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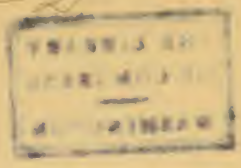


LIFE

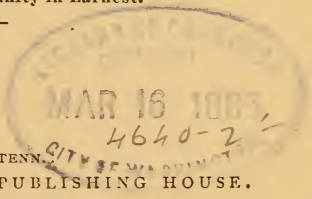
OF

JOHN WESLEY.

BY THE REV. B. W. BOND,
Of the Baltimore Conference.

With an Introduction by Bishop A. W. Wilson, D.D.

"Methodism is Christianity in Earnest."



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SOUTHERN METHODIST PUBLISHING HOUSE.
Sunday-school Department.
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EDITOR'S NOTE.

THE author has so grouped the leading events in the life of Mr. Wesley as to present in a small compass a fair and distinct likeness of the great Founder of Methodism. It is a miniature representation, but large and distinct enough to give our young people a correct idea of the man and his work. We think the book opportune, and trust it will do much good. Our children should be taught to know and venerate the character of the man who has done so much for the world, and to whom we as a Church are indebted for our existence. It is a fault of the present generation of Methodists that they know so little about him. We place this memoir in our catalogue with the hope that it will soon find its way into every Sunday-school library in the land, and that it may stimulate thousands to a better life.

W. G. E. CUNNYNGHAM,
Sunday-school Editor.

Nashville, Tenn., Feb., 1885.

PREFACE.

THE older biographies of Mr. Wesley are deficient in many details which have since been published, and which are necessary to a complete and distinct understanding of the man and his work. On the other hand, Tyerman's "Life and Times of John Wesley," while it will probably always remain the standard classic history of the illustrious Founder of Methodism, is too voluminous to obtain a general reading in this busy age. Hence the present attempt to give a brief and popular but still a correct and adequate *rêsumê* of all the more characteristic incidents of Mr. Wesley's life, such as might help to excite or deepen, particularly among the young, an interest in "those doctrines and usages of early Methodism that have contributed under God to its spiritual power." The facts narrated, which for the most part are the common heritage of Methodism, have been largely taken from Tyerman, and sometimes *verbatim*. "Wesley's Journal," the "Memorials of the Wesley Family," and other authorities, have contributed in the same way. A very large part of the book consists in quotations from Wesley himself, in which he is left to tell his own story. The selection and grouping of the incidents, however, are the author's own work. In hope that it may be found successful in accomplishing the object proposed, he offers it to the favorable consideration of the reader.

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INTRODUCTION.

BY BISHOP A. W. WILSON, D.D.

THIS is not an attempt to furnish a new life of Mr. Wesley. Very little can now be added to the materials that have accumulated in the last century, and it would be difficult to find a new point of view from which to contemplate the character and work of the Founder of Methodism. The aim of the writer of the following pages has been simply to bring the history of the man and his labors within the compass of a volume that may not seem ponderous for the average reader, especially among the young. If he shall succeed in attracting the attention of the young, and inducing them to acquaint themselves with the principles and processes of the great Methodist movement as they are illustrated in the life of John Wesley, he will have done a good work for the Church of the next generation.

In the enlightenment of the world and the training of the Church, it is to men we must look. Events have their significance and influence only as they express character and tell of vital energies producing them. Every great advance in the history of our race is signalized by the appearance of a man fitted for leadership. The Church of the Covenant begins its course with the call of Abraham, the father of all them that believe. The Church under the law takes its rise from the choice of Moses the lawgiver. Prophecy is incarnated in Samuel and Elijah. The Son of man is the final expression of the truth and power of all that had gone before him; while from him, as God mani-

fest in the flesh, proceeded the whole energy that was to renovate the nations and save the world.

The fulfillment of the purpose of God in Christ Jesus was committed to human ministry. Peter, John, Paul, and their fellow-laborers and sufferers, were, in their proper persons, the exponents of the mind of their Lord, and by the intenseness of their human sensibilities and energies gave new and higher demonstration of the truth that to do his will in the world God worketh in men, and hath committed the ministry of reconciliation to men.

It is as it always has been: when God has a work to do, he prepares a man to do it. The men whom he has called are the focal-points of human history. The light has converged upon them and radiated from them. Wycliffe and Huss, Luther and Calvin, and Knox and Wesley—how would the history have been changed had these not appeared! Another civilization and another Church would have been about us had they not lived; and we need not hesitate to say a darker civilization and a feebler Church; nay, would there have been a Church? The forms of superstition and priestcraft would have been perpetuated undoubtedly as the most effective agencies for the subjugation of mind and the inthrallment of will that the mind has ever known. But the Church, as Christ gave it—luminous, radiant, dispelling darkness, ennobling men, lifting them to the consciousness of manhood in Christ, enfranchising them, offering them the liberty of the sons of God, the freedom of the kingdom of heaven—would surely have had no place among men to-day had these first-born of God not come.

Happy the generation, the Church, that takes note of such men, and follows them as they followed Christ! We do no wrong to the Master in honoring them. We but glorify God in them. The error and fault of the present

generation of Methodists are that they know too little of John Wesley and the men who wrought with him in his great struggle for human souls—for all human souls. They know nothing of the intense convictions which impelled him to the achievement of his broad purpose, the spiritual wisdom which guided him along providential ways to the settlement of the wonderful economy—one and many—in England and America which has conserved the fruits of his labors, and the preternatural experience, evincing the high possibilities of our humanity, which attested the genuineness of his convictions and gave the key-note to the testimony of the Church for the ages to come. For our young people this knowledge is indispensable. No man can know Methodism who does not know John Wesley.

Our prayer is that this endeavor to bring the man and his work within reach of all our people may be successful in the largest measure, and that thousands may here find impulse and inducement to such large study of Wesley and Methodism as may yield the best fruits in experience, life, and labor.

LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Epworth—The Wesley Family—The Rev. Samuel Wesley —Mrs. Susanna Wesley—Fire—Wesley's Childhood—The Charterhouse—Epworth Noises—Oxford—Unsaved.

NEARLY two hundred years ago—June 17, 1703—in a rectory in Lincoln county, on the east coast of England, the hero of our narrative was born. Epworth, the little town where he first saw the light, consisted principally of a long, straggling street of small houses situated in the middle of a narrow strip of land between three rivers. The country round about was a low-lying plain intersected with numerous creeks and so-called rivers running in from the adjacent sea. A large part of it had but lately been reclaimed from the swamps by draining, and, still comparatively barren, stretched flat and monotonous on one side toward the sea, and was closed in by low, dun hills on the horizon on the other. As might be expected, the people both of the town and country were rough, illiterate, and needy. Schools, even the most rudimentary, were very few and very poor. Books were scarce and

dear, and newspapers almost unknown. Communication with the outside world by stage or private conveyance was difficult and unfrequent over the miserable roads they then had, and few went or came to add freshness and information to the monotonous and restricted life of the obscure little place. There did not seem to be much hope for the future of the family in the rectory standing there at one end of the long street and filled with children from young Samuel, the oldest, down to the babe in the cradle. The face of the landscape, the state of society about them, the want of schools and all other means of culture in the town and neighborhood, were such as to repress every aspiration, and promised only hopeless inferiority of mind and influence. Had Mr. Wesley, their father, been rich, the prospect would have appeared brighter, since he could then have procured the means of improvement for his family. But he had long been burdened with the heaviest poverty. His salary was only about one hundred and thirty pounds a year clear money, and there were nineteen children born, ten of whom lived to be grown. He was not a very good manager, and when he undertook to carry on the rectory farm, as he did, he made more debts than crops. He had the misfortune, too, of having his barn fall down. One year his crop of flax was burned. For some years he was not popular with his parishioners, on account of his politics and other

reasons, and his cattle were stabbed in the fields. His house also was burned twice—once partially, and at another time down to the ground. Three times he was elected to represent the diocese in convocation at London, to attend which he was obliged to employ a curate for his parish at home and to incur other expenses, amounting in all to one hundred and fifty pounds. All this kept them very poor. Thirteen years after the rectory was rebuilt Mrs. Wesley writes: "The house is still not half furnished, and I and the children have not more than half enough clothing." "Endless duns and debts" are spoken of in after years by one of the daughters, and a want of sufficient clothes for the family. On one occasion Mr. Wesley was put in jail by a hard-hearted creditor for a debt of thirty pounds which he could not pay, and there he was forced to remain three months, until his friends could help him; his family meantime living on milk and bread raised on the farm, and cared for solely by the unfaltering courage and devotion of Mrs. Wesley. "Tell me, Mrs. Wesley," once asked the Archbishop of York, "whether you ever really wanted bread." "My lord," said she, "I will freely own to your grace that, strictly speaking, I never did want bread. But then I had so much care to get it before it was eat, and to pay for it after, as has often made it very unpleasant to me; and I think to have bread on such terms is the next degree of wretchedness to

having none at all." And Mr. Wesley writes: "I have had but three children born since I came hither about three years since, but another coming, and my wife incapable of any business in my family as she has been for almost a quarter of a year, yet we have but one maid-servant, to retrench all possible expenses. Ten pounds a year I allow my mother to help keep her from starving. All which together keeps me necessitous, especially since interest-money begins to pinch me, and I am always called on for money before I make it, and must buy every thing at the worst hand; whereas could I be so happy as to get on the right side of my income, I should not fear, by God's help, but to live honestly in the world, and to leave a little to my children after me. I think as 't is I could perhaps work it out in time, in half a dozen or half a score of years, if my heart should hold so long; but for that God's will be done." Nevertheless, scarcely was there a family ever heard of so remarkable for virtue, intelligence, and distinction. John Wesley, the second son and the subject of our biography, was one of the most wonderful men that history mentions. Samuel, the eldest, was early noted for his genius and wit, and grew up to be a learned and talented author, a friend of Addison, Pope, and Prior, and others of the greatest authors of his time. The third and youngest son, Charles, was the finest sacred poet of modern times and perhaps that ever lived, and in some other

respects was not much inferior to John. The seven daughters were also all possessed of superior qualities of mind and character. Emilia was distinguished for her grace of person, her gifts, and her exquisite taste in music and poetry. Mary was beautiful of face and in character, though short and deformed in body. Anne and Susanna married badly and were unhappy, but exhibited in their sad lives traits of surpassing patience and loveliness of character. Mehetabel, almost unequaled in her attainments, learned to read in Greek at the age of nine, while her poetical gifts, accomplishments, and personal appearance were all of the highest order. Martha strongly resembled her brother John in person and mind. Refined in feeling and wise in counsel, she was honored with the friendship and society of the great Dr. Samuel Johnson. Hezzy, the youngest, died unmarried at an early age, after a disappointment, "full of thankfulness, resignation, and love."

To what cause can we ascribe such results under such circumstances? For answer we must look to the home alone where these children were reared. There was no other agency at Epworth. And it is the character and methods of management of the parents that determine the character of the home. The example of the Wesley family teaches that where these are what they should be there is every thing to hope for in the children, no matter what

poverty or surrounding discouragements may oppress them.

Both Rev. Samuel Wesley, the father, and Mrs. Susanna Wesley, his wife, were descended from ancestors as distinguished for their courage and adherence to principle as they were for their intelligence and piety — the father and grandfather of Mr. Wesley and the father of Mrs. Wesley all being ministers. Mr. Wesley himself was "earnest, conscientious, and indefatigable in his search after truth," and became a learned and accomplished author. In person short of stature—for all the Wesleys were small, none being more than five feet six inches in height, and John weighing but one hundred and twenty-two pounds. He was affectionate and vivacious toward his children, yet a rigid disciplinarian. Indefatigable in his pastoral labors, he lived to see all enmity against him disappear among his parishioners, and to enjoy universal respect and love. He was so absorbed by his literary and other labors that the care of the large family fell mainly upon his faithful wife, Mrs. Susanna Wesley—a name never to be forgotten among wives and mothers. Moving among her large family and under the pressing burdens and perplexities of poverty, she performed her manifold and ceaseless household duties with the utmost order, method, and economy. She would seem to have had enough to do in the ordinary labors necessary for the care of

so many dependent upon her. But in addition she has in large part to manage the business of the rectory farm; she alone, with some little assistance from her husband, must educate her seven daughters to be accomplished women, and prepare her three sons for entrance into the higher schools of learning; while in the frequent absence of Mr. Wesley she takes the spiritual charge of her children and servants, and sometimes even of her neighbors. Beautiful and graceful in person, she also has a strong and active mind, which she does not neglect to cultivate by reading and thinking. Every morning and evening she retires to her room to spend an hour in secret devotion, a habit she says she formed at thirty, when family cares began to increase and she felt the need of more prayer to be fitted to perform them. Therefore, she is now able to pursue her affairs with the greatest diligence, wisdom, and calm serenity. The children are all governed exactly—by rule. When each child is one year old it is taught to fear the rod, and if it cries at all, to "cry softly." Each one is taught the Lord's Prayer as soon as it can speak, and to repeat it every morning and every night. School is kept up in the house by the mother, and is opened and closed with the singing of psalms by the children. Twice a day each of the older children takes one of the younger—the oldest taking the youngest, and so on—and reads to them a

Psalm and a chapter in the New Testament; after which both older and younger retire for secret prayer. Every evening the mother takes in turn one of the children by itself—"Molly on Monday, Hetty on Tuesday, Nancy on Wednesday, Jacky on Thursday, Patty on Friday, Charles on Saturday, and Emilia and Sukey together on Sunday"—and talks to them as to their spiritual state, with counsels and exhortations suited to their capacity. O that mothers everywhere might thus feel the solemn responsibility of the tender souls committed to their charge!

Thus did this faithful mother labor in her house. Their tempers and manners also were her constant care. None were allowed to have any thing they cried for, because that would teach them to cry. Politeness was required of all from one to another, and even toward the lowest servants. All their doings—their going to bed, their rising, their dressing, eating, exercise, etc.—were strictly regulated by rule. Well may it be doubted whether a more illustrious woman has ever appeared—one more faithful, more wise, more holy. "I have traced her life," says Dr. Adam Clarke, "with much pleasure, and received from it much instruction; and when I have seen her repeatedly grappling with gigantic adversities, I have adored the grace of God that was in her, and have not been able to repress my tears. I have been acquainted with many pious

women; I have read the lives of several others, and composed memoirs of a few; but such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted. Many daughters have done virtuously, but Susanna Wesley has excelled them all." Here was the secret: The Wesley children attained their high renown, under the blessing of God, from the character and nurture of their parents, especially of their mother; and their parents discharged their duties toward their children with such superior excellence chiefly because they framed their own lives and the lives of their family not as prompted by inclination or according to the maxims and customs of the world around them, but as they found them directed by the unerring and eternal Word of God.

The recorded events of John Wesley's childhood are few. The most remarkable was his escape from the fire which destroyed his father's house. "February 9," writes his mother some months after it occurred, "between the hours of eleven and twelve, our house took fire, by what accident God only knows. It was discovered by some sparks falling from the roof upon a bed where one of the children lay, and burnt her feet: she immediately ran to our chamber and called us; but I believe no one heard her, for Mr. Wesley was alarmed by a cry of fire in the street; upon which he rose, little im-

agining that his own house was on fire; but on opening his door he found that it was full of smoke, and that the roof was already burnt through. He immediately came to my room (as I was very ill he lay in a separate room from me) and bid me and my two eldest daughters rise quickly and shift for our lives, the house being all on fire. Then he ran and burst open the nursery door, and called the maid to bring out the children. The two little ones lay in bed with her—the three others in another bed. She snatched up the youngest, and bid the rest follow, which they did, except Jacky. . . . . While Mr. Wesley was carrying the children into the garden he heard the child in the nursery cry out miserably for help, which extremely affected him; but his affliction was much increased when he had several times attempted the stairs then on fire and found they would not bear his weight. Finding it was impossible to get near him, he gave him up for lost, and kneeling down he commended his soul to God, and left him, as he thought, perishing in the flames." But the child was preserved. This is his account of what happened in his room when he awoke in it alone: "Seeing the room was very light, I called to the maid to take me up. But none answering, I put my head out of the curtain and saw streaks of fire on the top of the room. I got up and ran to the door, but could get no farther, all the floor beyond it being in a blaze. I

then climbed upon a chest that stood near the window; one in the yard saw me, and proposed running to fetch a ladder. Another answered: 'There will not be time; but I have thought of another expedient. Here, I will fix myself against the wall; lift a light man and set him on my shoulders.' They did so, and he took me out of the window. Just then the roof fell; but it fell inward, or we had all been crushed at once. When they brought me into the house where my father was, he cried out: 'Come, neighbors, let us kneel down! Let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight children; let the house go — I am rich enough!'"

This wonderful preservation seemed to point out that he was reserved by Divine Providence for some special purpose. His mother evidently so regarded it; and two years afterward, when he was about eight years old, in one of her "meditations," which she was accustomed to write during her hours of devotion, she says:

"Evening, May 17, 1711.

"*Son John.* What shall I render to the Lord for all his mercies? The little unworthy praise that I can offer is so mean and contemptible an offering that I am even ashamed to tender it. But, Lord, accept it for the sake of Christ, and pardon the deficiency of the sacrifice. I would offer thee myself and all that thou hast given me; and I would re-

solve—O give me grace to do it!—that the residue of my life shall all be devoted to thy service. And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that thou hast so mercifully provided for than ever I have been, that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."

God did bless the good mother's efforts, and her boy early displayed an uncommon character for piety, thoughtfulness, and patient endurance. From early childhood he was remarkable for his sober and studious disposition. He was also exceedingly conscientious, and seemed to feel bound to answer the demands of reason and right in every thing he did, and would do nothing without first reflecting on its fitness and propriety. To argue about a thing, indeed, seemed even then to be instinctive. It is said that at the table if he were asked if he would be helped to any thing which it was unusual for him to take, he would first consider the matter, and reply, "I will think about it." His father on one occasion said to him: "Child, you think to carry every thing by dint of argument; but you will find how little is ever done in the world by close reasoning."

Better than this, he was religious and so consistent that his father, High-churchman that he was,

and living far back in the last century, admitted him to the communion-table when he was but eight years old. Wesley himself, many years afterward, and evidently before he had disentangled himself fully from his High-churchism, said that until he was about the age of ten he had not sinned away that "washing of the Holy Ghost" which he received in baptism. This, as well as his native courage and resolution, was shown by the way he endured an attack of that dreadful disease small-pox while his father was away from home, and when he was less than nine years old. "Jack," writes his mother to Mr. Wesley, "has borne his disease bravely—like a man, and indeed like a Christian—without complaint, though he seemed angry at the small-pox when they were sore, as we guessed by his looking sourly, though he never said any thing."

Such was John Wesley till he was ten and a half years old. He was then, through the influence of the Duke of Buckingham, admitted a pupil into the Charterhouse, London. This was a distinguished school, founded by Thomas Sutton in 1611 for the maintenance and education of poor boys. Forty pupils at a time were here to be fed, clothed, and taught free of expense. The building had been originally occupied as a monastery by Carthusian monks, and was called the Charterhouse from Chartreux, the place where their order first arose.

Here his fortitude and patience were severely tried. A poor country boy, alone at school in London, he endured many insults and injuries. Fagging was prevalent, and among other hardships borne by the younger scholars, they had to suffer the want of proper and sufficient food. The older boys took from them their share of the meat they received and ate it themselves. One thing that helped his health was his strict observance of his father's command to "run around the Charterhouse garden three times every morning." But he must have suffered greatly. When he went to Oxford at seventeen his health was far from strong, and once he almost choked to death with bleeding from the nose, a complaint with which he was much affected.

Under all his discouragements he maintained a noble cheerfulness and courage. And when he himself became one of the older boys he did not practice the same cruelties upon those beneath him. On the contrary, he was in the habit of associating with them a great deal, and haranguing them when gathered together. This was cited afterward by his enemies as a proof of his ambitious temperament; and it is said that when the master of the school had remonstrated with him on his seeking the society of the younger boys so much rather than confining himself to that of his equals, his answer was, "Better to rule in hell than serve in heaven." This account may well be doubted. It

is not probable that such a principle should have been so clearly and deliberately adopted by a boy as young as he was then; and it is very improbable that one capable of doing so would have avowed the fact so frankly. Rather, this habit shows that he was kind and generous, with an innate propensity for public speaking and leadership, and speaks loudly for the magnanimity of the youth who could act so after he had himself received such ill treatment from those who were older.

The account of this period of his life would be incomplete without some reference to the mysterious noises that were heard in his father's house at Epworth while he was at the Charterhouse: "Sometimes moans were heard as from a person dying; at others it swept through the halls and along the stairs with the sound of a person trailing a loose gown on the floor; the chamber-walls meanwhile shook with vibrations. Before 'Jeffrey,' as the children called it, came into any room the latches were frequently lifted up and the windows clattered. It seemed to clap the doors, draw the curtains, and throw the man-servant's shoes up and down. The mastiff barked violently at it the first day, yet whenever it came afterward he ran off whining to shelter himself." These noises continued for about two months, and then ceased. Some thought they were produced by the servants. The family all considered them supernatural,

though finding that no harm was done thereby they ceased to dread them. John, who was then but a youth, obtained all the particulars from his mother and each of his four sisters, and was deeply impressed with their accounts. Isaac Taylor thinks that "his faculty of belief was thus so laid open that ever after a right of way for the supernatural was opened through his mind; and to the end of life there was nothing so marvelous that it could not pass where 'old Jeffrey' had passed before it." Southey thinks with Wesley that the noises were supernatural; and Tyerman says: "We have little doubt that the Epworth noises deepened and most powerfully increased Wesley's convictions of an unseen world, and in this way were of the utmost consequence in molding his character and in making him one of the most earnest preachers of the Christian's creed that ever lived."

When he left the Charterhouse at sixteen he had, by his energy of character, his unconquerable patience, his assiduity, and his progress in learning, acquired a high position among his fellows. In the same or the following year he seems to have been a guest and pupil of his brother Samuel, who had by that time risen to be head usher of Westminster school, where Charles was a scholar. And Samuel writes of him to his father: "My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from breeding your third son a

scholar. Jack is a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can."

In 1720 he obtained one of the Charterhouse scholarships in Christchurch College, Oxford. Here, in that illustrious seat of learning, he maintained his reputation for scholarship which he had gained at the Charterhouse. He was of a gay and sprightly disposition, full of wit and humor, given to writing verses, and fond of lively company. In fact, Wesley at this period, and for a considerable time before, was any thing but serious-minded. While he was at school distinguished for many most excellent qualities, in one respect he had fearfully gone backward. O the dangers besetting a young boy away from home in a godless school! While at the Charterhouse young Wesley gained in knowledge but lost in religion. Of this period he writes afterward: "Outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eyes of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures and said my prayers morning and evening, and what I now hoped to be saved by was: (1) Not being so bad as other people; (2) having still a kindness for religion; and (3) reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers."

Again he writes of himself when at Oxford: "I

still said my prayers both in public and privately, and read with the Scriptures several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness—nay, went on habitually and for the most part very contentedly in some one or other known sin, though with some intermissions and short struggles, especially before and after the holy communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year."

This lamentable truth was accompanied with its usual inevitable effects. His character began to deteriorate in important respects. Nothing but the grace of God in the human soul can keep it on a high plane. His letters at this period were without religious sentiment, and his life was without religious aim. He perhaps thoughtlessly contracted debts greater than he had means to pay; and there may have been other things. We find his father writing, January 5, 1725:

"*Dear Son:* Your brother will receive £5 for you next Saturday if Mr. S—— is paid the £10 he lent you. If not, I must go to H——, but I promise you I sha' n't forget that you are my son if you do not that I am your loving father,

"Samuel Wesley."

And again he wrote, January 26, 1725:

"*Dear Son:* I am so well pleased with your decent behavior, or at least with your letters, that I

hope I shall have no occasion to remember any more some things that are past; and since you have now for some time bit upon the bridle, I will take care hereafter to put a little honey upon it as oft as I am able; but then it shall be of my own mere motion, as the last £5 was, for I will bear no rivals in my kingdom. Your affectionate father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY."

And a rather frothy letter from Robert Kirkham, afterward one of the first Methodists, written as late as 1727, talks about "a dinner of calf's head and bacon, with some of the best green cabbage in the town," and tapping "a barrel of admirable cider," of all of which the writer wishes Wesley might have been a partaker.

CHAPTER II.

The College Porter—"Works of the Law"—The Ministry—Fellow of Lincoln—Fruitless Preaching—Charles Wesley—George Whitefield—The Oxford Club—Death of Mr. Wesley—Georgia—The Moravians—High-churchism—Conversion.

WHAT were the special means by which Wesley was at last moved to forsake his life of irreligion, we do not fully know. We may be sure that God's Spirit constantly reproved him of sin and of righteousness and of the judgment to come; and doubtless human instrumentalities were not wanting. Perhaps one of the earliest, and certainly one of the most powerful by Wesley's own account, was the porter of his college. This humble but faithful Christian went one evening to talk with the lively young collegian in his room. After indulging in some pleasantry, Wesley told him to go home and get another coat. The porter replied: "This is the only coat I have in the world, and I thank God for it." Wesley said: "Go home and get your supper." The man responded: "I have had nothing to-day but a drink of water, and I thank God for that." Wesley remarked: "It is late, and you will be locked out; and then what will you have to thank God for?" "I will thank him," replied the porter,

"that I have the dry stones to lie upon." "John," said Wesley, "you thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie upon. What else do you thank him for?" "I thank him," returned the poor fellow, "that he has given me life and being, and a heart to love him, and a desire to serve him."

Wesley says the interview made a lasting impression on his mind, and convinced him there was something in religion to which he was a stranger, so great is the power of a faithful witness and a godly life, even in the humblest Christian. Who can tell how great a part the poor porter had in turning John Wesley's thoughts and affections toward God, and thus in promoting the welfare of the world! Whatever other agencies there may have been at work, it is certain that in 1725 we find Wesley thinking of the ministry. His father wrote him that "the principal motive must not be, as Eli's sons, 'to eat a piece of bread,' but for the glory of God and the good of men." His mother wrote: "Dear Jackey, the alteration of your temper has occasioned me much speculation. I who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operation of God's Holy Spirit, that by taking away your relish for sensual enjoyments, he may prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature. If it be so, happy are you if you cherish

those dispositions, and now in good earnest resolve to make religion the business of your life; for after all that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary, and all things else are comparatively little to the purpose of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation."

He now began to apply himself with diligence to a thorough reformation of life. "When I was about twenty-two," he says, "the providence of God directed me to Kempis's 'Christian Pattern.' I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, angry at Kempis for being too strict, though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation; yet I had much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before. Meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two for religious retirement; I communicated every week; I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed; I began to aim at and pray for inward holiness, so that now, doing so much and living so good a life, I doubted not that I was a good Christian." He also read Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying." "Instantly I resolved

to dedicate all my life to God—all my thoughts and words and actions—being thoroughly convinced that there was no medium, but that every part of my life (not some only) must either be a sacrifice to God or to myself—that is, in effect to the devil."

He now began to correspond with his mother on religious topics, particularly on the two great doctrines of universal atonement and the privilege of living in a state of conscious salvation. He also adopted Taylor's recommendation of taking an exact account of the manner in which he spent his time by daily writing how he had employed every hour—the beginning of that famous diary which he continued till his death. His change in life subjected him to contemptuous sneers from those associated with him. Up to this time he was all alone in his endeavors after a better life. He wrote to his father about his ill treatment, and received the following characteristic reply:

"August 24, 1725.

"*Dear Son:* If you be what you write, I shall be happy; as to the gentlemen candidates you mention, does anybody think the devil is dead or asleep, or that he has no agents left? Surely virtue can bear being laughed at. The Captain and Master of our salvation endured something more for us before he entered into glory; and unless we track his steps, in vain do we hope to share the

glory with him. Naught else but blessings from your loving father, SAMUEL WESLEY."

Meantime the day fixed for his ordination drew near. This involved various expenses which, though not large, it was difficult to meet. His father was at the time "struggling for life," but by great exertion helped him, and he was ordained deacon by Bishop Potter September 19, 1725, the good bishop at the same time advising him that "if he wished to be extensively useful he must spend his time not in contending for or against things of a disputable nature, but in testifying against notorious vice, and in promoting real essential holiness." Wesley's first sermon was preached at South Leigh, a small village three miles from Witney. In March following he was elected a fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford. This was a most important event to him. The position gave him a comfortable support from the funds of the college, while it also gave him a share in its government, and made him a tutor and lecturer to the students. New duties were upon him. He resolved to be diligent. "Leisure and I," he writes, "have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged me."

During the ensuing summer he paid a visit home to Epworth, where he spent his time pursuing his studies with the greatest diligence, preaching also twice every Sunday, and conversing with his father

and mother on practical religion. He here also wrote a paraphrase of the one hundred and fourth Psalm, in which he showed his genius for poetry.

On returning to the university his literary reputation now soon became established. All parties acknowledged him to be a man of talents and learning, while his skill in logic was remarkable, so that "though he was only in the twenty-third year of his age, and had not yet taken a master's degree," within two months after his return he was elected Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes.

In the beginning of 1727 he drew up for himself a scheme of studies, telling his mother that he "had perfectly come over to her opinion that there are many truths it is not worth while to know," and for the knowledge of which time was ill spent when so many really important things remained undone. Another step he took was to rid himself of unprofitable friends. "I resolved," he says, "to have no acquaintance by chance, but by choice, and to choose only such as would help me on my way to heaven. In consequence of this, I narrowly observed the temper and behavior of all that visited me. I saw no reason to think that the greater part of these truly loved and feared God; therefore when any of them came to see me I behaved as courteously as I could, but to the question, 'When will you come to see me?' I returned no answer, and when they had come a few times and found I still

declined returning the visit, I saw them no more; and I bless God this has been my invariable rule for about three-score years." Still Wesley, according to his own testimony, was ignorant of God. "Meeting with Mr. Law's 'Christian Perfection,' and 'Serious Call,' although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that every thing appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, resolved as I had never been before not to prolong the time of obeying him. . . . . I was convinced more than ever of the impossibility of being half a Christian, and determined to be all devoted to God; to give him all my soul, my body, and my substance."

Meantime he was still preaching, and, in some degree at least, privately laboring in the gospel. He writes in 1727: "While watching with a friend at a young lady's funeral I attempted to make him a Christian. From that time the youth was exceedingly serious, and a fortnight ago died of consumption. I was with him the day before his decease, and at his request preached his funeral-sermon." Mr. Tyerman adds: "Here was Wesley's first convert."

August, 1727, he went home to act as his father's curate, Mr. Wesley being obliged to have assistance on account of his age and his loss of health. Here

he remained till November 22, 1729, preaching and doing all the ordinary work of a country pastor. Meantime, during a three months' visit to Oxford in the summer of 1728, he was ordained elder by Bishop Potter. Of his ministry at Epworth he says:

"I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labor. Indeed, it could not be that I should, for I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of believing the gospel—taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance. During all this time I was utterly ignorant of the nature and condition of justification. . . . . I had some confused notion about the forgiveness of sins, but then I took it for granted the time of this must be the hour of death or the day of judgment. I was equally ignorant of the nature of saving faith, apprehending it to mean no more than 'a firm assent to all the propositions contained in the Old and New Testament.'"

On Wesley's return to Oxford in 1729 he found his brother Charles, with two or three other students, attending the sacrament weekly, and otherwise following a strict religious life. In 1726, when Charles had first come to Oxford, John had spoken to him about his soul. Charles was then "a sprightly, rollicking young fellow, with more genius than grace," and answered: "What! would you have me to be a saint all at once?" Now all was changed. The regularity with which he and his associates

were living led a young collegian to call them "Methodists," and "the name clave to them immediately." At first Robert Kirkham and William Morgan, besides the two Wesleys, were all that composed their company. Afterward there were added to them John Clayton, John Broughton, Benj. Ingham, James Hervey, John Whitelamb, Westley Hall, John Gambold, Charles Kinchin, William Smith, and some others from time to time.

George Whitefield did not join them till 1735. "Three years before he had been admitted a servitor (or servant to the other students, for which he received maintenance and tuition) of Pembroke College, and had begun to pray and sing psalms five times a day. He longed to be acquainted with the Methodists, and often watched them passing through a ridiculing crowd to receive the sacrament at St. Mary's; but he was a poor youth, and shrunk from obtruding himself upon their notice. At length a woman in one of the work-houses in the city having attempted to cut her throat, Whitefield sent to Charles Wesley to inform him of her condition. This led Charles to invite him to breakfast next morning, and he thus became introduced to the Methodists and adopted all their rules. On this the master of his college threatened to expel him; some of the students ridiculed him, others threw dirt upon him, and others took their pay from him. In great distress about his soul, he lay prostrate on

the ground in silent or vocal prayer. He chose the worst sort of food; he fasted twice a week. . . . . Abstinence and inward conflicts brought on illness; but after seven weeks he was enabled to lay hold on Christ by a living faith, and was filled with peace and joy."

The brotherhood thus formed was as perfect as unity of sentiment and feeling could make it. All were of one judgment and one heart. Wesley was their chief director. Whatever he proposed was readily adopted, until he was nicknamed "the Curator of the Holy Club." Every night they met to review what each had done during the day, and to consult as to what should be done the day following. Their meetings always began with prayer and ended with a frugal supper. Labor among young students to keep them from evil company and evil ways; the instruction and relief of impoverished families; visiting schools, the work-house, and the prisoners in the castle; reading prayers Wednesday and Friday; preaching every Sunday, and administering the sacrament once a month, kept them busy. Out of their own scanty means they raised a fund to purchase books, medicines, and other necessaries for the prisoners, and to release those who were confined for debts of small amount.

It was the practice of the Oxford Methodists to give away all they had after providing for their own necessities. Wesley, referring to himself, says:

"One of them had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight and gave away two. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty-eight and gave away thirty-two. The third year he received ninety pounds and gave away sixty-two. The fourth year he received a hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived as before on twenty-eight, and gave to the poor all the rest."

One cold day a young girl who was attending one of the schools they had established for the poor called upon Wesley, almost frozen. He said: "You seem half starved; have you nothing to wear but that linen gown?" "Sir," she replied, "this is all I have." He put his hand into his pocket, but found it empty. The walls of his room, however, were hung with pictures. "It struck me," says he, "will thy Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful steward; thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold?' O justice! O mercy! Are not these the blood of this poor maid?"

He was just as conscientious as to the use of his time. Finding that he awoke every night about twelve or one o'clock, he concluded that this arose from his lying in bed longer than nature needed; and to satisfy himself he procured an alarm which aroused him next morning at seven, an hour earlier than he had risen the day previous; but still he lay awake again at night. The second morning

his alarm aroused him at six, and the third at five; but still he lay awake. The fourth morning he got up at four, and now wakefulness was unknown to him. Sixty years afterward he writes: "By the grace of God I have risen at four o'clock ever since, and, taking the year round, I do n't lie awake a quarter of an hour together in a month."

His hours for private devotion were from five to six o'clock every morning and every night. The Bible was his book of books. He was always cheerful, but never arrogant. "By strict watchfulness he beat down the impetuosity of his nature into a child-like simplicity. His piety was nourished by continual communion with God, and often was he seen coming out of his closet with a serenity of countenance that was next to shining. Slanders never ruffled him. Coming home from long journeys, where he had been in different companies, he would calmly resume his usual employments as if he had never left them."

His friends lived a similar life. Every morning and every evening they spent an hour in private prayer. Thursday, every week, though they might be separate from each other, they prayed in concert at an appointed hour. In secret devotion they frequently stopped short to observe if they were using proper fervor; and before concluding in the name of Christ they adverted to the Saviour, now interceding in their behalf at the right-hand of God, and

offering up their prayers. They embraced every possible opportunity of doing good, and spent an hour every day in speaking directly to men on the state of their souls, planning every conversation beforehand, that they might speak the more usefully. They were all at this time intensely High-church, however. There is reason to think that Wesley recommended the confessional, and it is certain that he seriously contemplated the formation of a society which should strictly observe saints' days, holy days, Saturdays (as the seventh day), besides other ritualistic practices, including even the superstitious admixture of the sacramental wine with water. In short, as Wesley himself says, "they were, in the strongest sense, High-churchmen."

Opposition was incessant. Slanders of all kinds were abundant. The press was employed to misrepresent, ridicule, and abuse them, and if possible to refute them. Wesley was the soul and life of the whole movement. He boldly defended himself and his associates in his sermons, and also by publishing replies to their accusers. When he was present with the little society, all went well; when he was absent, it soon went down. Twice, on returning from a short visit home, he found it almost extinguished, and twice he again restored it to life and vigor.

There were friends, too, who came to their aid. Wesley's father encouraged them. The noble-

hearted old rector has not always had the credit due him for the part he had in the establishment of Methodism. The little band at Oxford applied to him in seasons of perplexity. One of them writes: "They formed their conduct upon his advice; and upon the encouragement he gave them they were determined at all events to persevere in the course they had begun." In his dying-hour, which now soon took place, he urged them to continued steadfastness, and prophesied their success. Placing his hand on Charles's head, the old hero said: "Be steady! The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom. You shall see it, though I shall not." "Are you near heaven?" asked John. "Yes," said he, "I am." "Are the consolations of God small with you, father?" "No, no, no!" he responds. As the moment draws nigh they kneel in prayer, all but Mrs. Wesley, who had fainted several times in the sick-chamber, and had to be removed. As they cease he whispers, "Now you have done all;" and as they again raise the voice of supplication he is gone. "Now," said Mrs. Wesley, when they told her, "I am heard in his having so easy a death, and I am strengthened to bear it."

It should be added that on the very day of her husband's death a cruel woman seized on Mrs. Wesley's cattle for a debt of £25. John gave his note for the amount, however, and the cattle were re-

leased. After otherwise assisting his mother he returned to Oxford. Immediately afterward the chief of the Oxford Methodists were widely scattered, Gambold, Ingham, and Broughton becoming engaged in regular ministerial work, Whitefield going on an evangelistic tour to Gloucester, Bristol, and other places, and the two Wesleys making a visit to London to James Hutton, one of their Oxford friends.

While here Wesley met with a Dr. Burton, who was greatly interested in the colonization of Georgia. Dr. Burton introduced him to Gen. Oglethorpe, the founder of the colony, who strongly urged him to undertake a mission there. Wesley consulted with Samuel and other friends. His noble mother wrote: "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice if they were so well employed." Dr. Burton wrote him that "plausible and popular doctors of divinity were not the men wanted for Georgia; for the ease, luxury, and levity in which they were accustomed to indulge disqualified them for such a work."

Ten days after the date of this letter Wesley accepted the proposal, and in sixteen days after the same date—in company with his brother Charles, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte—embarked for the work in Georgia. Wesley's chief desire was to preach to the Indians, which Ingham also intended to do; but the colonists were without a pas-

tor, and the "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts" appointed Wesley to the place at a salary of £50 a year. On board the vessel he met with a company of Moravian emigrants going over to join their brethren already settled there. Wesley was greatly impressed with their pious behavior, especially during a dreadful storm that continued a week, and threatened to utterly destroy them. Just when the sea sparkled and smoked as if on fire, and the air fairly blazed with lightning, while the sails were torn to tatters by the fury of the wind, the Moravians were engaged in singing a psalm at their evening service. The English passengers began screaming, but they calmly sung on. Wesley was struck with this, and asked them, after the service was over, "Were you not afraid?" One replied, "I thank God, no." "But were not your women and children afraid?" "No," replied he, "our women and children are not afraid to die." Wesley concludes his account by saying, "This was the most glorious day that I had ever seen."

Arriving at Savannah, Wesley met the well-known Moravian elder, Gottlieb Spangenberg. Wesley asked his advice how to act in his new sphere of labor. Spangenberg replied: "My brother, I must first ask you one or two questions: Have you the witness within yourself? Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" Wesley was surprised at such

questions. They were new to him. He was at a loss how to answer. Spangenberg continued, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" This was easier, and Wesley answered, "I know that he is the Saviour of the world." "True," said Spangenberg, "but do you know he has saved *you?*" Wesley was again perplexed, but answered, "I hope he has died to save me." Spangenberg only replied, "Do you know yourself?" Wesley replied, "I do;" and he was led to think of doctrines which it took him two more years to understand.

During the two years nearly that Wesley staid in Georgia he met with a succession of disappointments and troubles. He had wished to go on a mission to the Indians, but Governor Oglethorpe objected on the grounds that there was then great danger of his being taken or killed by the French near by, and that it was inexpedient to leave Savannah without a minister. Wesley replied that his appointment to the office of minister there was done without his desire or knowledge, and that he should not continue longer than until the way was opened to go among the Indians. So the matter ended, but his path seemed effectually stopped.

He now therefore began to apply himself to ministerial labors in Savannah. Every Saturday and Sunday afternoon he catechised between thirty and forty children. Every Sunday he held three public services: at five in the morning, at midday, and at

three in the afternoon; and then at night as many of his parishioners as desired it met at his house, with whom he spent an hour in prayer, singing, and mutual exhortation. A similar meeting was held every Wednesday night, and selected ones on all the other evenings of the week, while he constantly visited his parishioners from house to house during the day. In addition, he learned French, Italian, and German, in order to converse with such of the people as could speak only those languages; and toward the close of his stay, to all his other labors on the Sabbath he added an Italian service in the morning and a French service in the afternoon.

An instance of his readiness in meeting emergencies, both humorous and instructive, occurred while he was here. Delamotte had a school in which part of the boys wore shoes and stockings, and the others none. The former ridiculed the latter, and Delamotte tried to stop it, but could not. Wesley said he thought he could cure it, if the next week he took charge of the school. On Monday morning he did so, and walked into school barefooted. The children looked amazed, but Wesley, without any reference to their past jeering, kept them at their work. Before the week was out the shoeless ones began to gather courage; and some of the others, seeing their minister and master come barefoot, began to copy his example, and the evil was effectually cured.

Unfortunately he did himself much hurt by his High-churchism. Many looked upon him as a sort of Roman Catholic. He rigidly excluded all who had not been baptized by an episcopally ordained minister, as well as all dissenters from the communion; he endeavored to enforce confession and penance, mixed wine with water in the sacrament, appointed deaconesses in accordance with what he called apostolic constitutions, and other such practices. This, and his repelling from the sacrament a Mrs. Williamson, for whom, before her marriage, he had felt a deep attachment, led at last to his return to England, December 22, 1737, where Charles had long preceded him.

It cannot be doubted that Wesley was sincere and conscientious in his course in Georgia, but he was certainly no less ill judged, unscriptural, and arrogant. Besides Mrs. Williamson, he had repelled others from the Lord's-table. The reasons he gave in her case were that since her marriage she had come to the sacrament only once a month instead of once a week, and some dissimulation, the nature of which he did not explain. In reference to Bolzius, whom he had also repelled, after quoting a letter received from him twelve years afterward, he says: "What truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! and yet this very man, when I was at Savannah, did I refuse to admit to the Lord's-table because he was not bap-

tized—that is, not baptized by a minister who had been episcopally ordained. Can any one carry High-church zeal higher than this? How well have I been since beaten with my own stick?"

On the way to England he had time for self-examination, and he writes: "By the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling, I am convinced of unbelief, of pride, of gross irrecollection, of levity and luxuriancy of spirit. I went to America to convert the Indians, but O who shall convert me?" On landing in England he penned another remarkable paper asserting the same thing, and saying, "Alienated as I am from the life of God, I am a child of hell." In after years he appended a note to the former of these statements, saying, "I am not sure of this," and to the latter, "I believe not; I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son." The latter expression is explained by the following extract from one of his sermons: "Nearly fifty years ago when the preachers commonly called Methodists began to preach that grand scriptural doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently apprised of the difference between a servant and a child of God. In consequence of this, they were apt to make sad the hearts of those whom God had not made sad; for they frequently asked those who feared God, 'Do you know that your sins are forgiven?' And upon their answering, 'No,' immediately replied, 'Then you are a

child of the devil.' No, that does not follow. It might have been said (and it is all that can be said with propriety), 'Hitherto you are only a servant; you are not a child of God. You have already great reason to praise God that he has called you to his honorable service. Fear not, continue crying unto him, and you shall see greater things than these.'"

Whether Wesley's decision in reference to himself was just might well be doubted. True, he was far from perfect in spirit and behavior in Georgia; but no man could be more sincere or earnest. In the same document in which he so accuses himself he says: "I not only have given and do give all my goods to feed the poor, and not only give my body to be burned, drowned, or whatever God shall appoint for me, but I follow after charity, if haply I may attain it. . . . I show my faith by my works—by staking my all upon it. I would do so again and again, a thousand times, if the choice were still to make." He afterward says of himself: "All the time I was in Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which by a living faith in him bringeth salvation to every one that believeth, I sought to establish my own righteousness, and so labored in the fire all my days. . . . In this state I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before I had willingly served sin; now it was unwillingly, but still I served it. I fell and rose, and fell again

Sometimes I was overcome and in heaviness, sometimes I overcame and was in joy; for as in the former state I had some foretastes of the terrors of the law, so had I in this of the comforts of the gospel. During this whole struggle between nature and grace, which had now continued above ten years, I had many remarkable answers to prayer, especially when I was in trouble. I had many sensible comforts, which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the life of faith. But I was still under the law, not under grace, the state most who are called Christians are content to live and die in; for I was only striving with, not freed from, sin. Neither had I the witness of the Spirit with my spirit, and indeed could not, for 'I sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.'"

On the way home, during a terrific storm in mid-ocean, he found himself afraid of death, and felt convinced that the reason was the want of a true living faith. A company of Moravians were on board, and Peter Böhler, their leader, told him that true faith was always attended (1) by dominion over sin; (2) constant peace from a sense of forgiveness. Wesley disputed this with all his might, but Böhler referred him to the Bible. Wesley consulted the Bible, and was compelled to acknowledge Böhler was right; still he did not believe that anybody's experience ever rose to this pitch. Böhler next day brought him three persons, all of whom

testified of their personal experience that the doctrine was true, and also that this faith is the gift of God, and that he surely gives it to every one who earnestly and perseveringly prays for it. Böhler further taught him that this saving faith is given in a moment, and that in an instant a man is turned from sin and misery to righteousness and joy in the Holy Ghost. Wesley protested against this also, and Böhler again referred him to the Scriptures. Wesley, to his utter astonishment, found there were scarcely any instances of other than instantaneous conversions. Still he objected: "God wrought this in the first ages of Christianity; times now are changed." Böhler turned again to his experience proof, and the day after brought forward his witnesses that God had given them in a moment such a faith in Christ as translated them out of darkness into light.

Wesley writes: "Here ended my disputing. I could only cry out, 'Lord, help thou my unbelief.' I was now thoroughly convinced, and by the grace of God I resolved to seek this faith unto the end, (1) by absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works of righteousness, on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up; (2) by adding to the constant use of all other means of grace continual prayer for this very thing."

From that time, February 7, 1738, till the 4th

of May, when Böhler left London, Wesley embraced every opportunity of conversing with him. Meanwhile several of his friends, as Whitefield and William Hutchins, of Pembroke College, had embraced the doctrine of salvation by faith only, and had experienced it. Charles Wesley also, on May 21, was made a partaker of the same great blessing. Wesley was still a mourner; his heart was heavy. He felt there was no good in him, and that all his works, his righteousness, and his prayers, as far from having merit, needed an atonement for themselves, and yet he heard a voice saying: "Believe, and thou shalt be saved;" "he that believeth is passed from death unto life."

Three more days of anguish were passed, and then, on May 24, at five in the morning, he opened his Testament on these words: "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." On leaving home he opened on the text, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon he went to St. Paul's Cathedral, where the anthem was full of comfort; at night he went to a society meeting in Aldersgate street, where a person read Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, in which Luther teaches what faith is, and also that faith alone justifies. While this preface was being read Wesley experienced an amazing change. He writes: "I felt my heart strangely

warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death; and I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." Toward ten o'clock a troop of friends took him to his brother, who was sick; they sung a hymn and then parted with a prayer. To add to this is not necessary. He was before a servant of God, accepted, as he afterward claimed himself, and was therefore safe; but now he knew it, and was happy as well as safe.

Böhler's explanation of his and Charles's difficulty in believing is well worth pondering by all: "Our mode of believing in the Saviour is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to it. If it were a little more artful they would much sooner find their way into it. Of faith in Jesus they have no other idea than the generality of people have. They justify themselves, and therefore they always take it for granted that they believe already, and try to prove their faith by their works, and thus so plague and torment themselves that they are at heart very miserable."

Wesley had found peace with God; but for the instruction of new converts let it be remembered that his joy in the Holy Ghost was not unbroken. The same night he "was much buffeted with temptations which returned again and again." The day

after, "the enemy injected a fear" that the change was not great enough, and therefore that his faith was not real. On May 26th his "soul continued in peace, but yet in heaviness through manifold temptations." On the 27th there was a want of joy; on the 31st he "grieved the Spirit of God, not only by not watching unto prayer, but likewise by speaking with sharpness, instead of tender love, of one who was not sound in the faith. Immediately God hid his face, and he was in trouble and heaviness till the next morning."

In mingling with the Moravians, one of whose societies he joined, he seemed to have imbibed some wrong notions from their teachings, and especially from their experiences, which, earnest and sincere as they were, were yet mixed with much that was fanatical and foolish. For a time he seems to have confounded the doctrine of the Spirit's witness with that of sanctification, and thought it to include "deliverance from every fleshly desire, and from every outward and inward sin."

Accordingly, five months after his conversion, we find him writing: "This witness of the Spirit, I have it not." And again: "I cannot find in myself the love of God or of Christ; hence my deadness and my wanderings in public prayer," etc. Like many others, he was apparently attaching to the witness of the Spirit a signification too high, and afflicting himself because his experience did

not reach to the height he had fixed for it. But in the midst of all these temptations and doubts and failings, he kept waiting upon God continually, read the New Testament, conquered temptation, and gained increasing power to trust and to rejoice in God his Saviour. The mists were soon scattered, and he could testify to the end of life: "The testimony of the Spirit is an inward impression on the soul, whereby the Spirit of God directly witnesses to my spirit that I am a child of God; that Jesus Christ hath loved me, and given himself for me; and that all my sins are blotted out, and I, even I, am reconciled to God."

CHAPTER III.

A Dark Hour—The Methodist Revival—Outdoor Preaching—Beau Nash—Persecution—The Foundry—The United Societies—Lay Preachers—Strange Scenes—Calvinism—Class-meetings—The Itinerancy—Preaching from his Father's Tombstone—Death of Mrs. Wesley—Mobs—Happy Deaths—Learning.

DURING the year 1738, with the exception of one month spent on his voyage from America and three months he passed in Germany on a visit to the Moravian community under Count Zinzendorf, Wesley preached continually—in work-houses, in prisons, in the cabin of a ship, or in churches—wherever he could gain admittance. Justification by faith and free grace were the great doctrines which he, with Whitefield and Charles Wesley, now began to teach, and which gave rise to that great revival of modern times called Methodism—the greatest revival since the days of the apostles. Never was there greater need of an awakening. "Never," says a writer in the *North British Review*, "has a century risen on Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne and reached its musty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn." Vice abounded. The Bishop of

Leitchfield, in a sermon in 1724, said: "The Lord's-day is now become the devil's market-day. . . . . Sin in general has grown so hardened and rampant as that immoralities are defended—yea, justified—on principle. . . . . Every kind has found a writer to teach and vindicate it, and a bookseller and hawker to divulge and spread it."

"Drinking had become almost a mania. In 1736 every sixth house in London was a licensed grog-shop. In the higher classes of society the taint left by Charles II. and his licentious court still festered. Among the lower classes laziness and dishonesty were next to universal. Superstition flourished almost as vigorously as it had done in the Middle Ages. Extravagance was the order of the day. Scarcely one family in ten kept within its income. The grand controversy was who should outdress, outdrink, or outeat his neighbor. Gambling was universal. London swarmed with ruined rakes and broken traders, who contrived to live in the best society by reciting broken scraps of poetry, singing licentious songs, and retailing drunken puns and quibbles. All usual restraints were relaxed. Everywhere there was an abuse of liberty, a great neglect in education, and a want of care in training children and in keeping servants in good order, while idleness, luxury, gambling, and drunkenness had grown into an alarming magnitude. Infidelity prevailed among all classes, and boldly made direct

efforts to undermine all religion. Ignorance was rife, and gave opportunity to all evil. In the whole kingdom in 1715 there were but one thousand one hundred and ninety-three schools for the education of the poor, containing only twenty-six thousand nine hundred and twenty scholars. Crime was enormous. In 1738 fifty-two criminals were hanged at Tyburn jail alone. During that and the preceding year twelve thousand persons in London had been convicted of smuggling gin or of selling it without license. Sunday traffic had become such a nuisance in London that the court of aldermen had to interfere to suppress it. A committee of the House of Lords, appointed in 1738 'to examine into the causes of the present notorious immorality and profaneness,' reported that a number of loose and disorderly persons had of late formed themselves into a club, and were trying to induce the youths of the kingdom to join them, professing themselves to be votaries of the devil, and offering prayers to him and drinking his health."*

At once the cause and a consequence of the prevailing ignorance, immorality, and crime was the general decay of religion prevailing. In the Church ministers were fops and dandies, and immoral or dead and formal. Bishop Burnet wrote in 1713: "Our ember days are the burden and grief of my

*Condensed from Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley."

life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be appreciated by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers—I mean the plainest parts of the Scriptures. They can give no account, or at least a very imperfect account, of the contents even of the gospel, or of the catechism itself."

Green says: "Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives. Drunkenness and foul talk were thought no discredit to Walpole. A later prime-minister, the Duke of Grafton, was in the habit of appearing at the play with his mistress. Purity and fidelity to the marriage-vow were sneered out of fashion; and Lord Chesterfield, in his letters to his son, instructs him in the art of seduction as a part of a polite education."*

To reform and save the people, Wesley and his colaborers simply preached the doctrines of the Bible and instituted their discipline of life; and it was sufficient then, as it always will be by the blessing of God. The moral aspect of the whole nation was soon changed.

"A religious revival burst forth at the close of Walpole's ministry which in a few years changed

*"History of the English People," Vol. IV., Book VIII.

the whole temper of English society. The Church was restored to life and activity. Religion carried to the hearts of the poor a fresh spirit of moral zeal, while it purified our literature and our manners. A new philanthropy reformed our prisons, infused clemency and wisdom into our penal laws, abolished the slave-trade, and gave the first impulse to popular education. The revival began in a small knot of Oxford students, whose revolt against the religious deadness of their times showed itself in ascetic observances, an enthusiastic devotion, and a methodical regularity of life, which gained them the nickname of 'Methodists.' . . . . . Their preaching stirred a passionate hatred in their opponents. Their lives were often in danger; they were mobbed, they were ducked, they were smothered with filth; but the enthusiasm they aroused was equally passionate. . . . . Charles Wesley came to add sweetness to this sudden and startling light. The wild throes of hysteric 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. But the Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church of England broke the lethargy of the clergy, and the 'Evangelical' movement, which found representatives like Newton and Cecil within the pale of the Es-

tablishment, made the fox-hunting parson and the absentee rector at last impossible. In Walpole's day the English clergy were the idlest and most lifeless in the world. In our own time no body of religious ministers surpasses them in piety, in philanthropic energy, or in popular regard.

"In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm, which, rigid and pedantic as it often seemed, was still healthy in its social tone, and whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had disgraced the upper classes, and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the restoration. But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt—which has never ceased from that day to this—to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor. It was not till the Wesleyan movement had done its work that the philanthropic movement began. The passionate impulse of human sympathy with the wronged and the afflicted raised hospitals, endowed charities, built churches, sent missionaries to the heathen, supported Burke in his plea for the Hindoo and Clarkson and Wilberforce in their crusade against the iniquity of the slave-trade."

Strong opposition arose. Mrs. Hutton, in whose house John and Charles Wesley had their lodgings, and whose family had been a long time intimate with them, grew alarmed lest her two boys should

also be drawn into the same "wild notions," and writes to Samuel Wesley to stop this "wildfire" if he can. Samuel was already troubled about his two brothers, and entered into a correspondence with John protesting and arguing against their views with all his might. Complaint was made against them by others to Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, and John and Charles waited on him to answer the charge; but the bishop found nothing to reprove in them, and dismissed them kindly. The famous Warburton began to write against them; and sermons from prominent ministers were leveled at their doctrines.

At the close of the year 1738 Wesley was almost uniformly excluded from the pulpits of the Established Church. With the exception of expounding in a few private houses, he had to content himself with preaching not more than half a dozen sermons during the first two months of 1739. In March he went to Oxford, where he labored chiefly in visiting families and individuals and instructing them, being sometimes obliged to dispute with opposers, whom he found everywhere endeavoring to destroy the fruits of his ministry. "We had appointed the little society at Reading to meet us in the evening, but the enemy was too vigilant; almost as soon as we were out of the town the minister sent or went to each of the members, and began arguing and threatening, and utterly confounded

them, so that they were all scattered abroad." But the work was not in vain. "Mrs. Campton set her face as a flint." "Mrs. Mears's agony so increased that she could not avoid crying out aloud in the street. With much difficulty we got her to Mrs. Shrieve's, where God heard us and sent her deliverance. Presently Mrs. Shrieve fell into a strange agony both of body and mind—her teeth gnashed together, her knees smote each other, and her whole body trembled exceedingly. We prayed on, and within an hour the storm ceased; and she now enjoys a sweet calm, having remission of sins and knowing that her Redeemer liveth." "On Monday Mrs. Cleminger being in pain and fear, we prayed, and the Lord gave her peace. At six in the evening we were at Mrs. Fox's society; about seven at Mrs. Campton's. The power of the Lord was present at both, and all our hearts were knit together in love."

Whitefield now took a bold step. In February, having come to Bristol, he found all the churches closed against him but two; and the chancellor of Bristol interfered to prevent him from preaching in those, threatening to first suspend and then expel him if he should continue to preach in that diocese without license. But the chancellor had undertaken no easy task. Away went Whitefield, February 17, and preached in the open air to two hundred colliers at Kingswood. Wesley "could

scarcely reconcile himself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, having all his life—till very lately—been so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that he should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been in a church." But Whitefield continued, and at the second service he had two thousand people to hear him; at the third four thousand; at the fifth, ten thousand; and afterward sometimes as many as twenty thousand. He now sent for Wesley. Wesley hesitated, Charles objected, and the society in Fetter Lane disputed; but at length the matter was decided affirmatively. Wesley reached Bristol March 31st, and immediately began to follow Whitefield's example.

Once more he was engaged in his loved employ, and thenceforth continued to preach without ceasing—in fields and commons, and public squares, wherever he could find a congregation—to the end of his long life; the greatest outdoor preacher that ever lived. Most of 1739 he spent in Bristol and its immediate neighborhood, delivering at least five hundred sermons, only eight of which were preached in churches. "The points," he writes, "I chiefly insisted upon were four: First, that orthodoxy, or right opinion, is at best but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part at all; that neither does religion consist in negatives, in bare harmlessness of any kind, nor merely in ex-

ternals, in doing good, or using the means of grace, in works of piety or of charity, but that it is nothing short of or different from the mind that was in Jesus Christ; the image of God stamped upon the heart; inward righteousness attended with the peace of God and joy in the Holy Ghost. Secondly, that the only way to this religion is repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, that by this faith he that worketh not but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly is justified freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. Fourthly, that being justified by faith we taste of the heaven to which we are going; we are holy and happy; we tread down sin and fear, and sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus." He adds that he had no desire to preach in the open air. Field-preaching was a thing submitted to rather than chosen; and submitted to because he thought preaching even thus better than no preaching at all—first in respect to his own soul, and next in respect to the souls of others. He asserts further that never had he seen a more awful sight than when on Rose Green or the top of Hannam Mount some thousands of persons were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God. He says: "I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. . . . . I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean that in whatever part of it I am I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to

declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation."

"Their congregations," says James Hutton, "were composed of every description of persons, who, without the slightest attempt at order, assembled, crying 'Hurrah!' with one breath, and with the next bellowing and bursting into tears on account of their sins; some poking each other's ribs, and others shouting, 'Halleluiah!' It was a jumble of extremes of good and evil. . . . Here thieves, prostitutes, fools, people of every class, several men of distinction, a few of the learned, merchants, and numbers of poor people who had never entered a place of worship, assembled in crowds and became godly."

But hundreds of the poor miners were made happy in Christ. Standing unwashed, just as they had come out of the coal-pits, the tears coursed down their blackened faces and left white furrows on their cheeks, while they repented, believed, and were saved. In a short time multitudes of them, notorious before for ignorance, degradation, and crime of every sort, were transformed into humble and consistent Christians.

Persecution arose. Wesley says: "We continued to call sinners to repentance, but it was not without violent opposition both from high and low, learned and unlearned. Not only all manner of evil was spoken of us, both in private and public, but the

beasts of the people were stirred up almost in all places to knock these mad dogs on the head at once; and when complaint was made of their savage, brutal violence, no magistrate would do us justice."

At Pensford the minister would not allow him to preach in the church, because he said he had heard he was mad. Wesley thereupon took his stand in the open air; but in the midst of prayer two men hired for the purpose began to sing ballads, which obliged Wesley and his company to sing psalms so as to drown one noise with another. Subsequently at Bath, Beau Nash—at that time the social dictator of that fashionable city, though a rake and a gambler—determined to break up Wesley's preaching in the city when he came there. In due time Wesley arrived, and was entreated by his friends not to attempt to preach. But he had gone there to preach, and preach he would. The threatenings of Nash made his congregation very large, both of the rich and the poor. Soon after Wesley began, the "beau" appeared in his immense white hat, and asked "by what authority he did these things." Wesley replied: "By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the gospel.'" "This is contrary to act of Parliament," said Beau Nash; "this is conventicle." Wesley an-

swered: "Sir, the conventicles are seditious meetings; but here is no sedition; therefore it is not contrary to that act." "I say it is!" cried he; "and besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir," said Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?" "No," said Nash. "How, then," said Wesley, "can you judge of what you never heard?" "Sir, by common report. Common report is enough." "Give me leave, sir," replied Wesley, "to ask, Is not your name Nash?" "My name is Nash," said he. "Sir," said Wesley, "I dare not judge of you by common report. I think it is not enough to judge by." Here Nash paused awhile, and having recovered himself said: "I desire to know what this people come here for." On which an old woman said: "Sir, leave him to me;" and amid her taunts the gorgeous "beau" slunk away.

These, however, were comparatively light attacks. "We were assaulted and abused on every side," says Wesley. "We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard-of monsters. But this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves so we might finish our course with joy."

Besides many other attacks from smaller antagonists, Gibson, Bishop of London, published a "pastoral letter" of fifty-five pages, two-thirds of which dwelt on "enthusiasm," charging the Methodists with nine serious errors. To this Whitefield replied boldly and effectively. At the same time Wesley was having a tilt with the Bishop of Bristol, who had directed him to leave the diocese. Wesley declined, declaring that "wherever I think I can do the most good there must I stay as long as I think so. At present I think I can do most good here; therefore, here I stay." The basest and most scurrilous attacks were common. It was declared that they were "movers of sedition and ringleaders of the rabble;" that they taught "such absurd doctrines as to give countenance to the lewd and debauched, the irreligious and profane;" that they were "deceivers," "babblers," "insolent pretenders." In a poetical pamphlet published in 1739 the devil was represented as having made a tour from Rome to Oxford, in the course of which he stole the bigoted madness of a Turk and the wit of a modern atheist, both of which he drenched dull and deep in a literary Dutchman's brain, and then making them his own, etc., introduced himself to the Methodists and gave them instructions how to act—instructions too filthy to be here repeated. Such was the storm in which Methodism was cradled. It was misunderstood and opposed more or

less actively even by such men as Dr. Doddridge, Hervey, and Samuel Wesley, friendly as they were personally to the Methodist leaders. But none the less the latter kept calmly on their way.

Methodism soon began to assume a more stable form. At once they set about building schools and churches and organizing their bands. The first school attempted was at Kingswood, where the people, poor and ignorant almost as the beasts that perish, were utterly unprovided for. The poor colliers contributed out of their poverty twenty pounds, Whitefield collected some eighty pounds more, and Wesley undertook the rest, becoming himself responsible for the payment of the debts. At the same time he began to build a room also in Bristol for the use of two "societies," by which a debt of one hundred and fifty pounds was contracted, while the subscriptions did not amount to more than a quarter of that amount. But he reflected that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof," and went on with the work, assuming all the debt. He also began to build a church in London. In November, on a visit there, he had preached in the "Foundry," a place which had been the king's foundry for cannon, but then "a vast uncouth heap of ruins," caused by an explosion that had occurred there in 1716. He had immense congregations, and he was pressed to buy the place and fit it up for public worship. The purchase-money was one

hundred and fifteen pounds; but a large sum additional would be required to make the needful repairs. Wesley resolved to undertake the work, and borrowing the money he bought the place and fitted it up. Subscriptions were obtained amounting in three years to four hundred and eighty pounds, but leaving still a balance of three hundred pounds unprovided for, and for which he alone was responsible. By such courage, faith, and self-denying enterprise did Methodism rise; and these were among Wesley's greatest gifts. Surely eloquence and even wisdom and knowledge are neither so strong nor, alas! so rare as these.

The "Foundry" was really the cradle of London Methodism. The building was about one hundred and twenty by ninety-nine feet. The chapel, with its galleries, seated some fifteen hundred persons on benches without backs, excepting about a dozen seats with back-rails for the weaker women in front. At the end of the chapel was a dwelling-house for his domestics and assistant preachers, and behind it was a band-room holding some three hundred people, where the classes met, and where prayer-meetings were held twice a week, and where in winter the "five o'clock morning service" was conducted. In this room, too, was "the book-room" for the sale of Wesley's publications, fitted up at the north end, and overhead were apartments for Wesley, and where his mother died. Attached to

the whole was a small building used as a coach-house and stable. Such was the first Methodist meeting-house—at once a church and a parsonage.

Another most important event in 1739 was the rise of the "United Societies." Up to this time the Methodists had organized no societies of their own. The "societies" to whom Wesley had been in the habit of preaching before this were of two kinds—one the "Moravian Societies," the first of which he had himself helped to organize in Fetter Lane, London, in 1738; the other the "Religious Societies," which had been in existence for many years before, scattered over the kingdom and composed of small gatherings of pious people met for religious exercises and to do works of charity. But he writes: "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or ten persons came to me in London who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a time when we might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every Thursday in the evening. To these and as many more as desired to join with them (for the number increased daily) I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meetings with prayer

suited to their several necessities. This was the rise of the United Societies, first in London and then in other places." Rules of discipline were soon added; and from this seed grew all the Methodist churches of Great Britain and America.

Another momentous event of this eventful year was the introduction of lay preaching. In 1735 John Cennick, the son of Quaker parents who had piously reared him, was convicted of sin while walking in Cheapside. At once he left off his sins, and prayed and fasted long and often, but not till September 5, 1737, did he find peace with God. Rejoicing in his new-found happiness, he began to preach. June, 1739, he became head-master of the school at Kingswood. There, on the failure of a young preacher to appear on an appointed day, he was requested to officiate. He reluctantly consented, and again the next day, and again on the following Sunday. Meantime Howell Harris, in Wales, without any orders, and without any acquaintance with the Wesleys, had been preaching since 1735, and was the means of a most glorious work of God in his native country. He and Cennick now met Wesley in Bristol. The three fell upon their knees. Wesley "was greatly enlarged," writes Harris, "in prayer for me and all Wales;" and both Cennick and Harris returned to their respective fields of labor encouraged by Wesley to continue preaching to sinners. Thomas Max-

field and John Nelson soon after followed, and Joseph Humphreys, who had also apparently assisted him, in 1738, at Fetter Lane.

This was a most startling innovation. "I knew your father well," said the Archbishop of Armagh to Charles Wesley; "I could never credit all I heard respecting you; but one thing in your conduct I could never account for—your employing laymen." "My lord," said Charles, "the fault is yours and your brethren's." "How so?" asked the Archbishop. "Because you hold your peace and the stones cry out." "But I am told," continued his grace, "that they are unlearned men." "Sometimes they are," said the sprightly poet; "and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet." His lordship said no more.

Whitefied was in doubt. Wesley himself, in the case of Maxfield, was apprehensive. Maxfield was one of his first converts, and had been with Charles Wesley for a year or two apparently as a servant. Being left at the Foundry to meet the society and pray with them and to give them suitable advice, he was insensibly led to preach, and with such power that numbers were converted. Wesley, hearing of this irregularity, hurried to London to put a stop to it. His mother, who then lived at the Foundry, said: "John, take care what you do in respect of that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine

what have been the fruits of his preaching, and hear him yourself." John did so, and was convinced, and Thomas went on preaching. Four years after, he wrote: "I am bold to affirm that these unlettered men have help from God for the great work of saving souls from death. But indeed in the one thing which they profess to know they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, which few of our candidates for holy orders even in the university are able to do. In answer to the objection that they are laymen, I reply: The scribes of old, who were the ordinary preachers among the Jews, were not priests; they were not better than the laymen. . . . Besides, in how many churches in England does the parish clerk read the whole service every Lord's-day. . . . Nay, is it not done in the universities. Who ordained that singing man at Christchurch, Oxford, murdering every lesson he reads, not endeavoring to read it as the word of God, but rather as an old song?" In further justification he states that after God had used him and his brother clergymen in several places to turn many from sin unto holiness, the ministers of those places spoke of them "as if the devil—not God—had sent them; and represented them as fellows not fit to live—papists, heretics, traitors, conspirators against their king and

country;" while the converts under their ministry were "driven from the Lord's-table, and openly cursed in the name of God." What could be done for their regular instruction? "No clergyman would assist at all. The expedient that remained was to find some one among themselves who was upright of heart and of sound judgment in the things of God." The attempt was made, and it succeeded. God owned and blessed it, and the lay preachers became the means not only of encouraging the converts and reclaiming backsliders, but also of converting sinners.

Mention must be made of the extraordinary manifestations that attended Wesley's preaching this year at Bristol and the neighboring country:

"April 17.—At Baldwin street we called upon God to confirm his word. Immediately one that stood by cried out aloud with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death. But we continued in prayer till a new song was put into her mouth, even a thanksgiving unto our Lord. Soon after, two other persons were seized with strong pain and constrained to roar for the disquietude of their hearts. But it was not long before they too burst forth into praise to God their Saviour. The last who called upon God as out of the belly of hell was a stranger in Bristol; and in a short space he also was overwhelmed with joy and love.

"April 21, a young man was suddenly seized with

a violent trembling all over, and in a few minutes sunk to the ground.

"April 27.—At Newgate I was led to pray that God would bear witness to his word. Immediately one and another and another sunk to the earth. They fell on every side as thunderstruck.

"May 1.—At Baldwin street my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groanings of some and the cries of others calling aloud to Him that is mighty to save. . . . A Quaker who stood by was very angry, and was biting his lips and knitting his brows when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We prayed for him, and he soon lifted up his head with joy, and joined with us in thanksgiving. A by-stander, John Haydon, a weaver, a man of regular life and conversation, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the Church and against dissenters, labored to convince the people that all this was a delusion of the devil; but next day, while reading a sermon on 'Salvation by Faith,' he suddenly changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming and beating himself against the ground. . . . . When I came in he said: 'Ay, this is he I said deceived the people; but God has overtaken me. I said it was a delusion of the devil, but this is no delusion.' Then he roared out: 'O thou devil! thou cursed devil!—yea, thou legion of devils!—thou

canst not stay in me! Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me in pieces if thou wilt, but thou canst not hurt me.' He then beat himself against the ground, his breast heaving as if in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty."

Such extracts might be multiplied. We subjoin only two or three more of the most remarkable:

"October 23.—I was pressed to visit a young woman at Kingswood. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. Anguish, horror, and despair above all description appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. She screamed out: 'I am damned, damned! lost forever! Six days ago you might have helped me; but it is past. I am the devil's now; I have given myself to him; I am his; him I must serve; with him must I go to hell; I will be his; I will serve him; I will go with him to hell; I cannot be saved; I will not be saved; I must, I will, I will be damned!' She then began praying to the devil. We began, 'Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!' She immediately sunk down as asleep, but as soon as we left off broke out again with inexpressible vehemence. . . . We continued in prayer till past

eleven, when God in a moment spoke peace to her soul.

"October 27.—I was sent for to Kingswood again, to one of those who had been so ill before. A violent rain began just as I set out. Just at that time the woman—then three miles off—cried out, 'Yonder comes Wesley galloping as fast as he can!' When I was come she burst into a horrid laughter, and said: 'No power, no power! no faith, no faith! She is mine! her soul is mine! I have her, and will not let her go!' Meanwhile her pangs increased more and more. . . . One who was clearly convinced that this was no natural disorder said: 'I think Satan is let loose. I fear he will not stop here;' and added, 'I command thee, in the name of the Lord Jesus, to tell if thou hast commission to torment any other soul.' It was immediately answered: 'I have; L——y C——r and S——h J——s.' We betook ourselves to prayer again, and ceased not till she began, with a clear voice and composed, cheerful look, to sing 'Praise God, from whom all blessings flow.'"

At this time L——y C——r and S——h J——s were in perfect health, and living some distance away; yet Wesley writes the next day:

"October 28.—I called at Mrs. J——s, at Kingswood. L——y C——r and S——h J——s were there. It was scarce a quarter of an hour before the former fell into a strange agony; and presently

after, the latter. The violent convulsions all over their bodies were such as words cannot describe. Their cries and groans were too horrid to be borne. We poured out our souls before God till L——y C——r's agonies so increased that it seemed she was in the pangs of death. But in a moment God spoke, and both her body and soul were healed."

Besides these, another marvelous case occurred November 30th, when seven persons were grievously tormented; and Wesley and his friends continued in prayer from the time of evening service till nine o'clock next morning, or about fifteen hours—a case almost unparalleled in the history of the Church.

Various explanations have been offered for these occurrences; but it is a noteworthy fact that, with few exceptions, they all took place in the year 1739, under Wesley's preaching, and in the city and neighborhood of Bristol. No such demonstration seems to have attended the preaching of Whitefield or Charles Wesley, though quite as faithful as that of Wesley, and far more impassioned. Similar effects followed the preaching of Cennick also at Bristol, and the Rev. Ralph Erskine writes Wesley that they had had something analogous in Scotland in the revival that then prevailed there. Wesley, five years after, when he had heard all that was to be said against them, and after they had ceased, gives the following as his explanation of them on

calm and full consideration; and none better is likely to be offered. He says:

"They may be easily accounted for, either on principles of reason or Scripture. First, how easy it is to suppose that a strong, lively, and sudden apprehension of the heinousness of sin, the wrath of God, and the bitter pains of eternal death should affect the body as well as the soul during the present laws of vital union? . . . Yea, we may question whether, while this union subsists, it be possible for the mind to be affected in so violent a degree, without some or other of those bodily symptoms following. Secondly, . . . we are to add to the consideration of natural causes the agency of those spirits who still excel in strength, and, as far as they have leave from God, will not fail to torment when they cannot destroy; to tear those that are coming to Christ. It is also remarkable that there is plain Scripture precedent of every symptom which has lately appeared."

This year Wesley's mother attained to a new experience. She had begun to entertain "strange fears concerning him, being convinced that he had greatly erred from the faith;" but this did not last long. Wesley writes: "September 3, 1739, I talked largely with my mother, who told me that till a short time since she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as having God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit; much less did she imagine that this

was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask it for myself; but two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words in delivering the cup to me, 'The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee,' the words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins.'" After this Mrs. Wesley resided chiefly in London, and heartily embraced the doctrines of John and Charles, and attended upon their ministry.

Wesley's publications now began to be important. Besides numerous tracts, he published in 1739 a beautiful abridgment of the "Life of Halyburton" and a book of hymns. A separation that took place in 1741 between Wesley and Whitefield, and their respective followers, on the doctrines of Calvinism, added to the list. Whitefield, while in America, had embraced Calvinistic views, and Wesley felt bound to oppose him. He says: "Call it by what name you please—'election,' 'preterition,' 'predestination,' or 'reprobation'—it comes in the end to the same thing. The sense of all is this: By virtue of an unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved and the rest infallibly damned, it being impossible that any of the former should be damned or that any of the latter should be saved." Such a doctrine, he asserts, among other monstrous consequences, makes all

preaching vain, tends to destroy our zeal for good works, and makes God, in saying one thing and meaning another—in pretending a love which he has not, and in condemning millions of souls to everlasting fire for continuing in sin, which, for want of grace he gives them not, they are unable to avoid—"as more false, more cruel, and more unjust than the devil." He adds: "This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible decree of predestination. And here I fix my foot; on this I join issue with every asserter of it. You represent God as worse than the devil; but you say you can prove it by Scripture. Hold! What will you prove by Scripture? That God is worse than the devil? It cannot be. Whatever Scripture proves, it never can prove this; whatever its true meaning, this cannot be its true meaning. Do you ask, 'What is its true meaning then?' If I say I know not you have gained nothing, for there are many scriptures the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know: better it were to say it had no sense at all than to say it had such a sense as this."

The differences that had arisen between him and the London Moravians increased, too; and he was at length forbidden the use of the Moravian pulpits. He then withdrew himself from them entirely. There was also much backsliding in the societies at this period, and a general want of any

great religious success during 1740 and 1741. Attacks upon him and his doctrines through the press steadily continued, and the mob kept up their furious violence toward him while preaching; but never for a moment did his courage or confidence give way. He was constantly engaged in traveling, preaching, and writing. Besides this, he undertook various laborious works of charity in Bristol and London for the relief of the poor. Being separated from Whitefield and the Moravians, he began to purge and organize more perfectly the societies that were now properly his own. Such as appeared guilty, and would not promise amendment, were not allowed to remain with them. To the rest he gave tickets, which were renewed every quarter, by which he certified to the membership of those who bore them. These he considered to be equivalent to the "commendatory letters" mentioned in the New Testament; and they also gave opportunity of removing any disorderly member in a quiet and inoffensive way—*i. e.*, by ceasing to give him a ticket.

An incident put a new and most potent means for good into his hands. At Bristol in 1742, when some of the principal members had met with Wesley to consider how they might pay the large debt that remained on their meeting-house, one of them proposed: "Let every member of the society give a penny a week till the debt is paid." Another

answered: "Many of them are poor, and cannot afford it." "Then," said the former, "put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give any thing, well. I will call on them weekly, receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." "It was done," says Wesley; "and in a while some of these informed me they found such and such a one did not live as they ought. It struck me that this was the very thing that was wanting so long." Thus class-meetings began. Each class met once a week with their leader, who conversed with them one by one, each meeting being opened and ended with prayer and singing. "It can scarce be conceived," says Wesley, "what advantages have been reaped by this providential regulation. Many now experienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to bear one another's burdens, and naturally to care for each other's welfare. And as they had a more intimate acquaintance, so they had a more endeared affection for each other. . . . For this I can never sufficiently praise God, the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest."

One more strong weapon completed the equipment of Methodism for the holy warfare. Hitherto Wesley's only regular congregations were at Kingswood, Bristol, and the Foundry. In 1742 he began to enlarge the sphere of his operations, and to em-

ploy for himself and his assistants the itinerancy. Fourteen weeks he spent in a tour through Wales. He then took a trip to the North of England, preaching at all the towns and villages he came to, and on his return to Bristol. This was the beginning of his itinerant labors, which thereafter never ceased to the day of his death. He soon made it the practice of all his preachers, and it remains one of the most important institutions of all important Methodist churches throughout the world.

At Newcastle, on his arrival there May 28, 1742, Wesley was surprised and shocked at the abounding wickedness. Drunkenness and swearing seemed general, and even the mouths of the little children were full of oaths. On Sunday morning, at seven o'clock, he took his stand near the pump, in "the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, crowded with keelmen and sailors using the language of hell." He began by singing the old hundredth Psalm and tune. "Three or four people came to see what was the matter," but before he finished preaching his congregation consisted of from twelve to fifteen hundred persons. When the service was ended, "the people stood gaping with the most profound astonishment," upon which he said: "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I design to preach here again." At five he took his stand on the hill, which was covered from

top to bottom with a congregation the largest he had ever yet seen, though he had preached sometimes to twenty thousand people at Moorfields and Kensington Commons, in London. "After preaching," he says, "the poor people were ready to tread me under foot out of pure love and kindness;" but he could not stay. Next morning he set out at three o'clock, and rode about eighty miles. The next day he rode to Bristol, on the way holding a prayer-meeting at Knaresborough. At Bristol John Nelson lived, and here he had been laboring with great success. At night Wesley preached to a vast multitude, and held service for two hours and a half. The next three days he spent preaching in Bristol and about in the surrounding neighborhood. He then set out for Epworth. The next day after his arrival there being Sunday, he offered to assist Mr. Romley, the curate, either by preaching or reading prayers; but his offer was declined, and Romley preached against enthusiasts in a very offensive sermon. After service, John Taylor gave notice, as the people were coming out of church, that Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, would preach in the church-yard at six o'clock. Accordingly at that hour he stood on his father's tombstone and preached to the largest congregation Epworth had ever seen. He remained eight days, and every night preached from his father's tombstone. Here they dared not disturb him.

His preaching was attended with amazing power. The people wept aloud; some dropped down as dead; his voice was drowned by the cries of penitents, and many found peace with God in the old church-yard. A gentleman who had not been at public worship of any kind before for more than thirty years stood motionless as a statue. "Sir," asked Wesley, "are you a sinner?" "Sinner enough," said he, and still stood staring upward till his wife and servant, who were both in tears, put him into his chaise and drove him home.

The last service lasted about three hours. Wesley writes: "We scarce knew how to part. O let none think his labor of love is lost because the fruit does not immediately appear! Near forty years did my father labor here, but he saw little fruit of his labor. I took some pains among this people too, and my strength also seemed spent in vain; but now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly; but the seed sown so long since now sprung up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins."

Thus the work was established also at Epworth. In the neighborhood some societies had previously been formed. "Their angry neighbors," says Wesley, "carried a whole load of these new heretics before a magistrate; but when he asked what they had done, there was a deep silence—for that was a point

their conductors had forgotten. At length one said: "They pretend to be better than other people, and pray from morning till night." Another said: "They have converted my wife. Till she went among them she had such a tongue, and now she is quiet as a lamb." "Take them back! take them back!" cried the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in town!"

On leaving Epworth he went to Sheffield, where he spent four days preaching, and thence to Coventry, to Gresham, and to Stroud, and thence to Bristol, June 28th.

July 23, 1742, his venerable mother passed from earth to heaven, at the Foundry. Charles was absent, but John and her five daughters were with her. "She had no doubt or fear, nor any desire but to depart and be with Christ." Early in the morning of the day she died, on awaking out of sleep, she cried: "My dear Saviour, art thou come to help me in my last extremity?" In the afternoon an intercessory meeting was held for her in the chapel, at the end of which Wesley returned to her. He found her pulse almost gone, and her fingers dead. Her look was calm, and her eyes fixed upward. They prayed and sung a requiem. Within an hour she died without a struggle, or groan, or sigh. They then gathered about her bed and fulfilled her last request, uttered just before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am re-

leased, sing a psalm of praise to God." They sung the psalm, and on Sunday, August 1st, in the presence of an immense multitude, Wesley himself preached the funeral-sermon from Rev. xx. 12, 13, and performed the last rites. "It was," says he, "one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see this side of eternity."

Till November Wesley labored in London and Bristol, but then, Charles Wesley having founded a society at Newcastle, he set out for the North. On arriving at Newcastle, November 13th, he met "the wild, staring, loving society," as he calls them, and began to preach. Great power attended him. On one occasion six or seven dropped down as dead; another time several of the genteel people were constrained to roar because of the disquietness of their hearts. In six weeks there were eight hundred persons joined together in society, besides many others benefited in the neighboring towns and villages. A meeting-house became necessary, and on December 20 the foundation-stone was laid. The building was estimated to cost £700, and Wesley had just twenty-six shillings toward it. But he went on, "nothing doubting, but as it was begun for God's sake, he would provide what was needful for the finishing of it." He preached his farewell sermon December 20th. Men, women, and children hung upon him; and even after he started on his journey "a muckle woman" kept her hold

of him and ran by his horse's side through thick and thin till the town was cleared.

During 1743 he extended his itinerant labors still farther, traveling into Cornwall, and beyond Newcastle into the North of England, enduring many hardships and meeting with many strange adventures. On returning to Newcastle, February 14th, he found that seventy-six had forsaken the society, a large proportion of them because their ministers refused them the sacrament as long as they continued Methodists. Thirty-three others had left because their husbands, wives, parents, masters, or acquaintance objected; five because such bad things were said of the society; nine because they would not be laughed at; and one because she was afraid of falling into fits. Sixty-four more he expelled, among them two for swearing, two for Sabbath-breaking, two for selling liquor, seventeen for drunkenness, three for quarreling, one for beating his wife, three for lying, one for laziness, and twenty-nine for lightness and carelessness.

In Staffordshire, in "the black country," there began about this time to be dreadful riots, the mob breaking the houses and furniture of the Methodists, and beating Wesley himself almost to death. So it was also in Cornwall. Many of these outrages were prompted by the parsons, and the magistrates would give no protection. But God protected them, and their work prospered. Often the

ringleaders of the mob would themselves be converted. At Walsal, in Staffordshire, the rioters seized Wesley, and driving off all his friends, surrounded him. Some one tried to grasp him by the collar and drag him down; a big fellow just behind struck him several times with a club; one man struck him in the breast, and another on the mouth, so that the blood gushed out. He stood and asked, "Are you willing to hear me speak?" They cried, "No, no! Knock out his brains! down with him! kill him at once!" Wesley asked again: "What evil have I done? Which of you have I wronged in word or deed?" Again they cried, "Bring him away! bring him away!" Wesley, upon this, began to pray, and instantly a man who just before had headed the mob turned and said: "Sir, I will spend my life for you; follow me, and no one shall hurt a hair of your head." Two or three others then joined him, one of them a prize-fighter in a beer-garden, and Wesley was saved. He writes: "A little before ten o'clock God brought me safe to Wednesburg, having lost only one flap of my waistcoat and a little skin from one of my hands. From the beginning to the end I found the same presence of mind as if I had been in my own study."

Five days after, Charles Wesley walked through the town and boldly preached from Rev. ii. 10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison,

that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." He says: "It was a most glorious time. Our souls were satisfied as with marrow and fatness."

In Cornwall much hardship was endured. Wesley and John Nelson traveled and slept together. Their bed was the floor. Wesley used Nelson's top coat for his pillow, and Nelson took "Burkitt's Notes" for his. One morning Wesley turned over and, slapping Nelson on the side, jocularly exclaimed, "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer, for the skin is off but one side yet!" It was seldom that any one gave them either meat or drink. One day as Wesley stopped to eat blackberries, he said: "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries, for this is the best country I ever saw for getting an appetite, but the worst for getting food." But Cornwall soon had flourishing societies established, and Methodist itinerants suffered no longer.

In London two more chapels were secured in 1743. The same year the "General Rules" were first adopted and published at Newcastle. The appointment of stewards in the several societies was now also begun, and the organization of the "United Societies" was complete.

Meantime it was found that the Methodists "died well." Elizabeth Davis, after she was speechless,

was desired to hold up her hand if she knew she was going to God, and immediately she held up both. Another said: "I am very ill, but I am very well. O I am happy, happy, happy! My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour. Life or death is all one to me. I have no darkness, no cloud. My body indeed is weak and in pain, but my soul is all joy and praise." John Woolley, a child of thirteen years, threw his arms wide open and said, "Come, come, Lord Jesus, I am thine!" and breathed his last. Among others Heziah Wesley, "full of thoughtfulness, resignation, and love, commended her soul into the hands of Jesus and fell on sleep."

Visiting the sick in person Wesley insisted upon as an imperative Christian duty; sending help was not enough. "One great reason," he says, "why the rich have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. . . . All who desire to escape the everlasting fire, and to inherit the everlasting kingdom, are equally concerned according to his power to practice this important duty."

Family religion and the instruction of children was another most important duty in Wesley's eyes. In a tract he published upon the subject, translated from the French, he asserts that "the wickedness of children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents. The souls of children ought to be fed as often as their bodies;" and Methodists

are urged not to send their sons "to any of the large public schools (for they are nurseries of all manner of wickedness), but to a private school, kept by some pious man who endeavors to instruct a select number of children in religion and learning." Wesley no doubt spoke from his own experience at the Charterhouse school. He also published a sermon on the same subject, as well as an abridgment of a work on "Learning and Knowledge," by Dr. John Norris. The following extract shows his views on an important matter in this connection:

"I cannot, with any patience, reflect that out of so short a time as human life—consisting, it may be, of fifty or sixty years—nineteen or twenty shall be spent in hammering out a little Latin and Greek, and in learning a company of poetical fictions and fantastic stories. . . . How many excellent and useful things might be learned while boys are thumbing and murdering Hesiod and Homer! Of what significance is such stuff as this to the accomplishments of a reasonable soul? What improvement can it be to my understanding to know the amours of Pyramus and Thisbe, or of Hero and Leander? Let any man consider human nature and tell me whether a boy is fit to be trusted with Ovid. And yet to books such as these our youth is dedicated. . . . The measure of prosecuting learning is its usefulness to good life, and conse-

quently all prosecution of it beyond or besides this end is impertinent and immoderate. For my own part I intend to study nothing at all but what serves to the advancement of piety and good life. I have spent about thirteen years in the most celebrated university in the world in pursuing both such learning as the academical standard requires and as my private genius inclined me to; but I intend to spend my uncertain remainder of time in studying only what makes for the moral improvement of my mind and the regulation of my life. More particularly, I shall apply myself to read such books as are rather persuasive than instructive; such as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the divine sense in the soul; being convinced by every day's experience that I have more need of heat than light; though were I for more light, still I think the love of God is the best light of the soul of man."

All may not agree with him, but Wesley was a wise man. In matters in which he had such personal experience his words deserve very serious attention. Let it be remembered that he was no fanatic, he was the embodiment of common sense—only it was all religious sense.

Instances of his practical common sense are found in his dealing with some honest but misguided people who mingled dross with their gold. One convert, a few days after his conversion, came

riding through Newcastle, hallooing and shouting and driving all the people before him, telling them that God had revealed to him that he should be a king, and should tread all his enemies under his feet. Wesley arrested him and sent him home, advising him to cry day and night to God, lest the devil should gain an advantage over him. On another occasion two, who called themselves prophets, came to Wesley in London, stating that they were sent from God to say he would shortly be "born'd again," and that unless he turned them out they would stay in the house till it was done. He gravely answered that he would not turn them out, and took them down into the room of the society. Here he left them. "It was tolerably cold, and they had neither meat nor drink. However, there they sat from morning to evening, when they quietly went away, and I have heard nothing from them since."

CHAPTER IV.

First Conferences — Ireland — Arrested — John Nelson — Helping the Poor — Education — Personal Appearance — Sanctification — Apostolical Succession — "Harmless Diversions" — Happy Experiences — Methodist Soldiers — Converted Children.

WESLEY'S first Conference was held Monday, June 5, 1744, at the Foundry in London, and continued five days. Besides the two Wesleys, four clergymen—John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton—were present; and four lay preachers—Thomas Richards, Thomas Maxfield, John Bennett, and John Downes. The day before the Conference met, besides the usual Sunday service at the Foundry, a love-feast was held and the sacrament administered to the whole of the London society, numbering between two thousand and three thousand souls. The next day the Conference proceeded to business. It was stated that the Methodists were divided into four sections: (1) The United Societies, consisting of all awakened persons who would join; (2) the bands, or those who were thought to have remission of sins; (3) the select societies, composed of those who seemed to walk in the light of God's countenance; and (4) the penitents, or persons who for

the present were fallen from grace. Regulations were adopted in regard to three points: (1) What to teach; (2) how to teach; (3) how to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice. The rules for the preachers were substantially the same as now exist. In addition, they were "as often as possible to rise at four o'clock; to spend two or three minutes every hour in earnest prayer; to observe strictly the morning and evening hour of retirement; to rarely employ above an hour in conversation; to keep watch-nights once a month; to speak freely to each other, and never to part without prayer."

From this time Conferences were held annually. The next year they met in Bristol, as also the next two years following. At the Conference of 1745 fourteen itinerants were reported to be then at work in England and Wales. In 1747 there were twenty-two, besides thirty-two local preachers and all the Calvinistic Methodists.

They now crossed over into Ireland. In 1745 an English soldier had formed a small society in Dublin and preached to them. Soon after, Benjamin La Trobe, a Baptist student from Glasgow, arrived and became their leader; and in 1746 John Cennick came over on invitation of the society and preached with such success that the society soon increased to about two hundred members. Then Thomas Williams, one of Wesley's itinerants,

came, formed another society, and wrote for Wesley. Wesley determined to go without delay, and arrived in Dublin August 9, 1747. He preached the same day, and continued laboring for a fortnight, when he returned to London, being succeeded by his brother Charles. This was the first of forty-nine times that he crossed the Irish Channel in his labor of love. The results were great. The societies increased rapidly in the island; some of Wesley's most eminent colaborers, such as Thomas Walsh, Adam Clarke, Henry Moore, and others, were gained here; and it was by the hand of his Irish converts that Methodism was afterward planted in America, and either planted or nourished in the West Indies, in Africa, India, and Australia.

Everywhere persecution was rife. At Oxford, after Wesley had preached a sermon in which he had dealt faithfully with the members of the university, he was no longer allowed to preach there, though his office as fellow required it. Attacks through the press increased both in number and violence. Gibson, Bishop of London, issued a pamphlet charging the Methodists with setting the Government at defiance and breaking the rules of the Church of which they were members, besides doing a disservice to religion by their doctrines and practices, among which he specifies "their setting the standard of religion so high." The Bishop of Lichfield published "A Charge Against Enthu-

siasm," in which he declared them "vain and enthusiastical," etc. Several others of less note but of greater virulence published tracts lampooning and abusing them as "a set of creatures of the lowest rank, most of them illiterate and of desperate fortunes; cursing, reviling, and showing their teeth at every one that does not approve of their frenzy and extravagance;" "crafty and malicious;" "hot-brained cobblers," etc.

A malicious accusation that threatened serious consequences was that they were rebels to the king and Jesuits in disguise. England was then in a ferment of excitement under apprehension of public danger. On February 15, 1744, the king had received information that the French, under the Pretender, and in support of the Catholic cause, were about to invade England. Great preparations were made. Troops were raised, and every thing put into a posture of defense. The coast was watched with the utmost care, and all reputed papists were forbidden to remain within ten miles of London and Westminster. The Methodists were said to be Catholics because they insisted so strongly on the necessity of good works. A magistrate came to the house where Wesley lodged in search of papists. Wesley satisfied him for the time, and he went away. But in a short time after, Wesley received a summons to appear before the court. He did so, but upon his taking the oaths of fealty

to the king and signing the declaration against popery, he was permitted to go in peace. Still it was currently reported that he had been seen with the Pretender in France. Charles Wesley, too, happened to pray that "the Lord would call home his banished;" and this was construed as a prayer for the Pretender, and he was summoned to appear before the court to answer the charge of having uttered "treasonable words." He appeared on the day fixed, and engaged to prove that the Methodists "to a man were true members of the Church of England and loyal subjects," and then desired them to administer to him the oaths. All the witnesses retracted their accusations, but he was kept eight hours enduring insults at the magistrates' door until they told him he might go, for they had naught against him. "Sir," said Charles, "that is not sufficient; I cannot depart till my character is cleared." At length their worships reluctantly acknowledged that his "loyalty was unquestioned," and he took his leave for Bristol, where the Methodists met him on a hill, and joined him in "singing praises lustily and with a good courage."

Yet at Brecon, in August, the grand jury made a presentment to the judge that "the Methodists held illegal meetings," and that they "collected together great numbers of disorderly persons, very much endangering the peace of our sovereign lord the king," and requesting the judge, if the author-

ity of the present court was not sufficient, to apply to some superior authority to put an end to the "villainous scheme" of "such dangerous assemblies." Meantime the violence of the mob was invoked to do what the law refused. "In Cornwall," says Wesley, "the war against the Methodists was carried on with far more vigor than that against the Spaniards." Thomas Westall was pulled down while preaching and committed to the house of correction as a vagrant, where he was kept till the next quarter sessions. At St. Ives they saluted Wesley with stones and dirt, and pulled down the meeting-house "for joy that Admiral Matthews had beat the Spaniards." A poor woman complained to the mayor that some one had thrown a huge stone into her house and come within a few inches of killing her sucking child. His worship damned her, and said she might go about her business. At Exeter a mob gathered at the door of the meeting-house and pelted those who entered with potatoes, mud, and sticks. On coming out all were beaten without exception, many trampled under foot, and some of the women lamed, and others stripped and then rolled into the kennel, their faces being smeared with lamp-black, flour, and dirt. Threats, too, were frequently made of impressing into the army all who attended their meetings; and a number of Wesley's itinerants actually were impressed, John Nelson among them.

Sometimes, however, the Methodists came off victors. At Nottingham, before he had been impressed, Nelson was assailed by a mob who surrounded the meeting-house and threatened to pull it down. The constable arrested John for creating the riot and took him to an alderman, the crowd following with huzzas and curses. The alderman asked his name, and said: "I wonder you cannot stay at home; you see the mob won't suffer you to preach at Nottingham." John replied that he had not been aware that Nottingham was governed by a mob, most towns being governed by their magistrates, and immediately began to preach and "set life and death before him." "Do n't preach here," said the alderman; while the constable began to be uneasy, and asked how he was to dispose of his prisoner. "Take him to your house," said the alderman. The constable asked to be excused; and at length was directed to "conduct him back to the place from which he had brought him, and to be careful he was not injured." "So," says honest John, "he brought me to our brethren again, and left us to give thanks to God for all his mercies." On another occasion at Norwich, while the mob were shouting, swearing, and throwing stones at the front of Isaac Barnes's house because he was a Methodist, his sister quietly heated the poker, and then letting it cool till it had lost its redness, she rushed into the street and pretended to strike the

assembled ruffians. One seized the poker, but instantly let it go. Others in quick succession did the same; and in a little while most of the valorous crowd were in burning agony, and, surprised and scattered, they beat a hasty retreat.

However, Methodism still made its way. Wesley and his itinerants continued incessantly to preach and labor throughout the kingdom. Wesley was always on the wing, and yet he found time to read and write and visit, besides organizing and pushing forward all sorts of important enterprises. In London in 1746, observing the frequent need by the poor—who came to him for food and clothing—of physic and medical attendance also, he "thought of a kind of desperate expedient: 'I will prepare and give them physic myself.'" He had made the study of medicine his diversion for many years; he now applied himself to it anew, and took to his assistance an apothecary and an experienced surgeon. "In five months medicines were given to above five hundred persons." Thus was founded the first free dispensary in England, though not without considerable opposition from physicians and others.

He was also anxious that his preachers should study. Devoutly thankful as he was for his uneducated but soul-saving itinerants, he saw that if intellectually and socially inferior to their neighbors, while they might be successful in the conver-

sion of ignorant and rude sinners, they would be in danger of being neglected if not despised by those who were superior. Accordingly he addressed Dr. Philip Doddridge, then at the head of a school in England, asking his advice as to what books to recommend. Doddridge replied, naming various works on logic, metaphysics, ethics, Jewish antiquities, history, science, and divinity, from which he probably furnished a list to his preachers.

He also had his "orphan-house" at Newcastle, at once a place of worship, a school and home for orphans, Wesley's northern home, and the "theological institution" for his preachers. On his visit in 1747 there were several young men there preparing for the itinerancy, with whom Wesley, during his stay, "read over a compendium of rhetoric and a system of ethics."

He had also, in connection with the Foundry in London, a "poor-house," consisting of two small houses, where needy and deserving widows were maintained. In 1748 Wesley writes: "In this we have now nine widows, one blind woman, two poor children, and two upper servants—a maid and a man. I might add four or five preachers; for I myself, as well as the other preachers who are in town, diet with the poor, on the same food and at the same table; and we rejoice herein as a comfortable earnest of our eating bread together in

our Father's kingdom." Then there was a lending society. Observing that people often needed small sums of money which they did not know where to borrow, Wesley went from one end of London to another begging; and in this way, and by a public collection afterward, he at length raised a fund of one hundred and twenty pounds. This was lodged in the hands of stewards, who attended every Tuesday morning for the purpose of lending to those who wanted any small amount, not exceeding five pounds, to be repaid within three months. Hundreds of the honest poor were greatly assisted by this device.

He also issued many valuable publications from 1744 to 1747. Among them was a tract on "Revivals of Religion," extracted from the writings of Jonathan Edwards, and designed to meet the objections made to his work by the arguments of another. The following is a synopsis: "It is no sign that a work is not divine because it is carried on in a way unusual and extraordinary. The Spirit is sovereign in his operations. Neither is a work to be judged by any effects on the bodies of men, such as tears, tremblings, groans, etc.; for there is reason to believe that great outpourings of the Spirit, both in the prophetic and apostolic ages, were not wholly without these extraordinary effects. Further, though many of the converts may be guilty of great imprudences and irregular-

ities, neither is this a sign that the work is not the work of God; for in a mixed multitude of wise and unwise, young and old, all under powerful impressions, no wonder that some should behave themselves imprudently. It was thus in the apostolic Churches, and this is not unlikely to continue while weakness is one of the elements of human nature. There may be errors in judgment and some delusions of Satan intermixed with the revival, but that is not conclusive evidence that the work in general is not the work of the Holy Ghost. Some may fall into scandalous practices; but if we look into Church history we shall find no instance of a great revival of religion but what has been attended with such relapses. The work may have been promoted by ministers strongly preaching the terrors of the law; but what of that? If there be really a hell of dreadful and never-ending torments, ought not those exposed to it be earnestly warned of their fearful danger? It may be unreasonable to think of frightening a man to heaven, but it is not unreasonable to frighten him away from hell."

He also published "A Word to a Drunkard" and "A Word to an Unhappy Woman," besides other needful tracts. Among other things he animadverts on "harmless diversions," and records notable testimony as to their harmful influence. Charles Wesley was preaching against them at Lane-east,

in Cornwall, in a church of which the venerable Mr. Bennett was the clergyman, two other clergymen—Messrs. Meriton and Thompson—being also among his auditors. "By harmless diversions," exclaimed Charles, "I was kept asleep in the devil's arms secure in a state of damnation for eighteen years!" No sooner had he said this than Meriton added aloud, "And I for twenty-five." "And I," cried Thompson, "for thirty-five." "And I," said the aged Bennett, "for above seventy."

A most important change in Wesley's views now took place. As late as 1745, in a letter to Westley Hall, he had expressed in the strongest manner that there was "a threefold order of ministers not only authorized by its apostolical institution, but also by the written word," and that it would be wrong to administer baptism or the Lord's Supper without "a commission so to do from those bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the apostles." In short, he was still as high a Churchman as he well could be. But January 20, 1746, on the road to Bristol, he read Lord King's great work on the "Constitution of the Primitive Church," etc., in which the learned author shows that bishops and presbyters are the same order. He was convinced, and writes: "In spite of the vehement prejudices of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught." His views were modified, and though some lingering

traces of High-churchism perhaps clung to him for many years, he was no longer a bigot.

Wesley was now past forty years of age. His personal appearance is thus described by the celebrated Dr. Kennscott, who heard him preach his last sermon at Oxford in 1744: "He is neither tall nor fat, for the latter would ill become a Methodist. His black hair, quite smooth and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was soft, short, and conformable to the rules of the university. His text was Acts iv. 31. He spoke it very slowly, and with an agreeable emphasis. When he came to what he called his plain, practical conclusion, he fired his address with so much zeal and unbounded satire as quite spoiled what otherwise might have been turned to great advantage. . . . Had these things been omitted, and his censures moderated, I think his discourse as to style and delivery would have been uncommonly pleasing. He is allowed to be a man of great parts, and that by the excellent dean of Christchurch (Dr. Conybeare); for the day he preached the dean generously said of him: 'John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast.' In reference to the latter charge, made also by another, Wesley answered: 'I make the word of God the rule of all my actions, and no more follow any secret impulses in-

stead of it than I follow Mohammed or Confucius. I rest not on ecstasies at all, for I never feel them, but judge of my spiritual estate by the improvement of my heart and the tenor of my life conjointly. I desire neither my dreams nor my waking thoughts to be at all regarded, unless just so far as they agree with the oracles of God.'"

Happy in his work, notwithstanding all its hardships and all its dangers, and happy in the love of God that burned brightly in his soul, the opinions of men of the world were of little moment to him. His constant cheerfulness under all his trials was proverbial. He writes to his friend Blackwell, while on a journey: "I am content with whatever entertainment I meet with, and my companions are always in good humor, 'because they are with me.' This must be the spirit of all who take journeys with me. If a dinner ill dressed, a hard bed, a poor room, a shower of rain, or a dirty road, will put them out of humor, it lays a burden upon me greater than all the rest put together. By the grace of God, I never fret; I repine at nothing; I am discontented with nothing. And to have persons at my ear fretting and murmuring at every thing, is like tearing the flesh off my bones."

But his spirit was often sweetly refreshed. Monday, Dec. 23, 1744, he writes in his journal: "In the evening, while I was reading prayers at Snowsfields, I found such light and strength as I never

remember to have had before. . . . Tuesday, 25th, I waked, by the grace of God, in the same spirit; and about eight, being with two or three that believed in Jesus, I felt such an awe and tender sense of the presence of God as greatly confirmed me therein. So that God was before me all the day long. I sought and found him in every place, and could truly say, when I lay down at night, 'Now I have *lived* a day.'" At Newcastle, July, 1748: "Sunday, 17.—We had a glorious hour in the morning. At half an hour past eight I preached in the Castle-garth, and again at four in the afternoon to a vast multitude of people. Monday, 18.—In the afternoon we rode to Widdington. The people flocked in from all parts. It was a delightful evening, and a delightful place under the shade of tall trees, and every man hung upon the word; none stirred his head or hand, or looked to the right or left, while I declared in strong terms the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Thursday, 21.—At seven I preached (at Berwick) to a far larger congregation than before; and now the word of God was as a fire and a hammer. I began again and again after I had thought I had done, and the latter words were still stronger than the former; so that I was not surprised at the number which attended next morning, when we had another joyful, solemn hour. Sunday, 24.—I preached at five (at Newcastle again), at half-past eight in the Castle-

garth, and at four in the afternoon. I was weary and faint when I began to speak, but my strength was quickly renewed. Thence we went to the society. I had designed to read the Rules, but I could not get forward. As we began so we went on till eight o'clock, singing and rejoicing and praising God. Thursday, 28.—We rode over to Nint-head, where I preached at eight. We then went to Alstone. At noon I preached at the cross. In the evening I preached at Hindley-hill again, and we praised God with joyful lips. Tuesday, August 2.—I preached about noon at Biddick, and at Pelton in the evening. I intended to give an exhortation to the society, but as soon as we met the spirit of supplication fell upon us, so that I could hardly do any thing but pray and give thanks, till it was time for us to part."

Such extracts might be multiplied. They continually recur throughout his journal, and show that "the joy of the Lord was his strength." The happy experiences, too, of his converts were cause for rejoicing. One of these was a poor old woman in Glasgow. Meeting on the street one day the minister of the kirk she had been accustomed to attend, he accosted her: "O Janet, where have ye been, woman? I have na seen ye at the kirk for long." "I go," said Janet, "among the Methodists." "Among the Methodists!" said the minister; "why, what gude get ye there, woman?" "Glory

to God!" replied Janet. "I do get gude, for God for Christ's sake has forgiven me au my sins!" "Ah, Janet," said the minister, "be not high-minded, but fear; the devil is a cunning adversary." "I dunna care a button for the deevil," answered Janet; "I've gotten him under my feet. I ken the deevil can do muckle deal, but there is ane thing he canna do." "What is that, Janet?" "He canna shed abroad the love of God in my heart; and I'm sure I've got it there!" "Weel, weel," replied the good man, "if ye have got it there, Janet, hold it fast, and never let it go."

Thomas Beard, "a quiet and peaceable man, who had lately been torn from his trade and wife and children, and sent away as a soldier for no other crime, real or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance, sunk after awhile under his burden; but his soul was in nothing terrified by his adversaries. His fervor increasing, he was lodged in the hospital at Newcastle, where he still praised God continually. He was let blood, but his arm festered, mortified, and was cut off; two or three days after, God signed his discharge and called him up to his eternal home." John Evans, another soldier, became deeply convicted and sought forgiveness with tears. "But October 23d, as William Clements was at prayer," he writes, "I felt on a sudden a great alteration in my soul. My eyes overflowed with tears of love. I knew I was

through Christ reconciled to God, which inflamed my soul with fervent love to him whom I now saw to be my complete Redeemer." Wesley adds: "He continued both to preach and live the gospel till the battle of Fontenoy. One of his companions saw him there laid across a cannon (both of his legs having been taken off by a chain-shot) praising God and exhorting all that were round about him; which he did till his spirit returned to God."

God's grace was sufficient to keep his servants steadfast even in the army, while it also made them famous for their courage in the field. England had no braver soldiers than the Methodists, and Methodism had no truer disciples than those in the ranks of war. The following extracts from two soldiers, writing to Wesley from the field of battle, illustrates what spirit they were of: "On the 29th we marched close to the enemy, and when I saw them in their camp my bowels moved toward them in love and pity for their souls. We lay on our arms all night. In the morning, April 30th, the cannon began to play at half an hour after four, and the Lord took away all fear from me, so that I went into the field with joy. The balls flew on either hand, and men fell in abundance, but nothing touched me till about two o'clock; then I received a ball through my left arm, and rejoiced so much the more. Soon after, I received another into my right, which obliged me to quit the field; but I

scarce knew whether I was on earth or in heaven. It was one of the sweetest days I ever enjoyed."

And again from the other: "April 30.—The Lord was pleased to try our little flock, and to show them his mighty power. Some days before, one of them, standing at his tent-door, broke out into raptures of joy. In the battle before he died he openly declared: 'I am going to rest from my labors in the bosom of Jesus.' I believe nothing like this was ever heard of before in the midst of so wicked an army as ours. Some were crying out in their wounds, 'I am going to my Beloved;' others, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.' There was such boldness in the battle among the little despised flock that it made the officers as well as the common soldiers amazed; and they acknowledge it to this day. The hotter it grew the more strength was given me. I was full of joy and love, as much as I could well bear. Going on, I met one of the brethren with a little dish in his hand seeking for water. He smiled, and said he had 'got a sore wound in his leg.' I asked, 'Have you gotten Christ in your heart?' He answered: 'I have, and I have had him all the day. Blessed be God that I ever saw your face!'"

The glorious work reached the hearts of children also. Some very remarkable cases are recorded by Wesley. A few of these we give, to show that the conversion of children, even in their earliest years,

has been characteristic of Methodism from the beginning. September, 1744, he writes in his journal: "Sunday, 16.—I buried near the same place one who had finished her course, going to God in the full assurance of faith, when she was little more than four years old. In her last sickness (having been deeply serious in her behavior for several months before) she spent all the intervals of her convulsions in speaking of or to God; and when she perceived her strength to be nearly exhausted she desired all the family to come near, and prayed for them all, one by one; then for her ministers, for the Church, and for all the world. A short time after, recovering from a fit, she lifted up her eyes and said, 'Thy kingdom come,' and died." And in March, 1745: "Tuesday, 18, I rode to Pontefract; on Wednesday to Epworth, and on Thursday, by Barley-hall, to Sheffield. I was glad of having an opportunity here of talking with a child I had heard of about eight years of age. She was convinced of sin some weeks before by the words of her elder brother, dying in the full triumph of faith. I asked her abruptly, 'Do you love God?' She said, 'Yes, I do love him with all my heart.' I said, 'Why do you love him?' She answered, 'Because he saved me.' I asked, 'How has he saved you?' She replied, 'He has taken away my sins.' I said, 'How do you know that?' She answered: 'He told me himself on Saturday, "Thy

sins are forgiven thee," and I believe him; and I pray to him without a book. I was afraid to die, but now I am not afraid to die; for if I die I shall go to him.'"

June, 1746, he writes again: "Saturday, 28.—I inquired more particularly of Mrs. N. concerning her little son. She said 'he appeared to have a continual fear of God, and an awful sense of his presence; that he frequently went to prayers by himself, and prayed for his father and many others by name; that he had an exceeding great tenderness of conscience, being sensible of the least sin, and crying and refusing to be comforted when he thought he had in any thing displeased God; that a few days since he broke out into prayer aloud, and then said: "Mamma, I shall go to heaven soon, and be with the little angels; and you will go there too, and my papa, but you will not go so soon;" and that the day before he went to a little girl in the house and said: "Polly, you and I must go to prayers. Do not mind your doll; kneel down now, I must go to prayers; God bids me.'" Wesley adds: "When the Holy Ghost teaches, is there any delay in learning? This child was then just three years old. A year or two after, he died in peace."

CHAPTER V.

Toils and Dangers—Grimshaw—Charles Wesley's Marriage—True Religion—Grace Murray—The Earthquake—Taming the Shrews—Preachers.

IN 1748, after visiting Bristol, Leeds, and other places, Wesley set out for Ireland. Three weeks, however, elapsed before the weather allowed him to set sail. The interval he spent in preaching in churches and chapels, in inns and in the open air. He reached Dublin at length on March 8th, and next morning preached at five o'clock. From Dublin he went on a tour through the country, preaching, visiting, and meeting the classes till the end of May, when he returned to England. On the 2d of June he held his Annual Conference in London. A few days after he went to Bristol, and opened Kingswood school. Three days after, he set out for the North of England, preaching on the way at all the towns and villages through which he passed, until he reached Newcastle July 9th. Here he spent more than five weeks on Newcastle Circuit, constantly laboring, till on the 16th of August he started southward again. On the way he continued to preach and visit the societies as usual, and met with many adventures. At Halifax he attempted to preach to an "immense number of people roaring

like the waves of the sea." A man threw money among the crowd, creating great disturbance. Wesley was besmeared with dirt, and had his cheek laid open by a stone. Finding it impossible to make himself heard, he adjourned to a meadow near by, and spent an hour with those that followed him "in rejoicing and praising God." At Haworth he met with Grimshaw, the incumbent of the parish —a Methodist, and of the noblest kind. "In the surrounding hamlets he was accustomed to preach from twelve to thirty sermons weekly. Of strong mental power, and educated at Cambridge, he yet accommodated himself to his rustic hearers. His power in prayer was marvelous. Often he would sleep in his own hay-loft simply to find room in the parsonage for strangers. Upon the bleak mountains—often in rain and snow, with no regular meals, and sometimes with but a crust—he unweariedly pursued his itinerant labors with a cheerful and grateful spirit. His dress was plain, and sometimes shabby. Often he had but one coat and one pair of shoes, because of his benevolence. His congregations were rude and rough, but hundreds of them were converted through his preaching. He died April 7, 1763, saying: 'I am as happy as I can be on earth, and as sure of heaven as if I was in it.' On his coffin was inscribed the words, 'For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.'"

From Haworth Wesley, in company with Grim-

shaw and Colbeck, went to Roughlee. Here the mob, with the connivance of the magistrate, assaulted them. Wesley was struck in the face, beaten to the ground, and forced into a house. Grimshaw and Colbeck were used with the utmost violence, and covered with sludge. One person was dragged by the hair, some were beaten with clubs, others trampled in the mire. All this outrage was incited by the Rev. Geo. White, a popish renegade, but now the curate of Colne. At Bolton the mob thrust him down once or twice, but he continued to preach. Stones were thrown and attempts made to silence him. One man began to bawl in his ear, when a missile struck him on his cheek, and he stopped. Another was forcing his way through the crowd to him when a stone hit him in the forehead and covered his face with blood. A third reached forth to seize him, when a sharp flint struck him on the knuckles and made him quiet. So preaching, Wesley got back to London September 4. Here he spent a week, then went to Cornwall; thence to Bristol, and back to London again October 15, where he continued to labor till the close of the year.

At the Conference of this year the preachers were directed to visit the poor members as much as the rich; in general, not to pray in public more than eight or ten minutes at a time; and to avoid popularity—*i. e.*, "the gaining a greater degree of esteem

or love from the people than is for the glory of God." There was another matter of great interest and importance. Five years before, in his "Thoughts on Marriage and Celibacy," Wesley had strongly commended a single life. Charles Wesley was now courting Miss Sarah Gwynne, a lady every way suited to him; but his brother's tract stood in the way. The Conference took the subject up, and, says Wesley, "in a full and friendly debate, convinced me that a believer might marry without suffering loss in his soul." Accordingly, on April 8 of the following year, Charles was married by his brother, who writes: "It was a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage." Charles himself says: "We were cheerful without mirth, serious without sadness; and my brother seemed the happiest person among us."

In the latter part of the year Wesley began to publish "all that is most valuable in the English tongue in three-score or four-score volumes, in order to provide a complete library for those who fear God." This involved immense additional labor through seven years, in which time he completed it, under the title "A Christian Library." In the same period, notwithstanding a long and serious illness, and besides his usual labors, he prepared and published certain books of instruction for Kingswood school, his "Notes on the New Testament," and numerous controversial and other tracts, among them one on

"Directions Concerning Pronunciation and Gesture." He also spent a month in lecturing to his preachers gathered at Kingswood. No one was more removed from fanaticism than he; but neither did he believe in the sufficiency of human learning and reason. "Human learning," said he, "is by no means to be rejected from religion; but if it is considered as a key, or the key to the mysteries of our redemption, instead of opening to us the kingdom of God, it locks us up in our own darkness. God is an all-speaking, all-working, all-illuminating essence, possessing the depths of every creature according to its own nature; and when we turn from all impediments the divine essence becomes as certainly the true light of our minds here as it will be hereafter. This is not enthusiasm, but the words of truth and soberness." This opinion was confirmed by experience. Thus at Limerick he writes: "The more I converse with this people the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work among them is manifest; and yet the main part of them—believers and unbelievers—are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion. It is plain God begins his work at the heart; then 'the inspiration of the highest giveth understanding.'" Fourteen years afterward, in defending his employment of unlearned lay preachers, he says: "What I believe concerning learning is this—that it is highly expedient for a guide of

souls, but not necessary. What I believe to be absolutely necessary is a faith unfeigned, the love of God and our neighbor, a burning zeal for the advancement of Christ's kingdom, with a heart and life wholly devoted to God. These I judge to be necessary in the highest degree; and next to these a competent knowledge of the Scriptures, a sound understanding, a tolerable utterance, and a willingness to be as the filth and offscouring of the world." He further advises no one above twenty years of age to think of learning Greek or Latin, on the ground that he could then employ his time abundantly better. French he considered "the poorest, meanest language in Europe—no more comparable to the German or Spanish than a bagpipe is to an organ."

In Ireland he met with much success, though he had great opposition. All sorts of slanders were circulated against him. At Bandon it was asserted that Methodism was all Jesuitism at bottom; at Blarney that the Methodists placed all religion "in wearing long whiskers." At Cork, by the secret plottings of the clergy, a mob was raised that committed the most horrible outrages against the Methodists for months together, unchecked by the mayor. Women as well as men were beaten and wounded nearly to death, their houses broken and their goods destroyed. Depositions were laid before the grand jury of the Cork assizes respecting the

leaders of the mob; they were all thrown out, but the grand jury made a presentment, to wit: "That Charles Wesley and seven other Methodist preachers therein named were all persons of ill-fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of his majesty's peace, and ought to be transported." Next spring several of these preachers presented themselves for trial. They were ordered into the dock of common criminals. Butler, a mean fellow, the leader of the rabble, was the first witness against them. The judge, looking at him with a suspicious eye, asked what his calling was. The worthless fellow hung his head, and sheepishly replied: "I sing ballads, my lord." The judge lifted up his hands in surprise, and said: "Here are six gentlemen indicted as vagabonds, and the first accuser is a vagabond by profession." A second witness impudently answered: "I am an anti-swaddler, my lord." The judge resented his insolence, and ordered him out of the room. Then turning to the jury he reprimanded the corporation and others for suffering such a vagrant as Butler to be the ringleader of a rabble, and commit such atrocious outrages upon so many of the peaceable and respectable inhabitants of the city; and declared it was an insult to the court to bring such a case before him.

An event that caused Wesley deep pain now occurred. Grace Murray, a young and talented widow of mean extraction, but a zealous, energetic,

and successful female itinerant, was chosen by him to be his wife, and they became formally engaged. She seems, however, to have chiefly consulted her ambition in thus acceding to Wesley's proposal, while her heart was really given to John Bennett, one of Wesley's most able and best educated preachers. This was, however, unknown to Wesley until she wrote him asking his consent to her marriage to Bennett. Wesley was "utterly amazed," but wrote a mild answer, "supposing they were already married;" but she hesitated, came back to Wesley, again returned to Bennett, and so coquetted between the two, though without the knowledge of either, for six months, until Charles, who strongly opposed the marriage on the ground that she was unsuitable for his brother, on his return from a visit to the latter, met her, took her behind him to Newcastle, where Bennett was, and in a week married them. The whole matter was one of the severest trials of Wesley's life.

In February, 1750, an earthquake occurred that filled London with alarm. Exactly a month afterward a second shock, longer and more violent, was felt; and ten days later another. People became frantic with fear. Meantime a crazy soldier prophesied that on the 4th of April there would be another earthquake that would destroy half of London. When the night arrived, people left their houses and crowded into the parks and other open places.

The churches were packed, especially the chapels of the Methodists. In Hyde Park, at midnight, amid dense darkness, and surrounded by terror-stricken multitudes, Whitefield preached on the coming judgment of the last day, the wreck of nature, and the sealing of man's eternal destinies. Wesley remained in London for three weeks after the first shock, and held "a solemn fast day" and two watch-night meetings, besides other services. He then set out for Bristol, and was succeeded by his brother Charles, who preached at least four times respecting the fearful events then agitating the public mind. He also issued a pamphlet entitled "Hymns Occasioned by the Earthquake," containing nineteen hymns, and breathing a happy, hopeful spirit. In the midst of the commotion the cruelly treated and broken-hearted Mehetabel Wesley died, and was buried by Charles, who preached from the text, "Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended."

On the 19th of March Wesley set out for Ireland. On the way he overtook John Lane, a preacher in the third year of his itinerancy, who had set out from Bristol with three shillings in his pocket. Six nights out of seven he had been entertained by strangers, and on his arrival had just a penny left. Five months afterward this brave itinerant died,

his last words being, "I have found the love of God in Christ Jesus." "All his clothes," writes a friend who was with him at the time, "linen and woolen, his stockings, hat, and wig, are not thought sufficient to pay his funeral expenses, which amount to £1 17s. 3d. All the money he had was one shilling and four pence." "Enough," adds Wesley, "for any unmarried preacher of the gospel to leave to his executors."

In Ireland several incidents occurred worthy of record. One day he rode, with but an hour or two's intermission, from five in the morning till nearly eleven at night—about ninety miles—when he came to Aymo, where he wished to sleep; but the woman who kept the inn refused him admittance, and let loose four dogs to worry him. At Portarlington he had the task of reconciling two termagant women, who talked for three hours, and grew warmer and warmer till they were almost distracted. Wesley says: "I perceived there was no remedy but prayer, so a few of us wrestled with God for above two hours." Then at last anger gave place to love, and the quarrelsome ladies fell upon each other's neck.

At Tullamore he rebuked the society for their lukewarmness and covetousness, and had the pleasure of seeing them evince signs of penitence. At Anghrim he preached "to a well-meaning, sleepy people," and "strove to shake some of them out of

sleep by preaching as sharply as he could." At Limerick he told "the society freely and plainly of their faults." His preachers, too, gave him trouble. He writes to Edward and Charles Perronet: "I have abundance of complaint to make as well as to hear. I have scarce any one on whom I can depend when I am a hundred miles off. 'T is well if I do not run away soon, and leave them to cut and shuffle for themselves. Here [in Ireland] is a glorious people; but O where are the shepherds? The society at Cork have fairly sent me word that they will take care of themselves, and erect themselves into a dissenting congregation. I am weary of these sons of Zeruiah; they are too hard for me."

CHAPTER VI.

Controversies—Wesley's Marriage—"Sifting" the Preachers—Calvinism—Scotland—Very Ill—An Invalid's Rest.

THE period immediately succeeding 1750 was one fraught with great anxiety to Wesley. Grave errors appeared among the London Moravians—both of doctrine and practice—and began to infest the Methodists also; and he found it necessary to attack them. Much ill feeling was engendered, and the controversy continued through years following. Another extremely bitter controversy was between the Wesleys and Whitefield on one side, and the Bishop of Lavington on the other. The latter had attacked the Methodists first in 1749 in a scurrilous publication, entitled "Enthusiasm of the Papists and Methodists Compared." Wesley replied severely. The bishop rejoined in a second part of the same pamphlet. Wesley answered still more severely; and so it continued till Lavington was forced to be silent.

A greater source of trouble was his marriage to Mrs. Vazeille, February, 1751. Having come to the conclusion that "in my present circumstances I might be more useful in a married state," he speedily consummated his design. Unfortunately, he could scarcely have hit upon a more unsuitable

woman. Of a bitter and angry spirit—indeed, almost if not quite insane—she became the torment of his life. A number of times she left him, and again returned. She defamed him in private, and seized his letters and put them in the hands of those she knew were his enemies, interpolating so as to make them bear a bad construction. In one or two instances she published them. At times she was outrageously violent toward him, and there was always little else in their intercourse than constant connubial storms.

Wesley was almost worn away. February, 1756, he writes: "Your last letter was seasonable indeed. The being continually watched over for evil; the having every word I spoke, every action I did—small and great—watched with no friendly eye; the hearing a thousand little tart, unkind reflections in return for the kindest words I could devise,

> 'Like drops of eating water on the marble,
> At length have worn my sinking spirits down.'

Yet I could not say 'Take thy plague away from me,' but only 'Let me be purified, not consumed.'" Wesley patiently endeavored to win her to a better mind, but all was in vain. His domestic wretchedness was protracted through thirty years, until she died October 8, 1781.

It is no mean proof of the greatness of Wesley's character that during all the years of this ministry his public career never wavered nor appeared to

lose one jot of its amazing energy. It was well that it was so, for difficulties thickened on every side. One source of trouble and uneasiness was the conduct of many of his preachers. One James Wheatley had to be expelled for gross immorality. Some were accused of railing, others of idleness, and he greatly feared there was a wide-spread decline of zeal and labors among them. He determined upon a sifting, and for this purpose sent Charles to Leeds to hold a Conference, directing him to prefer grace before gifts, and to deal not only with disorderly walkers, but also with triflers, the effeminate, and busybodies. Six preachers resigned their work that year, six the next year, and twelve more in the four years thereafter out of sixty-eight in all employed. Wesley wrote: "It is far better for us to have ten or six preachers who are alive to God, sound in the faith, and of one heart with us and with one another, than fifty of whom we have no assurance."

The Calvinian controversy which now began to rise added one more source of trouble. In 1751 three of the preachers at the first Irish Conference avowed Calvinistic opinions. Others, it was rumored—and among them Charles Wesley—were infected also with the same views. Under such circumstances Wesley, in 1752, issued his "Predestination Calmly Considered," a pamphlet of eighty-three pages, written in a most loving spirit, but

showing conclusively that the Calvinistic doctrine of election necessarily involved the corresponding and abhorrent doctrine of reprobation—plainly opposed to the Scriptures and dishonoring to God. His pamphlet utterly demolished the Calvinian theory, and to it no Methodist ventured a reply; but a Dr. Gill, a learned Baptist, attempted it twice, but he was no match for Wesley at the best, and his answer was not even worthy of himself. A most bitter and painful controversy, however, ensued, lasting for many years, and dividing the friends of Christ.

Through all Wesley continued to travel and preach through three kingdoms. In 1751 for the first time he visited Scotland, and succeeded in planting Methodism there, though it has never flourished there as in England. Returning, he pursued his itinerant labors through England and Ireland during the rest of that year and all of the following year. In 1751 he held the first Irish Conference at Limerick. A general decay of the societies in Ireland was reported, occasioned partly by the teaching of Antinomian and Calvinian doctrines, partly by the want of discipline, and partly by the misbehavior of the preachers. Various measures were adopted to remedy these evils. He staid twelve weeks in Ireland and then went to Bristol, and thence to London, where he spent the remainder of the year.

It were wearying even to read all the journeyings of this evangelist of Christ. But at last strength began to fail under his many heavy burdens. For months during 1753 his health was feeble, until on November 12, preaching at Leigh, in Essex, he caught cold. Two days after, on returning to London, he "had a settled pain in his left breast, a violent cough, and a slow fever." His physician ordered him at once to remove into the country and to rest, which he did, going to his friend Mr. Blackwell, at Lewisham. The news of his illness spread rapidly, and caused general alarm. Charles Wesley hurried to him, and though he was then considerably better, thought him "still in imminent danger, being far gone and very suddenly in a consumption." He then went to the Foundry and preached on the power of prayer, and declared it to be his opinion that if his brother's life was prolonged it would only be by the prayer of faith. Whitefield was touched with the deepest sorrow, and, forgetting the differences between them, wrote:

"*Rev. and Very Dear Sir*—If seeing you so weak when leaving London distressed me, the news and prospect of your approaching dissolution have quite weighed me down. I pity myself and the Church, but not you. A radiant throne awaits you, and erelong you will enter into your Master's joy. If in the land of the dying, I hope to pay my last respects to you next; if not, reverend and very dear sir,

F-a-r-e-w-e-l-l! *Præ sequar, esti non passibus æquis.* My heart is too big, tears trickle down too fast, and you, I fear, are too weak for me to enlarge. Underneath you may there be Christ's everlasting arms!"

He continued to improve, however, and in five weeks was able to remove from Lewisham. Still he was an invalid for the first six months of 1754. But he did not remain idle. He began the new year at the Hotwells, Bristol. On the first Sunday of the year he commenced writing his "Notes on the New Testament," "a work," says he, "which I would scarce ever have attempted had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel or preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write." With the exception of the time prescribed for exercise on horseback, two hours for meals, and one for private prayer, he spent sixteen hours a day on this work. In ten weeks his rough draft of the translation and the notes on the Gospels were completed. He then returned to London, and retiring to the village of Paddington, he spent nearly the whole of the next three months in writing, except that he came to town every Saturday evening to take part in the services next day. He preached first again at Bristol March 26, and after that a few times till Whitsunday, when he once more took the evening service at the Foundry; but he writes: "I have not recovered my whole voice or strength; perhaps I never may; but let me use what I have."

He now began to travel some, and in the last of May held his Annual Conference. In the summer, however, he again became very unwell, and was again ordered to repair to the Hotwells, Bristol, without delay. He did so; but in three weeks started again, September 5, on a preaching tour to Taunton, Tiverton, and other places. September 10 he got back to Bristol, "at least as well as when he left it," having preached eight times in as many days, besides traveling, visiting, and meeting his societies. He then remained at Bristol three weeks longer preaching and visiting, till on attempting to hold a watch-night service September 27, at eleven o'clock, he almost lost his voice, and the next evening it entirely failed. He then set out for London, and arrived there October 4, where he seems to have remained the rest of the year in great feebleness. Nevertheless, besides the work already noticed, he published during this year "An Extract of his Journal from November 25, 1746, to July 20, 1749," one hundred and thirty-nine pages; "An Answer to Rev. Dr. Gill," and eight volumes more of his "Christian Library," which he had compiled from the writings of Leighton, Barrow, Charnock, Baxter, and others.

At the commencement of 1755 he was occupied, at the author's request, with the revision of Hervey's greatest work, "Theron and Aspasia." On the first of April he set out on a three months'

journey to the North of England, seemingly with all his wonted vigor, preaching, visiting, and overseeing. Returning, he went to Norwich and thence to Cornwall, and so passed the rest of the year laboring as usual.

CHAPTER VII.

Separation—Sanctified Fanaticism—The Poor Actor—The Use of Money—Berridge—Shirley—"Softness"—Personal Appearance.

A MOVEMENT now arose to separate from the Church of England and establish Methodism as a distinct Church. For years there had been much dissatisfaction among the societies. The Methodist preachers were generally not ordained, and therefore unable to administer the sacraments to their people, while in many cases they were rudely repelled from the communion in the churches of the Establishment, and refused the sacraments. Again, the Established Church was very corrupt, the ministers ignorant in spiritual things, irreligious in life, and often immoral. Many of the most pious and influential of Wesley's preachers longed for some other arrangement to meet the pressing demands of the people. On the other hand, Charles Wesley, who was an ardent Churchman, with some few others, strongly opposed all innovation. A long and severe contest ensued. From 1755 to 1761 each year the matter was discussed at length in the Conferences, while numerous letters and pamphlets were published on the subject, pro and con. At the Conference of 1755 the preachers,

"in seven or eight long conversations," gave their reasons for its expediency. Wesley said: "I will freely acknowledge that I cannot answer these arguments to my own satisfaction, so that my conclusion, which I cannot yet give up, 'that it is lawful to continue in the Church,' stands almost without any premises that are able to bear its weight." The objection was justly urged that lay preaching, being clearly inconsistent with the discipline of the Church of England, was already a partial separation. In reference to this Wesley says: "We have not taken one step farther than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this that we have (1) preached abroad; (2) prayed extempore; (3) formed societies; and (4) permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty rather wholly to separate from the Church than to give up any one of these points. Therefore if we cannot stop a separation without stopping lay preachers, the case is clear: we cannot stop it at all." Still he would not consent. He did not question the right to do so under the Scriptures. He declared his total dissent from the doctrine of apostolical succession, and said in reference to even an episcopal form of Church-government: "That it is prescribed in Scripture I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I

have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon.' I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor his apostles prescribe any particular form of Church-government, and that the plea of divine right for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive Church." He also maintains the superiority of the Methodist order of services over that of the Church of England. He says: "The longer I am absent from London, and the more I attend the service of the Church in other places, the more I am convinced of the unspeakable advantage which the Methodists enjoy. I mean even with regard to public worship, particularly on the Lord's-day." He then goes on to compare at length the services of the Methodists with those of the Church of England, to show the great superiority of the former, and therefore why they could never be given up. But he argues against formal separation on the ground of expediency, alleging principally that it would prejudice the cause of the Methodists with many who otherwise would be their friends, cause many to leave the societies, and engage him in a thousand controversies, so as to almost entirely divert him from useful labors. On these grounds he decided to remain.

Commotion now arose in another quarter. In 1762 great extravagances began in the London Society. Maxfield and Bell, two of the preachers,

with many of the members, began to utter the wildest opinions, and to make the most fanatical claims. Wesley, with Charles, went to see them about it, and afterward wrote them what he disliked in them—*i. e.*, "their supposing man may be as perfect as an angel; that he can be absolutely perfect; that he can be infallible, or above being tempted; or that the moment he is pure in heart he cannot fall from it." Also "their depreciation of justification," and their doctrines that a sanctified person needs no self-examination, no private prayer; and that he cannot be taught by any one who is not in the same state as himself.

But it was too late. Bell and Maxfield both went off and took some two hundred of the society with them. On the other hand, Charles Wesley was led by these excesses to considerably modify his views of the doctrine of sanctification, and consider it not the product of simple faith only, but also "of severe discipline, comprehending affliction, temptation, long-continued labor," etc. Many of his former co-workers — among them Madan, Berridge, Romaine, and even Whitefield — openly contended against Wesley. Wesley was most uneasy, but Fletcher came to his aid, and he was enabled to stand fast against his opposers on the right-hand and on the left, rescue the societies at last, and under God to establish the genuine doctrine of Christian perfection as the accepted teaching of Methodism.

All this time the Calvinian controversy continued with more or less vigor. Socinianism, too, upreared itself before him, and Wesley was obliged to write an octavo volume of five hundred and twenty-two pages in answer to Dr. Taylor, the most eminent Socinian minister of his age. Wesley's book was a most triumphant refutation of the heresy, it being the ablest work on the subject in the English language. He still had to defend himself from attacks through the press. He was unremitting in his benevolent labors for the poor and suffering in every place. An incident that happened in Ireland illustrates the genuineness of his philanthropy. In a public house were a number of loungers, and among the rest a starving actor in a motley dress that had seen better days, reclined on a wooden bench in the corner. The landlady, a true termagant, furiously bawled out to the poor player: "Turn out, you pitiable ragamuffin!—plenty of promises, but no money; either pay your way, or you and your doll of a wife turn out." Just then Wesley entered, and instantly the landlady became as mild as a May day. "Dear sir," says she, "I am glad you're come; this man, sir, is a very bad man, sir; as you said in your sermon yesterday, 'He that oppresseth the poor is a bad man,' sir." "What has he done?" asks Wesley. "Why, sir, I have kept him and his wife for a fortnight, and have never seen the color of his

money. Three crowns is my due, and I'll have it if law can get it." "Who is this gentleman?" "Who is he? Why, he is one of those you preach against—one of your player men. I wish you could preach them out of town. Why, sir, they are all starving. I don't think this man has got a good meal for a fortnight, except what I have given him, and now you see his gratitude." Wesley approached the poor, dejected actor and said: "You serve the stage, young man; would I could teach you to serve your God, you would find him a better master. Pardon me, I mean not to upbraid you, or to hurt your feelings. My Master sent you this," putting into his hand a guinea; "retire and thank him." "Who is your master?" cried the actor; "where and how shall I thank him?" "God is my Master; return him thanks." "How?" "On your knees when in private; in public at all times; in your principles and practice. Farewell; go, comfort your wife and children." The poor fellow was dumbfounded, and sobbing the thanks he could not speak, he left the room. "Three crowns is your demand on our afflicted brother?" said Wesley to the landlady. "Yes, sir; fifteen shillings." "I will pay you," said Wesley; "but what can you think of yourself? How terrible will be your condition on your death-bed, calling for that mercy which you refuse to a fellow-creature! I shudder whilst under your roof, and leave it as I would the pesti-

lence. May the Lord pardon your sins." With this he put fifteen shillings on the table, and made his exit. "Pardon my sins!" quoth the irate virago, "pardon my sins, indeed! And why not his own? I'll warrant he has as much to answer for as I have; getting a parcel of people together that ought to be minding their work. Why, it was only yesterday that he was preaching everybody to the devil that encouraged the players."

Money never staid with John Wesley long. In 1766, when he was sixty-three years old, by the will of a Miss Lewin he received £1,000. He said, "I am God's steward for the poor," and he gave it all away in less than two years. His sentiments on the subject of giving are embodied in a pastoral address issued about 1764. He says: "If you are not in pressing want give something, and you will be no poorer for it. Grudge not, fear not; lend unto the Lord, and he will surely repay. If you earn but three shillings a week and give a penny out of it, you will never want. But I do not say this to you who have ten or fifteen shillings a week and give only a penny. To see this has often grieved my spirit. I have been ashamed for you, if you have not been ashamed for yourself. O be ashamed before God and man! Be not straitened in your own bowels. Give in proportion to your substance. You can better afford a shilling than he a penny. Open your eyes, your heart, your

hand." His three well-known rules for a Christian in his conduct in relation to money are elaborated at length in his sermon on the "Use of Money," published about this time, viz.: (1) "Gain all you can; (2) save all you can; (3) give all you can."

Difficulties and oppositions still beset him. At Grampound, "a mean, inconsiderable village," the mayor sent two constables to prohibit him from preaching. Wesley answered: "The mayor has no authority to hinder, but it is a point not worth contesting; so," he adds, "I went about a musket-shot farther and left the borough to Mr. Mayor's disposal." At Stallbridge he had to apply to the courts for protection. At Plymouth a large stone was thrown in at the window at the close of the sermon, and fell at his feet. At Swadlingbar, in Wales, as soon as he began preaching, a papist commenced "blowing a horn," but "a gentleman stepped up, snatched his horn away, and, without ceremony, knocked him down." At York he met with a ludicrous adventure: the rector there, the Rev. Mr. Cordeaux, on previous occasions had warned his congregation against hearing "that vagabond Wesley preach." Wesley, after preaching in his own chapel, now went in his canonicals to Mr. Cordeaux's church. The latter saw that he was a clergyman, and without knowing who he was offered him his church to preach. Wesley accepted,

and preached. After service Cordeaux asked his clerk if he knew who the stranger was. "Sir, he is the vagabond Wesley," replied the clerk, "against whom you warned us." "Ay, indeed," said the astonished rector, "we are trapped; but never mind, we have had a good sermon."

Sometimes his congregations were unappreciative and stupid. At Liverpool the congregations were exceeding large, but many of the people "seemed to be like wild asses' colts." At Berwick he preached to "a drowsy congregation." At Kingswood he says: "Scarce thirty of them think it worth while to hear the word of God on a week-day—not even when I preach." At North Scarle he had a great multitude to hear him, but though he "spoke as plainly as he could on the first principles of religion, many seemed to understand him no more than if he was talking Greek."

On the other hand, there was much to encourage him. The work still increased. He had a noble corps of preachers, and others joined him. There was Berridge, vicar of Everton, in learning inferior to very few of the most celebrated men of Cambridge, where he had taken his degree, who for twenty years traveled his circuit, embracing five counties, and preached on an average from ten to twelve sermons every week. Magistrates and squires and others furiously opposed him. The "old devil" was the name by which he was distin-

guished among them. But he steadily pursued his work, renting houses and barns for preaching, and lay preachers employed and maintained, his Church income and the fortune inherited from his father being appropriated to the work, until even his family plate was converted into clothing for his itinerant preachers. Thousands were converted and brought into the Church under his ministry.

Capt. Webb has already been mentioned. The Rev. Walter Shirley, first cousin to the Countess of Huntingdon, who held a Church-living in Ireland, was another powerful ally. Cope, Bishop of Clonfert, threatened him. "Menaces, my lord," said Shirley, "between gentlemen are illiberal; but when they cannot be put into execution, they are contemptible." The Archbishop of Tuam, on the other hand, treated the charges brought against him with contempt. Once the curate of Loughrea came to him with a very important air: "O your grace!" exclaimed he, "I have such a circumstance to relate to you; one that will astonish you." "Indeed," replied he, "what can it be?" "Why, my lord," said the curate solemnly, "Mr. Shirley wears white stockings." "Very anti-clerical and very dreadful," responded the archbishop. "Does Mr. Shirley wear them over his boots?" "No, your grace." "Well, sir," said the prelate, "the first time you find him with his stockings over his boots, pray inform me, and I shall deal with him accordingly."

Thomas Walsh, too, must not be forgotten. "The best Hebrean," says Wesley, "I ever knew. I never asked him the meaning of a Hebrew word but he would tell me how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in each place."

But the greatest of all was John Fletcher, a name ever memorable not only in Methodist annals, but in the history of the general Church of Christ. He joined the Methodists in 1755, and truly continued a bright and shining light till his death in 1785. His labors cannot here be related. Suffice it that he appeared at a time when Wesley greatly needed such a man, and that through years following he continued to refresh the oft-tried heart and help the weary hand of his veteran chieftain.

Wesley could not endure "softness." When fifty-five years old he traveled in one day ninety miles on horseback and by post-chaise over miserable roads to meet his appointment to preach the following morning. Seven years later he made a tour through England, Scotland, and Ireland that lasted thirty-two weeks, everywhere preaching and visiting. On one occasion a servant, on entering his room, found his coachman rolling himself up and down the feather-bed most vigorously, because, as he said, Wesley would not sleep in it until it was made as hard as possible.

He maintained a constant warfare against worldliness. He exhorts against any thing being aimed

at in dress except neatness and plainness, and says: "It is true these are little, very little things, therefore give them up, let them drop; throw them away without another word." He says of theaters that they "sap the foundation of all religion, as they naturally tend to efface all traces of piety and seriousness out of the minds of men;" and he addressed a letter to the mayor and corporation of Bristol against permission being granted to build a new theater there. Yet he was no fanatic. The day after Conference closed at Bristol he attended a performance of Handel's "Messiah" in the cathedral, and afterward when in London spent part of an afternoon in the British Museum, then lately opened.

A spectator describes him at this period as travelling in an old, lumbering carriage with a book-case inside of it, and dressed in a cassock, with black silk stockings and large silver buckles. Horace Walpole heard him preach in 1766, and writes: "Wesley is a clean, elderly man, fresh-colored, his hair smoothly combed, but with a little *soupçon* of curls at the ends. Wondrous clever, but as evidently an actor as Garrick. He spoke his sermon, but so fast, and with so little accent, that I am sure he has often uttered it, for it was like a lesson. There were parts and eloquence in it, but toward the end he acted very ugly enthusiasm, decried learning, and told stories."

Toward the end of 1765 he met with a severe accident by the fall of his horse, by which he was much bruised and made to suffer seriously for many months. As late as May, 1766, he writes: "I know not to what it is owing that I have felt more weariness this spring than I had done for many years, unless to my fall at Christmas, which perhaps weakened the springs of my whole machine more than I was sensible of." He also complains of feeling much pain, but adds: "But, blessed be God, I have strength sufficient for the work to which I am called. When I cannot walk any farther I can take a horse, and now and then a chaise, so that hitherto I have not been hindered from visiting any place which I proposed to see before I left London."

CHAPTER VIII.

Chapel Debts—Finances—Rules of Discipline—Profitable Conversation—Rules for a Revival—First College Appointments—Whitefield's Death—Happy Experiences—Wesley Sick—The Work of a Methodist Preacher—A None-such—The Sin of Screaming.

IN 1767 the first Methodist missionary collection was taken up by Wesley at Newcastle for the American Indians. In the same year a connectional effort was made to pay off the debts upon the chapels throughout the kingdom. These debts amounted to eleven thousand three hundred and eighty-three pounds, and at that day was a burden heavy to be borne. A circular was issued and subscriptions taken up in all the societies to raise twelve thousand pounds. In two years eight thousand seven hundred pounds was raised, and much relief afforded; but chapel debts still existed, and were for years afterward one of Wesley's sorrows.

Some further details as to the state of Methodism at this period—twenty-eight years after its origin—are interesting. Forty-one circuits had been formed, one hundred and four itinerants employed, and twenty-five thousand nine hundred and eleven

members of society gathered. Six of the circuits were in Yorkshire, and one-fourth of the members. One fact worthy of notice at the Conference of this year—1767—was the presence of "many stewards and local preachers," besides the itinerants, showing that Wesley had wisely availed himself of the counsels of the laity. Salaries were small. In 1768 three married Methodist ministers and an unmarried one cost the Barnard Castle Circuit about £109 8s. a year, or about ten shillings and sixpence per minister per week. From the minutes of the Conference of 1765 we learn that £100 9s. 7d. was raised that year for Kingswood school. The yearly subscription in the classes was £707 18s.; of which £578 was devoted to the payment of chapel debts, £38 17s. in defraying chapel expenses, and the remaining £91 1s. divided among the preachers who were in want.

At the same Conference rules were adopted for the management of the fund for the support of superannuated preachers, their widows and children. Various other regulations were adopted to promote the work. In all future buildings there were to be sash-windows opening downward, but no "tub-pulpits." Men and women were to sit apart everywhere. Outdoor preaching had often been omitted to please societies and stewards, but this was not to be done again. Some of the preachers were not "merciful to their beasts," and it was directed that hard rid-

ing should be avoided, and that every one should "see with his own eyes his horse rubbed, fed, and bedded." Societies and congregations were to be taught singing. The people were to be urged to be good economists. Members might "tenderly and prudently call each other brother and sister; but as a rule they talked too much and read too little, and ought to amend in this." Many of them were "absolutely enslaved to snuff;" some drank drams. The preachers were enjoined on no account to indulge in such practices themselves, but were to speak to any snuffing during sermon.

Wesley discussed another topic at this Conference, as follows: "God thrust me and my brother out utterly against our will to raise a holy people. Holiness was our point—inward and outward holiness. When Satan could no otherwise prevent this, he threw Calvinism in our way, and then Antinomianism. Then many Methodists grew rich, and thereby lovers of the present world. Next they married unawakened or half-awakened wives, and conversed with their relations. Thence worldly prudence, maxims, customs, crept back upon us, producing more and more conformity to the world. Then there followed gross neglect of relative duties, especially education of children." Wesley adds: "This is not cured by the preachers. Either they have not light or not weight enough. But the want of these may be in some measure supplied by

publicly reading the sermons [his own sermons] everywhere, especially the fourth volume, which supplies them with remedies suited to the disease."

In a letter to Fletcher about the same time, he writes: "Mr. Eastbrook told me yesterday that you are sick of the conversation even of them who profess religion; that you find it quite unprofitable if not hurtful to converse with them three or four hours together, and are sometimes almost determined to shut yourself up as the less evil of the two. I do not wonder at it at all, especially considering with whom you have chiefly conversed for some time past. . . . I will go a step farther; I seldom find it profitable for me to converse with any who are not athirst for perfection, and who are not big with earnest expectation of receiving it every moment. Now you find none of these among those we are speaking of. . . . Again, you have for some time conversed a good deal with genteel Methodists. Now it matters not a straw what doctrine they hear, whether they frequent the Lock or West street. They are almost all salt which has lost its savor, if ever they had any. They are thoroughly conformed to the maxims, the fashions, and customs of the world. But were these or those of ever so excellent a spirit, you conversed with them too long. One had need to be an angel—not a man—to converse three or four hours at once to any

purpose. In the latter part of such conversation we shall doubtless lose all the profit we had gained before."

The total increase of members reported at the Conference of 1768 was four hundred and thirty. Wesley was not satisfied with this, and minute directions how to promote a revival appeared in the minutes the year following.

August 24, 1768, the first Methodist college was instituted at Trevecca, Wales, by the Countess of Huntingdon. At Oxford persecution of the Methodists had become very bitter, and a number of students supposed to be maintained there by the Countess had been expelled for holding Methodist tenets. In five months afterward she opened the new college at one of her country-seats, and thus Methodism from the first secured the immense advantage of sanctified learning for its cause and for the cause of Christ.

A plan of settlement for the perpetuation of Methodism in its integrity after his death was now anxiously considered by Wesley. At length, in 1769, he proposed that articles of agreement should be signed, pledging them all "(1) to devote themselves entirely to God; (2) to preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other; (3) to observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline as laid down in the minutes." The matter was then laid over for the present for consideration; but at the Conference of

1773 all the forty-seven preachers present signed it. Meantime Wesley had endeavored to get Fletcher to consent to become his successor, but in vain. Mr. Fletcher no doubt wisely declined to undertake what perhaps no person could possibly have accomplished—the wearing of John Wesley's mantle and authority without having borne John Wesley's part in first organizing the work.

Difficulty in stationing the preachers seemed to be growing. At the Conference of 1770 he writes to Mr. Merryweather at Yarm:

"*My Dear Brother*—I have the credit of stationing the preachers; but many of them go where they will go, for all me—for instance, I have marked down James Oddie and John Nelson for Yarm Circuit the ensuing year; yet I am not certain that either of them will come. They can give twenty reasons for going elsewhere. Mr. Murlin says he must be in London. 'T is certain he has a mind to be there. Therefore, so it must be; for you know a man of fortune is master of his own motions."

The Calvinian controversy began to be very bitter. The Conference of 1770, alarmed at the spread of Antinomianism, and attributing it to neglect in themselves in counteracting the fatalistic theories of Geneva, said, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism," and published a minute defining the points wherein they dissented from it. In order

to preserve peace, Wesley had hitherto gone too far in suppressing, if not in some respects surrendering. the Arminian doctrine. Hence the minute. Great offense was given at once to all the Calvinistic Methodists. The Countess of Huntingdon declared that whoever did not wholly disavow these opinions should leave her college; and the matter did result in both Fletcher and Benson quitting Trevecca. A host of writers sprung into the arena, and thenceforward for full seven years the controversy raged. Two on the Calvinistic side, and both young men, were furiously violent against Wesley, and spared no pains to cast obloquy upon him. Others were more calm. On the Arminian side the principal writer was John Fletcher, though Wesley himself also wrote much and strongly. But Fletcher's Checks will ever remain a classic and incontrovertible discussion of the subject, at once written in the chastest literary taste and breathing the most lovely Christian spirit. To enter into the details of the controversy would manifestly be out of place here. Suffice it that Calvinism has never since even nominally held much place in Methodism, and practically it has become almost obsolete everywhere in English-speaking countries.

Soon after Conference, Whitefield died—while on one of his evangelistic journeys—at Newburyport, in New England, September 30, 1770. On the day before he had preached in the open air for

nearly two hours. A friend said to him just before he commenced: "Sir, you are more fit to go to bed than to preach." "True," replied the dying man; and then turning aside he clasped his hands, and looking up, said: "Lord Jesus, I am weary *in* thy work but not *of* thy work." Next morning at six o'clock he was dead. He was buried where he died, with every mark of respect. Wesley, in accordance with a long-standing agreement between them, and on invitation of the congregation, preached the funeral-sermon in Whitefield's Tottenham Court Chapel, November 18, to an immense multitude from the text, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his." "It was," says Wesley, "an awful season; all were as still as night." In the afternoon he preached again in Whitefield's Tabernacle, in Moorfields. The hour appointed was half-past five; but the place was filled at three, and Wesley began at four. Whitefield, he said, had "unparalleled zeal, indefatigable activity, tender-heartedness to the afflicted and charitableness to the poor, the most generous friendship, nice and unblemished modesty, frankness and openness of conversation, unflinching courage and steadiness in whatever he undertook for his Master's sake."

The loss of such a friend and brother was a grievous affliction. But his comfort was in God and in the glorious work. Many seasons of refresing con-

tinually occurred, and are gratefully recorded in his journal:

"Easter-day, April 7.—After preaching I went to the new church, and found an uncommon blessing at a time when I least of all expected it—namely, while the organist was playing a voluntary! We had a happy hour in the evening, many hearts being melted down in one flame of holy love.

"Thursday, 11.—The barber who shaved me said: 'Sir, I praise God on your behalf. When you were at Bolton last I was one of the most eminent drunkards in all the town; but I came to listen at the window and God struck me to the heart. I then earnestly prayed for power against drinking, and God gave me more than I asked; he took away the very desire of it. Yet I felt myself worse and worse, till on the 5th of April last I could hold out no longer. I knew I must drop into hell that moment unless God appeared to save me; and he did appear. I knew he loved me, and felt sweet peace; yet I did not dare to say I had faith till yesterday was twelvemonth. God gave me faith, and his love has ever since filled my heart.'

"Sunday, May 20.—While Mr. Berridge was preaching I heard many cry out, especially children, whose agonies were amazing. One of the eldest, a girl of ten or twelve years old, was full in my view, in violent contortions of body, and weeping aloud I think incessantly during the whole

service; and several much younger children were in Mr. B—ll's view, agonizing as they did. When the power of religion began to be spoken of, the presence of God really filled the place; and while poor sinners felt the sentence of death in their souls, what sounds of distress did I hear! The greatest number of them who cried or fell were men; but some women and several children felt the power of the same Almighty Spirit, and seemed just sinking into hell. Among the children who felt the arrows of the Almighty I saw a sturdy boy, who roared above his fellows, and seemed in his agony to struggle with the strength of a grown man. I staid in the next room, and saw the girl whom I had observed so peculiarly distressed in the church lying on the floor as one dead, but without any ghastliness in her face. In a few minutes we were informed of a woman filled with peace and joy, who was crying out just before. Just as we heard of her deliverance the girl on the floor began to stir. She was then set in a chair; and after sighing awhile suddenly rose up, rejoicing in God. Her face was covered with the most beautiful smile I ever saw. Meantime I saw a thin, pale girl weeping with sorrow for herself and joy for her companions. Quickly the smiles of heaven came likewise upon her, and her praises joined with those of the other. I also then laughed with extreme joy; so did Mr. B—ll, who said it was more than he could well bear. . . .

Immediately after, a stranger, well dressed, who stood facing me, fell backward to the wall; then forward on his knees, wringing his hands and roaring like a bull. His face at first turned quite red, then almost black. He rose and ran against the wall, till Mr. Keeling and another held him. He screamed out: 'O what shall I do! what shall I do! O for one drop of the blood of Christ!' As he spoke God set his soul at liberty; he knew his sins were blotted out; and the rapture he was in seemed too great for human nature to bear. He had come forty miles to hear Mr. B., and was to leave him the next morning.

"I observed about the time that Mr. Coe (that was his name) began to rejoice, a girl eleven or twelve years old, exceeding poorly dressed, who appeared to be as deeply wounded and as desirous of salvation as any; but I lost sight of her till I heard the joyful sound of another born in Zion, and found upon inquiry it was she, the poor, disconsolate, gipsy-looking child. And now did I see such a sight as I do not expect again on this side eternity. The faces of the three justified children, and I think of all the believers present, did really shine; and such a beauty, such a look of extreme happiness, and at the same time of divine love and simplicity, did I never see in human faces till now. The newly justified eagerly embraced one another, weeping on each other's necks for joy. Then they

saluted all of their own sex, and besought both men and women to help them in praising God."

Such scenes were common among the people. His own heart rejoiced no less in God his Saviour: "Saturday, 9.—I rode slowly forward to Berwick. I was myself much out of order; but I would not lose the opportunity of calling in the evening all that were weary and heavy-laden to Him who hath said, 'I will give you rest.' Sunday, 10.—I preached at eight and at four in the afternoon, and in the hours between spoke with members of the society. I met them all at seven, and a glorious meeting it was. I forgot all my pain while we were praising God together; but after they were gone I yielded to my friends, and determined to give myself a day's rest, so I spent Monday, the 11th, in writing; only I could not refrain from meeting the society in the evening. Friday, 13.—At the meeting of the society such a flame broke out as was never there before. We felt such a love to each other as we could not express, such a spirit of supplication, and such a glad acquiescence in all the providences of God, and confidence that he would withhold from us no good thing. Sunday, 15.—The rain constrained me to preach in the house, but I could not repine; for God was there, and spoke peace to many hearts. Tuesday, 24. . . . . After preaching again at one, I rode to Birmingham. This had been long a dry, uncomfortable place, so I expected

little good here; but I was happily disappointed. Such a congregation I never saw there before, and seldom have I known so deep, solemn a sense of the power and presence and love of God. The same blessing we had at the meeting of the society, and again at the morning preaching. Will God, then, at length cause even this barren wilderness to blossom and bud as the rose?"

In 1772, when almost seventy, he felt some abatement of his accustomed energy. His friends saw it, and hence the following entry in his journal: "1772, February 28.—I met several of my friends, who had begun a subscription to prevent my riding on horseback, which I cannot do quite so well since a hurt which I got some months ago. If they continue it, well; if not, I shall have strength according to my need."

A carriage was provided for him. In less than ten weeks thereafter he had traveled from London to Bristol, and thence to Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Glasgow, Aberdeen, and Edinburgh, besides a great mumber of intervening towns and villages, preaching everywhere, and sometimes as many as four times a day. He had to traverse the worst of roads, and often encountered winter storms, and not unfrequently preached in the open air. On reaching Edinburgh he underwent a medical examination by three of the most prominent practitioners of the city. His disease

was pronounced hydrocele. He writes: "They satisfied me what my disorder was, and told me there was but one method of cure. Perhaps but one natural one, but I think God has more than one method of healing either the body or the soul." A few months later he writes: "I am almost a disabled soldier. I am forbid to ride, and am obliged to travel mostly in a carriage." Great concern was shown at his illness, and prayer was made for him by his friends. Still he continued to labor with unabated efforts. He still preached in the open air. He writes: "To this day field-preaching is a cross to me; but I know my commission, and know no other way of preaching the gospel to every creature." He was seven months on a preaching tour, returning to London October 10, 1772. Spending one day only, he started off again. At another time, when seventy years old, and still in comparatively feeble health, he started in his chaise from Bristol at two o'clock in the morning, and traveled to London—a distance of one hundred and fourteen miles—the same day. An entry in his journal the following year is a curiosity: "Wednesday, March 30.—I went on to Congleton, where I received letters informing me that my presence was necessary at Bristol. So about one I took chaise, and reached Bristol about half an hour after one the next day. Having done my business in about two hours, on Friday in the afternoon I reached

Congleton again, about a hundred and forty miles from Bristol, no more tired (blessed be God!) than when I left it." Thus, over rough roads in an inclement season, this old man rode in his private chaise two hundred and eighty miles in about forty-eight hours. Persecution, too, though much abated, had not entirely ceased. At Halifax a ruffian struck him most violently on the face, when with tears starting from his eyes the venerable saint meekly turned to him the other cheek also, and the brutal coward slunk away.

Yet he uttered not a syllable of complaint. He took a warm interest in every important public event. The case of Wilkes was exciting much political controversy at this time, and Wesley published a tract upon it. He also became one of the first advocates for the abolition of the slave-trade. In 1772 there was a scarcity of provisions in England, and consequently much distress throughout the kingdom, and Wesley published a long letter, attributing it to the distillation of grain into spirits, the prevalence of luxury, avarice, high rents, and high taxes. Another time he gives advice as to the aim and spirit with which Christians should vote. At another he founds "The Christian Community" for the relief of the poor, a society which still exists, and which has done incalculable good. The work grows in America, and he seriously thinks of going there. Meantime he keeps up the work at

home. At Poplar he was importuned to give up the preaching there; but he constantly answered, "Does the old woman [Mrs. Clippendale] who sits in the corner of the long pew still attend?" "O yes," was the reply, "she never misses." "Then, for her sake, keep going," said Wesley. They did keep going, and Poplar came at last to have a good society. Again, when at Londonderry, a band of singers which he had organized two years before had become dispersed, through the neglect of the preacher. He says: "Nothing will stand in the Methodist plan unless the preacher has his heart and his hand in it. Every preacher, therefore, should consider it is not his business to mind this or that thing only, but every thing." To Benson, whom he had sent across the Tweed, he writes: "You will be buried in Scotland if you sell your mare and sit still. Keep her, and ride continually. Sit not still, at the peril of your soul and body!" His own strength he explains as follows: "June 28, 1774.—This being the first day of my seventy-second year, I was considering, How is this, that I find just the same strength as I did thirty years ago? that my sight is considerably better now and my nerves firmer than they were then? that I have none of the infirmities of old age, and have lost several I had in my youth? The grand cause is the good pleasure of God, who doeth whatsoever pleaseth him. The chief means are: (1) My con-

stantly rising at four for about fifty years; (2) my generally preaching at five in the morning—one of the most healthy exercises in the world; (3) my never traveling less, by sea or land, than four thousand five hundred miles a year."

A description of him by Benson, written about this time, is full of interest. "I was," says he, "constantly with him for a week. I had an opportunity of examining narrowly his spirit and conduct, and I am persuaded he is a none-such. I know not his fellow, first for abilities natural and acquired, and secondly for his incomparable diligence in the application of those abilities to the best of employments. His lively fancy, tenacious memory, clear understanding, ready elocution, manly courage, indefatigable industry, really amaze me. I admire, but wish in vain to imitate, his diligent improvement of every moment of time; his wonderful exactness even in little things; the order and regularity wherewith he does and treats every thing he takes in hand, together with his quick dispatch of business, and calm, cheerful serenity of soul. I ought not to omit to mention—what is manifest to all who know him—his resolution, which no shocks of opposition can shake; his patience, which no length of trials can weary; his zeal for the glory of God and the good of man, which no waters of persecution or tribulation have yet been able to quench. Happy man! Long hast thou borne the

burden and heat of the day, amidst the insults of foes and the base treachery of seeming friends; but thou shalt rest from thy labors, and thy works shall follow thee!" He was now beginning, indeed, to be held in general respect, though at times violent persecution still assailed him, and on two occasions was presented with "the freedom of the city" at places where he preached.

In 1775 he had a severe illness. At Castle Candfield, in Ireland, he writes: "The rain came plentifully through the thatch into my lodging-room; but I found no present inconvenience, and was not careful for the morrow." But six days afterward he was seized with a burning fever. He continued, nevertheless, to travel and preach almost as usual for three days or more, until at Lurgan he was obliged to succumb. A physician was called in, who told him he must rest. Wesley replied he could not, as he "had appointed to preach at several places, and must preach as long as he could speak." The doctor gave him medicine, and off Wesley went to Tandaragu, and then to a gentleman's seat three miles beyond Lisburn, where nature sunk. Strength, memory, and mind entirely failed him. For three days he lay more dead than alive. His tongue was black and swollen; he was violently convulsed; for some time his pulse was not discernible. Hope was almost gone, when Joseph Bradford, his traveling companion, came with

a cup, and said, "Sir, you must take this." Wesley writes: "I thought, I will if I can swallow, to please him, for it will do me neither good nor harm. Immediately it set me a vomiting; my heart began to beat and my pulse to play again, and from that hour the extremity of the symptoms abated." Six days afterward, to the astonishment of his friends, and, as he says, "trusting in God," he set out for Dublin, and within a week was preaching as usual. Six years after, he wrote, referring to this illness: "From this time [1775] I have by the grace of God gone on in the same track—traveling between four and five thousand miles a year, and once in two years going through Great Britain and Ireland, which by the blessing of God I am as well able to do now as I was twenty or thirty years ago."

He knew how to give advice. The following letter, addressed to John King, one of his preachers in America, is interesting:

"*My Dear Brother*—Always take advice or reproof as a favor. It is the surest mark of love. I advised you once and you took it as an affront, nevertheless I will do it once more. Scream no more, at the peril of your soul. God warns you now by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream; speak with all your heart but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not *cry*.' The word

properly means, 'He shall not *scream*.' Herein be a follower of me as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream. I never strain myself. I dare not. I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul. Perhaps one reason why that good man Thomas Walsh, yea, and John Manners too, were in such grievous darkness before they died was because they shortened their own lives.

"O John, pray for an advisable and teachable temper! By nature you are very far from it. You are stubborn and headstrong. Your last letter was written in a very wrong spirit. If you cannot take advice from others, surely you might take it from your affectionate brother, JOHN WESLEY."

CHAPTER IX.

Discipline—Works of Charity—Sunday-schools—Labors—Late Sleeping—Asbury—Silas Told—Fletcher—In Holland—A Novel.

WESLEY'S first act in 1776 was to join at a watch-night meeting with eighteen hundred London Methodists in renewing his covenant with God. The enforcement of discipline among the members next engaged his attention, saying: "If only six will promise to sin no more, leave only six in society. . . . They are no Methodists who will bear no restraints." The lease on the old Foundry building was now drawing to a close, and it was determined to build "a new Foundry." This was the beginning of City Road Chapel, since so famous. April, 1777, he laid the corner-stone, and Sunday, November 1, 1778, he opened it with preaching.

In 1777 Wesley assisted in organizing and drew up the rules for a "Strangers' Friend Society" in London, which gave rise to the general society of that name that still exists in England, and which has done unspeakable good. In 1779 "The Naval and Military Bible Society" for supplying soldiers and sailors with pocket Bibles was founded, twenty-

five years before the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the oldest Bible society that now exists. And in 1782, seventeen years before the origin of the Religious Tract Society, Wesley instituted his "Tract Society" to distribute religious tracts among the poor.

Sunday-schools were then another new agency for good which he now adopted and developed. The first Methodist Sunday-school of which we have any account was that founded by Miss Hannah Ball at High Wycombe, England, in 1769, at least four years before Robt. Raikes began his famous Sunday-school at Gloucester. Indeed, it is stated that another Methodist young lady—Miss Cooke—afterward the wife of Samuel Bradburn, suggested the latter to Raikes in 1783. At first Sunday-schools were intended only for poor and neglected children who were not able to get schooling in any other way. Paid teachers were employed, and instruction given in reading and in the catechism. Some of the rules sound a little curious now. "The children were required to come with clean hands and faces and hair combed, and with such clothing as they had. They were to stay from ten to twelve, then to go home; to return at one, and after a lesson to be conducted to church; after church to repeat portions of the catechism; to go home at five quietly, without playing in the streets." Diligent scholars received rewards of

Bibles, Testaments, books, combs, shoes, and clothing. The teachers were paid a shilling a day.

Improvements rapidly followed. In these Wesley and the Methodists took a leading part. Wesley at once saw how useful they might be made. As early as 1784 he writes: "I find them springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of our schools may become nurseries for Christians?" The children of Church-members were brought in also. They began to teach "reading, writing, and religion." "Inquisitors" were appointed, whose office it was to spend Sunday afternoon in visiting the schools to ascertain who were absent and then seek the absentees at their homes or in the public streets—a custom well worth following now. Teachers were obtained to serve without pay. This the Methodists were the first to undertake. Singing was next made one of the principal features of the exercises—a most important step—and addresses, made from time to time by ministers, were introduced.

The results were very great. At Leeds twenty-six schools, containing about two thousand scholars, were early established. At Bolton a school was started in 1785, and a few years after had about two thousand scholars. And the average attendance for the first thirty years of its existence was eighteen hundred. "The change in the manners and morals of

the children was marvelous, and about a hundred of them sung like seraphs." Wesley visited it in 1787, and writes: "From Mr. Peel's we went to Bolton. Here are eight hundred poor children taught in our Sunday-schools by about eighty masters, who receive no pay but what they are to receive from their great Master. About a hundred of them, part boys and part girls, are taught to sing, and they sung so true that all singing together there seemed to be but one voice. The house was thoroughly filled while I explained and applied the first commandment. In the evening, many of the children still hovering round the house, I desired forty or fifty to come in and sing 'Vital Spark of Heavenly Flame.' Although some of them were silent, not being able to sing for tears, yet the harmony was such as, I believe, could not be equaled in the King's chapel." Again, in 1788, he visited there, and says: "About there I met between nine hundred and one thousand of the children belonging to our Sunday-schools. I never saw such a sight before. They were all exactly clean as well as plain in their apparel. All were serious and well-behaved. Many, both boys and girls, had as beautiful faces as I believe England or Europe can afford. When they all sung together, and none of them out of time, the melody was beyond that of any theater; and what is best of all, many of them truly fear God, and some rejoice in his salvation.

These are a pattern to all the town. Their usual diversion is to visit the poor that are sick (sometimes six or eight or ten together), to exhort, comfort, and pray with them. Frequently ten or more of them get together to sing and pray by themselves, and are so earnestly engaged, alternately singing, praying, and crying, that they know not how to part."

Such were some of the fruits of Methodism—fruits such as a genuine Christianity must always show. In 1778 he inaugurated another very important enterprise in the publication of the *Arminian Magazine.* Wesley was the editor, and seemingly the principal contributor to the end of his life, publishing in it, among other valuable articles, a number of his best sermons. Besides this, he was continually issuing various other publications on religious and other subjects. Yet he was never flurried under all the various labors thus continually devolving upon him. He writes: "You do not understand my manner of life. Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit. . . . I never spend less than three hours—frequently ten or twelve—in the day alone. So there are few persons in the kingdom who spend so many hours secluded from all company. Yet I find time to visit the sick and the poor; and I must do it if I believe

the Bible." His secret was steady diligence in using every moment of time to the best advantage in his work. He thought lying in bed longer than was necessary—namely, longer than six or seven hours a day for men, and a little longer for women—a great evil; because: "1. It hurts the body. Whether you sleep or no (and indeed it commonly prevents sleep), it as it were soddens and parboils the flesh, and sows the seeds of numerous disorders, of all nervous diseases in particular, as weakness, faintness, lowness of spirits, nervous headaches, and consequent weakness of sight. 2. It hurts the mind; it weakens the understanding; it blunts the imagination; it weakens the memory; it dulls all the nobler affections; it takes off the edge of the soul, impairs its vigor and firmness, and infuses a wrong softness, quite inconsistent with the character of a good soldier of Jesus Christ; it grieves the Holy Spirit of God, and prevents, or at least lessens, those blessed influences which tend to make you not almost but altogether a Christian." He says that "intemperance in sleep" is the cause—what very few people are aware of—why many people have not better health of body or of mind, and advises: "Lie down at ten o'clock and rise between five and six, whether you sleep or no. If your head aches in the day, bear it. In a week you will sleep sound."

The increase of popery and the financial distress

of the country also occasioned long communications from him, the first being published in the *Public Advertiser*, the latter being addressed to Mr. Pitt, the Prime-minister.

As a preacher he seems to have lost nothing of his power. At Madeley "both Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher complained that after all the pains they had taken they could not prevail on the people to join in society; no, nor even to meet in class." But Wesley, on visiting them, preached "two rousing sermons," and "then desired those who were willing to join together for Christian fellowship to call upon him and Mr. Fletcher after service. Ninety-four persons did so—about as many men as women."

He was still aided by devoted and able men. Besides those in Great Britain and Ireland, in America Francis Asbury trod closely in his footsteps, if he did not surpass him in labors. Besides traveling and preaching, he made it a rule to read a hundred pages daily, and to spend three hours every day in prayer. Cabins of the most miserable description were his usual homes; his daily rides were often from thirty to fifty miles over mountains and swamps, through bridgeless rivers and pathless woods, his horse weary, and he himself often cold, wet, and hungry. For forty-five years he made a tour of the States, for the most part on horseback, traveling never less than five

thousand, and often more than six thousand miles a year, frequently through uninhabited forests without a companion or a guide. Usually he preached at least once every week-day and thrice every Sunday. His custom was to pray with every family on whom he called in his wide wanderings. He presided over seven widely separated Conferences every year, and during the same space of time wrote to his preachers and his friends upon an average about a thousand letters. For his services he received sixty-four dollars and his traveling expenses. Early educational advantages he had none; but, notwithstanding all his difficulties, and despite frequently suffering from the maladies arising from his exposure to the malaria of a new country, he became proficient in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew; acquainted with several branches of polite literature, and kept abreast with the history of his times. He rode till he could ride no longer, and then might have been seen moving about on crutches, and helped in and out of his light spring-wagon in which he continued to pursue his wanderings till he died in Baltimore in 1816. Before he died he enjoined that no life of him should be published, and to the present his injunction has been substantially observed.

Others in humble spheres were moved to unusual labors. There was Silas Told, the master of the Foundry school, who made it the great business of

his life to visit the London prisons and preach to debtors and malefactors until there was not a prison in the metropolis, nor scarcely a work-house within twelve miles round it, where he was not a frequent and welcome visitor. The scenes he witnessed were horrible, but for thirty years he continued his work. All sorts of criminals—papists and Protestants—clung to him in their anguish for counsel and consolation. Even turnkeys, sheriffs, and hangmen, though opposing him at first, could not withstand his persistence, and were wont to weep at length with the prisoners under his exhortations and his prayers. He died when nearly seventy years old, and Wesley preached his funeral-sermon.

One of Wesley's strongest supporters was now tottering on the edge of the grave. John Fletcher had for some years been in feeble health. At the Conference in 1777 he entered emaciated, feeble, and ghost-like. In an instant the whole assembly stood up, and Wesley advanced to meet his almost seraphic friend. The apparently dying man began to address them, and soon one and all were bathed in tears. Wesley, fearing he was speaking too much, abruptly knelt at his side and began to pray. Down fell they all and joined in his petition. The burden of their prayer was that their friend might be spared a little longer, until at last Wesley exclaimed with a confidence that thrilled every heart: "He shall not die, but live and de-

clare the works of the Lord!" Nor did he die till eight years after.

Wesley's eightieth birthday was spent in Holland. William Ferguson, one of his local preachers, had removed there, and by his earnest piety and labors attracted great attention, including that of many of the principal inhabitants. He spoke much of Wesley and distributed his sermons. A general wish was expressed to see him; and Wesley, who for forty years had not indulged in a holiday from his incessant labors, passed over to Holland for seventeen days, "partly for relaxation and partly to indulge and enlarge his catholic spirit by forming an acquaintance with the truly pious in foreign nations." His visit was eminently pleasant. Ministers of the churches welcomed him, and persons of high rank showed him honor. At Rotterdam he preached twice in the Episcopal church to large congregations. At the Hague he met a company at the house of a lady of the first rank, and expounded to them the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, Captain M—— interpreting. He held a service on the passenger-boat between Haarlem and Amsterdam, singing and speaking to the people, Ferguson being the interpreter; "and all our hearts," writes Wesley, "were strangely knit together, so that when we came to Amsterdam they dismissed us with abundance of blessings." So he passed the time. When he started for England again, "it

was with the utmost difficulty we could break from them. Two of our sisters, when we left the Hague, came twelve miles with us on the way; and one of our brethren of Amsterdam came to take leave of us to Utrecht, above thirty miles. I believe if my life be prolonged I shall pay them a visit at least every other year."

His cheerful spirit had nothing forbidding in it. His piety had no gloom or sourness. He was not a fanatic, but a sincere and happy Christian. He had humor also, and could afford on occasions to indulge in a little pleasantry. An instance of this it is not inappropriate to quote. It is well known that in 1780 he published a revised and abridged edition of a novel, entitled "The Fool of Quality." This was a source of great perplexity to one section of his admirers. John Easton, one of his itinerants, belonged to these. After John had very freely condemned his conduct to his face, Wesley replied: "Did you read 'Vindex,' John?" "Yes, sir." "Did you laugh, John?" "No, sir." "Did you read 'Damon and Pythias,' John?" "Yes, sir." "Did you cry, John?" "No, sir." Lifting up his eyes and clasping his hands, Wesley exclaimed: "O earth, earth, earth!"

Wesley was much refreshed by his trip to Holland; but at Conference soon after, in the midst of the business, he was seized with alarming illness. His friends thought his end had come, and so did

he himself. For eighteen days he hung between life and death, when he found himself somewhat better. The same day, "being unwilling to be idle," he spent an hour with the Bristol penitents; the day following preached twice, and the day after that set out again on his gospel wanderings.

CHAPTER X.

Deed of Declaration—Organization of the Church in America—Ordination—Virtual Separation—Consecration of Coke—Ceaseless Labors—Dancing and Novel-reading—Proper Style of Preaching—A Beautiful Old Age.

THE year 1784 has been called the grand climacteric year of Methodism. Two movements leading to the erection of Methodism into a distinct and independent Church organization, both in England and America, took place at the Conference of this year. The first was Wesley's execution of his famous "Deed of Declaration," by which he conveyed the possession and use of all his chapels to one hundred of his preachers, designated by name, in trust to hold the same for the promotion of the gospel, and with power, after the death of himself and his brother Charles, to appoint the preachers who should preach in them from year to year, etc. Before this the chapels had all been vested in him and Charles; but there was no provision where their power should be lodged in case of their death, or how it should be exercised. To settle the matter, Wesley executed this deed—reserving, however, to himself and his brother Charles, as a life estate therein, the power to make the ap-

pointments, etc., during the life of both or either of them.

The deed created great excitement. There had been one hundred and ninety-two members of Conference, and of course the selection of the legal one hundred by Wesley made necessary the retirement of the other ninety-two from all the business of Conference. Active opposition was at once aroused against it, and consequences of the most serious kind threatened Methodism for awhile. Five of the principal opponents of the measure at length withdrew, and twenty-five more of the ninety-two eventually followed them. But the crisis passed, and Methodism in England became a permanent, organized, and distinct ecclesiastical body. The itinerancy was also preserved, and Methodism prevented from being merged into Congregationalism.

Another momentous step taken was the episcopal organization of the Methodist societies in America. Hitherto Wesley had refrained, for "many of reasons," from ordaining preachers himself. The Methodists in America had grown rapidly, until now they formed a large body of twelve thousand nine hundred and fifteen members, with forty-six circuits and eighty-three itinerant preachers, besides hundreds of local preachers. The clergymen of the Church of England, comparatively few of whom had remained on the triumph of the colonies at the close of the war, were nearly all little

better than deists, and bitter persecutors of the Methodists. In consequence, the latter demanded the administration of the sacraments from their own preachers. Many had been for years without these sacred ordinances. In 1780 Mr. Wesley had applied to Bishop Lowth for ordination for some of his preachers in America, but was refused, the Bishop saying, "There are three ministers in that country already." Wesley answered him: "Suppose there were three-score of those missionaries in the country, could I in conscience recommend these souls to their care? Do they take care of their own souls? . . . I know what manner of men the greater part of these are. They are men who have neither the power of religion nor the form; men that lay no claim to piety nor even to decency." At length the preachers in Virginia ordained themselves, and began to administer the sacraments. Asbury, a year after, with great difficulty persuaded them to suspend this till further advice could be had from Wesley, and wrote Wesley telling him of the greatness of the work, of the division that was taking place, and of the general uneasiness of the people respecting their unbaptized infants and their inability to partake of the Lord's Supper. The result was that Wesley, at the Conference of 1784, himself, in his select committee of consultation, first proposed the plan which was subsequently carried out. "The preachers were as-

tonished when this was mentioned, and to a man opposed it; but I saw plainly," writes John Pawson, who was present, "that it would be done, as Mr. Wesley's mind appeared to be quite made up." As we have already seen, of his power to ordain others Wesley had no doubt. He shocked Charles in 1780 by saying, "I verily believe I have as good a right to ordain as to administer the Lord's Supper;" and more than once he declared that to believe that none but episcopal ordination was valid "was an entire mistake." Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey were appointed to America; and in a short time afterward he ordained Whatcoat and Vasey as elders and consecrated Coke, who was already a priest of the Church of England, "superintendent" of the work in America, and "as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ." He also wrote to the Methodists of America telling them what he had done, and also that he had "prepared a liturgy little differing from that of the Church of England (I think the best constituted national Church in the world), which I advise all the traveling preachers to use on the Lord's-day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days." He also, as is well known, sent them twenty-five articles of religion, revised from the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. He gives as a reason for his action that the colonies being now independent

"the English Government has no authority over them, either civil or ecclesiastical;" and that while Congress and the various State Legislatures exercised a civil authority over them, "no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all;" and that he conceived himself "at full liberty, as I violate no order and invade no man's rights by appointing and sending laborers into the harvest." He adds that he prefers this to ordination by the English bishops. "It has, indeed, been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America; but to this I object. (1) I desired the Bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. (2) If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. (3) If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them; and how grievously would this entangle us! (4) As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the State and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive Church; and we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely set them free."

These facts show conclusively that Wesley intended to found a distinct and entirely independent Church in America. There was really, upon the

High-church theory, no Episcopal Church in America. Only those who had been reared in the mother country, or had crossed over from America and been confirmed in Great Britain, were communicants; for no bishop of the Church of England had thus far ever come to America. But further, the Church of England did not now have jurisdiction —it did not exist—in America, inasmuch as the laws of England, which alone established it, had now no authority there, while on the other hand no American Episcopal Church had yet been organized. Thus, besides the prelatical theory of "no bishop, no Church," there was, as a matter of fact, then no Episcopal Church in America.

Wesley's act of ordination in England was itself an act of separation of himself from the Established Church, though he constantly but very inconsistently protested it was not. But such was the view taken of it by many others, and great excitement arose. Charles Wesley was scandalized. He wrote to Wesley: "Lord Mansfield told me last year that ordination was separation. This my brother does not and will not see." Wesley wrote, in answer to Charles's assertion that he had been inconsistent inasmuch as he had uniformly refused to ordain any of his preachers in England: "For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question, What obedience is due to 'heathenish priests and mitered infidels?' I have from time to time

proposed my doubt to the most pious and sensible clergymen I knew, but they gave me no satisfaction; rather, they seemed to be puzzled as well as me. Obedience I always paid to the bishops, in obedience to the laws of the land; but I cannot see that I am under any obligation to obey them further than those laws require. It is in obedience to those laws that I have never exercised in England the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe I am a scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in England or in Europe; for the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable which no man ever did or can prove."

Still he contended that this did not involve a separation from the Church of England; that he was still a member of that Church, nor had any desire to separate from it. But he continued his ordinanations, and a year afterward ordained three preachers in Scotland, where the Methodists were situated very much as in America. In 1786 he ordained two more for Scotland, one for Antigua, and one for Newfoundland; 1787, five others; 1788, two more in Scotland, and in 1789 two others. "But," says he, "this is no separation from the Church at all. Not from the Church of Scotland, for we were never connected therewith any further than we are now; nor from the Church of England, for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland. Whatever, then, is done in America or Scot-

land is no separation from the Church of England. I have no thought of this; I have many objections against it. It is a totally different case. 'But for all this, is it not possible there may be such a separation after you are dead?' Undoubtedly it is; but what I said at our first Conference, above forty years ago, I say still: I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead."

In a word, Wesley preferred that those who were not already members of the national Church should remain without it, and even contemplated the separation of those already in it as an event possible in the future, though personally he wished to live out his days in the Church of England. Doubtless he was inconsistent, and Lord Mansfield's assertion was true that in ordaining he thereby actually separated himself from that Church; but it is not surprising, in view of the life-long associations and sympathies of Wesley with his mother Church, that he could not bring himself to admit the fact. But his unswerving devotion to duty and the cause of humanity and of Christ led him, notwithstanding, to still provide for the sheep scattered abroad.

This he did toward the last by relaxing also in various other respects. The demand for services in the chapels at the hours when they were being held in the churches also grew strong, and at last he allowed it, "on condition that divine service never be

performed in the church hours when the sacrament is administered in the parish church where the preaching-house is situated." In 1788 he published a 12mo volume of four hundred and thirty pages—"The Sunday Service of the Methodists"—in reality an altered edition of the Prayer-book, in which material alterations are made in the verbiage, in the forms, in the ritual, and even in the articles of religion. Everywhere the word "priest" is left out and "elder" substituted. The order of confirmation is omitted, as also the form of absolution and some others; and in lieu of the three forms in the Prayer-book for ordaining deacons, priests, and bishops, Wesley gives three forms for "ordaining superintendents, elders, and deacons."

His end was now hastening on; but he hastened no less in the King's business. At eighty-four we find him for five days traversing the streets of London to obtain subscriptions for the relief of poor members of his London society. His *Arminian Magazine* and other publications are issued regularly, and are as racy and able as ever. His traveling, visiting, and preaching are as laborious as forty years before. We find him at Birmingham, after traveling by stage-coach for nineteen hours, immediately entering into the chapel and preaching; the next day off again before five o'clock in the morning, traveling nearly eleven hours, and preaching again at night at Gloucester. On the

next morning he set out again at two o'clock, traveled till half-past four in the afternoon, and preached at Salisbury in the evening. Next morning at four he took chaise to Southampton, where he preached the same day and the next. At one time he makes a seven months' tour; at another, five months'. At another time he devotes himself to writing a book he was anxious to finish. He says, September 26: "To this I dedicated all the time I could spare, till November, from five in the morning till eight at night. These are my studying hours. I cannot write longer in the day without hurting my eyes." He still went through storms and snows as if he were a strong young man. His mind, and heart too, still seemed to retain all the elasticity of his youth, and his interest in every thing about him as fresh as ever. He expresses himself on the subject of dancing and novel-reading, condemning the first as "leading young women to numberless evils," and "recommending very few novels to young persons, for fear they should be desirous of more," and saying, "The want of novels may be more than supplied by well-chosen history." He publishes his sermon on "Dress," and shows that the natural results of fine dress are pride, vanity, anger, and lust. Another sermon on the "More Excellent Way" enforces his views on early rising, business, food, conversation, amusements, and money. On the last he dwells with especial emphasis, and terribly de-

nounces the laying up treasures upon earth. Two other sermons published in 1787—one on "Christian Courtesy," the other on "Former Times Better than These"—are remarkable productions. He speaks of his style of preaching: "Is there need to apologize to sensible persons for the plainness of my style, . . . which I use from choice, not necessity? I could, even now, write as floridly and rhetorically as even the admired Dr. B——; but I dare not, because I seek the honor that cometh from God only. What is the praise of man to me, that have one foot in the grave and am stepping in the land whence I shall not return? Therefore I dare no more write in a fine style than wear a fine coat. But, were it otherwise, had I time to spare, I should still write just as I do; I should purposely decline what many admire—a highly ornamental style. I cannot admire French oratory; I despise it from my heart. . . . God himself has told us how to speak, both as to the matter and the manner. 'If any man speak in the name of God, let him speak as the oracles of God;' and if he would imitate any part of these above the rest, let it be the First Epistle of St. John. This is the style—the most excellent style—for every gospel preacher."

He attends the classes, though it was even now an irksome task. He writes: "1787, November 19.—I began the unpleasing work of visiting the classes. I still continue to do this in London and

Bristol, as well as in Cork and Dublin." He speaks of the itinerant system of Methodism: "It must not be altered till I am removed, and I hope it will remain till our Lord comes to reign upon earth." He meets Howard, the great philanthropist, who writes: "I was encouraged by him to go on vigorously with my own designs. I saw in him how much a single man might achieve by zeal and perseverance, . . . and I determined I would pursue my work with more alacrity than ever." He gives us his experience: "February 24, 1786.—I do not remember to have heard or read any thing like my own experience. Almost ever since I can remember I have been led on in a peculiar way. I go on in an even line, being very little raised at one time or depressed at another. . . . I am very rarely led by impressions, but generally by reason and by Scripture. I see abundantly more than I feel. I want to feel more love and zeal for God."

Three years later, when Wesley was eighty-six years of age, Mr. Alexander Knox visited him, and writes: "I was delighted to find his cheerfulness in no respect abated. It was too obvious that his bodily frame was sinking; but his spirit was as alert as ever, and he was little less the life of the company he happened to be in than he had been three and twenty years before, when I first knew him. Such unclouded sunshine of the breast, in the deepest winter of age and on the felt verge of eternity,

bespoke a mind whose recollections were as unsullied as its present sensations were serene." An incident that happened about the same time illustrates his bright frame of mind. At a large party of friends who were assembled to meet him at dinner, while the meal was in progress he suddenly laid down his knife and fork, clasped his hands, and lifted up his eyes as in the attitude of prayer and praise. In an instant all were silent, and Wesley gave out and sung with great animation:

"And can we forget,
In tasting our meat,
The angelical food which erelong we shall eat,
When enrolled with the blest
In glory we rest,
And forever sit down at the heavenly feast?"

The happy old man, then so near the gates of heaven, quietly resumed his knife and fork.

CHAPTER XI.

The Better Land in View—Fletcher's Death—Charles Wesley's Death—Beginning of the End—Dangers and Duty of the Rich—Wesley's Example—Last Sermons—Last Illness—"The Clouds Drop Fatness"—Wesley Rests from his Labors.

IT was no wonder that Wesley's thoughts now often turned to the better land. There he was soon at last to rest. There almost all of his oldest and best loved friends had preceded him. Vincent Perronet and John Fletcher both departed in 1785. The former was in the ninety-second year of his age. Wesley was in Ireland at the time, and Charles Wesley buried him. For the last twenty years he had enjoyed such a degree of fellowship with God as rarely is experienced by man in this world. He lived chiefly in his library, but when he mingled with his friends was always cheerful. His favorite study was the fulfillment of prophecy, and the second coming and visible reign of Christ on earth.

Fletcher died in triumphant joy. He had on the previous Sunday preached and administered the Lord's Supper in his parish church. Among the last words which he addressed to his loved wife were: "O Polly, my dear Polly, God is love! Shout,

shout aloud! I want a gust of praise to go to the ends of the earth!" Wesley was again absent in the West of England, and unable either to see him or to attend his funeral; but as soon as possible he published a sermon in memory of him, taking the same text as Charles had taken at the death of Perronet: "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright; for the end of that man is peace." He says: "I was intimately acquainted with him for above thirty years. I conversed with him morning, noon, and night without the least reserve during a journey of many hundred miles, and in all that time I never heard him speak one improper word, nor saw him do an improper action. Many exemplary men have I known, holy in heart and life, within four-score years, but one equal to him I have not known—one so inwardly and outwardly devoted to God. So unblamable a character I have not found, either in Europe or in America; and I scarce expect to find such another on this side of eternity."

Charles Wesley was still left. The two brothers had often differed in their views, but had ever been united as one man in affection, in labors, and in manner of life. But now he too began to decline, and early in 1788 it appeared evident that he must soon die. Wesley clung to the hope, however, that he might still live, and wrote him repeatedly urging him to take such measures as were advisable to

his recovery, and expressing his own deep concern for him. He urges him especially to "go out at least an hour a day. I would not blame you if it were two or three. Never mind expense; I can make that up. You shall not die to save charges." Afterward he wrote to Charles's daughter, Sally, and to Samuel Bradburn, then stationed in London, suggesting various remedies that might be of use, and especially that all should join in fervent supplications in behalf of his brother. All was in vain, and on March 29, 1788, Charles Wesley died at the very moment, as was afterward ascertained, that his brother John and the congregation were singing at Shropshire:

> Come, let us join our friends above,
> That have obtained the prize.

Wesley did not know of his death till April 4th, the day before the burial—through the misdirection of the letter which had been sent to inform him of the event—and was unable to get to the funeral. His sorrow was deep, though he said little about it. A fortnight afterward, when at Bolton, he attempted to give out, as his second hymn, the one beginning—

> Come, O thou Traveler unknown;

but when he came to the words,

> My company before is gone,
> And I am left alone with thee,

the bereaved old man sunk beneath emotion that was uncontrollable, burst into a flood of tears, and sat down in the pulpit and hid his face with his hands. The crowded congregation were touched deeply at the sight, singing ceased, and tears filled the eyes of all. At length Wesley recovered himself, rose again, and went through a service which was never forgotten by those who were present.

The following is the obituary, published in the Conference Minutes:

"Mr. Charles Wesley, who, after spending four-score years with much 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 stood still at last.

His least praise was his talent for poetry; although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say that that single poem, 'Wrestling Jacob,' was worth all the verses he himself had written."

Wesley was to tarry three years longer. He now himself began to feel some tokens of decline. He writes, just before Charles's death: "I find, by an increase of years, (1) less activity—I walk slower, particularly uphill; (2) my memory is not so quick; (3) I cannot read so well by candle-light; but I bless God that all my other powers of body and mind remain just what they were." Still his labors did not cease to the last. We have already seen some ac-

count of his work up to 1789. The same spirit and energy continued to manifest themselves in his own activity, and the same solicitude and watchfulness for the welfare of his beloved Zion. At the Conference of 1790, the last that he attended, he made further regulations in regard to the work. Charles Atmore describes him at this time as follows: "Mr. Wesley appeared very feeble; his eyesight had failed so much that he could not see to give out his hymns, yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind and his love toward his fellow-creatures were as bright and ardent as ever." As soon as the Conference was over he set out again on his evangelistic labors, and spent the next three weeks in Wales; thence back again to Bristol, where he spent a month; thence to London, and thence to Rye, to Colchester, to Yarmouth, and various other places, traveling and preaching as incessantly as ever. Meantime he continues an unceasing guardianship over every interest of his Master's kingdom. He gives directions as to prayer-meetings, that none should be continued later than nine o'clock, particularly on Sunday, etc. He "does not like dividing circuits." He exhorts the people to give attention to reading: "It cannot be that the people should grow in grace unless they give themselves to reading. A reading people will always be a knowing people. A people who talk much will know little. Press this upon

them with all your might, and you will soon see the fruit of your labors." He fears there is danger from lukewarmness among the preachers, and writes to Alexander Mather: "No, Aleck, no; the danger of ruin to Methodism does not lie here. It springs from quite a different quarter. Our preachers are many of them fallen. They are not spiritual; they are not alive to God. They are soft, enervated, fearful of shame, toil, hardship. They have not the spirit which God gave to Thomas Lee at Pateley Bridge, or to you at Boston. Give me one hundred preachers who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen, such alone will shake the gates of hell and set up the kingdom of heaven upon earth."

The preaching of perfection he still regarded as of the utmost importance. He says: "This doctrine is the grand deposition which God has lodged with the people called Methodists; and for the sake of propagating this chiefly he appeared to have raised them up." In this connection another extract is worth quoting: "To retain the grace of God is much more than to gain it. Hardly one in three does this; and this should be strongly and explicitly urged on all who have tasted of perfect love."

One of the subjects he most frequently and strongly dwelt upon in his last days was the danger of rich men, and their duty to be liberal. In 1789,

in addition to the utterances on the same theme he had already given to the world, he published his sermon on the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, in which he addresses rich Methodists: "O how pitiable is your condition! And who is able to help you? You need more plain dealing than any men in the world, and you meet with less. For how few dare to speak as plain to you as they would to one of your servants! . . . O that God would give me acceptable words, and cause them to sink deep into your hearts! Many of you have known me long—well-nigh from your infancy. You have frequently helped me when I stood in need. May I not say you loved me? But now the time of our parting is at hand; my feet are just stumbling upon the dark mountains. I would leave one word with you before I go hence, and you may remember it when I am no more seen. O let your heart be whole with God! Seek your happiness in him and him alone. Beware that you cleave not to the dust! This earth is not your place. See that you use this world as not abusing it; use the world and enjoy God. Sit as loose to all things here below as if you were a poor beggar. Be a good steward of the manifold gifts of God."

Again, in February, 1790, he wrote a sermon on "The Rich Fool;" in July afterward, one on Jeremiah viii. 22, on "Why has Christianity done so little good in the world?" in which he gives it as

one great obstacle, the refusal of professing Christians to give as they should. And again he wrote another sermon, September 21, on the text, "If riches increase, set not your heart upon them." In these last sermons he again and again enforces the duty of giving in the most solemn and intensely anxious manner. "O that God would enable me once more," says he, "before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who gain and save all they can, but do not give all they can. Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and in a great measure stop his gracious influence from descending on our assemblies. Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus distressed? Because you impiously, unjustly, and cruelly detain from them what your Master and theirs lodges in your hands on purpose to supply their wants. In the name of God, what are you doing? Do you neither fear God nor regard man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry and cover the naked with a garment? Have you laid out in your own costly apparel what would have answered both these intentions? . . . This idle expense has no approbation either from God or your own conscience. But you say you can afford it. O be ashamed to take such miser-

able nonsense into your mouths! Never more utter such stupid cant, such palpable absurdity! Can any steward afford to be an arrant knave, to waste his lord's goods? Can any servant afford to lay out his master's money any otherwise than his master appoints him? So far from it that whoever does this ought to be excluded from a Christian society. I am distressed. I know not what to do. . . . Is there no means to hinder riches destroying the religion of those that possess them? I can see only one possible way; find out another who can. Do you gain all you can and save all you can? Then you must, in the nature of things, grow rich. Then, if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, give all you can; otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation than for that of Judas Iscariot. I call God to record upon my soul that I advise no more than I practice. I do, blessed be God, gain and save and give all I can; and so, I trust in God, I shall do while the breath of God is in my nostrils. But what then? I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus my Lord. Still,

> I give up every plea beside;
> Lord, I am damned, but thou hast died."

And once again, in a sermon written September 25, 1789, he had thus adverted to one especial danger attending the love of money: "How great is the darkness of that execrable wretch (I can give him no better title, be he rich or poor) who will

sell his own child to the devil; who will barter her own eternal happiness for any quantity of gold or silver! What a monster would any man be accounted who devoured the flesh of his own offspring! And is he not as great a monster who, by his own act and deed, gives her to be devoured by that roaring lion?—as he certainly does (so far as is in his power) who marries her to an ungodly man. 'But he is rich; he has £10,000.' What if it were £100,000? The more the worse; the less probability will she have of escaping the damnation of hell. With what face wilt thou look upon her when she tells thee in the realms below: 'Thou hast plunged me into this place of torment. Hadst thou given me to a good man, however poor, I might now have been in Abraham's bosom.' . . . Man, woman, think what you are about. Dare you also sell your child to the devil? You undoubtedly do this (as far as in you lies) when you marry a son or a daughter to a child of the devil, though it be one that wallows in gold and silver. O take warning in time! Beware of the gilded bait! Death and hell are hid beneath. Prefer grace before gold and precious stones; glory in heaven to riches on earth. If you do not, you are worse than the very Canaanites. They only made their children pass through the fire to Moloch; you make yours pass into the fire that never shall be quenched, and to stay in it forever."

It was no idle boast of Wesley's that what he advised in this respect he practiced. He left no money at his death except what was on his person or in his bureau-drawer at London, though he had gained large sums from the sale of his books. His biographer, Mr. Moore, writes: "Mr. Wesley's accounts lie before me, and his expenses are noted with the greatest exactness. Every penny is recorded, and I am persuaded the supposed £30,000 [the amount another had estimated he had given away in his life-time] might be increased several thousand more." And this too without spending any thing scarcely upon himself. From his account-book, for instance, we find that in 1782 he received £361 19s. into his own hands. Of this he spent £5 19s. for clothes, and gave all the rest away himself; and besides directed his book agent, John Atlay, to give away a further sum of £237 13s.—making £593 13s. for the year. In 1783 he gave away in the same way £832 1s. 6d.; in 1784, £534 17s. 6d.; in 1785, £851 12s.; in 1786, £738 5s.; in 1787, including his traveling expenses, £961 4s.; in 1788, £738 4s. At the end of his accounts for 1789 he writes: "I have given this year by myself £206; by George Whitefield, £560; traveling, £60. But I can be accurate no [the sentence is unfinished]. 'Not as I will, but as Thou wilt.'"

The faithful steward now drew near to render up his account. October 6, 1790, at Rye, beneath an

ash-tree in the church-yard, he preached for the last time in the open air from "the kingdom of God is at hand," etc. An eye-witness writes: "The word was attended with mighty power, and the tears of the people flowed in torrents." On the evening of the same day he preached again at Rye. At Colchester soon after, he found the society "lessened and cold enough" through the interference of a reverend gentleman who had used his utmost endeavors, and even made use of gifts and bribes to break up the Methodist society there. Wesley was annoyed, and said in his sermon: "I understand there is a sheep-stealer in Colchester who takes both sheep and lambs from his neighbor's fold at will. Now, I charge that man to desist, or to meet me and answer for his deeds at the bar of God in the day of judgment." The guilty man was present; and his subsequent conduct showed that he was not a forgetful hearer. One of his hearers thus describes his appearance: "He stood in a wide pulpit, and on each side of him stood a minister, and the two held him up, having their hands under his arm-pits. His feeble voice was scarcely audible; but his reverend countenance, especially his long, white locks, formed a picture never to be forgotten. There was a vast crowd of lovers and admirers. It was for the most part a pantomime, but the pantomime went to the heart. Of the kind I never saw any thing comparable to it in after life." Still

he traveled and preached every day. At Yarmouth the poet Crabbe heard him, and was greatly struck with the reverend appearance of the aged preacher, with his cheerful air, and the beautiful cadence he gave to some lines that he quoted; and after the sermon was introduced to him, and was received with benevolent politeness.

His last entry in his published journal is as follows:

"Sunday, October 24.—I explained to a numerous congregation in Spitalfield's church 'the whole armor of God.' St. Paul, Shadwells, was still more crowded in the afternoon while I enforced that important truth, 'One thing is needful;' and I hope many even then resolved to choose the better part."

So he ended the year 1790. The new year saw him still laboring in his loved employ, though "in age and feebleness extreme." Besides preaching, he wrote various letters—letters of consolation to bereaved persons; of direction for the work to his preachers; of instruction to inquiring Christians. Among them was one to Ezekiel Cooper, one of his preachers in America, exhorting him to "lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world." The last sermon he wrote was about six weeks before his death, on "Faith the evidence of things not seen," though another, on "Life like a dream," was being printed on the very day when his corpse lay in City Road

Chapel. In both he muses deeply upon the unseen and spiritual world into which he felt he must soon enter. Imagining himself already a disembodied spirit, he thus soliloquizes: "Now that your eyes are open, see how inexpressibly different are all the things that are now around you! What a difference do you perceive in yourself! Where is your body? your house of clay? Where are your limbs? your hands? your feet? your head? There they lie—cold, insensible! What a change is in the immortal spirit!" And again: "How will this material universe appear to a disembodied spirit? Who can tell whether any of these objects that now surround us will appear the same as they do now? What astonishing scenes will then discover themselves to our newly opening senses! . . . Above all, the moment we step into eternity shall we not feel ourselves swallowed up of Him who is in this and every place, who filleth heaven and earth?"

He was soon to know. On Thursday, February 17, 1791, he preached at Lambeth. Returning home, he seemed unwell, and said he had taken cold; but on Friday read and wrote as usual, and preached at Chelsea in the evening on the text, "The king's business requireth haste;" but once or twice was compelled to stop and rest. Saturday he spent principally in reading and writing. On Sunday he rose at his usual hour, but had to lie down again at seven o'clock, and slept above three

hours; and in the afternoon he had to go to bed again and sleep. On Monday he seemed better, and went out to dine, according to engagement; and on Tuesday resumed his usual work, preaching at City Road Chapel from the text, "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;" after which he met the leaders. On Wednesday he rose at four o'clock and rode eighteen miles to Leatherhead, where he preached for the last time, in the dining-room of a magistrate, from the words, "Seek ye the Lord, while he may be found; call upon him while he is near." The next day he rose again at four, and passed the day with his old friend Mr. Wolff, at Balham, where he was cheerful, and seemed nearly as well as usual, and wrote his last letter—one addressed to Mr. Wilberforce, encouraging him to go on with his work in opposition to slavery. Next day he came home, and became so unwell that the doctor was sent for. February 26, 27, and 28, his strength gradually declined. Much of the time he slept; at intervals he would awake, and could be heard saying in a low, distinct voice: "Christ is all! he is all!" "There is no way into the holiest but by the blood of Jesus;" "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might become rich," etc.; "That is the foundation, the only foundation; there is no other!"

and such like expressions. On March 1, after a restless night, being asked if he were in pain, he said "No," and began singing:

> "All glory to God in the sky,
> And peace upon earth be restored!"

But after singing two stanzas his strength failed. "I want to write," said he. A pen was put in his hand, but he could not use it. "Let me write for you," said Miss Ritchie; "tell me what you wish to say." "Nothing," he replied, "but that God is with us." "I will get up," said he; and while his friends were arranging his clothes, he again sung, "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath," etc., through two stanzas. Once more seated in his chair, he said in a weak voice: "Lord, thou givest strength to those that can speak, and to those that cannot. Speak, Lord, to all our hearts, and let them know that thou loosest tongues;" and again began to sing his last song on earth:

> "To Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,
> Who sweetly all agree."

But here his voice failed, and after gasping for breath he said: "Now we have done; let us all go." Full of happiness, but utterly exhausted, he was put to bed; when, after a short but sweet sleep, he opened his eyes and said to the weeping friends around, "Pray and praise;" and of course they complied. Then he gave directions about his fu-

neral, and again called out, "Pray and praise!" and again they prayed and sung praises to God. They then again approached his bedside, when he said with the utmost placidity, "Farewell, farewell!" He tried to speak, but they could not make out what he said, except that he wanted his sermon on "The love of God to fallen man" to be "scattered abroad and given to everybody." Seeing they could not understand him, he paused; and then summoning all his strength exclaimed, in a tone well-nigh supernatural, "The best of all is, God is with us!" And then after another pause, lifting his arm in grateful triumph, he reiterated, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

Once more nature was exhausted. His sight now was so nearly gone that he was unable to recognize the features of those by his bedside. "Who are these?" he asked. "Sir," said Mr. Rogers, "we are come to rejoice with you; you are going to receive your crown." "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes," replied Wesley. Charles's widow having come to see him, he affectionately tried to kiss her, and remarked, "He giveth his servants rest." She wet his lips, when he repeated his usual thanksgiving after meals: "We thank thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies. Bless the Church and king, and grant us truth and peace, through Jesus Christ our Lord, forever and ever!" Then pausing a little, he cried,

"The clouds drop fatness!" And after another pause: "The Lord of hosts is with us! the God of Jacob is our refuge! Pray and praise!" And again his friends fell on their knees.

Scores of times during the night he repeated the words, "I'll praise! I'll praise!" but could say nothing more. Next morning a few minutes before ten, Joseph Bradford, so long his faithful friend and traveling companion, prayed with him. "Farewell!" cried Wesley—the last words he uttered—and then, while Bradford was saying, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors, and this heir of glory shall come in!" Wesley gathered up his feet in the presence of his brethren, and without a groan or a sigh was gone. He died about ten o'clock A.M. Wednesday, March 2, 1791.

As soon as he was dead, his friends stood about his corpse—as Wesley, with his brothers and sisters, himself had done about their mother's body—and sung:

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

And then they knelt down and prayed that his mantle might rest upon his followers. His remains were interred behind the chapel in City Road on the 9th of March, at 5 o'clock A.M.

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