advice he sought. The German said:

“My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions: Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?” Wesley knew not what to answer. The preacher, seeing his hesitation, asked:

“Do you know Jesus Christ?”

“I know,” said Wesley, “he is the Saviour of the world.”

“True,” replied he, “but do you know he has saved you?”

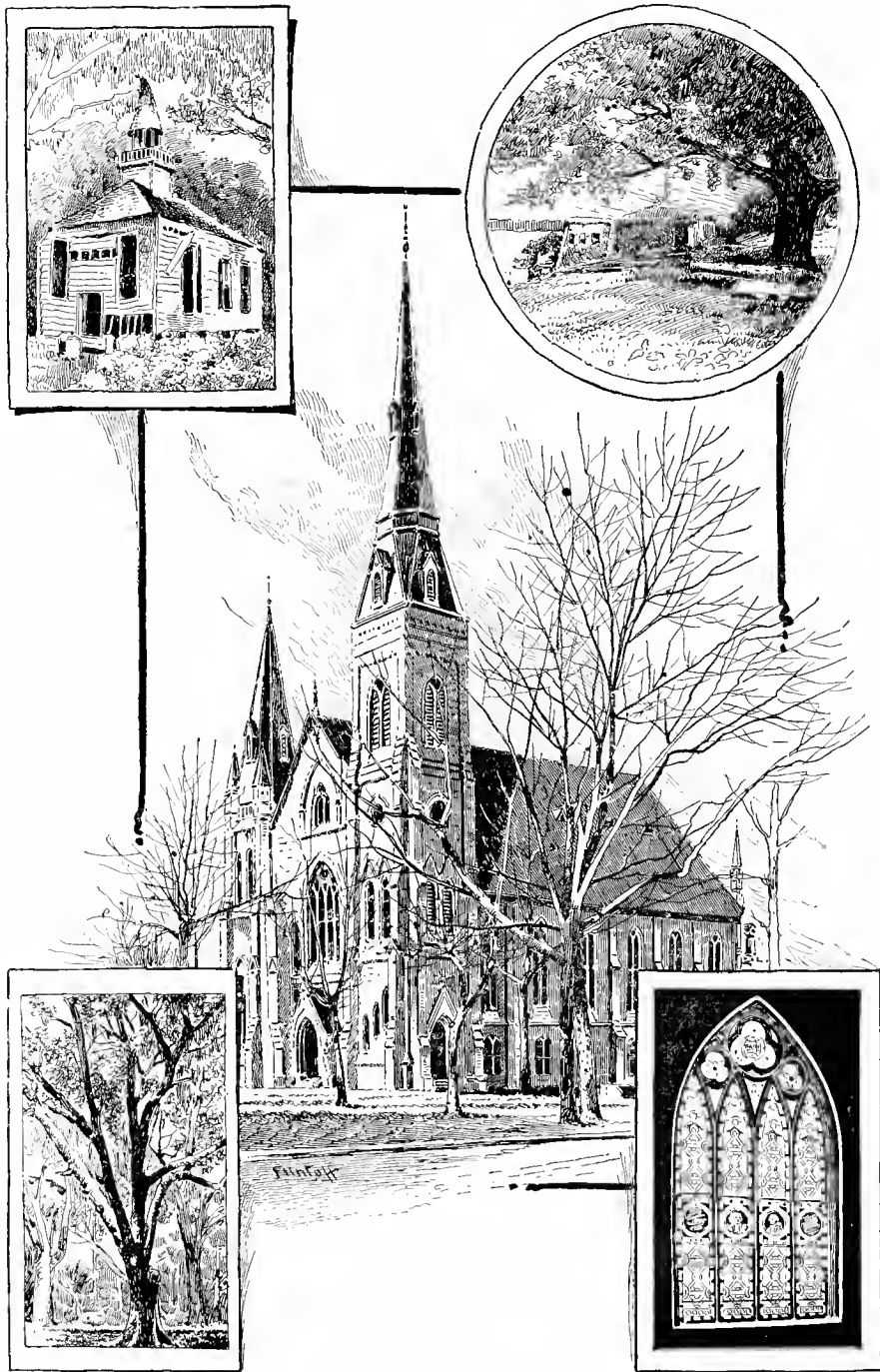
Wesley answered, “I hope he has died to save me.”

Spangenberg only added, “Do you know yourself?”

“I do,” was the reply; but in his Journal he wrote, “I fear they were vain words.” Such a spiritual probing Wesley had never before received. The conversation was worth the journey across the ocean. The flash of lightning left him in darkness. He asked Spangenberg many questions about the Moravians of Herrnhut.

Tomo-ehi-chi, the chief, and other Indians called on him and expressed their friendly greeting, but the way of approach to these heathen was for the time so hedged up that Wesley could devote little attention to their needs.

John Wesley found Savannah, with forty houses, built on a bluff forty or fifty feet above the bend of the river, which here was about a thousand feet across. He began his ministry with a sermon on “Charity” (1 Cor. xiii), and described the death-bed of his father at Epworth. The courthouse, which served as church, was crowded, and the mission began with great promise. Ten days later a ball had to be given up, for the church was full for prayers and the ballroom empty! A lady told him when he landed that he would see as well-dressed a congregation on Sundays as most which he had seen in London. He found that she was right, and he preached on the subject of dress with such effect that gold and costly apparel disappeared, and the ladies came to church in plain linen or woolen,



Memorials of the Wesleys in Georgia.

Wesley Church, Frederica.

Ruins of Fort at Frederica.

The Wesley Monumental Church, Savannah.

"Wesley's Oak," St. Simon's Island.

Wesley Window, in Monumental Church.

He established day schools, teaching one himself and placing Delamotte in the other. Some of Delamotte's boys who wore shoes and stockings thought themselves superior to the boys who went barefoot. To cure their pride Wesley changed schools with his friend and went to teach without shoes and stockings. The boys stared, but Wesley kept them to their work, and before the end of the week he had cured the lads of their vanity.

The Sunday appointments were many. He divided the public prayers, reading the morning service at five, having the sermon and Holy Communion at eleven, and the evening service at three. There was a meeting at his own house for reading, prayer, and praise. At six o'clock he attended the Moravian service. He catechised the children at two o'clock, and during the latter part of his stay he had service for the Italians at nine and for the French at one. In two neighboring settlements he read prayers on Saturday in German and French, and he even studied Spanish in order to converse with some Spanish Jews.

All might have gone on well if, as Southey says, he could have taken the advice of Dr. Burton, to consider his parishioners as babes in their progress, and to feed them with milk. But "he drenched them with the physic of an intolerant discipline." His High Churchmanship manifested itself in all the irritating forms common to the sectarian bigots who domineer over timid villagers in some of the rural parishes of England to-day, except that he did not resort to the modern cruelty of depriving the poor and sick Dissenters of relief from public charities. He refused the Lord's Supper to all who had not been episcopally baptized; he re-baptized the children of Dissenters, and he refused to bury all who had not received Anglican baptism. He insisted also on baptism by immersion. He refused the Lord's Supper to one of the most devoted



Christian men in the colony, Bolzius, the pastor of the Salzburghers, because he had not been baptized by a minister who had been episcopally ordained. Many years afterward he made this comment on his action: "Can anyone carry High Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been since beaten with mine own staff!"

No wonder was it that a plain speaker said to Wesley at this time: "The people say they are Protestants, but as for you they cannot tell what religion you are of; they never heard of such a religion before, and they do not know what to make of it."

At the same time, as Rigg has pointed out, Wesley was "inwardly melting, and the light of spiritual liberty was dawning on his soul." He attended a Presbyterian service at Darien, and, to his great astonishment, heard the minister offer a devout *extempore* prayer. He was impressed by the simple beauty of the life of the Moravians, and they sent him to the New Testament. He read Bishop Beveridge's *Pandectæ Canonum Conciliorum*, which sent him to the Scriptures again as a higher authority than tradition or councils. He thus expresses to Wogan his opinion as to the innermost nature of religion: "I entirely agree with you that religion is love and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost; that, as it is the happiest, so it is the cheerfulest thing in the world; that it is utterly inconsistent with moroseness, sourness, and indeed with whatever is not according to the . . . gentleness of Christ Jesus."

Charles Wesley, who had accompanied Oglethorpe to Frederica, a new settlement, one hundred miles to the southward, had no better success in winning the sympathy of those to whom he preached. His faithful preaching at the sins of his parishioners gained him enemies, who lied about him, and even attempted his life, until at a funeral service he "envied the corpse his quiet grave." In 1736 he was sent home to England

with dispatches from the governor, and saw no more of Georgia.

While he was in Georgia, John Wesley published his first collection of Psalms and Hymns. It was printed "at Charlestown" (Charleston, S. C.), and the title-page is dated 1737. In a preface to a reprint of this volume Osborne says: "It has been supposed that this Collection of Psalms and Hymns was the first published in our language, so that in this provision for the improvement of public worship Wesley led the way." His father's hymn rescued from the Epworth fire, Addison's hymns, and some of his own noble translations from the German are included in the collection.

The incident which terminated John Wesley's usefulness as a missionary has a somewhat romantic interest. He fell deeply in love with Miss Sophia Hopkey, the attractive niece of the chief magistrate of Savannah. On the advice of his Moravian friends he suddenly decided not to marry her, and she soon married another. The attachment must have been very strong, for in his old age he wrote of the disappointment: "I was pierced through as with a sword."

But the matter did not end here. Later Wesley felt it his duty to rebuke the lady for inconsistency of life and to refuse her the Communion. He was prosecuted by her husband for so doing, but, as a High Churchman, refused to recognize the authority of a civil court. Then the storm burst. The colonists found many grievances against their rigid clergyman, and to end the matter, on the advice of his friends, he decided to leave Georgia.

So with a heavy heart, on December 2, 1737, Wesley took boat with three friends for Carolina, on his way to England. After a trying journey of ten days they reached Charleston, and went on board the *Samuel*. After a stormy voyage Wesley rejoiced to see "English land once more; which, about

noon, appeared to be the Lizard Point," and the next day they landed at Deal, only a day after Whitefield had sailed out. Whitefield afterward declared: "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very pre-

Tu. March 8. Miss Sophia engages herself to Mr. W., a person not remarkable for Handsomeness, neither for Greatness, neither for Wit, or Knowledge, or Sense, & least of all, for Religion. And on Sat: 13, they were married at Purrysburg (as were Mr. Borey & Mr. Burrows). This being y<sup>e</sup> Day is compleated y<sup>e</sup> year from my first preaching to her. What Thou dost, O God, I know not now: But I know hereafter. O give her not up yet, to a strong Delusion, y<sup>e</sup> she sh<sup>d</sup> believe a Lie.

Sund. 20. M<sup>rs</sup> Williamson told me freely, that her husband had forbid her, to speak to me any more. Ah poor Sophia! It is y<sup>e</sup> beginning, what will the End be?

A Fragment of Romance.

Facsimile of a passage in Wesley's MS. Journal, written in Georgia, relating to the engagement and marriage of Miss Sophia Hopkey.

cious among the people; and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. O that I may follow him as he has followed Christ!"

On his voyage home, and just after he landed, Wesley poured

out his soul in language which in after years he modified in some of its expressions. He wrote in his Journal: "I went to America to convert the Indians, but, O! who shall convert me? who, what is he that will deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe myself, while no danger is near; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled. Nor can I say, to die is gain . . . I show my faith by my works, by staking my all upon it. I would do so again and again a thousand times, if the choice were still to make. Whoever sees me sees I would be a Christian. . . . But in a storm I think, What if the Gospel be not true? . . . O who will deliver me from this fear of death? . . . Where shall I fly from it?"

The day that he landed in England, February 1, 1738, there was another gloomy entry in his Journal, but he ends it with his face toward the light: "This, then, have I learned in the ends of the earth, that I 'am fallen short of the glory of God;' that my whole heart is 'altogether corrupt and abominable;' . . . that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, . . . that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves; . . . that, 'having the sentence of death' in my heart, . . . I have no hope . . . but that if I seek, I shall find Christ, and 'be found in him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.'" "I want . . . that faith which enables every one that hath it to cry out, 'I live not; . . . but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.' I want that faith which none can have without knowing he hath it; [when] 'the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God.'"

Many years later when republishing his Journals he added

four short notes: On the original statement, "I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted," he remarks, "I am not sure of this." "I am a child of wrath," was his early record; "I believe not," was his later note. And in another note he says: "I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son"—a distinction upon which he dwells in one of his sermons. In a touching passage in a letter to Bishop Lavington, written in 1752, he says that the passages in the Journal were written "in the anguish of my heart, to which I gave vent between God and my own soul." But the anguish was soon to pass away, and he was to know the full joy of sonship in the family of God.

The mission to Georgia never fulfilled the ideal of the ardent young ritualists and mystics who were its apostles. It was diverted from its noble and romantic purpose of founding a primitive and perfect Church in a new world and among unsophisticated Indians. But it was not an utter failure. It brought the missionaries themselves priceless lessons, which they had the grace and manliness to learn. It developed the Moses-like meekness which was blended with strength in the character of the coming leader. It drew Whitfield across the Atlantic to preach a Gospel greater than his later Calvinistic creed. It did much to mold the men who were to be the founders of a catholic missionary Church. It gave to the hymnology of the great Revival "the wafture of a world-wide wing." It prepared the way for a theology radiant with the light of a new spiritual experience, and broad as the charity of God.

## CHAPTER VII.

**The New Birth.**

Whitefield's Revival Fire.—Peter Böhler's Influence.—Charles Wesley's Happy Day.—John Wesley's Heart "Strangely Warmed."—A Spiritual Revolution.

**W**HILE the Wesleys were in America their young Oxford companion, George Whitefield, had set the world to talking. Such preaching was never heard. The parish churches were crowded to the doors when he was to preach, even on week days. He preached thirty times a month, sometimes four sermons on a Sunday, and weeping hearers followed him out into the streets to get a word with him. He says of a notable sermon: "The doctrine of the new birth, and justification by faith in Jesus Christ (though I was not so clear in it as afterward) made its way like lightning into the hearers' consciences."

All classes for the first time now heard from a tongue of fire the Gospel of Christ. The mighty doctrines of justification and regeneration leaped forth in living power. Heaven and hell were realities in awful contrast. Of course the people were moved. They felt that Whitefield was one of them. His illustrations, drawn from common life and spiced with humor, deepened the popular interest. "Even the little improprieties," remarked Wesley, "both of his language and manner, were the means of profiting many who would not have been touched by a more correct discourse or a more calm and regular manner of preaching."

To all must be added the power arising out of the divine

transformation of the man and the eloquence of the Spirit. The God before whom he stood was to him so glorious in majesty that Whitefield would throw himself prostrate on the ground and offer his soul as a blank for the divine hand to write on it what he pleased. Mabie says that when Corot in his peasant blouse went out into the fields at four o'clock with his easel before him, and studied the dawn, "the day broke for him as if it had never come out of the sky before; as if he were the first man seeing the first day." So to Whitefield every day seemed the first day on which God had sent the Gospel to men and commissioned him to put the vital truth on the tablets of the heart.

An urgent letter from John Wesley turned Whitefield's attention to Georgia. His heart leaped at Wesley's words: "What if thou art the man, Mr. Whitefield? Do you ask me what you shall have? Food to eat, and raiment to put on; a house to lay your head in, such as your Lord had not; and a crown of glory that fadeth not away." Whitefield offered himself to the authorities of the Georgian Mission, was accepted, and voyaging westward his vessel passed that of John Wesley homeward bound. His apostolic journeyings and splendid services on both sides of the Atlantic transcend the scope of this biography, though we shall from time to time meet the flaming evangelist as we follow the person and work of the head of the Methodist movement.

For several years after their return from Georgia the Wesleys were thrown much in contact with certain Moravians whose creed kept alive the old doctrine of justification by faith. Peter Böhler, the Moravian, wrote to Count Zinzendorf at Herrnhut of his acquaintance with them:

I traveled with the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, from London to Oxford. The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he did not properly believe on the Saviour, and was willing to be taught. His

brother, with whom you often conversed a year ago, is at present very much distressed in his mind, but does not know how he shall begin to be acquainted with the Saviour. Our mode of believing in the Saviour is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to it; if it were a little more artful, they would much sooner find their way into it. Of faith in Jesus they have no other idea than the generality of people have. They justify themselves; and therefore they always take it for granted that they believe already, and try to prove their faith by their works, and thus so plague and torment themselves that they are at heart very miserable.

Böhler put himself under Charles Wesley's care, at Oxford, to learn English. The pupil taught his teacher a yet nobler lesson. When he fell ill and seemed on the point of death Böhler asked him, "Do you hope to be saved?" Charles answered, "Yes." "For what reason do you hope it?" "Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God." Böhler shook his head and said no more. "I thought him very uncharitable," wrote Charles at a later day, "saying in my heart, Would he rob me of my endeavors? I have nothing else to trust to." The sad, silent, significant shake of Peter Böhler's head shattered all Charles Wesley's false foundation of salvation by endeavors.

On Sunday, March 5, 1738, John Wesley wrote: "I was, in the hand of the great God, clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." In later years he adds, in parenthesis, "(With the full Christian salvation.)" To the question whether he should cease preaching his friend replied, "By no means." "But what can I preach?" asked Wesley. "Preach faith till you have it, and then because you have it you will preach faith." And so on Monday morning he offered salvation by faith to a man under sentence of death in Oxford Castle.

He was deeply moved when the condemned man he again visited rose from prayer exclaiming eagerly, "I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins,



and there is no more condemnation for me." So he died in peace.

On the Sunday after this affecting scene Wesley took a step of no little importance in the history of Methodist worship.



Peter Böhler.

The Moravian who instructed the Wesleys.

He writes in his Journal of April 1: "Being in Mr. Fox's society, my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I propose to be confined to them any more, but to

pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions."

Rigg has well observed how strikingly this illustrates the main principle of Wesley's ecclesiastical course, of using whatever methods clearly promised to do the most good. He enters into no abstract controversy as to praying with or without forms. Probably his experiences in America, where he heard the Presbyterian minister pray, and yet more his intercourse with the Moravians, had helped to loosen the bonds of servile ecclesiasticism in this respect. He never condemned forms of prayer, which would have precluded not only the liturgy, but the Lord's Prayer and many hymns, but he found free prayer rich in blessing, and henceforth he held himself at liberty, according to occasion, to pray without forms. "The ritualist was already greatly changed. Already the manacles had dissolved from the hands of devotion; soon the fetters would be broken which bound his feet from running in the evangelical way."

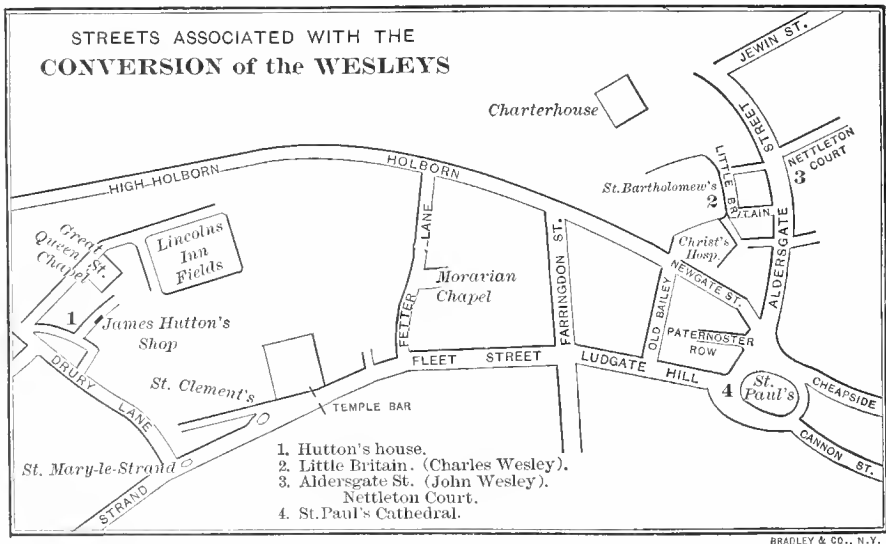
On the following Easter Sunday morning, after thus commencing the use of extempore prayer in social worship, he preached "in our college chapel" of Lincoln, and closed the day with the entry, "I see the promise; but it is far off."

Again Böhler came to his help by bringing together some friends to relate their experience in his hearing. As they testified with clearness and fervor to the joy of faith, John Wesley and his companions were "as if thunderstruck." An old Moravian hymn, "My soul before thee prostrate lies," was sung.

John Wesley thus sums up the result of his conversations with Böhler, the testimony of the Moravians, and the singing of this old hymn: "I was now thoroughly convinced; and, by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end: (1) By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon

my own works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up. (2) By adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving 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."

Charles Wesley was the first of the Wesley brothers to receive the name of Methodist, and he was also the first to experience



joy and peace through believing. "While John was entering this Bethesda pool Charles stepped in before him. One Mr. Bray, a brazier, of London, a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ, yet by knowing him knows and discerns all things," finds him sick and spiritually perplexed, and invites him to lodge with him in Little Britain, that he may help him to spiritual health. Here the sick man found Luther's Commentary on Galatians, and was greatly edified by its views of the work of faith. He spent much time in reading, meditation, converse, and prayer, and on Whitsunday, in 1738,

he found peace. A poor woman, the brazier's sister, herself a recent convert, had been moved to address him with the words: "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities." She spoke the words tremblingly, and fled. Bray reads, "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered," and the hearer, laying hold on the atonement by simple faith, finds himself at peace with God. Opening his Bible, his eye falls on the words, "and now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee. He hath put a new song in my mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and shall put their trust in the Lord." Thus Charles Wesley learned the new song of the great revival, and found his life-long inspiration.

On the following Tuesday he began the hymn which links his conversion with that of his brother:

Where shall my wondering soul begin?  
 How shall I all to heaven aspire?  
 A slave redeemed from death and sin,  
 A brand plucked from eternal fire,  
 How shall I equal triumphs raise,  
 Or sing my great Deliverer's praise?

On that Whitsunday which brought joy to Charles Wesley's soul his brother John attended the Church of St. Mary-le-Strand. He was still grieving because he had not the assurance of acceptance. "Let no one deceive us by vain words," he wrote to a friend, "as if we had already attained this faith. By its fruits we shall know. Do we already feel peace with God and joy in the Holy Ghost? Does his Spirit bear witness with our spirit that we are the children of God? Alas! with mine he does not. O, thou Saviour of men, save us from trusting in anything but thee! Draw us after thee. Let us be emptied of ourselves, and then fill us with all peace and

joy in believing, and let nothing separate us from thy love in time or eternity.”

His prayer was heard. On Wednesday, May 24, at five in the morning, he opened his Testament to these words: “There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” As he



Nettleton Court, off Aldersgate Street.

The scene of John Wesley's religious crisis.

was about to leave the house he came upon the words, “Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.”

In the evening he reluctantly attended a little meeting in Nettleton Court, on the east side of Aldersgate Street, where a few pious souls met in a society for prayer and Bible study. Some one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans descriptive of saving faith.

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. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitely used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart.

The brazier's house was but a few steps away, and John Wesley hastened thither to hail his brother with the rapturous words, "I believe," and to join him in singing the new hymn,

Where shall my wondering soul begin ?

His conversion revolutionized the whole character and method of his ministry. The great evangelical doctrines had been obscured by his sacerdotalism. His moral teaching, lofty as it was, had lacked the inspiration of the mightiest motive—the personal consciousness of God's love to man and the burning love to God created by the witness of the Spirit. The faith of a servant was transformed into the faith of a son, and from this hour, as Dr. Rigg observes, "this ritualistic priest and ecclesiastical martinet was to be transformed into a flaming preacher of the great evangelical salvation and life in all its branches, and its rich and varied experiences. Hence arose Wesleyan Methodism and all the Methodist Churches." The younger Methodist, Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, expressed the same conviction as to the historical importance of this event: "The Rubicon was crossed. The sweeping aside of ecclesiastical traditions, the rejection of the apostolical succession, the ordination with his own hands of presbyters and bishops, the final organization of a separate and fully equipped Church, were all logically involved in what took place that night."

Oxford Methodism, as Fletcher's latest biographer, F W Macdonald, has observed, "with its almost monastic rigors, its living by rule, its canonical hours of prayer, is a fair and noble phase of the many-sided life of the Church of England, and with all its defects and limitations claims our deep respect. But it was not the instrument by which the Church and nation were to be revived; it had no message for the world, no secret of power with which to move and quicken the masses. To do this it must become other than it was. It must die in order to

bring forth much fruit. And this death and rising were accomplished in the spiritual change wrought in John Wesley, the leader of the earlier and the later Methodism." The place of this spiritual event in the history of the English nation has been well stated by the historian Lecky: "It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the scene which took place at that humble meeting in Aldersgate Street forms an epoch in English history. The conviction which then flashed upon one of the most powerful and most active intellects in England is the true source of English Methodism."

From the year of his conversion Wesley's sacerdotalism withered away. He did not, as an Anglican has observed, abate his attachment to the ordinances of the Established Church, and he did not at once reach that degree of independence of her hierarchy and some of her rules which marks his farthest point of divergence. Dr. Rigg has forcibly said, "Habits of thought and feeling which had become a second nature still clung to him for a while; but these dropped off one by one until scarcely a vestige of them was left." The grave-clothes of ritualistic superstition hung about him even after he had come forth from the sepulcher and had in his heart and soul been set loose and free, and he only cast them off gradually, but the new principle that he had embraced led before long to his complete emancipation from the principles and prejudices of High Church ecclesiasticism. The ultimate separation of the Methodist societies from the Anglican Church, Dr. Rigg says, was also involved in this change: "Newman renounced justification by faith, and clung to apostolic succession; therefore he went to Rome. Wesley embraced justification by faith, and renounced apostolical succession; therefore his people are a separate people from the Church of England."

## CHAPTER VIII.

**Revival Preaching.**

“Jesus, the Sinner’s Friend, Proclaim.”—“By Grace are Ye Saved.”—A  
 Happy New Year.—Whitefield Calls Wesley Out of Doors.—  
 Shouts in the Camp.—The Old Room at Bristol.—  
 The Foundry for Gospel Artillery.—Wesley’s  
 Chapel in City Road.—Wesley’s House.

**I**N that first burst of song which came to Charles Wesley’s  
 lips at his conversion were these pregnant lines:

O how shall I the goodness tell,  
 Father, which thou to me hast showed?  
 That I, a child of wrath and hell,  
 I should be called a child of God!  
 Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,  
 Blessed with this antepast of heaven!

And shall I slight my Father’s love  
 Or basely fear his gifts to own?  
 Unmindful of his favors prove?  
 Shall I, the hallowed cross to shun,  
 Refuse his righteousness to impart,  
 By hiding it within my heart?

No: though the ancient dragon rage,  
 And call forth all his hosts to war;  
 Though earth’s self-righteous sons engage  
 Them and their god alike I dare;  
 Jesus, the sinner’s Friend, proclaim;  
 Jesus, to sinners still the same.

John Wesley was not behind his brother in his purpose to proclaim salvation, and his tremendous energy, inspired industry, and genius for administration soon organized a corps of helpers to assist in declaring abroad the word of life. As he has strikingly summarized this phase of the movement: “Just at



this time (1738-9), when we [the nation] wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance. In two or three years they had sounded the alarm to the utmost borders of the land. Many thousands gathered together to hear them, and in every place where they came many began to show such a concern for religion as they had never done before."

On the 11th of June, 1738, eighteen days after his conver-



View of Herrnhut.

To which Wesley resorted for spiritual instruction, 1738.

sion, John Wesley preached his famous sermon before the University of Oxford on "By grace are ye saved through faith"—the keynote of his entire ministry. That sermon is the first of those which form the standard of Methodist belief. That great doctrine he now began to preach with experimental fervor. His conviction of its importance was deepened by his visit to Herrnhut, in Bohemia (July-September, 1738), where he studied with enthusiasm and sympathy the beliefs and practices of the pious Moravians. On the way he spent a fortnight at Marienborn in company with Count Zinzendorf, the chief man of the Moravian brotherhood. The day after his return

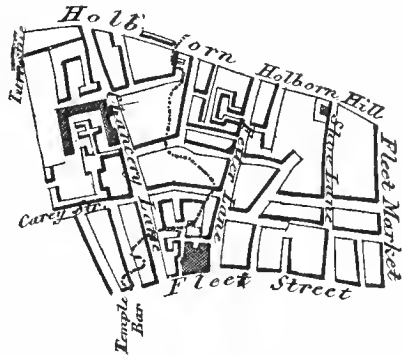
to London he began, to use his own words, "to declare in my own country the glad tidings of salvation, preaching three times and afterward expounding the Scripture to a large company in the Minories," one of the localities in which his brother had been zealously preaching and working. Here a woman "cried out as in the agonies of death," so poignant was her conviction of sin.

On New Year's eve, 1738-9, seven of the Oxford Methodists and some sixty others held a watch-night service and love feast in a religious society whose rooms were in Fetter Lane, London. The seven were ministers of the Church of England. Wesley writes of the ushering in of this most notable year in Methodist annals:

"About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we were recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of his majesty we broke out with one voice, 'We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord.'" Whitefield pronounced this to be "the happiest New Year's Day he had ever seen."

Tyerman well regards it as a glorious preparation for the herculcan work on which Whitefield and the Wesleys

were entering. Three days afterward the seven clergymen met again. Whitefield says: "What we were in doubt about, after prayer, we determined by lot, and everything else was carried



Plan of Holborn.

Fetter Lane, connecting Holborn and Fleet Street, is entered close by the old Staple's Inn, still standing, as in Wesley's day. Here was the room in which the memorable love feast was held on New Year's Day, 1739, and here also was the old chapel which the Moravians secured in 1740.

on with great love, meekness, and devotion. We continued in fasting and prayer till three o'clock, and then parted, with a full conviction that God was going to do great things among us."

It was Whitefield who began to preach in the open air, and he did so at first because the churches would not hold the multitudes who came to listen. At Kingswood, beside Bristol, on



Hannam Mount, Kingswood.

A favorite field-pulpit of Wesley and Whitefield.

Saturday, February 17, 1739, before a congregation of two hundred colliers, he first defied ecclesiastical rules or fashions by preaching in the open air.

"I thought," says he, "it might be doing the service of my Creator, who had a mountain for his pulpit and the heavens for a sounding board; and who, when his Gospel was refused by the Jews, sent his servants into the highways and hedges."

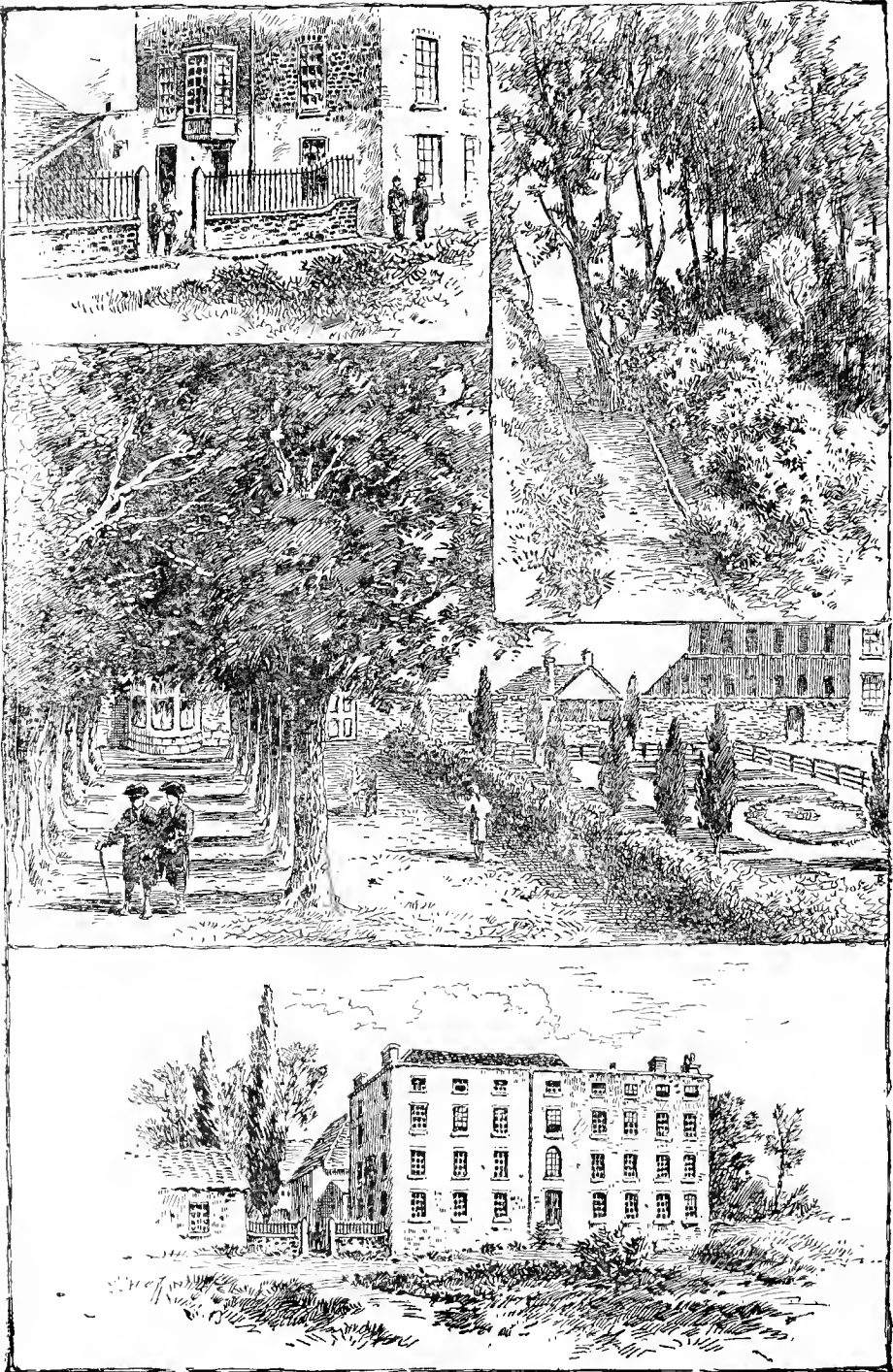
Wesley, who came to his aid at Bristol, shrank from the practice, but bethought himself of the Sermon on the Mount

as "one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching," and soon "submitted to be more vile," preaching to a crowd of four thousand from a hillock near the city from the words: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor." Charles Wesley had the same stiff churchly notions to break down, but he was soon in the fields with the others. Thus all three evangelists were committed to a work which did more than anything else to arouse the slumbering people and churches of England.

The philosophic critic of Methodism, Isaac Taylor, has truly said: "The men who commenced and achieved this arduous service, and they were scholars and gentlemen, displayed a courage far surpassing that which carries the soldier through the hailstorm of the battlefield. Ten thousand might more easily be found who would confront a battery than two who, with the sensitiveness of education about them, could mount a table by the roadside, give out a psalm, and gather a mob."

While Wesley remained at Bristol the famous Methodist school at Kingswood, for the education of the colliers' children, began to rise. It was Whitefield who initiated it, but Wesley who gave it substance and form and directed its beneficent career. Under his preaching at Bristol also broke out the strange cries and shouts, accompanied by singular physical manifestations such as marked the Great Awakening in New England. Cries of the sharpest anguish were heard. Hardened sinners were stricken down as in the throes of death. A Quaker who was angry at what he thought to be the affected groans and cries in Baldwin Street room was knitting his brows and biting his lips in displeasure when he was struck down in a moment, as by an unseen hand, and recovering after prayer, cried out, "Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord!"

Bold blasphemers cried aloud for mercy; passing travelers, pausing to hear, were smitten to the earth in deep conviction



Scenes about Old Kingswood.

Wesley's oriel window.

The gardens behind the school.  
Old Kingswood, near building.

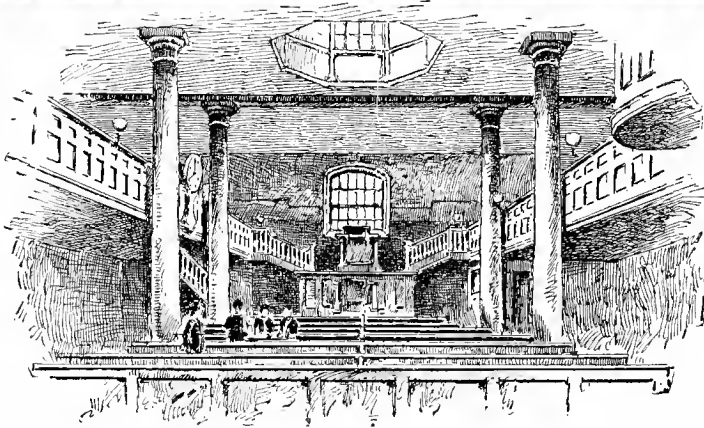
Wesley's walk.

for sin. An irritated mother, vexed by the weeping of her daughter, became herself convulsed with sorrow and went home in joy. A physician, who thought that mere excitement or even fraud had most to do with these scenes, was present at one meeting and watched with keen eyes one woman whom he had known for years. She broke out into "strong cries and tears." Great drops of perspiration ran down her face, and her body shook. He was convinced that in this case at least there was no imposition nor mere natural disorder, and when, in a moment, both body and soul were healed he acknowledged "the finger of God."

It must, in justice to Wesley, be said that such phenomena were never encouraged by him, but every effort was made to control them. There is no doubt that there were some cases of imposture. Charles Wesley said: "Many, no doubt, were at our first preaching struck down, both body and soul, into the depth of distress. Their outward affections were easy to be imitated." Where he suspected affectation he ordered the persons to be carried away. At Newcastle he declared he thought no better of anyone for crying out or interrupting his work, and successfully secured quietness. He sometimes regarded "the fits" as a device of Satan to stop the work.

But when every allowance was made for such cases the evangelists themselves had good reason to believe that the large majority were the result of real and intense conviction for sin. "From the days of John the Baptist till now," observes Mrs. Oliphant, "such incidents have made themselves visible wherever a new voice like that of him in the wilderness has come, rousing the world into a revival of religious life." One of Wesley's most recent biographers in the Anglican Church, Miss Wedgwood, is convinced "that there was something in the personal influence of Wesley (for it certainly does not remain in his sermons) which had the power of impressing on

a dull and lethargic world such a horror of evil, its mysterious closeness to the human soul, and the need of a miracle for the separation of the two, as no one perhaps could suddenly receive without some violent physical effect."



The "New Room in the Horsefair," the First House Built for Methodist Preaching.

The room above the chapel where the first "class" met.  
Interior of the preaching room.

On May 12, 1739, the foundation stone of the first Methodist "preaching room" in the world was laid. It was the building known to Wesley in after years as "the new room in the Horse-fair." The eleven trustees whom Wesley appointed did very

little to raise the necessary funds, and Wesley took upon himself the payment of the builder. Whitefield urged Wesley to get rid of the trustees, on the ground that they would have power under the deed to turn him out if he displeased them by his preaching. Wesley took this advice, canceled the deed, and became the sole proprietor. This, though insignificant at the time, was a matter of great importance, for in this manner nearly all the chapels built in the early years of his career were vested in himself. This involved serious responsibility, which however, was honorably fulfilled; for trusts were afterward created, and by his "Deed of Declaration" all his interests in his chapels were transferred to his incorporated Conference.

Three weeks after the first stone was laid Wesley wrote: "Not being permitted to meet in Baldwin Street, we met in the shell of our new society room. The Scripture which came in course to be explained was, 'Marvel not if the world hate you.' We sung:

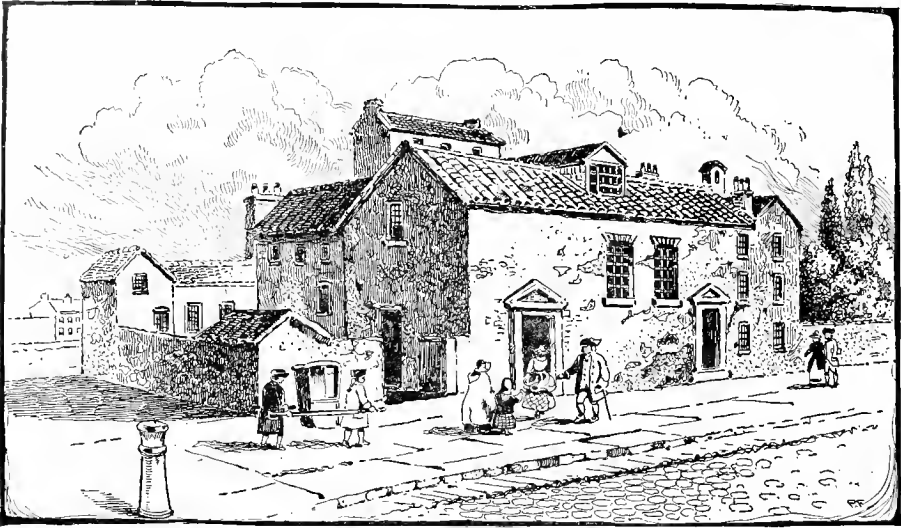
Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!  
Thine own immortal strength put on

and God, even our own God, gave us his blessing." Here the first class meeting was held. Here, in Wesley's lifetime, eighteen Conferences assembled. From the old pulpit, moved from its former place, but otherwise unchanged, John Wesley in 1739 expounded the Acts of the Apostles, the "inalienable charter" of the Churches of God. It was also Charles Wesley's pulpit, in which he preached for many years. And many others, men of renown, who turned the old godless world of those days upside down, preached in that pulpit, and lodged in the little rooms above, like ships' cabins. Whitefield complained to Wesley that the room was too richly ornamented. Wesley replied: "The society room at Bristol, you say, is adorned. How? Why, with a piece of green cloth nailed to the desk, and two sconces, for eight candles each, in the middle. I



know no more. Now, which of these can be spared? I know not; nor would I desire more adornment, or less. But 'lodgings are made for me and my brother.' This is, in plain English, there is a little room by the school where I speak to the persons who come to me, and a garret in which a bed is placed for me."

In London, whither he went in June, Mr. Wesley preached to



The Foundry Chapel, Moorfields, London.

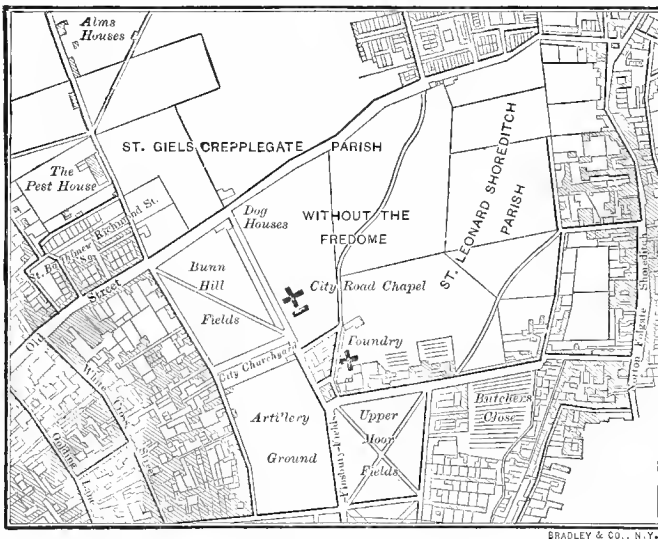
The old artillery foundry, as remodeled for use as a Wesleyan chapel.

vast crowds in the fields near the site of the old Foundry and the later chapel in City Road, the most celebrated preaching-house of world-wide Methodism.

The winter of 1739 was unusually severe, and in the prospect of being unable to preach out of doors, and with most of the churches closed against him, Wesley, by the advice and with the help of two gentlemen until then unknown to him, leased the Foundry for £115, and afterward restored and almost rebuilt the whole, at a cost of £800, to fit it for his purposes. This was the arsenal which had been wrecked by an explosion

when the Methodist preacher was a lad at the Charterhouse School.

Its preaching room would seat fifteen hundred people. The band room behind seated three hundred. One end of the chapel was fitted up for a schoolroom; the opposite end was the "book room," and the Collection of Psalms and Hymns published in 1741 bore the imprint, "Sold at the Foundry, Upper Moorfields." Above the band room were Wesley's



Vicinity of City Road and Foundry in Eighteenth Century.

apartments, whither he brought his mother, to spend her declining days.

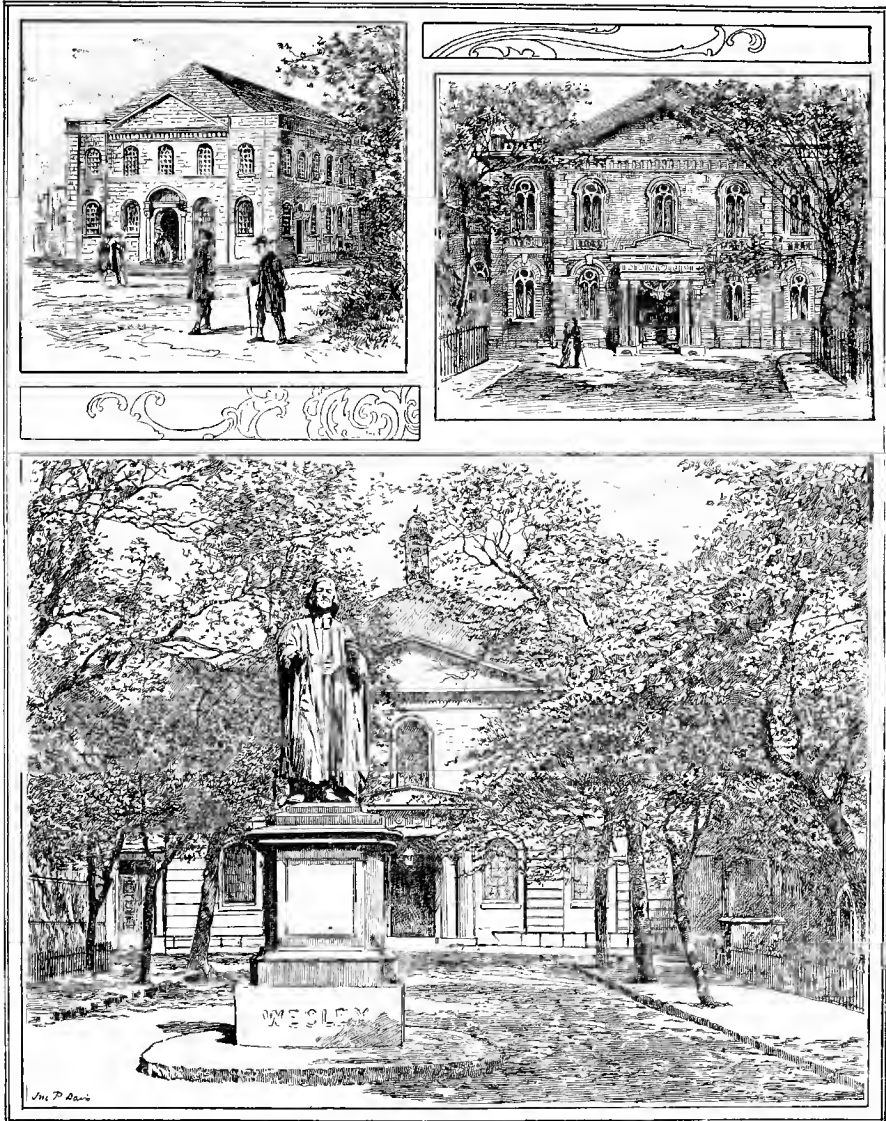
Wesley's first service was held at the Foundry on Sunday, November 11, 1739. He wrote: "I preached at eight o'clock to five or six thousand, on the Spirit of Bondage and the Spirit of Adoption, and at five in the evening in the place which had been the king's foundry for cannon. O hasten Thou the time when nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more!"

For thirty-eight years the Foundry was the headquarters of

Methodism, and the center of many philanthropic agencies, including the charity school, a dispensary, almshouse for nine poor widows, and a loan society. "On dark winter nights, over roads without pavements, and unlighted by gas or lamps of any kind save the flickering lantern of the serious and earnest worshippers, might be seen those devout men and women almost groping their way to the daily services at the first Methodist chapel, led by the tinkling of the Foundry bell."

The building was often so overcrowded that preacher and people left it for the open fields, and the crazy structure was costly to repair. In 1775 Wesley obtained from the city authorities a piece of land two hundred yards away from this old building, and on a stormy April day in 1777 he laid the foundation stone of the "new chapel" in City Road. On November 1, 1778, the chapel was opened. It was the first Methodist chapel built in London, and was unequaled throughout the connection. To a preacher who compared one of the Hull chapels with it Wesley replied, "If it be at all equal to the new chapel in London I will engage to eat it." Two years after its completion Wesley was awakened one night by an alarm of fire. The building stood in the course of the flames, but while the family were at prayer the wind shifted and saved the structure. The glory of the "latter house" was as great as that of the former, and many memorable services were held within its walls, notably that of 1785, the first London ordination service, when three laymen were solemnly set apart "to administer the sacraments and feed the Church of God." In 1791 ten thousand persons filed through the house to look on the calm face of John Wesley as he lay coffined for burial in the adjoining graveyard.

The chapel in City Road, now known as Wesley's Chapel, has been many times renovated, but the shell of the building, the galleries and beams, the communion table and rail are all



Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London.

As it originally appeared in 1778.

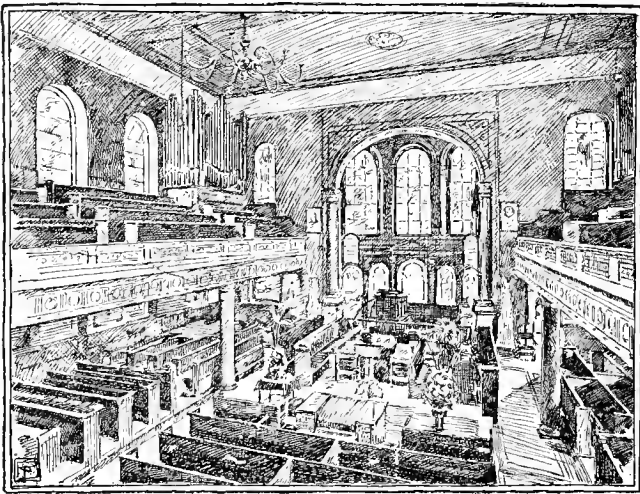
Where the Ecumenical Conference met, 1831.

City Road Chapel, 1901.

of Wesley's time. Many mementos of the Wesleys and Fletcher are preserved in it, and it is the most interesting locality in London to all lovers of Methodist history. Twice, in 1881 and 1901, the Ecumenical Conference has brought together

within its hallowed walls the spiritual children of John Wesley from every quarter of the world. In 1902 its memorial window to Bishop Simpson, the gift of American Methodists, was unveiled, with appropriate ceremony, to which the presence and participation of the Ambassador of the United States gave especial dignity.

Wesley's dwelling house still stands substantially unaltered on the south side of the open space in the front of the chapel.



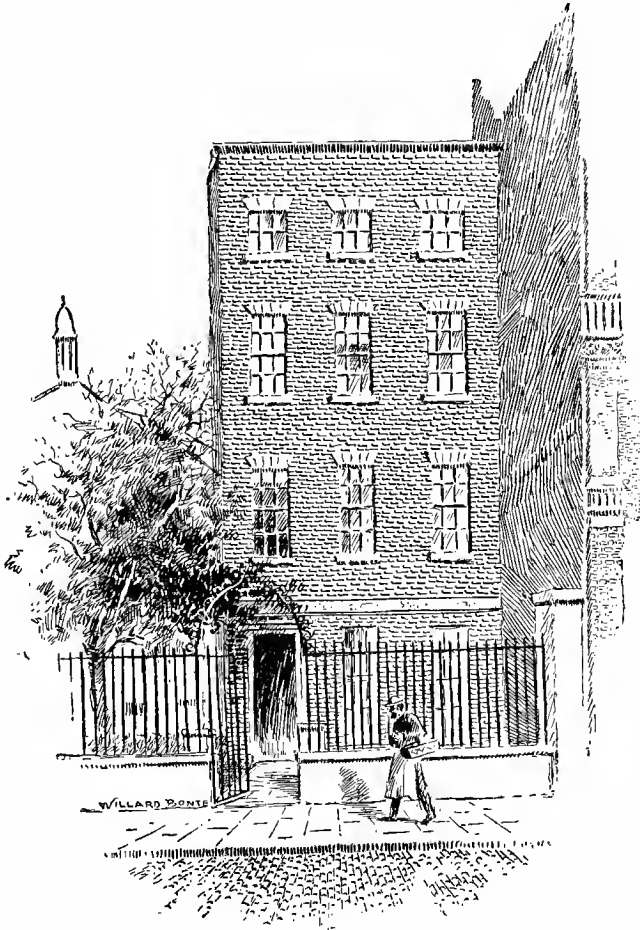
Interior of City Road Chapel.

At the time of the Ecumenical Conference of 1901.

He occupied the three rooms on the ground floor, and was head of the household of London preachers who dwelt above, as a significant entry in his Journal shows, December 9, 1787: "I went down at half an hour past five, but found no preacher in the chapel, though we had three or four in the house. [From the minutes of the Conference we may infer that these were Dr. Coke, Mr. Creighton, Samuel Bradburn, and John Atlay] So I preached myself. Afterwards, inquiring why none of my family attended the morning preaching, they said it was because they sat up too late. I . . . therefore ordered

that (1) everyone under my roof should go to bed at nine, that (2) everyone might attend the morning preaching.”

Hither came Dr. Coke to discuss Wesley's momentous proposal of ordination—although the ordination took place later



Wesley's House, City Road, London.

in a private house at Bristol. Hither, also, often came Charles Wesley on his little horse, gray with age, to write and sing many of his hymns to the delighted household. And hither, too, came John Howard, the philanthropist, to spend an hour with John Wesley in memorable converse. And in the front

room the founder of Methodism died. Can we wonder that the plain old dwelling is visited by troops of Methodists, who rejoice that in 1898 it was endowed as a permanent memorial of Wesley and a house for "Christian workers in the development of the spiritual and aggressive work connected with Wesley's Chapel"?

## CHAPTER IX.

**Society and Class.**

No Solitary Religion.—The First Society.—A Layman's Notion.—An Unspeakably Useful Institution.—The General Rules.—Quarterly Tickets.—Mother and Son.—“Jack May Excommunicate the Church”—Braving the Bishops.—“I Look upon All the World as My Parish.”—Preaching from His Father's Gravestone.—Death of Susanna Wesley.

**W**ESLEY never forgot the words of the “serious man” who told him that if he would serve God and reach heaven he must find companions or make them, saying, “The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.” He had seen the usefulness of the “societies” which had once existed in the Church of England, and he had profited by the fellowship meetings of the Moravians. In April, 1739, and a little later in London, he mentions fellowship meetings among the newly won converts. He took the names of the three women at Bristol who “agreed to meet together weekly,” and also the names of the four men who agreed to do the same. “If this work be not of God, let it come to naught. If it be, who can hinder it?” He dates, however, the actual commencement of organized Wesleyan Methodism a few months later in the same memorable year of “First things.” His account was first published in 1743 as preface to that most important of early Methodist documents, *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies*, in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne:

“In the latter part of the year 1739 eight or ten persons, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning



for redemption, came to Mr. Wesley in London. They desired, as did two or three more the next day, that he would spend some time with them in prayer and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That he might have more time for this great work he appointed a day when they might all come together; which from thenceforward they did every week, namely, on Thursday, in the evening. To these and as many more as desired to join with them (for their number increased daily) he gave those advices from time to time which he judged most needful for them; and they always concluded their meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places."

Wesley took down their names and places of abode in order to call upon them at their homes. He was moving in the same path as the apostles. "In the earliest times," says he, "those whom God had sent forth preached the Gospel to every creature. And the body of hearers were mostly Jews or heathens. But as soon as any of these were so convinced of the truth as to forsake sin and seek the Gospel salvation they immediately joined them together, took an account of their names, advised them to watch over each other, and met these catechumens (as they were then called) apart from the great congregation, that they might instruct, rebuke, exhort, and pray with them, and for them, according to their several necessities."

"Thus arose, without any previous design on either side, what was afterward called a society; a very innocent name, and very common in London for any number of people associating themselves together."

When this society at the Foundry was begun—the first society under the direct control of Wesley—the society in Fetter Lane was still attended by the Methodist converts, but they

seceded from it on account of internal dissensions on July 20, 1740. About seventy-two of the members adhered to them, joining the new society at the Foundry.

Wesley describes the next step in the organization of Methodism with characteristic simplicity: "The people were scattered so wide, in all parts of the town from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behavior of each person in his own neighborhood was; so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon

<i>Luke the 17. v. 5.</i>	
<i>Lord, increafe our Faith.</i>	
<i>Jan 1</i>	<i>1755. Mary Wright</i>
<i>Apr. 2.</i>	<i>155 Mary Wright</i>
<i>July 2.</i>	
<i>Octo. 1.</i>	<i>Wright</i>

A "Quarterly Ticket."

a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since." This was the method of the class meeting, which was first adopted at Bristol in 1742. There still remained a large debt on the meetinghouse built in the Bristol "Horsefair" three years before, and Wesley called together the principal men for consultation. How should the debts be paid? Captain Foy said, "Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid."

Another answered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it."

"Then," said Foy, "put eleven of the poorest with me, and if they can give anything, well; I will call on them weekly, and

if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbors weekly, receive what they give, and make up what is wanting."

"It was done," says Wesley. "In a while, some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, 'This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long.'"

The layman conceived the idea that solved the financial problem, and that quickened in the preacher's mind the plan by which the spiritual welfare of every member might be secured. Wesley called together all the leaders of the classes—as they were now termed—and desired each to make particular inquiry into the behavior of those he visited. This was done, and "many disorderly walkers were detected." Some turned from the evil of their ways; others were put out of the society. Thus was found a plan by which discipline might be maintained, the unworthy admonished or dismissed, and the consistent encouraged.

On Thursday, April 25, Wesley called together in London several earnest and sensible men, told them of the difficulty of knowing the people who desired to be under his care, and after a long conversation they adopted the new plan of classes. "This was the origin of our classes at London," writes Wesley, "for which I can never sufficiently praise God; the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest."

It was soon found impracticable for the leader to visit each member at his own house, and so it was agreed that the members of each class should come together at some suitable place once a week. Wesley writes: "It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped by this little prudential regulation. Many experienced that Christian fellowship of

which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other's welfare. And as they had daily a more intimate acquaintance, so they had a more endeared affection for each other."

After the division of the society into classes there came the institution of weekly leaders' meetings. The leaders were untrained men, and the objection was raised that they had neither gifts nor graces for such a divine employment. Wesley, however, quietly remarked,

"It may be hoped they will all be better than they are, both by experience and by observation, and by the advices given them by the minister every Tuesday night, and the prayers (then in particular) offered up for them."

On February 23, 1743, John Wesley sent forth the General Rules in his own name, and on May 1 Charles Wesley's name was signed to the important pamphlet. The society was defined as "a company of men, having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." There was only one condition required for admission into these societies—"a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits. It was therefore expected of all who desired to continue therein that they should continue "to evidence their desire of salvation, first, by doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced." One special test was in the "avoiding

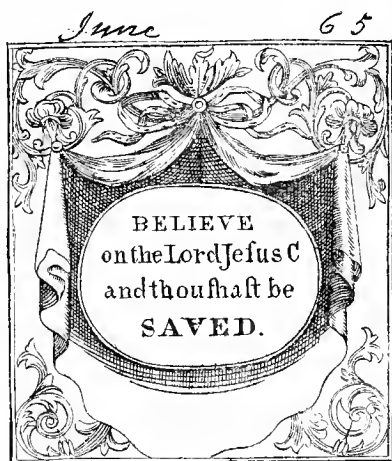


*Mary Heest*

A Quarterly Ticket, 1764.

such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus." A further evidence of sincerity was to be shown by "doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible, to all men." The third evidence of desire for salvation was by "attending on all the ordinances of God," such as public worship, the ministry of the word, the Lord's Supper, family and private prayer, searching the Scriptures, and fasting or abstinence. Thus in well-built sections was laid the broad platform of Methodism.

The quarterly visitation of the classes by Wesley and his



*June Wright.*

A Quarterly Ticket, 1765.

preachers and the use of a ticket of membership, appear to have begun in 1742. Soon a voluntary subdivision of the class, called the "band," was instituted. There were bands for married men, married women, single men, and single women. The love feast, the *agape* of the early Christians, was revived by Wesley, and celebrated quarterly. At first band members, and, later, all members of society holding class tick-

ets, were admitted. "A little plain cake and water" were partaken of as a sign of fellowship, and the service consisted of a joyous testimony of Christian experience.

Another institution peculiar to Methodism was the watch night. The colliers at Kingswood had heretofore given many a night, and especially the last night of the year, to drunken revels and song. When they became Christians their social customs underwent a transformation, and they met as often as

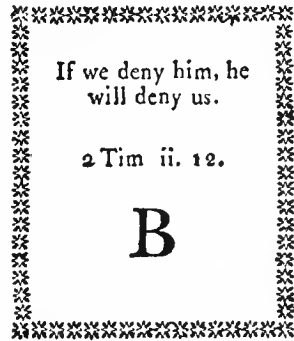
possible, and spent the greater part of the night in prayer and praise. Objectors arose, and Wesley was urged to stop the meetings. He remembered that the early Christians spent whole nights in prayer, giving to them the name *vigiliae*, and he saw in them an agency for good.

So he sent the members word that on Friday night nearest full moon (that there might be light) he would watch with them and preach. He began the meeting between eight and nine, and continued it until after twelve, "a little beyond the noon of night," as Wesley remarked. The first meeting at the end of the year was held at Kingswood, on Wednesday, December 31, 1740. The first watch night in London was held on Friday, April 9, 1742. The custom ex-

tended to other places. The meetings in time ceased to be monthly, and were held quarterly, but in recent years they have been confined to New Year's Eve. Charles Wesley wrote some triumphant hymns for use on these occasions, including the song in which every English watch-night service concludes to-day, "Come, let us anew our journey pursue." Another service of which Wesley made much was one "for renewing the covenant."

Very soon Wesley was driven, "sorely against his own will," says Dr. Rigg, to make a distinct separation of his societies in London and Bristol from the Church of England. The clergy not only excluded the Wesleys from their pulpits, but in 1740 repelled them and their converts from the Lord's table. At Bristol especially, in that year, this was done with much harshness. The brothers, therefore, administered the sacrament in their own preaching rooms. The practice having been estab-

March 1789.



*George Osborn*

A Quarterly Ticket, 1789.

lished at Bristol, the London society at the Foundry claimed the same privilege. Thus full provision was made for the spiritual wants of the societies quite apart from the services of the Church of England, although for many years many of the Methodist members attended the communion service of the Anglican Church.

Susanna Wesley was providentially at hand to counsel and encourage her son when he was laying the foundation of organized Methodism. She stood by his side when he preached at Kennington Common to twenty thousand people. She was present when the question of separation from the Fetter Lane society was discussed, and approved of the withdrawal of the members to the Foundry. About this time she was brought into fuller sympathy than ever with her son's views of the possibility of conscious forgiveness. John Wesley records a conversation in which she said that until recently she never dared ask this blessing for herself. "But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words in delivering the cup to me, 'the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee,' the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins." "I asked her," says Wesley, "whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith, and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered: 'He had it himself, and declared a little before his death that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being accepted in the Beloved.' But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, especially upon it; whence she supposed he looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few; not as promised to all the people of God." At the Foundry Mrs. Wesley enjoyed the society of her sons and several of her daughters, and attended all the meetings of the infant Methodist Church.

But Samuel Wesley, at Tiverton, was greatly distressed by the doctrinal and the ecclesiastical irregularities of his younger brothers. He declared in a letter to his mother shortly before his death, November 6, 1739, that he would "much rather have them picking straws within the walls than preaching in



The Rev. Samuel Wesley, Jr.

The print was published after his death; the legend is, "late master of the grammar school at Tiverton, elder brother of the Rev. John Wesley."

the area of Moorfields"—alluding to the lunatic asylum. "It was with exceeding concern and grief I heard you had countenanced a spreading delusion so far as to be one of Jack's congregation. Is it not enough that I am bereft of both my brothers, but must my mother follow too? I earnestly beseech the Almighty to preserve you from joining a schism at the close of your life, as you were unfortunately engaged in one at the



beginning of it. . . . As I told Jack, I am not afraid the Church should excommunicate him, discipline is at too low an ebb, but that he should excommunicate the Church. . . . He only who ruleth the madness of the people can stop them from being a formed sect in a very little time." This letter faithfully presents the views of many a clergyman of the time.

Although some Anglian and Methodist writers have stated that Wesley did nothing that was inconsistent with the laws of the Established Church, it must be granted that his "irregularities" were calculated to alarm the "orderly" prelates of his day. When he organized his societies, built and registered meetinghouses for worship, and, later, ordained ministers not only to preach, but to administer the sacraments, he practically separated from the State Church in the eyes of orderly clergy. His brother Samuel, as we have seen, very early called his action "schismatic." A recent Methodist newspaper observes that there could be no more curious illustration of the way in which our wishes can destroy our logic than the fact that Wesley persuaded himself to the end that he had not separated from the Church of England. Abel Stevens, breathing the free air of the New World, has said that English writers have deemed it desirable, and have not found it a difficult task, to defend Wesley against imputations of disregard for the authority and "order" of the State Church, "but it may hereafter be more difficult to defend him before the rest of the Christian world for having been so deferential to a hierarchy whose moral condition at the time he so much denounced, and whose studied policy throughout the rest of his life was to disown if not to defeat him."

Within five weeks of John Wesley's return from Germany he and his brother Charles were summoned before the Bishop of London, Dr. Edmund Gibson, and questioned with great strictness. When the Wesley brothers appeared before him, charged with

preaching an absolute assurance of salvation, he heard them fairly, and said: "If by assurance you mean an inward persuasion whereby a man is conscious in himself, after examining his life by the law of God and weighing his own sincerity, that he is in a state of salvation, and acceptable to God, I don't see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance." To the charge of preaching justification by faith only, the Wesleys replied: "Can anyone preach otherwise who agrees to our Church and the Scriptures?" John Wesley inquired if his reading in a religious society made it a conventicle. The bishop warily replied: "No, I think not. However, you can read the acts and laws as well as I. I determine nothing." But in 1739 the bishop issued a pastoral letter in which he charges the Methodists with "enthusiasm," or "a strong persuasion in their mind that they are guided in an extraordinary manner by immediate impulses and impressions of the Spirit of God." They were guilty of "boasting of sudden and surprising effects, wrought by the Holy Ghost, in consequence of their preaching." He supported the churchwardens of Islington against their vicar and excluded Charles Wesley from the pulpit.

We find John Wesley again facing the bishop in 1740. What did he mean by perfection? was the question. When Wesley had replied the bishop said, "Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to the world." And Wesley gladly obeyed by publishing his sermon on Christian Perfection. But a little later the rise of the societies and the field-preaching, with its sensational accompaniments, again alarmed the bishop. He wrote a pamphlet against this "sect," in which he charged them with "having had the boldness to preach in the fields and other open places, and inviting the rabble to be their hearers," in defiance of a statute of Charles II. Wesley replied in his *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. He declares that the clergy, who will not suffer him to preach in the

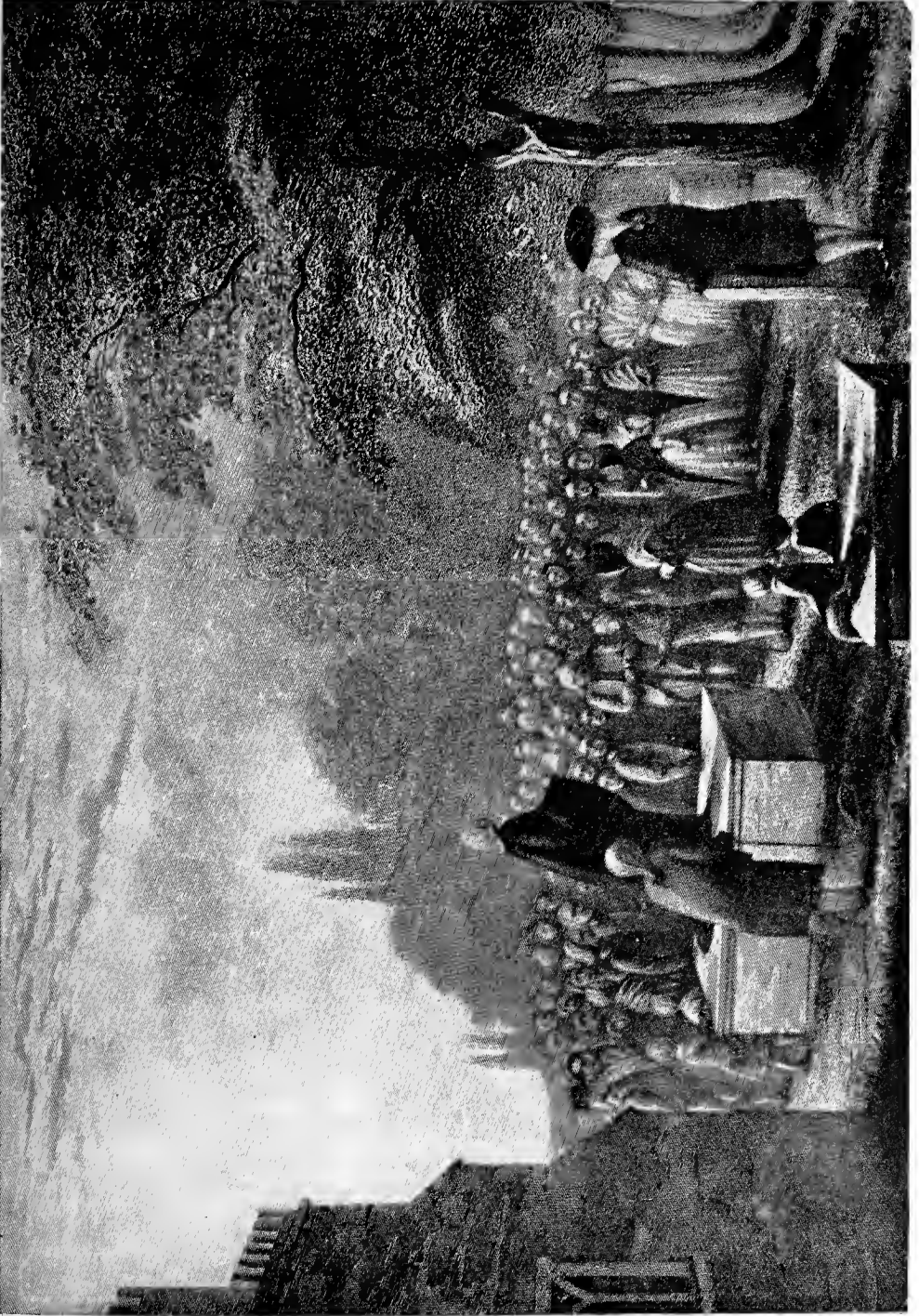
churches, are accountable for his preaching in the fields. Besides, "one plain reason why these sinners are never reclaimed is this, they never come into a church. Will you say, as some tender-hearted Christians I have heard, 'Then it is their own fault; let them die and be damned!' I grant it may be their own fault, but the Saviour of souls came after us, and so we ought to seek to save that which is lost." The able and sincere Bishop Gibson could not shake himself free from the prejudices and Church "order" which stood in the way of the salvation of the despised "rabble," and in another of his pastorals he classes the Methodists with "deists, papists, and other disturbers of the kingdom of God."

Bishop Butler, author of the great Analogy, summoned Wesley, and after a conversation on justification by faith, for which the Methodist claimed the support of the Anglican Homilies, said:

"You have no business here; you are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore I advise you to go hence."

"My Lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can," replied Wesley. "Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay so long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here; therefore here I stay

Being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received I am a priest of the Church universal; and being ordained as fellow of a college, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the word of God in any part of the Church of England. I do not, therefore, conceive that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law. When I am convinced I do then it will be time to ask, 'Shall I obey God or man?' But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile that I could advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls in any other place more



Wesley Preaching on his Father's Tomb in Epworth Churchyard.



than in Bristol, in that hour, by God's help, I will go hence; which till then I may not do."

Wesley took his own time and did not leave Bristol until persuaded that it was his duty to labor elsewhere.

There was a deluge of pamphlets and articles against the Methodists, in which Wesley was branded as "a restless deceiver of the people," "a newfangled teacher setting up his own fanatical conceits in opposition to the authority of God," "a Jesuit in disguise," and, worst of all, "a Dissenter." The Methodists were denounced as "young quacks in divinity," "buffoons in religion," "bold movers of sedition, and ring-leaders of the rabble." The magazines and newspapers conducted a hot crusade against them, "stirring up the people," writes Wesley, "to knock these mad dogs on the head at once;" and we shall find that mob violence soon followed these appeals of the press and censures of the prelates.

In answer to a clergyman who forbade his preaching in his parish, Wesley gave utterance to the famous saying which appears on the Wesley tablet in Westminster Abbey. He wrote: "God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear, God or man? . . . *I look upon all the world as my parish*; thus far I mean that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to, and sure I am that his blessing attends it."

In 1742 John Wesley began to occupy a larger portion of his boundless parish.

During the year he spent about twenty-four weeks in London, fourteen in Bristol and its neighborhood, one in Wales, and

thirteen in making two tours to Newcastle-on-Tyne, the metropolis of the busy North.

His own account of his Newcastle visit is graphic. He had never seen and heard before in so short a time so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing—even from the mouths of little children. He writes:

At seven I walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, and, standing at the end of the street with John Taylor, began to sing the 100th psalm. Three or four people came out to see what was the matter, who soon increased to four or five hundred. I suppose there might be twelve or fifteen hundred before I had done preaching, to whom I applied those solemn words, “He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed.”

Observing the people, when I had done, to stand gaping and staring upon me with the most profound astonishment, I told them: “If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God’s help, I design to preach here again.”

At five the hill on which I designed to preach was covered from the top to the bottom. I never saw so large a number of people together, either in Moorfields or at Kennington Common. I knew it was not possible for the one half to hear, although my voice was then strong and clear; and I stood so as to have them all in view, as they were ranged on the side of the hill. The word of God which I set before them was, “I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely.” After preaching the poor people were ready to tread me under foot, out of pure love and kindness. It was some time before I could possibly get out of the press. I then went back another way than I came; but several were got to our inn before me, by whom I was vehemently importuned to stay with them, at least a few days, or, however, one day more. But I could not consent, having given my word to be at Birstall, with God’s leave, on Tuesday night.

Four months before his mother’s death Wesley revisited his birthplace, Epworth. The curate was now Mr. Romley, who had been schoolmaster at Wroote, had been assisted by Wesley’s father in preparing for Oxford, and had been his amanuensis and curate. On Sunday morning Wesley offered to assist Mr. Romley either by preaching or reading the prayers, but the curate would have none of his help. In the afternoon Wesley took his seat in the church, which was crowded in consequence

of a rumor that he would preach. Romley preached a florid and rhetorical sermon against "enthusiasm" with evident reference to Methodism.

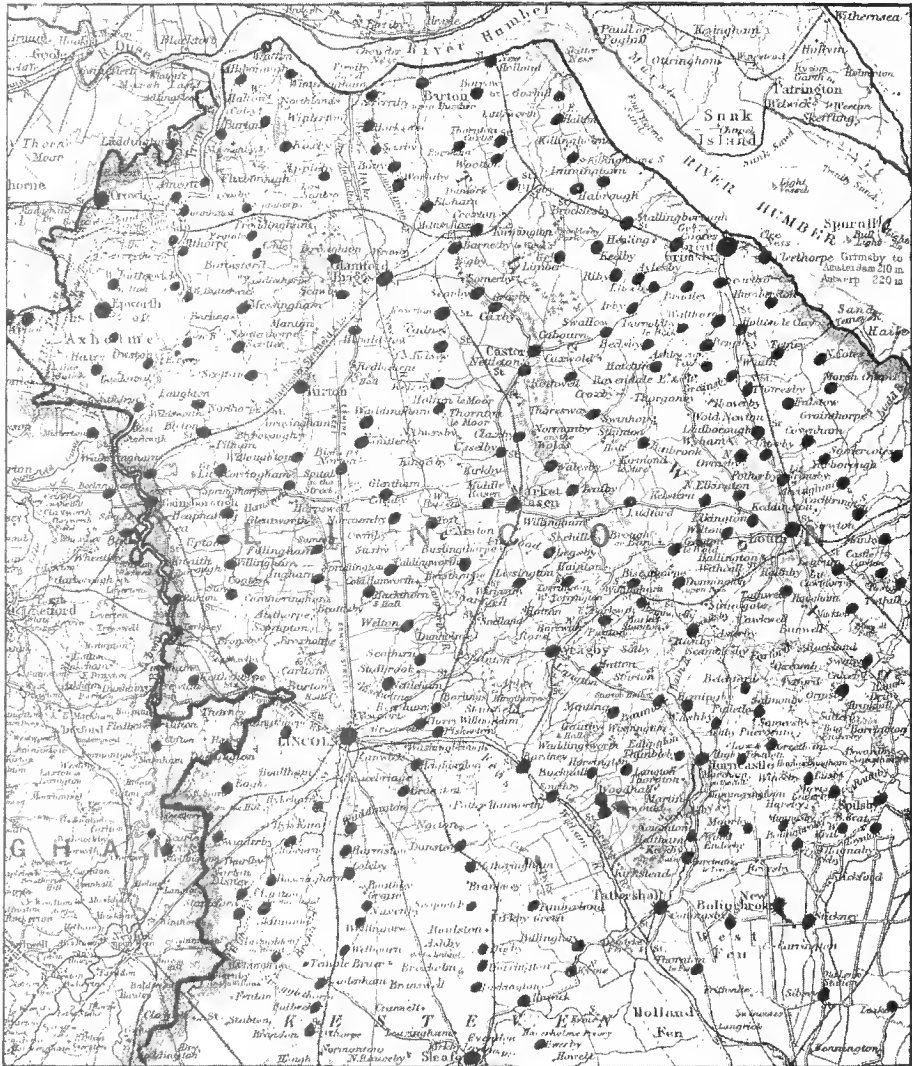
But the people were not to be disappointed. As they came out John Taylor announced that Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, would preach in the churchyard at six o'clock. At that hour he stood on his father's tombstone and preached to the largest congregation ever seen in Epworth. "The scene was unique and inspiring—a living son preaching on a dead father's grave because the parish priest would not allow him to officiate in a dead father's church." "I am well assured," writes Wesley, "that I did far 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."

He could not resist the appeal to remain a few days longer, and on eight evenings he preached from the tomb-pulpit. In the daytime he visited the surrounding villages. He waited on a justice of the peace, and writes of him as "a man of candor and understanding; before whom (I was informed) their angry neighbors had carried a whole wagonload of these heretics. But when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence; for that was a point their conductors had forgot. At length one said, 'Why, they pretended to be better than other people; and, besides, they prayed from morning to night.' Mr. S. asked, 'But have they done nothing besides?' 'Yes, sir,' said an old man; 'an't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue! And now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back!' replied the justice, 'and let them convert all the scolds in the town.'"

The churchyard services were attended with amazing power. On the Saturday evening Wesley's voice was drowned by the cries of penitents, and many then and there found rest for



their souls. His last service at Epworth lasted three hours, and "yet," says Wesley, "we scarce knew how to part. O



Methodism in Wesley's County, A. D. 1903.

The heavy black dots represent the location of Wesleyan chapels in Lincolnshire at the present day.

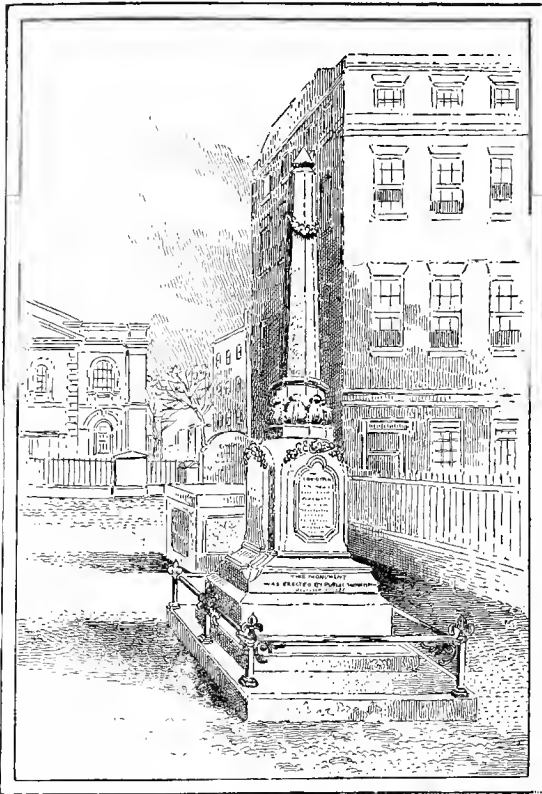
let none think his labor of love is lost because the fruit does not immediately appear! Near forty years did my father labor here; but he saw little fruit of all his labor. I took some pains

among this people, too, and my strength almost seemed spent in vain; but now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed sown long since now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins."

The next year Wesley again visited Epworth, and, it being a place under heaven where this should befall me first as my father's house, the place of my nativity, and the very place where, "according to the strictest sect of our religion," I had so long "lived a Pharisee." It was also fit, in the highest degree, that he who repelled me from that very table where I had myself so often distributed the bread of life should be one who owed his all in this world to the tender love which my father had shown to his as well as personally to himself.

Methodism in Lincolnshire owes its organized churches to the service of Wesley in his father's churchyard. During the forty-eight years that followed Wesley made many visits to his native county, preaching in nearly all its towns and many of its villages. In 1761 he writes, "I find the work of God increases on every side, but particularly in Lincolnshire, where there has been no work like this since the time I preached on my father's tomb." His last visit to Epworth was paid just eight months before his death, when he preached in the market place to a large crowd on "How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation?" At the centenary of his death, in 1891, the Wesleyan Methodist societies of his native county reported a membership of twenty thousand, or one twentieth of the entire membership of the societies in England and Wales; and this in a county the entire population of which is considerably under half a million.

Susanna Wesley, "the mother of the Wesleys" and the "mother of Methodism," lived to see England awakening at the call of her devoted sons, and in the metropolis, the west,



Monument to Susanna Wesley,  
City Road, London.

“He did by his Spirit apply the merits of the great atonement to my soul, by telling me that Christ died for me. . . . If I do want anything without which I cannot be saved (of which I am not at present sensible), then I believe I shall not die before that want is supplied.”

and the North of England she heard of multitudes quickened by the new life and enrolled in the new fellowship. The records of her closing days are brief. In the last letter she is known to have written she is rejoicing in the clear assurance which came to her so late in life:



Grave of Susanna Wesley, Bunhill Fields,  
London,

Her son John was at Bristol when he heard that she was failing fast, and after preaching to a large congregation on Sunday evening, July 18, 1742, he rode off hurriedly to London. He reached the Foundry on the 20th, and wrote in his Journal, "I found my mother on the borders of eternity; but she has no doubt or fear, nor any desire but, as soon as God should call her, to depart and be with Christ." Fifteen years before, she had told John that she did not wish her children to weep at her parting from them, but if they "were likely to reap any spiritual advantage" by being present at her departure, she would be glad to have them with her. Charles was absent from London, but her five daughters were present, as well as John.

On the following Friday they saw that her end was near. John read the solemn commendatory prayer, as he had done seven years before for his father. It was four o'clock when he left her side for a moment to "drink a dish of tea," being faint and weary with watching and emotion. "One called me again to her bedside," he says. "She opened her eyes wide and fixed them upward for a moment. Then the lids dropped and the soul was set at liberty without one struggle or groan or sigh. We stood around the bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech, 'Children, as soon as I am released sing a psalm of praise to God!'"

She was buried in "the great Puritan necropolis," Bunhill Fields. A witness records: "At the grave there was much grief when Mr. Wesley said, 'I commit the body of my mother to the earth!'" Then a hymn was sung, and standing by the open grave Wesley preached to a vast congregation which he describes as "one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side eternity" His subject was "the great white throne" of the Book of the Revelation.

## CHAPTER X.

## Lay Helpers.

Wesley's "Irregularities."—"Soul-saving Laymen."—Cennick, Humphreys, Maxfield.—"He is as Surely Called of God to Preach as You Are."—John Nelson, of Birstall.—The Extraordinary Call of Women.—Mary Bosanquet and others.

WESLEY had already become a radical anti-High Churchman. Four departures from conventional church "order" evidence this. He had organized a system of religious societies altogether independent of the parochial clergy and of episcopal control, and the "rules" of his societies contained no requirement of allegiance to the State Church. This was a distinct step toward a separate communion. A year later he had built meetinghouses, licensed and settled on trustees for his own use. The next year he began, with his brother, to administer the sacraments in these houses. Now he took another step in the same direction by calling out lay preachers, wholly devoted to the work of preaching and visitation. When this last step was challenged he met it in a style which showed how resolutely he was "casting off the graveclothes" of sacerdotalism. "I do assure you this at present is my embarrassment. That I have not gone too far yet I know, but whether I have gone far enough I am extremely doubtful. . . . Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen."

The step cost him a severe struggle. "To touch this point," he says, "was to touch the apple of mine eye." But in his First Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion he triumphantly

justifies lay preaching by Scripture, Church history, and Christian common sense. "God immediately gave a blessing thereto. In several places, by means of these plain men, not only those who had begun to run well were hindered from drawing back unto perdition, but other sinners also, from time to time, were converted from the error of their ways. . . I know no Scripture which forbids making use of such help in a case of such necessity. And I praise God who has given even this help to these poor sheep when their own shepherd pitied them not."

The "plain men" who head the host of Wesley's lay preachers are John Cennick, Joseph Humphreys, Thomas Maxfield, and John Nelson.

John Cennick was the grandson of persecuted Quakers. He had turned from a reckless youth to deep seriousness and so to a joyous Christian experience. He made the acquaintance of the Methodist leaders, and was engaged to teach the Kingswood school. Here, with Wesley's approval, he began "expounding" the word to the assembled colliers. Later he left the Methodists and joined the Moravians, doing nobly the work of an evangelist amid mobs and sore abuse. He died in 1755, if it be well to speak of him as dead who wrote those living hymns, "Children of the heavenly King" and "Thou dear Redeemer, dying Lamb."

Joseph Humphreys, who began to assist Wesley at the Foundry in 1740, had been trained for the ministry in a Dissenters' school. Having been awakened by hearing the Methodist preachers, he began to read sermons, then to exhort briefly, and finally to preach, in spite of jeers and maltreatment. After his work with Wesley he joined Whitefield's following, later the Presbyterians, and died a regularly ordained clergyman.

Thomas Maxfield was one of the first converts at Bristol. He went up to London with Charles Wesley, and was helpful

as a personal worker at the Foundry meetings. By the usual stages he went on from exhortation to preaching in John Wesley's absence.

Wesley at first considered this preaching of sermons, as distinguished from the informal exhortations of a leader, an irregularity, and hastened back to London to check it. He arrived with an anxious look upon his face. His mother inquired the reason of his concern and displeasure.

"Thomas Maxfield has turned preacher," was his abrupt reply.

"John," said Mrs. Wesley, "you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favoring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man; for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the points of his preaching, and hear him yourself."

Wesley heard Maxfield preach, and was satisfied. "It is the Lord!" he exclaimed; "let him do what seemeth him good. What am I that I should withstand God?" His last scruples about employing unordained preachers yielded to his mother's argument, and the woman apostle of the old rectory kitchen, who had alarmed her good husband by the "irregularity" of her fireside services, gave an impetus to the work of the lay preachers which is felt to-day over the whole earth. The way was now prepared for the extension of Methodism throughout the country, and for the growth of the "circuit" system.

But Wesley's enlistment of laymen roused afresh the fears of the English prelates. When Robinson, the Archbishop of Armagh, met Charles Wesley at the Hot-wells, Bristol, he said :

"I knew your brother well; I could never credit all I heard respecting him and you; but one thing in your conduct I could never account for—your employing laymen."

“My Lord,” said Charles, “the fault is yours and your brethren.”

“How so?” asked the primate.

“Because you hold your peace, and the stones cry out.”

“But I am told,” said the archbishop, “that they are unlearned men.”

“Some are,” said the sprightly poet; “so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet.”

John Wesley’s defense of these “unlettered” men was, perhaps, more to the point. He wrote:

“I am bold to affirm that these unlettered men have help from God for that great work—the saving of souls from death. . . . Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know, they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university, are able to do.”

John Nelson, the prince of lay preachers, was a giant Yorkshire stonecutter, whose great body held a soul tormented by uncertainty. “Surely God never made man to be such a riddle to himself, and to leave him so,” he wrote, in the era of his spiritual conflicts. “I was like a wandering bird cast out of the nest till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields. O that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand he stroked back his hair and turned his face toward where I stood, and, I thought, fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock, and when he did speak I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done I said, ‘This man can tell the secrets of my heart; he hath not left me there, for he hath shown the remedy, even the blood of Jesus.’”



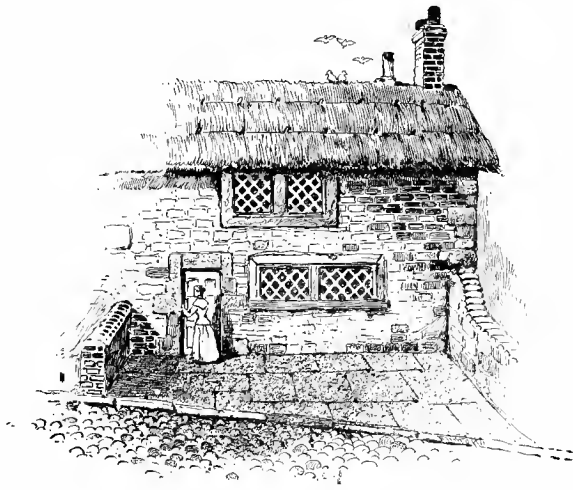
Conversion made John Nelson a new creature. His Birstall neighbors were curious to know the cause of the change, and from telling them he was soon preaching to them. "If it be my Master's will, I am ready to go to hell," said he, "and preach to the devils." He could hardly have fared worse had



John Nelson

he been taken at his word. The parish clergy were enraged to see a stone mason assuming to teach people the way to heaven. They used every means foul and fair to silence him and disperse his meetings. Wesley saw the greatness of the man and called him to London. Together they traversed Cornwall, preaching and enduring opposition and privation. He was cast into prison, impressed as a soldier, but after three months

was released. He continued to preach in the market places, submitting to all indignities rather than defend himself by his strength. Once he was felled by a brute who had sworn to kill him. His assailant leaped upon him several times, till he was breathless, and the renewed bleeding from his morning wounds left him unconscious. The bully then seized one of the Methodists who was near and flung him against a wall, breaking two of his ribs. He then went to the gentleman who



John Nelson's Birthplace

At Birstall, Yorkshire.

had hired him and boasted, "I have killed the preacher; he lies dead in the croft."

As Nelson lay bleeding on the ground "the parson's brother" and about twenty others came to see if he were really dead. They cursed him soundly, dragged him into the street as consciousness returned, and one after another struck him till he was down again. Eight times he struggled to his knees, and eight times they knocked him down. Then taking him by his long hair, they dragged him over the stones, kicking him fiercely. Six of them got on his body and thighs, "to tread

the Holy Spirit out of him," they said. One exclaimed, "I have heard that a cat has nine lives ; but I think he has nine-score." Another said, "If he has, he shall die this day." The "gentlemen" then dragged him to the village well and attempted to put him in, but a woman intervened and resisted them, and at last some "gentlewomen from the city called the gentlemen by their names," who looked as men confounded at being discovered in this dastardly work. Some friends helped him into a house, and the next day he met Wesley and "found his word come with power" to his soul, and was constrained to cry out: "O Lord, I will praise thee. Thou hast brought me out of the jaws of death."

It was with men of such mettle to carry the proclamation that John Wesley organized his itinerant ministry.

We have seen that Susanna Wesley became a lay preacher in the rectory of Epworth and saw the fruit of her labor. Her meetings formed part of that providential training which made her not only the mother of the Wesleys, but also the "mother of Methodism." We cannot wonder that John Wesley, enriched by the influence of his gifted mother and sisters, should have recognized the freedom and power of woman in the work of extending and deepening the Evangelical Revival and its philanthropic ministry.

Mary Bosanquet, who became the wife of Fletcher of Madeley, is the most eminent of the daughters of Methodism who received what Wesley called the "extraordinary call" to address mixed public congregations. She was the daughter of wealthy worldly folk, and it was from a Methodist maidservant that Mary first heard of the peace that comes with believing. Before she was twenty her father drove her from home because she would not promise to refrain from trying to convert her brothers. With her own means she opened an orphanage. She and Mrs. Sarah Crosby, one of her helpers, began to ad-

dress the members of society. Many were present, and the two women were in effect preaching before they knew it.

In 1771 Mrs. Crosby wrote a letter to Wesley to ask his advice and direction for Miss Bosanquet on the same point.



Mrs. John Fletcher (Mary Bosanquet).

One of the women who were "called to preach."

With the sound judgment and calm, good sense which distinguished her she argues that from the Scriptures it is clear that occasionally women had an extraordinary call to preach. For herself she concludes, "If I did not believe I had an extraordinary call, I would not act in an extraordinary manner." Wesley's reply expresses his mature and final opinion:

“MY DEAR SISTER: I think the strength of the cause rests there; on your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our lay preachers; otherwise I could not countenance his preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism is an extraordinary dispensation of his providence. 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 made a few exceptions; at Corinth, in particular.

“I am, my dear sister, your affectionate brother,

‘JOHN WESLEY.’”

Mrs. Crosby traveled widely through Yorkshire after this letter, and her labors were owned of God.

Mary Bosanquet was asked by many, “If you are called to preach, why do you not do it constantly, and take a round as a preacher?” She answered, “Because that is not my call. I have many duties to attend to, and many cares which they know nothing about. I must therefore leave myself to his guidance who hath the sole right of disposing of me.” Again, she tells us, they asked, “Why do you not give out, ‘I am to preach?’ Why call it meeting?” She answered, “Because that suits my design best. First, it is less ostentatious. Secondly, it leaves me at liberty to speak more or less, as I feel myself led.\* Thirdly, it gives less offense to those who watch for it.” Thus she uses her gifts with discretion, as tenderly sensitive to inward impressions, which she believed were wrought by the Holy Spirit, as the saintly Quaker women like Elizabeth Fry and Mary Capper. For thirteen years she toiled at Cross Hall, sometimes in great financial straits, sometimes slandered, but comforted by her friendships, and ever praying, “Only make

me what thou wouldst have me to be, and then lead me as thou wilt."

We have seen that Wesley recognized the "extraordinary call" of Sarah Crosby and Mrs. Fletcher as preachers. Later we find him giving even more decided encouragement to Miss Mallet (afterward Mrs. Boyce), whom he met at Long Stratton, in Norfolk, and of whose remarkable experience he gives an



Cross Hall.

The Home of Mary Bosanquet Fletcher.

account in his Journal. He became to her, as she well says, "a father and a faithful friend." Her own Journal is so suggestive and terse that it must tell its own story: "When I first traveled I followed Mr. Wesley's counsel, which was to let the voice of the people be to me the voice of God, and where I was sent for, to go, for the Lord had called me thither. To this counsel I have attended unto this day. But the voice of the people was not the voice of some preachers. Mr. Wesley soon made this easy by sending me a note from the Conference

by Mr. Joseph Harper, which was as follows: 'We give the right hand of fellowship to Sarah Mallet, and have no objection to her being a preacher in our connection so long as she preaches the Methodist doctrine and attends to our discipline.' This was the order of Mr. Wesley and the Conference of 1787. From that day I have been little opposed by preachers."

Another of the prophesying daughters of Methodism was Mrs. Ann Gilbert, who consulted John Wesley, about 1771, as to her public work. He took her by the hand, saying only, "Sister, do all the good you can." One minister, who heard her preach in Redruth Chapel to fourteen hundred people, said that she had a torrent of softening eloquence which occasioned a general weeping through the whole congregation; and, what was more astonishing, she was blind, and had been so for many years. The Rev. W. Warrener, the first missionary to the West Indies, was converted under the preaching of another good woman, Miss Hurrell; and Mrs. Holder, Mrs. E. Collett, Mrs. De Putron, and Mrs. Sarah Stevens, all of them ministers' wives, were preachers.

## CHAPTER XI.

**Two Sorts of Methodists.**

Whitefield's Calvinism.—Arminians.—“The Queen of the Methodists.”—  
Trevecca College.—Lady Huntingdon's Connection.—Time Heals  
the Wounds.—Whitefield's Candle Burns to the Socket.

**W**HILE John Wesley was organizing societies and building preaching houses in England, George Whitefield was ranging through the American colonies kindling the old churches into new zeal by his flaming eloquence. He returned to England in March, 1741, prepared to take issue with his former leader on the doctrine of election. His intercourse with the New England Calvinists had made him a militant opponent of the doctrine of universal redemption as taught by the Wesleys. Some of the new societies had already split upon this rock, even John Cennick, the schoolmaster at Kingswood, having seceded and urged Whitefield to return from America in order to defend the doctrine.

To Wesley's intensely practical mind the main reason for opposing the Calvinistic theories was what he considered to be their tendency to antinomianism. To check the progress of what he felt to be dangerous error, he preached and published his famous sermon on Free Grace—the third sermon that he had published. On reading this sermon and Charles Wesley's appended hymn, Whitefield attacked it in a pamphlet “Letter to John Wesley,” which was disfigured by the personalities and bad logic of the overmatched debater.

About six weeks before his arrival in England some one obtained a copy of an abusive private letter he had sent to

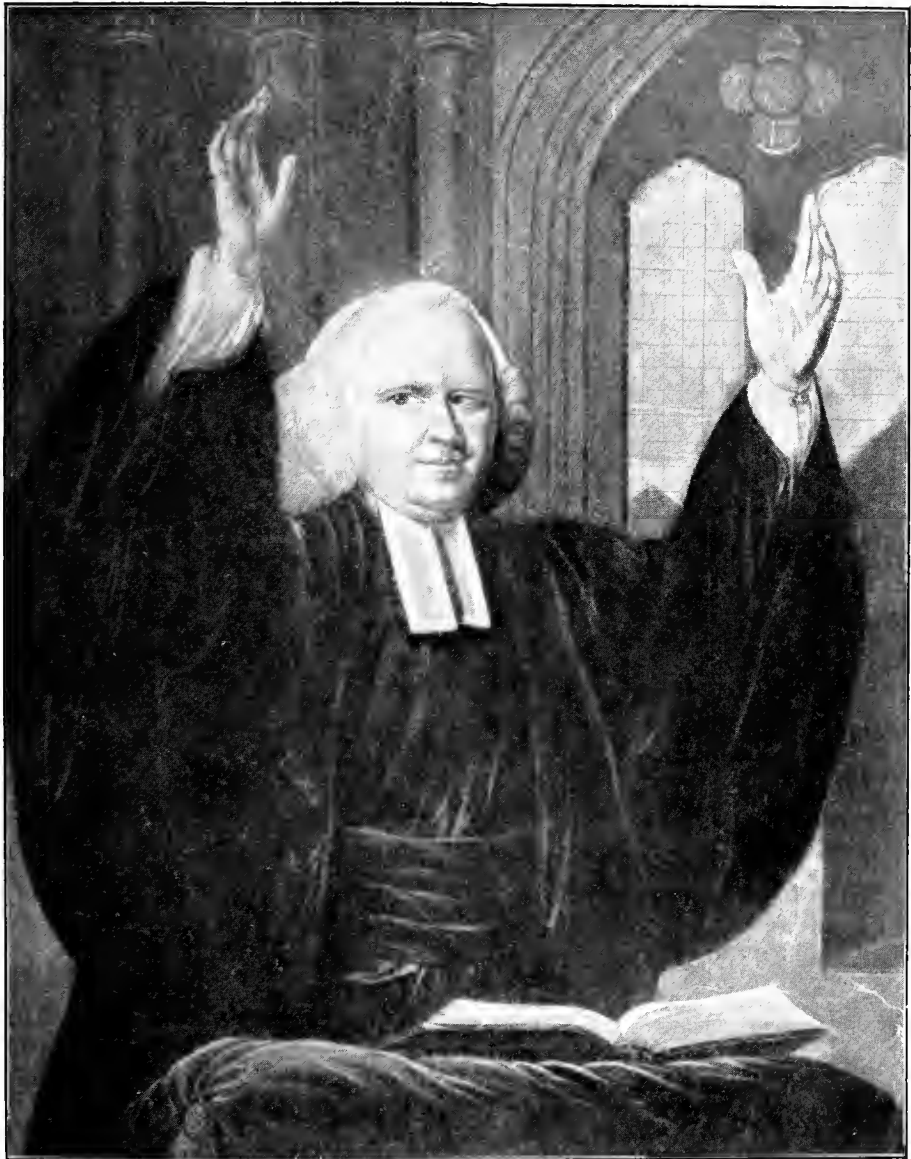


Wesley in 1740 and circulated it at the doors of the Foundry. Wesley heard of this, and having procured a copy, tore it in pieces before the assembled congregation, declaring that he believed Whitefield would have done the same. In two minutes the whole congregation had followed his example, and all the copies were torn to tatters.

When Whitefield reached England, in March, 1741, and preached at Kennington Common, he was greatly distressed to find that his letters to Wesley had alienated many of his friends. He did not refrain, however, from preaching against the Wesleys, by name, at Moorfields. His old friends, nevertheless, invited him to preach at the Foundry, but with Charles Wesley by his side he there proclaimed the Absolute Decrees in the most offensive manner, and it was evident, as Wesley says, that "there were now two sorts of Methodists—those for particular and those for general redemption."

It is not necessary to enter into all the details of the painful but important controversy. It is far pleasanter to record that in course of time the personal breach between the evangelists was entirely healed, although both held fast their own opinions, and the living stream of Methodism was divided into two currents. "One branch," says Bishop McTyeire, "after refreshing and enriching a dry and thirsty land, is absorbed and lost; the other, with well-defined and widening banks and deepening current, flows on."

Howell Harris, the warm-hearted Welsh Calvinist, and Lady Huntingdon found Wesley ready to forgive Whitefield's impetuous personal abuse, and one of the noblest characteristics of Whitefield was revealed in his willingness to confess his faults. He wrote to Wesley in October, 1741: "May God remove all obstacles that now prevent our union; may all disputings cease, and each of us talk of nothing but Jesus and him crucified. This is my resolution. I am without dissimulation. I find I



The Rev. George Whitefield, A.M.  
Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon.



love you as much as ever, and pray God, if it be his blessed will, that we may all be united together."

Later Wesley's pardon was asked for the unnecessary and offensive taunts of the widely circulated letter. In a pamphlet of some years later Whitefield made the following frank confession: "It was wrong in me to publish a private transaction to the world, and very ill-judged to think the glory of God could be promoted by unnecessarily exposing my friend. For this I have asked both God and him pardon years ago, and though I believe both have forgiven me, yet I believe I shall never be able to forgive myself; my mistakes have been too many and my blunders too frequent to make me set up for infallibility. But many and frequent as my mistakes have been or may be, as I have no part to act—if I know anything of my heart—but to promote God's glory and the good of souls, as soon as I am made aware of them they shall be publicly acknowledged and retracted."

Whitefield soon regained his popularity. Evangelical Calvinists, mostly Dissenters, rallied round him and built his first tabernacle in Moorfields not far from the Foundry. It was only a large, rough wooden shed, but for twelve years it was Whitefield's metropolitan cathedral and was the scene of great spiritual victories.

A few months later Whitefield sent Cennick a contribution of £20, from a lady, toward a chapel at Kingswood, which still stands. Like Wesley, he began to employ lay evangelists. Howell Harris was soon preaching in the Moorfields tabernacle.

The Wesleyan Methodists now became distinguished from the followers of Whitefield as Arminians. The Arminian or, rather, Remonstrant, Confession arose in Holland about the beginning of the seventeenth century as a protest against Calvinism. The principle of the Arminian type of doctrine was the universality of the benefit of the atonement and the restored

freedom of the human will. The Wesleyan Methodists, however, rejected the teaching of the immediate successors of Arminius, who were tinged with Socinianism and rationalism, and Wesleyans, as Pope says, were Arminians as opposed to Calvinists, but in no other sense.

The pillar and prop of Whitefield and his Calvinistic followers was Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, one of the most notable figures in Methodist history, the woman who won from her fashionable friend, Horace Walpole, the half-ironical title, "Queen of the Methodists." This peeress, the daughter of the Earl of Ferrars, was four years younger than John Wesley. Being naturally of a serious mind, her impressions were deepened by the experience of her sister, Lady Margaret Hastings, who had been converted by Ingham, the Oxford Methodist. She, too, experienced the joy of full acceptance in Christ, became a hearer of Whitefield and an attendant at the Foundry. Although she sided with Whitefield in the Calvinistic controversy, she was largely instrumental in bringing about the reconciliation of the leaders, and became a devoted friend of Mrs. Charles Wesley.

It required much more courage to face the prejudices and ridicule of her class, but it is to the credit of the nobility that they learned to respect Lady Huntingdon's character and motives, though only a few followed her example. She succeeded in persuading the most distinguished men and women of her day to meet in her drawing-room at Chelsea, or her chapel at Bath, or in Whitefield's Tabernacle itself, to hear her favorite preachers. The lists of illustrious persons given by her biographers make some pages look like a court directory.

There is evidence that even in the corrupt court of the second George it was felt that Lady Huntingdon had chosen the better part. One day at court, we are told, the Prince of Wales inquired where Lady Huntingdon was, that she so seldom



Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.  
Called "The Queen of the Methodists."



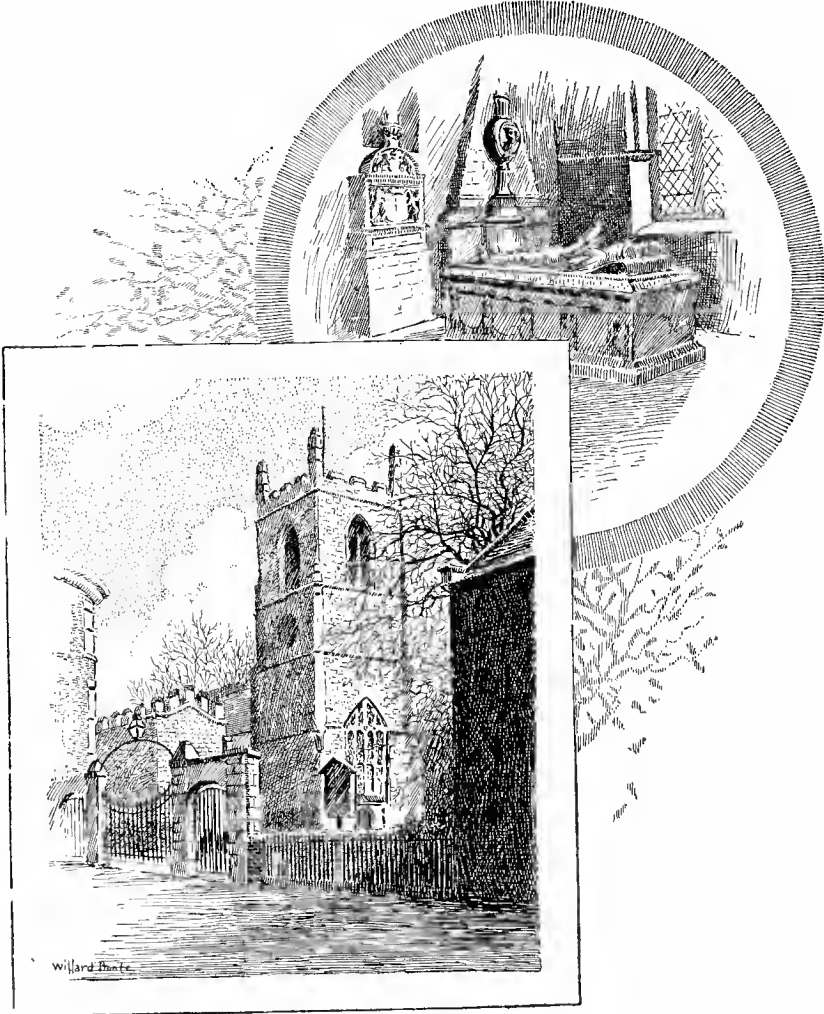
visited the circle now. Lady Charlotte Edwin replied with a sneer, "I suppose praying with her beggars." The prince shook his head and said, "Lady Charlotte, when I am dying I think I shall be happy to seize the skirt of Lady Huntingdon's mantle to lift me up with her to heaven."

Lady Huntingdon's personal character deserved and won the deepest respect. An Anglican writer has well said that the moral courage which enabled a lady, brought up among all the traditions of an aristocracy such as the aristocracy was in the reigns of George II and George III, to cast aside all the prejudices of her order, and brave all the contempt and ridicule of those with whom she would naturally be most brought into contact, and cast in her lot openly and without reserve with the despised Methodists, is admirable. If she seems at times to adopt a somewhat imperious air toward her protégés, we must remember that a countess was a countess in those days, and that she was certainly encouraged in the line she took by the extravagant homage paid to her by Whitefield and others. John Wesley, indeed, was never dazzled by her grandeur; on the contrary, he took upon him more than once to rebuke the imperiousness of "that valuable woman." Berridge, of Everton, rebelled in his own laughing way against her authority; and there is not the slightest trace of undue subserviency in the clergy, like Romaine and Henry Venn and others, who acted with rather than under her. But the majority of those who were connected with her could not fail to be dazzled by the honor of the connection; and not only submitted, but courted, the authority which she was not slack in assuming over them.

But she used that authority for the highest purposes. She was as far removed as John Wesley from any love of power for power's sake. She devoted her fortune to her new work. The sale of her jewels contributed to the building of a chapel at



Brighton. She erected or purchased buildings in many places, appointing ministers as she thought fit—revoking such appointments at her pleasure. The united congregations were called



The Last Resting Place of Lady Huntingdon.

Church of St. Helen's, Ashby.

The Huntingdon Family Tombs.

“Lady Huntingdon’s Connection.” Over the affairs of this connection she ruled with much tact until her death, appointing committees of laymen to superintend secular business.

There was a great stir at the universities in 1767. A little band of Methodists had been formed in Cambridge under Rowland Hill. At Oxford, Halward, of Worcester College, formed an evangelical "Holy Club," with the result that six students of St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, were expelled, after due trial, "for holding Methodist tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures in private houses." The Oxford authorities as well as the public journals accused Lady Huntingdon of "seducing young men from their respective trades and avocations and sending them to the university, where they were maintained at her expense, that they might afterward skulk."

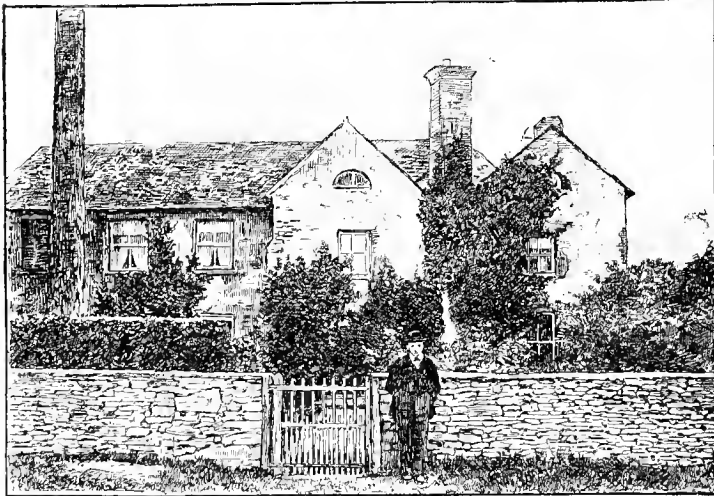
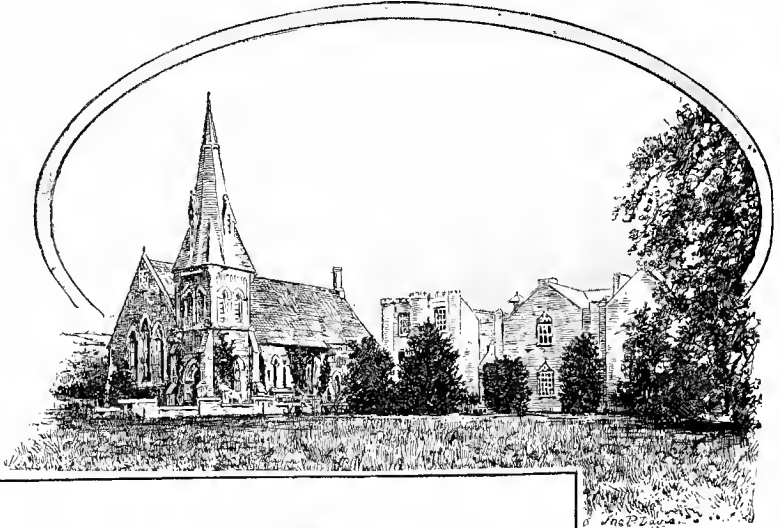
The resolute countess had already consulted Wesley about a scheme for the education of preachers, and she decided at once to build a college of her own.

On the site of an old castle in South Wales she built Trevecca College. It was opened in 1768. John Fletcher, the saintly Methodist clergyman of Madeley, was president, and Joseph Benson was head master, until the Calvinistic sympathies of the countess led to their retirement. She resided at the college for many months in the year, and "stationed" the students; some going to Ireland, others to America, but the greater number supplying her chapels in Great Britain.

Lady Huntingdon maintained her leadership of her connection with undiminished vigor. Her chapels at Bath and Brighton were always full. About the middle of the eighteenth century Tunbridge Wells became a more popular resort than either of these places, and she forthwith built a chapel there which Whitefield opened with one of his thrilling sermons.

Lady Huntingdon's societies, like Wesley's, drifted away rather than separated of set purpose from the Established Church. She was compelled to become a practical Dissenter

in the interests of her noble evangelistic work. The crisis in her case, however, came earlier than in Wesley's. The step was not taken hastily, but after repeated provocations, legal



Trevecca Farmhouse.

Trevecca College.

Here John Wesley, John Fletcher, and George Whitefield stayed when they went to open Trevecca College, 1768.

Opened by Lady Huntingdon, 1768, now controlled by the Calvinistic Methodists.

decisions, and with a pure desire to secure the preaching of the Gospel. The clergymen who preached in her chapels were silenced by the Anglican authorities in 1781, and she was forced

with bitter pain to withdraw from the Church to which she had been so loyal.

It is gratifying to record that Lady Huntingdon lived to regret the spirit of the Calvinistic controversy. She survived Mr. Wesley about five months. After his death a small tract was published containing the particulars of his last illness, and the expressions to which he then gave utterance. Lady Huntingdon read it with great interest, and sending for Joseph Bradford, asked him if this account was true, and if Mr. Wesley really died acknowledging his sole dependence upon the meritorious sacrifice of Christ for acceptance and eternal life. He answered her ladyship that this was so, and that from his own knowledge he could declare, whatever reports to the contrary had been circulated, that the principles which Mr. Wesley recognized upon his deathbed had invariably been the subject of his ministry. She listened with eager attention to this statement, confessed that she had believed that he had grievously departed from the truth, and then, bursting into tears, expressed her deep regret at the separation which had in consequence taken place between them. She died at the age of eighty-four, in the Chapel House, Spa Fields, June 17, 1791, and was buried at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, clothed with the white silk dress in which she opened the chapel in Goodman's Fields. "I long to be at home. I shall go to my Father; can he forget to be gracious? Is there any end of his loving-kindness? My work is done. I have nothing to do but go to my Father," were among her last words.

Dr. Haweis, his wife, Lady Anne Erskine, and a lay gentleman were appointed trustees of the chapels, houses, and other effects of Lady Huntingdon's Connection; and they were to appoint successors.

For thirty-one years, from the date of his conversion (1739) to his death, in 1770, Whitefield traveled and preached with

such consuming energy that the attempt to follow him produces a sensation of breathlessness. In 1744 he made his third visit to America, remaining four years; his fourth visit was in 1751, less than one year; the fifth in 1754, a little over a year; the sixth in 1763, lasting about two years; his last in 1769.

Whitefield's Tabernacle, in Tottenham Court Road, London, was opened in 1756. Beneath it were vaults, "where," Whitefield used to say to his somewhat bigoted congregation, "I intend to be buried, and Messrs. John and Charles Wesley shall also be buried there. We will all lie together. You will not let them enter your chapel while they are alive. They can do you no harm when they are dead." He continued to do the work of an evangelist to the last in England, Scotland, and America, besides conducting an enormous correspondence.

During the last four years of his life in England Whitefield's friendship with the Wesleys became very warm. John Wesley breakfasted with him, and sadly writes of him as "an old, old man, fairly worn out in his Master's service, though he has hardly seen fifty years;" and a month later: "Mr. Whitefield called upon me. He breathes nothing but peace and love. Bigotry cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes." And in a letter to his wife Charles Wesley wrote of two happy hours he and his brother spent with their old friend. "The threefold cord we trust will never more be broken."

In 1769 he made his last voyage, and after revisiting the scenes of his Gospel triumphs from Georgia to New England, died at Newburyport, Mass., September 30, 1770, "suddenly changing," as the quaint epitaph has it, "his life of unparalleled labors for his eternal rest."

In compliance with Whitefield's expressed wish, John Wesley preached his funeral sermon in Tottenham Court Road Chapel, and Charles Wesley, who had introduced the humble

Oxford servitor to the Holy Club years before, wrote an elegy full of tender feeling upon the death of his friend.

What is probably the true version of a story concerning Wesley's warm friendship for Whitefield was sent to the editor



The Whitefield Cenotaph.

In the South Presbyterian Church, Newburyport, Mass.

of the Contemporary Review, in 1891, by Mr. Bevan Braithwaite, the venerable representative of the Society of Friends at the centenary celebration of Wesley's death. Mr. Braithwaite heard it from Edward Pease (the friend and early patron of George Stephenson), who died in 1857 at the advanced age

of ninety-two. He was fond of relating how in early manhood he had stolen into a chapel to hear Wesley preach, and had a distinct recollection of his personal appearance and earnest solemnity of manner. The following was his story:

“One day, after Whitefield’s decease, John Wesley was timidly approached by one of the godly band of Christian sisters who had been brought under his influence, and who loved both Whitefield and himself:

“‘Dear Mr. Wesley, may I ask you a question?’

“‘Yes, of course, madam, by all means.’

“‘But, dear Mr. Wesley, I am very much afraid what the answer will be.’

“‘Well, madam, let me hear your question, and then you will know my reply.’

“At last, after not a little hesitation, the inquirer tremblingly asked, ‘Dear Mr. Wesley, do you expect to see dear Mr. Whitefield in heaven?’

“A lengthy pause followed, after which John Wesley replied with great seriousness, ‘No, madam.’

“His inquirer at once exclaimed, ‘Ah, I was afraid you would say so.’

“To which John Wesley added, with intense earnestness, ‘Do not misunderstand me, madam; George Whitefield was so bright a star in the firmament of God’s glory, and will stand so near the throne, that one like me, who am less than the least, will never catch a glimpse of him.’”

## CHAPTER XII.

**Wesley Faces Mobs.**

The Wednesbury Riots.—Before the Magistrate.—A Noble Champion.—  
“Always Look a Mob in the Face.”—Stoned at the Market  
Cross.—Causes of the Disturbance.—Quieter Times.

**T**HE Wesleys had been censured by bishops, cursed by High Church clergy, and slandered by a host of pamphleteers. But this stormy course of violent words was only the prelude to the ferocious attacks of the mobs which came, like wild beasts, howling on their track in the moral wilderness of England.

The “Black Country,” in the northern part of Staffordshire, was the scene of one of the earliest and most violent persecutions. The towns of Wednesbury, Walsall, and Darlaston had won for themselves an unenviable notoriety for lawlessness. The brutal sports of these towns reflected the moral condition of the people. Bull baiting and cockfighting provided scenes of riotous delight.

Charles Wesley was the first Methodist who preached at Wednesbury, in November, 1742. John soon followed, and a society of one hundred members, increased to more than three hundred by the following May, was speedily formed. The storm soon broke. Charles preached in May at Walsall from the steps of the market house, the mob roaring, shouting, and throwing stones incessantly, many of which struck him, but none hurt him.

Soon after this the rioters of the three towns turned out in force and smashed windows, furniture, and houses. People



were promiscuously struck and bruised. The magistrates, on being appealed to by the Methodists for protection, told them they were themselves to blame for the outrages, and refused all assistance.

Wesley, in London, received a full account of this terrible six-days' riot, and thus writes: "I was not surprised at all; neither should I have wondered if, after the advices they had so often received from the pulpit as well as from the episcopal chair, the zealous High Churchmen had risen and cut all that were Methodists in pieces!"

Wesley proceeded at once to the scene to render what assistance he could. But no redress could be obtained. In October he went again to this den of wild beasts. While he was writing at Francis Ward's the mob beset the house and cried, "Bring out the minister; we will have the minister!" Wesley asked some one to take their captain by the hand and lead him in. After a few words the lion became a lamb. Wesley now asked him to bring two of the bitterest opponents inside. He soon returned with a couple who "were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he." Then, mounting a chair in the midst of the mob, he demanded, "What do any of you want with me?"

Some said, amid the clamor, "We want you to go with us to the justice."

"That I will," said Wesley, "with all my heart."

The few words he added had such an effect that the mob shouted, "The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defense."

Some dispersed to their homes, but Wesley and the rest, some two or three hundred, set out for the magistrate's house. Darkness and heavy rain came on in about half an hour, or by the time they had walked a mile, but they pushed forward another mile, to the justice's house at Bentley Hall. Some of

the advance guard told that officer, Mr. Lane, that they were bringing Wesley.

“What have I to do with Mr. Wesley?” quoth the magistrate. “Take him baek again.”

When the crowd came up and knocked for admission the magistrate declined to see them, sending word that he was in bed. His son came out and asked their business. A spokesman answered, “To be plain, sir, if I must speak the truth, all the fault I find with him is that he preaches better than our parsons.”

Another said: “Sir, it is a downright shame; he makes people rise at five in the morning to sing psalms. What advice would your worship give us?”

“To go home,” said young Lane, “and be quiet.”

Not getting much satisfaction there, they now hurried Wesley to Walsall, to Justice Persehouse. Although it was only about seven o’elock, he also sent word that he had gone to bed, and refused to see them. Yet these very magistrates had recently issued an order calling on all officers of justice to search for and bring before them any Methodist preacher found in the district.

At last they all thought it wise to make their way home, and some fifty of the crowd undertook to convey Wesley baek to Wednesbury. But they had not gone a hundred yards when the mob of Walsall burst upon them. They showed fight, but, being wearied and greatly outnumbered, were soon overpowered, and Wesley was left in the hands of his new enemies. Some tried to seize him by the collar and pull him down. A big, lusty fellow just behind him struck at him several times with an oaken elub. If one of these blows had taken effect, as Wesley says, “it would have saved all further trouble. But every time the blow was turned aside, I know not how, for I could not move to the right hand or left.” Another, rushing

through the crowd, lifted his arm to strike, but on a sudden let it drop and only stroked Wesley's head, saying, "What soft



John Wesley, the Founder of Kingswood.

The original is preserved in the dining hall of the new Kingswood School, Bath.

hair he has!" One man struck him on the breast, and another on the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out; but he felt no more pain, he affirms, from either than if they had

touched him with a straw; not, certainly, because he was over excited or alarmed, for he assures us that from the beginning to the end he was enabled to maintain as much presence of mind as if he had been sitting in his study, but his thoughts were entirely absorbed in watching the movements of the rioters.

When he had been pulled to the west end of the town, seeing a door half open—which proved, strangely enough, to be the mayor's, though he did not know it—he made toward it to go in; but the owner, who was inside, would not suffer it, saying the mob would pull the house down to the ground. However, Wesley stood at the door, and raising his voice to the maddened throng, asked, “Are you willing to hear me speak?” Many cried out, “No! No! Knock his brains out! Down with him! Kill him at once!” Others said, “Nay, but we will hear him first!” Then he spoke a while, until his voice suddenly failed. Now the cry was: “Bring him away! Bring him away!” Recovering his strength, he began to pray aloud. Then the ruffian who had headed the rabble, a prize fighter at the bear garden, struck with awe, turned and said: “Sir, I will spend my life for you! Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head!” Others of his companions joined with him in this new departure. An honest butcher also interposed and thrust away four or five of the most violent assailants. The people fell back to the right and left, and in the charge of his new-found protectors Wesley was borne through the infuriated crowd and escorted to his lodgings at Wednesbury, having lost only one flap of his waistcoat and a little skin from one of his hands. He says concerning it: “I took no thought for one moment before another; only once it came into my mind that, if they should throw me into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in my pocket. For myself, I did not doubt but I should swim across, having but a thin

coat and a light pair of boots." "I never saw such a chain of providences before; so many convincing proofs that the hand of God is on every person and thing, overruling all as it seemeth him good."

In the midst of all these perils four brave Methodists—William Sitch, Edward Slater, John Griffith, and Joan Parks—clung fast to Wesley's side, resolved to live or die with him. None received a blow save William, who was knocked down, but soon got up again. When Wesley asked William Sitch what he expected when the mob seized them he answered with a martyr's spirit, "To die for him who died for us." And when Joan Parks was asked if she was not afraid she said: "No, no more than I am now I could trust God for you as well as for myself."

When Wesley reached Wednesbury the friends were praying for him in the house from which he had started. His sufferings awoke general sympathy. Next morning, as he rode through the town, he says, "Everyone I met expressed such a cordial affection that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard." Charles Wesley met him at Nottingham. He says his brother "looked like a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters." Charles went straight from Nottingham to the scenes of the rioting, boldly bearding the lions in their den. He was constitutionally a timid man, as he often confesses, but there was nothing he feared so much as to offend his own conscience.

He arrived at Wednesbury five days after the miraculous escape of his brother, and found the Methodists "standing fast in one mind and spirit, in nothing terrified by their adversaries." He writes: "We assembled before day to sing hymns to Christ as God. As soon as it was light I walked down the town and preached. . . It was a most glorious time." The clergyman at Darlaston was so struck with the meek behavior

of the Methodists in the midst of suffering that he offered to join the Wesleys in punishing the rioters. As for "honest Munchin," the nickname for George Clifton, the captain of the rabble, who had rescued Wesley, he was so impressed with Wesley's spirit that he immediately forsook his godless, profligate gang, and was received on trial into the Methodist society by Charles. The latter asked him, "What think you of my brother?" "Think of him?" was the answer, "That he is a mon of God; and God was on his side, when so many of us could not kill one mon." Clifton lived a good life after this, and died in Birmingham, aged eighty-five, in 1789, two years before Wesley. He was never weary of telling the story of that night when he might have taken life, had not God stayed his hand.

It was John Wesley's rule, confirmed, he says, by experience, "always to look a mob in the face." An indescribable dignity in his bearing, a light in his eyes, and a spiritual influence pervading his whole personality often overawed and captured the very leaders of the riots.

At St. Ives, in Cornwall, when the mob attempted to break up his meeting, he says: "I went into the midst, and brought the head of the mob up with me to the desk. I received but one blow on the side of the head, after which we reasoned the case, till he grew milder and milder, and at length undertook to quiet his companions." A similar incident is recorded a few years later when a lieutenant at Plymouth-dock, with his retinue of soldiers and drummers, headed a raging crowd. "After waiting about a quarter of an hour," says Wesley, "perceiving the violence of the rabble still increasing, I walked down into the thickest of them and took the captain of the mob by the hand. He immediately said: 'Sir, I will see you safe home. Sir, no man shall touch you. Gentlemen, stand off! give back! I will knock down the first man that touches him!' We walked

on in great peace, my conductor, a very tall man, stretching out his neck and looking round to see if any behaved rudely, till we came to Mr. Hide's door. We then parted in much love. I stayed in the street, after he was gone, talking with the people who had now forgot their anger and went away in high good humor."

Sometimes the rioters themselves were the chief sufferers from the missiles and clubs so freely used. Wesley gives a striking instance of this at Bolton, Lancashire, when he preached at the Cross. One man was bawling just at Wesley's ear, "when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still." A second was forcing his way to assault Wesley, when another stone hit him on the forehead, "the blood ran down, and he came no farther." A third stretched out his hand, and in the instant a sharp stone came upon the joints of his fingers, and he was "very quiet" during the rest of the discourse, which was finished in peace. A year later, in the same town, Wesley was followed "full cry" to the house where he stayed. A raging crowd filled the street and took possession of every room in the house. One friend who ventured out was thrown down, rolled in the mire, and thrust back in such a state that "one could scarce tell who he was." Wesley called for a chair and quietly stood upon it. "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." In a few hours the entire scene was changed, and none opened their mouths unless to bless or thank the Methodists!

When Wesley was preaching at Gwennap two men raging like maniacs rode furiously into the midst of the congregation and began to lay hold upon the people. Wesley commenced singing, and one man cried to his attendants, "Seize him, seize him, I say; seize the preacher for his majesty's service." Cursing the servants for their slowness, he leaped from his

horse, caught Wesley by the cassock, crying, "I take you to serve his majesty." Wesley walked with him three quarters of a mile, when the courage of the bravo failed, and, finding he



Wesley Preaching at Bolton Cross.

was dealing with a gentleman, he offered to take him to his house, but Wesley declined the invitation. The man called for horses and took Wesley back to the preaching place.



The next day at Falmouth more serious perils awaited him. The rioters attacked the house where he was staying, and the noise was like "the taking of a city by storm." The outer door was forced; only a wainscot partition was between them and the object of their rage. Wesley calmly took down a large looking-glass which hung against the partition. The daughter, Kitty, cries out, "O, sir, what must we do?"

"We must pray," he replied.

"But, sir, is it not better for you to hide yourself?"

"No," said Wesley. "It is best for me to stand just where I am."

The crews of some privateers, to hurry matters, set their shoulders to the inner door, and cried, "Avast, lads, avast!" and the door gave way. Wesley stepped forward at once and said: "Here I am. Which of you has anything to say to me? To which of you have I done any wrong? To you? Or you? Or you?" He walked on as he talked until he came to the middle of the street, when, raising his voice, he cried with great dignity:

"Neighbors, countrymen! Do you desire to hear me speak?"

"Yes, ycs," they answered; "he shall speak."

The captains of the mob, admiring his courage, commanded silence while he spoke, and afterward conducted him in safety to another house!

The reasons assigned by the rioters themselves for their opposition to Methodism were very various and curious, but they often echoed the pulpit cries of the day, or were the outcome of passing popular and unreasoning excitement ready to seize on any excuse for violence. When Wesley visited St. Ives the second time, in 1744, he found the mob had pulled down the preaching house "for joy that Admiral Matthews had beat the Spaniards. Such is the Cornish method of thanks-

giving. I suppose, if Admiral Lestock had fought too, they would have knocked all the Methodists on the head." The violence of the clergy was not any more intelligent. The bigoted rector of Penzance had several Methodists committed to prison, among them Edward Greenfield, a tanner, who had a wife and seven children. Wesley asked what objection there was to this peaceable man, and the answer came: "The man is well enough in other things; but his impudence the gentlemen cannot bear. Why, sir, he says he knows his sins are forgiven!"

The main responsibility of these riots lay with the clergymen and "gentlemen" who stirred up the excitable people, and cannot be attributed to any illegal or rash actions of the Wesleys.

Miss Wedgwood, who is far from being a Methodist, says, concerning John Wesley: "Nothing that could form the flimsiest pretext for the treatment received by his followers can be brought home to him. He does not appear to have separated families; he never went where he had not a perfect right to be; he addressed those whom he regarded as beyond his pale in courteous and modern language; he never thrust his exhortations on anybody. The attacks of enemies, and even the accounts of alienated disciples, may be read without extracting a single anecdote that we should think discreditable to him; indeed, it is from this source that we derive much valuable, because unconscious, testimony to the good influence of his code on secular life. We cannot, then, admit that Wesley's errors of judgment or limitations of sympathy had even the slightest share in producing the popular fury of which instances have just been given."

It is noteworthy that, while Wesley's persecutors passed quickly away, nearly all who took patiently the spoiling of their goods lived long and peaceful lives. Wesley notes the

sad end of many persecutors. Egginton, the Vicar of Wednesbury, who delivered a sermon against the Methodists which Wesley pronounced the most wicked he ever heard, and who was responsible for the violence of the mob, died in a few months. At Bristol, in 1743, a clergyman preached terrible sermons in several city churches against the upstart Methodists, and was about to do so in the Church of St. Nicholas,



**The Press Gang.**

After the cartoon by Gilray.

when, after announcing his text, he was seized with a rattling in the throat, fell backward in the pulpit, and expired the following Sunday. In some instances those who planned the death of the preachers were themselves wounded, and even killed, by their companions.

The Methodists were not driven out; they more and more became masters of the situation, and after 1757 peace reigned almost everywhere. It was due largely to Wesley's good

generalship, his perfect command of his forces, and the noble example which he himself set. Isaac Taylor's verdict is, "When encountering the ruffianism of mobs and of magistrates, he showed a firmness as well as a guileless skill, which, if the martyr's praise might admit of such an adjunct, was graced with the dignity and courtesy of the gentleman." Wesley was always the gentleman and the scholar. As Rigg says: "It was contrary alike to his temper and his tactics, to his courtesy and to his common sense, to say or do anything which might justly offend the taste of those with whom he had to do. . . Wesley's perfect, placid intrepidity, his loving calmness and serenity of spirit, amid whatever rage of violence and under whatever provocations and assaults, must always remain a wonder to the historian. His heroism was perfect; his self-possession never failed him for a moment; the serenity of his temper was never ruffled. Such bravery and self-command and goodness, in circumstances so terrible and threatening, were too much for his persecutors everywhere. He always triumphed in the end."

## CHAPTER XIII.

**In Conference with the Preachers.**

An Ecclesiastical Statesman.—The First Conference.—Notable Conferences.—One-Man Power.—“Christian Democracy.”—Early Discipline.—Circuits.

“**MY** brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls that were awakened under his ministry he joined in societies, and thus preserved the fruit of his labor. This I neglected, and my people are a rope of sand.” Thus Whitefield, the evangelist, spoke of John Wesley, the ecclesiastical statesman. It was Wesley’s aim to bind together with links of steel not only individual members, but all the new societies from Land’s End to Newcastle. And he did this at first without any intention to form a separate Church from the Establishment. With a sole desire to shepherd these souls, but against his own ecclesiastical sentiments, in spite of his own protests, and with a curious obliviousness to the final results of his action, Wesley step by step organized a great New Testament Church, which after his death was to drift away from the State Establishment and become one of the Free Churches of the world. It was not Wesley but Wesley’s Christ who, as Head of his Church, overruled Wesley’s Anglicanism that Methodism might become cosmopolitan.

During his first five years of itinerancy, from 1739 to 1744, forty-five preachers, including three or four clergymen, had gathered round Wesley. The lay preachers maintained themselves by working at their secular callings in the intervals of their journeys. There is no record of the total membership in

England, but in London alone there were two thousand members. The class meeting was fully developed, the Rules of the United Societies printed and enforced, the quarterly visitation of the classes arranged for, lay preaching instituted, places of worship secured, and the sacraments administered. And all this had been done apart from episcopal authority or control.

Five years after the formation of the first society class the first Conference was held in London, in 1744. Its purely incidental character is indicated by the quiet record in Wesley's Journal, where "Conference" is spelled with a small "c": "Monday, August 25, and the five following days, we spent in conference with many of our brethren, come from several parts, who desire nothing but to save their own souls and those that hear them."

"That little conclave of 1744 in the Foundry," said Dr. Gregory in 1899, "was the first of a series which has already extended over a hundred and fifty-five years, with many offshoots and affiliations, directing and administering to thousands of churches, in almost every nation under heaven." There were present the two Wesleys and four other clergymen: John Hodges, rector of Wenvo, Wales; Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton in Gloucestershire; and John Meriton, from the Isle of Man. The four lay "assistants" present were Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennet, and John Downes. The Conference considered three points: 1. What to teach. 2. How to teach. 3. How to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice. For two days they conversed on such vital doctrines as the Fall, the Work of Christ, Justification, Regeneration, Sanctification. The answer to the question "How to teach?" was fourfold: 1. To invite. 2. To convince. 3. To offer Christ. 4. To build up. And to do this in some measure in every sermon.

In the light of later history the questions relating to the

Church of England are of great interest. It was agreed to obey the bishops "in all things indifferent," and to observe the

- A. 1. Be diligent, never be unemployed a moment, never be triflingly employed, [never while away time,] spend no more time at any place than is strictly necessary.
2. Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness unto the Lord. Avoid all lightness as you would avoid hell-fire, and laughing as you would cursing and swearing.
3. Touch no woman; be as loving as you will, but hold your hands off 'em. Custom is nothing to us.
4. Believe evil of no one. If you see it done, well; else take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always allowed [supposed]† to be on the prisoner's side.
5. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your [own] breast, till you come to the person concerned.
6. Tell everyone what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste, therefore, to cast the fire out of your bosom.
7. Do nothing as a gentleman: you have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. You are the servant of all, therefore.
8. Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood, or drawing water, if time permit; not of cleaning your own shoes or your neighbour's.
9. Take no money of any one. If they give you food when you are hungry, or clothes when you need them, it is good. But not silver or gold. Let there be no pretence to say, we grow rich by the Gospel.
10. Contract no debt without my knowledge.
11. Be punctual: do everything exactly at the time; and in general do not mend our rules, but keep them, not for wrath but for conscience sake.
12. Act in all things not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct: partly in visiting the flock from house to house (the sick in particular); partly, in such a course of Reading, Meditation and Prayer, as we advise from time to time. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work [which] we prescribe [direct]\* at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.

The Rules of an Assistant.

Reproduced from the notes of the first Conference, as recently printed by the Wesley Historical Society.

canons "so far as we can with a safe conscience." The charge of schism was anticipated thus:

“Q. 12. Do not you entail a schism on the Church? that is, Is it not probable that your hearers after your death will be scattered into sects and parties? Or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?”

“A. 1. We are persuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe, notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out or that they will leaven the whole Church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls, while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead.”

It was decided that lay assistants should be employed “only in cases of necessity.” The rules of an assistant are terse: “Be diligent. Never be triflingly employed. Be serious. . . Speak evil of no one; else your word, especially, would eat as doth a canker.” The remainder of these rules appear in our facsimile pages of the recent edition of Bennet’s Notes.

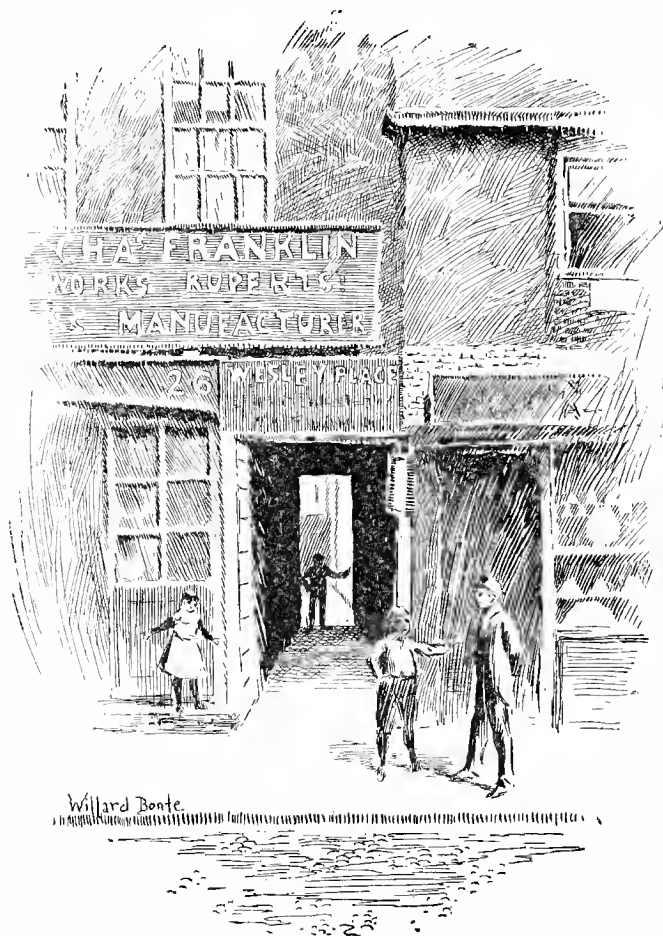
It was decided that the best way to spread the Gospel was “to go a little and little farther from London, Bristol, St. Ives, Newcastle, or any other society. So a little leaven would spread with more effect and less noise, and help would always be at hand.” It is evident that the towns here named were regarded as the centers of Methodism in that year. The belief was expressed that the design of God in raising up the preachers called Methodists was “to reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.”

During its session Lady Huntingdon invited the Conference to her London mansion in Downing Street, and Wesley preached from the text, “What hath God wrought.” This was the first of the household services which afterward, under



Whitfield, almost transformed that aristocratic mansion into a chapel.

The second Conference was held at Bristol, in the Horsefair preaching room. London and Bristol were the meeting places



“The Hole in the Wall.”

The entrance from the Horsefair, Bristol, to the chapel where the second Conference was held.

until 1753, when Leeds was added; in 1765 Manchester was visited, and these became the four Conference towns for the rest of Wesley's lifetime.

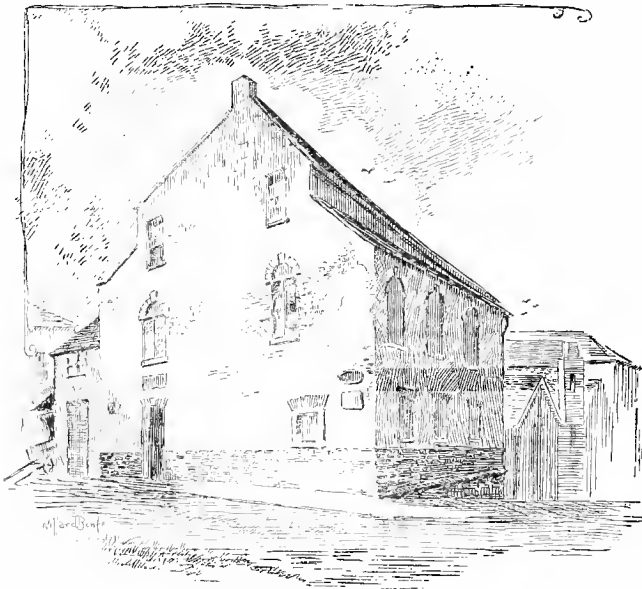
A layman was present at the second Conference, as well as

seven lay preachers. This layman was Marmaduke Gwynne, a magistrate of Garth, whose daughter Charles Wesley married. In 1749 the question was asked, "Who are the properest persons to be present at any Conference of this nature?" The answer was: "1. As many of the preachers as conveniently can. 2. The most earnest and most sensible of the Band Leaders where the Conference is. 3. Any pious and judicious stranger who may be occasionally in the place." It is evident that the early Conferences were very mixed in their membership. It was not until 1784, when Wesley's famous "Deed of Declaration" was enrolled, that the Conference received a legal definition, and the governing body of one hundred preachers was appointed. And it was not until 1797 that "the Band Leaders" and "pious and judicious strangers" were formally excluded, and preachers only declared eligible to attend. Later legislation has again opened the door to the laity.

The Church principles aimed at and acted on at Wesley's Conferences are clearly stated. The leading principle is that every ecclesiastical obligation, including obedience to bishops and observance of canons, must be subordinated to the salvation of souls. We have seen this expressed at the first Conferences; it was reaffirmed later. In 1746, after he had read Lord (Chancellor) King's account of the Primitive Church, Wesley finally renounced the doctrine of apostolical succession. He never swerved from his conclusion, and in a letter to his brother Charles many years after he spoke of "the uninterrupted succession" as "a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

The Leeds Conference of 1755 was confronted by the fact that some of the lay preachers, upon their own responsibility, had begun to administer the sacraments. Sixty-three preachers assembled—an unprecedented number. Many views

were advocated, but John Wesley's prevailed. He succeeded in persuading the Conference that, whether it was lawful or not, it was no way expedient to separate from the Church. He admitted that he could not answer the arguments for seccssion, but he wrote: "I only fear the preachers or people leaving not the Church, but the love of God and inward or outward holi-ness. . . . If, as my lady [Huntingdon] says, all outward Estab-



The Old Chapel, Derby, 1765.

An example of early Wesleyan building.

lishments are Babel, so is this Establishment. Let it stand, for me; I neither set it up nor pull it down. But let you and I build up the city of God." "Church or no Church," he again wrote, "we must attend to the work of saving souls." He felt that separation at this time would not help the main work. Walsh and his associates consented, for the sake of peace, to cease to administer the sacraments.

So here, for a season only, the question was shelved, not as the result of any ecclesiastical opinion held by John Wesley,

“but of that expediency which with him was always a moral law.”

At the Leeds Conference of 1769, memorable, as we shall tell later, for the appointment of the first preachers to America, Wesley read a paper in which he advised the preachers what to do after his death. It was signed by all the preachers at the Conferences of 1773, 1774, and 1775, and was afterward superseded by his Deed of Declaration, but it is worthy of note here as showing that at the age of sixty-six he felt that Methodism would be compelled, sooner or later, to take an independent and permanent form.

During his lifetime John Wesley was recognized as the living center of his united societies. He was the president of every Conference. He was felt to be the father of this new people, who before were “not a people,” but “a rope of sand.” A Fernley lecturer has well said that nothing but his personal influence—spiritual, moral, and intellectual, brought to bear on each part of the wide connection by his visitation and his facile, firm, yet flexible and gentle pen, which gave him a kind of connectional ubiquity—could possibly have held together and molded the vast and locally scattered multitude which was pulsating with a new life.

At the Conference of 1766 he frankly faced the question: “What power is this which you exercise over both the preachers and the societies?” After tracing step by step the wonderful history of the societies, he affirms, “It was mercy in obedience to the providence of God, for the good of the people, that I first accepted this power which I never sought; it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honor, or pleasure, that I use it this day.”

“Does not Methodism . . . represent Christian democracy within the Church, in opposition to the supremacy of a few great ones?” says the Lutheran Church historian, Hagenbach. Con-

trusting Wesley with Zinzendorf, "who could never lay aside the count," this German onlooker observes of Wesley: "Nature had made him a man for the masses, and, notwithstanding all that native nobility and dignity by which he impressed everybody, there was in him a true absence of everything that savored of haughtiness." Although, inspired by the purest motives and for the good of the people, he maintained his lead-



Barnard Castle Chapel, 1765.

ership to the last, no leader of men was ever more willing to take counsel with others. With aristocratic blood in his veins, he founded the most democratic Church in Christendom. He encouraged the utmost freedom of discussion in his Conferences. He would have no man muzzled.

It is surely not without reason that so many Methodist class leaders and local preachers have been elected to the various local government boards which now abound in England. In many rural districts their training in the conduct of Church

business has fitted them above all others to serve the community in these local boards. Uninteresting and complicated as Methodist polity and the doings of "Conference" may appear to the casual observer, to those who follow its development the history has national significance.

It was in 1747 that the qualifications of lay preachers were set down in this wise:

"Q. How shall we try those who believe they are moved by the Holy Ghost and called of God to preach ?

"A. Inquire, 1. Do they know in whom they have believed ? Have they the love of God in their hearts ? And are they holy in all manner of conversation ? 2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work ? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding ? Have they a right judgment in the things of God ? Have they a just conception of the salvation by faith ? And has God given them any degree of utterance ? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly ? 3. Have they success ? Do they not only so speak as generally either to convince or affect the hearts ? "

The territorial division of the country early necessitated a gradation of office among the preachers. In the most incidental "common-sense manner" a primitive episcopacy of the purest type was thus formed, without the name. The preacher in charge of a circuit was called an assistant (to Wesley), and his colleagues were helpers, both to the assistant and Wesley. At the third Conference we also find the third office, exhorter, recognized. The religious life of the preachers of each grade was the primary qualification, but from the first their intellectual training was provided for, as the lists of books in the early Minutes show. "Read the most useful books," was a minute at Leeds in 1766. "Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or at least five hours in twenty-four. . . 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return

to your trade." This applied especially to the itinerants, for whom a better financial provision was made about this time.

Wesley's common sense is evident in the crisp sentences of the "smaller advices about preaching" in 1746. After advising that assistants should never preach more than twice a day, unless on Sunday or special occasions, the minute enjoins:

"1. Be sure to begin and end precisely at the time appointed.



William Shent's House.

The site and probably the house in which the first Methodist sermon in Leeds was preached, 1743. Shent was barber and preacher.

2. Sing no hymns of your own composing. 3. Endeavor to be serious, weighty, solemn, in your whole deportment before the congregation. 4. Choose the plainest text you can. 5. Take care not to ramble from your text, but keep close to it, and make out what you undertake. 6. Always suit the subject to the audience. 7. Beware of allegorizing or spiritualizing too much. 8. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture

or pronunciation. 9. Tell each other if you observe anything of this kind."

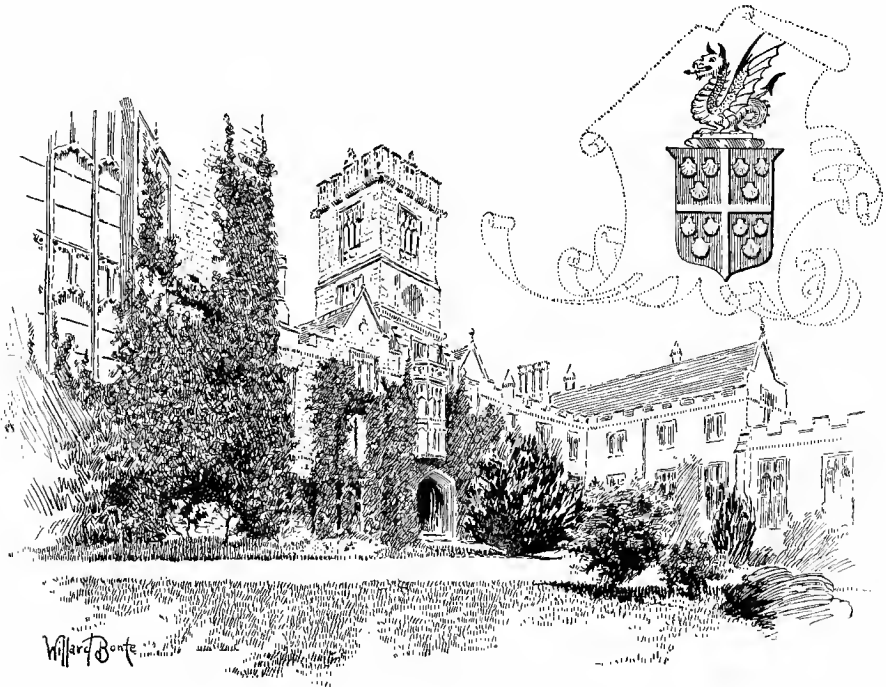
A question of intense interest to all who, like Wesley, are engaged in evangelizing the masses also occurs at this third Conference:

"Q: What sermons do we find by experience to be attended with the greatest blessing?

"A. 1. Such as are most close, convincing, and practical. 2. Such as have most of Christ the Priest, the Atonement.

3. Such as urge the heinousness of men living in contempt or ignorance of him.”

The early preachers did not take a vow of poverty on entering the itinerancy, but the Frenchman, Lelièvre, in his charming *Life of Wesley*, has well said, “They practiced a voluntary course of self-renunciation that was never excelled by the fol-



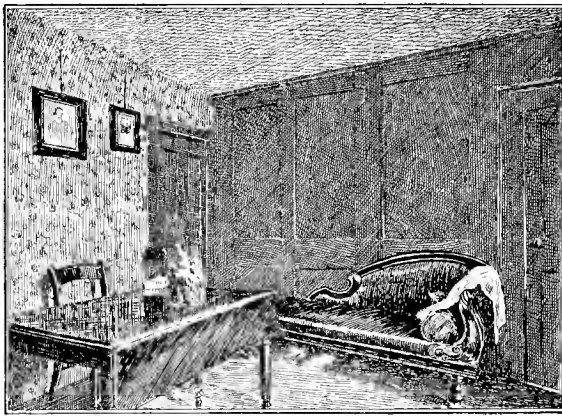
The Modern Kingswood School, Bath.

lowers of St. Francis.” One of the rules was, “Take no money of anyone. If they give you food when you are hungry, or clothes when you need them, it is good, but not silver or gold. Let there be no pretense to say we grow rich by the Gospel.” Receiving their daily supplies from the society, they were only paid, in money, enough to cover their traveling expenses, and these were very small, most of them walking long distances. One faithful preacher, who died in harness, left but one shilling



and four pence. "Enough," says Wesley. "for any unmarried preacher of the Gospel, to leave his executors."

Married preachers like John Nelson, stone mason, and William Shent, barber, had to work at their trade for support. In 1752 the Conference fixed £12 as the sum which the societies should pay annually to each preacher. It was a much-breached rule. In 1769 an allowance of £10 was made for the wife of a married preacher. And the next year we find a preacher's house in the principal Methodist centers. In 1774 the rule was made that "every circuit shall find the preacher's wife a



John Wesley's Study, Bristol.

Here Adam Clarke first met Wesley (1782).

lodging, coal, and candles, or £15 per year" to procure them for herself. An allowance of £4 a year was made for each child.

The question of the education of the preachers' children occupied the Conference of 1748. The school at Kingswood was enlarged, with the help of £800 received from some unknown lady, and a schoolroom, separate from that used for the colliers' school, was provided. A very elaborate plan, extending to the very details of diet, was drawn up by Wesley, and the stringent rules suggest the reflection that Wesley was

never blessed with any children of his own. The course of study was encyclopædic; the discipline severe. But Kingswood School was a marvelous advance upon any school in the kingdom, for boys of from six to twelve years old, in the range and quality of its teaching.

The division of the kingdom into "circuits" first appears in the Conference Minutes of 1746. The circuits and appointments for the next quarter were thus arranged, the initials indicating the names of the preachers:

"Q. How are these places to be supplied for this quarter?

"A. As far as we can yet see, thus:

Circuit.	June.	July.	August.
1. London.	J.W. J.R. T.R.	J.W. To.M. J.R.	C.W. Jo.B. Jo.D
2. Bristol.	J.M. T.Md. J.W.	C.W. T.R. T.H.	T.R. T.J.
3. Cornwall.	C.W. T.Mk. J.Tr.	Jo.Tr.	T.R. F.W.
4. Evesham.	J.W. Ja.Jo.	Ja.J. T. Jo.Co.	Jas.Co.
5. Yorkshire.	To.Ha. To.W.	J.H. J.B. Ja.W	J.T. Jo.N. Ja.W.
6. Newcastle.	Ja.W. Jo.R.	J.N. T.We. S.L.	S.L. T.W Jo.W.
7. Wales.	Mr.M.	T.R.	J.W.

The chapels were legally settled upon trustees in 1749, and at the Manchester Conference of 1765 a secretary was appointed to examine the deeds and see that vacancies among trustees were filled. The regular annual publication of the Minutes also began at this latter Conference, and the first provision for the "worn-out preachers" having been made two years previously, the title of "Superannuated Preachers" appears in the Minutes for the first time. At this session the Member's Ticket was permanently adopted.

The Methodist preachers were required to exercise over each other the most faithful vigilance, and at every Conference after 1767 the question was asked: "Are there any objections to any of the preachers?" who were named one by one. This practice is still maintained. Wesley regarded the maintenance of doctrine, experience, right conduct, and discipline as essen-

tial to the permanency of Methodism, and held that they must not be separated. "The first time I was in the company of the Rev. John Wesley," once wrote a correspondent of the New York Evangelist, "I asked him what must be done to keep Methodism alive when he was dead. To which he immediately answered: "The Methodists must take heed of their doctrine, their experience, their practice, and their discipline. If they attend to their doctrines only, they will make the people anti-nomians; if to the experimental part of religion only, they will make them enthusiasts; if to the practical part only, they will make them Pharisees; and if they do not attend to their discipline, they will be like persons who bestow much pains in cultivating their garden, and put no fence round it to save it from the wild boars of the forest.'"

Janu. 29. 1752

It is agreed by us whose names are underwritten

1. That if we hear any Ill of each other, we will not listen, or willingly inquire after any Ill concerning each other:

2. That if we do hear any Ill of each other, we will not be forward to believe it:

3. That as soon as possible we will communicate what we hear, by speaking or writing to the Person concerned:

4. That till we have done this, we will not write or speak a Syllable of it to any other Person whatsoever:

5. That neither will we mention it, after we have done this, to any other Person:

6. That we will not make any Exception to any of these Rules, unless we think ourselves absolutely obliged in Conscience so to do

John Jones

John Nelson

Will<sup>m</sup> Shent

John Stairne

John Wesley

Charles Wesley

John: Tumbath.

Perronetz

Jon<sup>th</sup> Reeves

To<sup>s</sup>. Connley

Werronet

Tho: Maxfield.

J. Dowler.



## CHAPTER XIV.

**Doctrinal Wars.**

Antinomianism.—The Minute of 1770.—Fletcher's Checks.—The Hills, Toplady, and Berridge.—Wordy Wars.

**M**ETHODISM owes one of its doctrinal standards, The Notes on the New Testament, to an illness which confined John Wesley to a sanitarium at the Hot-wells, Bristol, early in 1754. It was "a work," he says, "I should scarce ever have attempted had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel or preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write." He had been attacked with a cough in November, and showed alarming symptoms of a rapid decline. Believing that his end was near, "to prevent vile panegyric," he then wrote his own epitaph, which, happily, was not needed:

Here lieth the body  
of  
JOHN WESLEY.

A brand plucked out of the burning:  
Who died of consumption in the fifty-first year of his age,  
Not leaving, after his debts were paid,  
Ten pounds behind him:  
Praying,  
God be merciful to me, an unprofitable servant.

A far more serious trouble to Wesley than any personal affliction was the antinomianism which threatened his societies with mortal disease. He was ever awake to the dangers which arise from the perversions of evangelical doctrine. "The antinomian proper," says Dr. Pope, the Methodist theologian, "is

one who treats the requirements of perfect holiness as met by Christ, and refuses to measure his own conduct by any law whatever."

Wesley carefully guarded his own doctrine of Christian perfection from this peril. He considered antinomianism the worst of all heresies. Most strenuously and persistently did he teach that the profession of justification by faith should ever be tested by right conduct.

"I would not advise to preach the law without the Gospel any more than the Gospel without the law," wrote John Wesley, referring to the so-called Gospel preaching which he disowned. "Undoubtedly both should be preached in their turns; yea, both at once, or both in one." And he sums up the Christian ethics taught by himself and John Nelson in these words: "God loves you; therefore love and obey him. Christ died for you; therefore die to sin. Christ is risen; therefore rise in the image of God. Christ liveth evermore; therefore live to God till you live with him in glory" "So we preached; and so you believed! This is the scriptural way, the Methodist way, the true way. God grant we may never turn therefrom, to the right hand or to the left."

Wesley's intense conviction of the importance of practical morality led him to take drastic measures to rid his society of antinomian teachers, and their perversions of evangelical truth. But, as Fletcher says, antinomianism had "spread like wild-fire" among some of the societies. Most of Wesley's preachers, like John Nelson, never ceased to urge the people to maintain good works. But a few were using the cant phrases and catch-words of a perverted Calvinism. It would be unjust to call the leading Calvinistic clergy antinomians. Wesley did not do so. But the teaching of some of them provided little safeguard against immorality at a time when antinomianism was doing fatal damage to the cause of religion. They held, practically,

that since salvation was all of grace through faith, they were not required to maintain good works; their standing in Christ was secured by election, and, clothed in his imputed righteousness, their own righteousness was a matter of indifference. It was not merely a logical deduction on Wesley's part that looseness of life might result from such loose doctrine. He had painful evidence that immorality was the actual result. He claimed the right to deal with the matter in his own Conference of preachers which met in London a month before the death of Whitefield. Hence arose the famous Minute of 1770, the outburst of a controversy which lasted for eight years, and the publication of Fletcher's celebrated Checks to Antinomianism.

The Minute which provoked the new controversy declared: "We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?"

"1. With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not 'faithful in the unrighteous mammon,' God will not give him the true riches.

"2. With regard to working for life. This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. 'Labor' (*ἐργάζεσθε*), literally, 'work,' 'for the meat that endureth to everlasting life.' And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for as well as from life.

"3. We have received it as a maxim that 'a man is to do nothing in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should 'cease from evil, and learn to do well.' Whoever repents should do 'works meet for repentance.'"

Then followed a review of the whole affair, concluding that "we are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing



to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our inward tempers and our outward behavior."

This restatement of doctrine was intended for the preachers, and as a counterblast to antinomianism. Lady Huntingdon



and her Calvinistic friends, however, regarded it as an attack on their doctrine of "imputed righteousness" and "justification by faith." Wesley seldom used the former term, on account of its frequent abuse, but the tenor of his preaching for thirty years and his recent sermon on the death of Whitefield ought to have convinced them of his loyalty to the great doctrine of the Reformation, justification by faith.

Lady Huntingdon broke off her friendship with the Wesleys, and declared that she "could burn against" the Minute.

Joseph Benson and John Fletcher had to leave her college at Trevecca for in-

dorsing its position, which that elect lady and her cousin and adviser, Rev. Walter Shirley, branded as "popery unmasked." A peace was patched up on the basis of concessions, but not until the ground had been laid for the five pamphlets by Fletcher—the Checks to Antinomianism, which constitute



Contemporary Portraits of Wesley.

Portrait engraved by Bromley for the European Magazine, April 1, 1791. Reputed portrait of Wesley at the age of twenty-five.

Portrait by J. Tookey. Published April 2, 1791. Portrait painted from life by Robert Hunter, 1765. Wesley himself called it "a striking likeness."



the greatest prose contribution to the literature of the Methodist awakening as do Charles Wesley's hymns to its poetry.

"It appears, if I am not mistaken," writes Fletcher in the first of his famous Checks, "that we stand now as much in need of a reformation from antinomianism as our ancestors did of a reformation from popery. People, it seems, may now be 'in Christ' without being new creatures, and new creatures without casting old things away. They may be God's children without God's image." This was Fletcher's main reason for the publication of the five pamphlets in which he defended the chief points of the Methodist belief with matchless logic and the finest literary expression.

Very pathetic is Fletcher's protest against the unkindness with which Wesley has been treated: "A gray-headed minister of Christ, an old general in the armies of Immanuel, a father who has children capable of instructing even masters in Israel, one whom God made the first and principal instrument of the late revival of true religion in Israel," should have met with more consideration. In another paragraph, as beautiful in style as in spirit, he incidentally pays a generous tribute to the Calvinist Whitefield as "one of the two greatest and most useful ministers I ever knew." "The other [Wesley], after amazing labors, flies still with unwearied diligence through the three kingdoms, calling sinners to repentance and to the healing fountain of Jesus's blood. Though oppressed with the weight of near seventy years, and the care of near thirty thousand souls, he shames still, by his unabated zeal and immense labors, all the young ministers in England, perhaps in Christendom. He has generally blown the Gospel trump and rode sixteen or twenty miles before most of the professors who despise his labors have left their downy pillow. 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. And shall we lightly lift up our pens, our tongues, our hands, against him? No; let them rather forget their cunning. If we will quarrel, can we find nobody to fall out with but the minister upon whom God puts the greatest honor? Our Elijah has lately been translated to heaven. Gray-headed Elisha is yet awhile continued upon earth. And shall we make a hurry and noise to bring in railing accusations against him with more success?"

Fletcher's masterpiece remains to this day a really valuable contribution to the literature of an age-long dispute. Every Methodist preacher reads the Checks as an indispensable part of his studies, and they are found at all points of the globe whither Methodist preachers have borne the cross. "They have been more influential in the denomination than Wesley's own controversial writings on the subject; for he was content to pursue his itinerant work, replying but briefly to the Hills, and leave the contest to Fletcher." They have influenced, if not directly through Fletcher's writings, yet indirectly through Methodism, the subsequent tone of theological thought in much of the Protestant world.

The chief champions of Calvinism were Sir Richard Hill and his brother, Rev. Rowland Hill, Rev. A. M. Toplady, the author of the hymn, "Rock of Ages," and John Berridge. That these Calvinistic friends were exasperated by Wesley's comparative silence is evident. Toplady writes: "Let Mr. Wesley fight his own battles, but let him not fight by proxy; let his cobblers keep to their stalls, his tinkers mend their brazen vessels, his barbers confine themselves to their blocks and basins, his blaeksmiths blow more suitable coals than those of controversy; each man in his own order." Wesley is elegantly described as "slinking behind one of his drudges." Some of the terms used respecting this venerable servant of God, who had grown gray in unparalleled labors for Christ, are almost too

bad to be transcribed, but they serve to show the spirit of the age. Here are a few: "An old fox, tarred and feathered;" "a designing wolf;" "the most perfect and holy and sly that e'er turned a coat, or could pilfer and lie;" "a dealer in stolen



Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady.

From the Gospel Magazine, 1777.

wares, as unprincipled as a rook and as silly as a jackdaw;" "a gray-headed enemy of all righteousness;" "a venal profligate;" "an apostate miscreant;" "the most rancorous hater of the Gospel system that ever appeared in this land; a low and puny tadpole in divinity." He is charged with "low, serpentine

cunning," and with "driving a larger traffic in blunders and blasphemies than any other blunder-merchant this island has produced."

When Wesley received Richard Hill's scurrilous pamphlet a little cool irony fell from his pen as he wrote in his Journal, 1772: "July 11. I was presented with Mr. Hill's Review, a curiosity in its kind. But it has nothing to do with either good nature or good manners; for he is writing to an Arminian." Toplady's translation of Zanchius on Predestination drew from Wesley his well-known summary of Calvinism: "The sum of all is this: one in twenty (suppose) of mankind are elected; nineteen in twenty are reprobated. The elect shall be saved, do what they will; the reprobate shall be damned, do what they can." Toplady recognized Wesley's mental force, and wrote: "I am not insensible to your parts, but, alas! what is distinguished ability if not wedded to integrity!" Rowland Hill called Wesley "the lying apostle of the Foundry." But, as Macdonald has well said, "we have no heart to pursue the details of this history. It is complicated and unremunerative in the last degree. It deepened into bitterness and scurrility, till its later literature becomes unreadable for very shame; it separated brethren; it turned allies into adversaries; it offered to a skeptical and ungodly age the spectacle of good men 'smiting one another unfriendly,' and consumed time and strength that were wanted, and more than wanted, for the Christianizing of the country."

Charles Wesley's daughter Sarah has preserved an anecdote which illustrates John Wesley's calm fidelity to his work amid his troubles. Her uncle had promised to take her to Canterbury and Dover, in 1775, and she was looking forward to this with peculiar pleasure. The day before the journey her father heard that Mrs. John Wesley had ransacked her husband's bureau and taken out some letters, on which, by interpolating

words and misinterpreting spiritual expressions, she contrived to place a vile construction. These she read to some Calvinists. They were to be sent to the Morning Post. Mr. Russell, a Calvinist, and an intimate friend of Charles Wesley, told him of the plot, suspecting that the letters were partial forgeries. Charles hastened to the Foundry to induce his brother to postpone his journey and remain in town to protect his reputation.



Rev. Rowland Hill.

“Never shall I forget,” says Miss Wesley, “the manner in which my father accosted my mother on his return home. ‘My brother,’ said he, ‘is indeed an extraordinary man. I placed before him the importance of the character of a minister; the



evil consequences which might result from his indifference to it; the cause of religion; stumbling-blocks cast in the way of the weak; and urged him, by every relative and public motive, to answer for himself, and stop the publication. His reply was: "Brother, when I devoted to God my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation? No. Tell Sally I will take her to Canterbury to-morrow." "

Miss Wesley adds, "The letters in question were satisfactorily proved to be mutilated, and no scandal resulted from his trust in God." Richard Watson records that in his day some of these letters, mutilated, interpolated, or forged by this unhappy woman, had got into different hands, and were still preserved. There were other Calvinists besides Charles Wesley's friend who protested against the attempt on the part of Rowland Hill, Toplady, and others to defame Wesley's personal character.

Rowland Hill, however, lived to lament the bitter spirit of the controversy, and he said of his own writings, "A softer style and spirit would have better become me." He also suppressed one of his most violent publications. The smoke of the controversy must not conceal from us his noble work as an impressive, witty, warm-hearted preacher.

Within a year of the close of the controversy Toplady died. He had removed from the country parish of Broad Henbury to London, and two months before his death a strange scene occurred in his chapel in Orange Street. He had heard a report that he had expressed a desire to recant his opinions in the presence of John Wesley. His combative but honest soul was greatly stirred. He resolved to appear before his congregation once more and publicly deny the rumor. His physician and family remonstrated in vain. He replied that he "would rather die in harness than die in the stall." He was carried to the pulpit, and there made his "dying avowal" that he was

satisfied of the truth of all that he had ever written. He was carried from his pulpit and soon after borne to his grave. He was only thirty-eight when he died; and Bishop Ryle says: "If he had lived longer, written more hymns, and handled fewer controversies, his memory would have been held in greater honor. . . . Toplady's undeniable faults should never make us forget his equally undeniable excellencies." Wesleyan Methodists to-day agree with the evangelical bishop. One of them writes of the sturdy polemic: "He was honest in his errors, and had a stout English heart, which commands our wonder, if not our admiration, in spite of his faults."

## CHAPTER XV.

**Ireland, Scotland, and Wales.**

Island Visits.—“The Dairyman’s Daughter.”—Irish and Irish-American Methodism.—Shamefully Treated.—The Palatines.—Wesley in Scotland.—A Dash into Wales.

**B**EFORE the death of Wesley, Methodism had touched all the islands that gem the coast of Britain, with the exception of the Shetlands, in the far north of Scotland. Midway between Ireland and the north of England lies the Isle of Man, with a resident population to-day of fifty-five thousand, and visitors who annually number one hundred and thirty thousand. The Manx novelist, Hall Caine, remembers among the old Methodist local preachers “some of the sweetest, purest, truest men that ever walked the world of God.”

It was a Liverpool local preacher, John Crook, who preached the first Methodist sermon in the island, in 1775, and the apostolic succession has been well maintained. Wesley came in 1777 and preached to vast assemblies in churchyards, markets, and fields. When he died one tenth of the adult population of Manxmen were members of the Methodist societies.

The Scilly Isles lie off the coast of Cornwall. As early as 1743 Wesley paid them a flying visit, accompanied by John Nelson. “It seemed strange to me,” he writes, “to attempt going in a fisher boat fifteen leagues upon the main ocean.” Landing at St. Mary’s, they waited on the governor, with the usual present, namely, a newspaper. “I desired him, likewise,” says Wesley, “to accept of an Earnest Appeal. The

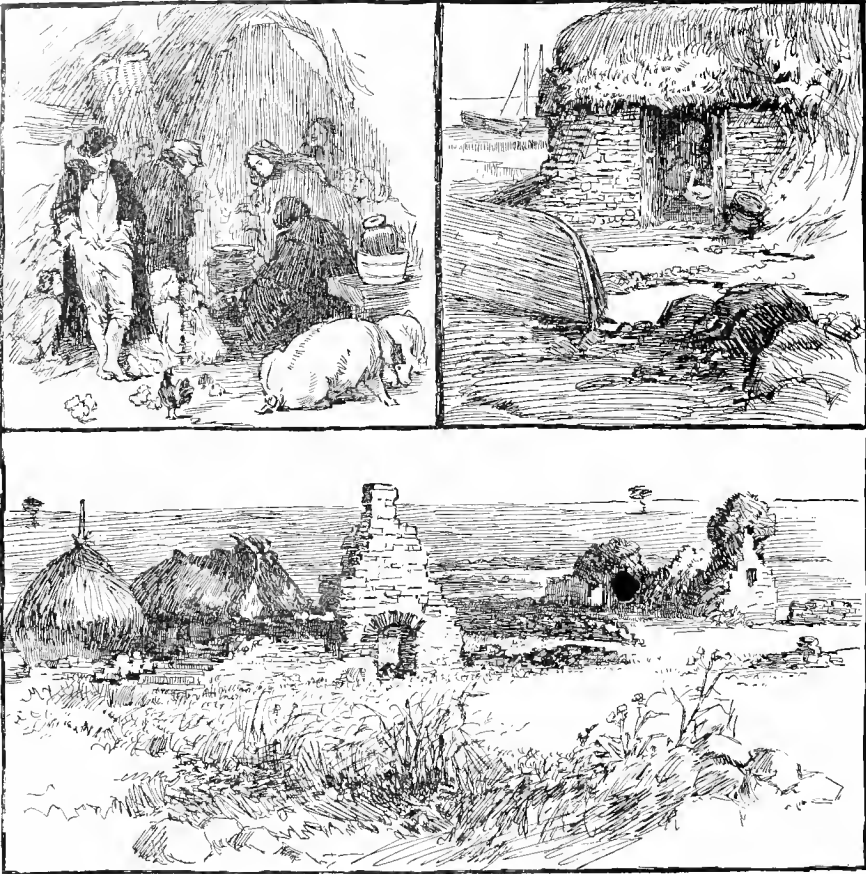
minister not being willing I should preach in the church, I preached at six, in the street, to almost all the town and many soldiers, sailors, and workmen, on 'Why will ye die, O house of Israel?' It was a blessed time, so that I scarce knew how to conclude. After sermon I gave them some little books and hymns, which they were so eager to receive that they were ready to tear both them and me to pieces."

Among Wesley's hearers in the Isle of Wight, where he formed a society in 1753, was one Robert Wallbridge, whose daughter, Elizabeth, was the Methodist girl saint whose piety has been immortalized in the character of "The Dairyman's Daughter."

Twelve years before Wesley visited Ireland Bishop Berkeley had advocated the very methods which Wesley used for reaching the hearts of the Irish people: the employment of lay preachers taken from the people, speaking their tongue, and "well instructed in the first principles of religion." The Established Church was feeble, and spiritually paralyzed, and Thomas Jackson, in his life of Charles Wesley, was justified in claiming that even the forms of Protestantism would at this day be extinct in most of the country had it not been for the new energy that was infused into the Irish Protestant churches by Wesley and his helpers. It is true that, while the progress of Methodism in Ireland has not been so rapid as elsewhere, owing to racial estrangements and deep-rooted Romanism, yet the fruit of Irish Methodism may be found in almost every land, and America and Australasia owe a mighty debt to Erin.

Wesley crossed the Irish Channel forty-two times, and spent six years of his busy life in the island. The bells were ringing for church when he first entered Dublin Bay, on Sunday morning, August 9, 1747. In the afternoon he preached in St. Mary's Church "to as gay and senseless a congregation" as he ever saw, and the next morning at six he preached to the

Methodist society in a crowded room. When he went back to England, a fortnight later, the Catholic mob wrecked the meeting room. The next year he came again—his brother Charles having made some progress in his absence.



Poor Old Ireland.

Interior of a cabin.

An Irish farm.

A fisher's hovel.

John Wesley was welcomed on his second visit, 1748, with great joy, so that his voice could scarcely be heard for some time for the noise of the people in praising God. He soon began to preach at five in the morning, "an unheard-of thing

in Ireland," and he continued to do this at Philipstown, Tullamore, Clara, and Athlone.

Wesley states that, while many of the Methodist converts had been Roman Catholics, the number would have been far greater had not the Protestant as well as the popish priests hindered them. "The dead Protestantism of the land was his chief obstacle." "O what a harvest might be in Ireland did not the poor Protestants hate Christianity worse than either popery or heathenism!"

Let us follow John Wesley in his itinerancy and obtain from his Journals passing glimpses of the Ireland of his day.

On his second visit to Cork, in 1750, where he was accompanied by Christopher Hopper, riots broke out with renewed violence. He went to Bandon to preach, but the Cork mob followed him and hung him in effigy. His best guardians were the soldiers, many of whom became stanch Methodists, and the mob became more afraid of them than of the mayor, to whom Wesley wrote a letter closing with these words: "I fear God and honor the king. I earnestly desire to be at peace with all men. I have not willingly given any offense either to the magistrates, the clergy, or any of the inhabitants of the city of Cork; neither do I desire anything of them but to be treated (I will not say as a clergyman, a gentleman, or a Christian) with such justice and humanity as are due to a Jew, a Turk, or a pagan."

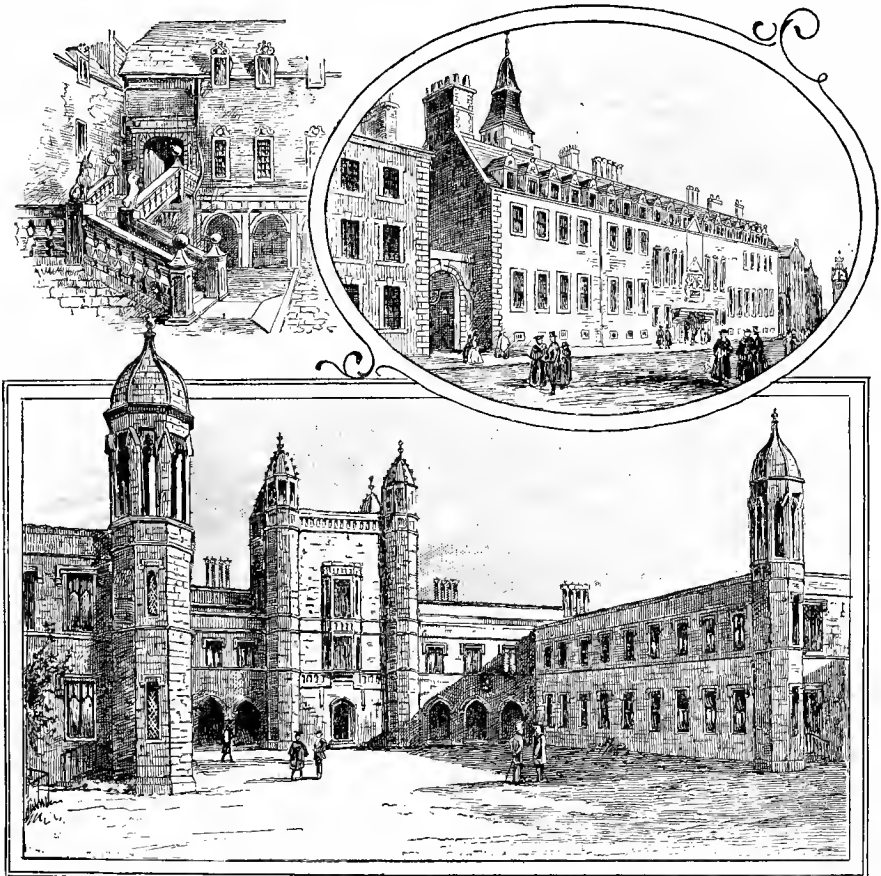
The day came (in 1787) when Wesley was received at the Mansion House by the mayor and "the chief of the city, being no longer bitter enemies, but cordial friends." Methodism was firmly planted, a large chapel built, and Wesley even feared, only five years from the date of the riots, that Cork might prove "the Capua of the preachers."

We find him in Dublin in 1752 preaching at five in the morning, and at midday attending the service at St. Patrick's, where

he is shocked at the "careless and indecent behavior of the congregation." At Kinsale he preaches in a grander cathedral. On the hill above the fort was a deep hollow capable of containing three thousand people. On one side the soldiers cut with their swords a ledge of earth which served as a pulpit, from which Wesley preached to a vast multitude who sat on the grass.

He and Christopher Hopper had attempted to reach Waterford in 1750, but the ferryman, fearing the mob which the notorious Butler had gathered, would not take them across the Graimah Ferry. So he came again two years later, heard Thomas Walsh preach on market day in Irish, and preached, himself, to a shouting, cursing crowd at the courthouse. Eleven years later he again faced the rioters in this city, and an interesting incident is related in the diary of Samuel Wood, a preacher of a later date: "I shall never forget the feelings excited within me when I was hardly five years old, in April, 1773, when I saw that venerable servant of God, the Rev. John Wesley, shamefully treated by a rude and desperate mob while he was preaching in the Bowling Green, Waterford. I felt all my blood rushing into my face. I stood at the table upon which Mr. Wesley was standing; and while I heard the shouting of the crowd, and saw the dead animals and cabbage stalks flying around his hoary head, I was filled with pity and horror. I wished that I were a man. I clinched my little fists. Some person came to remove the 'child;' but 'the child' resisted and would not be removed, until a gentleman, afterward well known as Sir John Alcock rushed forward, took Mr. Wesley in his arms off the table and conveyed him in safety to Mr. Scott's. He [Mr. Wesley] afterward inquired who 'the child' was who so bravely stood by the table. I was brought to him. He put both his hands upon my head and blessed me, in the presence of my mother. Dear Mr. Wesley must have

been seriously injured but for the manly intervention of Mr. Alcock. Such was my first sight of, and such my first introduction to, my venerable and much-beloved father and friend, the Rev. John Wesley. This outrage, I afterward learned, was



Views in Aberdeen.

The college staircase.

The college.

Marischal College, where Wesley preached, 1761.

excited and encouraged by a superstitious faction of some mercantile reputation in the city of Waterford, which faction soon melted away, like hail in summer. God visited them suddenly and awfully.



“The next evening Mr. Wesley preached in John Street, ‘Sir Charles’s Yard,’ as it was called in Waterford; and there, before the gate, a wretched vagrant was dressed up in a white shirt and a flaxen wig, placed upon a table, and was singing ribald songs.”

In Limrick, Wesley preached to the Palatines, those German Protestant refugees who had been allowed to settle there a generation before. The Methodist doctrine and order took hold upon them, and from among them went out Philip Embury and Barbara Heck, who, with Robert Strawbridge, another native of Ireland, were to plant Methodism in New York and Maryland, and open the way for the widest extension of Methodism.

Scotland first heard of Methodism through a handful of Methodist soldiers at Musselburgh, near Edinburgh.

Wesley first visited Scotland in 1751, at the entreaty of his friend Colonel Gallatin, who was quartered at Musselburgh. Moore tells us that Whitefield had urged him not to go, saying that he would have “nothing to do but to dispute from morning to night.” Wesley, however, went his way, resolving to avoid controversy. His companion was Christopher Hopper, who had been among his brother’s curious hearers at Tanfield Cross, Newcastle. At Musselburgh a large congregation “remained as statues from the beginning of the sermon to the end,” though they were said to be grossly inattentive when in their own kirk.

At Edinburgh, Wesley says he “used great plainness of speech toward them, and they all received it in love; so that the prejudice which the devil had been several years planting was torn up by the roots in one hour. After preaching, one of the bailies of the town, with one of the elders of the kirk, came to me and begged I would stay with them awhile, if it were but two or three days, and they would fit up a far larger place than

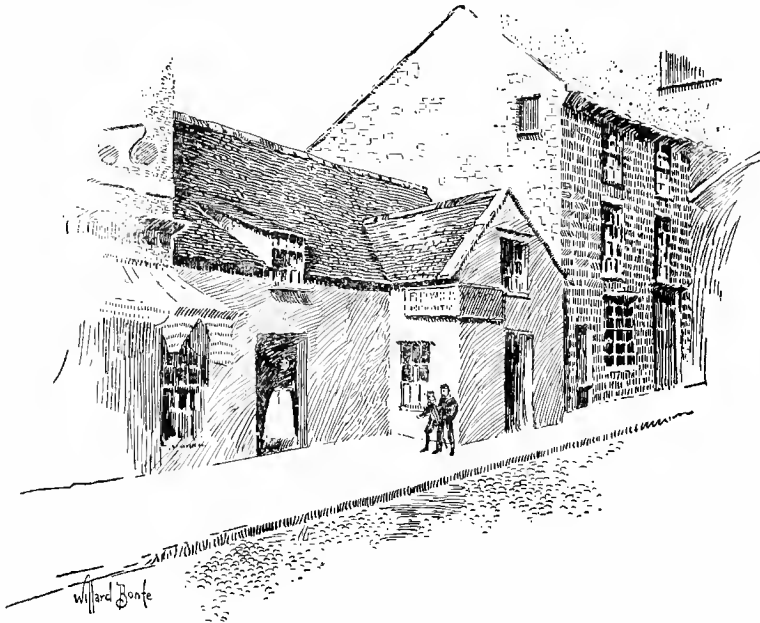
the school, and prepare seats for the congregation. Had not my time been fixed, I should gladly have complied."

Wesley visited Scotland again in 1753, when Dr. Gillies, of Glasgow, courteously offered him his pulpit. "Surely," said Wesley, "with God nothing is impossible! Who would have believed, five and twenty years ago, either that the minister would have desired it or that I should consent to preach in a Scotch kirk!" He preached also in the open air to crowds, who stood listening even in the rain. Hopeful at first, he soon learned that respectful attention covered much indifference, or difference of opinion; but he found those who joined the society were reliable in character. "Steadiness, indeed," says Moore, "he looked for in the people of North Britain."

At Aberdeen, in 1761, Wesley preached to a vast crowd in the college close, and about twenty were added to the society. Before noon on Monday morning, he says, "twenty more came to me desiring to cast in their lot with us;" and as he was looking at the King's College, shortly after, one of a large party of ladies and gentlemen came to him and said, "We came last night to the college close, but could not hear, and should be extremely obliged if you would give us a short discourse here." "I knew not," says Wesley, "what God might have to do, and so began without delay on 'God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself.' I believe the word was not lost—it fell as dew on the tender grass. In the afternoon I was walking in the library of the Marischal College when the principal and the divinity professor came to me, and the latter invited me to his lodgings, where I spent an hour very agreeably. In the evening the eagerness of the people made them ready to trample each other under foot. It was some time before they were still enough to hear, but then they devoured every word." In the evening the professors and magistrates attended the service. Wesley left ninety members in the society.

On two later visits to Edinburgh we find him preaching in the High School yard and on Calton Hill, until, in 1766, he reports a service in "the new room, a large and commodious building."

His summary of what he said at Dundee in answer to objections to Methodist work in Scotland, in 1766, is so important that it must be given in full. He writes: "The sum of what I



House in Carnarvon.

Wesley lodged here on his visits to Wales, 1747, 1748, 1749.

spoke was this: 'I love plain dealing. Do not you? I will use it now. Bear with me. I hang out no false colors; but show you all I am, all I intend, all I do. I am a member of the Church of England; but I love good men of every Church. My ground is the Bible. Yea, I am a Bible bigot. I follow it in all things, both great and small. Therefore I always use a short private prayer when I attend the public service of God. Do not you? Why do you not? Is not this

according to the Bible? I stand whenever I sing the praise of God in public. Does not the Bible give you plain precedents for this? I always kneel before the Lord my Maker when I pray in public. I generally use the Lord's Prayer, because Christ has taught me when I pray to say . . .' I advise every preacher connected with me, whether in England or Scotland, herein to tread in my steps!" At Dundee he found a society of sixty members.

At Edinburgh again, on the following Sunday morning at five o'clock, he had a larger congregation than he had ever seen before, and he remarks—probably in view of the idea that the Scotch can only be reached by elaborate polemical and profound discourses—"It is scarce possible to speak too plain in England; but it is scarce possible to speak plain enough in Scotland. And if you do not, you lose all your labor; you plow upon the sand."

Controversies over doctrinal points made the progress of the Scottish societies slower than that in other parts of the British Isles.

On several occasions he was present as a spectator at the meeting of the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. He was shocked at the behavior of many of the members, and he declares, "Had any preacher behaved so at our Conference, he would have had no more place among us." At Edinburgh many of the ministers attended the services which he held during the session, and he had pleasant intercourse with some of them. Moore tells us that Mr. Wardrobe, minister of Bathgate, preached at Wesley's Chapel at Newcastle, to the no small amazement and displeasure of some of his zealous countrymen. It was not Wesley's fault that his fellowship with many other excellent Scotch ministers was interrupted by the Calvinistic controversy

John Wesley preached his first sermon in Wales on October

15, 1739, on the little green at the foot of the Devauden Hill near Chepstow. Wesley's first convert was a poor woman who had walked six miles to hear him, and followed him to Abergavenny, Usk, and Pontypool, found peace, and stood by his side at Cardiff, the wave-sheaf of an abundant harvest. At Cardiff he preached in the shire hall, and on later visits in the castle yard. As he explained the last six beatitudes he tells us that his heart was so enlarged that he knew not how to give over, so he "continued three hours." At Cardiff was formed the mother church, and here Wesley opened his first chapel in Wales on May 6, 1743. The Calvinistic wing of Methodism, led by such splendid evangelists as Howell Harris and George Whitefield was first in the field and has always been predominant in Wales.

## CHAPTER XVI.

**The Work beyond the Sea.**

Methodism in 1769.—An American Offshoot.—Shall Wesley Go?—Political Pamphlets.—Wesley to Lord North.—A Calm Address —  
A Methodist Episcopal Church for America.

**A** DOZEN years ago there came to light a letter written by John Wesley in 1769 to John Liden, a professor in Lund University, in Sweden, and giving in orderly arrangement the condition of Methodism as it existed in that year.

The sixth paragraph alludes to the work in America: "There are only three Methodist societies in America: one at Philadelphia, one at New York, and one twelve miles from it. There are five preachers there; two have been at New York for some years; three are lately gone over. Mr. Whitefield has published a particular account of everything relative to the Orphan House (in Georgia)."

The first societies in New York and Maryland were the result of the independent labors of emigrants who had been converted in Ireland. Appeals came from the new societies urging Mr. Wesley to send them regular Conference preachers. In the Leeds Conference of 1769 Question XIII is as follows: "We have a pressing call from our brethren at New York (who have built a preaching house) to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?"

A young man, apparently far gone in consumption, rose up in his place in the gallery and said, "If you will send me, sir, I will go in the name of the Lord." Immediately another

young man, also in the gallery, got up and said, "Sir, if you will send me, I will go with Brother Pilmoor." This second volunteer was Richard Boardman

Then came Question XIV: "What can we do further in token of our brotherly love?" Answer: "Let us now make a collection among ourselves." (This was immediately done.) Question XV: "What is the whole debt remaining?" Answer: "Between five and six thousand pounds." So with a heavy debt on one hand and no reserve for contingent expenses on the other, the great American Mission began in the British Conference.

Lloyd's Evening Post, of May 26, 1769, had some fun at the expense of this departure. The public were sarcastically informed that the following promotions in the Church were about to be declared: "The Rev. G. Whitefield, Archbishop of Boston, Rev W Romaine, Bishop of New York; Rev J. Wesley, Bishop of Pennsylvania; Rev. W Madan, Bishop of the Carolinas; Rev. W. Shirley, Bishop of Virginia; and Rev. C. Wesley, Bishop of Nova Scotia."

Wesley was greatly moved by the reports which came to him from the American envoys, Boardman and Pilmoor. He wrote: "It is not yet determined if I should go to America or not. I have been importuned for some time; but *nil sat firmi video*. I must have a clear call before I am at liberty to leave Europe." Referring to this period, Mr. Tyerman remarks: "Wesley had nearly arrived at the age of threescore years and ten; but if his way had opened, he would have bounded off across the Atlantic with as little anxiety as he was accustomed to trot to the hospitable Perronet home at Shoreham." The obstacles, however, were insurmountable. There was no one during his absence to take his place as superintendent general of the societies in Britain, and to this must be added the strong objections of the people to let him go.

“If I go to America,” said he, “I must do a thing which I hate as bad as I hate the devil.”

“What is that?” asked his friend.

“I cannot keep a secret,” he answered; meaning that he must conceal his purpose, otherwise his societies would interfere and effectually prevent his going.

Twelve months later he wrote to Mrs. Marston, of Worcester: “If I live till spring, and should have a clear, pressing



The Old Boggart House, Leeds.

Where the Conference of 1769 was held, in which the first Wesleyan missionaries volunteered for America.

call, I am as ready to embark for America as for Ireland. All places are alike to me. I am attached to none in particular. Wherever the work of our Lord is to be carried on, that is my place for to-day. And we live only for to-day. It is not our part to take thought for to-morrow.”

Rumors spread, both in America and England, that Wesley had decided to go and “turn bishop;” and he wrote later to Walter Sellon: “Dear Walter, you do not understand your information right. Observe, ‘I am going to America to turn bishop.’ You are to understand it in *sensu composito*. I am



not to be a bishop till I am in America. While I am in Europe, therefore, you have nothing to fear; but as soon as ever you hear of my being landed in Philadelphia it will be time for your apprehension to revive. It is true some of our preachers would not have me stay so long, but I keep my old rule: *Festina lente.*"

For several years the Conference continued to appoint volunteers to America. In 1770 the name of young Francis Asbury was read out—the man who, under God, was to lay the foundations of the Methodist Episcopal Church, when the troubles between the king and the colonies should have led to the War of Independence.

It was Wesley's way to maintain a deep interest in all events which touched the national life. When the kingdom was agitated by fears of a French invasion, in 1756, Wesley, ever practical, proposed to raise five hundred volunteers, supported by contributions, ready to act for a year in case of invasion. They were to be supplied with arms from the Tower and to be drilled by one of the king's sergeants. The offer does not appear to have been accepted. During the Seven Years' War the Methodists observed the national fasts and united in constant intercession.

The parliamentary elections of the day were often riotous. We find Wesley "hastening to Bristol on account of the election" in 1756. He called all the freemen of the society together after preaching, and "enlarged a little on his majesty's character, and the reasons we had to spare no pains in his service," with a view to persuading some of them to vote for John Spencer, who was opposing Jarrit Smith, a suspected Jacobite. This at least reveals the loyalty of the Wesleys to King George. "The whole city is in confusion," writes Wesley to Mr. Blackwell. "O what a pity there could not be some way of managing elections of every sort without this embittering of

Englishmen against Englishmen, and kindling fires which cannot be quenched in many years!"

About 1764 he wrote a letter to the societies at Bristol in which he utters a noble protest against political corruption: "For God's sake, for the honor of the Gospel, for your country's sake, and for the sake of your own souls, beware of bribery. Before you see me again the trial will come at the general election for members of Parliament. On no account take money or money's worth. Keep yourself pure. Give, not sell,



Wesley Chapel, "Old John Street Church," New York.

The preaching house, which stands back from the street, was built in 1768.

your vote. Touch not the accursed thing, lest it bring a blast upon you and your household." He asserts that this political morality is essential "to your retaining the life of faith, and the testimony of a good conscience." Such was the ethical teaching of the leader of the Great Revival.

Wesley's first political pamphlet was directed against John Wilkes, M. P., the editor of the *North Briton*, whose blundering arrest by the government made him a popular hero. Wesley says of himself that politics were beyond his province, but he

uses "the privilege of an Englishman to speak his naked thoughts." "I have no bias, one way or the other. I have no interest depending. I want no man's favor, having no hopes, no fears, from any man." We may question if Wesley were unbiased, but of his disinterestedness there can be no doubt. He defends the character of the king, though later we find him opposed to his American policy. He sees that the rule of "King Wilkes" means the rule of "King Mob." Wesley's pamphlet was published in 1768. Next year the celebrated Letters of Junius appeared in the Public Advertiser, and political excitement rose to fever heat. The attempt to tax the American colonies by the notorious Stamp Act—an infringement of the principle "no taxation without representation"—and the imposition of other obnoxious duties after its enforced repeal, were producing the ferment which resulted in the American War of Independence.

The scenes and passions of the American Revolution are now viewed by Englishmen in lengthening perspective and in clearer light. But many of the most honest Christian Englishmen of that day could not see through the smoke of fratricidal war and party fury, as the little band of Methodist preachers in America proved to their cost.

Even Wesley's vision became dim in the thick of the storm. During the first two years of the Revolution he was in sympathy with the colonists. On June 15, 1775, he wrote his now famous letter to Lord North and the Earl of Dartmouth. This letter was consigned to an official pigeonhole, and was first printed in full nearly a century later by Dr. George Smith. It has often been quoted since, notably by Bancroft, who, however, was misled as to its place in the story of Wesley's political change of view. "In spite of all my long-rooted prejudices," writes Wesley, "I cannot avoid thinking, if I think at all, that an oppressed people asked for nothing more than their legal

rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner that the nature of the thing would allow. But waiving this,



The First Methodist Chapels in Maryland.

Bush Chapel and Stone Chapel, where Robert Strawbridge preached the Gospel.

waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, Is it common sense to use force toward the Americans? Whatever has been affirmed, these men will not be frightened; and it seems

they will not be conquered so easily as was at first imagined. They will probably dispute every inch of ground, and, if they die, die sword in hand. Indeed, some of our valiant officers say, 'Two thousand men will clear America of these rebels.' No, nor twenty thousand, be they rebels or not, nor perhaps treble that number. They are as strong men as you; they are as valiant as you, if not abundantly more valiant, for they are one and all enthusiasts—enthusiasts for liberty; and we know how this principle breathes into softer souls stern love of war, and thirst of vengeance, and contempt of death. We know men, animated with this spirit, will leap into fire or rush into a cannon's mouth. 'But they have no discipline.' Already they have near as much as our army, and they will learn more of it every day, so in a short time they will understand it as well as their assailants. 'But they are divided among themselves.' So you are informed. So, doubt not, was Rehoboam informed concerning the ten tribes. So, nearer our own times, was Philip informed concerning the people of the Netherlands. No, my lord, they are terribly united. Not in the province of New England only, but down as low as the Jerseys and Pennsylvania. The bulk of the people are so united that to speak a word in favor of the present English measures would almost endanger a man's life. Those who informed me of this, one of whom was with me last week, lately come from Philadelphia, are no sycophants; they say nothing to curry favor. But they speak with sorrow of heart what they have seen with their own eyes and heard with their own ears.

“These men think, one and all, be it right or wrong, that they are contending *pro aris et focis*; for their wives, children, and liberty. What an advantage have they herein over many that fight only for pay! none of whom care a straw for the cause wherein they are engaged; most of whom strongly disapprove of it. Have they not another considerable advantage?

Their supplies are at hand and all round about them. Ours are three thousand miles off! Are we then able to conquer the Americans, suppose they are left to themselves; suppose all our neighbors should stand stock-still and leave us and them to fight it out? But we are not sure of this. Nor are we sure that all our neighbors will stand stock-still."

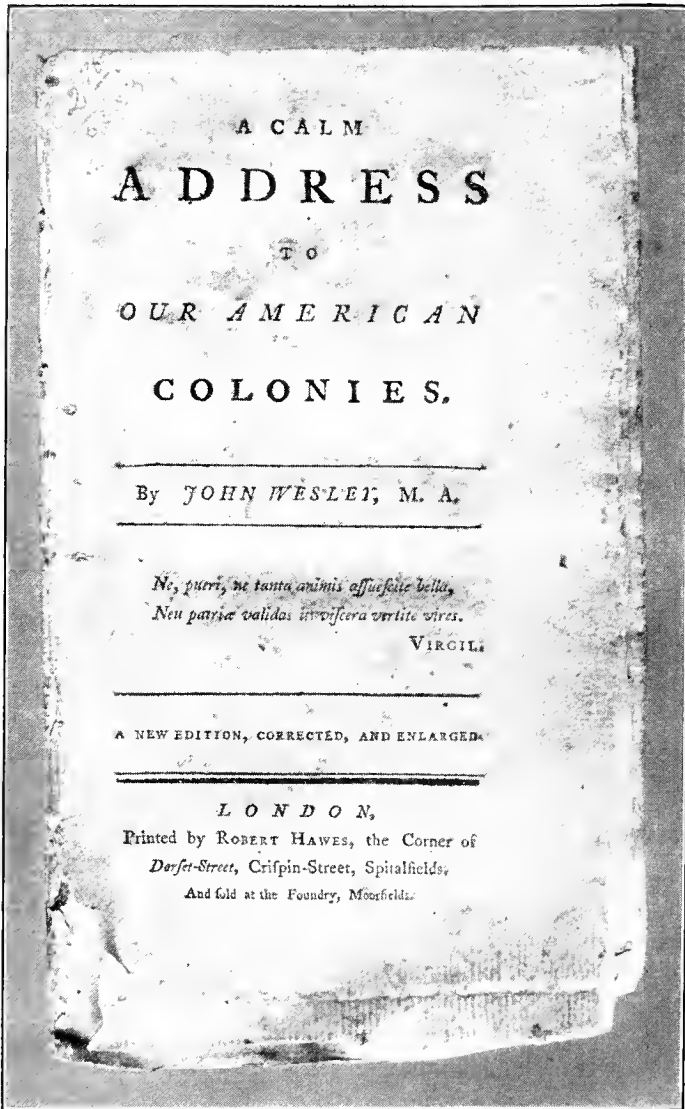
The statesmen did not heed Wesley's warning. "His solemn predictions were fulfilled." "To-day his letter reads like a history rather than a prophecy," are the comments of Buckley and McTyeire, as they look down the vista of the century.

But Wesley's view of the question between England and her colonies changed after he had read Dr. Samuel Johnson's *Taxation no Tyranny*, published in the autumn of 1775. He was convinced by that pamphlet that the colonists should be content with the military and naval protection of the mother country, and with obedience to its laws, without a vote in lawmaking and administration. Wesley published an abridgment of Dr. Johnson's pamphlet, under the title of *A Calm Address to our American Colonies*, naming the source of his tract only in a second edition.

Johnson wrote to Wesley thanking him for his "important suffrage to my argument on the American question. To have gained such a man as yourself may justly confirm me in my own opinion. What effect my paper has upon the public I know not; but I have no reason to be discouraged. The lecturer was surely in the right who, though he saw his audience slinking away, refused to quit the chair while Plato stayed."

Next year Wesley published another pamphlet, entitled *Some Observations on Liberty*. The able American editor of Wesley's works, John Emory, expresses in a footnote the strong and decided American disapprobation of Wesley's views. Dr. Buckley regards Wesley as "absolutely honest, but his training and mode of thought made it impossible for him to sympathize

with the colonists from the moment they determined upon revolution, and his horror of war intensified his feelings." Bishop



Title-page of Wesley's "Calm Address."

Which embittered American feeling against his preachers.

McTyeire well remarks on the extreme infelicity of the case that, while the letter to Lord North lay buried in the state

archives for nearly a century, the Address to the Colonics was published by tens of thousands of copies, creating serious difficulties for the American preachers.

With characteristic wisdom and charity Asbury thus comments on an "affectionate" letter which he received from Wesley: "I am truly sorry that the venerable man ever dipped into the politics of America. My desire is to live in love and peace with all men; to do them no harm, but all the good I can. However, it discovers Mr. Wesley's conscientious attachment to the government under which he lives. Had he been a subject of America, no doubt but he would have been as zealous an advocate of the American cause. But some inconsiderate persons have taken occasion to censure the Methodists in America on account of Mr. Wesley's political sentiments."

The independence of America brought Wesley face to face with a new problem. The American Methodists were left without an ordained ministry capable of administering the sacraments. They looked to Wesley as their "father," and asked what they should do.

The crisis was reached in 1784. Thirty-eight years earlier, as we have seen, Wesley had renounced the High Church dogma of apostolic succession, and had been convinced that in the primitive Church "bishops and presbyters were of the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain." He now proceeded to exercise that right. The Rev. Dr. Thomas Coke, a presbyter of the Established Church, had been for six years a Methodist preacher. In his study at City Road, London, Wesley first asked Dr. Coke to accept episcopal consecration at his hands and become "superintendent" (or bishop) of the societies in the United States. Coke asked for time to consider this innovation on the order of the Anglican Church. Wesley cited the example of the ancient



Alexandrian Church, which for two hundred years had provided its bishops through ordination by its presbyters. Two months passed before Coke wrote to Wesley accepting his proposal, though still suggesting delay. But on September 1, 1784, the momentous step was taken at Bristol. Richard Whatcoat thus records it in his Journal: "September 1, 1784, Rev. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England, formed a presbytery and ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey deacons, and on September 2, by the same hands, etc., Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey were ordained elders, and Thomas Coke, LL.D., was ordained superintendent for the Church of God under our care in North America."

The ordination took place in Mr. Castleman's, 6 Dighton Street. Wesley commissioned Dr. Coke to ordain and consecrate Francis Asbury as "joint superintendent" on his arrival in America, and wrote a letter for circulation among the societies, which concludes with the significant words: "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and primitive Church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free."

Charles Wesley was shocked by what he considered to be a breach of Church order. He wrote to his friend Dr. Chandler: "I can scarcely yet believe it, that in his eighty-second year my brother, my old and intimate companion and friend, should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America. Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation." He wrote to his brother begging



The Ordained Missionaries to America.

Rev. Thomas Vasey.

Rev. Richard Whatcoat,

Rev. Thomas Coke, D.C.L.



him, before he had quite broken down the bridge, to stop and consider. But his brother had considered the question for forty years, and the extraordinary need of America was not the only ground of his action. He based it upon Scripture, history, and reason. "I firmly believe," he replied, "that I am a scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England, or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable which no man ever did or can prove."

Canon Overton, a Churchman who considers Wesley's action to have been utterly wrong, says with honorable candor: "It has been said that John Wesley's mental powers were failing when he began to 'set apart' his preachers; and Charles Wesley himself has countenanced the idea by exclaiming, 'Twas age that made the breach, not he!' But there really appear to be no traces of mental decay in any other respects."

Wesley used the Latin designation "superintendent" rather than "bishop," the more accurate rendering of the Greek *episcopos*. The latter word was associated in England with too much secular pomp to satisfy his simple tastes. It was not his wish to multiply bishops of the Anglican type. He desired a more primitive Church order; as Dr. Gregory has expressed it, "not prelatial, but presbyterial; not hierarchical, but evangelistic; not diocesan, but 'itinerant.'" The term bishop, in this primitive sense, was afterward adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church. Wesley raised no objection to the designation "Episcopal," though he clung tenaciously to his term "superintendent."

The history of the Methodist Episcopal Church shows that Wesley's fear of the hierarchical use of the more simple and exact term "bishop" was groundless. Watson has well stated Wesley's position. He "never did pretend to ordain bishops in the modern sense, but only according to his view of primitive episcopacy . . . founded upon the principle of bishops and

presbyters being of the same degree; a more extended office only being assigned to the former, as in the primitive Church. For, though nothing can be more obvious than that the primitive pastors are called bishops or presbyters indiscriminately in the New Testament, yet at an early period those presbyters were, by way of distinction, denominated bishops, who presided in the meetings of the presbyters, and were finally invested with the government of several churches, with their respective presbyteries; so that two offices were then, as in this case, grafted upon the same order." The Methodist bishops, says Watson, "have in practice as well exemplified the primitive spirit as in principle they were conformed to the primitive discipline."

## CHAPTER XVII.

**Traveler, Preacher, and Philanthropist.**

Wesley's Travels.—His Preaching Power.—The Last University Sermon.—A Pioneer of Benevolence.—Temperance.—Sunday Schools.—The Press.—Hymns and Tunes.

**A**T seventy-two John Wesley could truthfully say to Lord North that he traveled four thousand or five thousand miles a year and conversed with more persons of every sort than anyone else in the three kingdoms.

Bad as the roads were he was a sturdy pedestrian, good for his five and twenty miles a day, reading as he walked. Before 1773 he made most of his long journeys on horseback, and, regardless of grace, rode with loose rein, reading history, poetry, or philosophy from the book in his uplifted hand. One June day in 1750 he rode ninety miles and was twenty hours in the saddle, using two horses.

He rode with a slack rein for above one hundred thousand miles, and except with two horses, that he says would fall "head over heels" anyway, he had surprisingly few falls; and he recommends the use of a loose rein to all travelers.

When his friends insisted on providing him with a chaise he showed the same determination to fulfill every appointment. The old Cornish sexton, Peter Martin, of Helstone, used to tell how, when he was ostler, he had driven Wesley to St. Ives. When they reached Hayle the sands which separated them from St. Ives were covered by the rising tide. A captain of a vessel came up and begged them to go back at once. Wesley said he must go on, as he had to preach at a certain hour.

Looking out of the window, he shouted, "Take the sea! Take the sea!" Soon the horses were swimming, and the poor ostler expected every moment to be drowned; but Wesley put his head out of the window—his long white hair was dripping with the salt water.

"What is your name, driver?" he asked.

"Peter," said the man.

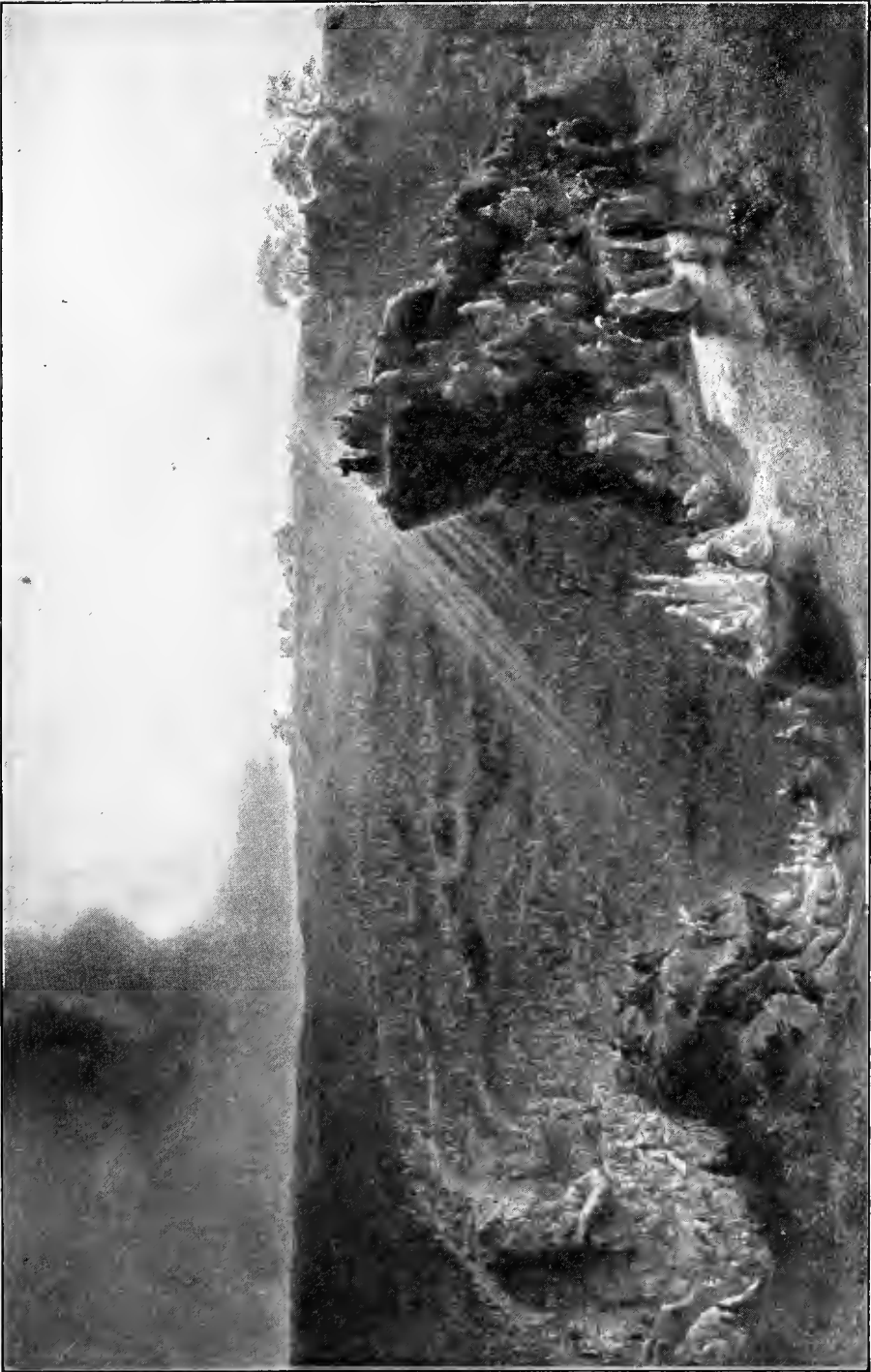
"Peter," he said, "fear not; thou shalt not sink."

At last the driver got his carriage safely over. Wesley's first care, he says, was "to see me comfortably lodged at the tavern;" he secured warm clothing, good fire, and refreshment for his driver, then, totally unmindful of himself, and drenched as he was with the dashing waves, he proceeded to the chapel, where he preached according to appointment. He was then in his eighty-third year.

Although he read as he traveled, nothing seemed to escape his observation. His journals are alive with critical notes on men and manners, nature and art.

Wesley's headquarters for England were London, where he spent several months every year; Bristol, in the west, with the neighboring Kingswood School as his home in later life; and Newcastle, with the hospitable Orphanage House, in the north. He itinerated by a careful plan, to avoid all waste of labor. He concentrated his preaching on the most thickly populated parts of England, though he visited many villages by the way. Miners and colliers, weavers and spinners, artisans and laborers, formed the backbone of his societies, with a strong contingent of commercial men and a few doctors and lawyers.

Wesley as a preacher possessed many natural advantages, as the accounts of him by John Nelson and Dr. Kennicott have shown us. His expressive features, his vivid eye, his clear voice, and manly, graceful carriage made his hearers either forget his small stature or wonder that a frame so slight should



John Wesley Preaching at Gwennap Pit.





enshrine a manhood so sturdy. When he preached at Hull in his old age, in the largest parish church in England, he was well heard. In the open air his voice reached the outskirts of the vast crowds. One of his favorite preaching places was in Cornwall, the natural amphitheater at Gwennap—"the finest I know in the kingdom." At one of his early annual services there it is supposed there were ten thousand people. The service continued until the darkness of night covered the vast assembly, yet there was "the deepest attention; none speaking, stirring, or scarce looking aside."

Wesley's extraordinary power as a preacher was due to his simplicity, his force of argument, his grip upon the reason and conscience, his transparent sincerity, his spirituality. He was not an impassioned and dramatic orator, like Whitefield. He did not, like his brother Charles, melt his hearers by his deep emotion and pathetic appeals. He "reasoned of sin and righteousness and judgment." John Nelson witnesses to his power of making the "heart beat like the pendulum of a clock; I thought he spoke to no one but me." "This man can tell the secrets of my heart; he hath not left me there, for he hath shown the remedy, even the blood of Jesus." After his "day of Pentecost" his whole man was "kindled and inspired by a divine conviction and force, and he preached as one inspired," with solemn intensity and perfect self-control, to crowds swayed by feelings which found expression in sobs and tears and outcries of prayer or praise.

St. John's First Epistle was his model of style. "Here," he says, "are simplicity and sublimity together, the strongest sense and the plainest language. How can anyone that would speak as the oracles of God use harder words than are found here?" He advised all his young preachers to make St. John their master.

His first extempore sermon was preached in All Hallows

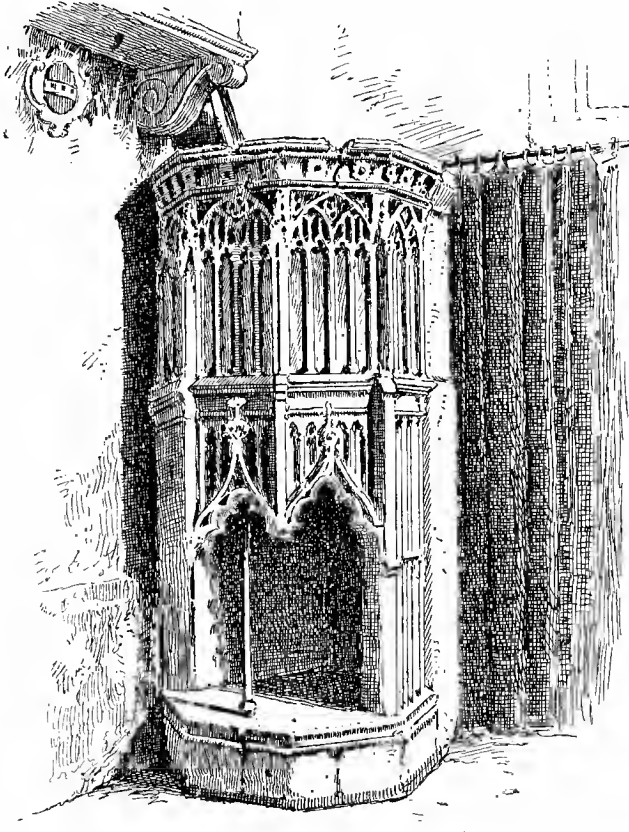
Church, Lombard Street, London. In 1788 he told the attendant, as he was putting on his gown to preach again in the same place, "Sir, it is above fifty years since I first preached in this church; I remember it from a particular circumstance. I came without a sermon, and going up the pulpit stairs I hesitated, and returned into the vestry under much mental confusion and agitation. A woman who stood by noticed my concern, and said, 'Pray, sir, what is the matter?' I replied, 'I have not brought a sermon with me.' Putting her hand on my shoulder, she said, 'Is that all? Cannot you trust God for a sermon?'" Her question went home; he spoke with freedom, and from that time he was independent of manuscript.

Sometimes, as we have seen, he preached at great length to hearers who never wearied. Sometimes he brought forth the treasures of ancient philosophy and interwove classical passages of point and beauty into his sermons, as in his sermon on The Great Assize, preached before the Judges of the Common Pleas at Bedford.

But his printed sermons as a rule do not represent the energy and directness of his extempore preaching when vast crowds hung upon his lips. How he preached in the open air, face to face with a raging mob, is better suggested by one of the many entries in his Journal: "I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed; they were ashamed; they were melted; they devoured every word."

On St. Bartholomew's Day, August 24, 1744, Wesley was called to Oxford to take his turn as university preacher. According to the terms of his fellowship he must deliver a sermon in St. Mary's Church once in three years or forfeit three guineas. He had preached in 1738 and 1741, but now he had become a notable figure, and great interest was felt in what he would say. The church is filled with university dig-

nitaries and townspeople. William Blackstone, an old Charterhouse boy, like the preacher, listens and makes note and comment as he did later on the Common Law. An observant undergraduate in the gallery remembers that "his black hair,



Pulpit of St. Paul's, Bedford.

Standing here, Wesley preached his famous sermon on *The Great Assize*. 1758.

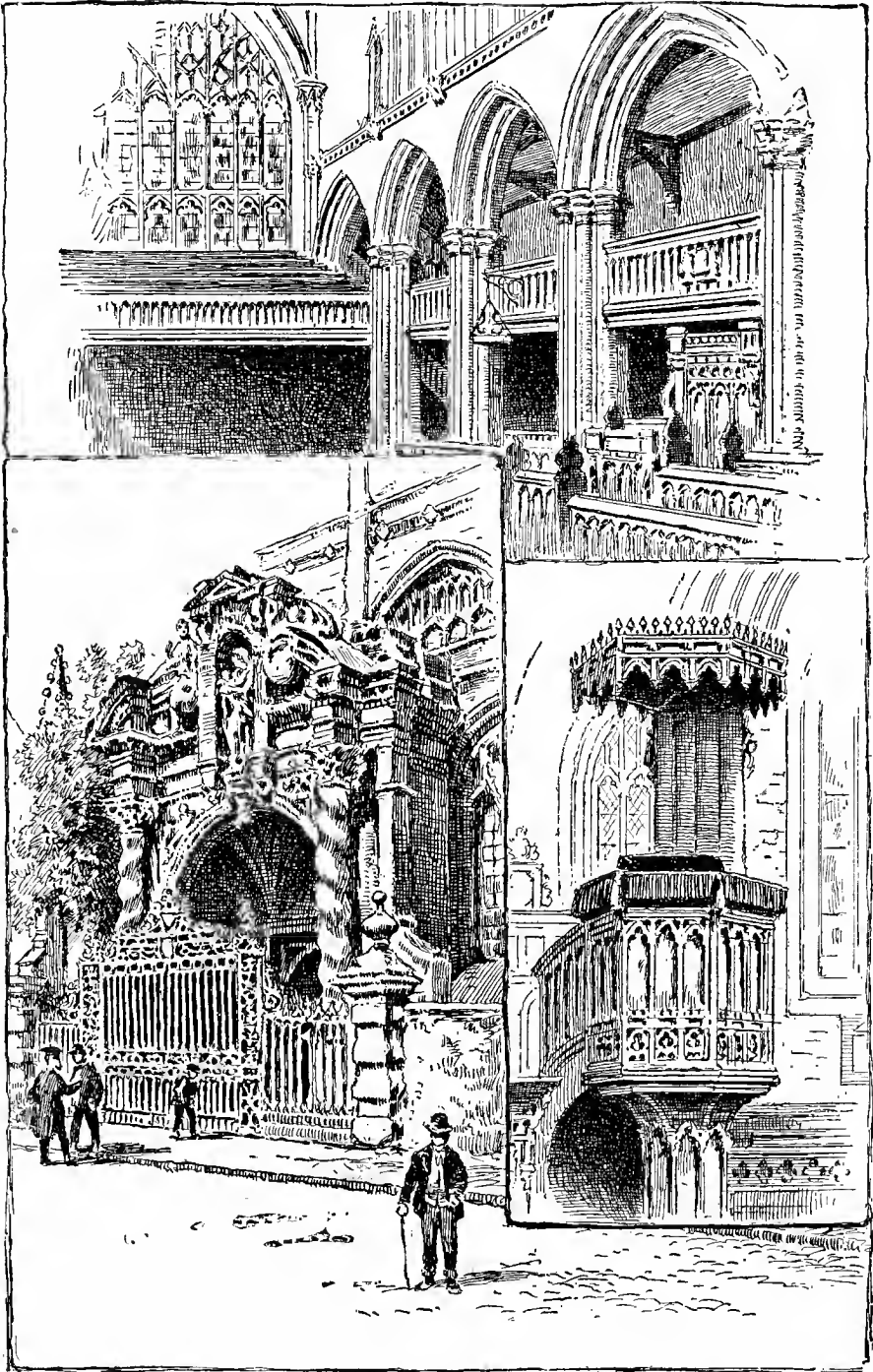
quite smooth and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was short, soft, and conformable to the rules of the university. His text (Acts iv, 31), 'And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' He spoke the text very slowly and with an agreeable emphasis."

Then followed the beautiful description of scriptural Christianity. and afterward the practical application which gave such dire offense. The dignitaries in the body of the church grew angry and restless, although the touching appeal to "the venerable men" who were responsible for the guidance of the young life of Oxford was based on facts to which every leading Oxford man of that century bears painful witness.

John Wesley notes in his Journal that it was St. Bartholomew's Day, and, of course, the anniversary of the ejection of two thousand ministers from the National Church by the Act of Uniformity. He adds: "I preached, I suppose, the last time at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have delivered my own soul. The beadle came to me afterward and told me the vice chancellor had sent him for my notes. I sent them without delay, not without admiring the wise providence of God. Perhaps few men of note would have given a sermon of mine the reading if I had put it into their hands; but by this means it came to be read, probably more than once, by every man of eminence in the university."

Blackstone also wrote of the service in a letter dated August 28, 1744: "We were yesterday entertained at Oxford by a Curious Sermon from Wesley Ye Methodist. Among other equally modest particulars, He informed us: 1st. That there was not one Christian among all ye heads of Houses. 2ndly. That Pride, Gluttony, Avarice, Luxury, Sensuality and Drunkenness were ye General Characteristics of all Fellows of Colleges, who were useless to a proverbial uselessness Lastly, that ye younger part of ye University were a generation of triflers, all of them perjured, and not one of them of any Religion at all. His notes were demanded by ye Vice Chancellor, but on mature deliberation, it has been thought proper to punish him by a mortifying neglect."

Wesley visited Oxford many times afterward, preaching only



Glimpses of St. Mary's, Oxford.

Porch, with statue of the Virgin.

The undergraduates' gallery.

The pulpit.

in a room or chapel, the authorities preferring to pay for a substitute rather than sit again under his searhing preaching. He went up to vote for a member of Parliament on a bitter day in January, 1751, at the request of the rector of his college, for whom he cherished warm affection. The university now was changing its attitude toward Wesley, and he says: "I was much surprised wherever I went at the civility of the people, gentlemen as well as others. There was no pointing, no calling of names, no, not even laughter. What can this mean? Am I become the servant of men? Or is the scandal of the cross ceased?" In the same year, on Friday, June 1, after enjoying his fellowship for twenty-six years, he resigned it of his own free will.

This severed his official connection with the university, but he loved it to the last, and wrote in 1778: "Having an hour to spare, I walked to Christ Church, for which I cannot but still retain a peculiar affection. What lovely mansions are these! What is wanting to make the inhabitants happy? That without which no rational creature can be happy, the experimental knowledge of God." Two years later he said, "I love the very sight of Oxford;" and when he was eighty he walked through the city, which was "swiftly improving in everything but religion." The hall at Christ Church, the Meadow, Magdalen Walks, and the White Walk still filled the old man with admiration, and he declared them finer than anything he had seen in Europe.

In 1744 and 1745 England was panic-stricken over the rumors of a French invasion to place the exiled Stuart "pretender" on the throne. "Papists" were proclaimed as especially pernicious foes of the king, and the Methodists fell under such suspicion of popery that John Wesley had to go before a magistrate and take the oath of loyalty—as no one could do with better conscience. Even in this period of unrest he did not

cease from his journeyings up and down the kingdom from Cornwall to Newcastle.

John Wesley was a pioneer on more than one line of philanthropy. The colliers' school at Kingswood and the orphan house at Newcastle were early manifestations of his love for his fellows. The activities which centered in the Foundry remind the modern reader of that very modern thing "the institutional church."

At the Foundry clothes were received from all who could



The Broad Walk, Christ Church, Oxford.

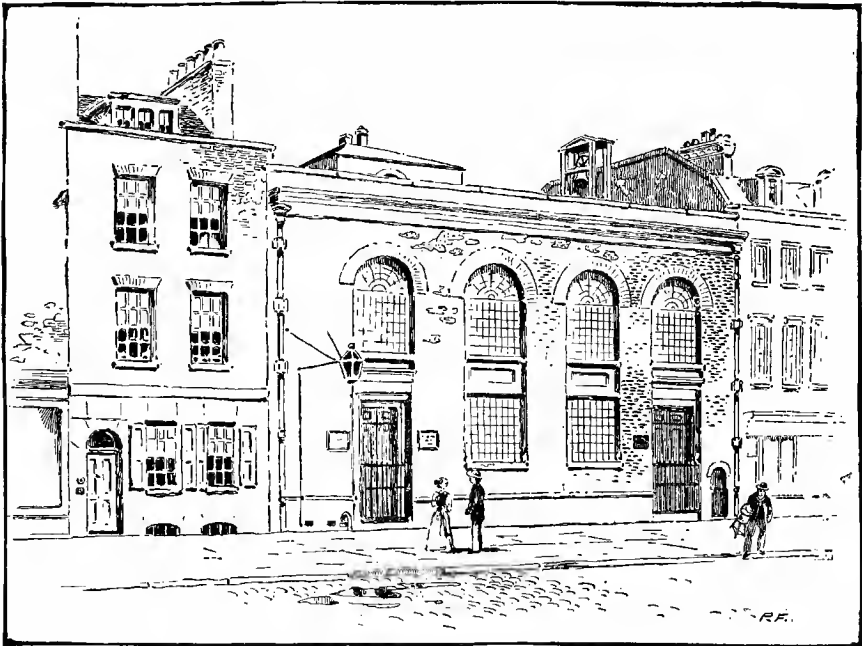
spare them, and were distributed among the poor. The society room was actually turned into a workshop for four months, where the poorest members were employed in carding and spinning cotton. Soon after, all the women who were out of work were employed in knitting, for which they were paid the ordinary price. A gratuity was added to the earnings in cases where the family need was great. Twelve persons were appointed to inspect the work and to visit the sick. In 1743,



in the great London society, Wesley appointed forty-six visitors whom he judged to be sympathetic and capable for this delicate work. They were selected from a company of volunteers. Dividing the metropolis into twenty-three districts, they went two by two into the homes of the sick three times a week, relieving their wants and inquiring concerning their souls. Their accounts were presented weekly to the stewards. Four plain rules were laid down: 1. Be plain and open in dealing with souls. 2. Be mild, tender, and patient. 3. Be clean in all you do for the sick. 4. Be not nice. Here was the golden law: "If you cannot relieve, do not grieve the poor; give them soft words, if nothing else; abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they should go empty away. Put yourself in the place of every poor man, and deal with him as you would God should deal with you." Wesley showed characteristic prudence in handling none of the funds himself. The Newcastle Orphan House, begun in 1742, and built by faith and prayer, became a preaching house, a children's home, a place of rest for workers, a school where Wesley taught rhetoric, moral philosophy, and logic to his young preachers, and a center of evangelism for the North of England. The West Street Chapel in London was another center of philanthropic effort. A Friendly Union Benefit Society was formed. The front parlor of the house was used as a soup kitchen. There was also a charity school similar to that of which Silas Told was master at the Foundry. Methodist women prepared linen for the children to wear, and formed what would be called to-day "a household salvage corps," collecting cast-off clothing and food for the poor. There are touching stories of outcast women rescued by the early Methodists.

But the boldest step was the founding of Wesley's medical dispensaries at the Foundry, West Street, and Bristol. The

sufferings of the sick poor stirred his heart, and "I thought," says Wesley, "of a kind of desperate expedient; I will prepare and give them physic myself." For six or seven and twenty years he had made anatomy and physic the diversion of his leisure hours. When preparing for the mission to Georgia he studied medicine; now he applied himself again. "I took into my assistance an apothecary and an experienced surgeon;



West Street Chapel, London.

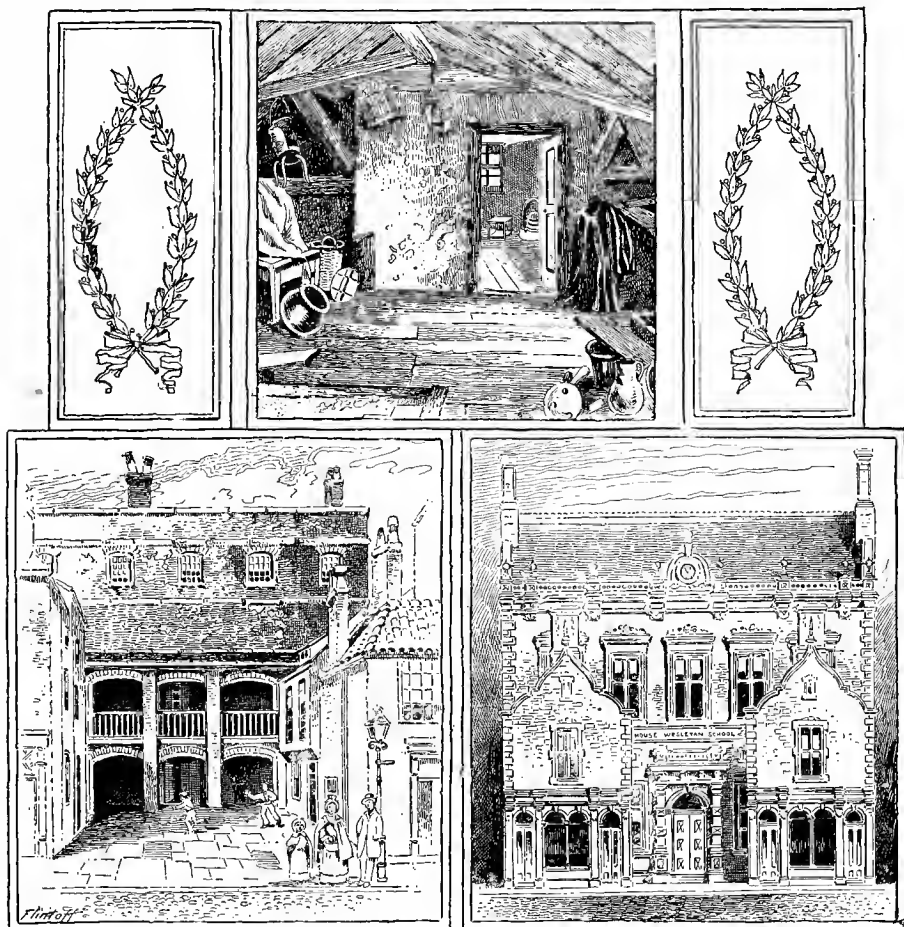
resolving not to go out of my depth, but to leave all difficult and complicated cases to such physicians as the patients should choose." In six months six hundred cases were treated in London. The Bristol dispensary soon had two hundred patients. In 1780 we find a medical man in attendance twice a week, for three hours each day, at the chapel house of West Street. Between 1746 and 1780 medical science and surgery in England had made more advance than in all the previous

part of the century, but when Wesley commenced both were in a very poor condition. A twenty-third edition of his *Primitive Physic* was published in the year of his death, in which many of the early prescriptions were discarded, but some of the remedies appear very "primitive" and amusing in the present day. Quick to perceive the practical usefulness of electricity as a therapeutic agent, he gave electric treatments to many as early as 1756. We can hardly claim for him the honor of founding aseptic practice, but certainly the man who said "cleanliness is next to godliness" was not far from it.

In a dram-drinking age he was an enemy of alcohol. Even of the medicinal value of liquors he said: "They may be of use in some bodily disorders, although there would rarely be occasion for them were it not for the unskillfulness of the practitioner." In general his condemnation of the use of beer, ale, wines, and spirits was far in advance of public opinion. Of the traffickers in liquor he said: "All who sell spirituous liquors in the common way, to any that will buy, are poisoners general. They murder his majesty's subjects by wholesale. They drive them to hell, like sheep. And what is their gain? Is it not the blood of these men?"

He advocated prohibition of the spirit traffic. In 1773, when bread was at famine price, and great poverty prevailed, one remedy he suggested was "prohibiting forever, by making a full end of distilling." "What will become of the revenue?" shrieked economists. Wesley wrote: "True, the traffic brings in a large revenue to the king, but is this an equivalent for the lives of his subjects? Would his majesty sell one hundred thousand of his subjects yearly to Algiers for £400,000? Surely, no. Will he, then, sell them for that sum to be butchered by their own countrymen? O tell it not in Constantinople that the English raise the royal revenue by selling the flesh and blood of their countrymen!"

In 1746 John Wesley established a "poor man's bank," collecting by public appeal a small capital to lend out to the industrious poor. He started with some £30, out of which he made



The Orphan House, Newcastle.

Wesley's attic study, old Newcastle Orphanage.

The Old Orphan House, 1742.

The New Orphan House and Wesleyan School.

loans of twenty shillings each to two hundred and fifty-five persons in eighteen months. The loans ran three months, and were repaid by weekly installments. One, Lackington, who was

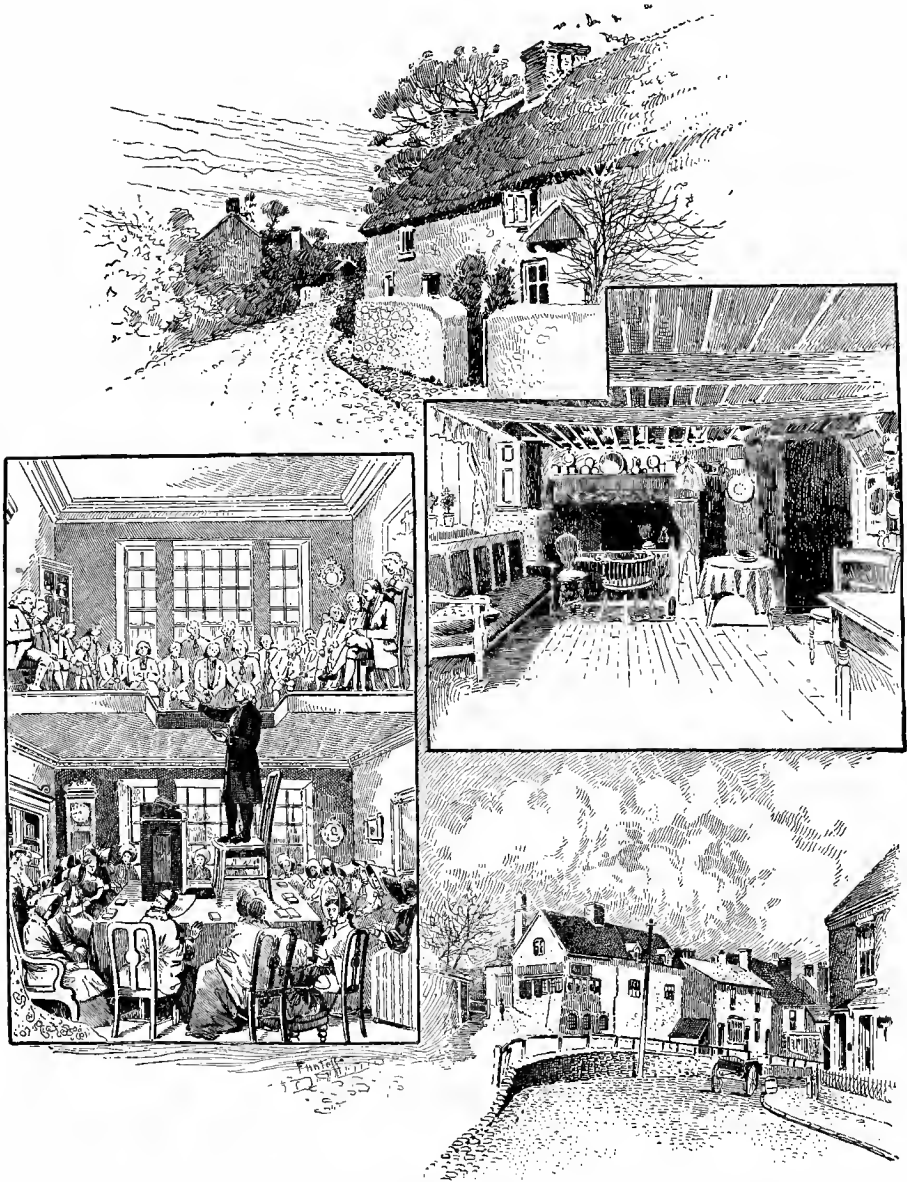
thus enabled to stock a book stall, worked up to a business of £5,000 a year in London.

Prison work had been begun by Wesley in his Oxford days. His Foundry schoolmaster, Silas Told, carried it nobly forward in London. Before there was an antislavery society Wesley had described the trade in men as "that execrable sum of all villainies." It was the burden of his letter to Wilberforce, the last he ever penned. Personally Wesley was the most liberal of givers. In his lifetime he lived on some £30 a year, and gave away the £30,000 profits of the book business. When the excise men supposing him to be wealthy—as he might have been—demanded that he "make due entry" of his plate, that duty might be levied on it, he wrote: "Sir, I have two silver teaspoons here in London and two at Bristol. This is all which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many round me want bread."

Some of the wealthy men of Manchester told Wesley that he did not know the value of money. He took no notice, but bit his lip and let them talk on. When he was preaching he recollected it, and began to talk of it immediately. "I have heard to-day," said he, "that I do not know the value of money. What! don't I know that twelve pence make a shilling, and twenty-one shillings a guinea? Don't I know that if given to God, it's worth heaven—through Christ? And don't I know that if hoarded and kept, it's worth damnation to the man who hoards it?"

Wesley's doctrine of Christian stewardship is summed up in his sermon on *The Use of Money*, with its three points: "Gain all you can; save all you can; give all you can;" and he practiced what he preached.

"I reverence the young," said John Wesley, "because they may be useful after I am dead," and at his last Conference, when asked what he would recommend for perpetuating that



Some of Wesley's Preaching Places.

A cottage chapel, John Clarke's.  
The double-decked chapel, Nottingham.

Preaching room at John Clarke's.  
Where Wesley preached, Cradley.

revival of religion which he had commenced he said, "Take care of the rising generation." He had encouraged Methodist

Sunday schools before Robert Raikes made his conspicuous success at Gloucester. His presses gave Raikes's experiment the widest publicity. His Journal entry at Bingley in July, 1784, remarks: "I stepped into the Sunday school, which contains two hundred and forty children, taught every Sunday by several masters, and superintended by the curate. So, many children in one parish are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners at least, as well as to read the Bible. I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?"

"Though I am always in haste," said Wesley, "I am never in a hurry, because I never undertake more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit." This perfect self-control, and the ability to turn to advantage every minute of spare time enabled him, in addition to his travels of five thousand miles a year and his forty thousand sermons, to edit and write four hundred books, and become the pioneer in publishing cheap and good books for the people. His style bears no trace of "hurry." He has described it: "What is it constitutes a good style? Perspicuity, purity, propriety, strength, and easiness joined together. As for me, I never think of my style at all, but just set down the words that come first.

Clearness in particular is necessary for you and me.

When I had been a member of the university for about ten years I wrote and talked much as you do now; but when I talked to plain people in the castle or town I observed they gaped and stared. This obliged me to alter my style. . . And yet there is dignity in this simplicity which is not disagreeable to those of highest rank."

That Journal which flows on with such copiousness, variety, and interest to the end of his life is, says Birrell, "the most

amazing record of human exertion ever penned by man." Social historians have learned to go to it for observation and comment of the rarest value.

As a pioneer of popular literature Wesley holds a high place in national history. The traveling peddlers, or "chapmen," were the only purveyors of cheap books before Wesley did his work, and their "cheap books," sold for a few pence, were of little or no value from an educational standpoint, as our facsimiles of some of the most harmless show. Wesley stored his preachers' saddlebags with penny books of a wholesome sort. "Two and forty years ago," he writes, "having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I have seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny apiece, and afterward several larger. Some of these have such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means I became unawares rich." What he did with the wealth we shall learn later. He created an appetite for reading among the people. His cheap books had an enormous circulation, and Watson justly observes that "he

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Printed by J. FRY and Co. and Sold at the Foundry, near Upper-Moulfield	
[PRICE SIX-PENCE.]	

Cover and Contents of the First Number of  
the Arminian Magazine.

(Reduced facsimile.)

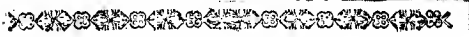
Some of these have such a sale as I never thought of; and by this means I became unawares rich." What he did with the wealth we shall learn later. He created an appetite for reading among the people. His cheap books had an enormous circulation, and Watson justly observes that "he



was probably the first to use on any extensive scale this means of popular reformation."

Wesley and Coke formed the first tract society in 1782, seventeen years before the formation of the Religious Tract

Society of London, and forty years before this thousands of copies of Wesley's Word to a Smuggler, Word to a Sabbath-breaker, Word to a Swearer, and other tracts were circulated broadcast. He did much by his cheap abridgments to bring stores of useful literature within the reach of those who were short of money to buy and time to read the ponderous folios and quartos in which much of the best writing was entombed. His Christian Library, in fifty volumes (1749-1755), was his greatest effort in this direction, but by this he suffered a loss of £200. Milton's Paradise Lost, Young's



T O T H E  
R E A D E R.

**I**T is usual, I am informed, for the compilers of Magazines, to employ the outside Covers, in acquainting the courteous reader, with the Beauties and Excellencies of what he will find within. I beg him to excuse me from this trouble: from writing a panegyric upon myself. Neither can I desire my Friends to do it for me, in their recommendatory Letters. I am content this Magazine should stand or fall, by its own intrinsic value. If it is a compound of Falshood, Ribaldry, and Nonfense, let it sink into oblivion. If it contains only the words of truth and soberness, then let it meet with a favourable reception.

It is usual likewise with Magazine Writers, to speak of themselves in the plural number: "We will do thus." And indeed it is the general Custom of Great Men so to do. But I am a little one. Let me then be excused in this also, and permitted to speak as I am accustomed to do.

LEWISHAM,  
Nov. 24, 1777.

John Wesley,

It will easily be observed, That this Magazine contains fewer Articles than any other. This is not by accident, but design. I have frequently been disgusted by the many bits and scraps of various kinds, which make up a great part of most publications of this nature. Before one has well entered upon any subject, it was at an end, and referred to the next Number: a mere trick to deceive the reader, to buy another and another Number. On the contrary, I shall endeavour to begin and conclude as many things as possible in each number: and with regard to taking the Numbers that follow, let every Reader use his own Discretion.

Wesley's Editorial Salutory.

In the first number of the Arminian Magazine.

Night Thoughts, and even the Pilgrim's Progress were mercifully condensed, and though to-day this may be regarded as vandalism, the needs of the poverty-stricken multitudes whose intellects were awakened by the revival condone the deed.

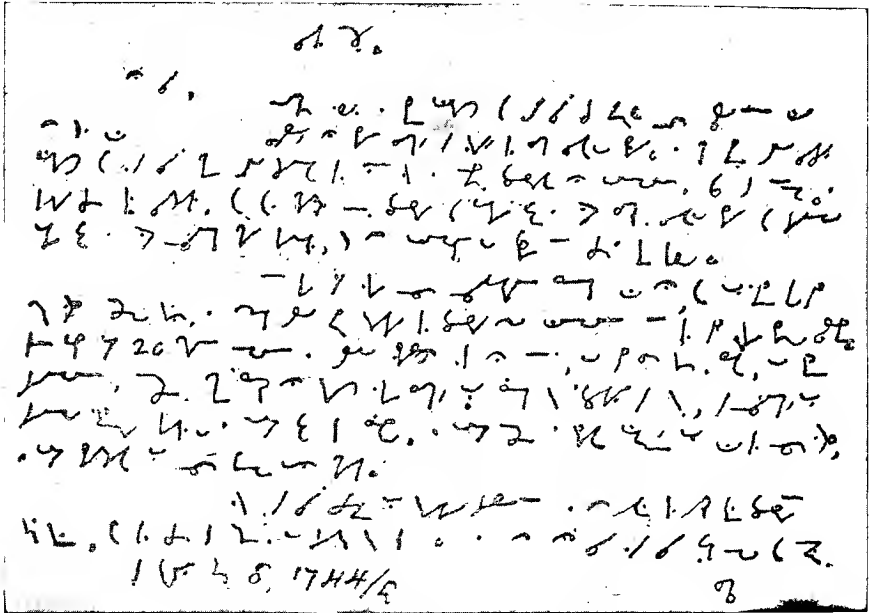
The list of Wesley's original works, from the first of 1733—

a Collection of Forms of Prayer, for the use of his pupils—to the last revision of his Notes on the New Testament, fifty-seven years later, would fill a volume.

Wesley's Notes on the New Testament (constituting with his first fifty-three sermons the doctrinal standards of Methodism) appeared in 1755. The notes he made "as short as possible, that the comment may not obscure or swallow up the text, and as plain as possible, in pursuance of the main design." His brother Charles, who was an excellent critic, assisted him. He took great pains to secure a correct Greek text, using chiefly the *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* of Bengel—"that great light of the Christian world." He anticipated the revision of 1881 in his use of paragraphs, the omission of chapter headings, and in a large number of renderings.

His first fifty-three sermons, referred to as part of the doctrinal standards of Methodism, were published in 1746 and 1760. Henry Moore states that Wesley felt the need of preparing some concise, clear, and full body of divinity to guide his preachers and people. Retiring to the house of his friends, the Blackwells, at Lewisham, and taking only his Hebrew Bible and Greek Testament with him, "My design," he says in his preface, "is in some sense to forget all that I have ever read in my life." One portion of this preface is so characteristic of the man and his methods that no review of his work would be complete without it. He writes: "To candid, reasonable men I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, I am a creature of the day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God; just hovering over the great gulf, till, a few moments hence, I am no more seen; I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing: the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach

the way; for this very end he came down from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! at any price, give me the book of God! I have it; here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo unius libri*. Here, then, I am far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone; only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book, for this end—to find the way to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning



John Wesley's Shorthand Writing.

Slightly reduced facsimile.

the meaning of what I read? Does anything appear dark or intricate? I lift up my heart to the Father of lights. 'Lord, is it not thy word, If any man lack wisdom, let him ask it of God? Thou givest liberally and upbraidest not. Thou hast said if any man be willing to do thy will, he shall know. I am willing to do; let me know thy will.' I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the atten-

tion and earnestness of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the things of God, and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learn that I teach."

These written and printed sermons, as we have noted, do not represent his preaching, and must be regarded rather as careful statements of his doctrines intended for thoughtful reading. His later sermons were prepared for his magazine, and are more varied in style and literary illustration.

His Earnest Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion (1743 and 1745) contain some of his most trenchant and powerful work. They were not only a vindication of Methodism, but of the Christian religion, and answered their purpose to a remarkable degree. They were fruitful, as we have seen, in the conversion of deists like Lampe, and Wesley tells of several like "Dr. W——, a steady, rational infidel," whom "it pleased God to touch" as they read. They did more to melt the hearts of the more reasonable of Wesley's clerical opponents than anything else he wrote.

Wesley wrote or compiled or edited schoolbooks, histories, condensations of great literary works, in great number and variety. His Collected Works, in thirty-two volumes, were published 1771-1774. All this work was done from what Dr. Osborne describes as his "intense determination to popularize literature, and by means of cheap extracts and abridgments to bring good books within reach of his societies, most of whom had neither time to read nor money to buy much more than he supplied to them."

In 1778 he put forth the first number of the Arminian Magazine, which is still issued under another title. It was aimed to counteract the effect of the Calvinist magazines.

Wesley declared in a letter to Thomas Taylor that his object was, "not to get money," but "to counteract the poison of

other periodicals." But it also supplied, by means of lives and letters, "the marrow of experimental and practical religion."

For forty years Wesley had a store, "The Book-Room," at

A  
COLLECTION  
OF  
TUNES,  
Set to MUSIC,

As they are commonly SUNG at the  
FOUNDRY

---



L O N D O N :

Printed by A. PEARSON, and sold by  
T. HARRIS, at the *Locking-Glafs and Bible*,  
on *London-Bridge*; T. TRYE, at *Gray's-Inn-  
Gate, H.bern*; and at the *Foundery, near Upper-  
Moorfields*, MDCCXLII.

Title-page of Wesley's First Tune Book.

the Foundry. In 1777 the business was removed to the new chapel in City Road. Thus began the great Book Concerns of world-wide Methodism, which have done so much for the circulation of its literature and the assistance of its funds.

Music had a powerful charm for all the Wesleys, and John was no exception. Scarcely less than his brother, whose poetical gift surpassed his, was his fondness for good singing. He heard the Messiah sung in Bristol Cathedral in 1758, and frequently met the composer Handel in London.

His tune books caught the popular ear, and the good singing of the Methodists became proverbial.

John Wesley's knowledge of the German language, acquired

on his first Atlantic voyage, opened up to him the splendid treasury of German hymnody; for, as Dr. Philip Schaff has well said in Julian's Dictionary of Hymnology, the "church hymn, in the strict sense of the term, as a popular religious lyric in praise of God, to be sung by the congregation in public worship, was born with the German Reformation." Ten thousand German hymns have become more or less popular, and have enriched the hymn books of Churches of other tongues, and nearly a thousand are "classical and

WEDNESBURY.

8 and 6 D.

Wesley's Favorite Tune, by Lampe.

immortal." "John Wesley," says Dr. Schaff, "was one of the first English divines who appreciated their value." He translated at least thirty hymns, five of which appeared in his first hymn book. He translated Psalm lxxiii from the Spanish version, and at least revised Mme. Bourignon's French hymn, "Come, Saviour, Jesus, from above."

John Wesley's modesty has made it difficult to distinguish his original hymns from those of his brother. His paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer, to which his name is attached, is one of the finest in the English language. His severer taste pruned his brother's hymns of luxuriations, and on comparing those

which John edited with the originals it will be found that they gained much by his unsparing censorship. John Wesley strongly objected to any "mending" of his own hymns, but he mended the hymns of others with a clear conscience, and with what success one example of his handling of the famous hymn writer, Watts, will suffice to show:

AS WRITTEN BY WATTS.  
 The God that rules on high,  
 And thunders when he please,  
 That rides upon the stormy sky,  
 And manages the seas.

AS REVISED BY WESLEY.  
 The God that rules on high,  
 And all the earth surveys,  
 That rides upon the stormy sky,  
 And calms the roaring seas.

After their spiritual Pentecost of 1738 the two brothers cooperated, both as authors and editors, and issued fifty-four hymnal publications, making on an average one every year until the death of John. The year after City Road Chapel was opened the Large Book was advertised in the Arminian Magazine, and it was published in 1780. It was entitled A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, and contained five hundred and twenty-five hymns selected from twenty-one previous publications.

John Wesley calls the hymns "a body of experimental and practical divinity." They were not only intended for congregational use, they were a compendium of theology and a manual of private devotion; and when the voices of the preachers were stilled the hymns remained for the deepening of the spiritual life of the people, the elevation of their worship, and the development of their character. "It is a great recommendation to the hymns of both Wesleys," says an Anglican historian, "that, although they are often mystical in tone, and appeal persistently to the feelings, they are thoroughly practical, never losing sight of active Christian morality."

But, after all, the Poet of the Revival was Charles Wesley, whose hymns are now sung in every branch of Christianity.

Charles, though younger than John, died before him. He had been residing in London for nearly a score of years, preaching frequently in City Road, and living in happiness with his good wife and his musically remarkable children. The friendship



Rev. Charles Wesley, A.M.

The portrait published in the *Arminian Magazine*. May, 1792.

of the brothers was not broken by their differences of opinion on ecclesiastical policy.

A few days before his death Charles Wesley called to his wife and requested her to write down the following lines:

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

This was the last verse he wrote.



Samuel Bradburn, then stationed in London, who sat up with him the last night of his life but one, says, "His mind was as calm as a summer evening." He told his wife that no fiend was permitted to approach him, and that he had a good hope. When asked if he wanted anything, he replied, "Nothing but Christ." Some one said that the valley of the shadow of death was hard to be crossed. He exclaimed, "Not with Christ." All his family was present. He pressed his wife's hand, when too feeble to speak, to assure her that he knew her. After his last words, "Lord—my heart—my God!" he quietly fell asleep, on Saturday, March 29, 1788.

A fortnight later, when at Bolton, John Wesley attempted to give out as his second hymn, "Come, O thou Traveler unknown," but when he came to the lines,

My company before is gone,  
And I am left alone with Thee,

he sank beneath the sorrow of his bereavement, burst into a flood of tears, sat down in the pulpit, and hid his face with his hands. The crowded congregation well knew the cause of his speechless sorrow; singing ceased, and "the chapel became a Bochim." At length the aged preacher recovered, and went through a service which was never forgotten by those who were present. His love for his brother is expressed in his own words: "I have a brother who is as my own soul."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

**Setting His House in Order.**

“Thou Art the Man!”—Methodist Clergy.—The Swiss Recruit.—Fletcher's Proposals.—The Deed of Declaration.—The Ordinations.—The Rubicon Crossed.

**J**OHN WESLEY completed his seventieth year in 1773. His health was apparently failing, and the great itinerant began to feel the necessity to set his house in order as one who goes on a long journey. He had been revising his manuscripts for his literary executor, but was concerned for the future conduct of the complex system of work which had resulted from his labors.

“What an amazing work has God wrought in these kingdoms in less than forty years!” he writes. “And it not only continues, but increases, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland; nay, it has lately spread into New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland, and Carolina. But the wise men of the world say, ‘When Mr. Wesley drops, then all this is at an end.’” And Wesley himself fears this, “unless, before God calls me hence, one is found to stand in my place. I see more and more, unless there be one *προεστωρ*, the work can never be carried on.” At present he fears the preachers will not submit to one another. A leader they must have. “But who is sufficient for these things?”

Then, after describing the type of leader needed, Wesley declares to John Fletcher: “Thou art the man!”

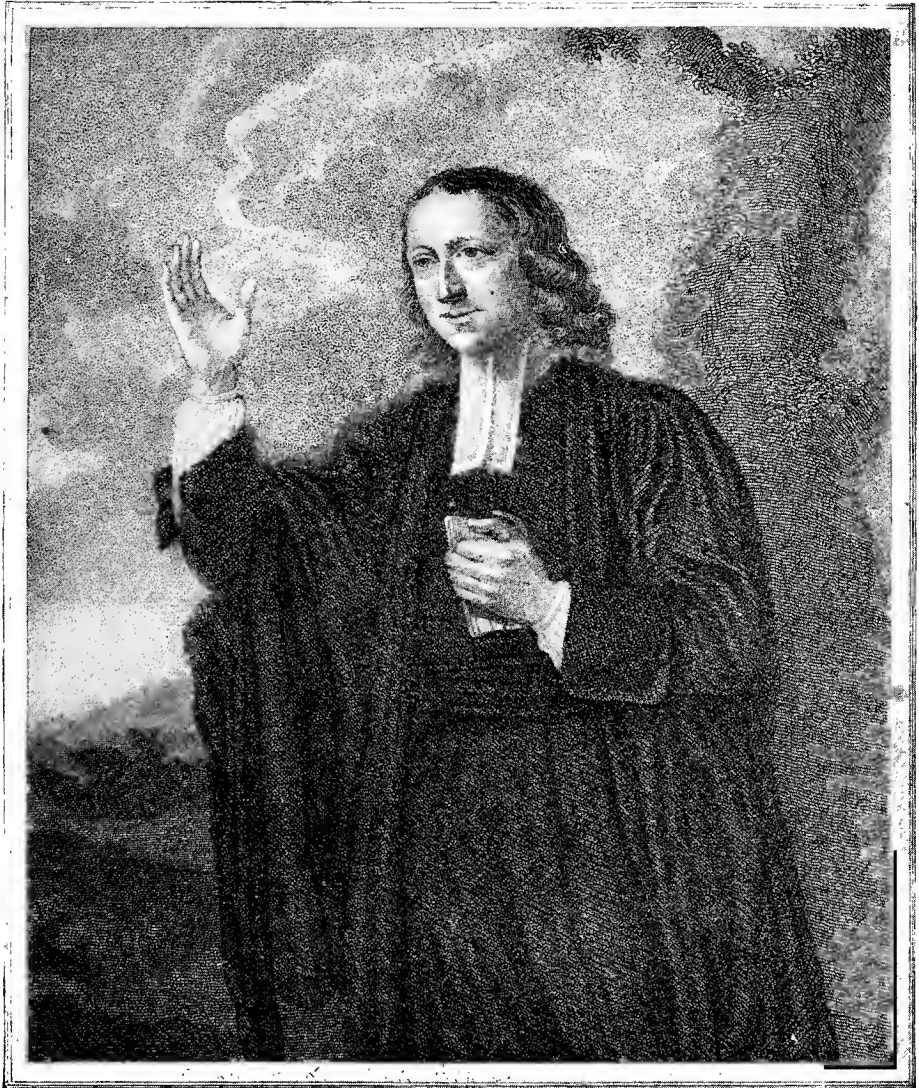
Fletcher stands easily foremost among the clergy of the Church of England who became identified with the Methodist

movement. Some of these gave up parochial work in the Church of England and became itinerant preachers like Whitefield. Others continued in their church livings and were at the same time Methodist assistants (superintendents) and had a Methodist circuit extending far beyond their own parishes, like Grimshaw, of Haworth.

A third class attended the Conferences, welcomed the Methodist leaders to their homes and pulpits, and assisted them in the administration of the sacraments, without leaving or extending their parochial work, like Vincent Perronet, of Shoreham, to whom Wesley addressed his Plain Account of the People Called Methodists, and Henry Venn, of Clapham, to whom Wesley wrote in 1765 the spirited letter in which the motto of the Epworth League is found: "*I desire to have a league offensive and defensive with every soldier of Christ.* We have not only one faith, one hope, one Lord, but are directly engaged in one warfare. We are carrying the war into the devil's own quarters, who therefore summons all his hosts to war. Come, then, ye that love him, to the help of the Lord—to the help of the Lord against the mighty! I am now well-nigh *miles emeritus senex, sexagenarius* [an old soldier who has served out his time and is entitled to his discharge—a sexagenarian]; yet I trust to fight a little longer."

But of all the evangelical clergy who, with or without their consent, were classed as Methodists the vicar of Madeley stands preeminent for saintliness, learning, and as a defender of the faith.

Jean Guillaume de la Flechere, for so he was christened, was a Swiss, born at Nyon of excellent family in 1729. Though educated for the Reformed ministry, he rejected its Calvinistic creed and turned to a life of adventure. A train of remarkable providences landed him in England, where he was coaching the sons of a member of Parliament when in 1754 he fell



John Wesley at the Age of Sixty-three.



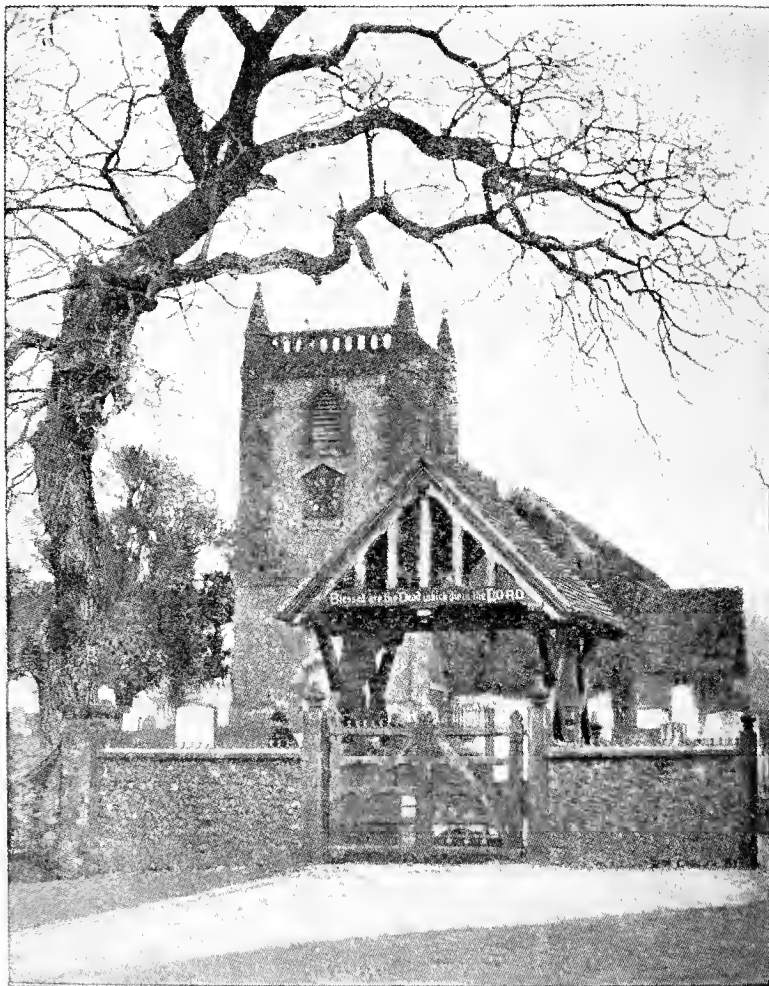
in with the Methodists and joined class at the Foundry. Wesley's Journal helped him to understand his spiritual needs and the way of salvation, and on January 23, 1755, he recognized himself "a new creature" in Christ Jesus. He entered the ministry of the Church of England, and performed his first ministerial service in assisting Wesley with the sacraments in Snowsfield Chapel.

"How wonderful," wrote Wesley, "are the ways of God! When my bodily strength failed, and none in England were able and willing to assist me, he sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland, and an helpmate for me in every respect; where could I have found such another?"

Fletcher's charming personality and rare spiritual gifts gained him immediate adoption into the little group of the clergy who favored the revival work. In 1760 he was appointed to the living of Madeley, and in that rural parish of miners and colliers he preached and lived the Gospel for twenty-five years. His converts were formed into classes on the Wesleyan plan, and his parish was administered according to Wesley's ideal.

Such was Fletcher of Madeley when, in 1763, John Wesley, looking about for a successor, said: "Thou art the man! God has given you a measure of loving faith and a single eye to his glory. He has given you some knowledge of men and things, particularly of the old plan of Methodism. You are blessed with some health, activity, and diligence, together with a degree of learning. And to all these he has lately added, by a way none could have foreseen, favor both with the preachers and the people. Come out, in the name of God! Come to the help of the Lord against the mighty! Come while I am alive and capable of labor! . . . Come while I am able, God assisting to build you up in faith, to ripen your gifts, and introduce you to the people! *Nil tanti*. What possible employment can you have which is of so great importance?"

Fletcher did not definitely decline Wesley's proposal, but he stated that he "needed a fuller persuasion that the time is quite come" to leave his work at Madeley. He hopes that



Shoreham Church.

The parish church of Wesley's friend, Vincent Perronet.

Wesley may outlive him, but he promises, "Should Providence call you first, I shall do my best to help your brother to gather the wreck, and keep together those who are not abso-

lutely bent on throwing away the Methodist doctrines and discipline." Six months later the call was repeated without success. Thirteen years afterward Wesley still doubted if his friend had done right in remaining in his parish. "I can never believe," says he, "it was the will of God that such a burning and shining light should be hid under a bushel. No; instead of being confined to a country village it ought to have shone in every corner of our land."

Although Fletcher did not accept Wesley's commission of lieutenancy, and was survived by him, he is known as his "designated successor." That he gave deep thought to the problem of Methodism after Wesley we know from a comprehensive statement of his conclusions in a letter written to Mr. Wesley in August, 1775, in which he exhorts his correspondent as an Englishman, a Christian, a divine, and an extraordinary messenger of God, to take positive steps toward the reformation of the Church of England, "which I love," says Fletcher, "as much as you do, but I do not love her so much as to take her blemishes for ornaments." Some of the leading points in the program of reform are thus stated:

"(1) That the growing body of the Methodists in Great Britain, Ireland, and America be formed into a general society—a daughter Church of our holy mother. (2) That this society shall recede from the Church of England in nothing but in some palpable defects, about doctrine, discipline, and unevangelical hierarchy. (3) That this society shall be the Methodist Church of England, ready to defend the as yet unmethodized Church against all the unjust attacks of the Dissenters—willing to submit to her in all things that are not unscriptural—approving of her ordination, partaking of her sacraments, and attending her service at every convenient opportunity. (4) That a pamphlet be published containing the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England, rectified according to the purity of the Gospel, together with some needful alterations in the liturgy and homilies, such as the expunging of the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed, etc. (5) That Messrs. Wesley, the preachers, and the most substantial Methodists in London, in the name of the societies scattered through the kingdom, would draw up a petition and present it to the Archbishop of Canterbury, informing his grace, and by him the bench of the bishops, of



this design; proposing the reformed Articles of Religion, asking the protection of the Church of England, begging that this step might not be considered as a schism, but only as an attempt to avail ourselves of the liberty of Englishmen and Protestants to serve God according to the purity of the Gospel, the strictness of primitive discipline, and the original design of the Church of England, which was to reform, so far as time and circumstances would allow, whatever needed reformation. (6) That this petition contain a request to the bishops to ordain the Methodist preachers which can pass their examination according to what is indispensably required in the canons of the Church. That instead of the ordinary testimonials the bishops would allow of testimonials signed by Messrs. Wesley and some more clergymen, who would make it their business to inquire into the morals and principles of the candidates for orders. And that, instead of a title, their lordships would accept of a bond signed by twelve stewards of the Methodist societies, certifying that the candidate for holy orders shall have a proper maintenance. That if his grace, etc., does not condescend to grant this request, Messrs. Wesley will be obliged to take an irregular (not unevangelical) step, and to ordain upon a Church of England independent plan such lay preachers as appear to them qualified for holy orders."

Then follow suggestions as to the trial of candidates and the exercise of discipline, and under (9), "that when Messrs. Wesley are dead the power of ordination be lodged in three or five of the most steady Methodist ministers, under the title of moderators, who shall overlook the flocks and the other preachers as Mr. Wesley does now." Under (10-12) the Prayer Book is to be revised, confirmation is to be performed with the utmost solemnity by Mr. Wesley or the moderators, and (13) enjoins that the doctrine of grace shall be preached against the Socinians, the doctrine of justice against the Calvinists, and the doctrine of holiness against all the world. The letter closes with a proposal that Kingswood School shall be used for the training of candidates for "Methodist orders," the education of the preachers' children, and as a home for worn-out ministers.

It will be seen that Fletcher thought that Wesley might secure the much-needed reform "without perverting;" that Methodism might exist in ecclesiastical form as a Church within a Church, or as a Church branch of the Mother Church, but

with a power of expansion to Ireland, the colonies, and the work beyond; the Articles and Prayer Book might be purged from unevangelical elements, to meet the scruples of many Methodists, and the damnatory clauses of the Athanasian Creed might be omitted. The Methodist superintendent preachers might be episcopally ordained presbyters, and their helpers deacons. If the bishops would not ordain, let the Wesleys do so.

Wesley did not see his way to do more than very partially to act upon Fletcher's very striking and comprehensive proposals. He did partially act upon them in some important respects.

He drew up a revised Prayer Book or Sunday Service for the independent Methodist Church, afterward the Methodist Episcopal Church of America. In this book the Thirty-nine Articles are reduced



The Birthplace of John Fletcher, Nyon, Switzerland.

to twenty-four, the Athanasian Creed disappears, the Psalms are abridged. All is adapted to a new people in a homely, pastoral country. Provision is made for independent Methodist ordination of deacons, presbyters, or elders, and the setting apart of superintendents, or "bishops," to use the word which early became current in America and which has almost displaced the other designation.

The suggestion (9) in regard to moderators was an extension of that which Wesley had himself proposed in 1769. It resembles more closely the American plan of general superintendence.

Both Fletcher (1759) and Perronet (1762) had previously described the Methodist society as the "Methodist Church."

And Wesley himself was now using the term, so that this was not a new departure. But "what was new was the frank boldness with which Fletcher would one hundred and twenty years ago have spread before the world and all the churches of the world the fact that by the labors of the Wesleys and their followers a new great Church—for not one nation, but all nations, something greater in its idea and its potentiality than a mere national Church—had actually been created; and that it was destined to prevail until it had replenished the earth. Here the independent race and nationality—the independent churchly ideas also—of the Swiss Reformed Churchman found voice and utterance. To Fletcher, Methodism was already a great Church, potentially the greatest Church of the world."

All accounts agree that Fletcher was a man of exceptional purity of character. Canon Overton, the High Churchman, writes: "Never, perhaps, since the rise of Christianity has the mind which was in Christ Jesus been more faithfully copied than it was in the vicar of Madeley."

The philosophic critic, Isaac Taylor, concludes that "the Methodism of Fletcher was Christianity, as little lowered by admixture of human infirmity as we may hope to find it anywhere on earth." "In a genuine sense he was a saint; . . . as unearthly a being as could tread the earth at all."

Yet the Protestant saint was no recluse. John Fletcher's pure and lofty heavenly mindedness did not alienate him from his age. His asceticism, as Mr. Macdonald has remarked, was "the asceticism of love, and not of bondage or of fear." He was a Methodist of the Methodists, and he was delighted when Wesley succeeded in persuading the converts at Madeley to meet in class. He built a Methodist meetinghouse in his village, and regarded Christian fellowship as essential to a New Testament Church. He greeted the lay preachers as brethren, and his appearance at Wesley's Conferences produced the same

remarkable spiritual impression on them as it did on his visitors and hearers elsewhere.

At one of the most important Conferences Wesley ever had Fletcher was present (1784). Dr. Coke had just begun the Foreign Missionary Society, and Wesley had just signed his famous Deed of Declaration constituting the Legal Conference. When Fletcher preached at seven on the Sunday morning,



**Madeley Parish Church and Vicarage.**

Where Rev. John Fletcher was vicar.

Henry Moore records, "The shadow of the divine presence was seen among us, and his going forth was in our sanctuary." The Conference was a critical one, and for seven days the new "deed" was debated. Fletcher was at prayer at two or three every morning. Turbulent brethren appealed against Wesley, but Fletcher acted as mediator. To Wesley, now eighty-one years of age, he said, "My father! my father! they have offended, but they are your children." To the disputing preachers, "My brethren! my brethren! he is your father!" Then he fell

upon his knees and prayed until many were in tears and sobbed aloud.

Fletcher's last sermon was preached in Madeley Church, August 7, 1785, and after the service he was carried fainting to his room. A week later he died, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. "I was intimately acquainted with him," says John Wesley, "for about 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 one improper word nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within fourscore years; but one equal to him I have not known; one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character in every respect I have not found either in Europe or America, and I scarce expect to find such another on this side of eternity." "A pattern of all holiness, scarce to be paralleled in a century!" His widow, Mary Bosanquet, continued for many years as an evangelist and loving benefactress of her kind.

Fletcher's refusal to assume the responsibilities of the work left John Wesley without an apparent successor. But in 1784 he promulgated his plan for perpetuating the Methodist organization. This was the Deed of Declaration—sometimes named in legal phrase the Poll Deed—which he executed February 28, 1784. It legally defined the "Conference of the people called Methodists," and declared "how the succession and identity thereof is to be continued."

Wesley's Poll Deed contained the names of a hundred preachers who were to be in the eye of the law what Wesley himself had been for forty years in relation to his societies and trust property. He had been carefully training his preachers for his responsibility. In a letter dated 1780 he had written, "I chose to exercise the power which God had given me through

Just now we have an opportunity of breaking the ice, of making a little trial. Mr Richardson is desirous of making an exchange with you & spending two or more weeks at Madbury. This might be done either now, or in October, when I hope to return from Bristol. And till something of this kind is done, you will not hear that sooty for the people, with a lone, can make your labour light, in spending & being spent for them. Methinks his pity we should lose any time. For what is vapour if Life?

Could not you spare a few days, to be with us at the Conference? Probably it would be a means of strengthening you I am,

Dear Sir,

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother  
Wesley.

Part of a Letter from John Wesley to John Fletcher.

the Conference—both to avoid ostentation, and gently to habituate the people to obey them when I should be taken from their head.” This Wesley now carried out more fully by merging his own authority in that of the Legal Conference.

The Conference was to meet annually, fill up vacancies in its number, elect a president and secretary, station the preachers, admit preachers on trial and into full connection, and maintain the discipline and general oversight of the societies. The term of appointments for itinerant preachers was limited to three years. The deed was not kept in reserve until Wesley's death, as some writers have assumed, but five months after its execution it was acted upon at the Conference by the election of two preachers to fill vacancies in the Hundred, and by the formal signing of the Minutes. Wesley was chosen president year by year until his death. Five or six preachers who were annoyed by the omission of their names from the Hundred severed their connection with Wesley, but at the Conference of 1785 all the preachers present signed a document approving both of the substance and design of the deed.

“Viewed in the light of outward appearances,” wrote William Arthur, “the enrollment of the Deed Poll of John Wesley would be one of the most commonplace of events. Viewed in the light of the attention given to it at the time by men of thought, of taste, or of affairs, it would rank as one of the most insignificant; not of more consequence than the execution of his will by an ordinary proprietor, or that of his deed of donation by the founder of some local charity. Viewed in the light of its moral intent, however, it rose to the rank of acts noble and wise. Viewed in its relations to Christianity as a collective body of Churches, it belonged to the category of great ecclesiastical events; and viewed in the light shed back upon it to-day by its historical results, as developed up to the present time, it must be placed among those pregnant acts in human affairs to which in successive generations other pregnant acts have to trace up their own origin.”

Three years later (November, 1787) Wesley took another step by which, as Dr. Stoughton observes, “he became practically a

Dissenter," however strongly he might repudiate the term. He decided that the safest way to safeguard his work was to secure legal licenses for his chapels and preachers, "not as Dissenters," he says, "but simply as preachers of the Gospel." By his repeated ordinations of preachers to minister the sacraments "according to the usages of the Church of England," he finally broke with the Church, though he insisted to the end that he remained within the pale.

After quoting many of Wesley's appeals to the Methodists

*Know all Men by these Presents, that I John Wesley, Master of Arts late of Lincoln-College in the University of Oxford, did, on the fifth Day of August in the Year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty eight, by the Imposition of my hands and Prayer, and in the Fear of God, (being assisted by other ordained Ministers) set apart Robert Gamble for the Office of an Elder in the Church of God: whom I recommend to all to whom these Presents shall come, as a proper Person to administer the holy Sacrament, and feed the Church of God, given under my Hand and Seal, the tenth Day of August in the Year above written.*

*John Wesley.*

**Certificate of Robert Gamble as Elder.**

Ordained by John Wesley, August 5, 1788.

against separation from the Church of England, Canon Overton asks: "But some years before Wesley uttered these words, had he not himself done the very thing which he deprecated? Consciously and intentionally, No! a thousand times no; but virtually, as a matter of fact, we must reluctantly answer, Yes. Lord Mansfield's famous dictum, 'Ordination is separation,' is unanswerable. When, in 1784, Wesley ordained Coke and Asbury to be superintendents, and Whatcoat and Vasey to be elders, he to all intents and purposes crossed the Rubicon."



With conspicuous fairness this able Anglican historian finds “the true explanation of Wesley’s conduct in this matter in the intensely practical character of his mind. His work . . . seemed likely to come to a deadlock for want of ordained ministers. Thus we come back to the old notion. Everything must be sacrificed for the sake of his work. Some may think this was doing evil that good might come, but no such notion ever entered into Wesley’s head; his rectitude of purpose, if not the clearness of his judgment, is as conspicuous in this as in the other acts of his life.”



Contemporary Portraits of John Wesley.

Drawn and engraved by T. Holloway.  
Published March 1, 1792.

Ridley's engraving. from a miniature.

Wesley at the age of eighty-six, probably  
by John Russell, R.A.

Ridley's engraving, from the drawing by  
Eldridge. Published March 1, 1792.



## CHAPTER XIX.

**The Passing of John Wesley.**

An Active Octogenarian.—Welcomed in Ireland.—Triumphal Progresses.  
 —“I do not Lack for Labor.”—Last Open-air Sermon.—The  
 Last Text.—A Last Letter.—“The Best of All is,  
 God is with Us!”

**O**N the verge of fourscore Wesley wrote: “I entered into my eightieth year, but, blessed be God, my time is not labor and sorrow. I find no more pain nor bodily infirmities than at five-and-twenty. This I still impute (1) to the power of God, fitting me for what he calls me to; (2) to my still traveling four or five thousand miles a year; (3) to my sleeping, night or day, whenever I want it; (4) to my rising at a set hour; and (5) to my constant preaching, particularly in the morning.” To these he added, “Lastly, evenness of temper. I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing. But still, ‘the help that is done upon earth he doeth it himself.’ And this he doeth in answer to many prayers.”

It was not until he was eighty-five that he began to feel that he was not “quite so agile as in times past,” and that his sight was “a little decayed.” But he did not even then cease to labor, and his cheerfulness was irrepressible.

The days of persecution for him were past, and he was crowned with honor wherever he went. A year after his brother's death he paid his last visit to Ireland, where he remained for nearly four months. The mayors of Dublin and Cork accorded him civic honors, and he was everywhere a coveted guest. The traditions of his prayers are cherished in many an Irish family to-day.

He took a nine weeks' tour from Dublin through sixty towns and villages, preaching a hundred sermons, six times in the open air, and once in a place which he says was "large but not elegant—a cow house." "I was delighted," says Alexander Knox, "to find his cheerfulness in no respect abated. It was too obvious that his bodily frame was sinking; but his spirit



The High Church, Hull.

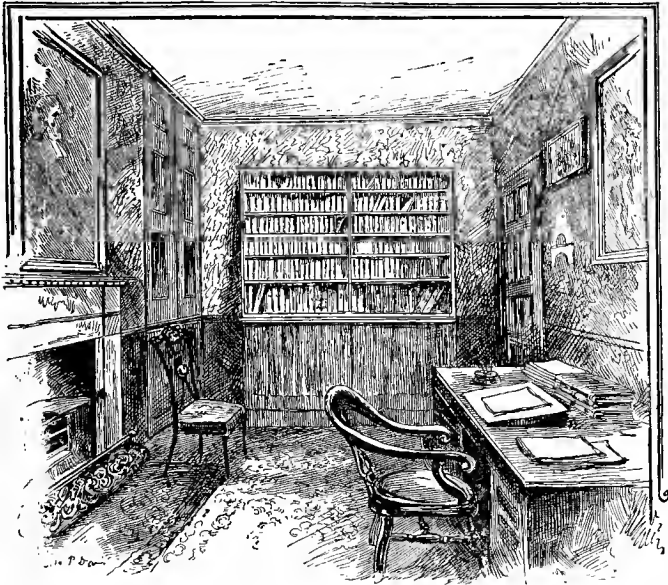
When nearly eighty-three years old Wesley preached here twice to throngs. Next day he rode seventy-six miles, preached thrice, and at night was "no more tired than when I rose in the morning."

was as alert as ever, and he was little less the light of the company he happened to be in than he had been three-and-twenty years before, when I first knew him. Such unclouded sunshine of the breast, in the deepest winter of age and on the felt verge of eternity, bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene."

He presided over his last Irish Conference (1789), and wrote: "I found such a body of men as I hardly believed could have

been found together in Ireland; men of so sound experience, so deep piety, and so strong understanding. I am convinced they are no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."

Wesley closed his farewell service in Ireland with his brother's hymn, "Come, let us join our friends above," pronouncing it the sweetest hymn his brother ever wrote. Before going on



Wesley's Study.

His workroom in the house in City Road, London.

shipboard the vast crowd on the quay again joined him in singing. He then knelt down and asked God to bless them and their families, the Church, and their country. Not a few fell upon his neck and kissed him. As the ship moved from the shore the Irish people saw the patriarch's hands still uplifted in prayer for the land he loved so well, and "they saw his face no more."

After Conference in 1789 he made a tour of Cornwall. Where once they had mobbed him they now lined the streets to stare

“as if the king were going by.” Twenty-five thousand people heard him preach at Gwennap pit.

He wrote on January 1, 1790: “I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot. My eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much; my mouth is hot and dry every morning; I have a lingering fever almost every day; my motion is weak and slow. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labor; I can preach and write still.” He continued to rise at four, and was a prodigy of energy and industry. Once more he visited

Scotland, but it was apparent that his work was done. On his last birthday, June 28, 1790, he thinks his strength “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.” Tyerman truly observes, “No weary child of innocence ever went to its welcome

Facsimile of Wesley's Signature,  
1790.

From the manuscript record of  
Bristol Conference Minutes.

couch with greater serenity than Wesley went down the steps leading to his sepulcher.”

This year he revisited Epworth, preaching at the market cross. Companies of people went with him from village to village, men walking on one side of the road and women on the other, singing as they walked, guarding their precious charge. His salutation to the crowds as he passed was in the words of his favorite apostle: “Little children, love one another.”

The last Conference he attended was at Bristol, in 1790. In England there were now 71,463 members of society; in America, 43,260; and on the mission fields, 5,350. The results during the last ten years of Wesley's life were more than double

the united results of the forty years preceding. "The Conference business over, its venerable head—who for seventy years had directed its deliberations—attached his signature. The autograph—preserved now as a precious relic—too clearly indi-

*209 - Balance in 20 April 1790*  
*Income April 1. 60 3 0*  
*Exp. at Manchester 12 12 0*  
*Exp. at Manchester 10 0 0*  
*by J. Barry 1 0 0*  
*to J. Barry 2 2 0*  
*pts. for upwards of eighty six years*  
*I have kept my accounts exactly. I am*  
*not at all sorry to say I have been satisfied*  
*with the continual conviction that I have*  
*all I can give. I say, give, all I have.*  
*John Wesley*  
*July 16 1790*

The Last Entry in Wesley's Cash Account.

"N. B.—For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I get all I can, and give all I can, that is, all I have."

cates that his eyes were dim, and that his hand had forgot its cunning."

But still he traveled, and preached in Wales, in Bristol and other towns in the west and south, in the Isle of Wight, whose



“poor, plain artless society” delights him. Then companies of the brethren come out to meet him as he returns to London.

His last open-air service was held under an ash tree in the churchyard at Winchelsea, Sussex, on October 6, 1790. He preached at noon, that the people who were at work might



The House at Leatherhead in which Wesley Preached His Last Sermon.

Old oaken staircase.

The main entrance.

The rear entrance.

hear. He stood on a large oak dining table, and spoke from the words, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand; repent ye, and believe the gospel.” One who was present said, “The word was with mighty power, and the tears of the people flowed in torrents.” The ash was long known as “Wesley’s tree,” and the vicar of the parish has hard work to protect it from relic-hunting pilgrims.

London  
Feb. 6. 1791

My Dear Henry

I am glad Mr. Robinson has got the  
 start of us. Let us follow him, as he  
 followed Christ. Let that  
 be our example; if the Lord will  
 at last I hope to go to Bath the  
 first Monday in March (to answer  
 your kind and warm Letter to my Dear Henry)

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother  
 J. Wesley

Mr. H. Moss

One of Wesley's Last Letters, February 6, 1791.

Alluding to the Bath journey, which he did not live to take.

Henry Crabb Robinson, the first war correspondent of the London Times and one of the founders of London University, heard Wesley preach at Colchester, and says that he stood in a

wide pulpit and on each side of him was a minister, the two holding him up. His voice was scarcely audible, and his reverend countenance, with the long white locks, formed a picture never to be forgotten. "Of the kind, I never saw anything comparable to it in after life." After the people had sung a verse Wesley rose and said: "It gives me a great pleasure to find that you have not lost your singing, neither men nor women. You have not forgotten a single note. And I hope, by the assistance of God, which enables you to sing well, you may do all other things well." A universal "Amen" followed. A little ejaculation or prayer of three or four words followed each division of the sermon. After the last prayer Wesley "rose up and addressed the people on liberality of sentiment, and spoke much against refusing to join with any congregation on account of difference of opinion."

In these last days his constant prayer was, "Lord, let me not live to be useless;" and James Rogers tells us that he often closed family prayers in the preachers' home, City Road, with the verse:

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!

He writes his last letter to America on February 1, 1791: "Those that desire to write . . . to me have no time to lose, for time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind . . . Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world, and that it is their full determination so to continue,

Though mountains rise, and oceans roll,  
To sever us in vain."

He arranged for another journey to Bath, and thence north,



Furniture which belonged to John Wesley.

Still preserved in the City Road vestry and Wesley's house.

but that journey was never taken. He preached for the last time in City Road Chapel on Tuesday evening, February 22. Next day he preached in a magistrate's house at Leatherhead,

113<sup>th</sup> Psalm Tune.

I'll praise my Maker while I've  
My Days of Praise shall ne'er be  
Breath, And when my Voice is lost in  
past; While Life and Thought and Being  
Death, Praise shall employ my nobler  
last; Or Immor-ta-li-ty en.  
Powers: Happy the Man whose Hopes re-  
dures.  
ly On *Israel's* GOD: He made the  
Sky, And Earth and Seas with all  
their Train: His Truth for e-ver stands  
se-cure; He saves th'opprest, He feeds y,  
Poor, And none shall find his Promise vain

Wesley's Last Hymn.

With the Huguenot tune to which it was sung.  
From the Tune Book of 1742.

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, wrote by a poor African, I was particularly struck by that circumstance—that a man who has a black skin, being

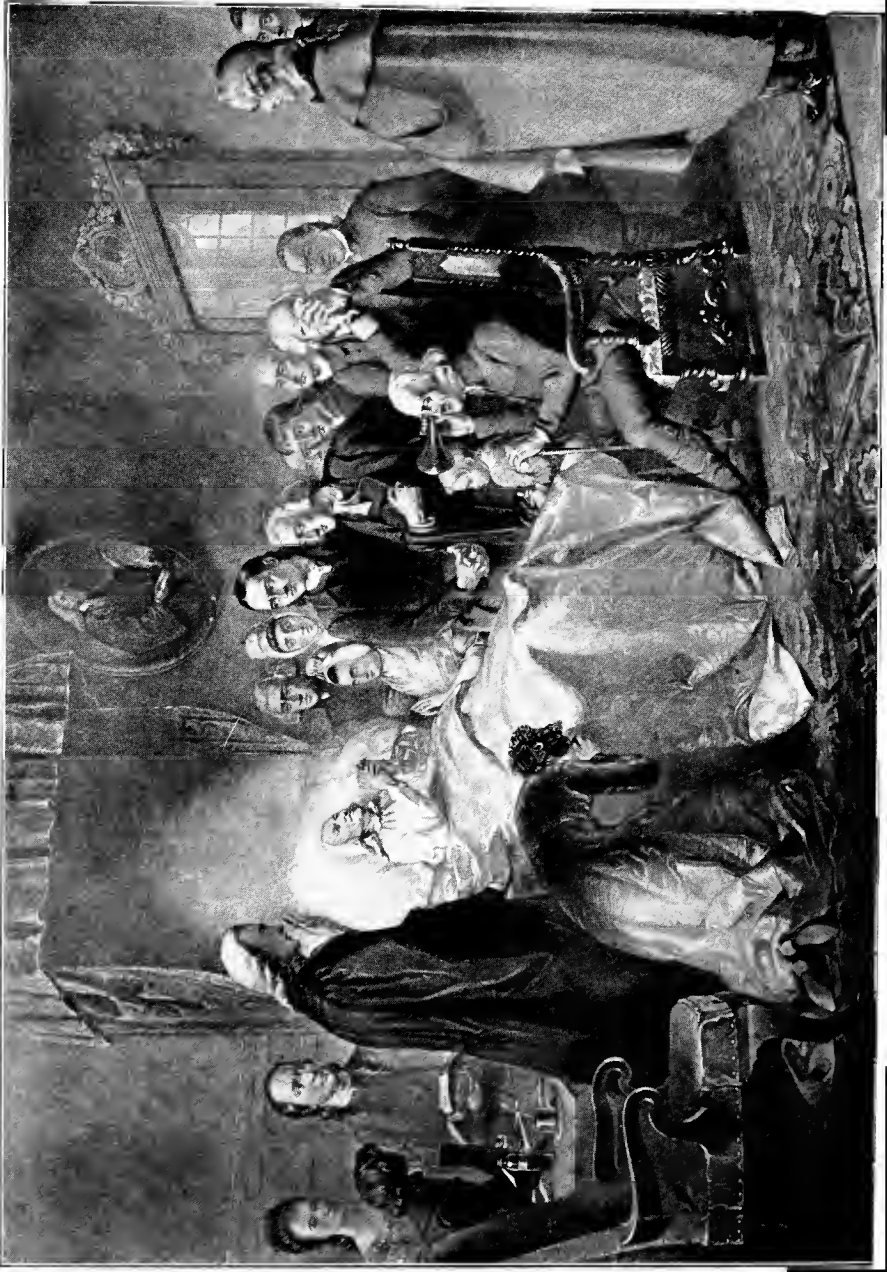
eighteen miles from London. The text was, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found; call ye upon him while he is near." This was Wesley's last sermon.

The last of his innumerable letters was addressed to William Wilberforce, the anti-slavery apostle. A better he never penned:

LONDON, FEBRUARY 24, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR: Unless the divine Power has raised you up to be as Athanasius, *contra mundum*, 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



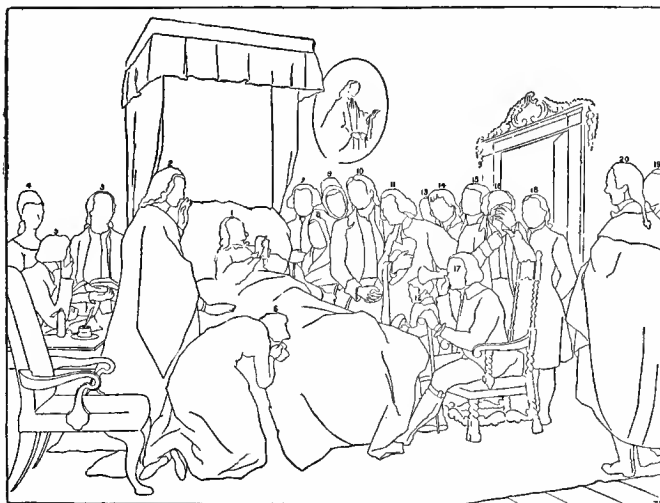


John Wesley's Deathbed. [From the Painting by Parker.]

wronged or outraged by a white man, can have no redress, it being a law in 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 of, dear sir, your affectionate servant,  
JOHN WESLEY.

Weakness grew upon him daily. He was taken to the house in City Road, but was very feeble. One day he would have



Key to the Painting "John Wesley's Deathbed."

- |  |                                      |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Rev. John Wesley, A.M.              | 11. Rev. James Creighton, A.M.       |
| 2. Rev. Peard Dickinson, A.M.          | 12. Master Rogers.                   |
| 3. Rev. Joseph Bradford.               | 13. Robert Carr Brackenbury, Esq.    |
| 4. Miss Sarah Wesley.                  | 14. Rev. Thomas Broadbent.           |
| 5. Medical Assistant to Dr. Whitehead. | 15. Rev. John Broadbent.             |
| 6. Mrs. Charles Wesley.                | 16. John Horton, Esq.                |
| 7. Rev. Thomas Rankin.                 | 17. Rev. Alexander Mather.           |
| 8. Mrs. Hester Ann Rogers.             | 18. George Whitfield (Book Steward). |
| 9. Miss Ritchie (Mrs. Mortimer).       | 19. Rev. Jonathan Edmondson.         |
| 10. Rev. James Rogers.                 | 20. Dr. Whitehead.                   |

written, but could not wield the pen. Miss Ritchie suggested, "Let me write for you, sir; tell me what you would say."

"Nothing," he replied, "but that God is with us." He begged the friends who had gathered round him to "pray and praise," responding with a fervent "Amen" to their petitions.



He grasped their hands and said, "Farewell, farewell." As others entered the room he tried to speak, but finding they could not understand him, he summoned all his remaining strength and cried out, "The best of all is, God is with us." Then lifting up his dying arms in token of victory, and raising his feeble voice with a holy triumph not to be expressed, he again repeated the heart-reviving words, "The best of all is, God is with us."

When Mrs. Charles Wesley moistened his lips he repeated the thanksgiving which he had always used after meals, "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies; bless the Church and the king; and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, forever and ever."

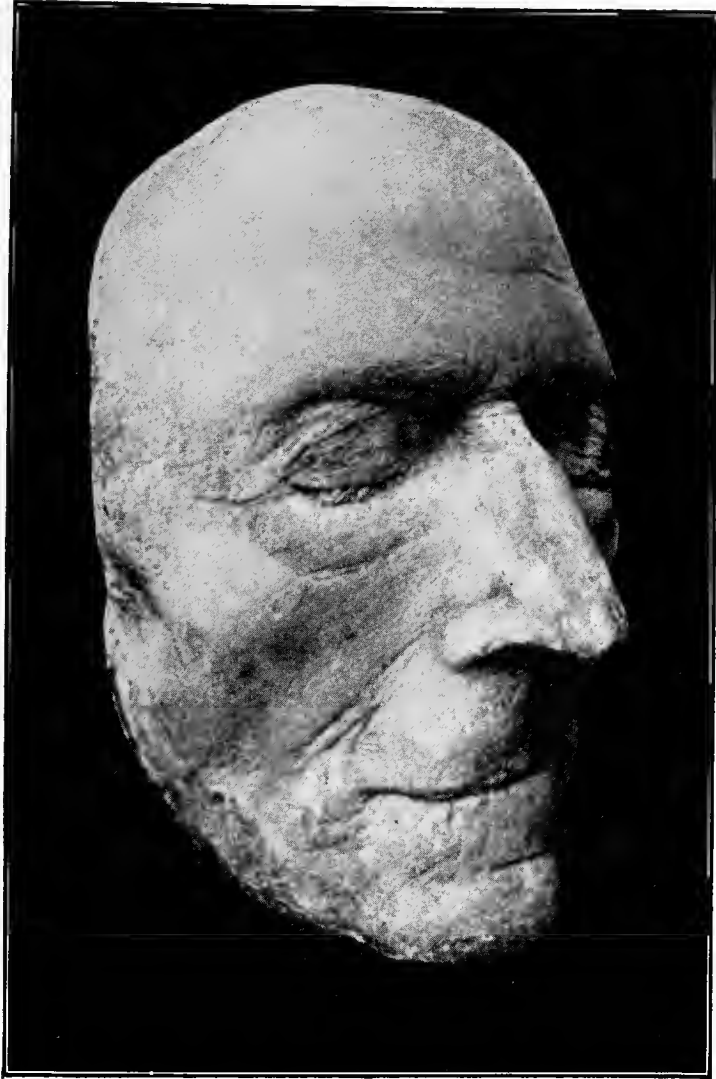
During the night he was often heard to say, "I'll praise—I'll praise." Next morning, about ten o'clock, Joseph Bradford, his faithful companion and nurse, prayed at the bedside, where eleven of Wesley's friends were assembled. The dying patriarch was heard to say, "Farewell;" then as Bradford was repeating, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and this heir of glory shall come in!" he entered, "without a lingering groan," into the joy of his Lord.

His friends standing around sang:

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

Then they knelt down, and Mr. Rogers led them in prayer "for the descent of the Holy Ghost on us and all who mourn the loss the Church militant sustains by the removal of our much-loved father to his great reward."

John Wesley died on Wednesday, March 2, 1791, in his eighty-eighth year. The day before his funeral his body was



**Mask of John Wesley.**

From the plaster-mold of his face taken after his death.

laid in City Road Chapel, and ten thousand persons passed through the building to take a last look upon his face. The poet Rogers was one of the number, and was wont to speak of the peace and beauty of the face, on which there lingered a heavenly smile.

To lessen the dangers of a vast crowd it was thought desirable for the funeral to take place in the early morning of Wednesday, March 9. The service was read by the Rev. John Richardson, one of the clergymen who had helped Wesley for nearly thirty years. When he came to the words, "Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God to take unto himself

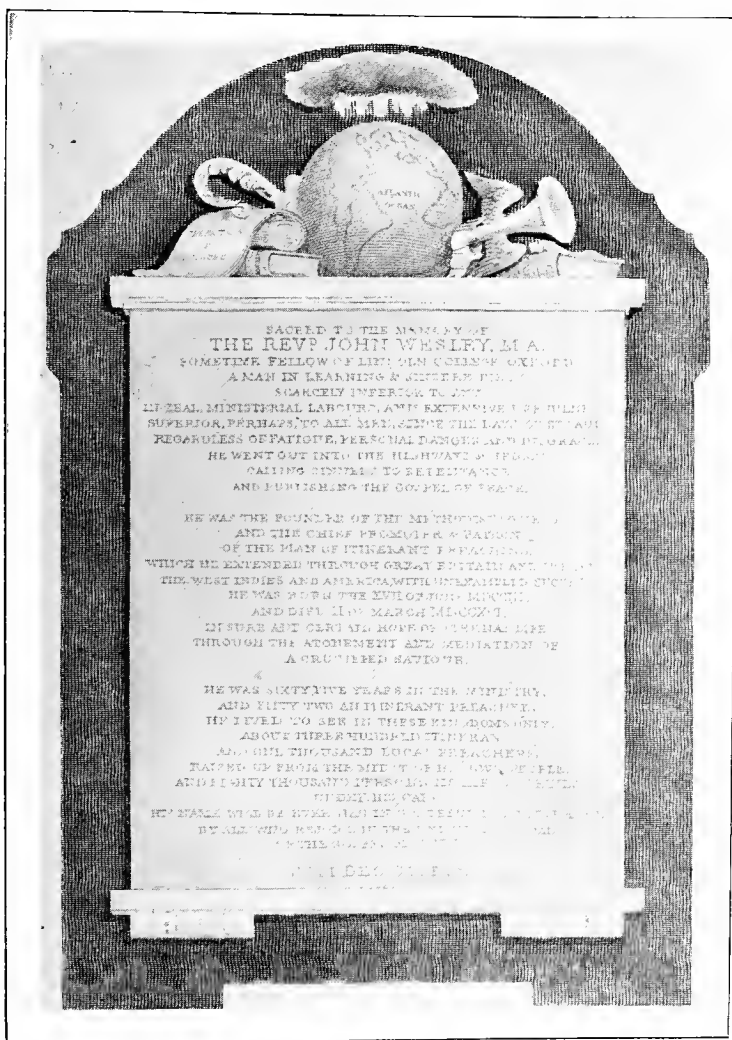


Tomb of the Rev. John Wesley.

the soul of our dear brother," and substituted with profound feeling the word "father," the throng of people were deeply affected, and loud sobs took the place of silent tears.

In one of his American addresses of 1878 Dean Stanley said: "On visiting in London the City Road Chapel, in which John Wesley ministered, and the cemetery adjoining, in which he is buried, I asked an old man who showed me the cemetery

—I asked him, perhaps inadvertently, and as an English Churchman might naturally ask—‘By whom was this cemetery



Wesley's Tablet in City Road.

consecrated?’ And he answered, ‘It was consecrated by the bones of that holy man, that holy servant of God, John Wesley.’”

At the first Conference after Wesley's death Joseph Bradford

produced a sealed letter, which Wesley had charged him to deliver to the president, containing his last counsels to the Conference. It was dated 1785, and stated that some of the traveling preachers had expressed a fear lest those who were named in the Deed of Declaration should exclude their brethren "either from preaching in connection with you or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience than to leave these, my last words, with you. I beseech you, by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren, but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit. In particular, I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect for persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for the Kingswood School, in disposing of the yearly contribution and the preachers' fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end."

## CHAPTER XX.

**The True John Wesley.**

John Wesley's Appearance.—His Habits.—His Temperament.—His Tact.—His Love of Children.—His Unhappy Matrimonial Experience.—His Wit and Humor.—His Freedom from Selfish Ambition.—Asbury's Tribute.

**Q**UANY authentic portraits, from Williams, in 1763, to Romney, in 1788, have given John Wesley's features to the world. His hazel eyes are said to have been bright and penetrating, even to the last. In youth his hair was black, and in old age silvery white. In height he was not quite five feet six inches, and he weighed one hundred and twenty-two pounds; his frame was well knit, muscular, and strong. He was scrupulously neat in his person and habits, and wore a narrow-plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, buckled shoes, and three-cornered hat. "I dare no more," he said in his old age, "write in a fine style than wear a fine coat." "Exactly so," remarks Overton, "but, then, he was particular about his coats. He was most careful never to be slovenly in his dress, always to be dressed in good taste. . . . It is just the same with his style; it is never slovenly, never tawdry."

In his habits of order, account-keeping, and punctuality he was literally a "methodist." "Sammy," said he to his nephew, "be punctual. Whenever I am to go to a place the first thing I do is to get ready; then what time remains is all my own." In old age, as he stood waiting for his chaise at Haslingden, he remarked, "I have lost ten minutes, and they are lost forever."

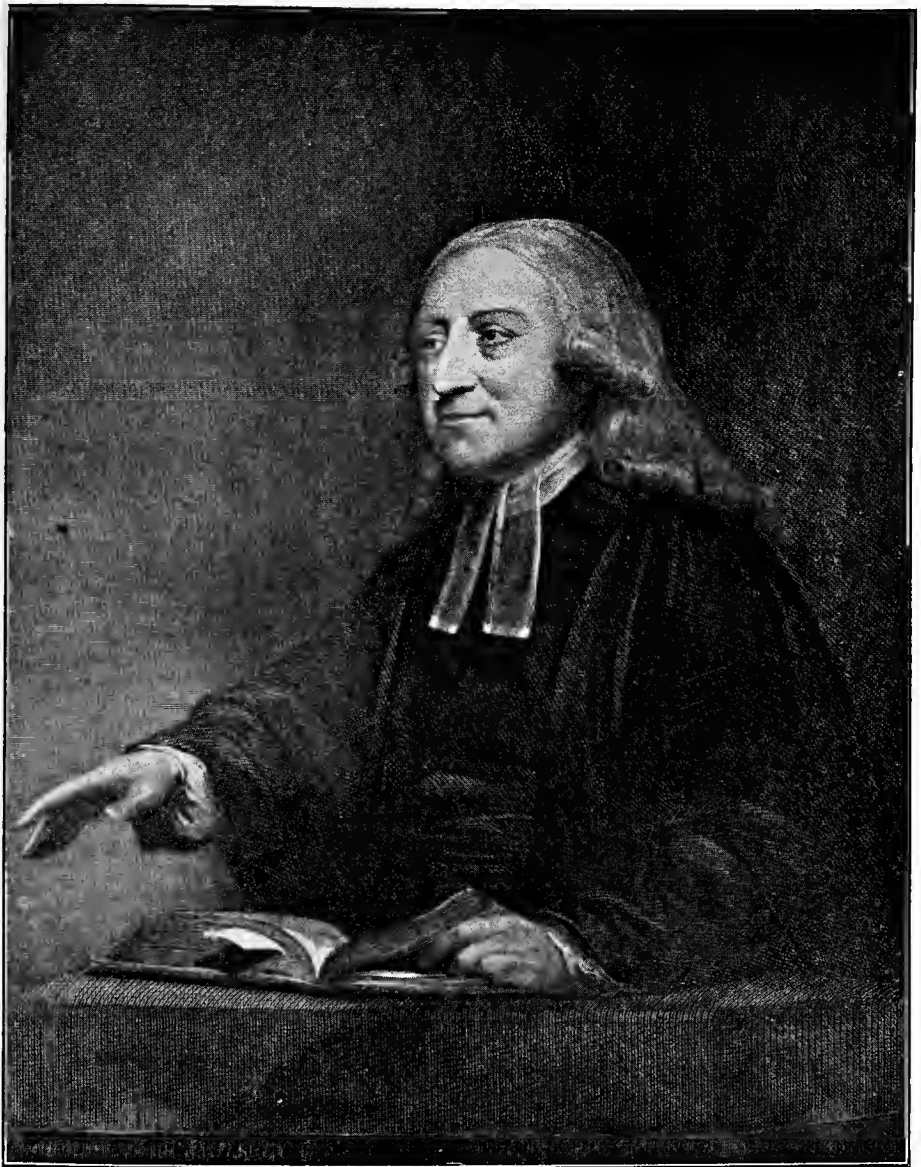
Every minute had its value to him for work or rest. "Joshua, when I go to bed I go to bed to sleep, and not to talk," was his rebuke to a young preacher who once shared his room and wished to converse at sleeping time.

Dr. Johnson once said to Boswell: "John Wesley's conversation is good, but he is never at leisure. He is always obliged to go at a certain hour. This is very disagreeable to a man who loves to fold his legs and have his talk out, as I do." On another occasion he said, "I hate to meet John Wesley; the dog enchants you with his conversation, and then breaks away to go and visit some old woman."

Yet Wesley was never hurried in mind or manner. "He had no time," says Henry Moore, "to mend anything that he either wrote or did. He therefore always did everything not only with quietness, but with what might be thought slowness."

Wesley was a delightful companion, and his comrades on the road and friends in the home witness to his cheerfulness, courtesy, kindness, and wit. "Sour godliness is the devil's religion," was one of his sayings. He told Mr. Blackwell that he could not bear to have people about him who were in ill humor, and he did his best to cure them.

Knox, as we have seen, was charmed with Wesley's habitual cheerfulness. When he first met him he tried to form an impartial judgment of his character, and wrote: "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 gay remembrance of a life well spent.' Wherever Wesley went 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 his conversation we might be at a loss whether to admire



John Wesley.

From the portrait by J. Jackson, R.A.





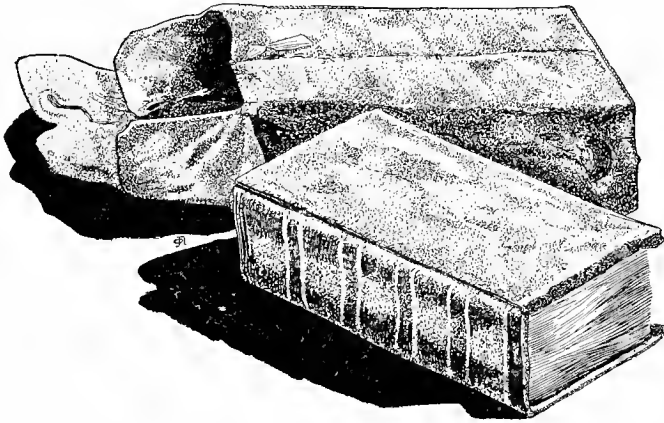
most his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth embittered his discourses. No applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud; and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently, 'May my latter end be like his!'

Wesley and one of his preachers were once taking lunch with a gentleman whose daughter had been greatly impressed by Wesley's preaching. The itinerant, a man of very plain manners and little tact, was conversing with the young lady, who was remarkable for her beauty. He noticed that she wore a number of rings, and taking hold of her hand, he raised it, and called Wesley's attention to the sparkling gems. "What do you think of this, sir," said he, "for a Methodist's hand?" The girl turned crimson, and the question was awkward for Wesley, whose aversion to all display of jewelry was so well known. But the aged evangelist showed a tact Chesterfield might have envied. With a quiet, benevolent smile he looked up, and simply said, "The hand is very beautiful." The young lady appeared at evening service without her jewels, and became an earnest Christian.

Of Wesley's love for children many anecdotes are told. Robert Southey says: "I was in a house in Bristol where Wesley was. When a mere child, on running down stairs before him with a beautiful little sister of my own, whose ringlets were floating over her shoulders, he overtook us on the landing and took my sister in his arms and kissed her. Placing her on her feet again, he then put his hand upon my

head and blessed me, and I feel as though I had the blessing of that good man upon me at the present moment." As Southey spoke the last words his eyes glistened with tears, and his voice showed what deep emotion the memory of that scene of his childhood awakened.

John Wesley's marriage presents a sad contrast to his brother's happy union. Dr. Rigg, in his *Living Wesley*, with psychological insight and balanced judgment has forever vindicated Wesley, and the Christian women with whom he was brought into close relations before and after his unhappy marriage,



Wesley's Field Bible, with Case.

from the austere and by no means discriminating or delicate criticism of more voluminous writers on the subject. Wesley's letters, he says, reveal his "extreme natural susceptibility to whatever was graceful and amiable in woman, especially if united to mental vigor and moral excellence. He had been brought up in the society of clever and virtuous women—his sisters—and it seems as if he could at no time in his life dispense with the exquisite and stimulating pleasure which he found in female society and correspondence. He was naturally a woman worshiper—at least a worshiper of such women. An almost reverent courtesy, a warm but pure affection, a

delicate but close familiarity, marked through life his relations with the good and gifted women—gifted they were, for the most part—with whom he maintained friendship and correspondence.”

Alexander Knox, who convinced Southey of Wesley's free-



The Title-page of Wesley's Field Bible.

This volume is handed down from president to president of the Wesleyan Conference, as a badge of office.

dom from personal ambition, also wrote to Hannah More a letter which reveals an unbiased critic's view of Wesley's relation to his women friends. He is writing of Wesley's friendship with Miss Knox, and having transcribed a note to himself.

in which Wesley sends an earnest message to "My dear Sally Knox," declaring that he "loves her dearly, and shall be glad to meet her at our Lord's right hand," Mr. Knox proceeds as follows: "John Wesley's impressible nature inclined him to conceive such attachments, and the childlike innocence of his heart disposed him to express them with the most amiable simplicity. The gayety of his nature was so undiminished in its substance, while it was divinely disciplined in its movements, that to the latest hour of his life there was nothing innocently pleasant with which he was not pleased, and nothing naturally lovely which, in its due proportion, he was not ready to love. To interesting females, especially, this affection continually showed itself; of its nature and kind, what he says of my sister gives a striking manifestation."

This susceptibility of Wesley shows that his somewhat ascetic and intensely busy public life and his ecclesiastical statesmanship did not crush his tender human feeling, as some of his critics have supposed.

In four instances Wesley the friend became a lover before he made the fatal mistake of marrying one who proved unworthy of his affection. Miss Betty Kirkham, the sister of one of the earliest Oxford Methodists, was his first love. With her he corresponded in the curious stilted manner of the day—a style he afterward utterly forsook. In those first love letters he transformed prosaic Betty into the romantic "Varanese," just as in his later correspondence with Mrs. Pendarves (Delany) he named that lady "Aspasia," his brother Charles "Cyrus," and himself "Araspes." Then came his ill-fated love affair with Miss Hopkey, in Georgia, which revealed what Canon Overton calls "his extreme guilelessness, his readiness to believe the best of everybody, his utterly unsuspecting nature." But the broken courtship which brought him most pain was with Mrs. Grace Murray.

Grace Murray, a sailor's widow, was then a devoted worker in the orphanage at Newcastle. She had a hundred members in her classes, was a skillful housekeeper, and nursed the sick itinerants who found refuge in Wesley's northern home. In spite of the pungent aspersions of Tyerman there is nothing



Mrs. Pendarves.

Afterward Mrs. Delany, with whom John Wesley corresponded.

in the history of her residence at the orphanage inconsistent with the conclusion that "she was a woman not only of singular tact, but of attractive modesty and of deep piety." All who knew her best testify to this; her diary, and the savor of her piety, and long after-life as a wife and widow of another

than Wesley confirm this. Canon Overton is in evident sympathy with Charles Wesley's strong objection to having "a ci-devant servant-maid for his sister-in-law." But she was far superior in intelligence and true refinement to many "ladies of quality" of the coarse Georgian period. That she manifested weakness and vacillation under circumstances of great perplexity may be granted, but in a woman of tender conscience and compassionate heart, surrounded by conflicting counselors, this is not surprising. John Bennet, one of Wesley's preachers, and John Wesley himself both fell in love with her. She had nursed the former through an illness of six months, in 1747, and next year Wesley was under her care for six days. She accompanied the preachers on their journeys to assist in village work, in leading bands and classes, and addressing small gatherings. According to the custom of that century, when women everywhere rode on pillion behind serving-man, friend, or relative, she followed the fashion. Mrs. Charles Wesley did the same. Mr. Tyerman reflects on Wesley for thus taking Grace Murray with him on journeys when there was special work for her to do. Wesley's contemporaries would have thought no evil of this, nor was there any impropriety in it. She corresponded with John Bennet, and, though there does not appear to have been a definite agreement between them, their marriage was no doubt looked forward to by both; but when John Wesley, with characteristic decision, made her an offer of marriage in August, 1748, she accepted it with surprise and delight. But John Bennet proved to be a successful rival, persuaded Grace Murray that it was her duty to marry him, and said that if she did not, he should "run mad." Charles Wesley intervened, alarmed at the thought of his brother marrying a woman who was so inferior to his own wife in social station. He saw Grace Murray and passionately remonstrated with her—"Grace Murray, you have broken my

heart!" The weak, distressed, and vacillating woman rode with him to Newcastle and fell at Bennet's feet, begging forgiveness for using him so badly. Within a week she became John Bennet's wife.

Bennet soon left Wesley, taking with him the majority of the members at Bolton and Stockport. He afterward became a Calvinistic minister at Warburton, where he died, in 1759.

The loss of Grace Murray was the greatest personal sorrow of John Wesley's life. Very pathetic are the letters and verses in which he refers to the event. He did not meet her again until 1788. "The meeting was affecting," says Moore, who was present; "but Mr. Wesley preserved more than his usual self-possession. It was easy to see, notwithstanding the many years which had intervened, that both in sweetness of spirit and in person and manners she was a fit subject for the tender regrets expressed in his verses. The interview did not continue long, and I do not remember that I ever heard Mr. Wesley mention her name afterward."

If Wesley had married Grace Murray he would have been saved from the matrimonial disaster which afterward befell him. In 1751 he married Mrs. Vazeille, the widow of a London merchant. Wesley took care that her fortune should be settled on herself and children, and it was agreed that he should not preach one sermon or travel one mile less than before his marriage. During the first four years Mrs. Wesley accompanied her husband on many of his journeys, but she naturally grew discontented with the discomforts of this unsettled life, and when she remained at home she became possessed of such an absurd jealousy of her husband that she almost became a monomaniac.

Charles Wesley early discovered her to be of an angry and bitter spirit, and in 1753 wrote to his own amiable wife: "I called, two minutes before preaching, on Mrs. Wesley at the



Foundry, and in all that time had not one quarrel." He begs his wife to be courteous without trusting her. She acted with such unreasonable malice that it is charitable to accept the suggestion that she was at times mentally unsound. She seized her husband's papers, interpolated his letters, and then gave



Mrs. John Wesley.

Mrs. Vazeille, to whom John Wesley was married, 1751.

them into the hands of his enemies or published them in the newspapers. She shut up Charles Wesley with her husband in a room, and told them of their faults with much detail and violence. Charles called her his "best friend," for this service, but began to recite Latin poetry and persisted until she at last set her prisoners free. He had tried this device with good effect on his voyage from Georgia.

Sometimes Mrs. Wesley drove a hundred miles to see who was with her husband in his carriage. John Hampson, one of Wesley's preachers, witnessed her in one of her fits of fury, and said, "More than once she laid violent hands upon him, and tore those venerable locks which had suffered sufficiently from the ravages of time." She often left him, but returned again in answer to his entreaties. In 1771 he writes: "For what cause I know not, my wife set out for Newcastle, purposing 'never to return.' *Non eam reliqui, non dimisi; non revocabo.*" (I did not forsake her; I did not dismiss her; I shall not recall her.)

In 1774 a petulant letter shows she was still with her husband. She died at Camberwell, in 1781, when Wesley was in the West of England. Jackson in his Life of Charles Wesley says that several letters of Wesley to his termagant wife, during his worst trials from her, show "the utmost tenderness of affection, such as few female hearts could have withstood; and justify the opinion that, had it been his happiness to be married to a person who was worthy of him, he could have been one of the most affectionate husbands that ever lived. Those who think that he was constitutionally cold and repulsive utterly mistake his character."

He told Henry Moore that he believed God overruled this prolonged sorrow for his good; and that if Mrs. Wesley had been a better wife, and had continued to act in that way she knew well how to act, he might have been unfaithful to his great work, and might have sought too much to please her according to her own desires.

Of wit and humor there is much in the Journals, and much more in the pithy letters which he was continually sending to his preachers. His anecdotes and racy sayings often supplied a tonic much needed by some of these itinerants

He was naturally quick-tempered, and sometimes said sharp

things, but he was yet quicker to apologize if he felt he had spoken too hastily and in anger. He was incapable of malice, and was marvelously ready to forgive his most cruel traducers and bitterest opponents.

It must be admitted that Wesley was sometimes too ready to

believe the marvelous, and that his guileless trustfulness of his fellow-men betrayed him into practical errors during his half century of labor. "My brother," said Charles Wesley, "was, I think, born for the benefit of knaves." He was too prone to take men and women at their own estimates. He attributed to the immediate interposition of Providence events which might be attributed to natural causes. He was too ready to regard the physical phenomena of the early years of the revival as spiritual signs, though he checked them when he was convinced of their imposture.



The Memorial Tablet to John and Charles Wesley in Westminster Abbey.

Southey was convinced by Knox of his error in regarding selfish ambition as a leading feature in Wesley's character. Canon Overton truly says that "Knox knew Wesley intimately; Southey did not." Knox, who united wide culture with ardent

piety, but who differed from Wesley in some of his opinions, speaks thus of his motives: "The slightest suspicion of pride, ambition, selfishness, or personal gratification of any kind stimulating Mr. Wesley in any instance, or mixing in any measure with the movements of his life, never once entered into my mind. That such charges were made by his opponents I could not be ignorant. But my deep impression remains unimpaired—that since the days of the apostles there has not been a human being more thoroughly exempt from all those frailties of human nature than John Wesley." "And this," says Overton, "is the unvarying strain of those who knew Wesley best." He was a born ruler of men, but he used his extraordinary power for no selfish ends. He ruled preachers and people with absolute authority, but he was no despot. He was the patriarch of his people, and they knew he spoke the truth when he said: "The power I have I never sought; it was the unexpected result of the work which God was pleased to work by me. I therefore suffer it till I can find some one to ease me of my burden." When he heard that men said he was "shackling freeborn Englishmen," "making himself a pope," and exercising arbitrary power, he replied with characteristic artlessness: "If you mean by arbitrary power a power which I exercise singly, without any colleague therein, this is certainly true; but I see no harm in it. Arbitrary in this sense is a very harmless word. I bear this burden merely for your sakes." He possessed, as Macaulay says, "a genius for government." Matthew Arnold ascribes to him "a genius for godliness." Southey considered him "a man of great views, great energies, and great virtues; the most influential mind of the last century; the man who will have produced the greatest effects centuries, or, perhaps, millenniums hence."

In America the irritation caused by Wesley's expression of his opinions during the Revolution had passed away before he

died. Bishop Asbury in his Journal (April 29, 1791) refers to the death "of that dear man of God," and gives what Dr. Buckley well calls 'probably the best estimate of his character



The Wesleyan Centenary Statue, City Road, London.

Unveiled March 2, 1891.

and career." It is well worth quoting here as we conclude our plain account of his life: "When we consider his plain and nervous writings, his uncommon talent for sermonizing and

journalizing; that he had such a steady flow of animal spirits; so much of the spirit of government in him; his knowledge as an observer; his attainments as a scholar; his experience as a Christian; I conclude his equal is not to be found among all the sons he hath brought up, nor his superior among all the sons of Adam he may have left behind.”



Seal of John Wesley.

THE END.



