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BY

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EMMANUEL

TO THE DEAR MEMORY OF

MY FATHER

WILLIAM RODWELL JONES

FOR OVER FIFTY YEARS A WESLEYAN MINISTER

PREFATORY NOTE

"If ever there was a human being who disliked power, avoided prominence, and shrank from praise, it was Charles Wesley." This was the judgment passed after his death by one who knew him intimately, and it seems indeed that posterity has served him according to his wish. To the majority he remains, as he loved all his life to be, hidden in the "amazing shadow" of his brother. Yet the man who has been styled with reason "the greatest hymn-writer who ever lived," the author of poems which will never die so long as the praises of God are sung in the English tongue, might seem to deserve more than a secondary and reflected recognition. In the great hall of Christ Church, Oxford, hung with scores of portraits of people of importance in their day and of no significance to ours, one looks in vain for any memento of Charles Wesley, "Student of Christ Church." Biographies of John Wesley and studies of him have been multiplied past counting, and most people are content to obtain their notions of Charles Wesley from scattered notices in books devoted to his brother. Yet both his personality and his career are fully worthy of independent attention.

This short sketch claims to be no more than an introduction and (if it may be so) a stimulus to more elaborate and detailed study. The main authorities are of course Charles Wesley's own *Journal* and *Letters*, and the complete edition of the

Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley, edited by Dr. Osborn. The *Journal* was originally written in shorthand, and was purchased by the Wesleyan authorities from the poet's son. It was published (not in its entirety) by the Rev. Thomas Jackson, in 1849, with a selection of letters. In 1909, the Rev. John Telford published the *Early Journals*.

Jackson's *Life*, which first appeared in 1840, remained the standard biography till the appearance of the Rev. John Telford's excellent work, the latest edition of which (in 1900) embodies the most recent research. Every student of Charles Wesley's life and work must express his obligation to this book, to the late Rev. Nehemiah Curnock's monumental edition of John Wesley's *Journals*, and to the publications of the Wesley Historical Society.

A list of the principal authorities consulted is given on page xi.

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LIST OF BOOKS CONSULTED

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CHARLES WESLEY:
A STUDY

CHAPTER I

THE BEGINNINGS

CHARLES WESLEY, the third surviving son and eighteenth child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley, was born at his father's Rectory of Epworth in Lincolnshire, on the 18th of December, 1707.

The Wesleys were an old family, originally of Devonshire, and Samuel Wesley was the first of them to write his name without the "t." The father and grandfather of Samuel Wesley were Puritan clergymen who suffered under the penal laws of the Restoration. Matthew, Samuel's elder brother, studied medicine and became an apothecary in London. Samuel was educated at the well-known Dissenting Academy on Newington Green, where Daniel Defoe had preceded him as a pupil. A commission which was given him to write a pamphlet against the Established Church led to his questioning, and finally abandoning, the principles of Church Government in which he had been brought up. He

was still a student when he met Susanna Annesley, daughter of Dr. Annesley, pastor of the Independent meeting-house in St. Helen's Place, Bishopsgate. Readers of Macaulay will remember the rather highly coloured passage in which he describes the position of a typical London Nonconformist divine. The contrast to which he refers must often have been present in later years to the wife of the Rector of Epworth.

"Few of the parochial clergy were so abundantly supplied with comforts as the favourite orator of a great assembly of Nonconformists in the City. The voluntary contributions of his wealthy hearers, Aldermen and Deputies, West India merchants and Turkey merchants, Wardens of the Company of Fishmongers and Wardens of the Company of Goldsmiths, enabled him to become a landowner or a mortgagee. The best broadcloth from Blackwell Hill and the best poultry from Leadenhall Market were frequently left at his door. His influence was immense. . . . On all political and literary questions the minister was the oracle of his own circle. It was popularly remarked during many years that an eminent Dissenting minister had only to make his son an attorney or a physician; that the attorney was sure to have clients and the physician to have patients."

Dr. Annesley added the advantages of good birth to those of eloquence and learning. He was the

nephew of the first Earl of Anglesey. The fact that the future evangelists of England belonged to the " governing classes " on both sides of the house is not without importance in its bearing on their history.

By the time she was fourteen, Susanna Annesley had already undergone much the same revolution of opinion as her future husband. At an age when most girls have hardly done with their dolls, she was deep in theological controversy. But even more remarkable than this intellectual precocity is the quiet firmness which enabled so young a creature to hold her own and take a definite line in opposition to her family and friends, at a time when religious prejudices were aggravated by quite recent memories of wrongs inflicted and endured on both sides, to a point which we in these milder days can hardly realize.

Samuel Wesley, " ever a fighter," began his long conflict with the world by tramping his penniless way to Oxford. He went through Exeter College as a servitor, was ordained, held curacies in London, wrote poetry which gained him the doubtful distinction of a mention in *The Battle of the Books*, and political pamphlets which commended him to such patrons as the Marquis of Normanby, who gave him his first living. In 1689 he married Susanna Annesley, and in the following year obtained the living of South Ormsby, near Louth in Lincoln-

shire. In 1697 he was presented to the living of Epworth, where John and Charles Wesley were born, and where he built the Rectory which was to become more famous than any parsonage house in England, not excepting Haworth Vicarage.

Even the Reverend Patrick Brontë's Yorkshire parishioners were lamblike compared to the truculent flock which Samuel Wesley was called to shepherd. They hated his Toryism and did their best to make the place too hot for him. His house was twice set on fire, his crops were destroyed, and his cows stabbed. In 1705 he was imprisoned in Lincoln Castle for debt. From prison he wrote to Sharpe, Archbishop of York, who remained his good friend through the worst of his troubles: "'Tis like a coward to desert my post because the enemy fire thick upon me. They have only wounded me yet, and I believe can't kill me." Mrs. Wesley told the Archbishop that though she could not say that she and her children had ever actually wanted bread, yet "she had so much trouble to get it before it was eat and to pay for it afterwards, as made it very unpleasant."

Charles Wesley was not two years old when he was carried in his nurse's arms out of the burning Rectory. He was not old enough to remember the dramatic rescue of the five-year-old John, or that strange roll-call in the garden, lighted by the flames of the burning house, when the father counted over

his little flock and then fell on his knees to give thanks to God, crying, "Let the house go; I am rich enough." As a matter of fact, this disaster crippled the family for many years. Mrs. Wesley wrote to her brother in 1722: "Mr. Wesley rebuilt the house in less than a year; but nearly thirteen years have elapsed since it was burned, yet it is not half finished, nor are his wife and children half clothed to this day."

Mrs. Wesley was as courageous as her husband, but was made of finer stuff. If he was iron, she was tempered steel. She was a small woman with the fine aquiline profile which recalls the portraits of her son John. All the world knows how she trained her numerous flock. Her rules for obedience, punctuality, and good manners were the rules of all well-managed nurseries of those days, but set out in a way which shows the essential orderliness of her mind. She was the only governess of her children till the girls were grown up and the boys ready for a public school—to which, after the barbarous fashion of the day, they were despatched at eight years old or thereabouts. With one exception they were not taught to read till they were five years old. "One day was allowed the child wherein to learn its letters, and each of them did in that time know all its letters great and small, except Molly and Nancy, who were a day and a half before they knew them perfectly, for which I then thought

them very dull; but since I have observed how long many children are learning the hornbook, I have changed my opinion. The reason why I thought them so then was because the rest learned so readily, and Samuel, who was the first child I ever taught, learned the alphabet in a few hours."

One result of the burning of the Rectory was to upset Mrs. Wesley's discipline for a time. The homeless children were received temporarily into the houses of the neighbours, "where they were left at full liberty to converse with servants, which before they had always been restrained from, and to run abroad and play with any children, good or bad. They soon learned to neglect a strict observance of the Sabbath, and got knowledge of several songs and bad things which before they had no notion of. That civil behaviour which made them admired at home by all that saw them was in great measure lost, and a clownish accent and many rude ways were gained which were not reformed without some difficulty."

Passages like these from Mrs. Wesley's letters may have fostered the idea that she was a female martinet without a sense of humour. Her experience was not such as to encourage a light and laughing outlook on life; but she seems, in fact, to have had a share of that somewhat dry and ironical form of humour which is noticeable in Charles Wesley's writings. There is a pleasant story of her coming

one day into the Epworth nursery, where all the children were in "high glee and frolic" with the exception of Patty. This child (John Wesley's favourite sister and remarkably like him) was a sober and silent little mortal, passionately attached to her mother, whom she followed about like a dog. "You will all be more serious one day," said the mother to the rollicking tribe; and Patty piped out, "Shall I be more serious, Mother?" "NO," said Mrs. Wesley, and that was all.

Her religious life was nourished on the Bible and on the Anglican divines of the seventeenth century. She loved and studied Ken, Taylor, and George Herbert. Pascal was one of her favourite writers. His meditations on the awful mysteries of life and death, the "abysmal depths of personality," the paradox of man's actual weakness and potential greatness, were congenial to her mind. She was rational in her piety as well as reverent, and insisted on the rights of reason within its own sphere. Her respect for authority was never hidebound or slavish, and she knew that the best custom may sometimes be more honoured in the breach than in the observance. She gave a brilliant example of this liberality of mind when, during her husband's prolonged absence in London at Convocation, she collected the poorer parishioners in her kitchen, to the number of about two hundred, for religious instruction, and again when her advice overcame John

Wesley's unwillingness to sanction the preaching of laymen.

It is wonderful that any woman could have kept her courage and mental poise in such circumstances as hers, and there is evidence that the miserable prospects of her daughters did often oppress her. The crushing poverty of the family did not so much affect the boys. They got scholarships at public schools and thence passed on to the University, where they were able to associate with their equals and compete for the prizes of life. But for the girls there was no such escape. The stately Emily —the finest reader of Milton, John Wesley said, that he had ever heard—Hetty, the beautiful and gifted, pretty Susan and quiet Nancy, and Molly, with her crooked back and angel face, there was nothing for them but the lot described by their mother when she laid her case before her brother, Samuel Annesley. Unfortunately, his mysterious disappearance, at the time when he was expected home from India, put an end to all hope of assistance from him.

"My dear Emily, who in my present exigencies would exceedingly comfort me, is compelled to go to service in Lincoln, where she is a teacher in a boarding school. My second daughter, Suky, a pretty woman and worthy a better fate, rashly threw herself away upon a man that is not only her plague, but a constant affliction to the family. The

other children, though wanting neither industry nor capacity for business, we cannot put to any, by reason we have neither money nor friends to assist us in doing it. Nor is there a gentleman's family near in which we can place them, even as common servants, and that even you yourself would not think them fit for if you saw them, so that they must stay at home while they have a home."

At the Rectory there was food enough, if there was no money for clothes. So there they remained till they married, one after another, meanly and miserably, and no one but their mother seems to have thought that this tragedy of a group of handsome, gifted girls was anything out of the common order of things.

"Let me have the child till he is seven," said the Jesuit teacher, "and I do not care who has him afterwards." No one can understand Charles Wesley's life without realizing what manner of woman was his mother.

The Reverend Samuel Wesley had one ambition: to make scholars and clergymen of his three sons. To this he devoted every farthing he could scrape together, for this he taxed his credit and spent his energy. His eldest son, Samuel, as soon as he was old enough, gallantly took his share of the burden. A steady, serious, hard-working man, without either the good looks or the brilliant ability of his brothers and sisters, he managed to

secure some reputation in his own time as a scholar and a poet. He belonged to the literary circle that revolved round Pope and Prior. Bishop Atterbury and Lord Oxford were his patrons. Nothing of his poetry is now remembered but the graceful verses beginning, "The morning flowers display their sweets," which still keeps its place in some hymnaries.

Like his brother Charles after him, he was educated at Westminster School, from which he got a scholarship to Christchurch. The famous school had reached the height of its eminence under Dr. Busby, who was succeeded by Dr. Friend in 1711. For nearly twenty years Samuel Wesley was a master at Westminster, but the disgrace of his patron Atterbury, in 1723, lost him his chance of the second mastership, and in 1736 he became Head Master of Tiverton Grammar School, where he remained till his death.

What he did for his brothers during his Westminster days appears from a letter which the Rector of Epworth wrote to him in 1732: "You have been a father to your brothers and sisters, especially to the former, who have cost you great sums in their education, both before and since they went to the University. Neither have you stopped there, but have shown your pity to your mother and me in a very liberal manner, wherein your wife joined with you, when you did not overmuch abound yourself."

To his care little Charles was committed when he entered Westminster School at the age of eight. It must have been a strange experience for so young a child to pass from the petting of the big sisters at Epworth to the Spartan conditions of a public school nearly two hundred years ago. In 1721 he was elected a King's Scholar, and became one of the forty scholars on the foundation. The time-table was presumably not very different from what it was in Archbishop Laud's time. In those days the boys rose at a quarter-past five, and after washing in the cloisters (superintended by the *monitores immundui*) and Latin prayers, they devoted themselves to the Latin grammar till breakfast, which was at eight. Dinner was at twelve, followed by "construes" for two hours; then, after an interval, studies were resumed till supper-time, and at eight o'clock the boys went to bed. Discipline was maintained by the monitors, who "kept them strictly to the speaking of Latin." Under this *régime* Charles became an excellent classical scholar. He and his brother John made a practice of speaking Latin together in after days. He learned to love the classical poets, especially Virgil, and knew long passages of the *Æneid* by heart.

According to his biographer, the Rev. T. Jackson, Charles had the reputation at school of being "arch and unlucky." This probably means that

when he got into scrapes he was always found out. There is a record of his taking the part of " Davus " in the *Andria* of Terence. The best-known incident of his school days is his championship of a little Scotch lad, James Murray, against some of the bigger boys who bullied him for being a " Jacobite." Murray, who afterwards became the great Lord Mansfield, renewed this schoolboy friendship in his old age. The anecdote illustrates the chivalrous courage which marked Charles Wesley all through his life; it also reveals on which side were his political sympathies. Samuel Wesley the younger held strongly by the old Tory and High Church traditions, and thus gave his younger brother a bias which he never lost.

Charles was captain of the school in 1725, before he left it with a scholarship which took him to Christchurch. At the time of his leaving, he was called upon to make a decision which affected his whole future. A certain landowner, named Garrett Wesley, in the county of Meath, found himself without heirs of his name. He wrote to the Rector of Epworth, asking if he had a son named Charles, and offering, if that were the case, to undertake his education. Accordingly a sum of money was regularly paid for the purpose by Garrett Wesley's London agent, and at the close of Charles's Westminster career he received a visit from Garrett Wesley, who offered to adopt him as his heir.

Charles wrote to his father for advice, but the Rector referred the decision entirely to him. The prospect was tempting enough for the youngest son of a starving country parson; but something held Charles back from accepting it. Perhaps the separation from his family weighed with him, for his family affections were intensely strong, or possibly he had already some foreboding of a vocation which he could not fulfil as an Irish squire. However that may be, the offer was refused.

Garrett Wesley then transferred his offer to a kinsman named Richard Colley, who took his name and was raised to the peerage by George II. in 1746 as Lord Mornington. He was the grandfather of the Duke of Wellington.

In April 1726 that pathetic cry of triumph went up from the weary old fighter away in Lincolnshire, "Wherever I am, my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln." In the same letter the Rector complains of money difficulties, and says that he does not expect to be able to do anything for Charles when he goes to the University. The brothers spent the summer at Epworth with their parents, and in the autumn Charles went up to Oxford.

Probably the "House," and the city with its green gardens and silver spires, have changed in outward aspect less than most of the scenes in which his life was spent.

> " Still on the roof the pigeons flutter,
> Still by the gateway haunts the gown."

But the Oxford of to-day is a strenuous place compared with the Oxford of the eighteenth century. According to Adam Smith, the professors never thought of lecturing, the examinations were a farce and the statutes a dead letter. Those who wished to study certainly might, if they had enough zeal and energy to resist the sleepy influence of the place. One can imagine the effect of the first taste of freedom on a lively boy fresh from school. Charles revelled in his new-found liberty, harmlessly enough, as John admitted; but when his senior tried to recall him to serious thoughts, he broke out, " Would you have me to become a saint all at once? "

He must have been at this time a very bright, attractive lad. He was short, like his brother, and his face had not the serious beauty which marked John Wesley in his youth, and made him, when old age had crowned him with a glory of silver hair, the very ideal of the Apostle of Love; but he had his share of the Wesley good looks. He was social and merry, the centre of a band of congenial spirits, " giggling and making giggle," like Cowper in his law-student days. But the steadying influence in his life was his brother John, to whom, from the time of his coming up to Oxford, he devoted himself with admiring loyalty. He was as eager and

abrupt in manner as his brother was calm and deliberate. He would burst in on John in his rooms at Lincoln, recite scraps of poetry, turn over the papers on the desk, peer among them with his near-sighted eyes for what he wanted, and pour out a stream of questions and remarks without waiting for the answers. He was orderly in nothing but in his handwriting, which was exquisite. All the more, therefore, he looked up to his grave, self-controlled, and methodical senior.

John Gambold, one of the original Oxford Methodists, and afterwards a Moravian bishop, wrote of him: "I never observed a person have a more real deference for another than he constantly had for his brother. Indeed, he followed his brother entirely. Could I describe one of them I should describe both. And therefore I shall say no more of Charles than that he was a man made for friendship, who by his cheerfulness and vivacity would refresh his friend's heart, with attentive consideration would enter into and better all his concerns; so far as he was able would do anything for him, great or small; and by a habit of openness and freedom leave no room for misunderstanding."

Charles was introduced by his brother to his friends near Oxford, and particularly to the family of the Rector of Stanton Harcourt, near Broadway. Robert Kirkham, the Rector's son, was a college chum of the Wesleys. His two charming sisters

and their friend Mary Granville, who appears in the Burney *Diary and Letters* as Mrs. Delany, carried on for some time a correspondence with John Wesley, on religious and literary themes, under names derived from the Scudery romances. Betty Kirkham was Varanese, Mary Granville, Aspasia, John Wesley, Cyrus, and Charles, who plays a very subordinate part in the correspondence, Araspes. The young women were well-read and pious as well as charming. It was probably Varanese who recommended to John Wesley the study of Thomas à Kempis, which, with Law's *Serious Call*, exercised so profound an influence on him at this time. There seems little doubt that his friendship for her might with favouring circumstances have developed into a warmer feeling, and Robert Kirkham openly expressed the wish that he might have Wesley for a brother-in-law. But the pressure of poverty, and of high aims, still undefined, was too heavy on John Wesley in those days to permit him to think of marriage.

At the age of twenty-one Charles took his degree, and by 1730 he had become a tutor, when his father wrote to him from Epworth : " You are now fairly launched. Hold up your head and swim like a man." From this time forth, with pupils and his Fellowship, Charles was able to maintain himself. His time of frolic was soon over, and after the first novelty of independence had worn off, he devoted

himself to study with such zeal as to impair his health.

In 1727 John left Oxford for a time, to act as his father's curate at Wroote. It was the old man's passionate desire, as he felt infirmity creeping on him and his time drawing to a close, that John should carry on his work, and make a home for his mother and sisters. Only a little while before his death he wrote of his intractable flock: "After near forty years' labour among them they grow better, I having had above a hundred at my last Sacrament."

It was during John's absence in Lincolnshire that the first great spiritual crisis of Charles's life took place. For no apparent reason, the depths of his spirit began to be troubled. Once he had turned off his brother's admonitions with a laugh and a light word, but now in his absence, at the beginning of 1729, he wrote to him, with touching earnestness:—

"God has thought fit (it may be to increase my wariness) to deny me at present your company and assistance. It is through Him strengthening me I trust to maintain my ground till we meet. And I hope that neither before nor after that time I shall relapse into my former state of insensibility. It is through your means, I firmly believe, that God will establish what He hath begun in me; and there is no other 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 myself tell how or when I awoke out of my lethargy, except that it was not long after you went away."

In this humble, earnest, generous spirit, Charles began the partnership which was never dissolved till he was laid to rest in Marylebone churchyard.

He was too sociable and eager-minded to be long content without trying to impart his new interests to those about him. We find him writing to John about one of his college friends: "A modest, humble, well-disposed youth. . . . He was got into vile hands. . . . I assisted in setting him free and will do my utmost to hinder him from getting in with them again. . . . He durst not receive the Sacrament but at the usual times for fear of being laughed at. By convincing him of the duty of frequent communicating, I have prevailed on both of us to receive once a week."

His attractiveness and that eager boldness which marked him when he was the cock of the school at Westminster gathered round him in Oxford a little group of friends, some of whom followed him in the new way of life which he had undertaken. His own account of it was: "I persuaded two or three young scholars to accompany me, and to observe the method of study prescribed by the

statutes of the University. This gained me the harmless nickname of Methodist."

The word had already been applied to certain sectarians both in France and England, but it is probable that the idle youths who first applied the term to Charles Wesley and his friends had never heard of these obscure zealots. The name was simply a hit at the religious practices of the group, and John Wesley explained it as "One who lives according to the method laid down in the Bible."

Charles at this time was not the only person who wished John Wesley back at Oxford. There were others who thought that a young man of his talents and character would find more scope there than in baptizing and burying the yokels of Lincolnshire. At the persuasion of Dr. Morley, Rector of Lincoln, John returned to that college, of which he was a Fellow, and at once assumed, as of right, the direction of the little society formed by Charles. This consisted at first of only two undergraduates, besides the two Wesleys—William Morgan of Christchurch, who died in 1732, and Robert Kirkham of Merton.

Gambold's recollections, already quoted, illustrate the way in which the little society grew. He relates how he had lived for some time in the same college as Charles Wesley without taking any particular notice of him, but in 1730, "on hearing of the whimsical Mr. Wesley and his pious extravagancies," he "went to his rooms without any ceremony and

desired the benefit of his conversation. . . . After some time, he introduced me to his brother John, of Lincoln College, 'for,' said he, 'he is somewhat older than I and can resolve your doubts better!'"

The Wesleys now came for the first time into touch with the man whose name will always be linked with theirs in the story of English religion. In 1732—the year after Samuel Johnson left Pembroke—George Whitefield came up to the same college as a servitor. At this time Charles Wesley had been six years at Christchurch, and was now one of the college tutors. William Morgan had died, and John Clayton, Benjamin Ingham, and Hervey, the author of *Meditations among the Tombs*, had been added to the original band.

"The young men" (Whitefield writes) "were then much talked of at Oxford—and I was strongly pressed to follow their good example, when I saw them go through a ridiculing crowd to receive the Holy Eucharist at St. Mary's. . . . It happened that a poor woman in one of the workhouses had attempted to cut her throat, but was happily prevented. Upon hearing of this, and knowing that both the Mr. Wesleys were ready to every good work, I sent a poor, aged apple-woman of our College to inform Mr. Charles Wesley of it, charging her not to discover who sent her. She went, but, contrary to my orders, told my name. He . . . sent an invitation to me by her to come to breakfast

the next day. I thankfully embraced the opportunity, and it was one of the most profitable visits I ever made in my life. . . .

" I had no sooner received the Sacrament publicly on a week-day at St. Mary's, but I was set up as a mark for all the polite students that knew me to shoot at. . . . Mr. Charles Wesley, whom I must always mention with the greatest deference and respect, walked with me to confirm me from the Church even to the College. I confess to my shame I would gladly have excused him, and the next day, going to his room, one of our Fellows passing by, I was ashamed to be seen knocking at his door. But blessed be God, the fear of man gradually wore off."

The fear of man seems never to have troubled Charles Wesley to any great extent, but it sheds a curious light on the situation that the brilliant Christchurch don had made for himself by his " whimsical " religious practices, that a servitor of Pembroke should be ashamed to be seen going into his rooms.

Whitefield adds that when, after some time passed in the strictly disciplined life which Charles recommended by his example, he began to relax his efforts and " fall into the snare of Quietism," Charles, as was his wont, recommended him to take counsel with his brother John, as more experienced in the spiritual life than himself.

It was John Clayton who, in 1732, suggested to

John Wesley the stricter observance of the Church's round of fast and festival, and William Morgan who took the initiative in the matter of regular visitation of the jails. When John Wesley asked his father's opinion on the proceedings of the " Holy Club," as it was scoffingly called at Oxford, the Rector of Epworth recalled with satisfaction that he himself in his Oxford days had made a practice of visiting the prisoners.

" I have the greatest reason to bless God," he wrote, " 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. . . . I think I must adopt Mr. Morgan to be my son together with you and your brother Charles, and when I have such a *ternion* to prosecute that war, wherein I am now *miles emeritus*, I shall not be ashamed when they speak with their enemies in the gate."

The " Methodists " had a regular plan of common study in the evenings, reading the Greek Testament, with the Latin and Greek classics, on week-nights, and divinity on Sunday evenings. They received Holy Communion together every Sunday morning, fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays, and visited the poor and needy. On one occasion Charles and John walked all the way to Epworth and back, in order to save the money that horse-hire would have cost, and give it to the poor.

Meanwhile changes were taking place in the Epworth household. Mr. Matthew Wesley, the apothecary, had visited the Rectory, and taken back Patty to be his housekeeper in Johnson's Court, Fleet Street. In her uncle's house she met a certain Westley Hall, a plausible young man, who had been a pupil of John's at Oxford, and at this time belonged to the Methodist coterie. He made love to Martha and became engaged to her, after which he went with John Wesley to stay at Epworth, where the family were unaware of his understanding with Martha, and began to pay attentions to Keziah, the youngest of the sisters who was then at home. Charles Wesley wrote of the matter with complacency : " Sister Kezzy made a considerable conquest when my brother was at Epworth—of Mr. Hall, I mean, who accompanied him. All parties are pleased with the match but Mr. Hall's mother, and for want of her consent there it rests."

His anger was the greater when the truth about Hall's engagement to Martha came out. Knowing nothing of the pre-contract, Charles was furious against Martha for stealing her sister's lover. He seems to have been particularly fond of his youngest sister, and his indignation at her wrongs found vent in a vigorous poetical protest, addressed to Martha, who had reason in the end to repent that she ever stuck to her bargain. Her husband turned out a

deplorable scoundrel, but she bore the sorrows of her married life with great dignity, and lived to extreme old age, having survived not only her unworthy husband, but her famous brothers and all her family of her own generation.

In 1733 the Rector of Epworth had resigned the small living of Wroote, which he held with his other cure, to John Whitelamb, the husband of his daughter Mary. He was now failing in health, and much concerned about the future of his family and of the parish to which he had given forty strenuous years. Both he and his eldest son, now Head Master of Tiverton Grammar School, put strong pressure on John Wesley to allow himself to be nominated as his father's successor. The young Oxford tutor refused, with arguments which seem thin and hard, when read in conjunction with the touching appeals which called them forth. But probably the strongest motive that influenced John's decision was one which he could not have used as an argument—the deep, inarticulate conviction that he had a work to do which would far transcend the limits of any parish, and with which no family claims, however strong, could be allowed to interfere.

In the autumn of 1734 Samuel Wesley the elder was seized with the illness which dragged on for eight months and finally killed him. Both his younger sons were with him during this illness, and on their minds the clear, unclouded faith of the

dying man made a permanent impression. John Wesley referred to it when he was accused of teaching new and strange doctrines. " My father," he said, with noble pride, " did not die unacquainted with the faith of the Gospel, of the primitive Christians, or of our first Reformers, the same which by the grace of God I preach and which is just as new as Christianity. . . . I know that during his last illness, which lasted eight months, he enjoyed a clear sense of his acceptance with God. I heard him express it more than once, although at that time I understood it not. ' The inward witness, son, the inward witness,' said he to me, ' this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity.' "

The account of his last moments is contained in a letter from Charles to his brother Samuel, written with characteristic warmth of feeling and energy of expression.

" ' O my Charles,' he said, ' God chastens me with strong pain, but I praise Him for it, I thank Him for it, I love Him for it.'

" The morning he was to communicate he was so exceedingly weak and full of pain that he could not without the utmost difficulty receive the elements; but immediately after receiving there followed the most visible alteration. He appeared full of faith and peace which extended even to his body; for he was so much better that we almost hoped he would have recovered. The fear of death he had

entirely conquered, and at last gave up his latest human desires, of finishing Job, paying his debts, and seeing you. He often laid his hand on my head and said, 'Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom. You shall see it, though I shall not.'"

In the same letter there is a pathetic note about his mother, who was evidently a candidate for some small pension.

"If you take London in your way, my mother desires you would remember she is a clergyman's widow. Let the Society give her what they please, she must be still in some degree burdensome to you, as she calls it. How do I envy you that glorious burden and wish I could share in it. You must put me in some way of getting a little money, that I may do something in this shipwreck of the family for somebody, though it be no more than furnishing a plank.

"I should be ashamed to have so much business in my letter, were it not necessary. I would choose to write and think of nothing but my father."

After her husband's death, Mrs. Wesley went to stay with her eldest daughter, Emily, who had started a school at Gainsborough. Patty married Westley Hall in the summer of 1735. John and Charles, for the time being, returned to Oxford.

CHAPTER II

GEORGIA

THE break-up of the old home seems to have coincided with a period of arrest and suspense in the lives of John and Charles Wesley. Robert Kirkham had left Oxford and taken a curacy, William Morgan was dead, Clayton was in Salford, Ingham in Yorkshire, Gambold, Rector of Stanton Harcourt. The old company was scattered, and the movement which they represented was passing into another phase. To neither John nor Charles Wesley did the prizes of Oxford appeal. Convinced as both of them were that Christianity meant more than a tepid acquiescence in the established observances of religion, they seemed to be half-consciously expecting some call which should make a complete break in their lives and cut them finally off from common ambitions and from slipping into a rut of self-seeking. In these circumstances, the invitation to take up mission work in the new colony of Georgia must have seemed to them like the pointing finger of God.

General Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony,

was one of the most brilliant figures of his time. He was splendidly handsome, and Hannah More, who saw him in his extreme old age, speaks of him as "the finest figure ever seen—heroic, romantic, full of the old gallantry." He was so eager and impetuous that Dr. Johnson said of him, "Oglethorpe never finishes what he has to say." Before John Howard, he devoted himself to the cause of prison reform, and was chairman of the House of Commons committee appointed to consider the question. One of the reasons which led him to interest himself in the colonization of Georgia was the idea that it might provide a new start in life for released debtors. It was also to be an asylum for the victims of religious persecution on the Continent, and a centre from which missionary work might be done among the Indians. The colony was founded under Royal Charter in 1732. Charles Wesley's father had been much interested in the venture, as General Oglethorpe was an old friend of his and a subscriber to his *magnum opus*, the *Commentary on Job*. Samuel Wesley the younger wrote a poem on the new enterprise, in which he foretold that Georgia would provide Britain with all the silk and wine she needed and make her independent of France and Spain.

The suggestion that John Wesley should undertake missionary work in the new colony under the S.P.G., seems to have been made through his friend,

Dr. Burton of Christchurch. John was in London on behalf of his mother, collecting some of the subscriptions that had been promised for the *Commentary on Job*. During his stay he had an interview with Oglethorpe, who seems to have formed at once the very high opinion of him that he retained through life. When the proposal was first made, John Wesley hesitated about accepting it on his mother's account. "I am the staff of her age," he wrote, "her comfort and support." Mrs. Wesley herself asked for no consideration. With Roman fortitude she wrote: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice that they were so employed, though I should never see them more."

Charles Wesley, who was not yet in priest's orders, decided to accompany the expedition as secretary to the Governor, an unfortunate arrangement, as he seems to have had neither taste nor aptitude for the work required of him. Their companions were Benjamin Ingham, one of the Oxford Methodists, and Charles Delamotte, son of a London merchant who gave up good prospects in business to go out as a lay helper in the mission.

Early in October Charles Wesley was ordained priest by Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, and a few days later he embarked with his brother and their two friends. They settled down at once to the regular habits of devotion and study which were maintained during a voyage of nearly five months.

They rose at four and read the Bible together for two hours before breakfast. The three hours from nine to twelve were devoted by Charles to sermon writing. Between dinner at one o'clock and prayers at four, their time was spent in religious conversation and reading with the passengers. There was an interval for private prayer between five and six, and more talk and instruction filled up the hours till bedtime.

General Oglethorpe always treated John Wesley with marked deference. When the sailors showed the brothers some discourtesy he rated them soundly. " Do you take these gentlemen for tithe-pig parsons? They are gentlemen of learning and respectability; they are my friends, and whoever offers an affront to them insults me."

The passengers on whom the young clergymen were to exercise their pastoral gifts were a curiously mixed collection. There were a pious company of Moravians, fugitives from the persecution of the Archbishop of Salzburg. Their gentleness, humility and quiet courage made an impression on the Wesleys which influenced the whole course of their after lives. It was their first introduction to the Protestant mysticism of Germany, and the favourable impression made on the voyage was deepened, during the five weeks that the Wesleys remained in Savannah, after their landing.

The majority of the emigrants were of a less

admirable type. They consisted largely of released debtors, wastrels, and undesirables. Among them were two women of doubtful antecedents, the husband of one of whom had managed to secure the appointment of surgeon to the party. The society of the ladies of Epworth Rectory, where high principle and true refinement reigned in spite of poverty, and of cultured gentlewomen like Mary Granville and Betty Kirkham, was a poor preparation for meeting the wiles of these dubious sirens. If the devils were a temptation to St. Anthony, said a cynic, we must not forget that St. Anthony was equally a temptation to the devils. The "shining innocence" of John Wesley and his brother was a provocation to these women, who seem to have imposed on them completely for the time being, and who engineered a plan to wreck their influence, which was diabolically effective in its simplicity.

At first all seemed to be going well. After a short stay at Savannah, Oglethorpe went on to Frederica, where Charles followed him on the 9th of March. He found it a village of palmetto huts and tents, where the storehouse had to serve not only as the church, but as the general place of assembly for the settlers.

"About three in the afternoon" (Charles wrote in his diary) "I first set foot on St. Simon's island, and immediately my spirits revived. No sooner did I enter on my ministry than God gave me, like

Saul, another heart. So true is the remark of Bishop Hall, ' The call of God never leaves a man unchanged. Neither did God ever employ any one in His service, whom He did not enable to the work set him, especially those whom He raises up to the supply of His place and the representation of Himself.' "

He had need of all his enthusiasm to support him against the distastefulness of some of his duties. On March 16th, he writes: " I was wholly spent in writing letters for Mr. Oglethorpe. I would not spend six days more in the same manner for all Georgia."

Although Ingham was officially the chaplain of the settlement, Charles seems to have regarded himself as equally responsible for the spiritual oversight of the colonists. He at once set up the full Church system so far as circumstances permitted, but his rather stiff and academic written sermons did not appeal to the ignorant people of the colony, and they probably thought his insistence on sacraments Popish. The definitely vicious element in the little society resented the influence of the Wesleys on Oglethorpe, and blamed them for the restraints which were imposed. Among these was the prohibition of Sunday sport, and the surgeon of the party was imprisoned by Oglethorpe's second in command for breaking this rule. The doctor, his wife, and her friends did not hesitate to lay the blame of this on Charles Wesley.

Her confederate meanwhile had little difficulty in persuading the earnest and simple young priest that she had been the victim of Oglethorpe's unhallowed passion. "Horror on horror," wrote Charles Wesley in his journal. "Never did I feel such excess of pity." He would have felt even greater horror—and perhaps, who knows? greater pity also—if he could have known that his penitent and her accomplice were slandering him to Oglethorpe, precisely as they slandered Oglethorpe to him.

In the first shock of the revelation Charles felt a positive shrinking from Oglethorpe, which the Governor noticed, but (with the lies of these women in his mind) put down to a very different cause.

Weeks after, when the plot was laid bare, Oglethorpe told his secretary what had been passing in his mind. "I intended, if she had stood to her charge, to send for and try you before all the people. . . . I thought you a very devil so to divert all inquiries into your own guilt by throwing the blame on me."

"But what," asked Charles very naturally, "did you think of my former life and my end in coming here?"

Oglethorpe replied that he had thought Charles sincere at the time, but supposed that never having met with a creature of the sort before he had been drawn on by her unawares into "depths of wickedness."

One reason which withheld Oglethorpe from the public exposure to which he felt inclined was the memory of an evening spent at the house of Matthew Wesley, just before he left for Georgia. The old apothecary had spoken contemptuously of the fanatical zeal of his missionary nephews. Oglethorpe had championed them ardently at the time, and did not wish to give the sceptical old man a triumph by telling him of Charles's moral breakdown. He therefore kept the matter to himself, and showed his anger and disgust by a harshness and unkindness which greatly alarmed and puzzled the innocent victim. The officers and colonists, taking their cue from the great man, made his life wretched by all sorts of petty persecutions. Worn out by mental trouble and bodily privation, he fell seriously ill. On March 29th, about three weeks after his arrival, he wrote in his diary: " Knowing I was to live with Mr. Oglethorpe I had brought nothing with me from England except my clothes and books, but this morning, asking a servant for something I wanted (I think a tea-kettle), I was told Mr. Oglethorpe had given orders that no one should use any of his things. I answered, that order, I supposed, did not extend to me. ' Yes, sir,' says she, ' you was excepted by name.' "

The next day, he asked that he might have some boards to lie on, as he was sleeping on the bare ground in the corner of a hut. He was refused,

although, he says, " they were given to all besides." Next day he writes, with a touch of his peculiar irony: " I begin to be abused and slighted into an opinion of my own considerableness. I could not be more trampled upon, was I a fallen Minister of State. The people have found out that I am in disgrace, my few well-wishers are afraid to speak to me. . . . The servant that used to wash my linen sent it back unwashed."

On April 1st a scout boatman was brought in, fatally injured by the bursting of a cannon. Charles, who was ill with fever and dysentery, visited and prayed with him, but in the evening was forced to take to his wretched couch. The next evening, though he could hardly stand, he walked out to bury the scout. On Sunday, April 4th, he notes: " I got an old bedstead to lie on, being the one on which the scout boatman had died." Two days afterwards, " Mr. Oglethorpe gave away my bed from under me, and refused to spare one of the carpenters to mend me up another." This petty malevolence was more bitter than physical pain to the intensely affectionate nature of Charles, who, like Jean Paul's hero, " would fain have every dog love him." Like another missionary, he was " pressed out of all measure, in so much that he despaired even of life."

Meanwhile, his colleague Ingham had done the

wisest thing possible under the circumstances, and on March 28th had started for Savannah to fetch John Wesley. John arrived on April 10th, and the relief of his presence must have been intense. "At six" (wrote Charles) "Mr. Delamotte and my brother landed, when my strength was so exhausted, I could not have read prayers once more. He helped me into the wood, for there was no talking among a people of spies and ruffians, nor even in the woods except in an unknown tongue."

In the secret of the woods then, and in Latin, for fear of being overheard by some spy, Charles told the story of his purgatory and of Oglethorpe's supposed villainy. The result appears in the following entries from Charles's journal.

"*April 16th.*—My brother brought me off a resolution which honour and indignation had formed, of starving rather than asking for necessaries. Accordingly I went to Mr. O. in his tent to ask for some little thing I wanted. He sent for me back again and said, 'Pray, sir, sit down. I hear you have spread several reports about me. . . . In you, who told them to your brother, 'tis scandal; in him, who repeated them to me, it is friendship.'"

Oglethorpe had evidently taken pains to justify himself to John Wesley, for whom he had a real veneration. Charles denied having raised the report or spread it. He admitted having mentioned the matter in confidence to John.

On April 24th, Oglethorpe sent for Charles again, and said, " I took some pains to satisfy your brother about the reports concerning me, but in vain."

At this interview the Governor was in a softened frame of mind. He was on the eve of starting for an expedition against the Spaniards, who were threatening the little colony. He had received information that the allies on whose help he depended had gone over to the enemy, and he thought he was going to almost certain death.

Even then, as he owned afterwards, he believed in Charles's guilt, but seeing him, as he put it, " so sad, so pale, so mortified," he felt a longing to be at peace with him. " I am going," he thought, " to cast myself on death and the mercy of God, and shall I refuse mercy to a fellow-creature? "

The rest of the interview may be given in Charles's words.

" He then gave me a diamond ring. I took it and said, ' Hear what you will quickly know to be true, as soon as you are entered upon the separate state. The ring I shall never make any use of for myself. I have no worldly hopes. I have renounced the world. Life is bitterness to me. I came here to lay it down. You have been deceived as well as I. I protest my innocence of the crimes I am charged with, and take myself to be now at liberty to tell you what I thought never to have uttered. Mrs. W. excited in me the first suspicion

of you after we were come here. She afterwards told you her own words as if they had been mine. This she confessed both to my brother and me, as likewise that she had falsely accused me to you of making love to her. She was put upon it by Mrs. H. saying, 'Let us supplant these parsons and we shall have General O. to ourselves.'

"When I had finished this relation, he seemed entirely changed, full of his old love and confidence in me. He . . . embraced and kissed me with the most cordial affection. . . . When the boat put off, I ran before into the woods to see my last of him. . . . I interceded that God would save him from death, would wash out all his sins, and prepare before he took the sacrifice to Himself."

The following Sunday passed "in great apprehension" on the part of the little colony, seeing "two great fires on either side of the town," and not knowing if they were made by friends or enemies.

"Though I expected every hour that the Spaniards would bring us the news of Mr. Oglethorpe's death, yet I was insensible of fear and careless of the consequences. But my indifference arose from stupidity rather than faith. There was nothing I cared for in life, and therefore the loss of it seemed a trifle."

At half-past eight in the morning, after four days of suspense, a boat was seen coming up the river, with Oglethorpe on board. The threatened attack by the Spaniards had not taken place, as the wind

had proved contrary and prevented their landing. "I gave him back his ring and said, 'I need not, sir, and indeed I cannot tell you how joyfully and thankfully I return this.' He appeared full of tenderness and passed on to observe the strangeness of his deliverance, when betrayed on all sides, without human support and utterly defenceless. He condemned himself for his anger (God forgive those who made me the object of it), which he imputed to his want of time for consideration. I said, 'I longed, sir, to see you once more that I might tell you some things before we finally parted, but then I considered that, if you died, you would know them all in a moment.' 'I know not,' he said, 'whether separate spirits regard our little concerns. If they do, it is as men regard the follies of their childhood or I my late passionateness.'"

It was during the dangers of this expedition that Oglethorpe seems to have become finally persuaded of Charles's innocence, by the rather obvious reflection that a person who had spoken so falsely of him was not entitled to much credit when she accused some one else. Nothing in all this strange story is stranger than the fact that two men of high character were ready to believe the worst of each other on the word of a worthless woman.

On the next day Charles writes: "I had some further talk with him. He ordered me whatever he could think I wanted, promised to have me an

house built immediately, and was just the same to me he had formerly been."

The people " had observed that I was taken into favour again, which I found by their provoking civilities."

In a letter to his mother on the 8th of May, John Wesley mentioned the " zeal for holiness of a young gentleman from Rotterdam who was with me last night." This young gentleman eventually called forth from Charles Wesley the celebrated remark that his brother " seemed born for the benefit of knaves." Yet Charles himself was at first equally attracted by the plausible young Dutchman. On the 14th of the month he left for Savannah, changing places with his brother, and while there saw a good deal of young Appee, who was betrothed to a Miss Bibby of Savannah.

By this time it had become clear to Charles, and probably to Oglethorpe also, that he had no vocation for secretarial work, and on the 25th he informed the Governor of his wish to resign his position. It had been arranged that he was to return to England with despatches for the trustees of the colony, and Oglethorpe requested him not to let them know of his intention of resigning. " There are many hungry fellows, " he said, " ready to catch at the office, and in my absence I cannot put in one of my own choosing. . . . I shall be in England

before you leave it—then you may either put in a deputy or resign." He added a word of advice: "On many grounds I should recommend to you marriage rather than celibacy. You are of a social temper, and would find in a married state the difficulties of working out your salvation exceedingly lessened, and your helps as much increased."

Shortly before Charles Wesley left Savannah the poor girl who was betrothed to the Dutchman, Appee, died suddenly. Charles felt the blow deeply for his friend—much more than the friend did for himself.

"Ah, poor Ophelia" (he wrote),
I thought thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife."

The "Hamlet" in question had already started for Charlestown, where Charles was to join him. When they met again, Charles made another step on the road of disillusion, so little did Appee seem to be affected by the tragic death of his *fiancée*.

Like John Wesley, Charles sometimes consulted the *Sortes Biblicæ*. On July 26th he notes in his journal the words, which conclude the lesson for the day, "Arise, let us go hence," and adds, "Accordingly I took my final leave of Savannah."

He spent eleven days at Charlestown, waiting for a ship, and saw enough of negro slavery to make him a determined opponent of the system. Mrs. Beecher Stowe was accused of exaggeration in *Uncle*

Tom's Cabin. But Charles reports that " the giving a child a slave of its own age to tyrannize over, to beat and abuse out of sport, was [he could testify from his own observation] a common practice." Stories of girl slaves whipped almost to death, of men scalded and barbarously mutilated, made an impression on him which he and his brother handed on to their followers. William Wilberforce, who did so much to put an end to slavery under the British flag, was in this respect a spiritual child of the Wesleyan revival.

On August 11th, 1735, Charles and his companion set sail for Boston, their first port of call. The ship was scarcely seaworthy, and the captain " a drunken, quarrelsome fool, praying and yet swearing continuously." The latter part of the voyage was very stormy, and it was fortunate that the mate knew his business, as otherwise the leaky craft would hardly have reached port.

The disappointments of Georgia reached their anti-climax when Mr. Appee (as Charles expressed it) " laid aside his mask." This clever, plausible young man was one of the few people of education in Georgia, and had wormed himself into the confidence of Oglethorpe as well as of the Wesleys. On the voyage from Charlestown to Boston he seems to have suffered a violent reaction from the constraint which he had put upon himself, in order to keep up his reputation with the Governor, and he spoke with

cynical impudence about his late patron, not sparing the Wesley brothers themselves.

" He began by telling me all Mr. Oglethorpe had ever said to him . . . that he took all my abstemiousness for mere hypocrisy, and put on for fear of my brother . . . that he found I apprehended being turned out of my office and therefore pretended to be weary of it; . . . that he believed him (J. W.) to have a little sincerity but more vanity; me to have much vanity but no sincerity at all."

The amount of credit which this statement deserved may be gauged by the remark about John Wesley, whom Oglethorpe always regarded with a feeling not far short of veneration.

Appee also observed that John Wesley was credulous, and that he pitied his ignorance in taking him (Appee) to be sincere in his religious professions. He considered that Wesley would have made an excellent Jesuit.

" He took me " (writes Charles) " to be partly in earnest, but I had a much greater mind to please myself than to please God. As for money, I did not much value it, but in my eagerness for pleasure and praise, I was a man after his own heart. He wished I would leave off my strictness, as I should then be much better company.

" While he was giving me this blessed account of himself, I could not help reflecting on the profound sagacity and spiritual discernment of my brother

and myself, particularly *his*, who was born for the benefit of knaves."

Perhaps it was as a warning against accepting religious professions at their face value that Charles recorded this conversation, humiliating as it must have been from the man whom he had admitted to his friendship.

At the end of October a fierce storm arose, and it took incessant pumping to keep the vessel afloat. With imminent death in prospect, Charles Wesley was yet conscious of such a conviction of the power of God with him, over-ruling all fear and raising him above himself, as " surpassed all rational evidence " and gave him " a taste of the Divine goodness."

He spoke earnestly to his companions and especially to Appee. " My poor friend was convinced, but stupid, owned the happiness of the most imperfect Christian, a happiness he himself was a stranger to. . . . I advised him to pray. He said it was mocking God to begin praying in danger when he had never done it in safety."

By the time the voyage came to an end, Charles had quite determined to break off his acquaintance with Appee, whose further career was of a piece with its beginning. As soon as he arrived in London he was imprisoned for trying to cheat the captain of his passage money. When he was released he went abroad, stealing a watch on his way to Paris. Eight years afterwards, in 1744, Charles, who was then at

the height of his fame as a preacher, was called to visit his old acquaintance, who was lying in a London jail on the eve of transportation. Charles showed him what kindness was possible and lent him some books, but from that time we hear no more of him.

So the Georgia episode came to an end. It was Charles Wesley's Valley of Humiliation. In the few months of his stay he had suffered most of the ills that flesh is heir to—bodily sickness and the fear of death, physical privation of the acutest sort, loneliness, perplexity, undeserved contempt and trust betrayed. Nothing in his previous life with all its trials had prepared him for the cruelty with which he was treated during the time when he was in disgrace with Oglethorpe. The jeers at his "whimsicality," which he had had to endure at Oxford, were pinpricks compared to the loathsome imputations, retailed by the basest of lips, which were accepted without question by those whom he had thought his friends. It was a sudden plunge from his studious and pious life in

"That fair city with the gleaming spires"

to the wild and open wickedness of a new "plantation." Nor did it appear that he had the consciousness of any useful work done, to comfort him for these experiences. His time had been taken up with uncongenial toil, which had diverted him from his true task. It seemed that he had nothing to

show for all that he had gone through but wasted time, shattered health, and a faith in human nature that was shattered too.

Yet all pilgrims " must needs " go through that Valley.

> " Who ne'er his bread with sorrow ate,
> Who ne'er through mournful midnight hours,
> Weeping upon his bed hath sat,
> He knows ye not, ye heavenly Powers."

The miseries of Georgia were a necessary part of the training which turned the lively, amiable Charles Wesley, the scholarly High Churchman, the lover of Virgil and Shakespeare, into the evangelist of England and one of the great poets of Christendom.

CHAPTER III

THE AWAKENING

CHARLES WESLEY'S return was hailed with joy by his many friends, when he landed in England on December 3rd, 1736. There was a rumour that the vessel, which enjoyed a bad reputation and for which fifty per cent. insurance had been refused, had been lost at sea. The first house in London to which he went was that of Charles Rivington, the publisher, in St. Paul's Churchyard. This was an old friend of the Wesley family, who had published the *Commentary on Job.* On the first Sunday after Charles's return, he received Holy Communion at St. Paul's Cathedral, and later on went to stay with his friend, James Hutton, in Great College Street, Westminster. Hutton's father was a Non-juring clergyman, who took boarders for West-minster School. Samuel Wesley, while a master at Westminster, had been his next-door neighbour. His house was the home of one of the little religious societies which were a feature of the times, and the meetings were held on Sunday evenings.

Here Charles, to his great delight, found a cordial

letter of welcome from his brother Samuel. No trait in Charles's character is more charming than the overwhelming warmth of gratitude with which he acknowledged every kindness. He never forgot this instance of Samuel's affection, and after his death the letter was found among his papers with the inscription, "*Notus in fratris anima paterni.* Let my widow preserve this precious relic."

He found himself something of a personage, for mission work was then interesting from its novelty. The S.P.G., the oldest of all the Church of England missionary societies, had been founded in 1701, only thirty-five years before. The manuscript journals of John Wesley and his friend Ingham were sent to England, passed from hand to hand, read, and discussed everywhere with great eagerness and interest. The Bishop of London did not fail to send for Charles shortly after his arrival, and (says Charles rather petulantly) "asked him abundance of curious questions not worth remembering."

On the 15th he called on the Georgia trustees, and delivered the letters with which he had been charged. On the 21st he dined with his uncle, Matthew Wesley. The good apothecary was as inimical as ever to the "apostolic projects" of his nephews, on which he bestowed "abundance of wit."

"He told me the French, if they had any remarkably dull fellows among them, set them to convert

the Indians. I checked his eloquence by those lines of my brother's—

> 'To distant realms the Apostles need not roam,
> Darkness, alas, and heathen are at home.'

He made no reply, and I heard no more of my brother's apostleship."

The experience which Charles had had of the Moravians in Georgia, prepared him to be deeply impressed by his first meeting with their leader, Count Zinzendorf, which took place in London, in January 1737. Soon afterwards General Oglethorpe arrived in England, and he had an interview with Charles at which their future arrangements were discussed. Charles still cherished the hope of returning to missionary work in America, but he made it quite clear that he should not go back as Oglethorpe's secretary.

At the beginning of March, he left London for a round of visits. His mother was then living with her eldest son at Tiverton, when Charles arrived there. We find in his journal the note, "I went to comfort my mother, indisposed in her chamber." If Samuel was her stay, and John her pride, this youngest son was surely her "comfort." On the 30th he paid his respects to the ladies of Stanton Harcourt. "They were all overjoyed to see me, especially my first of friends, Varanese" (Betty Kirkham).

On May 3rd he was back in London, and a few days later we find him calling on Lady Betty Hastings, who had wished to see him about the Georgia Mission. This lady was the recipient of "the finest compliment ever paid to a woman"—the celebrated phrase of Steele, that "to love her was a liberal education." She was as pious and generous as she was charming, the friend of Bishop Wilson, and the supporter of her sister-in-law, Lady Huntingdon, in her early crusade against the religious indifference of the upper classes.

Soon after, Samuel Wesley and his wife came up from Tiverton, and Charles notes in his journal: "I carried my brother to the good Archbishop, who received us very kindly."

There was, in short, enough attention shown him in high quarters to turn a young clergyman's head, if he had not been guarded by a very real humility. In June of this year he met in London Dr. Byrom, the inventor of the system of shorthand which both the Wesleys used, and even better remembered as the author of the celebrated Jacobite epigram—

> "God bless our Lord the King, the Faith's defender;
> God bless (no harm in blessing) the Pretender.
> But who Pretender is, and who the King—
> God bless us all—that's quite another thing."

Byrom mentions in his journal one occasion when Charles Wesley came to see him, brought his

book of Georgian shorthand and "talked prettily." Not wishing, however, to allow too much weight to his own impressions, he consulted a common friend, one Chaddock, who thus replied—

"In young professors commonly the tares of vanity appear among the good grain; but in the person spoken of, I profess I can't discover any, tho' I've had my eye upon him for years. One Sunday, walking with him from church where there had been a very full congregation, to hear him, 'O Mr. Chaddock,' says he, 'when I got into the pulpit, I was humbled exceedingly to think if after teaching so many, I should fall short of my duty myself, and having preached to others should myself be a castaway.' But I must be foolish to think any words are a proof that a man is humble. . . . Therefore leaving my friend to the judgment of God, I can only say that I am obliged to thank God for the advantage of seeing such a simple unaffected piety as appears in all his manner."

About the time when the meeting with Byrom took place, the family lost a kind friend in Matthew Wesley. His house had always been open to the brothers, and he had given one sister after another a home. Keziah, the youngest and the only unmarried daughter, had now gone, greatly against Charles's judgment, to live with her sister Martha and Westley Hall.

In July Charles paid a short visit to Oxford, and

had a sharp argument on religious matters with some of the men. He left them with the words, " Remember, you will be of my mind when you come to die."

This year he was one of those selected to present the address from the University of Oxford to George II., and on August 26th he waited upon the King at Hampton Court. " The Archbishop told me he was glad to see me there. We kissed their Majesties' hands, and were invited to dinner. . . . The next day we waited upon His Royal Highness and dined all together at St. James's."

There seems to have been no reason in his outward circumstances at this time why Charles Wesley should not have availed himself of his personal gifts, and the interest which he had aroused in high quarters, to follow the path which led by easy stages for such as he, to the high places of the Church. But the hindrance was in himself. His mind was full of unrest and uncertainty. He went to see William Law, who was sought after in his retirement at Putney as a sort of religious oracle. The sum of his advice was " Renounce yourself and be not impatient."

In September he visited Delamotte in his home at Blendon, and then went on to his friends at Stanton Harcourt, where his sister Keziah was just then on a visit. The poor girl fell on his neck and begged him to pray for her. " She was full

of earnest wishes for Divine love" and "owned there was a depth in religion she had never fathomed."

As his mental distress increased he withdrew more and more into himself, and certain of his friends appear to have been surprised and troubled by his aloofness. Ingham wrote to John Wesley, who was still at Savannah: "Charles is so reserved, he neither writes to me nor comes to see me. What he intends is best known to himself."

Probably Charles himself could least have told what he intended just then. He was passing through that time of darkness and suspense which in the annals of the mystics has often been known to precede a great spiritual illumination. He was, moreover, at this time in wretched health, though his restless energy carried him backwards and forwards between London, Blendon and Oxford. On one of these journeys he had an adventure with a highwayman, which shows the chances which travellers had to take in those days, in the most civilized part of the kingdom and within a short distance of London.

"In a mile's riding my horse fell lame. I sung the 91st Psalm, and put myself under the Divine protection. I had scarce ended and turned the hut on Shotover Hill, when a man came up to me, demanding my money, showing but not presenting a pistol. I gave him my purse. He asked how

much there was. 'About thirty shillings.' 'Have you no more?' 'I will see.' I put my hand in my pocket and gave him some halfpence. He repeated the question, 'Have you no more?' I had thirty pounds in a private pocket. I bade him search himself, which he did not choose. He ordered me to dismount, which I did, and begged hard for my horse, promising not to pursue him. He took my word and restored him. I rode gently on, praising God."

At Mr. Hutton's house, which was Charles Wesley's London headquarters, he had a visit in November from his brothers-in-law, Lambert and Wright, the husbands of Nancy and Hetty Wesley. "The latter" (writes Charles, referring to Wright) "has corrupted the former, after all the pains I have taken with him, and brought him back to drinking. . . . I prayed for meekness and then set before him the things he had done in the devil's name towards recovering a soul to him. He left me promptly. I encouraged poor J. Lambert to turn again unto God."

The year 1738, memorable in the history of English religion, opened with the return of John Wesley from Savannah on the 1st of February. On the 8th Charles was with the Georgia trustees, who were disappointed at the poor reports of the colony which his brother had brought back. Up to this time

Charles seems to have cherished the hope of returning to Georgia as a missionary, but this hope was finally extinguished by the severe attack of pleurisy with which he was seized at the end of February.

In the middle of April we find him at Oxford, where he seems to have had a return of his illness. His doctor advised him not to think of foreign work, but to stay at Oxford, "where he might as Senior Master expect offices and preferment."

The final disappointment of his missionary hopes seems to throw him back on the safe and normal career of an Oxford don, with the prospect of a College living. But other influences were at work. He had travelled up to Oxford with a young Moravian named Peter Böhler, a *protégé* of Count Zinzendorf's, to whom the Count had arranged that Charles should give English lessons, with a view to equipping him for missionary work in Georgia. This young man (he was only twenty-five) was already eminent among the Moravian mystics. He taught that true faith meant dominion over sin and conscious peace; that this faith is the free gift of God, and that it is given instantaneously and consciously.

Soon after making acquaintance with the Wesleys, Böhler wrote of them to Count Zinzendorf: "The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he did not properly believe in our Saviour, and was

willing to be taught. His brother is at present very much distressed in his mind, but does not know how he shall begin to be acquainted with the Saviour."

For twelve years now Charles Wesley had devoted himself to the service of Jesus. With the Perfect Pattern before his eyes, he had given up the amusements of his age and the natural ambitions of his class; he had sacrificed his prospects in the Church, visited the sick and the prisoners, denied his natural "love of pleasure and praise," left home and friends and endured more hardship for his faith while yet under thirty than most Christians incur during the whole course of their lives. Yet even now he might have made Froude's words his own—

> "O God of mercy, why am I
> Still haunted by the self I fly?"

Again and again in his journal he repeats his weariness of the struggle and his longing for death. Only death, he seems to have thought, could release him from the "body of death" which he carried about with him. He remembered the joy and triumph of his father's deathbed; but he seems to have thought that this was merely a foretaste of heaven, and was not meant to be the portion of the Christian in his life on earth.

Some pious writers have gone so far as to say of Charles Wesley during these years, that he was

"in a state of guilt" and "without the Christian salvation." John Wesley used similar expressions with regard to his condition before 1738, but afterwards withdrew them. The case of these brothers before the crisis which transformed their lives is more truly and fairly put by a modern writer—

"The joyless Christian is the brave man who loyally resolves to serve Christ though there be never one smile for him, unconsciously regarding joy as a special favour for those who deserve it, and he knows that he does not and never can, so he drills his soul in an attitude of sad patience." [1]

"I stand nor dare affirm I see or hear,
How should I dream, when strict is my employ?
Yet if some time, far hence, Thou drawest near,
Shall there be any joy like to our joy?" [2]

But there is the other side of the picture.

"The joyful Christian is he who has just as little joy in him as the other; he knows that he can never deserve joy, but that our Lord Jesus, the substance of all joy, has forgiven all his sins and come to dwell in his heart; so that having no joy of himself, he will always be rejoicing in the Lord, and calling up that joy in continual thanksgiving. Singing to the well, he finds the water of life always there, ready to spring up and make his wilderness blossom as the rose." [1]

[1] *Spiritual Progress*, Congreve.
[2] *Poems*, Edward Dowden.

The time had now come for Charles to pass from the first of these phases into the second, but he knew it not, being in that darkest hour which goes before the dawn, and without hope of day. His sister Keziah came up to Oxford from Stanton Harcourt, to nurse him through his illness; and after some days he was well enough to return to London. Almost immediately, however, he had a relapse; Peter Böhler came and stood by his bedside, and prayed that he might "see the Divine intention" in his illness. Pondering on these words, Charles began to wonder whether the "Divine intention" might not be that he should again consider Böhler's doctrine of faith.

At this time a small society, consisting of those who had been influenced by Böhler's teaching, and including the two Wesleys, and Piers, Vicar of Bexley, had begun to meet weekly for prayer and mutual confession of sins, Bible reading and the singing of hymns. They were all members of the Church of England, and went regularly to St. Paul's to make their communion. The meetings of the society were held at first at James Hutton's bookshop in Little Wild Street, but they were afterwards moved to Fetter Lane.

The elder Huttons, who belonged to the stiff Nonjuring High Church school, were much distressed that their sons James and John, as well as the Wesleys, should have become infected with

the Moravian teaching; and consequently Charles found the atmosphere of the house not so congenial as formerly. To the distress of Mrs. Hutton, who had invited him to stay at her house, he insisted upon being moved, ill as he was, to the house of a humble adherent of the Moravians, a brazier by trade, "a poor ignorant mechanic who knows nothing but Christ, yet by knowing Him knows and discerns all things." Here he was visited by other simple and pious people, like that "old Mr. Ainsworth, a man of great learning about seventy, who like Simeon was waiting to see the Lord's salvation that he might depart in peace," or the poor illiterate woman (Mrs. Turner, Bray's sister), who, as she told her brother, felt a strange compulsion to enter the invalid's room, and speak the words which he accepted as indeed a message from Him Whom he sought, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe and thou shalt be healed."

On that same morning, May 21st, 1738, John Wesley had left his brother's sick bed to go to church. "On leaving the church," he writes, "I received the surprising news that my brother had found rest to his soul. His bodily strength returned also from that hour."

Charles was still lying ill in his room when on the night of May 24th, as he notes in his journal, "Towards ten, my brother was brought in triumph

by a troop of our friends, and declared, 'I believe.' We sang the hymn with great joy and parted with prayer."

The hymn was the one beginning—

> "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?"

It was written the day after his own conversion.

The strong spiritual excitement under which the brothers were labouring carried them at first beyond due bounds. At the Huttons' on May 28th John distressed his old friends by his unmeasured language. When he said that five days before he was not a Christian, he was warned by the old Nonjuror "not to despise the benefits received by the Sacraments." The Rev. Nehemiah Curnock, editor of the standard edition of Wesley's *Journals*, says: "If, at this distance of time, we read through the letters passing from one to another, not among godless enemies but in the inner circle of kinsfolk and friends, and compare them with the journals, we shall find that the Wesleys were being driven hither and thither on waves of intense spiritual excitement. The phenomena recall the days of Pentecost and the prophecies of Joel. No wonder that godly and sober people like Mrs. Wesley and

Martha Hall and the Huttons and Samuel Wesley, were perplexed and distressed."

Many years afterwards, looking back on these days, John Wesley wrote: "When, fifty years ago, my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, taught the people that unless they knew their sins forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I wonder they did not stone us. . . . We preach assurance, a common privilege of the children of God; but we do not enjoin it under pain of damnation denounced on all who enjoy it not."

The mystic experience which John and Charles Wesley underwent within a few days of each other ranks with the great conversions which have proved to be turning-points in the history of the Christian Church. It was, one cannot doubt, to Charles Wesley, the sudden revelation of One Whom he had long sought; an overwhelming manifestation of beauty and love in which all "subtle thoughts and curious fears" were overborne. He himself, in the greatest hymn he ever wrote, has given the classic expression of this supreme awakening.

"Speak, or Thou never hence shall move,
And tell me if Thy name be Love.

'Tis Love, 'tis Love, Thou diedst for me,
I hear Thy whisper in my heart,
The morning breaks, the shadows flee,
Pure, universal Love Thou art;
In vain I have not wept and strove,
Thy Nature and Thy Name is love."

The day following his brother's conversion Charles wrote in his diary: "Before communicating I left it to Christ whether and in what measure He would please to manifest Himself to me in the breaking of bread. . . . I had no particular attention to the prayers, but in the Prayer of Consecration I saw by the eye of faith, or rather had a glimpse of Christ's broken mangled body as taken down from the Cross. Still I could not observe the prayers, but only repeat with tears, 'O Love, Love.'"

When a man realizes in this manner the Divine love for his soul, it is as though new life were being absorbed by him at every pore. He has set the doors and windows of his being open to the light and air—that same light and air which were about his dwelling when his windows were so jealously barred, only he did not know it. There is a splendour in the grass, a glory in the flower, which he never noted before; and all things take on for him the freshness that they wore when he first opened his eyes on the world. The smile of God is in the sunshine and the peace of God on the sea; the birds are His choristers and the flowers make the place of His Feet glorious. Every beauty the man sees reminds him of the archetypal Beauty which, at the call of suffering humanity, "dropt down" from the very heart of bliss, "to toil for man, to suffer and to die."

But the revelation brings not only joy but power. Men who are filled with this new wine have a tremendous hold on their fellows. After this experience Charles Wesley was for a time at least lifted quite above all timid introspection and anxious care about his own spiritual state. It seemed as if this release was all that was needed to make him a channel for immense spiritual forces. Many years afterwards he recalled the joy of this first illumination, in verses where the rough anapæsts do convey something of the spring and energy of the new life.

" Jesus all the day long
Was my joy and my song,
O that all His salvation might see;
He has loved me, I cried,
He has suffered and died,
To redeem such a rebel as me.

On the wings of His love,
I was carried above
All sin and temptation and pain;
I could not believe
That I ever should grieve,
That I ever should suffer again.

I rode on the sky,
Freely justified, I,
Nor envied Elijah his seat;
My soul mounted higher,
In a chariot of fire,
And the moon it was under my feet."

He was only too soon to learn that neither sin nor suffering were done with. Even the Apostles

could not remain for ever on the Mount of Transfiguration. But the experience was as permanent in its results, as definite a step to a higher plane of living, as the similar experiences of St. Paul, St. Francis, or St. Teresa

CHAPTER IV

THE EVANGELIST

CHARLES WESLEY could no more keep silence about the new joy that had come into his life than St. Francis could. He spoke of it to every one he knew and to every one he met. When travelling, he talked to his fellow-passengers, not in a perfunctory way, but like a man charged with some great and wonderful good news. When staying at a friend's house, he talked of it to the valet who waited on him, to the maid, to the gardener. He notes, in speaking of his sister Hetty, that "the poor have generally a much greater degree of confidence than the rich and learned."

In the course of the summer he became intimate with George Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington, who was then a young man of twenty-three. He was employed for some time as Stonehouse's curate, though never regularly licensed. We also find him at Oxford, Blendon and Bexley in the course of the summer and autumn. Wherever he was known to be staying, people crowded to the house. Some criticized the novelty of his teaching, though one of his converts professed to have found it in the

devotions of Jeremy Taylor. The assistance which he gave to Mr. Stonehouse did not interfere with his meetings in private houses, where as many as two hundred people were sometimes gathered to hear him.

One result of Charles Wesley's influence was that the Vicar of Islington felt compelled to repel from the Communion Table one of his parishioners, a man of notoriously evil life. The "aggrieved parishioner" took legal action against the vicar, who might have suffered seriously for doing his duty, had not the sudden death of the prosecutor put a stop to the proceedings.

Of all the Christian works of mercy, that of visiting the prisoners was always particularly near to the heart of Charles Wesley. None certainly required more self-denial than to penetrate into those dens of vice and infection, where criminals of all degrees of guilt were herded together without classification or proper supervision, or the smallest care for sanitation or common decency. There is a passage in his journal for July 1738 which is not unworthy to be placed by the side of the famous episode in the life of St. Catherine of Siena. He was visiting ten men who were lying in Newgate under sentence of death. One of them was a negro, found guilty of robbing his master. Day after day, through the heats of July, Charles visited the poor wretch in his noisome cell.

"I told him" (he writes) "of One Who came down from heaven to save lost sinners and him in particular. . . . He listened with all the signs of eager astonishment. The tears trickled down his cheeks while he cried, 'What, was it for me? Did God suffer all this for so poor a creature as me?' I left him waiting for the salvation of God."

A few days later he went with his converts to the spot where they were to suffer. "None showed any natural terror of death, no fear or crying or tears. I never saw such calm triumph, such incredible indifference to dying. . . . That hour, under the gallows, was the most blessed hour of my life."

His experiences ranged from Newgate to Westminster Abbey, where he preached during the summer and assisted in the celebration of Holy Communion.

During the summer John Wesley was absent in Germany, on a visit to Count Zinzendorf at Herrnhut. He returned on the 16th of September, and at the end of the same month Charles was at Oxford. An old friend with whom he had stayed on previous visits was "acutely estranged by the offence of the Cross," but John Gambold was still constant. During October Charles preached extempore, for the first time, at St. Antholin's—a small incident as it might seem, but in reality of the greatest

importance for his future career. The habit of extempore preaching was a necessary part of his equipment as an evangelist of the masses. The common people of England resented, as they do to this day, a written discourse.

By this time strange reports of the new teaching had reached the Bishop of London, and on the 12th of October the Wesley brothers waited on him to answer the complaints that had been made against them. Their doctrine of "inward assurance" was made a ground for charging them with Antinomianism, against which accusation they protested vigorously to the Bishop.

"If by assurance," said Bishop Gibson, "you mean that 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, I do not see how any good Christian can be without such an assurance." This, they said, was what they were contending for. John then inquired whether the religious societies, such as the one with which they were associated in Fetter Lane, were conventicles. "He said he thought not, and that we might have free access to him at all times."

Some three weeks afterwards Charles had a less agreeable interview with his Bishop. He held the view, contrary to the general judgment of the Western Church, though received by some of

the stricter Nonjurors, that baptism by schismatics is invalid; and displayed considerable truculence in arguing the point with his ecclesiastical superior. The question of his licence then came up, and the Bishop inquired if he was a licensed curate. Charles replied that he had the leave of the proper minister (Mr. Stonehouse).

"But do you not know," said the Bishop, "that no man can exercise parochial duty in London without my leave?"

"Do you inhibit me?"

"Oh, why will you push things to an extreme?" asked the Bishop pathetically. "I do not inhibit you."

"Do you, then, dispense with my giving you notice of any baptisms for the future?"

"I neither dispense nor not dispense."

"He concluded the conference with, 'Well, sir, you knew my judgment before. You know it now. Good-morning to you.'"

This was not, unluckily, to be the last occasion on which English bishops were to show their incapacity to deal with the new force that had arisen in English religion, nor was it the last on which Charles was to exhibit that want of tact, that disposition to "push things to an extreme," which went some way to neutralize the influence which his gifts and character would otherwise have gained him.

At the beginning of the following year it was again suggested to him that he should settle down at Oxford, but this he felt he could not do " without further direction from God."

On February 21st he went with John to call on the Archbishop of Canterbury, who received them " with great affection." He " spoke mildly of Mr. Whitefield, counselled us to give no more umbrage than was necessary for our defence, to forbear exceptional phrases, to keep to the doctrines of the Church." From him they went on to the Bishop of London, who warned them against Antinomianism, and dismissed them kindly.

The arrangement by which Charles had acted as an unlicensed curate for Mr. Stonehouse only lasted a short time. The Vicar's attempt at enforcing the discipline of the Church was put down to Charles's influence. Certain rich laymen of Islington, then a wealthy rural suburb, began to feel that this kind of thing must not be allowed to spread. Like a famous historical character, they wanted to know " what the deuce religion had to do with a man's private life." On April 15th Charles was asked for his licence by the churchwardens, who knew full well he had none. On the evening of the same day he went with his Moravian friends, Bray and Hutton, to visit Count Zinzendorf, who was then in London. On the 29th the churchwardens prevented him by main force from entering the pulpit

of the parish church. Mr. Stonehouse appealed to the Bishop, who declined to interfere, and in the following month the informal arrangement between him and Charles Wesley came to an end.

George Whitefield had now begun his astonishing ministry. John Wesley wrote of him in 1740: "Many last winter used tauntingly to say of Mr. Whitefield, 'If he will convert heathens, why does he not go to the colliers of Kingswood?' In spring he did so, and as there were thousands who went to no place of public worship, he went after them into their own wilderness."

Charles Wesley stood by Whitefield's side when he preached to a great multitude on the Mount at Blackheath, and asked, "What has Satan gained by turning him out of the churches?"

In the spring of 1739 Whitefield's work among the colliers near Bristol had developed so greatly that he wrote to John Wesley to come and help him. Charles confesses that he and others had a fear that the journey would prove fatal to John, and that they tried to dissuade him. Momentous it certainly was. John, who before that date would, as he says, "have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church," "submitted to be vile" by preaching near Bristol to about three thousand people, and comforted himself by remarking that the "Sermon on the

Mount offered one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also." On April 4th, 1739, the first Methodist Society was founded in Bristol, which was to rank as a centre of the new movement, second in importance only to London.

In the following May Charles was following his brother's example, and preaching in the Essex villages to large congregations in the open air. Mr. Piers, the Vicar of Bexley, who sympathized warmly with the new evangelism, was in this respect at variance with some of his leading laymen, who complained to the Archbishop that Whitefield and the Wesleys were allowed the use of the Bexley pulpit. The Archbishop took the side of the complainants, and forbade the incumbent to lend his pulpit to the missioners. Mr. Piers contrived ingeniously to render literal obedience to this command, while "breaking it to the sense," by allowing his friends to address the congregation from the reading-desk and sanctuary.

Upon this, the Archbishop sent for Piers and Charles Wesley. To the former he was markedly gracious, to his companion very much the reverse. He dropped a hint that he might possibly proceed to excommunication if Charles proved contumacious. Charles, on his side, inquired whether the success which attended Whitefield's ministry was not sufficient proof of his vocation, and recommended to

his superior the example of Gamaliel. But although he bore himself in this uncompromising way during the interview, he suffered afterwards from the reaction of overstrained nerves. "In great heaviness and discouragement," he asked himself whether he should not be wise to abandon his intention of preaching in the open air at Moorfields on the following Sunday. But the conviction of his Divine call overcame the fear of man. On Sunday morning he went out into the open fields, where now is Finsbury Square, and preached the gospel to the ten thousand poor people who were assembled to hear him. "The Lord" (he wrote) "was with me, His meanest messenger, according to His promise. At St. Paul's, the psalms, lessons, etc., for the day, put fresh life into me. So did the Sacrament. My load was gone, all my doubts and scruples. God shone upon my path, and I knew this was His will concerning me."

On the following Sunday he preached the University sermon at St. Mary's, Oxford, "with great boldness. All were very attentive. One could not help weeping."

He had some conversation with the Vice-Chancellor, who demurred to their doing good in other men's parishes. He also, before leaving Oxford, saw the Dean of Christchurch, who objected to certain points in his teaching, but "promised him to read Law and Pascal,"

Charles Wesley was now fairly launched on the career of mission preaching which, in spite of delicate health and constant literary production, he carried on without intermission for over twenty years. His success was instant and remarkable. "His preaching at his best was thunder and lightning," says one of the early Methodists. John Wesley admits that, in the force of brief, pointed appeals, Charles surpassed him as much as he surpassed Charles in consecutive reasoning. But from heights of passionate eloquence the young evangelist sank only too often into gulfs of depression. He seems to have been rather terrified than elated by the fame of a popular preacher. "I never knew till now," he wrote in his private journal, "the strength of temptation and the energy of sin. Who that conferred with flesh and blood would covet great success? I live in a continual storm, my soul is always in my hand. The enemy thrusts sore at me that I may fall, and a worse enemy than the devil is my own heart. *Miror aliquam prædicatorem salvari.*"

On August 10th he wrote to Whitefield, who was thinking of returning to the Mission in Georgia, and looked to "Mr. Charles" to carry on his work in England—

"I am continually tempted to leave off preaching and hide myself. . . . I should then be free from temptation, and have leisure to attend to my own

improvement. God continues to work *by* me, but not in me, that I can perceive. Do not reckon on me, my brother, in the work God is doing; for I cannot expect He should long employ one who is ever longing and murmuring to be discharged. I rejoice in your success, and pray for its increase a thousandfold."

Charles Wesley's first visit as a missioner to Bristol, with which city he was afterwards to be so closely connected, was made in the summer of 1739. In May of that year the foundation of a preaching-house for the Methodists was laid in the Horse Fair. The property was vested in John Wesley, and he became personally responsible for its upkeep. A Dissenter of some standing, Joseph Williams of Kidderminster, left in MS. some interesting impressions of Charles Wesley's preaching in Bristol, which are quoted in Jackson's *Life*.

" Hearing that Mr. Charles Wesley would preach in the afternoon, just out of the City, I got a guide and went to hear him. I found him standing on a table with his hands and eyes lifted up to Heaven in prayer, and surrounded with, I guess, more than a thousand people, some few of them persons of fashion, both men and women, but most of them of the lower rank of mankind. . . . He preached about an hour . . . in such a manner as I have seldom, if ever, heard any minister preach; that is, though I have heard many a finer sermon

according to the common taste, yet I have scarcely ever heard any minister discover such evident signs of a vehement desire or labour so earnestly to convince his hearers.

" Afterwards, I waited on Mr. Wesley, asked him many questions, and received much satisfaction from his answers. I then went with him to a religious society which met about seven in the evening, and found the place so thronged that it was with very great difficulty we got to the centre of it, where was a convenient place provided for him either to stand or sit. . . He first prayed, then expounded part of the 13th chapter of St. John's Gospel; then sang a hymn; then proceeded awhile in the exposition; then sung another hymn; then prayed over more than twenty bills which were given up by the society respecting their spiritual concerns, and concluded with the benediction. Never did I hear such praying or such singing. Their singing was not only the most harmonious and delightful I ever heard, but they sang ' lustily and with a good courage.' . . . If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth I heard it there."

The proceedings which this intelligent observer describes with so much interest are those in common use at countless missions. To that age they were strikingly novel—as novel, apparently, as the spectacle of a minister to whom it was a life-and-death

matter to convince his hearers that he had really got something of immense importance to say to them.

We find it difficult to appreciate the impression made by George Whitefield and the Wesleys, because the very methods by which they electrified a religion that was slowly dying of convention have themselves become conventional. This was happening even before Wesley died, as we learn from the words of his earliest biographer, Dr. Whitehead—

"When persons began to relate their experiences of religion at the time of which I am speaking, it appeared to many a new thing in England. The phrases they made use of had not yet been learned by heart; they were the genuine expression of what had passed in their own hearts, and therefore signified something fixed and determinate, which all who experienced the same things or their want of them would easily understand, though to others they would appear as they do now, mere cant phrases, without any determinate idea affixed to them."

It must be said that it was Charles Wesley more than any other man who fixed the language of Methodism. The description just quoted showed how large a part hymn-singing played from the first in the meetings of the Methodist societies. At first the need was met by the hymns of Watts and Doddridge, Ken's office hymns, and several trans-

lations and adaptations made by John Wesley, with excellent taste and judgment, from the German, and, with surprising lack of both, from George Herbert. But soon Charles Wesley's poetic gift, by which he had set no store till the time came for him to use it in his great life-work, was pressed into the service, and the astonishing facility of which he soon gave proof, made him and his brother almost independent of outside sources.

The important place given by John Wesley to hymn-singing at the Methodist services appears in his published rules:—

Suit the tune to the words.

Avoid complex tunes.

Sing no anthems.

Do not suffer the people to sing too slow.

In every society let them learn to sing, and let them always learn our own tunes first.

Recommend our tune-books everywhere, and if you cannot sing, choose a person or two in each place to pitch the tune for you.

Exhort every one in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only.

Whether the English are a musical nation or not, there is no doubt that they are a nation that loves singing. Singers of madrigals and glees in Tudor days, their love of song was checked in the stern

days of the Civil Wars, to break out afresh when Charles Wesley set his fresh and heartfelt spiritual ditties to simple, popular tunes. One can imagine what an impression must have been made on a stranger accustomed to the dull droning of Tate and Brady, which was the rule in most parish churches, on coming into a Methodist meeting. The tone, volume, and attack of the singing, the bright and varied tunes, controlled and directed an enthusiasm that might else have run to waste. To quote once more the well-known appreciation of T. H. Green—

"His hymns expressed the fiery convictions of the converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared. The wild throes of hysterical enthusiasm passed into a passion for hymn-singing, and a new musical impulse was aroused in the people which gradually changed the face of public devotion throughout England."

Nothing in the Methodist societies was done without hymn-singing. The indefatigable Charles provided hymns for opening and closing meetings, for band meetings and fellowship meetings, for Baptism and Holy Communion, for weddings and funerals. He composed his hymns chiefly on horseback as he was riding about the country, and the hoof-beats hammered out the rhythm of the song as it shaped itself in his brain. Then he jotted it down in shorthand, and wrote it out at leisure when he arrived at his destination. The total number

of hymns composed by him is estimated at about six thousand; and in appreciating the amount of work which he accomplished in his lifetime this incessant and immense literary output must never be forgotten.

The extraordinary success of the mission at Bristol stirred up among certain "idle shepherds" a miserable but all-too-human jealousy. A Bristol clergyman complained to Charles of the greatly increased numbers who began to present themselves at the Lord's Table. "I offered my services" (wrote Charles) "to lessen his trouble, but he declined it. There were a hundred new communicants, he told us, last Sunday. We bless God for this cause of offence and pray it may never be removed."

In consequence of the attitude of some of the Bristol clergy who refused Communion to the converts of the Wesleys, Charles early took the step of administering Communion to them himself on Methodist premises. The first occasion on which this took place was at Kingswood, near Bristol.

Controversy, more or less bitter and virulent, seems almost inseparable from any successful religious movement. It was so in this case. The Wesleys had been brought up under Laudian, *i. e.* Arminian, influences. Whitefield, though he loved and admired them, did not follow them in this, and his followers carried his doctrine to lengths

which he would not have admitted. It was the camp followers rather than the leaders that made the mischief.

When Whitefield went to America, he handed over to the Wesleys the school he had founded at Kingswood for the children of the colliers. He appointed as master a *protégé* of Charles Wesley's, who imbibed extreme Calvinistic doctrines and turned violently against his old teacher. In 1740 this individual wrote to Whitefield from Kingswood : "Brother Charles is suffered to open his mouth against the truth. Brother John follows him in everything." Charles Wesley had just brought out, in conjunction with his brother, a small volume of hymns directed against the tenets of Calvinism.

Whitefield wrote from America to "dear Mr. Charles" to complain of the publication of this book. "Oh, my dear brethren, my heart bleeds within me. Methinks I could be content to tarry on the waters for ever rather than come to England to oppose you." He did, however, return in 1740, and at once began to preach the peculiar tenets against which the Wesleys contended. To quote his own words : "Busybodies on both sides blew up the coals. A breach ensued. But as both sides differed in judgment, but not in affection, and aimed at the glory of our common Lord, though we hearkened to talebearers on both sides, we were kept from anathematizing each other."

Both Whitefield and his most eminent disciple, Howell Harris, founder of the Calvinistic Methodists, stood by the Wesleys at this time in their controversy with the Moravians. It will be remembered that the religious society at Fetter Lane in which John Wesley "found peace" was originally a Moravian meeting-place, and for some time the London Wesleyans appear hardly to have differentiated themselves from their Moravian brethren. When, however, the Moravians began to develop a Quietism that leaned to Antinomianism, when they depreciated the ordinances of the Church and the use of the regular means of grace, the Methodist leaders were obliged to part company with them.

Some of the Moravians showed great bitterness against the Wesleys. Their old friend James Hutton wrote in his memoirs under the date of March 14th, 1740: "John Wesley being resolved to do all things himself, and having told many souls that we thought were justified, but have since discovered themselves not to be so, his brother Charles is coming to London determined to oppose all such as shall not use the means of grace after his sense of them. Both John and Charles Wesley are dangerous snares to many young women. Several are in love with them. I wish they were married to some good sisters, though I would not give them one of mine, even if I had many. . . . At Bristol the souls are wholly under Charles Wesley."

On Sunday, July 20th, 1740, at a meeting of the society in Fetter Lane, John Wesley solemnly protested against the errors of the Moravians, and left the place with his whole following. This was the real birth of Methodism as a distinct society.

It would seem, however, that even up to the end of 1741 the Moravians had not lost hopes of winning Charles to their side. In April of that year John Wesley wrote a letter on the subject to his friend, the Countess of Huntingdon, who shared his anxiety for his brother. Charles was, in fact, strongly drawn in opposite directions, as it was too often his hard lot to be. On one side was his love and admiration for Peter Böhler, whose teaching and influence had helped him out of the Slough of Despond into which he had fallen on his return from Georgia, and for such simple, pious souls as Bray, the working man in whose house he had found peace with God. Even after the final breach, when the recollection of Count Zinzendorf and his disciples occurred to him, he would exclaim, "No English man or woman is like the Moravians."

On the other hand, he was too much of a Churchman, too deeply saturated with Laudian theology, too well acquainted by experience with the value of institutional religion, to accept their slighting view of the Sacraments. He deeply felt the falling away of the Delamottes. On July 11th, 1740, he went to Blendon, warned the whole family solemnly,

and then parted from them. "I rode on softly to Eltham," he says, "cast out by my dearest friends." John Gambold and George Stenhouse were two other intimate friends of his who also at this time forsook the Church of England for Moravianism.

"They saw the ship by many a tempest tossed,
Her rudder broken and her tackling lost,
Left her to sink without their helping hand,
Looked to themselves and basely 'scaped to land.
But shall I, too, the sinking Church forsake?
Forbid it, Heaven, or take my spirit back. . . .
While but a fragment of our ship remain,
That single fragment shall my soul sustain.
Bound to that sacred plank, my soul defies
The great abyss, and dares all hell to rise,
Assured that Christ, *on that*, shall bear me to the skies."

In the poem from which these spirited lines are taken, Charles Wesley asserts his lifelong conviction that the failures and shortcomings of the Church formed no ground for forsaking her. By this and many other utterances he ranged himself with Andrewes and Butler, and the long succession of those who in dark and perplexing times have not despaired of the Church of England.

Howell Harris, the Apostle of Wales, who was Whitefield's most eminent colleague, supported the Wesleys at this time in their controversy with the Moravians. When Wesley was obliged to leave the meeting-house in Fetter Lane, and took on the

disused cannon foundry in Moorfields which became the London headquarters of Methodism, Howell Harris frequently preached there and spoke at their meetings, warning the people against the forsaking of Christian ordinances. "I find a command from God," he said, "to invite all poor sinners to His altar. There I first found Him myself."

By the year 1741 the young movement had marked itself off from Moravian Quietism on the one hand and from Calvinism on the other. The system of the Methodist Societies, begun in 1739, was by this time established on a firm basis. In this consisted the originality of the work of John Wesley. He saw that the extraordinary effect produced by the preaching of himself, his brother and Whitefield would be merely transient unless it were followed up by the systematic shepherding and discipline of the reclaimed souls. The institution of "bands," by which he hoped to secure the disciplinary advantage of the confessional while avoiding its drawbacks, was followed by the development of the distinctive institution of Methodism, the Class Meeting.

This was in the beginning simply a financial expedient. Wesley had incurred heavy monetary responsibilities. With no fixed income besides his Fellowship, he had taken over the old foundry in Moorfields. The place was almost a ruin; it stood in Windmill Street, near the north-west corner of

Finsbury Square. When repaired it held about one thousand five hundred people. The accommodation included a preacher's house, a school-room, and a room where the "bands" met. The tracts, pamphlets, and small hymn-books which John was for ever publishing were kept on sale on the premises. In the preaching-room there were no pews; the men sat on one side and the women on the other.

We have to imagine this humble building, standing close to what is now Finsbury Circus, facing an open, park-like space, laid out with grass and gravel walks, on the very edge of the country. It was one of the lungs of the city, a favourite breathing-place after the fatigues of the day. Under an avenue of elm trees stalls with tea and cake were set out, and here the city apprentice entertained his sweetheart on holiday afternoons. From Moorfields, pleasant country roads lined with villas led to the villages of Islington, Hoxton and Hackney. A fruit market occupied the site where now stands the Mansion House; London Bridge was laden with a double row of crazy shops; Tottenham Court, where Whitefield was to build his famous Tabernacle, was a turnpike on a road that ran between fields to the country suburb of Hampstead.

Wesley had also built a preaching-room in the Horse Fair at Bristol, and further, he was responsible for the upkeep of Kingswood School, and for meeting

the expenses of his various assistants, lay and clerical, on their preaching tours.

To meet these expenses he induced the members of his societies to assess themselves at a small regular sum—a penny a week and a shilling a quarter was the standard rate. They were divided into groups, and a "leader" was appointed to collect the payments. The leader was soon entrusted with the spiritual oversight of the members of his group; and thus the class meeting gradually superseded the "band," and became a weekly gathering for prayer, mutual confession and exchange of spiritual experiences.

John Wesley was the sole proprietor of all his chapels till the Deed of Declaration in 1787 transferred them to the "Legal Hundred." The contributions from the classes in any place were handed by the leaders to the society steward, who was accountable for them to Wesley. Out of this fund Wesley paid the expenses of his growing work. Neither he, nor Charles, nor any of the helpers received anything at first but an allowance for bare living and travelling expenses.

In May 1740 Wesley acquired the premises in West Street, Seven Dials, just out of Long Acre, which was then a fashionable thoroughfare. This became the principal London chapel of the Methodists until the building of the "New Chapel" in City Road. Here Wesley's eldest sister, Emily

Harper, lived for thirty years after she became a widow.

Samuel Wesley had watched with an anxious eye the proceedings of his brothers in the summer and autumn of 1739. He did not live to see the later developments of their work. His death, on November 6th, 1739, was a great blow to his mother, who wrote to her son Charles some days after as follows: "Dear Charles. . . . Your brother was exceeding dear to me in life, and perhaps I have erred in loving him too well. I once thought it impossible for me to bear his loss, but none know what they can bear till they are tried.

"I thank you for your care of my temporal affairs. It was natural to think that I should be troubled because so considerable a part of my support was cut off. But, to say the truth, I have never had an anxious thought of such matters; for it came immediately into my mind that God, by my child's loss, had called me to a firmer dependence on Himself, that though my son was good, he was not my God, and that now my Heavenly Father seemed to have taken my cause more immediately into His own Hand."

Although Mrs. Wesley, like her eldest son, had at first had some misgivings as to the new path on which John and Charles had started, she was now fully satisfied that they were obeying a Divine call. Her sound advice to John on the subject of

the employment of lay preachers has often been quoted. In December 1739 she wrote to her youngest son—

"You cannot more desire to see me than I do to see you. But then, alas! when you come your brother leaves me. Yet that is the will of God, in Whose blessed service you are engaged, Who has hitherto blessed your labour and preserved your persons. That He may continue so to prosper your work, protect you both from evil, and give you strength and courage to preach the true Gospel in opposition to the united powers of evil men and bad angels, is the hearty prayer of, dear Charles, your loving Mother."

In a letter written a few months later, she rebuked him for indulging in a mood of morbid depression :—

"You ask many questions which I care not to answer, but refer you to our dear Lord, Who will satisfy you in all things necessary for you to know. I cannot conceive why you affirm yourself to be no Christian, which is in effect to tell Christ to His face that you have nothing to thank Him for, since you are not the better for anything He has done or suffered for you. I think myself far from being as good a Christian as you are, or as I ought to be, but God forbid I should renounce the little Christianity I have; nay, rather, let me grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ."

Susanna Wesley was near the end of her course when these words were written. On the 9th of March, 1741, the gentle and indomitable spirit departed. Charles was not present, but both John and his sister, Mrs. Lambert, wrote to tell him of his mother's last hours.

" Children," she said, " as soon as I am departed, sing a song of praise to God."

CHAPTER V

HEROIC DAYS

THE fact that the writer of one of the most clear-sighted and suggestive studies of the Wesleyan Movement that has yet appeared, should characterize Charles Wesley as " timid " is the measure of the attention that has been devoted to his character and career in comparison with that of his brother. He made proof of physical courage as a boy at Westminster, when he championed little Murray against the school bully. Excitable and sensitive as he was, yet no sooner did an external danger threaten than all the soldier in him stood to meet it, with foot firmly planted, eye resolved, and hand steady. In moments of perplexity and self-distrust, an insult or a menace braced his nerves. All through the heroic days of the first Methodist missions, if John's was the calm generalship that directed the campaign, Charles was the brilliant cavalry leader who plunged into the thickest of the fray. Like the Norman bard at the battle of Hastings he rode to the onset with a song on his lips, and the Methodist army, singing his hymns, pressed after him, intent in the words

of their Founder on "spreading Scriptural holiness throughout the land."

The colliery village of Kingswood had been the scene of the earliest triumphs of the evangelists. It was here that Whitefield saw the wild pitmen listening to him, with the tears making white channels down their blackened faces. After Whitefield's departure for America his place was taken by the Wesleys, and Charles Wesley again and again praises the simplicity of "this childlike people."

In May 1741 he notes in his journal: "At Kingswood, as soon as I had named my text, 'It is finished,' the love of Christ crucified so constrained me that I burst into tears and felt strong sympathy with Him in His sufferings. In like manner the whole congregation looked on Him Whom they had pierced and mourned."

A collier whose wife had been attracted by Charles Wesley's preaching, burst in upon him one day dragging his four little children with him. He threw the youngest, a mere infant, down on the table in front of the preacher, crying out, "You have got the mother, take the bairns too."

The solidity and seriousness of the work accomplished was shown by lives permanently changed, and death encountered with patience and joy. A doctor who had been called in to see a dying Methodist remarked to Charles Wesley, "Most people die for

fear of dying, but I never met with such people as yours. They are none of them afraid of death, but are calm and patient, and resigned to the last."

One of the Bristol physicians, Dr. Middleton, proved a good Samaritan to Charles Wesley during his serious illness at Bristol in August 1740. Although a stranger to him he attended him with a care which probably saved his life, and refused to take a fee for his services. Charles had scarcely recovered from this illness when a serious riot broke out among the Kingswood colliers, occasioned by the high price of corn. On hearing of the disturbance he rode out towards Kingswood to see what he could do, and was met by about a thousand of them at Lawrence Hill. Many of them knew him well and saluted him affectionately, not having seen him since his illness. He mounted a small eminence and began to speak to them and persuade them to return to their homes, when some of the wilder spirits attempted to break up the meeting, violently pushing and driving the listeners away from the preacher.

"I rode up to a ruffian who was striking one of our colliers and prayed him rather to strike me. He would not, he said, for all the world, and was quite overcome. I turned upon one who struck my horse, and he also sunk into a lamb. Wherever I turned, Satan lost ground."

It seemed, indeed, to the evangelist as though

Satan were making a desperate effort to recover this threatened kingdom. Charles rode calmly here and there among the crowd, followed by his little band of adherents, speaking to each party of the rioters that he met and "gleaned a few from every company." Then, to the sound of one of his own hymns, he marched his company to the school, where they spent two hours in prayer that mischief might be prevented.

"Then news was brought us that the colliers were returned in peace. They had quietly walked into the city, without sticks or the least violence. A few of the better sort went to the Mayor and told their grievances. Then they all returned as they came, without noise or disturbance. . . . Nothing could have more shown the change in them than this rising."

Remember the condition of these men, unable to read or write, embruted by their conditions of labour, and starving. Think of what men in such circumstances have done—of what in another half-century they were to do—of Paris in the Terror and the Bristol riots. One must do all this, if one is to measure the strength of that influence which not only here, but all over England, in the latter half of the eighteenth century, held the forces of ignorant passion in check, moralized and civilized our common people, and kept them patient through the terrible ordeal of the industrial revolution.

The latter part of this year was troubled by the defection of his lieutenant, John Cennick, who seceded from the Methodists of Bristol and became the leader of a Calvinist split. His followers showed great bitterness against the Wesleys. Howell Harris, on the other hand, received Charles Wesley with cordiality, when in November 1740 he visited Cardiff for the first time. He was invited by some of the local clergy to preach in their churches. At one of these services certain members of the congregation, annoyed at the directness of the preacher, got up and walked out of the church. Not content with this demonstration, one of them, a physician in the town, came to the house where Charles was staying, and asked him what he meant by calling him (the physician) a Pharisee from the pulpit. He was followed by a justice and a bailiff, arriving one after the other to enforce the complaint of the doctor. Charles told them that in the church while preaching he recognized no superior but God, and should not ask any man's leave to show him his sins. During the night a mob, largely composed of theatrical people, who were finding the Methodist services dangerous counter-attractions to the playhouse, surrounded the house where Charles was staying, and one of them, who was armed, actually made his way in.

"When the sword was brought in, the spirit of faith was kindled at the sight of the danger. Great

was our rejoicing within, and the uproar of the players without, who strove to force their way after their companion. My female advisers were by no means for my turning out, but deferring my journey. I preferred Mr. Wells's advice of going with him through the midst of our enemies."

Consequently, he walked peaceably to the waterside to take boat for Bristol, "no man forbidding him." They were unable to sail that night, and had to defer their journey till the following morning, but apparently met with no further molestation. Charles remained at Bristol till the end of December, when he returned to London for a time.

In 1742 we find him in Staffordshire, and later at Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he formed the first Methodist society, and did not leave it till John was able to take his place. Very different from this "wild, staring, loving society," as John Wesley describes it, was the congregation which listened to Charles on April 4th, in the Church of St. Mary's at Oxford. The sermon preached on this occasion was printed and went through sixteen editions in seven years.

The year 1743 was to see the climax of mob violence against the Methodists. In February of this year John Wesley published the first edition of the *Rules of the Society of the People called Methodists*. This edition bears his own name only

In the second and subsequent editions the name of Charles is added.

On the 20th of May Charles notes in his journal: "I got once more to our dear colliers at Wednesbury." On the following day he had to face a serious riot, "fierce Ephesian beasts, who roared and shouted and threw stones incessantly." These poor drunken wretches were set on by one of the leading men in the place.

At Sheffield the clergy (still according to Charles's diary) "had so stirred up the people that they were ready to tear them" (the Methodists) "in pieces." One man, a captain in the army, drew his sword on the preacher. Charles looked at him calmly, smiled in his face, and said, "I fear God and honour the King." "His countenance fell in a moment, he fetched a deep sigh, put up his sword, and quickly left the place."

"To one of the company who afterwards informed me, he had said, 'You shall see, if I do but hold a sword to his breast he will faint away.' So perhaps I should, had I only had his principles to trust to; but if at that time I was not afraid, no thanks to my natural courage."

While the mob were doing their best to pull down the meeting-house the constable came to Charles and begged him to leave the town. "I thanked him for his advice, assuring him I should not go a moment the sooner for this uproar." Speaking of

the mob he says, " Their outcries often waked me in the night; yet I believe I got more sleep than any of my neighbours."

Having destroyed the meeting-house, the rioters next attempted to pull down the house where Charles was lodging. The owner applied to the magistrate for protection, but the magistrate refused it unless he would promise to turn out the Methodists.

" The house was on the point of being taken by storm. I was writing within, when the cry of my poor friend and his family, I thought, called me out to those sons of Belial. In the midst of the rabble I found a friend of Edwards, with the Riot Act. At their desire I took and read it, and made a suitable exhortation. One of the sturdiest rebels our constable seized and carried away captive into this house. I marvelled at the patience of his companions, but the Lord overawed them. What was done with the prisoner I know not, for in five minutes I was fast asleep in the room which they had dismantled. . . . I afterwards heard that within the hour they had quitted the place."

Riding from Sheffield to Thorpe he was mobbed and stoned. " Blessed be God, I got no hurt, but only the eggs and dirt. My clothes, indeed, abhorred me, and my arm pained me a little by a blow I received at Sheffield."

He was well received in Leeds, where the local clergy showed themselves friendly. At Newcastle

enormous crowds came to hear him. His common-sense and instinct for reverence were both revolted by the hysteria which accompanied the services. "Many, no doubt" (he writes), "were at our first preaching struck down, both soul and body, into the depths of distress. Their outward affections were easy to be imitated. Many counterfeits I have already detected. To-day one who came from the alehouse was pleased to fall into a fit for my entertainment, and beat himself heartily. I thought it a pity to hinder him, so instead of singing over him, as has so often been done, we left him to recover at his leisure. . . . Some very unstill sisters, who always took care to stand near me, and try which should cry loudest, since I had them removed out of my sight have been as quiet as lambs."

Newcastle was not the only place where these "unstill sisters" were encountered. At Bristol "Jenny Deschamps, a girl of twelve years old, confessed her fits and cryings out" (above thirty of them) "were all feigned that Mr. Wesley might take notice of her."

On his way from the North he visited Epworth, "my native place," as he tenderly calls it. "All who met, saluted me with hearty joy. . . . One of the happiest days I have ever known."

In London he met his uncongenial brother-in-law, Westley Hall, who had now definitely joined the Moravians, to the great distress of his wife.

Charles had a passing glimpse of her at Salisbury later in the year. " She stands alone," he wrote, " refusing to forsake the ordinances of God."

In July he was at St. Ives, where he had to deal with one of the fiercest mobs he had yet encountered. On July 22nd a gang of rowdies broke into the meeting-house, smashed the windows, beat and trampled on the women. They were led by the Town Clerk, and the Mayor's son was one of the ringleaders. This youth, according to Charles's account in his journal, " struck out the candles with his cane and began courageously beating the women. I laid my hand upon him and said, ' Sir, you appear like a gentleman. I desire you would show it by restraining those of the baser sort. Let them strike the men, or me, if they please, but not hurt helpless women and children.' He was turned into a friend immediately and laboured the whole time to quiet his associates." After a time the ruffians began to quarrel among themselves and drove each other out of the meeting-house. " Having kept the field, we gave God thanks for the victory."

On August 20th Charles preached for the first time at the new chapel in Snowsfield, Southwark. In the autumn we find him in the midlands. Meeting his brother John, immediately after the disgraceful outbreak at Wednesbury when he was nearly murdered, Charles writes: " He looked like

a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters."

Later in the year he was at Bristol, whence he made a short excursion into Wales, returning to London about the middle of November.

"On Christmas Day," he writes, "I heard that one of our fiercest persecutors, who had cut his throat and lay for dead some hours, was miraculously revived as a monument of Divine mercy. He was confounded at the sight of me, much more by my comfortable words and a small alms. He could only thank me with his tears."

One of the last and fiercest of the outbreaks in which Charles Wesley was involved took place at Devizes in February 1747. It was worked up by a local curate, who went from house to house declaring that he himself had heard Charles Wesley preach blasphemy before the University. The mob, headed by "the chief gentleman of the town," and accompanied by "the zealous curate, dancing for joy," surrounded the house where he had taken up his quarters, with one of his assistants. After raving round the house for some time, breaking the windows and tearing down the shutters of the shop, they went off to the inn where the preachers' horses had been put up, and turned the poor beasts into a pond, where they were found some hours afterwards, up to their chins in water. The tenant of the adjoining house, a Baptist, let the preachers

into his house by a private passage, and allowed them to rest on his bed. They "accepted his kindness and slept in peace."

The next day the mob played a fire-engine on the house, which flooded the rooms and spoiled the goods in the shop. The preachers and their friends took refuge in a small upper room at the back of the house. Some of the rabble got on the roof and began to take off the tiling. "I was diverted" (says Charles) "by a little girl who called to me through the door, 'Mr. Wesley, Mr. Wesley, creep under the bed. They will kill you. They are pulling down the house.'"

The siege lasted till about three in the afternoon. Other Methodists in the town were harried and assaulted, and the leader of the local "Society" was ducked in the horsepond. Of the two police constables in the town, one was favourable to the Methodists, the other unfavourable, but even he now began to be concerned at the temper of the mob, which, beginning with horseplay, was now rising to positive savagery. This man soon after five p.m. came to Charles, and said that if he would promise not to preach again they would see him safe out of the town. Charles replied that as an Englishman he refused to give up his liberty to visit any part of the kingdom that he pleased. The constable replied quite meekly that all he wanted was an undertaking that Mr. Wesley had no present

intention of coming back to Devizes. Charles answered, "I cannot come now, because I must return to London a week hence; but observe I make no promise of not preaching here when the door is opened, and don't you say that I do."

We may surmise that the constable and his friends said anything that they thought would quiet the rabble. They had some difficulty in controlling the spirits that they had raised. Between two lines of scowling faces Charles and his companion rode out of Devizes, singing the hymn which he had composed, and which served as a battle-song for such times as these—

"Thine Arm hath safely brought us
A way no more expected,
Than when Thy sheep
Passed through the deep
By crystal walls protected.

Thy glory was our rearward,
Thine Hand our lives did cover;
And we, even we
Have passed the sea,
And marched triumphant over."

In the naïve and detailed accounts of similar episodes of which the journal of this period is full, while the native courage of the man comes out clearly enough, there is also an evident wonder at his own composure, the sense of being upheld by an Invisible Hand. The work that Charles Wesley

and his companions did, and the impression that they made on their contemporaries, is inexplicable, unless we remember that they believed themselves with all their hearts to be the recipients of a supernatural call, and to be encompassed by unearthly protection. It was the story once again of the prophet whose eyes were opened so that he saw the celestial horses and chariots between him and the Syrians.

The period of acute persecution and mob violence lasted for about four years. The most painful feature about these attacks is that they were in several cases instigated by members of the local clergy. At Sheffield, at Wednesbury, at St. Ives and elsewhere in Cornwall, Charles complained that the ministers stirred up the people. At Devizes they were, as he notes with his frequent causticity, " wrought up to a proper pitch by the painstaking curate."

The ministers of the older Dissenting denominations, whose congregations were affected by the popularity of the new teachers, did not always show a friendlier spirit. At Dudley the Nonconformist pastors stirred up their congregations to riot against the Methodists. When John Wesley was investigating the cause of a large falling off in the membership of the Newcastle society, he found that a good number of those who had left were Dissenters, who had given up their membership because their

ministers had refused to administer the Sacrament to them if they remained connected with the Wesleyans.

The bishops, although they refrained from strong measures of discipline, were, most of them, at any rate in the early stages of the movement, distinctly unfriendly. Archbishop Potter, it is true, never spoke unkindly of John Wesley, whom, when Bishop of Oxford, he had ordained deacon and priest. "These gentlemen are irregular," he said on one occasion, "but they have done good, and I pray God to bless them." Towards the close of Wesley's career he referred with gratitude to the sympathetic counsel which he received at a time when he was standing on the threshold of his work.

"Near fifty years ago, a great and good man, Dr. Potter, then Archbishop of Canterbury, gave me an advice for which I have ever since had occasion to bless God. 'If you desire to be extensively useful, do not spend your time or strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open, notorious sin, and in promoting real essential holiness.'"

But this was not the general attitude of the Episcopal Bench. Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, and Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, published furious charges against the Methodists. Hurd, Bishop of Worcester, a favourite of George II., and tutor to

his two sons, preached in 1752 on " the mischief of enthusiasm."

One is inclined to be of the opinion of the Countess of Hertford, who, referring in a letter to a sermon which she had heard on " The Great Folly and Danger of being Righteous overmuch," adds that this doctrine " does not seem absolutely necessary to be preached to the people of the present age."

Bishop Gibson in his Charge, published in 1741, reminded his clergy that a century ago " the like clamours were propagated through the nation against the established clergy as a body inactive in the work of religion, whose defects in the discharge of their duty did greatly need to be supplied by itinerant teachers. And those under a notion of more zeal and sanctity, and by pretensions to more than ordinary measures of the Spirit, drew after them confused multitudes of the lower ranks, and did all that was in their power to bring the established service to disgrace. We can have no more pregnant testimony how mischievous such pretences are to religion, and how productive of profaneness, blasphemy, and the most evil doctrines and practices than these and the like results."

Yet, only a year before, the same bishop had confessed that " the decay of piety and religion and the increase of sin and vice are so visible in our days, notwithstanding the endeavours of the parochial clergy, that no additional expedients ought to be

omitted to preserve among the people a sense of duty and a spirit of devotion."

We may wonder now why it was that well-meaning and pious men did not recognize in Wesley and his helpers the most powerful influence that the century was to know, in the direction of preserving and promoting a " sense of duty and a spirit of devotion."

Prejudice and professional jealousy will account for a good deal. But there was also the memory, to which Bishop Gibson referred, of the domination of the " enthusiasts " of the Long Parliament, only a hundred years before. The dignitaries of the Church of England were in no mood to welcome anything which recalled Cromwellian rule. And while Wesley and his brother were definite Churchmen, some of their helpers, such as Edward Perronet, were as savage and unmeasured in their attacks on the Establishment as any Hugh Peters or Praise-God Barebones could have been.

The most extraordinary stories were in circulation as to what the Wesleys taught and as to what went on at their meetings. The effect of strong excitement on ignorant minds, the crying and fainting, the exhibitions of hysteria of which Charles Wesley himself spoke so scathingly—these were not calculated to recommend the movement to those who prided themselves on being " sober, peaceable, and conscientious sons of the Church of England."

But more than all this, the spirit and temper of

the religious movement led by the Wesleys ran clean counter to the prevailing tone of English Churchmanship in the middle of the eighteenth century. The great names in the Church at that date were those of men like Warburton and Waterland, whose task was to prove the reasonableness of religion. But the religion of Wesley and his followers was not—on the surface of it—reasonable. It was saturated with supernaturalism. It appealed to visions and revelations of the Lord.

The Deists were credited by their opponents with the conception of a God who had wound up the Cosmos as a man might wind up a watch, and then left it to itself. But their orthodox assailants laid themselves open to much the same imputation. They tended to present Christianity as an insurance society organized for the purpose of making the best of both worlds. All mysticism was suspect to them; they dreaded and disliked above all things any admission of the possibility of an inrush of the Divine on the ordered chain of linked events which they had hooked on in their own minds to some exceedingly remote Final Cause. The notion of contact between man and the Divine at some definite point, as in Sacraments, was as repugnant to their habits of mind as the claim of a Methodist field preacher to a direct call from God to proclaim the gospel. The age of miracles, in their view, stopped dead at the end of the last chapter of the Acts of

the Apostles. Since then the word of the Lord had been "precious" in the sense of being scarce; "there was no open vision," only the record of what once had been. The Methodists with their extempore prayers, their testimony meetings, where one and another rose to give account of God's special dealings with his soul, the stories of special providences, marvellous answers to prayer, everything which made the convert feel—

> "Witnesses, cohorts, about him to left and to right,
> Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware,"

to help or hinder him on the way to the Celestial City—these "Ranters," as they were called, ranked in the estimation of their clerical critics (let us remember) in the same category as St. Francis or St. Teresa. They were "enthusiasts"—*c'était tout dire.*

Great soreness was also caused by the complete ignoring on the part of the Wesleys and their followers of the system which provides that the person who holds the cure of souls in a parish is responsible for what goes on in it, and that it is not permissible to preach in another man's parish without his leave. We may wonder now that those under whose eyes great part of England had lapsed into heathenism should stand on their petty rights, when the work they had neglected was being done

by others; but doctors have been known to wrangle on points of professional etiquette over a deathbed. No doubt there were many quiet and pious souls in country parsonages up and down England who experienced great searchings of heart when the Methodist arrived, with his extempore sermons and hymns that caught at the heart-strings, drawing the people to the preaching on the village green, away from the peaceful and decorous atmosphere of the parish church. Not every one could meet the situation with the wise and cheerful detachment of Parson Irvine in *Adam Bede*.

Notwithstanding all that may be said as to the low standard of clerical life and duty under the four Georges, it is well to remember that Goldsmith's exquisite portrait of a country parson—the only picture worthy to make a pair with the still more famous portrait by Chaucer—was painted from a clergyman of the Irish Establishment, which has left an even worse name in history than the English Church of the eighteenth century.

"A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich with forty pounds a year;
Remote from towns he ran his godly race,
Not e'er had changed nor wished to change his place;
Unpractised he to fawn or seek for power,
By doctrines fashioned to the varying hour;
Far other aims his heart had learned to prize,
More skilled to raise the wretched than to rise. . . .

At church with meek and unaffected grace,
His looks adorned the venerable place;
Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway,
And fools who came to scoff remained to pray.
The service past, around the pious man,
With steady zeal, each honest rustic ran;
E'en children followed with enduring wile,
And plucked his gown to earn the good man's smile. . . .
To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given,
But all his serious thoughts had rest in heaven.
As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm,
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,
Eternal sunshine settles on its head."

CHAPTER VI

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE WORK

One reason of the treatment meted out to the early Methodists was that the beginning of their movement coincided with a time of great national anxiety and unrest. The unpopularity of the Hanoverian sovereigns with a large part of the nation, the incessant wars abroad and Jacobite intrigues at home, invasion panics and alarms of spies and plotters, kept the whole people, rulers as well as populace, in a state of continual nervous excitement. In the imagination of the people Popish emissaries were everywhere. The teaching of the Wesleys, with its insistence on the reality of Sacramental grace, alarmed those who had been taught to consider such teaching a badge of the Nonjurors. Their opposition to Calvinism went so far as to lay a stress on the necessity of working out one's own salvation, which was considered by their opponents to commit them to something very like the Popish doctrine of "merits." Their emotional preaching and their ascetic lives seemed more in tune with a Jesuit mission than with the Church as by law established. All this was more than enough to give

colour to the accusation of being crypto-Papists, which was so frequently brought against them. Any tavern-haunting, fox-hunting parson, who felt his devotion to the ale-bench rebuked by the strict lives of the Methodists, need only assert that they were leagued in secret to bring back "wooden shoes and warming-pans," and he was sure to find ready credence.

An incident related in Charles Wesley's journal of March 1744 gives a good illustration of the kind of annoyance to which he and his colleagues were exposed. On the 14th, while visiting the societies in and near Leeds, he was told that there was a warrant out against him on a charge of speaking treasonable words. He was then about to leave Leeds, but decided to remain and go before the magistrates at Wakefield the next day. "I found it hard," he says simply, "not to premeditate or think of to-morrow." In the evening he met the society in a crazy old upper room. The rotten flooring gave way and let about a hundred people down with him into the room below. Some of the congregation were severely hurt, though he himself escaped with only slight injuries. One lad, who had come to disturb the meeting, had his leg broken, and "was taken up, roaring, 'I will be good; I will be good.'"

"Next morning" (he writes) "I rode to Wakefield, and at eleven, waited upon Mr. Justice Burton at his

inn, with two other justices, Sir Rowland Wynne and the Rev. Mr. Zouch. I told him I had seen a warrant of his to summon witnesses to some treasonable words, said to be spoken by one Westley, and I had put off my journey to London to wait upon him and answer whatever should be laid to my charge. He answered he had nothing to say against me and I might depart. I replied that was not sufficient without clearing my character, and that of many innocent people whom their enemies were pleased to call Methodists. 'Vindicate them,' said my brother clergyman, 'that you will find a very hard task.' I answered, 'As hard as you may think it, I will engage to prove that they all, to a man, are true members of the Church of England, and loyal subjects of His Majesty King George.' I then desired they would administer to me the oaths, and added, 'If it were not too much trouble, gentlemen, I could wish you would send for every Methodist in England, and give them the same opportunity you do me, of declaring their loyalty upon oath.'

"Justice Burton said he was informed that we commonly prayed for the Pretender in all our societies or *nocturnal meetings*, as Mr. Zouch called them. I answered, 'The very reverse is true. We constantly pray for His Majesty King George by name. I am as true a Church of England man and as loyal a subject as any man in the kingdom!'"

As the witnesses who had been summoned to testify to his treasonable words had not put in an appearance, Charles went to wait for them at a neighbouring house. After some time he was told that the principal witness, one Mary Castle, on hearing that Mr. Charles Wesley would be present to meet his accusers, had suddenly bethought herself that she did not herself hear the treasonable words spoken, but had had them repeated to her by another woman. Three more witnesses also retracted and declined to testify. Only one of the five put in an appearance, an innkeeper named Joseph Woods, who confessed that he had nothing to say and would not have appeared if he had not been forced. Charles Wesley was then called before the magistrates, who said that he might depart as they had nothing against him. He insisted that they should examine Woods. "Had I not been here" (he said) "he would have had enough to say and ye would have had witnesses and oaths enough. But I suppose my coming has prevented theirs." One of the justices added, "I suppose so too."

All that they could get out of Woods was this: "I have nothing to say against the gentleman. I only heard him pray that the Lord would call home His banished." Mr. Zouch, the clergyman, then asked if there was any other reference to show that the words "pointed to these troublesome times"

He was informed that there was none. " Now, gentlemen," said Charles Wesley, " give me leave to explain my own words. I had no thought of praying for the Pretender, but for those that confess themselves strangers and pilgrims upon earth, who seek a country, knowing this is not their place. . . We are not at home till we are in heaven." The clergyman answered : " I thought you would so explain the words, and it is a fair interpretation." Charles then asked if they were all satisfied. " They said they were, and cleared me as fully as I desired."

Charles Wesley, a man of birth, connections, and education, was able to stand up for himself and take his own part effectively, but poor men up and down the country, without these advantages, often fared badly. Some of them were handed over to the press-gang, among others John Nelson, who was released through the exertions of Charles Wesley and Lady Huntingdon. Another, Thomas Beard, was not so fortunate. John Wesley wrote of him in his journal as " a quiet, peaceable man, who had lately been torn from his trade and wife and child, and sent away as a soldier, for no other crime, either committed or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance. But his soul was in nothing terrified by his adversaries. Yet the body after a while sunk under its burden. He was then lodged in the hospital at Newcastle, where he praised God

continually." The words that follow throw some light on the state of medical practice and sanitary knowledge at the time, when filth and incompetence in our hospitals slew more men than the enemy's bullets. " His fever increasing, he was let blood. [Apparently with a dirty lancet.] His arm festered, mortified, and was cut off; two or three days after which, God signed his discharge and called him up to his eternal home."

In the midst of all these troubles, with Civil War and invasion impending, while they and their friends were in constant danger of mob violence, imprisonment or exile, the two Wesleys and four of their clerical helpers met at the Foundry chapel in London on June 25th, 1744, and held the first Conference of " The People called Methodists." The names of these clergymen were Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton, near Evesham, who is said to have been a descendant of Rowland Taylor, the Marian martyr; Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley; Hodges, Rector of Wenvoe in South Wales; and John Meriton, from the Isle of Man. Lady Huntingdon entertained the Conference at her town house, and some of the lay preachers were present by invitation. The proceedings were recorded, as they are to this day, in the form of questions and answers. Among the " Minutes " we find the following, which shows that the relation of the young societies to the Church of

England had already begun to present serious difficulties.

"Q. How far is it our duty to obey the bishops?"

"A. In all things indifferent. And on this ground of obeying them, we should obey the canons, as far as we can with a safe conscience.

"We cannot with a safe 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."

During this month Charles was called to visit his old Georgian acquaintance, Appee, in the Tower, where he was awaiting transportation for theft. "I gave him books and advice, which perhaps may not be finally lost upon him."

In August of this year the Wesley brothers were at Oxford, where John preached at St. Mary's for the last time. The unpopularity of the Methodists at this time was so great that after the service the two brothers, with Piers and Meriton, walked away alone, no man daring to join himself to them. "I was a little diverted" (writes Charles) "at the coyness of my old friend, Mr. Wells, who sat just before me, but took great care to turn his back upon me all the time, which did not hinder my seeing through him."

Oxford at this time was full of visitors who had arrived for the races, and Charles preached in the yard of the inn to a crowd of sportsmen and gownsmen.

In spite of slander and prejudice the movement was constantly gaining adherents. One of the most influential of these was Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham. He was of French extraction, and it was his grand-nephew who built the famous bridges of Concord and Neuilly over the Seine at Paris. He had been prejudiced against the Wesleys by the report that they were adversaries of the Church, but after coming into contact with one or two of the London Methodists, he changed his mind and sought an opportunity of meeting the brothers. John was introduced to him by Mr. Piers on August 14th, 1744, and about a month afterwards, his son Edward, who had become one of Wesley's helpers, brought Charles to make his father's acquaintance. Another clerical friend of this period was the famous William Grimshaw, Vicar of Haworth, whose eccentricity was a legend of the place before the Brontës gave it a more abiding celebrity.

The following winter was saddened to Charles Wesley by the trouble to which he refers in a letter written from Epworth on December 17th.

"My greatest trouble is that I have innocently brought such a burden upon my friends, especially one; neither can I conceive it possible that this trouble should be wholly removed here. The joint may perhaps be set, but the halting will continue, till I come to the land where all things are forgotten.

"God, who has known my soul in adversity, causes me also to know it. That He loves me I can no more doubt than of His being. He has likewise given me to love others with a pure love, particularly one person from whom I never expect or desire any further communication of good than I do from my mother or other spirits of just men made perfect. And however Providence may work, I mean never more to see *that* person (if without sin I may forbear) till we stand together at the Judgment Day."

The wound so bitterly felt was a double one to his affections and his reputation—a slander set about by one of the lay preachers, whom Charles had refused to recommend for ordination. The slanderer ultimately retracted his assertions and asked pardon, but, meanwhile, the lie had done its work.

Some verses which he wrote at this time enable us to measure the pain and indignation that this episode caused him. He calls God to witness to the innocency of his life—

"Surely Thou didst as from my birth instil
A secret horror of external ill;
I durst not tread the path by sinners trod,
Do this great crime and sin against my God.
Thou knowest, for all our hearts by Thee are seen,
Thou knowest I am not here like other men . . .
Thy grace restrained my every mean desire
And kept the bush unburned amid the fire."

He drew some comfort from the thought that the virulence of the slander was a testimony to the special malice of Satan, and hence an indication of the success of his work.

"Me if Thou hadst never sent
Satan's stronghold to o'erthrow,
Would he thus his malice vent,
Stir up all his power below,
Make me as his children black?
Would he his own kingdom shake?

Lord, my times are in Thy hand,
Judged in man's unrighteous day,
Let us in Thy Judgment stand,
When the wicked melt away.
Vindicate Thy servant there,
Clear me at the last great bar."

On January 13th he writes: "In much distress at the altar . . . I have found these last few days more comfort both in preaching and praying than for some years. Is not our God a very present help in time of trouble?"

"*January 26th.*—Mr. Erskine came to me at Shorts' Gardens with a message which the Bishop of London had sent to Lady Huntingdon, that if I could come to him and declare my innocency touching the scandal and take the sacrament upon it, he would desire no further satisfaction, but himself clear me. I immediately consented, and sent my brother advice of it."

The matter was soon after set right by the confession of the author of the mischief, but it gave

the Bishop of London an opportunity to evince his personal friendliness to the Wesleys.

In March of this year Charles was in Bristol, returning to London for Easter. "We kept the octave, communicating each day, and the Lord never sent us away without a blessing."

In June 1745 he visited Salisbury and found his much-tried sister, Mrs. Hall, "as a rock in the midst of waves." In the previous year John had received a long letter from Westley Hall urging him and his brother to leave the Church. John's reply showed that, at that time, no difference had declared itself between him and Charles on the subject of the necessity of episcopacy. "We believe it would not be right for us to administer either Baptism or the Lord's Supper unless we had a commission to do so from those bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles. We believe there is and always was in every Christian Church an outward priesthood ordained by Jesus Christ, and an outward sacrifice offered therein by men ordained to act as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God."

Two years later John Wesley read Lord King's book, published in 1691, which, as he stated, effected a complete change in his opinions on this point. But for the time being the serious differences between the two brothers on the question of the necessity of episcopacy had not yet declared themselves.

In the entry for July 31st, 1745, in Charles's diary, there occurs the first mention of a name which was to be intimately connected with his own. Marmaduke Gwynne of Garth, a Breconshire squire, had been influenced by the preaching of Howell Harris, and through him had come to know the Wesleys. He was present at the second Conference, which was held at Bristol in August, and invited Charles to visit him at Garth; but having sprained his leg, Charles was unable to accept the invitation, and the visit to his future father-in-law had to be put off.

Almost immediately afterwards came the news of the landing of Charles Edward Stuart in Scotland, quickly followed by the tidings that the Jacobite forces had occupied Edinburgh.

His return to London in the autumn is marked by a little incident which is worth recalling as an instance of the quiet dealing with individual souls, which formed a more important part of the missionary work of the Wesleys than their pulpit triumphs.

"After preaching in Bath, a woman desired to speak with me. She had been in our society, but left the fellowship and fell little by little into the depths of vice and misery. I called Sister Naylor to hear her mournful account. She had lived for some time at a wicked house in Avon Street, and confessed it was hell to her to see our people pass

by to the preaching, knew not what to do or how to escape. We bade her fly for her life and not once look behind her. M. Naylor [a woman member of the society] kept her with herself till morning, and then I carried her with us in the coach to London, and delivered her to the care of our sister Davey. Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?"

On Good Friday 1746, a day always solemnly observed by Charles Wesley, he writes: "I drank tea at my sister Wright's with Mrs. Rich and her two youngest daughters, one the greatest miracle of all accomplishments, both in mind and body, that I had ever seen." Mrs. Rich was the wife of the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre She heard Charles Wesley preach once at West Street Chapel, and refused to appear on the stage again. Her accomplished step-daughters were taught music by Handel.

Charles Wesley had a passion for music and greatly enjoyed an occasional hour at one of Mrs. Rich's afternoon receptions, where her daughters and their musical friends entertained the visitors. After one of these concerts, he notes: "We caught a physician by the ear through the aid of Mr. Lampe and some of our sisters. This is the true use of music." Mr. Lampe was a German musician, who had been engaged by Rich to compose or arrange music for Covent Garden. He became a

Methodist, and set several of Charles's hymns to music.

Three of the hymns, to Charles's great gratification, were set to music by Handel himself, and published by Samuel Wesley in 1826. They are: "Sinners, obey the Gospel call," "O Love Divine, how sweet Thou art," and "Rejoice, the Lord is King."

Mrs. Wright, the beautiful, unhappy Hetty Wesley, though mismated with a sot, who beat her and made her miserable, had many friends who were attracted by her stately beauty and the charm of her vivid personality. These, and the faithful friendship of her brothers, helped her through the difficult years, till the day came when Charles could write: "I followed her to her quiet grave, and wept with those that wept."

He was at Bristol when the news arrived of the defeat of the Young Pretender's rebellion. In June he visited Cornwall, and in September we find him visiting Mr. Perronet at Shoreham. While he was preaching the church was invaded by a band of rioters, who turned it into a bear garden. He was stoned by the mob and might have been severely hurt but that Charles Perronet screened him with his own body. Edward Perronet, the other son, accompanied him in the autumn on a preaching tour to Newcastle.

Early in the following year (1747) he was staying with Mr. Grimshaw at Haworth. In February took place the riots at Devizes, of which something has already been said. During a good part of this year Charles Perronet was his travelling companion.

In September he had a letter from Whitefield, who wrote from Philadelphia : " Some have written me things to your disadvantage. I do not believe them. Love thinks no evil of a friend, and such are you to me."

On Whitefield's return to England he gradually loosened his connection with the Calvinistic Methodists, who began to look more and more to Howell Harris as their head. Whitefield, on the other hand, became closely associated with Lady Huntingdon and the earnest Calvinistic section in the Church of England, among whom she was by this time recognized as a leader.

Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, was the most important of a group of noble dames who led a reaction in fashionable society against the coarse worldliness that had been the rule under the first two Georges. She was one of the three daughters and co-heiresses of the second Earl Ferrers, and was born in 1707, being thus a year older than Charles Wesley. In 1728 she married the second Earl of Huntingdon, who left her a widow at thirty-nine. The three sisters-in-law, the Ladies Mary, Elizabeth, and Margaret Hastings, all of them distinguished

and interesting women, were among the first supporters of Whitefield. Lady Betty was the object of Steele's famous compliment, "to love her is a liberal education." She has a further title to remembrance as the friend and helper of the saintly Bishop Wilson. Lady Margaret became the wife of one of the original Methodists, Benjamin Ingham, who was afterwards a bishop among the Moravians. Lady Frances Shirley and Lady Gertrude Hotham also opened their drawing-rooms to Whitefield, when his preaching first began to electrify London.

Lady Huntingdon was untiring in her efforts to bring her friends to hear Whitefield and the Wesleys. To one of these invitations the Duchess of Buckingham made the famous reply: "I thank your ladyship for your information concerning the Methodist preachers. Their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinctured with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth."

There is a pathetic note in the reply—querulous though it be—of old Sarah of Marlborough to a similar invitation: "I must accept your obliging invitation to accompany you to hear Mr. Whitefield." After the usual outbreak of spleen against her own relatives, she adds, "I always feel more

happy and contented after an hour's conversation with you than I do after a whole week's round of amusement."

In 1746 Lady Huntingdon appointed Whitefield her private chaplain. This was one of the privileges of her rank, which she exercised freely. She also built chapels at Bath, Tonbridge and London, in which her chaplains might officiate.

The multiplication of proprietary chapels was a feature of the Church life of the period. As a Church historian says: "Well-to-do people provided for their own religious wants at Cheltenham or Bath or Brighton by the system of proprietary chapels, by which a popular preacher invested money in hiring a building, and fitting it up as a chapel, and then having obtained a licence from the bishop attracted a large congregation and made a handsome income by letting the seats."[1] What this might degenerate into we see in Thackeray's portrait of the Rev. Charles Honeyman, incumbent of Lady Whittlesea's chapel in Mayfair. But Whitefield and the Wesleys, though as ready, when opportunity offered, to preach the gospel in Mayfair drawing-rooms as in London slums or on Cornish moors, never forgot that their first and most imperative mission was to the poor.

In August 1747 Charles Wesley found himself able to accept his friend Squire Gwynne's invita-

[1] Wakeman, *History of the Church of England.*

tion to visit him at Garth, his home in Breconshire, where he lived in patriarchal state, the head of a family of nine sons and daughters, in a great rambling house, with twenty servants and a private chaplain. His wife had brought him £30,000, a good fortune for those days. She was a woman of character and intelligence, and evidently exercised considerable influence over her husband. She was a good deal distressed at first when her husband became an adherent of Howell Harris, and afterwards of the Wesleys; but her prejudices were dispelled to some extent by reading Wesley's pamphlet, *An Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. The favourable testimony of some of her friends who had known the Wesleys at Oxford did more, and when Charles Wesley himself arrived as the guest of the family, the change in her feelings was complete. He appears at once to have endeared himself to the whole family, and the regret was mutual when he left them on September 2nd for Ireland.

He remained in Ireland till the end of the following March, overseeing the infant society which his brother had founded in Dublin, and making missionary journeys into other parts of the island.

The converts in Dublin had been passing through a time of severe persecution just before his arrival; their preaching-room had been broken into and the

furniture burned. Lawlessness prevailed to an extent which may be judged from the entry in his diary : " The Ormond mob and Liberty mob seldom part till one or more are killed. A poor constable was the last, whom they beat and dragged about till they had killed him, and then hung him up in triumph. None was called in question for it, but the earth covered his blood. Last week a woman was beaten to death by the rabble . . . she was caught picking a pocket. . . . A poor, weakly man . . . was so abused by his neighbour, who knocked him down and stamped upon his stomach, that he died soon after. The murderer was, indeed, brought to trial, but acquitted as usual."

Somewhat to his surprise, after all this, his first mission services passed off very quietly. " Never have I seen a quieter congregation at the Foundry " (he writes) " than we had at the Green both morning and evening. The Papists stood like lambs. I quoted Kempis, which makes some of them confident I am a good Catholic."

He was scrupulous, as always, in attending Holy Communion, and in bringing his people with him. He notes with some humour that he was not looked upon with much favour by the orthodox when he went to St. Patrick's. " The Dean I must except, who has always treated us with great courtesy, looks pleased to see us make the bulk of the communicants, appointed us a seat by ourselves, and

constantly administers to me first as the rubric directs."

While in Dublin he visited the prisons as usual, and spent many hours with a poor woman who was condemned to be burned to death for coining.

"*February 25th.*—We have wrestled in prayer for the poor creature, and to-day I saw plainly the answer received. Her heart was broken in pieces."

"*February 26th and 27th.*—I was again with the woman. Near twenty of the poor wretches pressed in after me. Her tears and lamentations reached both their hearts and mine."

"*February 29th.*—I heard from the keeper that a reprieve was come down and a pardon expected. . . . 'Oh,' said she to me, 'I am afraid if my life be spared that I shall fall from God. I know He would have mercy on me, if I die now.'"

"*March 1st.*—I met the woman, released from her chains both of mind and body. She threw herself at my feet and cried, 'Oh, Sir, under God, you have saved my soul. I have found mercy when I looked for judgment. I am saved by a miracle of mercy.'"

At this time, when everybody who travelled at all went by road and mostly on horseback, you could tell a Methodist afar off by his singing. Many paragraphs of the journal begin, "I took horse." Here is one.

"*February 8th,* 1748.—I took horse for Tyrrell's

Pass. We overtook a lad whistling one of our tunes. He is a constant hearer though a Roman, and joined with us in several hymns which he had by heart."

At Athlone on February 10th, they had their first taste of mob violence in Ireland. They rode on singing till within half a mile of the town, when they were suddenly set upon by a crowd of ruffians armed with stones. One of the Methodists was knocked senseless, and some were for retreating, but Charles asked them if they could bring themselves to leave their brother in the hands of his murderers. The Dragoons, coming out of Athlone, dispersed the rioters, and the Methodists carried the wounded man into a cottage, where he was kindly treated, the surgeon who attended him refusing any remuneration for his trouble.

It is difficult to avoid monotony in the cold record of these things, the long ride to the preaching place and the congregation waiting under the open sky. Long before the preacher arrives the sound of the Methodist hymn is borne on the winter wind and taken up by the waiting people. In the towns there are visits to be made to the sick and the prisoners, and in the evenings fellowship meetings in private houses or in the meeting-house. On Sundays the Methodist service is held in the dark of the early morning, so as not to interfere with the due observance of the order of Morning and Evening Prayer in the parish church. Every Sunday he

brings his people to the parochial altar, to wait on God in "His own appointed way." In reading the few published sermons of Charles Wesley one misses the clear logic, the sword-like trenchancy of phrase, which makes John Wesley's discourses even now such good reading—nearly as good as the *Serious Call*. Cold print cannot give the spirit of those moments, when the evangelist saw the people ranged before him on the hillside in their hundreds, waiting for the good news of God.

"He as He wills shall solder and shall sunder,
Slay in a day and quicken in an hour,
Tune Him a music from the Sons of Thunder,
Forge and transform my passion into power.

Quick in a moment, infinite for ever,
Send an arousal better than I pray,
Give me a grace upon the faint endeavour,
Souls for my hire, and Pentecost to-day."

CHAPTER VII

MARRIAGE

In Mr. Quiller-Couch's fine story, *Hetty Wesley*, he represents one of the Wesley girls as saying to her brother Charles, "Something of you—your worldly happiness belike, will escape" from the fate which seemed to have sacrificed the fortunes of the whole family to the tremendous mission of John Wesley. It is certainly true that while the beautiful sisters made mean and miserable marriages, and John's unlucky choice was the dark spot in a singularly successful career, Charles had the happiness to find his true mate and to live with her many years in peace.

Neither John nor Charles had accepted celibacy as a necessary part of his scheme of life. They both held themselves, in the words of the Article, "free like other Christian men, to marry at their discretion, as they should judge it to serve better for godliness." Whether Charles remembered the advice which General Oglethorpe gave him on this point, we do not know. Probably, in the first

enthusiasm of his militant years, he had no time to think of it. Now, however, in 1748, he was forty years old. After more than ten years of strenuous work the foundations of the "Methodist Connexion" had been laid all over England. The organization and consolidation of the work were in the hands of John. He had already grouped his converts in each place where a society was established, into classes and "bands," marked out the spheres of his travelling preachers, set the local preachers their tasks, mapped out England into districts with a "Chairman" over each, and laid down the general lines of that marvellous organization, so strong and yet so supple, which functions to this day. He had established the simple system of finance through the class-meetings, "a penny a week and a shilling a quarter," from each member, which was to cover England with preaching-houses, to maintain a ministry, training-colleges, and schools. The whole movement hung on this one man to an extent which we in our own day can better understand, because we have seen the parallel to it. "If by absolute power," said Wesley with charming simplicity, "you mean power which I exercise alone, without any coadjutor, it is certainly true, but I see no objection to it." General Booth might have said the same. The followers of John Wesley no more objected to his autocracy than did the Salvationists of our own time to the despotic power

of their leader, and, of all John Wesley's subjects, not the least loyal was his brother Charles.

At the same time, if John Wesley constructed the powerful engine of the Methodist societies, Charles, one might almost say, found the steam. The play of "Hamlet" with Hamlet left out is not more inconceivable than the Methodist movement without Charles Wesley's hymns. The devotional impulse which he started has outlived its first occasion, overflowed the bounds of its channel, and quickened and inspired every communion that calls itself Christian. The lay preachers and itinerants, the society classes and quarterly meetings, made the great Methodist community, which saved England from the horrors of the French Terror, evangelized the wild west of America, Christianized the negroes of the Southern States, and numbers to-day its 100,000,000 adherents all over the globe. But the songs of Charles Wesley have a field that transcends the bounds of Methodism, they have no limited or local use, they are not for one sect but for all Christians.

In the short Memoir, prefixed to a volume of Charles Wesley's early sermons, probably written by his widow, there is an interesting comparison between the brothers. John Wesley, says the writer, was "born with a temper which scarce any injuries could provoke. Charles was full of sensibility and fire; his patience and meekness was neither the

effect of temperament nor reason, but of divine principles."

"The peculiar virtue of John was forgiveness of enemies." He had the power, it seemed, of absolutely forgetting a fault or an injury. Charles, on the other hand, "could not replace his confidence where he had experienced treachery."

"His most striking excellence was his humility; it extended to his talents as well as virtues; he not only acknowledged and pointed out, but delighted in the superiority of another, and if ever there was a human being who disliked power, avoided pre-eminence and shrank from praise, it was Charles Wesley."

It is a remarkable instance of this self-effacement that it was not till 1749 that he published any hymns in his own name, although several hymn-books had already been issued by the Wesley brothers jointly, in which nearly all the original hymns were by Charles. The two volumes of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, issued in that year, were brought out by subscription, with the object of defraying the expenses of his marriage, and several of them were addressed to the lady who had by this time become his wife.

This was Sarah, one of the daughters of Squire Gwynne of Garth. Mrs. Gwynne, in common with the whole family, seems to have taken a great personal liking to Charles when he paid his first

visit to them before leaving for Ireland. On his return, in March, he made straight for their home. He was in bad health when he left Ireland, and arrived at Holyhead in great pain with a swollen face on March 21st. He spent the next night at Carnarvon and the third at Tan-y-bwlch. He hoped to get through to Garth the next day, but was quite exhausted and was obliged to spend the night at a poor cottage. The following day he rode through the rain to Garth, which he reached, utterly spent. "All ran to nurse me," he says quaintly. Until April 3rd he was "exercised with strong pain," but on that day he was well enough to assist in the Sunday services, and on Monday he was able to take the air in Mrs. Gwynne's sedan-chair.

The result of this experience was to give him a firm place in the affections of the warm-hearted Welsh family, and when on April 5th he started for London, he was accompanied on the first stage of the journey by Mr. Gwynne and Miss Sally. Sarah Gwynne was a small, pleasant-looking girl of twenty, with a beautiful voice. Probably neither she nor any of her family at this time regarded the mission preacher of twice her age as a possible bridegroom, but his intimacy with the family made rapid progress during the year. In June Mr. Gwynne came to Bristol with Sally, while Charles was in charge of the society there, and when he went to London they accompanied him and stayed

at the Foundry. It may have been at this time that a perspicacious old woman belonging to the London society formed the opinion which she afterwards expressed to Charles when he took his wife to call upon her. She told him that the moment he entered her room with Miss Gwynne, she said to herself, "That's my minister's wife." Charles also made the Gwynnes known to his friends the Perronets, and to Ebenezer Blackwell, the wealthy banker of Lewisham, a steady helper and friend to the London Methodists.

At the end of July he escorted Sally and her father back to Bristol, and on July 29th preached outside the Assembly Rooms to a fashionable crowd. "The ladies in their coaches were surprisingly patient," he said.

On August 2nd he was again at Garth and noted the cordiality of Mrs. Gwynne's welcome. On the 8th he left his "dearest friends," and started for Ireland. He almost welcomed the accident which caused him to miss the boat at Holyhead, as it gave him time for retirement "in which I could both write to and pray for those who are dear to me as my own soul." He joined his brother at Dublin and then went on to Cork, travelling through the greater part of Ireland, and had much success, preaching to huge crowds, giving endless private interviews and forming societies.

On September 11th he notes a sentence in the

Bishop of Exeter's charge to his clergy, which seems to him worthy to be written in letters of gold. It was to the effect that by merely moral preaching the clergy had " preached the people into downright infidelity," and urged them " to preach Jesus and salvation in His blood."

He reached Holyhead on October 9th after a rough crossing, and left as soon as possible for Garth *via* Carnarvon. Leaving Carnarvon at break of day, he rode to Garth over the mountains, through rocky, dangerous country. As he put it : " We wandered through the mountains at random with such guides as we could get, and I was quite reconciled to the thought of taking up my lodgings there. . . . Yet the Lord brought us through all." At Rhyader the curate undertook to guide him for the rest of the way, and not being able to get another horse for love or money, walked beside him till they reached Garth.

During this visit he seems to have finally made up his mind to ask Sarah Gwynne to be his wife, and when he arrived in London in November he made known his decision to his brother.

In doing so he was only fulfilling a solemn compact made between John Wesley and his original helpers, to the effect that no one of them was to take steps to matrimony without the knowledge and consent of the others. He found that John not only approved his choice, but had actually anticipated

it, by drawing up a list of three young ladies, any of whom he considered suitable objects for Charles's choice, and of these Sarah Gwynne was one.

The only difficulty was likely to be raised by the bride's family, and concerned the question of income. Charles had literally nothing of his own except the income from his studentship, and a small legacy which he had recently received from a Mrs. Sparrow of Lewisham, a connection of Ebenezer Blackwell's. From the funds of the society he and his brother drew a bare sufficiency for their daily needs. The golden rule of communism, " from each according to his ability and to each according to his need," was the rule of the earliest Methodist preachers. They had their board and lodging, horse-hire and other necessaries for their work, provided for them out of the contributions of the members, and the literary profits of the Wesley publications, and, apparently, that was all.

On the day after Charles had declared his intentions to his brother, he received fifty pounds, in payment of his legacy, and it was armed with this fortune that he presented himself before the wealthy Mrs. Gwynne, to whom her husband had referred him. Sarah's sister, Rebecca, a warm admirer of Charles, broke the matter to her mother. Mrs. Gwynne had a sincere regard for Charles. She declared at once that she had rather give her daughter to him than to any man in England, were it not for

the want of fortune. She admitted that "he had acted like a gentleman in all things." Charles asked her whether it would content her if he could guarantee an income of £100 a year. She said it would. Charles made his way to London in horrible December weather, through pouring rain, but he notes: "Such cheerfulness of heart, such a sense of joy and thankfulness, I have seldom known."

Mr. Blackwell was quite willing to join two or three other friends in guaranteeing the small annual income which was Mrs. Gwynne's minimum; but now John Wesley came forward with another proposal. He thought that the arrangement proposed by the banker might compromise his brother's independence, and suggested as an alternative that Charles's income should come out of the profits of their books. As these were derived in large measure from the sale of Charles's hymns, it seemed a perfectly just arrangement.

Mrs. Gwynne, however, still hesitated, and Charles induced his friend, the Vicar of Shoreham, to write to her on his behalf. In a letter dated January 14th, 1749, Mr. Perronet, after reminding her that the worldly wealth does not matter to those whose affections are set on things above, goes on to say—

"I have hitherto been speaking as though Mr. Wesley's worldly circumstances wanted an apology, but this is not the case. The writings of these

gentlemen are even at this time a very valuable estate, and when it shall please God to open the minds of people more, and prejudice is worn off, it will be much more valuable. . . . They are works which will last and sell while any sense of true religion and learning shall remain among us."

This letter had the desired effect, and in February Charles Wesley, with his brother and one of the young Perronets, set out for Garth to arrange for the marriage. Charles found Mrs. Gwynne " very open and affectionate. She has fought my battle against her own relatives, particularly her son." Mr. Howell Gwynne was told bluntly by his sister Becky that he ought to feel honoured by the proposal, and finding the ladies of the family against him, gave in with a good grace and was soon " as affable as the rest." John Wesley repeated his engagement about the allowance which Charles was to have from the sale of the books. Sarah Gwynne, on her part, promised not to interfere with the missionary journeys of her future lord, or with his vegetarian diet. Mrs. Gwynne tried to make him promise not to return to barbarous Ireland, but Sally would not hear of his giving such a pledge, and expressed a wish to attempt the adventure herself.

He left Garth at the end of February Miss Gwynne's accepted bridegroom. The marriage was to take place in April. In the interval he

corresponded voluminously with his bride, largely in verse.

Before the wedding actually took place John showed some uneasiness and reluctance. Perhaps he had misgivings as to the influence of the wealthy and rather worldly Mrs. Gwynne, perhaps he feared that—

> "Isaac's pure blessing and a verdant home"

might withdraw his brother from the missionary life. Perhaps it was merely an undefined jealous dread lest this new and intimate influence should undermine a friendship closer than is the wont of brothers. His vacillations seem to have been somewhat trying to the bridegroom, as appears from his journal.

"*April* 1*st*.—Just as we were setting out for Wales my brother appeared full of scruples, and refused to go to Garth at all. I kept my temper and promised, if he could not be satisfied there, to desist. I saw all was still in God's Hands and committed myself to Him."

"*April* 3*rd*.—He seemed quite averse to signing his own agreement, yet at five we set out with a heavy heart."

"*April* 4*th*.—I met Mr. Hodges at Forman. He asked me, 'My brother, what are you seeing in this thing? Happiness? Then you will be sadly dis-

appointed. If a help and comfort only, look up to God and He will surely give it you.' "

John Wesley's notes of the journey are interesting. He had always a freer mind than Charles when travelling, and a greater readiness to note any point of interest which presented itself. This intellectual alertness makes his journal much better reading than his brother's. Charles would never have given us this little vignette.

" We had almost continued rain from Aberdare to the great rough mountain that hangs over the Vale of Brecknock, but as soon as we gained the top of this we left the clouds behind us. We had a mild, fair sunshiny evening the remainder of the journey."

Whatever his scruples had been he had got rid of them all on the day he married his brother and Sarah Gwynne. Charles says, " My brother seemed the happiest person among us."

" It was a solemn day " (John wrote in his journal), " such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage."

Charles's account is as follows—

> " Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
> The bridal of the earth and sky."

" Not a cloud was to be seen from morning to night. I rose at four, spent three hours and a half in prayer or singing with my brother, with Sally and with

Beck. At eight I led my Sally to church. . . . Mr. Gwynne gave her to me, under God. My brother joined our hands. It was a most solemn season of love. Never had I more of the Divine Presence at the Sacrament."

Martha Hall, whose wretched husband had deserted her about two years before, and who was then living in the minister's house at the Foundry in London, wrote him a touching letter—

" Surrounded as I am by distress on every hand, I find that my heart can rejoice for you. May God enable you to glorify Him all your days by showing forth to all men what He wills marriage to be."

At the beginning of her married life, Mrs. Charles Wesley was her husband's companion on his preaching tours, and he notes with great complaisance, " All look on my Sally with my eyes."

For the first few months of their marriage they had no settled home, but in September they went to live at a house in Stokes Croft, Bristol,[1] which had not then lost all right to its rural name. It was a small, narrow brick house with steps up to the front door, and a garden with fruit trees at the back. Modest as the dwelling was, Charles took possession of it with intense and almost pathetic satisfaction, for since he ceased to occupy his rooms in Christchurch he had had no place he could call his own. On the day after they moved in, he writes:

[1] Supposed to be No. 4, Charles Street, Stokes Croft.

"I passed the hour of retirement in my garden, and was melted to tears by the Divine goodness."

In spite of the disparity of age, Mrs. Charles Wesley seemed to have been an admirable helpmeet to her husband, who never varied in his devotion to her. The wealthy squire's daughter accustomed herself without a murmur to the cares of a growing family and a very small income. In the early days of the marriage she shared the privations and even the dangers of her husband's wandering life. One day he was riding with her over Hounslow Heath, when a highwayman crossed the road, passed the preacher and his wife, and robbed all the coaches and passengers that came behind them on the road.

In Mrs. Wesley's old age, she used to relate the experiences of these days with a good deal of humour. One day she and her husband arrived at Stone in Staffordshire, and she sat down to rest in the inn garden which adjoined the parsonage grounds. She was singing a Methodist hymn to herself when the Vicar and his daughters came to their side of the hedge and listened, complimented her on her voice, and asked for her help in the choir on the following Sunday. She said that she should be happy to sing if her husband might preach, but when the Vicar understood who she was, he declined to lend his pulpit, even with such an inducement.

It often fell to her lot to entertain the travelling preachers in her own home at Bristol, and she never

failed to speak of them with admiration as humble, single-hearted men, with that good breeding (the best of all) which springs from the heart. "To the end of her life," says the Rev. Thomas Jackson, "she used to speak of them with considerable emotion. She often remarked that she never met with persons better behaved or more agreeable in their spirit and manners."

In March 1749 Charles met his brother at Kingswood School, which, he writes, "is now very much like a college. Twenty-one boarders are there and a dozen students, his sons and pupils in the gospel. I believe he is now laying the foundations of many generations."

This school had grown out of the original charity school established by Whitefield for the children of the Kingswood colliers, and taken over by Wesley. It was to be a boarding-school for the children of Methodist preachers and others who were being educated with a view to their afterwards entering the ministry. In addition, there were the young probationers who were under training as preachers. The school at New Kingswood, near Bath, for the sons of Wesleyan ministers is all that now remains of this foundation of Wesley's, which was one of his favourite enterprises and for which he compiled many school books, including a History of England.

The association between the two brothers, so exceptionally close and tender, was now to undergo

a strain which almost proved too much for it. The action which Charles Wesley unhappily took in the Grace Murray episode is the most indefensible of his life, and its effects were little short of disastrous.

This woman, as much a sower of discord in her way as Helen of Troy, was one of the early converts of the Wesleys. She belonged to Newcastle, and was married when very young to a master mariner, who brought her to London, where she came under Methodist influences. She was received by Charles Wesley as a member of the London society in 1740, and had to endure a good deal of domestic persecution on account of her religion. Her husband was lost at sea on one of his voyages, and she then went back to Newcastle where her mother lived, and was appointed by Wesley as housekeeper of the Orphan House which he had founded. She seems to have had much natural quickness, tact, and charm, and her influence on the young female converts of the Mission was so excellent that she was chosen to be one of the small band of men and women who accompanied John Wesley on his preaching tours. In this way she travelled over the greater part of the British Isles. On reaching a town or village, the men lodged with one member of the local society, the women with another. There was preaching in the open air or at the meeting-house, and Grace Murray would then see the women who desired spiritual instruction, and "meet" the

classes of women that were already formed, for religious conversation, hymn-singing and prayer. For more than ten years she had been engaged in this way, and John Wesley had gradually come to the conclusion that she had been providentially prepared to be his destined helpmate.

In his interesting study, *The Living Wesley*, Dr. Rigg has pointed out that this born ruler of men was notable for a certain innocent heedlessness and tactlessness in his relations with women. He had little power of reading feminine character, and though he had been strongly interested by more than one woman, it was certain that no woman would ever hold a dominating place in his life. If he had not esteemed Grace Murray very highly as a fellow-worker, he would not have allowed himself to think of her as a wife.

Grace Murray, however, had another suitor, a certain John Bennett. He was one of Wesley's lay helpers, well connected and well off. He had been introduced to Wesley by Lady Huntingdon in 1743. During a visit to Newcastle he fell ill and was taken to the Orphan House, where he was nursed by Grace Murray. As many men have done before and since, he fell in love with his nurse, and she reciprocated the feeling.

There was no formal engagement between them, though the matter, no doubt, was freely gossiped about in the society, and Wesley, when he proposed

marriage to her in 1749, was under the impression that the affair with Bennett was at an end. His reasons for coming to the conclusion that he ought to marry are set out with some crudity in a curious document which appears to be genuine,[1] and which has been edited and published with some comments by Mr. Augustin Leger, under the title of *John Wesley's Last Love.*

To Grace Murray Wesley's offer must have seemed like the command of King Ahasuerus to Esther to share his throne. He was not only her superior in education and social standing, he was her spiritual guide and the revered and autocratic head of the whole community of which she formed part. The call to share his life and his toils must have come to her almost as a Divine vocation, and during a mission tour in Ireland she consented to enter with him into a solemn contract of marriage.

No sooner had this been settled than doubts, intrigues, and difficulties arose. In the *Twelve Rules of a Helper* it is written, "Take no steps to marriage without first consulting with your brethren." This involved that John Bennett should be asked for his consent to Wesley's marriage with Grace; and if he had been sure that her heart was completely lost to him, he would probably have acquiesced. But, as Mr. Curnock says in a note to

[1] First published, with some omissions, 1848; second edition, 1862.

the *Journals*, it is difficult to realize " the slanders, scandals, and passionate loves and hatreds against which the leaders of the Revival had to contend." Some sister, jealous of the elevation of her companion, had repeated to Grace some idle gossip about Wesley and another of the women helpers. In London she found that her engagement to Wesley was looked upon with disfavour as likely to hinder him in his work. Perplexed and jealous she turned to her other lover, and Bennett and she resumed their correspondence. On hearing of this, Wesley offered to withdraw in Bennett's favour; but now Grace had veered round again, reproached herself for her wavering, and offered to marry Wesley at once. Wesley, however, felt bound to observe the conditions under which Charles's marriage had lately taken place, and these involved, in the first place, John Bennett's withdrawal, secondly, Charles's consent, and, thirdly, the notifying of the engagement to every helper and every society in England, at the same time desiring their prayers.

On September 7th Wesley wrote a long letter to Bennett, setting forth the reasons which he thought should influence Bennett to retire in his favour. This letter he gave to one of his people, William Shent, a barber in Leeds, who promised to deliver it to Bennett with his own hand. For some reason he never did so.

Wesley despatched a copy of this letter to Charles

at Bristol, and it seems to have come to him as a bolt out of the blue. As Wesley says, " The thought of my marrying at all, but especially of my marrying a servant and one so low-born, appeared above measure shocking to him. Thence he inferred that it would prove so to all mankind, and consequently that it would break up all our societies and put a stop to the whole work of God."

There is small doubt that Charles's family pride was offended at the idea of such an alliance. But apart from that altogether, he was not wrong in thinking that the step his brother proposed was likely to cause trouble and dissension in the society. Many would envy Grace her promotion. Some would see in it a confirmation of the scandals which had been whispered from time to time about the Wesley brothers, without being really believed even by those who repeated them.

Charles believed that his brother was blinded and carried away by passion. Determined to make him hear reason if possible, he left Bristol at once and hurried north. At Leeds he met some members of the society, who told him of Grace Murray's engagement to Bennett. This must have rejoiced him, as it enabled him to decide that what he had dreaded as a rash act was also a wicked one. At Newcastle, he met a woman named Jane Keith, a bitter and jealous enemy of Grace Murray's, who gave him such an account as he wished to hear, and at his

request set it down in writing. The main points were that Wesley was infatuated to a degree which was making him the talk of the place and that the society was ready to fall to pieces.

Primed with fresh arguments Charles went to Whitehaven, where Wesley was for the moment, and remonstrated violently with him. John heard him patiently and promised to refer the matter to the decision of their trusted friend, Mr. Perronet. The next morning Charles left Whitehaven without giving his brother notice, and went straight to the village of Hinely Hill, near Newcastle, where Grace Murray was staying at the cottage of one of the members.

Charles was by this time quite worn out with his rapid journeys and the vehemence of his emotions. When he came into the room where she was, he could just find breath to exclaim, "Grace Murray, you have broken my heart!" and fainted at her feet. The shock of such a meeting with one whom she had called her "father in Christ," and whom she honoured and loved only next to his brother, made her quite unfit to defend herself against the accusations with which he overwhelmed her when he recovered. She had promised to marry one man, and then engaged herself to another, and "one of such importance that his doing so dishonest an action would destroy both himself . . and the whole work of God."

Charles also gave her to understand, no doubt

quite sincerely, that he had brought his brother round to his view, and that they were both about to start for London. There was no telegram or telephone in those days, only the interminable delays of a horse-carried post. The poor woman, imagining herself forsaken by her spiritual master and guide, who had so strangely become her suitor, had nothing to support her against Charles's vehemence. He carried her off behind him on horseback to a farm near Durham, where the people, who were Methodists, took her in for the night, and the next day they started for Newcastle.

Charles's main object now was to get her safely married to John Bennett, who was then at Newcastle, but Bennett felt that he had been played with too long, and Charles was obliged to seek out and reason with the unwilling bridegroom. Meanwhile, the unfortunate girl had been left at a place two miles out of the town. Bennett at last consented to meet her; she fell at his feet and begged his forgiveness. On Tuesday, October 3rd, they were married, and then went on to Leeds.

On discovering that Charles had stolen a march upon him, John Wesley went at once to the cottage where his promised bride had been staying, only to find that she had left with his brother two hours before. He seems to have taken this as an indication not to fight any longer for his own way. " If " (he wrote) " I had had more regard for her I loved

than for the work of God, I should have gone on straight to Newcastle and not back to Whitehaven. I knew this was giving up all, but I knew God called."

The Methodist movement was now faced with a danger much more serious than any that could have arisen from the marriage with Grace Murray—ill-judged as that might have been—the danger of a violent estrangement between its two chiefs. George Whitefield saw this and hastened to play the part of a peacemaker. He begged Wesley to meet him and Charles at Leeds. Wesley arrived before his brother, and at his first interview with Whitefield gave full scope to his anger and grief. The next day Charles arrived and, according to John's account, broke out in reproaches to which John listened with cold indignation. George Whitefield and John Nelson, who was also present, prayed, wept and entreated, and at last succeeded in calming the one and assuaging the just resentment of the other. The brothers embraced each other with tears. Then John Bennett came in, and Wesley met his successful rival. "Neither of us could speak, but we kissed each other and wept."

In a further conversation with Charles, John succeeded in convincing him that he had acted with perfect uprightness throughout the affair. Charles's indignation was now entirely turned against Grace

Murray, who seems, however, to have only been guilty of not quite knowing her own mind. Her marriage, so strangely brought about, appears to have been a happy one. In 1750 Bennett left the Methodists and settled as an Independent minister at Warburton near Warrington. After his death, which took place in 1759, his widow joined the Methodists again and lived a pious and useful life.

John Wesley claimed in his journal (October 29th, 1752): "If I have any strength at all, and I have none but what I have received, it is in forgiving injuries." He did not overpraise himself, but even his magnanimity was taxed by this blow at his happiness.

"For ten years" (he wrote a short time afterwards to a friend) "God has been preparing a fellow-labourer for me by a wonderful train of providences. . . . I fasted and prayed and strove all I could, but the sons of Zeruiah were too hard for me. The whole world fought against me, but, above all, my own familiar friend. Then was the word fulfilled, 'Son of Man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes at a stroke.'"

On October 8th Charles Wesley wrote from Sheffield: "George Whitefield and my brother and I are at one, a threefold cord that shall no more be broken." This was taking things too easily. Wesley would have been more than human if the behaviour of Charles, so prejudiced, inconsiderate,

and high-handed, had not left a deep soreness and suspicion behind.

The latter part of 1749 was saddened for Charles, not only by these events, but by an affection of the throat which hindered him from preaching, and by a severe attack of the nervous depression to which he was more or less a victim all his life. On January 15th he seems to have recovered and we find him noting, "I preached with the old power."

The February of 1750 was memorable for a violent earthquake shock, repeated on March 8th. People in London thought that the last day was come, and thronged the churches and chapels. The occasion called forth several hymns from Charles, of which the most notable is the one beginning—

> "Woe to the men on earth who dwell,
> Nor dread the Almighty's frown,
> When God doth all His wrath reveal,
> And shower His judgments down.
> Sinners, expect those heaviest showers,
> To meet your God prepare,
> For lo, the seventh angel pours
> His phial in the air."

He wrote to his mother-in-law a graphic description, marked by his peculiar condensed irony, of the state of panic which prevailed in London.

"The late earthquake has found me work enough. Yesterday I saw the Westminster end of the town full of coaches, and crowds flying out of the reach of Divine justice. Their panic was caused

by a poor madman's prophecy. Last night they were all to be swallowed up. The vulgar were in almost as great a consternation as their betters. Most of them watched all night; multitudes in the fields and open spaces; several in their coaches; many removed their goods. London looked like a sacked city. A lady just stepping into her coach to escape dropped down dead. Many came all night knocking at the Foundry door and begging admittance for God's sake. Our poor people were calm and quiet."

It was the confidence and faith of the little Methodist community that brought so many terrified souls to knock at the Foundry door.

With March came rest for the beautiful, unhappy Hetty Wesley. On the 1st Charles writes in his journal: "I prayed by my sister Wright, a gracious, tender, trembling soul, a bruised reed, which the Lord will not break." The next day she died. Her besotted husband showed some natural feeling, and begged that Charles would not forsake him.

About this time he made an acquaintance which was destined to bring much trouble to him and his. In July of the previous year, the following entry occurs in his diary: "At Ned Perronet's I met Mrs. Vazeille, a woman of a sorrowful spirit."

She was the widow of a London merchant, a middle-aged woman with grown-up children, who had been left with a small competence by her

husband. She was recommended to the Wesleys as a friend of their faithful supporter, Blackwell, the Lewisham banker, and on this account Charles and his wife did their best to be agreeable to her. She was invited to stay with his wife's relatives at Ludlow, who "showed her all the civility and love that they could show, and she seemed equally pleased with them." On May 28th we find him "showing Oxford to Mrs. Vazeille," and early in June he and his wife were back in London as the lady's guests.

They returned to their home in Bristol at the end of August and found Westley Hall and his wife there. Martha had left her husband for a time and taken refuge with her brothers in London, but she had been brought to think it her duty to return to him. He had definitely quarrelled with the Wesleys, and when he found that his wife was at one of Charles's meetings he went to the chapel and obliged her to leave in the middle of the service.

Charles had been much troubled by the affairs of his sister-in-law, Betty Gwynne, who had become engaged against the wishes of her family. They were at last brought to consent, and Charles, with deep misgivings (which fortunately were not justified by the event), performed the marriage ceremony. But a severer trial, arising, as usually happens, from the last quarter he expected, was hanging over his head.

" My brother returned from Oxford, sent for me, and told me he was resolved to marry. I was thunderstruck. . . . Trusty Ned Perronet followed me, and told me the person was Mrs. Vazeille, one of whom I never had the least suspicion."

Charles had probably by this time seen enough of the " woman of a sorrowful spirit " to realize the full disastrousness of his brother's choice. But John had made up his mind, and Charles must have realized that this time he had only himself to thank if he were not taken into confidence till the matter had gone too far to be stopped.

In this case, John Wesley, who had been so scrupulous over the Grace Murray incident, broke the rules he had himself laid down, first by not consulting his brother, and, secondly, by not seeking the approval and prayers of the societies. He had made up his mind that it was better for the work that he should be married, and that the wife he needed was a woman of mature years, with an independent income, who would not involve him in fresh responsibilities, but would leave him free for his work. Mr. Blackwell probably encouraged him in this view. Mrs. Vazeille was not his equal in birth, but her actual social standing was not inferior to his, and the thing might have looked feasible enough to any one who ignored the two temperaments concerned.

Charles could not do this. He knew his brother

and he knew Mrs. Vazeille. He was already ill and harassed with petty cares, and he broke down completely under this unpleasant surprise. Common-sense might have suggested that he should make the best of what could not be altered. Instead of this, he allowed the whole of the society in London to be witness of his anger and despair. He was one of the last to hear of the marriage, which took place quietly on February 18th or 19th, 1751.

Charles at first refused to meet his brother and the bride, but on the 24th Mr. Blackwell came to him and fairly forced him to go and greet them. A few days afterwards John and the new Mrs. Wesley came to the house next the chapel in West Street, where Charles and his wife were then living. The meeting was friendly, and Charles went into the chapel to hear his brother preach.

From a passage in the private diary, published by Mr. Curnock in his notes to Wesley's *Journals*, it appears that the sermon was followed by a curious *apologia*. Wesley told the congregation that he might have remained in Oxford, living on his fellowship and universally honoured, but that he had left all for the people's sake, returned to London, taken up his cross and married, " to break down the prejudice about the world and him." During this harangue, Charles said, " his easily-won lady sat open-eyed."

On March 14th, rather late in the day, Charles

was brought to see the necessity of a complete reconciliation with his brother. Next day he writes: "Called on my sister, kissed her, and assured her I was perfectly reconciled." That this cost him something we may imagine when we find him reading Marcus Aurelius, and learning from him "some useful lessons, particularly not to resent, not to revenge, not to let my peace be at the mercy of every injurious person."

On the 19th he writes: "Brought my wife and sister together, and took all opportunities of showing the latter my sincere respect and love."

This was all very well, but a woman of Mrs. Wesley's temper was not likely to forget his previous treatment of her. The ill-assorted match turned out as might have been expected. Charles knew how far a woman of middle-age, spoiled by an indulgent, wealthy husband, would be likely to put up with the hardships of an itinerant life. But if he fancied that John would drop his work for his wife's sake, he did not yet know his brother.

Mrs. Wesley seems at first to have made a real effort to live up to the vocation she had accepted. She accompanied her husband in some of his preaching tours; and Charles, after one of their quarrels, imagined, with a most unsaintly but very human touch, her state of mind when she found her coach hopelessly bogged by bad weather on one of the wretched country roads. She soon bored her

husband with her incessant complaints about long journeys, bad weather, ill-aired beds, coarse food and rough company. He left her at home, and as he was always away, she learned how small a part she really had in his life, and the discovery made her wild. Four months after her marriage she came crying to Charles with complaints of her husband. Charles talked to her and then to John, and imagined that he had made matters up. But the trouble soon broke out again, while her relations with Charles and his wife went from bad to worse. She was so bitter in her criticism of him that he used to call her "My best friend." After several painful scenes he took the part of avoiding her as much as possible, and for some time the brothers rarely met.

John Wesley seemed to have borne the vagaries of his uncongenial mate with the greatest possible patience, till the time came when she left his roof never to return. (This was some time after he wrote in his journal the famous "*Non eam reliqui; non dimisi; non revocabo.*") It was without much regret that he resumed his bachelor life. His preachers were his children, and when they were grouped with him round the historic teapot in the preachers' house at City Road, he knew as much of family happiness as his nature required. The mistake of his marriage clouded his life indeed for a season, but left no lasting trace. The one who never got over it, we surmise, was Mrs. Wesley.

CHAPTER VIII

MIDDLE LIFE

In June 1751 considerable scandal was caused by the conduct of one of the most prominent of the Methodist preachers, James Wheatley, who was eventually expelled from the society for immorality. In consequence of this, Charles was requested by his brother to undertake an examination into the moral character of every preacher. The result of the investigation showed that any fears on the part of the leaders that Antinomianism had taken serious hold of the preachers as a body were unfounded. Charles has left it on record that he did not find "the least accusation of a nature similar to Wheatley against any preacher in the Connexion."

Charles Wesley was more fitted than his brother for such a task. John Wesley is said by his earliest biographer, Dr. Whitehead, to have been easily imposed upon by professions of religion. "The case was far otherwise with Mr. Charles; he quickly penetrated into a man's character, and it was not easy to impose on him." On the other hand, the very generosity of John Wesley's temper, his

incapacity of believing or remembering harm of any man, gave him an influence which his more clear-sighted brother missed.

At Worcester, whither his wife accompanied him, Charles Wesley had a disturbing experience. The mob interrupted his open-air services, and on one occasion prevented him from preaching at all. Charles went to see the Mayor and complained of these proceedings and of the outrages that had been committed on Methodist property. The Mayor said, " He had never before heard of their being so treated; that none had applied to him for justice or he should have granted it; that he was well assured of the great mischief the Methodists had done throughout the nation, and the great riches Mr. Whitefield and their other teachers had acquired." Charles adds, " I easily satisfied all his objections. He treated me with civility and freedom, and promised at parting to do our people justice."

He went on a preaching tour through the Black Country, and on to Sheffield, Rotherham and Wakefield. At Birstal, near Leeds, he preached to a congregation that " filled the valley and sides of a hill, like grasshoppers for multitude. Yet my voice reached the most distant, as I perceived by their bowing at the Holy Name. God gave me the voice of a trumpet, and sent the word home to many hearts."

Next day he notes: "I visited a sick sister, destitute of all things, but triumphing over want, sickness, death." The following day he was stricken down with fever. On August 8th he was well enough to start for Newcastle, travelling on horseback with his wife on a pillion behind him, but he could get no further than Toplift. He reached Newcastle on the following day. "I preached" (he writes) "but very feebly. Preaching, I perceive, is not now my principal business. God knoweth my heart and all its burdens. Oh, that He would take the matter into His own hand, though He lay me aside like a broken vessel."

On August 13th he rode into Sunderland, and the same evening, in spite of his weakness, preached for an hour and a half. At Newcastle-under-Lyme he visited in prison a wretch convicted of murdering his own daughter, and brought him to confession and repentance. He then travelled by way of Durham and York to Epworth and back again to Yorkshire. He stayed about a fortnight in Leeds, and held a conference of the preachers, which was attended by Grimshaw of Haworth and about a dozen others, mostly laymen. At Haworth, Charlotte Brontë's parish, the old church was crowded to hear him, and then, as the people who filled the churchyard cried out that they could not hear him, he came outside and stood on a tombstone to speak to them. Even the church leads and steeple were

crowded with listeners. Then on to Manchester and Bolton, Birmingham (where the first of the New Year's Eve "watch-night services" now so common was held), Evesham and Oxford, arriving with his wife in London on the 4th of October.

Increasing family cares soon prevented Mrs. Charles Wesley from accompanying her husband on these preaching tours. Charles wrote constantly to her in his frequent absences. "My ever dearest Sally," "My most beloved friend," "My dearest partner," he calls her. On one occasion he began to muse on how he could bear Ezekiel's trial, "should it please God to take the desire of his eyes from him with a stroke." But he consoles himself with the reflection, "It is far more probable that my beloved Sally will see many good days in the vale, after my warfare is accomplished and my weary soul at rest. Here, indeed, we have laid the foundation of an eternal friendship, and hasten to our consummation of bliss above. Till then, we scarce begin to know the end of our meeting upon earth."

He was not always in this pensive vein. He playfully alludes to a difference of opinion about a horse. "My surefooted mare gave me no fall, notwithstanding your malicious supposition. You would do well, instead of affronting her, to find a better."

Once there is a question of an escort for her up to

London. "The preachers will guard you to town. Do not refuse either brother Oddie or brother Oliver. If none of them are ready, brother Sheen, or Mr. Lewis will, I know, attend you as far as Marlborough."

One or more of his young sisters-in-law was often with them at Bristol, and they came in for their share of the messages. As for instance, "Beck must recover her music most positively or not look me in the face. It lies with you to drag her to the harpsichord and tie her down in her chair."

His first child, called John after his brother, was born in 1752, and allusions to him are frequent thenceforward.

"Look you to nurse Sennick; as much air and sunshine as you please, but not a grain of salt or a bit of meat for Jacky."

Eight children were born to Charles Wesley in the house in Stokes Croft, but only three lived to grow up—Charles, born in 1757, Sarah in 1760, and Samuel in 1766. There is a pleasant glimpse of the children in a letter written to his wife from London.

"If you cannot keep Sally from eating poison, I must grub up all the trees in the garden or take another house without one. Give my love to Charles. I know not what to say to Sally unless she has quite given up eating raw fruit. Then you may give my love to her also."

The early years of Charles's marriage were marked by the establishment of an intimate friendship with Lady Huntingdon. In 1749 she gave up her place, Donington Park, to her son, and a little time afterwards settled at Bristol. In 1751 Charles called upon her and presented his young wife. "Our old friend appeared as such, seemed taken with Sally, and said, 'Mrs. Wesley, I will come to see you.' Appointed the next day."

This was the beginning of a warm friendship between the great lady and the preacher's wife. What one knows of Mrs. Charles Wesley leaves the impression of a modest, well-bred and sweet-tempered woman, well worthy of Lady Huntingdon's regard. The worst that has been said of her was that she was inclined to be hospitable beyond her means, and that she spoiled her children. She was a most loyal and loving wife, and the one offence that stirred her to bitterness and resentment was any aspersion on her husband.

Lady Huntingdon used to the full her peeress's privilege of appointing private chaplains, and both John and Charles Wesley were on the list. Charles frequently officiated for her, and saw so much of her about 1752 that ill-natured people set about the report that he was turning Calvinist. The relations between the leaders of the "Calvinistic" and "Arminian" Methodists were distinctly friendly for the time being. In 1753, while the

New Tabernacle was being built in what was then a rural suburb, close to Tottenham turnpike, the Wesleys lent the Foundry Chapel for the use of Whitefield's congregation, and this courtesy was warmly acknowledged by Whitefield in a letter to Charles.

In the autumn of 1753 Charles Wesley paid what proved to be his last visit to Cornwall. Jacky was then a year old. Towards the close of the year he received a letter from his brother, which marks a degree of estrangement between them.

"Either act really in connection with me," John Wesley wrote, "or never pretend to it. By acting in connection with me, I mean, take counsel with me once or twice a year, as to the places in which you will labour. Hear my advice before you fix whether you take it or no. At present you are so far from this that I do not know when and where you intend to go; so far are you from following any advice of mine, nay, even from asking it. And yet I may say without vanity that I am a better judge in this matter than Lady Huntingdon, Sally, Jones, or any other; nay, than your own heart, that is, will. I wish you all peace, zeal, and love."

There is a touch of jealousy towards the end of this letter, which one might without over-refining attribute to the influence of Mrs. John Wesley. It is certain that her influence counted for a good deal in keeping the brothers apart. She had insulted

Charles and his wife, and he simply would not go where he was likely to meet her. One of his letters to his wife shows him rather hopelessly at war with the spirit of resentment—

"I am going to breakfast with Mrs. Morton, who is as far from the spirit of *my best friend* as east from west. What shall you and I do to love her better? I fear you do not constantly pray for her. I must pray, or sink into the spirit of revenge."

He was shocked out of the mood of estrangement from his brother into which he had drifted, by the tidings of John's sudden illness, considerately broken to him by Lady Huntingdon. He left Bristol at once and went to Lewisham, where John was being nursed in the house of his friend, Mr. Blackwell. It was necessary for him to remain in London to take John's place, and his journal sets out the course of the illness and his own anxieties.

"*Sunday, December 2nd.*—The first news I heard last night in Moorfields was that my brother was something better. . . . Last Wednesday he changed for the better while the people were praying for him at the Foundry. . . . Yet it is most probable he will not recover.

"All last Tuesday they expected his death every hour. He expected the same and wrote his own epitaph: 'Here lieth the body of John Wesley, a brand not once only plucked out of the fire. He died of consumption in the fifty-first year of his

age, leaving, after his debts were paid, not ten pounds behind him, praying, 'God be merciful to me, an unprofitable servant.'

"He made it his request to his wife and me to forget all that is past, which I very readily agreed to; and once more offered her my service in great sincerity. Neither will I suspect hers, but hope she will do as she says."

In a sermon preached at the Foundry during John's illness, he exhorted his congregation to "repent and do the first works," and on no other condition to hope for their leader's recovery. "I told them" (he says) "that I neither could nor would stand in my brother's place if God took him to Himself, for I had neither a body nor mind nor talents nor grace for it."

It was some comfort to him in this time of acute anxiety for the life on which so much depended, that the old prejudice against Wesley seemed almost to have disappeared. "Many secret friends now show themselves. The strangers stop us in the streets with their inquiries, and the people in general seem to find out the value of the blessings they are going to lose."

While still unrelieved from anxiety about his brother, he received a letter from Lady Huntingdon informing him that his wife was ill with confluent smallpox. The true nobility of Lady Huntingdon's nature showed itself in this crisis. Regardless of

the risk of infection or of the loathsomeness of the disease, she went twice a day to nurse her poor young friend. Not only so, she arranged for another preacher to take Charles's place in London, and thus to make it easy for him to return to his wife for a few days. He hurried back and found her "on a restless bed of pain, loaded with the worst kind of the worst disease." She was in danger for over three weeks, and had hardly begun to recover when their little child sickened. In a few days all that remained to them of him was the lock of fair hair folded in a paper, on which the mother had written: "My dear Jacky Wesley's hair, who died of the smallpox on Monday, January 7th, 1753–4, aged a year, four months and seventeen days. 'I shall go to him, but he shall never return to me.'"

The loss of his first-born was deeply felt by Charles Wesley. The child was just of the age when babies begin to be interesting to their fathers. In the long poem which Charles wrote on his little son's death, there are a few lines of strange poignancy—

> "Turn from him, turn, officious thought,
> Officious thought presents again
> The thousand little acts he wrought
> Which wound my heart with soothing pain;
> His looks, his winning gestures rise,
> His waving hands and laughing eyes."

The child had already begun to display signs of such musical precocity that it seems as if he might have rivalled his brothers, had he lived. At twelve months old he hummed the tunes he heard, and beat correct time.

The disease robbed Mrs. Wesley not only of her child but of her beauty. She was so much changed that the twenty years' disparity in age between her and her husband was no longer so marked as it had been, and she used to accuse him merrily of being pleased at this, when he told her that in his eyes she was as fair as ever.

One happy result of the troubles of the winter was a removal of the estrangement between Charles and his brother. John spent the time of his convalescence at Hotwells, near Bristol, and Charles was with him there for several days, helping him with his *Notes on the New Testament.*

In the summer of this year the Wesley brothers were obliged to visit Norwich in consequence of fresh trouble caused by the renegade, James Wheatley, whose Antinomian teaching perverted a good many members of the society. John broke down in health as soon as he arrived, and Charles was left to deal with the situation. "From morning till night," they were told when they arrived, "the Mayor of Norwich was occupied taking the affidavits of the women whom he had tried to corrupt." There was an attempt to throw the

odium of Wheatley's conduct on the Methodists, but fortunately Charles was able to point to the notice which they had published a year before, disclaiming connection with him.

On the market day Charles Wesley preached in the open air, "the butchers continually passing, yet all was quiet till I had done." On Sunday he went as usual to the Cathedral to receive Communion. The Bishop officiated, and there were about twenty communicants. "If the Gospel prevails in this place they will find the difference," he wrote. At another meeting, he notes: "A huge man tried to ride up to me, but the people interposed again and again, till a serious stout man took and led his horse away, and kept the poor drunkard at a distance."

Wheatley met him in the town and had the effrontery to try and speak to him, but Charles wrote: "I think it best . . . neither to mention nor to think of him any more than if there was no such sect or sinner upon earth."

In spite of the scandal caused by Wheatley's proceedings, the general tone among decent people with reference to the Methodist movement was markedly different from what it had been ten years before, and the old prejudice was rapidly disappearing. "There is no railing at present," Charles observes, "in any of the churches. Many people there are, no doubt, who would fain stop the course

of the gospel. And with this view, no doubt, the Rev. Mr. . . . published his scandals of my brother. But he finds himself mistaken. It is too gross to pass, even at Norwich. The clergy, I hear, declare they are satisfied of Mr. John Wesley's unexceptionable character, and the generality of the people are much displeased at the idle tale."

Early in the following year he went to Brecon, to comfort the last hours of Grace Bowen, a clergyman's daughter, who had been nursery governess in the Gwynne family, and was greatly beloved by them all. The letters Charles wrote to his wife from the deathbed of this humble, simple woman, are honourable to them both.

The reconciliation arrived at between Mrs. John Wesley and Charles does not seem to have lasted long. At the Leeds Conference of 1755, when there was an important debate on the relation of Methodism to the Church, which will be dealt with in its proper place, he left abruptly on the morning after the closing of the debate. He wrote to his wife—

" Last Saturday afternoon I met my good angel and sister. I have done her honour before the people, and behaved, though I say it, very much like a gentleman, only that I took French leave this morning, that is, left Leeds without telling either her or her husband. He will follow me quickly

with a letter, but I am hardened to causeless reproofs."

On November 1st of this year occurred the Lisbon earthquake, the most awful visitation of the kind until the earthquake that destroyed Messina in 1909. The impression made in England was very great, and is reflected in Charles's hymns. The partisans of the Pretender were still active, and England was harassed with fears of invasion. Men's hearts were failing them for fear and looking for the judgments that were coming upon the earth. In the New Year the Government appointed February 5th as a Fast Day, and a pamphlet of seventeen hymns, composed by Charles, was issued for the occasion.

During the summer he was in London, taking the place of his brother, who was absent on a missionary tour in Ireland. After the Conference, which was held at Bristol, he went on a preaching round through Staffordshire, Yorkshire and Lancashire.

At York the local Methodists had given up the early morning service on account of the small attendance, and they told Charles he need not expect a congregation. However, at five o'clock in the morning the room was almost full. Next morning he preached again at the same early hour, and spent the day in "making up a difference which the Sower of tares had occasioned among the principal members of the society." He gave

himself the pleasure of attending Divine Service at the Minster, " where the people were marvellously civil and obliged me with the anthem I desired, Hab. iii., 'a feast for a king,' as Queen Anne called it."

On the following Sunday he records: " I received the Sacrament at the Minster. They were forced to consecrate twice, the congregation being doubled and trebled through my exhortation and example. Glory be to God alone. I found great faith to pray for him that consecrated, and heard afterwards that it was . . . one who had known the Methodists from their rise at Oxford and was no enemy to them. I expect, if I hold out myself, to meet that soul in Paradise."

At Manchester he visited his old friend, Dr. Byrom, and was " hard put to it," as he confesses, to defend John Wesley's book against William Law.

On November 6th he writes: " God brought me safe to my friends in Bristol." This is the last entry in his journal. After this day he seems to have given up itinerancy, and to have divided his time between London and Bristol, taking Bristol as his special charge and only visiting London during John's absences, until the time came for him to settle there finally.

In the spring of 1758 he was incapacitated for some time by a fall. In the autumn he made a

journey into Devonshire to visit his brother Samuel's daughter, who was married to an apothecary named Earle at Barnstaple. After his brother's death, seventeen years before, intercourse between the families seemed to have dropped. When postage was expensive and communications difficult, it was harder to keep in touch with friends than it is now.

The visit was a success. Charles Wesley's affectionate heart went out to the whole family, and his notice of his little grandniece is particularly pleasant. "His little girl is past seven, full of life and sense, and as fond of me (after an hour's acquaintance) as I of her."

"My sister [Samuel's wife and Mrs. Earle's mother] passed her three years of widowhood in a house by herself, pining continually after her old companion till she overtook him in Paradise. . . . Such I trust will be the end of my Sally, such your end and mine."

". . . I dreamed last night that Sarah had let Charles fall and killed him. [Charles Wesley the younger was then nine months old.] You will look to him, I think, but for his sake and mine look to yourself also. May the Lord bless my dearest Sally. May the Good Shepherd gently lead her and carry her and her lamb in His bosom. Adieu."

In 1759 there was another invasion panic. Charles wrote to his wife from London—

"I got two hours this morning with Lady Huntingdon, and dined with her and Mr. Madan and Jones. All expect the French. Admiral Rodney is gone to burn their broad-bottomed boats or die in the attempt. He desired the King, in case he fell, to take care of his widow and family. Two hundred thousand pounds have been expended on the French boats at Havre-le-Grace and Dunkirk. Each carries three hundred men, and is so contrived as to land their men on horseback. In five hours they may reach the Sussex coast. Last Sunday night, twelve of a society of ours were seized and carried on board the vessels that guard the Sussex coast. Their prayers may do good service."

The close friendship with Lady Huntingdon continued, and through her he became known to the members of her West End set, whose religious interests were the same as his, but the length and pomp of whose entertainments were a weariness to his soul.

"This morning" (he writes to his wife) "I breakfasted at Lady Piers' and dined at Mr. Lloyd's, with Mrs. Gamley and Miss Derby. The length of the entertainment and very trifling conversation tired me to death. . . . Yesterday I dined alone with my faithful friend and yours, Lady Huntingdon, and passed the evening with her in close conference."

His letters to his wife during his frequent absences from home do something to supply the lack of the journal. He writes playfully, on one occasion: "You are not too old to be cured of the rheumatism if you have the resolution to use the remedy of constant exercise. I threaten you hard if we live over the winter and I get a sure horse that will carry double or treble."

He had to console his friend Lady Huntingdon in two heavy family trials. One was the death of her daughter, Lady Selina Huntingdon, who died like a saint at the age of twenty-five. The other was the great scandal caused by the case of Earl Ferrers, Lady Huntingdon's cousin, and the brother of the Rev. Walter Shirley, an Irish clergyman who played a not unimportant part in the Evangelical revival. In spite of these edifying connections, Lord Ferrers was one of the most notable reprobates of the eighteenth century. He murdered his steward for a reason so paltry as to point to mental derangement, and then conducted himself in the course of his trial by the House of Lords, described by Charles Wesley in great detail, with a coolness and composure that seemed to argue full possession of his faculties. Horace Walpole, with a characteristic sneer, remarks that all the efforts of Lady Huntingdon and the Methodists were insufficient to bring him to repentance. Charles certainly spared no pains, visiting him in prison more than

once, and holding prayer-meetings for his conversion. Ferrers went defiantly to the scaffold, in an open carriage drawn by six horses, and decked out in the dress he had worn at his wedding.

In the following year Charles had an illness which obliged him to spend some time at Bath for treatment. The result of this retirement was the two volumes of *Hymns on Select Passages of Holy Scripture*, published under his own name in 1762.

John Wesley, with his phenomenal energy of mind and body, was inclined to judge other men too much by his own measure. He wrote vehement letters to Charles, urging him to preach more. "In connexion" (he says) "I beat you, but in strong, short, pointed sentences, you beat me."

Very few of Charles Wesley's sermons have been preserved, and almost all belong to the earlier period of his life. He seems to have been an unequal preacher, extraordinarily impressive at his best; but rather through emotional glow and intensity than intellectual cogency. In this—"the connexion," as John called it—he certainly did "beat" Charles.

In 1766 Charles received an impatient letter from his brother.

"How long shall we drag heavily though God has called us to be the chief conductors of such a

work? If I am in some sense the head and you the heart of the work, may it not be said, The whole head is sick and the whole heart faint? Come, in the name of God, let us arise and shake ourselves from the dust. Have *senes sexagenarii* (who would have thought that we should live to be such) time to lose? Let you and me and our house serve the Lord in good earnest."

A fortnight after he returns to the attack: "I think you and I have abundantly too little intercourse with one another. Are we not old acquaintances? Have we not known each other for half a century, and are we not jointly engaged in such a work as probably not two other men upon earth are? Why then do we keep at such a distance?"

The criticism of inactivity seems hardly deserved in the case of a man, who at this time, besides overseeing the Methodist congregations in London and Bristol, was bringing out three volumes of hymns in two years. Charles was at this time anxious about his health, and persuaded that he had not long to live, though in a more hopeful mood he writes: "I may live to hear Charles talk Latin and Greek." What he thought of his brother's energy appears from the following, written to his wife at Bristol: "My brother will, I presume, look in upon you in his flight to the Land's End. He is an astonishing youth, and may be

saluted like the Eastern monarchs, 'O King, live for ever!'"

In 1767 his last child, John James, was born. John wrote to congratulate him on the event, and mentioned that "Mr. White, sometime Chairman of the Assembly of Divines," was his own great-grandfather. He adds, referring to Charles's three boys: "It is highly probable one of the three will stand before the Lord. But, so far as I can learn, such a thing has scarce been for these thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, preaching the gospel, nay, and the genuine gospel, in a line."

In spite of this distinguished prognostication, not one of the three boys referred to became a Christian minister, and the poor baby, whose birth called it forth, died in July while Charles was absent in London.

This sad event may have precipitated a step which he had had for some time in contemplation. The musical genius of his two surviving boys was already apparent, and he was most anxious to secure them proper teaching, which could only be had in London. On this account, and in order to avoid the long absences from his family, which were becoming more and more irksome, he decided to accept the offer of his friend Mrs. Gamley, the aunt of Lady Robert Manners, who placed at his disposal, free of rent, her furnished house in Chesterfield Street, Marylebone, the lease of which had still

twenty years to run, and which was about three miles from the Foundry, and considerably less from West Street Chapel. Here he settled with his family and spent the last seventeen years of his life.

CHAPTER IX

CONTROVERSIES

For twenty years Charles Wesley had been among the greatest of missionary preachers, superior to his brother John in the intensity of his emotional appeal, and in this respect ranking second only to Whitefield himself. But from the year 1756 he ceased the itinerant journeys by which he had carried the gospel through England and Ireland, and devoted himself to a general superintendence of the Methodist societies in London and Bristol, and to his incessant work as a writer of hymns. Various reasons have been given for this —his own delicate health and advancing years, the claims of his wife and young family, the partial estrangement from his brother, which was the result of a total estrangement from his brother's wife. All these things helped. But one deep determining cause is probably to be found in the growing divergence of view between himself and the bulk of the preachers, and to some extent also between him and his brother, as to the relation of the Methodist societies to the Church of England.

The first hint of coming trouble was given at the Conference of 1751, when an agreement was entered into by John and Charles Wesley, and four of the lay preachers, that no one of them would separate from the Church without the consent of all the other signatories. In 1755, at the Leeds Conference, the subject came up again, and Charles was so far from satisfied with the results arrived at, that, as we have already seen, he left Leeds before the Conference was over. The meeting resolved that "whether it was lawful or not to leave the Church it was no way expedient." To Charles, convinced as he was that Episcopacy was of the *esse* and not merely of the *bene esse* of the Church, such a shirking of the issue appeared unworthy, and while still thrilling with the excitement of the debate, he wrote a long rhymed epistle to his brother, of which four thousand copies were issued.

It begins with a vivid picture of the practical corruption and deadness of the Church, which was the justification of their missionary movement, and also the excuse of those who, like Edward Perronet and several others among the preachers, desired that the Methodists should leave the Establishment, and cast in their lot with the Dissenting bodies.

"Does she still exist in more than sound?
The Church, alas, where is she to be found?
Not in the men, however dignified,
Who would her creeds repeal, her laws deride,

Her prayers expunge, her articles disown,
And thrust the filial Godhead from His throne.
Vainest of all their anti-Christian plea,
Who cry, 'The Temple of the Lord are we.
We have the Church nor will we quit our hold.'
Their hold of what? The altar? or the gold?
The altar theirs, who will not light the fire,
Who scorn the labour but accept the hire,
Who not for souls but their own bodies care,
And leave to underlings the task of prayer?"

After this spirited attack on worldly Latitudinarianism in high places, he goes on to ask, like Ezekiel, "Can these bones live?" and gives the answer from his own experience.

"And yet the thing impossible is done,
The Lord hath made His power and mercy known,
Strangely revived our long-forgotten hope,
And brought out of the grave His people up.
Soon as we prophesied in Jesus' Name,
The noise, the shaking and the spirit came;
The bones spontaneous to each other cleaved,
The dead in sin His powerful word received,
And felt the quickening breath of God and lived."

In the face of all temptations to forsake the Church, he reiterates his own determination to be faithful to her—

"For her, whom her apostate sons despise,
I offer up my life a sacrifice,
While the lost sheep of Israel's house I seek
By bigots branded for a schismatic;
By real schismatics disowned, decried
As a blind bigot on the Church's side."

He ends with a pathetic appeal to his brother—

"Partner of my reproach, who justly claim
The larger portion of the glorious shame,
My pattern in the work and cause Divine,
Say, is thy heart as bigoted as mine?
Wilt thou with me in the old Church remain
And share her weal or woe, her loss or gain,
Spend in her service thy last drop of blood,
And die to build the temple of our God? . . .
When first sent forth to minister the Word,
Say, did we preach ourselves or Christ the Lord?
Was it our aim disciples to collect,
To raise a party or to found a sect?
No, but to spread the power of Jesus' Name,
Repair the walls of our Jerusalem,
Revive the piety of ancient days,
And fill the earth with our Redeemer's praise."

This was in 1755. Nearly a hundred years afterwards, the same clear call was sounded by Keble and Newman in the *Lyra Apostolica*. To these men, as to the initiator of the first "Oxford Movement," the Church of England was "not the commonplace, smug, prosaic affair, which contemptuous Whigs imagined that they could handle as they chose. Nay, she could appeal to the imagination, and to the conscience, and to the heart. She had in her the secret of romance, the charm of antiquity, the weight of historic authority, the pathos of a troubled and stormy past . . . the honour, the majesty, and radiance of the Church of Christ." [1]

[1] Canon Scott Holland, preface to *Lyra Apostolica*.

John Wesley's position was very different from that of his brother. He stood midway between the original "Methodists" and that large mass of converts who had been brought into the societies from Dissent, or from practical heathenism, to whom the Church of England had never meant anything, and who recognized no other loyalty than that which bound them to the society and to its leaders. He set a high value on his standing as a priest of the Church of England. He could declare with perfect sincerity that he hoped to live and die in that Church, and that none who regarded his advice would ever separate from it. Yet he seems to have regarded separation as at least a possible contingency. He writes to Charles: "If, as my Lady says" (Lady Huntingdon), "all Church establishments 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."

In short, if John Wesley had been obliged to sacrifice either the Methodist societies or the Church connection, he would certainly have let the Church go. To sacrifice the societies would have been to Charles—one cannot doubt it—"the plucking out of the right eye," but if the choice had been forced on him, he would have made the sacrifice; for in his view the English Church was the covenanted sphere of God's work, the visible expression for our nation and race of the Body of Christ.

It was natural, then, that the brothers should take different views of the discussions at the Leeds Conference. John considered that the preachers, many of whom were inclined to favour separation, had shown an excellent spirit. "Here," he wrote, "is Charles Perronet raving 'because his friends have given up all,' and Charles Wesley, 'because they have given up nothing,' and I in the midst staring and wondering both at the one and the other."

Edward Perronet, the other son of the Vicar of Shoreham, had published a satirical poem, called *The Mitre*, in which he had attacked the Church of England as "the ape of Rome." This book called forth the violent indignation of Charles, and was suppressed by John Wesley.

The Conference of 1756, which met at Bristol, was marked by a solemn declaration on the part of the Wesley brothers of their purpose never to separate from the Church. At this time Charles was carrying on an interesting correspondence with a Truro clergyman, named Walker, on the subject of regularizing the status of the lay preachers. Charles said what was the truth, that his brother would never consent to suppress an institution which had proved of such marvellous value in supplying the deficiencies of the regular ministry. He said, with some bitterness, that he stood in the midst of his brother's violent counsellors, "the object both of their fear and hate."

Walker wrote a long letter about the lay preachers to John Wesley, who replied with calm politeness: "We have found by long experience that a frequent change of teachers is best. I know were I to preach a whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. . . . And here is another difficulty still; what authority have I to prevent their doing what I believe God has called them to do? I rejoice that I am called to preach the gospel both by God and man. Yet I acknowledge I had rather have the Divine without the human than the human without the Divine call."

This passage illustrates the extent to which by this time John Wesley had moved away from the High Church doctrine in which he had been trained and to which Charles still adhered. Neither Charles Wesley nor any other High Churchman would have admitted the antithesis between the human and Divine call, as to them the act of the Church in ordination was the act of the Holy Spirit.

During Charles Wesley's journeys about the country he fought hard to keep the people to the Church of England. At Manchester, in 1756, he notes—

"Our society in Manchester was upwards of 200, but their itching ears have reduced them to half that number. To these I showed the melancholy state of the members of the Established Church,

who are the most unprincipled and ignorant of all that are called Protestants, and therefore exposed to every seducer who thinks it worth his while to turn them Dissenter, Moravian, or Papist. I told them of all the members of the Church of England the poor Methodists are most exposed, because serious and therefore worth stealing. . . . I challenged them to show me one Methodist who had ever prospered by turning Dissenter. I asked what would become of them when my brother should die, whether they would not then be scattered and broken into twenty sects old and new. To prevent this I advised them (1) to get grace or the love and power of God, which alone could keep and stablish their heart; (2) to continue in all the means of obtaining this, especially the Word and prayer of all kinds; to read the Scriptures daily and to go constantly to church and Sacrament."

It was Charles Wesley's hope that the lay preachers would obtain ordination. Some of them, as a matter of fact, did so, and settled down as parish priests. What he seems to have failed to understand was that, in so far as they did this, they ceased to be active agents of the movement, the aim of which was to do something which the settled parochial system could not do—or at any rate was not then doing. The wandering preachers brought with them an atmosphere of novelty and excitement, which broke up the crust of religious indifference

that had settled on the English villages. They cut across the routine work of the village clergy, just as in the fourteenth century the Preaching Orders from abroad had cut across the work of the secular parish priests. That movement, too, in its time had been viewed with jealousy and hostility by the settled ministry. It took all the power of the Papacy to win toleration for the Friars and to secure their acceptance as a part of the organization of the Church. What the colossal power of Rome only just achieved was not going to be effected by the English Church of the eighteenth century, with its timid subservience to the State. A man of genius might have saved the situation; he was not forthcoming. The bishops, after some feeble attempts to discourage the movement, were content to let it alone. To some one who complained to him of John Wesley's preaching in a London church, when invited by the incumbent, the Bishop of London replied, "I have no power to interfere. Mr. Wesley is a duly ordained clergyman and under no ecclesiastical censure."

The bishops, then, could not, or did not, see their way to accept the new order of travelling preachers as part of the Church's scheme; and, that being so, it could only develop, as it did, on lines tending to diverge more and more from the Church. The preachers themselves were yearly more inclined to separation, and Charles's insistence on correct

Churchmanship was not calculated to increase his popularity with them.

He wrote to his wife from London an account of a "leaders' meeting" in which he says he told them, "My chief concern on earth was the prosperity of the Church of England, my next that of the Methodists, my third, that of the preachers; that if their interests ever came in competition, I would give up the preachers for the sake of the Methodists, and the Methodists for the good of the whole body of the Church of England; that nothing could ever force me to leave the Methodists but their leaving the Church."

He told his wife that the meeting was strongly with him, and there is no doubt that in London and Bristol, where his personal influence was great, he took the people with him, as he did not in other parts of the country where he was less seldom seen.

There were not wanting many who pointed out the apparent inconsistency between his high view of the Church's claims and his indifference to disciplinary details. A writer in *Lloyd's Evening Post* (December 1760) taunts him with his irregularity in administering the Sacraments in London and Bristol without the Bishop's licence. "Is not your late incapacity to preach, and the distractions among you, a judicial stroke for your gross disingenuity and sin against God?" There have been sufficient examples since those days to show that a

firm hold on the theory of the necessity of Episcopacy is quite consistent with an indocile attitude towards the *ipse dixit* of an individual bishop. Those to whom bishops are mere State functionaries have often shown them more personal deference than those to whom they represent a fundamental principle of Church life.

In 1758 John Wesley issued a pamphlet entitled *Twelve Reasons against separating from the Church of England*, to which Charles added a note—

"I subscribe to the twelve reasons of my brother with all my heart. . . . I am quite clear that it is neither expedient nor *lawful* for me to separate, and I never had the least inclination or temptation to do so. My affection for the Church is as strong as ever, and I clearly see my calling, which is to live and die in her communion. Would to God that all the Methodist preachers were in this respect like-minded with C. W."

In March 1760 Charles was deeply disturbed by the action of three of the Wesleyan preachers stationed at Norwich, who had taken out licences under the Toleration Act, and had begun to administer the Sacraments to their congregations. Neither of the Wesleys, needless to say, had given them authority for this step; but the desire was growing among both the preachers themselves and their congregations for freedom from the restrictions in which they were placed by adherence to

Church law in the matter. Charles wrote strong letters to some of the senior preachers, expressing his concern at this new development, and his sympathy with their temporal anxieties, beseeching them at the same time not to leave the Church. Thus he wrote to Nicholas Gilbert—

" Your fidelity to the Church of England, although your duty, I shall accept as the greatest kindness you can possibly show me, beyond any personal benefit whatsoever."

And to Christopher Hopper—

" Here is a poor Methodist preacher who has given up his business (his little all) for the sake of preaching the gospel. Perhaps he has got a wife and children. . . . Suppose neither he nor his children are starved while my brother or I live, what must he do when we depart? Our end cannot now be far off. He must turn Dissenter or Church minister. I grant it. There is no alternative.

" But will you (you ask us) now use all your influence to get us ordained? I answer for myself, yes, and will begin to-morrow or never blame him for turning Dissenter. Neither have I the least doubt but that the porter will be commanded to open the door and to admit, by imposition of hands, as many as have addicted themselves to God's service in the Established Church. I have more reasons for believing this than is commonly known.

. . . If any of you prefer the services of the Dissenters, I would let you depart in peace."

Charles also corresponded with Grimshaw of Haworth, who put the case of the preachers with much insight and common-sense.

" If you can stem the torrent " (he wrote) " by dint of persuasion or some other influence you may have over some of the preachers, it will only be during your own lives. So soon as you are dead, all will do as many have already done."

Charles in his letter to Grimshaw had put down the separatist tendencies that distressed him to " pride and the enemy " on the part of the preachers. Grimshaw showed that the congregations were as much involved as the preachers.

" Nor is this spirit merely in the preachers. It is in the people also. There are so many inconveniences attend the people that in most places they all plead strenuously for a settled ministry. They cannot, they say in conscience, receive the Sacraments as administered in our Church. They cannot attend preaching at eight, twelve, and four o'clock on the Lord's Day and go to church. For my part . . . I believe the Church of England to be the soundest, purest, and most apostolical, national Christian Church in the world. Therefore I can in good conscience live and die in her. But my conscience is not another man's. I believe the Methodists (preachers and others) have so much

to say for their separation from our Church as will not easily in a conference or otherwise be obviated."

It would indeed demand uncommon zeal to attend the Wesleyan preachings at the hours specified by Mr. Grimshaw, to meet regularly in "class" and "band," and withal to be a regular attendant and communicant at the parish church. Between the travelling preacher and the resident clergyman, the Methodists turned naturally to the man who spoke their own dialect and who was one of themselves. The Methodist meeting, with its fervent extempore prayers, dramatic "experiences" and bright hymn-singing, appealed to them more than the dull duet between parson and clerk, or a sermon too often gabbled from manuscript by an absentee rector. Then it must be remembered that in many cases the Methodist converts had no ties with the Church at all. Many of them were Dissenters, many belonged to the masses of ignorant heathenism that the neglect of the Church had suffered to accumulate in the new industrial districts.

Moreover, when the vicar or the local publican wished to make trouble, the old penal laws could be invoked against a preaching-house which was not protected by registration as a Dissenting chapel under the Toleration Act.

Taking all this into consideration, it speaks volumes for the personal influence of the Wesleys

on preachers and people that the formal separation was delayed as long as it was.

Yet, on the other hand, the tradition of attachment to the Church lingered long. Many years after the Wesleyans had become a separate denomination, with preachers ordained by the Conference to administer the Sacraments, numbers of them disliked and refused the title of "Dissenter." In 1841 the Rev. Thomas Jackson, Charles Wesley's biographer, wrote, sixty years after his death: "The Wesleyan Methodists have never as a body either avowed or entertained the belief that an ecclesiastical establishment, episcopacy, or the use of a liturgy is unlawful. In the strict sense of the word, therefore, they are not Dissenters. . . . A regular attendance upon the religious services of the Church is not at all inconsistent with membership in the Methodist societies, nor is it even discountenanced."

Within living memory, heads of Wesleyan families kept their pews in the parish church, and it was only in 1891 that the title of "Wesleyan Methodist Church" received official sanction by a Resolution of the Conference.

The date when another controversy reached the acute stage is marked by the discussion in the Conference of 1758 on "Christian Perfection."

The object of Methodism, as set out by its Founder, was "to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the

land." To be saved from the punishment of sin was never by either of the Wesleys set up as the sole goal of a convert. John Wesley's answer to the charge of Antinomianism was the same as that made by St. Paul; because his converts were saved by grace, they were to be intolerant of sin. But need this growth in holiness be the slow and weary thing they found it? Must they be for ever "haunted by the self they fly"? Since all was the work of Grace, could not Grace effect their sanctification in an instant, as they were taught it did their conversion? If one moment sufficed to turn a soul from darkness to light, was not one moment sufficient to break the power of sin? And when a man felt that he had undergone such an experience, ought he not to testify of it?

By some such train of thought many religious people justified a movement which broke out with great force among the Methodists. Up and down the country, in the various societies, they were claiming to be completely delivered from the power of sin, and to have attained Christian Perfection.

No wise person, who has once for all accepted the possibility of the direct action of the Spirit of God on the human soul, will dogmatize as to what is or is not possible in the matter of spiritual experience. Readers of Baron von Hügel's *Life of St. Catherine of Genoa* will remember the sudden and extraordinary manner in which she was de-

livered in one moment, as it seems, for the rest of her life, from any impulse conflicting with the will of God. On the other hand, it is obvious that the claim to possess this experience allows unlimited scope for self-deception.

John Wesley had an incorrigible habit of taking people at their own valuation. When member after member told him that he or she was delivered from all sin, he believed them and praised God. Charles Wesley, more cautious, saw danger in such professions. He uses strong language in his journal about some of those self-deceivers whose extravagances were bringing the Methodist movement into disrepute. Some of them had gone so far as to say that unless a man had attained a state of entire sanctification, the test of which seemed to be his own feeling and not any impartial outward judgment about his life, he was still under the wrath of God.

The matter came up at the Conference of 1758, when the following careful statement was put on the Minutes—

"Do you affirm that perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistakes?"

"We continually affirm just the contrary."

"In what manner would you advise those who have attained to speak of their own experience?"

"With great wariness and with the deepest humility and self-abasement before God."

"What does Christian perfection imply?"

" The loving God with all the heart, so that every evil temper is destroyed, and every thought, word, and work springs from and is conducted to the end by the pure love of God and our neighbour."

Some of Charles Wesley's hymns imply the possibility of a sudden and permanent deliverance from sin, but he never laid claim to any such experience himself, and the instances of fanaticism and self-delusion which he encountered inclined him to fall back more and more on the sober Catholic doctrine, according to which conquest of sin normally comes by slow degrees and as the result of discipline and perseverance. He wrote to his wife from London in 1765—

" It is observable what some tell me, that on Thursday night, after my preaching poverty of spirit, such a spirit of humility fell upon the bands at their meeting as had not been known for months or years past. Every mouth was stopped, not one boasting word of perfection was heard. They lay low in the dust before the Friend of Sinners."

The Calvinistic controversy had for Charles Wesley the unfortunate result of interrupting a long and deeply valued friendship. Ever since he went with his young wife to settle at Bristol, Lady Huntingdon had shown herself a generous and faithful friend to them both. In 1758 Charles

had introduced to his patroness a young clergyman of French-Swiss extraction, who had sought ordination with the object of assisting the Wesleys in their work. He was much attached to them both, and to Charles he wrote in the warmest terms of admiration and friendship: "I ask no other place in Heaven than that I may have at your feet. I doubt if even Paradise would be Paradise to me unless it were shared with you."

He was also much struck with Lady Huntingdon, and called her "a modern prodigy, a humble and pious Countess." She appointed him one of her private chaplains, and he also assisted in the services at West Street Chapel in London; but in 1760 he was appointed to the living of Madeley in Shropshire, which he held till his death. Lady Huntingdon showed her confidence in him by inviting him to accept the presidency of the College which she had founded at Trevecca for theological students; but in 1770 the dispute between her followers and the Wesleyans, which had been damped down for some time by Whitefield's pacific policy, flamed out once more.

In the Wesleyan Conference of 1770 a discussion took place which was bitterly resented by the Calvinists. "Nothing can be more false"—so ran the official "Minutes" of the proceedings—"than the maxim that a man is to do nothing in order to justification." And the report goes on with a

quaint air of finality in the expression, which stamps it as Wesley's—

"Whoever repents should do works meet for repentance. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for? . . . We are every hour and every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works; according to the whole of our inward temper is our outward behaviour."

And he concludes with a sudden burst of candour—

"What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, about words."

Fletcher seems to have been much of the same opinion, when he wrote, referring to Lady Huntingdon—

"There is more misunderstanding between my Lady and Mr. Wesley about words and modes of expression than about things and essential principles. . . . My Lady is more for looking to the misery and depths of the Fall; Mr. Wesley more for considering the power and effect of the recovery. My Lady speaks glorious things of free grace, and Mr. Wesley inculcates the glorious use we ought to make of it."

No differences between Christians are more acute than those which come from differences of emphasis on aspects of truths held in common by both. John Wesley would have assented without demur to the

remark of Ruskin in his early Calvinist days that all the religious errors of men spring from the effort " to earn and not to receive their salvation." Lady Huntingdon would have shrunk with horror from the doctrine that because salvation was a matter of free grace, it did not matter how one lived. Yet Wesley held that the logical goal of Calvinism was Antinomian immorality or the gloom of the reprobated sinner; while Lady Huntingdon had no doubt that Arminianism was but one step short of full-blown Popery.

Charles Wesley did not attend the Bristol Conference in 1770, and a letter from John to him, dated August 3rd, seems to show that Charles had been suggesting some explanation of the word " merit " which would clear the Conference from the suspicion of having upheld Romish doctrine.

These efforts at explanation came to nothing for the moment. John Wesley was thoroughly irritated by Lady Huntingdon's more than episcopal pretensions, and wrote her such a letter as he knew how to write. The Countess, on her part, prepared for the fray, and in next June Charles received from her a copy of the circular letter which her cousin and chaplain, the Rev. the Hon. Walter Shirley, was sending round, under her direction, to beat up supporters for a counter-demonstration, to be held at the time of the next Wesleyan Conference in the coming August. With this circular came a

long letter from Lady Huntingdon to Charles, in which she wrote—

"The 'Minutes' have long affected my mind with deep concern, and, thinking that all ought to be deemed Papists who did not disavow them, I readily complied with the proposal of an open disavowal of them. As you have no part in this matter, I find it difficult to blame your brother to you, while, as an honest man, I must pity and not less regard you, as you must suffer equal disgrace and universal distrust from the supposed union with him."

This disagreeable and insolent letter was found among Charles's papers, docketed, "Lady Huntingdon's last. Unanswered by John Wesley's brother."

Lady Huntingdon's plan of a demonstration against the Wesleyans proved a failure, and Mr. Shirley, who seems to have been a moderate-minded and amiable man, wrote to Wesley, apologizing for the impertinence of his circular, and asking if a deputation from the Calvinists might attend the Conference. This being agreed to, Mr. Shirley and some others attended the session, and proposed that Wesley and his preachers should make a public statement to clear themselves of the imputation of teaching Romish doctrine. A statement was accordingly drafted by Shirley, and amended by Wesley, which condemned justification by works as "a most perilous and abominable doc-

trine," and this was adopted by the Conference. On receiving this assurance, Mr. Shirley, on his part, consented to make a public statement that he and his friends had mistaken the meaning of the passage in the " Minutes."

Unfortunately, just as peace seemed secure, Fletcher hurled a bomb into the Calvinist camp, in the shape of *Five Letters,* in which he attacked their whole theological position. On reading Shirley's withdrawal, he would gladly have suppressed the pamphlet, but it was already in type, and Oliver, one of Wesley's preachers, who was in charge of the publishing office, decided that it should appear.

Charles Wesley, in a letter to Fletcher, says that he considers the pamphlet moderate, in view of the fact that Wesley had been attacked as a " Papist unmasked, a heretic and an apostate." " You have not been too severe to dear Mr. Shirley, but very kind and friendly, to set a good mistaken man right, and probably to preserve him from the like rashness as long as he lives. Be not troubled, therefore, but cast your care upon the Lord."

Mr. Shirley had had his lesson and kept out of the arena for the future, but the controversy was continued by the Calvinists with remarkable bitterness. Toplady, and the two brothers Richard and Rowland Hill, earned unenviable distinction by scurrilous attacks upon Wesley, which did not spare his personal character.

As illustrating the kind of attacks to which Wesley was subjected, and the composure with which he bore them, a story told by Charles's daughter Sarah, and quoted in Jackson's *Life*, is worth recalling.

"I think it was in the year 1775 my uncle promised to take me with him to Canterbury and Dover. About this time Mrs. Wesley had obtained some letters, which she used to the most injurious purpose, misinterpreting spiritual expressions and interpolating words. These she read to some Calvinists, and they were to be sent to the *Morning Post*. A Calvinist gentleman who esteemed my father and uncle, came to the former and told him that, for the sake of religion, the publication should be stopped. . . . As Mrs. Wesley had read, but did not show, the letters to him, he had some doubt of their authenticity. . . .

"My dear father, to whom the reputation of my uncle was far dearer than his own, immediately saw the importance of refutation, and set off to the Foundry to induce him to postpone his journey; while I in my own mind was lamenting such a disappointment, having anticipated it with all the impatience natural to my years. Never shall I forget 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." '

" I ought to add that the letters in question were satisfactorily proved to be mutilated, and no scandal resulted from his trust in God."

Fletcher, the chief champion on the Wesleyan side in this controversy, was in constant correspondence with Charles, to whom he sent his manuscripts for revision; and Charles, who by this time was settled in London, saw them through the Press for him. " Your every hint is a blessing to me," the author wrote.

John Wesley had a very high opinion of Fletcher, whom he considered " the best man he ever knew." When it became clear that Charles neither would, nor could, take his place if he were removed by death, he suggested that Fletcher should consider the possibility of becoming his successor. Fletcher rather put off the suggestion than absolutely declined it, but in 1774 his own health began to fail, and though he lived for another eleven years, it

soon became clear that he could not look forward to assuming the arduous charge which was borne by the Founder of Methodism. In 1775 he wrote to Charles—

"The Methodists will not expect from you your brother's labours; but they have, I think, a right to expect that you should preside over them while God spares you in the land of the living. Should your brother be called to his reward, I would not be free to go to London till you and the preachers had settled all matters. . . . My going just at such a time would have the appearance of vanity. It would seem as if I wanted to be somebody among the Methodists."

By a not uncommon turn of fate, it happened that the two men who were so concerned for the future of the movement after John Wesley's departure, were destined to pass away before him, and the presidency of the Methodists settled itself as such things do.

CHAPTER X

LAST YEARS

For the last twenty-five years of Charles Wesley's life he was an inhabitant of Marylebone parish. One of the principal motives which led him to settle in London was the wish to obtain good musical teaching for his two sons, of whom Charles, the elder, was fourteen years old when they came to live in Chesterfield Street, and Samuel, the younger, five.

The Wesley children were brought up in a music-loving home. Charles himself had a passion for the masters of English Church music, Purcell, Blow, and Boyce, and, like the whole of England at that time, he was an ardent devotee of Handel. According to his son Samuel, he had a most accurate sense of time, but not much voice. Mrs. Wesley, who played prettily on the harpsichord, had a voice of delightful quality and excelled in Handel's oratorio songs.

The notes which Charles has left on the musical development of his two sons show with what interest and care he watched their progress. "He

[Charles] was two years and three-quarters old, when I first noticed his strong inclination to music. He then surprised me by playing a tune on the harpsichord readily and in just time. Soon after, he played several, whatever his mother sung or whatever he heard in the streets. From his birth she used to quiet and amuse him with the harpsichord, but he would not suffer her to play with one hand only, taking the other and putting it to the keys before he could speak. When he played himself, she used to tie him up with his backstring to the chair for fear of his falling. Whatever tune it was, he always put a true bass to it."

His father took the infant prodigy up to London at four years old, and he played to several musical people. The child used to ask, when told to play to any one, "Is he a musicker?" and if answered, "Yes," he played with the greater readiness. Some of those who heard him were reminded of what Handel, then one of the lions of London, had told them of his own childhood.

On another occasion Charles wrote to his wife: "We met Mr. Smith and Mr. Tate. They stared and looked at each other as if they did not believe their own ears, while Charles played like his master. It is hard to say which of the three was most delighted. The first masters count it an honour to assist him."

These artists treated the brilliant child with the

generosity of the guild. Kelway, the first music teacher of the day, gave little Charles lessons gratis for two years, and testified that he had "a divine gift." Dr. Boyce, the English representative of the Handelian tradition, came several times to Charles Wesley's house to hear the little fellow play, and gave him lessons in composition.

Some of the stricter sort were disposed to cavil at Charles Wesley's decision to allow his sons to cultivate the talents with which they were so remarkably endowed. John Wesley was not one of these, as may be inferred from the fact that he made his nephew Charles the handsome present of Dr. Boyce's three volumes of cathedral music.

Charles was a wonderful virtuoso, but Samuel, who was nine years younger, much surpassed him as a composer. He did not show his brother's precocity, and the first sign of musical talent that struck the family was that he was always listening to Charles's playing. When the great Mr. Kelway came to give Charles his lesson, the baby, "undisturbed by Mr. Kelway's frowns, constantly attended, and accompanied Charles on the chair." Before he could write he had begun to compose music. By the time he was eight years old he had written an oratorio, "Ruth," and presented it to Dr. Boyce, who acknowledged it with charming courtesy.

"Dr. Boyce's compliments and thanks to his very ingenious brother composer, Mr. Samuel

Wesley, and is very much pleased and obliged by the possession of the oratorio of 'Ruth,' which he shall preserve with the utmost care as the most curious product of his musical library."

Lord Mornington, one of the leading amateurs of the day, told Daines Barrington that "he always wished to consult Master Wesley upon any difficulty in composition, as he knew no one who gave so immediate and satisfactory information."

Mr. Madan, the popular incumbent of the Lock Chapel, who was suspected of being the original of Cowper's *Occiduus*, took young Samuel Wesley about with him to musical parties, where he made the acquaintance, among others, of Dr. Burney, musical critic, and father of the famous Fanny. The Doctor spoke of Samuel in the warmest terms, and was delighted not only with his music but with his manners. He "behaved as one brought up in a court, but without a courtier's servility."

It may have been through Dr. Burney that Dr. Johnson heard of the talents of the Wesley boys. Charles Wesley the younger used to describe with much humour a visit which the great man paid to their house in Chesterfield Street. "I understand, Sir, your boys are skilled in music. Pray let me hear them." As soon as they began, the Doctor, who did not know one tune from another, snatched up a book that lay in the window-seat and was soon absorbed in reading and rolling from side to

side As soon as the music ceased Johnson awoke as from a trance, growled forth, "Young gentlemen, I am much obliged to you," and walked off. "Wesley imitated Johnson's manner and growl most happily," says Daines Barrington.

Another link with Dr. Johnson was Charles Wesley's sister, Martha Hall, who now lived entirely under the wing of her brothers, in the house next door to the Foundry Chapel. She was a quaint little old lady, so remarkably like her brother John that she might almost have been taken for him in women's clothes. She was the one member of the Wesley family without a sense of humour. She had displayed great magnanimity in dealing with her despicable husband, and Dr. Johnson and his *entourage* had a real regard for her.

Through Mrs. Hall, her young niece Sarah, the only daughter of Charles Wesley, came to know some of the leading literary women of the day, Mrs. Barbauld, Hannah More, Mrs. Elizabeth Carter, Miss Porter and others. Sarah herself seems to have had more literary ambition than talent, to judge from the reference made to her by Charles Lamb, in a letter to Coleridge dated 1800.

"Miss Wesley and a tribe of authoresses that come after you here clearly are the shadows. You encouraged that mopsey . . . to dance after you in the hope of having her nonsense put into a nonsensical anthology."

One must allow something for the whimsicality of Lamb at twenty-five, and Sarah Wesley was an admirable daughter if a poor poet.

Martha Hall died in 1791, at the preachers' house in City Road, aged eighty-four, having survived both her famous brothers. Her niece wrote of her—

"Dr. Johnson was an early friend of hers; to her my father owed his acquaintance with the doctor, and I, the honour of his favour. I used to accompany her to Bolt Court, and had the privilege of hearing their discourse. . . . Even my brothers looked forward with delightful anticipation when her weekly visit was to be paid (for one day a week was appropriated by my father to receive her). Her conversation so far resembled my uncle's that children idolized her. . . . My father used to say, 'it was needless to give anything to Pat for her comfort; she always gave it away to some beggar.'"

Boswell has left on record a lively and somewhat disrespectful account of his impressions of Mrs. Hall, on one occasion when he was honoured with an invitation from the Doctor to drink tea with her and Mrs. Williams in Bolt Court. He also preserves the verdict of Johnson, that Charles Wesley was a "more solid man" than his brother, so far as belief in ghost stories was concerned.

There is an interesting glimpse of the family life, while all the children were young, in a letter which Charles wrote to his wife from Bristol in 1778—

" Assure me Sam rides every day, Charles rises at six, Sally at seven, their mother before eight, and that my scholars go on with their Latin or at least do not stand still."

A very tender relation seems to have subsisted between Charles Wesley and his daughter. He taught her Latin, which was not then commonly included in the curriculum of a young lady's education. One day, when she was repeating her lesson to her father, he said impatiently, " Sarah, you are as stupid as an ass." The poor child said nothing, but looked up piteously at him. The heart of the irascible, affectionate little man was melted at once; his own eyes filled with tears, and he finished the sentence with the words, " and as patient."

Before Sarah was twenty the budding bluestocking had begun to write verses, and send them to her father for correction. " They want perspicuity " (he wrote), " which should be the first point, but they are worth correcting."

Nothing that Charles Wesley wrote ever wanted perspicuity. He proceeds—

" There are many useful things which I can teach you if I live a little longer. But I never dare promise myself another year. . . . Probably I have taken my last leave of Bristol. Certainly I shall never more be separated eight weeks from my family."

Later he wrote to his daughter from their home

in Chesterfield Street, Marylebone, at a time when she was staying with friends at Guildford—

" I think you may avail yourself of my small knowledge of books and poetry. I am not yet too old to assist you a little in your reading, and perhaps improve your taste in versifying. You need not dread my severity. I have a laudable partiality for my own children. Witness your brothers, whom I do not love a jot better than you; only you be as ready to show me your verses as they their music.

" The evenings I have set apart for reading with you, and then we should begin with history. A plan or order of study is absolutely necessary. Without that the more you read the more you are confused, and never rise above a smatterer in learning."

We do not know if he used for his children the concise history of England which John Wesley produced in 1775. He was pained by his brother's reflections on Charles I.'s want of sincerity. " Such a drawback from his good character will exceedingly grieve more than me, as much as it will please the patriots and republicans." (It will be remembered that Dr. Johnson in his Dictionary defined Patriotism as " the last refuge of a scoundrel," using the word in the cant sense given to it by the factions of the time.) " At such times as these, you and I should not join in the popular cry, but rather go against the stream. Let Macaulay and company call the King's murder ' this great act of national

justice.' Let not your hand be upon him or mine."

In 1777 occurred the famous *cause célèbre* of Dr. Dodd, which was even more of a nine days' wonder in London society than the Ferrers case. Dr. Dodd was a popular London preacher, who got into difficulties through his ambition and extravagance, and finally forged the signature of the Earl of Chesterfield, a former pupil of his, and was hanged for the crime. He had been acquainted with the Wesleys in the days of his prosperity, and both John and Charles went to visit him in prison. Charles was much impressed by his penitence, and wrote some severely satirical verses on the minister who refused to recommend him to the mercy of the Crown.

In 1779 the two young Wesleys, being twenty-two and thirteen years old respectively, began the series of concerts in Chesterfield Street, which for some years were a feature in the life of musical London. Charles Wesley played the organ, of which he had a remarkable command, and Samuel the violoncello. After the first concert their father wrote to John Wesley: "I am clear without a doubt that my son's concert is after the will and order of Providence. It has established them as musicians, and in a safe and honourable way. The Bishop has sent us word that he has never heard any music he likes so well, and promises Charles five scholars next winter."

At these recitals might be met not only the Bishop of London, who expressed himself so favourably after the first experiment, but Lord Dartmouth (Cowper's "peer, who wore a coronet and prayed"), General Oglethorpe, Daines Barrington, and the Earl of Mornington, one of the Irish connections of the Wesleys, and father of the great Duke of Wellington. Lord Mornington was a musical enthusiast, who came every week to breakfast in Chesterfield Street and made music with the Wesley boys. He did not at all mind being taken for a professional musician as he wended his way through Marylebone with a violin case under his arm.

To Charles Wesley this partial return to society was a fresh call to do the work of an evangelist. He wrote to Kelway a long letter of admonition after a serious illness, and also wrote to Lord Mornington, who replied, in an excellent spirit, taking the opportunity to congratulate the father upon the genius of his sons—

"Their merit will make its own way upon so much the surer footing as it is independent. I hope you will live to see it, and though you have been called out of your retirement into a world you wish to keep clear of, yet you have the satisfaction of finding that the world is obliged to go to you, and not you to them."

The fact that Charles Wesley had allowed his sons

to become musicians, and in particular the starting of the weekly concerts, provoked considerable adverse comment among the "unco guid." Even Fletcher seems to have thought that a word of warning was called for—

"You have your enemies" (he wrote to Charles) "as well as your brother. They complain of your love for music, company and fine clothes, great folks, and the want of your former zeal and frugality. I need not put you in mind to cut off sinful appearances. You were taught to do this before I knew anything of the matter. Only see you abound more and more, to stop the mouths of your adversaries, or of your jealous friends."

In order to show that he had no sympathy with the narrow-minded outcry of a certain set, John Wesley made a point of appearing now and then at the recitals in Chesterfield Street, although with the sentiments which he expresses in his journal. "I spent an agreeable hour at a concert of my nephews. But I was a little out of my element among lords and ladies. I love plain music and plain company best."

There is no evidence in the records of Charles Wesley's life at this period of any slackening in his devotion to the great interest of his life. His trouble was to find himself in advancing years and growing infirmities more or less shelved and considered as

a drag on the energies of the younger generation. Some bitterness of this sort arose in connection with the services held at what was then called the " New Chapel," but which modern Londoners know as the Wesley Chapel in City Road. The opening of this building, in what was then a wealthy suburban district, marked the emerging of the Methodist movement into the sunshine of popular acceptance and respect. Five years afterwards John Wesley wrote: " I have more invitations to preach in churches than I can accept."

Charles Wesley, as the chief of the Methodist ministers resident in London, was responsible for the conduct of the services at the New Chapel, and was accustomed to preach there morning and evening, when his health allowed. This arrangement caused some discontent among the other London preachers, which found a mouthpiece in Joseph Pawson, who was appointed one of his assistants in 1780.

Joseph Pawson, one of the most able and eloquent of the lay preachers, had been provisionally ordained, as it were, by Wesley, to administer the Sacraments to the Methodists in Scotland. Like other of Wesley's innovations, this was simply an expedient to meet a practical difficulty. There were in Scotland no episcopally ordained clergymen willing to assist the Wesleys, as there were in England. But it seems rather to reduce the whole thing to an

absurdity to insist, as Wesley did, that though Pawson and others were competent to administer the Sacraments to Methodists in Scotland, they lost that competence directly they crossed the Tweed. To this extent one can sympathize with Pawson's outburst of indignation when he wrote to a friend in 1787: "We are to be just what we were before we came to Scotland—no Sacraments, no gowns, no nothing at all of any kind whatsoever."

In this respect Pawson only expressed the views of a large and growing body of the preachers, who looked on Charles Wesley as the principal hindrance to their attainment of the status they desired. Pawson knew that Charles Wesley was strongly opposed, on principle, to the administration of the Sacraments by preachers who had not received ordination from the bishops, and he stated that Charles had charged the London society never to receive the Sacraments from any of the unordained preachers. "O cursed ignorance, O furious bigotry!" is his comment. "How doth the fire of hell burn in that poor man's breast!"

He found, however, that, so far, Charles had his brother behind him, and yielded for the time, with the remark, "There seems to be no prospect of doing anything but just the old way while Mr. Wesley lives."

It is not surprising, therefore, to find, in a memorandum of Pawson's quoted by Dr. Whitehead

in his memoir of Charles Wesley, the following passage—

" It is well known that Mr. Charles Wesley was much prejudiced in favour of the clergy through the whole course of his life, and that it was nothing but hard necessity that obliged him in any degree to continue the lay preachers. . . . He was glad of their assistance when he did not choose to preach himself, and accordingly on a Sunday evening, he would always have a lay preacher appointed as well as himself, lest a shower of rain or an agreeable visit should prevent his attending."

One would think that a delicate man of over seventy might make arrangements to prevent his congregation being disappointed without incurring this kind of misconstruction.

In June the trouble of which Pawson was the ringleader seems to have come to a head, and on the 16th Charles wrote to his brother to inform him that the principal lay preachers stationed in London had written to the country preachers complaining of the way in which they were treated by " the clergy here," which, he adds, " means neither more nor less than your own brother Charles. The whole ground of their complaint against me is my serving the chapel on Sunday afternoon as well as in the morning.

" My reasons for preaching in the New Chapel twice every Sunday are, (1) because, after you, I have

the best right, and (2) because I have so short a time to preach anywhere; (3) because I am fully persuaded I do more good there than in any other place.

"They, I know, are of a different opinion and make no secret of it, declaring everywhere that the work is stopping, the society scattering, and the congregation at the New Chapel dwindled away and quite dead.

"I thank God the chapel is well filled. Last Sunday I preached twice, never with greater and seldom with equal effect. I think the preachers wrong, and in the greatest danger through pride, but I have and will have no quarrel with them.

"Convince them, if you can, that they want a clergyman over them to keep them and the flock together. Convince them that it is impossible I should stand in their way long, for I cannot (should I live to the winter) serve the New Chapel Sundays and holy days in all weathers. . . . If God continues my strength, I shall take the best care of the chapel I can till you return. Then I shall deliver up my charge to you and you alone."

The matter was settled eventually by Charles consenting to preach sometimes at West Street Chapel, and to relinquish the City Road pulpit to others; but the incident illustrates the extent to which he had lost touch with the younger and more aggressive element among the Methodists.

In November of the same year "the McNab incident" provided a fresh illustration of the growth of a new spirit. John Wesley had always kept in his hands the sole power of directing the activities of the preachers and appointing their spheres of labour. A certain preacher named McNab had been appointed to Bath by the Conference. Wesley desired that an Irish clergyman in whom he was interested, and who had come to Bath to live, should occupy the pulpit of the Methodist chapel on Sunday evenings. McNab refused to submit to this arrangement, saying that he had been appointed by the Conference and not by Wesley, and that Wesley had no right to interfere. Wesley took up the challenge at once, went down with Charles to Bath, and expelled McNab from the Connexion. His authority was still so great that there was no open revolt against the sentence, though many of the preachers sympathized strongly with McNab, and as a result of the representations that were made to him, he consented to restore McNab to his full status as a preacher at the Conference of 1780.

Charles had been delighted with his brother's strong exercise of authority, and was proportionately disgusted with what he judged to be the weak compliance that followed it. At first he refused to attend the Conference of 1780, and wrote beforehand to John Wesley—

"I can do no good. I can prevent no evil. You

know I cannot command my temper, and you have not courage to stand by me. . . . I am [not] sure they will not prevail on you to ordain them. You claim the power, only say it is not probable you shall exercise it. I want better security."

The lay preachers were delighted with the results of the Conference, and Pawson wrote: "There was nothing . . . but peace, harmony and love." Charles, who was present after all, did not disturb this harmony by any protest, which he knew would be useless; though he wrote bitterly to his brother afterwards: "It was much easier to say nothing than to speak neither more nor less than you would approve."

It was in the full tide of distress, occasioned by his clear vision of the inevitable trend of the Methodist movement, that he wrote the pathetic lines—

"Why should I longer now contend,
My last important moments spend,
In buffeting the air?
In warning those who will not see,
But rest in blind security,
And rush into the snare?

Prophet of ill, why should I live,
Or by my sad forebodings grieve,
When I can serve no more?"

There is something that reminds one of the tough and impracticable old fighter of Epworth in his obstinate resistance to the changes which he saw to be inevitable; but his sensitiveness to criticism

and opposition was not to be found in his father. He was too tenderhearted to be able to oppose those he loved without much suffering.

The outbreak of the Gordon Riots in 1780 gave him an opportunity of showing that his characteristic generosity and fearlessness remained with him to the last. At the risk of being taken for a Papist in disguise, the brave old man opposed the senseless bigotry of the London mob. He was nobly seconded by the London Methodists in his care for the "trembling, persecuted Catholics." He wrote to his daughter—

"If God had not rebuked the madness of the people at the very crisis, London had now been no more. No wonder your mother was terrified when I was proscribed as a Popish priest, for I never signed the petition or ranked among the patriots."

His contempt for the cowardice of the authorities and the savage folly of the mob was expressed in a satirical poem of four cantos, entitled "The Protestant Association," of which the following lines may serve as a sample—

> "The justices with dread look on
> Till their own houses are burned down,
> Content the mob should burn their hives,
> If they would only spare their lives. . . .
> Old Wesley, too, to Papists kind,
> Who wrote against them for a blind,
> Himself a Papist, too, at heart,
> He and his followers shall smart."

On the 8th of June he gave John Wesley, then in the country, a lively description of those days of terror—

" You read a very small part of the mischief done in the papers. It is nothing, they say, to what they intend to do. But they have made a good beginning. Brother Thackray was an eyewitness. He saw them drag the Bishop of Lincoln out of his coach and force him to kneel down. They treated him unmercifully, began to pull the house down to which he fled for shelter, were scarcely persuaded to let him escape at eleven at night. Another bishop wisely called out, ' Huzza, no Popery,' and was dismissed with shoutings. Lord Mansfield would have reasoned with them, but they would not hear him and handled him almost as roughly as the Bishop of Lincoln. They pulled off the Archbishop's wig.

" Some of the Tabernacle have asked if Charles Wesley were not with the petitioners, and were surprised to hear I was not. ' What, then,' said they, ' does he not stand up for the Protestant cause? '

" Imagine the terror of the poor Papists. At the chapel I preached peace and charity, and prayed earnestly for the trembling, persecuted Catholics. Never have I found such love for them as on this occasion; and I believe most of the society are like-minded."

Charles Wesley's charity for the Papists did not prevent him from being deeply grieved and mortified

when his son Samuel, the most gifted and the most wayward of his three children, joined for a time the Roman Catholic Church.

The Duchess of Norfolk, the leader of Roman Catholic society in London, undertook to break the news to him. The old man received her in full canonicals. When she said something of the leading of Divine grace, Charles, who was pacing the large drawing-room in great agitation, interrupted her, "Say the loaves and fishes, Madam, say the loaves and fishes."

On this occasion John Wesley wrote words of wisdom to his nephew Charles. "I doubt not but Sarah and you are in trouble because Samuel has 'changed his religion.' Nay, he has changed his opinion and mode of worship, but not his religion; it is quite another thing. . . . What, then, is religion? It is happiness in God or in the knowledge and love of God. It is faith working by love, producing righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In other words, it is a heart and life devoted to God. . . . Either he has this religion, or he has not; if he has, he will not finally perish."

The year 1784 was a notable one in the history of the Methodist movement. On February 28th the Methodist Connexion was made a legal entity by the Deed of Declaration, which vested its property and powers in the "Legal Hundred," *i. e.*

one hundred of the itinerant preachers, the first of whom were appointed by John Wesley himself with power to fill vacancies as they arose. By this means the permanence of Methodism was secured after the death of the Founder, "Upon such a foundation" (to use John Wesley's own words) "as is likely to stand as long as the sun and moon endure." "That is," he added, "if they continue to walk by faith and to show forth their faith by their works."

In September of the same year John Wesley took the momentous step, which made separation from the Church of England inevitable, by solemnly ordaining Dr. Coke as a General Superintendent for the Methodist societies in America.

Charles Wesley, according to Dr. Whitehead, summed up his view of the situation, in this bitter quatrain—

> "How easily are bishops made,
> By man's or woman's whim.
> Wesley his hands on Coke hath laid,
> But who laid hands on him?"

In the following year three of the preachers were ordained by Wesley to administer the Sacraments in Scotland. In both instances Wesley did not want arguments to justify the course which he had taken. In spite of strong representations as to the need for bishops in America, the English bishops had never ventured to consecrate one. They were liable to

the penalties of *præmunire* if they consecrated without leave of the Crown, and the Crown was far from disposed to grant the necessary permission, fearing as it did the effect upon the colonies, who were chiefly of Puritan descent and not too well affected, as it was, towards British rule. Only in 1784, after the Declaration of Independence, was Dr. Seabury consecrated as Bishop of the Episcopal Church in America, by the Scottish bishops in Aberdeen. Then in 1786 there was passed an "Enabling Act," permitting the Archbishops to consecrate bishops for work in foreign countries; and in the following year two more bishops for America were consecrated at Lambeth. There was thus some point in Charles Wesley's contention that if the colonists could have had patience for two or three years, the lack of episcopal oversight would have been supplied; but, on the other hand, Wesley could plead, in justification of his irregularity, the long neglect of the colonists by the heads of the English Church.

In Scotland the Episcopal Church had sunk under persecution to "the shadow of a shade," and the Scottish people of no matter what persuasion would have resented the interference of English bishops.

For these reasons Wesley held that if his converts in Scotland and America were not to be left without the Sacraments, his ordinations were a necessity; but he still declared that he had no mind to extend the plan to England or to break with the

Church of which he was a priest. Charles Wesley saw clearly enough that "he who says A will end by saying B"; but, as a matter of fact, it was not till after Charles's death that Wesley went on to ordain preachers for England.

A long letter written in April 1785 to Dr. Chandler, a clergyman, who was just leaving for work in America, shows with what consternation Charles viewed his brother's action.

"My eldest brother, Samuel, a strict Churchman, brought me up in his own principles. We preached, but never in church hours, in houses or fields, and sent, or rather carried from thence, multitudes to church who had never been there before. Our society in most places made the bulk of the congregation both at prayer and Sacrament.

"I never lost my dread of separation, or ceased to guard our societies against it. I frequently told them, 'I am your servant as long as you remain in the Church of England, but no longer. Should you forsake her, you would renounce me.'

"Some of the lay preachers very early discovered an inclination to separate, which induced my brother to print his *Reasons against Separation*. As often as it appeared, we beat down the schismatical spirit. If any one did leave the Church, at the same time he left our society. For near fifty years we kept the sheep in the fold, and having filled the number of our days, only waited to depart in peace.

"After having continued friends for about seventy years and fellow-labourers for above fifty, can anything but death part us? I can scarcely yet believe it, that in his eighty-second year my brother, my old intimate friend and companion, should have assumed the episcopal character, ordained elders, consecrated a bishop, and sent him to ordain our lay preachers in America. I was then in Bristol at his elbow; yet he never gave me the least hint of his intention. How was he surprised into so rash an action? He certainly persuaded himself that it was right.

"Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation. This my brother does not and will not see; or that he has renounced the principles and practice of his whole life.

"Thus our partnership here is dissolved, but not our friendship. I have taken him for better for worse, till death do us part, or, rather, reunite us in love inseparable. I have lived on earth a little too long, who have lived to see this evil day. . . .

"P.S.—What will become of those poor sheep in the wilderness, the American Methodists? Had they had patience a little longer, they would have seen a real bishop in America, consecrated by three Scotch bishops, who have their consecration from the English bishops and are acknowledged by them the same as themselves. There is, therefore, not the least difference between the members of Bishop

Seabury's church and the members of the Church of England. He told me, he looked upon the Methodists in America as sound members of the Church, and was ready to ordain any of their preachers whom he should find duly qualified. His ordinations would, indeed, be genuine, valid, and episcopal.

"But what are your poor Methodists now? Only a new sect of Presbyterians. And after my brother's death, which is now so near, what will be their end? They will lose all their influence and importance; they will turn aside to vain janglings; they will settle upon their lees, and like other sects of Dissenters, come to nothing."

The modern Methodists who read this vaticination, and remember that the body to which they belong now numbers more members than any other religious communion in the United States, may be excused for quoting Mr. Biglow's warning, "Don't never prophesy till you know." But to Charles Wesley the thing was a matter of principle, not to be settled by the counting of heads, and he was almost brokenhearted.

On August 14th he wrote a pathetic letter to his brother, entreating him to stay "till I am taken from the evil."

John wrote a patient and affectionate reply, which he afterwards published in the *Arminian Magazine*. It showed how deep was the gulf which yawned between the two brothers.

After stating that he had paid obedience to the bishops, "in obedience to the laws of the land," he adds, "But I cannot see that I am under any obligation to obey them further than those laws require. . . . I firmly believe I am a scriptural *episkopos*, as much as any man in England or Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove."

To this Charles replied—

"I do not understand what obedience to the bishops you dread. They have left us alone and left us to act just as we pleased these fifty years. At present some of them are quite friendly towards us, particularly towards you. The churches are all open to us, and never could there be less pretence for a separation.

"That you are a scriptural *episkopos* or overseer I do not dispute, and so is every minister who has the cure of souls. Neither need we dispute whether the uninterrupted succession is fabulous, as you believe, or real, as I believe.

"If you will go on hand in hand with me, do. I do go on, or rather creep on, in the old way in which we set out together, and trust to continue in it till I finish my course. . . . I thank you for your intention to remain my friend. Herein is my heart as your heart. Whom God has joined let not man put asunder. . . We have taken each other for

better for worse, till death do us part—no, but unite eternally."

Charles was present at the Conference of 1786, the last which he attended. After the Conference he preached a sermon in which he prophesied that not more than one-third of the Methodists would remain in the Church of England, but that they would prosper abundantly and revive the Church. His text was, "I will bring the third part through the fire."

John Wesley's account of the Conference was as follows—

"On Thursday in the afternoon we permitted any of the society to be present, and weighed what was said about separating from the Church; but we all determined to continue therein without one dissenting voice, and I doubt not but this determination will stand, at least till I am removed into a better world."

With this Charles Wesley had to make himself content. He could not bring himself to break with his brother and with the work to which he had given his life. He wrote to a friend during the Conference: "My brother and I and the preachers were unanimous for continuing in the old ship. The preachers of a dissenting spirit will probably after our death set up for themselves, and draw away disciples after them. . . . The bishops might, if they pleased, save the largest and soundest part of them back

into the Church. But I fear, between you and me, their Lordships care for none of these things."

On April 9th, 1787, he wrote to John Wesley: "Stand to your own proposal, 'let us agree to differ.' . . . Keep your authority while you live, and after your death, *detur digniori*, or, rather, *dignioribus*. You cannot settle the succession. You cannot divine how God will settle it."

His old friends began to fall around him in these latter days. Piers, Vicar of Bexley, one of his earliest friends and converts, had died in 1769. Ebenezer Blackwell, the banker, who had helped to make the financial arrangements that rendered his marriage possible, died in 1782. In 1785 Vincent Perronet passed away, and Charles conducted the burial service at Shoreham and preached the funeral sermon. On August 14th of the same year he lost his dear friend, Fletcher of Madeley. Such incidents in the life of an ageing man belong to the time of falling leaves and presage the end.

On the other hand, he had much to comfort him—the sedulous attention and affection of his wife and daughter, the love of his disciples and friends, the respect and regard with which good men surrounded the veteran of so many fights.

William Wilberforce relates how he met Charles Wesley at the house of a common friend of himself and Hannah More. "When I came into the room Charles Wesley rose from the table around which a

numerous party sat at tea, and coming forwards to me gave me solemnly his blessing. Such was the effect of his manner and appearance that it altogether overset me, and I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself."

Wilberforce always retained his reverence for Charles Wesley, and on hearing several years afterwards that his widow was in straitened circumstances, he made her a yearly allowance till his death.

He went on preaching in spite of growing weakness, until within a few months of his death. At his best his manner in the pulpit had great authority and vigour, great tenderness also. As he grew old, he fell into the habit of making long pauses, closing his eyes, leaning on his Bible and fumbling with his hand. Sometimes he made the congregation sing while he was taking breath and gathering strength to proceed.

His biographer, Moore, who was one of the young preachers at City Road Chapel, during the last years of Charles Wesley's life, gives an interesting picture of him at this period.

"He rode every day, clothed for winter even in summer, a little horse grey with age. When he mounted, if a subject struck him, he proceeded to expound and put it in order. He would write a hymn thus given him on a card (kept for that purpose) with his pencil in shorthand. Not unfrequently he has come to the house in the City

Road, and having left the pony in the garden in front, he would enter crying out, 'Pen and ink, pen and ink.' These being supplied, he wrote the hymn he had been composing. When this was done he would look round on those present and salute them with much kindness, ask after their health, give out a hymn, and thus put all in mind of eternity.

"He was fond of that stanza on these occasions—

> "There all the ship's company meet
> Who sailed with our Saviour beneath;
> With shouting each other they greet
> And triumph o'er sorrow and death.
> The voyage of life's at an end,
> The mortal affliction is past;
> The age that in heaven they spend
> For ever and ever shall last."

The same author gives an instance of his disinterestedness in money matters. "He refused a living of £500 a year, choosing rather to remain among the people that he loved." He also refused a large fortune left him by a lady whose relations had quarrelled with her, "telling me in his usual short way, 'It was unjust.' Being advised to accept the fortune and give it to the relatives, 'That is a touch of the devil,' he said, 'but it won't do. I know what I am now, but I do not know what I should be if I were thus made rich.'"

A music-seller once sent in to him a bill which he thought erroneous. It was an old account. He

instantly sent the money with the following note: "If there is the least doubt, Mr. Wesley always takes the safest, that is, his neighbour's side, choosing to pay a bill twice or twenty times rather than not at all. He will be obliged to Mr. Wright for a line of acknowledgment, now that he is out of his debt."

He was once speaking to Moore of the great work done among the prisoners of Lincoln Jail by his father, during the time that he was imprisoned there for debt. Mrs. Hall, who was present, exclaimed, "Brother, how can you bear to speak of these things?" He replied "in his usual short way, 'If you are ashamed of poverty you are ashamed of your Master.'"

The interest in prisoners, which he had shown when as a young man he visited the prisoners in Oxford Jail, remained with him all his life, and was strong up to the end. His last publication was a hymn-book entitled *Hymns for Condemned Malefactors.*

At the beginning of February 1788 he was obviously failing fast, though he still went out. On the 18th February he had a cordial note from his brother—

"Dear brother, you must go out every day. . . . Do not die to save charges. You certainly need not want anything so long as I live."

The young Wesleys had been wayward and diffi-

cult; for we find John admonishing his brother to be master in his own house. He had written in a previous letter: "I shall shortly have a word to say to Charles or his brother or both."

On March 7th he wrote to Sarah Wesley, recommending "ten drops of elixir of vitriol in a glass of water" as a remedy. It was his harmless mania to prescribe for all his friends. He goes on, "Now, Sally, tell your brothers from me that their tenderly respectful behaviour to their father (even to asking his pardon if in anything they have offended him) will be the best cordial for him under heaven. I know not but they may save his life thereby. To know that nothing will be wanting on your part gives great satisfaction to, my dear Sally, yours very affectionately."

John Wesley advised the family to call in Dr. Whitehead, who afterwards wrote his life. "I visited him several times" (said Whitehead) "in his last illness, and his body was indeed reduced to the most extreme state of weakness. He possessed that state of mind which he had been always pleased to see in others, unaffected humility and holy resignation to the will of God. He had no transports of joy but solid hope and unshaken confidence in Christ, which kept his mind in perfect peace."

He was now so weak that he could not retain nourishment, but John Wesley still wrote hopefully

from Bristol. He could not believe that the bond of so many years was about to be snapped. "Let prayer be made continually, and probably he will be stronger after this illness than he has been these ten years. Is anything too hard for God?"

A short time before Charles Wesley died he called his wife to him and dictated these lines, the last he ever composed—

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a helpless 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!"

He called his son Samuel to his bedside and said, "*Omnia vanitas et vexatio spiritus præter amare Deum et Illi servire.*"

At other times he spoke tenderly of his boys, told his daughter to trust in God and that He would never forsake her, and prayed with tears for all his enemies.

The end came on March 29th, 1788, and on April 5th Sarah Wesley wrote to his brother—

"For some months past he seemed totally detached from earth. He spoke very little nor wished to hear anything read but the Scriptures. . . . All his prayer was, 'Patience and an easy death.' He told my mother the week before he departed, that no fiend was permitted to approach him, and said to us all, 'I have a good hope.'

" When we asked him if he wanted anything, he frequently answered, ' Nothing but Christ.'

" Some person observed that the valley of death was hard to be passed. ' Not with Christ,' replied he.

" On March 27th, after a most uneasy night, he prayed as in an agony, that he might not have many such nights. ' O my God,' said he, ' not many.'

" The last few days he was scarcely conscious; he was eager to depart, and if we moved him or spoke to him, he answered, ' Let me die. Let me die.'

" When your kind letter came [to Charles] (in which you affectionately tell him that you will be a father to him and to my brother Samuel) I read it to my father. ' He will be kind to you,' he said, ' when I am gone. I am certain your uncle will be kind to all of you.'

" The 28th, my mother asked if he had anything to say to us. Raising his eyes he said, ' Only thanks, love, blessing.'

" The last morning, which was the 29th of March, being unable to speak, my mother entreated him to press her hand if he knew her, which feebly he did.

" His last words which I could hear were, ' Lord—my heart—my God.' He then drew his breath short, and the last so gently that we knew not exactly the moment when his happy spirit fled."

He was buried, by his own request, in the churchyard of the old church of St. Marylebone. We

have it on the authority of John Pawson that " he sent for the parson of the parish where he lived and said, ' Sir, whatever the world may have thought of me, I have lived and I die in the communion of the Church of England, and I will be buried in the yard of my parish church."

The pall was borne by eight clergymen of the Church of England. The place where he was interred is now marked by the monument erected by the Methodist Conference of 1858, as a token of " respect and reverence " for the brother of " the Founder (under God) of the Methodist Connexion." One face of the obelisk bears the inscription which was engraved on the original tombstone, including the following verse from a hymn which he himself had written in memory of a friend—

> " With poverty of spirit blest,
> Rest, happy saint, in Jesus rest.
> Thy labours of unwearied love,
> By thee forgot, are crowned above,
> Crowned, through the mercy of thy Lord,
> With a full, free, immense reward."

It is interesting to compare with Pawson's remarks the estimate given of Charles Wesley by another of the preachers, William Bradburn, who preached his funeral sermon at City Road on Sunday, April 6th, " to an inconceivable concourse of people of every description."

" Mr. Charles Wesley died just as any one who

knew him might have expected. He had no disorder but old age. He had very little pain. His mind was calm as a summer evening. . . . He always seemed fearful of suffering something dreadful before death. I think he was quite disappointed, for no one could pass easier out of time than he did.

". . . His soul was formed for friendship in affliction, and his words and letters were a precious balm to those of a sorrowful spirit. He was courteous without dissimulation, and honest without vulgar roughness. He was truly a great scholar without pedantic ostentation. He was a great Christian without any pompous singularity, and a great divine without the least contempt for the meanest of his brethren."

But the most eloquent of all tributes to the dead poet was paid without words a fortnight after his death, when John Wesley, preaching at Bolton, gave out the hymn "Wrestling Jacob" for the congregation to sing. When the bereaved old man, eighty-five years of age, came to the lines—

> "My company before is gone
> And I am left alone with Thee,"

he sat down in the pulpit, covered his face with his hands, and burst into tears, while the whole congregation wept with him.

The following notice from the pen of John Wesley,

and marked by his usual terseness, appeared in the "Minutes of Conference" for 1788.

"Mr. Charles Wesley, who after spending four-score years with great sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease, but after a gradual decay of some months, 'the weary wheels of life at last stood still.' His least praise was his talent for poetry, although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that the single poem, 'Wrestling Jacob,' was worth all the verses he himself had written."

John Wesley, and the Methodist people after him, provided for the widow and daughter of Charles Wesley. Mrs. Wesley died in London in 1822, at the great age of ninety-six. Her daughter Sarah, who never married, only survived her six years. Charles Wesley the younger had an honourable career as an organist and composer, though he never fulfilled the extraordinary promise of his childhood. The career of Samuel Wesley and of his son Samuel Sebastian belong to the history of English music.

CHAPTER XI

THE HYMNS

"His least praise was his talent for poetry." In this laconic phrase John Wesley summed up the immense poetic production of his brother, a production extending over half a century, and amounting to over six thousand hymns, besides various miscellaneous pieces, and a mass of manuscript matter still unpublished.

Charles Wesley is so pre-eminently a writer of hymns that it has apparently occurred to few people to consider him as a poet. Perhaps if he had not been a writer of hymns he would never have been a poet. He was so careless of personal distinction, so void of selfish ambition, that he would never have written for fame. The need of self-expression in verse became dominant after the great spiritual crisis through which he passed in May 1738; and the place which singing soon took in the movement, bringing with it a constant demand for new hymns, kept his productivity at stretch throughout his life.

But in this part of his life, as everywhere else, he was content to do his work under John's shadow.

The first hymn-books issued by the Wesleys had nothing to distinguish the contributions of each. The definite declaration of John, " But a small part of these hymns is of my own composing," and the weight of internal evidence, justifies the attribution of many hymns to Charles, of which there is no direct evidence that they were not the work of his brother.

The first of the Wesleyan hymn-books, which was also, according to Canon Julian, the first hymn-book of the Anglican Communion, was the collection which John Wesley drew up for his mission in Georgia, and which was published at Charlestown in 1737. This did not contain a single hymn by Charles, though it included some translations from the German by John Wesley.

It seems likely that the association of the Wesleys with the Moravian exiles during the mission to Georgia had a considerable effect on the development of Methodist hymnody. In Wesley's admirable versions, some of the finest hymns of Scheffler, Gerhart, and Tersteegen were introduced to English congregations, and served as models for the new school. Up to that time there had been nothing in England to compare with the abundant development of German hymnody after the Reformation. The Puritans discouraged the mediæval carols, and nothing but paraphrases of Scripture were admitted in church. The Laudian movement, with Herbert, Withers, and Donne, flowered in a rich development

of sacred poetry, soon nipped by the zealots of the Commonwealth. Donne is said to have had some of his sacred poems set to music and sung at St. Paul's.

After the Restoration the revival of hymnody came from the Nonconformist side, through Baxter, Doddridge and, greatest of all, Isaac Watts. In 1696 appeared the first hymn-book of the Congregationalists, and two years afterwards Tate's metrical version of the Psalms, with a Supplement of hymns and paraphrases that included "When shepherds watched their flocks by night."

Thus Charles Wesley, when he began to write hymns, had not to invent a new *genre*. That had already been done, and the modern English hymn —neither an office hymn, nor a paraphrase, nor a sacred poem, but something which may partake of the nature of any of these, and yet with a character and a law of its own—had already been created.

His first published hymns appeared in 1739, when he was just over thirty years of age, and was already launched on his career as an evangelist. The title-page of the volume is as follows:—

"HYMNS AND SACRED POEMS, published by John Wesley, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and Charles Wesley, M.A., Student of Christchurch, Oxford.

'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing each

other in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto the Lord.' —Coloss. iii. 16.

" London. Printed by William Strahan and sold by James Hutton, Bookseller, at the Bible and Sun without Temple Bar, and at Mr. Bray's, a Brazier in Little Britain.

" 1739. 12 mo. pp. xvi. 223."

This included several of Herbert's poems (sadly mangled), some hymns by Gambold, " Eupolis' Hymn to the Creator " (perhaps by Hetty Wesley), and some translations from the German, besides Charles Wesley's contributions. It went into five editions. To the fourth and fifth editions were added a second volume, which was issued in 1740, and which included " Jesu, Lover of my soul." The later editions also contain the Christmas and Ascension hymns, " Hark, how all the welkin rings," and " Hail, the day that sees Him rise," which are among the finest things that Charles Wesley ever wrote. William Strahan continued to print these and the following hymn-books, which were sold by Thomas Harris, at the Looking-Glass and Bible on London Bridge, at the Foundry Chapel in Moorfields, and at the other Methodist preaching-houses.

Between the years 1739 and 1749 a constant stream of small hymn-books and tracts poured from

the press. *Hymns on God's Everlasting Love,* directed against the Calvinists, came out in 1741. In 1742 appeared an elegy on Robert Jones, a notable Methodist, which illustrated Charles Wesley's command of rhymed heroic verse. In 1744, *Moral and Sacred Poems ;* in 1745, *Hymns on the Lord's Supper,* prefaced by Dr. Brevint's treatise, which went into eleven editions between 1745 and 1825. In 1745, when the outbreak of mob-violence and persecution against the Methodists was at its height, the Wesleys published *Hymns for Times of Trouble,* including the glorious battle-song, " Head of Thy Church triumphant." In the two following years appeared *Hymns for the Nativity, Resurrection, and Ascension, Hymns on the Trinity,* and *Graces before Meat.*

A letter from John Wesley to his brother informs us that he found two of the Nativity hymns " namby-pambical," but considered " All Glory to God in the sky " the best in the collection. His request—" I wish you would give us two or three invitatory hymns; we want such exceedingly "—shows how Charles was constantly kept to work as the song-writer of the community.

One might go on with the enumeration, *Hymns for those that seek, and those that have Full Redemption, Funeral Hymns, Hymns for Children ;* and this does not nearly exhaust the list. Wesley might well say in 1780 : " Considering the various hymn-books which my brother and I have published within these

forty years last past . . . it may be doubted whether any religious community in the world has a greater variety of them."

Charles Wesley made his first independent appearance as an author, except for a few short pamphlets, with the two volumes of *Hymns and Sacred Poems*, which were published by subscription in 1749, in order to defray the expense of his marriage. Many of them refer to incidents in his personal experience, and several were originally written for Sarah Gwynne during their engagement.

John Wesley did not see this book before publication, and stated afterwards that there were things in it which he did not approve; but this did not prevent him from extracting from it 143 hymns for the standard hymn-book published in 1780. By comparing the hymns as they appear in that book with the original versions, we are enabled to judge of the value of John's editing.

The two volumes of short hymns and paraphrases which Charles brought out in 1762 after a stay at Bath for his health contain little of outstanding merit. With his astonishing fluency, it was impossible for him to be always inspired. But the best of his work as a hymn-writer (with the important exception of some of the hymns for the seasons of the Christian Year and of the Sacramental hymns) is to be found in the volume of 1780, *Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*, which so far has had a profounder

religious influence and a more enduring popularity than any other hymn-book. First issued in 1780, it continued in use, with the addition of Supplements from time to time, but without any change which really impaired its identity, till it was superseded in 1904 by the new *Methodist Hymn-book*. It included hymns from nearly twenty other previously published books, and well bore out Wesley's description of it, as " a little body of experimental and practical divinity."

Hymns and Spiritual Songs for the Use of Real Christians of all Denominations had been the principal hymn-book used by the Wesleyans from 1753 to 1780, when it was superseded by the larger book. The third edition (1782), which was the book as it finally left Wesley's hands and before his successors had begun to tinker at it, contained 525 hymns, all taken from books previously published by the Wesleys. " Jesu, Lover of my soul " was added in 1797, and " Rock of Ages," by Toplady, appeared in the Supplement of 1811. Of the 525 hymns in the original edition, one was by George Herbert, seven by Dr. Watts, one by Charles Wesley's father, one by his brother Samuel, two by Dr. Henry More, twenty-seven were translations by John Wesley, and four hundred and twenty-six original hymns by Charles Wesley.

In 1875 the book was revised and published with a new Supplement, containing many popular modern

hymns. In 1904 it disappeared from use, being supplanted by the *Methodist Hymn-book.*

Charles Wesley continued his literary activity till within a short time before his death. In 1780 he brought out a small collection of hymns referring to the Gordon Riots, and entitled *Hymns Written in the Time of the Tumults, June* 1780. Another hymn-tract, *Hymns for the Nation,* appeared in 1782, in the midst of the American War. His last publication was *Prayers for Condemned Malefactors,* which appeared in 1785.

There is hardly any of this mass of work which is not characteristic and in a sense interesting, but the hymn-book of 1780 remains Charles Wesley's chief monument as a poet and evangelist. Charles could have had no better editor than his brother. The preface, with its just and tempered eulogy, makes it clear that, if Charles had no more loyal admirer, he certainly never had a more discriminating critic. What John allowed to pass was, at any rate, work that came up to his own standard and deserved his own commendation—

" In these hymns there is no doggerel, no botches, nothing put in to patch up the rhyme, no feeble expletives. Here is nothing turgid or bombast on the one hand, or low and creeping on the other. Here are no cant expressions, no words without meaning. Those who impute this to us know not what they say. We talk common-sense both in

prose and verse, and use no word but in a fixed and determinate sense. Here are, allow me to say, both the purity, the strength and the elegance of the English language, and, at the same time, the utmost simplicity and plainness, suited to every capacity. Lastly, I desire men of taste to judge (these are the only competent judges) whether there be not in some of the following hymns the true spirit of poetry, such as cannot be acquired by art or labour, but must be the gift of Nature."

One respect in which this collection of between five and six hundred hymns differs from any modern congregational hymn-book is its unity of authorship. It is almost as much one man's work as the *Christian Year*. That in itself gives it a peculiar impressiveness. But unlike the *Christian Year* it is a congregational book. The poet of the *Christian Year* is as solitary as Thomas à Kempis. But the Wesleyan Hymn-book, as Wesley said of the Bible, " knows nothing of solitary religion."

It was not only the Methodist song-book but the Methodist Manual. Its quaintly named sections sum up the work of the Methodist missionaries. Beginning with the section, " Exhorting Sinners to return to God," it carried the preacher and the penitent through the whole cycle of experience. " For Mourners convinced of Sin; Seeking for Full Redemption; For Believers rejoicing—fighting—watching—praying; For the Society Meeting—

Parting"; these are some of the headings. But to the early Methodists, Charles Wesley's hymns were not only for the preaching-house or the band-room; they gave a voice to every mood and every need of the individual believer. The converted pitman, as he started on his day's work before the east began to whiten to the dawn, might be heard humming to himself—

"Christ, Whose glory fills the skies,
Christ, the true, the only Light,
Sun of Righteousness, arise,
Triumph o'er the shades of night.
Dayspring from on high, be near;
Daystar, in my heart appear."

The pious widow, "managing" in her single room on half-a-crown from the parish and another half-crown from the "society," would croon to herself as she moved about, tidying up her attic for the night—

"How do Thy mercies close me round!
For ever be Thy name adored.
I blush in all things to abound,
The servant is above his Lord.

For lo! a place Thou hast prepared
For me, whom watchful angels keep;
Yea, He Himself becomes my guard,
He smoothes my bed and gives me sleep."

And the Methodist prentice lad, where Tom Paine was the oracle of the workshop, would brace himself

against the scoffing of his mates, with words from the same book—

> " Shall I for fear of feeble man
> The Spirit's course in me restrain,
> Or undismayed in deed and word
> Be a true witness for my Lord ? "

Not a few of the simple people, who knew their hymn-book almost by heart in the early days of the Methodist movement, could make their own those words, which remind us of the saying of St. Thomas Aquinas, when—so the lovely legend tells—the crucifix in the Church of St. Domenico at Naples bowed Its Head to him and said, " Thou hast written well of Me, Thomas, what reward dost thou desire therefor ? " and the saint answered, " Nothing, Lord, but Thyself."

So Charles Wesley sang—

> " Thee, only Thee, I fain would find,
> And cast the world and sin behind,
> Thou, only Thou, to me be given,
> Of all Thou hast in earth or heaven."

Those whose lot it was to have this book put into their hands almost as soon as they could read, to whom the memory of the thick little volume, conned during long dull sermons in the corner of a high pew, is vivid still after the lapse of many years, can never forget the impression that remained with them—amid much that was inexplicable, and much that was

tiresome—the impression of tremendous issues hanging on unseen things. The book opens with a great calling of sinners to repentance, like the voice of Evangelist at the gate of the City of Destruction. Then before long one came to Samuel Wesley's monumental hymn, "Behold the Saviour of mankind," like a crucifix by the wayside with its *Sic te dilexi*. And there was little in the book to excite the morbid fears of childhood. The horrors of popular Calvinistic preaching are conspicuous by their absence. It is the gracious, tender, appealing side of Christianity on which the poet insists. One is reminded again and again of one of the most touching passages in the *Pilgrim's Progress*, where Faithful tells how he was delivered from the scourging of his old sins.

"He had doubtless made an end of me, but that One came by and bade him forbear."

"CHR. Who was that that bid him forbear?"

"FAITH. I did not know Him at first, but as He went by, I perceived the holes in His hands and in His side; then I concluded that He was our Lord."

Charles Wesley was never tired of insisting that a life of conscious friendship with God is the due heritage of every Christian.

> "Say not, we cannot know
> On earth the Heavenly powers,
> Or taste the glorious bliss below,
> Or feel that God is ours. . .

A stranger to that Bread,
You may beguile or cheat;
But us you never can persuade
That honey is not sweet."

It may be allowed that the purely literary interest of most of these hymns is small. A man to whom religious experience is a sealed book can be thrilled with the ecstasy of Crashaw, pleased by the delicate fancy of Herbert, or soothed by that sympathetic interpretation of natural beauty in which Keble is only excelled by Wordsworth. But " a stranger to that Bread " will not find much to interest him in the marching songs of simple people, " who desire a better country."

" The rougher our way,
The shorter our stay,
The tempests that rise
Shall gloriously hurry our souls to the skies;
The fiercer the blast,
The sooner 'tis past,
The troubles that come
Shall come to our rescue and hasten us home."

Whatever incongruity there may be nowadays in singing words like this from the comfort of a cushioned pew, there was none when they were written. The people of Wallsall or St. Ives, in the bad days of 1743, knew well enough what those tempests were, in which they suffered the spoiling of their goods and took the risk of martyrdom.

There are twenty or thirty of Charles Wesley's

hymns which still hold their own in all collections, and are likely to do so while English religion lasts. Among them are the noble hymns for Christmas, Easter, and Ascension Day. Yet "Wrestling Jacob," "Jesu, Lover of my soul," and the beautiful "Love Divine, all loves excelling" probably excel anything else he ever wrote.

One striking merit of Charles Wesley as a hymn-writer is that though his hymns are weighted with theology and meant to teach theology—to be, in fact, as his brother said, "a little body of practical divinity"—they do not cease to be hymns. One never forgets that they were written for singing and were meant to be sung. Certainly Charles Wesley wrote his hymns to teach his people. He published a whole series on the Calvinistic controversy. His hymns on the Lord's Supper are meant to inculcate a Eucharistic doctrine, which is barely distinguishable from that set forth by Dr. Bright in his hymn, "Once, only once, and once for all."

But while Dr. Bright's hymn is a neat and well-balanced little exercise in metrical divinity, it has not much of the lilt and lift of a true hymn about it. Compare it with the well-known hymn, "Victim Divine, Thy grace we claim." Here the teaching is theologically as balanced and as careful as in Dr. Bright's verses. Bishop Gore specially refers to the debt which theologians owe to the Wesleys for their

Eucharistic hymns, as insisting that the earthly prayers and sacrifices are by Eucharistic oblation presented at the Heavenly Altar, and returned to the Church as the spiritual food of Christ's Body and Blood, while avoiding " the great pitfall in Eucharistic doctrine—the putting the Eucharistic sacrifice in line, so to speak, not with the heavenly presentation or pleading of the sacrifice of Christ, but with the slaying of it on Calvary." [1]

" He still respects Thy sacrifice,
Its odour sweet doth always please;
The offering smokes through earth and skies
Diffusing life, and joy, and peace;
To these Thy lower courts it comes
And fills them with divine perfumes."

But this is not mere versified theology. It is a true hymn, a song of worship. Note how the pæan of joy and faith culminates in the awe and exultation of the last verse.

" We need not now go up to Heaven
To bring the long-sought Saviour down;
Thou art to all already given,
Thou dost even now Thy banquet crown;
To every faithful soul appear
And show Thy Real Presence here."

Some of the most characteristic of Charles Wesley's hymns have found no place in modern collections, because it is felt—and felt quite rightly—that they represent phases of experience too personal and too

[1] Gore, *The Body of Christ*, Chap. III. iii. (2).

intimate for congregational use. If such verses as the following seem to be pitched in too high a key, it must be remembered that they were written not for a congregation largely made up of conventional church-goers, but for a small number of like-minded people, passionately interested in religion.

" Ah, show me that happiest place,
The place of Thy people's abode,
Where saints in an ecstacy gaze,
Or hang on a crucified God.
Thy love to a sinner declare,
Thy passion and death on the tree,
My spirit to Calvary bear,
To suffer and triumph with Thee.

'Tis there, with the lambs of Thy flock,
There only, I covet to rest—
To lie at the foot of the Rock,
Or rise to be hid in Thy breast.
'Tis there I would always abide,
And never a moment depart,
Concealed in the cleft of Thy side,
Eternally held in Thy heart."

Fortunately, this warmth of temperament was saved, on most occasions, from degenerating into sentimentality, or what John Wesley called " namby-pambicalness," by that sturdy virility which marked most of the eminent men of the eighteenth century, and which the Wesleys possessed in full measure. Charles Wesley's finest hymns are severe in their restraint. Simplicity and dignity seldom fail him;

his style is often terse and sometimes bald, but it is never finicking or affected.

It is worth noticing that he did his part in breaking up the frost of the "classical" period in poetry. The variety of the metres he employs is remarkable, and not less the ease and fluency with which the various forms are handled. His son said that Charles Wesley had a strong sense of rhythm, and in nothing is this more noticeable than in what may be called the "attack" of his hymns. The finest of them begin with an arresting line—

"Christ, Whose glory fills the skies."

"Hark, how all the welkin rings."

"Rejoice, our God is King."

"Hail, the day that sees Him rise."

These are true trumpet notes for the march of the Church Militant.

But the greatest distinction of these hymns consists in their passionate sincerity. They are veritable human documents—precious to the universal human soul, because so evidently the record of one particular soul, struggling, suffering, striving toward the light. Many of them were suggested by particular crises in his own life. A hymn he wrote soon after his conversion contains this fine stanza—

"Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and Nature's night;

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray,
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee."

The well-known mission hymn—

"Ye neighbours and friends
Of Jesus, draw near"—

was written after preaching to the Newcastle colliers.

The tender "Hymn for a dying Child" was written for his own firstborn.

"When Thou didst our Isaac give,
Him we trembled to receive,
Him we called not ours, but Thine,
Him we promised to resign.

Yet Thou knowest what pangs of love
In a father's bosom move,
What the agony to part
Struggling in a mother's heart."

When he thought of moving to London, he wrote—

"Saviour, I would not take
One step in life alone,
Or dare the smallest motion make
Without Thy counsel known."

He was too sensitive not to feel painfully at times the

"weary weight
Of all this unintelligible world."

An early hymn, written in what he calls a "murmuring, discontented spirit," expresses that passionate

longing for the repose of death which was no more a pose with him than it was with Charles Kingsley or Christina Rossetti, being simply the natural recoil of a passionate nature, alive to every form of beauty, organized for joy and keenly sensitive to its opposite.

> " Fain would I leave this world below
> Of pain and sin the dark abode,
> Where shadowy joy or solid woe
> Allure or tear me from my God;
> Doubtful and insecure of bliss,
> Since death alone confirms me His."

His impassioned realization of the evil and dangers of the world, " where men sit and hear each other groan," made death seem to him *janua vitae*, and gave a triumphant accent to his funeral hymns—

> " Rejoice for a brother deceased,
> Our loss is his infinite gain,"

or again, in the well-known lines—

> " One army of the Living God,
> To His command we bow;
> Part of His host have crossed the flood,
> And part are crossing now.
>
> Even now, by faith, we join our hands
> With those that went before,
> And greet the blood-besprinkled bands
> On the eternal shore."

That strange look of content on dead faces, the look as of a riddle solved, a peace beyond human imagining achieved, had been to him again and again a

confirmation of his dearest hopes. Thinking of it, he wrote the lines beginning—

> " Ah, lovely appearance of Death,
> What sight upon earth is so fair? "

which a timid taste has excised from modern editions of the hymns.

He wrote many hymns and elegies in commemoration of dead friends. His funeral ode on Dr. Boyce, in which he pictures the dead musician as greeting his master Handel in heaven, provoked some searching of heart among the " unco guid."

An interesting section of his verse is concerned with public occasions. For the solemn Fast Day appointed by the Government during the crisis of 1756 he wrote seventeen hymns, including the one beginning, " Righteous God, Whose vengeful phials." John's scrupulous taste rejected the forcible lines—

> " Men, their instant doom deploring,
> Faint beneath their fearful load;
> Ocean, rising, working, roaring,
> Claps his hands to meet his God,"

in which he referred to the terrible floods which accompanied the earthquake of Lisbon in 1755.

He had not sufficient lightness of touch to excel in satirical verse; but the " Man of Fashion," written in 1784, contains some forcible lines. " Who is the

Man of Fashion?" he inquires, and answers his own question as follows—

> "A busy man without employment,
> A happy man without enjoyment,
> In sleep and dress and sport and play
> He throws his worthless life away,
> Has no opinions of his own,
> But takes from leading beaux the tone;
> With a disdainful smile or frown
> He on the rif-raf world looks down,
> The world polite his friends and he,
> And all the rest are nobody. . . .
> The great his oracles he makes,
> Copies their vices and mistakes,
> Custom pursues, his only rule,
> And lives an ape and dies a fool."

The "Elegy on Whitefield" is perhaps the most noteworthy of his longer poems. In it he pays an impressive tribute to the power of the great preacher—

> "Love irresistible they could not bear
> Or stand against the torrent of his prayer. . . .
> Roused from the sleep of death, a countless crowd,
> Whose hearts like trees before the wind are bowed,
> As a thick cloud that darkens all the sky,
> As flocking doves, they to their windows fly,
> Press to the hallowed courts with eager strife,
> Catch the convincing word and hear for life,
> Pricked at the heart with one consent inquire,
> What must we do to escape the never-dying fire?"

There is an endearing touch of quaintness in some of his more intimate poems, as, for instance, in the lines he wrote shortly before his death, in which he

contrasts the achievements of his rash and vigorous youth with the enforced quiescence of old age.

" As strong and glorying in my might
I drew the two-edged sword,
Valiant against a troop to fight
The battles of my Lord,
I scorned the multitude to dread,
Rushed on with full career,
And aimed at each opponent's head,
And smote off many an ear.

But now, enervated by age,
I feel my fierceness gone,
And Nature's powers no more engage
To prop the Saviour's throne.
My total impotence I see,
For help on Jesus call,
And stretch my feeble hands to Thee,
Who workest all in all."

There is a touching acknowledgment in these simple lines of that vehemence of temper, or rather that nervous excitability, which had stood in his way all his life, and prevented him from becoming a leader of men. Like Peter, he had smitten with the sword and blundered in smiting; like Peter, also, the time had come for him, in his old age, to be girded and carried whither he would not. But disappointment—even that worst form of it which comes when we measure the hopes of youth against the achievements of maturity—had passed into resignation, and at the end the words of his favourite Marcus Aurelius

may well have found their echo in his heart: "Therefore, depart well satisfied, for He by Whom you are dismissed is satisfied too."

So let us take our leave of Charles Wesley—no hero, though he did heroic deeds—no saint, though he strove hard for saintliness—but a brave fighter, a true poet, a humble, earnest lover of Jesus.

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