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VOLUME I

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF METHODISM IN THE CHRISTIAN
CHURCH

BOOK I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF METHODISM

BOOK II

BRITISH WESLEYAN METHODISM

BOOK III

BRITISH BRANCHES OF METHODISM

VOLUME II

BOOK IV

METHODISM BEYOND THE SEAS

BOOK V

METHODIST FOREIGN MISSIONARY ENTERPRISE

BOOK VI

METHODISM TO-DAY



JOHN WESLEY

1741-1803

after the painting by J. M. WILLIAMS, R.A., 1801

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College, Manchester

EDITED BY
W. J. TOWNSEND, D.D.
H. B. WORKMAN, M.A., D.LIT.
GEORGE EAYRS, F.R.HIST.S.

IN TWO VOLUMES, ILLUSTRATED

VOLUME I

According to this time it shall be said,
What hath God wrought!—NUM. xxiii. 23.

*Wesley's Text on laying the Foundation Stone
of City Road Chapel, London, 1777.*

HODDER AND STOUGHTON
LONDON MCMIX

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PREFACE

FOR some time a History of Methodism has been required which should utilize the results of recent study upon the origins of the Methodist churches, manifest the sense of their oneness which all feel increasingly, and set forth world-wide Methodism as a branch of the Church Catholic with its own notes and an essential unity underlying its several forms in many lands.

A New History of Methodism is designed to do this. It may claim this title, since not only is it the result of fresh study of the sources, but its plan and method have not been previously employed in Methodist histories. The chapters of the *History* have been prepared by several contributors. In our judgement the time is past for one author to produce such a history. As was said by the late Bishop of London (Dr. Mandell Creighton) in approving this plan for the *Cambridge Modern History*, 'The task is too large, its relations are too numerous and too indefinite, for any one mind, however well stored, to appreciate them all.' Moreover, this method has permitted the co-operation of representative historians of the several branches of Methodism, and of authors specially familiar with the various subjects dealt with. For the first time the several sections of Methodism

find this separate and collective treatment in the same history.

While accepting a general standpoint necessary to the unity of the work, the contributors have been left free to express their frank judgement of men and movements. All the writers are Methodists; each is strongly attached to the section of which he has written, and has frankly told its story as he conceives it. Happily, all of them see more clearly than did some of their predecessors that when good men adopted different courses all the wisdom was not on one side nor all the error on the other. Both sides are told here. We think that the work gains by these complementary surveys of the same events and workers. The fullest account of them is given in the story of that section whose development they most deeply affected. Shorter statements appear in other related sections. This method has sometimes involved slight repetitions; but this was preferred to the loss of clearness or natural sequence. All these lights and side-lights upon the same facts and persons are gathered together in an ample Index arranged by Mr. Eayrs, by whom the first proposals and plan of the *History* were made. Reference to distinguished workers who are still serving Methodism has been avoided, except in a few cases where completeness required mention of them.

A general list of authorities, prepared by Dr. Workman, is furnished in the second volume; the special authorities for each chapter are given at the head of it. The illustrations have been reproduced from authentic representations. Special attention has been given to this feature by the Rev. Thomas E. Brigden.

The Editors acknowledge their indebtedness to the Rev. Dr. W. Robertson Nicoll, Mr. Thomas Seccombe, M.A., Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley (New York City), and others, for their valuable suggestions; and to Professor Faulkner, of Drew Theological Seminary, Madison, New Jersey, for important assistance besides that rendered as contributor. Professor Tipple, of the same Seminary, made possible the reproduction of the likeness of Bishop Asbury which appears as the frontispiece to the second volume; and by kind permission of the Rev. John S. Simon, Governor of the Didsbury College of the Wesleyan Methodist Theological Institution, we are able to give the unique and most characteristic portrait of Wesley which is the frontispiece to this volume.

The Editors desire also to express their cordial appreciation of the fraternal co-operation of the contributors near and far in producing a comprehensive history of the Methodism which they love in common. They unite with them in devoutly hoping that the work will be of service everywhere to the people called Methodists, and draw them into closer fellowship and united labour.

W. J. T.
H. B. W.
G. E.

Easter, 1909.

ERRATA

- Page 40, note 1, for 'never,' read 'rarely.'
- „ 188, line 15, for 'good,' read 'gold.'
- „ 204, „ 17, „ 'movement,' read 'moment.'
- „ 244, „ 11, „ 'Father of everlasting love,' read 'Father, whose everlasting love.'
- „ 254, lines 8 and 9, for 'Blessed are the poor in heart,' read 'Blessèd are the pure in heart.'
- „ „ line 10, for 'Holy Spirit, pity me,' read 'Holy Spirit! pity me.'
- „ 291, lines 8 and 9, for 'pointed. By his Deed of Declaration his interest in these properties was transferred to the Conference,' read 'pointed, who generally held them for preachers appointed by Wesley and later by the Conference.'
- „ 304, delete side date, 1782.
- „ „ line 1, for 'An Act was also passed permitting Protestant Dissenters,' read 'Not until 1836 was an Act passed permitting Dissenters.'
- „ 390, note 1, for '1724,' read '1794.'

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ABBREVIATIONS

THE following abbreviations are frequently used in the references, notes, and Index. For the works themselves, the editions, and dates, the reader should consult the GENERAL LIST, Volume II. Appendix A, under the author's name.

B.C.M. . . .	. . .	Bible Christian Methodists.
CW . . . .	. . .	Charles Wesley.
<i>DNB</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Dictionary of National Biography.</i>
<i>EMP</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Lives of Early Methodist Preachers.</i>
<i>HM</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>History of Methodism.</i>
<i>HWM</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>History of Wesleyan Methodism.</i>
JAMES, <i>VRE</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Varieties of Religious Experience.</i>
JW or <i>JW</i> . . . .	. . .	John Wesley or <i>John Wesley.</i>
<i>LQR</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>London Quarterly Review.</i>
<i>LW</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Life of Wesley</i> (except Rigg, <i>LW</i> , <i>infra</i>).
M. or Meth. . . .	. . .	Methodist, Methodists, or Methodism, as required.
M.C.A. . . . .	. . .	Methodist Church of Australasia.
M.C.C. . . . .	. . .	Methodist Church of Canada.
M.E.C. . . . .	. . .	Methodist Episcopal Church (U.S.A.).
M.E.C.S. . . . .	. . .	Methodist Episcopal Church South (U.S.A.).
M.N.C. . . . .	. . .	Methodist New Connexion.
P.M.C . . . . .	. . .	Primitive Methodist Church.
RIGG, <i>LW</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Living Wesley.</i>
RYLE, <i>CL</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>Christian Leaders of the Eighteenth Century.</i>
STEPHEN, <i>ELS</i> . . . .	. . .	<i>English Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century.</i>
U.M.C. . . . .	. . .	United Methodist Church.
U.M.F.C. . . . .	. . .	United Methodist Free Churches.
W.H.S. or <i>WHS</i> . . . .	. . .	Wesley Historical Society.
W.M.C. . . . .	. . .	Wesleyan Methodist Church.
<i>WMM</i> . . . . .	. . .	<i>Wesleyan Methodist Magazine.</i>
<i>WM</i> . . . . .	. . .	<i>Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference.</i>
<i>WW</i> . . . . .	. . .	<i>Wesley's Works.</i>
n. . . . .	. . .	Footnote on page cited

To the Reader

Who faulteth not, liueth not; who mendeth faults is commended. The Printer hath faulted a little: it may be the Author ouersighted more. Thy paine (Reader) is the least; then erre not thou most by misconstruing or sharpe censuring; lest thou be more vncharitable than either of them hath been heedlesse: God amend and guide vs all.

ROBARTES, *On Tythes* (Cambridge, 1613)

INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF METHODISM IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

CREDO IN SPIRITUM SANCTUM,
SANCTAM ECCLESIAM CATHOLICAM,
SANCTORUM COMMUNIONEM

All at once I looked up with terror.
He was there.
He himself with his human air.
No face : only the sight
Of a sweepy garment, vast and white,
With a hem that I could recognize.
My mind filled with the cataract,
At one bound of the mighty fact.
' I remember, he did say
Doubtless, that, to this world's end.
Where two or three should meet and pray,
He would be in the midst, their friend ;
Certainly he was there with them !'

BROWNING, *Christmas Eve.*

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INTRODUCTION

THE PLACE OF METHODISM IN THE LIFE AND THOUGHT OF THE CHURCH

AUTHORITIES.—See General List. References on certain special points have been occasionally introduced into the Notes. For Deism see General List, § A II. (c). The reader desirous of further knowledge of Mysticism may refer to the following: INGE, *Christian Mysticism* (1899); JAMES, *Varieties of Religious Experience* (= *VRE*), cc. 16 and 17; ROYCE, *The World and the Individual*; MÆTERLINCK, *Ruysbroeck and the Mystics* (1894), or the older VAUGHAN, *Hours with the Mystics*. The works of Tauler, Eckhart (see also UEBERWEG, *Hist. Phil.* i.), Suso, St. John of the Cross, Juliana of Norwich, St. Theresa, and other mystics are now accessible in cheap editions and translations. Law, Thomas à Kempis, and the *Theologia Germanica* must not be overlooked.

I

IN the writing of history few will deny that the formation of accurate generalizations is more difficult than the discovery or narration of the true facts. Many writers have been so impressed with the absence of law in human phenomena, or rather with the difficulty of discerning in phenomena the regulative laws of progress, that they have denied the possibility of any philosophy of history worth the name. The need, they claim, is the accurate presentation of the facts themselves. From these each student must form his own conclusions; their value is little other than the reflection of his bias.

THE
PHILOSOPHY
OF
HISTORY.

Whether a philosophy of history is possible it is not our present purpose to discuss. Nevertheless we may maintain that if it is impossible this is not because of the crooked nature of the phenomena of history, but by reason of the limitations of the powers of the observer. The study of a fact in nature demands the keenest observation of the trained intellect. But no intelligence can reconstruct

Its
limitations
and
reality.

more than the barest outlines of the past ; again, we are all too much a part of the present, with its struggles and tumults, to understand fully that in which we ourselves are actors. In history, as in all human matters, we work in the dark, speculating upon, rather than proving, the elemental passions and motives which have shaped the destinies of centuries. That the forces which underlie the activities of men are not blind, but rather are moving towards some goal that as yet we do not see, by ways which we cannot always discern, is, to the Christian at all events, a self-evident truth. If we cannot prove this conclusion from our incomplete survey of history itself, we deduce it from the fundamental premisses of our faith. The kingdom of God may not come with observation ; nevertheless we believe that it is slowly rising in our midst. At times we catch glimpses of the laws which underlie its growth ; we see the Master-builder laying deep the foundations, or building thereon an imperishable structure.

Especially
in the
history of
the Church.

If for the Christian these things are so in the region of general history, much more are they true of the history of the Church. For the history of the Church is but the story of the growth of the kingdom of God. However difficult may be the discovery of the laws of that growth, that such laws exist must be axiomatic for all who believe in the kingdom itself. For in the study of ecclesiastical history we find more than the mutable actions of weak or passionate humanity. That in the affairs of the Church human nature exists, passionate enough and mutable enough, we do not deny. But, in considering the final design, it is the Potter that counts even more than the clay ; the wheel and the Hand that turns it are fashioning an ordered result.

Which
posits the
activities
of the Holy
Spirit.

We begin, then, our survey of the place of Methodism in the life-history of the Church with this postulate : that the history of the Church is the story of the workings of the Divine Potter ; and that underlying all the phenomena of spiritual life and thought we may discern, if we will, the activities of the Holy Spirit. A sect of the thirteenth century known as Joachimists—or the believers in a work

called *The Introduction to the Eternal Gospel*—claimed that theirs was the age of the Holy Spirit, that the dispensation of the Father had been succeeded by that of the Son, who in His turn had given place to the Spirit. In one sense we may acknowledge that Joachim di Fiori and his followers spoke the truth. We cannot understand any other standpoint for the ecclesiastical historian. The story of the Church is not the dull record of strife, stagnation, decay, or change; nor can it be constructed by the postulation of *à priori* conditions to which all its phenomena must bend, or be rejected. In any scientific study of the dispensation of the Holy Spirit we must form our laws of the growth of the kingdom, not by enunciating *à priori* dogmas, but by observing the conditions under which He has worked. Who has produced in different forms and diverse manners that continuity of life of which in all ages He is the Lord and Giver.

To the student approaching the study of Church history from this standpoint, the question of the place of Methodism, or for that matter of any form of faith, assumes a new meaning. The dogmatist, claiming a knowledge of essential truth as pretentious as it is unwarranted, is eager to judge a religious movement by the agreement of its record with certain *à priori* notions—for instance, the dogma of Apostolic Succession. The scientific historian, unable thus to brush aside concrete facts because they do not fit in with his prejudices, will patiently examine the phenomena in question as part of a vast field of similar phenomena, all of which in their different ways are manifestations of the one life. Every communion of thinkers, every phase of faith, has its place in and its relation to the great whole, and plays some part, possibly *protestant* and transient merely, in the progress and development of the one Holy Catholic Church.

To most of our readers these remarks will appear trite and commonplace. Unfortunately the dogmatism of certain theologians renders it necessary for us thus to claim that Methodism has a place in the development of the kingdom of God, and, so far as we can judge from existing phenomena,

Ecclesiastical phenomena not to be judged by *à priori* standards.

The absurdity of this method when applied to Methodism.

forms part of His divine plan. A Church which enfolds some thirty million adherents, which is to-day the largest Protestant Church in the world, which has established itself in every quarter of the globe, which is so manifestly a *fact* in the sphere of the spiritual, must either have a meaning and place, or we must give up the attempt scientifically to study Church history from phenomena, and fall back upon the narrow horizons and attenuated conceptions of the *à priori* dogmatist.

The development
of ideas.

One other postulate is involved in our position. For us the history of the Church is the record of development. With the final form that the life and doctrine of the Church may assume we are not concerned ; this we are content to leave to the Will of the Spirit, Whose immanence in all spiritual matters we dare not deny. But running through the ages we see ever developing purpose, ever expanding ideas. As in thought, so in the sphere of the spiritual. The implicit of one age becomes the explicit of the next. Life in its richness is ever assuming varied forms, while conserving the one mystical unity. These new forms in their turn lead to the apprehension of deeper ideas. The doctrine of the Trinity, so imperfectly apprehended in the second century, becomes the clear conviction of the fourth ; theories of Atonement which to Anselm were convincing necessarily give place to other ideas. Thus every age contributes something to the unfolding of the one eternal truth, provided always that it has the necessary *continuum* of life. The question therefore underlying any spiritual movement—Montanism, Monasticism, Puritanism, Methodism, and the like—is of the fact of its life ; of the *idea* that the movement embodies ; of its contribution, temporary or permanent, to the total of truth and the heritage of mankind ; of the causes which have led it to outlive its usefulness or to take a more enduring place among spiritual forces.

Our
programme
in this
chapter.

From this standpoint of the *Idea* which Methodism represents we would approach our present subject. After an examination into the place thereof in the life and thought of the Church we shall touch upon certain doctrines that may

be regarded as corollaries of the primary 'idea.' Thence we shall pass to the consideration of the similarities and difference between Methodism and other movements which preceded it. The relations of Methodism to Nonconformity, to the Evangelical Revival in the Anglican Church, to the Oxford Movement, and to Mysticism will also receive attention. We shall conclude with claiming for the organization of Methodism in its broad outlines fidelity to that of the primitive Church.

II

Few would deny that the primary *Idea* of Methodism lies in its emphasis of experience. The content and value of this 'idea' we shall investigate later; our first business must be the answer to the question: What was it that led the Methodists thus to emphasize experience? What were the causes, historical and theological, which produced the 'idea'? If it be objected that it were better to know first in what the 'idea' consisted, we answer that by investigating the historical causes we shall obtain a more adequate conception of the contents of the 'idea' itself, and of the place which Methodism takes thereby in the development of the Church.

THE 'IDEA' OF EXPERIENCE.

For our purpose it is not necessary that we go back farther than the Reformation. The Reformation, in its final significance, was the protest of individualism against the excessive solidarity characteristic of the medieval world.¹ In the Roman Church the individual *qua* individual had little or no place. His salvation was conditioned from first to last by his belonging to a corporation, in whose privileges and functions he shared; through whose sacraments his life was nourished; by whose graduated hierarchy, though but the meanest servant of the Church, he was linked on to the supreme head; whose saints shielded him by their merits and intercessions. Through this corporation alone was he brought into touch with his Saviour; outside the corporation

Its history: the Medieval Church.

¹ See Allen, *Continuity of Christian Thought* (1895), pp. 241 ff; a very suggestive volume.

his soul was lost. In this corporation all national distinctions were obliterated ; the Church was majestically one in creed, ritual, discipline, and language. The grandeur of the idea few will dispute ; its extraordinary hold for long centuries upon the consciences of men testifies to the strength of its appeal. In the Roman Church the individual, as Faber assured us from his own experience, realized the peace which passes all understanding as he thus escaped from the burden of his individuality, and found rest from storm and passion in the consciousness of his oneness with an innumerable company of others, holier, wiser, stronger than himself.

The
conscious-
ness of
solidarity.

This consciousness of solidarity fitted in with all the conceptions, political and philosophical, of the times. In politics the ruling idea was the figment of the Holy Roman Empire, that unrealized and unrealizable dream of the unity of all men in one world-state, whose heads, pope and kaiser, were the co-regents of God. For as soul and body are but one, so also were pope and kaiser in their mutual dependence. The one was the antitype of the other ; the emperor a civil pope, the pope a spiritual emperor. That this dream was never realized is beside the mark ; it was characteristic of the Middle Ages that they were content not to reconcile belief and practice. But in church and state, in action and in thought, for over a thousand years solidarity was the root-idea of the life of Europe. In social life this manifested itself in the strength of civic feeling, in the power and extent of the guild, and in the many details and regulations whose socialism is so opposed to modern individualism.

Realism
and the
individual.

This same consciousness of solidarity is found in mediæval philosophy. The battle of the Realist and Nominalist, reduced to its final terms, was really a conflict between the claims of the individual and the universal ; nor was it by an accident that Realism, or the assertion of our participation in the universal, was generally allied with orthodoxy. We should do well also to note that Realism, at any rate in its later forms, stood for the protest of the mediæval mind

against any doctrine of illusion. The Realist held that mental ideas are in some sense of the word strict realities—the explanation of this gave rise to the thirteen different schools of medieval Realism which Prantl has distinguished. Thus theologically we may claim that Realism was a form of the doctrine of Assurance, sought by the reduction of the objective world to certain fundamental unities. With the rise of the Cartesian philosophy and its doctrine of innate ideas, Assurance, as we shall see later, would be found in the reality of consciousness.

Against this exaggeration of solidarity the Reformation was a many-sided protest. In place of the Holy Roman Empire we see the rise of separate nations, each determined to work out its life, political and religious, on its own lines. Side by side with this growth of the new nations we see the loss of the old civic spirit, and the destruction of the medieval guild. In place of Realism and Nominalism, we find the Renaissance with its return from the barren search after the universal to the triumphs in art and literature of individual genius. Instead of a salvation conditioned by corporate relations, we find the assertion by Luther of the paramount importance of the inner life of the individual. For whatever else justification by faith may mean it stands for the claim that between the individual and his Saviour no corporation, no priest, no sacrament, no saints may intervene. The diverse creeds of the Reformation—and their very diversity was one of the fruits of this resurrection of individualism—agree at any rate in this fundamental position. But when attempt was made to define more accurately the relation of the individual to God then difficulties began. For this question involved also many others of vital bearing upon life and thought. If the individual's salvation was conditioned by his own "faith"—the technical name in Protestant theology for this individual relation to God—what becomes of the sacraments, how must we interpret them; what becomes of the Church; what is the relation of this faith to consciousness; above all, what are the limits and claims of authority, and wherein must that authority

The Re-
formation.

lie? In the various solutions given to these questions we find the *apologia* of the different Protestant churches.

The Reformers and authority.

As regards authority, the Reformers did not, on the whole, claim this prerogative for the individual. Luther, it is true, seems at times to do so, especially in the liberty he asserts for every man to examine the Scriptures for himself, in his claim that even General Councils may err, and by the daring act of his marriage. But Luther's logic was overruled by the necessities of the age, and by the tendency of his strong personality to identify truth with his own view of it. The peasants' revolt, the excesses of the Anabaptists, as well as his differences with Carlstadt and Zwingli, led him to the assertion of an authority other than that of the individual. For the most part the reformers found this authority in the Scriptures. For an infallible Church they substituted an infallible Book, whose authority and contents they received on grounds which they did not trouble to analyse—the analysis of which, in fact, was forbidden. Others, again, as for instance the Dutch Church, asserted the authority of an unchangeable symbol, and declared the Netherland Confession to be infallible. The result either way was the same. Though the individual's salvation was conditioned by his own subjective act, authority was still wholly external.

In Calvinism all becomes objective.

The position was so contradictory that it was impossible that it could be maintained. To an external authority Calvin added purely objective conditions of salvation; this is no longer the act of the individual, but the result of immutable decrees. Strange as it may seem, this elimination of the individual was the result of the very emphasis that the Reformation placed upon the individual. On one side Calvinism stood for the emphasis of individuality; it placed the individual absolutely face to face with God; there was nothing, not even a Saviour, between. In this we see the secret of the strong, if rugged and dour, manhood which it has always produced, whether in Scotland or South Africa. But this very strength of individuality resulted, by a familiar spiritual paradox, from the overwhelming conscious-

ness of the believer that he was absolutely nothing before God. God and His Will were all and in all; the individual was but the channel for His motions. Whether in heaven or in hell he exists merely for the pleasure of the Eternal, his every action limited and conditioned before all time by sovereign decree. All is viewed, as Spinoza—the representative in philosophy of this creed—would phrase it, *sub specie aeternitatis*; his own nothingness has existed from all eternity, and forms part of an eternal scheme—this last, paradoxically, no mean exaltation for the individual otherwise reduced to a mere ‘worm.’

Thus the ultimate result of the Reformation, on the side of Geneva at least, was the elimination of the individual in the assertion of whose claims and efforts the Reformation had begun. All had become once more external: an external source of authority—not the Church, but the Bible; external conditions of salvation—not the individual’s faith, but immutable decrees. Nor could these conditions be altered by aught that the individual might experience or accomplish.

Strip this creed of its religious power, eliminate from it all sense of mystery, reduce it to frozen metaphysics and the supremacy of reason, rob it of all the nobility which the overwhelming consciousness of the greatness of God had imparted to the merest ‘worm’ that lay at His feet, and the logical result is Deism, the fashionable creed of the early years of the eighteenth century.¹ For if all is immutable decree there is neither need nor logic in prayer or worship; these things are but the idle beating of the wings against the prison bars. The idea of an unrelated and irresponsible God who has foreordained all must be the dissolvent of any belief in the Bible, viewed, as the Puritans viewed it, as the record of His interpositions in the affairs of men. Where all is decree and foreknowledge, miracle is of necessity impossible, and the life and atonement of Jesus, at best, a work of supererogation. In a word, this unrelatedness will express

The
resultant
Deism.

¹ Objection may be taken that Calvinism in the Presbyterians and Independents did not lead to Deism. We answer that it led to Arianism and Socinianism, from which the step to Deism is not great.

itself in the denial of the possibility of all the acts and processes whereby the individual soul has sought to establish relations with its Creator and Redeemer.

The
Methodist
reaction.

In a reaction against this Deism, Methodism had one of its roots. Wesley destroyed Deism, not by his pen, but by his deeds. The Deist had appealed to logic; Wesley, leaving the more logical issues to Butler and Berkeley, appealed to the heart. In place of a frozen theology he gave us a living experience, in which God was not hidden, neither far off, but very nigh. God, said the Deist, is unrelated. Wesley taught once more the great Pauline truth—relation ‘in Christ Jesus,’ the redeemed soul conscious of its sonship to the Father through the Holy Spirit. Prayer, said the Deist, is illogical and absurd; God is not a man that He should change. Wesley’s answer was to teach men how to pray, and so to pray that whether God was changed or not their relations to God were for ever changed. There is nothing mysterious, the Deist claimed, in Christianity. Wesley brought men face to face with the mystery of the Cross. Miracles, the Deist added, are impossible, a manifest contradiction. Wesley appealed to experience itself, and adduced the supreme miracle of life, the break in all continuity exemplified in every conversion of a sinner into a saint, that right-about-face of all the forces of a depraved character the explanation of which is beyond the ken of any merely natural system of ethics.

Its value
shown by
the history
of Deism
in France
and
Germany.

That in the suppression of Deism as a force in English life Methodism played a leading part is fully acknowledged. This is seen the more clearly if we turn to the after career of Deism in France and Germany. In the works of Voltaire, Diderot, and Rousseau we gather the ripe fruit of the teaching of Toland, Collins, Woolston, and other English Deists.¹ Almost all the writers of the *Encyclopædia* were profoundly indebted to their English predecessors, whose teaching they carried still further, applying its powerful dissolvents to the State as well as to religion. But in France there was no Evangelical Revival to deliver her from a movement that

¹ On these writers see *infra*, pp. 125 ff.

ultimately became an engine of destruction. In Germany the effects of Deism were less violent but more lasting. There the Leibniz-Wolffian philosophy, with its system of microcosms and macrocosms, its predetermined harmonies and their optimistic fatalism, and its sentimental coquettings of the ego with its own self, had predisposed the thoughtful to welcome the Deistical writers. 'Illumination,' to use the new name under which Deism masked, rapidly dominated the Lutheran Church, captured the schools and universities, crushed out Pietism, and reduced Protestant Germany to shallow utilitarianism and irrational rationalism. The deliverance effected by Butler and Wesley in England, in Germany was but partially accomplished by Herder. The influence of the German poet, with his love of Christianity as the beautiful, will not for one moment compare with that of the English evangelist consumed with the passion for souls, not the beautiful or cultured, but common sinners.

But the Deistic controversy was not without its good side—the effort, however exaggerated and superficial, to make use of reason as the gift of God for the discovery and investigation of truth. At the beginning of the eighteenth century it was still necessary to vindicate the right of every man to think freely. The error of Deism lay in the claim that unassisted reason was sufficient for all human needs. The danger of its opponents, especially if narrow-minded and illiterate men, was rather, the exaltation of faith into something independent of reason. That Methodism has emancipated itself from this danger, though not without toil and trouble, is due to the emphasis laid by Wesley throughout his life upon logic and argument. In the case of other leaders a religion that set out to overthrow the dogmas of rationalism by its vindication of the claims of a living experience might have degenerated into a disastrous appeal to emotion and feeling. But Wesley, by teaching his followers to think,¹ set before his societies a better ideal.

Methodism
and the
appeal to
reason.

¹ See especially his *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason*, in which he refuses to be misled by the specious argument of Dodwell (1742) that 'Christianity is not founded on argument.'

The
Reformers
and
authority ;
The In-
dependents.

We must retrace our steps. There are other lines of development in thought and life which we should note. We have pointed out that the question of authority was never settled by the Reformers, or rather was settled by them on lines contradictory in some respects to the root idea of the Reformation. It was impossible that such a settlement could be permanent. The Brownists in the reign of Elizabeth, the Independents of the Commonwealth, and the Anglican Latitudinarians of the seventeenth century showed the way to revolt. They claimed for the individual his completest freedom—‘any man,’ said Tillotson, ‘that hath the spirit of a man would break with any church in the world upon this single point,’—freedom no longer hampered by external authority, whether of organic Church, of priesthood, or even of inspired Book. To the authority of this last it is true that the Independents did lip-service. But by allowing each man to interpret the oracles according to his inner light they really reduced the objective to the subjective, and placed the seat of authority, as did the Quakers, in the inner light. In this direction therefore we see once more the ground prepared for a later appeal to experience.

Wesley's
debt to
them.

The appeal to experience of the Wesleys was bound to differ in many respects from the appeal of Quaker or Independent ; it reflected, in fact, as we might expect, the mixed sources from which it sprang as well as the religious experiences through which they had passed. The Wesleys were of sturdy Nonconformist ancestry on both sides ; their grandfather and great-grandfather had lived harassed, distrustful lives under the infamous persecution Acts of the times.¹ Their parents, it is true, had turned their faces on their kinsfolk, and taken refuge in the church which had persecuted them ; but their belief in the authority of that church is less apparent than the strong individuality of judgement which led them in early youth to take this step. The ‘conventicle’ which Susanna Wesley at one time held in the Epworth parsonage showed that she had not wholly

¹ See *infra*, pp. 165-6.

forgotten her early training. The sons, John and Charles, nurtured on High Church doctrine, recognized the authority of an organic Church, but could not tear out their Puritan inheritance of a strong belief in individual judgement, and in the value and reality of individual experience.

In this matter of authority we see one link between Wesley and the Latitudinarians, of whom Archbishop Tillotson may be taken as the representative. In this world of limitations, intensity and breadth can rarely be found working together, and Methodism undoubtedly made for the first rather than the second. Nevertheless the Latitudinarians were not without their influence upon the Evangelical Revival. Throughout life Wesley 'never ceased to be comparatively indifferent to orthodoxy, so long as a man had the witness of the Spirit, proving itself in works of faith.'¹ Stillingfleet's *Irenicon* led Wesley to believe in a Church constituted upon a broad and comprehensive basis, tolerant of different parties within its communion, including his own societies. He would have protested as strongly as Chillingworth against minor differences being made the cause of loss of unity. We believe also that he would have approved of Tillotson's four cautions as to the proper limits within which the right of private judgement should be exercised.² The archbishop's insistence upon the necessity of guides and teachers and of due submission to authority was carried out by Wesley in the formation of his societies. However much the two might have differed on the doctrines of the Atonement, of Future Punishment, or of Assurance—this last to Tillotson a matter of logical proof, or reasonable attestation—in their churchmanship the two were not far apart. Through Tillotson also, or rather through the spirit of the age of which Tillotson was but one representative, there crept into Methodism an unwholesome emphasis upon the prudential value of religion. The self-love which Butler analysed, the 'be good and then you will be happy' of popular writers, was characteristic of a

And to the
Latitudinarians,
1694.

¹ Abbey and Overton, *o.c.* i. 8. See also *infra*, p. 206.

² Tillotson, *Works*, ii. 265-7.

utilitarian and commonplace century, whose 'enthusiasts' even had little sympathy with mysticism. From this inheritance Methodism is not yet wholly delivered.

Wesley's
union of
authority
and
experience.

The conjunction of belief in the authority of an organic church with insistence upon the value and reality of individual experience as the final test, gives to Methodism its special position in the catholic Church. We have the root idea of the Independent joined to the root idea of the Anglican, a primary insistence upon the value of the subjective joined to the constant maintenance of the objective authority of the Church. To plead that Wesley himself held contradictory views as to wherein lay the objective authority of the Church is futile. Whatever may be said about the logic of his churchmanship, it cannot be gainsaid that he insisted throughout life upon external authority as well as upon inner illumination. If his enemies claimed, not without some grounds for their statement, that that external authority was but himself, they would really do him an injustice. Even in his most daring acts of assertion of individual authority, resulting at times, as in his ordination in 1784 of bishops for America, in his violation of the canons of the Church to which he professed allegiance, he believed, rightly or wrongly, that he was but carrying out the powers given to him as a presbyter of that Church. In this double allegiance to the inner illumination as the final court of appeal and to an ill-defined outer authority we see one secret of the struggles which rent Methodism after Wesley's death, the history of which will be told in later chapters. Only slowly do two principles so diverse in origin and tendency learn to accommodate themselves within one system.

Philosophy
in the
eighteenth
century.

Thus far we have dwelt upon movements within the Church. But there was another movement the understanding of which is of the utmost importance. We allude to philosophy. That Wesley, though a keen logician, knew little or nothing of philosophy is beside the mark. The *Zeitgeist*, or spirit of the times, is potent alike in the unconscious and the conscious ; only here and there do we find

souls able to withstand its influence—*rari nantes in gurgite vasto*. As a matter of fact Methodism was profoundly influenced by the drift of philosophy in England. Both alike appealed to experience ; many would claim that both alike exaggerated that appeal by their carelessness in laying down the limits of its validity.

The appeal of philosophy to experience originated with Descartes. In this matter, as in some of its issues, Cartesianism is the counterpart to the Reformation. By his great dictum, *Cogito ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am'), the French thinker laid the sure foundations of Ontology. As some Methodist doctrines must find their ultimate justification in this identification of consciousness and reality, it were interesting to speculate what would have been the result if the extension by Malebranche of the Cartesian doctrine into a mystical vision of all things in God had established itself in Wesley's Oxford.¹ But the speculation is useless, for Oxford had followed the lead of the Jesuits and banned Cartesianism, leaving English philosophy to develop the Cartesian argument on lines of reaction peculiar to itself. Hobbes and Locke twisted the whole matter into one of deductive psychology. In introspection, the examination of the contents of the mind and feelings, they had endeavoured to find the grounds of validity of thought and being. Such an effort was bound to lead to nescience, as indeed we see when Hume, with unflinching logic, carried on the work of Locke and Hobbes to its legitimate conclusion. Introspection as a method for the discovery of truth cannot but end, as he showed, in the demonstration of its own impotence. The analysis of mind resolves all into fleeting sensations, in which we can find neither permanence of the ego nor warrant of belief in aught objective, whether God, morality, or self. The 'waking' of Kant from his 'dogmatic slumbers' saved philosophy from the impasse into which the English school had thus led it. By his categories of thought and his appeal to 'the categorical imperative,' Kant demon-

Its appeal to experience.

¹ The Methodist theologian, Dr. W. B. Pope (*infra*, pp. 53, 478), was much influenced by this idea.

strated once more the necessity of recognizing the authority of that which lies external to ourselves, the contents of which can never be discovered by analysis or introspection.¹

Wesley's
philosophical
position.

But we are anticipating. Wesley knew nothing of Hume or Kant; the *Zeitgeist* influenced him before Hume had shown its logical issue, or Kant pointed out the more excellent way. Nevertheless in any survey of English thought the place of Wesley cannot be neglected. For his appeal to experience was not, as Warburton and other writers of the eighteenth century urged, mere 'enthusiasm,' much less was it the outcome of mysticism. In this appeal he was at one, however unconsciously, with the English school, with an important difference. The philosophers had confined themselves too strictly to intellectual factors. Wesley urged, though not of course in so many words, an enlargement, so as to embrace spiritual phenomena, of the content of the mind to which the philosophers applied their method of introspection. In modern terms, Wesley claimed that spiritual phenomena have a reality of their own which neither scientist nor psychologist can safely ignore.

His claim
for the
validity of
introspec-
tion.

Be this last as it may, there can be no doubt of Wesley's claim for the validity of introspection. Untroubled by any doubt as to the validity of his method, unconscious of how completely he was in sympathy with the philosophic drift of the age, profoundly unaware that that drift must end in absolute nescience, Wesley made his appeal to spiritual experiences and feelings, and claimed that in these we may find objective reality. We see him time after time putting his own soul under the microscope of his relentless self-analysis, and accepting the results as the authoritative decisions of God. To the dangers of this theory, as afterwards illustrated by Hume, and to the correction which time has applied, we shall return later.

¹ On this section the student may be referred to T. H. Green, *Introduction to Hume's Treatise on Human Nature* (1874), E. Caird, *Kant* (1889), and the article on *Cartesianism* by E. Caird in *Encyc. Brit.* See also General List, § A III. (a) and (β).

III

Wesley's appeal to experience, though many-sided, is known in the main, in its theological aspects, as the doctrine of Assurance. This was the fundamental contribution of Methodism to the life and thought of the Church. The question of forgiveness, of relation to God, even the existence of the Trinity itself, was answered by an appeal to one's own consciousness—not the universal consciousness of men, but the enlightened consciousness of the few, the spiritually-minded, to whom God had thus given a 'special understanding.'

THE
DOCTRINE
OF
ASSURANCE.

The manifest difficulty of this restriction Wesley did not attempt to meet; he would have fallen back for justification on the authority of St. Paul. He proclaimed with no uncertain sound, not only that a man may know that his sins are forgiven, but that he has within himself the witness to his own relation to God. In his own consciousness he may find the certitude of the things wherein he believes, of his pardon, adoption, and sonship. One restriction Wesley made, of great importance in its bearing on the religious controversies of the age: this consciousness was no assurance of future perseverance; it was strictly limited to the immediate content of the mind or soul.

Methodists to-day, and, for that matter, Christians in many other branches of the One Church, are so familiar with this position, at any rate in some of its bearings, that they find it difficult to account for the antagonism which the doctrine at first aroused. They hardly realize how new it was as a working principle of life. They forget the time it took for Wesley himself to learn the great truth. The disgust of the age with the first advocates of this doctrine is not difficult to explain. Cultured society was largely under the domination of the Deists. By the majority of the writers of the age, including such Churchmen as Warburton, all reference to the inner light of spiritual discernment was regarded with distrust as 'enthusiasm.' But here were men, not many wise, not many noble, but the

The
antagonism
to the
doctrine.

base-born and erstwhile ungodly, the stonemason Nelson, the cobbler Olivers, common soldiers as Haime,¹ Staniforth and Bond, swearers and lewd livers as the miners of Kingswood, who ran full tilt at the fundamental doctrine of Deism, as they sang, with no uncertain sound :

My God, I am Thine,
What a comfort divine,
What a blessing to know that my Jesus is mine ;

or unconsciously unfolded their philosophy :

We know, by faith we surely know,
The Son of God is come,
Is manifested here below,
And makes our hearts His home ;
To us He hath, in special love,
An understanding given,
To recognize Him from above
The Lord of earth and heaven.

To some extent also the antipathy to the doctrine was political. The staunch Toryism of the age felt that there was danger to the Constitution in the presumption of ignorant underlings to a knowledge denied to their betters. We see this clearly in the well-known letter of the Duchess of Buckingham, the illegitimate daughter of James II., to the Countess of Huntingdon :

I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preaching ; their doctrines are most repulsive, and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks and to do away with all distinctions, as it is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting.

After this we are not surprised to learn that the Methodist Greenfield was actually imprisoned for saying that he knew that his sins were forgiven.²

¹ *Infra*, p. 315.

² *Infra*, p. 325.

At first, also, Wesley, as he acknowledged in his old age, preached the doctrine in an uncharitable and exaggerated form :

When fifty years ago my brother Charles and I, in the simplicity of our hearts, taught the people that unless they knew their sins were forgiven they were under the wrath and curse of God, I marvel they did not stone us.

But this last was precisely what many of the people attempted.

Nor must we overlook the antipathy of the Englishman in every age to a new idea. And the novelty of the idea cannot be gainsaid. Never before in the history of the Church since the writings of St. Paul had the doctrines of Assurance been so clearly enunciated.

Novelty of the doctrine.

This last point is so important that we shall do well to pause for a moment and examine the matter. As regards the position of the Medieval Church there can be no mistake. The doctrine of Assurance was altogether contradictory to the whole scheme of indulgence, penance, purgatory, and sacerdotalism in general. We see this clearly brought out in the tale of one of the saints and doctors of the Church, Gregory the Great, to whom a lady of the bedchamber at the court of Constantinople wrote to say that she could have no peace until Gregory assured her that it was revealed to him that her sins were forgiven. To this the great pope replied that she had required of him a matter that was both difficult and unprofitable—

The Medieval Church.

because thou oughtest not to become secure about thy sins, except when, in the last day of thy life, thou shalt be able no longer to bewail them. But until that day comes, thou oughtest, ever suspicious and ever fearful, to be afraid of faults and wash them with daily tears (*Epp.* vii. 25).

Any other view, in fact, would have been destructive of the priestly machinery of Rome, with the emphasis of *probation* which Gregory did so much to establish. As such the

doctrine of Assurance has received the condemnation of the Council of Trent :

No one can know with a certainty of faith which cannot be subject to illusion, that he has obtained the grace of God. . . . Except by special revelation no one can know whom God hath elected.¹

In modern Romanism, as developed by Alphonso Liguori, Assurance, it is true, has a place ; but it is the assurance which comes from the absolute authority of a father-confessor.²

In this survey of the Medieval Church we have been too sweeping. We have forgotten the Mystics. With the Mystics a doctrine of Assurance was a necessity ; it was part of their constant protest that the kingdom of heaven is within. But to the Mystics, and Wesley's debt to them, we shall return later.

Wyclif.

If from the Roman Church we turn to the Reformers we find the same result, though in a different form. Of this no instance can be more instructive than Wyclif. One of the mistakes of Wyclif's scholastic method is to identify too completely *knowing* and *being* ; but *knowing* with him is a purely intellectual act, totally distinct from consciousness or assurance. As with Wyclif 'charity' is the correlative of 'grace,' we are not surprised that he should claim that 'working by right life, ended after God's will, maketh a man God's child' ; but the assurance of this he denies even more vehemently than St. Gregory. No man, he claims, not even a pope, 'wots whether he be of the church, or whether he be a limb of the fiend.' As a corollary he denies that 'the church can be called the whole body (*universitas*) of faithful travellers.' All that he will allow is that 'as each man shall hope that he be safe in bliss, so he should suppose that he be a limb of Holy Church.' The stern predestination doctrines of Wyclif allowed him no

¹ *Concil. Trident.* vi. cc. 9, 12, 13. Cf. Moehler, *Symbolism* (E.T.) 154 ff. *S. Paul craint de n'estre pas sauve* is the title of a work by the Jesuit Richeome (*Oeuvres*, 1628, i. 627).

² Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vii. 108.

PLATE I



JOHN WYCLIF. (Knoke portrait.)

MARTIN LUTHER, ART. 37. (Cranach.)

JOHN HUS, 1509-1415

JOHN CALVIN, 1509-1564. (Holbein.)

JAMES ARMINIUS, 1509-1609

other outlook ; and Hus in Bohemia, the later Lollards in England, followed his lead.¹

With Calvin a logical doctrine of Assurance is impossible ; Calvin. for inasmuch as the source of salvation is external, in the immutable decrees, the certitude of salvation must take the form of a special external revelation. A revelation of election to damnation is contradictory to the constituents of human nature—that way madness lies. A consciousness of election to salvation is possible ; and, according to the Westminster Confession :

this certainty is not a bare, conjectural, and probable persuasion, grounded upon a fallible hope, but an infallible assurance of faith.

But the *Helvetic Confession* shows the loophole for doubt : ‘ If thou believest and art in Christ, hold without doubt that thou art elect.’ Now, Calvin’s conception of human nature necessitates the possibility of illusion, and this leads, as Calvin owns, to the tortures of anxiety, ‘ the constant struggle of the faithful with their own distrust.’ In this last sentence we find the whole doctrine of Assurance given away. Hence the Westminster Confession, and the Savoy Declaration of 1658 after it, claim that—

this infallible assurance doth not so belong to the essence of faith, but that a true believer may wait long, and conflict with many difficulties, before he be partaker of it.²

When we turn to Luther we are met with a difficulty. Luther. The doctrine of Assurance seems at first sight clearly bound up alike with Luther’s revolt against the medieval doctrine and practice of merit, and with his cardinal principle of justification by faith. What, for instance, could be nearer the Methodist doctrine of Assurance than the following :

Faith is a living deliberate confidence in the grace of God, so certain that for it one could die a thousand deaths. And such

¹ For a fuller analysis of the teaching of Wyclif see my *Dawn of the Reformation*, i. 176, 215.

² See Calvin, *Op.* iii. 24, § 3, fol. 353, c. 2, § 17, fol. 198. Walker, *Creeeds of Congregationalism* (1893), p. 385.

confidence and knowledge of divine grace makes us joyous, intrepid, and cheerful towards God and all creation.

It is impossible for one who hopes in God not to rejoice; even if the world falls to wreck he will be undismayed under the ruins.

Thou must have heaven and be saved already before thou canst do good works.

But even more than in individual passages the doctrine of Assurance is expressed in the salient facts of Luther's spiritual life. With the great German in his strength, as any reader of his *Letters* may see for himself, religion is not so much a doctrine as an experience, the certainty that by faith in Jesus Christ he had a gracious God. With him all real life and blessedness is the outflow of this certainty. Moreover his great historic cry at Worms, 'Gott helfe mir, Ich kann nicht anders,' is the eternal voice of humanity, falling back upon the fundamental experiences of the soul as the justification of action.

His changed
views of
faith.

Why, then, it may justly be asked, did not the doctrine of Assurance become with Luther not merely a recognized part of Protestant theology, but a real factor in the life of the Protestant churches? And probably it would have so become had Luther always been careful to emphasize the truth he undoubtedly held in his better moments, that faith is no mere intellectual acceptance of Christ and His atoning death, even though that acceptance be of a strictly 'apprehensive' or personal kind, but involves a spiritual incorporation of the soul with his Saviour. But Luther's conflict with the 'Enthusiasts' and Anabaptists led to a disastrous obscuration in his primary positions. As Luther grew older his conception of faith became more and more intellectual, till at last it comprised little beyond the assent of the mind to certain articles of an orthodox creed. In his later years Luther's theology grew almost as scholastic as that of the Scotists and Thomists whom he set out to slay, and Melancthon pursued still farther the same mischievous course. When faith is thus reduced to the assent of the intellect it ceases to have that guarantee or

assurance which faith can have only when it is the consciousness of the soul transformed with the passion of love. This is seen clearly when we remember that the identification of faith and belief generally leads to the degradation of morals into a subordinate place—as, alas! in that great blot upon the character of Luther, his justification of the bigamy of Philip of Hesse. But when actions become a secondary element in salvation, assurance—a consciousness resulting from the whole life, one of the elements in which, as Wesley would phrase it, is the witness of our own spirit—is bound to be eliminated. The later history of the Lutheran Church, in many of its aspects, is the record of the desolation caused by thus narrowing faith to ‘pure doctrine.’ Nor must we forget that, in his battle with Erasmus, Luther affirmed in almost reckless language the impotence of the will. Predestination by divine grace, he declared, was unconditional. Melancthon, it is true, broke away from this disastrous theory by propounding his doctrine of *synergism*. But the mischief of degrading faith into assent was already accomplished.¹

When we turn from the Continental Reformers to the Anglican Church we meet with the same difficulty as in the case of Luther. The doctrine of Assurance is undoubtedly taught, at any rate inferentially, both by its great divines and in its *Homilies*.² As illustrations we may give the following from the *Homilies* :

Anglican
Church.

The Spirit which God hath given us to assure us that we are the sons of God, to enable us to call upon Him as our Father.

Have a sure and constant faith ; not only that the death of Christ is available for all the world, but that He hath made a

¹ For a study of Luther's doctrine I may refer to Beard, *Reformation*, 3rd ed. 132 ff. ; Luther, *Works*, ed. Walch, x 1314, 1341, viii. 2623 ff., espec. viii. 2660. Also Augsburg Confess. art. iv. ; Harnack, *Hist. Dogma*, vii. 168-267 ; Lindsay, *Reformation*, i. 426-88 ; Seeberg, *Dogmengeschichte*, and Loof, *Leitfaden zum Stud. d. Dogm.* ; and the *Letters of Luther*, Eng. trans., Currie (1907). In passing one may note that Wesley in his treatment of Luther shows little understanding or sympathy (cf. *Journal*, i. 296).

² Wesley gives several passages in his *Earnest Appeal* and *Further Appeal*. In 1739 he extracted all these into a tract which ran through thirteen editions before 1770.

full and sufficient sacrifice for thee, a perfect cleansing of thy sins, so that thou mayest say with the apostle, 'He loved thee and gave Himself for thee.' For this is to make Christ thine own, and to apply His merits unto thyself.

Faith is a sure trust and confidence that God both hath forgiven and will forgive our sins.

Even more striking is a passage in Hooker which seems to have escaped Wesley's notice :

God hath left us infallible evidence whereby we may at any time give true and righteous sentence upon ourselves. We cannot examine the hearts of other men, we may our own. 'That we have passed from death to life, we know it,' saith St. John, 'because we love our brethren.' I trust, beloved, we know that we are not reprobates, because our spirit doth bear us record that the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ is in us.¹

From such statements as the above, which might easily be multiplied, the transition is not great to the Methodist doctrine of Assurance :

That persuasion which is given by the Holy Spirit to penitent and believing persons, that they are now accepted of God, pardoned and adopted into God's family.

Nevertheless the fact remains that, whatever may have been the doctrine, explicit or implicit, of the Anglican Church, Wesley's doctrine of Assurance was looked upon as a dangerous innovation, the formulation of a new heresy. Even leaders in the Church joined in the popular outcry, and that not merely because of certain exaggerations which they claimed to detect in Wesley's teaching. In reality the whole incident forms another illustration of the familiar truth, that it is not the same thing for an article of faith to have a place in the creeds and formularies of a Church, and for that same article to be a living factor in its life. The working creeds of a Church are by no means the full contents of its official symbols.

¹ Hooker, *Works*, ed. Keble, iii. 673.

IV

In this appeal to experience—especially by his doctrine of Assurance, taken in the main, without undue stress upon mere detail—we believe that Wesley has made a lasting contribution to the life and thought of the universal Church. In this appeal we find the historic work and place of Methodism. Once let it as a church lose this note, and its historic justification has perished. This consciousness has given to its preaching its greatest power, is the explanation of its fervid evangelistic appeals, lies at the root of its special institution of the class-meeting, is the essential qualification demanded from all candidates for its ministry, and is one of the secrets of its hold upon the masses. In this emphasis of experience lies also one cause of the tendency, abundantly illustrated in the later pages of this volume, towards superficial disintegration. For a living, vivid experience is naturally unwilling to be regulated by rules and authority; in other words, the religion of experience is the complete expression of that individualism the desire for which, as we have already seen, lay at the root of the Reformation. The religion of experience—

THE
HISTORIC
WORK OF
METHODISM.

battles everywhere with authority, with the dogmas of infallibility, and the dogmas of agnosticism, with the dogmas of arrogant assertion, and the dogmas of confident denial.¹

Before we proceed to consider the dangers and safeguards of the doctrine of Assurance, it may be well to point out how completely the emphasis placed by Wesley upon experience is in accord with the best scientific thought of the times. We see in it another illustration of what Prof. James calls ‘the admirable congruity of Protestant theology with the structure of the mind.’² If we have read aright the drift of thought in the last thirty years it has set in steadily towards the recognition of the reality of the phenomena of experience. Tolstoy is now not alone in his claim that faith is among the

Modern
science
and the
appeal to
experience.

¹ Little, *Christianity and the Nineteenth Century*, 48.

² James, *VRE*, 244.

forces by which men live, 'without which I myself would not exist.' The days when religion might be dismissed in the words of Grant Allen as a 'grotesque fungoid growth' which has somehow clustered round the primeval thread of ancestor worship have gone, we trust for ever. The indifference of the scientist has given place to the more scientific interest of the student of psychology and sociology. No thinker to-day would deny the persistence and reality of religious phenomena, the part they play and have played in the evolution of society, and in the development of the individual. The subjective factors in the world of experience cannot be omitted or suppressed for the sake of the objective.

Nor would the scientist turn to-day, as did Herbert Spencer, for the explanation of the ecstasy of a St. Paul or of a St. Francis, the sublime indifference of the martyrs, the fervid zeal of a Xavier or Wesley, to the details of ghost and ancestor worship amid primitive savages. As Prof. James has shown us, it would be just as sensible to 'call religion an aberration of the digestive function' or a 'perversion of the respiratory organs.' 'The plain truth is,' he goes on to add, 'that to interpret religion one must in the end look at the immediate content of the religious consciousness.' Even 'institutional religion' must find, in the long run, its warrant here; any church, however great the emphasis it places upon organization as a means to an end, is ultimately founded upon the consciousness of personal communion with the divine, and the reality of that consciousness.¹ But the further demonstration of this truth lies outside our immediate purpose, and would require an essay to itself.

The dangers of the doctrine of Assurance lie on the surface and have often been pointed out by critics. Such an appeal, it is said, usually ends in sheer individualism, in a religion which is ever watching under the microscope its own motions with a tireless suspicion which amounts to a negation of the grace of God. Wesley, more by accident than design, or

The
dangers of
Assurance.

¹ See James, *VRE*, cc. 1, 2, and 20.

rather, in the Providence of God, effectually prevented this by making the chief court of the appeal a social court. In his system of class-meetings the basal principle of individual experience was saved from excess by the correction given through the experience of others, as well as by the spiritual obedience demanded by the whole organization and framework of his societies. Individual experience is thus balanced by connexionalism. In an effective practical fashion the experience of the whole church is brought to bear upon the isolated feelings of the separate member. If it be objected that connexionalism and experience lie in different spheres, one in the world of thought, the other a matter of organization, the answer of every Methodist would be none the less certain. As the body conditions the spirit, so the organization controls, modifies, and co-ordinates individual experience, not so much by *ex cathedrâ* utterances, or formal claim, as by the sheer practical necessities of life. This last, in fact, might well be translated into philosophic phrase: in the working of Methodism the appeal to individual experience is ever checked and balanced by the appeal to collective experience.

For the collective experience of the Church is as much a reality as the experience of the individual soul. The Church is not a heterogeneous collection of unrelated individuals; it is a unity, animated and controlled by the one life of the Spirit. The mystery of this life and unity and the laws of its growth are not yet revealed unto us. Dogmatists have only succeeded in dismembering the Body of Christ by *à priori* conditions out of touch with facts. But the reality of the life of the Catholic Church, the validity and growth of its experience, become manifest to all who have turned from the profitless wrangle of conflicting organizations to the study of the soul-history of the saints of God. But here again we touch a large subject, into which, however fascinating, we cannot further enter.

The
appeal to
collective
experience.

In the sharper enunciation of this appeal to collective experience we find the main drift of present-day Methodist thought and development. The doctrine of the Church,

the value of the judgement and experience of the Church in contrast to the isolated individual, the continuity of the one divine life running through all the centuries, the need of clearer recognition of an objective value in the sacraments as the ordinances of Christ—to these great truths of collective experience, Methodism to-day pays an ever-increasing attention. And in this appeal to collective experience Methodism discovers a new warrant for its own beliefs. The experiences of the children of God in every age are much the same, though the language in which they are expressed may vary. Few things are so unchanging as the soul of man and its deeper utterances. Moreover, just as in science the test of truth is our power to repeat our experiments, so also in religion. The communion of saints is not merely the reproduction but the verification of experience. Hence Methodism is rightly undisturbed by the higher criticism of the Bible. Its results bear only on the structure and framework of the records; they often bring out into greater relief the eternal reality of the experiences of the soul which the Book contains.

The
danger
of sub-
jectivism.

In another direction also has correction come. The microscopic self-analysis in which Wesley revelled in his Oxford days, and from which he was never wholly free, even in his calmer old age, was at one time the bane of some of his followers. But this subjectivism has slowly given place to a larger conception of the grace whereby we are saved—‘for if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart and knoweth all things.’ Assurance does not mean the reduction of the Cross and its effects to the fluctuating motions of our minds, ‘little more,’ as Coleridge claimed, ‘than a strong pulse or throb of sensibility, accompanying the vehement volition of acquiescence.’ Assurance is rather the clear consciousness of the tremendous objective force greater than ourselves which God has provided for the salvation of the world, and which, by appropriation or assimilation, has entered into our own lives. Assurance thus becomes one with faith; for faith has ceased to be intellectual or emotional assent, and has become a

rejoicing consciousness, and Christ's redemption a realized human experience. Pusey's sneer against 'justification by feeling' is altogether wide of the mark.

With this deliverance from the tyranny of the subjective and emotional there has come into Methodism a larger toleration for forms of religious life not her own. Most men to-day would agree with Canon Overton's criticism of Wesley's excessive self-condemnation: 'If John Wesley was not a true Christian (when in Georgia), God help millions of those who profess and call themselves Christians.' Wesley's condemnation of his own religious life at Oxford as valueless did little harm, for it was limited to himself, and, as a matter of fact, in his later years was retracted. It would have accomplished untold mischief if it had led 'the people called Methodists' into a habit of judging all men by their own emotions and experiences. The measures of our mind are no test of the height and depth and length and breadth of God's love even for ourselves, much less for others. But this danger, though at one time serious, has become a thing of the past.

A final danger of the doctrine of Assurance upon which critics have fastened is, unhappily, not limited to those who profess this grace. Assurance at times may become the worst form of egoism or egotism, as we see abundantly illustrated in the dreary Calvinistic controversy between Whitefield and Wesley. But the cure for such egoism is not to condemn the doctrine of Assurance, but to insist upon the broader recognition of the varying contents of the religious consciousness. Only by this means will men attain the grace that Cromwell besought for the Kirk of Scotland: 'I beseech you, in the bowels of Christ, think it possible that you may be mistaken.' But in this matter of narrowness rigid dogmatists of all schools have much to learn.

The danger
of egoism.

Wesley's doctrine of Holiness, or 'perfect love,' is really a corollary of his appeal to experience. For if a son is conscious of his relation to his Father there must be the possibility that that consciousness shall be complete, 'with-

The
doctrine of
Holiness.

out a cloud between,' and as such the source of exquisite joy and untroubled confidence :

My Father God! that gracious name
Dispels my guilty fear,
Not all the harmony of heaven
Could so delight my ear!

That it is possible *now* is a further necessity, for otherwise the experience would not be in consciousness. But when we begin to give the full content of this consciousness, to subject it to analysis, to write down cause and effect, to express it in theological terms, then difficulties begin both for Wesley and ourselves. Such difficulties spring wholly from the attempt to define the undefinable. In reality, with Wesley holiness was not a theory, but an experience, a life. But this is true of the saints of God in every age. As Wesley points out, the religion of 'perfect love' is no new religion :

It is beautifully summed up in that one comprehensive petition, 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name.'

Holiness one
throughout
the Church.

In every age this desire has been the mark of the child of the Father; the granting of this prayer his highest bliss. Varieties in the definition of the mark are immaterial; it is the conscious pursuit that gives unity to the saints of all time. Not to recognize this is to rend the seamless robe of Christ. St. Bernard, St. Francis, and Wesley might have split hairs in attempting definitions; in the testimony of their experience they are absolutely one. Let the reader judge for himself—put side by side three characteristic utterances, and point out, if he can, the fatal differences. He will realize, instead, the fundamental agreements. Bernard's 'Jesu, dulcis memoria'; the superb chapter in the *Little Flowers* wherein Francis discoursed to brother Leo, 'the little sheep of God,' of 'that wherein is perfect joy'; the sections in a Kempis entitled 'Of familiar

intercourse with Jesus ' ; and Charles Wesley's hymn entitled *Wrestling Jacob* :

Contented now upon my thigh
 I halt, till life's short journey end ;
 All helplessness, all weakness, I
 On Thee alone for strength depend ;
 Nor have I power from Thee to move ;
 Thy nature and Thy name is Love ;

are all from the same mint.

Nevertheless if we must dwell on differences we would point out that these lie almost wholly in two directions. St. Bernard—to take that great saint as an example of a system—emphasized probation. Wesley, with his different outlook, was bound to make this secondary to grace. But to grace as such we cannot apply the categories of time. Time, as Wesley felt, is not an actuality, only a quality of consciousness. Unfortunately in trying to express this profound philosophical truth many of Wesley's followers, and Wesley himself occasionally,¹ write as if time could be counted by the strokes of the clock. But if ' time ' be translated into terms of consciousness the difficulty sometimes found in Wesley's doctrine of Holiness, as also in his doctrine of Conversion, at once disappears. In the case of conversion, for instance, the more vivid and complete the consciousness, especially as contrasted with previous experience, the more ' instantaneous '—to use the word of offence—it will appear. But analysis shows that the cause of this impression is not ' time,' but the fulness of the consciousness first of sin, then of the Saviour. In modern Methodism ' time ' elements, in the ordinary sense of the term, both as regards holiness and conversion, are thus increasingly regarded as of secondary consequence.

Causes of
misunder-
standing.

A further doctrine which some have claimed as peculiar to Methodism is found in the stress laid upon Conversion. It is difficult to see how such an exaggeration has arisen.

The
doctrine of
Conversion.

¹ Cf. Tyerman, *Life of Wesley*, i. 463, *WW*, vi. 464, a passage that reads like an extract from some modern work on religious psychophysics, e.g. Starbuck's *Psychology of Religion*.

Both the doctrine and the fact of Conversion have been upheld and borne witness to from the earlier days of the Church down to the present time. But to the cold formalists and Deists of the eighteenth century both doctrine and fact seemed new. They would have sneered at the Confessions of St. Augustine ; of St. Francis they were ignorant. Bunyan they would have dismissed as an illiterate tinker. But what was new in Methodism was not so much the fact of conversion as the immediate consciousness of its accomplishment, with all the joy that such consciousness brings. But on this matter we have already sufficiently dwelt.

In reality the attack upon the Methodist doctrine of Conversion, when care is taken to clear away such irrelevant details as its 'instantaneousness,' is always directed from one quarter. It resolves itself into a protest against any conception of religion as an individual consciousness of relation to God, which is not dependent upon sacraments or church. But in this matter we are not careful to answer. This is part of the inheritance of Methodism from the Reformation.¹ She would be false to herself and to her history if she suffered any tampering with this fundamental truth.

Wesley's Ar-
minianism.

Wesley's doctrine of Assurance involved as a necessary corollary an Arminian theory of the Atonement. Wesley's Arminianism, it is true, was reached by steps altogether independent of those by which he was led to appeal to experience ; nevertheless we can see clearly to-day that the one was the consequence of the other. For, as we have already noted,² the assurance of damnation by eternal decree is so contradictory to the constituents of human nature as to be inconceivable in the case of the healthy-minded. Any appeal to experience which refuses to take account of hope as one of the essential contents of experience is so incomplete as to be valueless. Assurance, therefore, is not and cannot be the negation of hope ; it is rather the vivid presentation of its reality, the realization in the concrete of one's ideals and aspirations.

¹ *Supra*, p. 9.

² *Supra*, p. 23.

To the twentieth century the necessary Arminianism of any appeal to experience seems axiomatic ; largely, of course, because this century starts with the postulate of the Fatherhood of God, and has rejected the hard forensic theories of the Atonement which satisfied an earlier generation. The difficulty of the twentieth century is rather to find in a scheme of perfect love any place for damnation at all, except as the possible continuance of present conditions — ‘myself am hell, nor am I out of it.’ But the eighteenth century was not so troubled. Hell was still a potent living reality, which played a tremendous part in the feelings of both saint and sinner. The experience of hell, not imaginary or symbolic, but actual anticipation, is one of the contents of the soul to which Wesley and the early Methodists again and again appealed. But in the providence of God Wesley saw clearly the truth, hidden from Whitefield, that any such appeal, nay, further, that any such experience, must rest upon the possibility of repentance and reversal. Where there is no hope there can be no gospel.

The
corollary of
experience.

We have said that Wesley’s belief in the universality of the gospel call was the necessary corollary of his appeal to experience. We see this more clearly if we try to present to ourselves the arguments which have led well-nigh the universal Church to discredit the Calvinism that appealed so powerfully to a former generation. It is not that men have now demonstrated by a surer logic the radical unsoundness of the Calvinist’s positions ; nor are we able to eliminate from the Bible the underlying determinism from which no Eastern literature is wholly exempt. So far as the Bible is concerned the dispassionate critic is driven to confess that both sides are able to prove by its means their own contention, and equally to disprove the theory of its rival. But the Church to-day does not base its Arminianism upon any biblical text, or series of texts. Within living memory the doctrine of the universality of the gospel call has passed from an argument into a conviction, which, like every other fundamental conviction, is not dependent upon proof, nor assailable because of logical difficulties. We have

As shown
in its
universal
acceptance
to-day.

here one of the doctrines in which we see how completely the ultimate standard of authority of any century must be found in the organic living experience of the Church itself. Rightly or wrongly, the average Christian has settled the matter for himself by falling back upon his own consciousness of the fitness of things. Calvinism, as Wesley frankly calls it, is 'an uncomfortable thought.' The all-pervasive universalism of the age—a deduction from the universalism of appeal for which Wesley contended—bases itself avowedly upon its own inner consciousness of what is possible or probable in a moral world under a moral Governor. Whether this appeal to inner consciousness, both collective and individual, be valid or not is a matter into which we are not called to inquire. Our present purpose is to point out that Wesley's doctrine of Assurance, founded, as it was, upon the appeal to experience, would have led inevitably in a later generation to an Arminian doctrine of the Atonement, even if at the time Wesley had thrown in his lot with Whitefield.

Wesley's Arminianism historically considered.

But Wesley's Arminianism was not a deduction of logic from certain fundamental premisses; he reached it rather through historical channels, largely through his parents. For the introduction of Arminianism—to use a convenient if somewhat inaccurate title for the rebellion in England against Calvinism, parallel with, rather than consequent on, that of Arminius in Holland¹—seems to us to have been in no small measure the most lasting part of the work of Archbishop Laud. He found the Anglican Church saturated with the doctrines and practices of Geneva; as part of his protest against Geneva he laid stress upon the more universal aspects of the life and faith of the Church. 'Predestination,' as one of his bishops wrote to him, 'is the root of all Puritanism, and Puritanism the root of all rebellion and disobedient intractableness.' By his repudiation of Calvinism, Laud thus prepared the way for the return of the Church to more

¹ The two movements were so independent in their origin that it is needless to enter into the differences and agreements between the teaching of Arminius and Wesley (cf. Platt in *Dict. Religion and Ethics*, vol. i. pp. 802 ff (1908); or Pope, *Compendium of Theology*, ii. 78 ff.)

'catholic' usage. For Calvinism and sacerdotalism—whether in the extreme forms of the latter in the Roman Church, or in its more moderate Anglican claims—are ultimately incompatible. The conditions of salvation cannot be at the same time 'immutable decrees,' and 'sacramental grace' and all that is involved in union with a living organic church. The one must make the other needless and illogical. Whether Laud's opposition to Geneva, which began in his early Oxford days, was based upon the deductions of logic or was the outcome of practical considerations we cannot say; that it was effectual in saving the Anglican Church from adherence to Calvinism none can deny. Through the Wesleys, father and son, this part of Laud's High Churchmanship has passed into the life-blood of Methodism.

V

In our first section we emphasized the unity and continuity of the one life which runs through all the ages of the Church, manifesting itself at different times in diverse forms. In certain aspects of his work Wesley but continued or revived methods and principles used by great predecessors. A few illustrations of this unity may profitably detain us. In spiritual matters there is little that is absolutely new; for the soul itself, its sins and sorrows, changes but slowly with the changing times.

We begin with the fundamental agreement between Methodism and a movement in the early Church known as 'Prophetism.' As far back as the days of St. Paul the 'prophets' were a recognized order in the church, suppressed towards the close of the second century by the growing sacerdotalism of the times, and by the exhaustion of the first wave of spiritual enthusiasm and illumination, assisted by recklessness and extravagance in the order itself. The history of 'prophetism' would lead us far afield, by disputed paths. Suffice that the characteristic of the 'prophet' was his extempore, some claimed his inspired, utterance. He was 'gifted' to speak the word of God in free spontaneous

METHODISM
AND
PREVIOUS
MOVEMENTS.

Prophetism.

discourse, oftentimes in ecstatic forms. Many of the prophets, if not most, were under the influence of millennarian and parousian beliefs, and have left us a chaotic wilderness of 'prophetic' literature, *Sibylline Oracles* and the like, whose obscurity is its chief interest. Others, as Celsus complained, made the staple of their preaching the retribution so speedily to come upon the world, as 'they roamed like tramps through cities and fortified places.' They received no fixed salary, only in the place where they settled down 'the first of a baking of bread, or a jar of oil and wine.' The need of testing the 'prophet' was not overlooked; at first by broad if indefinite principles, which at a later date, as we see in the *Didaché*, gave place to more wooden maxims.¹

The duties
of the
'prophet.'

The 'prophet' was thus essentially a preacher, generally a wandering preacher, though, unlike the 'apostle,' he was not deprived of the liberty of settling down in one place. He differed from a 'teacher' by being a producer and not an expounder simply; the emphasis was laid upon intuition and not assimilation. He had nothing to do with either the financial side of church life, or its pastoral oversight, much less was he allowed to administer its sacraments.² These were matters reserved for other officers, for the deacon, the presbyter, or the bishop, though there was nothing to prevent these officers, at any rate in earliest times, from being 'prophets' as well. Even as a preacher the prophet's business was rather to warn than to instruct; he was the evangelist and not the overseer of the flock. His special witness was to the spontaneous work of the Holy Spirit, whose mouthpiece, oracle, or 'forthteller' he professed to be. As such one special function seems to have been reserved to him—the proclamation to backsliders of the forgiveness of the Church.

The similarity between the early Methodist preacher and

¹ 1 Cor. xii. 3; 1 John iv. 1. *Didaché*, xi. 8–12. There is a large literature on 'prophets.' The student may refer to Lindsay, *Church and Ministry in the Early Centuries*; Selwyn, *Christian Prophets*; Harnack in *Enc. Brit.* xix. 822 ff.; Workman, *Persecution in Early Church*, 153 ff.

² *Didaché* x. 7 is ambiguous. But Dr. Lindsay's interpretation (*o.c.* 95) seems to me inaccurate.

the 'prophet' is manifest. The two movements, in fact, stand for the same 'liberty of prophesying.' The enemies of the two were the same—occasional inner extravagance, the opposition from without of those with whom order is paramount. The duties of the two were much the same, even to the matter of 'wandering,' and the manner of payment of those who rested for a while on their 'circuits.' But most important of all is the witness borne by both movements to the free utterance of the Holy Spirit as one of the elemental facts of a living faith which neither the growth of sacerdotalism, nor the claims of decorum, nor even the 'foolishness of preaching' itself is able to destroy. That 'Prophetism' is an essential part of Methodism is not only demonstrated by her early history, but also by one curious fact. When at times Methodism has tended to lose the 'liberty of prophesying,' whether in her prayer-meetings, 'love-feasts,' and 'band-meetings,' in the ministrations of her local preachers, or otherwise, she has always seen the rise, commonly by a secession from her own ranks, of a movement reviving the 'prophet.' One illustration may be found in the story of the Bible Christians¹; another is seen in the history of the Salvation Army. This great host of 'prophets,' whose devoted 'General' was once a Methodist minister,² was largely officered in its earlier days by earnest Methodists, whose spirit of 'prophecy' had found the restraints of modern Methodism too exacting.

Similarities
between
'Prophet-
ism' and
Methodism.

The reader will have gathered, from our remarks on Prophetism, that there are certain points of affinity between Methodism and two other historic movements. We allude to Montanism and the rise of the Friends. Montanism was the protest of the second and third centuries against the suppression of the 'prophet.' With all its extravagance Montanism bore witness to the great truth of the free life of the Holy Spirit, manifesting itself by other than sacerdotal channels. In some aspects Methodism was the Montanism of the eighteenth century; a protest against an age which had killed the doctrine of the Holy Spirit by frozen rationalism

Montanism.

¹ *Infra*, pp. 502 ff.

² *Infra*, p. 540.

and deadly worldliness. In this protest also—in spite of diversity in almost all else—Wesley could have joined hands with George Fox, though his love of order would have prevented him from sympathizing fully with the wonderful life and visions of the mystic in ‘leathern breeches.’¹

The
parallel
with
Methodism.

The parallel between Montanism and Methodism does not end here : the writings of the most illustrious of all Montanists, the orator Tertullian, shows us that Montanism was a reaction against secularism in the Church. Western Montanism—for the Phrygian form with its extreme sensational features lies altogether outside our present comparison—had no quarrel with Catholic doctrine or Catholic system ; only it wanted to force back both into what it deemed to be apostolic simplicity and purity. Its work was not to bring forward new doctrine, but to emphasize the idea of the Paraclete. The ideal of the Montanist and of the Methodist alike was spirituality ; to ensure this both were prepared to turn the Church into ‘societies,’ however few and insignificant, shut out from the world by rigorous discipline, and working upon the world not so much by intercourse as by challenge. Both alike were thus forced into a certain antagonism to culture, from which Montanism, unlike Methodism,² was never delivered. Both alike suffered persecution from the established Church of the times, with fatal effects for Montanism. Finally both movements were accompanied by certain remarkable manifestations of nervous excitement.³

Monasticism.

From Prophetism, its outcome in Montanism, and its revival in the Society of Friends we pass to the relation of

¹ Wesley never mentions Fox. This is the more remarkable inasmuch as Wesley was acquainted with Barclay’s *Apology*. The similarity between Wesley and Fox in recording the business of Conferences, etc., by question and answer, to which Methodism still adheres, is therefore accidental. For the growing similarities of Methodism and Quakerism the reader should refer to the works of that eminent Friend, Prof. Rufus Jones.

² For the deliverance of Methodism see *Infra*, pp. 63–4.

³ For Montanism see Ritschl, *Altkatholische Kirche* (1857), or Bonwetsch, *Gesch. des Montanismus* (1881). In 1781 Wesley wrote : ‘I have frequently been in doubt whether Montanus was not one of the wisest and holiest men who was then in the Christian Church.’

Methodism and Monasticism.¹ At first sight the two movements would appear to have nothing in common; their differences, certainly, are neither few nor insignificant. For Monasticism too frequently identified religion with Calvary, the foundation with the superstructure. Its consciousness of the need of union with the Crucified did not sufficiently lead to the joy of union with the risen, triumphant Christ. But we must beware lest we are misled, as was Charles Wesley—

Not in the dark monastic cell
By bars and grates confined ²—

into taking some accidental circumstance for the essence of a system.

Between Methodism and Monasticism, in addition to the common emphasis of renunciation, there are three great points of contact and similarity. In the first place Monasticism as worked out by St. Benedict, and developed by his successors—for the Carthusians were always few—was essentially a social religion; men were to help each other to the spiritual life under leadership and a rule. Nor was this fellowship limited to the affairs of the soul: it extended, far more completely than has ever been realized in Methodism—or, for that matter, is now possible—to all the interests of life, to the work in the fields, to the home-life in the cloister.

Both are
social.

The second point of resemblance is equally striking. Monasticism, especially in its origin, was the witness to a sacerdotal age that holiness is a fact of character rather than an imputed act. Largely through the influence of Cyprian the foundations of the Church, as it then existed, had been laid on the doctrines of apostolic succession and a mediating priesthood; the coming of grace from without, through channels other than the man himself. Against this the monk was a silent but constant protest.

¹ For Monasticism see Harnack, *Monasticism*, trans. E. E. Kellett (1901); or a forthcoming work (1909) by myself, *Monasticism in the Early Church*.

² C. Wesley did not know that out of the 520 monastic houses of England only nine had cells. He had obtained his ideas from the Charterhouse.

Monasticism never forgot that personal holiness—the special definition given to the term need not now concern us—is something far higher than any succession can bestow. Instead of intermediate communion with God through priests and sacraments, the monk upheld the ideal of the direct intercourse of the soul with its Maker.

The
priesthood
of the
laity.

Moreover, Monasticism, especially in its origin, was the protest that the laity also are priests unto God. The earlier monks were generally laymen. Jerome, for instance, was ordained against his will and always refused to consecrate the elements. It is true that in the course of time this distinction became lost, and the monk was forced to join the priesthood, probably under pressure from without. The bishops felt the danger of communities of laymen growing up within the church, which proclaimed to the world, by their very existence, an ideal of religious life opposite to that sacramental and sacerdotal theory on which their episcopal authority rested. Nevertheless, in theory at least, the monk, even to the end, was not necessarily a priest; whilst his abbot, oftentimes exalted by papal sanction into the equal of a bishop, was none other than a presbyter. In some respects the anti-sacerdotalism of Methodism is but the development, under a new form, of this constant protest of Monasticism.

The
sacrifice of
praise and
thanks-
giving.

A further point of contact is of equal importance. In every monastery the service of God in the church was the supreme duty; in some cases interrupted by brief hours for sleep or work, in others carried on by relays without cessation day or night. But this service was rarely the adoration of the mass; its more usual form was a continuous sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving. Monasticism was dissolved, but this spirit survived, and has become triumphant in the Nonconformity of England and America. Little do the members of some humble class-meeting, as they meet together for singing and prayer, the wayside preacher, or the head of the family as he gathers his children around him for worship, realize that they are perpetuating in new ways the characteristic motive of a despised system.

A last point of comparison between Methodism and some forms of Monasticism lies, curious to say, in the emphasis placed by Wesley upon his annual Conference. In the judgement of Dr. Fitchett 'the Conference is perhaps the most original contribution that Methodism has made to church history.' Dr. Fitchett has overlooked, we think, the somewhat similar institutions in connexion with the Cistercians and the Friars. The organization of the older monasteries was essentially what we should call to-day of a Congregational type—*i.e.* each house was isolated and independent of all others, unless indeed it were an offshoot, a dependent cell or priory. But the Cistercians and the Friars were the founders of connexionalism—for we may pass by the limited effort in this direction of the Clugniac reformers. Every abbot of a Cistercian house was bound to attend the Chapter General held annually at the chief establishment, and was under obligation to render account to the central authority; much after the same manner as Methodist 'superintendents' to their Conference.

Monasticism
and the
Annual
Conference.

The analogy between the organization of Methodism and that of the Friars was even closer. The Franciscans, for instance, were divided into 'Provinces,' over each of which was a 'Provincial Minister.' The 'Provinces' were again divided into 'Custodies,' under the charge of 'Custodians,' who possessed general rights of supervision for their districts. Every year Chapters General were held—the first at Michaelmas, the second and more important at Whitsuntide. In many of its powers this Whitsuntide gathering corresponded with the Methodist Conference. The original purpose of both Chapter General and Conference was the same: the foregathering of brethren from far and near that they might gain new enthusiasm by the communion of saints. How Wesley would have rejoiced in the testimony of Cardinal Ugolino when he beheld five thousand brethren gathered at 'the Chapter of the Rush-mats' (this last a general name for all St. Francis's annual gatherings).

'Of a truth this is the camp and the army of the knights of God.' . . . Nor was there heard in so great a multitude or idle

speech or foolish jest, but wheresoever a company of brothers was gathered together they either prayed or said the office and bewailed their sins, or discoursed concerning the salvation of souls.

How Wesley would have insisted that this was the ideal he himself had formed for his own Conference, though he might not have admitted, as did St. Francis, the crowds of strangers. The growth of business soon led, in the case of the Friars, to the restriction of the Chapter General to the 'delegates' of the 'provinces'; in the case of Methodism to the exclusion, by Wesley himself, of all but a select band of preachers—this last an arrangement that speedily proved impossible to work. But both Friars and Methodists found that this common government by a central court united the whole body into a compact effective instrument.

Methodism
and the
Franciscan
Revival.

A comparison between Wesley and St. Francis—to one detail of which we have already alluded—would have amazed no one more than Wesley himself. To the eighteenth century St. Francis was unknown—'a well-meaning man, though manifestly weak in his intellect.'¹ To-day the similarity between the two men, and between the revivals in which they were the leaders, is clear. John Wesley was, in fact, the St. Francis of the eighteenth century.

Like him, he received in his spiritual experience the direct call of God to a complete surrender of self. Like him, he found in the love of God the central truth which inspired his life and ruled his will. To live the life of Jesus Christ in the world was the common object of both—of the one through imitation of His poverty, of the other of His sinless perfection. The revival of personal religion in a coarse and profligate age through the instrumentality of a society was their common achievement. The Methodist, like the Friar Minor, took the world as his parish. He planted himself in the crowded cities and among the outcast populations. His mission was to the poor, the unlearned, and the neglected. He cared not for boundaries of parish or country. Borne on the wings of love, he crossed the seas, bringing to all who would hear . . . the glad tidings

¹ So Wesley, *Eccl. Hist.* ii. 258, from Mosheim.

of forgiveness. Indeed, with due allowance for the differences of the time, the methods as well as the objects of Wesley were singularly like those of St. Francis. There was a similar use of colloquial and simple sermons, similar reiteration of a few all-important truths, similar renunciation of all pomp and splendour of service or building, similar religious use of hymns and music. Even the obstacles which they encountered and the difficulties which they raised were similar. The sneer of the worldly, the accusation of fanaticism, the dread of the orderly, the dislike of the parish clergy, the timidity of the bishops, the self-sufficiency of the members of the society themselves, were trials common to both. That the sons of St. Francis, with all his individuality, remained devoted children of the Church, that the sons of Wesley, with all his personal loyalty, found their natural sphere outside the Church, was due, under God, to the circumstances of the time.¹

The comparison between the two saints might be pressed to further detail. How easy it would be to mistake the following appeal of St. Francis for one of Wesley's *Twelve Rules of a Helper* :²

Wesley and
St. Francis.

By the holy love which is in God I pray all the friars, ministers as well as others, to put aside every obstacle, every care, every anxiety, that they may be able to consecrate themselves entirely to serve, love, and honour the Lord God with a pure heart, and a sincere purpose ; which is what He seeks above all things.

Or take the following from the *Little Flowers*. Change the Tuscan blue for English grey, the romance of the thirteenth century for a more joyless age, and have we not read the same in Wesley's *Journals* ?

Ye must needs know that St. Francis, being inspired of God, set out for to go into Romagna with Brother Leo his companion ; and as they went they passed by the foot of the Castle of Montefeltro ; in the which castle there was at that time a great company of gentleness and much feasting. . . . And St. Francis

¹ Wakeman, *History of the Church of England* (5th ed.), p. 448 ; cf. Jessop, *Coming of the Friars*, 49.

² *Infra*, p. 295.

spake unto Brother Leo, Let us go up unto this feast, for with the help of God we may win some good fruit of souls. . . . Coming to the castle, St. Francis entered in, and came to the courtyard where all that great company of gentlefolk was gathered together, and in fervency of spirit stood upon a parapet and began to preach, taking as the text of his sermon these words in the vulgar tongue—

So great the joys I have in sight
That every sorrow brings delight.

Contrast of
character.

As regards their characters the resemblance is less complete. Wesley is as complex as Francis is simple. In his indifference to the sunnier sides of life Wesley was the child of Puritanism; Francis, by his joyous simplicity, the founder through Giotto and others of Italian art. Wesley, like all great Englishmen, was a man of gigantic will. Cardinal Ugolini, the evil genius of the revival, who succeeded in reducing the revival into an auxiliary of the Papacy, would have found it a difficult task to force the man 'whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu' into a system destined to destroy his ideal. Wesley's keen eye would have detected, his energy baffled, the snares that thwarted St. Francis. Of Wesley we may say, with Green, that 'no man ever stood at the head of a great revolution whose temper was so anti-revolutionary'; of St. Francis, that no man whose unconscious purpose was so revolutionary so successfully strengthened existing institutions. But the two were one in the purity of a devotion in which there was neither the ineffectual selfishness of 'other-worldliness,' nor the blindness which makes men the slaves of the present. Thomas of Celano's verdict on the secret of his leader might equally have been written of Wesley:

His genius, free from all taint, pierced through hidden mysteries, and the lover's affection entered within, whereas the knowledge of masters remains without.

Certain other matters in this comparison of Wesley and St. Francis deserve special attention. We do well to

remember that Wesley's helpers and the Little Poor Brothers of St. Francis were both originally laymen. The significance of this fact cannot be exaggerated. For centuries the laity had held little place in the organization of the church. Now Europe was flooded by a host of lay preachers, most of whom earned their living, like St. Paul, by the labour of their hands. When Brother Giles was waiting for a ship whereby he might sail to the Holy Land, he carried water and made willow baskets. When other occupations failed, the brethren hired themselves out as servants. The new place of the laity was also emphasized by St. Francis in the foundation of his Tertiaries, or great guild of the Brothers and Sisters of Penitence. Of this lay fraternity the obligations were peace and charity. To this day the Franciscan order is the only one in which there is no difference of costume between laymen and priests. All this, designedly accomplished by St. Francis, was forced upon Wesley in the working out of his mission. Only slowly has there grown up in Methodism a difference of spiritual rank between its lay workers and its ministers; while no one conversant with Methodism will deny that the key to its influence is its appeal to the laity. Unlike the Anglican Church, Methodism robbed of its ministry could still survive; deprived of its lay workers it would assuredly die. Not merely its *bene esse*, but its *esse*, lies in their service.

The call of
the laity.

The two revivals were also alike in their democratic significance. The Little Poor Brothers of Assisi sprang from the common soil. Hitherto monks had belonged to the upper classes; only for the aristocrat was there the refuge of the cloister. But in the brotherhood of Francis caste distinctions were unknown; the men whom feudalism and the Church had despised took the world by storm. The Friars were recruited from the lower middle classes, or from the artisans of the towns. The true title of the order is untranslatable because of its democratic significance. In all the towns of Europe the people were divided into *majores* and *minores*; the nearest equivalent would be 'gilded' and 'ungilded.' Francis deliberately enrolled

Democratic
significance.

himself with the latter ; his was the company of the Brothers Minor. That the appeal of Methodism has as yet been limited almost wholly to the same classes as the company of the Friars has been judged by some to be a sign of its strength, by others a note of weakness. But of the fact and of its democratic significance there can be little doubt.

Similarity
of methods.

Allusion has already been made to the similarity of methods of the two saints. Both alike made it their rule to go to those who needed them most. Both alike found their flock in the slums and hovels of overcrowded cities and neglected suburbs. Both alike were exposed to the persecution of the mob. Both alike fell back on the ministry of song and on field-preaching. In the preaching of both men there was neither grace of oratory nor profundity of thought, only the setting forth of the Saviour with burning love and conviction. Thomas of Celano's remark upon the preaching of his master, that Francis 'had first persuaded himself by practice of that which he endeavoured to commend to others by his words,' might with equal justice be applied to Wesley. For both alike believed that the Sermon on the Mount was something more than a speculation in ethics. For both St. Francis and Wesley to walk in the light meant perpetual sunshine. They deemed perfection and joy to be equivalent terms. The astonishing thing is that both made thousands to realize this truth of a transcendent idealism.

Identifica-
tion of
perfection
and joy.

On this identification of perfection and joy it were well to linger for a moment ; for it is perhaps the most striking of the many similarities between the two movements. For this purpose we cannot do better than put side by side certain characteristic documents.

When Brother Bernard drew nigh unto death : 'Sursum corda, Brother Bernard, sursum corda,' cried Brother Giles with joyfulness. The face of the dying saint—

grew bright and joyful beyond measure, as he replied : 'O brothers most dear, this I find within my soul, that for a thousand worlds the like of this I would not have served any other Lord.

Brother Ruffino narrates that when he saw the Saviour, His sign to him was this :

As long as thou shalt live thou shalt no more feel sadness nor melancholy ; he that made thee sad was the devil.

Brother Masseo was so filled with—

the light of God that from thenceforward he was always joyful and glad ; and oftentimes when he prayed he would break forth into sounds of joy, cooing like a dove.

Even the well-known sermon of St. Francis to the birds is but a result of this joy, if read, as it should be, in its context. For it is in the same chapter that we read how Francis received the counsel of God—

that it behoved him by preaching to convert much people. Thus saith the Lord : Say unto Brother Francis that God has not called him to this estate for himself alone, but to the end that he may gain fruit of souls and that many through him may be saved.

Then there came upon him the great joy of souls, one result of which, as he set out ‘ taking no thought for road or way,’ was his sermon to his ‘ little sisters the birds.’ But most of all do we catch the new joy of Christ in six lines by Brother Wernher von der Tegernsee :

Des solt du gewis sin ;
 Du bist min, ih bin din.
 Du bist beslozzen
 In minem herzen ;
 Verlorn is das sluzzelin
 Du muost immer drinne sin¹—

lines which remind us of Wesley’s—

Take my poor heart, and let it be
 For ever closed to all but Thee !
 Seal Thou my breast, and let me wear
 That pledge of love for ever there !

Other passages from the hymns and journals of the Wesleys

¹ ‘ Thou art locked up in my heart ; the little key is lost ; thou must remain inside.’

that ring with the same note will readily occur to every student ; as for instance Charles Wesley's—

With Thee conversing, we forget
All time, and toil, and care ;
Labour is rest, and pain is sweet,
If Thou, my God, art here.

Wyclif and
Wesley.

Between Wyclif and Wesley there would not have been, we imagine, much real sympathy. Wyclif's unimpassioned piety, his lack of any consciousness of the tremendous reality of sin, his scholastic subtleties, curiously combined in later years with indifference to all studies but theology, his Erastian conceptions of reformation, his somewhat doubtful opportunism in political matters, the crudity in thought and utterance of many of his ideas, would not have appealed to Wesley. On the contrary the vehemence of Wyclif's language, and the revolutionary character of many of his proposals, especially of his doctrine of 'dominion,' would probably have estranged the more sober and conservative Englishman. In one thing only can we be sure of their perfect accord—Wyclif's intense love of and his sympathy with the poor. Wyclif's sorrow for their woes runs through his works like a wail of love, and redeems his fiercest denunciations, his most impossible schemes. Half Wyclif's writings might be compressed into his bitter cry : ' Poor men have naked sides, and dead walls have great plenty of waste gold.'

Their use
of the pen.

But in two matters Wesley and Wyclif were one in their methods—in their constant appeal by the pen, and in their use of unauthorized preachers. In the vast range and extent of his writings Wyclif is incomparably the greater of the two men ; in the strenuousness of his intellectual life Wyclif has had no superior. His activity in bringing out long scholastic treatises, or in editing popular editions of his sermons and tractates, is almost incredible, more especially when we consider the few years into which his tireless energy compressed tasks that might well have occupied a lifetime. For Wyclif was not merely the last

of the schoolmen, but the first of modern pamphleteers. In homely English, in stinging sarcasm and bold invective, he drove home arguments hitherto buried in crabbed Latin. Nor must we forget that by his translation of the Vulgate into the language of the people Wyclif was, in some degree, one of the fathers of our later English prose. Though Wesley seems to have been strangely ignorant of Wyclif, the later reformer followed in the footsteps of the earlier in his numerous tracts, written in terse logical English, appealing to all sorts and conditions of men.¹

Wesley's early preachers, and Wyclif's 'Biblemen' have often been compared. For Wyclif had unconsciously copied the methods of St. Francis, and fallen back upon the lost secret of the Friars. From Oxford, as from Assisi two centuries before, Wyclif, like Wesley four centuries later, sent out his 'poor priests,' who, in the highways and byways, if not in the churches then on the village greens, should win the souls of the neglected. Clad in russet robes of undressed wool, without sandals, purse or scrip, a staff in their hands, dependent for food and shelter on the goodwill of their neighbours, their only possession a few pages of Wyclif's Bible, or his English tracts and sermons, constantly moving from place to place (for Wyclif feared lest they should become 'possessioners'), not given 'to games or to chess' but 'to the duties which befit the priesthood,—studious acquaintance with God's law, plain preaching of the word of God, and devout thankfulness,'—Wyclif's 'poor priests,' like the Friars before them, and Wesley's 'helpers' on their 'circuits' in later days, soon became a power in the land. Wyclif's 'Biblemen,' it is true, were not 'laymen,' as is so often assumed.² Even Archbishop Courtenay, their great enemy, only calls them 'unauthorized preachers'—*i.e.* clerics without a bishop's licence. Some, no doubt, like Wesley's Holy Club, were men of culture, students attracted by Wyclif's enthusiasm at Oxford; the majority,

'Biblemen'
and
'Preachers.'

¹ For a more detailed study of Wyclif see my *Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. i. 'Age of Wyclif,' cc. 3, 4.

² For proofs see *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, 275; Wilkins, *Concilia*, iii. 158.

especially after his expulsion from the university, were simple, unlettered clerks—‘an unlettered man,’ he said, ‘with God’s grace can do more for the church than many graduates.’ But apart from this question of orders—a word which to the medieval mind had a differing connotation from that which it bears to-day—the resemblance between Wyclif’s Biblemen and Wesley’s early ‘preachers’ is complete, the fear of becoming ‘possessioners’ included.

Wesley and
Loyola :
the
surrender
of the
will.

Comparisons have sometimes been made between Wesley and Loyola,¹ chiefly, of course, because of the obedience exacted by both from their followers. But in the case of Wesley the obedience was personal, in the case of Loyola part of a system. The subjection of the will to another, even in the smallest details of life, is the essence of the Society of Jesus; a doctrine utterly alien to the Methodist spirit. And yet—for after all in the matters of the soul unity is often to be found in the most diverse phenomena—in this doctrine of the subjection of the will modern Methodism and Jesuitism are one, up to a certain point. In its recent preaching Methodism has recognized the great psychological truth somewhat hidden from a previous generation that it is the will, and not the intellect or feelings, that constitutes the essence of the ego. Its evangelists have, therefore, pointed out that ‘conversion’ is nothing else than the surrender of the will, that holiness consists in the perfect surrender, that the essence of sin lies in selfishness, or the exaltation of self by the unsundered will. But this surrender is always made immediately to Christ, never, as in the Society of Jesus, to an earthly representative.

Modern
Methodist
views of
the will.

A criticism of these views lies outside our purpose. In some respects recent Methodist teaching as regards conversion and holiness has departed from the earlier practice. But one criticism is very pertinent to our historical survey. Jesuitism has always leaned towards semi-Pelagianism. This, in fact, is the necessity of its outlook, for if the will be utterly corrupt there can be no virtue in obedience,

¹ *Infra*, p. 163, n.

however complete. Jesuitism, therefore, has always repudiated the extreme forms of Augustinian doctrine, and in this has lain one secret of its hold upon men of the world. It has never failed to recognize the value and merit of human nature. Modern Methodism, by similar insistence upon the will as the root of sin, and upon the surrender of the will as the way of conversion and the beginning of holiness, is tending also, rightly or wrongly, in the same direction. For if the will be utterly corrupt, no surrender is possible. Not to recognize this is ultimately to land in the Calvinistic doctrine of election. The repudiation, therefore, by the majority of Methodist ministers of the doctrine of total depravity in its extreme Augustinian forms is one of the marks of the times, and is a necessary result of the triumph of Arminianism. Theologically, however, the position is saved from semi-Pelagianism by the hypothesis of prevenient grace, the emphasis of which by the late Dr. W. B. Pope was, perhaps, his most lasting contribution to Methodist theology.

VI

The relation, historical and theological, of Methodism and Mysticism must not be overlooked. The debt of Wesley himself is well known. Through reading Thomas à Kempis he first saw 'that true religion was seated in the heart,' while Jeremy Taylor's *Holy Living and Dying*, Law's *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection* 'convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and depth and breadth of the law of God.' In 1756 Wesley recommended the works of the Cambridge Platonist, Henry More, to the study of his brother clergymen. Indirectly also he had been influenced by the 'illuminated Behmen,' through Behmen's effect upon the Pietists Spener and Francke, upon Count Zinzendorf and the Moravians, and upon William Law, as we see in Law's *Spirit of Prayer*.¹ Now, of Methodism, as Warburton claimed, 'William Law was the father, and

METHODISM
AND
MYSTICISM.

¹ *Vide also infra*, pp. 185 ff.

Wesley
and Law.

Count Zinzendorf rocked the cradle';¹ a remark true to this extent, that it points out Wesley's debt to both, especially to Law.

Wesley's de-
nunciation
of
Mysticism.

At a later date Wesley denounced Mysticism with a characteristic thoroughness which at times degenerates into unfairness. He writes :

All the other enemies of Christianity are trifles. The mystics are the most dangerous. They stab it in the vitals, and its most serious professors are most likely to fall by them. . . . The whole of Behmenism, both phrase and sense, is useless, most sublime nonsense, inimitable bombast, fustian not to be paralleled. . . . The mystic writers are one great antichrist.

Hence Wesley falls foul of the primary work of one of the great mystics of all times. Luther's *Galatians*, he tells us in 1741, is 'quite shallow, muddy, and confused, deeply tintured with mysticism, and hence often dangerously wrong.' He gives us to understand that he had done with 'enthusiasm' for ever when he separated from the Moravians. So when the 'French prophets,' certain Camisards from the Cevennes, stirred England with their spiritual agitations Wesley diagnosed the movement as 'natural distemper'; to his later embarrassment when brought face to face with the physical effects of his own preaching.

Its causes.

There were many features in the Mysticism of the times which will account for Wesley's dislike. The extravagance of Molther's doctrine of 'stillness'—that the single duty of a man wanting faith or to serve God perfectly was 'to be still' and do nothing, thus reducing prayer, the means of grace, and good works into hindrances to salvation, not to say sins—naturally disgusted his logical common sense and his energetic spirit. Then much of the current Mysticism lent itself to Antinomianism. Now, Wesley abhorred

¹ Owing to limitations of space I have not entered into the relations of Wesley and the Moravians. They are dealt with in all the histories. *Vide infra*, pp. 191 ff. In my judgement the contact of Moravianism and Methodism is surface contact, which may easily be exaggerated. To the Pietists, through John Wesley's translations, Methodism owes some of its finest hymns.

PLATE II



BISHOP LOWTH, 1710-1787, who declined to ordain Wesley's preachers for America.

JOHN LOCKE, 1632-1704.

ARCHBISHOP POTTER, 1671-1717, who, as Bishop of Oxford, ordained Wesley.

JACOB BEHMEN, the Mystic, 1575-1624.

IMMANUEL KANT, 1724-1804.

BISHOP BUTLER, 1632-1726.

Antinomianism, the iron of which, through an incident in his family history, had entered deep into his soul. Antinomianism had ruined the influence of his early friends the Moravians, and but for his strong control would have gained a footing in his societies. In addition to these two chief causes for his dread of Mysticism, we gather from the many references to the subject in his *Journals* and letters other reasons, some of which were scarcely just. He believed that Mysticism advocated a doctrine of union with God which would rob man of his personality. He dreaded the Mystic's exclusion of reason, as he deemed it, for the appeal to feeling. He hated the 'fondling, amorous,' irreverent language and symbolism which characterized some of its utterances. Nor would he allow that it was the uniform duty of the Christian 'to choose the most disagreeable things, whether they come from God or the world.' In much of this dislike to Mysticism, Wesley, no doubt, was the child of his age, which vehemently suspected anything savouring of 'inner light.' The genius of Locke was in the ascendant, and that was fatal to all forms of transcendental or mystical thought.¹

Nevertheless Wesley was more influenced by Mysticism than he was aware. The proofs of this as regards Wesley himself are given elsewhere; ² here we are concerned with the relation of Methodism to Mysticism. A definition of Mysticism is peculiarly difficult, but under any definition we hold that many of the primary ideas of Methodism must be regarded as mystical. This forms the argument of Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Romanists Compared*, a work regarded by the eighteenth century as a triumph of logic. Lavington was right; we are not careful to deny his main impeachment. Mysticism and Methodism both build upon the foundation, not of argument or observation, but of conscious spiritual experience. The doctrine of Assurance is not far removed from a belief in the 'inner light.' Hence Mystics and Methodists are one in their claim for spiritual certainty, though the claim is stated by

The influence
of Mysticism
upon Metho-
dism.

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 17.

² *Infra*, pp. 186-8.

the Mystic in more unguarded language than by the Methodist. For instance, Ruysbroeck writes :

With our inner ears we shall hear the inborn Word of the Father, and in this Word we shall receive all knowledge and all truth.

Tauler is more cautious :

Dear children, no one ought to allow himself to be in doubt of his own eternal life ; he ought to be sure of it and not only imagine it.

Put into modern language these statements of Ruysbroeck and other Mystics, which might be multiplied indefinitely, are merely the extremest form of that which is characteristic of Methodism also : the claim that 'states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect are for those who experience them states of knowledge.' This Noetic quality, as Prof. James calls it, is common to both Mysticism and Methodism.

Again, the Methodist insistence upon Conversion is based in evangelical argument upon the existence of a faculty different from, nay, superior to reason. In Mysticism and Methodism this intuitive faculty reigns supreme :

Where reason fails with all her powers,
There faith prevails, and love adores.

With this familiar Methodist hymn we may compare the thirteenth-century Flemish Mystic Ruysbroeck :

See now, here must our reason and all definite actions give way, for our powers become simple in love, and are silent and bend low before the manifestation of the Father ; for the manifestation of the Father raises the soul above reason into nakedness without similitudes. . . . Above all things, if we desire to enjoy God, or to experience eternal life within us, we must rise far above human reason, and enter into God through faith.

Or, for that matter, we might adduce the great pagan Mystic

Plotinus, for there is no speech nor language where the voice of Mysticism is not heard :

We must first make the organ of vision analogous and similar to the object which it is to contemplate. The eye would never have perceived the sun, if it had not first taken the form of the sun ; so likewise the soul could never see beauty if it did not first become beautiful itself ; and all men should begin by making themselves beautiful and divine, in order that they may obtain the sight of the beautiful and divine.

The hands are the hands of the Greek pagan ; the voice is that of St. Paul.

By this insistence upon the spiritual faculty as higher than reason, and the source of our spiritual knowledge, Methodism becomes one also with Mysticism in its constant vindication of the spiritual rights of the uneducated against the pretensions of mere learning ; a vindication that at times has degenerated into the contempt for learning which has been the danger of Mysticism in all ages. Said Tauler :

Children, ye shall not seek after great science. Simply enter into your own inner principle, and learn to know what you yourselves are, spiritually and naturally, and do not dive into the secret things of God.

Between Wesley's doctrine of Christian Perfection and that of the Mystics there is, after all, no great gap, especially if we remember that both Wesley and the Mystics need a little translation of technical terms. Writes Ruysbroeck :

The union with God which any loving spirit has possessed in love draws towards the innermost centre of its essence all loving spirits, and he who clings closely to this attraction cannot fall into deadly sin. The contemplative one, who has renounced his own being and all things else, does not experience an expulsive force, because he no longer possesses anything, but is emptied of all ; and so he can always enter naked and imageless into the secret place of his spirit. There he sees the eternal light revealed, and in that light he feels an eternal craving for union with God. And he himself feels a constant

fire of love which desires above all things to be one with God. . . .
This eternal craving for union with God causes the spirit to
glow evermore with love.

Or again :

We shall enjoy God, and, united in Him, we shall rest in
blessedness. And this measureless delight in super-essential
rest is the ultimate source of blessedness, for we are then swal-
lowed up in satisfaction beyond all possibility of hunger.

Let the reader compare with this Wesley's doctrine of
Christian Perfection, as given, not in formal treatises that
chill, perhaps, by their logic and dogmatism, but in hymns
that warm the heart—for instance, his glowing translation
from Tersteegen :

Thou hidden love of God, whose height,
Whose depth unfathomed no man knows,
I see from far Thy beauteous light,
Inly I sigh for Thy repose ;
My heart is pained, nor can it be
At rest, till it finds rest in Thee.

or Charles Wesley's—

Lord, I believe a rest remains
To all Thy people known ;
A rest where pure enjoyment reigns
And Thou art loved alone,

and he will realize the essential unity of Methodist and
Mystic in spite of difference in technical terms. But after
all this is only to claim that in its doctrine of holiness both
Methodism and Mysticism touch the basal facts of spiritual
consciousness, never more finely expressed than by the
great Mystic St. Augustine : 'Thou hast created us unto
Thyself, O God, and our heart finds no rest until it rests in
Thee.'

In his remarkable examination of Mysticism Prof. James
tells us that there are two necessary qualities or marks of
the mystical. The first he calls Ineffability, by which he

means 'that no adequate report thereof can be given in words.' He goes on to add :

It follows from this that its quality must be directly experienced ; it cannot be imparted or transferred to others. No one can make clear to another who has never had a certain feeling, in what the quality or worth of it consists. One must have musical ears to know the value of a symphony.

The second quality of Mysticism Prof. James tells us is the Noetic quality :

Although so similar to states of feeling, mystical states seem to those who experience them to be also states of knowledge. They are states of insight into depths of truth unplumbed by the discursive intellect. . . . As a rule they carry with them a curious sense of authority for after-time.

That these two qualities of Mysticism are qualities also of Methodism is, we think, abundantly clear from our previous analysis of Methodism and of the place therein of the doctrine of Assurance. Prof. James goes on to add 'two other qualities, less sharply marked.' The first he calls *Transiency*, the second *Passivity*. The first seems to us to be rather a matter of interest to psychologists ; it is the antagonism of Methodism to the second that is the dividing line between it and the more strictly mystical groups of religious consciousness. The doctrine of 'stillness,' the negative Passivity which makes Eckhart and Tauler use language curiously similar to that of Hegel, is not a doctrine of Methodism.

Yet even in this matter it would be easy to exaggerate the antagonism. Wesley laid a certain stress upon the tranquil tarrying and spiritual 'quiet,' the sane emphasis of which has been the great contribution of the Friends—both the medieval Friends of God and the later Quakers—to the Catholic Church. Some of his brother's hymns breathe the true spirit of Quietism, especially his fine stanzas :

Open, Lord, my inward ear,
 And bid my heart rejoice ;
 Bid my quiet spirit hear
 Thy comfortable voice

The
 doctrine
 of Stillness.

From the world of sin and noise
 And hurry I withdraw ;
 For the small and inward voice
 I wait with humble awe.

The lines remind us of the words of Tauler :

In the chamber of the heart God works. But what He works in the souls of those with whom He holds direct converse none can say, nor can any man give account of it to another ; but he only who has felt it knows what it is, and even he can tell thee nothing of it, save only that God in very truth hath possessed the ground of his heart.

But with this last sentence Wesley would have had little sympathy. He sang rather :

What we have felt and seen
 With confidence we tell ;
 And publish to the sons of men
 The signs infallible.

Quietism—against which Wesley revolted—is false when stated in its extremest terms. Nevertheless we must not forget the true Quietism, never more needed than in this noisy and superficial age. Ruysbroeck is right : it is

in the repose of our spirit that we receive the incomprehensible splendour which envelops and penetrates us, just as the air is penetrated by the brightness of the sun. And this splendour is merely a boundless vision, and a boundless beholding.

The
 influence
 of the
 social
 factor.

In our judgement the real antagonism, as Wesley deemed, of Methodism and Mysticism—or, as we should prefer to put it, the great corrective by Methodism of the dangers of Mysticism—lies in the emphasis by Methodism of the social factor. However mystical the experiences of its individual members, the narration of the same to one another is in the long run fatal to the aberrations of the mystic spirit. Mysticism, unlike Methodism, loves the subconscious, and the darkness which broods over the sea of silence. Suso, Tauler, Eckhart—especially Eckhart—in a Methodist class-meeting

would be worse than dumb ; they would be unintelligible. Every reader of Tauler's life is familiar with that wonderful scene in Strassburg Cathedral when, instead of preaching, Tauler stood in the pulpit waiting for a message that never came, his sobs audible in the stillness.¹ Such an experience Wesley would have regarded as 'enthusiasm' ; the needs of the people before him would have driven out all other thoughts. Equally fatal is the social factor to the contempt for the outer ordinances of religion which has ever been one of the stumbling-blocks of Mysticism. The social factor was also Wesley's great test for the genuineness of all out-pourings of the Spirit ; they must form part of the common inheritance of faithful Christians.

No doubt there are dangers of exaggeration in this social factor, as fatal, in their way, as the errors of Quietism. Judged by Wesley's last test we should write down Joan of Arc as an impostor instead of one of the truest prophets of God. Repetition in others is no infallible measure of the motions of the Spirit, though, no doubt, it will pass as a rough working rule of life. Even less must we judge truth by our powers of testimony. 'Woe to us,' says Carlyle, 'if we have nothing in us except that which we can express and show to others.' Methodism does not always sufficiently remember that words, as it has been finely said, were invented for the ordinary uses of life, and that they are unhappy, restless, and as bewildered as beggars round a throne when from time to time some royal soul leads them elsewhere. As Tauler puts it, those for whom 'eternity is the aim and dwelling-place' should not be 'like unto foolish asses which never learn any other form of speech than their own braying.' But this danger is rapidly becoming a thing of the past.

The
truth of
Quietism.

Owing to their possession in common of many qualities, Methodism and Mysticism alike have been regarded as philosophical empiricism, or sneered at as the glorification of sentimentality. Methodism need be at no pains to dis-

The
need of
Mysticism.

¹ That this incident is probably not historical does not lessen its value as illustration. The legends of Nicholas of Basel show the *drift* of medieval Mysticism.

associate herself from this joint charge. For Mysticism has been in the past, and will be in the future—

the conception of men whose piety has been won after long conflict, whose single-minded devotion to an abstraction has resulted from a vast experience of the painful complications of life. . . . It has been the ferment of the faith, the forerunner of spiritual liberty, the inaccessible refuge of the nobler heretics, the teacher of the despairing, the comforter of those who are weary of finitude.¹

The truths of Mysticism neither grow old nor die. Maeterlinck is right :

To-day you may pass through the infirmaries of the human soul, where all thoughts come day by day to die, and you will not find there a single mystic thought.

On the contrary they are as potent for uplifting in the twentieth century as in the days of Plato or St. Paul. In her growing realization of unity with a sane Mysticism Methodism will find her most powerful weapon in the great fight of the future against a deadly materialism both in thought and in life.

VII

METHODISM AND PURITANISM.

Methodism has sometimes been charged with being an ascetic religion. Its asceticism, such as it is, is its inheritance from the Puritanism in which it was cradled. Between asceticism and Puritanism there is one fundamental difference. Asceticism looks upon mortification as a duty for its own sake ; hence the tortures of Eastern monks, the wild privations of saints in every age. Puritanism on the contrary, the Puritanism of Milton and other nobler representatives, looked upon mortification as a means to an end. In asceticism the attention is too often fixed upon the process ; in Puritanism the thought was concentrated upon the intended result. With rare good sense Wesley rejected asceticism early in life. ' I cannot think,' he writes to his

¹ Royce, *op. cit.*, 81-5.

mother, 'that when God sent us into the world He had irreversibly decreed that we should be perpetually miserable in it.' So, in spite of occasional toyings with asceticism, he put aside the teaching of the *De Imitatione Christi* in favour of the common-sense rule of his Puritan mother :

Would you judge of the lawfulness or unlawfulness of pleasure ? Take this rule : Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish of spiritual things—in short, whatever increases the strength and authority of your body over your mind, that thing is sin to you, however innocent it may be in itself.¹

To this teaching Methodism, on the whole, has been true. The danger manifested more than once in its history of classifying things as 'worldly' or 'unworldly' by a rigid rule has given place to the greater danger which it shares to-day with every church of forgetting that renunciation in some form or other is still

the strait and royal way
That leads us to the courts above.

If we claim that Methodism owes much of its strength to the Puritanism which it inherited, if we point to the loss of this Puritanism as one of the dangers of the present, this must not blind us to some matters in which the Puritanism inherent in Methodism was not all gain. The danger of both asceticism and Puritanism is a dualism of life ; the cutting off of many human interests as alien from God. The illustrations of this in the case of the extreme Puritans are many. The world will never cease to laugh at the folly which banned the mincepie, which substituted verses of the Bible for Christian names, or which discovered sin in a 'kist of whistles,' or a steeple.

The
danger of
Dualism.

Methodism has suffered at times, especially in its early days, from a similar spirit of dualism. At one time this manifested itself in what might fairly be described as the

Emancipa-
tion
through the
Oxford
Movement.

¹ *Vide also infra*, p. 170.

cultivation of the ugly, a fault aggravated by the Philistinism of the Georgian age. Occasionally, as in the struggle over the Theological Institution,¹ this dualism has taken the form of a suspicion of culture, a feeling not wholly extinct in certain circles ; more often in its pulpit utterances it has preached an indifference to, even a contempt for, the results of science or criticism in their bearings upon truth. In the mother church this dualism manifested itself at one time in the curious form of an indifference to all political and social issues, more ostentatious, possibly, than real.

In these matters Methodism by no means stands alone ; probably in all, with the one exception of the last, it has been less extreme than the other Nonconformist churches. For the most part this dualism was not so much a characteristic of Methodism as the result of the contracted horizons of the times. From any extreme form of dualism Wesley himself was remarkably free, but in this matter he was not altogether able to resist his age. For her emancipation from this dualism Methodism is indebted, to a larger extent than she is aware, to the Oxford Movement. That all life, whether culture, art, politics, the care of the body, amusement or business, must find its unity in Christ Jesus is the great lesson which, more than any other, we have learned from the teaching of Newman and his school.

Other
results
of the
Oxford
Movement.

In certain other of their relations, however, the religious revivals of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have not been so harmonious. The virtual suppression of Evangelicalism as a governing force in the Church of England has made Methodism more conscious of itself as the representative Evangelical Church of the country. If ever again English Methodism become one organization, such welding will be due to one of two causes : either a great spiritual revival which sweeps aside all minor differences, as of but secondary moment in comparison with the evangelical strength which complete unity would give ; or else the pressure from without of an intolerant Anglicanism. Within living memory this last has produced its effect. Even the

¹ *Vide infra*, p. 517.

Wesleyan Methodist Church, which at one time was regarded as a sort of poor connexion of the Establishment, has drifted into complete separation. Harmony between the two will never be restored on the old basis. Only the frankest recognition by the Anglican of the validity and reality of the church life of Methodism can prevent a further widening of the breach, than which we can conceive no greater disaster to English religious life. The desire for unity, in which Tractarianism began, has thus led, by a strange irony, to a sharper schism, a deeper distrust of the fidelity of Anglicanism to the great principles of the Reformation, a determination, if needful, to join battle on this issue, and to sink every other consideration before the maintenance in England of a Protestant evangelical church.

In this connexion it were well to remember the effect of Methodism in the erection of Nonconformity into a force representing in England at least half the nation, in America a much larger proportion. Leaving America out of the account, it is open to question whether, but for Methodism, Nonconformity in England would not have become reduced to a few insignificant extremists. When Wesley was born many of the moderate Dissenters, of whom Baxter may be taken as representative, were still in favour of inclusion in a national church. The Independents, it is true, were largely irreconcilable, so also were the Baptists. But both were declining sects, whose religious life had suffered from their constant controversies, and from the Socinianism of many of their leaders. 'Those who are best acquainted with the state of the English nation tell us that the Dissenting interest declines from day to day.' So wrote the historian Mosheim in 1740, and similar evidence could easily be adduced.¹ Between 1714 and 1731 more than fifty Nonconformist ministers took orders in the Established Church. The stricter manners and the severe morals of an earlier generation were disappearing, and with them went the courage and enthusiasm of religious life. The vital force

Methodism
and other
Noncon-
formist
churches.

¹ See Dale, *English Congregationalism* (1907), 528 ff.; Drysdale, *Presbyterianism in England* (1889), pp. 489-542.

of the Dissenters seemed to have become exhausted by their long fight for existence.

Distrust
gives place
to alliance.

In the providence of God, and by one of the ironies of history, all this was altered by a loyal son of the Anglican Church. Wesley not only gave Nonconformity a new religious life, but, by the immense additions that his own revival ultimately gave to its ranks, made Nonconformity into a great national force. Only slowly, as Dale reminds us, did these results appear. For a long time Wesley's Arminianism filled the leaders of Dissent with alarm; for in many of their churches a loose Arminianism had led to Socinianism, and quenched the fire of spiritual earnestness. Hence at first the 'Arminian Methodists' were regarded by the Independents as the enemies of the 'doctrine of grace.' Not until late in Wesley's life did the more serious Nonconformists discover the immense moral and spiritual difference between the old Arminianism which they dreaded, and the evangelical Arminianism, with its supreme loyalty to Christ and His Cross, which Methodism proclaimed. Then the flames kindled by Wesley began to spread; the dry timber of the older Nonconformity took fire.¹ In the nineteenth century William Jay, John Angell James, Thomas Raffles, and other great Dissenting leaders, owed much of their zeal and success to their connexion with Methodism. A passion for evangelistic work took possession of the Independents, and in consequence the walls of mutual distrust which had long separated Methodism from sections of Nonconformity were broken down. Rigid Calvinism gave place to a nobler conception of the Divine Love. From Methodism the older Dissenting churches gained, not only a new theology but new life, vigour, courage, and fidelity; while Methodism, on its side, was slowly drawn during the nineteenth century further away from the Established Church, into closer alliance with its Free Church brethren. Thus Nonconformity gradually became conscious of its essential unity. A common solicitude to make men Christians led to a lessening emphasis of differences in mere organization.

¹ Dale, *Fellowship with Christ*, 'Theology of John Wesley,' 224.

The dissidence of dissent gave place to the nobler conception of an evangelical solidarity, the end of which is not yet.

In the judgement of some writers of repute the new life which Wesley gave to Nonconformity was not, perhaps, the most potent result of his revival. By the withdrawal from the Church of England of what would have formed a strong Evangelical section, Methodism, we are told, upset the balance so long maintained in Anglicanism, and made it possible for the Tractarians to undo the work of the Reformation. No task can be more difficult or useless than to indicate the other directions which history would have taken if certain events had not occurred—if the Persians had conquered at Marathon, Harold at Hastings, and so on. The different outlook to-day in the Anglican Church, if Methodism had been welcomed by the bishops, may be regarded as belonging to the same category of impossible speculation. Nor must we forget that the Oxford Movement was largely a reaction against a somewhat narrow and cramping Evangelicalism. The reaction might not have been the less vigorous and persistent—though the conflict between the two sections would have been more strenuous—if the Evangelicals, under the lead of Porteous, Simeon, Wilberforce, and others, had been reinforced within the Church by the Methodists.

Methodism
and Angli-
canism.

VIII

We have reserved to the last the most difficult topic : the place of Methodism in the Catholic Church, as judged by its ministerial organization. For herein we touch a difference that at present seems hopelessly to divide good men. But as this is not the occasion for apology for one view or another, but rather for the presentation of fact, we may somewhat lessen the difficulties before us.

The
Presbyterian
organization
of
Methodism.

For Methodism undoubtedly is Presbyterian in the main outlines of its organization, both in America and in England. This Presbyterian stamp was impressed upon it, curious as it may seem, by Wesley himself ; unconsciously, no doubt, for the most part. But Wesley's American ' bishops,' his English

‘superintendents,’ his system of ‘stewards,’ his annual ‘Conferences,’ his ‘quarterly meetings’ of the ministers and laymen in every circuit, all fall in so closely with the Presbyterian system that the later division into synods, the later ordination of the ministers by the laying on of hands of the senior brethren, the later admission of the laity¹ to all, or almost all, the courts of the church have consolidated, not altered, the work he began.²

Relation
to the
primitive
church.

But if we pass away from this disputed question, we should do well to inquire to what extent Methodism has conserved the general organization of the primitive church. Of the orders, other than presbyters and bishops, recognized in sub-apostolic times, for the models of which the church was indebted to Judaism, Methodism has virtually retained the majority. In its ‘stewards’ we may see efficient successors to the apostolic ‘deacons’; to the relief afforded the pastorate by their unwearied ‘service of tables’ Methodism owes, on the spiritual as well as on the financial side, an untold debt. To the early ‘prophets’ we have already alluded; in its ‘local preachers’ and ‘exhorters,’ Methodism finds the nearest analogy. The ‘teachers’—who, of course, had nothing whatever to do with secular schools³—discharged functions some of which to-day are allotted to the ‘leaders.’ On their instruction of the ‘classes’ in the deeper things of God the health, or rather the life, of Methodism as a distinctive church largely depends.

Its
historical
origin.

Historically speaking, the Presbyterian organization of Methodism was due to Wesley’s reading of Baron King, of Oekham’s *Inquiry*, and of Stillingfleet’s *Irenicon*. Lord King’s *Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Catholic Church* (1691) is a remarkable book, and proved the first step towards his becoming the Lord

¹ I am aware that there may be some dispute as to whether the ‘elders’ of Presbyterianism are laymen or not (see Rigg, *Church Organization*, 130 ff). But for all practical purposes they are as much laymen as the ‘stewards’ of Methodism.

² *Vide infra*, p. 441.

³ See my *Persecution in the Early Church*, 173–5. For ‘teachers’ see Lindsay, *op. cit.*, 103 ff; Harnack, *Expansion of Christianity*, i. 444 ff.

Chancellor. Its purpose was to promote the comprehension of the Dissenters, for King had been trained as a Presbyterian. Only recently has it been superseded by other works. In 1746 the *Inquiry*, in its second more complete edition (1712), fell into the hands of Wesley. In spite of his High Church prejudices he owned in his *Journal* that it was an 'impartial draught.' Writing to Coke in 1784 with reference to his ordination of 'superintendents' and 'elders' for America, he says :

Lord King's *Account of the Primitive Church* convinced me many years ago that Bishops and Presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain.

This impression was deepened by Stillingfleet's *Irenicon* (1659). In 1756 Wesley writes :

As to my own judgement I still believe the Episcopal form of Church government to be scriptural and apostolical. I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. But 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*.¹

'But were it otherwise,' Wesley goes on to add, 'I should still call these "smaller points" than loving God and all mankind.'

To this position, so clearly enunciated by Wesley, Methodism in both continents still adheres. That it believes in episcopacy from a practical standpoint is shown by its system of 'superintendents' in Europe, of 'bishops' in America; but it denies the special order and exclusive grace. English 'superintendent' and American 'bishop' are both one with their fellow presbyters; nor is ordination reserved for the 'superintendents' to the exclusion of presbyters of mature experience. Whether in this contention Methodism is right is a theme too large for discussion within the pages of this Introduction. In the judgement of

¹ *WW*, xiii. 251, 211, and cf. Bennet's *Minutes*, s.v., 1747, printed by WHS, 1896, p. 47.

the present writer much spade work has yet to be done before the final verdict of history can be given as to the place and meaning of the episcopus and presbyter in the early history of the Church. But whatever be the facts as to the second century, with its undoubted growth of a monarchical episcopate, we know no scholars who would be so daring as to pronounce that in this matter historical criticism has shown that Methodism is at variance with the usages of the Apostolic Church.

The
revival
of the
apostolate.

'Prophets' and 'teachers,' as Harnack has shown us, were both part of the 'prophetic ministry' of the early Church. Conjoined with them were the 'apostles.' To many who have not familiarized themselves with the results of recent research it may seem strange to claim that the chief office of the early Church revived by Methodism was that of 'apostle.'¹ Owing to the reverence attached to the Twelve Disciples, and the later restriction to them of the title of 'apostle'—a title not given them by Jesus—the place of 'apostles' in the primitive Church has been somewhat obscured. Far into the second century, as the *Didaché* shows us, the 'apostles' were the itinerant missionaries of the Church. Their one occupation was to preach the word, especially to the heathen, and in the pursuit of this duty the 'apostle' was sometimes called 'the evangelist.' An essential mark of their calling was their absolute poverty; before being admitted to the 'apostolate' they must fulfil the demands of Christ, and divide their goods among the needy. On no account must they settle down; their duty called them to travel unceasingly in the interests of their mission. They were regarded as assigned to the Church as a whole, not to individual communities. Their business, as Eusebius tells us, was to lay the foundations, and then hand over the work of 'edification' to more settled pastors.

Its
cessation
with Coke.

With this brief explanation the revival of the 'apostolate' in Methodism needs little illustration. The Wesleys—John throughout life, Charles until he married—Whitefield,

¹ For 'apostles' in the early Church see Harnack, *op. cit.*, i. 398-441.

Asbury,¹ and Coke, were genuine ‘apostles,’ in their ceaseless ‘evangelism,’ in their ‘apostolic poverty’—‘two silver spoons,’ writes John to the commissioner of taxes, ‘one in Bristol, the other in London’—and in their claim that the world was their parish. If they had been familiar with primitive usage they might have claimed the title, for certainly they fulfilled all the requirements of the ‘apostolate,’ as their ‘assistants,’² to whom they entrusted the building upon the foundations they had laid, fulfilled those of the office of ‘prophet.’ In the third and fourth centuries the ‘apostle’ disappeared, largely through the jealousy of the ‘episcopus,’ who aspired to his place and duties. So also in Methodism. The ‘apostolate’ died with Wesley. The one remaining ‘apostle,’ Coke, with his roving commission, was always jealously regarded by the prophets and presbyters, who succeeded to Wesley’s authority though not to his office.³

Of greater importance than the revival of the ‘Apostolate’ was the return to the earlier traditions of the Church in the place assigned by Methodism to its women workers. The dignified position of women in the later Jewish Church—especially that of the Dispersion—and in the early Christian Church would require an essay in itself. The orders of ‘prophets’ and ‘deacons’ were open to them, at any rate in the East; ⁴ while the record of the women who ‘witnessed the good confession’ forms one of the noblest pages in the annals of martyrdom. In the medieval Church also women had a distinct place and power. St. Hildegard of Bingen and St. Catherine of Siena are but two out of the many medieval ‘prophetesses,’ a critical study of whose work is sadly wanted; ⁵ while the position of woman as the head of a great monastic establishment, sometimes, as in Caedmon’s Whitby, a double monastery of both sexes, cannot be

The place of
women
workers.

¹ For Asbury see vol. ii. book iv. chap. iv. Myles, *Chronological Hist. of Methodism*, p. 64, calls Coke an ‘apostle.’

² *Infra*, p. 299.

³ *Infra*, p. 388.

⁴ Pliny, *Epp.* 96, 97; Uhlhorn, *Christian Charity*, 165 ff.

⁵ See my *Dawn of the Reformation*, vol. ii. App. E.

exaggerated. But with the Reformation the place of woman in the Church somewhat declined. Geneva was fatal to 'the regiment of women,' and in the Anglican Church in the seventeenth century the spiritual power of the laity became a cipher.

All this was reversed by the Quakers. Under the clear-sighted lead of Fox, they restored to woman her place among the 'prophets'; their informal female diaconate was from the first one of their ministries of 'help.'¹ The daring of the Friends has been but imperfectly followed as yet by any Church, nevertheless we may urge that Methodism has done its part in recognizing and using more fully the gifts and graces of women. In some sections of Methodism they have claimed their place among the 'prophets';² in the Wesleyan Methodist and other English sections the strenuous and devoted work of the 'deaconesses' has abundantly justified their official recognition;³ in the zenanas of the East they are the only possible 'evangelists'; whilst the wide world over women have formed most efficient 'leaders' of 'classes.' In the government of Methodism, though practically excluded from its Conferences, they have been freely admitted to its Leaders' Meetings, and its Quarterly Meetings, the two chief local courts of spiritual and financial affairs.

IX

We must bring to a conclusion this brief and rapid survey. Limitations of space have prevented us from noticing many matters of interest and importance, and from entering more fully into the relations of Methodism to the Pietists and Moravians. We end as we began by claiming for Methodism a definite place in the progress and development of the one Holy Catholic Church. What the future may have in store of unions and reunions we know not. These things we are content to leave to the overruling of the Holy Spirit.

¹ Barclay's *Apology*, s.v.

² *Infra*, p. 585.

³ *Infra*, p. 455.

In the eternal years of God two centuries of history are but as a day ; nor can we argue from the present to the certainties of the future. But to ignore the fact of a Church which is to-day the largest Protestant Church in the world, with the possible exception of the Lutheran Church, is not only absurd but blasphemous.

For in the history of every Church, to the thoughtful student, the salient fact is not so much the human agencies as the presence of the Divine. We believe, as did the earliest Fathers : Where Christ Jesus is, there is His Church.¹ And in the story of Methodism only the blind and irreverent can fail to discern the presence and power of the Master. For us, as for St. Ignatius :

OUR CHARTER IS JESUS CHRIST ; OUR INFALLIBLE
CHARTER IS HIS CROSS, AND HIS DEATH, AND HIS
RESURRECTION, AND FAITH THROUGH HIM.²

¹ Ignatius, *Ad Smyrn.*, viii. 2: ὅπου ἂν ᾖ ὁ Χριστός Ἰησοῦς, ἐκεῖ ἡ καθολικὴ ἐκκλησία.

² Ignatius, *Ad Phil.*, viii. 2.

BOOK I

THE FOUNDATIONS OF METHODISM

CHAPTER I

THE TIME AND CONDITIONS

God appoints to every one of His creatures a separate mission ; and if they discharge it honourably, if they quit themselves like men, and faithfully follow the light which is in them, withdrawing from it all cold and quenching influence, there will assuredly come of it such burning as in its appointed mode and measure shall shine before men, and be of service, constant and holy.—RUSKIN.

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CHAPTER I ✓

THE TIME AND CONDITIONS

AUTHORITIES.—The authorities for this period are fully detailed in section A of the General List. Special attention may be drawn to the following: TRAILL, *Social England*, illus. ed.; STANHOPE, *History of England in the Eighteenth Century* (1858), *History of Reign of Queen Anne* (1872); MARTINEAU, *History of Religion in England* (1858); SKEATS, *History of Free Churches of England* (1868); STOUGHTON, *History of Religion in England* (1881); BOGUE, *History of Dissenters* (1808); BURNET, *History of my Own Times* (1857); THACKERAY, *The Four Georges* (1859); TULLOCH, *Rational Theology and Christian Philosophy in England* (1872); UEBERWEG, *History of Philosophy*, 2 vols. (1872); ADAMS, *History of Reign of Queen Anne* (1886); MASSEY, *History of England during Reign of George III.* (1858); SMILES, *Lives of the Engineers*, vol. i. (1862); CAMBRIDGE MODERN HISTORY, vols. v., vii., viii. (1904-8).

I

To describe the unfoldings of Methodism from its beginning as a grain of mustard seed to its growth into the gigantic tree under whose branches nations find shelter, is an ambitious but an incomparably interesting work. It calls for patient and painstaking investigation, so that providential intimations, impulses, influences, and personalities may be duly noted, that the divine element in the working principles of human history may be fully appreciated, and that the impulsive and impressive potency of environing events may be correctly estimated. This much is imperatively required in order that the causes of the rise and progress of an imposing spiritual reformation may be fully and justly appraised.

METHODISM
A PROVI-
DENTIAL
MOVEMENT.

The purpose of this section is to present a statement of the time and conditions under which the greatest movement of social and spiritual progress which the modern world has seen had its birth and uprising. It is still glistening with the

freshness of youth, and if we rightly discern the signs of the times it is on the verge of great developments and beneficent extensions. Although it is the latest manifestation of Protestant Christianity, on an extensive scale, it is the largest and most compact church organization now existing in that section of the faith, and we trace indications of an expanding future in the evangelical fervour and aggressive enterprises which characterize its movements, and in the *rapprochements* towards closer union and co-operation which are visible among its various branches.

A
reactionary
period.

The seventeenth century closed upon Christian England without any sign of a noble national life pulsating in the hearts of the people. To outward view they had lost all buoyancy of faith and concern for morality. The period of English history from the restoration of the Stuart dynasty to the accession of George II. was one of degeneracy from high ideals. Reaction gathered in irresistible force on the accession to power of Charles II. and his followers, and swept down the old barriers of moral and social life, with the result that a tide of religious indifference and moral dissipation overflowed the land. The transition from the close of the seventeenth century to the eighteenth has been called 'a dewless night followed by a sunless dawn.' The patriots of the Commonwealth had been succeeded by the profligates of Charles II. The magnificent figures of Cromwell and Milton, Baxter and Howe, Jeremy Taylor and Ussher found degrading contrasts in the dissipated nonentities who formed the Cabal, in the obscenities of Prior and Wycherley, in the plotting of Atterbury and the intolerance of Sacheverell. The Puritan spirit still lingered; but it lay concealed and undemonstrative in the quiet homes of many of the operative and middle classes, while the degrading immoralities and orgies of the court and the upper classes ran madly riot. For a brief period the figures of William of Orange, and his incorruptible friend and minister William Bentinck, had adorned the scene, but at the period of this sketch they had given place to such low intriguers as Harley and Bolingbroke.

The consequent depression in every aspect of political, social, and religious life was deplorable. The profligacies and scandals of the Stuart régime were so widely prevalent that the public mind required a long period in which to recover moral tone or to respond to the vibrations of a purifying faith. But beneath all this apostasy and reaction the forces which make for righteousness were slowly but surely recuperating, and a mighty effort for self-preservation and resurrection was imminent in the religious consciousness and life of the people.

In a history of world-wide Methodism, a preliminary review of the conditions of life in England as exercising suggestive and moulding influences upon the founders and leaders of the great movement will aid in the formation of a fair judgement of the evangelical revival itself, and will also help to explain many of the startling developments of its early career. It will not be needful to describe every side of English life in that period, but only those which throw light upon the makers of Methodism, and the work which they accomplished.

Review of conditions necessary.

Important eras of human progress and national salvation are generally inaugurated and moulded by a man who has understanding of the times, whose ear is open and attuned to respond sympathetically to the sighs and groans of humanity for redemption from the powers of evil, and who has the constructiveness and comprehensiveness of nature to become the builder of a nation and the hero of a far-reaching reformation. Such a man is a living centre, and other men are drawn to him by a mutual sympathy, and as workers together they become welded one to the other in the formation of a new era. The circumference of the influence of these kings of men and the length of their sovereignty are regulated by the inherent power of will and the correctness of the prevision which they possess, but still more by the high standard of moral purpose which they adopt and embody in their achievements.

The man and the epoch.

A strange book was published under the name of Louis Napoleon which propounded a theory upon this subject

that is still fashionable in some quarters. It is stated in these words :

When Providence raises up individuals like Charlemagne, Caesar, Napoleon, it is for the purpose of indicating to the peoples the path they are to follow ; of putting the seal of their genius upon a new era, and completing the work of centuries in a few years. Happy the people who recognize and follow them. Woe to those who misunderstand and resist them. They, like the Hebrews, crucify their Messiah.¹

This theory, with a grain of truth at the bottom, is so false in its development and conclusion as to totally misrepresent history and cancel its noblest teachings. It estimates the course and actions of great men not by such a standard as is supplied in the Sermon on the Mount, or by the eternal law of righteousness, but on the principles of absolutism and fatalism. It endows such men with supernatural capabilities, and invests them with a prevenient destiny. In the constitution of true heroes, character is the first desideratum, and moral elevation the true criterion. If noble aims had always actuated the ambitions of Caesar, Charlemagne, and Napoleon, their work would have been permanent and its results beneficent. But their work was either a failure or was superseded by that of others who had less selfish aims and loftier ideals. The great evangelical movement of the eighteenth century arose through one man who was divinely prepared and appointed to lead a widespread religious revival. By his entire consecratedness, his responsiveness to divine leading, and his quick apprehension of the needs of the times he became the most beneficent instrumentality for good to his generation.

John
Wesley's
idea.

Lecky has carefully discussed the question whether John Wesley or the first William Pitt was built to the higher pattern, and, after judiciously estimating the men, awards the palm to Wesley. The historian is only just. Wesley's idea was the noblest that could be entertained by man. It possessed and inspired him, it transfigured all his work,

¹ *Julius Caesar*, Preface.

and it constituted him the church builder and reformer of modern times. No character or reputation has ever been more closely scrutinized. The Röntgen rays of criticism have searched him through, but no reputation has stood rigid tests more triumphantly.

The idea which Wesley grasped with such an immovable faith was Holiness,—‘To spread scriptural holiness throughout the land.’ The Puritan stood for righteousness, in all human relations and aspects. Wesley took an advanced step and preached holiness—holiness of heart as the foundation of holiness in all conditions and duties. Holiness in Wesley’s thought meant righteousness manifesting itself in perfect love to God and man, and as a transforming power applied by the Holy Spirit to the individual. He was enthralled by the idea, he preached it with the certainty of a demonstrated theorem, in a style as clear as finely cut crystal. All his societies were organized with reference to it. He went up into the mount of vision, where his eyes were purged at the fountains of immortal radiance, and then he laboured to give the idea concrete form in a living society. This he accomplished so successfully that to-day Methodism counts its adherents by millions.

A movement of such magnitude, and with such far-reaching issues, in which the results direct and indirect are equally various and beneficial, must be considered in relation to its prevenient and environing influences if an exact judgement is to be formed of its birth and history. The minds of its founders, especially that of John Wesley, were quick and plastic in receiving outward impressions, which afterwards hardened into immovable convictions. But while they were rigid in holding to divine essentials, they were elastic as to temporary or non-essential arrangements. This latter feature operated helpfully in the early stages of Methodism, but an opposite temper created difficulties in the evolution of later methods and operations.

II

ENGLAND,
1702-29 :
MATERIAL
AND SOCIAL
CONDITIONS.

The England into which the Wesleys were born was so different in its material, political, social, and religious conditions from the England of to-day as to be scarcely recognizable. In every aspect of the evangelistic work which opened before the founders of Methodism there were difficulties to be encountered of a most formidable character. Nothing could have overcome them but indomitable will, unflinching courage, and unquenchable zeal for the elevation of humanity. These conditions acted and reacted powerfully upon the spiritual revival which Methodism accomplished, as will appear in the ensuing pages.

Land and its
cultivation.

Two hundred years ago nearly half the land of England was uncultivated. Yet the people depended for their sustenance upon the fruits of the soil. The value of land produce was much greater than all other results of the people's industry put together at that time. The methods of cultivating the land were of rude and primitive character. The forms of modern agriculture were entirely unknown. The land which lay in its rude state consisted of moor, forest, fen, and bog. The county of Essex was mainly occupied by huge forests; large districts, such as Enfield, within sight of London and more than twenty miles in circumference, lay unenclosed and useless; fifty miles of country in a direct line from Abingdon to Gloucester were a waste; so also were Hounslow Heath, Finchley Common, the Weald of Surrey, and most of the counties of Cambridge and Huntingdon; and stretching away from Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire to the borders of Scotland large tracts of waste land met the eye of the traveller. In the fens and swamps of the Eastern Counties the country was so rough and the solitudes so vast that, as the darkness of night came on, bells were rung to indicate to the traveller the path he might safely pursue, and in a few districts land lighthouses cheered him on his doleful journey.

Some idea of the scarcity of agricultural cultivation may be formed from the fact that many animals and birds that

are now rarely or never found in England then existed in immense numbers in the dense forests spread over the island. Some of these, now preserved in a tame state on large estates, roamed at will in large flocks over the wooded country. Wolves and wild boars had been exterminated during the Commonwealth period, when the country squires were deprived of many of their privileges. During the same time the plague of foxes was much reduced. Farmers mustered the peasantry of their districts, with all the dogs they possessed, and cleared their neighbourhoods of what was then a positive scourge. Herds of red deer were as numerous in the southern and western counties as they were in the Highlands of Scotland, and the wild bull was to be found majestically tossing his white mane in the forests of Lancashire. The wild cat, the marten, and the badger lingered in many districts; eagles, bustards, and cranes were common in the marsh countries and on the eastern coasts.

Since these times England has undergone a complete transformation of her material state. What the change means as to the growth of the people in social comfort a few facts will make abundantly clear. The wheat crop at the commencement of the eighteenth century rarely exceeded two millions of quarters. The average yield of the same crops at the present time amounts to close upon forty millions of quarters. This result is partly obtained by at least one quarter of the land of the nation having been redeemed in the meantime and brought under cultivation. The rest is due to the improvements in methods of agriculture, now as much a science as an industry.

As with agriculture, so with the mineral wealth of England. It was practically untapped at the commencement of the eighteenth century, and the people lived in poverty with unrealized riches under their feet. The most valuable mineral product at that time was tin, of which about sixteen hundred tons were obtained yearly. The yield of copper was almost *nil*. Rock salt had been recently discovered in Cheshire, but little trade had been done in it. The yield of iron was a little more than ten thousand tons yearly,

Mineral
wealth.

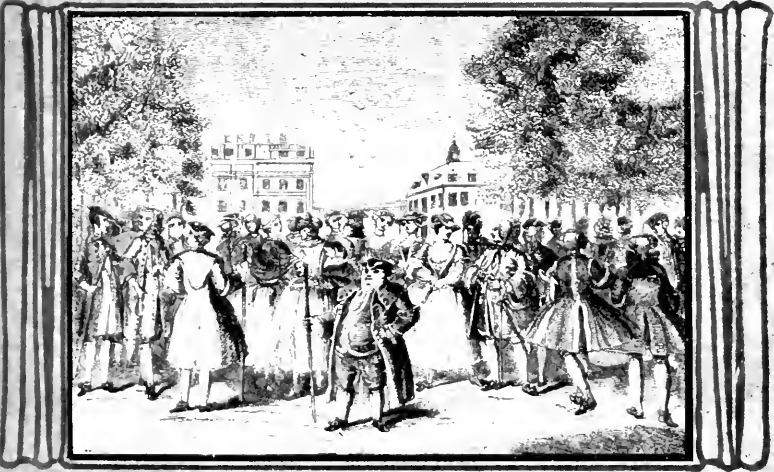
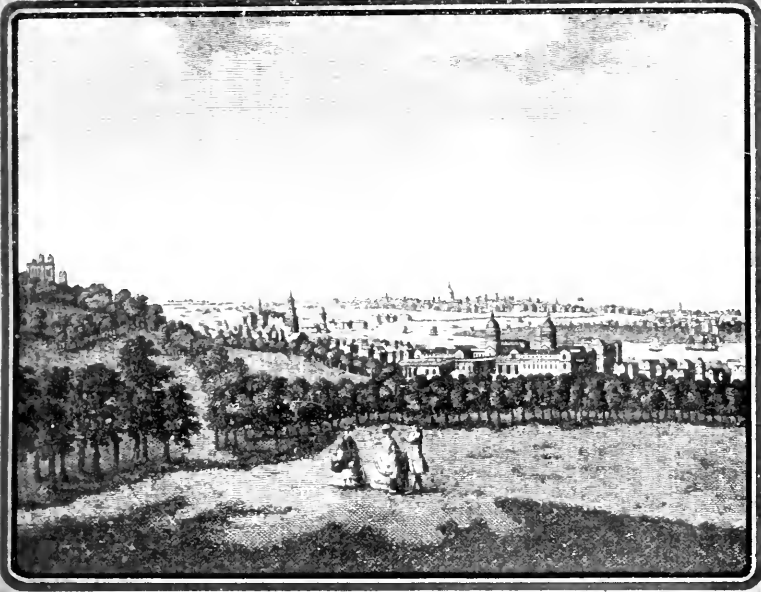
and coal hewing was in its infancy. Probably not more than seven hundred thousand tons were obtained for all the country, of which London consumed about half. The output for one year in this century, for Great Britain and Ireland, is : lead ore, 64,000 tons ; copper ore, 52,000 tons ; iron ore, 174,000,000 tons ; coal, 232,428,000 tons. What this means in the transformation of England since the birth period of the Wesleys it would take a volume to describe. Advancements even more significant might be recorded in manufacture and commerce, but the scope of this sketch does not permit of enlargement upon these departments.

The people
and their
social state.

The population of England at the beginning of the Wesley era cannot be precisely ascertained. Authorities reckon it as between five and a half and six millions of people. The population of England and Wales to-day is slightly under thirty-three millions.

A distressing picture was presented by the contrasting conditions of rich and poor. There was appalling squalor and poverty at the bottom of the scale, luxury and extravagance at the top, with several intervening states. The agricultural labourer received in many cases fourpence a day with food, in other cases eightpence a day without food. In some neighbourhoods the wages were fixed at four shillings a week without food from March to September, but during the other months three shillings and sixpence a week were paid. In some counties the wages rose to six shillings a week in summer and five in winter. Workmen engaged in manufactures, such as woollen or linen, were paid at little more than the rate of agricultural labourers. Six shillings a week were given in some districts and as little as four shillings in others. Children of the tenderest years were employed in the manufactures, especially of woollen and linen. They were paid miserably trifling wages, and they grew up in entire ignorance, amidst deplorable social conditions. A few tradesmen, such as builders and carpenters, received a higher rate of wages, but at the highest they were not half, some of them not more than a third of what is now being paid.

PLATE III



LONDON, FROM GREENWICH, IN WESLEY'S DAY,
THE MALL AND ITS FASHIONS IN 1736.

The social condition of the labourer was rendered more difficult on account of the much higher price of commodities than in the present day. Good wheaten bread was entirely out of his reach. He and his family lived upon bread made of oats, rye, and barley. Sugar, salt, coals, candles, soap, clothing, and bedding were much more expensive than now. The result was that a large majority lived from hand to mouth, in absolute squalor, and when old age came upon them they were thrown upon the parish, or had to find shelter in the workhouse. Authorities declare that one in every five of the population was reduced to this dire extremity. The blackness of this picture is somewhat relieved by the fact that the peasantry had some small opportunities of supplementing their miserable pittance. Through the existence of so much marsh, heath, and forest land, they were able to obtain turf and peat which they dried for the winter fires. They could catch wild fowl in the fens, or keep geese on the common. But with every contribution in aid, a bare existence was all that was possible to them. The economic position of the agricultural labourer still needs to be ameliorated, but it has greatly altered for the better.

The condition of the commercial classes was one of comparative comfort. It was the age when great cities began to arise. At the Restoration no provincial town in the kingdom contained so many as thirty thousand inhabitants, and only four contained as many as ten thousand. Bristol stood next to London as a seaport, and Norwich was the largest manufacturing town. York and Exeter, Worcester and Nottingham had from eight to ten thousand inhabitants, but a town like Derby had only four thousand. Manchester, Leeds, Sheffield, Birmingham, and Liverpool were then small and insignificant places, but these five cities now average five hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants each. By the influx of trade and manufacture which marked the eighteenth century from the beginning, the social condition of the middle class was greatly advanced.

The settlement of the Huguenot refugees in England gave

The commercial classes.

a great impulse to the silk and other industries, which in their turn gave rise to other branches of manufacture. The trade in linen, paper, hats, tapestry, glass, pottery, cloths, and calicoes grew apace in every direction. Mining operations were instituted in many neighbourhoods, with the result that not only did home demands rapidly increase, but the export trade with other countries became a source of national wealth.

National
finances.

The financial state of England at this time was one of great anxiety and difficulty. The arrangement of national income and expenditure was new to the House of Commons, and the existence of war with France made it a problem for the gravest consideration. The national debt at the accession of Anne was only sixteen millions sterling, with an interest of one million three hundred thousand sterling. In 1714 it had grown to fifty-two millions and an interest of three millions three hundred thousand. To meet this, and the expenses of army and navy, Government departments and salaries, the royal allowances, and all other demands upon the exchequer, everything was taxed. Salt, sugar, wines, tea, tobacco, pepper and other spices, raisins and currants, malt, coal, glass, soap, candles, leather, paper, linen, calicoes, silks, and many other commodities were heavily loaded. The land, the property, and the window taxes also brought heavy burdens upon many, and loud outcry was raised against the injustice of these charges. The heavy taxing of imports gave rise to smuggling on an enormous scale, and an army of revenue officers had to be maintained to watch the coast and apprehend the violators of the law.

1694.

In the trying exigencies of these times the Bank of England was established. The idea was borrowed from the Dutch, and naturalized in England and Scotland by William Paterson, who sought by this expedient to accommodate the commercial community, support public credit, and relieve the Government from the ruinous terms upon which alone it had been able to raise supplies and conduct its financial operations. The project met with the fiercest opposition

from the landed interest, but its general utility made it irresistible to the commercial classes and the Government.

The country squires and smaller landed proprietors, as represented in the pages of Fielding and Smollett, were, with some honourable exceptions, coarse and ignorant. There were gentlemen and ladies of refinement, education, and piety to be found among them, but these qualities were not characteristic of the class generally. The type of the country gentleman was to be found in *Squire Western* rather than *Mr. Allworthy*. Many of them could do little more than sign their names to a summons or a warrant. They knew much of grain, pigs, and cattle, they spoke in the broadest provincial dialect, interlarded their speech plentifully with oaths and lewd jests, sat long at table which was loaded with coarse plenty, and they drank beer to excess. The ladies retired from the table the moment the usual courses had been partaken of. Then the men drank, laughed, and joked indecently until they rolled under the table. The nobleman was necessarily of a higher order than the ordinary country squire. He had received a university training, had made the grand tour, cultivated the pride of his order, and both the good and bad points of the 'grand old English gentleman' were found in him. As a class these were luxurious, extravagant, excessive wine-drinkers, given to gambling, and too often lascivious in habit. The pictures drawn of them by contemporary novelists and historians are repulsive and humiliating.

That there were notable exceptions in the higher classes of English society at this time is gladly acknowledged. Homes and families like those of Colonel Hutchinson, as delineated by his saintly wife Lucy, were still to be found, notwithstanding the general drift into immorality which the Restoration period witnessed. There were also large numbers amongst the middle classes who nursed a beautiful Christian life quietly and privately amongst themselves, hoping that ere long days of grace would dawn.

The state of education at this time was deplorable. Schools were few and with some exceptions of the most

Country
gentry.

State of
education.

primitive and inefficient kind. The endowed grammar schools, numbering about four hundred, gave opportunity for some youths to prepare for the universities, and for others to gain some equipment for a respectable calling in life. But popular education was unknown. The restrictions which required all schoolmasters, either lay or clerical, to accept the Declaration of Conformity, or obtain a licence from a bishop or an ordinary, had operated disastrously against the extension of educational opportunities ; so did the ' Clarendon Code,' the Occasional Conformity Act, and the Schism Act. This last made it impossible for the Dissenters to hold office, even as assistants, in any private or public school. The frequent boast of the clergy that education has been in their hands for centuries is mainly true because of the disabling Acts which by their influence were passed concerning the Dissenters. Not till 1779 was any one allowed to act as a school teacher without subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles.

1711.

1713.

In the reigns of William and Anne, charity schools were instituted which gave poor children a little instruction. What was attempted beyond these was done by private enterprise. Such schools were generally conducted by old men and women who could gain a livelihood in no other way, and who had the merest smattering of elementary knowledge themselves. The endowed schools were generally in a corrupt condition. The endowments were often monopolized by the squire or the clergy. In the free grammar school of Pocklington there was one scholar and an income of one thousand pounds. The education given to boys and girls was of the poorest character. Immense numbers never went to school, whilst those who did so only learned to read and write in the most rude manner. Even the children of the better class were poorly furnished. The finished education of a young gentleman meant a slight smattering of Latin and less Greek, often beaten into him by the half-starved usher of a public school, or the servile hanger-on in a country house. The education of girls was even more shallow. Boarding-school advertisements ran

as follows : ' Young women may be soberly educated and taught all sorts of learning fit for them.' This training meant the narrowest possible curriculum—reading, writing, a little music, dancing, and as much arithmetic as would enable them to play cards. A young lady was esteemed learned if she could write a letter without serious mistakes in spelling. As to the education given to the girls of the poor it was practically *nil*. The idea prevailed that education for the poor meant the unfitting of them for domestic service, or for the drudgeries of commerce or agriculture. Nearly a hundred years elapsed before Lancaster and Bell introduced teaching for the poor on an extended scale, and even then Bell urged that the project of teaching poor children to write or cypher was ' Utopian.'

The amusements of the people were of the most degrading character. The most popular of these was witnessing the executions at Tyburn or elsewhere, when half the population of London assembled to see men, women, and often children hung on the scaffold, in many instances for crimes of an insignificant nature. Next in attractiveness to this revolting spectacle was Bartholomew Fair. This was sometimes prolonged for ten or twelve days, and in the reign of Queen Anne great efforts were made to have it extended to fourteen days. Every form of merriment, amusement, and licence was indulged in. The neighbourhood of Smithfield was transformed into a city of narrow streets, filled with stalls, booths, raree shows, and exhibitions of almost every kind imaginable. Its patrons were deafened with the cries of showmen, blare of trumpets, beating of gongs, clanging of cymbals, and a hundred other ear-splitting instruments ; demoralized by drunkenness, wholesale gambling, indecent shows, plays, interludes, lotteries, and nameless debaucheries. There repaired the men of *ton* and fashion from the West End, there were sometimes to be found ladies of the Court skilfully disguised, tradesmen and their wives from the City, and there also crowded the drunkards, wantons, thieves, and vagabonds from all parts of London and far beyond. The festival was

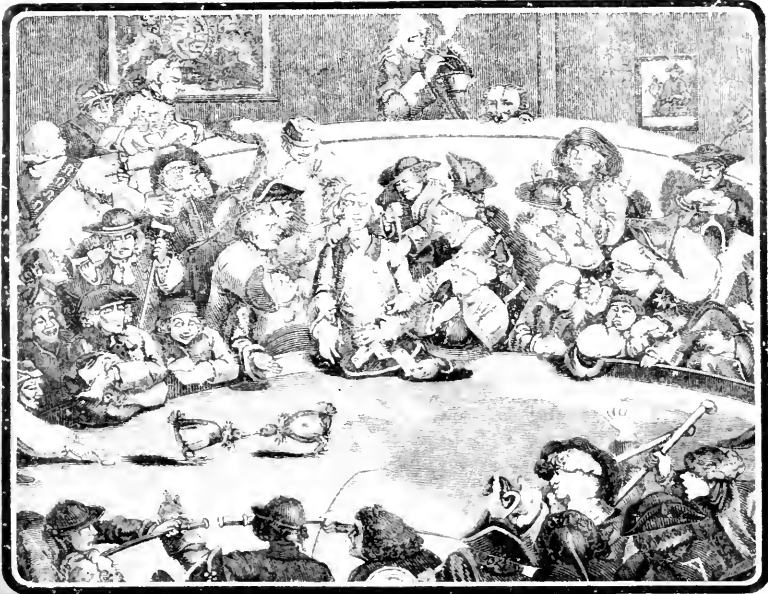
Amuse-
ments.

a moral pestilence of the direst kind. The results were such that early in the eighteenth century the Lord Mayor issued a proclamation denouncing 'the great profaneness, vice, and debauchery' to be found there. Scarcely less horrible was Mayfair. In a less degree but all demoralizing were the wakes and fairs which were common all over the country, at which shows, raffling stalls, drinking booths, and pedlars' stands were innumerable. Games, such as cudgel-playing, wrestling, boxing, and racing were practised, the runners in the last-named being generally young women, the winner being rewarded with a smock. In towns and villages it was common in the evenings, and sometimes on the Sunday afternoons, to hold bull-baitings, cock-throwings (played by tying the legs of the bird together and throwing it on sharp stakes), cock-fightings, rat-hunts, and other repulsive sports. Prize fights were of great frequency, not only by boxing, but with broadsword, sword, dagger, and single-stick. Degraded gladiators existed in large numbers, who travelled over the country, mangling each other for the amusement of brutalized dandies or the vulgar crowd. Descriptions of these scenes given by contemporary historians are too repulsive to be quoted.

Ranelagh, Vauxhall Gardens, The Pantheon, and Belsize House furnished amusement for the wealthier classes, where there were theatres and shows, with extensive gardens, plentifully provided with refreshments, retiring and dressing-rooms. There were sidewalks through avenues of trees, summer-houses, music, and outside amusements of various kinds. These places were open all day and almost all night. They were scenes of fashionable dissipation and profligacy, especially of illicit intercourse and ruinous gambling.

Lotteries, which had been prohibited in the reign of William III. as a common nuisance, 'causing ruin to children, servants, and unwary persons,' were everywhere rife in the reigns of Anne and George I. The Government itself from 1709 to 1724 annually raised immense sums of money by lotteries, being authorized thereto by Act of

PLATE IV



THE COCKPIT. HOLLAND.

THE BOY-GAMBLERS IN MARYLEBONE CHURCHYARD, WHERE CHARLES WESLEY WAS BURIED.

Parliament. The prizes were in the form of terminable or perpetual annuities. Ten-pound tickets were sold at a premium of about forty per cent. to contractors, who resold them in retail to men who travelled over the country to dispose of them. The drawing was sometimes kept over for forty days, and a pernicious habit arose of insuring the fate of tickets during the drawing for the sum of fourpence or sixpence. A certain number of tickets were drawn each day, so that according to the proportion drawn and the number left behind the prices of the remaining tickets were increased. The Government profited largely by these gambling expedients. So also did the contractors and brokers. One firm of these is said to have spent £36,000 in advertisements in a single year, a fact which indicates the extent of the practice. In other ways lotteries were in common vogue. If private persons desired to raise money by disposing of their household goods, it was done by a lottery. Illicit forms of this vice were carried on under many false names.

Gambling under many methods was almost universally practised during this period, nor was there any serious attempt made to stop or limit the evil. The only check upon the wholesale practice was the imposition of sixpence a pack on cards, and five shillings a pair on dice, a limitation which drew forth the regrets of Dean Swift, that in this way the poor might find it more difficult to indulge in the practice. Public gambling-houses were licensed by the royal groom porter; the fees were his perquisite, and he was not likely to impose any check upon the handsome income he so derived. The result was that tables for faro, bassette, ombre, dice, and other methods of gambling were kept in every quarter. In the two parishes of Westminster there were two hundred and ninety-six tables for one fashionable game alone. All classes, from members of the royal family to city apprentices, were carried away by the prevailing pest, with terrible results to morals and fortunes. Many ^{of the} English forests were cleared of their timber to pay the gambling debts of lords and ladies of the highest

Coffee-houses.

standing. Lord Carnarvon, speaking with the wisdom of a gambler, said that 'wood was the excrescence provided by nature for the payment of debts.'

Mainly for the convenience of gambling, drinking, and roystering, clubs and coffee-houses existed in every neighbourhood. Some of these were respectable, especially in the earlier years of their history. Will's Coffee-house was fairly reputable in the days of Dryden and his friends, but it afterwards sank to the common level. The Kit Kat Club, maintained by many of the leading politicians and litterateurs of the day, had a higher character than the run of society clubs, and yet hard drinking was common among the members, not even Addison being able to withstand the infection. But with very few exceptions the coffee-houses were the haunts of the depraved of both sexes. Most of them, while professing to serve only tea, coffee, and such light refreshments, carried on a brisk trade in Hollands gin, ratafia, liqueurs, and all kinds of intoxicants. They joined to this the immensely profitable practice of letting nightly lodgings to all comers, and what this covered is too repulsive to relate.

Criminal
law.

The criminal law of England at the period of which we write was cruelly rigorous and degrading. Such offences as breaking down the mound of a fish-pond, or cutting down a cherry tree in an orchard, or stealing property or money to the value of forty shillings were punishable with death, and the extreme penalty was often inflicted. Sometimes the judge and jury rebelled against carrying out the law in trifling cases, but this was done by evading it. The jury returned the value of what had been stolen as under the fatal sum, whereas it was often far above it. It is a singular illustration of the occasional perversion of the Christian consciousness that a writer like Paley should in his treatise on Moral Philosophy enter upon a vindication of laws of such unnatural severity. A far sounder sense of right was expressed by Oliver Goldsmith when he puts into the mouth of the Vicar of Wakefield these words :

Nor can I avoid questioning the validity of that right which

social combinations have assumed, of capitally punishing offences of a slight nature. . . . When by indiscriminate penal laws the nation beholds the same punishment affixed to dissimilar degrees of guilt, the people are led to lose all sense of distinction in the crime, and this distinction is the bulwark of all morality.

The laws of religious persecution were also lamentable in their intolerance and senseless severity. That in the prosecution of them they reacted against their framers and supporters, does not condone their injustice. They are a monument of bigotry and unchristian sectarianism. But while the constitution of the nation was slowly broadening down from precedent to precedent, the criminal code preserved its harsh and bloodthirsty character to the days of Bentham and Romilly. It was administered in the most unequal, partial, and even ludicrous manner. The justices of the peace were chiefly fox-hunting and drunken squires, with the merest fragment of education, full of class prejudices, and conservative of many injurious customs and ideas. They exercised unquestioned authority in their own localities. They were indulgent to loose livers, but severe on poachers, Puritans, and Dissenters. This partiality showed itself with emphasis in the treatment which the founders of Methodism received from the justices before whom they were haled, and in the licence allowed to the mobs which assaulted them. Many of the clergy at that time acted as magistrates, and were not behind the boorish squires in the injustices practised upon those who were the victims of religious persecutions. It is only right to point out that after the death of Queen Anne a more tolerant spirit prevailed in the English Government. It was firmly opposed to persecution for religious opinion, and it did much to discourage the boisterous attacks which were made upon the early Methodists, which were so often fomented by the clergy and the local authorities. In many places the magistrates were ignorant of their duty, but more frequently they were hostile to evangelists and Dis-

senters, and not only refused to protect them, but openly encouraged their ill-treatment.¹

Treatment
of prisoners.

If the criminal law of England was repulsive, the treatment of prisoners fully corresponded to the nature of the code by which they were condemned. The interiors of the gaols and prisons were horrible beyond description. A writer of carefully judicious mind has said: 'They surpassed the imagination of more civilized times.' They were subject to no regulations, and had no proper provision for affording sustenance to the prisoners. The consequence was that some lived riotously, and others pined in starvation. The pictures of the prisons of the period by Henry Brooke and Oliver Goldsmith, the first prison reformers of our country, are drawn to literal truth in every particular. Sometimes needy persons died of hunger before their trial at the assizes came round. Bodies of the dead were often left to moulder for days in the dismal dungeons of the living. George Fox gives so harrowing a description of what he experienced in Launceston Gaol as to excite indignation that such horrors could be allowed in a Christian land. Ellwood, the Quaker friend of Milton, when enduring confinement in Newgate, testifies that he saw the quarters of men executed for treason lying for days close to his cell, while the hangman and hardened criminals played at bowls with their heads. Many people languished in prison for indefinite periods simply because they were obnoxious to the local justices on the bench. Large numbers of prisoners died of the foul disease called gaol fever, which was the result of the insanitary condition of the buildings, drains, ditches, overcrowding, and accumulations of filth. When the prisoners appeared in court for trial, they often brought with them the contagion from the gaol, with the result that both officials and the public were seized as by a plague which spread far and wide. The Dissenters suffered untold afflictions through these frightful evils. The gaolers were not paid any fixed salaries, but lived upon fees exacted from the prisoners. It therefore followed that many whom

¹ *Vide infra*, pp. 327 ff.

the juries had declared to be not guilty, others in whom the grand jury had not found even the appearance of guilt, others whose prosecutors had failed to appear, were detained in prison for months after they had ceased to be accused parties, until they paid fees of gaol delivery. It was this outrageous injustice which first aroused the attention of John Howard to the evils of our prison system in 1773. He visited every town in the kingdom which contained a prison, to investigate the state of its affairs. The result was that he spent his fortune and the remaining years of his life in seeking to ameliorate the condition of the prisoner, and to christianize our prison system.

A knowledge of the highways and roads of England is necessary, if a true estimate is to be formed of the work accomplished in the eighteenth century by the apostles of Methodism. Nothing has aided the advancement of the nation in social and religious life more than the facilities of travel and intercommunication which have been effected in every part of the land. At the settlement of William III. not only were there no canals or railways, but the roads were few and all of them in a scandalous condition. The best highways were full of deep ruts with precipitous descents and rugged surfaces. All marks which distinguished the road from the common became invisible as the darkness of night settled over the landscape. Pepys, Thoresby, Pennant, and others tell that they and travellers generally were frequently lost at nightfall when on their journeys. They had unconsciously wandered far from the road, and were obliged to wait in their vehicles till the morning. Coaches were often unable to pass each other, because only a narrow path of firm ground rose above the quagmire which lay on either side. Commonly under such circumstances coachmen or waggoners parleyed and quarrelled long and fiercely as to which should give way for the other to pass. The roads were often impassable for days and weeks, because of floods or ice. Very often two or three pairs of oxen had to be attached to coaches or waggons to drag them out of ruts or accumulations of

Roads and
modes of
transit.
Difficulties
of travel.

mud. It took Pennant six days to travel from Chester to London, with sometimes as many as eight horses to drag him through the slough. Arthur Young, in his account of journeys in Lancashire and the North, describes a journey of only eighteen miles, in which three carts were shattered, the foundation of the road being shifting sand, which became shifting mud in a rainy season. He describes other roads along which only one line of conveyances could proceed at a time, as there was only one line of ruts. He speaks of another as 'a paved causeway as narrow as can be conceived and cut into perpetual holes, some of them two feet deep measured on the level.' The conveyance of goods was generally by stage waggons; passengers lay in the straw amongst the packages. Fifteen pence per ton per mile was the usual charge for carriage of goods, which was in most cases, as in that of coals, prohibitive. In some counties pack-horses were employed, especially in hilly districts; and these sure-footed animals, with the produce of woollen and cotton mills on their backs, frequently with the addition of poor travellers mounted between the bales, travelled long distances in Yorkshire and Lancashire. Middle-class people generally travelled by stage coaches, which, given fairly good roads, fine weather, and regular changes of horses, were able to cover fifty miles of country in a day, but this rate had generally serious deductions made from it by casualties. The rich travelled in their old-fashioned family coaches, which were roomy and cosy, drawn by four horses, supplemented by oxen or pack-horses when the roads were steep or rugged. In many parts of the country six horses were needed to drag the coach, and even then it was often detained for hours in a slough or quagmire.

Highway-
men.

Dangers and vicissitudes arising from the condition of the roads were **not** the **only** trials which travellers had to endure. Every public highway was infested with highway robbers, many of them mounted on horseback, who even in daylight stopped both foot passengers and travellers in conveyances, and plundered them of every article of value

they had with them. A charm of romance was thrown around many of these thievish adventurers, as being men of handsome appearance, courteous bearing, graceful riders, and gallant opponents. Tales, greatly exaggerated, of their bold adventures, generous acts to the poor, and courteous treatment of ladies even when they were robbing them were common talk in society, and gave the rogues an adventitious popularity with the vulgar, which drew unscrupulous spirits to take to the dangerous vocation, with the result that many of them ended their career on the gallows. In many cases the keepers of public-houses on the lines of travel were in league with the marauders. They gave information to the thieves, afforded them opportunities of plunder, and shared in the profits. The novels which describe these times abound in romantic tales of the daring and courage of these rascals, which contain at least as much fiction as truth. The roads on all sides of London were frequented by robbers. Hounslow Heath, Finchley Common, Epping Forest, Hayes Common, and similar neighbourhoods were constantly the scenes of robbery and violence.

London was but a shadow of its present self, and its streets and thoroughfares accorded almost entirely with the provincial highways described above. Its population was little more than half a million at the commencement of the eighteenth century. Great improvements had been carried out both in streets and buildings over the area devastated by the Great Fire, but to gain a true idea of the size of London at that time we must think not only of the suburbs as being pure country, but also of such contiguous districts as Blackwall, Chelsea, Marylebone, Finsbury, the Tower Hamlets and Islington, as being almost entirely unoccupied. The crazy old London Bridge covered with piles of mean houses was the only land communication with the south side of the Thames. The streets in the centre of the city, save where the demolition caused by the fire had led to rebuilding on an enlarged scale and in an improved style, were narrow, badly paved, without sewers, and dangerous to all who had

to go through them. The narrow footpath was separated from the carriage road only by a line of unconnected stakes or posts at wide intervals, which Samuel Johnson habitually touched as he passed them. The kennels, which were open on both sides of the streets, were swollen into torrents in wet weather, whilst in dry or hot weather the air was pestiferous with exhalations from the garbage which choked them. When the puddles were in full tide, the carmen and coachmen drove their vehicles through them to enjoy the fun of thoroughly splashing the passers-by. The footpaths were frequently occupied with sedan chairs, wheel-barrows and other obstructions, some of them being left there wantonly to prevent an easy passage. If a passenger, especially a woman, became bewildered by these annoyances and slipped into the kennel, shouts of enjoyment filled the street. Notwithstanding all these drawbacks it was preferable to pass along the streets on foot than to use a vehicle. Collisions were frequent, and not always accidental. There were no traffic regulations, and when a stoppage occurred drivers and servants broke into altercations in which oaths and imprecations bore a leading part. At such times thieves and beggars seemed to spring out of the ground as if by magic, so quickly did they crowd round and assiduously ply their occupations. Not till 1761 were means taken to improve these things, and then improvement could only be made by slow degrees. Snow Hill on wet days became a river which flowed into the Fleet ditch, causing a concentration of pestilent horrors. When rain fell the streets became expanses of liquid mud, whilst the runnels of the house-tops discharged pitiless streams of dirty water from above. The passengers below fought with each other for the wall, and drove the weaker pedestrians into the full brunt of the storm.

Dangers of
the night.

As night came on the beggars recovered with marvellous swiftness from their lameness, blindness, and diseases, and became sturdy assailants of unprotected passengers. Lincoln's Inn Fields were a nightly haunt of desperadoes who scrupled at no violence in robbing or assaulting their victims.

Those who ventured abroad in the dusk in chairs or coaches fared as ill as foot travellers. Drivers in the narrow thoroughfare became speedily entangled in a deadlock, and then cursed and lashed at each other with their whips, or came down and engaged with each other in pugilistic encounters, while the terrified passengers were spoiled of their valuables by evil-minded loiterers.

Towards the outskirts of the city, as darkness drew on, dangers gathered thickly round those who ventured out of doors undefended. Highwaymen abounded in the near neighbourhoods, and sometimes ventured into the centre of the city. Piccadilly, St. Giles', and Bond Street were scenes of spoliation by these robbers, and ladies venturing out had to be attended by servants carrying arms. The streets in the city were crowded with abandoned women and their bullies, while an excitement of a political or contentious nature drew mobs of blackguards who raged and fought so desperately that control by the authorities was impossible. Turbulence in the streets was indulged in not only by the lower orders; in Queen Anne's reign it became the custom of the fops and profligates of fashion, known as Mohocks, after tarrying long at the wine and the gambling-table, to roam the streets at midnight, beating the watch, subjecting unprotected women to shameful insult, damaging property, and perpetrating mischief in any cowardly and inhuman manner. Then they reeled without interference to their homes. The city apprentices also formed themselves into gangs which paraded the streets, especially in the neighbourhood of Fleet Street and the Strand, interfered with passengers and used violence to those who resisted or resented their conduct. This class glorified the calling of the robber or highwayman as heroic and romantic.

III

The political conditions of England immediately preceding the uprise of Methodism were peculiarly crucial and conflicting. It was a transition period. Cross currents,

POLITICAL
SITUATION.

A man called
for.

Declaration
of rights,
1688.

1689.

contrary interests, and bitter party elements existed in all directions. If the crying needs of the hour had not brought the providential man who could control and guide the State in its time of peril, England might have been reduced to a position of permanent degradation. But the needed man appeared in William of Orange, a true Protestant, a great constitutional statesman, free from selfish and base ambitions, a brave and skilful soldier, and an ardent lover of freedom. We wish we could say he was as pure in life as competent in rule. The chief event of the accession of William and Mary was the Settlement of the Crown and the Throne, made between the new rulers and the nation. This was called the Declaration of Rights, prepared chiefly by Lord John Somers, and called by Edmund Burke 'the immortal Bill.' It affirmed the rights of the people, limited the royal prerogatives, disposed of the idea of the divine right of kings, determined that Parliament must frequently be summoned, that the sovereign must not tax the people or keep a standing army without consent of Parliament, that he must not put aside any of the laws of the realm, and finally that every person who should be reconciled to or hold communion with the see of Rome—who professed the popish religion, or married a papist—should be excluded from, and be for ever incapable of inheriting, possessing, or enjoying the crown. This was the second great Charter of England, and its provisions were equally honourable to the king and the statesmen who were united with him in its execution. The Bill concluded with the words which gave it the name of the Declaration of Settlement. 'The Lords and Commons do claim, demand and insist upon all and singular the premises as their undoubted rights and liberties.' One of the earliest measures passed in William's reign was the Toleration Act, under which the legal right to worship was conceded to Nonconformists, Catholics and Unitarians excepted. But many irritating limitations were included in it. All Dissenting preachers and teachers were required to subscribe to thirty-six of the Thirty-nine Articles, and those who failed to do so remained subject to the penal laws.

Any one found at a Dissenting place of worship might be called upon by a justice of the peace to take the oaths, and no building could be used as a place of worship until it had been certified before the bishop, or archdeacon, or by a justice of the peace.

The accession of William brought another great change in the administration of the government of England. This was government by party. The king was strangely puzzled by some of the peculiarities of the English Constitution, and especially by the existence of two great parties in the State who were always in collision with each other. Their several interests were so sharply divided that any statesmen in power were embarrassed exceedingly in making laws for the people. After much consideration William proposed that the men chosen by the king to preside over the great departments of State should be called 'the king's ministers' and form a cabinet. Also that these ministers should all belong to one party, either Whig or Tory. The choice must be decided by which party had a clear majority in the House of Commons. Government by party may not be an ideal method for a perfect state, but it is the only practical one in our present imperfect condition.

Government
by party.

A more important change resulting from the Act of Settlement was the emergence of the House of Commons as the ultimate governing force in the kingdom. This arose from the provision in the Act and the Bill of Rights which guaranteed to the Commons the control of the expenditure. In this really lay the power of administration. This was the vital principle of the Constitution which was betrayed and sacrificed in 1685. It was now re-affirmed and re-established.

When William ascended the throne he felt that his great mission was to restore England to that commanding position in Europe which it had occupied under the rule of Cromwell. This high stand had been forfeited under the shameful rule of the Stuarts. The ascendancy which was being claimed by Louis XIV. of France was a danger not only to England, but to the Protestant nations of the Continent.

England's
ascendency
regained.

In 1689 Louis had struck a blow for extended conquest by the invasion of the German Palatinate and the neighbouring Principalities. War was at once engaged in against Louis by William and his allies, with the result that in 1697 the French King was so weakened that he signed the Treaty of Ryswick, by which he agreed to resign the conquests he had made, and submitted to terms by which a fair balance of power might be preserved.

But in 1700 Louis broke his engagements and the ascendancy of France again became imminent. William formed a Grand Alliance with the Emperor and the States General to resist the ambitious design of Louis to become the dictator of the Continent. The Tory party in England at this time was doing all it could to frustrate William's purpose, and opposed the entering upon a war with France. But an event occurred which greatly influenced the nation to act with the King. James II. died, and Louis acknowledged his son, Prince James Francis Edward Stuart, now known as the Old Pretender, as king of England. The indignation of Englishmen at this insult was intense. Another deciding influence was that the stock-jobbers recognized that the money and trading interests would be subserved greatly by a foreign-aided war against France. Parliament voted men and money without scruple for a mighty struggle with Louis. But before it could commence William was thrown from his horse and received fatal injuries. He died when, according to human judgement, his presence seemed indispensable, but the Grand Alliance he had formed remained and became the salvation of Europe.

Accession
of Anne.

The statesmen who formed the *entourage* of William, either were or became Whigs in politics and Protestants in sentiment. But when the great king died a trying crisis came to England. Anne (1702—1714), who succeeded him, had always been a bigoted Tory. In her heart she had the warmest sympathy with her half-brother the Pretender. She clung passionately to superseded ideas of royal prerogative, her feelings were fervently active in favour of the Established Church, and she indulged bitter animosity against

the Dissenters. After her accession several matters occurred which seriously affected the position of parties. The Queen and the Duchess of Marlborough had for years been bound together in closest friendship. This intimacy helped to hold Anne for some time in apparent agreement with the Whigs. But extreme friendships between men and women sometimes end in aversion and hostility. This was the case with the Queen and the Duchess, and the breach which took place between them made it easy for Anne to break with the Whigs. A Tory reaction was working in the public mind, encouraged by the inflammable preaching of Dr. Sacheverell, who denounced from the pulpit of St. Paul's the principles of the Revolution and described Dissenters as 'villains, hypocrites, and murderers.' He was enthusiastically supported by the High Church party, who so influenced the people that mobs assembled and demolished the principal meeting-houses of the Dissenters in the city. Sacheverell's sermon was such a violent ebullition of party rancour that the Government resolved to prosecute him. The wiser part of the Cabinet was against this proceeding, but Lord Godolphin, who had been contemptuously referred to by the preacher under his nickname of Volpone, carried his will and the prosecution went forward. Sacheverell was condemned, but the Government was ruined. The Queen dismissed her Whig advisers and called the Tories, headed by Harley and Bolingbroke, to her counsels. In a general election which followed, the Tories obtained a large majority. 1709.

After the death of William the Whig Government of Anne pursued his policy, and the war was prosecuted against Louis with great vigour by the Duke of Marlborough, who was the greatest warrior of his day. The victories gained by him over the French on the fields of Malplaquet, Ramillies, Oudenarde and Blenheim were the glories of Anne's reign, and left Louis with a depleted kingdom, an overwhelming debt, and an outlook of hopeless ruin. The Tories on their taking office closed the war with France, arranged the Peace of Utrecht, cultivated friendship with Louis, joined the Queen in persecuting the Dissenters,

and some of them plotted for the restoration of the Stuarts.

George I.

On the accession of George I. (1714), the Whigs regained the ascendancy. The advisers of the late monarch were discredited, some fled to France and plotted with the Pretender, some were impeached for high treason. The new ministers of the Crown pursued a firm and wise course of constitutional progress, the pretensions of the Stuarts were shattered, and England entered upon a career of prosperity and national development. Slowly but surely important steps were taken in the direction of civil and religious freedom. One change the importance of which cannot be overrated was the emergence of the Prime Minister. The change was effected quietly and without observation. It was made necessary by the difficulty of having two kings, William III. and George I., who imperfectly understood the English language, but it resulted in a transference of the centre of gravity. It was a transformation of the English Constitution from being an hereditary monarchy with a parliamentary regulative agency into being a parliamentary Government with an hereditary regulative agency.

Emergence
of Premier.

Religious
freedom.

On the side of religious freedom a great advance was made in the repeal of the Occasional Conformity Act and the Schism Act. The effect of the Test and Corporation Act was that Dissenters qualified for office by taking the sacrament at church once a year, but continued to worship in their own meeting-houses as before. An Occasional Conformity Bill was passed imposing a fine of £40 upon any person who should attend a conventicle while holding any public office. The Schism Bill was the work of Lord Bolingbroke, and it provided that no person should teach in a public or private school unless he conformed to the Established Church and had a licence from a bishop. A breach of this Act involved three months' imprisonment. The repeal of these shameful laws was a great relief to the Dissenters. An attempt was also made to secure the repeal of the Test Act, but the time was not ripe for such an act of justice.

Sir Robert Walpole, one of the greatest of English statesmen, managed the nation with consummate skill and sagacity. But two great blemishes rest on his reputation. One is as to his private character, which was low and licentious in a shameful degree. This unhappily was a common characteristic in the lives of many public men of the period. The other drawback concerned the wholesale bribery and corruption by which he carried on his administration. Places and pensions were openly sold, and there were few members of Parliament whose votes he was not able to purchase by money payment. In his hands bribery became an organized system. After his death the practice became even more base and degrading. The Pelhams not only perpetuated the system, but descended to methods of corruption too low for Walpole to attempt.

In some aspects of the national life this period of transition was full of promise. There were signs of growth and development in several directions. There was an eagerness manifested for the discussion of political, social, and religious problems; there were signs of great expansion in trade and commerce. Everything was being submitted to the test of reason, and from the clash and clangour of controversy truth and righteousness always emerge in beneficent brightness.

IV

The period has often been called 'The Augustan Age of Literature,' but this is scarcely true if the term 'Augustan' stands for superlative excellence. It does not compare favourably with the original era, when such names as Virgil, Ovid, Horace, and Livy illuminated the literature of the day. And in English literature it is excelled both by former and later epochs. There was nothing creative as in Elizabethan days, when the names of Bacon, Spenser, Shakespeare, Raleigh, and Hooker shone with unapproached splendour. Nor was there anything in it to compare with the Victorian era, brightened by such spirits as Carlyle and Macaulay, or De Quincey, Ruskin, Thackeray, Dickens,

INTEL-
LECTUAL
CONDITIONS.
The Augustan Age?

and George Eliot, or Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning. In literature the age was more remarkable for smartness of wit and perfectness of style than for robustness or originality. Of this latter quality it was almost destitute. There was, however, rank abundance of writers, some of whom attained high excellence of form and some a large measure of popularity. The latter has not always been endorsed by posterity.

John Locke
(1632-1704).

1690.

One writer should be mentioned here, although he stands a little outside our period, on account of the enormous influence he exercised both in England and on the Continent during the whole of the eighteenth century. This was John Locke, a name which must ever be reckoned high among metaphysicians and political economists. In a large measure he suggested the fundamental principles of the Act of Settlement. In his *Two Treatises of Government*, replying to the reactionary figments of Filmer, that kings had absolute rights and powers over their subjects, Locke insisted that all civil right rested in a contract, either expressed or implied, between the governor and the governed, which bound the one to govern on certain prescribed conditions, *i.e.* according to law, and the other to obey the lawful demands of the government. He also pleaded with impassioned earnestness for civil and religious liberty in his *Epistola de Tolerantia*. This greatly aided the passing of the Toleration Act. But his chief work was the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, which still remains one of the epochal books in English literature. The chief purpose of the essay was to disprove the doctrine of innate ideas. It is not easy to fix precisely Locke's position. The mind at birth, he affirms, is a sheet of white paper, and whatever knowledge it afterwards acquires is written upon it by the finger of experience. This is the position of simple sensationalism, and from this teaching Condillac and the French materialists professed to derive their views. Locke seems to admit one source of knowledge which is independent of the senses. Our knowledge, he says, is made up partly of ideas of sensation and partly of ideas of reflection. These last are supplied to the mind by its own operations: we

1689.

1690.

know that we think, believe, doubt, will, love, etc. Judging casually, it might seem that Locke taught that reflection was a source of ideas independent of the senses. But closer scrutiny shows that he allows only one real inlet for ideas, although reflection may give us the means of modifying or combining them.¹

Prolonged and severe controversy arose concerning the principles advocated by Locke. Some of the combatants are referred to in the notice given below of the deistical dispute. It is sufficient to mention here two metaphysical athletes of rare quality who joined in the fray. Samuel Clarke opposed the sensationalism of Locke with vigour and skill. He insisted that in the human mind there are necessary and absolute ideas, such as eternity, immensity, etc., which express qualities or attributes. But to every quality there must be a correspondent subject to which it belongs. A Being therefore must exist to which such attributes belong, and this Being we denominate God. Clarke also insisted upon a sure ground of morals. He said that the human reason recognizes certain fixed relations in the universe, and that virtue consists in acting in harmony with these, or as he expresses it, with the fitness of things. He also stoutly opposed the fatalism of Spinoza and maintained the freedom of the human will. Clarke was the chief exponent of the idealistic philosophy against the materialists of his generation. The other great metaphysician who illumined this period was George Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne. He was so firmly opposed to the conclusions of sensationalism as to rush into an opposite extreme. He denied the validity of the inferences made by every perceiving mind concerning the objects perceived. He denied the existence of matter, which he averred is only a name given by philosophers to the 'something' which underlies and supports the sensible qualities of an object. Locke taught that the objects, by the impressions which they make upon the senses, engender ideas. Berkeley insisted that the ideas implanted by the Creator in the human mind teach it all that can be known

Samuel
Clarke
(1675-1729).

George
Berkeley
(1684-1753).

¹ *Vide also supra*, p. 17.

about the objects. In the next generation David Hume employed the argument *reductio ad absurdum* against this theory with complete success.

Addison.
Steele.

In the general literature of the period there was not only great activity but some new developments. Joseph Addison and Richard Steele were schoolfellows at the Charterhouse and companions at Oxford. They devoted themselves to letters and left an enduring mark in literature. Addison early plunged into poetry. His poem on the victory of Blenheim so delighted the Whig ministry that they made him the Commissioner of Appeals. Receiving subsequent promotions, he became eventually one of the chief Secretaries of State. Steele became a soldier and a rollicking blade. He led a wild life, until, upbraided by conscience, he resolved to reform, and wrote a devotional book, called *The Christian Hero*, intended to help him to lead a better life. For a time he succeeded in his efforts, but the unceasing raillery of his associates and the pernicious atmosphere of his environment unfortunately turned him from his purpose. On April 12, 1709, he commenced a new era in English literature. He issued on that day the first periodical published in the country worthy of the name. It was called the *Tatler*, and was published three times a week at the price of one penny. Addison joined in it as an occasional contributor, and for two years it ran its course, when it disappeared to make room for the *Spectator*. To this Addison became a regular contributor. Steele continued to distil his light and good-natured wit through its pages, but Addison's genius made it universally acceptable and famous. Steele drew the first sketch of Sir Roger de Coverley in its pages, but Addison adopted the old Tory knight and decked him in all his charming eccentricities. The volumes of the *Spectator* still maintain a high place among English classics, and it will be long before the Visions of Mirza, or the Essays on 'Paradise Lost,' will be surpassed for undefiled English. It is not difficult to account for the unique popularity of the *Spectator*. Its plan was original and peculiarly happy. It excited the interest of a boundless constituency by

1711.

pictures and reflections drawn from the entire round of human life, politics alone being excluded. The attractive idea of the Spectator's Club, with its delightful figure of Sir Roger, awakened general curiosity and interest, which were constantly stimulated by the successive contributions of Addison. These were varied but always elegant, refined, natural; his satires were faithful, but in excellent spirit; he rebuked the corruptions of the times, but in charity rather than anger; he sketched social manners and customs with an easy humour, and his freehand drawings of the old knight's whimsicalities were admirably achieved. The whole series abounds in pathetic touches, in racy and exact delineations of the human heart. When literary criticism was attempted it was equally excellent as to its conception, its correctness, and its grace. The issues were precisely adapted to suit the higher consciousness of the times and to give it an upward direction. The entire series was like a pure translucent stream pouring its waters noiselessly into a polluted river with beneficent intent and beneficial result.

Both Addison and Steele attempted poetry and the drama. The latter wrote second-class plays which have long been relegated to obscurity. Addison wrote 'Cato,' at that time much admired. It was lacking in vigour and fire, but contained some fine pieces which schoolboys long continued to recite at their annual exhibitions. As a poet he is best remembered as the author of the favourite hymns:

'The spacious firmament on high;'

and—

'When all Thy mercies, O my God.'

The most prolific writer of the generation was Daniel De

Daniel De
Foe
(1663-1731).

Foe. He was as gifted as he was prolific. He began the serial literature of England by publishing in 1704 *The Review* as a weekly paper. It was soon issued twice and subsequently thrice a week. He wrote nearly two hundred books, many of them amazingly clever. His *Robinson Crusoe* is still unequalled in its line. As a piece of realistic if imaginary

1703. writing, his *History of the Plague of London* is unsurpassed in our language. His novels are often coarse, but are remarkable for their perfect delineations of life and naturalness of plot. His political writings produced a powerful impression, especially his *Shortest Way with Dissenters*. This was a caustic piece of irony which recommended the passing of an Act by which a Dissenter found attending a conventicle should be punished with death or with imprisonment for life. The clergy took the pamphlet seriously and passionately supported its suggestions. Then when the farce was discovered, they were so exasperated at having allowed themselves to be imposed upon, that they prosecuted De Foe, who was heavily fined and made to stand in the pillory three times. The people formed guard round him, decked the pillory with flowers, and drank his health. Then he was imprisoned. By this persecution he lost his business and £3,500. De Foe was unmistakably a genius. He was equally excellent as a novelist, an essayist, and an historian. He has been called the model of style for an historian, and whatever departments of authorship he undertook he was efficient and admirable in all.

Swift
(1667-1745). At the antipodes from De Foe as a political writer was Jonathan Swift. He was as ardent in support of the conservative and clerical parties as De Foe was in opposition. The brilliance of Swift's genius was only equalled by his misuse of it. A stream of nitric acid trickled from his pen when it was used for party purposes. He was filled with 'the hate of hate and the scorn of scorn.' When his pen was used for lighter purposes it too often exuded filth. Never was so much ability misused and abused.

1710. Other writers of note are referred to in the *résumé* given below of the controversy on Deism, but mention must be made here of two specially noteworthy writers: one Matthew Henry, the author of *A Commentary on the Bible*, incomparable for spiritual insight and devotional sentiment; the other Gilbert Burnet, Bishop of Salisbury, who left behind him historical works of great value, notably *The History of the Reformation in England* and the valuable *History of*

my own Times. He was a great figure in his day : a wise statesman, a fair scholar, an eloquent preacher, and an honest man.

Among the poets of this period the name of Alexander Pope is by far the most prominent. Dryden had just passed away, and he left no successor as a master of satire, or of exquisite versification. His *Absalom and Achitophel* is filled with brilliant albeit poisoned lines. In the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, in ever-changing metre, Pope wove a marvellous texture of fair and glowing imagery. He was much inferior to Dryden in true poetic instinct and genius, but he shines with rare brightness amidst a considerable group of commonplace contemporaries. He did not make his era, he simply reflected it. He was a consummate versifier, an incisive satirist, a terse, trim epigrammatist. In delicate, felicitous diction he embodies commonplace sentiment, philosophical fallacies, and everyday truisms. He was the poet of exquisite form and framework ; but save when he was carried along on a tide of personal bitterness, he knew nothing of 'the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling.' His finest productions are the *Essay on Criticism* and *The Dunciad*. In the *Essay on Man*, the rhythm of which is as perfect as the reasoning is shallow, he embodied the poison of Bolingbroke's scepticism. His *Windsor Castle* is pretty, and bright with reminiscences of rambles in the glades and woods of the castle in early youth. His lines, *The Dying Christian to his Soul*, are feeble and artificial sentimentalism, based upon the untranslatable verses of Hadrian.

After Pope, poets there are none, but poetasters in abundance. Thomas Parnell wrote *The Hermit*, which is marked by sweetness and fluent versification ; Thomas Tickell is remembered only by his *Monody on the Death of Addison*, which is one of the finest funeral elegies ever written ; Prior produced some fine pieces, but was too apt to run into indecency ; John Gay wrote some artless, pleasant 'Fables,' but has a name in literature for his song 'Black-eyed Susan,' and for his clever but demoralizing comedy *The Beggar's Opera* ; Richard Savage wrote *The Wanderer*,

Pope
(1688-1744).

Minor poets.

which contains some vigorous lines, but he would have been forgotten save for Dr. Johnson's sketch of his miserable career ; John Dyer composed picturesque descriptions in his *Grongar Hill*, but the sonnet addressed to his memory by Wordsworth is worth all that he himself ever wrote. In a niche of his own among the poets of this age stands Dr. Isaac Watts. His prose works on *Logic*, and *The Improvement of the Mind*, are written in clear and forceful English, and filled an important space in their day, but his beautifully simple hymns for childhood are unrivalled in their fitness for little children. His hymns for divine worship are surpassed only by those of Charles Wesley. Matthew Arnold sang his hymn—

'When I survey the wondrous cross,'

shortly before his death, and remarked that there was no hymn like it. Watts's noble hymn—

'O God, our help in ages past,'

was sung in Westminster Abbey with overwhelming pathos at the funeral of Gladstone ; and at the coronation of His Majesty King Edward VII. it was also sung by the Westminster boys with a sweetness never to be forgotten by those who were present.

The drama.

In dealing with the dramatists of this age, we descend into the sewers of literature. They would be passed by unnoticed but that the moral condition of this period is more correctly mirrored by the drama than by any other medium. At the commencement of the generation, Wycherley, Vanbrugh, Congreve, and Farquhar were still living, and their productions were the rage of the play-going world. These men and their contributions to literature were a disgrace and a degradation to the national character. As a critic, Macaulay judges of matters purely literary in the clear, cold light of reason. But his moral nature revolted in horror before the abyss of infamy in which dramatists and play-actors of this period wallowed. He said of them and their work :

It is clever and very entertaining, but it is in the most emphatic sense of the words, earthly, sensual, devilish. Its indecency, though perpetually such as is condemned not less by the rules of good taste than by those of morality, is not in our opinion so disgraceful a fault as its singularly inhuman spirit. We have here Belial not as he inspired Ovid and Ariosto, graceful and humane, but with the iron eye and cruel smile of Mephistopheles. We find ourselves in a world in which the ladies are like very profligate, impudent, and unfeeling men, and in which the men are too bad for any place but Pandemonium or Norfolk Island. We are surrounded by foreheads of bronze, hearts like the nether millstone, and tongues set on fire of hell.¹

There was a decided improvement as to moral tone in the plays of Richard Steele, but what they gained in decency they lost in liveliness. They were voted dull, an unpardonable sin in the drama of that day. Mrs. Centlivre did not err in her many plays on the side of dulness. She adapted herself readily to the spirit of the age, both as to sprightliness and indecency. In this latter quality she did not equal Wycherley and his set, but for a woman she indulged in it to an unpardonable degree. An upward moral tendency is to be traced in the productions of Colley Cibber, Aaron Hill, and Nicholas Rowe, but they did not equal their predecessors in vigour of movement or lightness of touch. They were a link between the obscenity of the writers immediately preceding and the higher taste of the next generation when Shakespeare was revived with the splendid art of David Garrick, and Goldsmith once more placed upon the stage dramas of charm and genius.

Speaking generally of the authors of the 'Augustan Age,' it may be said that they had little force and no breadth of imagination, no pathos or enthusiasm, and, with few exceptions, no comprehensiveness or originality. Some of them are clear and reasonable, but cold and artificial. They are too much occupied with sarcastic representations of society and the meaner vices of human nature. In theology and philosophy there were writers who struck a higher

The character of the age.

¹ *Essay on the Comic Dramatists of the Restoration.*

note. Sir Isaac Newton and Edmund Halley made the time notable for their brilliant scientific discoveries. The literary class cultivated grace, satire, badinage, and epigram, at the expense of higher qualities. It neglected the true standard of virtue, and forgot the divine life. It knew not that to inhale the mountain breeze is better than to be stifled in hothouse fragrance ; that it is nobler to cultivate robustness of thought and enthusiasm of feeling than mere elegance of form or refinement of style.

Composers
of music.

This was an important age in relation to the development of musical taste and genius. The Opera was then introduced and established in England. Several operas by various authors were presented at Drury Lane and Lincoln's Inn Fields, but none of them had special merit save Handel's *Rinaldo*, which was given at the Haymarket. It was immeasurably the finest production of its class which the world had seen, and proclaimed Handel as a composer of the highest order. Fortunately for posterity, dramatic music was found to afford inadequate scope for his musical potentialities. They found a more expansive sphere in his magnificent and unapproached Epics of Music, the Oratorios, in which succeeding generations have delighted, and which, if possible, are more highly appreciated now than ever before. The *Israel in Egypt* and *Judas Macabaeus* were a full and adequate expression of the national spirit of England on its noblest side. *The Messiah* has become the favourite utterance of its profoundest religious feeling and spiritual fervour.

Handel
(1685-1759).

1742.

Following Handel, but at a great distance, come several composers of religious music who gave a healthy impulse to the psalmody and worship of the world. Henry Purcell somewhat antedates these composers ; but he was a new force in the musical world, and his great compositions *Te Deum* and the *Jubilate written for St. Cecilia's Day* are noble productions which have outlived his operas, odes, and miscellaneous pieces. After Purcell came Dr. John Blow, organist of Westminster Abbey, who wrote many anthems still in vogue which are characterized by much

Purcell
(1658-1695).

soundness of tone, breadth of style, and exactness of construction ; Dean Aldrich, who prepared services and anthems, still sung in our cathedrals, which are marked by thoroughness of taste and true devotional harmony ; Dr. William Croft, who as a composer was only second to Purcell. The rich, full swell of his anthems *God is gone up* and *O Lord, Thou hast searched me out*, and the sweet melody of his tunes *St. Ann* and *St. Matthew*, are heard in almost every church in the land ; Maurice Green, of St. Paul's and the Chapel Royal, was a composer of high merit, whose anthem *O Clap your Hands* is still a favourite with many choirs ; and, to mention only one more out of many worthy of note, Jeremiah Clarke, of the Chapel Royal, wrote anthems dignified in character and pathetic in sweetness, such as *Bow down Thine Ear*. Such fecundity of composers of high talent and taste exercised a beneficial influence upon the age, and greatly affected the Evangelical Movement which was imminent, and in which singing had to play such an important part.

In art and architecture the period could boast of little excellence. Grinling Gibbons, the wood carver, was unique as a real genius in his art. Sir James Thornhill and Sir Godfrey Kneller were the only artists of outstanding excellence. In architecture Sir Christopher Wren was supreme. He finished his *chef d'œuvre*, St. Paul's Cathedral, in 1710, and he left fifty-one churches in London alone as a fruit of his industry and genius, some of which reached a high standard of excellence and beauty.

Art and
architecture.

V

' Never since the Reformation had the Church of England given so fair a promise of a useful and prosperous career as she did at the beginning of the eighteenth century.' This statement by Canon Overton is literally correct. The Queen was devoted to its interests and enthusiastic in promoting them. Both the great political parties of the realm were anxious for its welfare. Both the higher and lower classes

THE STATE
OF RELIGION.

were its vehement partisans. High Church mobs clamoured against the Dissenters and political leaders lent themselves to the clamour.

Condition
of the
Church.

The promise referred to in the extract given above was not fulfilled. On the contrary every historian of the period pictures the condition of the Church as being one of utter helplessness to accomplish a great destiny. Church writers try to account for this failure on various grounds. Among the reasons suggested are these: the jealousy of the Non-jurors towards those who had stepped into their places; the prolonged Deistical controversy against revelation and in favour of natural religion; the injury to religion by free livers; the misrepresentations of the clergy by the leaders of the evangelical revival in order to place in bright relief the characters and labours of their own heroes. How far these pleas avail in behalf of the Church's inefficiency to prevent a national drift of ungodliness our readers must decide for themselves. We cite as witnesses only devoted members of the Church itself, who, jealous for its honour, whilst loyal to the truth, have borne candid testimony on the subject.

Burnet says :

The convocation did little this winter. They continued their former ill-practices, and little opposition was made to them as very little regard was had to them. They drew up a representation of some abuses in the ecclesiastical discipline and in the consistorial courts; but took care to mention none of the greater ones of which many among themselves were eminently guilty, such as pluralities, non-residence, the neglect of their cures and the irregularities in the lives of the clergy which were too visible.¹

More severe is the verdict given by Southey. He says :

The greater part of the nation were totally uneducated—Christians no further than the mere ceremony of baptism could make them, being for the most part in a state of heathen, or worse than heathen, ignorance. In truth they had never been

¹ *History of His own Times*, ed. 1857, p. 751.

converted ; for at first one idolatry had been substituted for another ; in this they followed the fashion of their lords ; and when the Romish idolatry was expelled they were left as ignorant of real Christianity as they were found.¹

Gladstone confirms these statements :

That the preaching of the Gospel a hundred years since had disappeared, not by denial but by lapse, from the majority of Anglican pulpits is, I fear, in large measure an historical truth.

He then writes of the Methodist movement as being—

a strong, systematic, outspoken, and determined reaction against the prevailing standards both of life and preaching. It aimed at bringing back on a large scale, and by an aggressive movement, the Cross, and all that the Cross essentially implies both in the teaching of the clergy, and into the lives as well of the clergy as the laity.²

These testimonies might be multiplied by adducing statements of like bearing from Bishops Gibson and Butler, historians like Macaulay, Lecky, and Green, with many others. The subject might be waived, save that Canon Overton, while admitting the evils of pluralities, absenteeism, and gross neglect of duty among the clergy, affirms that very few charges of immorality were brought against them during the reigns of George I. and II. This, we regret to say, cannot be admitted. While many of the clergy maintained purity of life and deportment, history does not absolve them from the charge of tolerating in the Church many clergymen whose conduct scandalized their profession. It is a melancholy reflection that the two littérateurs of that age who surpassed all others in the wanton indecency of their writings were both clergymen. Sterne and Swift were not merely gross in picturing the immoralities of their times, as were Smollett and Fielding, but out of a filthy mind descended to depths which it is an offence to human nature to think of. Both of them also in their own lives

The clergy.

¹ *Life of Wesley*, p. 206, ed. 1864.

² *Gleanings of Past Years*, vii. 207.

departed far from the common standards of manliness or honour. A great writer has described Swift in respect to some of his productions as 'a monster gibbering shrieks and gnashing imprecations against mankind, tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of manliness and shame, filthy in word, filthy in thought, furious, raging, obscene.'¹ Almost as severe is the verdict of this writer on Sterne, whom he refers to as 'a wretched, worn-out old scamp,' and describes him at the last 'as vain, as wicked, as false as he had ever been.'²

There never was such licence among so-called ministers of religion as at this time. Bate, a chaplain in a cavalry regiment who was killed in a duel, was afterwards mourned in the society papers as 'a promising young man.' Grose tells of 'a bruising parson,' who if any one doubted his word was always ready to fight. There was the sanctimonious Dodd, extravagant and fast living, afterwards executed for forgery. There were Alsatian clerics in the Seven Dials, and profligate debtors in the Fleet. There were the play-writing parsons, Francklin and Townley, as noted for free living as for the unclerical use of their literary gifts. There was Hackman, who shot an actress at the stage door and was executed. To show that these cases were not alone, but symptomatic of a prevailing evil, it is sufficient to reproduce the testimony of a clergyman of that time, quoted by Dr. Stoughton: 'The public have long remarked with indignation that some of the most distinguished coxcombs, drunkards, debauchees, and gamesters who figure at the watering places, and all places of public resort, are young men of the sacerdotal order.'³ Of the fox-hunting parsons we need say little. The statements above are made with reluctance that our readers may see the indifference of the nation to spiritual religion and understand the bitter opposition which everywhere arose towards the Methodist evangelists in their divine work.

To these lamentable scandals must be added those of

¹ Thackeray, *English Humorists*, ed. 1892, p. 146.

² *Ibid*, p. 312.

³ *Religion in England*, vi. 206.

pluralities and absenteeism. The prevalence of the former to a large degree necessitated the latter. It was impossible for the bishops and clergy to perform their duties efficiently when they occupied several positions, any one of which was sufficient to fill their time and abilities. It is remarkable that some of the worst pluralists were men of piety and ability, a fact which shows how environment may blind a good man to the evils of the system which enthralls him. William Mason, the poet, the friend and biographer of Gray, was at one time vicar of Aston in Yorkshire, a canon of York Minster, a prebend of Driffild, and the precentor of York Cathedral. Dr. John Hinchliffe was for some time Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and Bishop of Peterborough. Having given offence by the utterance of political opinions too liberal for the university, he was induced to resign the mastership, but received consolation by being appointed to the rich deanery of Durham. Probably the most notorious case was that of Richard Watson, Bishop of Llandaff, the opponent of Edward Gibbon and Thomas Paine. He was professor of divinity at Cambridge and rector of Somersham in Hunts. Then he became the Archdeacon of Ely, and rector of Northwold in Norfolk. As if these were not enough, he was presented to the valuable living of Knaptoft in Leicestershire, but resigned the living of Northwold. He was then promoted to the see of Llandaff, being allowed to retain all the other preferments save the archdeaconry. The deadly results of such a system were severely denounced by many of the best friends of the Church and by none more strenuously than by Bishop Burnet. In a charge to the clergy of his diocese he vehemently inveighed against pluralities, and urged the authority of St. Bernard, who, being consulted by one of his followers whether he might accept two benefices, replied: 'And how will you be able to serve them both?' 'I intend,' said the priest, 'to officiate in one of them by a deputy.' 'Will your deputy be damned for you too?' cried the saint. 'Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you will be damned in person.'¹

Pluralities
and
absenteeism.

¹ Burnet's *Life*, by T. Burnet, *in loco*.

We are glad to record that there were many men of learning in the universities, and also able and pious ministers in the pulpits of the metropolis, but too often the country clergy were notoriously ignorant and indifferent. Burnet, writing on this subject in 1713, says :

I cannot look on without the deepest concern when I see the imminent ruin hanging over the Church, and by consequence over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows ; but what heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen. I will in examining this confine myself chiefly to the clergy. Our ember weeks are the grief and burden of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended 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 part of the Scriptures, which they say in excuse for their ignorance that their tutors in the universities never mention the reading of to them ; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the Gospels. Those who have read some few books yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better in many who, having got into orders, come for institution and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures or any one good book since they were ordained ; so that the small measure of knowledge upon which they got into holy orders not being improved is in a way to be quite lost ; and then they think it is a great hardship if they are told that they must know the Scriptures and the body of divinity better before they can be trusted with the care of souls.¹

The Non-
jurors.

The deadness of the Established Church was undoubtedly caused in part by the schism which arose within it by the accession of William and Mary to the throne. Many of the clergy firmly believed in the notion of the divine right of kings, and taught the duty of obedience to the sovereign

¹ Burnet's *Pastoral Care* (3rd edition), preface.

whether he was right or wrong. These men held that nothing could absolve them from the oath of allegiance which they had taken to Charles or James. They therefore refused to stain their consciences by offering allegiance to the new dynasty. These men in character and piety were the salt of the Church; they were conspicuous for their saintly character and many of them also for their ripe scholarship. Strange to say that out of one archbishop and eight bishops who refused to conform seven of them had taken the noble stand against James when they refused to acknowledge his dispensing power, or to read his Declaration of Indulgence in the churches. These men by their protest against royal assumption had done much to bring the reign of tyranny to an end, and to hasten the revolution. They had cheerfully gone to the Tower as state prisoners as the penalty of their adherence to conscience. The Church of England was never so dear to the heart of the nation as then. Many of the abstinent clergy were High Churchmen, with a reputation for devotion to their work which commended them to the love of the people. Sancroft, Archbishop of Canterbury, was an able if a narrow man who ornamented his position by his dignity and integrity. Bishop Ken, the author of the morning and evening hymns, was more loved and revered than any man in the Church. More than four hundred of the clergy joined these leaders in refusing to swear fealty to the new sovereigns, and in consequence were deprived of their offices, livings, and homes. There were many able and learned men among those who were thus sent out into the wilderness, some of whom won fame in after days by their contributions to theological or general literature. Such were Charles Leslie, Jeremy Collier, Henry Dodwell the elder, and Robert Nelson. The loss to the Church of the pious devotion and working power of the Non-jurors was incalculable, and it was aggravated by the bitter controversies which ensued, and which diverted the minds of all concerned from the nobler work of the cure of souls. Later, serious divisions and controversies arose among the Non-jurors themselves which gradually destroyed

their influence, so that after a chequered history they finally disappeared towards the end of the eighteenth century.

The
decadence
of Dissent.

1650.

There was also to some extent a decadence in religion and spiritual power to be observed within the Dissenting churches. Lukewarmness dimmed their piety and checked their progress. One cause of this was the removal by death of their leaders. Just before this time the figures which had given inspiring majesty to Nonconformity during the Commonwealth and Restoration periods had passed away. The dreamer of Bedford had crossed the river to the New Jerusalem, and his supernal genius and indefatigable labours were no more a living force in the new generation. Richard Baxter, the untiring invalid, wrote treatises on practical and controversial religion that would fill 40,000 closely printed octavo pages, some of which, as *The Saint's Everlasting Rest* and *The Reformed Pastor*, are classics in our religious literature. His gigantic labours as Church reformer, defender of the rights of the Dissenters, and as pastor, place him in a foremost position as a patriot and saint; but his enormous personal influence was now wanting. John Owen also was gone, who, if prolix in style, yet enriched the Church of Christ with many tomes of lofty argument and erudite exposition, some of which are still timely, as witness his unapproached *Discourse concerning the Holy Spirit*. And to name but one other, John Howe, the friend of Cromwell, was no more, a man who for massive thought, comprehensive sweep, and piercing vision has not been surpassed to the present hour. All these had entered into rest and left no successors. The Dissenters were also suffering much from the incidence of the penal laws to which they were still subject. Persecution reacts against the persecutor and in favour of the persecuted. But if long continued the power of endurance becomes strained, and many timorous and shrinking souls are led to conform for the sake of peace. So when proposals of compromise were made some began to acquiesce and to concede. This operated unfavourably upon Nonconformity, which always loses power and the esteem of the nation when it slackens its hold upon its

foundation principles concerning the Headship of the Lord Jesus.

There were still some noble men in English Nonconformity, chief of whom at this time were Philip Doddridge and Isaac Watts, both erudite theologians and gifted hymnists. These, with some others of like mind, stood as a breakwater against an inrolling tide of indifference, with some measure of success. But towards the close of the seventeenth century a spirit of rationalism arose which evoked an intense opposition towards evangelical Christianity. It not only impugned the divinity of Christ, the facts of gospel history, and the general credibility of Scripture, but denied that at any time or in any way the Deity had made a revelation of religion to mankind. It admitted the possibility of natural religion, the operative law of conscience, the claims of virtue, and even the beneficial influence of Christianity. The assault was carried out by a succession of able writers in an uncompromising manner, and constituted a bold challenge to Christian advocates to prove the very foundation of their faith.

The Deistic controversy.

Early in the seventeenth century Lord Edward Herbert, of Cherbury, brother of 'holy George Herbert,' as men love to call the author of *The Temple*, issued a volume, *De Veritate*, in which, rejecting Christianity, he extracted portions from every system of religion and combined them into a scheme of Eclectic Theism, which he affirmed was sufficient for man's spiritual needs. The articles of this rationalistic creed were few and simple. There is a Supreme Being who is to be worshipped, the exercise of virtue is the true worship, sin if repented of will be pardoned, there is a future state of rewards and punishments. He issued other books explaining and defending his system. He rejected all revelation as an artifice of the priests, but at the same time he conformed to the ceremonies of the Church of England, had a clerical chaplain in his house, and prayers read twice a day.

Lord Herbert.

In the early years of the Commonwealth there appeared an epoch-making book by Thomas Hobbes, entitled *The Leviathan*, a treatise on the nature of a commonwealth, in

Hobbes (1588-1679). 1651.

which religion was affirmed to be simply a matter of political convenience, to be used or otherwise at the will of the governor. This book leapt into notoriety at a bound. It was the production of a powerful intellect, wrought out with admirable symmetry, and filled with epigrammatic satire. Hobbes was a master of style, combining clearness, strength, and brightness. He was the founder of English materialism. He is most definite in his assertion of the sensationalist position. Speaking of man's thoughts he says: 'The original of them all is that which we call sense, for there is no conception in a man's mind which hath not at first totally or by parts been begotten upon the organs of sense. The rest are derived from that original.' This was in direct contradiction of the teaching of Descartes as to innate ideas and the spirituality of the mind. *The Leviathan* created an immense sensation. It laid the axe at the root both of religion and true philosophy. It advocated political principles in direct hostility to all forms of popular government and democratic institutions. It taught the principle of selfishness as the spring of human action. The social union among men was said to be simply an interested league suggested by prudential views of personal advantage. These notions were urged with great cleverness and with a contemptuous tone towards religion and higher ethics which greatly commended the book to Charles II. and his licentious associates. Its attractive style and glozing sophistries captured large numbers of readers and a blighting influence was exerted upon society.

From the seed of scepticism and materialism sown by Herbert and Hobbes there sprang a great harvest of controversy and for the larger part of a century the intellectual world was filled with the clash of the battle. The briefest reference can only be made to the leading combatants on either side, as the relation and influence of the Deistical controversy upon the Methodist movement has been treated elsewhere by another pen.¹

After Thomas Hobbes came Charles Blount, who is

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 12.

described by Leland as the successor of Herbert and the predecessor of Toland. He issued several books consisting mainly of unacknowledged extracts from various authors. Macaulay speaks of him as 'the most audacious of literary thieves.' His profanity and flippancy were so offensive as to draw upon him severe censure from Pierre Bayle, the French unbeliever. John Toland succeeded Blount as a teacher of Deism. Whilst a student at Oxford and professing orthodox opinions, he wrote his book *Christianity not Mysterious*, which by its covert advocacy of Deistic views aroused a great outburst of discussion. The design of the book was to show that there are no facts or doctrines of Scripture or revelation which are not perfectly plain, intelligible, and reasonable, being neither contrary to reason nor incomprehensible by it. Toland vigorously attacked some of the most cherished doctrines of Christianity, and was considered in his day as the chief leader of the Deists. His last and most offensive book was *Pantheisticon*, an imitation of the Liturgy of the Prayer-Book, but composed of passages selected from heathen writers.

Blount and
Toland.

1696.

Nicholas Tindal was next in the succession of Deistic writers. He published in 1730 the book by which he is best known, *Christianity as old as the Creation, or the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature*. It was a general résumé of the contention of the Deists and marked the acme of the contest on both sides. It drew forth more than thirty replies, a fact which indicates both the fierceness of the conflict and the notoriety of the book. Thomas Woolston was a pious clergyman and an excellent scholar. He made a careful study of the works of Origen, from whom he borrowed the idea of interpreting the Scriptures as allegorical. In 1705 he published *The Old Apology for the Christian Religion Revived*, embodying therein his recently accepted views. From this time his conduct was so eccentric that his friends concluded that he had lost the true balance of his reason. He resigned his position in the Church and announced his intention of founding a new sect. He carried his theory of allegory so far as to question the truth of the

Tindal and
Woolston.

virgin birth and the resurrection of Jesus. He published a series of discourses upon the miracles of Jesus which evoked a storm of replies. In these sermons he partially anticipated the mythical theory of Strauss. He was foolishly prosecuted by the Government for blasphemy, and sentenced to a year's imprisonment and a fine of £100. He was unable to pay the fine, and remained a prisoner for four years until he died.

Collins.

Anthony Collins repeatedly attacked Christianity. He was no scholar, but a breezy writer with a popular style. He was honoured by the entry of such men as Bentley, Samuel Clarke, Sherlock, and Swift into the lists against him. His works, though not of high merit, are of interest on account of the line of historical criticism which he took and for the extent of the controversy which he excited.

Shaftesbury
(1671-1713).

Some of the writers who attacked Christianity upon various points as the contest proceeded need not be referred to here, but three names which have left a deep impression upon the religious literature of England require special mention. These are Lord Shaftesbury, Lord Bolingbroke, and David Hume. Shaftesbury had very indefinite opinions on religion, and his chief book, *Characteristics*, abounds in bright and useful epigrams. It aims rather to unsettle the minds of believers in Christianity than to impart positive truth. He compares the condition of the world under heathenism and Christianity, summing up in favour of the former, and bitterly ridiculing the leading features of the latter. At the same time he solemnly professed to accept the Christian religion and declared his orthodoxy in adhering to it. Bolingbroke also during his life professed regard for Christianity and the Church, and was active in the persecution of the Dissenters, but his posthumous book, *Letters on History*, was a bold attack on Judaism and Christianity. He assailed revealed religion from the basis of the sensational theory of knowledge. It is singular that while his political writings are models of pure English, this book is written in a dull and cumbersome strain. It was the book referred to by Samuel Johnson in the words: 'Having loaded a

Boling-
broke
(1678-1751).

blunderbuss and pointed it against Christianity, he had not the courage to discharge it himself, but left half a crown to a hungry Scotchman to pull the trigger after his death.' It was a poor assault, and Christianity survived it! David Hume, to whom we shall refer elsewhere,¹ must be mentioned here as the most thorough philosopher of his time, who while rejecting Christianity on its historical side, and shutting out from his purview the reality of miracles or prayer, yet argued, on metaphysical grounds, so earnestly in behalf of virtue and morality for their own sake as to make us mourn that he did not come to a full knowledge of Jesus Christ and His teaching.

From this summary survey of one side of this great controversy it will be seen that the ground covered by these writers was both extensive and various. There was no common agreement among them. Every one took his own course independently of the others. None of them sought to form a sect or creed, nor to organize a *κοινωνία* in any sense. They were free lances. Some of them preserved a profession of religion and were members of the Established Church, whilst the others reached different stages of unbelief in a descending scale.

The influence of the controversy upon the welfare and progress of the Christian Church was paralysing in a lamentable degree. The effect as described by Lecky was—

to lower enthusiasm and to diminish superstition. Men became half believers. Strong religious passions of all kinds died away. The more superstitious elements of religious systems were toned down, unrealized, silently dropped. There was a tendency to dwell exclusively upon the moral aspects of the faith.²

Effects of
controversy.

This verdict is perfectly just. Defenders of Christianity and of Deism both appealed to reason alone. All seemed to forget that man was an emotional and imaginative being. Enthusiasm was reckoned as folly or a crime, and earnest-

¹ *Vide infra*, p. 351.

² *England in the Eighteenth Century*, iii. 310.

ness was branded with the name of fanaticism. This state of mind partly accounts for the riotous treatment which the Methodist evangelists received during their early history.

The sentiments and principles of the Deists gained multitudes of adherents. The wits, beaux, and rakes of the fashionable world gladly availed themselves of teachings which relaxed the bonds of morality and permitted greater licence of conduct. In the streams of vice which freely flowed in England during the two generations which followed the restoration of the Stuarts, the world has an exhibition on a small scale of the result which would ensue from the entire withdrawal of Christian restraints from human society.

Defence of
religion.

But the Christianity of England bravely withstood the determined and long-sustained attack which was made by the succession of able and brilliant men who led the hosts of unbelief. Notwithstanding the disadvantages arising from the low condition of the inferior clergy, and other regrettable accidents of the position, there was a host of men who stepped into the breach and fought on the side of revealed truth with such earnestness, erudition, and eloquence as arouse our wonder and admiration. The highest and noblest thought of the nation was called into service, and its exponents contended earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints.

1699.

One of the earliest combatants in the controversy was Dr. Richard Bentley, author of the *Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris*, the most astonishing exhibition of erudition and acuteness of criticism in the English language. He assailed the *Discourse on Free-thinking*, by Anthony Collins under the cognomen of Phileutheros Lipsiensis. It was like the paw of the lion on the mouse. He shattered every claim of Collins to be considered a scholar, exposed his innumerable blunders, claimed the exercise of free inquiry as belonging to Christians rather than to unbelievers, and left him in a distressful condition. In common with other controversialists of that day, Bentley indulged too freely in

satire and abuse of his opponents, thereby injuring rather than advancing his cause. In a higher strain than this book were his *Discourses against Atheism*, being the first Boyle Lecture. This was a work of great value, in which Newton's newly discovered principle of gravitation was pressed into the service of theology.

Bentley was closely followed by Dr. Samuel Clarke in the defence of revelation and religion. He was of almost equal eminence as theologian, metaphysician, mathematician, and philologist. There was scarcely any department of the Deistic controversy he did not deal with. He opposed with great firmness and ability the materialism of Hobbes, the pantheism of Spinoza, the empiricism of Locke, the determinism of Leibnitz, the necessitarianism of Collins, the denial of the immortality of the soul by Dodwell, and other attacks upon Christianity and virtue. His arguments may not win the acquiescence of some thinkers of the present day, but he bore splendid testimony for truth and religion. He is still reckoned an intellectual athlete of great dialectic skill.

Samuel
Clarke
(1675-1729).

William Warburton, Bishop of Gloucester, entered into this great struggle of the Giants and Titans, as to the truth of revelation, and carried himself with amazing vigour and force. He contributed to the dispute *The Divine Legation of Moses, Demonstrated on the Principles of a Religious Deist*. The Deists had insisted on the absence of any inculcation of a future life in the writings of Moses as a fatal objection to the divine authority of his writings. Warburton accepted the contention and affirmed that no merely human legislator would have omitted such a powerful sanction of morality, and that therefore the economy of Moses was undoubtedly divine. It is doubtful whether the assumption of either Warburton or the Deists is feasible, although Archbishop Whately gave his approval to the theory; but Warburton handled the question with such wealth of learning, such skill in dialectics, and mastery of fence that he produced a deep impression upon many minds. He was an expert in debate, and had a boundless repertory

Warburton.

1737.

of satire and epithets in the use of which he showed astonishing readiness. Unfortunately for both sides these two-edged weapons were freely made use of ; but Warburton was so superior to his opponents in their use that he was sometimes credited with victory when his pleadings were vulnerable.

Sherlock.
1729. If not the ablest, the most popular opponent of the Deists was Thomas Sherlock, Bishop of Bangor and London. He issued a volume, *The Use and Abuse of Prophecy*, which sprang at once into fame and had a large circulation. This was followed by a still more famous book, *The Trial of the Witnesses of the Resurrection of Jesus*. Throwing the argument into the form of a legal trial, Sherlock gave a vivid and powerful representation of the case. A sequel to this book followed which was almost as effective, and subsequently the volume of prophecy was re-issued with many additions of great importance.

Butler
(1692-1752)
1736. All these writers, however eminent, were surpassed when Joseph Butler appeared and issued his monumental works, the three sermons on *Human Nature*, and *The Analogy of Religion Natural and Revealed to the Constitution and Course of Nature*. These works were the culmination and crown of the Deistic controversy. The sermons have been pronounced to be the most valuable essays ever published in the department of moral philosophy. They are this because they contain Butler's famous and impregnable doctrine of Conscience ; a doctrine which, being therein explained according to the strict truth of our mental constitution, is irresistible. The *Analogy* is pronounced by Sir James Mackintosh to be the most original and profound work extant in any language on the philosophy of religion. This is the almost universal verdict of the intellectual world, although in recent years James Martineau and Matthew Arnold hesitated to accept it. In preparing both the *Sermons* and the *Analogy* Butler had exclusively before his mind the advocates of Deistical principles, and every sentence was skilfully directed to refute the arguments against revealed religion. These works marked an era in

our religious literature, and to this day hold the field as marvels of reasoning power.

There are many lesser writers who engaged in this crucial controversy on the Christian side, who cannot even be mentioned here, but the service rendered by some was too signal to be entirely passed over. John Howe wrote a magnificent vindication of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Nathaniel Lardner issued a learned and convincing work, *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, which gave him a leading place among Christian apologists. William Law, who will be noticed more fully elsewhere, contributed to the controversy *Remarks upon the Fable of the Bees*, in reply to Mandeville, and *The Case of Reason, or Natural Religion fairly and fully stated*, in answer to Tindal's *Christianity as old as the Creation*. John Leland was a voluminous and painstaking writer who by turns attacked Tindal, Morgan, Dodwell, and Bolingbroke, but is best remembered by his *View of the Principal Deistical Writers that have appeared in England during the Last and Present Centuries*. This was a permanent contribution to the history of religious thought. Charles Leslie published a popular little brochure, *A Short and Easy Method with Deists*, which remained in circulation until far into the last century, and was of much service to the young men of the churches fifty years ago. John Balguy also wrote short, terse, telling tracts in reply to Shaftesbury, Tindal, and others. To these might be added Stillingfleet, Chandler, and Conybeare, who did yeoman service for Christianity. A few of those named lived and served on the extreme margin of the time covered by this sketch, but they have been included in order that a fairly full idea of the conflict may be gathered and a correct estimate may be formed of the chosen men of the Church who were raised up by Providence to render vigilant and determined service in behalf of the truth of God and Christ.

There is a reverse side to this. While these men were engaged in wrestling with the rationalizing forces of the day, the immense reserve forces forming the great body of believers were not maintaining an active warfare against prevailing

Lardner
(1727-1743).

Leland
(1691-1766)

Leslie and
others.

Decay of
spiritual
religion.

vices and immoralities. The evangelical message was silent in the pulpits, the pleading and wooing note of the Puritan was no longer heard, the sermons generally read from the desk were dull, dry platitudes, dealing with religion on the ethical side. 'Christ and Him crucified,' as the staple of the gospel message, was forgotten. No wonder that the clergy were idle and indifferent, or that wickedness prevailed among the classes and the masses. It was time for God to work, and ere long a trumpet voice was to be heard speaking as ten thousand thunders and crying, 'Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'

Religious
societies.

The Christian consciousness of the age was not at ease during this period of spiritual dearth and social declension. At the close of the seventeenth century, under a resistless quickening of the Spirit of God, a few people in various places realized a sense of their obligation as to the souls of men. They began to meet and form societies. This is often the first outward indication of the new life stirring in the hearts of those in whom the Spirit is working. The prevailing indifference, immorality, and scepticism were regarded with much anxiety by many minds. At the close of the seventeenth century this feeling manifested itself in a movement which greatly resembled the Young Men's Christian Associations of the present day. A number of young men in London had been moved by the preaching of Bishop Beveridge and Dr. Anthony Horneck to care for their souls and for the conversion of others. These preachers drew their converts into an association for religious conference, the singing of hymns, offering of prayer, and conversation on practical religion. At every meeting they contributed for the relief of the poor. An evening service was held daily at the church of St. Clement Danes, which was well attended. The converts were regularly at the administration of the Lord's Supper and all the religious festivals. Kindred societies sprang up rapidly. Forty-two existed in London and Westminster alone, and they quickly spread until they were formed in all parts of England. The objects promoted were to hold meetings for prayer and

exhortation, to send children to school, to support weekly lectures and daily prayers in churches, to pray seven times a day, to live in charity with all men, to keep in close touch with the Church of England by devoutly attending its services.¹

Shortly afterwards several societies were formed for the suppression of vice. Persons of high position united with them, and Churchmen joined with Dissenters in forwarding the objects contemplated. Meetings were held quarterly for divine worship and counsel in the church of St. Mary le Bow, and the Salters' Hall. These efforts towards a revival of religious life soon died of inanition, but they gave birth to others which still exist and accomplish a vast amount of good work. One of these was the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge, which was commenced by Dr. Thomas Bray, an indefatigable originator of helpful religious efforts. He was sustained by laymen like-minded with himself, chief of whom was Robert Nelson, liberal both in heart and pocket. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was also suggested and established by Dr. Bray, which has had a noble history, and still maintains a vigorous missionary propaganda in many parts of the world.

Societies for
suppression
of vice.

1698.

1701.

The former of these societies did an incalculably valuable work by the circulation of Bibles, Prayer-Books, and religious tracts. It also promoted charity schools, sustained missions in India, and opened out Georgia as a home for the persecuted Protestants of Salzburg. John and Charles Wesley and George Whitefield in after years visited this settlement and promoted its operations. These were but outward manifestations of a divine life and power which were beginning to pulsate in the hearts of Christians, but which were to assume noble proportions in the near future.

¹ Perry's *History of the Church of England*, iii. 87.

CHAPTER II

THE OXFORD METHODISTS

O! had I lived in that great day,
How had its glory new
Filled Earth and Heaven, and caught away
My ravished spirit too!

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Obermann Once More*.

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CHAPTER II

THE OXFORD METHODISTS

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List, especially section B IV. (β) i. and ii., add: ANDREW LANG, *Oxford* (1890); A MERE DON, *Aspects of Modern Oxford* (1894); THOMPSON, *Christ Church* (College History Series) (1900); CLARKE, *Lincoln College* (College History Series) (1898); *Alumni Oxonienses*, and articles in *Dict. Nat. Biog.*

I

THE Methodists of the world look upon Oxford as the cradle OXFORD. of their church. It is a city of infinite charm. Anglo-Saxons everywhere, however much they may criticize Oxford, or abuse it, have in their hearts a tenderness for it which is touched with pride. Countless associations with the more picturesque phases of English history during a period of at least eight hundred years, the story of its own past written in its grey old buildings, the reminders of great and notable men who in their youth walked amid its shadows, the mellow, indescribable beauty of the place itself, combine to secure for Oxford a filial reverence and affection wherever the English language is spoken. After all this, there are many millions of people for whom the chief glory of Oxford is its connexion with the origin of Methodism.

It must be said, however, that Methodism was only an 'Oxford Movement' with a very important 'difference.' Had it been an Oxford Movement like that associated more than a century later with the names of Newman and Pusey, that and no more, it would have had no such history as this book records. The historian of Puseyism to-day treats of a movement whose force is largely spent. Methodism, a hundred years older, is still pushing its conquests in

every continent of the globe. But Methodism, as it was first known in the University, could have had no such future. The practical contact of the enthusiastic Methodists of Oxford with the conditions of the greater world outside the medieval city was necessary in order that they might be made aware of their limitations and led to seek a more satisfying and saving faith. The missionary voyage of Wesley to Georgia, with all its various circumstances, and the transforming spiritual experience through which he soon afterwards passed, were essential to the making of Methodism into a great world-force.

728. There can be no wonder, however, that, even at Oxford, Methodism, as it was at first, made a tremendous stir. For the University in the earlier half of the eighteenth century was passing through one of the very dullest periods of its history. The fact is well illustrated by the experience of Dr. Johnson, who was at Pembroke from 1728 to 1731. The condition of things which prevailed is accurately summarized by an anonymous writer. 'The functionary who stood in the place of the modern examiner was, in 1720, a very different kind of person from his successor—that incarnation of cold and impassive criticism; collusion between "opponent" and "respondent" must have been possible and frequent; and so far had things gone that the candidate for a degree was permitted to choose the "Master" who was to examine him; and it appears to have been customary to invite your Master to dinner on the night preceding the final disputation. *Terrae Filius*¹ declared (though some allowance must be made for exaggeration):

'Most candidates get leave . . . to chuse their own examiners, who never fail to be their old cronies and toping companions. . . . It is also well known to be the custom for the candidates either to present their examiners with a piece of gold, or to give them a handsome entertainment, and make them drunk, which they commonly do the night before examination, and sometimes keep them till morning, and so adjourn, cheek by jowl, from their drinking room to the school where they are to be

¹ A bi-weekly in 1721.



OXFORD IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY. (Engraving, 1750.)

THE HOLY CLIP, (CLASSROOM.)

examined.' The same writer adds, 'This to me seems the great business of *determination*: to pay money and get drunk.'

Adam Smith, who went up to Balliol in 1740, tells how 'the greater part of the public professors have for these many years given up altogether the practice of teaching.'

The religious condition of the University in these circumstances must have been deplorable. In 1729, the very year when Charles Wesley began his work, a notice complaining of the great spread of Deism among the students of the University was issued by the Heads of Colleges. The Dean of Christ Church, Dr. William Bradshaw, would not allow the programma to be posted up. The protest and perhaps still more the inhibition attest the need of a religious revival.

The founder of Oxford Methodism was not John Wesley, but his brother Charles, who was by five years the younger. Charles had been elected a Student of Christ Church in 1726, and seems to have been at that time 'a sprightly, rollicking young fellow, with more genius than grace.' His brother John remonstrated with him, apparently to no purpose. Soon afterwards, however, the elder brother left Oxford to take duty for a time as his father's curate. It was during this temporary absence of John Wesley from Oxford that the history of Oxford Methodism may be said to have begun.

Charles
Wesley and
Methodism.

Possibly the mere fact that Charles, still little more than a boy, was now left entirely to his own resources brought with it a new sense of responsibility. At all events, he began to take religion with a new seriousness. He not only himself attended the sacraments weekly in the Chapel of Christ Church (which is also the Oxford Cathedral), but he induced two or three companions to follow his example; and it was to the little group so formed that the term 'Methodist' was first applied. Charles himself explains in one of his letters that the name was given because he and a few of his friends 'agreed together to observe with strict formality the method of study and practice laid down in the Statutes of the University.' They were precise and

regular—methodical—in their conduct, and in the disposing of their time.

The name
'Methodist.'

The term 'Methodist' was not, of course, new. Not to mention any still older application of the word to students of certain schools of botany and of medicine, it was definitely applied to a class of religious people in a sermon at Lambeth in 1639, and not as if it were coined even then for the occasion. 'Where are now our Anabaptists and plain pack-staff Methodists, who esteem all flowers of rhetoric in sermons no better than stinking weeds, and all elegance of speech no better than profane spells?' In 1693 a pamphlet was published entitled, *A War among the Angels of the Churches: wherein is shewed the Principles of the New Methodists in the great point of Justification, by a Country Professor of Jesus Christ*. In a dictionary published in 1706 the word 'Methodist' is thus explained, 'One that treats of method or affects to be methodical.' It was not the first name that was given to Charles Wesley and his friends. The nickname 'Sacramentarians,' which originated in Merton College, seems to have preceded it. Many other designations were applied to them, but the term 'Methodists' was the name that survived. John Wesley's definition of the word in his dictionary, published in 1753, would account for the survival. 'A Methodist is one who lives according to the method laid down in the Bible.'

John
Wesley and
Oxford
Methodism.

The movement to which this name had been given was still unorganized when John Wesley came back from Epworth to take up his residence again at Lincoln College. His age, his character, and his strong personality made him the natural and inevitable leader of a society which was after his own heart. By this time, moreover, he was an old Oxonian, for he had first come up to Christ Church in 1720, and this fact would of itself add to his influence.

During his undergraduate days, though his abilities had been conspicuous, his character had left something to be desired. He himself put it more strongly. He said that he had lived in known sin, and had not been much troubled in his conscience thereby, except just before and just after

the Communion, which, in obedience to rule, he had taken three times a year. It was only when his thoughts turned of necessity to the question of his career, and the obvious opening seemed to be into the Church, that he began to think seriously of personal religion. After some very earnest correspondence with his parents he was duly ordained deacon by Dr. Potter, then Bishop of Oxford. Six months later he sought election to a Fellowship in Lincoln College, which was open only to natives of the county of Lincoln. John Wesley, who was born at Epworth, was successful in his candidature, and retained the Fellowship for a good many years. Though at first he endeavoured to hold a curacy in his father's parish of Wroote along with his College preferment, he was soon recalled to Lincoln to take up the actual duties which properly devolved upon a Fellow. His habits of life by that time had become so strictly moral, and his religious earnestness was so manifest, as to bring down upon him speedily a good deal of ridicule. He had scarcely settled, however, into the college routine before his brother's little group of Methodists came to him for advice and guidance, and he became the recognized leader. Wesley himself writes :

In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford, 1729.
Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College, Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ Church, Mr. Morgan, Commoner of Christ Church, and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College, began to spend some evenings a week in reading, chiefly the Greek Testament.

II

It should be said that serious study was an abiding characteristic of the Oxford Methodists—a fact which needs to be emphasized when it is remembered that their enthusiasm was often mistaken for fanaticism. It was, however, their moral earnestness and not their passion for learning which impressed the University. They took religion seriously. The august and momentous truths which were proclaimed

CHARACTER-
ISTICS OF THE
OXFORD
METHO-
DISTS.
Regular
study.
Moral
earnestness.

from Oxford pulpits, and which were the accepted faith of the University, they regarded as having sovereign claims on their obedience. If these things were true, then nothing was worth a thought beneath except how to live one's life in conformity with their requirements. They sought with an amazing thoroughness to make their life harmonize with their creed.

It is strange that the spectacle of men who lived as they professed to believe should have had so striking an effect as to become the prevailing topic of conversation in every Common Room in the University. Religion alive, moving and working, painfully disturbed the careless, gay worldliness which was then dominant.

Methodical
habits.

The first manifestation which impressed the critics was the disciplined habits of the members of the new society. They bound themselves to regular seasons for prayer. John Wesley himself devoted from five to six o'clock every morning and every evening to this purpose. Regularity in early rising, indeed, was one of the most marked characteristics of these Oxford Methodists. They were most scrupulous, also, in their attendance at the weekly Sacrament. They repeated a Collect every day at stated hours, at nine, twelve, and three o'clock. They were most systematic in their self-examination. They devoted fixed times to the study of the Scriptures and to definitely allocated works of charity. They looked upon personal extravagance as a sin, and after providing for their own necessities they devoted the rest of their income to philanthropic objects. 'One of them,' says Wesley—and he is speaking of himself—

had thirty pounds a year. He lived on twenty-eight and gave away forty shillings. 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.

All this involved a stern self-discipline, which not only in-

fluenced the character for life, but gave also a permanent impression to later Methodism.

Amongst the four original members of the Oxford group, if Charles is to be regarded as the founder, and John Wesley as the leader, William Morgan was foremost in that kind of work which gave to the movement its most honourable characteristic. The Oxford Methodists became passionately devoted to social service. Systematic attention to prisoners in the Oxford gaols, visitation of needy families, and the teaching of the children of the poor occupied time which others gave to pleasure. Their prison work began through a visit which Morgan happened to pay to a man who was condemned to death for the murder of his wife. The scenes in the Castle Prison greatly impressed the visitor; for the criminals of those days, it will be remembered, included debtors, men who were often victims of misfortune rather than vicious. It was part of the duty of the prison chaplain to minister to those who were condemned to death, and to prepare them for the awful change. The souls of the rest were absolutely unshepherded. Morgan was filled with pity, and he went and told the story to his comrades, urging upon them the desirability of service among prisoners. Thereupon the Wesleys went with Morgan to make their own investigations. They were so impressed by what they saw that they determined to visit both the Castle Prison and the Bocardo—the prison of the University—once or twice every week. It was Morgan also who first began to visit the sick and the poor, though the other members of the new society soon followed his lead.

Social
service

The young Methodists went about this new work with as much wisdom as earnestness. They took counsel of the aged father of the Wesleys, and, following his sensible advice, they obtained the full consent to their prison work both of the chaplain and of the bishop of the diocese.

Even this kind of work did not escape criticism and ridicule. Sometimes, indeed, the opposition was violent. But Wesley was well able to meet his adversaries. As Moderator at Lincoln he presided over those exercises in

Attacks and
defence.

disputation which were at that time an important part of the University curriculum. He thus became expert in argument. He pushed home questions such as these :

Whether it does not concern all men of all conditions to imitate Him, as much as they can, 'Who went about doing good' ?

Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, 'While we have time, let us do good unto all men' ?

Whether it be not our bounden duty always to remember, that He did more for us than we can do for Him, who assures us, 'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me' ?

Whether upon these considerations, we may not try to do good to our acquaintance ? Particularly, whether we may not try to convince them of the necessity of being Christians ?

Whether, upon the considerations above mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are hungry, naked, or sick ? In particular, whether, if we know any necessitous family, we may not give them a little food, clothes, or physic, as they want ?

Lastly : whether upon the considerations above mentioned, we may not try to do good to those that are in prison ? In particular, whether we may not release such well-disposed persons as remain in prison for small sums ?

Whether we may not lend smaller sums to those that are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with ?

This argument, unanswerable by professed Christians, shows us also in some detail the kind of beneficent work which the Oxford Methodists were trying to do. Those who to-day are seeking to direct a larger portion of the religious energy of Methodism into social service very properly quote the precedent of the Oxford 'Holy Club.'

Nicknames. For this name, like that of 'Methodists,' was sometimes given to them in derision. Their title, indeed, was varied. They were the 'Godly Company.' They were the 'Reforming Club.' The members were not only 'Methodists,' they were 'Enthusiasts' ; they were 'Bible Moths.' It is



THE
Oxford Methodists :

Being an Account of some

YOUNG GENTLEMEN
IN

That **CITY**, in Denison so called ;
Setting forth their

RISE and DESIGNS.

WITH

Some Occasional **REMARKS**

ON

A **LETTER** inserted in *Fog's Journal* of
December 9th, 1732, relating to them.

In a **LETTER** from a Gentleman near
OXFORD, to his Friend at *LONDON*.

THE **SECOND EDITION**,
With very great Alterations and Improvements.

To which is added,

A Short **EPISTLE** to the Reverend
Mr. WHITEFIELD, A. B. of *Pembroke*
College, Oxon.

LONDON :

Printed for J. RUSSELL at the *Oxford Arms*, in
Warwick Lane and A. DODD, without *Temple-Bar*, 1733. [Price Six Pence.]

AN
EXTRACT
OF THE
Rev. Mr. **JOHN WESLEY'S**
JOURNAL

From **FEBRUARY 1. 1737-8.**

To his Return from **GERMANY.**

*For this Cause I obtain'd Mercy, that in me both Jews
Carnally might have perished, all Long before, for
a Father, to whom which could have done before me
him to Lift overlooking. 1 Tim. 1. 16.*

LONDON :

Printed by W. STURMANS, and Sold at the Foundry
near *Upper Marshfields*, and at *JAMES HUTTON'S*,
at the *Bible and Sun* without *Temple-Bar*.

M. DCC. XL.

A
SERMON

PREACHED AT

St. Mary's in **OXFORD**,

On **SUNDAY, September 21, 1735.**

By **JOHN WESLEY, M. A.**
Fellow of *Lincoln College, Oxon.*

Publish'd at the Request of several of the Hearers.



LONDON :

Printed for C. RIVINGTON, at the *Bible*
and *Crown*, in *St. Paul's Church-Yard*;
and J. ROBERTS in *Warwick-Lane*, 1735.

FRONTISPIECE OF 'FOG'S JOURNAL,'
Vol. I. 1732.

FIRST EDITION OF WESLEY'S 'JOURNAL.' (Part II.)

THE FIRST PAMPHLET IN DEFENCE OF
METHODISM, 1732.

WESLEY'S FIRST PRINTED SERMON.

high praise that their enemies believed that they deserved such names. Some other nicknames given them bring before us the most striking feature of Oxford Methodism to the modern student. They were called 'Sacramentarians' and 'Supererogation men.' Wesley himself says that the Oxford Methodists were in the strongest sense High Churchmen. Nor has that term to be construed narrowly. Wesley and his associates at Oxford emphasized so many of the tenets and practices which characterized the ritualistic movement a hundred years later in the same University, as to lead to the suggestion that there may have been definite points of connexion between Methodism and Puseyism. Though the idea does not, perhaps, take into sufficient account the rapidity with which names are forgotten and influences changed in university towns, yet the similarity between the teachings and practices of the Holy Club and of what has been more specifically called the Oxford Movement makes the suggestion, at least, interesting. Wesley, for example, held strongly to the belief in Apostolic Succession, and it influenced his conduct for many years.¹ When in Georgia he excluded Dissenters from Holy Communion because he thought that they had not been properly baptized. The Oxford Methodists also looked upon frequency of communion as essential to the Christian life, and, though they rejected the doctrine of Transubstantiation, they held that in the Eucharist there is an outward sacrifice.

Sacramen-
tarians.

These ideas were strengthened and extended when John Clayton, a tutor of Brasenose, was introduced to Wesley, and presently joined the society. Clayton was a strong man. He had already formed definite religious views, to which he adhered with a remarkable tenacity to the end of his life. By his advice the members of the Club began to observe rigorously the fasts of the Church. The standing and ability of Clayton, who had been in Oxford for several years, gave him considerable weight in Methodist counsels. Even after he had left Oxford, he was consulted about such questions as the observance of Saturday as the Sabbath,

¹ *Vide* also pp. 69, 229.

in addition to Sunday as the Lord's Day, and as to the admixture of water with the wine used at the Sacrament.

In the early days of the movement stress was laid also upon auricular confession. Wesley sought with the utmost zeal to gain converts to his views. Happily, sometimes he was met with just the kind of opposition that was likeliest to have some influence upon him. There is a letter extant from Wesley's sister, Emily, which must have a place in this story. Wesley has been urging upon his sister the use of the Confessional. She answers :

To open the state of my soul to you, or any of our clergy, is what I have no inclination to at present ; and, I believe, I never shall. I shall not put my conscience under the direction of mortal man, frail as myself. To my own Master I stand or fall. Nay, I scruple not to say, that all such desire in you, or any other ecclesiastic, seems to me like Church tyranny, and assuming to yourselves a dominion over your fellow-creatures, which was never designed you by God. . . . I farther own, that I do not hold frequent communion necessary to salvation, nor a means of Christian perfection. But do not mistake my meaning : I only think communing every Sunday, or very frequently, lessens our veneration for that sacred ordinance ; and, consequently, our profiting by it.

This letter, with all its sisterly frankness, ought to have been useful to the Fellow of Lincoln. But it was many a day before his views were greatly altered.

In the meantime the Methodists were so earnest, fervent and regular in their religious exercises as to compel attention not only in Lincoln, but also in Christ Church, Queen's, Meriton, Brasenose, Pembroke, Exeter and other colleges, whilst their devotion to philanthropic work compelled admiration.

Holy Club. It is to be regretted that we have no very detailed descriptions of the meetings of the Holy Club. Wesley's comfortable room in Lincoln College, where they were usually held, is visited by thousands of pilgrims. Tradition locates it as a first-floor room on the south or right-hand side of the first quadrangle, with the famous ' Wesley's Vine ' creeping round the window. At first the meetings

were held every Sunday evening, then on two evenings a week, and at last every evening from 6 to 9 o'clock. It is not difficult to picture the group of young enthusiasts as they read their Greek Testament together, or arranged their plans for the morrow's work in the Bocardo or in the Castle Prison, or earnestly discussed the doctrines and practices of the ancient Church.

III

The number of those who met together varied at different times. At most there were twenty-seven. Once during a temporary absence of John Wesley from the scene, the numbers shrunk to five. This fact, whilst it shows how much the movement depended upon the personality of John Wesley, is also to be explained by the conditions of University life, and especially the rapidity with which the membership changes. It cannot, moreover, be denied that the fire in some hearts burned out all too quickly. At one time or another, however, there were present in that room men whose names were to be long remembered. Next to John and Charles Wesley perhaps the best known of these is George Whitefield, the inn-keeper's son from Gloucester, who became a servitor at Pembroke. Though, before going up to Oxford, he had heard something of Methodism, it was only when the Club was already approaching dissolution that Whitefield came under the direct influence of the Wesleys. When he did, he threw himself into all their exercises with such enthusiasm as to break down his health, and it became necessary for him to leave the University for a time. On his return, the Wesleys having meanwhile departed, the oversight of the diminished society fell to his care. The career of George Whitefield, however, is sketched in a later chapter. A few other names compel attention. That of James Hervey, for instance, was one day to become a household word, though his fame was not destined to be permanent. Benjamin Ingham as the Yorkshire evangelist, Gambold as a Moravian bishop, and Clayton

PROMINENT
MEMBERS
OF THE
HOLY CLUB.

The
Wesleys,
Whitefield,
and others.

as a leading clergyman in the rising town of Manchester, were, each in a different way, to obtain a wide and a more or less lasting celebrity. Some others of the group are still remembered by Methodists with affection and reverence; others again are little more than names; of many more the very names themselves have escaped record.

Hall.

Westley Hall must needs be mentioned, for he was the Judas of the club. However sincere he may have been in his professions at Oxford, in after years he turned out an unmitigated scoundrel, and was a sore trouble to the Wesley family.

Morgan:

And then, William Morgan was there—for a time. His burning soul carried him into all kinds of good work. Perhaps, indeed, his spiritual energy demanded more than the weak flesh could bear. For reasons of health he was compelled to leave Oxford in 1731, and resided in Holt. Even there his fervid soul still drove him into perpetual service. He went into the villages round about Holt, called the children together, taught them prayers and the catechism, and when he left the neighbourhood gave them each a shilling. For a little while he came back to the University, and then went home to his father's house in Dublin. He suffered from a mental disorder, which it may be was only aggravated by the crude methods of dealing with such cases adopted by the physicians of those days. Blisterings and other severities hastened the end. He was a fine character, whom his comrades admired and loved. His death not only brought sadness to Wesley and his friends because of the loss they had sustained, but it subjected them to painful and cruel attacks. It was said that it was Oxford Methodism, and especially the practice of fasting, that had brought on Morgan's melancholy. Wesley, however, was able to prove that his friend had begun the practice some time before he himself had adopted it. Morgan's father entirely absolved the Wesleys from responsibility for his son's illness, and it is clear that Morgan was less a follower than a leader in the Oxford Movement.

Looking upon a typical meeting in the Lincoln Fellow's

room no one could have dreamed of the work which was to be accomplished, under God, by the instrumentality of the men who assembled there. Few indeed, besides the famous brothers, ultimately connected themselves with that Methodist system which was to be organized in the near future. Yet in other directions, which may be briefly indicated, the religious enthusiasm engendered in the Oxford Club had a mighty and an enduring influence.

Most of the Oxford Methodists were intended for orders in the Church of England, and were actually ordained. No doubt when they thought of the future they pictured themselves as exemplary parish priests. The glowing soul of Kinchin, indeed, spent the most of the brief space allowed for earthly service in the parish work of Dummer. Christopher Atkinson was for twenty-five years vicar of Thorp-Arch, near Wetherby in Yorkshire, and Whitelamb for a period of forty years was rector in the obscure parish of Wroote. Whitelamb, however, was a great disappointment to John Wesley, who wrote on the occasion of his death, 'Why did he not die forty years ago, while he knew in Whom he believed?'

Kinchin.

Atkinson.

Whitelamb.

Of Clayton, something more should be said. He was a man to whom religion was ever the first of all interests, the most serious and pressing of all business. To him, as to other Oxford Methodists, religion was stern duty, and the salvation of the soul was to be obtained by effort and by obedience. He was a most rigorous High Churchman, not only at Oxford, but afterwards. While Wesley was being drawn towards more evangelical views by contact with the Moravians, Clayton in Manchester, where he served the Non-juring Trinity Chapel, was confirmed in his reactionary sacramentarianism by constant association with his fellow Non-juror and Jacobite, Dr. Deacon, whose ideas on most important questions were entirely anti-Protestant. A man of the utmost conscientiousness, of boundless energy, of exact scholarship and wide reading, Clayton could not but make his mark in a community which even at that time was exceptionally alert and active. He was

Clayton.

called upon to preach upon occasions of special importance, and was regarded as one of the most potent elements in the religious life of Manchester.

But with the later Methodism, the Methodism which accepted as its fundamental doctrine Justification by Faith alone, Clayton had no sympathy, and Wesley and he became permanently alienated. Sometimes they came into close personal contact with each other, and on the side of the Wesleys there was an earnest desire for friendly association, which, however, was never realized. Yet, though out of sympathy with later Methodism, Clayton was a devout parish priest, a bold and faithful witness for righteousness, an energetic and useful reformer. He was a notorious Jacobite, and his fidelity to that cause brought him into serious trouble. For some years he was suspended by his bishop and condemned to silence in the Church. Even when the suspension was removed he suffered from the envenomed attacks of political and other opponents. But he outlived the opposition, and regained some considerable influence. For twenty years he was one of the chaplains of the Collegiate Church at Manchester—another centre of Jacobite and Non-juring sympathies. He died on September 25, 1773. His memory was long held in honour as that of a bold and brave clergyman. What would have been his career had he attended with the Wesleys the memorable meeting at Fetter Lane, and passed through the same enlightening experiences, it is impossible to tell. Yet a life like his, in which the things of first importance were from beginning to end given the first place, had no small influence upon the character of a town destined in a comparatively short time to become as populous as London itself was in the time of the Wesleys.

Hervey.

James Hervey should also be mentioned as a clergyman who carried into his parish work the fervour of the Holy Club, though he was more highly distinguished as a writer than as a minister. In the University he was neither active nor prominent. His college was Lincoln, and his tutor was Richard Hutchins, later its rector. Hervey was in

the University for two years before he received that spiritual awakening which turned a clever but idle student into a thoughtful and earnest worker. Wesley himself was probably instrumental in the change. At any rate some fourteen years afterwards, Hervey, who by that time had become famous, wrote, 'Assure yourself, dear Sir, that I can never forget the tender-hearted and generous Fellow of Lincoln, who condescended to take such compassionate notice of a poor undergraduate, whom almost everybody condemned; and when no man cared for my soul.'

The impression which Hervey made upon other members of the Club during his Oxford residence may be gathered from the description of one of them :

He is a man of surprising greatness of soul; and, if you look for his virtues, you will not be able to discover them one by one, but you will see that he walks before God with a reverence and alacrity which includes them all.

Hervey remained in Oxford a little while after the Wesleys had left for Georgia, and was then ordained by Bishop Potter. His conscience compelled him to give up his exhibition of £20 a year, and he went to act for a while as curate to his friend Kinchin at Dummer. He threw himself with so much energy into his work as seriously to impair his health. A Mr. Paul Orchard, who had a fine old mansion, beautiful for situation, away in Devonshire, induced him to 'come apart and rest awhile' at Stoke Abbey.

During this period of retirement Hervey learned of the change of view which had come to his Methodist friends, and, though he had no sympathy with the new methods which they were beginning to adopt, he soon came to share their spiritual illumination, and at Whitefield's request wrote an interesting account of his own spiritual experience. 'The light,' he said—

was not instantaneous, but gradual. It did not flash upon my soul, but arose like the dawning day. A little book, wrote by Jenks, upon Submission to the Righteousness of God, was made serviceable to me. Your Journals, dear sir, and Sermons,

especially that sweet sermon upon ‘What think ye of Christ?’ were a means of bringing me to a knowledge of the truth. I now desire to work in my blessed Master’s service, not *for*, but *from* salvation. I believe, that Jesus Christ, the Incarnate God, is my Saviour; that He has done all that which I was bound to perform; and suffered all that I was condemned to sustain; and, so, has procured a full, final, and everlasting salvation for a poor damnable sinner. I would now fain *serve* Him who has *saved* me. I would glorify Him before *men*, who has justified me before *God*. I would study to please Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of my life. I seek this blessing, not as a *condition*, but as a *part*—a choice and inestimable *part* of that complete salvation, which Jesus has purchased for me.

In 1740, with restored health and his soul pulsating as with new life, he undertook a curacy at Bideford, where he is said to have planned his famous work, *Meditations among the Tombs*. The subject was suggested on the occasion of an excursion to Kilkhampton from Bideford. Circumstances now brought Hervey to accept a curacy in his father’s parish, Weston-Favel, where he devoted himself with the utmost assiduity to his literary pursuits. Nor did he neglect his work as priest. Such incessant labour still further impaired his health, and he retired for rest to London, where he lived for some time in the house of Whitefield, who was one of his dearest and truest friends. The great revival was now stirring the country from end to end, and in London Hervey cultivated the acquaintance of some of its leaders, such as Lady Huntingdon, Charles Wesley, and Romaine. In 1752 he succeeded to his father’s living, where he again overworked himself, and fell into a decline which terminated in his death in 1758.

Hervey had become a pronounced Calvinist in his theology. In his *Theron and Aspasia* he even expressed views which called forth adverse criticism from Calvinists themselves because of tendencies to antinomianism. This publication had some curious effects. In a roundabout way it had a considerable influence on the life of Ingham. It

caused also a breach between Hervey and Wesley, which was never healed. Wesley in his *Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion*, strongly objected to Hervey's views.

Hervey was better known as a religious writer than as a parish priest. Some of his works attained an extraordinary popularity. In many English and Scotch homes his books were ranked with *The Pilgrim's Progress* and *The Whole Duty of Man*. His earliest work, *Meditations and Contemplations*, passed through fourteen editions in as many years. Though critics do not place a high value on the literary quality of Hervey's writings, they nevertheless contributed largely to the edification of hundreds and thousands of the common folk. The awakening of his soul, and the direction of his abilities to such high purpose, must be ascribed to the influence of Lincoln College and Oxford Methodism. Besides all this, the example of men like Hervey must have had an influence on the clergy generally, which, though it cannot be accurately traced or defined, must, nevertheless, be taken into account in any proper estimate of the value of the Methodist Movement.

Thomas Broughton was another Oxford Methodist who remained steadfast to the Established Church. After some more or less temporary appointments in London, he was, on the advice of the Rev. Henry Venn, presented with the living of Wotton, in the gift of Sir John Evelyn, and worth at that time from £200 to £300 a year. The work of his life, however, was in the management of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, a society of which he was secretary from 1743 to 1777, and which operated in fields which have since been divided among several well-known organizations. To this work he gave five days a week, and during the period of thirty-four years laboured with fidelity, zeal, and ability. His end was singularly beautiful. It was on a Sabbath morning. He had put on his ministerial robes, and retired to his private room for meditation. The church bells called to the house of prayer. They ceased, yet Broughton did not appear. His friends at length entered

his room and found him on his knees. But there was a deep stillness, and when they drew near to the kneeling form they found that the soul had gone to the city which needs no temple.

IV

LATER IN-
FLUENCE OF
OXFORD
METHODISM.

The good which followed the Methodist Revival at Oxford was not on the one hand confined to its influence on and through the clergy, nor on the other to the societies and churches which were subsequently formed, with the general name of 'Methodist.' The curiously intimate connexion of early Methodism with the Moravians has already been mentioned. At one time it seemed probable that the new movement might be destined simply to vitalize and extend the most ancient of Protestant churches. The great leaders of Methodism, however, amid some painful circumstances, were compelled to break loose from the Moravian societies. But there were at least two members of the Holy Club, Gambold and Ingham, who maintained the connexion, and rendered such notable service as to demand some brief record.

Gambold.

John Gambold always held a high position in the estimation of John Wesley, who called him 'One of the most sensible men in England.' He came up to Oxford when he was a boy of fifteen. He entered as a servitor at Christ Church. The death of his father two years after his matriculation preyed upon the lad's spirit, and induced religious melancholy. He had no friend, he said, to whom he could open his mind. No man cared for his soul. Two years later he came across Charles Wesley, who had entered the college about the same time as himself. In other words, they had lived together for four years in the same college, had no little in common, and yet they had not known each other. Gambold blamed himself for the fact, and says how one day he suspected from something he heard about Charles Wesley that he might be a good Christian. He, therefore, went straight away to his room and asked for the benefit

of his conversation. From that time the two became intimate friends. After a while Charles introduced Gambold to his brother John, and in due course he was admitted to the Holy Club.

Even there, however, he did not find happiness. It has been suggested that there was in Gambold an underlying intellectual scepticism side by side with a sensitive mysticism—a combination by no means rare, and one in which happiness is difficult of attainment.

He was ordained priest in 1733, and soon became the vicar of Stanton-Harcourt in Oxfordshire. His sister kept house for him, and for some time Kezia Wesley, the youngest of the Epworth family, lived under the same roof. In his quiet country living Gambold was under the fascination of the mysticism of the Greek Fathers. When Wesley returned from Georgia he introduced his friend to Böhler, who lectured in Latin at Oxford, and Gambold interpreted for him. Böhler was the appointed Ananias to open the eyes of both the Wesleys and of Gambold to the simple evangelical faith. Under his teaching the latter entirely threw off his mystic delusions. And with them he lost his melancholy. His spirit became joyful in God his Saviour. He felt that he was a new creature.

Now it happened that a younger brother of Gambold's had come into contact with the Moravians in London, and on visiting Stanton-Harcourt he gave such an account of their doings that John Gambold was greatly attracted, and was induced some months later to visit London for the purpose of studying their views and methods. He was evidently greatly impressed, but he still retained his connexion with the Church of England, and preached before the University of Oxford in December, 1741. A few months later, however, he resigned his living and became a teacher in a school at Broad Oaks, Essex. In 1744 he saw his way clear to become a stated minister in connexion with the Moravians at Fetter Lane. His great abilities were thenceforth given to the work of God in connexion with that community. He became a Bishop, and commanded great

influence. His services to the Moravian Church can scarcely be exaggerated. His character, his learning, his fervour were invaluable through that long and difficult period in Moravian history in which the name of Zinzendorf is so prominent. After a good day's work for his Master, he spent the evening of his life in partial retirement at Haverfordwest, where for three years he suffered from dropsical asthma. He died in 1771. Wesley considered that association with the Moravians limited Gambold's usefulness. But when it is remembered how the Moravians have inspired all the churches of Christendom, particularly in the direction of foreign missionary enterprise, and that no one has done more for modern Moravianism than Gambold, it cannot be felt that his life was lived in vain. He has left his mark on the Universal Church.

Ingham.

Benjamin Ingham was another of the Oxford group who for a long while was identified with the Moravians. He was a Yorkshireman, born at Ossett in 1712. He went up to Queen's College in 1730, and joined the Holy Club two years later. He soon became one of the foremost for activity and devotion. When he left the University in 1734, he did his best to keep up the Oxford spirit and methods in his native town. He was not only strict in self-discipline, but he put forth every effort to influence his family and his poorer neighbours. Nor was the work in vain. Many of those who came under his ministrations were convicted of sin, and were prepared for the good news of salvation by faith.

Ingham returned to Oxford in February, 1735, and was ordained in the following June. He immediately took up an appointment in London. The sphere was too narrow for him, and he became a popular itinerant preacher, visiting many of those surrounding villages which have long since been absorbed by the ever-growing metropolis. One day, however, he was stirred by the message from Wesley, 'Fast and pray, and then send me word whether you dare go with me to the Indians.' The ultimate result was that Ingham accompanied Wesley on the memorable missionary

voyage. It was the occasion of his being brought into contact with the Moravians, a number of whom, exiled for their religion, were on the same vessel voyaging to America, expecting grants of land in Georgia. Ingham writes that they were more like the primitive Christians than any others in the world, for they had retained the faith, practice, and discipline of the apostles. Ingham did not remain very long in America. In Georgia the new missionaries found themselves short-handed. From various circumstances the situation became intolerable, and Ingham was sent back to England to try and get volunteers for the work. He soon became better acquainted with the Moravians, and even went with Wesley, who had followed Ingham back to England, to study their Herrnhut settlement. He was greatly attracted by what he saw and heard, for the Moravians were more cordial in their welcome to Ingham than to Wesley. When some time afterwards, and amid painful circumstances, Wesley withdrew from the Moravian Society, Ingham did not follow his old leader. At a later date, however, Ingham himself broke with the Moravians and formed a connexion of his own. But Ingham was not happy even in his relations with his own churches. He adopted certain doctrinal heresies in which they would not follow him. The consequent dissensions were heartbreaking to a man of his temperament, and he was only sustained by the friendship of men like Grimshaw and Romaine, and by the devotion and sympathy of a noble wife, Lady Margaret Ingham, a daughter of the famous Countess of Huntingdon. Ingham died in 1772. A few, very few, of the societies which he founded are still in existence, and continue to bear his name.

John Hutchins, or Hutchings, who entered Pembroke Hutchins. College in 1734, and graduated B.A. in 1738, may also be named among the Oxford Methodists.¹ He was present

¹ Tyerman, *Oxford Methodists*, p. 370, has manifestly erred in identifying him with Rev. Richard Hutchins, D.D., Rector of Lincoln College 1755-81. *Vide* Rev. T. McCullagh's art. in *London Quarterly Review*, January 1902 p. 145, and Rev. H. J. Foster's art., 'Wesley Hall,' *WHS*, v. 151.

with the Wesleys and Whitefield at the wonderful Watch-night and Love-feast at Fetter Lane, London, January 1, 1739. Later he was associated with the Moravians there (1741). Few facts are known as to his subsequent career.

Later
Oxford
Methodism.

Returning to Oxford, it would be a curious inquiry how far the Methodist Movement continued its influence in the University after the dispersion of the founders. The outside world sometimes remembers university movements longer than the universities themselves. Did Methodism, which in its day made so great a sensation, pass quickly out of Oxford talk and memory ?

There are a few facts which support the idea that Oxford Methodism had a longer life. It must be remembered, for instance, that in addition to those who were recognized members of the Holy Club, several others attended the meetings from time to time, and were more or less influenced by the religious atmosphere ; that some of the leaders of the movement were men of recognized standing in the University, three of them being college tutors ; and that a few of the members of the Club stayed on in the University, holding positions both prominent and influential.

Kinchin.

Charles Kinchin, for example, who was ever faithful to the Methodist principles, continued to visit the prisoners in the Oxford gaols when almost all the members of the club had left the University. We read, also, of his expounding the Scriptures, with forty gownsmen among his auditors. The atmosphere of the University became, however, less and less favourable to the new movement.

The characteristic of Oxford Methodism was its spiritual fervour ; and in spite of all outward changes, it is still the invaluable element in the Methodism of the world. Wesley himself wrote in 1772, ' Let me be again an Oxford Methodist. I am often in doubt whether it would not be best for me to resume all my Oxford rules, great and small. I did then walk clearly with God and redeem the time. But what have I done these thirty years ? '

What he had done is told partially in these pages ; the whole will never be known.

CHAPTER III

JOHN WESLEY

1703—1791

Servants of God ! or sons,
Shall I not call you ? because
Not as servants ye knew
Your Father's innermost mind ;
His, who unwillingly sees
One of His little ones lost.

.
Radiant with ardour divine !
Beacons of hope, ye appear !
Languor is not in your heart,
Weakness is not in your word,
Weariness not on your brow.

MATTHEW ARNOLD, *Rugby Chapel.*

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CHAPTER III

JOHN WESLEY

AUTHORITIES.—In addition to the authorities and sources quoted in the General List, especially § B I. and II., certain works on special points have been indicated in the notes.

I

WITHIN a century of his death, John Wesley's central place in the history of Methodism, and his rank as a great religious leader in the history of Christendom and of the Anglo-Saxon race, became generally recognized by writers of note in Europe and America.

WESLEY'S
CENTRAL
PLACE
IN THE
HISTORY OF
METHODISM.

The early biographers of Wesley did their work hurriedly and without perspective. It was unfortunate that the first *Life of Wesley* to be translated into German should have been Hampson's, 'the oldest, but not the most trustworthy representation of Wesley by one of his personal opponents.'¹ And it is singular that the translation should have been the work of Niemeyer, a disciple of Semler, the 'Father of Rationalism.'

Early
biographies.

1791.

1793.

Robert Southey was the first English man-of-letters to write a *Life of Wesley* that takes a place among British biographical classics; and this work by a 'semi-rationalistic-orthodox' Anglican was, by another curious literary reversal, translated into German by F. A. Krummacher, an Evangelical, whose *Parables* are well known in Germany.

1820.

Southey.

1828.

¹ Dr. G. A. Wauer, Leipzig. Smith, *HM*, i. 498, ii. 205. *WHS*, ii. 21. 'Hampson's book is a sort of quiver from which the detractors of Wesley generally selected their arrows' (Thomas Jackson).

Southey's work, deficient as it was in spiritual insight, placed Wesley on a pedestal that he had not occupied before in the eyes of many educated readers in England and Germany. He wrote to Wilberforce two years before his book was published: 'I consider him as the most influential mind of the last century.'¹

Recent
apprecia-
tions.
1879.

The opening pages of the recent *Lives* of Wesley glitter with quotations to the same effect from Buckle, Lecky, Leslie Stephen, Green, Overton, and others. In 1879 Gladstone described Wesley as 'that extraordinary man whose life and acts have taken their place in the religious history not only of England, but of Christendom.' In Germany, Wesley has been assigned his true place in the history of Protestant Christianity by 'an eminently sane and scientific worker,' Dr. Frederic Loofs, of Halle, who writes: 'In the many-sidedness of his education, and in his unwearied interest in all branches of knowledge, he is without a peer amongst revival preachers in any age.' In France, writers on the eighteenth century have generally recognized the paramount influence in England of Wesley and his work, and Cornelius de Witt says: 'If the England of to-day no longer resembles the England of the eighteenth century, it is mainly due to him.' Lelievre's *Wesley* has been translated from French into Italian by Francesco Sciarelli; and G. de Leva, Professor of History in Padua University, observes: 'How large a part Wesley had in the religious regeneration of England.' The distinguished Belgian economist and professor, Emile Laveleye, bears similar testimony. American historians and public men, from Bancroft to President Roosevelt, express the same view. The newer methods of comparative history have suggested fascinating studies in comparison and contrast between Wesley and Francis of Assisi, Wyclif, Savonarola,

1903.

¹ Wilberforce, *Correspondence*, ii. 388. For Macaulay's estimate of Southey's *LW* see his *Essay on Southey's Colloquies*, ed. 1874, p. 100, where occurs the oft-quoted passage comparing Wesley's 'genius for government' with Richelieu's. Watson's *LW*, corrective of some of Southey's errors, was translated into German by Eckenstein, 1839.

Luther, Knox, Leighton, George Fox, Spener, Francke, Oberlin and Tholuck.¹

It is a noteworthy fact, however, that in the earlier stages of the Methodist revival Whitefield, and not Wesley, was regarded by many as the foremost leader, and his name stands first, not only in the lampoons and periodicals of his day, but in contemporary histories. Mosheim tells how 'George Whitefield makes a considerable noise in England, and has formed a society which he proposes to render superior in sanctity to all other Christian churches'; and Dr. Maclaine, in his translation of Mosheim, places Wesley as second to Whitefield in his table of *Heretics and Sectarians* of the century! Wesley observed this when he was writing his *Ecclesiastical History*, and raised no objection to the priority of Whitefield, but simply remarked, probably with a twinkling eye, 'Under the article *Heretics*, Dr. Maclaine is pleased to place Mr. Whitefield and me.'² It is curious to find Keble, in 1847, dividing mankind, in relation to religion, into 'Christians, properly so-called, *i.e.* Catholics; Jews, Mohammedans, and heretics; and heathens and unbelievers.' Among *heretics*, he includes all Protestant sects.

Arch-heretic or no, Whitefield was pre-eminently the orator—the first to experience an evangelical conversion and to preach in the open air. He was also the better known in Lady Huntingdon's circle among what he calls 'tip-top nobility,' of whose dizzy elevation Wesley never betrayed any consciousness. Whitefield was the favourite with the Calvinistic dissenters and the Evangelical clergy—such as Hervey, Berridge, Romaine, and Toplady, who,

Whitefield's
early
priority.
1714-70.

1764.

Wesley's
central
historical
position.

¹ For a comparison of S. Francis and Wesley, and Wyclif and Wesley, *vide supra*, p. 44; Wesley and Loyola, Church's *Occasional Studies*, i. 244, Macaulay's *Essay on Ranke's History*, p. 557, and Wedgewood, *JW*, 378; Leighton and Wesley, D. Butler, *Life and Letters of Leighton*, 1903, p. 524, and *WHS*, vi. 12; Luther, Knox, and Wesley, Butler, *Wesley and Whitefield in Scotland*, 115-18; Wesley, Zinzendorf, and Oberlin, Sack, *Leaders of the Church Universal*, and Wauer, *Dissertation on the Brethren's Church in England*; Spener, Francke, Tholuck, Loofs, *art. cit.*

² Maclaine, *Mosheim*, trans. 1764, ii. 292, 343; Wesley, *Concise Eccles. History* (Paramore), 1781, iv. 169. See also Tyndal, *Rapin*, v., and Smollett's *Continuation of Hume*, v.

‘perhaps,’ says Gladstone, ‘are to be regarded as, along with Whitefield, the fathers of the Evangelical school.’ And this ‘school’ in its later evolution was inclined to ignore Wesley altogether. Bishop Ryle, however, says, ‘Whether we like it or not, John Wesley was a mighty instrument in God’s hand for good, and *next to Whitefield*, was the foremost evangelist of England a hundred years ago.’¹ But it never occurred to either Whitefield or Wesley to raise the question as to which was the greater in the kingdom of God, and when they separated it was on quite another ground.

1708-88. Charles Wesley’s place as the chief singer of Methodism is unchallenged. It was he who called Perronet, vicar of Shoreham,² ‘the Archbishop of the Methodists,’ though this was partly a reverent pleasantry. Still, this parochial clergyman was for forty years the chief counsellor of the Wesleys, and was one of the seers who styled the early United Societies *The Methodist Church*. Fletcher of Madeley has

1729-85. been regarded as the supreme type of the seraphic Methodist saint. But in the perspective of history John Wesley towers above all others in force of character and in depth and breadth of influence. In the words of the historian Green, he ‘embodied in himself not this or that side of the vast movement, but the very movement itself.’

II

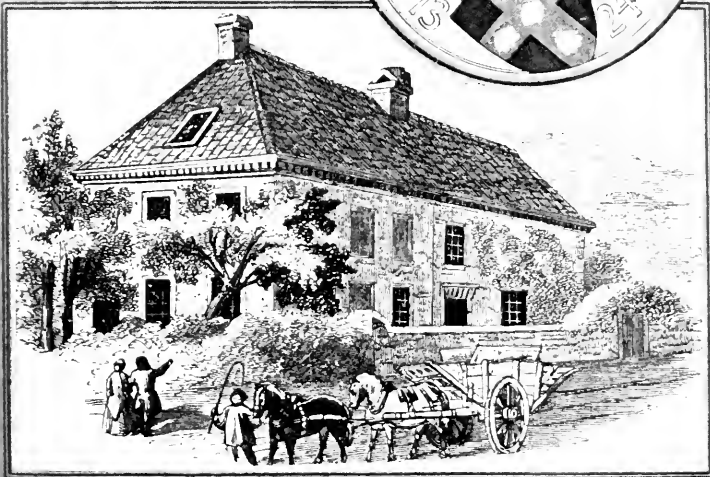
HIS
ANCESTRY :
Patrician ;

John Wesley was born on June 17th (O.S.), 1703, at Epworth Rectory : the eleventh of the nineteen children of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. The Wesleys were reticent concerning their aristocratic ancestors—the Wellesleys and Annesleys—though when John Wesley saw the incorrect drawing of the Wellesley Arms beneath his engraved portrait of 1788 he would be reminded by the scallop shells that some remote forefather was a crusader and a pilgrim to the Holy Land.³ His mother sealed some of her letters with the Annesley arms.

¹ Cheetham, *op. cit.*, 190 ; Ryle, *CL*, 105.

² For Perronet, *vide also infra*, p. 253.

³ On the Wellesley Arms, *WHS*, i. 97, art. by L. H. Wellesley Wesley.



DR. ANNESLEY'S HOUSE IN SPITAL SQUARE, still standing, where Susanna Wesley was born, and from whence she was married. Sketch by T. E. B., 1908.

THE ARMS OF THE WESLEY FAMILY. From drawing by K. E. B., 1908.

EPWORTH RECOVERY, 1825

Canon Overton regards it as an evidence of John Wesley's good breeding that 'he was never intoxicated by being brought into contact with the great,' and possessed native tact and delicacy in dealing with the poor. The Epworth household, often in poverty, preserved the better traditions of family life in manners, taste, and tone, which were in danger of extinction in an unchivalrous century of high-born bores, rakes, sycophants, and cynics, whose libertinism and effeminacy John Wesley vigorously denounced in his *Appeals*.

Were Edward III. or Henry V. to come among us now, what would they think of the change in their people? . . . Would they rejoice to see the nobles and gentry of the land 'lying at ease stretching themselves on beds of down'? too delicate to use their own limbs, even in the streets of the city; to bear the touch of the people, the blowing of the wind, or the shining of the sun! . . . the ancient hardiness lost, the British temperance, patience, and scorn of superfluities, the rough, indefatigable industry exchanged for 'softness, idleness, and fullness of bread.'

It was not until mid-life that Wesley appears to have awakened to an interest in the family relationship with Puritans and Nonconformists. His great-grandfather, Bartholomew Westley, was one of the ejected clergymen of 1662, and his body rests in the sea-girt churchyard of Lyme Regis, almost within sight of the secluded dell where he and his persecuted parishioners were wont to worship.¹ His son John, who predeceased him, was another of the sufferers under the Act of Uniformity. The Methodist grandson of this first John Westley records in his *Journal*, 1765, the story, but recently made known to him, of this Nonconforming ancestor's interview with Bishop Ironside, of Bristol. This John Westley the first was the father of Samuel Wesley of Epworth, who, as we have noted, married Susanna, the daughter of Dr. Annesley, another distinguished Nonconformist.

Puritan;
Noncon-
formist.

¹ *WHS*, arts. by Broadley, iv. 89, vi. 1.

Writing to his brother Charles in 1768, John Wesley says :

Such a thing has scarce been heard a thousand years before, as a son, father, grandfather, *atavus*, *tritavus*, preaching the Gospel, nay, and the genuine Gospel, in a line. You know Mr. White, sometime chairman of the Assembly of Divines, was my grandmother's father.

As his knowledge of the earlier Puritans and Nonconformists increased with his later reading, his admiration for them found expression in his journals and letters. But there is no evidence that in his early life he was consciously influenced by his heritage from the Westleys, Annesleys and Whites, though we may attribute certain heroic qualities in his character to his Puritan blood. Much of 'the original inspiration of Puritanism had passed away,' and not a breath of contemporary dissent entered the Epworth home of the Wesleys.

Samuel
Wesley
of Epworth,
1662-1735.

For thirty-eight years John Wesley's father was rector of Epworth. He had been a boy in Dorchester Free School, a student for two years in a Dissenting academy, and at twenty was a precocious pamphleteer, writing lampoons on Church and State, dabbling in poetry, and advancing in classical learning. He was asked to translate from Latin the works of John Biddle, 'the father of the English Unitarians.' When he discovered the tendency of Biddle he refused to proceed, and forfeited a much-needed gratuity. While he was studying to answer some strictures on Dissenters, his reading led him to renounce Dissent, and early one morning he tramped to Oxford and entered Exeter College as a servitor. Writing to his son John in 1730 to encourage the philanthropic prison-work of the Holy Club, he said :

Go on in God's name in the path to which your Saviour has directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you! For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the Castle.

He studied hard, became saturated with the High-Church

Toryism of which Oxford was the distillery, wrote sorry lines on 'Great James,' left the university with a reputation for much curious learning, and was ordained priest by Compton in St. Andrew's, Holborn, twelve days after King William and Queen Mary were proclaimed.

During his second London curacy he married Dr. Annesley's accomplished daughter. In 1690 he was presented to the living of South Ormsby, and six years later he removed to Epworth. Of his visits to Convocation, his parochial troubles, and his lamentable political time-serving, we need not tell here. He was sufficiently a minor poet to be worthy of a fatal kick from Homer's horse in Swift's *Battle of the Books*. Later, Pope, writing to Swift, says: 'I call him what he is, a learned man, and I engage you will approve his prose more than you did his poetry.' We find his son John assisting him in the Marquis of Rockingham's library at Wentworth House when he was writing his prodigious *Dissertations on Job*. He contributed many articles to one of the earliest English periodicals, Dunton's *Athenian Gazette*.¹ He is at his best in his letters, and his criticisms on books of many periods and schools of thought, including the Cambridge Platonists, Port Royalists, Mystics, Puritans, and Non-jurors affected the reading, the theology, and the devotional life of John Wesley. His High-Churchmanship was more political and ecclesiastical than doctrinal. The 'genuine gospel,' as his son observes, was not altogether absent from his preaching. His one hymn, *Behold the Saviour of Mankind!* links him again with the philanthropic work of his sons, for it was repeatedly sung with intense pathos and glorious results to the penitent felons of Newgate at the beginning of the great revival.² He wrote in the *Athenian Gazette* on the need of a reformed psalmody, and was an apologist of the religious societies which prepared the way for the fellowship of Methodism. He encouraged in his children a missionary spirit that did not characterize

Epworth,
1697.

His
influence
on
Methodism.

¹ Republished as *The Athenian Oracle*. (Scott Library.) Preface by Walter Besant.

² *Vide also infra*, p. 246.

Puritanism or contemporary Dissent, and published a comprehensive scheme of missions for India, China, and Abyssinia.

With a twentieth-century bias it is easy to see the faults of this early eighteenth-century parson. His character mellowed with years. As he was dying he said to his son John, 'The inward witness, son, the inward witness—this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity'; and laying his hand on the head of Charles, he exclaimed, 'Be steady! the Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not.'

Dr. Newman, Dr. Pusey, and Dean Church regarded Keble as 'the true and primary author' of the Oxford Tractarian Movement of the nineteenth century.¹ And he who would get at the roots of Keble's churchmanship must take his father into account—the 'country clergyman' 'whose theology was that of the Caroline divines of the seventeenth century.' Samuel Wesley's theology was also Caroline, but, unlike Keble the elder, he had come into contact, in his early life and his later reading, with other systems of theology and devotion that enabled him to transmit to his sons intellectual and practical impulses that cannot be overlooked in any history of the evolution of Methodism.

To a greater extent this is true of Susanna Wesley, especially as regards the spiritual ideals, the habits of reflection, and the distinctive Methodism of her son John. Cripplegate Church, from which her father was ejected in 1662, the house in Spital Square in which she was born when he was minister of the meeting-house in Little St. Helen's, and a part of St. Leonard's, Shoreditch, where he was buried in 1696, remain as the London memorials of the dignified and liberal-minded Nonconformist divine. He had graduated with honours at Queen's College, Oxford, and that doughty Royalist, Anthony à Wood, marvelled how this could be done without copious libations of college ale, and says :

¹ Overton, *The Anglican Revival*, p. 34.

The heritage of Caroline divinity.

Susanna Wesley, 1669-1742.

Her Non-conforming father, Dr. Annesley, d. 1696.



JOHN WESLEY, copied from White's
History of the White Church, and
Nonconformity, 1692. John
Wesley's grandfather.

DR. S. ANNESLEY, D.D. OF ST. JOHN'S
Wesley, 1681. From the
Vicariate, 1692.

SUSANNA WESLEY, 1689-1712,
'The Mother of Methodism.'

SAMUEL WESLEY, 1662-1733, Rector
of North. Father of John and
Charles Wesley.

SAMUEL WESLEY, JUN., 1689-1739,
Elder Brother of John and Charles
Wesley.

He seldom drank any beer, only water, *nevertheless* he was rarely sick, and his sight was so strong he could read the smallest print in his seventy-seventh year !

Daniel Defoe, who married one of his daughters, bore tribute to his faithful preaching :

The sacred bow he so divinely drew
That every shaft both hit and overthrew.

He ‘ charmed with godliness,’ and passed away exclaiming, ‘ I will die praising Thee. . . . I shall be satisfied when I awake with Thy likeness—satisfied ! satisfied ! ’ His daughter Susanna commended to her sons his abstemious, wholesome habits of life and his contempt for Royalist roystering and unmanly ‘ delicacy.’

Susanna Wesley’s methods of training her children are given in great detail by her son, and illustrations of ‘ her orderliness, reasonableness, steadfastness of purpose, calm authority, and tender affection ’ might be multiplied. Wesley expressed admiration for the serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by thirteen children. He appears to have inherited this ‘ serenity.’

Her serenity
and sagacity.

Some who have not carefully read Mrs. Wesley’s letters imagine that her intellectual and fervent devotional life lacked tender human feeling, and produced a stilted type of piety and manner. But she wrote to her son Samuel, who had addressed her as ‘ Madam ’ : ‘ Sammy,—I do not love distance or ceremony. There is more love and tenderness in the name of mother than in all the complimentary titles in the world.’ She was the centre of the household affection. Her daughter Martha clung to her with ‘ a sort of idolatry.’ John, soon after leaving home, wrote to her in terms of pathetic endearment, expressing the hope that he might die before her, in order to escape the anguish of witnessing her death. She is said to have lacked humour and wit, and there is certainly, in her writings, an absence of those qualities which we find in the smart sayings of her husband’s racier essays and letters, and the epigrams which

sometimes flash like sunlit crystals in the writings of her sons. But she warned her son John at Oxford against the danger of a morbid asceticism, and dared to disagree with à Kempis in his condemnation of all mirth and pleasure as sinful or useless, in opposition to 'so many direct and plain texts of Scripture.' She would have 'every one enjoy the present hour.'¹ She encouraged her sprightly children in their fun. 'The nursery, the yard, and the adjoining croft occasionally became scenes of high glee and frolic.' Her portrait² presents a type of beauty that silences impertinent comment, and suggests that though she may have lacked humour in relation to some aspects of life, a conventional Georgian wit would have fared badly, though not unkindly, at the point of a sword not often withdrawn from its sheath of velvet.

Herbert,
Kempis,
Taylor,
Ken,
Scougal.

1650-78.

A habit of profound reverence for God and all things touched with divinity gave dignity and grace to the character of this remarkable woman. She honoured and loved her father, but in girlhood the atmosphere of contemporary Dissent, then, as Defoe says, 'in a declining way,' became un congenial to her, and she left it. George Herbert became her favourite poet; à Kempis, Taylor, and Ken furnished her manuals of devotion. Henry Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man* was to her 'an excellent good book.' Its author was 'one of a group of learned, saintly, and peace-loving divines, of whom Leighton is the chief.' She recommended the book to her son John, who published six editions of it, and placed it *first* on his book-list of 1744. She was no ordinary reader. If Newman's definition be accepted: 'Philosophy is reason exercised on knowledge,' then Mrs. Wesley was a philosophic thinker. She was a careful reader of Pascal's *Pensées*, and his influence pervades her remarkable *Conference with her Daughter*.

A disciple
of Pascal.
1711.

If we would act reasonably [she writes], we shall neither stifle the principles of reason, nor build too much upon them;

¹ *Vide also supra*, p. 63.

² The early painting at the Book-Room, City Road; not the steel engravings.

for by doing the first we make our religion childish and ridiculous, and by the other we exclude all supernatural assistance and mysterious truths from it, and thereby cut off all hope of salvation by Jesus Christ, as M. Pascal has well observed.¹

A score of passages might be quoted to show how strongly Pascal appealed to her, and through her influenced the thought of her son John. She was profoundly conscious of the limitations of thought and of the transcendent greatness of God. 'A little learning and study will serve to convince us that there are innumerable things which surpass the force of human understanding.' But this did not lead her, as she says, to 'discard reason from having anything to do in matters of religion.' She distinguished between 'the knowledge of God that is the effect of reason assisted by human knowledge,' and the knowledge which is an—

effect of reason acting by the influence and direction of the Holy Spirit, and by which God is known to the heart and will, not only as the Author of our being, but the Healer and Repairer of the lapse and misery of human nature; a Saviour, Him whom our soul loveth.

She gave a prominent place to the will in the search for God and truth, asserting her conviction that it is inconsistent with all the notions we have of divine goodness that God should suffer any man whose 'will peremptorily resolves to embrace and adhere to truth without regard to the consequences of doing so, to fall into *damnable* error.' It might be supposed that one who so strongly emphasized the use of the reason and will in religion would be lacking in fervour of devotion. But there are passages in her *Manual* of meditations which glow with sanctified emotion.

Her son John's escape from the burning parsonage in 1709 led her, as she said, 'to be more particularly careful

Her
influence on
Methodism.

Her
relations
with her son.

¹ Mrs. Wesley, it is said, read French. But she appears to have read Pascal's *Thoughts* in Kennet's translation of 1704. This was better than Walker's translation of 1688. Both of these were from the first incomplete Port Royal edition of the *Pensées*.

for the soul of this child.' In her letters to him at Oxford she warned him against the extravagances of an exclusive Mysticism, and helped him to settle the question of Predestination. He read to her the record of his evangelical conversion, and when she understood his experience more clearly, she blessed God, who 'had brought him to this way of thinking.' It was to her he turned for counsel when he was founding the first Methodist societies, of which her gatherings in the rectory kitchen had been a type. She recognized the divine call of the first lay preacher at the Foundery. And Wesley writes, as he records her death :

I cannot but observe that even she, as well as her father and grandfather, her husband and her three sons, had been, in her measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness !

The influence of 'the older clergy.'

Dr. Pusey once wrote, 'All that I know about religious truth I learnt, at least in principle, from my dear mother. But then, behind my mother, though of course I did not know it at the time, was the Catholic Church.'¹ And he tells us how his mother learned what she knew 'from the older clergy.' Mrs. Wesley also learned much from 'older clergy' of the earlier Caroline and Non-juring type, especially from Ken and Law. But her philosophic habit of thought and her reading of Pascal and Locke led her to apply reason to her knowledge, believing, as she said, 'it is of admirable use when enlightened and directed by God's Holy Spirit.' She did not surrender reason even to the church which she loved and revered, and thus taught her son, in whom the high tone of her mind, its independence and its self-control, 'were visibly repeated.' 'The mother of Methodism' was indeed, as Isaac Taylor tells us—

a woman of extraordinary intelligence and force of mind, of correct judgement, and vivid apprehension of truth, who conferred also upon her sons whatever advantage they might derive from her composite excellence as a zealous churchwoman—yet rich in a dowry of nonconforming virtues.²

¹ Liddon, *Life of Pusey*, i. 7.

² *Wesley and Methodism*, p. 19.

Wesley entered the Charterhouse as a gown-boy in the year that the school celebrated its hundredth anniversary. Steele and Addison had been there before him, and a year before his entrance Addison's hymns, *When all Thy mercies, O my God*, and *The spacious firmament on high*, appeared in *The Spectator*. Twenty years later Wesley was the first to introduce these hymns by the famous Carthusian into public worship by inserting them in his first hymn-book. From *The Spectator*¹ we get glimpses of the public-school life of the day, of the 'armed pedagogues' by whom reckless Dick Steele was flogged, and of the 'great tenderness' of other masters. The Wesleys recognized the good sense of Budgell's article of 1712: 'A private education promises, in the first place, virtue and good breeding; a public school, manly assurance and an early knowledge of the ways of the world.' This, perhaps, summarizes Wesley's experience. At Epworth he had been taught to be chivalrous, to endure hardship manfully, and to work methodically. He had amused his folk at home by his reflective habits, even as a child. To a boy who had learned to *think*, the archaic methods of school-teaching did little harm. His masters were sound classical scholars.

The influence of the Charterhouse School, 1714-20.

His elder brother Samuel was head usher at Westminster School, and in 1719, when John appears to have been his guest, he wrote to his father, 'Jack is with me—a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can.' Charles Wesley came to Westminster School in 1716, so for four years before John went up to Oxford the three brothers were in London together.

The study of 'the boy,' as distinguished from the study of his books, has advanced in recent years, and there is a tendency to admit that the religion of the public-schoolboy is more difficult to analyse than Wesley's chief biographer, or even Wesley himself, appears to have thought. Wesley's own confession, after his 'conversion' in 1738, that at

The religion of the public schoolboy.

¹ *Spectator*, Nos. 168, 313, 453, 465. For the Charterhouse, see also W. Haig-Brown, *Charterhouse Past and Present* (1903), or A. H. Tod, *Charterhouse* (1900).

school he was negligent, guilty of sins which he knew to be such, 'though they were not scandalous in the eyes of the world,' and that he hoped for salvation because he was 'not so bad as other people, had a kindness for religion, read his Bible, and went to church,' led Tyerman to conclude that 'John Wesley entered the Charterhouse a saint and left it a sinner.' Dr. Rigg sees the defectiveness of young Wesley's religion, but says more justly in his *Living Wesley* :

Wesley never lost, even at the Charterhouse, a tender respect for religion, the fear of God, and the forms of Christian propriety. . . . It was no small evidence of, at least, the powerful restraining influences of religion, that he passed through such an ordeal as his six or seven years' residence without contracting any strain of vice.

But of personal devotion to the living Christ, of enthusiasm for humanity, or of 'a light which transformed everything,' such as Coleridge Patteson found at Eton, or William F. Moulton at Sheffield,¹ we find no record.

III

HIS
IDEALS
AS AN
OXFORD
METHODIST,
1720-36.

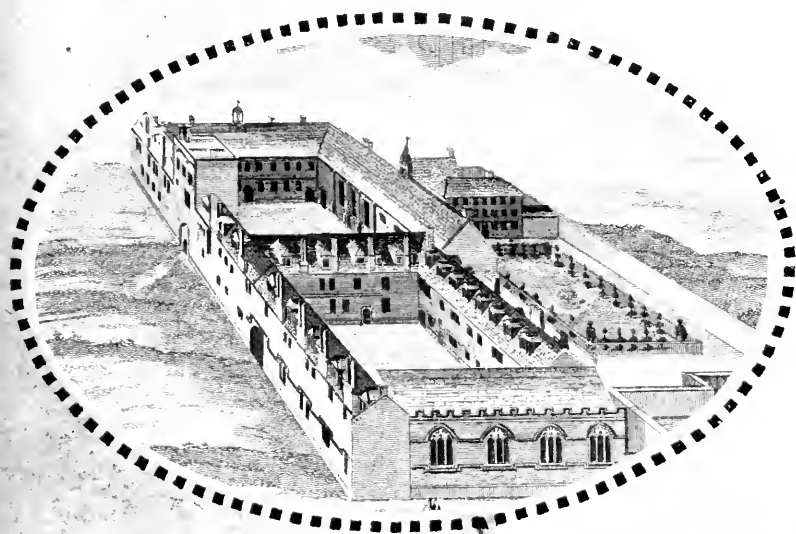
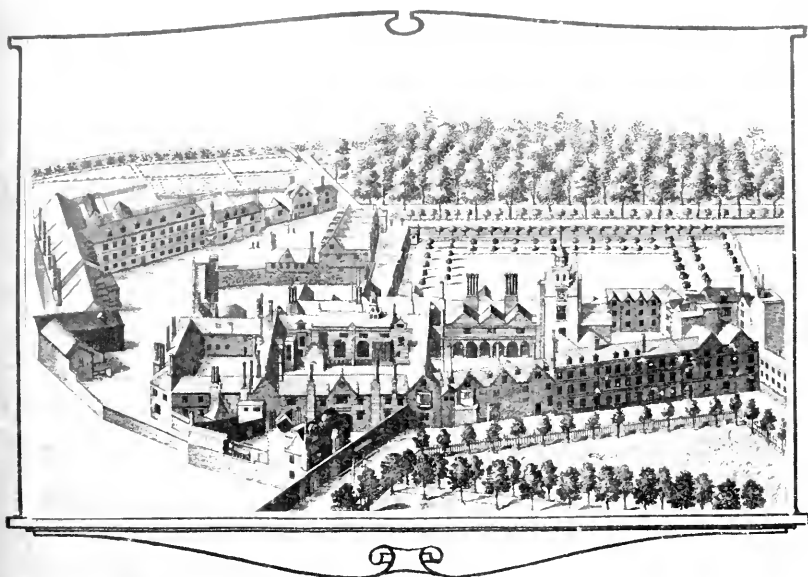
Wesley left Charterhouse at seventeen years of age, and entered Christ Church, Oxford, in June 1720. His brother Charles came up from Westminster to the same college six years later. Their brother, Samuel, had also graduated there.

John must have looked with interest on the colleges of his ancestors. At one of them his great-grandfather, Bartholomew, had studied 'divinity and physic'; at New Inn Hall his grandfather John had taken his degrees; at Queen's his maternal grandfather, Dr. Annesley, had graduated; and his father had struggled with poverty and won a name for learning at Exeter College.

John Wesley was at Oxford during an inglorious period of its academic history, though the serious decline which

¹ *Life of Bishop Patteson*, i. 18. *Memoir of William F. Moulton*, p. 31.

PLATE IX



THE CHARTERHOUSE SCHOOL. (Maitland, 1756.)
LINCOLN COLLEGE, OXFORD. (Vertue, 1743.)

befell most of the colleges was postponed at Lincoln until later in the century. Christ Church had gained distinction during the past thirty years under its deans: Dr. Aldrich, the logician, architect, and composer; Dr. Atterbury, better known as a Jacobite bishop than as a scholar; and Smalridge, the friend of the Non-jurors. But regarding the university as a whole, the famous Rector of Lincoln, who took a leading part in the great changes which have revolutionized Oxford since Wesley's day,¹ says:

The
university
in the
eighteenth
century.

We would not be thought unjust to 'alma mater.' Many excellent influences flowed from Oxford, many good men imbibed wisdom and holy inspiration, if not from her studies, at least from their own studies within her precincts, even during the long period of her captivity. . . . We speak now of one point only, though that the vital one—of liberal education. On a calm survey of our history it must be admitted . . . that from the time that Henry VIII. violently crushed learning here till quite recent times—viz. till the examination statute of 1804, Oxford had ceased from the proper functions of a university. . . . was restricted to an inferior sphere, and exerted only casual, secondary, incidental influences. . . . The fatal divorce between the university and the national mind reached its acme politically about the middle of the century, when Oxford had become identified with the sullen and anti-national Jacobite faction; morally and intellectually, about the close of the century, when it can scarcely be said that the university gave any education at all.

By the middle of the century graduation had become a farce and tuition was casual or non-existent. Gibbon's strictures on the Oxford of his youth need not be repeated here. But, as an Oxford scholar informs us:

The unsparing denunciation of the great historian seems to have been merited. . . . One fact, however, redeems the history from insignificance, and reasserts the ancient importance of Oxford—the Wesleyan movement, . . . and rightly, for the traditions of Oxford are the traditions of an academic Iona.²

¹ Pattison, *Oxford Essays*, pp. 251–79; Church, *Occasional Papers*, v. ii. 351–72.

² Stedman, *Oxford, its Life and Schools*, 1887, p. 25.

Wesley's
love for
Oxford.

We cannot be surprised therefore if Wesley, from the standpoint of a Fellow and Lecturer, after 1726, should have severely criticized the condition of his university. He was entirely free from the bitterness of Gibbon, and the 'fierce antipathies' which, Church thought, 'warped the judgement' of Mark Pattison.¹ In 1741 we find Wesley writing of Oxford University as—

my tender parent, by whom I have been nourished for now more than twenty years, and from whom, under God, I have received those advantages of which I trust I shall retain a grateful sense till my spirit returns to God who gave it.

Forty years later he writes, 'I love the very sight of Oxford,' and in view of the 'neap' tide which it had reached by this time, we understand why he adds, 'but my prejudice in its favour is considerably abated; I do not admire it as I once did.'

His
ethical
standpoint
after 1725.

But Wesley did not regard his university solely from the academical standpoint. The serious view of life which came to him in 1725, when he was facing ordination, convinced him that disregard of the statutes, slipshod methods, and purely secular ideals in study and tutorship were not only discreditable to the university, but from a Christian ethical standpoint, *immoral*. This was scoffed at in the first printed attack on the Holy Club, as a distinctively *Methodist* view.² He maintained this standpoint, not only while he was at Oxford, but to the end of his long life. In preparing a university sermon in 1741, he wrote :

Know ye not then so much as this, you that are called moral men, that all idleness is immorality; that there is no grosser dishonesty than sloth; that every voluntary blockhead is a knave? He defrauds his benefactors, his parents, and the

¹ Church, *op. cit.*, ii. 351.

² Fog's *Weekly Journal*, Oxford, December 9, 1732. A facsimile is given of the title-page of the third edition of the *Reply* to this attack. Marriot says that William Law was probably this defender of the men 'in derision called Methodists.' Charles Wesley says the term referred 'to the strict conformity to the method of study and of practice laid down in the *Statutes of the University*, at which they professed to aim.'

world ; and robs both God and his own soul. . . . How few of the vast number who have it in their power are truly learned men ! . . . Who is there that can be said to understand Hebrew ? Might I not say, or even Greek ? A little of Homer or Xenophon we may still remember ; but how few can readily read or understand so much as a page of Clemens Alexandrinus, Chrysostom, or Ephrem Syrus ! And as to philosophy (not to mention mathematics, or the abstruser branches of it), how few do we find who have laid the foundation—who are masters even of logic ; who thoroughly understand so much as the rules of syllogizing ; the very doctrine of the moods and figures ! Oh, what is so scarce as learning, save religion !¹

This, of course, only applied in detail to the professed aims of university life ; but the ethical principle penetrating his dictum that all idleness is immorality, every voluntary blockhead a knave, Wesley applied to the whole of life from this year of his awakening at Christ Church. His later evangelicalism did not lower his ethical standard, or impoverish his educational ideal. Letters written thirty years after his 'conversion' teach that to every one to whom the opportunity is given, it is a religious duty to seek an expansion of all the powers which make for the beauty and worth of human nature.

John Wesley was elected a Fellow of Lincoln College on March 17, 1726. He held the fellowship for a quarter of a century. 'Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College' is his designation on the title-pages of most of his books. The college was founded by Bishop Flemyng of Lincoln, in 1427, and its buildings were completed by Bishop Rotherham in 1475, who imposed upon it in 1480 the statutes, some of which Wesley quotes. Flemyng, when a graduate at Oxford, had been noted for his sympathy with the Wyclifite preachers—or, rather, for his opposition to their academic opponents—but as he advanced in the church he found it convenient to change his attitude towards them.² At the mandate of the Council of Constance he dug up Wyclif's remains, burned 1428.

Fellow of
Lincoln,
1726.

¹ See also *An Address to the Clergy*, by John Wesley : London, 1756.

² Workman, *Dawn of the Reformation*, ii. 244-5, 'Age of Wyclif.'

1429.

them, and flung them into the Swift. At the close of his life he founded what he called his 'little college of theologians' at Oxford, 'to defend the mysteries of the sacred page against these ignorant laics who profaned with swinish snouts its most holy pearls.' Rotherham, according to his old manuscript statutes, was of the same mind towards 'this pestiferous sect.' It is among the ironies of history that Wesley, the Wyclif of the eighteenth century, should have been elected Fellow of 'the little college' of these prelates and that a manuscript copy of Wyclif's—or, rather, Purvey's—Bible is one of the most precious treasures in its library.

Wesley speaks well of the college of his day and of his brother Fellows. A succession of able, strong Rectors and a tradition of learning preserved it from the general decadence. He found a sympathetic friend in his Rector, Dr. Morley, and an environment more favourable to his new ideals of study and piety. He was appointed Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes, lecturer in logic—and later, in philosophy. Hebrew, Arabic, Greek, Latin, logic, ethics, metaphysics, natural philosophy, oratory, poetry, and divinity, all find a place in his weekly plan of study. His contemporaries—Hervey, Badcock, Gambold, and others—bear testimony to his fidelity and discriminating kindness as a college don. Wesley says that he should have thought himself 'little better than a highwayman' if he had neglected his work as a lecturer.

Work as
a college
lecturer,
1726-35.

Logic, on
'principle of
conscience.'

As moderator of the classes he presided over the daily disputations. He writes, 'I could not avoid acquiring thereby some degree of expertness in arguing. . . . I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art.' As lecturer in logic, he found Aldrich's *Manual* in use. A late Rector of Lincoln—the church historian, Overton—considered it 'far inferior to the work of Sanderson,' which it superseded. Wesley also recognized the value of Sanderson, and in the *third* edition of his own *Logic*,¹ appends a portion of Sanderson's lectures, and also

¹ *A Compendium of Logic*, third edition, enlarged, p. 48.

names two of his own sermons which illustrate Sanderson's methods.¹ Like Whately, he 'applied common sense to elucidate the old logic, and breathed life into the dry bones of Aldrich.'² In his journal he wonders that any one has patience to learn logic, but he who does it on *principle of conscience*; unless he learns it as three in four of the young men in the university do—that is, goes about it and about it without understanding one word of the matter. 'Learning on principle of conscience' was another unpopular Methodist peculiarity at that time. Gambold says: 'The first thing he struck at in young men was that indolence which would not submit to close thinking.'

Wesley's Methodism, on its devotional side, was a new development, but not an entirely new product. There was much in it that was common to it and to the ethics and spiritual ideals of other movements. There is a measure of truth in Alexander Knox's contention that Wesley was an eclectic. His Methodism assimilated elements kindred to its own wherever he found them, and he found some of the most permanent when he was at Oxford. Among his early publications are some treatises by John Norris,³ of Bemerton. He was an Exeter College friend of Wesley's father, and became a Fellow of All Souls. He belonged to the same school of thought as the so-called Cambridge Platonists, John Smith and Ralph Cudworth, portions of whose writings Wesley also published. Professor Cheetham justly says: 'Their manner of regarding the gospel as life rather than theory, and their insistence on the necessity of personal experience of the love of Christ, came again into view in the Wesleyans.'⁴ They are mentioned here because

The influence of the English philo-Platonists.

¹ Wesley's sermons on *The Means of Grace and Enthusiasm*. In 1756 Wesley printed four of Sanderson's sermons.

² Pattison, *Oxford Essays*, p. 261.

³ *A Treatise on Christian Prudence, and Reflections on the Conduct of Human Life with reference to Learning and Knowledge*. 1734. To the third edition of the latter Wesley appends a list of books, carefully classified, in illustration of Norris's principles, and this general scheme is followed in his later book lists.

⁴ *Hist. of Christian Church since the Reformation* (1907).

John Norris
(1657-1711).

Norris's *Reflections with reference to Learning and Knowledge*, recommended to John Wesley by his father and mother, greatly influenced his course of study, his reading, and his later educational work for the Methodist people. Wesley acted upon Norris's suggestions on devotional reading with rich results in 1725. Norris, after commending all studies 'perfective of the understanding,' and condemning the 'absurd notion that ignorance is the mother of devotion,' deals with the culture of the spiritual life, and concludes :

I shall apply myself to read such books . . . as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the divine sense in the soul ; as being convinced by every day's experience that I have more need of heat than of light. Though were I for more light still I think this would prove the best method of illumination, and that when all is done, the love of God is the best light of the soul.¹

1725-29.

'Such books' Wesley read. He turned to à Kempis's *Christian's Pattern*,² Taylor's *Holy Living*, and, later, Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call*, and Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul of Man*. In special preparation for ordination, his father recommended St. Chrysostom ;³ he also read, he says, Pearson *On the Creed* and Bishop Bull's impressive manual for candidates for holy orders.⁴

After reading à Kempis, he writes :

I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, very angry at Kempis, for being

¹ Wesley's third edition of Norris's *Conduct of Human Life*, p. 34.

² Wesley read Stanhope's translation of *De Imitatione Christi*, published 1698, under title *The Christian's Pattern, or a Treatise of the Imitation of Christ*. The Latin title is the one borne by the copy at Brussels, signed by à Kempis in 1425. On Wesley's translation and Latin ed., *vide*, p. 182.

³ Knox says of Wesley : 'He certainly had every feature of Chrysostom's system and spirit beyond any other individual to my judgement that is within my knowledge. . . .' (Knox's *Remains*, iv. 135).

⁴ Wesley's Certificate of Ordination as *Deacon*, September 19, 1725, and as *Priest*, September 22, 1728, by Bishop Potter, at Christ Church Cathedral, are in the Library of Headingley College.

too strict. . . . Meeting likewise with a religious friend. . . . I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at and pray for inward holiness. . . . I saw that simplicity of intention and purity of affection, one design in all we speak or do, and one desire ruling all our tempers, are indeed the wings of the soul, without which she can never ascend to God. *I sought after this from that hour.*

A new spiritual ideal.

Taylor deepened the convictions awakened by à Kempis.

Jeremy Taylor.

I resolved to dedicate all my life to God—all my thoughts and actions—being thoroughly conscious that there was no medium, but that every part of my life, not some only, must either be a sacrifice to God or myself; that is, in effect, to the devil.¹

Wesley gives this as the genesis of the doctrine of Entire Consecration and Holiness which developed into the Methodist doctrine of Christian Perfection. This was not peculiarly a 'High-Church' doctrine, though Wesley found it taught by the mediaeval saint and the Caroline divine. He found it later in the *Covenant* of the Nonconformist Alleine. His evangelical experience transfused it with new light and love.

But Wesley's habit of 'philosophic reflectiveness,' encouraged by his mother's remarkable letters, led him to reject some of the morbid elements in the writings of à Kempis and Taylor, just as his practical ethical instincts led him to reject at later stages an unguarded Mysticism and an *antinomian* evangelicalism.

He also discussed with his mother the doctrine of Predestination. He could not conceive it 'consistent with either the divine justice or mercy that it was decreed from eternity that such a determinate part of mankind should

Predestination.

¹ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, as believed and taught by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley from the year 1725 to the year 1765*, pp. 3, 4. Bristol, 1766.

be saved, and that a vast majority of the world were only born to death.' His mother agreed with him.

Taylor's teaching as to the necessity of perpetual doubt concerning our acceptance with God troubled him. He thought there could be no satisfactory

evidence of our final perseverance till we have finished our course. But I am persuaded we may know if we are *now* in a state of salvation, since that is expressly promised in Scripture to our sincere endeavours, and we are surely able to judge of our own sincerity.

His biographer, Moore, well remarks, 'He saw the blessing even now, but not the way to attain it.'

William
Law.

After entering Lincoln College Wesley read Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call to a Holy Life*. He writes :

I was much offended at several parts of both, yet they convinced me more and more of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that everything appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help.

The defect in his view, from an evangelical standpoint, is seen in what follows :

By my continued endeavour to keep the whole law, inward and outward, to the utmost of my power, I was persuaded that I should be accepted of Him, and that I was even then in a state of salvation.

Permanent
influence of
à Kempis,
Taylor,
Law.

Although Wesley discovered that what was lacking in à Kempis's, Taylor's, and Law's books must be supplied by evangelical teaching, he never ceased to recognize their value. His translation of à Kempis was published in 1735, and again in 1750. His carefully edited Latin abridgement for use in Kingswood School appeared in 1748. Six editions of the *Christian's Pattern* were issued from 1741 to 1788. In 1750 in his *Large Minutes of Conference* he com-

plained: 'The societies are not half supplied with books; not even with Kempis—which ought to be in every house.' He published Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* after his conversion, and shortly before his death he described the latter as 'a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English language, either for beauty of expression, or for justness and depth of thought.' In 1784 he published an edition with a note on the title-page: 'This book not to be sold, but given away.' In 1789 he commended the 'excellent book of that great and good man Bishop Taylor,' which he had included in his Christian Library. It was evidently Wesley's life-long desire that à Kempis, Taylor, and Law should contribute a permanent element to the devotional literature of Methodism.

Dr. Horton notes as 'a curious fact' that Wesley 'outgrew' Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life* when he came into contact with Böhler, discovered the secrets of spiritual power, and 'passed through the rigour of Methodism into the liberty and fulness of the sonship of God.'¹ In view, however, of this other 'fact,' Wesley's continued commendation of Law's early books, we may suggest that Wesley's later discovery of the open secret of power through a transcendent mystical experience did not prevent his recognition of the value of the ascetic element which has been too much lacking in some types of pietistic and evangelical piety.

Wesley's only experience in parochial work was gained during the greater part of two years when he assisted his father as curate at Wroote. During this period he was, as Overton says, 'simply a high-and-dry churchman of the old school.' On his return to Oxford in 1729 he found the term 'Methodist' in use, and the Holy Club established by his brother Charles.

Wesley
as a High
Churchman.

He now came much under the influence of his friend, the High Churchman, Clayton. A fragment in Wesley's own handwriting shows how closely he followed the Non-jurors

¹ Horton, *The Open Secret*, p. 63.

in observing the rubrics of the Prayer-Book of Edward VI. and the traditional *Apostolical Constitutions*.¹

I believe (myself) it is a duty to observe so far as I can (without breaking with my own Church): 1. To baptize by immersion. 2. To use water, oblation of elements, invocation, alms, a Prothesis, in the Eucharist. 3. To pray for the faithful departed. 4. To pray standing on Sunday at Pentecost. 5. To observe Saturday and Sunday Pentecost as festival. 6. To abstain from blood, things strangled. I think it prudent (our own Church not considered): 1. To observe the stations. 2. Lent, especially the Holy Week. 3. To turn to the East at the Creed.²

Wesley's words in brackets appear to have been crossed through with a pen as though he had reconsidered them. He says, later, that he 'made antiquity a co-ordinate rule with Scripture.' Like Palmer, the liturgical scholar of the later Oxford Movement, he held that baptism by immersion and the mixed chalice 'are not essential but primitive.'² Palmer held that the Church of England has never 'condemned prayers for the dead, but only omitted them from her liturgy.' Wesley's collection of prayers for his pupils indicates that he follows Hickes's modified practice in relation to *the faithful departed* expressed in the Edward VI. Prayer-Book, which the Non-jurors preferred to use, expanding the idea of the communion of saints in both worlds, and emphasizing the petition that 'at the day of the general resurrection, we, and all they which are of the mystical body of Thy Son, may be set on His right hand, and hear that His most joyful voice, Come. . . .'³

His private diary and his multiplied rules for the Holy Club show that his ethics were in danger of being resolved into casuistry—into a system of minute examination of cases of conscience and details of conduct. He went far

¹ Hickes, *Two Treatises: The Christian Priesthood and the Episcopal Order*, ii. 112, App. i.—lxiii. London, 1711.

² Palmer, *Origines Liturgicae*, ii. 13, 75–6.

³ Hickes, *Two Treatises*, ii. xlv. 1711.

beyond Taylor, who might have taught him 'the particular cases are infinite, and my life is not so.'

A fragment of 'accounts' in Wesley's handwriting throws light on his reading in 1732-3, and also on the origin of his first publications. In May 1732 he notes among 'expenses':

Law's *Serious Call*, 5s.; De Renty's *Life*, 3s.; July 24, à Kempis, 1s. 6d.; Rivington's and horse, 20s. 2d.; Aug., Brevint and Heylin's *Tract*, 4s.; Oct., Spinckes's *Devotions*, 3s.; Dec., *Vind. Law*, 2s.; 1733, Ken's *Catechism*, 3s.; Nelson's *Devotions*.

Wesley's first publication was the *Collection of Forms of Prayer for Every Day in the Week*, prepared for his pupils, in 1733. Nine editions followed up to 1755. He included it in his *Works*, 1772. Some of the prayers were selected from Spinckes's and Nelson's manuals¹ named above, and from Hicckes's *Reformed Devotions*,² of which his diary records his reading. He afterwards published Hicckes's work (1755)—with John Austin's hymns—and the other books named. In the atmosphere of these books Wesley was living and praying when he began his remarkable editorial and literary work.

Wesley was saved from some of the dangers of an excessive introspective piety by the philanthropic work of the Holy Club, by the sensible letters of his father and mother, and by his growing knowledge of the Scriptures. But he was for a season in much peril. Like Law he turned for relief to Mysticism, though he never followed him into the inextricable confusions of Behmenism.

His
eclectic
Mysticism.

Wesley visited Law at Putney in 1732 when Law was acting as tutor to young Gibbon. Law recommended Wesley to

1732.

¹ *The True Church of England Man's Companion*. . . . *Private Devotions collected from the writings of Archbishop Laud, Bishop Andrewes, Bishop Ken, Dr. Hicckes, Mr. Kettlewell, Mr. Spinckes* (Rivington); 1722, and Nelson's *Companion for the Fasts and Festivals*.

² *Devotions in the Ancient Way of Offices, with Psalms, Hymns, and Prayers*. Sixth edition. London, 1730.

read the sermons of Tauler, and the *Theologia Germanica*—a treatise which Luther put next to the Scriptures and St. Augustine. Wesley was fascinated by the mystic doctrines of union with God, the supremacy of love, the blessedness of internal religion—of purity, illumination, and self-discipline. In this last he found a point of contact with his Anglican asceticism. In the tendency of some forms of Mysticism to underestimate the value of the means of grace he found the antithesis to his own tendency, as an earnest, plodding ritualist, to make the use of ‘instituted’ means of grace the one path to the knowledge of truth, the experience of holiness, and the attainment of an ideal character. He told his brother Samuel that the rock on which he nearest made shipwreck was the writings of the Mystics, under which term he included ‘all, and only those, who slight any of the means of grace,’ who are ‘entered into the passive state,’ who ‘renounce reason and understanding.’

Nov. 23,
1736.

To those who are acquainted mainly with the active side of Wesley’s life, and who assume that he was lacking in a contemplative habit of mind, it may appear strange that at Oxford, like his brother Charles, he should have been, as he says, ‘strongly persuaded in favour of solitude,’ and the mystic call ‘to the desert.’ But both brothers were in danger, though for a short time only, like some of King Arthur’s knights, of ‘passing into the silent life,’ and ‘leaving human wrongs to right themselves.’ So strong was this tendency that John Wesley was inclined at one time to abandon the social service of the Holy Club, as his father’s letters to him show.

Wide
knowledge
of Mysticism.

But readers of his *Journal* whose attention is chiefly arrested by the severe strictures on Mystics, from Dionysius to Law, and by his antipathy to what he calls Behmen’s ‘sublime nonsense,’ are in danger of overlooking the fact that Wesley did not reject what he calls the ‘gold’ of Mysticism. One of the nuggets in his literary quarry, The Christian Library (50 vols. 1749–55), is *The Homilies of Macarius*. It is preceded by a life of the Egyptian Mystic, who held with the Cambridge Platonists—whose works also find a place in

the Library—that the Christian's mind is the throne of God, like the chariot seat in Ezekiel's vision, 'and the heavenly Charioteer hath seated Himself upon thee, and thy soul is become all over a spiritual eye.'¹ Though Wesley says that he preferred the 'ancient' to the modern Mystics, it is doubtful if true Mysticism finds a finer expression anywhere than in some of his translations of the hymns of the German Mystics. In prose, he preferred the Quietist and Port Royal Mystics of the French school for their lucidity of thought and language. He quotes, both in sermons and letters, a characteristic passage from the life of De Renty, of which he published a translation,—'I bear about with me continually an experimental verity and a plenitude of the presence of the ever-blessed Trinity.' Fenelon's letters, Brother Lawrence's² *Practice of the Presence of God*, and other French devotional treatises are in the Library. The hymn of the Mystic of Flanders, Antoinette Bourignon, *Venez, Jésus, mon salutaire*, was one of John Wesley's early translations. The Spanish Mystics are represented by *The Spiritual Guide* by Molinos, a follower of St. Teresa, and the *Spiritual Letters* of Juan d'Avila. To both of these the soul, filled with the divine presence, becomes—

a throne of peace : within thine own heart, with His heavenly grace thou mayest look for silence in tumult, solitude in company, light in darkness, vigour in despondency, courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war, and quiet in tribulation.³

'There are excellent things in most of the Mystic writers,' writes Wesley ; 'as almost all of them lived in the Romish Church, they were lights whom God raised up to shine in a dark place. But they did not give a clear, a steady, or a uniform light.'

Bishop Lavington says in his savage pamphlet,⁴ 'Francis

¹ Wesley, *Macarius*, i. 90. Christian Library, 1749.

² 'Brother Lawrence' was Nicholas Hermann, of Lorraine, whose treatise has recently charmed Prof. James ; see *Talks on Psychology* (1905), p. 224.

³ Wesley's *Molinos* (1754), p. 251.

⁴ *Supra*, p. 55.

of Sales is another Papist much commended by Mr. Wesley, who he doubts not is in Abraham's bosom.' He also finds Wesley quoting Francis of Assisi, and exclaims, 'They were arrant shatter-brained fanatics. The Methodist has a similar texture of brain.' Wesley replied: 'I leave you to enjoy this argument.'

Law's *Christian Perfection* and *Serious Call* were written before he came under the influence of Behmen, but selections from his later writings, including *The Spirit of Prayer*, were published by Wesley. They were abridged and guarded by an occasional note, but all the better elements of Mysticism were conserved. Writing of Fenelon, whom he often quotes approvingly, and of Madame Guyon, whose *Life* he published, Wesley says to a friend, 'We have all the good that is in them, without the dross; which is often not only useless, but dangerous.' He taught Methodists to discriminate between the gold and the dross, though he sometimes did this with such ethical energy that some of his disciples were likely to decline the refiner's task as too dangerous and delicate for them, and to reject both gold and dross.

Oxford
tendencies.

Wesley's reasons for declining to succeed his father in parochial work at Epworth are fully given in his *Journal*. It was his resolve to live and die at Oxford. His tendency towards a cloistered, though not altogether a self-centred life is revealed in his letters. To 'save my own soul' was confessedly a dominant motive, but this frank admission has been too relentlessly used against the honest, anxious, semi-mystic High Churchman who wrote at the same time: 'Here are poor to be relieved, children to be educated, workhouses and prisons to be visited; and lastly, here are the schools of the prophets, here are tender minds to be formed and strengthened.' He had not yet attained 'healthy-mindedness' by what has been inadequately called 'the Lutheran justification by faith and the Wesleyan acceptance of free grace,'¹ but in the light of his practical beneficence, his self-sacrificing efforts to do good to the

¹ James, *VRE*, p. 111.

minds and bodies of others, his disregard of popularity, his fearless plain-speaking, and his passion for righteousness during his 'High-Church' life from 1725 to 1737, it behoves us to pause before we describe this conscientious sacerdotalist as a sickly or selfish saint.

IV

The missionary impulse appears to have been hereditary in the Wesley family. The first John Wesley had a burning desire to go to Surinam. His son Samuel, as we have seen, had devised a great scheme for missions. Susanna Wesley's devotion was quickened by the accounts of the work of the Danish missionaries at Tranquebar. Now there came to her sons a missionary call which she encouraged them to obey.

HIS
MISSION
TO
GEORGIA,
1736-8.

Ten years before Wesley went to Georgia, Berkeley, now Bishop of Cloyne, had published his *Proposal for converting the Savage Americans to Christianity*. He had written what appear to be his only verses, containing the famous line :

Westward the course of empire takes its way.

He had secured a grant from Parliament for his college in the Bermudas, left Europe, and commenced to seek the instruction of colonists and the conversion of natives, but returned baffled and disappointed. He gave Oglethorpe permission to apply to Parliament for the diversion of the fund to work in the colonies of Georgia. The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts took up the cause, George II. granted a charter for the new province in 1732, and Oglethorpe was appointed the first governor.

Georgia.

General Oglethorpe was a remarkable man whose long life, as Lecky says, 'was crowded with picturesque incidents and with the most varied and active benevolence.' He was 'too honest to take high rank among the intriguing politicians of his time,' but he was a prison reformer before Howard, and resolved to give the debtors whose sufferings he relieved in the Fleet and Marshalsea prisons a chance of becoming colonists in the New World and in a province in which there

General
Oglethorpe.

was to be no slavery. Pope recognized his 'strong benevolence of soul.' Thomson placed him at the head of the generous band who 'searched into the horrors of the gloomy gaol.' Johnson and Warton were entranced by his well-told stories of his battles and voyages. Thomas Jackson regarded him as the man who drew the Wesleys from an ascetic, retired life into a course of active service for the good of mankind.

Oglethorpe
and Wesley.

The rector of Epworth had written to Oglethorpe expressing his sympathy with his scheme for Georgia, and John was introduced to him by Dr. Burton of Corpus Christi College, who was one of the trustees for the new colony. The two Wesley brothers were urged to go out as ministers to the colonists and missionaries to the Indians. At first, John says, he peremptorily refused. Incidents followed which led him to reconsider his resolution. He took counsel with his brother Samuel, William Law, and his friends Clayton and Byrom. Then he consulted his mother, who, dependent as she was upon her sons, to whom she clung with fervent devotion, quietly declared, 'Had I twenty sons I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more.'

Wesley,
Rousseau,
and
Berkeley.

Wesley, like Berkeley, entered on his missionary enterprise with eighteenth-century ideas as to the simplicity, innocence, and teachableness of the natives of the New World. Berkeley thought of—

. . . happy climes, the seat of innocence,
Where nature guides and virtue rules,
Where men shall not impose for truth and sense
The pedantry of courts and schools.

And Wesley's fictitious ideals were equally glowing. The heathen, he says, 'have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it . . . they are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God.' Curiously enough, Berkeley and Wesley, so different in their mental cast, were inclined, like their strange contemporary Rousseau, to glorify the 'noble savage'; and



GENERAL OGLETHORPE, 1733-1785
of Georgia.

COUNT ZINZENDORF
1700-1760.

JOSEPH FÖLSCHER SPAN, 1700-1770
of Georgia, 1769-1770, of Tennessee, 1770-1771.

PETER WÖHLER, 1712-1778,
Whom Wesley met in 1738.

J. A. BUNGER, 1687-1772, who translated the
Latin of the books of Wesley into the
New Testament.

all three betray their restlessness under the conventional social strait-waistcoats of their century.

The Wesleys sailed from Gravesend for Georgia on October 21, 1735. On board the *Simmonds* were twenty-six Moravians under the care of their bishop, David Nitschman. For the first time Wesley came into contact with a purely Protestant monasticism—an evangelical brotherhood, with an organic life. He found that men, women, and children had learnt the secret of an unaffected humility, courage, and social service which was essentially Christian. They freely performed offices for others which the English counted 'servile.' Insult and injury could not move them. This was astonishing to the inflated and 'typical' Britons of that day. But a violent storm and a threatening wave set the English passengers shrieking! Wesley heard the Moravians singing. 'Were not your women and children afraid?' he asked afterwards. 'No, we are not afraid to die,' was the answer. Wesley was deeply impressed. Their ideal of service without servility was already his own, but the secret of their tranquillity was not yet his, nor did he find it in the revival of his Oxford discipline and the quickened pursuit of his High-Church ideals recorded in his private journal of the voyage. On ship-board, he says, he learnt German, that he might converse with the Moravians. This introduced him to their experimental doctrine of faith, and it opened to him also the treasury of German hymnody which was to enrich the worship and devotion of Methodism.

The first
Moravian
influence.

The Wesleys first set foot on American soil on February 6, 1736. An early print gives a good idea of the plan of the new city of Savannah as Wesley saw it. His journal records his significant conversation with August Gottlieb Spangenberg, the Moravian pastor, whom Oglethorpe introduced to him soon after his arrival. Spangenberg is sometimes referred to as 'a simple-minded Moravian.' His simplicity was that of a scholar of Jena and a lecturer of Halle University, with a single aim in life—to lead men into personal contact with the living Christ. His *Idea Fidei Fratrum*, published in 1779, and translated from German by Benjamin

Spangenberg.

La Trobe into the most lucid English, redeemed Moravian theology from the unwholesome elements introduced into it by Zinzendorf. 'It is a doctrinal compendium so simply Biblical,' says a German church-historian, 'and so far removed from all enthusiasm and everything objectionable, that, with few exceptions, every one must coincide with it who will grant that the Scriptures are the rule of our faith';¹ and Herder exclaims, 'What a leap is it from the theology of the Count, as it is contained here and there in his discourses and hymns, to Spangenberg's *Idea Fidei Fratrum!*'

When Wesley met Spangenberg he says he 'soon perceived what spirit he was of,' and asked his advice about his work. Spangenberg said: '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 knew not what to answer. Seeing his hesitation, the pastor asked: 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' Wesley paused, and said: 'I know He is the Saviour of the world.' 'True,' said Spangenberg, 'but do you know He has saved you?' Wesley answered: 'I hope He has died to save me.' 'But do you know yourself?' was the searching question. Wesley writes: 'I said, "I do," but I fear they were vain words.' Spangenberg was no unsympathetic and censorious inquisitor. In plainness of speech he and Wesley were well matched. He appreciated the open-minded humility of Wesley, which touched with grace the priest and ecclesiastic. It appears as if this conversation revived Wesley's memory of his father's dying words concerning 'the inward witness,' for we find him quoting them in the first sermon he preached in Savannah.

Southey thinks Wesley might have done better even as a High Churchman if he had taken Dr. Burton's advice, to consider his parishioners as babes, and to feed them with milk, but he 'drenched them with the physic of an intolerant discipline.' He refused the Lord's Supper to all who had not been episcopally baptized; he rebaptized the children

¹ Hagenbach, *Christian Church in Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, 1. 429-30.

of Dissenters, and declined to bury all who had not received Anglican baptism. He insisted also on baptism by immersion. He refused the Lord's Supper to one of the most devoted men in the colony—Bolzius, the pastor of the Salzburghers, because he had not been canonically baptized. In his *unpublished* journal he writes :

Unfulfilled
ideals,
sacerdotal
and
missionary.

I had occasion to make a very unusual trial of the temper of Mr. Bolzius, in which he behaved with such lowliness and meekness as became a disciple of Jesus Christ.

Many years later, in commenting on a letter from this good man, he says :

What a truly Christian piety and simplicity breathe in these lines! And yet this very man did I refuse to admit to the Lord's Supper because he had not been baptized by a minister episcopally ordained. Can any one carry High-Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I been beaten with my own staff!

No wonder is it that a plain speaker said to Wesley at this time :

The people say they are Protestants, but as for you they cannot tell what religion you are of : they never heard of such a religion before, and they do not know what to make of it.

At the same time Wesley was 'inwardly melting, and the light of spiritual liberty was dawning on his soul.' He heard the Presbyterian minister at Darien offer a devout extempore prayer, and was 'astonished.' He was impressed by the simple beauty of the life and order of the Moravians, and they sent him to the New Testament. Beveridge's *Pandectae Canonum Conciliorum* also directed him to this authority, higher than tradition or councils. He expressed in a letter his opinion on the innermost nature of religion :

I entirely agree with you that religion is love and joy and peace in the Holy Ghost : the cheerfulest thing in the world : that it is inconsistent with moroseness, sourness, and with what is not according to the gentleness of Christ Jesus.

He devoted himself to the education of children and founded and taught in Sunday schools. He formed a 'Religious Society' of twenty or thirty persons who met in his house, and notes this as a second stage in the development of Methodism. He was greatly disappointed that his chaplaincy interfered with his romantic ideals of mission work among the Indians, though he records his suggestive interviews with them. But his illusions as to their childlike simplicity and virtue were dispelled before he left Georgia.

His first
hymn-book,
1737.

To a knowledge of German he added Spanish and Italian, and read Molinos and Dante. 'I began learning Spanish,' he says, 'in order to converse with my Jewish parishioners, some of whom seem nearer the mind of Christ than many of those who call Him Lord.' He translated from the Spanish one of the most melodious and perfect of hymns: 'O God my God, my all Thou art.' In his unpublished pocket-diary he records his first attempts to translate some German hymns. He published his first *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, printed at Charleston, in 1737. The arrangement of the hymns shows a strict regard to ancient church usages on the plan of Hicke's and Spinckes's *Devotions*—at this time his favourite manuals. It is pleasant to note that his rigid orthodoxy did not prevent him from including psalms and hymns by Dr. Watts. His father's hymn, rescued from the Epworth fire, John Austin's hymns from the *Devotions*, Addison's hymns from the *Spectator*, and his own translations from the German were included in the collection.¹

Space cannot be devoted here to his romantic and painful love affairs which, with the grievances raised by his rigid churchmanship, led to his leaving Georgia. With Overton, one hardly knows whether to be provoked at or to admire his 'guileless simplicity' in relation to the women who find a place in his personal history. His Georgian diary² absolves him from all suspicion of dishonour. It reveals how constantly the ecclesiastic and the man were at conflict.

¹ *Vide also infra*, p. 173.

² To be published in July 1909.

That Wesley suffered acutely is revealed not only in his journal of the time, but in his reference to his experience when he was eighty-two years of age.

On the day that he landed in England, February 1, 1738, there is a gloomy entry in his journal, but he ends it with his face towards the light :

I have no hope but that if I seek I shall find Christ, and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.

Many years later he added notes to his earlier entries. He had written, 'I who went to America to convert others was never myself converted.' On this he remarks, 'I am not sure of this.' 'I am a child of wrath,' was the early record. 'I believe not,' was his later note. In another note he adds, 'I had even then the faith of a servant, though not that of a son'—a distinction upon which he dwells in one of his sermons. In a touching passage in a letter to Bishop Lavington, written in 1752, he says that the passages in his journal were written 'in the anguish of my heart, to which I gave vent between God and my own soul.'

Wesley's mission to Georgia failed in its purpose of founding an ideal church of the Anglican order in a new world and among unsophisticated Indians. But it did much to mould the character of the man who was to be the founder of a catholic missionary church. It started a song-worship which was to become world-wide. It prepared the way for a theology penetrated with the light of evangelical mysticism, and broad as the charity of God.

Results
of the
Georgian
experience.

V

In the university library of Prague there is an old Hussite hymn-book containing three illuminations, intended to suggest the relations between the early English, Bohemian, and German reformations. Wyclif is striking sparks from a stone ; Hus is kindling a fire with the sparks ; Luther is

HIS EPOCH-
MAKING EX-
PERIENCE.

Wyclif,
Hus,
Luther,
Wesley.

brandishing a flaming torch. The relations between the Moravian development of the Hussite movement, the Lutheran influence in the evangelical conversion of the Wesleys, and the genesis of world-wide Methodism might suggest another symbolic illustration to an ingenious scribe. Wesley himself, in reviewing his Georgian experiences, rejoiced that 'thereby God has given me to know many of His servants, particularly those of the Church of Herrnhut.' He could not forget Spangenberg. And it was a sentence of Spangenberg's expressing the Saviour's power to free from sin which relieved the anguish of Peter Böhler's mind when he was at the University of Jena. Böhler was twenty-five years old when he came to England—ten years younger than John Wesley, who found him lodgings in Westminster.

Wesley regarded February 7, 1738, as 'a day much to be remembered,' for on that day he first met Böhler at the house of a Dutch merchant in London. They 'conversed much,' read the Greek Testament together, and discussed the doctrine of faith. 'By Böhler,' writes Wesley, 'I was clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved.' In a later note he adds 'with the full Christian salvation.' A question arose in his mind. How could he preach to others if he had not faith himself? Böhler advised: 'Preach faith till you have it; and then because you have it, you will preach faith.' He again read the *Homilies* in which the doctrine of salvation by faith was clearly taught. He preached it in the London churches, until, one after another, they were closed against him. A letter of Gambold's partly explains why a doctrine found in the Homilies was so offensive to the complacent Hanoverian clergy:

If you speak of faith in such a manner as makes Christ a Saviour to the utmost, as discovers a greater pollution in the best of us than we could before acknowledge, but brings a greater deliverance from it than we could before expect—if any one offers to talk at this rate, he shall be heard with the same abhorrence as if he was going to rob mankind of their salvation. I am persuaded that a Montanist or a Novatian

Peter
Böhler,
1738.

Preaching
faith.

who from the height of his purity should look down with contempt upon poor sinners, and exclude them from all mercy, could not be thought such an overthrower of the gospel as he who should learn from the Author of it to be a friend of publicans and sinners, and to sit down upon the level with them as soon as they begin to repent.

Wesley's bonds of servile ecclesiasticism were loosening. On April 1, he records at Oxford :

Being in Mr. Fox's society my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more, but to pray indifferently, with a form, or without, as I may find suitable to particular occasions.

1738.
The
loosening of
ecclesiastical
bonds.

This became a main principle in his ecclesiastical course. He never condemned forms of prayer, which would have precluded not only the liturgy, but the Lord's Prayer and many hymns. He entered into no abstract controversy on the subject, but held himself at liberty, according to occasion, to pray with or without forms. On the following Easter Sunday he preached 'in our college chapel' of Lincoln, and closed the day with the entry, 'I see the promise; but it is far off.'

Böhler again came to his help by bringing some of his friends to testify to the joy of faith. They sang the hymn by C. F. Richter from the Freylinghausen Gesangbuch, which Wesley had translated for his Charlestown hymn-book. He now sang it with 'penitential feeling and with tears.'

The
Moravian
testimony.

(Hier legt mein Sinn sich vor Dir nieder.)

My soul before Thee prostrate lies,
To Thee, her source, my spirit flies;
My wants I mourn, my chains I see,
O let Thy presence set me free.¹

Wesley thus sums up the result of his conversations with

¹ *Psalms and Hymns*, p. 56. Charlestown, 1737. The tune to which it was generally sung is found in Wesley's first tune-book, 1742.

Böhler, the testimony of the Moravians, and the singing of the Pietist hymn :

I was now thoroughly convinced ; and by the grace of God, I resolved to seek it unto the end : (1) by absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or part, upon my own work 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 the other means of grace continual prayer for this very thing—justifying, saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me ; a trust in Him as my Christ, my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

Böhler embarked for Carolina on May 4, and Wesley's deep conviction of his own momentous vocation is expressed in his journal : ' O what a work hath God begun since his coming into England ! such a one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth shall pass away.' The work of Böhler was to be consummated by the teaching of Luther.

Charles Wesley was the first of the two brothers to find spiritual rest. At nine o'clock on Whitsunday morning, May 21, his brother John and some friends came to his room in the house of Mr. Bray, the brazier, at the corner of Little Britain, where he lay ill, and sang *A Hymn to the Holy Ghost*. It was probably Austin's rendering of the *Veni Sancte Spiritus* which John had inserted in his Charlestown hymn-book—the only hymn with that exact title :

Come, Holy Ghost, send down those beams
Which gently flow in silent streams
From Thy eternal throne above :
Come, Thou enricher of the poor,
Thou bounteous source of all our store,
Fill us with faith and hope and love.¹

After singing the hymn, which greatly comforted his brother, John went to the church of St. Mary-le-Strand and heard the rector, Dr. Heylyn, preach ' a truly Christian sermon ' on ' They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' Wesley assisted the rector with the Communion. Soon after the

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 22.

May 21,
1738.
His
brother's
' conver-
sion.'

service he heard the joyful news that his brother had found rest to his soul.

At five in the morning on the Wednesday following—on that day which marks, as Lecky says, ‘an epoch in English history’—John Wesley opened his Greek Testament at the words ‘Τὰ μέγιστα ἡμῖν καὶ τίμια ἐπαγγέλματα δεδώρηται ἵνα διὰ τούτων γένησθε θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως (There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature).’ His later note shows how he interpreted this: ‘Being renewed in the image of God, and having communion with Him, so as to dwell in God and God in you.’ In the afternoon he heard the anthem at St. Paul’s Cathedral, ‘Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord.’

May 24,
1738,
the epoch-
making day.

In the evening he went, very unwillingly, to one of the ‘religious societies,’ still connected with the Church of England, which met in Aldersgate Street (probably in Nettleton Court). Here some one was reading Luther’s *Preface to the Epistle to the Romans*. The reader may have been William Holland, the business man of Basinghall Street, who, a few days before, had heard Charles Wesley reading Luther’s *Commentary on Galatians*, and who says:

The
influence
of Luther.

My heart was filled with peace and love. I almost thought I saw our Saviour! When I afterwards went into the street I could scarcely feel the ground I trod upon. I was blind to the scenes, deaf to the noises around me.

If Holland was the reader, his heart must have burned again as he read Luther’s words, with John Wesley as a hearer:

Faith is an energy in the heart, so efficacious, lively, breathing, powerful as to be incapable of remaining inactive. Faith is a constant trust in the mercy of God towards us, by which we cast ourselves entirely on Christ and commit ourselves entirely to Him. . . . This firm trust is so animating as to cheer and elevate the heart, and transport it with affections towards God. The believer feels no dread in opposing himself as a single champion against all creatures. This high and heroic feeling, this noble

enlargement of spirit, is effected in the heart by the Spirit of God, who is imparted to believers by faith. It is impossible to separate works from faith, as impossible as to sever light from heat in the fire. . . .

The effect of this reading upon Wesley is best described in his own words :

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

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

Charles Wesley was still lying ill in his room. He writes : 'Towards ten my brother was brought in triumph by a troop of friends, and declared, "I believe!"' We sang the hymn with great joy, and parted with prayer.' The hymn, 'Where shall my wondering soul begin?' had been written by Charles two days before. Thus it became the birthday song of living, evangelical Methodism, for, as Hugh Price Hughes once wrote, 'On that day Methodism, as history knows it, was born.'¹

The Re-
formation
and the
Revival.

The Evangelical Revival was thus linked with the Protestant Reformation. Luther, 'being dead, yet speaketh,' through the Elizabethan English translation of Justus Jonas's Latin translation of the original German. He spake not always clearly, not infallibly, as Wesley discovered later. 'Exegesis was not Luther's strong point, and his commentaries bristle with faults,' say recent critical students of St. Paul's writings. 'The value of his contribution was of a different character. By grasping some of St. Paul's leading ideas, and by insisting upon them with unwearied boldness and persistence, he produced conditions of religious life which made the comprehension of part of

¹ *Contemporary Review*, 1891, p. 477.

the apostle's teaching possible.'¹ This service he rendered to Wesley. He focussed attention on the nature of faith as 'a vital energy in our hearts,' and upon the living object of faith. He did this for both the Wesley brothers by sending them to the Scriptures themselves, for, as the latest historian of the Reformation writes :

The Reformation, which was a great revival of religion, animated with the yearning to get near to God, with sorrow, confession, and trust, sent believers to have fellowship with Him through the Bible, and to obtain pardon and acceptance at His footstool.²

It has come to be generally recognized that Wesley's conversion not only marks an epoch in his personal experience, but is a landmark in the history of Protestant Christianity. 'That wonderful experience,' said Dr. Dale, at the centenary of Wesley's death, 'that revelation of Christ, had a relation to all that has given the name of John Wesley a place in the history of Christendom.'

A landmark
in history.

VI

We have seen that Wesley's consciousness of a divine call to some great work of which he had but a vague conception, and absolutely no plan, deepened as he entered upon the new experience which transformed him and marked the birthday of Evangelical Methodism. Yet no man in England was more ready to recognize that Methodism, of which he became the central figure, was not the only spiritual revival of his day. He was stirred by the report of the awakening in America under the ministries of Tennant and Jonathan Edwards.³ In Wales, Griffith Jones, Howell Harris, and others, and in Scotland, James Robe of Kilsyth, were leading similar movements. John Arndt had taught

HIS
NATURAL
AND
SPIRITUAL
MANHOOD.

Influence
of con-
temporary
revivals.

¹ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, ciii.

² Lindsay, *The Reformation*, i. 194.

³ Wesley (Edwards), *Thoughts concerning the present Revival in New England*, 1745, and *an account of the Work of God in North America*, 1778,

the German Pietists to pray that 'the floodgates of piety and devotion might overflow the face of the whole earth,'¹ and the Moravian historian tells us that Christian David and his brethren were 'not hermits who wrapped themselves up in themselves. Service, self-sacrifice, the spread of the gospel of Christ—that was their watchword at Herrnhut.' These movements had set free the mysterious energy of intercessory prayer, under the administration of the Holy Spirit. 'Minds all over the world commune through the One mind that is present in them all,' said a modern missionary saint, who was possessed by a profound conviction of the immanence of God.² Here and there leaders who had been developing for years were divinely selected as the most responsive, the strongest, and the fittest.

From the
psychological
standpoint.

Wesley was one of these prepared personalities. His inherited physique and temperament, his accumulated stock of ideas, his power of holding to the practically right ones however unpalatable, and his acquired habit of acting definitely and fearlessly on any selected ideal, has already found illustration. We may take into account, to use a terminology that might have tempted the wit of Wesley—'the subconscious incubation and maturing of motives deposited by the experiences of life, of which, when ripe, the results hatch out or burst into flower.'³ We may be glad to be reminded of the 'admirable congruity of Protestant theology with the structure of the mind as shown in Wesley's experience.' But this would be a very inadequate explanation of his conversion, or of his pre-eminence as a religious leader. We must also take into account the fact of the new conscious relation of his whole personality to a personal God, brought about by a 'faith' of which the most complete exposition is given in his *Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion*. We must regard his conversion not only as a 'real, definite, memorable event to

¹ Wesley (Arndt), *True Christianity*, p. 161, 1750. And also Wesley's *Account*, above named, of the Salzburghers.

² Dr. E. E. Jenkins (President of Wesleyan Conference, 1880),

³ James, *VRE*, p. 244,

him who had the experience,' but as an actual advent of the living Christ, which in the history of the Methodist movement is a central fact, though it must be associated with Wesley's heritage of truth tested by others, coming to him through books, which, as we have seen, find an important place in every stage of his spiritual history.

Wesley inherited a physique of which he made the best Physique. by habits acquired at Epworth and the Charterhouse. Dr. G. Osborn was fond of telling how Henry Moore, with whom he lived in early days, said to him as he saw the Duke of Wellington standing by his horse on a parade ground, 'There's the image of John Wesley.' Family tradition gives his height as five feet five inches, and his *Journals* of 1769 and 1789 record an unvarying weight of a hundred and twenty-two pounds for his compact muscular frame. Hampson and Whitehead describe his 'clear forehead, an aquiline nose, an eye the brightest and most piercing that can be conceived, an aspect, particularly in profile, of acuteness and penetration.' When young Kennicott, afterwards the famous Hebraist, was an undergraduate, he heard Wesley preach his last university sermon at St. Mary's, Oxford, and wrote: 'His black (dark brown) hair, quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure of his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man.' In old age the dark hair became silvery white, as a much treasured lock shows, though for some time after his illness of 1775 he wore a wig. He was scrupulously neat in his person and habits, and wore a narrow-plaited stock, a coat with a small upright collar, buckled shoes, and three-cornered hat.

Of his numerous portraits, five may be regarded as the Portraits. most characteristic. The first by Williams (*cir.* 1742) in Didsbury College; the busts by Roubilliac (*cir.* 1753) and by Wood (1784)—the latter moulded from the life, and giving an expression of much force of character; Hone's painting of Wesley preaching in the open air (1765), and Romney's masterpiece of 1789. When Dr. Maclaren of Manchester was invited by the Rev. R. Green to see the

portrait by Williams, he stood before it for some time in contemplation, and then exclaimed, 'Now I have seen the man who moved England.' Mr. Green well describes it :

Portrait
by J. M.
Williams,
R.A., 1742.

This portrait by Williams is of great interest, as representing Wesley in the vigour of his days. He is just about to enter upon that remarkable series of evangelistic tours which constitute the greatest work of his life. It is the portrait of the man who made Methodism. The face is of the Miltonic type. The nose is prominent and well defined ; from a little above the centre to the tip is almost a straight line, thus differentiating it from the distinctive Roman type. The eyes are large and reflective ; and over them the lids fall sufficiently to indicate calmness and rest, without drooping to drowsiness. There is no appearance of hurry or flutter in them ; but a hidden power of activity and sustained labour. They betoken a concentration of thought on the present movement ; there is no distant and dreamy absence of mind. They are fixed on the beholder with that calm, steady, penetrating gaze with which he arrested the leaders of riotous mobs, and put to silence disturbers and rude assailants in his meetings. The well-modelled mouth is firm without sternness ; it indicates calmness, placidity, and self-control ; it shows no line of flippancy or anger, but an habitual seriousness that evidently could brighten into sweetness and joy, or could melt into tenderness rather than harden itself into severity. Power of thought is shown in the widely spread eyebrows and the ample and slightly tapering forehead, partly hidden by the dark auburn hair, which, parted in the middle, falls in wavy ringlets upon the narrow, sloping shoulders. The square jaw and slightly projecting chin add strength and energy to the whole. The entire aspect is peaceful and at rest, grave without sadness, without agitation, or sign of fear or weakness ; calm and even majestic in its consciousness of strength, but free from foible and vanity ; it shows great reserve of power, and capability withal of quivering emotion. It is the face of one having large sympathies, busied with great thoughts, moved by great purposes.¹

That there was a peculiar charm and power in Wesley's

¹ See frontispiece to this volume and *WHS*, iii. 185, iv. 1, 122-3.

personality, and that his face and bearing were very expressive of the inner man, his contemporaries bear witness. At Oxford his friend Gambold often saw him come from prayer 'with a serenity that was next to shining,' and says 'there was something of authority in his countenance.' John Rishton of Haslingden, and others who knew him in his later days, tell us that 'when he said "good-bye" his face was as the face of an angel.'

His
personal
charm.

He was by no means the chilly stoic he has been sometimes represented. Overton regards his strong family affection as 'the first feature which strikes us. He carried Epworth about with him to the end of his days.' His successive love affairs reveal a very human side to his character. His unhappy marriage betrays a lack of judgment on his own part and an unfitness in his wife for the trials of an itinerant life, which cost him more suffering than appears on the surface of his domestic history. But comrades and friends of every type testify to his cheerfulness, courtesy, kindness, and wit. He held, as he says, that 'sour godliness is the devil's religion.' He was a charming travelling companion. His patrician descent and the indefinable tone imparted by public school and university training only expanded his unaffected fellow-feeling with all types of humanity. His spiritual experience of 1738 brought him into new and delightful fellowship, and a catholic doctrine of universal redemption was peculiarly congenial to his humanitarian instincts.

As he cast off what Dr. Rigg well calls 'the grave-clothes of High-Church dogmas and ritualism,' his sympathies broadened. He had strong prejudices of taste, and was repelled by obscurities of style and the mawkish vocabulary of some types of piety. His moral antipathy to a perverted evangelicalism tempted him to exercise a sarcastic wit, distinctly Wesleyan, which he usually kept under severe restraint. His disregard for 'mere opinions,' in comparison with character, is well known. It is true that he appears at times very dogmatic himself, but his own explanation of this is the true one. 'My dogmaticalness is neither more

His catholic
spirit.

nor less than a custom of coming to the point at once, and telling my mind flat and plain, without any preface or ceremony.' He was conscious that he had acquired 'prejudices of birth and education,' but his views of truth and humanity expanded with years. In one of his least-known prefaces he writes :

Perhaps it may be useful, as well as agreeable, to those who are broke loose from that miserable bigotry, which is too often entailed upon us from our forefathers, to observe how the same Spirit works the same work of grace in men upright in heart, of whatever denomination. These, how widely soever they differ in opinion, all agree in one mind, one temper. How far distant soever they are from each other, with regard to the *circumstances* of worship, they all meet in the *substance* of all true worship, the *faith that worketh by love*.¹

His serenity
and strength.

His remarkable serenity was not entirely due to temperament, though he was undoubtedly influenced by his mother's tranquil spirit. His power of concentrated attention, his orderly habits, his economy of time, his practical business ability, and the sway of selected moral and religious motives over natural tendencies to impulsive actions, which were less controlled in other members of his family, all ministered to the calmness of his spirit and demeanour. Wesley himself says :

When I was at Oxford, and lived like a hermit, I saw not how any busy man could be saved. I scarce thought it possible for a man to retain the Christian spirit amid the noise and bustle of the world ; God taught me better by my own experience.

Once when he was busy writing at Witney his friend Mr. Bolton tried to draw him into conversation by saying how much pleasanter it was to live in the country than the town. 'All is silent, all retired, and no distracting noises of the busy multitude intrude themselves.' 'True, Neddy,' said Wesley, 'but noisy thoughts may.' Mr. Bolton took the

¹ Christian Library, xxvi., *Life of Calvin*, p. vi.

gentle hint. Wesley knew the psychological secret of a well-balanced mind. He knew also that a deeper tranquillity, attained by no self-discipline, was his. Outwardly calm as he was before 1738, his journals reveal the distressing restlessness of his soul until he realized the mystic peace imparted by the witnessing Spirit of God. Long before that, in seasons of devotion, he had transient experiences of spiritual rest and joy, and for some months after his evangelical conversion he records fluctuations in his consciousness of the love of God, but he vanquished his doubts, and, as Overton says, 'henceforth, during the whole of his long life, hardly the shadow of a doubt about his spiritual state crossed his path; clouds and darkness constantly swept over his outer life, but there was perpetual and unclouded sunshine within.' Adam Clarke maintained that Wesley's 'deep intimacy with God' was the secret of a tranquillity more remarkable even than Fletcher's, when we consider the amazing labour Wesley had to undergo, 'the calumnies he had to endure, his fightings without, opposition arising from members within, and his care of all the churches.'

A spirit of reverence, which we have observed in Wesley's mother, also gave strength and dignity to the character of her son. It pervaded his whole being and action. It is revealed in his choice of books, in his selection of hymns for translation, in his few original compositions, in his revision of his brother's devotional poetry, and in the records of his private and public worship. It was reflected in the feeling of awe which often possessed and quieted unruly crowds in fields and market-places. It hallowed the poor rooms, the unsightly Foundery, and the crude preaching-houses, and transformed them into temples. It gave a distinctive character to the Methodist revival. The aesthetic feeling was not dominant in Wesley, though his taste was severe, and he was not insusceptible to the charms of architecture and music, which were regarded as such important factors in the Anglican revival of the next century. But he did not regard these as essential to devout

His
habitual
reverence.

worship and transforming visions of God. Herein he was an evangelical Mystic. His habitual reverence invested the simplest forms of speech and ordinance with a significance, dignity, and power that did much to deepen and exalt the worship of the people whom he taught to sing Tersteegen's hymn :

Lo! God is here! Let us adore
And own how dreadful is this place.

This spirit of reverence affected his relations to all in whom he believed the divine image was being renewed, irrespective of social or intellectual rank. He was himself frank and guileless, and prone to err on the charitable side in his estimate of others, and was sometimes deceived. But this never made him cynical. He venerated the poorest saints. He saw the mystical beauty of holiness in untutored men and women. He said he heard from their lips some of the loftiest truths of the spiritual life. Yet he recognized the value of variety of type and attainment, and affected no disregard for the intellectual element in religion. We see this in his preface to the discourse of the Cambridge Platonist, John Smith, on *The True Way of Attaining Divine Knowledge* :

I am sensible some parts of the following discourses are scarce intelligible to unlearned readers. But I could not prevail with myself, on that account, to rob those who can understand them of so great a treasure.

Like his mother, he was a disciple of Pascal. His evangelical conversion did not lead him to depreciate the exercise of reason. The modern psychologist says that 'the total mental efficiency of man is the resultant of the working together of all his faculties.'¹ It is this efficiency we find in Wesley, if we recognize among his highest faculties what Matthew Arnold called 'a genius for godliness,' but which Wesley himself described as 'the spiritual sensation of the soul . . . whereby a believer perceives, through the

¹ W. James, *Psychology and Life's Ideals*, p. 207.

power of the Highest overshadowing him, the existence of Him in whom he lives and moves and has his being, and the invisible world, the system of things eternal.' And while his faith in God was in and through Christ, as a real and objective atonement for the sin of the world, he recognized the transcendent mystery of redemption. 'It is true,' he wrote, 'I can no more comprehend it than his lordship (Lord Huntingdon): perhaps I might say, than the angels of God, the highest created understanding.' In this he resembled his great contemporary, Bishop Butler.

VII

For fifty years Wesley was a preacher of extraordinary power. And his preaching was as effective from the ethical as it was from the evangelistic standpoint. He combined the passion for rescuing men with the passion for educating them to righteousness. Others have preached with equal power as revivalists for short and intermittent periods, and their success has been conditioned by the co-operation of existing churches. But a half-century of uninterrupted evangelism, under such conditions as prevailed in the eighteenth century, combined with pastoral organization and correspondence, educational and philanthropic enterprise, is unique in the history of religious revivals.

HIS EVANGELICAL AND ETHICAL PREACHING.

His sustained power.

His personal endowments contributed to his power—his magnetic presence, his expressive features, his vivid eye, his clear voice. In the open air he was well heard by five, ten, or fifteen thousand people gathered in the urban spaces of Kennington and Moorfields, and in the natural amphitheatre of Gwennap. St. John's first epistle was his model of style. 'Here,' he says, 'are simplicity and sublimity together, the strongest sense and the plainest language.' He tells us that early in his career he renounced a more elaborate style because he discovered that his intelligent servant, Betty, could not understand him. At Oxford, his private journals show that he studied the drama. There

His style.

are passages in his *Appeals* which indicate considerable imaginative power. But he did not possess Whitefield's dramatic and oratorical gifts, and he lacked the pathos of his brother Charles. When he preached in All Hallows Church, Lombard Street, in 1788, he recalled the day, fifty years before, when he was compelled to preach extempore because he had forgotten his written sermon. From that time he was independent of manuscript, though on special occasions he chose to use it. His transparent sincerity, his grip upon the reason, his appeals to the conscience, and his penetrating insight, gave him incisive force.

Wesley's printed sermons do not, as a rule, give an adequate idea of the freedom, energy, and restrained emotion of his extempore preaching, when he was face to face with vast crowds in the open air. This is suggested by one of many entries in his *Journal* :

I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was still. My heart was filled with love and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed ; they were ashamed ; they were melted ; they devoured every word.

His *Appeals*, as we have observed, and the closing pages of his reply to Dr. Conyers Middleton's *Free Inquiry* (1749) give some idea of the argumentative force of his applications. He is addressing those whose Christianity lies only in opinions ' decked with a few outward observances ' :

As to morality, even honest heathen morality,—O let me utter a melancholy truth !—many of those whom you style Deists have far more of it than you. Go on, gentlemen, and prosper. Shame these nominal Christians out of that poor Christianity which they call Christianity. Reason, rally, laugh them out of their dead, empty forms, void of spirit, of faith, of love. Convince them that such unmeaning pageantry is absolutely unworthy, you need not say, of God, but even of any man that is endowed with common understanding. . . . Know your time ; press on ; push your victories, till you have conquered all that know not God. And then He, whom neither they nor you know now, shall arise and gird Himself with strength, and go forth in His almighty love, and conquer you all together.

Wesley's preparatory reading, in what his mother called 'practical divinity,' contributed to the continuity of his evangelistic power. Few leaders of great revivals—except, perhaps, Jonathan Edwards and Charles G. Finney—have commenced their aggressive missions with such a mental storage of illuminating and heart-warming truths. Wesley had absorbed the ideas of the masters of the devotional life—of à Kempis, Pascal, Taylor, the Christian Platonists, and above all of St. Paul and St. John. He had translated from the German and Spanish hymns which expressed the loftiest conceptions of God and the deepest sense of the mysteries of faith. This supplied fuel for the fire which burnt steadily for half a century. His 'conversion' evangelized the divinity of a decade of study. The divinity enriched the pastoral evangelism of a thousand apostolic letters which were often as heart-searching as his sermons. To the philosophic judgement of Alexander Knox—who received letters from Wesley which are models of tact and sympathy for evangelists who deal with inquirers of his type—it seemed that Wesley's divinity contained 'the very spirit of Macarius and Chrysostom, of Smith and Cudworth, of De Sales and Fenelon, simplified, systematized, rationalized, *evangelized!*'¹

Preparatory
divinity.

Wesley's own failures also contributed to his power as a preacher. They shattered his sacerdotalism. They drew him in the strength of his manhood back into God. They taught him what to preach, if he would help others. It is no wonder, if after thirteen years of spiritual quest he learned the secret of peace, he should preach the neglected doctrine of the witness of the Spirit with peculiar power in an age in which bishops like Warburton regarded the Deity, as Leslie Stephen says, 'as a constitutional monarch who had signed a constitutional compact,' and ceased to commune with men as Spirit with spirit.

His ex-
perimental
doctrines.

Wesley did not claim to preach any new truth. 'My doctrines,' said he, 'are simply the common, fundamental principles of Christianity.' He found his redemptional

His
guarded
Arminian-
ism.

¹ Knox, iii. 138.

theology in the *Homilies* and Articles of the Church of England. But he emphasized a carefully guarded Arminian interpretation of them.

For Wesley [says Dr. Dale], God did not dwell apart from the creation, living in heights of unapproachable majesty. He believed that in God we live and move and have our being. And yet in the strength of his own moral life he had a most vivid conviction that he was morally free—free to receive or reject the infinite grace which the living God was pressing upon him; and therefore he was an Arminian.

He preached this conviction of personal responsibility with solemn intensity, and arraigned his hearers before the very bar of God.

Wesley himself asked and answered an interesting question at his Conference of 1746.

What sermons do we find by experience to be attended with the greatest blessing? Such as are most close, convincing, practical. Such as have most of Christ the Priest, the Atonement. Such as urge the heinousness of men living in contempt or ignorance of Him.

He sums up the evangelical ethics preached by himself and John Nelson¹ in these words:

God loves you; therefore love and obey Him. Christ died for you; therefore die to sin. Christ is risen; therefore rise in the image of God. Christ liveth evermore; therefore live to God till you live with Him in glory! So we preached.

His
ethical
passion.

The ethical passion which possessed Wesley during his whole religious life contributed greatly to the sustained power of his preaching. His evangelical experience did not diminish his moral enthusiasm. It gave it new motive and directed it to the most practical ends. It filled him with a burning zeal for righteousness not unlike that of a Hebrew prophet or of St. James. Dr. Dale thought that—

one defect of what we call the Evangelical Revival consists in its failure to afford to those whom it has restored to God a

¹ For Nelson, *vide infra*, pp. 312-5.

lofty ideal of practical righteousness and a healthy, vigorous moral training.¹ . . . If this defect is to be remedied, we evangelicals must think more about Christian ethics.

Wesley, as an evangelical leader, thought and preached much on Christian ethics. There are no more practical treatises in the English language on the science of living according to Christianity than are to be found among Wesley's sermons. He was ever as awake to the dangers which arise from perversions of evangelical doctrine as he was to the powerlessness of ethical teaching divorced from religion. He considered antinomianism the worst of all heresies. He parted from the Moravians, to whom he owed so much, because he met with some of their teachers who perverted their doctrine of salvation by faith, and depreciated an active righteousness—though this was but a transient phase of doctrine and was not supported by their systematized theology. 'Much of his opposition to Calvinism,' says Overton, 'arose from his suspicion of its ethical bearings.' This is evident in his sermon on *Free Grace*, in which he combines 'doctrinal argument with declamatory invective of the most scathing terribleness.' His moral sense as well as his masculine taste revolted from what he calls the 'luscious' style of certain types of so-called gospel-preaching. He describes the preaching of Wheatley, whom he disowned in 1751, as an unconnected rhapsody of unmeaning words like Sir John Suckling's—

Antino-
mianism
the worst
heresy.

Verses, smooth and soft as cream
In which was neither depth nor stream,

and he commended and republished the treatise of the Cambridge Platonist, Worthington, from whom he may have borrowed his adjective. Worthington says :

It pleases men to be entertained with a luscious preaching of the gospel made up all of promises, and these wholly unconditional ; it gratifies them to hear what is done without them, rather than what is to be done within them, and the sincere and entire obedience to our Saviour's precepts.

¹ *Vide* also Davison, *Christian Conscience* (1888), p. 204.

Wesley never fell into this error. He preached to the conscience and the will.

Ethics and holiness.

His whole doctrine of right conduct, duty and virtue, was raised into the unity of holiness, as the privilege of the life of faith on earth. Christian perfection, as he defined, guarded, and preached it, was an inspiring and attainable ideal. 'Loving God,' he writes in old age, 'with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves, is the perfection I have taught these forty years. I pin down all its opposers to this definition of it. No evasion! No shifting the question! Where is the delusion of this?' And, in the words of Dr. W. B. Pope, he 'ever gave the Holy Spirit his honour in the work of human salvation.' He believed and preached that the Divine Spirit was as mighty in administering redemption as the Divine Son was in accomplishing it.

Universal grace.

Behind all his preaching was the conviction that God's universal grace touched every man and 'the light enlightening every man coming into the world.' This gave to his preaching its 'character of Catholic freeness and simple sincerity, an unreserve and alacrity and vigour which no other doctrine could inspire.'¹

His university sermons.

Wesley preached a sermon before Oxford University in 1733 on *The Circumcision of the Heart*, which he said, thirty years later, contained all that he continued to teach on salvation from all sin and loving God with an undivided heart. But he omitted to state that when he republished it in 1748 it contained a remarkable addition on 'the revelation of Christ in our hearts.' In 1738 he preached the sermon on *Salvation by Faith*, which appears as the first in his published works. His Latin sermon of three years later has not been printed. *The Almost Christian* was preached in the same year. His last University sermon (1744) was on Acts iv. 31: 'They were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' It was, as we have seen, the sermon which Kennicott heard. Blackstone, the coming commentator on English law, an old Carthusian, like the preacher, was

¹ Pope, *Peculiarities of Methodist Doct.*, p. 10.

also present, and his interesting letter describing this 'curious sermon by Wesley y^e Methodist,' is preserved at the Charterhouse. It is pleasant to find the two men, Wesley and Blackstone, thirty years later, fighting together for the abolition of slavery. Wesley, in his *Thoughts on Slavery* in 1774, is able to refer to his startled and sarcastic young critic of 1744 as 'that great ornament to his profession, Judge Blackstone.' He notes in his *Journal* that the sermon was preached on St. Bartholomew's day, and adds: 'I preached, I suppose, the last time at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have delivered my own soul.' Both Wesley and Blackstone record that the Vice-Chancellor demanded the notes of the sermon, and Kennicott heard that 'the heads of colleges intend to show their resentment.' Blackstone says, 'On mature deliberation it has been thought proper to punish him by a mortifying neglect.' Wesley writes:

I am well pleased that it should be on the very day on which in the last century near two thousand burning and shining lights were put out at one stroke. Yet what a wide difference is there between their case and mine! They were turned out of house and home, and all they had: whereas I am only hindered from preaching, without any other loss; and that in a kind of honourable manner: it being determined that when my next turn to preach came, they would pay another person to preach for me. And so they did twice or thrice; even to the time I resigned my Fellowship.¹

He resigned his Fellowship on June 1, 1751.

During the early stages of the revival, scenes of physical prostration and abnormal excitement sometimes followed the preaching of Wesley. Similar phenomena had occurred under Tauler's preaching during the Rhine-land revival of 1339, when Adolf saw people 'lie on the ground as though dead, such had been the power of Tauler's words.' Edwards in America, Robe in Scotland, and Grimshaw in Haworth record similar incidents. Cennick, describing the scenes at

Mysterious
phenomena.

¹ Wesley, *Eccles. Hist.* (1781), iv. 187.

Bristol (1739), says that they especially followed Wesley's preaching on holiness and the law of God. They were more frequent under John Wesley's calm, incisive appeal to the conscience than under the oratory of Whitefield or the emotional utterances of Charles Wesley. Men and women, whose power of self-control were weakened by years of sin, were found, as Wesley records, 'in violent agonies,' not only in the heated rooms, but in the open air. Space cannot be devoted here to the questions raised in Wesley's day, and since, by these phenomena. They ceased after a few years, and the development of Methodist singing contributed largely to the higher expression and control of the intense emotion of the great awakening. A particularly sane remark occurs in a rare pamphlet by a shrewd business man, Thomas Butts, who writes in 1743 :

As to persons crying out or being in fits, I shall not pretend to account exactly for that, but only make this observation : it is well known that most of them who have been so exercised were before persons of no religion at all, but they have since received a sense of pardon, have peace and joy in believing, and are now more holy and happy than ever they were before. *And if this be so, no matter what remarks are made on their fits.*

Sensible Thomas Butts ! Wesley made him one of his first Book Stewards.

An itinerary has been compiled showing Wesley's carefully planned journeys and incidental excursions over 250,000 miles of execrable roads. He preached on an average fifteen sermons a week. The record is unparalleled if we remember the strain of the intense but controlled emotion of his evangelistic preaching and the unflagging mental activity of his quiet hours. The modern journalist W. T. Stead considers that not even Wesley's great genius would have left so deep and broad an impress on the world's history 'without that marvellous body, with muscles of whipcord, and bones of steel, with lungs of leather, and the heart of a lion,' enabling him to bring his magnetic influence to bear on multitudes all over the British Isles. But we

A page
from his
Journal.

open his *Journal* at a page which shows that his resolute spirit possessed a body not always in perfect health.

His age is seventy-four. On Friday, May 9, he rides from Osmotherly, fifteen miles, to Malton, Yorkshire, suffering at intervals from ague. He preaches. Having heard that E. Ritchie is very ill, he sets out after the service, and reaches Otley, forty-eight miles away, at four o'clock Saturday morning. After seeing the invalid, he rides back to Malton, having, as he says, ridden between ninety and a hundred miles. He rests one hour, then rides twenty-two miles to Scarborough, and preaches in the evening. On Sunday morning he is shaking with fever. He lies between blankets, drinks hot lemonade, perspires, and sleeps for half an hour. Then he rises up and preaches. After this, he meets the society. On Monday he is preaching at Bridlington. On Tuesday preaching at Beverley in the morning, and in the evening at Hull, having ridden thirty-six miles that day. On Wednesday he rides twenty-six miles to Pocklington, preaches, rides twelve miles farther to York, and preaches again. He admits that he feels his 'breast out of order,' and would gladly rest. But he is expected at Tadcaster. He starts at 9 a.m. Thursday in a chaise, which breaks down. He borrows a lively horse, whose movements, he cheerfully says, 'electrifies' him, and he feels better! He preaches, and that same night returns twelve miles to York. The next day he 'took the diligence' for London.¹

In the early years of Wesley's itinerancy, the strain of these incessant labours was frequently increased by the necessity of facing violent mobs, especially in Staffordshire, Cornwall, Lancashire, and Ireland. The vivid pages of his *Journals* and other contemporary records show him displaying courage, caution, tact, and resource in the highest degree. He was often the subject of interpositions and deliverances little short of the miraculous. He seemed indeed to bear a charmed life.

¹ For roads and distances see Cary's *Survey*, 1784. For Wesley's itinerary, *WHS*. 1908.

VIII

HIS EDUCATIONAL
AND
LITERARY
WORK.

Educational
theories.

While Wesley's work gave a new intellectual stimulus to the life of the English people, this was not the result of any new theories or methods applied to the education of the young. He preached and wrote on the subject, dealing with it mainly from the religious standpoint. 'Some,' he says, 'answered by that poor, lame, miserable shift, Oh, he has no children of his own; but many of a nobler spirit owned the truth.' In his knowledge of child-nature and in educational theories he was not much in advance of educated Englishmen, generally, of his day. His brother Charles read the *Life of Comenius*, the Moravian bishop who in Cromwell's day visited England and awakened Hartlib, to whom Milton dedicated his tractate *Of Education*. All the Wesleys knew Milton's work, and John read, criticized, and commended Locke's *Thoughts* and *Essay*. He also read Rousseau's *Emilé*, but he makes no reference to the value of his principle of basing education on the study of the child himself. Pestalozzi was born in 1746, and his influence did not affect English teachers until long after Wesley's day. Froebel was only a boy of eight, passing for the dunce of the village school in the Thuringian Forest when Wesley died. The study of the child made no perceptible advance in England during Wesley's lifetime or under his influence, though he did so much to give an impetus to compassionate efforts to educate and shelter the children of the poor. To the modern teacher some of his theories and methods appear as absurd as those of most of his contemporaries, but three of his educational principles have exponents to-day: 1. Proceed from the known to the unknown. 'Carefully observe,' he preached, 'the few ideas which they have already, and endeavour to graft what you say upon them.' 2. Interest children in things rather than words. 'Bid the child look up to the sun, let him see the trees . . . the flowers.' This seems almost like an echo from Comenius: 'We should learn as much as possible from the great book of nature, from heaven and earth, from oaks

and beeches.' 3. Education should be for all. Here again he was in accord with the Moravian pioneer who said, 'Not only are the children of the rich and noble to be drawn to the school, but all alike, gentle and simple, rich and poor, boys and girls, in great towns and small.' And, what is more important, Wesley acted upon this, founding schools for colonists in Georgia, for colliers in Kingswood, for the sons of his own preachers, for the poor around the London Foundery, and the orphans of Newcastle. Green, the historian, says the spiritual movement led by Wesley 'gave the first impulse to our popular education.'

Education
for all.

He had himself founded and taught in Sunday schools in Georgia, and he greatly encouraged the movement in England, giving his blessing to Hannah Ball, Rodda, Atmore, and other Methodists, and co-operating with Robert Raikes, whose plan he published in his *Arminian Magazine* (1785). Before he died he found that Sunday schools were giving a new impulse to the great revival of sacred song, and he was entranced by the singing of the children at Bolton, which he thought could not be excelled except by 'the singing of angels in our Father's house.'

Sunday
schools.

Kingswood School, near Bristol, was founded in 1748 for the sons of Wesley's preachers. After an existence of a century and a half, it still continues, in its new home at Bath, its remarkable success, though under conditions totally changed from its first beginnings. It must not be confounded with the earlier school for colliers' children started by Whitefield, and completed and sustained by Wesley, which continued to exist for sixty years. The new Kingswood school was intended to be of a type 'which would not disgrace the Apostolic age.' It did not attain this ideal in Wesley's lifetime, though it has a splendid educational record, and to-day maintains a foremost place among the schools of England. Wesley's original plan extended to the very details of diet. His rules illustrate his archaic theories of boy-nature. The course of study was encyclopædic. The discipline was severe. But it was an advance upon any

Kingswood
School.

school in the kingdom for boys from six to twelve years of age in the range and quality of its teaching. Dr. Rigg suggests that the only solution of the incongruity between Wesley's characteristic kindness of disposition and popularity with children and the seemingly morose asceticism of his rules for the school, is to be found 'in the now almost incredible truth as to the state of public schools in Wesley's day, when play meant coarse violence, and unfettered intercourse mutual barbarizing and demoralization.' The educational principles of play and the value of co-operative games were almost unrecognized. It is curious to find Wesley quoting from the *Germans*, 'He that plays when he is a boy will play when he is a man.' His rule against play at Kingswood was based on this; but it appears inconsistent with his delight in child-life to which Bradburn, Knox, and Southey all bear testimony, and with the scenes witnessed at Bath by Mrs. Hughes when Wesley ordered his chaise every day half an hour before he wanted it, and packed it with children that he and they might enjoy a lively ride before serious business commenced.¹

Popular
Literature.

Wesley's practical enthusiasm for popular education made him a pioneer publisher of cheap literature. He did in his day what Knight and Chambers did in the next century. He filled his preachers' saddle-bags with cheap books, superseding the old chap-books.

Two and forty years ago, [he writes] having a desire to furnish poor people with cheaper, shorter, and plainer books than any I have seen, I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a piece, and afterwards several larger.

They had an enormous circulation. Book-lovers may regard his abridgements—especially of Milton, Herbert, and Bunyan—as vandalism: to the practical mind of Wesley the needs of the poverty-stricken multitudes, whose intellects were awakened by the religious revival, condoned the deed. He and Dr. Coke formed the first Tract Society in 1782,

¹ Southey, *Commonplace Book*, iv. 672.

seventeen years before the Religious Tract Society was established, and forty years earlier thousands of copies of *Words* to soldiers, sailors, and smugglers were scattered broadcast.

A list of Wesley's four hundred publications is given in Green's *Bibliography*. They constituted a working library for his schools and preachers, and, including his hymn-books, his original works and educational text books represented all that he thought most useful to the awakening congregations. His pungent wit is best revealed in his preface to his *English Dictionary*, and his fearless breadth in his brief introductions to the astonishing collection of devotional and biographical masterpieces in his *Christian Library*.

His advice on reading, in his book-lists and letters, relates to a wider range of literature than is covered by his publications, and is adapted, with keen insight, to the varied needs and habits of his preachers and correspondents. To the studious Benson he writes, 'Beware you be not swallowed up in books! An ounce of love is worth a pound of knowledge.' But to John Trembath he says: 'Reading is for your life. There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty, superficial preacher.' Most of his recommended books on History, Philosophy, and Science are, of course, now superseded. But others, which he continued to commend when he was fourscore, are immortal, and are suggested by the names of the poets: Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, Milton, and the writers of 'the classics of the soul': Augustine, à Kempis, Pascal, Taylor, Norris, Scougal, Leighton, Law, Bunyan, Baxter, Edwards.

Advice on Reading.

His *Notes on the New Testament* (1755), (constituting with his 'first four volumes of sermons'¹ the doctrinal standards of Wesleyan Methodism) anticipated the revision of 1881 in

Notes on the New Testament.

¹ *Model Deed*. Wesley's 'First four volumes of *Sermons*,' published 1746-8-50-60, contained only forty-three sermons. His first four volumes of collected *Works*, 1771, contained fifty-three sermons and some treatises. This raises an interesting question concerning the number of sermons included in the doctrinal standards. See also *infra*, p. 306 n.

the use of paragraphs, the omission of chapter headings, and in a large number of renderings. The first seven chapters of Matthew show one hundred and thirteen alterations made in the text by Wesley which agree in whole or part with those in the new revision. He acknowledged his debt to Bengel's *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* (1742), which still 'stands out among the exegetical literature not only of the eighteenth century but of all centuries for its masterly terseness and precision and for its combination of spiritual insight with the best scholarship of his time.'¹ Wesley describes the Lutheran scholar as 'that great light of the Christian world.'

His style.

Wesley's intensely practical mind is revealed in all his original literary work. He had no desire for literary distinction.

Young and Hervey, [says Leslie Stephen]² are religious sentimentalists, who have also an eye to literary elegance. Wesley was far too masculine and sensible to be a sentimentalist; his emotions impel him to vigorous action, and are much too serious to be cultivated for their own sakes, to be treated aesthetically. . . . It would be difficult to find any letters more direct, forcible, or pithy in expression. He goes straight to the mark without one superfluous flourish. He writes as a man confined within the narrowest limits of time and space, whose thoughts are so well in hand that he can say everything needful within those limits.

This is true of all his writings—epistolary, controversial, doctrinal. His style is best described in his letter to a brother clergyman:

What is it constitutes a good style? Perspicuity, purity, propriety, strength, and easiness joined together. . . . Clearness in particular is necessary for you and me. . . . When I had been a member of the University for about ten years I wrote and talked much as you do now, but when I talked to plain people in the castle or town I observed they gaped and stared. This obliged me to alter my style.

¹ Sanday and Headlam, *Romans*, introd. cv.

² L. Stephen, *ELS*, 161.

This alteration took place at Oxford; but like other habits acquired there, which prepared him for his greater mission, it can no more be attributed to his academical environment than to his later religious experience. The needs of the 'plain people' obliged him to alter many other things besides his style. But his supreme common sense soon convinced him that neither he, nor his style, were any the worse for the change.

Wesley published his famous *Journal* in twenty-one parts from 1739 to 1791. To Mr. Augustine Birrell it appears 'the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned by man,' and he is glad to place it beside Walpole's *Letters* and Boswell's *Johnson* and to know that there are aspects of the eighteenth century that cannot be found elsewhere.¹ That keen critic, Edward Fitzgerald, in urging a friend to read it, wrote :

It is curious to think of this diary running almost coevally with Walpole's letter diary; the two men born, and dying too, within a few years of each other, and with such different lives to record.

IX

Wesley has found his true place in modern history as a pioneer of social reform. There may be a reflection of primitive Christian communism in his financial arrangements for his preachers, and in his view of wealth, and no Christian socialist ever illustrated the principle of having 'all things in common' with his people in a more practical way than Wesley himself. His doctrine of salvation, and of the equality of all men before God, combined with his ethical passion, promoted that softening of the character, deepening of the altruistic feelings and ever-growing sense of responsibility to each other in which Mr. Kidd, in his *Social Evolution*, says we have the explanation of the development of the humanitarian feeling in the social and political

His Journal.

**HIS SOCIAL
ENTER-
PRISES.**

Was he a
Socialist?

¹ Birrell, *Lect. before the Royal Society* (1899).

movements of our time.¹ But Wesley had no great scheme for social reconstruction or economical reform. His Tory optimism, it must be admitted, was quite inconsistent with the appalling accounts he gives in his *Journal* of the wretched social conditions that prevailed in the England and Ireland of his day. In his pamphlet against Wilkes, whose blundering arrest had made him a popular hero, Wesley says of himself that politics were beyond his province, though he uses 'the privilege of an Englishman to speak his naked thoughts.' Some of his 'naked thoughts' ran as follows :

We enjoy at this day throughout these kingdoms such liberty, civil and religious, as no other kingdom or commonwealth in Europe, or in the world enjoys ; and such as our ancestors never enjoyed from the Conquest to the Revolution. Let us be thankful for it to God and the King.

This may have been comparatively true, and the reference to King George, whose American subjects were growing discontented with this happy state of affairs, was characteristic and loyal, but it was not the language of a socialist.

His
practical
philan-
thropy.

Nevertheless Wesley was intensely interested in social questions, as his trenchant pamphlets show, and advocated drastic reforms. In his *Thoughts on the Present Scarcity of Provisions*, published in 1773, he vividly describes the misery of the people, and condemns the waste and luxury which are among the causes of scarcity. He would prohibit all distilling, repress luxury by law, raise the taxation on the rich, and revise the civil list, abolishing all useless pensions. In his pamphlet of 1776 on *The unhappy Contest between us and our American Brethren* he condemns the wickedness and insanity of deciding international questions by war. On the subject of riches, and the crime of acquiring them through unhealthy occupations, gaming, dishonesty, overcharging, and unfair competition, he declares, 'None can gain by swallowing up his neighbour's substance without

Waste.

War.

¹ *Social Evolution*, p. 184. For Wesley's social views reference may also be made to an article in *Lond. Quart. Rev.* for April, 1908, by J. A. Faulkner

gaining the damnation of hell.' And his indictment of the liquor traffic in his letter to Pitt in 1782, and in his sermons, is terrific in its force.

Green regards the abolition of slavery as one of the results of the Methodist revival and of the new philanthropy it inspired. To quote Mr. Kidd once more : ' the two doctrines which contributed most to the abolition of slavery were the doctrine of salvation and the doctrine of the equality of all men before the Deity.'¹ These were doctrines emphasized by Wesley. His reading of the book against slavery by Anthony Benezet, the ' honest Quaker,' gave an impulse to his protest against ' that execrable sum of all villainies ' and led to the publication of his *Thoughts on Slavery*, his co-operation with Clarkson's Abolition Committee, and to one of his two last letters to Wilberforce. Slavery.
1767.

Some of the most pathetic entries in his *Journal* relate to the work which he, with his brother and Silas Told, did in the disgraceful prisons which he so severely criticized. Howard, whom Wesley thought ' one of the greatest men in Europe,' was encouraged by him to go on with his work of reform, and in 1789, on the eve of his departure to Russia, left for him at City Road a copy of his latest work on prisons.² Prison reform.

Wesley anticipated almost all the forms of social work now carried on in the town missions of Methodism. Labour homes, schemes of work for the unemployed, poor man's loan offices and banks, medical dispensaries, and stations for the use of the newly discovered electrical apparatus were included in his schemes. The story of his personal charity would fill a volume. Moore tells us that he distributed more than £30,000 during his lifetime. This was mostly derived from the profits on his books. He practised all he preached in his sermon on *The Use of Money*, the best summary of his Christian economics. If he was not a theoretical socialist, he was a self-denying, practical philanthropist, who gave a new and abiding impulse to social reform. There is a theory that the influence of his Non-conformist ancestry had something to do with his departures Social work.

¹ *Social Evolution*, pp. 171-2.

² *Vide supra*, p. 94.

from Anglican Church order, but his *Journal* shows that the same motive that led him to alter his literary style—the desire to do good to the greatest number of ‘plain people’—accounts for most of his departures from the prevailing attitude of the religious world towards the neglected masses to whom the ‘respectable’ congregations of Nonconformists were as indifferent as the Anglicans.

The
democracy.

It is interesting to find both French and German observers of Methodism remarking on the adaptation of Wesley’s organization to the needs of a growing democracy. M. Cucheval-Clarigny, writing in the *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, notes that the ‘wisely graduated hierarchy of Methodism enables it to extend itself even to the farthest limits of civilization; by the same arrangement it reaches the lowest strata of society.’¹ And Hagenbach considers that Methodism represents ‘Christian democracy within the Church.’ Yet, as we have seen, Wesley did not start with any preconceived plan to secure this. With aristocratic blood in his veins, and a tendency to autocracy in his will, he founded one of the most democratic Churches in Christendom. This was partly the outcome of his later Protestantism. The record of 1747 shows that he would have no man muzzled in his Conference. ‘Every man must think for himself, since every man must give an account of himself to God.’ How Wesley thought for himself his expanding churchmanship reveals.

Protestant
freedom.]

The one thing that appears, to some, inconsistent with the spirit of protestant freedom is Wesley’s autocracy as a leader. But he was perfectly honest when he wrote, ‘The power I have I never sought; it was the unadvised, unexpected result of the work which God was pleased to work by me.’ When he was accused of ‘shackling free-born Englishmen,’ ‘making himself a Pope,’ and ‘exercising arbitrary power,’ he said with characteristic simplicity:

If you mean by arbitrary power a power which I exercise singly, without any colleague therein, this is certainly true;

¹ *Revue des Deux-Mondes*, August 15, 1859.

but I see no harm in it. Arbitrary in this sense is a very harmless word. I bear this burden merely for your sakes.

Emerson said of Napoleon that 'his absorbing egotism was deadly to all other men.' This cannot be said of Wesley. If he wielded a power over his societies that was almost Napoleonic, it was from no absorbing egotism, it was for the sake of the people that he lived and ruled, and before he died he had taught them the art of self-government as they were able to receive it, by training the laity to a pastoral service that was utterly alien to sacerdotalism, and prepared the way for a yet more democratic church organization.

X

Wesley's singleness of aim is as manifest in his adaptive and expanding churchmanship as it is in his literary and social enterprises. To Walker of Truro he wrote (1757): 'I have one point in view—to promote, as far as I am able, vital, practical religion, and by the grace of God to beget, preserve, and increase the life of God in the souls of men.'

HIS EXPANDING CHURCHMANSHIP.

For this practical purpose he evolved his class-meetings (1739–43), with their lay leaders, Scriptural study and fellowship—producing 'an ineffable and ineffaceable difference' between them and the confessional. 'The confessional is an instrument of priestcraft. The class-meeting is a bulwark of spiritual freedom.'¹ He acknowledged his great debt to the earlier Religious Societies of the Church of England, which he continued to visit, but he organized his own United Societies independent of Episcopal control, and the *Rules* of 1743 contained no requirement of allegiance to the State Church or uniformity of opinion on religious dogmas. He built meeting-houses licensed under 'an Act for exempting Protestant Dissenters' from certain penalties, and settled on trustees for his own use, and in these

Protestant fellowship.

Freedom of worship.

¹ Slater, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

Freedom of prophesying.

‘unconsecrated’ buildings he and his brother administered the Sacraments. Influenced by his mother, he called out his lay preachers and justified the step in his *Appeal*, by Scripture, history, and common sense. No other man of his century did so much to encourage the ministry of woman in the service of Christ and the people. He re-asserted the priesthood of every believer, and before he renounced the doctrine of apostolical succession he had practically proved it to be an anachronism.

Aggressive evangelism.

When he followed Whitefield’s example, and, like a Wyclifite friar or a reformer at St. Paul’s Cross, began preaching in the open air, he took the critical step in his evangelistic career. He broke away from what Dr. Fitchett calls ‘the drowsy, slippers, arm-chair religion of the day. Open-air preaching in our day has become almost a convention, but in 1739 it was a revolution.’ So thought the Bishop of London (Gibson), one of the mildest ecclesiastical opponents of the irregularity, whose imposing quarto pamphlet shows that he considered meetings in private houses bad enough, but was appalled when—

not content with that they had the Boldness to preach in the Fields and other open places, and by public Advertisements to invite the *Rabble* to be their hearers! How big with mischief that practice in particular is may be abundantly seen.¹

Thirty years later Wesley was more concerned about drowsy Methodists than about paralysed bishops, and addressed them with impartial frankness:

Preach abroad in every place; mind not lazy or cowardly Methodists. It is the cooping yourselves up in rooms that has damped the work of God, which never was and never will be carried on to any purpose without going out into the high-ways and hedges and compelling sinners to come in.

Evolution of a church.

The whole Methodist system arose, as Wesley says—

without any previous design or plan at all. Everything arose just as the occasion offered. They saw or felt some

¹ Gibson, *Observations on the conduct and behaviour of a certain Sect usually distinguished by the name of Methodists* (London, 1739), p. 2.

impending evil or some good end necessary to be pursued. At other times they consulted on the most probable means, following only common sense and Scripture.

The United Societies quietly became a church without the name, though Fletcher (1759) and the far-seeing Perronet styled them 'the Methodist Church' (1762). In a few lines of his *Journal* Wesley records the first Conference (using a small 'c') of the six clergymen and four laymen 'who desire nothing but to save their own souls and those that hear them.' But with characteristic statesmanship he took care that all the business should be methodically adapted to this one end.

1744,
August
25-30.

Two years after his first Conference he read Lord (Chancellor) King's account of *The Primitive Church*,¹ and as the result, finally renounced what he afterwards called 'the fable' of apostolic succession. After 1746 Wesley wrote of the State Church in England in terms which show that he had no sympathy with the political High Churchmanship of his day, or the ostentatious use of the term 'national.' He finds 'no trace of a national church in the New Testament; it is 'a mere political institution.' 'The King and the Parliament have no right to prescribe to me what pastor I shall use.' In the important Minutes of 1747, it is concluded—

Apostolical
succession
and the
State
Church.

that in the nature of things there must be numberless variations in the government of various churches; as God variously dispenses His gifts of nature, providence, and grace, both the offices themselves and the officers in each ought to be varied from time to time.

Yet Wesley's attachment to his mother church was pathetic and certainly honourable to him. He succeeded in persuading the Conference of 1755 that it was in no ways expedient to separate.² He clung to it to the last. But the needs of the people, and 'the bitter hostility of most of the parochial

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 69.

² See also *Large Minutes*, 1770.

Reluctant
inconsis-
tencies.

clergy,'¹ prompted actions which, it must be admitted, were inconsistent with Wesley's protests against separation.

Their enemies [said he] provoke the people to it; the clergy in particular, most of whom, far from thanking them for continuing in the church, use all the means in their power, fair and unfair, to drive them out of it. Church or no church [he wrote to Charles], we must attend to the work of saving souls.

Ordinations
for
America,
1784.

When, in 1784, Wesley proceeded to act upon the conviction he had arrived at thirty-eight years before, that 'bishops and presbyters are of the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain,' he did, in the opinion of High Churchmen like Bennett of Frome, 'become actually in effect a schismatic,' and Methodism became, from the standpoint of Dr. Cheetham, 'a definitely schismatic body.' To the same historian, the Non-jurors, like Bishop Ken, Law, Nelson, Hickes, were also schismatics, but his judgement on them may be applied to Wesley: 'They must not be too hardly judged for their schism, . . . we may be sure it was never a mere idle fancy which led them to secede.'²

The War of Independence had wrecked the Established Church in America, which had always been a much-neglected fragment of the diocese of London! The clergy, who, as their own historians admit, were even less efficient than their parochial brethren in England, nearly all fled.³ The Methodists, numbering now fifteen thousand, with eighty-three itinerant but unordained preachers, had hitherto received the Sacraments from the clergy, when they could. They now appealed to Wesley. He made two attempts to persuade Bishop Lowth to ordain at least one of his preachers,

¹ Balleine, G. R., *History of the Evangelical Party* (1908), pp. 43-4.

² Cheetham, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 188. Balleine, *op. cit.*, 46, says: 'The decisive act of schism was the first ordination,' though he also says that 'many scholars from St. Jerome to Lightfoot have held Wesley's view that bishops and elders in the N.T. are only different names for the same officer.' See Hatch, *Organization of Early Christian Churches* (1880), pp. 56-69.

³ Moore, ii. 327. McConnell, *Hist. of Amer. Episc. Ch.* (1891), p. 215.

but without success. He came to the conclusion expressed later in a circular letter :

As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State and from the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

In conjunction with two other presbyters, Wesley performed five acts of ordination at Bristol,² in order to provide for the church organization of the Methodists in America. Whatcoat's *Journal* contains the clearest record :

September 1, 1784.—Rev. John Wesley, Thomas Coke, and James Creighton, presbyters of the Church of England, formed a presbytery and ordained Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey deacons, and on September 2, by the same hands, etc., R. Whatcoat and T. Vasey were ordained elders, and Thomas Coke, LL.D., was ordained superintendent for the Church of God under our care in North America.³

The existing certificate which Wesley gave to Coke uses the term *superintendent*. The American Methodists considered this to be equivalent to 'bishop,'⁴ though Wesley avoided the use of the word. His brother Charles was shocked that his brother should 'assume the episcopal character, ordain elders, consecrate a bishop, and send him to ordain lay preachers.' John replied : 'I firmly believe that I am a Scriptural *episcopos* as much as any man in

A
Scriptural
episcopos.

¹ Wilberforce, *Hist. of the Epis. Ch. in Amer.* (1840), p. 180.

² In the house of Mr. Castleman, 6, Dighton Street. *WHS*, ii. 103.

³ The entry for September 2, which is obscure in the first edition of Wesley's *Journal*, part xx., is omitted altogether from his revised edition of the same year.

⁴ 'As the translators of our version of the Bible have used the English word *bishop* instead of *superintendent*, it has been thought by us that it would be more Scriptural to adopt their term *bishop*.'—*Note* in *American Minutes*, 1785, p. 50.

England or in Europe. For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove.' ¹

Overton, as a High Churchman, considers that Lord Mansfield's dictum, 'ordination is separation,' is unanswerable, but with conspicuous fairness he adds :

The true explanation of Wesley's conduct in this matter is the intensely practical character of his mind. . . . Everything must be sacrificed for the sake of his work. Some may think that this was doing evil that good might come, but no such notion entered Wesley's head; his rectitude of purpose, if not the clearness of his judgement, is as conspicuous in this as in the other acts of his life.²

Other
Ordinations,
1784-9.

Other ordinations followed, authorizing preachers to administer the Sacraments in Scotland, Antigua, Newfoundland, and, in the case of Mather, Moore, and Rankin, in England. Mather, who was ordained 'superintendent,' was elected Wesley's second successor in the presidency of the Conference in 1792.

Three years before his death, Wesley wrote, 'A kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees.' He had anticipated this long before, for at the Leeds Conference of 1769, memorable for the appointment of the first preachers to America, he had read a paper in which he advised the preachers what to do after his death. His Deed of Declaration,³ executed February 28, 1784 (prior to the ordinations), contained the names of a hundred preachers who were to be, in the eye of the law, what Wesley himself had been for forty years in relation to his societies and trust property. The Deed defined and perpetuated 'The Conference of the People called Methodists'; the ordinations provided for the pastoral organization of Methodism as an expanding Church, not merely Anglican, but cosmopolitan.

His
Deed of
Declaration,
1784.

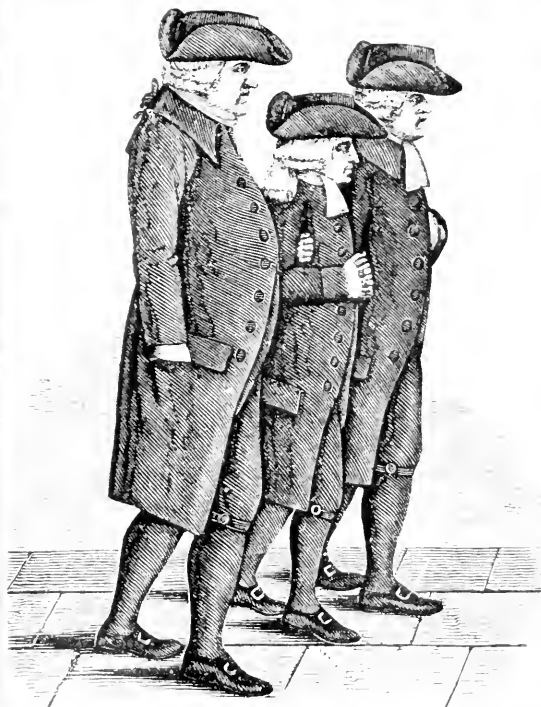
His death,⁴
1791.

John Wesley died on Wednesday, March 2, 1791, in his

¹ Letter August 19, 1785; see *WW*, xiii. 253.

² Overton, *EC*, vol. ii., p. 83.

³ See vol. ii., Appendix B.



*For upwards of eighty years
 I have kept my Accounts exactly I will
 not attempt to say longer being satisfied
 with the continual Conviction that of
 all I can give all I can give, all I have
 John Wesley
 July 16. 1790*

DR. HAMILTON, JOHN WESLEY, AND JOSEPH COLL, AS THEY WERE SEEN WALKING IN EDINBURGH IN THE YEAR 1790.

THE LAST ENTRY IN WESLEY'S PERSONAL ACCOUNT-BOOK, 1790.

* For upwards of eighty-six years I have kept my accounts exactly. I will not attempt it any longer, being satisfied with the continual conviction that I can give all I can give—that is, all I have.

eighty-eighth year, repeating the first words of the last hymn he had given out in City Road Chapel a week before :

I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
 And when my voice is lost in death,
 Praise shall employ my nobler powers :
 My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
 While life, and thought, and being last,
 Or immortality endures.

The centenary of Wesley's death was observed on March 2, 1891, in Great Britain and America, and representatives of many churches gathered at City Road Chapel to witness the unveiling of his statue, and to testify, as Lord Wolverhampton said, that ' Wesley is a greater force in the nation to-day, in the Church to-day, than he was a hundred years ago.' Archdeacon Farrar affirmed that ' his was the voice that first offered the great masses of the people hope for the despairing, and welcome to the outcast ; and his work is continued under changed forms, not only in the founding of the great Wesleyan community, but also in the Evangelical movement in the Church of England.' The centenary was also observed by a service in St. Giles's Cathedral, Edinburgh, in which clergymen of various churches took part, and at which representatives were officially present from the Senate of the University of Edinburgh and the municipality. ' In Wesley,' said *The Scotsman*, ' Britain acknowledges one of the greatest of her sons, and Christianity one of the most devoted of its modern disciples.'¹ In 1903, when the Bi-centenary of Wesley's birth was celebrated in America, President Roosevelt said, ' I am glad America has a peculiar proprietary claim on Wesley's memory, for it is on our continent that the Methodist Church has received its greater development. . . . The Church he founded has throughout its career been a Church for the poor as well as for the rich, and has known no distinction of persons.'

Centenary
 celebration,
 1891

¹ *Scotsman*, March 2 and 3, 1891 ; *Contemporary Review*, October 1891.

CHAPTER IV

CHARLES WESLEY AND THE HYMN-WRITERS OF METHODISM

Charles Wesley, a Christ Church student, came to add sweetness to this sudden and startling light. He was the 'sweet singer' of the movement. His hymns expressed the fiery conviction of its converts in lines so chaste and beautiful that its more extravagant features disappeared. 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.

J. R. GREEN, *A Short History of the English People*.

For if such holy song

Inwrap our fancy long,

Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold.

MILTON, *On the Morning of Christ's Nativity*.

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CHAPTER IV

CHARLES WESLEY AND THE HYMN-WRITERS OF METHODISM

AUTHORITIES.—For Charles Wesley, see the General List. For hymn-writers and their hymns the standard work is JULIAN, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (new ed. 1907). The student may also profitably consult G. J. STEVENSON, *The Methodist Hymn-Book* (1894); S. W. CHRISTOPHER, *Poets of Methodism* (1877); A. E. GREGORY, *The Hymn-Book of the Modern Church* (1904); MILLER, *Singers and Songs of the Church* (1869); GARRETT HORDER, *The Hymn-Lover* (1889); TELFORD, *The Methodist Hymn-Book Illustrated* (1906).

I

AN endeavour critically to examine the relative value of the part played in the Methodist Revival by John and Charles Wesley were nearly as sacrilegious and futile as an attempt to appraise the worth of the work of 'the great twin brethren who fought so well for Rome.' Either apart from the other would have done great things; neither without the other could have done a tithe of the work he actually achieved. The brothers had many traits in common, while the deficiencies of the one were in a remarkable manner made up by the qualities of the other. Both were accomplished scholars, able theologians, consummate evangelists. John was a capable commander-in-chief, Charles an intrepid leader of the cavalry division. John was a land surveyor, carefully surveying the ground, accurately estimating its character and capacity; Charles, a landscape gardener, seeing the possibilities of parts, concerned rather with beauty than utility. John, though not deficient in emotion, was severely logical; Charles, by no means lacking in reasoning power, was strongly swayed by feeling. John must follow principles to their logical conclusion, and with

CHARLES
WESLEY.

advancing years became more and more liberal ; Charles, on the other hand, was not disturbed by the presence of two contrary tendencies, and in later life yielded to his conservative predilections. John became the statesman and organizer of the Methodist movement ; Charles its bard.

His life.

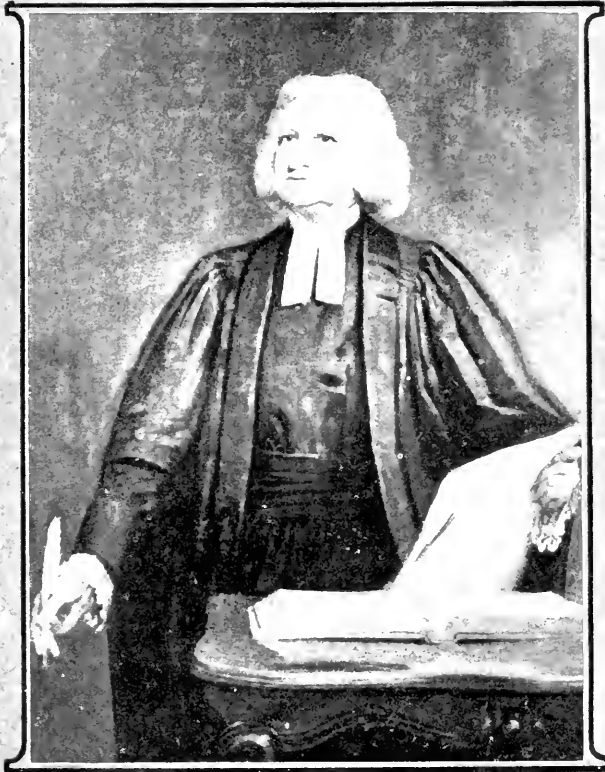
In view of the diverse work which the brothers were to do, it was well that in youth they saw but little of each other. Otherwise John, by virtue of his seniority and his natural gift of authority, might have acquired too commanding an ascendancy over his younger brother. As it happened, their habits and religious convictions were well established before they were thrown much together. Charles, the eighteenth child of his parents, was born on December 18, 1707,¹ and was therefore four and a half years younger than his brother. From the Rectory fire he escaped in the nurse's arms. In due course (1716) he was sent to Westminster School, where his eldest brother Samuel was one of the ushers. He quickly manifested the Wesley characteristics of intellectual ability, wit, and courage. The story of his chivalrous defence of young Murray, afterward Lord Chief Justice Mansfield, is well known. In 1725 he was captain of the school. About this period Sir Garret Wesley, a rich relative possessing large estates in Ireland, proposed to make him his adopted son and heir. To the youngest son of an impoverished country parson such an opening must have seemed very tempting, not to say providential ! Nevertheless he declined it. His brother John speaks of his decision as his ' fair escape.' On his refusal, Garret Wesley had to seek another heir, whom he found in young Colley. This man became Lord Mornington, father of the Marquis of Wellesley, the conqueror of India, and of the Duke of Wellington, the vanquisher of Napoleon. Charles Wesley, on the other hand, instead of settling down as a country magnate, became the evangelist and poet of the great Methodist movement. Tremendous issues to hang on the slender thread of a schoolboy's choice !

At Oxford,

In 1726 Charles Wesley was elected a student of Christ

¹ So Telford convincingly argues.

PLATE XII



That you'd yet better believe man the more
cherish'd, that he's more firm, more in the
newly'de pray'ry of his heart
I am, my dear Sir,
Yours truly,
C. Wesley

CHARLES WESLEY,
(from the painting by J. W. L. Forster.)
FACSIMILE OF CHARLES WESLEY'S HANDWRITING IN 1782.

Church, Oxford, with a scholarship of £100 a year. There he became the founder of the 'Holy Club,'¹ which John, on his return from Wroote, instantly joined. Then began that close and affectionate association of the two brothers which lasted without interruption until Charles's death. For the next thirty years the details of their outward life were so strikingly similar that to know the story of the one is to know the main facts in the life of the other. Charles, like his brother, a rigorous High Churchman, took holy orders, and in 1735 proceeded to Georgia in the capacity of secretary to the benevolent General Oglethorpe.² The appointment was not suitable, and Charles Wesley soon returned to England. His perilous homeward voyage supplies the vivid imagery of many of his verses. Shortly after his arrival he came under the influence of the Moravians, and especially of Peter Böhler. On Whit Sunday, 1738, he experienced his evangelical conversion. Good Mr. Bray, 'a poor ignorant mechanic, who knows nothing but Christ,' in whose house he was lodging, and Bray's sister, timid but faithful Mrs. Turner, were the Aquila and Priscilla to the young Apollos. The day after receiving the gift of faith he began a hymn to celebrate his conversion, broke off 'for fear of pride,' but, encouraged by Bray, resumed his purpose and finished the composition. On the following Wednesday, the eventful 24th of May, John Wesley with a troop of friends came to announce his own faith in Christ. Before parting for the night the brothers 'sang the hymn with great joy.' It would be interesting to know the strains of this overture to the great Methodist Oratorio. Almost certainly the hymn was the one commencing 'Where shall my wondering soul begin.' The exultant assurance of the last two lines of the second verse—

His
conversion.

Should know, should feel my sins forgiven,
Blest with this antepast of heaven—

might well justify suspicion of pride to a sensitive soul whose

¹ *Supra*, p. 139.

² *Supra*, p. 189.

experience up to that time had found expression in the lines—

Doubtful and insecure of bliss,
Since death alone confirms me His.

The tentative and deliberate commencement of the third verse suggests the point of resumption after Bray's exhortation to continue. At a succeeding verse, 'Outcasts of men, to you I call,' we hear the stirring *motif* of the Methodist Revival.¹

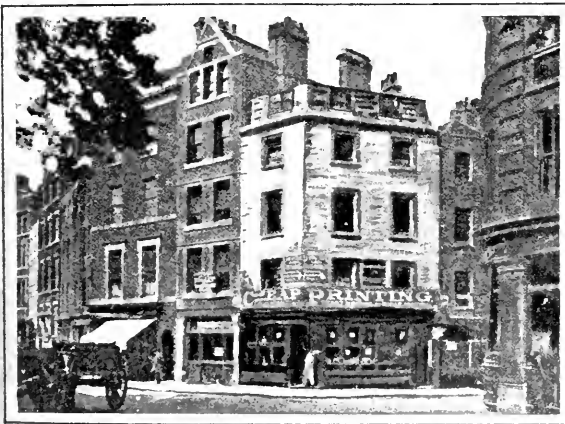
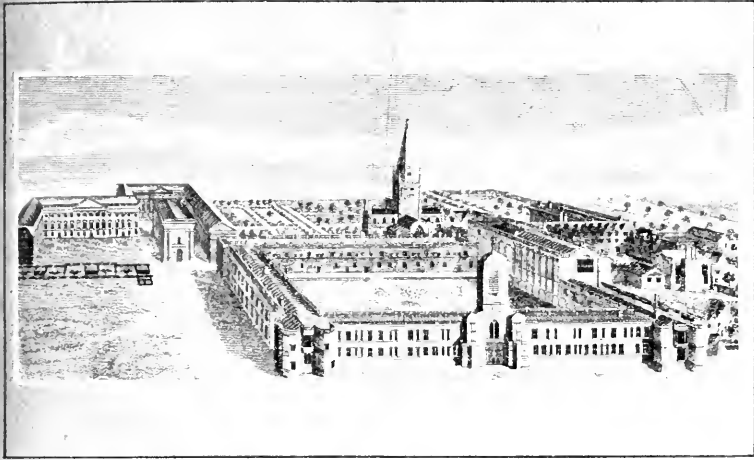
Becomes an evangelist.

In July 1738 Charles Wesley accepted a curacy under Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington,² but a few months later he received the intimation he was to preach in the parish no more; his 'sound words' the churchwardens and others would not hear. Thenceforth he became the Methodist Evangelist, riding from one end of England to the other, preaching to great crowds in the open air, courageously facing fierce mobs, enduring hardness, seeing numerous and striking conversions, founding societies, in all things sharing his brother's labours and burdens. Hearing of his brother's peril at Wednesbury, he instantly takes horse to stand by him; at Devizes his escape from the mob with his friend Meriton seems little short of miraculous; at Sheffield amid showers of stones he calmly bares his breast to the pointed sword of an army officer who furiously assaults him; at St. Ives he preaches in the midst of clubs raised against him by men who have sworn he shall not preach again; at Wakefield, loyal Hanoverian though he was, he is haled before the magistrate as a supporter of the young

¹ The melody of the memorable duet is not so easy to determine. The guess of the Preface to the *Methodist Tune-Book*, that the tune was that called 'Old 23rd,' is too confidently expressed. More likely it was one of the 6.8s found in Wesley's 1742 tune-book, there called 'Playford's tune,' and 'Slow German tune,' which are found in Methodist tune-books under the name 'Vater Unser' and 'Marienbourn' respectively. The former of these two is in the judgement of the present writer the more likely.

² The accuracy of this has been doubted; see *WHS*, v. 238. But *C. W.'s Journal* for July 24, 1738; April 15, 1739; April 29, 1739; and June 15, 1739, shows that he considered himself curate, even if not licensed curate.

PLATE XIII



CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD. (Vogue, 1721.)

HOUSE AT THE CORNER OF LITTLE BRITAIN, LONDON (RECENTLY DEMOLISHED), WHERE SAMUEL JOHNSON, CLAYTON AND CHARLES WESLEY WAS CONVERTED.

Pretender ; and so on through many strenuous and fruitful years. His happy marriage in 1749 to Miss Sally Gwynne at first made but little difference to his activities, but after a few years family cares conspired with other causes to limit his ministry to the neighbourhood of Bristol, where he resided.

In 1771 he removed to London and took up his residence in a handsomely furnished house in Marylebone placed at his disposal by the generosity of Mrs. Gumley. Here he remained to the day of his death, receiving many distinguished men and instituting those musical evenings at which his sons Samuel and Charles had the opportunity of displaying their exceptional talents. Though frequently exhorted by his strenuous brother John to resume 'travelling preaching' as a cure for his ailments and an antidote to a growing despondency, he confined his activities almost exclusively to the London societies, preaching chiefly at West Street Chapel, visiting the sick and poor, and particularly ministering to the prisoners at Newgate. This last was a service which from the first he assiduously practised, and in which his remarkable faith was marvellously honoured. One of the earliest entries in his *Journal* after the date of his conversion is, 'We joined this morning in supplication for the poor malefactors while passing to execution.' Again, a few days later, under date July 10, we read :

I went to Newgate and preached to the ten malefactors under sentence of death. . . . A sudden spirit of faith came upon me, and I promised them all pardon in the name of Jesus Christ if they would repent and believe in God. Nay, I could not help telling them I had no doubt but God would give me every soul of them.

His last publication was his *Prayers for a Condemned Malefactor*, a small collection of hymns designed to lead such to Christ. One copy has a manuscript note, 'These prayers were answered, Thursday, April 28, 1785, on nineteen malefactors, who all died penitent'—a significant

sidelight on the times.¹ So to the end he maintained the courageous faith of his conversion hymn :

Outcasts of men, to you I call,
The invitation is to all.

He died on May 29, 1788, and at his special request was buried in the graveyard of Marylebone Parish Church.

His
character.

‘His least praise,’ writes his brother in the obituary in the *Minutes of Conference* for 1788, ‘was his talent for poetry.’ This was said not in disparagement of his poetic ability, but in appreciation of his other great gifts, which were a little overshadowed by his own pre-eminent endowment and his brother’s outstanding powers. ‘In connexion,’ said John Wesley to him, ‘I beat you, but in sharp, pointed sentences you beat me.’ Some affirm that Charles was the more successful evangelist, and the more intrepid leader ; others that he was the better theologian. Whether that be so or not, he certainly could never have done his brother’s work. Indeed, in 1753, when John Wesley lay a-dying, as men thought, Charles told the London Society that he neither could nor would stand in his brother’s place ; adding that he had ‘neither a body, nor a mind, nor talents, nor grace for it.’ But it is sufficient praise for any one man to be the Psalmist of the Methodist movement. That is Charles’s unquestioned honour. And long hence when, possibly, the standard works of the elder brother are read only by the preachers, and the organization which he built up has been so modified as to show but little trace of its original form, the hymns of Charles Wesley will continue to permeate the Methodist Church with the gracious leaven of its primitive experience.

II

CHARLES
WESLEY’S
HYMNS.

The Wesley family was remarkable for its gift of poetry. The Rector of Epworth was one of the minor poets of the day.² His eldest son Samuel and his brilliant daughter Hetty were richly endowed with the lyric faculty. In

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 94

² *Vide supra*, p. 167.

Charles the gift was most fully developed. Some of his early verses display real poetic feeling. But it required the crisis of his spiritual renewal in 1738 to call out his powers in all their variety and intensity. Then all at once he leapt forth a fully equipped poet. It is questionable if he ever produced better work than in the first few years of the Revival. As early as 1739 he published such established favourites as his universally sung hymns for Christmas, Easter, and Ascension-tide. In the same volume are found, among others, 'Jesu, my God and King,' 'And can it be that I should gain,' 'Peace, doubting heart,' 'Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickenng fire,' 'Son of the Carpenter.' Next year follow such masterpieces as 'Christ, whose glory fills the skies,' 'Jesu, Lover of my soul,' 'Come, Holy Ghost, our hearts inspire,' 'O for a thousand tongues to sing,' 'Earth, rejoice, our Lord is King,' and others. Unlike most poets, whose best work is done 'far from the madding crowd,' Charles Wesley found his inspiration in the midst of arduous labours, tumults, and perils, and actually composed many verses while in the saddle. To this period we owe the noble hymn, 'Worship and thanks and blessing' (written probably after the Wednesbury riots in 1743), 'Soldiers of Christ, arise,' and other martial strains. In strong contrast, the same years of stress produce 'Love Divine, all loves excelling,' 'O Love Divine, how sweet thou art' (a strain worthy of St. Bernard), 'All ye that pass by,' and many of the hymns 'for those that seek and those that have full redemption.'

He was almost as prolific of hymns as was Solomon of proverbs, and his discourse covered nearly as wide a field. He is credited with some 6,500 poetical compositions. About half of these consist of evangelical paraphrases or meditations on select passages of Scripture. As illustration we may cite the powerful 'Come, O Thou Traveller unknown,' so highly praised by Dr. Watts, James Montgomery, and the late Dean Stanley; and the solemn 'A charge to keep I have,' which has been called the Marseillaise of Methodism.

¹ There seems no sufficient reason to doubt Charles Wesley's authorship of this famous hymn.

Their
theological
power.

Two or three of the shorter meditations are occasionally put together to form one hymn, as, for instance, 'When quiet in my house I sit.' The hymns on the church seasons have already been referred to, but special mention should be made of the unique collection of hymns for Pentecost. There is hardly a doctrine of evangelical theology that is not rendered intelligible, attractive, and edifying by his ready pen. In the great controversy between Arminian and Calvinist he brought the powerful aid of his muse to assist his brother's dialectics. His fiery and trenchant verses commencing 'Father of everlasting love' probably did more to undermine the doctrine of Particular Redemption than did any of his brother's polemics. The heresy of 'stillness,' which at one period threatened to destroy the harmony of the societies, he rebuked, and at the same time set forth the true place of the means of grace in the hymn 'Still for Thy lovingkindness, Lord.'¹ The doctrine of Christian Perfection, as Wesley's well-known treatise on the subject shows, was more fully expounded in Charles Wesley's hymns than in any other way. His hymns for the sacraments, and especially for the Lord's Supper, present a high doctrine with much poetic fervour and grace.

Their
variety.

He writes for all classes ; for the society in all its meetings, for families, for children (including the delightful 'Happy man whom God doth aid,' and the tender evening hymn, 'Gentle Jesus, meek and mild'), for the Kingswood colliers (whom, by the way, he cannot be accused of flattering), for condemned malefactors ; he has hymns for the king and the nation (very strange these read in these democratic days !), for seasons of the year, the morning and evening hours, for the daily work (including 'Forth in Thy Name, O Lord, I go,' and a gem worthy of Addison, 'O Thou Who camest from above'), for the sick chamber and the hour of death. He improves times of tumult and seasons of peril. The great earthquake of 1756 calls forth a series of noble compositions, including one which Southey pronounces one of the finest lyrics in the language, 'Stand

¹ *Vide* also *supra*, pp. 59 ff.

the omnipotent decree.' The hymns on death in their exultation at the believer's triumph over the last enemy and his entrance into eternal bliss vividly recall the joy and victory of first-century Christianity. The hymns on heaven and the future state closely follow the thought of the Book of Revelation, of which he was an earnest student, and reflect much of the inspired seer's rapture. His own swan song, 'In age and feebleness extreme,' dictated not long before he died, lacks the ecstasy of his earlier writings, but is full of quiet and humble trust.

Our poet, not finding sufficient scope for the expression of his exuberant feelings in the ordinary church metres, presses into his service the more varied forms of the lyricists of his own and neighbouring lands. He uses in all some thirty measures, and seems equally skilful with each. Perhaps he is most himself in the lines of three-syllabled feet, which give ampler opportunity of expression to his buoyant and impetuous spirit. None has handled better than he the difficult trochaic 7s and 6s; the smoother and easier iambic form he for some unexplained reason avoids.

In common with most devotional poetry designed for public use, these hymns are steeped in Biblical language and imagery. Line after line of the verses recalls a scriptural phrase. At the time of the rise of Methodism the use of the hymn in church was a modern innovation confined to a few advanced Dissenters. So strong was the prejudice against these 'human hymns' as contrasted with the metrical 'Psalms of David,' that even the paraphrases of Dr. Watts, which, except in their superior literary grace, only departed from the manner of the metrical versions by giving a New Testament interpretation to the original psalm, were looked upon with grave suspicion, and maintained a precarious and constantly challenged position. The immediate vogue of Wesley's hymns, especially in view of their far greater departure from traditional form, may therefore cause surprise. But it must be remembered that their use was confined to meetings which were not regarded as usurping the functions of public worship, and so raised no question of

Metres
employed.

Their success.

church order or propriety ; while the congregations that sang them so lustily, being largely drawn from the masses then destitute of even the form of godliness, would be happily free from ecclesiastical or doctrinal scruples in the matter. Even so, however, their general acceptance might have been less immediate and widespread, had they been less reminiscent of words of scripture, or less imbued with the evangelical spirit.

Their
Methodist
tone.

The Evangelical Revival breathes, or rather, throbs through them all. Salvation of oneself and one's brother is their supreme concern. The whole outlook on life and the world is seen through the glass of personal experience. It is this feature which distinguishes them from earlier hymns of the same class. Compare for instance two great redemption hymns by the Wesleys, father and son. Now Samuel Wesley was a true evangelical of his day, and possessed of more fervour than most of the clergy of that time.¹ Take, then, his stately stanzas, 'Behold the Saviour of mankind,' still worthily occupying a place in Methodist hymn-books, and compare them with a hymn of his son's on the same great theme, 'All ye that pass by.' The difference of treatment is immediately perceptible. The one is didactic, objective, statuesque, the other thrills with the passionate emotion of a living experience. It teaches, yet does not so much teach as appeal, and with compassionate eagerness, like the angels in Sodom, takes by the hand the hesitating hearer and constrains him not only to the acceptance of salvation, but to the present assurance of forgiveness. Note that intense moment when the herald loses himself in his message, identifies himself with the hearer and makes the dramatic passage from the second to the first person.

For you and for me
He prayed on the tree:
The prayer is accepted, the sinner is free.

That sinner am I,
Who on Jesus rely,
And come for the pardon God cannot deny.

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 168.

In the father's hymn the death of Christ is an historic, one may say, dogmatic fact, in the son's an event of immediate and vital experience ; in the one, faith is an intellectual assent, and 'assurance,' if not altogether presumptuous, at best tentative and inferential ; in the other, faith is a personal appropriation, and assurance immediate, vivid, decisive.

On the universality of redemption the hymns are equally positive. 'For all, for all my Saviour died,' is their consistent witness. But what is specially noticeable is that the conviction is not so much a conclusion reached from the study of the Scripture, although that of course is behind all, as it is experimental resulting from the consciousness of one's personal acceptance in the Beloved :

Their
experimen-
tal basis.

'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me !

Still working from the subjective side, Charles Wesley reaches that other great branch of Methodist witness—the doctrine of Entire Sanctification or Perfect Love. Redemption, he seems to argue, is intensive as well as extensive, saving all of man as well as all men. Already in 1740 he is announcing :

My God, I know, I feel Thee mine,
And will not quit my claim,
Till all I have is lost in Thine,
And all renewed I am.

The hymns 'for those that seek and those that have full redemption' are unwavering in their testimony. The well-known verses, 'All things are possible,' are emphatic as to the possibility of such experience. Its realization, apprehended by simple faith, is set forth in the lines :

'Tis done ! Thou dost this moment save,
With full salvation bless ;
Redemption through Thy blood I have,
And spotless love and peace.

He seems to develop a mystical doctrine of the soul's renewal which may be best illustrated by reference to the Romanist

doctrine of transubstantiation. Just as the substance of the sacramental bread, in which the accidents inhere, is removed and the body of Christ takes its place, the accidents remaining the same, so the core of the sinful nature is taken away and the Spirit of Christ occupies the place, the outward man nevertheless remaining the same :

The original offence
 Out of my soul erase ;
 Enter Thyself, and drive it hence,
 And take up all the place.

Soul of my soul remain !
 Who didst for all fulfil,
 In me, O Lord, fulfil again
 Thy heavenly Father's will !

The doctrines of Assurance and Entire Sanctification necessitated a full development of the doctrine of the Person and work of the Holy Spirit. None of his lyrics are richer in teaching or more helpful to the believer than those in the little volume, *Hymns for Whit-Sunday*.¹ To Charles Wesley the Holy Spirit is no mere influence, however sweet and gracious, but a living, active, present Person to whom prayer may be addressed, and with whom fellowship may be enjoyed, the witness to and with the believer's spirit.

The hymns sound the whole gamut of the emotional experience of a strong and sensitive soul. The penitential hymns, of which there is a great number, touch the lowest depths of contrition and self-abasement. Joy in believing rises to the loftiest height of ecstasy. The new life of faith is set forth in the happiness of conscious peace and power, and in the confident hope of yet brighter days beyond the grave.

My hope is full, O glorious hope,
 Of immortality.

Blemishes.

As may be expected, such hymns are not free from the faults of their virtues. Strong emotions occasionally

¹ Full title is *Hymns of Petition and Thanksgiving for the Promise of the Father* (Felix Farley, 1746).

prompt to unrestrained and even unjustifiable expressions. This is especially noticeable in the hymns of penitence. Here and there again one meets with endearing expressions such as too often mar the hymns of Faber. The language, formed on the classic model, while generally simple and strong, tends occasionally to grandiloquence. Many of the words could not have been understood of the people. Indeed, John Wesley, yielding to much solicitation, actually published an annotated edition of the hymn-book. Thus to the lines—

Those amaranthine bowers
(Unalienably ours),

footnotes explain the meaning of 'amaranthine' (tracing its reference to *Paradise Lost*), and also of 'unalienably.' Exception has also been taken to the excessive spiritualizing in some of the hymns. Occasional allegorical treatment is acceptable, but carried to excess it becomes wearisome and may perchance descend to the grotesque. Lastly, the style of too many of the hymns is diffuse. The thought eddies rather than progresses. In view, however, of the constant and eager demand for fresh hymns which the poet had to gratify, the wonder is that he maintains so high an average of excellence. In later life he revised many times before publication. The hymns included in modern collections have enjoyed the great advantage of revision and pruning at the fastidious hands of his brother John.

In the compositions of one who read so widely, remembered so easily, and produced so rapidly, reminiscences of other writers are sure to be discovered. His extensive acquaintance with the classics colours his whole style, and appears in the occasional employment of a word in an unusual sense. Indebtedness to Milton has been already referred to. Traces of Pope are not wanting. The influence of Young's *Night Thoughts* is most marked. It could hardly be otherwise in the case of a book of which he stated, 'No writings but the inspired are more useful to me.' His prose reading supplied thoughts which he worked up

Charles
Wesley's
debt to
others.

into verse. He acknowledges his indebtedness to Matthew Henry, Gill, and Bengel for many of the thoughts in his *Hymns on Select Passages of Scripture*. Ignatius's line, 'My love is crucified,' powerfully impressed him, and appears again and again as 'My Lord, my love is crucified.' Luther's comment on the Galatian passage, 'Who loved me and gave Himself for me,' which he read shortly after his conversion, did much to give his thought the personal reference which, as we have seen, is so characteristic a note of his hymns. The much reprehended, and, we may add, misapprehended stanza commencing, 'Nothing is worth a thought beneath,' is evidently suggested by words in Law's *Christian Perfection*. His noble hymn, 'Victim divine,' is a paraphrase in verse of a section of Brevint's tractate *The Christian Sacrament and Sacrifice*. Even popular secular verse is used and turned to good account. The verse, 'He comes, He comes, the Judge severe,' is a close parody of Carey's patriotic song, 'He comes, he comes, the hero comes,' and conceivably was written in order to give opportunity to sing at the Methodist services the stirring melody to which the original was set. At any rate, to that melody it was, and in some parts still is, sung.

Comparison
with Watts.

Charles Wesley's only serious rival in hymnody is his famous contemporary and predecessor in the art, Dr. Watts, whom Montgomery styles 'the greatest name among hymn-writers.' And in a certain originality, catholicity of sentiment, breadth of treatment and smoothness of language, Watts may claim superiority. Wesley's thought is too often bounded by the horizon of the Methodist Revival; whatever his subject, he never seems content till he has made it yield an evangelical moral. But his wing is stronger, his stroke more vigorous, and his flight more daring; moreover his metres are much more varied, and his lapse into prose and defective rhythm far less frequent. But when each is at his best they run so nearly side by side as to suggest that they are not rivals in a race, but true yoke-fellows in the service of their common Master.

III

Of far less bulk, and with no pretence to originality, the contributions of John Wesley to Methodist psalmody may yet prove at least as lasting as those of his brother. Though possessed of the true spirit of a poet, he abstained from any rivalry with his gifted brother in the realm of creation, and gave himself to the work of the translator and editor. Entering the fruitful garden of German hymnology, he greatly and permanently enriched our English hymn-books by transplanting therefrom some of the choicest specimens of Gerhard, Dessler, Lange, Tersteegen, Zinzendorf, and other of its choicest ornaments. His chaste and stately verse formed an admirable contrast and complement to his brother's more fervid and exuberant strains; and to the fervour, buoyancy, and eagerness of Methodist experience contributed a welcome restraint, stability, and quiet assurance. His editorial emendations of the hymns of his brother, Watts, and others, are so just and skilful that they have in many cases superseded the originals. It was eminently to the advantage of the Methodists that the collections of hymns used in their meetings were arranged by his calm judgement and severe taste. Of these the 'Select Hymns' published in 1761 and the standard edition of 1780 were the most important.

OTHER
HYMN-
WRITERS.
John
Wesley.

This latter collection consisted of upwards of five hundred hymns, and was prepared in response to urgent and reiterated requests for a hymn-book which should contain all the hymns he wished sung at his services. It is called *Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists*. In plan and contents it is an unrivalled mirror of Methodist purpose, principles, and practice. It is a kind of poetical Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, tracing the course of a sinner from the time his name is Graceless and his dwelling the City of Destruction, up to that of his admission as Christian within the gates of the Eternal City. The book opens with Evangelist in the market-place of the City of Destruction endeavouring to get a hearing for his message. By all manner

John
Wesley's
hymn-book.

of appeal, describing the pleasantness of religion, the goodness of God, the brevity of life, the blessedness of the believer's death, the dread certainty of judgement, the bliss of heaven and the woe of hell, he exhorts sinners to return to God. From such field-preaching the evangelist now adjourns to the house, where he prays for a blessing. Those who resort thither, desiring to know more of the way of life, he warns of formal religion, whether of the Pharisee or the Quietist, and describes inward religion and the way of penitence and faith. Thereupon come the prayers for evangelical repentance, on whose answer the seeker becomes a 'mourner convinced of sin.' Through the Slough of Despond the awakened sinner struggles till he reaches the wicket-gate and nears the Cross. At the sight of the Crucified he exclaims :

Now I have found the ground wherein
Sure my soul's anchor may remain,

and becomes a 'Believer rejoicing.' With such leaps for joy as :

in the Heavenly Lamb
Thrice happy I am,
And my heart it doth dance at the sound of His name,

he realizes the blessedness of his estate, in which 'Jesus all the day long is his glory and song.' Then follows the equipping for the war : the sections of conflict, watchfulness, prayer, suffering, intercession, in which the many incidents of the Christian pilgrimage and warfare are abundantly and vividly set forth. The way to the land of Beulah is traversed in the great section 'seeking for full redemption,' and the blessedness of dwelling therein set forth in that 'for believers saved.' The peace, joy, and happy fellowship of the House Beautiful are reflected in the hymns for the society. The climax is reached as, watching their friends pass into the glories of the country on the other side of the river, the rest, like Bunyan, 'wish themselves among them' with the characteristically Methodist assurance of hope, 'Go

on—we'll meet you there,' with which sentiment the wonderful book reaches its condign conclusion.

There are other stars in the Methodist galaxy, but their glory is paled 'by reason of the glory that excelleth.' Among them an honourable place must be given to Williams of Pantycelyn, the Watts of Wales, as he has been called. Born in 1717, he became an itinerant evangelist among the Calvinistic Methodists, and for nearly half a century emulated the zeal of Howell Harris. The English churches owe a deep debt of gratitude to this author for the hymn 'Guide me, O Thou great Jehovah,' and other favourites.

Williams,
Cennick,
Bakewell,
Olivers,
Rhodes,
Perronet.

John Cennick¹ must ever be remembered for his share in the production of 'Lo, He comes in clouds descending.' He is also the author of 'Thou great Redeemer, dying Lamb,' 'Children of the heavenly King,' and the Graces before and after meat still used at Methodist tea-meetings.

John Bakewell, the author of 'Hail, Thou once despised Jesus,' was a Methodist class-leader who, in the words on his tombstone in City Road graveyard, 'adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour 80 years, and preached His glorious gospel about 70 years.' It was at his house in Greenwich, it is said, that unlettered Thomas Olivers, one of Wesley's itinerants, composed in 1774 that majestic ode, 'The God of Abraham praise.' Benjamin Rhodes, another of the travelling preachers, composed in 1787 the favourite hymn, 'My heart and voice I raise,' which he often used to sing as a solo at the end of the evening service.

Edward Perronet, erstwhile companion of Charles Wesley in the hardships and dangers of his itinerant labours, contributed to the song of the church the universally sung 'All hail the power of Jesu's name.'

The generation that followed the Wesleys was practically barren of Methodist hymn-writers. Charles Wesley's matchless compositions rendered additions needless. As so often happens where a pre-eminent gift is bestowed, his genius acted rather as a deterrent than as an incentive to others to follow in his wake. But the name of Benjamin

Later
barrenness.

¹ *Vile infra*, p. 292.

Bunting.

Gough, and of P. J. Wright, the latter an eloquent minister in the Methodist New Connexion, should be mentioned. The refined verses of William Maclardie Bunting, the gifted son of the famous Dr. Bunting, deserve more extended notice. His hymn, 'O God, how often hath Thine ear,' written when he was only eighteen years of age, has true poetic feeling, and has become a recognized part of the Annual Covenant Service. His gracious hymn, 'Blessed are the poor in heart,' is often sung. The deeply penitential and searching 'Holy Spirit, pity me,' is more fitted for private devotion than public use. In his *Sweet Singer of Israel* Dr. Benjamin Gregory published some excellent metrical paraphrases of select Psalms; but they have not been widely used.

Of writers still living, Rev. E. J. Brailsford's 'Behold, behold, the Bridegroom nigh'; the Rev. A. H. Vine's tender hymn, 'O breath of God, breathe on us now'; Dr. T. B. Stephenson's hymn for the setting apart of deaconesses, 'Lord, grant us, like the watching five,' show the true lyric and devotional spirit; while the Rev. E. Boaden's hymn, 'Here, Lord, assembled in Thy name,' happily unites the gospel with temperance work. But comparison with the hymns of Charles Wesley forces the question to what extent the wistfulness and uncertainty of modern religious thought and feeling have modified or undermined the directness, vigour, and assurance which were the conspicuous contribution to Christian experience of early Methodist song.¹

¹ For the hymn-books and tunes of early and of later Wesleyan Methodism see vol. ii., Appendix C. The Methodist hymn-writers of America are dealt with elsewhere. See vol. ii. chap. iii. (ii), vi.

CHAPTER V

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

So in light and shadow the preacher went,
God's erring and human instrument ;
And the hearts of the people as he passed
Swayed as the reeds sway in the blast.

WHITTIER, *The Preacher.*

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CHAPTER V

GEORGE WHITEFIELD

AUTHORITIES.—The Works and Authorities dealing with Whitefield are fully detailed in the General List, § B IV. (a). Special reference may be made to the Lives by GILLIES, GLEDSTONE, and TYERMAN, and to the *Journals* of Whitefield.

I

AMONG the men of the eighteenth century George Whitefield stands out unique. At sixteen he was a tapster ; at twenty-six he was the most brilliant and popular preacher the modern world has ever known. The secret of his power must always remain to a large extent a mystery. His published sermons make the reader wonder if it really existed. His journals fail to reveal the attractiveness of his personality. Even the estimates of his contemporaries leave one perplexed and almost incredulous. Yet the extraordinary power of the man is beyond all question, and no history of the Evangelical Revival would be complete without some record of his life and work.

Whitefield was born in 1714, and the Bell Inn at Gloucester, where his early years were spent, may still be found, though but a fragment remains of the original structure. The cathedral, of course, is still there, and St. Mary's Church, where Whitefield preached his first sermon. The gateway of the New Inn, as of old, opens the way to the picturesque medieval courtyard, surrounded by quaint balconies, from

BIRTH AND
TRAINING.
From
tap-room
to
university.

which fourteenth-century citizens looked down upon the pilgrims who crowded to see Gloucester's famous shrine. Save for these, and a few other landmarks, the city of Whitefield's time has passed away.

He was the great-grandson of a clergyman, the youngest of six brothers, and received his early education at the Gloucester Grammar School. There his powers of elocution made him popular as a speaker on great occasions, and as an actor in the school plays, in one of which, dressed in girl's clothes, he took the woman's part, a boyish prank of which he was afterwards ashamed. He had the dramatic instinct, and indeed hankered after the stage. There can be little doubt that he had the making of an actor in him, though his powers were destined for higher and nobler use. As a university career seemed out of reach, he left school early, and, as he himself expresses it, 'I put on my blue apron, and my snuffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in one word, became professed and common drawer for nigh a year and a half.'

Formative
influences.

All the while strong influences were at work in his soul preparing him for his great career. Like John Bunyan, he gives a very black account of his own ungodliness, which does not seem to have amounted to very much more than the mischief and thoughtlessness that spring from high spirits and irrepressible vitality. As most of his 'roguish tricks' were 'happily detected,' he was perhaps saved from things far worse. Even in those days of irreverence and profanity he had longings after a better life. It almost provokes a smile to read that the books he stole were 'books of devotion,' and the money he appropriated he 'gave to the poor.' It was the old battle between the flesh and the spirit which every well-endowed soul must fight through, and which in Whitefield's case was the preface to whole-hearted devotion to God. He seems to have had an early premonition of that future destiny, for, talking one day to his sister, he said, 'God intends something for me, which we know not of. Every way seems to be barred up.' It was this feeling that took him once more to the Grammar

School to prepare himself for the University, to enter which became the one object of his life.

In 1732, a youth of scarcely eighteen years of age, he was received at Pembroke as a servitor, just as Samuel Wesley entered Exeter, half a century before. There he was brought at once into contact with the men of the Holy Club, though at first only as an outside observer. He heard much of the asceticism of their lives, of their humble service for the poor. He watched them week by week on their way to St. Mary's to receive the Sacrament, but never joined in the ridicule that was poured upon them by other students. His nobler instincts were gaining the upper hand, and before long it was his ambition to join this little company of enthusiasts. They, however, were on a higher social level; he was only the college fag, and twelve months went by before Whitefield and John and Charles Wesley were brought into touch with one another, and the friendship began which, with scarcely a break, was to last for a lifetime.

The world owes an untold debt to unknown men. Very few know even the name of Henry Scougal, whose little book on *The Life of God in the Soul of Man* first awakened Whitefield to the fact that there is a deep spiritual experience which labours and austerities, however strenuous, can never secure. It was a new revelation, for, when he read 'that true religion is a union of the soul with God, or Christ formed within us, a ray of divine light instantaneously darted in upon' his 'soul,' and from that moment, but not till then, did he know that he must be a new creature. Emancipation did not come at once. The Wesleys, at this time, were complete strangers to the truth which, in a few years' time, was to become the great theme of their preaching; and, led by them, Whitefield for months plodded painfully along the arid road of rule and ritual pietism. But it is worthy of note, and one of the outstanding facts of Whitefield's life, that he was the first to enter into the living experience which before long was to become the joy of thousands. It was just seven weeks after Easter, 1735, that the

clouds cleared from the sky, and Whitefield's soul found the light.

Spiritual
deliverance

I was delivered from the burden that had so heavily oppressed me. The spirit of mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in God my Saviour, and for some time could not avoid singing psalms wherever I was; but my joy gradually became more settled, and blessed be God, has abode and increased in my soul, saving a few casual intermissions, ever since.

Three years were to elapse before the Wesleys reached the same gladness of heart, but with Whitefield the change was definite, instantaneous, and complete.

I know the place; it may perhaps be superstitious, but, whenever I go to Oxford, I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed Himself to me, and gave me the new birth.

He saw little of the Wesleys before their departure for Georgia a few months later, and it was only on their return in 1738, and through the influence of the Moravians, that they received the same illumination.

As he was the first of the three leaders to grasp the truth which is the inspiration of all effective evangelism, so Whitefield was the first great preacher of the Revival. He was ordained and preached his first sermon in 1736. That was the famous occasion when he was reported to have driven fifteen people mad, and when the Bishop who had ordained him, evidently believing that any sort of mind was better than the normal mind of the people in question, expressed his hope that the madness would be lasting. 'As I proceeded,' Whitefield writes, 'I perceived that the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd who knew me in my childish days, I trust I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority.'

A new
star in the
firmament.

A youth of only twenty-two years, his instant success was phenomenal. In less than twelve months he startled England. He was a new star in the ecclesiastical heavens,

and he blazed the more brightly because of the dead blackness of the background. For a time he returned to Oxford. Then he took a temporary curacy at Dummer in Hampshire. But the quiet little village could not hold him. He was like a lion in a cage, an eagle chained to a perch. In a very few months he was back in the living world, and was succeeded by Hervey, another member of the Holy Club, the quiet, contemplative author of *Meditations among the Tombs*.¹

Before the end of the year Whitefield resolved to go to Georgia, a decision fraught with tremendous issues, could he have seen the future; but before he sailed he stirred the whole country with his oratory. At Bristol clergymen vacated their pulpits for him, the churches were crowded to overflowing; he preached not only twice on the Sunday, but every week-day. In London the crowds were even greater, constables were placed at the door to keep the people in order; and, such was the excitement over the 'boy preacher,' as he was called, that he had to drive to his work by coach to escape the inconvenient attentions of the people. As might be expected, the new preaching awakened adverse criticism. The collections taken up for the poor of Georgia were so large that the preacher was described as a 'spiritual pickpocket.' One hostile cleric called him a 'pragmatical rascal,' whatever that might mean, and uncomplimentary epithets flew freely, the first flakes of the storm that was to burst in full fury later. For the time, however, there was a lull, for on December 28, 1737, Whitefield sailed for Georgia.

The work in America may be left out of consideration for the moment. In less than twelve months he was back again in London, and found that many things had happened in the interval. Both the Wesleys had passed through the same spiritual change as himself. Charles Wesley had commenced his noble ministry of song, and had given to the world hymns that will live as long as earthly praise shall rise to heaven. The city pulpits were closed to both brothers, and they were in close and constant converse with the Moravians. By the

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 152.

end of the year the three friends were together, ready for that mighty work of spiritual revolution of which, though they never dreamed of its issues, they were to be the honoured leaders. Reading the record of these weeks, one is impressed by the marvellous energy of the man. On Christmas Eve he preached twice ; spoke at three Societies, including the one at Fetter Lane ; continued in praise, prayer, and song all through the night ; preached again at four, then at six, and on three other occasions during Christmas Day, besides joining in the celebration of the Supper of the Lord. It was at one of these numerous services that, for the first time in public, he used extemporaneous prayer.

II

CLERGYMAN
AND
EVANGELIST.

From this time forward the history of Whitefield is the history of the Evangelical Revival, though his path diverged in some measure from the one followed by his two companions. He had a distinct place of his own, and a study of the man apart from his contemporaries calls for some estimate of the special influence he exerted.

An epochal
year.

Whitefield was ordained priest at Oxford, by Bishop Benson, on January 10, 1739. Benson was wiser than he knew when, years before, he laid hands on the young Oxford youth. Unerring as his instinct was, his mind was sorely troubled within a twelvemonth of the Oxford ordination. It is said that in conversation with the Countess of Huntingdon he 'bitterly lamented' that he had ordained Whitefield. 'Mark my words,' replied the Countess, 'when you come upon your dying bed, that will be one of the few ordinations you will reflect upon with complacence.' The prophecy was literally fulfilled ; for when the aged Bishop was dying, he sent Whitefield ten guineas for his work, and asked to be remembered in his prayers.

As with Wesley, so with Whitefield, the year 1739 was typical of his whole career. It was a year of beginnings, a year of innovation. At its commencement he was a newly



GEORGE WHITEFIELD. (Russell)
LADY D. MINGOOS. (From first edition of 1790)

ordained priest of the Anglican Church, commissioned to minister to the congregation of Savannah in Georgia ; when the year closed he was the evangelical free-lance of two continents. Little by little, as the Established Church closed its doors to him, greater doors were opened. The men who tried to restrain him were the means of giving him larger liberty. He was forbidden to preach within consecrated walls, with the result that he addressed tens of thousands without. The staid and respectable church-goers, who still clung to the services of the Established Church, were denied the privilege of hearing him from the orthodox pulpit ; but from walls and tables and extemporized platforms the young orator moved the multitudes at village fairs and race-courses, and reached the masses of the new industrial populations springing up round the coalfields of the country.

The voyage to Savannah was not to take place until the autumn, but it was impossible for Whitefield to be silent. He preached here, there, and everywhere, though church after church was refused to him. At Bristol he boldly took a step which profoundly influenced the whole course of the Revival. The idea of open-air preaching had occurred to him earlier, when hundreds of people were unable to get places in the churches where he preached, and he was only deterred by his friends, who described it as a 'mad notion.' It would be interesting to know if he was influenced in any degree by the example of another clergyman, one William Morgan, who, a year before, 'pitying the rude and ignorant condition of the Kingswood colliers, sometimes preached to them in the fields.'¹ However that may be, when the Dean and Chancellor of the Cathedral practically forbade him to enter any of the pulpits of the diocese, he cast all scruples aside, and on February 17, for the first time, preached out of doors to a congregation of 200 colliers on Kingswood Hill. The two hundred grew in a few days to 2,000, and then to 4,000 and 5,000, and from that time forward open-air evangelism became one of the most powerful weapons of the Methodist movement.

¹ *Account* by John Cennick, *WHS.*, June 1908.

In Wales.

From Bristol Whitefield passed into Wales, where he strengthened the hands of Howell Harris, the Wesley of the Principality. Out of the friendship and co-operation of these two men grew a work which is represented to-day by the Presbyterian Church of Wales, better known by the old name of the Calvinistic Methodists, and which holds the premier place, both in numbers and robust vigour, among the Nonconformist communities which practically monopolize the religious sympathies of the Welsh people. Gloucester, Cheltenham, and Oxford were visited before his return to London. Back once more in the metropolis, Whitefield commenced open-air services in Moorfields and on Kennington Common, which were attended not merely by vast crowds of ordinary citizens, but by many of the great people about town. On some of these occasions he spoke to audiences of from twenty to thirty thousand people, the majority of whom were untouched by any of the existing religious agencies of the day.

Opposition.

By these bold departures from conventional form, and still more by the doctrines preached, the whole kingdom of evil was by this time roused. Pamphleteers and lampoonists vied with one another in the virulence of their denunciation. Dr. Trapp, a notorious controversialist of the time, was perhaps the most extreme of these journalistic hooligans. He was a master of ecclesiastical Billingsgate. 'Pharisaical ostentation,' 'folly that approaches near to madness,' 'infamous prevarication,' were a few among his choice epithets. Whitefield's *Journal*, which he had just published, Trapp declared to be 'a rhapsody of madness, spiritual pride, and little less than blasphemy.' The Methodists were 'impostors and seducers,' 'false zealots foaming out their own shame.' It was only one of many ebullitions of temper on the part of the adversaries of the new movement and may serve as a typical specimen of the kind of abuse to which the leaders of the great Revival were subjected. At least forty-nine pamphlets were published during this one year, directly occasioned by the preaching of this young man of twenty-five. Some few were replies; but the

majority were lampoons, burlesques, and malicious personal attacks.

In August 1739 Whitefield sailed for the second time for America. He went as the incumbent of Savannah, and carried with him large sums of money for the erection of the Orphan House for the destitute children of Georgia. But even before he landed he had resolved to resign his living. He felt a wider call, and in words which echo Wesley's bold declaration of a few months earlier, he wrote, 'The world's now my parish.' He landed in America on October 31, but it was January 9 before he reached Savannah, and in the meantime he had preached with phenomenal success in Philadelphia, New York, and other towns. In April he was back again in Pennsylvania, gathering crowds of from five to fifteen thousand people. He visited Savannah again for twenty-five days in June, and for fourteen days in August, but by this time he was the preacher of a continent, and not merely of a parish.

From this time forward Whitefield led the life of a clerical nomad. No boundary of sea or land could restrain him. His irrepressible enthusiasm needed a whole world for its expression. His movements were meteoric. He flashed from side to side of the Atlantic, and kindled the fires of revival wherever he went. The narrative of his journeyings would occupy a volume. But, out of the mass of material which must be studied to get a complete conception of his life and work, the characteristics of the man stand out boldly and definitely.

In such a nature as his there was little room for the simple pleasures of the domestic circle. One who, in writing to ask the hand of a young lady in marriage, could say, 'I bless God, if I know anything of my own heart, I am free from that foolish passion which the world calls love,' was plainly ignorant of what he was writing about. When he did get married it was to a widow ten years his senior, 'neither rich in fortune, nor beautiful as to her person,' as he candidly confessed. Why he married at all it is difficult to say; and the incidents of his married life

Whitefield
becomes a
free-lance.

are too few to have any important bearing upon his career. Yet he had a fine capacity for friendship. Between him and the Wesleys, save for one sharp difference, there was a deep and lasting attachment, and the strongest bonds of affection united him to such men as the Erskines and the Tennents, and other notable men of his day.

III

WESLEY
AND
WHITE-
FIELD

A study of his life as a whole inevitably suggests comparison with the other great personality of the Evangelical Revival. John Wesley and George Whitefield are inseparably linked in thought as the foremost leaders of the movement. Yet, friends and co-workers as they were, they were men of entirely different temperaments. Both were necessary. Had either been wanting, the movement would have suffered. They were complementary one to the other.

The two
leaders
contrasted.

Whitefield was a man of emotion and impulse. Wesley was the embodiment of self-control, swift to obey only what appealed to his reason. Whitefield was carried away by the storm of feeling his own eloquence provoked; Wesley was calm and self-possessed though thousands were in a frenzy round about him.

Whitefield's learning was of a very mediocre quality, while Wesley was a scholar, a Fellow of a university, a lecturer in her schools. Yet, curiously enough, it was Wesley who gripped and held the common people; while Whitefield gained an extraordinary popularity among the aristocracy of his time.

Both Wesley and Whitefield shared that humanitarian feeling which in new forms is stirring men's hearts to-day. The former with his dispensaries, his prison-visiting, and his care for the poor, exhibited on one side of the water the same spirit of social service which led to the establishment of Whitefield's Orphanage in Georgia.

Whitefield was first and foremost a preacher: Wesley

not only preached, but organized. The one was a Savonara, swaying vast audiences with the intensity of passionate utterance; the other was like John Hus, with his devoted Brotherhood ready to carry forward the truth he taught into the future years. And so it came to pass that while one moved the passing crowd, the other changed the face of the nation. Whitefield has left behind him a tradition of phenomenal oratory, and Wesley has his monument in the greatest evangelical group of churches in the world.

At the same time Whitefield gave to the new movement a warmth and glow that it might never have possessed without him. Unconventional, unfettered by tradition, fearless of opposition, he opened up paths along which his co-workers would never have ventured on their own initiative. In broad-minded tolerance, also, he led the way; for while Wesley, with high-handed bigotry, was excommunicating Dissenters in Georgia, Whitefield was holding the most brotherly intercourse with the Dissenters of London. In later years the two leaders vied with one another in recognizing the diversity of operation through the same Spirit.

Whitefield's one lapse from brotherliness and charity was due to his adoption of Calvinism. His change of opinion became marked during his second voyage to America, and it was accentuated by his association with the Baptist and Presbyterian divines of New England, Jonathan Edwards among the number. In England, John Cennick, whom Wesley had placed in charge of his school at Kingswood, was infected with similar views, and actually preached against the Wesleys in their own pulpit. The spread of these doctrines led Wesley to preach and publish his sermon on 'Free Grace,' a noble defence of the universality of Christ's redeeming work. Whitefield, on receipt of a copy of this sermon, wrote a reply, which was certainly lacking in courtesy and good feeling, and in which he said: 'Infidels of all kinds are on your side of the question: deists, Arians, Socinians, arraign God's sovereignty and stand up for universal redemption.' Mischief-makers were ready enough

The
Calvinistic
con-
troversy.

to widen the breach. Shortly before Whitefield's arrival in England some meddler got hold of a most unseemly letter he had sent to Wesley in 1740, and circulated printed copies at the doors of the Foundery when Wesley was preaching. A copy reaching Wesley himself, with generous magnanimity he tore it to pieces in the presence of the congregation, saying that he believed that the writer would have done the same had he been present. In a few moments every copy in the building was in fragments. It is pleasant to relate that the broken friendship was very soon restored. Before the year 1741 ran out, there was a complete reconciliation. Whitefield wrote to Wesley :

May God remove all obstacles that now prevent our union ; may all disputings cease, and each of us talk of nothing but Jesus and Him crucified. . . . This is my resolution. I am without dissimulation. I find I love you as much as ever, and pray God, if it be His blessed will, that we may all be united together.

Some years later, in a published pamphlet, Whitefield referred to the matter again, and most frankly acknowledged his fault. No one can help honouring a man who could honestly say, as he did :

Many and frequent as my mistakes have been, or may be, as I have no part to act—if I know anything of my own heart—but to promote God's glory and the good of souls, as soon as I am aware of them they shall be publicly acknowledged and retracted.

Nevertheless, though the friendship briefly interrupted was never again broken, Whitefield remained a Calvinist, and the Methodist revival henceforth moved on in distinct channels of thought.

Whitefield's
Calvinism.

Whitefield's Calvinism was at first very thorough-going in its character. He accepted fully the doctrines of election and reprobation, and, apparently, found nothing repulsive in the conception.

I frankly acknowledge [he wrote] I believe the doctrine of reprobation, in this view, that God intends to give His saving

grace, through Jesus Christ, only to a certain number, and that the rest of mankind, after the fall of Adam, being justly left by God to continue in sin, will at last suffer that eternal death, which is its proper wages.

But it was a doctrine of the head and not of the heart. In his impassioned appeals to the sinful he offered salvation, without reserve, even to those whom he graphically described as 'the devil's castaways.'

It ought also to be recognized that the great preacher's leaning towards Calvinism opened the way to fields of usefulness which would otherwise have been closed to him. In Presbyterian Scotland he had an influence far exceeding that of Wesley, and the scenes witnessed in Scottish cities and glens rivalled the wonderful experiences at Kingswood and Moorfields. Whitefield was also welcomed as the natural chief of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wales, among whom Howell Harris was the moving spirit, and when their first Assembly was held in 1742 he was unanimously elected Moderator. He attended also several later Assemblies. In London all whose sympathies were with Calvinism rallied round Whitefield, and among them not a few evangelical Dissenters. The Tabernacle, a huge wooden shed, was erected not far away from the Foundry, and became Whitefield's headquarters for the next twelve years.

It is at this period in Whitefield's career that Lady Huntingdon begins to play a very prominent part in the Methodist movement. She was a woman of remarkable power. Of royal descent and aristocratic breeding, trained from childhood in the strictest traditions of her class, familiar with court life, she had yet the courage openly to avow herself a Methodist, and, as such, exercised an astonishing influence over some of the most prominent people of the time. Horace Walpole, Chesterfield, Lady Marlborough, and others equally well known, were her personal friends, and had a hearty respect for her. King George III held her in high esteem. He told her an entertaining

The
Countess of
Huntingdon.

story of a high dignitary, who was evidently jealous of the popularity of the Countess's preachers. 'Make bishops of them; make bishops of them,' said the king. 'That might be done,' was the reply, 'but, please your Majesty, we cannot make a bishop of Lady Huntingdon.' Here the Queen broke in, 'It would be a lucky circumstance if you could, for she puts you all to shame,' and the King accentuated the reproof by adding, 'Well, see if you cannot imitate the zeal of these men.' He finally closed the conversation by saying with great emphasis, 'I wish there was a Lady Huntingdon in every diocese in the kingdom.'

To this noble lady, strong, capable, decisive, and at the same time both tender and womanly, Whitefield owed powerful support which never failed him to his dying day. She gathered round her, indeed, a group of remarkable men, who became known as Lady Huntingdon's preachers. Though attached to the Church of England, she built chapels and purchased buildings, appointing ministers at her own pleasure. In 1768 she erected Trevecca College, which became the divinity school of 'Lady Huntingdon's Connexion,' as the new community was termed, when separation from the Church became inevitable. It is interesting to know that Henry Venn, Romaine, and John Berridge, founders of the Evangelical School in the Anglican Church, were her personal friends, preaching for her, and co-operating with her in every possible way. But among all her co-workers, Whitefield was the bright particular star whom she delighted to honour. To his services she brought the leaders of the fashionable world. At her house he met the best-known men and women in literature, politics, and society. Her purse was always at his disposal, and she was the first to suggest several ventures in which he played a prominent part.

Foremost among these may be placed the building of the Tottenham Court Road Chapel. The old Moorfields Tabernacle, already mentioned, is gone, leaving no trace behind; but in Tottenham Court Road there still stands a Whitefield Tabernacle, the third structure on the same site, and it



TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD, LONDON, AND WHITEFIELD'S TABERNACLE. ROBERTS, DEL.
MONTAGUE AUGUSTUS TOPLADY, 1740-1778. JOHN CENNOCK, 1718-1755. S. COOPER, SCULPTOR.
Author of 'Rock of Ages.' Lay preacher, hymn-writer.

represents the building in the erection of which Lady Huntingdon took so large an interest.

Six months before the Tottenham Court Road Chapel was commenced, Whitefield was preaching twice a week in an Independent Chapel in Long Acre, rented at the time by the Rev. John Barnard, one of his early converts. It had been his desire for some time to have a chapel at his disposal, convenient for the West End, and at that day Long Acre was a fashionable street in the heart of the theatrical world of London.

Here Whitefield was subjected to many annoyances. Stones were flung through the windows ; drums, bells, and clappers kept up incessant din during his preaching ; and threatening letters were received. Soon after the disturbances began, Whitefield received a letter from the vicar of the parish prohibiting his further preaching in Long Acre. The vicar of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields at this time was the Rev. Zachary Pearce, D.D., who occupied, in addition to this wealthy living, the offices of Dean of Chichester, and Bishop of Bangor. During the year of this controversy about Long Acre, he was still further promoted to the see of Rochester, and the Deanery of Westminster.

The correspondence that followed is an interesting one, though the nature of the Bishop's letters can only be inferred from Whitefield's replies. The distinguished pluralist pleaded the 'privileges of a peer,' and threatened penalties if his letters were used in print. From Whitefield's letters we gather that the chapel was private property, licensed as a Dissenting place of worship, and that he had permission to use in his services the Liturgy of the Church of England. He quietly, but decidedly, declined to be silenced.

The Long Acre incident led to the building of the new chapel in Tottenham Court Road. Whitefield speaks of securing the ground in a letter to the Countess in May 1756, and the stones were laid in the following June. It is interesting to note that three Dissenting ministers—Dr. Thomas Gibbons, Dr. B. Grosvenor, and Dr. Andrew Gifford, Assistant Librarian at the new British Museum—were present at the

stone-laying and afterwards preached in the building itself. Whitefield's first intention was to place the new building under the protection of Lady Huntingdon, as her 'domestic chapel,' he being her chaplain. On inquiry it was found that 'no nobleman can license a chapel, or in any manner have one, but in his dwelling-house.' 'There seems, then, but one way,' writes Whitefield, 'to license it *as our other houses are*; and thanks be to Jesus for the liberty which we have.' Yet, though he licensed it as a Dissenting place of worship, it was opened for divine worship 'according to the forms of the Church of England.'

In spite of rebuffs he never faltered in his attachment to the Church of his ordination. 'Unless thrust out,' he wrote, 'I shall never leave her; and even then I shall adhere to her doctrines, and pray for the restoration of her discipline, to my dying day.'

IV

WHITEFIELD
AND
AMERICA
The
orphanage.

Whitefield's influence in America it is difficult to over-estimate. The orphan house, which held so large a place in his heart, ranks only as an incident in the larger work he accomplished. The orphanage was originally Charles Wesley's idea, shared by General Oglethorpe. Many of the early colonists in Georgia were carried off by fever and hardship, and their children were left destitute. Whitefield took up the proposal with enthusiasm, raised money for it, obtained a grant of land for the building, and gave himself no rest until the scheme became a reality.

The most curious point in the history of the institution is the fact that Whitefield, as its founder, became a slave-owner, defending his action with Old Testament illustrations, and clinching his argument with the declaration that 'hot countries cannot be cultivated without negroes.' No doubt he used the slaves that worked upon the estate exceedingly well, and most of his friends in America held similar views; but it is a matter for regret that he was unable to rise above the sentiment of his time. The orphanage had a chequered

career. It flourished during his lifetime, and was left to the care of the Countess of Huntingdon. Two years later it was burned, only the wings remaining; and during the Civil War it was simply a charred ruin. The memory of Whitefield was, however, too strong for the enterprise to perish, and the orphanage was re-established. The building which now exists is the fourth upon the same site.

Whitefield's greatest work in the New World was the revitalizing of the Nonconformist churches already in existence, and the preparation of the ground for the Methodist pioneers who followed him. The Methodist churches of America to-day outnumber all others, and only second to them come the Baptists and the Presbyterians. At the Revolution, when the Anglican pastors nearly all deserted their flocks and returned to England, it was to these churches that the work of evangelization fell. And it was through Whitefield that an evangelistic impulse was given, which powerfully influenced the religious development of the peoples of North America.

Evangelistic impulse.

V

Both in Great Britain and America Whitefield's influence was pre-eminently that of a preacher. He was a voice, and a mighty voice, and the more the old records are studied, the more plain it becomes that behind the preaching there was a great soul. His published writings, as already intimated, leave the reader without light as to the secret of his power. One can base no theory sufficient to explain his popularity on either the *Journal* or the *Sermons*. There is far higher merit in John Wesley's plain crisp English than in Whitefield's florid periods. Yet he must have possessed a strange personal magnetism. People were carried away, not so much by what he said as by the way in which he said it. Perhaps the only reliable estimate that can be made must be based upon the judgement of his contemporaries. Benjamin Franklin was a man of sturdy judgement and

WHITEFIELD AS A PREACHER.

Contemporary judgement.

independent character, but even he, spite of himself, felt the charm of the orator.

A very beautiful tribute to his power is to be found in one of the letters of Mrs. Edwards, the wife of the venerable Jonathan Edwards, a lady who knew Whitefield personally and deeply respected him.

You have heard of his deep-toned, yet clear and melodious voice. It is perfect music. It is wonderful to see what a spell he casts over an audience by proclaiming the simplest truths of the Bible. I have seen upwards of a thousand people hang upon his words with breathless silence, broken only by an occasional half-suppressed sob. He impresses the ignorant, and not less the educated and refined. It is reported that while the miners of England listened to him, the tears made white furrows down their smutty cheeks. So here, our mechanics shut up their shops, and the day labourers throw down their tools to go and hear him preach, and few return unaffected. . . . He speaks from a heart all aglow with love, and pours out a torrent of eloquence which is almost irresistible.

Later
opinion.

The tradition of his mighty sermons lived long in the Western States, and Whittier has finely embodied it in his poem *The Preacher*.

The flood of emotion, deep and strong,
Troubled the land as it swept along,
But left a result of holier lives.

From English writers similar testimony might be quoted. A pulpit orator who could charm the cynical Horace Walpole, and make even the passionless Chesterfield forget himself; who could awaken envy in Garriek, and move the critical Hume to admiration, must have been no ordinary man. There was more than oratory. John Richard Green, one of the most sober of historians, finds the real secret of his influence in the 'intense reality' of his preaching, 'its earnestness of belief, its deep, tremulous sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind.' And Sir James Stephen is constrained to say: 'If ever philanthropy burned in the

human heart with a pure and intense flame, embracing the whole family of man in the spirit of universal charity, it was in the heart of George Whitefield. He loved the world that hated him. He had no preferences but in favour of the ignorant, the miserable, and the poor.'

He died at Newbury Port, in America, after thirty-one years of restless energy. The great soul burnt itself out. He crossed the Atlantic thirteen times; he rode on horseback in Great Britain and America many thousands of miles; he preached during his brilliant career over 18,000 sermons; to the very end he never spared himself. On the last day of his life, travelling on horseback to Boston, he was entreated to preach to the people of Exeter, a town through which he had to pass. He did so, though more fit for bed than open-air oratory. Reaching his home for the night, at Newbury Port, the people crowded round the house and even into the hall, eager to listen to the voice of their loved teacher. After supper he took his candle, and started to go upstairs. 'The sight of the people moved him, and pausing on the staircase, he began to speak to them. He had preached his last sermon; this was to be his last exhortation. There he stood, the crowd in the hall gazing up at him with tearful eyes, as Elisha at the ascending prophet. His voice flowed on until the candle which he held in his hand burned away and went out in its socket. The next morning he was not, for God had taken him.'

The last
journey.

Sept. 30,
1770.

Wesley, his friend ever since the Oxford days but for one brief misunderstanding, preached his funeral sermon in Tottenham Court Road Chapel. It was a noble tribute. He spoke with deepest feeling of Whitefield's activity, his tenderness, his susceptibility to friendship, of his frankness and integrity. And with a few memorable words from this generous appreciation, this study must be brought to an end.

'I must close this head,' said Wesley, 'with observing what an honour it pleased God to put upon His faithful servant, by allowing him to declare His everlasting gospel in so many various countries, to such numbers of people, and

with so great an effect on so many of their precious souls. Have we read or heard of any person since the apostles who testified the gospel of the grace of God through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of any who has been a blessed instrument in the hands of God of bringing so many sinners from "darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God"?'

CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, HELPERS OPPOSITION

Methodism is Christianity in earnest.—CHALMERS.

All the body titly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love.—Eph. iv. 16, R.V.

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CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENTS, INSTITUTIONS, HELPERS, OPPOSITION

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List, especially § B IV., add: Contemporary pamphlets and works collated in series, *History, Attacks, Defence*, etc., in the Hobill Library, U.M.C. College, Sheffield. Bennet and Wes. Min., *Pub.WHS*, and *EMP* are of special value. A series of articles, 'Methodism in Former Days,' *WMM*, 1845-55, and the *Methodist Recorder*, Winter Numbers, 1892 *et seq.*, contain much material. See also articles in *DNB*, and works cited in footnotes *in loco*.

I

IF we can trace the influence of Wesley's nonconforming ancestry in his variations from the canons and rubrics of the Established Church of England, we can also see in him evidences of the extraordinary ability for organization and generalship which commanded world-wide attention in Wellington, a later descendant of a collateral branch of the same Wellesley or Wesley family. There was more than facial resemblance between the religious and the military leader. By both, imperial plans were often wrought out to the smallest detail. Wesley's short, sharp directions in letters or *Minutes* ring like the commands of a general, and were often as direct and effective as a gunshot. Macaulay's oft-quoted opinion was that Wesley had a genius for government not inferior to that of Richelieu, and Leslie Stephen styled him the greatest captain of men of his century. But for his work in this capacity, the religious revival which Lecky considered of more importance than the career of the elder Pitt, or the splendid victories by land or sea in the same period, must soon have spent itself. German Pietism

DEVELOP-
MENTS AND
INSTITU-
TIONS.

Wesley as
organizer.

under Francke (1663—1727) did so, and had to wait a century for Tholuck and others to rekindle its fires. Incompleteness of organization was one cause of this decline. The same may be said of the Religious Societies in England (*circa* 1670), which prepared the way for the Evangelical Revival.¹ Wesley's organizations and those of his helpers and imitators conserved the impulses imparted by their doctrine, preaching, and song. The rills were directed to ordered channels, and what might have spread itself over the parched land almost ineffectively was thereby permanently retained to minister to spiritual fertility and social improvement.

Wesley early resolved 'not to strike one stroke in any place where I cannot follow the blow.' As an orator Whitefield was his superior. Seldom did Wesley's informing, incisive statements of doctrine and duty raise such tumultuous enthusiasm as did the preaching of Whitefield. Wesley had other powers. He was the Protestant Loyola. Under God he created Methodism²; for no sooner had he conquered a soldier in the enemy's ranks than he enlisted him in his own regiment, arranged for his drill and exercise, and employment in the campaign. This section will notice the arrangements and institutions of Methodism which were thus developed, notice some of the helpers in the work, and the opposition which it aroused. We thus trace the origins and early experience of, probably, the largest Protestant community in the world. Dr. Fitchett's striking summary, revised by the latest statistics,³ shows that to-day Methodism, taking its four great divisions in Great Britain, Canada, the United States, and Australasia, has 52,000 ministers in its pulpits and 30,000,000 hearers in its pews. It has built 96,000 separate churches; it teaches in its schools every Sunday more than 7,000,000 children. The branches of Methodism are in some respects more vigorous than the parent stock. In Canada out of a population of less than

¹ *Vide* Loofs, *op. cit.* in Herzog, and Prof. Tasker's review, *LQR.*, July 1893.

² On the name *vide supra*, p. 140, and Murray, *New Eng. Dict.*

³ Vol. ii., book vi., chap. iv.

6,000,000 nearly 1,000,000 are Methodists. Every ninth person in Australasia belongs to Wesley's Church. The Methodist Church in the United States raised £4,000,000 as a Centenary effort—the largest sum raised by a single church in a single effort in Christian history.

It is no derogation of Wesley's genius to state that several of the features of the system which he built up were adopted or adapted from others. Only God can say, 'I create all things new.' Wesley so combined and recombined various features, articulated and reticulated them, and animated the whole, as to be in all but the highest sense their creator. He was quick to see the possibilities of a suggestion. 'This is the very thing we have wanted so long,' he declared, when the first form of the class-meeting was proposed to him. Sometimes, however, his innate conservatism restrained him; some of the most fruitful methods were almost forced upon him. He was influenced greatly by his association with the Moravians. Not only did he find among them at first clearer conceptions of evangelic truth and so great a quickening of the life of God in his spirit as made him a new man, but he saw at work among them principles and details of organization which he afterwards used. At their Herrnhut colony he witnessed gatherings for testimony and mutual edification, select bands, classes, conferences on doctrine, open-air preaching, preaching by laymen, itinerant preachers, and orphan homes. Most of these features had, indeed, been anticipated by the Waldenses in the sixteenth century, between whose organization and that of the Moravians and the Methodists there are striking, though probably accidental, resemblances.¹

Indebted-
ness to the
Moravians.

Though Wesley's arrangements were adaptable and experimental, certain regulative principles may be seen in them. Like Spener, he wished to reform the Established Church by forming religious societies within it. For many years he felt that their work was purely supplementary and complementary, and he avoided all names for it or its officers which might suggest anything else. He held that

1635-1705.

¹ *Vide* Mr. J. W. Laycock's paper, *WHS*, i. 109.

Christian character is perfected by fellowship. 'Remember you cannot serve God alone,' an earnest man had told him; 'the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.' He held also the Mystic belief that any one taught of God can and must minister according to his gift to the edification of the body of Christ. And Wesley, following and extending the practice of the early Church, graded his followers according to their religious condition.

FIELD-
PREACHING,
1739.

Open-air or field-preaching was one of the chief means by which the people were gathered. As already shown, Whitefield adopted this novel and effective work. Wesley followed on the afternoon of April 2, 1739, and preached in the brickyard, at the farther end of St. Philip's Plain, Bristol, to about three thousand people. Guided by the Methodist antiquary, the spot where Wesley first preached in the open-air in England may still be traced.¹ It is classic ground for all Methodists. The prophetic programme of Methodism, 'Christianity in earnest,' was the same as that proclaimed in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke iv. 18, 19). This innovation cost Wesley some uneasiness. He had found it difficult to tolerate Whitefield in doing it, but he now 'submitted to be made more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation.' Charles Wesley had found 'ten thousand helpless sinners' waiting for the word in Moorfields, London, and John Wesley preached to thirty-one thousand in Bristol and neighbourhood during a fortnight. Like Whitefield, he was deeply moved by the sight of a crowd. The appeal from the sea of upturned faces, moving to and fro like wavelets as eager expectancy and the Spirit of the Lord moved upon the face of the waters, overcame ancient prejudice. Once he would 'have thought the saving of souls almost a sin, if it had not been done in a church'; now the infinite pity surged through him to meet the infinite pathos of human wants and needs. On weekdays this work was generally done in the very early morning, that the labour of the people might not be hindered. Dark-

¹ Rev. H. J. Foster's paper, *WHS*, iii. 25-41.



Stone Dine.

Blond fief

John Wesley D.D.
Aetatis 63.

Publick Assenting to Act of Parliament.

WESLEY PREACHING IN THE FIELDS. (Engraving of the original of a picture of Wesley's Testimony, 1767)

ness and rain were considered small hindrances ; but natural reluctance and ' the subtle poison of the easy-chair ' had to be reckoned with. Says Wesley :

I preached abroad . . . to twice as many people as we should have had at the House. What marvel that the devil does not love field-preaching ? Neither do I ; I love a commodious room, a soft cushion, a handsome pulpit. But where is my zeal, if I do not trample all these underfoot, in order to save one more soul ?

Every Sunday Wesley required the preachers to do this work. He dated the decline of any society from the neglect of it, and predicted the disappearance of Methodism when it ceased.

If its novelty made it attractive and the closing of the churches one by one to the evangelists made it necessary, it nevertheless excited the bitterest opposition. To this it lent itself. John Nelson was told, ' We allow all you say is true ; yet you deserve to be set in the stocks for delivering it in the streets.' Ecclesiastical limits were ignored as one preacher after another declared with Wesley, ' I look upon all the world as my parish.'¹ Self-appointed guardians of public peace and private virtue cried out for fear at such vast gatherings. Pamphlets appealed to the Government for the suppression of them. Such fears proved to be groundless. The preachers showed themselves efficient maintainers of order. Such disturbance as occurred was provoked by others, as we shall see. The solemn and tender appeals of the preachers exorcised wildness and wickedness. Often those who came to scoff remained to pray.

Opposition
aroused
by it.

Those who were thus gathered, as well as other serious-minded persons, were counselled, sustained, and trained, not only by the preaching of the word and by the ordinances, but by Christian fellowship. As Dr. Woodward shows, many

CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP.

¹ This now classic phrase was first used by him on May 11, 1739. Rev. H. J. Foster points out (*WHS*, iii. 36) that Whitefield, ' circa 1739,' said ' The whole world is now my parish.' ' Which of them had learned it from the other ? ' For its legal aspect *vide infra*, p. 323 u.

small societies for cultivating religious life in the members of the London churches existed (1692). Elsewhere they arose sporadically around some leader, as 'Mr. Fox's Society,' or 'Mr. Ingham's Society.' Wesley was a prominent member of one, founded on May 1, 1738, which met at 32, Fetter Lane, London. It was composed of members of the Church of England. Such as disowned themselves members of that church were discontinued from membership in the society. Most of them, at least, were Methodists. Not until later did it become a Moravian society, when certain members introduced Quietist notions which Wesley vainly strove to eradicate. These denied the use of the means of grace, reading of the Scriptures, prayer, and the practice of good works by any who had not received justifying faith. This was their doctrine of 'stillness' which the practical mind of Wesley abhorred. He cherished always the strongest regard for the Moravians generally, and thought them the best Christians in the world.

The first
Methodist
society,
1739.

Almost a year later (April 4, 1739) a society was formed in Bristol like that in London. By the end of that year¹ Wesley had gathered a society at the Foundery, in Moorfields, London, of which he and his brother Charles were pastors. This must be regarded as the parent society of present-day Methodism. To it came Lady Huntingdon and Charles Wesley's friend, Mr. Seward, and others, about twenty-five men and fifty women in all, who seceded from the Fetter Lane Society with John Wesley in July 1740, since he and they could no longer countenance the heresies which some of the Moravians had introduced. With the Foundery Society were soon linked some religious societies which had been formed in Bristol. Wesley's description of the origin and objects of the Foundery Society must be given :

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 (as did

¹ December 27 seems to have been the day. See Thomas McCullagh's paper, 'The First Methodist Society,' *WHIS*, iii, 166.

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

While at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1743 Wesley drew up and published rules for these and other Methodist societies which had been formed. The title is significant: *The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies, in London, Bristol, King's-wood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne*.¹ The Methodists under Wesley were one people, a Connexion, united for the same purposes and subject to the same discipline.

The societies were composed of Bands or Select Bands. Bands. For these Wesley had earlier furnished rules (December 1738). A Band was made up of like-minded persons who were seeking Christian Perfection. The Bands constituted an inner fellowship of the society and sometimes held united meetings. Each had not fewer than five or more than ten members. They met weekly; men, women, married and unmarried persons in separate Bands. Following the leader, the members told one another of their temptations, triumphs, and faults, and this 'plain and home.' What was said was to be held in strictest confidence. In all things indifferent they submitted to their minister's judgement, and they brought in all they could spare towards a common stock. Wesley felt that he could unbosom himself to the members of the Bands on all occasions and upon the deepest subjects. Expulsions from membership were subject to 'the consent and approbation' of the members of the Band Society—a fact of much significance.² Band members

¹ *Vide* vol. ii., Appendix D.

² Wesley's *Journal*, February 28, 1741.

Tickets of membership.

received a ticket quarterly. It bore a date and a Scripture emblem or text, and also the member's name written by one of the preachers. The ticket was a proof of membership, admitted its holder to the Band, the Love-feast, and other private meetings of the society, and served as a commendatory letter to the initiated or such as removed. Wesley seems to have originated this Methodist ticket system in imitation of the *tesserae*, *συστατικῶν ἐπιστολῶν*, of apostolic days (2 Cor. iii. 1). It was used also in the class-meetings later, to which we must soon refer. Tickets for the Band members had some distinction, the smallest being the addition of the letter B. The issue of them was continued in England until 1880.¹

It was scarcely to be expected that so intimate a fellowship would be permanently maintained in its simplicity and distinctiveness, though the fears of Southey as to its abuse were groundless. General weekly meetings of earnest members of the society were long continued under the name of Band Meetings. Many Methodist sanctuaries had a Band Room. A small secession bore the name Band Room Methodists.²

Love-feasts.

Love-feasts were general gatherings of all the members. They had been instituted by the Moravians in imitation of the *Agapae* or love-feasts held in the early Christian Church, in some places as late as the fourth century. There they had sometimes been spoiled by selfishness and gluttony. In their revived form this was impossible. A little plain cake and water, the elements of a simple meal, were distributed to all present and taken by them as members of one family united by love to Christ. This was followed by testimonies concerning His love to them and theirs to Him, interspersed with songs of praise. At first only members of the Bands were admitted to these gatherings. Later all members of society enjoyed this privilege, the quarterly ticket of membership being the passport. Other religious persons might receive the written permission of the preacher, and see and hear the miracles of divine grace.

¹ See papers and illustrations, by Mr. J. G. Wright, *WHS*, v. 33; by Rev. F. M. Parkinson, i. p. 129.

² *Vide infra*, p. 556.

The division of the local societies into classes of twelve persons or more, each having its leader, who received the contributions of the members and served as a sub-pastor, was the next development. Hitherto Wesley and his brother Charles had visited the members in London in their homes. They now numbered eleven hundred. Relief was needed that they might continue their itinerations. It was thus obtained, and an institution of extraordinary usefulness, perhaps the most characteristic of Methodism, was created. Wesley says :

THE CLASS-MEETING,
1742.

The people were scattered so wide in all parts of the town, from Wapping to Westminster, that I could not easily see what the behaviour of each person in his own neighbourhood was ; so that several disorderly walkers did much hurt before I was apprised of it. At length, while we were thinking of quite another thing, we struck upon a method for which we have cause to bless God ever since. I was talking with several of the society in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts there, when one [Captain Foy] stood up and said, ' Let every member of the society give a penny a week till all are paid.' Another answered, ' But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it.' ' Then,' said he, ' put eleven of the poorest with me ; and if they can give anything, well : I will call on them weekly ; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly ; receive what they give and make up what is wanting.' It was done. In a while, some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, ' This is the thing, the very thing we have wanted so long.' I called together all the Leaders of the classes (so we used to term them and their companies), and desired, that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence. As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places.

To objectors Wesley said that he regarded the class-meeting as not of divine institution, nor essential, but a prudential

A
prudential
regulation.

regulation. Once a quarter he or one of his preachers met the members of the classes, and gave a ticket to such as they approved. By withholding it they dismembered such as they judged to be unworthy. Serving the purposes before stated, it was a valued token. Some members treasured their tickets as signs of unbroken precious fellowship until the close of life : and dying, asked that they might be interred with them.

The class-meeting was often the germ-cell of new Methodist societies. It could be held anywhere, in kitchen, or drawing-room, hayloft, coalpit, or barn. It preceded the preacher and outstayed him. Wherever a few of those who feared the Lord desired to speak often one to another, and one would lead them, a class might be formed. To it the serious, the curious, the unattached were invited, the only condition being ' a desire to flee from the wrath to come and to be saved from their sins.' Its leader knew each member, saw every one weekly, either at the meeting or in their own homes. The names were entered upon a class-paper or book, as first done by John Nelson. As each told his religious experience, the leader reproved, rebuked, exhorted with all long-suffering and teaching, consoled them in sorrow, relieved their poverty, showed interest in their temporal affairs, and was to all as a brother or sister beloved. The leader received from the members their contributions for the poor or the work of God, the general amount being a penny a week and a shilling a quarter. The class leaders were the under-shepherds, each dwelling in the midst of his little flock, while the chief shepherd led the flock at large to the pastures of truth or went out in the wide circuit and far beyond seeking the lost. By meeting the leaders of the classes the preachers learned the exact spiritual and moral condition of all the members, and corrected or supplemented the knowledge of them gained at the quarterly visitation of the classes.

Its finance,
Minutes,
1782, 1788.

A unique
system.

This unique system may be compared with the Scottish prayer-societies and Walker's Cornish conversation-classes ;¹ but it surpassed both in its simplicity and adap-

¹ Walker, *Practical Christianity* (1766), p. 157; also Tyerman, *Wesley, in loc.*

tiveness. It secured the mutual edification of the members, the exercise of discipline upon them, trained them for service, and gathered financial aid systematically in small sums, the aggregate of which was large. Wesley regarded this Christian fellowship as supplying a manifest lack in the Church of England.

Look east, west, north, or south, name what parish you please, is Christian fellowship there? Rather, are not the bulk of the parishioners a mere rope of sand? What Christian connexion is there between them? What intercourse in spiritual things? What watching over each other's souls?

This practice more than anything else helped to conserve the doctrine and spirit of Methodism, and fixed its character. It was marked as non-sacerdotal, since in these gatherings for fellowship ordained and unordained persons dealt freely with the mysteries of the spiritual life; as experimental and practical rather than doctrinaire and controversial, for here everything was brought to the test of common experience; as ethical as well as emotional, for the members knew the conduct of one another and all combined to sustain each in such behaviour as became the gospel and Methodism; as social and gladsome with holy song, rather than self-centred, cloistered, and sombre; as free from state aid and control, as it was sustained by the regular freewill offerings of those who voluntarily accepted its ministrations.

Any means for sustaining and increasing the ardent seriousness of his followers was welcomed by Wesley. Such were Watch-nights and Covenant Services. At Kingswood the colliers before their reformation usually spent the Saturday night in the ale-house. Afterwards, led by James Rogers, one of their number, they devoted it to prayer. Wesley heard of it, and proposed to join them on the next occasion. He says, 'Abundance of people came. I began preaching between eight and nine, and we continued until a little beyond the noon of night, singing, praying, and praising God.' He chose for them and the other societies the nights nearest the full moon, that the congregation might

Watch-
night
services
introduced,
1740.

have light for going and returning. Repelling the charge of favouring midnight assemblies, he referred to the vigils of the early Church. Later this monthly service was held on the closing night of the year only. In 1826, and later, it lasted three hours at Chester and elsewhere.

Covenant Services.

Of the Covenant Service Wesley wrote in 1755, 'I mentioned to the congregation [in London] another means of increasing serious religion, which had been frequently practised by our forefathers, and attended with eminent blessing; namely, the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul.' In several preparatory gatherings the nature of the covenant was explained. On the evening when all met to unite in it, Wesley says:

After I had recited the tenor of the covenant proposed, in the words of that blessed man Richard Alleine, all the people stood up in token of assent, to the number of about eighteen hundred persons. Such a night I scarce ever saw before. Surely the fruit of it shall remain for ever.

In the larger societies such a service was held annually upon the first Sunday of the year, and was followed by the observance of the Lord's Supper.

CHAPELS:
the first,
1739.

It became increasingly clear that all these gatherings, or of those who wished to hear the gospel, could not be held in the open air. The first building for the use of the Methodists was acquired in 1739. The building was the King's Foundry, Moorfields, London.¹ It had previously been used as a place in which Government cannon were cast. In the same year an erection, the New Room in the Horsefair, Bristol, was begun 'with the voice of praise and thanksgiving.' The gladness was surely prophetic; for although

¹ It stood in the locality called 'Windmill Hill,' now known by the name of Windmill Street, a street that runs parallel with City Road, and abuts on the north-west corner of Finsbury Square. Tyerman, *Wesley*, i. 271; see also Telford, *Wesley's Chapel and Wesley's House* (London: Kelly [n.d.]).



June 6-17 62

Mary Harte

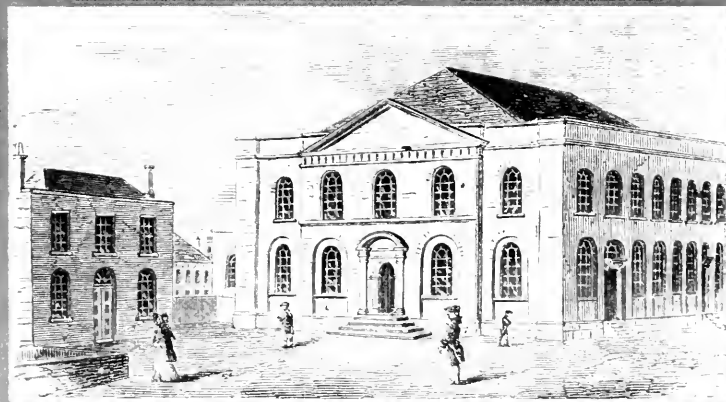
Sept 1771.

Walk in Wisdom
toward the end that are
without redeeming the time.

Col. iv. 5.

A b

Henry Crispe



THE FOUNDRY, MOORFIELDS, LONDON, OPENED AS A CHAPEL IN 1773.
 AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CLASS- AN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY
 TICKET, 1792. BAND-BOOK, 1771.
 CITY ROAD CHAPEL, 1789, OPENED 1778.

erected for two general religious societies in the city, this building soon passed with many of their members to the Methodists, and was often regarded as the first erected of their one hundred thousand churches—an honour which must be more accurately claimed for the Orphan House, Newcastle-on-Tyne.¹ The New Room was vested in Wesley, as were most of the early estates. Later, trustees were appointed. By his Deed of Declaration his interest in these properties was transferred to the Conference. With the use of their own separate buildings a new officer arose among the Methodists. The Foundery members proposed to contribute a quarterly allowance for Wesley. He said that his Oxford fellowship supplied all, more than all, he wanted. ‘Nay, but,’ one replied, ‘you want one hundred and fifteen pounds to pay for the lease of the Foundery. And likewise a large sum will be wanted to put it in repair.’ Wesley consented, and asked who would receive and pay such moneys? One said, ‘I will do it, and keep the account for you.’ ‘So here,’ says Wesley, ‘was the first steward; and afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as stewards, and in process of time a greater number.’

The first
steward.

Another order of labourers had also entered the fields, which were indeed white unto harvest. Without any connexion, though almost simultaneously in several places, laymen began to preach the gospel. The practice of fraternal fellowship and testifying had prepared them for the work of exhortation. As early as 1735 Howell Harris engaged in such work in Wales, ‘tearing all before him like a large harrow.’ Thrice denied episcopal ordination, he formed thirty private prayer societies, and broke the moral darkness of his native land. Wesley met him in 1739 and they rejoiced together. But Wesley was at first very reluctant to sanction lay preaching. This development owed much

LAY
PREACHING,
1739.

¹ The chapel and premises known as the Orphan House were erected there, and were opened for use March 25, 1743. This was therefore the first building actually erected by Methodists for their own use. *Vile Stamp, Orphan House of Wesley* (1863).

to the appreciation and courage of godly women. Lady Huntingdon urged Thomas Maxfield to use his gifts; Susanna Wesley defended him when he did so; and aged Mrs. Canning of Evesham said to Wesley concerning Thomas Westell, 'Stop him at your peril. He preaches the truth, and the Lord owns him as truly as He does you or your brother.'¹

Thomas Humphreys,² Wesley says, was the first lay preacher who assisted him in England. This was in 1738. We must, however, certainly pause to look at John Cennick, who began this work on June 14 in the following year. Five hundred colliers heard the word, and 'many believed in that hour.' Standing under a sycamore tree at Kingswood on that summer day, preaching, layman though he was, Cennick represents a great host who afterwards rendered the like service. He was a local preacher, and such as he frequently conducted five out of seven preaching services in British Methodism, and everywhere did much to extend the work. Cennick was a land surveyor and writing master who had walked from Reading the day previous to his preaching, having been engaged as master of the school then being built at Kingswood for the children of the colliers. Despite all protests he continued to preach, and this with Wesley's sanction. After Cennick, Maxfield, Richards, and Westell engaged in this work. It is difficult to say why Wesley disapproved of the efforts of Maxfield and Westell when he had encouraged Cennick. Wesley being away, Maxfield was employed at the Foundery at the end of 1739 to take charge of the society and to expound the Scriptures. Hearing that this had developed into preaching, Wesley hastened back to London to stop it. His

Cennick.

Maxfield.

Wesley's
attitude.

¹ Moore, *Life of Wesley*, ii. 11.

² See his *Journal*, 'An overlooked page in Methodist history,' *WMM*, 1884. Here Tyerman contends that Wesley, through age (88), was mistaken in saying Humphreys was the first lay preacher (1738), and gives 1740 as his year. Then Humphreys says, 'I began to preach at the Foundery.' He may have preached elsewhere before, as a Moravian. This gives Cennick the place as Wesley's first lay preacher. See also Tyerman, *Wes.*, i. 276. For Cennick, see his *Account*, *WHS*, vi., 101, 133.

mother restrained him from doing so. Moore describes her looking attentively at him as she said :

John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily anything of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as truly called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching and hear him also yourself.

He did so and was constrained to say, 'It is the Lord ; let Him do what seemeth Him good.' Forty such preachers were at work by the year 1744, who, while the Wesleys ranged the country, took oversight of the societies and preached in their own localities. As we shall see, this glaring violation of ecclesiastical order was loudly condemned by both clerical opponents and friends of the Methodists. Sharp colloquies ensued. Robinson, Archbishop of Armagh, complained to Charles Wesley about this employment of laymen. Charles replied that the fault lay at the door of the clergy : 'You hold your peace and the stones cry out.' 'But they are unlearned men,' said the primate. 'Some are,' Wesley replied, still using Scripture references, 'and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet.' John Wesley defended such workers quite as stoutly. No part of his *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion* is more cogent than that devoted to this subject. He pointed out that our Lord was a layman : 'Is not this the carpenter ?' Moreover Wesley had grateful recollections of the Moravian mechanic and lay preacher, Christian David, who at Herrnhut had been as an angel of God to him, learned and in holy orders though he was. He dared not stop men whom he saw and heard doing the like service to others, else unhelped. Often the lay preachers had their own sharp replies for their clerical critics. A clergyman who told a North Country lay preacher that he was not qualified to preach, astonished him and drew forth the brusque retort, 'Qualified ! You say that ? Why, without your gown you *dare na*, and

without your book you *could* na, and without your pay you *would* na. *And I do without all three.*'

THE ITINER-
ANCY : its
beginnings.

As they proved their powers and were approved by signs following, some of the lay preachers began to itinerate like the Wesleys and Whitefield. John Wesley's first extended evangelistic tour was taken in 1742. Thereby Newcastle-on-Tyne was added to London and Bristol as one of his centres. These formed roughly, as Dr. Fitchett points out, an isosceles triangle upon the lines of which Wesley continually itinerated throughout his life. But even his boundless activity and the labours of such clerical helpers as were willing to assist him were quite insufficient for the quick-springing needs and calls all over the land. The spots of light already created made visible the darkness all around. Bands of Methodists were appearing spontaneously on all hands, and needed guidance. 'When Mr. Wesley first came to Leeds,' said a member of the original class-meeting there, [1743] 'we took him into society; he did not take us in.' The previous year societies were formed in Northumberland, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Nottinghamshire, as well as in South Yorkshire, while the older societies increased greatly. Hence Wesley welcomed help in the work. Some of his lay preachers began to itinerate in 1740. The development of this, another distinguishing feature of Methodism, was gradual. Such clergy of the Church of England as assisted the Wesleys remained in their cures or residences, and exercised a wide ministry round such centres. The *Minutes* of the twelfth Conference of the Methodist leaders give three lists of preachers. The names of the Wesleys are at the commencement of one following the words, 'Our present itinerant preachers are.' With them are several clergymen and a number of lay itinerants. Then follow lists of 'Half-Itinerants,' and 'Our chief Local Preachers.' Half-itinerants were such as William Shent of Leeds, who continued his business, which others managed, while he travelled as a preacher under Wesley's direction.

The character and qualifications of these itinerant preachers were defined by successive Conferences. Concerning such as desired this office it was to be inquired :

The Itinerants : their qualifications,

1. Do they know in whom they have believed ? Have they the love of God in their hearts ? Do they desire and seek nothing but God ? . . . 2. Have they *Gifts* (as well as *Grace*) for the work ? . . . 3. Have they success ? Do they not only so speak as generally either to convince or affect the hearts, but have any received remission of sins by their preaching ? a clear and lasting sense of the love of God ? As long as these three marks undeniably occur in any, we allow him to be called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient reasonable evidence that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

The judgement of Wesley and his preachers, the spoken or written testimony of the new helper himself, the witness of those helped by his preaching, and the approval of the society of which he was a member, were to furnish the answers to these questions ; and the congregation was asked to join in prayer and fasting that a right decision might be made concerning the candidate. He was appointed upon a probation of one year's service. This was afterwards extended to four years. At its close he was received into full connexion with Wesley and the Conference. As on the commencement of his probation, he received on this occasion a copy of the *Large Minutes*, a summary of Methodist history, doctrine, and discipline, inscribed with a recognition of his status as a fellow-labourer. For these workers Wesley drew up his famous code, *The Twelve Rules of a Helper*.¹ They are full of sagacity and sanctified common-sense. They still embody the ideal for a Methodist preacher, and are annually read in many District Synods.

and Rules.

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never wile away time ; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary. 2. Be serious. Let your motto be, 'Holiness to the Lord.' Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking. 3. Converse sparingly

¹ *Works*, viii. p. 309. Other versions differ in a few expressions.

and cautiously with women ; particularly with young women.

4. Take no step towards marriage without first consulting with your brethren. 5. Believe evil of no one unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side. 6. Speak evil of no one ; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned. 7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, as soon as may be ; else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom. 8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A Preacher of the gospel is the servant of all. 9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin. Not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water ; not of cleaning your own shoes or your neighbours'. 10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them ; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake. 11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most. Observe : It is not your business to preach so many times, or to take care of this or that society, but to save as many souls as you can ; to bring as many sinners as you can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember ! a Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline ! Therefore you will need all the sense you have, and to have all your wits about you ! 12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct ; partly in preaching and visiting from house to house ; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory.

Studious
ness
enjoined
upon all
preacher.

Chosen for their experimental knowledge of religion and their natural abilities rather than for their acquirements, the preachers were required by Wesley to give themselves

diligently to self-culture. He prescribed courses of reading for them, including the classics. Though he declared 'I would throw away all libraries rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul,' he felt that there was no incompatibility between learning and zeal. So he thus commanded them :

Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or, at least, five hours in the four-and-twenty. 'But I read only the Bible.' Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. 'Bring the books,' says he, 'but especially the parchments'—those wrote on parchment. 'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade. 'But I have no books.' I will give each of you, as fast as you can read them, books to the value of five pounds.

Wesley was soon able to express the confidence that there was not one of them who could not pass 'such an examination, in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame and in tender love), are able to do.' Some were exceptionally endowed and equipped. Wesley regarded Walsh as the best Biblical scholar he had ever known, Downes as by nature full as great a genius as Sir Isaac Newton, and Cownley as one of the best preachers in England.

Such preachers as were slightly furnished found their resources increased in availability by the system of itineration; and for all this was well adapted to meet the time and conditions. They moved from place to place in the wide circuits and from circuit to circuit. Wesley declared (1784) that it hurt both preachers and people for the preacher to stay six or eight weeks together in one place. He could not find matter for preaching every morning and evening, nor would the people come to hear him. 'Hence,' he added

The Itinerancy established.

quaintly, 'he grows cold by lying in bed, and so do the people.' Wesley affirmed that if he were to preach one whole year in one place he would preach himself and most of the congregation to sleep. He maintained the itinerancy at all costs. Some left him in consequence of this. His final arrangement was that no preacher must labour in the same circuit for more than three years. Moving to and fro, the itinerant was a bond of union between the societies in the circuit, and his appointment in several circuits with the passing of the years knit them together in the connexion of which he was the representative. The system helped also to secure uniformity in teaching and administration. The preacher did not remain long enough to impress upon the members his peculiar views or methods. His doctrine and discipline and those of his predecessor and successor had been derived from Wesley and the Conference. To these he and they were all amenable. Different times and conditions may necessitate modifications; but for securing the unity, homogeneity, and happy co-operation of a new, scattered, varied, and rapidly-growing community, perhaps nothing better than the itinerancy within the circuits and from circuit to circuit could have been devised. Wesley's preachers had the mobility of Wyclif's itinerating poor priests and laymen, or recalled the Friars of the Middle Ages without their hampering vows.¹

The Circuit
System.

The Circuits or Rounds were at first called after their founder or the chief itinerant in them, as 'John Bennet's Round,' or the 'Circuit of William Darney's Societies.' Bennet's labours laid the foundations of Methodism in Cheshire and district. Writing in 1750 he tells us 'My circuit is one hundred and fifty-two miles in two weeks, during which time I preach publicly thirty-four times, besides meeting the societies and visiting the sick, etc.' Such a record gives an impression of the size of the circuits, as does the first official list. They then numbered seven :

1746.

1. LONDON (which includes Surrey, Kent, Essex, Brentford,

¹ *Vide supra*, pp. 44-51.

Egham, Windsor, Wycombe). 2. BRISTOL (which includes Somersetshire, Portland, Wilts, Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire). 3. CORNWALL. 4. EVESHAM (which includes Shrewsbury, Leominster, Hereford, and from Stroud to Wednesbury). 5. YORKSHIRE (which includes Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutlandshire, Lincolnshire). 6. NEWCASTLE. 7. WALES.

Myles adds that these circuits were some hundreds of miles in circumference, and the preachers travelled twenty, thirty, and sometimes forty miles in a day, and preached twice and sometimes three times in a day. The preachers' appointments to conduct services in the societies were stated on a written or printed plan which gave particulars of places, times, dates, preachers, etc. The first plan seems to have been made by Wesley for the London Circuit in 1754, and was the first of a series of seventeen weekly plans.¹ Afterwards quarterly or half-yearly plans were made. In his circuit Bennet gathered the preachers and officers of the societies together in a Quarterly Meeting, to confer about their work and its progress. The Haworth Circuit adopted this as early as 1749.² Wesley ordered Bennet to visit circuits and teach them the method and nature of these meetings. Soon all the assistants summoned this important church court regularly.

The Assistants, so styled by Wesley, were the more experienced of his preachers. Afterwards they were called Superintendents. Each of these was 'in the absence of the Minister, to feed and guide, to teach and govern the flock,' and to take charge of the societies and the other preachers in a circuit. He planned their work and that of the societies in his circuit, admitted and expelled members, supplied Wesley's publications, and accompanied Wesley in his annual visitation of the societies in that circuit. Wesley appointed them to their circuits each quarter or six months, and planned

The Superintendents.

¹ *WHS*, iii. 21. Note by Rev. T. E. Brigden.

² The first Quarterly Meeting of which we have record was held at Todmorden-Edge, October 18, 1748 (*WMM*, 1843, 'Methodism in Former Days,' iii.).

for them and for himself the dates for Watch-nights, Intercession Days, Love-feasts, and Letter Days. On the latter he corresponded with the Assistant, and some other person in each society, once a month. Wesley was thus virtually the superintendent of every circuit. The whole economy of Methodism centred in himself.

The
preacher :
his travel-
ling, appear-
ance, and
dress.

The condition of England as elsewhere portrayed in these pages must be recalled if the work of the preachers is to be appreciated. The itinerant was almost a romantic figure, certainly romance gathered about him. When he began his work the question was pressed, ' Does his health appear equal to the duties of the itinerant life ? ' It was necessary. Generally he was a man of robust health. Upon the face of many of his preachers, whose likenesses Wesley gathered into *The Arminian Magazine*, there are traces of their lowly origin and employment before, like the fishermen of old, they were called to preach the gospel. Upon some may be seen also the signs of servitude endured in the prison-house of sin before liberty was found and salvation in the name of Jesus. And the marks are there also of spiritual conflicts waged, or vigils passed in intercession for their fellows whom they loved more than their own souls. A large wig was worn by preachers of advanced age. Others allowed the hair to grow until it lay upon the shoulders. Sometimes it was powdered. Sometimes the front hair was brushed down over the forehead like the Puritans. Except for this, the face was always bare.

The preacher's dress varied, but soon became distinctive of his calling. Thomas Olivers was asked, ' Why dost thou dress like a parson ? ' because he was dressed in blue ; and when John Nelson's clothes were worn out, one gave him a piece of blue cloth for a coat and a piece of black cloth for waistcoat and breeches. The coat was long, frock-shaped, and had a high stiff collar, which at once protected the wearer from some of the missiles of the mob and preserved the linen cloth or stock which was folded in snowy whiteness round his neck. Often he wore knee-breeches and the picturesque three-cornered hat of the professional man of the period.

And there was his horse. The few and far-stretching circuits, to be travelled without the aids of to-day, made the preacher's horse and the circuit horse for local preachers an important item. The Conference of 1765 enjoined the preacher not to ride hard, and to see with his own eyes his horse rubbed, fed, and bedded. Not even Methodist grace and 'gumption' always ensured straight dealings with horses. Now and again the preacher's horse appeared in Kilham's and other controversies. The preacher's saddlebags carried his simple wardrobe and his working library, and Wesley's publications for the people. Sometimes he carried a spade with which to cut a way for himself and his horse through the snow. The preachers swam through floods, wandered whole nights on moors and wastes, and were sometimes almost engulfed in bogs. Highwaymen came to let them pass unmolested, for earlier encounters had shown that they possessed nothing but a few tracts and a fixed determination to pray for and with their molesters. A generation later Kilham said it required six weeks to visit the places in the Pocklington Circuit, during which period the preachers were at home only five or six nights. Their absence from their families was one reason for Wesley's plan of schools for the preacher's children where they might have oversight and training. In their heroic journeyings his example was before them, and fear of his disapproval urged them onward. Awaiting them were men in peril of infinite loss. Within them was the constraining love of Christ.

His
heroism.

The visit of a preacher was an event for all the Methodists of town or village. As a traveller he brought news of other towns and places in the country, then all so remote and strange. His conversation brought his listeners into living contact with the larger life of the circuit and Connexion. As he told of his escapes, of moving accidents by flood and field and coach and horse, he was regarded with something akin to awe; and as he dilated with gladness, which the experience of his listeners enabled them to share, upon the miracles of grace wrought by God through Wesley and the

Visiting the
people.

preachers, farmer's kitchen or miner's cot or shopkeeper's parlour became a Bethel, the entranced company a church in the house, and Jesus appeared in the midst. In Manchester Methodism began its work in a third-story garret of an old building by Blackfriars Bridge; in York, in a house 'at the bottom of the Beddern,' and in 'the Hole in the Wall.'¹ But these and humbler places were made glorious by divine blessing and human devotion. From them the preacher went to seek the wanderer and to preach the evangel. Back to them, hounded by a howling, infuriated mob, he and his little flock often fled as to a sanctuary, and rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer. The movements of the preacher made a track of light in the moral gloom of the country, and the blessing of him that was ready to perish was at once his justification and reward.

Tending the
children.

Children received the special attention of the preachers. 'Where there are children in the society,' said Wesley, 'meet them at least an hour every week.' In the homes he visited, each child was to receive from the preacher the *Instructions for Children*, and on his next visit he was to hear what had been learned by heart. Neglect of these duties was dealt with summarily by Wesley. Though, like Isaac Watts, he had no children of his own, he was devoted to young folk. Southey told Everett his treasured recollection of Wesley's visit to his home, of the kiss he gave to his little sister and the blessing he received himself from the patriarchal preacher. Wesley established a school for boys at Kingswood, chiefly those of his preachers (1748). If its Spartan strictness recalled his own early training, the constant and costly efforts he made to ensure the success of the scheme proved his devotion to its purpose.² His Sunday School at the Orphan House, Newcastle, was one of the best in the kingdom. It soon had not fewer than a thousand children in attendance.

1790.

¹ For List of *Local Histories*, compiled by Mr. George Stampe, see *WHS*, i. 3, vi. 70. The Hobill Library has 24 vols. containing many of these.

² *Vide supra*, p. 218.

All this work of soul-saving and nation-building was carried on at very little cost financially. Wesley permitted the preachers to receive gifts of food and clothing, but at first no money from those they served. Hopper said: 'In those days we had no provision made for preachers' wives, no funds, no stewards. He that had a staff might take it, go without, or stay at home.' It is pathetic to read such records as that concerning John Jane, who died in 1750: 'All his clothes, linen and woollen, hat and wig, are not thought sufficient to answer the funeral charge, which is one pound seventeen shillings and threepence: all the money he had was one shilling and fourpence.' Two years later £12 per annum was allowed to preachers for necessaries. Previously the society stewards supplied their bare needs and travelling expenses. Some circuits divided the love-feast money among the preachers, 'which was very little indeed,' says Myles, speaking of the Norwich Circuit. York appealed to the Manchester Conference 'against the large sum of £12 a year' for the preachers, as just named; but it was confirmed and made universal. Is it not in its records that the quaint entry is also found: '7s. 6d. for turning the Assistant preacher's coat and making it fit the second preacher'? Abounding hospitality came to be shown there, and generally, to the preachers. Pending this, however, the Conference increased the allowance to £16 per year. A step in advance had been taken when a slight provision was made for the preacher's wife. Alexander Mather (1733-1800) was the first who was so assisted. He was a baker in London, a man of strong natural understanding, judicious, and well fitted to rule. In eminence and usefulness he was scarcely behind the very chiefest of the early preachers. When importuned to itinerate, he declined until it was agreed that his wife should be allowed four shillings a week. The separate allowance for a preacher's wife was fixed by the Conference of 1769 at £10 per annum. Some items from the Bradford Circuit book¹ for the year 1770 (January 2) show the usages of the

The
preacher's
sustentation.

1749.

1765.

1800.

1757

¹ See Charles A. Federer's and Richard Green's papers, *WHS*, iii. 99, 89.

Connexion in what was then regarded as the advanced era of its financial movements :

	£	s.	d.
The preacher's quarterly board, 13 weeks at 3s. 6d.	2	5	6
The preacher's quarterage	3	0	0
" " for the wife	1	17	6
Allowed for servant	12	6	
Allowed for turnpikes	6	0	
	<hr/>		
	£8	1	6

Hospitality received on his long and frequent journeys must be remembered ; but a total allowance of less than £33 per year for a preacher and his household was little indeed. Later these allowances were merged in one sum, others were added for children, and a house was provided. It was always evident that only intense devotion to Christ and humanity could have made bearable such a life of privation and hardship as that endured by most of the early preachers. While provision for their maintenance was so slight, it is not surprising that some of the preachers followed a trade¹ while serving the circuits, or carried with them medicines, etc., for sale. It soon became apparent that this was highly inexpedient, and it was forbidden (1768). Nor is it surprising that the rate of mortality among the early itinerants was high, or that many of them soon desisted from the work. Saving others, they could not save themselves. Many of them laid down their lives for the gospel, or lived out but half their days. They 'ceased at once to work and live.' Myles gives a list of two hundred and eighteen preachers, of whom one hundred and thirteen soon wearied of itinerating. Of the remaining one hundred and five, more than half died prematurely.

THE DOC-
TRINES
TAUGHT.

The doctrine taught by the preachers to adults and to children was that of evangelical Arminianism. It re-

¹ e.g. Nelson, *vide infra*, p. 312.

sembled that which was producing remarkable results about this period in Germany, America, and elsewhere.¹ Here it may be noted that its development and presentation was affected by another controversy. At some cost Wesley had freed it from errors introduced by some Moravian teachers.² The second controversy had larger results. Whitefield had embraced Calvinism. Wesley preached his masterly sermon on *Free Grace* in June 1739, and it was freely published, with a hymn of thirty-six stanzas by Charles Wesley on Universal Redemption. Though anxious to retain the friendship of the Wesleys and to continue in co-operation with them, Whitefield 'preached the absolute decrees in the most peremptory and offensive manner,' even when invited to minister at the Foundery. Sometimes he named the Wesleys in his discourse while denouncing their doctrine. By March 1741 the separation was complete. Cennick, Howell Harris, Lady Huntingdon, and others clave to Whitefield. The results of their labours were gathered into the Calvinistic Methodist Church and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Thus separated, the doctrine taught by the Wesleys became increasingly clear. While in general agreement with the articles and homilies of the Church of England, it emphasized certain points and gave an evangelical Arminian interpretation to all. It thus created a virtually distinct system of doctrine. With almost ceaseless iteration the preachers taught the doctrines of universal depravity, universal redemption, the witness of the Spirit or Christian assurance, the duty of testimony, and sanctification or Christian perfection. Charles Wesley's characteristic line—

Evangelical
Arminian-
ism.

O let me commend my Saviour to you,

was upon their lips, and they proclaimed the five universals : that all men needed salvation ; that all men might be saved ; that all men might know themselves saved ; that all should

¹ *Supra*, p. 36.

² *Vide supra*, pp. 59, 284.

declare their salvation ; and that all might perfect holiness in the fear of the Lord.¹

The sermon
and the
services

The best general method of inculcating this teaching, Wesley told his preachers, was to invite, to convince, to offer Christ, and to build up ; and to do this in some measure in every sermon. This they did. Lecky notes that one of their peculiarities was the personal application they gave to their exhortations. It was their main object, by gesture, by look, by the constant use of the singular pronoun, to preach so that each member of the congregation might imagine the whole force of the denunciations or the pleadings of the preacher was directed immediately to himself. Wesley cordially approved much of Baxter's teaching, and commended his pastoral methods. Certainly his preachers often recalled Baxter's manner as he stood in the pulpit of a crowded church, with outstretched arm and forefinger, as though he would beckon his hearers to Christ, and called to them pleadingly, ' Will you ? Will you ? ' In contrast with Baxter's example and that of the Puritans, and indeed his own frequent practice,² Wesley ordered his preachers always to conclude the service in about an hour. They were to suit the subject to their audience, to choose the plainest text, and keep close to it, neither rambling from it, nor allegorizing, nor spiritualizing too much. Many counsels as to pulpit manners were laid upon them. Loud-voiced preaching Wesley could not tolerate. 'Scream no more,' he wrote to one, 'at the peril of your soul.'

The services had attractive simplicity. The utterances of the preacher were often vocally supported by confirmatory testimonies from among his listeners, or expressions of praise to God ; sometimes by the outcries of those seeking pardon or oppressed with a sense of sin. The sexes sat apart, as among the Moravians, and took separate parts in

¹ The four vols. of Wesley's Sermons (1771), i.-liii., with his *Notes on the New Testament*, constituted the standard of Methodist theology. It was further embodied in the important *Articles of Religion* prepared by order of the Conference of 1806. On the question of forty-three or fifty-three sermons, see Preface (end) *WW* (1831), vol. xiv.

² See a delightful *résumé* of instances in Dr. Rigg's *LW*, pp. 139-45.

the singing. The hymns were read out by the preacher two lines at a time, so that such as could not read might join in the song, and, even more, that all who sang might appreciate the words uttered.¹ The preachers were directed to stop the singing frequently and ask, 'Do you know what you sang last?' For more than a century it remained the custom for the hymns to be read impressively by the preacher in separate verses, and so sung. Two hymns were sung in the service; Wesley threatened dismissal to preachers who used more than two. He wrote (1785):

To C. Muckersey [M'Kersey] and Byron. If you do not chuse (*sic*) to obey me, you need not: I will let you go when you please and send other Preachers in your place. If you do chuse to stay with me, never sing more than twice; once before and once after Sermon.²

The singing was generally without musical accompaniment. Dialogue hymns, in which some question of deep religious concern was asked and answered, were much enjoyed. Wesley, churchman though he was, came to admire Methodist services, and in *A Letter to a Friend* 1757. described their features and advantages.

Since Scripture doctrine was to be interpreted by experience, and as the work became so manifold and extended, it was necessary that the chief workers should confer together. The first Methodist Conference, destined to become the mother of many Conferences in many lands, was summoned by Wesley in 1744. It was held at the Foundery, London, from Monday to Saturday, June 25-30. Ten persons were present, six being clergymen—John and Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Henry Piers, Samuel Taylor, and John Meriton. By agreement they invited to their councils four lay preachers—Thomas Maxfield, Thomas

THE CONFERENCE.

The first, 1744.

*

¹ So late as 1856 the Conference republished a Resolution of 1844 which expressed serious disapproval of reading and singing a whole verse of a hymn at once (*WM*, 'Miscell. Res.').

² *WHS*, i. p. 143.

Richards, John Bennet, and John Downes. As published later the Minutes of the proceedings were given in Wesley's favourite form of question and answer. The Conference discussed what and how to teach and what to do. Doctrine, discipline, and practice were clearly defined. The adherents were described as graded.

The United Societies (which are the largest of all) consist of awakened persons. Part of these, who are supposed to have remission of sins, are more closely united in the Bands. Those in the Bands, who seem to walk in the light of God, compose the Select Societies. Those of them who have made shipwreck of faith meet apart as penitents.¹

The
Anglican
Church.

The attitude of the Methodists towards the Church of England was stated with Pauline freedom and prophetic insight.

Q. 12. Do not you entail a schism on the Church? *i.e.* Is it not probable that your hearers after your death will be scattered into all sects and parties? Or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect? A. 1. We are persuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe notwithstanding either **that** they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead.

And human
authority.

Three years later the Conference declared that the Methodists did not separate from the Church of England, but they knew no New Testament grounds for a national church; such was a mere political institution. And they did not

¹ The Bradford Circuit roll of members of its societies, 1781, in the handwriting of Alexander Mather, gives their religious state as well as their names, whether 'seekers of salvation,' 'justified persons,' or those professing to be 'perfect in love.' *Vide The Bradford Antiquary*, July 1902, art. 'Kirkgate Chapel,' by Mr. J. Norton Dickons.

regard the orders of bishops, priests, and deacons as essential to a Christian church. At these early Conferences the greatest care was taken 'to check no one, either by word or look, even though he should say what was quite wrong.' In speculative things all were expected to submit to the unanimous judgement of the rest only so far as judgement was convinced; in practical things only as far as they could without wounding conscience. Further than this it was declared to be undeniably plain that a Christian could not 'submit to any man, or number of men, upon earth,' neither 'to Pope, Council, Bishop, or Convocation.' Nor were these conferences restricted to clergymen or the preachers. At that of 1746 it was agreed that the most earnest and most sensible of the Band Leaders where the Conference is, and any pious and judicious stranger who might be occasionally in the place, were also 'the properest persons to be present.' Would that the temper, principles of church government, and liberty of these conferences had been maintained in all succeeding ones!

The Conference was the crown and sum of the Methodist system. In five years all characteristic features of Methodism had been developed. Its great year of origin was that first year (1739). In it began the open-air evangelistic preaching, the society with which present-day Methodism is lineally connected was formed, the first building was acquired, and lay preaching was sanctioned. The Conference became an annual gathering. At it Wesley presided, admitted and excluded preachers, appointed them to their spheres, and directed the whole economy of the growing movement. For an ever-increasing number the fiat of the Conference settled annually their work, the bounds of their habitation, and the concerns of the churches they loved. A Methodist Conference is a unique assembly.

Origins.
1739-44.

It is [says Dr. Fitchett] a parliament clothed with all the functions of legislation; a cabinet of administration; a court of discipline; the machinery by which the great system of the itinerancy, which is characteristic of the pastorate of the Methodist Churches, is regulated.

PHILAN-
THROPY AND
REDEMPTIVE
SERVICE.

It must not be overlooked that side by side with preaching and organizing went philanthropy and effort towards social reform. The Christ-like example of Morgan, the Oxford Methodist, was followed by many. The earliest financial arrangements of Methodism were not for the enrichment of its services, nor even for ministerial maintenance ; but to provide humble buildings for worship and to succour the poor and needy. One of the memorable glimpses of the eighteenth century is of Wesley at the age of eighty-two trudging five days from morning until evening through the streets of London, often ankle-deep in melting snow, collecting £200 with which to clothe the poor. His example was much ; but Wesley also systematized such help, and indeed anticipated features of the Elberfeld and other effective systems of poor relief. The beneficence of early Christianity was recalled by that of the Methodists at Tetney, Lincolnshire. Wesley says :

In the class-paper (which gives an account of the contribution for the poor) I observed one gave eightpence, often tenpence, a week ; another thirteen, fifteen, or eighteen pence ; another, sometimes one, sometimes two shillings. I asked Micah Elmoor, the Leader, an Israelite indeed, who now rests from his labour, 'How is this ? Are you the richest society in all England ?' He answered, 'I suppose not. But all of us who are single persons have agreed together to give both ourselves and *all we have* to God. And we do it gladly ; whereby we are able, from time to time, to entertain all the strangers that come to Tetney ; who often have no food to eat, nor any friend to give them a lodging.'

Almost every society had its benevolent fund ; and the operation of its relief was not confined to the members of their own religious fellowship. The Strangers' Friend Society, still in places maintained in vigour, was established by Methodists.¹ John Richard Green rightly associates the Methodist revival with the rise of modern English philan-

¹ Gardner, *The Grain of Mustard Seed*, and *WMM*, 1845, 'Methodism in Former Days,' xiv.

thropic and redemptive effort. Many of them the result of reforming zeal, and all of them aflame with moral enthusiasm, the Methodists despaired of no man. Neither vicious men or women, nor loathsome disease, could deter them. They begged for entrance to noisome prisons as to a palace, and pleaded with those under sentence of death to accept life in Christ.

Silas Told (1711—1778), the reclaimed sailor whom Wesley Silas Told. appointed master of the Foundery charity school, filled his leisure with this work, and stands beside John Howard as a prisoner's friend. His veracious narrative¹ of his life and this work is comparable with Defoe's masterpieces in romance, horror, and pathos. Most impressive are his records of moral transformations and miracles of grace, with his modest references to his own courage and patience, which were the human instruments of them. When a man was sentenced to death for stealing sixpence, and Newgate had forty prisoners under sentence of death at one time, the sad offices of Told were in frequent request. He allowed himself to be locked in the cell with each prisoner in turn; and when the fatal hour came accompanied each to the place of execution. He was overwhelmed with grief when he could not secure the release of such as he was convinced were innocent. In several such instances their innocence was established after their execution. Told received the penitent confessions of hundreds. He was their never-wearied intercessor with God, and the intermediary between them and their victims or broken-hearted friends. He laboured steadily to secure the reform of blundering legal administration and inhuman law. All this was done without fee or reward.

Sarah Peters also regularly visited Newgate until jail fever, contracted there, laid her in the grave. One after another of six condemned prisoners there at one time was bowed in penitence and lifted up in humble trustfulness by her ministry. The jailor declared, 'I never saw such people.' They blessed the day and place of their

¹ *The Life of Silas Told*, written by Himself (London, 1790).

captivity since there they had found deliverance from sin. Said one: 'When I first came to this place my heart was as hard as my cell-walls and as black as hell. But now I am washed, now I am made clean by the blood of Christ.' Similar work was done in the prisons of Bristol, Leeds, York, and elsewhere. The scene in *Adam Bede*, where Dinah Morris is pictured bending in yearning Christ-like pity over condemned Hetty Sorrel, had frequently its counterpart in reality.

II

HELPERS.

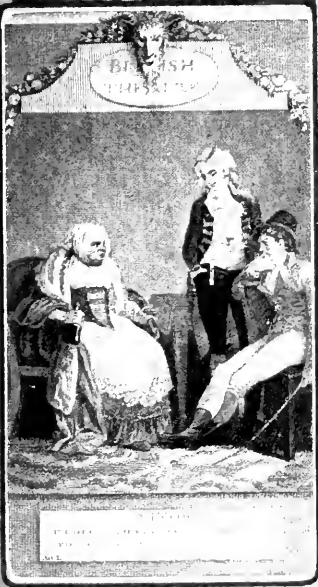
As we have seen, the spirit of Methodism created workers; the neglected religious tasks of their age called loudly for them. Several of these helpers of the Wesleys, typical of many preachers, clerical helpers, and godly women workers, may now be briefly noticed.

THE ITINER- ANTS.

Wesley drew out of his preachers their life-stories, and published them while yet their subjects and contemporaries were living. The veracity of these remarkable records was thereby established. They are human documents of the first order, transparent and naïve, evidential and suggestive in high degree. It is not surprising that in the *Arminian Magazine* (1778 *et seq.*), or in fuller form in the *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, they retain their attraction for minds of diverse order as varieties of experience, and are of psychological interest. Their devotional value is great.

John Nelson.

John Nelson (1707—1774) was an early, and in every way distinguished helper as a preacher and witness. His character was a valuable asset, while his labours were almost apostolic in their range and results. His *Journal* is entitled to a place beside Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*. Nelson was born at Birstall, Yorkshire. He was a man of robust physique and strong emotions, albeit of quick intelligence. By trade he was a stonemason. In this he excelled, and was sure of employment, although he refused to work on



SILAS TOLD PREACHING TO A FLEON ON THE WAY TO LEBURN. (Hoote's)
A SAMPLE OF THE SATIRE OF THE
DRAMA. (Hoote's Minor.)

CARICATURE OF 1766. (Avisley's Barret
found.)

Sundays, as desired to do on the Exchequer buildings in London. His abilities and frankness attracted men of all grades to him. The Speaker of the House of Commons tarried to watch him at work and bemoaned the transitoriness of things material and of all things mortal. Nelson had a sovereign remedy for all sadness. He begged all to seek the mercy he had found ; for, says he, ‘ I could not eat my morsel alone.’ Though not immoral before this change, he was under a horror of great darkness. Wesley was the messenger of peace and light to him. By that and a deep kinship of spirit the aristocrat and the artisan, the scholar and the stonemason, were knit together. Love made his hand skilful as he drew this picture.

I was like a wandering bird, cast out of the nest, till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields. Oh, that was a blessed morning to my soul ! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face towards where I stood, and I thought fixed his eyes upon me. His countenance struck such an awful dread upon me before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock ; and, when he did speak, I thought his whole discourse was aimed at me. When he had done, I said, ‘ This man can tell the secrets of my heart : he hath not left me there ; for he hath showed the remedy, even the blood of Jesus.’

Wesley engaged him to itinerate after he had rendered extraordinary service in the reformation of his own district. The vigorous Methodism of such centres as Leeds, Manchester, Sheffield, York, was associated at its founding with his labours. His tour with Wesley in Cornwall was memorable for its success and privations. At St. Ives Nelson says :

Becomes an itinerant.

Mr. Wesley and I lay on the floor : he had my great-coat for his pillow, and I had Burkitt’s *Notes on the New Testament* for mine. After being here near three weeks, one morning, about three o’clock, Mr. Wesley turned over, and, finding me awake, clapped me on the side, saying, ‘ Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer : I have one whole side yet, for the skin is off but on

one side.' We usually preached on the commons, going from one common to another, and it was but seldom that any one asked us to eat and drink. . . . As we returned, Mr. Wesley stopped his horse to pick the blackberries, saying, 'Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries; for this is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst that ever I saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?'

Pressed as
a soldier.

Early in this work and while he still worked at his trade, Nelson was illegally pressed for a soldier in order to stop his preaching. He refused to accept service and was trailed about the country to weary him. He used every opportunity to preach to the crowds he encountered, and respected no man's person in his counsels and rebukes. For the last a profane officer put him in prison and threatened to chastise him. He says ingenuously :

It caused a sore temptation to arise in me; to think that a wicked, ignorant man should thus torment me, and I able to tie his head and heels together. I found an old man's bone in me; but the Lord lifted up the standard within, else should I have wrung his neck and set my foot upon him.

At length Lady Huntingdon procured Nelson's discharge (1744). A substitute was hired for him, probably paid for by the London Methodists. His life was throughout one of incessant labour and privation. Like St. Paul, he often worked at his trade while serving as preacher. A characteristic and pathetic letter to Charles Wesley¹—'If I be hurt I would not have any one to be hurt with me'—shows that as late as 1758 Nelson was compelled to state 'I am going to hew stone again and I think to quit the [preacher's?] house'; for he had but ten shillings a week for himself, his family, servant, and house-keeping.

His perse-
cutions.

Few of the itinerants were so brutally persecuted as Nelson. By plots to destroy him and Wesley it was thought to extinguish Methodism. Both were remarkably tactful with the mob and opposition, and often turned them in their

¹ Unpublished until 1903. *WHS*, iv. 104.

favour. At Manchester Cross Nelson's face was cut by a stone thrown at him ; but he continued singing and preaching while the blood streamed down his face. As he preached at Nottingham a sergeant who had led a mob to illtreat him said he had been compelled to listen to him, and believed he was a servant of God. He implored his pardon with tears. The parish clergyman at Grimsby hired a drummer to drown Nelson's voice. He preached on until the drummer, pausing to rest a moment, was cut to the heart by Nelson's words, threw his drum away, and stood listening with tears streaming down his cheeks. In Bradford he was flung into a filthy dungeon. He says : ' My soul was so filled with the love of God that it was a paradise to me. I wished my enemies were as happy in their own houses as I was in the dungeon.'

Nelson was a redoubtable controversialist. He defended Wesley and Methodist teaching against all comers. His apt replies and quotations from Scripture were often repeated. ' You have too good a memory for me,' said one as he retired defeated. When another said to Nelson that his head was turned he replied, ' And my heart too, thank the Lord.' One who declared that he expected to obtain heaven by good works was told that he would be the first on such terms, and that he would spoil its song of praise to God, for his would be ' Glory be to myself.'

John Haime (1710—1784) took another view of his duty as Methodist, and won fame as one of the most intrepid of British soldiers before he became an itinerant. Wesley corresponded with several of his followers in the army, preached in or near their camps, and wrote for them the tract *Advice to a Soldier*. Of forty-one preachers whose stories are told in the *Lives*, more than one-fourth had been soldiers. Facing the French army at Dettingen, where he was under fire seven hours, Haime was delivered from the fluctuations of spiritual experience which had before distressed him. In winter quarters in Ghent and in camp near Brussels he formed Methodist societies. He often preached to a thousand hearers, officers and men. The profanity of the soldiers in that campaign was remarked even by Sterne.

Haime.

1743.

The efforts of Haime and his helpers raised the question, 'Was ever so great a work before in so abandoned an army?' Haime hired others to take his place as soldier, while he preached four or five times a day, sometimes thirty-five times in a week. The chaplains bitterly opposed his efforts; and he declared that he had 'three armies against him—the French army, the wicked English army, and an army of devils.' Happily his efforts were approved by the Duke of Cumberland, who was in command. Six others served with Haime as preachers, and there were three hundred in Methodist membership.

1745.

At the battle of Fontenoy these preachers and their comrades were among the bravest and most fearless. Some were possessed by a rapturous desire for death which resembled that showed by some of the martyrs. All were amazed at their courage. Clements, one of the preachers, would not be carried off the field, though wounded, for 'I have an arm left to hold my sword.' When a second shot broke that arm, he declared, 'I am as happy as I can be out of paradise.' Evans, also a preacher, was smitten by a cannon ball which took off both his legs. He 'was laid across a cannon to die, where as long as he could speak he was praising God with joyful lips.' Haime had a persuasion that he should not be killed, and so it proved, although he was in the thickest of the fight and several times was thought to be dead.

Hopper.

Christopher Hopper (1722—1802) is a type of another class among the preachers. Adam Clarke declared that Hopper was in the strictest sense a great man. He was a native of Durham, educated, and strictly trained. He gave up his school and went from town to town and house to house, singing, praying, and preaching the word. His small financial resources were soon exhausted. As he crossed quagmires and mountains through snowstorms when the congealed flakes covered him with a white mantle, he says, 'Satan assaulted me, and pushed me hard to return to my school, or some other business, to procure bread.' But his faith triumphed and he continued his arduous and most useful

ministry. With Wesley he introduced Methodism into Scotland (1751). In Wesley's absence, he presided at the Conference of 1780. He was aptly called the tall cedar in the goodly forest of the early preachers, a Boanerges to the stout-hearted and a Barnabas to the sorrowful.¹

Robert Carr Brackenbury (1758—1818) travelled irregularly for forty years, often appointed as a supernumerary. He was a gentleman of education, poetic talent, and wealth, and welcomed Wesley and his preachers to his home, Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire, which Wesley called a palace in the midst of a paradise. He formed many societies, among them those of the Channel Islands, where Kilham assisted him. Brackenbury, never received into 'full connexion' as a preacher, preferred to preach from the reading-desk in the chapels, reserving the loftier platform for the appointed travelling preacher. The first lay itinerants followed his practice or spoke from among the congregation. Walsh was the first to claim the pulpit for them. Few of them excelled Brackenbury in gifts or holiness. He was the intimate friend of Wesley, often assisted him in services, accompanied him on several tours, and was by his side when he died.

Bracken-
bury.

Several clergymen of the Church of England strongly sympathized with the Wesleys and assisted to spread Methodism. Besides those named as present at the first Conference and several whose work demands at least a brief notice, there were others. Among these were Benjamin Colley, Vincent Perronet, John Richardson, Peard Dickinson, James Creighton, and Thomas Vasey. These, with the Wesleys and the three ministers named below, are the eleven clergymen who identified themselves with the Methodist movement.

METHODIST
CLERGY.

Among such helpers William Grimshaw (1708—1763) was distinguished. On becoming vicar of Haworth, Yorkshire (1742), he opened his pulpit to the Wesleys, and his home to

Grimshaw.

¹ Thomas Walsh, often styled 'Wesley's typical helper,' is noticed in vol. ii. chap. i.

their assistants. Despite opposition by his clerical brethren, which however failed to secure the approval of his bishop, he itinerated among the Methodist societies, formed several, and was appointed by Wesley superintendent of the Haworth Circuit with Nelson and Schofield as colleagues. Grimshaw's preaching and labours produced remarkable results amongst a people then 'ignorant and brutish as the face of the country is wild and rugged.' The services held in his church attracted vast crowds. Its communicants increased from two hundred to twelve hundred. Grimshaw was stern and summary in his dealings with wilful absentees from worship. Sometimes he announced his intention of preaching before their doors; or, whip in hand, he would surprise idle Sabbath-breakers in the ale-houses and cloughs of his parish and march them before him to church. His consuming devotion, personal frugality, and abounding benevolence more than condoned such occasional asperities.

Fletcher.

The character and abilities of John Fletcher (Jean Guillaume de la Flechère, 1729—1785) stirred even Southey to admiration as 'a man of rare talents and rarer virtue,' who 'in any communion would have been a saint.' He was born at Nyon, the youngest son of a noble family of Savoy, was prepared for the army, and obtained a commission in Flanders. Diverted from this, he became a tutor in an English family. A question concerning the Methodists brought him the reply that 'they are a people who pray day and night.' 'Then,' said he, 'I will find them out if they are above ground.' Wesley counselled him to seek ordination. The day upon which he received it, in the Chapel Royal, Whitehall, he went at once to help Wesley to dispense the ordinance of the Lord's Supper to the Methodists at West Street Chapel.¹ It was a critical period in the development of Methodism. Wesley wrote gratefully :

1757.

Mr. Fletcher helped me again. How wonderful are the ways of God! When my bodily strength failed and none in England

¹ With Fletcher went John Bakewell, the author of 'Hail, Thou once despised Jesus,' who was thus secured for Methodism.



VINCENT PERRONET, OF SHOREHAM. The 'Archbishop of the Methodists,' who first used the term 'The Methodist Church.'

JOHN FLETCHER, 1729-1785.

JOHN NELSON, stonemason, the typical lay itinerant.

WM. GRIMSHAW, of Haworth, 1708-1765.

MRS. MARY FLETCHER, 1759-1815.

ADAM CLARKE, 1760-1822, in the travelling costume of his day.

were able and willing to assist me, He sent me help from the mountains of Switzerland, and an helpmeet for me in every respect ; where could I have found such another ?

Fletcher accepted the vicarage of Madeley, Shropshire, 1760. a position he held until his death twenty-five years later. His work there, adapted by his seraphic ardour to every class and condition, brought Madeley enduring fame, like that of Baxter to Kidderminster. He ranked with the noble and learned ; but he strove to remove from the meanest every excuse for the neglect of religion. He rang a bell at five o'clock on Sunday morning in the most distant parts of his parish to call all to worship. Methodist societies were established by him all round the neighbourhood. This and his endeavours to suppress obscenity and brutal sports brought upon him the opposition of the clergy, magistrates, publicans, and the mob. His life was often in danger. His love and loveliness overcame all hatred, and his church was filled to overflowing. The income from his Swiss patrimony and other sources was all absorbed by his charities, which sometimes involved him in debt and almost emptied his house and wardrobe. There are not in literature more moving descriptions than his of the sad lot of the English labourer, colliers, bargemen, and ironworkers, as he saw them and sorrowed over them and their sins. Fletcher frequently visited Trevecca, as honorary president of its college, which Lady Huntingdon had founded for ministerial students of all denominations. Upon the revival of the Calvinian controversy of thirty years earlier, in which Hill and Toplady now joined with incredible vehemence, every one holding Arminian views was required to quit the college. Joseph Benson, its classical tutor, was amongst these. Fletcher thereupon severed his connexion with it (1770). With saintly patience and restraint, but with 'logie on fire,' he dealt with these advocates of Calvinism, and with its principles. His *Checks to Antinomianism* still move their readers to Wesley's opinion of them : 'One knows not which to admire most—the purity of the language, the strength and clearness of the argument, or the mildness and sweetness

of spirit which breathes throughout the whole.' Fletcher was the earliest and fullest expositor and interpreter in English of the Remonstrant theology of Arminius; and his works remain the storehouse of its treasures and the arm-oury for its defence. His love and his learning made Fletcher at once the St. John and the St. Paul of Methodism. Somewhat late in life he married Mary Bosanquet, of Cross Hall, Leeds. She was an equal partner with him in saintliness and service. Her *Life* is one of the treasures of devout Methodists. Wesley, who thought that Fletcher had the popular address of Whitefield, with greater intellectual abilities, and was the holiest man he had known in eighty years in England and America, desired him to be his successor as the director of Methodism. This Fletcher declined. He predeceased Wesley by six years.

Coke.

If Fletcher felt compelled to refuse such honour and responsibility, his writings had helped to secure a distinguished coadjutor for Wesley. This was Thomas Coke, of whose noble services later pages will tell. Fletcher's *Checks*, with Wesley's sermons and *Journals*, were lent to Coke. He then sought out Wesley, and was dismissed from his curacy at South Petherton because he adopted Methodist ways. He resolved to unite with Wesley, who met him at Kingston near Taunton.

Here I found a clergyman, Dr. Coke, late Gentleman Commoner of Jesus College in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose. I had much conversation with him; and an union then began, which I trust shall never end.

All such assistance was welcome. By 1760 there were ninety itinerants, many local helpers, and upwards of fifty chapels were regularly used. In that year also there was a revival in Yorkshire. The growth of the work, its need of superintendence, and the calls of his people for the regular administration of the ordinances among them gave Wesley anxiety. He addressed a circular to more than fifty clergymen asking them, without formally uniting, to assist him and one another in evangelistic work. Only three vouch-

Wesley's
appeal to
the clergy,
1764.

safed an answer. One of these, Vincent Perronet, responded heartily, opened his house to the Methodists, and earned from Charles Wesley the title of 'the archbishop of the Methodists.' Twelve others attended the next Conference, urging the request that the Methodist preachers should be withdrawn from any parish where there was an evangelical minister. Even Charles Wesley declared that if he had a parish, Methodists should not preach in it. It was true that lack of piety and defective teaching on the part of the clergy had at first been one of the grounds upon which Wesley had justified Methodist work and workers. He had declared,¹ 'Soul-damning clergymen lay me under more difficulties than soul-saving laymen.' Meanwhile, by their own actions the clergy had forced many thousands of Methodists to look upon Wesley and his preachers as their spiritual guides, and a vast organization, which had in it all the promise of completeness and permanence, had been built up. Wesley was not prepared to risk its decline or the spiritual interest of his followers. Rather he sought to consolidate and extend it.²

Two important steps were taken in 1778. Wesley commenced a monthly publication, *The Arminian Magazine: Consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption*. In the same year he opened 'a new Foundery,' a large chapel in City Road, London.³ Its site is about two hundred yards from that of the Foundery which the new building replaced. It was the first chapel built by Methodists in London. Its unique associations and the memorials in and about it made it the resort of visitors from all lands.

A large share in almost all departments of work was taken by women. Liddon defined Methodism as the religion of emotion—a defective account, since no doctrine or system made greater demands upon the will⁴ or was more fruitful

WOMEN
WORKERS.

¹ *Arminian Mag.* 1779, p. 375.

² On the work in Ireland and America, see vol. ii.

³ *Supra*, p. 290. The foundation stone was laid by Wesley, April 21, 1777. He preached from Num. xxiii. 23. It was opened November 21, 1778.

⁴ *Some Elements of Religion* (ed. 1881), p. 9; also *supra*, p. 52.

in godly conduct. Nevertheless as Methodism restored emotion as one of the courts in which the evangel delivered its appeal, and called women as well as men to serve in the church and the kingdom, it was natural that women should welcome the message. As class-leaders, prayer-leaders, sick-visitors, teachers, and occasionally as preachers, the women of early Methodism abounded in good works. The fragrance of their devotion and piety meets one on every page of the records. Wesley was reluctantly brought to believe that some of them had a clear call to the work of preaching. 'God owns women in the conversion of sinners,' he said when referring to this matter, 'and who am I that I should withstand God?'

Mary Bosanquet, afterwards the wife of Fletcher, was the leader of a distinguished group of women who preached. At Leytonstone and later at her ample home at Cross Hall, she spent her fortune in maintaining an orphanage and a house of charity, and her gifts in teaching and preaching. Sarah Crosby was one of her assistants. When she went to lead her class at Leytonstone on one occasion, instead of thirty members she found two hundred present, and was led to speak to them altogether instead of separately. With Leeds as centre she itinerated over a wide district. During one year she travelled nine hundred and sixty miles, held one hundred and twenty public services, led six hundred class and private meetings, and wrote one hundred and sixteen letters. Under the name Sarah Williamson, she is probably 'the blessed woman' referred to in *Adam Bede* as the friend of Dinah Morris. Miss Mallett, afterwards Mrs. Boyce, laboured chiefly in Suffolk and Norfolk. She held Wesley's authority from the Conference of 1787 'as a preacher in our connexion, so long as she preaches the Methodist doctrine and attends to our discipline.'¹ Ann Cutler made Bradford District the sphere of her labours, which were ever memorable by reason of her special power in prayer. Hester Ann Rogers, the wife of James Rogers, an intimate friend of Wesley and one of his itinerants, died when only

¹ Quoted by Rev. J. C. Nattrass, *WHS*, iii. 74.

thirty-eight years of age ; but her work and character, her letters and journal, gave her a high place among Methodist saints.

III

The moral revolution thus wrought in England must be viewed in the light of the fierce opposition which beat about it for many years. Methodism overcame it and thereby rendered incalculable service to civil and religious liberty. John Goodwin, Milton, and Locke contended for it as the most sacred right of human nature. The Wesleys, Whitefield and their followers maintained the noble strife, suffered in it, and made the bounds of freedom wider. They broke the power of the mob, taught magistrates their duty, and vindicated the rights of free speech and the open-air meeting. The necessity for Methodism is indicated by the kind of opposition which it aroused : the toleration, approval and success which it won indicate its divine and human resources.

Opposition was commenced at Bath in 1739, and Beau Nash was its first leader. He was easily dealt with by Wesley in the well-known open-air colloquy. Combe, the Mayor of Bristol, was determined that the peace should be maintained in that city, and opposition there soon died. The Bishop of Bristol (Joseph Butler, author of *The Analogy*) told Wesley, ' You have no business here : I advise you to go hence.' Wesley pleaded his college fellowship as giving him ' an indeterminate commission to preach the word of God in any part of the Church of England.'¹ As we have seen, Wesley managed the mobs with consummate tact, and was often wondrously delivered from them or kept unharmed in the midst. He was soon received everywhere with respect. More church pulpits were opened

¹ Thomas McCullagh's art., *Lond. Quart. Review*, January, 1902, p. 139. Wesley was, however, in error. This Master's degree gave him the *jus ubique docendi*, which he seems to have mistaken for the *jus ubique predicandi*. Hence his famous though irregular declaration, ' The world is my parish.' *Vide supra*, p. 283 n.

or reopened to the Wesleys than they could use. But opposition of all kinds was long continued to their followers. In general it may be said that upon the breaking-up of new ground opposition was offered; even as late as the first quarter of the nineteenth century. Wesley's reluctance to allow his preachers to license themselves under the Toleration Act often left them unprotected. If they availed themselves of it he enjoined them to declare themselves not Dissenters from the Church of England, but Methodists, a distinction which neither the Act nor the magistrates recognized. It was not until 1787 that he advised that all chapels and preachers should be licensed, and then the latter only as preachers of the gospel. All such points were used as pretexts for withholding protection from or illegally ill-treating the Methodists. 'You have no licence to preach and you must go for a soldier,' said the press-gang commission to John Nelson.

Any excuse seemed to be good enough. In his valuable survey of the eighteenth century and Methodism¹ Mr. Simon reminds us that much of the hostility was due to the fact that the clergy had spread the rumour that Wesley was a Jesuit. Certainly this hypothetical connexion of the Methodists with Popery was made the ground of much anti-Methodist literature. They were also freely, but untruthfully, accused of disloyalty.² Because he prayed that God would 'bring home His banished ones'—a scriptural euphemism for the unconverted—Charles Wesley was arraigned at Wakefield for favouring the return of the Pretender. John Wesley was said to be in his pay. All these conditions and suspicions were contributory causes of the opposition and persecution which broke upon the Methodists with unexampled fury. The real causes were the evil heart of unbelief and ungodliness which they attacked, and the innovations which they felt it necessary to introduce. They were passionately in earnest, ignored

False
rumours.

¹ *The Revival of Religion in England in the Eighteenth Century* (1907).

² The use of the names Brunswick and Hanover for many Methodist chapels was originally intended to show loyalty.

precedent, transgressed ecclesiastical regulations of time, place, and manner, and invaded the clerical office. Each of these offences aroused a group of opponents. Archbishop Secker declared that such practices were 'oppositions to the most fundamental principles and essentially constituent parts of our Establishment.' So thought the clergy. Wesley answered that they were no more fundamental than were the tiles of a house. After a long hearing before the Vice-Chancellor and the Heads of Houses, six students were expelled from Oxford University 'for holding Methodistical tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures, and sing hymns in a private house.'¹ These were their 'crimes,' says the sentence of expulsion.² 1768.

The expression of Methodist belief was treated as a crime, although associated with exemplary conduct. Edward Greenfield, of St. Just, Cornwall, who previously had been notorious for cursing, swearing, and all manner of wickedness, had become remarkable for quite contrary behaviour. He was however 'adjudged to banishment' from his wife and family or to 'death.' Wesley, who records this, inquired the reason.

I asked a little gentleman at St. Just what objection there was to Edward Greenfield. He said, 'Why, the man is well enough in other things; but his impudence the gentlemen cannot bear. Why, sir, he says he knows his sins are forgiven!'

Frequently the opposition and persecution were actually led by clergymen. The *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers* cite twice as many instances of this as of their friendliness. They incited the mobs against the Methodists by appeals from the pulpit, headed the rabble which gathered, or paid its leaders. White, vicar of Colne, obtained a bad pre-eminence. He preached twice and pub-

CLERICAL
HOSTILITY.

¹ This expulsion occasioned the famous satirical sermon called *The Shaver*, by MacGowan, 1768.

² Myles, *Chronological History of Meth.* (1813), p. 122.

lished his *Sermon* in which he said that Methodism had a direct tendency to ruin trade. In anticipation of Wesley's visit he enlisted all who would into His Majesty's service 'for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne.' The mob thus raised brutally beat Wesley and Grimshaw and many Methodists, some of whom were thrown from a stone twelve feet high into the river. 'The Church in danger' was the rallying cry most frequently, and Macaulay's description of the conduct of its devotees in the Restoration period was, sad to say, almost deserved again in many instances.

Little as the men of mirth and fashion were disposed to shape their lives according to her precepts, they were yet ready to fight knee-deep in blood for her cathedrals and palaces, for every line of her rubric, and every thread of her vestments. Thus the clergy, for a time, made war on schism with so much vigour that they had little leisure to make war on vice.

Dissenting
disapproval.

The Dissenters were not always favourable nor even tolerant towards the Methodists. For some years the Congregationalists regarded the new movement with deep distrust.¹ Some Dissenting ministers excluded from the Lord's Table all who would not refrain from hearing the Wesleys. Doddridge was asked to consider 'in how disadvantageous a light' his association with the Methodists had placed him. He and Wesley corresponded pleasantly, and at Wesley's request he suggested works to be included in *The Christian Library*, and also courses of reading for the preachers. Methodists had to thank the Dissenters for now keeping for them and for England the opportunities of the Sunday. Under the Militia Bill of 1757, the Government proposed that the new force should be exercised on that day. Pitt supported this; the Bishops offered no opposition; but, says Lecky, 'it created

¹ *Supra*, pp. 65-6; also Dale, *English Congregationalism*, p. 561.

such indignation among the Dissenters that it was speedily abandoned.¹

Restraint being generally absent, mobs raged furiously against the Methodists. Men and women left their brutal sports, and with less feeling than brutes, and with almost inhuman ingenuity and persistence, they hounded the preachers about, and treated them as the off-scouring and scum of the race. All had not John Nelson's ready wit. When the Mayor of Nottingham said the mob would not let him preach, he said, 'I beg pardon, sir, I did not know before now that the town was governed by a mob; for most such towns are governed by magistrates.' The preachers needed all their wits in order to avoid dangers where possible. Wesley declined to preach in a yard 'plentifully furnished with stones. Artillery ready at hand for the devil's drunken companions.' Rogers in such a case was only saved from an intended death-blow by the interposition of a young woman who had recently joined the Methodists. She was felled to the ground by a large stone, and bore gladly to her dying day the mark which it left upon her face. Seward's death resulted from stoning while preaching at Hay, Brecon, in 1740.

Thomas Mitchell received, perhaps, the most cruel ill-treatment of any of the preachers. It was similar in kind to that accorded to many, and his heroic endurance and mystic gladness amid it all was representative of theirs. 'Who would true valour see, let him come hither.' Mitchell was stoned by a Yorkshire mob, for nearly two miles, and lay wounded and ill for weeks. In Lincolnshire (1751) at Wrangle (ominous name!) the mob, headed by two constables, seized him at the early preaching and were instructed by the clergyman in the afternoon still to detain him. The

¹ The Methodists rendered a similar service as leaders in a protest in 1803 when the threatened invasion of England by Napoleon necessitated the Act of Enrolment. Their protest secured exemption from enrolment for Methodist and other preachers, and from Sunday training for all who had religious objections to it. (*WHS*, vi. 27, and *WM*, 1803, 'Addresses.')

mob threw him into a pond again and again. He was then painted all over with white paint, while five of his friends were put through the water. He was next carried to a deeper pond. Taking him by the legs and arms, his tormenters swung him to and fro, and flung him as far as they could into the pool. Quivering as they held him in this long-drawn torture he says : ' For a moment I felt the flesh shrink ; but it was quickly gone. I gave myself up to the Lord, and was content His will should be done.' Not content even that he should be drowned, his persecutors watched for his reappearance and dragged him out more dead than alive. When he recovered a little and was in bed, the mob fetched him again and carried him about, swearing that they would take away one of his limbs unless he would promise to come there no more. ' I told them, I can promise no such thing.' The clergyman told them to take him out of the parish. Putting an old coat about him to cover his nakedness, they carried him to a little hill a mile away, and surrounding him, shouted, ' God save the king, and the devil take the preacher.' No one dare go nigh him. Nevertheless, though forsaken and so exhausted that he could scarcely stand, he declared : ' From the beginning to the end my mind was in perfect peace. I found no anger or resentment, but could heartily pray for my persecutors.'

Wednesbury
and
Norwich.
1743.

The people shared the fate of the preachers ; even women, the aged and afflicted, were not exempt. At Wednesbury the Methodists were beaten with cudgels, dragged through the filth of the streets, and their houses were wrecked. Norwich was undergoing moral transformation at their hands. Their reward was violent and continued persecution by the Jacobite or Hell-fire Club, and Protestants and Papists united. The ringleaders of the mob were kept in pay and primed with liquor. A plot was laid to inveigle the preachers into a house and then suffocate them in a mud pit. Their followers were wounded and burned by the throwing of stones and fireworks among them. Abominable brutalities were inflicted on women. If one magistrate

1751.

imprisoned the rioters, another released them.¹ At other places an ox or a pack of hounds was driven among the assembled Methodists. Sometimes the meeting-house door was fastened on the outside while they worshipped, sparrows were let loose through the windows to put out the lights in the room, and then, as in early Christian history, foul imputations were made that orgies were held in the darkness. Fear and prejudice joined hands to oppress this sect everywhere spoken against. Inns were closed against their wayfaring preachers. Sometimes by agreement, farmers and employers dismissed their helpers and landlords expelled their tenants—all for ‘the odious crime of being Methodists.’ The imagined indignities and cruelties inflicted upon Pidgeon and his family in Rowe’s inimitable *Diary of an Early Methodist* were actually endured, and far worse, by many.²

Misrepresentation, opposition, and persecution by the Press and various publications began in 1738³ and continued with few intervals until 1778, when Wesley was seventy-five and Methodism had been established forty years. Particulars need not be given; but a reference to this class of opposition which Methodism outlived is necessary. Richard Green placed all under obligation by compiling his volume on this painful subject. He names 606 such publications.⁴ Tyerman’s painstaking summaries show that every class and form of literary expression were used. Prose, verse, picture, play, lampoon,

THE PRESS.

Literary
opposition.

¹ *Vide WW*, viii. 210; also *A Summary View of the Doctrines of Methodism: Occasioned by the late Persecutions of the Methodists at Norwich*, signed C. P. — [? Charles Perronet] (Bristol: Felix Farley, 1753); also *Narrative of Disturbances and Outrages in Norwich and the Confession of Some* (London, 1752); also Cennick, *An Account of a Late Riot at Exeter* (London, 1745).

² As late as 1811, a Methodist, William Kent, of Childrey, Berks, was fined £20 for holding a conventicle, though his house was licensed. On appeal the conviction was quashed and the fine returned.

³ *Vide Fog’s Weekly Journal*, December 9; and a reply (? by William Law) *The Oxford Methodists* (London: J. Roberts, 1738).

⁴ *Anti-Methodist Publications issued during the Eighteenth Century* (1902).

and caricature appeared in broadsheet, pamphlet, volume, journal, and newspaper. Ecclesiastical dignitaries and eminent writers vied with hacks and miserable scribblers. Facts and arguments were few, and generally in inverse ratio to abuse and calumny.

In most of these attacks Wesley was naturally the chief object: all who helped him shared in the obloquy and envenomed misrepresentation which went before him and followed after, and made the work more difficult everywhere. Sometimes he replied. He never resorted to the methods and terms often used by his critics and opponents, except perhaps in the one instance of his revolting summary of Toplady's creed. To inquiries he made patient, painstaking answers, laboured assiduously to remove misconceptions, and sometimes injured the work by delaying to take steps which might arouse criticism. His fullest and most spirited defence of himself and Methodism, and perhaps his most vigorous and impressive piece of writing, is his *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, and the three parts of his *Farther Appeal*. Sometimes one can almost see and hear the critic whom Wesley here answers; and, as he beats his opponent back step by step, one shares the feeling of George IV., who as he read Watson's reply to Southey's attacks on the Methodist leaders exclaimed, 'Oh my poor Poet Laureate!' Often Wesley treated published attacks with the silence and contempt which they deserved. Thomas Olivers, one of his preachers, was among the stoutest defenders of Wesley and Methodist doctrine and practice; but he did better service by his preaching and his incomparable hymns than by his polemics.

Meanwhile, criticisms were answered by living epistles read and known of all. Men and women of all classes, who by the agency of Methodism had been healed of moral disease or quickened into newness of life, were standing in the midst, so that soon the bitterest enemy could say nothing against it. After their life of altruistic endeavour, Wesley could add 'Our people die well.' In words of moving eloquence, Lecky gives his impartial confirmation to this

1744, 1745;

Answers
furnished by
renewed
lives.

significant testimony. Sacred recollections were treasured and recounted in village and town concerning the calm confidence, 'too full for sound and foam,' and sometimes of the rapture with which the Methodists faced 'the Shadow fear'd of man.' Often it was noticed that the mind of the dying saint was strangely illumined, and some mystic utterance was left behind to enrich religious lore and open the deeps for such as had eyes to see.

CHAPTER VII

ENGLISH LIFE AND SOCIETY AND THE CONDITION OF METHODISM AT THE DEATH OF WESLEY

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant nation, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks ; methinks I see her as an eagle mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam ; purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance ; whilst the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means.—MILTON, *Arctopagitica*.

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CHAPTER VII

ENGLAND, 1760—1791

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List and to the authorities quoted in Bk. I. Ch. I. add: EVERETT, *Adam Clarke Portrayed* (1843-4-9); ROBERTS, *Hannah More, Life and Letters* (1838).

THE first chapter of this book supplied a sketch of the general conditions of England at the birth of Methodism, in order that our readers might have before them a view of the background and environment of the great religious movement whose story it was intended to relate. This was needful in order that a fair judgement might be formed of the historic drama, with its interesting personages and impressive events. It is equally important that after more than half a century of strenuous and romantic experience, when the death of the leader forms an epoch in its history, that the movement and the nation should be viewed in relation to each other, that thereby a just estimate may be formed of the Evangelical Revival in its essential spirit and actual achievements. Severe as has been the necessary compression, the writer hopes that this summary will aid the reader to the formation of a true judgement of what competent writers have characterized as the most important and far-reaching movement since the Reformation.

I

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century great changes in the agricultural conditions of the country became imminent. The old Aryan common three-field and common-meadow system began to work with increasing clumsiness

MATERIAL
AND SOCIAL
CONDITIONS,
1760-91.

Enclosure
Acts.

and unfairness. A much larger corn supply was demanded by the rapidly increasing population, and this could be best realized by the enclosure and cultivation of the common lands. An Act to accomplish this progressive movement had been passed in 1709, but it remained practically a dead letter for thirty years. Up to 1750 the number of enclosures made under its provisions was under two figures. But from that time the great landowners eagerly sought to reap the advantages opened out before them, with the result that from 1765 to 1785 nearly one thousand Enclosure Acts were passed. Two principles were affirmed in these Acts : that all persons interested in open land should receive an equivalent in enclosed land ; and that the enclosure should not be prevented by the vexatious opposition of a small minority. The equity of these provisions is palpable ; but in the practical working of the Acts many gross injustices were inflicted. The enormous changes involved by enclosure legislation may be understood when it is considered that from 1750 to 1793 the enclosures covered a total of 2,744,000 acres.

Improved
farming.

National improvement in any direction quickly incites to progress in other departments. The increase in land cultivation led to better methods of farming. Viscount Charles Townshend was a type of many landowners who introduced alterations in the cultivation of land so that it became much more productive. Some proprietors travelled in other countries to acquaint themselves with various modes of agriculture which they afterwards carried out with success in this country. These developments in land culture were accompanied by similar progress in the livestock of farmers. Robert Bakewell, a Leicestershire farmer, was the chief agent in this direction. He visited farms throughout England, and instituted experiments by which sheep produced two pounds of mutton where previously they had only yielded one. He produced improved breeds of cattle and horses, and elevated the entire method of housing and feeding stock. He introduced a mode of effectively improving grass land by irrigation, and gave

healthy impulse to all farm methods. In this way the necessities of large populations were met, and commerce was greatly stimulated.

The Treaty of Paris secured a great opportunity for the extension of British commerce. By that document France was excluded from India and also in a large measure from North America. Extensive and exclusive markets were thus obtained for England's traders. Nor was this the whole of the gain. England became also the sole colonizing nation. The exclusiveness as to commerce did not continue long, but with the prospect of quick and enormous profits there resulted a large increase of trade and manufacture. In manufactures up to this time England had lagged behind some of the continental nations. She attained precedence for her woollen products ; but her entire exports of cotton goods amounted in value to less than £50,000 per annum. Simultaneously with the new opening for extending commerce, skilful inventors arose who produced ingenious machines which transformed textile manufactures. John Kay of Bury invented the fly shuttle and the picking peg, and James Hargreaves of Blackburn the spinning jenny. Richard Arkwright of Preston brought out the water frame, otherwise called the throstle frame. Then Samuel Crompton of Firwood, near Bolton, invented the mule, called so because it combined the principles of the machines of Arkwright and Hargreaves. Other improvements were introduced by Need and Strutt of Nottingham, Rev. E. Cartwright of Hollander House, Kent, Radcliffe and Marsland of Stockport, and by others. The results of such numerous and invaluable advances in the methods of production, were diminution in the cost of yarn, increase of wages, and enlargement of trade. New driving methods were required. Wherever possible water-mills were substituted for men or cattle for this purpose. Then James Watt invented the steam engine, improving upon a rude and costly engine introduced some time before by Newcomen. This proved to be an epoch-making invention in many applications.

1763.

New inventions in machinery.

1743.
1767.
1769.
1779.

1765.

Invention of
calico
printing,
1764.

An improvement almost as important as these was the remarkable invention of calico printing, which gave a further impulse to the cotton industry. This was followed by the discovery and application of chlorine in the process of bleaching, introduced from France by James Watt. This saved much time and money, as previously calicoes required to be taken to Holland, where they were exposed for five or six months in the open air to be bleached.

Gas.

The invention of gas followed. Candles had been used for the lighting of mills and factories. By the introduction of gas a revolution was effected. It is not too much to say that these various discoveries and inventions developed the trade of England incalculably and transformed the condition of the people. The exports of cotton, which at the commencement of our period amounted to only £50,000 per annum, increased so that in a hundred years England had more cotton mills and operatives working than all the rest of the world beside.

Roads and
transit.

The extension of commerce imperatively required improved means of communication and travel. Rivers were made navigable, roads were constructed or put into repair until they were equal in excellence to any on the Continent. Canals were cut through districts as highways of commerce. All the country was not equally responsive to the call for new modes of transit. Some districts lagged behind others, especially in the north, where the old pack-horse tracks and ill-furnished roads lingered till towards the close of the century, when Telford and McAdam brought scientific principles and regular system to their construction and repair. McAdam constructed a model road between Maybole and Kirkoswald, which led to a speedy reconstruction of many roads on what is now known as the macadamized plan. James Brindley, an uneducated but acute genius, the son of a Derbyshire farmer, attracted the attention of the Duke of Bridgewater in 1759. Brindley had manifested some ingenuity in mechanical engineering, and he was consulted by the Duke on the project of forming a canal by which the produce of the Worsley coalmines

could be cheaply transported to Manchester. He produced a plan of striking originality, including an aqueduct by which the canal was to be carried over the river Irwell. On the successful completion of this work he constructed the Bridgewater Canal connecting Liverpool and Manchester. This was soon followed by many others. His greatest work was the Grand Trunk Canal, connecting the Trent and the Mersey. Brindley constructed canals measuring in combined length 365 miles. He died in 1772, and by 1794 eighty-one Acts of Parliament had been passed for the construction of canals.

Methods of development pursued in neighbouring countries were now compared one with another, with the result that new avenues to wealth and progress were made available. Forms of investment which had been long practised in Italy and Holland were introduced into England, with the effect of greatly extending bank operations. So successful were financiers in these banking extensions that London became the chief centre of finance in Europe, and also the greatest emporium of commerce.

National resources.

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century the manufacture of pottery in England was in a crude condition. Staffordshire had long been the centre of the trade, but only coarse wares had been produced. Better styles had been imported from Holland and France, and some time after the accession of George III. a race of potters emerged into prominence which produced both earthenware and porcelain of the finest material and decoration. In 1763 Josiah Wedgwood manufactured cream-coloured ware superior to any produced on the Continent both in fineness of texture and durability. This immediately superseded the foreign manufactures. Wedgwood then devoted himself to the invention of ornamental works of graceful design and exquisite adornment. He experimented with clays, colours, and chemicals until he was able to produce cameos, intaglios, medallions, vases, and statuettes of fine, hard texture, with decoration which rivalled in delicacy the work of Benvenuto Cellini. Wedgwood was the forerunner of

Pottery.

a race of great Staffordshire potters, such as Spode and Minton of Stoke, Mason of Longton, Ridgway of Shelton, and others. Centres of the pottery manufacture also arose at Bow, Chelsea, Worcester, Derby, Coalport, and other places, which produced wares of the highest excellence.

Glass.

Concurrently with the growth of the art of pottery was the extension of the manufacture of glass. Sheet or crown glass was first made in 1760. Plate glass followed in 1773, and then cut flint glass came into common use, demanding the establishing of many factories for its production. The demand and supply would have been much greater but for the window taxes, which crippled the trade, and for two generations prevented its natural expansion.

Linen.

During our special period the linen trade was partially overshadowed by the development of the cotton trade, but in Scotland it advanced from four and a half million yards in 1760, to nineteen million yards in 1784. The woollen, silk, and lace trades advanced in similar ratio.

Extensions
of trade

The extension of commerce and the introduction of machinery in all manufactures called for developments of coalmines, and manufactories of iron and steel. In 1783 the processes of puddling and rolling iron were invented. The quantity of pig iron made in England in 1740 was seventeen thousand tons; in 1796 it was one hundred and twenty-five thousand tons. Added to these enormous growths, which required the labour of large populations, there were many other trades and manufactures arising, such as copper, alkali, gas, leather, rope, paper, and other kindred manufactures, all adding to national wealth and importance.

The extension of commerce between Britain and other countries may be estimated from the facts that in 1791 our exports were twenty-five millions, an increase of twelve millions in ten years; our imports were twenty millions, an increase of ten millions in ten years.

Effect on
Methodism.

It remains to point out the effect of the above movements in commerce and trade upon Methodism. The two were intimately bound up together. The great expansion of trade and manufactures led to the rapid growth of the towns

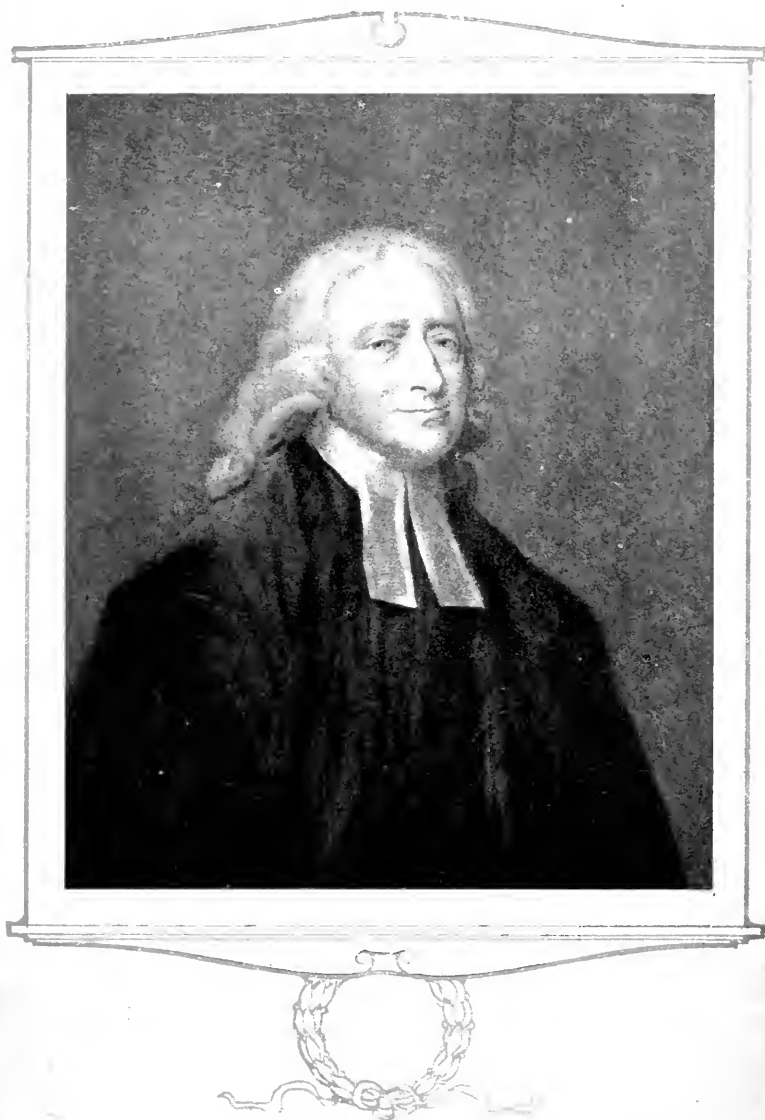
of England. Rural districts became urban ; small villages grew into large centres of population ; country towns became great cities. Illustrations will readily occur to the reader. Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, are but the more remarkable of the many examples of rapid growth that might be cited. From being a county of few parishes and scanty population Lancashire suddenly became the greatest manufacturing district in the world. In this phenomenal growth of manufacturing districts Methodism found its opportunity. The Church of England was too often indifferent to their needs, or, where the rector or vicar was not to blame, the machinery for the subdivision of the old parishes and the erection of new churches was cumbrous and out of date. We have a well-known instance of this in the case of Leeds. Not until Dean Hook succeeded in getting a special Act of Parliament were the clergymen of Leeds able to deal with the new populations. These largely lapsed to the care of an aggressive Methodism whilst the Established Church was debating how it could adjust its machinery to the needs of the times. That which happened at Leeds occurred elsewhere, though not perhaps in so obvious a fashion.

Nor was it only among the working classes that the new conditions prepared the way for the growth of Methodism. The growth of manufacturing industries led to the rise of a middle class. The successful man of business or commerce was not content with the complete non-recognition of the laymen, at that time characteristic of the Church. This active spirit led him to identify himself with Methodism, inasmuch as there he found both a welcome and scope for his energies. Moreover, in the Church the dominant Toryism of the times led to a contempt for those who had made money in manufactures ; they were looked upon as outside society circles ; they were regarded with disdain as self-made men. The middle classes, ostracized by social folly, found their opportunity of influence and service in the many duties and offices of Methodism. As in many instances it had been the means of their spiritual awakening

and of their material prosperity, it had claims upon them which the Dissenting Churches could not possess, and it also offered them more varied forms of service.

Little matters sometimes lead to great results. We have mentioned the introduction of new illuminants. The effect of this upon Methodism, especially in the generation which succeeded Wesley, should not be overlooked. Wesley, in his early desire not to separate from Anglicanism, laid down the rule that services should not be held within church hours. In those days the universal practice of the Anglican Church was the afternoon service; Methodism therefore was driven to the evening hours. With the increase of illuminants, the better lighting of the streets, the concentration of population in urban districts, the evening services of Methodism, not forgetting its class-meetings, at once became popular; in fact, the Established Churches of both England and Scotland have since found it necessary, with but rare exceptions, to follow the example.

The improved means of communication made possible also the thorough working out of the connexional idea. If roads had continued to be as bad as in the youth of Wesley, the power of control by a central Conference would have proved impossible or pernicious. Methodism, especially in the remote districts of the country, would have drifted in due time into local churches, only loosely held together by legal ties. But with the new means of communication there came a new ease in working out the connexional principle. The Annual Conference became a reality, in touch with the whole country; not the executive meeting of a few officials, but the general gathering of ministers, and later of laymen also, from far and wide. The synods, committees, and other central courts of Methodism were capable of being held without undue expense or excessive localization. In a word, connexionalism—the intercourse of part with part, the circulation throughout the whole system of the same principles and methods of government—was made possible and easy of accomplishment.



ROMNEY'S PORTRAIT OF WESLEY, 1789.
(From Ward's mezzotint.)

II

A decided improvement in the tone and habits of social life occurred in England towards the end of the eighteenth century. The court was domestic in its character and homely in its tastes. George III. and his queen were decorous in conduct and simple to parsimoniousness in their household arrangements. They maintained full court splendour on state occasions, but they had no liking for parade or ceremony. The strict morality observed by them was not welcomed by the fashionable world, but it commended both king and queen to the affections of the higher middle classes, now becoming, through the extensions of commerce and manufacture, an important element in the life of the nation. The purity of the English court also contrasted most favourably with the extravagance and licentiousness of foreign courts. Some members of the old nobility imitated the sober life of the sovereign, and helped to maintain the higher standard observed. Among the younger aristocracy, however, there was a determined revolt against the strictness of manner now in vogue. The young princes grew up in overt rebellion to the rule of their parents, and the leaders of the fashionable world identified themselves with the Prince of Wales and his brothers in their course of dissipation and extravagance. High play was practised, and the nation more than once had the spectacle of a group of titled ladies standing in the dock of Marlborough Street police station, charged with keeping faro tables in their houses, and being fined fifty pounds each for the offence. Lord Kenyon, in summing up a case of this kind, declared that if he had to deal with any similar cases, if they were the highest ladies in the land, 'they shall certainly exhibit themselves in the pillory.' Such a rebuke indicates that the vice was losing its glamour, and that many were becoming ashamed of the practice. Gaming parties were still held by certain coteries, which met in rotation in each other's houses. On the other hand, there were arising in society

sets of ladies who abolished all card-playing from their gatherings.

Reformation
of manners.

In the fashionable world there were healthy influences at work which favoured a reformation of manners. The Blue Stocking Clubs, which spread themselves over society during the closing years of the century, exercised an elevating influence upon many, and the Evangelical Revival revealed its purifying power in the circles which gathered round the Countess of Huntingdon, Lady Anne Erskine, Lady Spencer, Lady Glenorehy, and wealthy members of the Methodist societies. Many of these became immersed in religious and philanthropic enterprises which had a purifying influence on the social life of the times.

Amuse-
ments.

Public amusements were undergoing a transformation which, on the whole, showed an upward tendency. The stage became more decorous, the vicious dissipations of Ranelagh declined, with the result that it lost its attractiveness for rakes and courtesans. This led to its being closed at the end of the century. The Pantheon also underwent a cleansing of its worst features, and became a decent concert hall, and even Vauxhall adopted a more sober tone. Nor were these the only signs of improvement. The cruel and dangerous displays of prize sword-fighting ceased, succeeded, however, by the love of boxing. The brutalities of the prize-ring became shamefully common, and the heir to the throne gave much encouragement to the repulsive sport. Notwithstanding this, the public taste for cruel sports moderated itself to some extent. Lotteries also had been greatly reduced in number. In 1777 there were four hundred lottery offices in London and its suburbs alone. In 1778 a law was passed limiting the number of sellers of lottery tickets to fifty-one for the entire kingdom.

Drinking.

There was a sensible diminution in the hard drinking of the upper classes, although the Prince of Wales and his set indulged in the vice to a lamentable extreme. This prolonged a national sore which might otherwise have been much alleviated. The fops and rakes of fashion still strayed about the streets late at night and early in the morning,

indulging in horse-play, scandalously insulting unprotected women, making the air foul with blasphemies and obscene conversation, until, exhausted by excess, and intoxicated with wine, they were picked up by hackney coachmen, conveyed to taverns or refuges till the morning, when the coachmen called for them, and conveyed them to their homes. Nevertheless there was a perceptible improvement in the drinking habits of the wealthier classes. Bull-baiting was on the decline, although the practice lingered for some time in low districts. Horse-racing became the favourite amusement with the aristocracy. A great change had come over the condition of some classes in the population. The country gentleman of small means to whom we are introduced in the writings of Fielding, Goldsmith, and Miss Burney had almost entirely disappeared. This was due to the operation of the Enclosure Acts and improved methods of agriculture. He was either unwilling to adopt these or could not incur the expense which they demanded. This class was either absorbed into the army, the civil service and Indian official life, or sank to the level of tenant farmers. The growth of Methodism thus synchronized with a slow but none the less radical revolution in the whole social structure of the country districts.

III

Few periods of history have excelled the latter half of the eighteenth century for intellectual activity and fecundity. Although effort was made by George III. and his counsellors to repress freedom of speech and the liberty of the press, there arose a crowd of writers in every department of literature who gave undying glory to the reign. More brilliant writers illuminated the Elizabethan and Commonwealth periods ; but in the number of its gifted authors and the general level of excellence attained, this age surpassed all preceding ones.

INTELLEC-
TUAL
CONDITIONS.
A great
period.

Samuel Johnson was the literary Titan of his times. He was built both physically and intellectually on a ponderous

Johnson
(1709-1784).

scale. He was a scholar, a thinker, and a rhetorician of high order, though of questionable taste. He was an indefatigable worker, as witness his *magnus opus*, *The Dictionary of the English Language*, a work of immense research, which occupied seven years in compilation, and, with the exception of Littré, is unsurpassed as the outcome of one man's labour in philological study, luminous definition, sagacity, and precision of expression. As a poet Johnson won greater favour than any of his contemporaries save Gray and Goldsmith. His poems have not retained the high estimate they held in his day, but *London* and *The Vanity of Human Wishes* are filled with fine lines and lofty sentiments. His pictures of Wolsey and Charles XII. are strong and admirable, and his poetry generally is suffused with a true religious spirit. Sir Leslie Stephen says of the former poem that it is pervaded 'by masculine force of thought,' and of the latter, that 'it is scarcely rivalled in the language, in its peculiar style of grave moral eloquence.' Carlyle's verdict upon him was just :

His religion was as the light of life to him ; without it his heart was all sick, dark, and had no guidance left. He was a guide and moral sweetener of his generation.

Collins.

A new era in poetry dawned with our period. The influence of Pope had been paramount in the preceding generation. A crowd of imitators had followed him, scarcely any of whom have survived to the present day. William Collins had imitated him in smooth, precise diction in his earlier efforts, but he soared far above him in lofty poetic suggestion. In his later poems Collins forgot to imitate. In his Odes he attained exquisiteness of form, faultlessness of expression, and delicacy of sentiment. Among the poets of the century he was excelled in these qualities only by Gray. Thomas Gray was a poet of high genius who from deficiency of energy, lack of ambition, and fastidiousness of taste produced a very small harvest of literary fruit. But it was of rare excellence. His poems are contributions to our literary

Gray
(1716-1771).

wealth worth all the tomes of rhyme by the poetasters of the century. Sir Leslie Stephen justly said of him :

He succeeded in secreting only a few poems, which have more solid bullion in proportion to the alloy than almost any in the language which are admired by critics, while the one in which he has condescended to utter himself with least reserve and the greatest simplicity has been pronounced by the *vox populi* to be the most perfect in the language.

Gray's lyrics introduced a new strain into English poetry. The peculiar formation of the strophe, antistrophe, and epode had not been attempted before. The full beauty of his compositions only appears after repeated perusals. Notwithstanding the transitions of taste and fashion, his Odes and the *Elegy* remain as among the finest examples of English poetry.

The most charming *littérateur* of the eighteenth century was Oliver Goldsmith, essayist, poet, playwright, and novelist. In each department he was almost equally perfect. His essays were an entire recoil from the inflated rhetoric of Samuel Johnson, and almost rivalled those of Addison for their quaint humour and delightful conceits. His *Vicar of Wakefield* was the first novel of genuine domestic life, and it remains unequalled for gentle, tender sentiment. His poetry was a startling rebound from the artificial glitter, false philosophy, and society chatter of his predecessors. His *Deserted Village* and *The Traveller* are deservedly among the most cherished poems in our language. Critics affirm that the political economy taught is not sound, and that historical proportion is not preserved, but the word-painting, the lyrical harmony, and human sympathy are perfect and will never fade. Goldsmith wrote two plays, *The Good-natured Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, both of them a total contrast to the licentious productions of the preceding generation. They were not dramas of the highest class, but they abounded in scenes of humour and strokes of true genius.

Goldsmith
(1728-1774).

One other poet of high excellence shines with a clear and

Cowper
(1731-1800).

steady lustre in the galaxy of eminent poets which adorn the literature of the period. He was a timid shrinking spirit, like a sensitive plant amid a garden of glowing flowers. But a great blank would be felt if the name of William Cowper were extinguished from the list of English poets. He was ruthlessly haunted by a brooding melancholy which sometimes displaced reason from her seat, yet at the moment of the extreme decadence of English poetry, when even Hayley was reckoned a great poet, Cowper introduced a style of poetry into our literature free from artificial trammels, fresh as a breeze from the moorland, abounding with exquisite descriptions of nature, containing scathing denunciations of slavery, war, and vice, glowing with love of freedom, justice, and progress, repeating in strong clear song the teachings of the Preacher of Galilee, and all suffused with an optimism born of visions of

The living throne, the sapphire blaze,
Where angels tremble while they gaze.

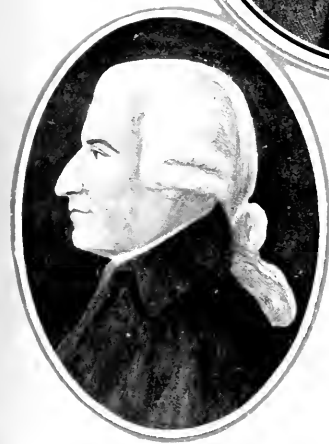
Cowper was a scholar, and, dissatisfied with the smooth flow of Pope's translation of Homer, he successfully rendered into robust English the swift and vigorous tide of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. He wrote pensively of

The calm retreat, the silent shade ;

and anon poured forth a flood of healthy humour in *The Diverting History of John Gilpin*. He wrote many hymns which are sung in the churches of all denominations. His highest achievement was *The Task*, a poem at once descriptive, satirical, and deeply spiritual. It is one of the finest didactic poems in the language, and is a direct fruit in its manly sense, healthy love of nature, and noble religious teaching of the Evangelical Revival.

Burns
(1759-1796).

The genius of Robert Burns was sufficient to redeem any epoch from commonplace. In masculine robustness and intensity of passion he exceeds all our modern poets. In his varied writings he reflected every side of Scottish character and mood. He described with equal ease and verisimilitude



REPRESENTATIVE MEN OF THE PERIOD.

DR. JOHNSON, 1709-1784. With whom the Wesleys had interviews.

WILLIAM COWPER, 1731-1800.

WILLIAM WILBERFORCE, 1759-1833, to whom Wesley wrote one of his last letters, 1791.

JOHN HOWARD, 1726-1790, who called at Wesley's house, City Road, with his last report on prisons, 1790.

EARL MANSFIELD, 1701-1793, Lord Chief Justice, Charles Wesley's life-long friend.

its tenderness, its almost animal vigour, and its burning patriotism. His songs are unapproachable for sweetness. In his serious moods he gives faultless expression to the noblest sides of the national life; in his wild and rollicking moments he reveals a wealth of genius which is as marvellous as its misuse is lamentable. He was built by nature to be a man magnificent in generosity, tenderness, and truth; his laxity of morals brought him degradation and misery which cannot be sufficiently regretted.

A new school of fiction arose about the middle of the century. Samuel Richardson was its creator, although the rudiment has been traced by some writers to the *Tatler* and *Spectator*. Richardson must be credited with being the originator of its expanded form. The success which attended his work was marvellous. In a sensual and profligate age he created *Pamela*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, and *Sir Charles Grandison*, and showed that happiness can only be attained by man in proportion as he practises virtue. He knew where the seat of human passion lay, and had perfect command of it. His diagnosis of the heart was skilful and complete, his representation of vice and folly impressive. His novels stand as a protest against surrounding profligacy; and though they seem intolerably prolix to this generation, they undoubtedly served in their day to arrest the downward drift of fashionable licentiousness and vice.

Richardson
(1689-1761)

Henry Fielding began his first novel, *Joseph Andrews*, as a satire on Richardson's *Pamela*. But in the process of the work he threw into it such powerful interest as to make it a work of real genius. This was followed by *Jonathan Wild*, and this again by his masterpiece, *Tom Jones*. All these overflowed with the music of humanity, and were framed with admirable constructive skill, but far too often ran into indecency. In this they were a reflection of the low morality of the times; but they did not gloat over vice for its own sake. Fielding in his construction of plot, delineation of character, and vigorous movement excelled all the novelists of the century.

Fielding
(1707-1754).

Smollett
(1721-1771).

Tobias George Smollett, historian, critic, naturalist, and novelist, the author of innumerable books, is now only remembered for his novels and for his beautiful song, 'Leven Water.' His novels stand next to those of Fielding for general excellence. They are stained with much coarseness because he describes with unnecessary plainness sides of life which modesty would hide, but he is never wilfully indecent like Sterne. His works overflow with humorous and vivid pictures of the life of the time. *Roderick Random* and *Humphry Clinker* will always hold a place among the chief novels of our literature.

Sterne
(1713-1768).

Lawrence Sterne, the third genius of the century as a novelist, was a contrast in nearly all respects to those already named. He could affect the hearts of his readers by tender pathos, but he wilfully turned the most moving scenes into opportunities for the insinuation of evil. By his frequent use of *double entendre* he disgraced his character as a clergyman and his pages as a writer. All such works were abhorred by the Methodists, as indeed was fiction in general; although Wesley had abridged and warmly commended for their use (1780) Henry Brooke's *Fool of Quality, or, The History of Henry, Earl of Moreland*.¹ Later, a new school of fiction arose to meet the new demand.

The stage.

The most signal proof of the general improvement in public manners at this time was the comparative purity and decency of the stage. It has been called the golden age of the English theatre. The horrible plays of the Restoration period had given place to a Shakespearian revival, and to the plays of Goldsmith, Home, Cumberland, and a crowd of others, the most famous of whom was Richard Brinsley Sheridan, whose plays did much to redeem the theatre from entire degradation. Samuel Foote was the most prolific playwright and the greatest reproach to his profession.

The improvement of the stage was largely due to David

¹ John Easton, one of the preachers, condemned Wesley for doing this. Wesley asked him if he laughed or cried when reading portions of it. When Easton replied, 'No, sir,' Wesley lifted up his eyes, clasped his hands, and exclaimed, 'O earth—earth—earth!' (*Vide* Everett, in *Adam Clarke Portrayed*, and Tyerman, *JW*, vol. iii. p. 342.)

Garrick. With such a circle of brilliant *artistes* as Macklin, Kemble, Quin, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Clive, Mrs. Cibber, and others he was able to give the finest dramas of Shakespeare in a perfect manner, and also to preserve the stage from the depths of impurity into which it had been plunged.

The school of English historians arose during this period. Its founder was a Scot, David Hume. His philosophical works, written in the first half of the century, have been noticed elsewhere,¹ but within our period he issued two volumes of English history dealing with the reigns of James I. and Charles I. The standpoint of the book was that of a thorough royalist, and overflowed with sympathy for Charles, Strafford, and Laud. It was received in chilling silence; but the later volumes, dealing with the Commonwealth and the Restoration, were received with such favour that he was encouraged to write the history of the country back to the landing of Julius Caesar. Modern research has detected innumerable flaws and distortions in it, and its authority is small.

In 1776 the first volume appeared of what is still acknowledged to be the noblest historical work in our language—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, by Edward Gibbon. It was a gigantic undertaking, covering nearly thirteen centuries, dealing with the two great branches of the Roman Empire, including all the nations which played a part in the marvellous drama which had its centres in Rome and Constantinople. It is written in a lofty musical style, stately in its march, picturesque in its representations, and with historical balance and perspective perfectly maintained. The drawback of the work is its unworthy and contemptuous treatment of Christianity. Gibbon belittles and misrepresents its influence, ignores or denies the presence of a Divine Power presiding over human affairs, refers the rapid progress of the gospel to secondary causes, and attributes the corruptions of the church to the essential nature of the Christian religion. A tendency of Gibbon's mind led him sometimes to indulge in the recital of licentious

¹ *Supra*, p. 17.

1788. details. It is regrettable that so monumental a book should be characterized by such blemishes. Meantime the Evangelical Revival was saving England from a decline and fall such as befell Rome. In the year when Gibbon issued the concluding volume of his History, Wesley offered the regenerating message of the grace of God to 20,000 eager listeners at Gwennap Pit.

Reid
(1710-1796). Following the succession of sceptical philosophers of the previous age there arose a number of eminent writers of the opposite school who powerfully influenced the public mind. Thomas Reid, professor of moral philosophy in Glasgow University, issued in 1764 *An Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense*. It was an epoch-making book, and a vigorous attack both on the scepticism of Hume and the idealism of Berkeley. By common sense Reid did not mean vulgar opinion, but the beliefs common to rational beings as such. He sought to prove that our belief in an external world is intuitive and immediate. He pleads that our perceptions cannot be constructed out of the sensations of sense and touch, which are only occasions and not the materials of our constructions. Therefore our belief in an external world of space must be accepted as an original datum of common sense. By such process of induction he reached his theory of common sense as implied in all experience. Reid, although indebted to preceding writers for some of his conclusions, founded a powerful school of thinkers in Europe. Dugald Stewart and Sir William Hamilton in Britain, Royard Collard and Jouffroy in France, were his disciples.

Adam
Smith.
1776. Another writer whose advent marked an era in the progress of philosophy was Adam Smith, also professor of moral philosophy at Glasgow University. His publication, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, showing that labour is the only source of national opulence, laid the foundation of Political Economy as a department of scientific inquiry. He was defective in some of his positions; but his treatise was a stimulating factor in the metaphysical thinking of his own and succeeding generations.

Sir James Mackintosh characterized the book as being one of four ' which have more visibly and extensively influenced public opinion than any other productions of the human intellect,' the others being Grotius' *Law of Nations*, Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, and Montesquieu's *Esprit des Lois*.

The writer who exercised the most influence on the popular mind at this time in the directions of philosophy and theology was William Paley, Archdeacon of Carlisle. He was not naturally a powerful or original thinker, but he had the faculty of gathering up and reproducing the thoughts and conclusions of greater men than himself, and presenting them in transparently clear and attractive English. His style was ' a pure well of English undefiled.' He could interpret abstruse trains of thought to the average intelligence with entire success. He thus became a great gift to his generation. His most original work is *Horae Paulinae*, an endeavour to prove the truth of the Scripture history of St. Paul by a comparison of the epistles which bear his name with each other, and with the Acts of the Apostles. It is an ingenious and instructive book. *The Evidences of Christianity*, which is still in use, is a skilful presentation of much that is contained in Butler's *Analogy*, and in Lardner's *Credibility of the Gospel History*. His *Natural Theology* is a book of wonderfully clear conception and exposition, for which he studied anatomy when over sixty years of age. His *Moral and Political Philosophy* is marred by his erroneous definition of virtue, which vitiates the whole strain of the volume. He defines virtue as ' doing good to mankind in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness.' If this be so it follows that every act not done for the sake of the agent's happiness is vicious. The same conclusion must be reached also if anything is done according to the will of God, if it is prompted by any motive but that of obtaining the reward of endless happiness. Commencing with a premise like this, it is not to be wondered at that Paley should advocate principles in both moral and political philosophy which are now discredited.

Paley
(1743-1805).

1794.

1802.

1785.

But the influence of Paley in his day upon Methodism was very great.

Burke
(1730-1797).

The man who by pen and tongue exercised the greatest influence upon this generation was Edmund Burke. His best work was *Reflections on the French Revolution*. In a group of orators unequalled for splendour in our history, among whom Fox, Sheridan, Windham, and Grey shone conspicuously, Burke, for expansiveness of comprehension and wealth of imagination, towered as the central figure. In these rare qualities Macaulay pronounces him to have been the greatest orator of either ancient or modern times.

Dearth of
writers on
religion.

There was a strange dearth of writers of eminence on theological and religious subjects during the latter half of the eighteenth century. Wesley and Whitefield were preachers and evangelists rather than writers, although Wesley's sermons are still considered by multitudes to be our clearest expositions of evangelical truth, and his *Journals* are the best chronicle of his times, compiled by a religious writer. The Established Church, whilst having experienced a measure of spiritual quickening, could boast of no writers equal to those of the preceding period. Horsley was a brilliant preacher and voluminous writer, but he has almost faded from recollection. Lowth was a ripe scholar and won temporary fame for his books on Biblical criticism, but they are now forgotten and entirely out of date. Jeremiah Seed was a fashionable preacher, described by Johnson as having 'a fine style but not very theological.' Hugh Blair may be considered as the best living preacher, a member of the famous Poker Club which gathered into itself the literary lights of Edinburgh. He lectured on Rhetoric and *Belles Lettres*, and published sermons which gained extraordinary popularity because there was nothing better then current. To survey the dreary space is to wonder what had come to the church which had been adorned by Cudworth and Donne, Taylor and South, Butler and Tillotson.

Women of
literature.

This age was remarkable for the number of women which dignified and redeemed it from much reproach. The Countess

of Huntingdon will be noticed elsewhere, but worthy of mention in this brief sketch are Mrs. Catherine Macaulay, whom Lecky characterized as 'the ablest writer of the new radical school'; Angelica Kaufman, a historical and portrait painter, the friend of Johnson and Reynolds; Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu, poetess, essayist, and society leader, a purifying influence on the fashionable world for more than a generation. She gathered round herself a brilliant circle, among whom were Wilberforce, Cowper, Hannah More, Johnson and his set, with many more. Mrs. Hannah More was in many respects the most prominent of all. She 1745-1833.
exercised a beneficent and widespread power as a novelist, poetess, and philanthropist, and was intimately acquainted with the literary and religious leaders of the times. She wrote many books, all of them having a high aim and being suffused with the truest spirit of religion. Not many of these have survived, but *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain* had a large circulation even within living memory, and her chief novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, passed through at least fifty editions in her lifetime. She was a centre of many admirable movements, as those for the abolition of slavery, the establishment of Sunday schools, of schools for poor children, and the distribution of religious tracts, many of which she wrote herself. She was an enthusiastic supporter of beneficent philanthropy in every direction, the last and best of the elect ladies who were a glory of their time.

While the intellectual wealth and power of England had Periodical
press.
 been producing important books in all departments of literature, the periodical press had been multiplying its organs in a manner no less remarkable. Monthly and weekly magazines were issued as the organs of religious denominations and political parties. *The Arminian Magazine* issued 1778.
 by Wesley was the forerunner of most of these, and, under another title, it is the only one of its contemporaries which still continues in existence. In 1724 there were only three daily newspapers in the entire country, with six weeklies and ten issued three times a week. But when Wesley died, in London alone there were thirteen morning, twenty

evening, and nine weekly papers. In the provinces there were eighty-four dailies or weeklies. To-day there are about twenty-five thousand newspapers published in the United Kingdom, one quarter of which are issued in London.

Artists.

1697-1764.

Up to the middle of the eighteenth century we had imported our artists from the continent. Now a succession of gifted portrait and landscape painters arose and redeemed the nation from reproach. William Hogarth was our first real artist of native growth. He was a careful student of men and manners. His paintings are exact representations of contemporary life, suffused with power of imagination and drawn with a touch of dramatic art. His service to his generation was to seize current vices, strip them of conventional trappings and fashionable glow, to hold them up to reprobation in their hideous repulsiveness and to set forth the consequences of sin with pathos and truth. In these respects he is still without a rival. Following Hogarth came Richard Wilson as the founder of English landscape painting. He was a painstaking and conscientious artist, a careful student of Salvator Rosa. His glowing skies and rich foliage draw the admiration of connoisseurs to this day. Then arose Reynolds, Gainsborough, and Romney, who raised the art of portrait painting to its highest excellence.

1723-1792.

Reynolds was the greatest portrait painter England ever produced. This is the verdict of Turner and Ruskin. The qualities of Reynolds as a man were as noble as his genius as a painter.

1727-1788.

Gainsborough was equally excellent as a painter of both portraits and landscapes. The former were so unaffected and graceful that they were described as 'mind and music breathing from the face.' Next in rank after these superb artists comes Romney, superior in the grace and dignity of his portraits to all our painters save only those just mentioned.

1734-1802.

Reynolds and Romney both painted portraits of Wesley. Three such artists would make any era remarkable, but to these must be added the names of West, Copley, Opie, Barry, Northcote, Stothard, and Bewick, with others almost equal in merit. Much of this extraordinary advance in art was due to the institution of the Royal

Academy (of which Sir Joshua Reynolds was the first President), the Society of British Artists, and the Society for the Encouragement of Art and Manufactures. Equally remarkable was the growth of the art of sculpture, in which Bacon, Nollekens, and Flaxman attained almost the perfection of skill.

Once more it remains to gather up, so far as is possible, the bearing of these new movements in art and literature upon Methodism. On the whole, we may say that the tendency of the day was towards revolt; a many-sided revolt, but especially directed against all that had cribbed, cabined, and confined human experience and taste within ruthless and artificial limits. With this revolt Methodism was one. Towards the close of Wesley's life we see the rise of a new spirit which was destined to effect both Methodism and all forms of religious life. With the incoming of Wordsworth and Burns we see the dawn of a more beautiful day; England would not always be content with the ugly and artificial. The return to the beautiful, especially in nature, of which those writers were the leaders, was followed by Walter Scott's romantic appeal to the medieval. The outcome of these two movements was felt in the Oxford Movement of the early nineteenth century. But to the effect of this upon Methodism reference is made elsewhere.¹

Effect on
Methodism.

IV

The period stretching from the rise of Methodism to the death of Wesley, in 1791, was crowded with startling and important political events. The accession of George III. to the throne was practically a revolution. He was in every respect a contrast to his predecessors, and the trend of his policy was totally opposed to theirs. No monarch ever ascended the throne of England amidst more universal favour. He was English born and bred. He had the traits and habits which commend themselves easily to the English mind. The two previous kings were foreigners by birth and

POLITICAL
SITUATION.

Character
and
qualities of
George III.

¹ *Supra*, p. 64.

in habit. They never claimed nor gained the affections of their subjects, but George III. was acclaimed king with universal enthusiasm. He had a stubborn will and just as much understanding as fitted him to be a fair man of business. He had been carefully drilled by his mother in extreme notions of royal supremacy. She had repeatedly urged him to absolutism, saying, 'George, be King.' He responded eagerly to such an injunction. He commenced his reign with a profound dislike of the method of government by party, which had grown up under his predecessors. He knew that a Parliament was indispensable to the Government of the nation, but he diligently applied himself to manipulate the House of Commons for his own purposes. A set of men known as 'the king's friends' were appointed to the chief departments of the Government.

George had some notable excellences. He was a firm believer in Christianity, and acknowledged gladly the debt which the country owed to Methodism. He was a virtuous man, lived a simple homely life, kept a household which was pure even to dullness, and a court which was perfectly decorous, until contaminated by the profligacy of his sons. On the other hand he was a friend to mediocrity. His favourite Ministers of State, artists, poets, and churchmen were all mediocre. His reign was adorned by men of extraordinary brilliance in every department, but he favoured none of them. Chatham, Burke, Sheridan, and Fox were set aside for Bute, North, and Sidmouth. In art West was preferred to Reynolds or Gainsborough, in poetry Beattie was esteemed higher than Goldsmith or Johnson; he said, 'Shakespeare wrote sad stuff.' The appointments to the chief places in the church during his reign were mostly inferior and some of them contemptible. This disposition of mind supplies a key to his whole nature, and explains much of the troubled course of his reign. He renewed and systematically pursued the policy, introduced by Walpole and perfected by the Pelhams, of expending enormous sums in bribing and corrupting the members of the Government and Parliament.

When George assumed the crown, the war between France and England was in full progress. Pitt was resolved to gain for England supremacy over both land and sea. The British arms were everywhere successful. The French were driven out of Canada, naval victories followed at Lagos and Quiberon Bay, Clive and Coote established British rule in Southern India. But the king and his favourites strongly opposed Pitt's war policy and refused to commence hostilities with Spain, which he held to be imperative, and for which with statesmanlike prescience he had fully prepared. Pitt resigned; but, as he had predicted, the war ensued, and he was recalled to office. Signal victories were again realized by the British, and a treaty of peace was concluded. Under this treaty France abandoned all right to any military settlement in India; she also resigned to England all possession in Canada, Nova Scotia, and Louisiana as far as the Mississippi. The effect of these victories upon the future of Methodism cannot be exaggerated. Canada and North America—the great strongholds of Methodism—became English and not French. Protestantism and not Romanism were destined to become supreme in the Northern Continent.

French War.

1759.

1763.

On the conclusion of peace a deep, hoarse cry arose condemning the corruption of Parliament and insisting upon reform. From the accession of Charles II. nothing had been done to repair the abuses in representation. Great towns like Birmingham and Manchester had no representatives, while members sat for boroughs which had disappeared, and had not one resident elector. Seats were openly bought and sold; members of Parliament disposed of their votes to the highest bidder. An office was kept open by Lord Bute for traffic in votes, and the king regularly scrutinized the voting lists of both Houses, and distributed places and rewards to those who had voted according to his will. The public press of the country was muzzled, and prosecution or persecution was the meed of the writers who sought to expose these wrongs or obtain redress. The eloquence of Pitt, now Earl of Chatham, was fearlessly employed to expose abuses and demand reforms; but the forces were

Cry for reform.

too strong for him, and he died in 1778, while in the act of pleading for such conciliatory treatment as would preserve the American colonies within the empire.

War with
America.

After the signing of the French Treaty there arose the dispute between the American colonies and England as to the right of the English Parliament to tax the colonies, which had no voice or representation in the Government. The result was a deadly war between the mother country and her children which lasted for seven years. It finally resulted in the defeat of the British, and the United States became a noble nationality. After some years a friendly understanding and a brisk commerce sprang up between the two nations, resulting in the prosperous development of the two countries. But in the binding together of the two nations Methodism has played no small part.

French
Revolution.

The national feeling of England was stirred to its depths, soon after the close of the American War, by the terrible cataclysm of the French Revolution. It is incomparably the most important event of modern history. It was the result of many concurrent causes, none of which singly is sufficient to account for it, but which in combination operated to produce effects which in their immediate influence were appalling. Among these causes have been reckoned the *Marriage de Figaro*, a play by De Beaumarchais, which greatly excited the popular mind. The mocking scepticism and satire with which Voltaire assailed the Roman Catholic Church shook the belief of the people not only in the purity and divinity of the church, but also in the truth of Christianity. Rousseau in his political works inculcated the doctrines of popular sovereignty and natural equal rights, leavening the proletariat with the teachings of the *Contrat Social*. The Encyclopaedists filled many minds with a defective philosophy, which destroyed the bulwarks of morality, and loosened the hold of men on truths which had been the safeguard of human nature. Such views of political economy, such materialistic principles spreading widely in a country whose financial position was one of bankruptcy, whose Government was hopelessly corrupt,

1784.

whose kings had become the tools of ambitious priests and profligate women, might well sap the bases of the national structure and ensure its downfall. But there were other causes which touched the people even more nearly than these coincident elements of revolution. The terrible famine of 1788, involving the ruin of manufactures and the paralysis of trade, drove to madness a squalid peasantry, clad in rags and pinched with hunger. The court and aristocracy were profligate, extravagant, effeminate, and hard-hearted. The château and the palace were filled with revelry and luxury. The high-roads of rural districts and the slums of great cities were filled with degraded wretches. The desperate conditions wrought madness in the minds of the people, until with one consentaneous paroxysm of rage they exacted vengeance upon their oppressors. The Revolution was an unparalleled devastation in which the foundations of law, order, government, and national security were swept away. It was the natural consequence of centuries of injustice, repression, and usurpation. In the *mêlée* the fabric of social order in France was destroyed ; in Europe it was everywhere shaken, and England felt the shock severely. Some of the greatest English writers rejoiced in the downfall of a shameful tyranny and hailed the uprising of the democracy. Dr. Priestley and Dr. Price vindicated the action of the people ; Sir James Macintosh predicted that France would now be regenerated and that all the nations of Europe would share in the benefit ; Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Southey sang rapturous paeans in support of it ; while Thomas Paine wrote his *Rights of Man*, in reply to Burke's *Reflections*. For a time England seemed to be in a parlous state through the infection of the revolutionary sentiment. The significance of this tremendous episode lies in the fact that it was not a change in the adventitious arrangements of society, but a complete upheaval of a nation from its base. The English Revolution of the seventeenth century was a vindication of a democratic constitution and a return to a polity which the people had possessed for centuries. But in France the Revolution was an utter rejection of the past and a fresh

Public
feeling in
England

creation upon a new basis and startling theories. The Assembly made a *tabula rasa*, and proceeded to reconstruct society by deductions from abstract principles, and on a professed foundation of pure reason. It was not wonderful that so profound an upheaval should send its vibrations far and wide. In England, the "Corresponding Society" was formed by Thomas Hardy to agitate for reform, and was supported by Major Cartwright and the extreme Radicals. The moderate section of Liberals formed the "Society of the Friends of the People," with the object of obtaining a measure of constitutional reform, Charles, Earl Grey, being the leader of the movement. Hampden Clubs arose in almost every part of the country, with Sir Francis Burdett as the president, to advocate reforms which meant little less than a revolution. Another movement was set on foot by a Yorkshire schoolmaster called Spence, who was a leveller of the most thorough type. Spencean clubs were established everywhere, advocating the formation of a republic. The advance of revolutionary principles was retarded by Burke's *Reflections upon the French Revolution*; but its arguments were assailed by many powerful writers, especially by Sir James Mackintosh in his *Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, as we have already pointed out. Widespread unrest arose in the public mind, and the safety of the Constitution was greatly endangered. But for Methodism, as Lecky acknowledges, the revolutionary forces in England would have been more widespread and effective. To this subject, however, we shall return.

V

CONDITION
OF RELIGION.

1767.

The period reaching from the accession of George III. to the death of Wesley was of great importance in relation to the improved standing of English Nonconformity.

The first step was taken in 1767. The City of London had long been accustomed to raise money by appointing Dissenters to the office of Sheriff, and then fining them heavily when they refused to stultify themselves by making a profession of belief in the Thirty-nine Articles. So successful had been

this iniquity that £15,000 thus accumulated was devoted to the erection of the Mansion House. An appeal was made to the House of Lords against this injustice, and a decision was obtained to the effect that no man could be punished for refusing to fill an office he was legally incapable of discharging. Thus the cruel wrong came to an end.

A Bill was introduced into Parliament to relieve Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters from the declaration required by the Toleration Act. It passed the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords. Seven years afterwards it was introduced again and passed with the proviso that a minister must be required to make a declaration that he accepted the Scriptures as a rule of faith and practice. 1772. 7

A Bill was passed to repeal those parts of the Act of William III. against Roman Catholics, which related to apprehending Popish bishops, priests, and Jesuits, subjecting these and all papists keeping a school to perpetual imprisonment, and also disabling papists from inheriting or purchasing land. The operation of the Bill was limited to England, and all Papists were required to take an oath against the Pretender, against the temporal jurisdiction or dispensing power of the Pope, against the doctrine that faith must not be kept with heretics and that heretics as such might lawfully be put to death. 1778.

Sir George Saville proposed to extend the benefits of the measure to Scotland, but an intense Protestant fanaticism arose against the proposal. Scotland was covered with societies and committees which roused the country by meetings, pamphlets, handbills, and sermons to resistance. In London a Protestant Association was formed with Lord George Gordon, a weak-minded bigot, as president, and 60,000 men under his guidance threatened to storm the House of Commons. Terrible riots arose and London was for some days in the hands of the mob, who destroyed and despoiled Popish churches, sacked Lord Mansfield's house and burnt his magnificent library. Even Old Newgate was stormed, the prisoners liberated, and the prison partly destroyed by fire. It was not till 1793 that this partial measure of justice was obtained for Scotland. 1780.

1782. An Act was also passed permitting Protestant Dissenters to celebrate their marriages in their own places of worship. Thrice, repeated efforts were made from 1787 to 1790 to repeal the Test and Corporation Acts, but they were defeated by large majorities in the Commons, and the shameful injustice lingered till 1828.

Religion in
the church.

Of the state of spiritual religion within the Established Church at the time of Wesley's death little that is satisfactory can be said. By a return made by the bishops of the time it was found that there were 11,164 parishes in England and Wales, but only 4,412 incumbents, being few more than one for every third parish. This shows the enormous prevalence of pluralities and absenteeism, although undoubtedly some improvement had taken place in these respects during the last generation. It was stated by Lord Harrowby, in the House of Lords, that the highest scale of salary paid to curates who did almost the entire work of these neglected parishes ran from £50 to £70 per annum, but that the usual scale was from £20 downwards to £10 per annum. Many rich incumbents were totally unknown even by appearance to their parishioners, and in many places the curate was only known by his weekly, fortnightly, or monthly appearance in the pulpit.

Revived
spiritual
life.

In spite of all drawbacks there was a definite rising of spiritual life in the Establishment. This was due to the extensive spread of the Evangelical Revival. The origin of this betterment can be distinctly traced to the Holy Club at Oxford. As Methodism extended over the land the Church felt a divine vibration and to some extent responded to it. Apart from the Wesleys and Whitefield there arose a band of saintly and gifted men who exercised a gracious influence upon their generation, and redeemed their church from utter reproach. Such were the Oxford Methodists; Grimshaw and Fletcher¹; William Romaine, who maintained for forty-five years a powerful spiritual ministry in London, who was caught in the toils of the revival by Wesley and Whitefield, and became a

¹ *Vide supra*, pp. 317 ff.

great Evangelical force in the church ; and John Berridge, another clergyman, who experienced a spiritual transfiguration, and thenceforth co-operated with the Methodist leaders in every good work. Henry Venn came under the magnetic influence of Lady Huntingdon, Whitefield, and Wesley, with the result that he became a mighty instrument in the purification of the church and the conversion of sinners. Samuel Walker of Truro laboured in association with the Methodists and promoted a great reformation in Cornwall. Augustus Toplady was converted under a sermon preached by James Morris, a follower of Wesley, and became one of the finest hymn-writers and most laborious pastors of his day. The results of the Methodist Revival passed far beyond its own boundaries, and exerted much indirect stimulus upon the historic church of the nation. These effects did not exhaust themselves in that generation. Charles Simeon, who became leader of the evangelical party within the church, was roused by Venn to indefatigable efforts for the spread of true religion, and sent many devoted labourers into the ministry both at home and abroad. Henry Martin was one of his disciples, and in the list of names which made up the eclectic society which he formed at Clapham for the promotion of the religious life there occur such names as John Newton, Richard Cecil, Thomas Scott, Martin Madan, and Thomas Haweis. It was impossible for such a group of men to be actively at work in the church without it being manifestly improved. They were not Methodists, although some of them were in frequent fellowship and co-operation with Wesley and his followers. Some warmly controverted the Arminian doctrines preached by the Wesleys, and others objected to their modes of evangelism. But each one was a centre of living, spiritual power, and the divine infection spread from them to others. Many laymen of wealth and position were drawn into beneficent work, and became the leaders of national movements of philanthropy and religion. Such were William Wilberforce, Henry Thornton, Zachary Macaulay, Granville Sharp, and other members of the

Clapham
Sect.

Clapham Sect,¹ all akin in sentiment and sympathy. Through men like these, organizations were formed to grapple with the slave trade, to promote prison reform, to circulate the Scriptures throughout the world, to evangelize the nations still in the night of heathenism, to scatter broadcast evangelical tracts and cheap publications, and many other schemes to promote the kingdom of God among men.

State of
Noncon-
formity.

The condition of Nonconformity at this time was that of respectable mediocrity. The Congregationalists had no man of genius or eminent learning to boast of, although they possessed several men of respectable attainments and ability, of whom we may cite Dr. Thomas Clifford of the Haberdasher Hall Church. The Baptists owned Dr. John Gill, one of the ablest divines they ever produced. He was a Biblical commentator and acute controversialist of no small fame in that day. Robert Robinson, author of *The History and Mystery of Good Friday*, and other works, was a man of remarkable talent, a vigorous writer, an ardent lover of liberty, and the writer of some noble hymns. He wrote an able defence of the divinity of Jesus Christ, but afterwards receded from his position, and adopted anti-Trinitarian views. The Unitarians were in a more flourishing condition at this time than ever since. Priestley, Price, and Lindsey, all men of great ability, were their prominent leaders. The general condition of the Dissenters was one of languor, nor did they resuscitate until the next generation.²

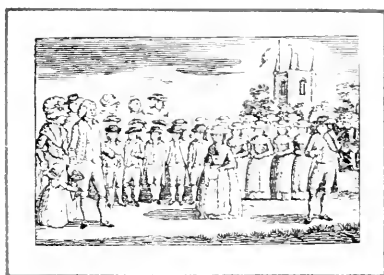
Sunday
schools.

The most far-reaching and beneficent movement apart from the evangelistic work of the churches of this time was the rise and rapid spread of Sunday schools. Wesley was one of the first to seize and utilize the idea. There had been such institutions before his day, but they were sporadic both as to time and place. Traces of them may be found as far back as the days of Luther, Knox, and Carlo Borromeo. Joseph Alleine, the author of *The Alarm to the Unconverted*, conducted Sunday schools in his church towards the end of the seventeenth century, and Bishop Wilson had them in

1672.

¹ Vide Telford, *A Sect that moved the World*.

² *Supra*, p. 66.



ROBERT RAIKES, 1735-1811, WITH WHOM WISLEY CO-OPERATED IN THE SUNDAY-SCHOOL MOVEMENT.
SOME OLD-TIME SUNDAY SCHOOLS, FROM EARLY WOOD-BLOCKS.

operation in 1703. Similar efforts were started both in England and America up to 1783. In Methodism they began in 1769, when one was commenced by Hannah Ball at High Wycombe. She was a young woman converted through the instrumentality of Wesley, and she conducted the school until her death in 1792, when she was succeeded by her sister Anne. This school is still in existence. Wesley first refers to Sunday schools in his *Journal*, under date July 18, 1784:

I preached in Bingley Church. Before service I stepped into the Sunday School, which contains 240 children, taught every Sunday by the curate. . . . I find these schools springing up wherever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but that some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians.

Sir Leslie Stephen relates that a woman in Gloucester first called the attention of Robert Raikes to this matter in 1780 by pointing out to him a crowd of young ragamuffins in St. Catherine's meadows. This woman, we are told by Tyerman, was Sophia Cooke, who afterwards married Samuel Bradburn. She was a convert to Methodism, but she marched with Raikes at the head of his ragged regiment the first time they attended service at the parish church. To Raikes belongs the credit of giving the modern Sunday school practical form and impetus. He published in his paper, *The Gloucester Journal*, an account of his experiment which attracted widespread attention to the movement. Wesley published Raikes's appeal for Sunday schools in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1785. In 1786 not less than 200,000 children were being taught in Sunday schools in England. They sprang up in Wales, Scotland, and the United States. Adam Smith declared that no plan so simple and promising for the improvement of manners had been devised since the days of the apostles. Queen Charlotte became deeply interested in them. Mrs. Trimmer and Hannah More established and encouraged them. The mighty instrumentality swept all over the land

scattering knowledge, simple ethics, and the saving truths of the gospel broadcast.

VI

INFLUENCE
OF
METHODISM
AND ITS
CONDITION
AT WESLEY'S
DEATH.

In forming an estimate of the influence exercised by Methodism upon English society, many elements are to be taken into account. In presenting statistics it is needful to be discriminative, because the numbers enrolled by the founders of Methodism were very different in weight and character from those tabulated by Jesuit missionaries in India or Mexico, where nominal baptism would be bestowed upon thousands in a day. Every member enrolled by the Methodists meant a man or woman who was regarded as converted in a true evangelical sense, being turned from the power of Satan unto God, and thoroughly renewed in heart and life. Each one therefore counted for a centre of living influence and active propagandism. Nor was this all. The conversion of a father or a mother generally meant the transformation of the home, and the family being gathered into the mothering care of the church. Thus the formation of a Methodist society in any neighbourhood meant the presence of an active spiritual agency, operating with beneficent effect upon the surrounding population. The adherents of the system might be fairly reckoned at five or six times the membership of the denomination, and the stimulus exercised upon other churches and associations, although not to be precisely appraised, must have been enormous.

Localities
and strength
of
Methodism.

The neighbourhoods where Methodism was located were unequally distributed. In Scotland the membership numbered only 1,086 in 1790. The societies, from causes to which we have already alluded,¹ were most numerous and powerful in large towns and in the counties where mines, manufactures, and commerce abounded. The counties of Westmoreland, Salop, Rutland, Cambridge, Huntingdon, Hereford, Berks, Buckingham, Monmouth, and Dorset were almost untouched by the revival. Some other counties

¹ *Supra*, p. 341.

were sparsely affected—Cumberland, Derby, Notts, Lincoln, Leicester, Northampton, Worcester, Suffolk, Essex, Devon, and Wilts having few societies, scattered over wide districts. But in Staffordshire, Durham, Northumberland, Norfolk, Warwick, Oxford, Gloucester, Somerset, and Hants, as well as Yorkshire, Lancashire, Cheshire, Middlesex, and Cornwall, there were many societies and circuits. The most important societies were to be found in London, Bristol, Redruth, St. Ives, Birmingham, Burslem, Macclesfield, Manchester, Bolton, Leeds, Halifax, Newcastle, and Blackburn. The membership of the denomination in Britain at the time of Wesley's death in 1791 was 72,000 and the adherents were reckoned at nearly half a million. The total number of members in Britain and America was 136,000 ; the adherents were calculated to be beyond 800,000.

The societies supplied ample material for the regenerating operations of Methodism, and a glance at the practical results will show what an efficient instrument of national progress and uplift it became. Its facility in organizing new forms of social fellowship for spiritual ends was almost miraculous. A host of truly converted labourers was being constantly trained and drafted into the harvest field, where there had been for long time an utter famine of helpers. Everything about Methodism at this time had the charm of freshness. The novelty, verve, and swiftness of the movement made it attractive to the receptive and responsive multitudes. These it held, organized, disciplined, and trained for service. Thus many forms of lay agency became effective forces, filling useful offices in the societies, and carrying on a guerilla warfare against the many vices then prevalent in all classes of the period.¹

Its operations.

The importance of the revival in relation to the times cannot be overestimated. The rapid expansion of populations, the startling growth of large towns, the influx of wealth by the increase of manufactures and commerce, called for a great moral and spiritual reformation to restrain the lower passions of human nature and to draw the people

Influence on national growth.

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 344.

to morality and virtue. For a nation to become rich without any restraining influence is to let the vilest passions run riot, as all history testifies. But England passed through this crucial period of advancing civilization and power without decadence or moral obliviousness. The reason was, as explained by all sober judges, that Methodism and the Evangelical Revival with its elevating tendencies providentially expanded side by side with the material prosperity of the nation. Methodism laid an appropriating hand on the middle and labouring classes, and transformed them into a healthy element in national development.

Methodism
and
philan-
thropy.

The controlling and steadying tendencies of Methodism were exerted in a remarkable manner upon the higher life of the nation. The spiritualizing power of the revival upon the Established Church has been noted above; but in great philanthropic and missionary movements at home and abroad it was both an originating and impulsive force. Wesley denounced the slave trade in 1774 as 'that execrable sum of all villainies,' and in 1780 induced the Conference to pass a resolution severely censuring any members of the community who had any interest in it. Wesley moved against it fifteen years before Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, and William Wilberforce formed the Society for the Suppression of the Slave Trade. In several other great reforms Wesley was the forerunner and pioneer.¹

Methodism
a restrain-
ing force.

The potent control which Methodism as an unrecognized force exerted upon the public mind of England in a time of disquietude, has been emphasized by many modern writers. It saved the country from such a cataclysm as happened in France. We have already described how violently the mind of England was agitated, how fiercely revolutionary opinions were advocated by powerful leaders of the people, and how the Government of the day inflamed the worst ire of the proletariat by the prosecution and imprisonment of their leaders. The self-restraint and common sense exercised by the mass of the people in that strange crisis is one of the most admirable aspects of our history in modern times.

¹ *Vide supra*, pp. 223 ff.

Evil passions were held in check, until healthy reforms slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent. M. Taine, the acute French historian, records his judgement that John Wesley and Methodism saved England from the horrors of revolution. Testimonies as to the healthful and becalming tendencies exercised by them have been borne by such historians as Southey, Macaulay, Lecky, and Green; by statesmen like Montesquieu and Gladstone, by *littérateurs* like Isaac Taylor, Sir James Stephen, and Thackeray. These combined witnesses may be sufficiently voiced by Mr. Augustine Birrell :

If you want to get into the last century, to feel its pulse throb beneath your finger, be content sometimes to leave the letters of Horace Walpole unturned . . . and ride up and down the country with the greatest force of the eighteenth century in England. No man ever lived nearer the centre than John Wesley—neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor Johnson. You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts. No other man did such a life work for England.¹

In the latter years of his life Wesley became intensely anxious as to the future of the mighty movement which had arisen so largely through his instrumentality. In 1763 a form of deed was drawn up for the settlement of the chapels, which provided—

Deed of Declaration.

that the trustees should permit such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference . . . and no others to have and enjoy the said premises, etc.

But the Conference consisted of Wesley and such other persons as he chose to invite to confer with him. It was necessary to define the word 'Conference,' to determine its constituents and provide for its continuity. A Deed of Declaration and Establishment of the people called Methodists² was therefore prepared and enrolled in the High

¹ *Scribner's Magazine*, Christmas, 1899.

² See Appendix B, for Copy of Deed.

Court of Chancery, March 9, 1784. Wesley was greatly exercised as to who should constitute the Conference. He finally decided upon one hundred preachers. Great offence was taken by many of the preachers at the arbitrary choice made by Wesley, many men being excluded who had borne the burden and heat of the day, and many being included who had recently entered the field. The contention at the ensuing Conference was so sharp that Fletcher, almost on his knees, urged the varying parties to end the controversy and work in peace. It was feared by many that those appointed would assume superiority over their brethren, to avert which Wesley wrote an affecting letter beseeching the 'Hundred' not to take undue advantage of their position. The letter was read to the Conference after the death of Wesley, and it was unanimously resolved, 'that all the preachers in full connexion with them shall enjoy every privilege that the members of Conference enjoy.' This promise has been observed faithfully to the present time.

Wesley's
ordinations.

A matter of vital importance in the future history of Methodism was the ordination by Wesley of some of his preachers. Twenty-seven were so set apart. Dr. Coke and Francis Asbury were ordained—

to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America, as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them by baptizing and administrating the Lord's Supper.

In 1785 he ordained John Pawson, Thomas Hanby, and Joseph Taylor to minister in Scotland; in 1786 Joshua Keighley and Charles Atmore also for Scotland, William Warrener for Antigua, and William Hammet for Newfoundland. In 1787 five more were ordained, and in 1788 two others. In 1789 seven others (including Alexander Mather, who was also appointed superintendent); and in 1789 Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin were ordained. These were all appointed to administer the sacrament of baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the usages of the Church of

England. The far-reaching results of these important steps have been treated of already.¹

The compactness, efficiency, and prosperity of Methodism at the time of Wesley's death were due in no small degree to the group of remarkable men whom the movement had developed and who during the last decade of their leader's life formed his immediate *entourage*. Such a brotherhood was necessary as a provision for the crucial event which Wesley's extreme old age made imminent. Hitherto Methodism had been an absolute monarchy of the most rigid kind. It had been a wise, reasonable, and unselfish absolutism; but the circumstances had demanded that it should be thorough. By a prevenient providence the crisis had been anticipated; and although controversies, rearrangements, and modifications were inevitable, it is one of the wonders of history that the community was not broken into fragments by the removal of a man who, humanly speaking, had been the keystone of the marvellous edifice. Some who succeeded Wesley will be noticed in a later section, but mention of those who formed what may be called the inner cabinet about him in his later life is required here.²

Wesley's
Inner
Cabinet.

Samuel Bardsley, Joseph Bradford, Charles Atmore, Thomas Hanby, Alexander Mather, Henry Moore, Thomas Taylor, William Thompson, John Pawson, and Thomas Olivers were all men of saintly life, strong character, and indefatigable zeal, having special gifts as preachers, intimately acquainted with the inner life of the denomination. They were trusted by Wesley as reliable counsellors and able administrators. Thomas Coke, LL.D., represented the foreign missionary sentiment and died a martyr to his enthusiasm. Samuel Bradburn was known for forty years as the Demosthenes of Methodism. Bramwell was the most successful soul-winner of this period. Adam Clarke and Joseph Benson were the scholars of the Connexion. Clarke, who placed himself at the disposal of Wesley in 1782, was a very Briareus of parts, being familiar with the Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldee, Syriac, Greek, and Latin versions of

¹ *Vide* also *supra*, p. 231.

² *Vide* also *infra*, pp. 388-92.

the Old and New Testaments. He knew several modern European languages and almost every branch of literature and science. Degrees were showered upon him and he was a member of many learned societies. Benson was for some time classical tutor at Kingswood School and afterwards held the same post at Trevecca College. He was a preacher of extraordinary power and sometimes held his congregations in rapt attention for two or three hours. He was the means of conversion to multitudes of colliers and operatives. He also prepared a *Commentary* on the Bible, which, if not so learned as that of Clarke, exceeded it in clear spiritual exposition. These men, with other helpers almost equal in usefulness and ability, were a pledge of the continued stability and consolidation of Methodism when the personal presence of the great founder had gone.

Economical
value of
Methodism.

To fairly appraise the influence of Methodism upon the material progress of the nation it must be recognized that its economical value was enormous. Its renovating power was chiefly manifested in the shopkeeping and operative classes. It wrought a transforming change in the colliers of the north and south-west, the mill workers of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and the fishers of the east and west coasts. It also found immense scope for its special methods of operation among the small traders of the towns and villages. By the masses of the operatives both time and money had been recklessly wasted in drinking, gambling, roystering, and sporting. But when the revival came crowds of these became productive instead of wasteful elements in the national life. They contributed, by a wise expenditure of wages and labour, to the trade and manufactures of the country to an incalculable degree. The shopkeepers and producers felt the benefit in the multiplication of their sales and profits. Wealthy Methodists sprang up in all parts of the land. Wesley was profoundly impressed with the wealth-producing power of the revival, and both preached and wrote to his people urging them, in language of power and severity, not to heap up riches, nor to indulge in extravagance either as

to their persons or their houses. On many occasions he spoke after this fashion :

O that God would enable me once more before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who can gain and save 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, prevent 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 so 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.

Whether the Methodists followed Wesley's advice as he would have approved cannot be decided here ; but his prescient mind realized what a wealth-producing machine had been brought into play by the great revival. Its power was displayed equally in the spiritual and the material progress of the age.

Such was Methodism when its founder was called to his reward, and such were the conditions under which the mighty organization, which he had been the means of creating, was pursuing its divine mission. Whether considered in relation to its expansion, as a religious community which has covered a large proportion of the British Dominions, or as to its elevating and spiritualizing influence upon the material, social, and religious life of the English people, or as a missionary force in the Church and the world, it must be recognized as a providential agency, called into existence in a time of national declension and apostasy. It cannot be doubted that without it, or some similar renovating instrumentality, England must have entered upon a period of fatal decadence. But as in the Reformation period, when the religious consciousness agonized for due expression and found a voice in Martin Luther, so in England a yearning for spiritual revival found expression through the Wesleys and Whitefield ; and they became the agents of an evangelical movement which has

changed the world, and which has still upon it the dew of its youth and the years of the Son of Man.

Wesley
and
Voltaire.

1694-1778.

This statement of the influence and bearings of Methodism in the crucial period reviewed may be illustrated by presenting the chief features of comparison or contrast of the two most famous men of the day, Wesley and Voltaire. Both men covered almost the same period of history, lived in the open, and were conspicuously before the eyes of their contemporaries, attained widespread and international fame, produced a deep impression on their generation, were mighty iconoclasts, possessed a singularly incisive and transparent literary style, and spent a long, strenuous, and active life. But here comparison ends and contrast begins. It is most important in pursuing this presentment that no injustice be done to the philosopher. Therefore in describing his features and qualities the judgement of two of his most careful critics, Thomas Carlyle and George Saintsbury, will be followed. Voltaire's nature was vehement but not deep, entirely wanting in earnestness, and in him the spirit of mockery grew till it was irresistible. Wesley's nature was deep and profound, with a calmness begotten of strong conviction, overflowing with human sympathy and compassion. Voltaire spent his time as much as possible with emperors and kings, their consorts or mistresses, seeking gold, dangling for pensions and promotions, entering into doubtful speculations, and heaping up enormous wealth. Wesley lived for and among the toiling masses of his countrymen, careless of wealth, living on the scantiest pittance, expending his overplus in charity, distributing in benevolent objects nearly twenty thousand pounds in the course of his ministry. Voltaire is described as being by turns imperious and obsequious, bold in times of safety, cowardly where risk threatened, doubling and hiding from retribution which often pursued him. Wesley was brave, manly, enduring, never more self-possessed than when facing riotous mobs, and if masterful in administrating his organization it was the firmness of far-sighted love and not the rigidity of selfishness. Voltaire's chief characteristic is affirmed to have been

adroitness ; he was supple, contemptuous, satirical, had his tongue in his cheek, was apt in lying and prone to vanity. Wesley was open, candid, serious, severely truthful, spent himself for others, and was absolutely single-minded. Voltaire is described as having never uttered a great thought, as having no trace of reverence in his composition, no dignity, no heroism, no love of truth, no conception of nobleness. Wesley spoke apothegms of crisp, clear, noble truth which have enriched the life-blood of the world. He lived constantly in the presence of eternal realities ; his life was an unbroken struggle against wrong and human misery ; his idea, ' to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,' was the highest that could inspire a lofty soul. Voltaire spoke of himself as ' the philosopher,' and as ' the modern Socrates.' He boasted that what it took twelve men to build one man would destroy. Wesley was consumed by self-forgetting zeal, and when he spoke of self he said :

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

Voltaire indulged in private intrigues, deceptions, gambling, and forgery. Wesley's name and life were irreproachable for saintliness and devotion. His daily motto was ' Holiness unto the Lord.' Voltaire occupied many years of his life in seeking to undermine and destroy Christianity. He judged it as presented by the corrupt Romish Church before his eyes, and spoke of it as *l'infame*, and gathered up the trend of all his efforts in the words, *écrasez l'infame*. Wesley spent sixty years of his life in noble constructive work, building up his fellows in purity and righteousness, and established what is now the largest Protestant community in the world. Voltaire attacked the beliefs of mankind surreptitiously and deceitfully, casting firebrands wherever he could do so with safety to himself. At the same time he built a church, placing on it the inscription, *Deo, erexit Voltaire*, obtained a relic from the Pope whereby to consecrate it, and frequently attended the sacrament. Wesley boldly rushed through every open door, calling upon men to be saved, and gladly

suffered the loss of all things for the sake of the gospel. Voltaire in his last illness sent for priests to give him absolution when he thought he was dying, repelling them when they came and he felt revived. Wesley's end was witnessed by many of his dearest friends. He passed away full of hope, bright with joy, saying, 'The best of all is, God is with us.' As he lived he died, and millions of Methodists testify to the reality and permanence of his work to-day.

GLORIA IN ALTISSIMIS DEO.

BOOK II
BRITISH WESLEYAN METHODISM

CHAPTER I
WESLEYAN METHODISM—THE MIDDLE PERIOD

1791—1849

I would express him simple, grave, sincere,
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain,
And plain in manner ; decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture ; much impress'd
Himself, as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too : affectionate in look
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.

COWPER, *The Task*.

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CHAPTER I

WESLEYAN METHODISM—THE MIDDLE PERIOD

1791—1849

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List add: B. GREGORY, *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism* (1898); P. BUNTING and G. S. ROWE, *The Life of Dr. Bunting* (1859, 1887). Of most of the prominent persons mentioned in the chapter *Lives* or *Memoirs* have been published which have been consulted, but need not be further specified. For the study of the period the valuable collection of pamphlets in the Library of Didsbury College is useful. See also the books mentioned on pp. 485 and 555.

I

WESLEY left to the religious body which he had founded, first, the body itself, *i.e.* the United Societies, vast numbers of men, women, and children striving to work out their own salvation and to do all the good they could, each with his or her own personal Christian experience, but each a member of a corporate and spiritual fellowship, with a sense of intimate brotherhood amongst those who came into contact with each other, and of vital union with the societies considered as one people. He left also the charge to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. The work that he had begun was to be continued and extended. By the Deed of Declaration¹ he had provided not only a plan of government but machinery by means of which the task of his societies might be accomplished. Through the Deed of Declaration the United Societies became a Connexion at Wesley's decease. Plainly the idea was that Methodism

THE UNITED SOCIETIES AT WESLEY'S DEATH.

Deed of Declaration.

1784.

¹ Appendix B, vol. ii.

1785. should be conducted with as little immediate change as possible. The dead hand grasped it—and was designed to grasp it—much more lightly than commonly is supposed. What Wesley himself had been the Conference was to be, acting as freely as he had acted, following the finger of Providence as implicitly as he had followed it. On three points only had he laid down any law : the Conference must meet regularly ; doctrines must remain unchanged ; the itinerancy must be enforced. The Legal Conference assumed his place ; just as he had called the preachers to advise with him, it was understood that preachers not of the Hundred might and would take part in the deliberations of their brethren. The Chester letter besought the Hundred, by the mercies of God, not to assume any superiority over their brethren, but to ‘let all things go on, among those itinerants who choose to remain together exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.’ The last clause evidently contemplates possible development and modification. The concluding paragraph of the letter more directly ascribes to the Legal Conference not merely all formal power, but active management. The autocracy of the Hundred was to be equal to Wesley’s own, and was to be wielded with the same kindness and supreme regard for the work of God as he had manifested.

Nothing is easier than to find fault with this arrangement. The government was exclusively that of the preachers—but it had always been of this character. Apparently no thought had been taken of the disturbance of relationships that necessarily ensued when the personality that held the societies together released his hold. It was not in human nature to transfer to a corporate body the love and loyalty which had been felt and expressed by children to their spiritual father. The laity was ignored completely—but then, in Wesley’s eyes, the preachers themselves were laymen, with a few exceptions. In this connexion the distinction between ministers and laymen had never occurred to Wesley. The Deed of Declaration provided for the

permanence of the United Societies and the continuance of evangelism. From this point of view the scheme approached ideal perfection.

Wesley, however, had underrated two forces. A waiter upon Providence, he did not perceive how far he had travelled towards constituting a separate church. His ordinations, for example, had been expedients to meet special needs, and were limited to the smallest possible number. He overlooked the inevitable demand for church life on the part of the people ; nor did he see that preachers who were well content and able to act as his assistants must acquire, willingly or unwillingly, a very different status after his removal. The Deed of Declaration takes account only of United Societies. It is, however, as eloquent in its silence as in its speech. Wesley's repeated references to faithfulness to the Established Church *during his life* show that he foresaw the possibility of separation after his decease. He would take no steps to facilitate this, therefore he could not provide an ecclesiastical organization ; but he did not forbid it, and no prohibition against the administration of the Sacraments by the preachers was recorded. There the Conference had a free hand, and Wesley was far too acute not to understand that this was the case. But evidently he exaggerated the attachment of both preachers and people to the Established Church ; he did not estimate the extent to which he himself was the link that bound Methodism to that church. The relation of Methodism to the Established Church was the critical question which the Conference that was called into being by Wesley's death was compelled to face.

Demand
for church
life.

Nevertheless that was not the first question considered. Scarcely had the earth settled around Wesley's tomb, when William Thompson, who up to that time was comparatively little known, called a private meeting at Halifax. Besides Thompson, Pawson, Rodda, Bradburn, Hopper, and three others were present. From this meeting a circular was issued to all the preachers as to the method of future government. Its main point was that there should not be ' another

Halifax
circular.

king in Israel.' To prevent this, the President and Secretary of the Conference should be elected yearly; District Committees should act during the intervals between Conferences; and the Conference should appoint annually its delegate in Ireland. Nothing was said about either the Church of England or the Sacraments. It was soon clear that the majority of the preachers approved the Halifax propositions—indeed, they were adopted (practically) by the ensuing Conference. But the Halifax meeting had one unfortunate result. The example was followed and enlarged on throughout the country. Meetings, mainly of laity, were held, at which other matters than details of organization were discussed. Much divergence of opinion appeared, but the balance inclined heavily towards attachment to the Anglican Church. The question of the Sacraments loomed large.

The First
Conference,
1791.

William Thompson was elected President of the Conference; Dr. Coke, Secretary. The equality of all the preachers was declared emphatically. No formal deliverance was recorded with regard to the Sacraments; but as to the general 'plan of economy,' it was ordered, 'we engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us.' This answer was ambiguity itself; Coke could interpret it one way, Pawson another. What was 'the plan which Mr. Wesley left'? To restrict the administration of the Sacraments to Methodist clergymen and preachers ordained by Wesley, or to 'follow the openings of Providence'? The relation to the Establishment remained undetermined. Here was the opportunity of the Church of England. Never did that 'church of lost opportunities' fail more pitifully. A little concession, a little statesmanship, some exhibition of friendliness and interest on the part of the hierarchy might have anchored Methodism as an organization firmly to the Church of England as by law established, though many individual Methodists would have stood aloof. For the bulk of the Methodists who formed any opinion on the subject loved and revered the church of John Wesley. The Dissenting element was small numerically, influential chiefly



WILLIAM THOMSON, Irishman; the First President after Wesley, 1791.

JOHN DAWSON, President, 1793.

JOSEPH BENSON, President, 1798 and 1810.

DR. COKER, President, 1797 and 1805, the Father of Methodist missions; died at sea, 1811.

DR. A. CLARKE and the Buddhist priests.

RICHARD WATSON, President, 1826.

ALEXANDER MATHER, Scotchman; the Second President, 1792.

HENRY MOORE, President, 1804 and 1823.

SAMUEL BRADBURN, President, 1799.

because of its determination and pugnacity. Much stronger in numbers and power, and, it must be added, in character, were the 'church' Methodists. Between these extremes, shading off into one or the other, stood the mass of the people. With one proviso, they were prepared to accept the decision of the Conference, though their tastes and sympathies inclined to the parish church. On one point, however, they were resolved; they would not be deprived of the Lord's Supper. The Eucharist might be administered in their own chapels by ordained preachers or itinerant clergy, or, preferably, they would kneel in the parish church, but somewhere and somehow they would obey the command, 'Do this in remembrance of Me.' The universal opening of parish churches would have satisfied them, except in the comparatively few cases of evil-living incumbents. But the Anglican bishops made no sign, and the local clergy showed themselves less willing than ever to welcome Methodists to the Lord's Table. Methodism had lost the prestige of Wesley's churchmanship. In some places a deliberate effort would seem to have been made to force members from the societies by deprivation of the Communion.

Alexander Mather was the President for 1792. His were the only shoulders that could possibly have worn Wesley's mantle. He did wear it, after a fashion, for a year. From one point of view, Coke was Wesley's natural successor, but Wesley had passed him by. He was pre-empted for foreign missions, and Ireland cried for him clamorously. Besides, his impulsiveness unfitted him for rule. Division of opinion was so strong concerning the Sacraments that the matter was decided by lot, which fell on the negative side. The next two years greater liberality in administration was allowed by a more or less reluctant Conference. The whole economy of Methodism was in the crucible, except that part which the Deed of Declaration shielded. The sacramental question was complicated with the right to hold service in church hours, the position of Quarterly Meetings, the powers and duties of trustees, and the relation of

The
Sacraments.

preachers to the Societies. The entire Connexion was in a ferment of meetings, pamphlets, and disputes.

Plan of
Pacification,
1795.

The Plan of Pacification was issued in 1795. It was true to its name. It threw all responsibility on the societies. Under certain conditions, each society must decide for itself. The Liturgy, or Wesley's abridgement thereof, or 'at least' the lessons of the Calendar, must be read when service was held in church hours. This was understood to refer to the morning service. The Sacrament must be administered only by persons authorized by the Conference. A cumbersome scheme was propounded, only once employed in the whole history of Methodism, for the dismissal of incompetent or erring preachers. By the Plan the die was cast: Methodism and the Established Church became separate bodies. True, societies and individuals might remain in communion with the old church if they chose—and many did;¹ but the right to administer the Sacraments and to hold service in church hours was established. The penalty of expulsion was affixed to the continuance of agitation by either preachers or people. All the preachers, except William Thom, Alexander Kilham, and four others, signed a declaration of voluntary adhesion to the *Large Minutes*, which had been brought up to date by Pawson.

Kilham's
agitation.

Kilham insisted on carrying on the agitation, not only in his own circuits and by word of mouth, but by widely circulated pamphlets. He blankly refused to cease his efforts. The Conference therefore had no option but to pass sentence. Whereupon Thom, in a beautiful letter, resigned his connexion with the Conference. The two founded the New Connexion with about 5,000 members.² We will not enter upon the controversies to which these events gave rise. Kilham refused to be pacified by the Plan of Pacification. He could not be allowed to continue to make war. Nineteen-twentieths of Methodism agreed

¹ There were several cases in which no service was held in church hours, and some where the Sacraments were not administered, as late as 1870, probably later.

² *Vide also infra*, pp. 488 ff.

to the Plan. One cannot but regret that Kilham could not accept the decision of the overwhelming majority. So young a man might well have yielded to the wisdom of his seniors. Admitting, either for argument's sake or from conviction, that Kilham's demands were intrinsically just, it is clear that the people did not want the power he wished to confer on them *nolentes volentes*. We may wish that Kilham had been content with a protest and the effort he had put forth, and had so preserved the unity of Methodism. His strong convictions would not permit this course. There we must leave the matter. Kilham possessed considerable ability, and was a fervent evangelist. Trained under the influence of Robert Carr Brackenbury, whose travelling companion and helper he had been,¹ he never lost his youthful enthusiasm. His early death was caused quite as much by his revivalistic preaching as by the labour of organizing the New Connexion.

Though the Plan of Pacification involved separation from the Established Church, and the constitution of the United Societies into a distinct church, with its own ministry and ordinances, its own tests and courts, many years elapsed before the process was formally complete. The final step was not taken till long after our period closes (1891). Thirty years passed before the travelling preachers, though they discharged every ministerial function, called themselves ministers. Under the monthly portrait in the *Magazine* stood the description 'Mr.—, Preacher of the Gospel.' The majority of the preachers deemed themselves 'helps to the regular clergy.' Members of society, by their own direction and by the choice of their relatives, were buried in the parish graveyard by the parish clergymen, the preachers willingly attending the funeral there as mourners. The large majority of marriages, even of preachers, was celebrated in the Established Church. No small proportion of Methodist children were taken to the same place for baptism. The custom of worshipping at the parish church on at least one

Relation to
the
Established
Church.

¹ *Infra*, p. 490.

Sunday or feast-day of each year died a lingering death, if, indeed, it has yet breathed its last. 'Mother church' retained a warm place in many Methodist hearts, long after all hope of reunion had vanished. Methodist affection for the Liturgy was not sustained wholly by its beauty, its stateliness, its appropriateness. The use of it marked the source from which Methodism sprang. Yet all the while the Church of England, with only too infrequent exceptions, remained hostile actively or passively. The refusal of the Communion to Mrs. Fletcher, in her old age and feebleness, by the curate of the church in which her husband had ministered, is only too typical of the attitude of the Episcopalian clergy. The hierarchy looked on without the faintest show of disapproval, often with positive sanction. The church of John Wesley spurned the love of the children whom she had 'thrust out' from her doors, treated their yearnings for acknowledgement and kindly recognition with aristocratic contempt. No wonder that we trace, whether for good or evil, a slow and gradual but steady approximation of Methodism towards Dissent. For the fault did not lie entirely with the clergy; the peer and the squire shared their feelings, and translated them into action sometimes tyrannous and persecuting, often humiliating and provoking.

II

SOME EARLY
LEADERS.

Dr. Coke.

It will be well to glance at some of the men who composed the Conference a few years after the death of John Wesley. In the eyes of the world, the most prominent man was Thomas Coke. He was the only one whose reputation extended beyond the bounds of Methodism. Chiefly because he was a clergyman, but partly because he held too pronounced views as to the relation of Methodism to the Established Church, and partly because of his engagements outside Great Britain, he did not obtain the presidency till 1797. The connexion of his name with foreign missions and his nearly perpetual presidency of the Irish Conference

tend to dwarf his services to British Methodism. But to him, as we shall see, was due the organization of home missions. His influence and his consent to the Plan of Pacification did much towards procuring its acceptance by the 'church' party. Three other clergymen were connected with English Methodism: John Richardson, who died in 1792, after twenty-nine years of ministry in London; Peard Dickenson (died 1802), a faithful helper of Wesley, of small ability, but whose preaching improved in quality and power almost marvellously in his old age; and James Creighton (died 1820), long 'the resident clergyman' at City Road. Except Coke, none of the clergymen took any share in Methodist organization.

The first President, William Thompson, was an Irishman with the characteristics of his Scotch ancestry rather than those of his native island, except that he was ready of speech. He was cautious, determined, long-sighted. Atmore says 'the outlines of the present-day form of government originated principally with him.' He died in 1799. Southey commends the cool judgement of Alexander Mather, the second President. In his earlier itinerancy his 'iron constitution' enabled him to accomplish work that astounded even the early Methodist preachers. Despite his singular self-restraint, he was one of the most fervent and successful of evangelists. Wesley regarded him as the sublimation of trustworthy common sense, and, for many years, made him practically his deputy, relegating to him difficult and delicate affairs. There is just a scintilla of evidence that Wesley looked upon him as his own probable successor. He died in 1800.

John Pawson (President 1795 and 1801) had received a better education than fell to the lot of most of Wesley's helpers. By no means brilliant, he was an eminently useful man. That he burnt Wesley's annotated *Shakespeare* as worthless lumber shows his narrowness of view. Probably, however, he did more than any other man, except Thompson, to mould Methodism in the decade after Wesley's death. Thompson seems to have supplied the brain,

Pawson the pen. Thomas Hanby¹ died in 1796, the first President, after Wesley, to pass to his rest. At the time of his death he was the oldest preacher in the Connexion. He was one of the original signatories of the Halifax circular. With more than average talent, a 'painful preacher,' his protracted itinerancy had abounded in edification.

Joseph Bradford² had travelled much with John Wesley. He favoured the establishment of Provincial Conferences. From a private letter of his we learn how serious was the division of opinion in the Conference itself, and how it was the love of the brethren for each other that held the Conference together. Thomas Taylor³ had earned to himself a good degree by his indomitable diligence. He is pictured as naturally irritable, but as attaining sweetness of disposition by divine grace. He was one of the most resolute opponents of Kilham's proposals. Joseph Benson⁴ was the foremost scholar and author of the Conference, but he was also one of the most impassioned of preachers, a notable revivalist. The President for 1799 was Samuel Bradburn, the first of the three great clerical orators of Methodism. The least polished of the three, he was certainly not the least in natural gift. His tongue flamed with zeal, his personality was alive with influence. He always forgot himself in his message, and many were the souls led through him to God. One faculty he possessed that was both strength and weakness—a facetious wit. But he was sadly lacking in self-control. James Wood⁵ lived till 1840. He was one of those quiet, pious, thoughtful, industrious men who form the strength of all ministries. Once only was he stirred to indignation, when Warren's accusations maligned his brethren. Of Joseph Taylor⁶ comparatively little is known. Holiness, gentleness, cheerfulness seem to have characterized him. Bunting describes a touching scene when, in the year after his own ordination, he met Taylor, then a very old man,

¹ President, 1724.

² President, 1795, 1805.

³ President, 1796; *d.* 1816.

⁴ President, 1798, 1810.

⁵ President, 1800, 1808.

⁶ President, 1802.

Bradford,
T. Taylor.
Benson,
Bradburn.

Wood,
J. Taylor,

after a day's work which had exhausted both of them, and the two proceeded 'to move each other by singing,' to the tune 'Beaumont':

O may Thy Spirit seal
Our souls unto that day!

Henry Moore¹ is remembered chiefly as one of John Wesley's literary executors, and for his *Lives of Wesley*; but in both Ireland and England, especially the former, he had endured much hardness for Christ's sake and the gospel's. His insistence, as having been ordained by Wesley, on his right to administer the Sacraments brought the dispute to a head. When refused the pulpit of the Old Room at Bristol by the trustees, he gave the lead which the Conference was almost bound to follow. Adam Clarke was the President for 1806. At that date, though he had published his *Bibliographical Dictionary*, his fame as a scholar was only beginning to spread, and had not much to do with his election. He was immensely popular as a preacher, and, notwithstanding his studious habits, a diligent pastor and efficient circuit minister. Of Scotch parentage, though born in Ireland, he promoted mission work in the Shetland Isles. He esteemed his own abilities for business and the pulpit at a low rate. His objection to the presidential chair, which he thrice occupied, was genuine and emphatic. On the first occasion he appealed to the Conference against it both before and after the vote was taken. He thought himself unworthy and unfit for the dignity. His successor was John Barber, who died during his second presidency (1815). In life and death, by word and act, he exemplified and taught Christian holiness.

Moore and
Clarke.

Among the other preachers of John Wesley's day who survived him were John Murlin (*d.* 1799), 'the weeping prophet'; Thomas Olivers (*d.* 1799), the author of 'The God of Abraham praise'; Christopher Hopper (*d.* 1802), who had passed through the times of violence and persecution; John Crook (*d.* 1805), 'the apostle of the Isle of Man,' largely

Other
worthies

¹ President, 1804, 1823.

useful too in the north of Ireland, one of the most awakening of preachers ; James Rogers (*d.* 1807), husband of the saintly Hester Ann Rogers, and himself a man of vigorous understanding ; Richard Rodda (*d.* 1815) and George Shadford (*d.* 1816), laborious and godly, exercising in old age an influence nearly proportionate to their toils and piety ; Alexander Suter (*d.* 1817), anxious for the old Methodism that regarded conformity to the world as a deadly sin ; and George Story (*d.* 1818), whom Southey commends for the absence of 'enthusiasm' from his character. In 1792 Story was appointed Editor, and remained at the Book-Room till shortly before his death. After his early struggles his religious experience was singularly calm and steadfast ; in all matters of policy he desired peace, but not at the sacrifice of principle.

Wesley's
disciples.

The list might be extended easily. We shall not understand the middle age of Wesleyan Methodism if we do not recognize that at the beginning of the period its leaders were men who had not only been trained under John Wesley, but had entered into his spirit and had grasped the inner meaning of his methods. There might be some friction and controversy in the first eight or ten Conferences, diametrically opposite opinions might clash fiercely, but on one point there was complete unity—the determination to carry on the work of God, and, as far as possible, upon the lines that Wesley had laid down. In every discussion these were the predominant motives. The foremost legislators and men of business were eminent also as pastors and evangelists. As one reads the official obituaries for, say, the quarter of a century after Wesley's decease, their straightforward simplicity and plainness of speech, the portrait painting that does not conceal the warts on the face, leave the impression of men who lived simple and strenuous lives, who were governed by but one aim, whose peaceful or triumphant deaths were the appropriate crown and consummation of their lives. Controversy, legislation, administration, differences of judgement did not lessen zeal or effort for the spread of Christian holiness. Certainly the

immediate successors of Wesley manifested their idiosyncrasies, their limitations, their fallibility as well as their might, their devotion, their singleness of eye, their shrewdness, even their humour; but one must travel far to find a body of men with a nobler or more consuming zeal for the work of God, or a clearer idea of the manner in which that work was to be attempted and accomplished. The essential matter was their experience of God, their profound and pervading spirituality—as real and ardent in statesmen like Thompson, in administrators like Mather, in scholars like Clarke, as in Hanby, Barber, or Story.

We might easily draw a picture of the condition—the ordinary life—of the societies, which would be closely true to life though in form imaginary. No literally historical picture has been preserved. We catch occasional glimpses which nearly all harmonize. We see not merely a Bible-reading but a Bible-studying, often a Bible-searching people. The demand for a commentary was so strong that Benson was formally requested to supply it. Both Clarke's and Sutcliffe's *Commentaries* were bought largely and eagerly, and were read. The *Magazine* was purchased not out of loyalty and patronage, but because it was valued. The large majority of the members took little interest in the controversies that look so big in history, except that they begged, now humbly, now imperatively, for the Sacraments. They preferred, as we have seen, to receive the Lord's Supper, if it could be obtained, in the parish church rather than in their own chapels and rooms. Many of them had a Quaker-like aptitude for making the best of both worlds, but more were markedly unworldly, content to earn an honest living, anxious to save their own souls alive, and those of their neighbours. Charles Wesley's description of 'Primitive Christianity,' which he intended obviously to apply to the people called Methodists, still held good:

Life of the societies.

Meek simple followers of the Lamb,
They lived, and spake, and thought the same,
They joyfully combined to raise
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.

With grace abundantly endued,
 A pure, believing multitude,
 They all were of one heart and soul,
 And only love inspired the whole.

The laity.

The laity of the first part of our period make much the same impression upon us as the preachers. Till his death in 1819, Robert Carr Brackenbury continued to spend his time ‘ ’twixt the mount and multitude.’ His attitude towards the Established Church and towards Methodism suffered no change from the removal of Wesley. He was too much occupied with mystic meditation, schemes of philanthropy, and ardent preaching of the gospel to trouble about questions of government, or any other rights than those of full salvation. Samuel Drew (1765—1855) was among the laity what Dr. Clarke was among the itinerants. His metaphysical and other writings gave him an assured place amongst the authors and thinkers of his day. But through all his struggles and successes he was first and foremost a Methodist, cultivating a humble spiritual life, and preaching a gospel of experience. Perhaps, however, William Carvosso (1750—1834) comes nearer the typical Methodist, though we must beware of fancying that his lack of elementary education is an example of the generality of the members. He prospered moderately—as much as he wished—in his business of a farmer, but his ‘one great business here’ was to prove the good and acceptable and perfect will of God for himself, to help others in the way of life, and to win as many souls for Christ as he could reach. He did not preach except very occasionally, and then against his own will and judgement; but he talked to every one who would listen to him, and, though they were gathered one by one, hundreds of souls were given him. Usually those to whom he spoke of Christ were invited to his own classes. They had ample choice, as he led eleven each week. It is characteristic of the man that he learnt to write in old age that thus he might counsel his members when unable longer to do so by word of mouth.



WILLIAM DAWSON, 1773-1843. Typical local preacher.

WILLIAM CARVOSO, *d.* 1834. Typical class leader.

ONE OF THE FIRST LANCASHIRE METHODISTS.

DINAH MORRIS (Elizabeth Tomlinson Evans, *d.* 1849), of George Eliot's *Adam Bede*.

MARY TAFT, *d.* 185

Thomas Thompson (*d.* 1828) and Joseph Butterworth (*d.* 1826) indicate the influence which Methodism exerted upon the general life of the nation. They were both members of Parliament on the Tory side : both philanthropists, both successful men of business, both devotedly religious, both firmly Methodist. Thompson's connexion with Wilberforce gave him something of the outlook and manner of the Clapham Sect ; Butterworth was almost a perfect sample of the ' church ' Methodist. Except in his own denomination Thompson's name is almost forgotten. Butterworth has a place in the *Dictionary of National Biography* on account of his efforts on behalf of and lavish gifts to the poor and wretched. Yet in their lifetime Thompson occupied the more prominent place in the public view, and perhaps in his own church. He was the stronger and more cultivated man, more the man of affairs ; his position as a banker conferred social prestige ; he contributed largely to Methodist periodical literature, and wrote a book on *French Philosophy*, which held a distinct place in Christian apologetics. Butterworth wrought quietly and ceaselessly ; the honour that he valued most was his class-leadership. In the midst of business and politics both retained a deep spirituality—Thompson's the stouter and more aggressive, Butterworth's the more persuasive and emotional. Both were held in high esteem by the non-religious world for their stainless integrity and their consistent Christian character.

Methodist
Members of
Parliament.

In the first quarter of a century after Wesley's death we find a galaxy of memorable names. These help to illustrate the character of a Methodist. There are the two Allans—the father ' general solicitor to the Connexion,' the son the donor of the Allan Library ; the retired naval officer, Christopher Sundius, an official of the Admiralty, who bore good and ill fortune with equal piety ; the retired military officer, Lancelot Haslope, Missionary Treasurer 1826–37, soldierly, self-effacing, yet ready for any post to which he was called, master of a stately but popularly effective eloquence ; Humphrey Sandwith, M.D., a physician of repute, a skilful

Typical
Methodists.

journalist, a powerful controversialist, gentle, considerate, godly; the Marsdens, faithful to the description of John Wesley that 'John Marsden was a Methodist, if ever there was one'; the Mariotts, cultured, hospitable, bountiful; John Edwards, 'Merchant' Irving, Samuel Budgett, eminently successful in commerce, who carried their religion into the minutest details of their business. Space would fail us even to write out the catalogue of similar worthies whose good report is preserved in biography and tradition. The more the records are studied the stronger grows the impression of men busied about their earthly vocation but waiting to drop their work and meet the Master at the first intimation of His coming.

Honourable
women.

Great, too, was the company of holy women. Mary Fletcher survived John Wesley twenty-five years. Her saintly life, her self-denying charity and activity, bore rich fruit in Madeley and its neighbourhood. She was devotedly attached to the Church of England. The portrait of Elizabeth Evans drawn as Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede* is true to essential fact—to the power of her preaching and her consistent piety. Lady Mary Fitzgerald finished in 1815 her half-century of singularly pure, humble, and benevolent membership. Lady Cayley, who died in 1828, blessed God for her title, because—

it is a key which opens every door in this [Brompton, in the Vale of Pickering] and the parishes adjoining. I can lift the latch of the cottage, knock at the door of the farmhouse, enter in and talk to the people of the Saviour's love.

More than once Wesley pointed to 'Bessy Ritchie of Otley' as an example of all that a Methodist woman should be. As Mrs. Mortimer she was long a class-leader at City Road. Her *Memoir* tells of profound religious experience, of constant and intimate communion with God. The *Experience* and the *Spiritual Letters* of Hester Ann Rogers became a sort of handbook of Entire Sanctification, read and prayed over by multitudes. She is the best English analogue of Madame Guyon. Her mysticism, deep as that of the French lady,

rests on a stronger reality, inasmuch as it owes less to the imagination. Lady Maxwell exemplified the conjunction of perpetual immersion in affairs with an abiding recollectedness. Her hands were but engaged below, her heart was still with God. Elizabeth Wallbridge, the 'Dairyman's Daughter,' owes her renown to Legh Richmond's account of her last days. She showed how Christ can lay hold of the lowliest and most frivolous, change their inmost nature, and lead them through death triumphant home. Here, too, we give but few samples from a vast harvest of golden grain.

III

At the first Conference after Wesley's death a committee was appointed for the oversight of foreign missions. It would seem that this committee accepted no financial responsibility; that remained with Dr. Coke. His heart embraced the world. He had visions of a world-wide Methodism, but his main desire was that the gospel should be carried to the heathen. He welcomed any agency, *e.g.* the London Missionary Society. For long years he had meditated a mission to India, but the time was not ripe. The attitude of Methodism towards foreign missions at that time present one of the most puzzling of problems. Soon we shall witness a magnificent outburst of enthusiasm, the impulse of which abides to this day. But till 1813 the people that sang—

AGGRESSIVE
ENTER-
PRISES.
Foreign
missions.

O that the world might taste and see
The riches of His grace;
The arms of love that compass me
Would all mankind embrace,

answered Coke's appeal, if not grudgingly, at least ineffectually. A large proportion of the funds collected by Coke himself came from other than Methodist donors. A change, however, was at hand, and in 1813 the first public missionary meeting was held at Leeds. There was no direct effort to raise money, not even by a collection. But a flame of

enthusiasm was kindled that spread rapidly over the kingdom. The Conference sanctioned the Leeds scheme, and the Wesleyan Missionary Society was formed.¹ Coke died at sea May 11, 1814. The Society had been formed only just in time to supply the vacancy caused by Coke's decease. It was as though Providence had preserved him till the church was ready to carry on his work.

Missionary
advocation.

The chairman of the Leeds meeting was Thomas Thompson, M.P. He became the first lay Missionary Treasurer in 1817, serving till 1819, when he was succeeded by Joseph Butterworth, M.P., who held office till 1826. Three other names connected with the Leeds meeting demand further notice. The most telling speech was delivered by William Dawson, then and for years afterwards the most popular of local preachers. Of humble origin, but with a much better education than fell to most of his class, he developed a marvellous power of oratory, in which force, humour, and pathos mingled. His vivid picturing, homely and apt illustrations, glowing earnestness, and his familiarity with the Scriptures gave him an influence over a congregation which no other Methodist layman reached. He combined the evangelist with the expositor. He was equally mighty on the platform and in the pulpit. Till his death, in 1841, he travelled throughout England, always attracting huge crowds, rarely preaching without visible results, and rousing missionary enthusiasm to its highest pitch.

Richard
Watson.

In connexion with the Leeds meeting Richard Watson preached his fine sermon on Ezekiel's Vision of the Dry Bones. Though not relieved of circuit work, Watson became the Missionary Secretary in charge of the home department in 1816. From 1821-5 he was set apart to the work, and had a further term of service, 1832-3. It is not too much to say that Watson took up the torch when Coke dropped it. He was the first systematizer of the theology of Methodism; he was, in his day, the most distinguished of Methodist authors; his preaching flamed with fervour and eloquence;

¹ For further information on the missionary work of Wesleyan Methodism, see the chapter by Dr. Barber in vol. ii.

but he reached his highest level of devotion and effectiveness in his services to foreign missions. In administration he must yield the palm to Bunting, but he is second only to him. From Watson, in the greatest measure of any one man, came the inspiration, the self-communicating grace and pity that spread throughout the church. Not only did he write the circular to the societies which stirred up branch organizations everywhere, but year after year his ardour inflamed all with whom he could come into contact by voice or pen. Bunting's long secretaryship (1833-51)¹ saw steady extension, and the development of the society's resources. His zeal burned scarcely less hotly than Watson's. Busied with the management of the entire Connexion, missions held the first place in his heart, and no other calls could induce him to withdraw his hand from them. Whatever was done or undone, the claims of missions stood paramount.

Methodism played a prominent part in the foundation of the Bible Society—Joseph Butterworth and Christopher Sundius were amongst the earliest members of its Committee. The sympathy of the Conference was shown by its allowing Adam Clarke to remain in London beyond the customary period in order that he might continue the services he was rendering to the Society. In the efforts which culminated in the abolition of the slave trade (1807) and the emancipation of the West Indian slaves (1833) Methodism had a large share. Two-thirds of the Nonconformist signatures to petitions in favour of the latter measure were Methodist. Watson and Bunting exercised considerable influence over both movements, as letters of Wilberforce and Buxton testify.

The Bible Society and abolition.

Here may be mentioned the work of Michael Thomas Sadler, the initiator of the movement that culminated in Lord Shaftesbury's Factory Acts. He joined the Methodists in early youth and began to preach before he was sixteen years of age, publishing a brilliant *Apology for Methodism* when he was barely seventeen (1797). Nominally—we cannot

Michael Thomas Sadler.

¹ He was also Watson's colleague 1821-3.

use a stronger adverb—a linen-merchant in Leeds, he gave himself up to the study of the Poor Laws, the condition of the labouring classes, and kindred social questions. His business relations with Ireland caused him to investigate questions of land tenure and the state of the Irish peasantry. His proposals anticipated several of the measures that have been carried in recent times. Elected Member of Parliament for Newark in 1829, he made his mark as an orator in the House of Commons by an impassioned and yet closely reasoned speech in opposition to Roman Catholic emancipation. For a single year from 1831 he sat for Aldborough. Despite the heated Reform Bill discussions, in which he was not silent, he compelled the attention of a reluctant legislature to the necessity of regulating child-labour. Defeated at Leeds in 1832 by T. B. Macaulay, he retired to Ireland, where he died in 1835. Lord Ashley took up his philanthropic labours where he dropped them, and acknowledged ungrudgingly the disinterested services of the pioneer. Richard Oastler, Sadler's companion in arms, was of Methodist extraction, and for some time a local preacher; but he yielded to the social and political attractions of the Established Church.

Home
missions.

The principles and practices of Methodism were home missionary; but as circuits were formed the care of them became the first charge upon the time and energy of the preachers. Even Coke admitted this necessity, but he was continually on the outlook for opportunities of direct home-missionary aggression. In 1801 he persuaded the Conference to begin Welsh preaching; in 1806 he obtained the appointment of eight missionaries to labour specially in neglected English villages.

Wales.

Preaching in the native language in Wales had been commenced in 1800 by Edward Jones, a layman who had been converted in Manchester at the same time as James Wood and Jabez Bunting. His work prospered greatly. He appealed to the Conference for preachers. Coke had not arrived from Ireland. The stations were confirmed before he appeared, but he induced the Conference

to begin a mission in North Wales, though it involved a revision of the confirmed stations. For a dozen years Welsh-speaking Wesleyan Methodism spread steadily. Unfortunately when Dr. Coke's hand was withdrawn no one was responsible for it, and it was allowed to languish. In the opinion of competent judges, if Coke's policy had been continued Wesleyan Methodism would have occupied the place now taken by the Calvinistic Methodists.

In 1815 all the home missions became circuits or 'appendages to circuits.' This change betokened no intentional decrease of effort for extension. Confusion had arisen in the public mind between the home and the foreign missions; the alteration was designed to affect only the name. But home-missionary activity did dwindle, with some partial recovery after 1820, largely owing to the change of administration. Even in Wesley's time the Contingent Fund had never been able of itself to meet the demands upon it. From 1815 to 1856 it had rarely a penny to spare for distinctly aggressive purposes. Till 1855 the Conference retained the control of the fund in its own hands, though the District Meetings received gradually increasing power of local management. A Mixed Committee was appointed for the fund in 1855, but for twenty years the Connexion was in too disturbed a state to attempt much more than to hold its own and to develop existing circuits.

IV

In so brief a sketch as this it is impossible to trace the growth of ecclesiastical organization. It must suffice to say little more than that, one after another, joint committees of preachers and laymen were established for the management of the various funds and for the guarding of privileges. Some of them met annually just before the Conference. A system of Committees of Review came into existence, through which the influence of the laity made itself felt in all matters of business and finance. Steadily the Conference showed itself more and more unwilling to interfere with the

GROWTH OF
ORGANIZA-
TION.

Mixed
committees.

recommendations of the Mixed Committees. It retained the nominal power of confirmation, modification, and rejection: it appointed all Committees by its own sole authority. The process by which the advice of these committees obtained a position parallel to that of the advice of the Cabinet to the Sovereign was not completed by 1848, but it had made long strides and scarcely received a perceptible check. The constitution of Wesleyan Methodism, like that of the United Kingdom, has 'slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent.'

An illustration or two may be given. The first Committee on which ministers and laymen sat jointly was the Committee of Privileges, which was founded in 1803. The previous year a relaxation of the Militia Act had been obtained, mainly through Methodist laymen acting at the instigation of certain preachers. At once the advantage was seen of a mixed body that could act with authority between Conferences in matters affecting the civil rights of the people. The experiment succeeded, and the example was followed, step by step, till all the church funds were managed by mixed committees, responsible only to the Conference.

Lord
Sidmouth's
Bill.

A curious and remarkably well-aimed blow was directed at Methodism in 1814. It was founded upon a return, ordered five years before, of the number of 'preaching licences' issued from 1780 to 1808, and of the number of 'churches and chapels' licensed for the Church of England during the same period. The growth of Nonconformity, particularly of Methodism, was shown to be alarming. Lord Sidmouth's Bill nominally related to all Dissenting ministers, but it had been framed ingeniously to affect only Methodist itinerant and local preachers, and even class-leaders. To all intents and purposes it forbade the exercise of their offices. Lord Sidmouth seems to have been actuated by a genuine suspicion of Methodist loyalty to the throne. Through the Committee of Privileges he was undeceived. He dropped the Bill as a Government measure. It might nevertheless have passed the Lords but for the resolute

opposition of Archbishop Manners-Sutton, who declared it to be a breach of the Act of Toleration. What could not be obtained by the Bill was attempted to be gained through judicial decisions that Methodist preachers, not being Dissenting ministers, could not claim the protection of the aforesaid Act. Once again the Committee of Privileges intervened, and procured through the Earl of Liverpool the repeal of Acts against religious liberty which dated from Charles II.

A noteworthy instance of intolerance occurred in 1842. The Rev. T. S. Escott, vicar of Gedney, not only refused Christian burial to a child who had been baptized by a Wesleyan Methodist minister, but described the itinerant preachers as 'beings who pretend to be ministers of the gospel, and really are ministers of hell,' and 'dissenting mountebanks.' An appeal to the Bishop of Lincoln produced a gentlemanly expression of regret for the insults, but a *non possumus* as to redress for the outrage. The Committee of Privileges prosecuted Mr. Escott in the Court of Arches. That Anglican court decided that baptism by Wesleyan Methodists was valid not only by the ecclesiastical but by the civil law. Mr. Escott appealed to the Privy Council, who confirmed the judgement of the court below. In days when cemeteries were comparatively rare, and when burials in churchyards could be performed only by Anglican clergy, the decision was of the greatest value. Various unsuccessful attempts were made to evade or defy the judgement. Without it the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism by Wesleyan Methodist ministers must have ceased.

The Gedney case.

It is by no means clear how laymen obtained the right of attendance at the District Meetings when financial business is discussed. The earliest rule simply allows a laudable custom which became obligatory in 1817. Previously it seems to have been left to the superintendent of each circuit to invite his circuit stewards if he chose. By resolutions subsequent to 1817 a few other lay officers were added to the circuit stewards. It was the policy of the Conference to

Laymen in District Meetings, 1815.

delegate more and more power to the District Meetings so formed. In specified instances the authority of the Meeting was made final.

The Financial District Meeting (September) was created by formal enactment in 1819. It consisted of 'such preachers as can conveniently attend (the superintendent, at least, of each circuit), and also the circuit stewards throughout the District.' The only business assigned to it was the allocation of 'children's allowances' to the different circuits. The next year it was reappointed, with some additional duties. In 1821 it was made a permanent institution. Ten years later financial secretaries were appointed for the first time. By this date the whole financial business of each district had passed under the control of the September Meeting. The years 1819-20 mark the establishment of a complete system of finance, which with enlargements and minor modifications endured till the establishment of the Representative Conference.

Regulations for the business of the Annual District Meeting were issued in 1812. Hitherto each Meeting had followed its own course, acting simply as a committee of the Conference. From the first the duty of inquiry into the character of the preachers had belonged to it. The Minor District Meeting consisted of four travelling preachers and the chairman. Originally designed only for the trial of accused preachers, in 1835 its 'principle' was extended also to the case of all excluded members who chose to avail themselves of its provisions. The Special District Meeting consisted of all the itinerant preachers of the District, with three (1797) or four (1835) other itinerant preachers called in by the chairman or by parties to the case under trial, if deemed desirable. In the Leeds organ case it was the court intermediary between the circuits and the Conference. It is summoned only for extraordinary matters. It differs from the Minor District Meetings not only in size, but in the fact that there is no appeal from its decision except to the Conference itself. The President of the Conference may 'assist at any District Meeting' if so requested by the chair-

Annual
Minor and
Special
District
Meetings.

man or a majority of the superintendents. In 1827 it was agreed that he might be accompanied by the Secretary if he desired it.

Two changes of great importance were made in the constitution of the Conference in 1814. Up to that date all the elections to the Legal Hundred had been made on the ground of seniority, and by the Hundred itself. It was then arranged that every fourth election should be by and from ministers who had travelled fourteen years. Ministers so qualified were given also the right of voting in the election of President and Secretary. Of course confirmation by the Hundred, which is never refused, is legally necessary. The first election to the Hundred by nomination was that of Jabez Bunting, by whom the alteration had been proposed.

The Legal
Hundred.

The solemn admission of preachers into full connexion by the lifting of the hand, and the conferring of the right to administer the Sacraments, changed the company of travelling preachers into a ministerial order. The prefix 'Reverend' was authorized in 1818. Four years later ordination by imposition of hands was proposed. The Conference rejected the proposal chiefly from fear of offending the 'church' Methodists, but partly lest doubt should be thrown on their existing mode of ordination, by the solemn vote, the lifting up of the hands of the presbytery. Gradually—one does not know quite how—the custom of laying hands on men designated for foreign service grew up. For several years Bunting had favoured the universal employment of this method, and had suggested rather than urged it. As President, in 1836, he explained to the men about to be received into full connexion the reasons for the omission of an apostolic institution. A protracted conversation ensued. A resolution moved by Dr. Newton was carried, with a few dissentients, that an Ordination Service should be held that year. It was made abundantly clear that the mode of ordination was merely 'a circumstance' in the admission to the full ministry, but the propriety and advantage of the 'circumstance' were insisted on strongly. In the disputes of the preceding year the

Ordination.

ministerial status of the preachers had been denied vociferously. It was meet that the most complete recognition should be given to it. We may both underestimate and overestimate the importance of the step. It was a distinct declaration that Wesleyan Methodism had become a church, an avowal of its union with the one catholic and apostolic church. Henceforth the name 'United Societies' or 'People called Methodists' might be preserved, but the status of a distinct branch of the church was avowed and demanded. The Ordination Service was the culmination of a series of events which placed the top-stone on a building which had rather grown than been erected of set purpose.

V

LATER
LEADERS
AND
MOVEMENTS,
Jabez
Bunting

The central figure of the middle age of Methodism is Jabez Bunting. The more thoroughly and minutely the history of the period is studied the stronger and deeper are the impression of the power of his influence and the extent and importance of his work. Before the end of his probation he was marked out for leadership. At the close of the four years the Conference debated warmly as to his appointment, the foremost circuits of the Connexion 'petitioning' for him. The circuits were moved by his pastoral diligence and his might in the pulpit. The Conference stationed him in London on the ground of connexional rather than local claims. At once he became a power, not only in Methodism, but amongst the Evangelicals generally, whether Churchmen or Dissenters. It is no small tribute to his position that he was asked to join the syndicate that started the *Eclectic Review*. From the first he belonged both to the management and the literary staff. His main desire was to be an efficient and successful circuit preacher, but almost every department of the church called for his advice and assistance. He had travelled but fifteen years when he was elected Secretary of the Conference, having previously filled the office of Assistant Secretary. Six years later he held his first presidency. Connexional honours were showered upon him. He was

Editor, Foreign Missionary Secretary, President of the Theological Institution. There was scarcely a committee of which he was not the most prominent member. In the Conference he stood *facile princeps*. For full thirty years the greater part of the legislation was of his initiation and of his moulding. A powerful opposition existed, led by such men as Joseph Fowler (the father of the first Methodist peer, Lord Wolverhampton), William Atherton (the father of the first Methodist Attorney-General), Joseph Beaumont, and Bunting's own son (W. M. Bunting). Bunting was 'ever a fighter,' and enjoyed the struggle of debate. Until near the close of his activity his supremacy was unchecked. Nor is the fact hard to explain. In the first place, Bunting expressed the opinions of the majority of the Conference. He gave force and definite utterance to them, but, at least in his earlier years, he did not make them. Richard Watson, Robert Newton, George Marsden, Thomas Jackson, supported him almost uniformly, but they were by no means his henchmen. No one could be better fitted to represent the distinctive spirit of Wesleyan Methodism than he. Of honourable Methodist ancestry, he had been baptized in the Church of England, and taken regularly to its morning service when a child. He carried on the church traditions so dear to many hearts. Yet the most violent reformer was not more convinced than he of the absolute necessity of giving to Methodism not only a distinct, but, so far as might be, a complete ecclesiastical status. His intellectual passion for symmetry was modified and controlled by cautious common sense. With all the instincts of a statesman, he did not press his own view unless he believed that he could carry the Conference with him. Strongly in favour of ordination by the imposition of hands, and expressing his judgement on it frankly and decisively, he waited year after year till others made the proposal.

Bunting's action with regard to the Leeds and Warrenite agitations, and, as superintendent of a circuit, as to the Band-Room Methodists, has given the impression in some minds that he was the champion of clerical domination.

Charge of
arbitrariness.

But in the first place he contended quite as much for the rights of trustees as for the supremacy of the Conference. He promoted the formation of committees on which ministers and laymen sat in equal numbers ; he extended the control of District Meetings over finance ; he bestowed a legal constitution on Quarterly Meetings. The right of an accused member to trial by a jury of his peers had no more resolute defender than he. In Methodist politics Bunting advocated that *via media* in which churches no less than individuals may tread most safely. He believed in a ' balance of power ' between clergy and laity ; but to countervail the influence of numbers and of the purse, he held that the Conference and, in his sphere, the superintendent of a circuit, must possess jealously guarded powers of veto and confirmation. No small part of Bunting's premiership was due to the policy he represented. In the second place, Bunting was endowed with a remarkable genius for organization and administration. He exhibited a rapidity of decision and accomplishment which even Dr. Punshon could hardly rival. If offices accumulated upon him, that was owing mainly to the judgement of the Conference, and of the laity, that he would discharge the various duties himself better than they could be performed through division amongst any number of others. It is true that he manifested the defects inseparable from ' the capable man '—provoking and unwise inattention to the representations of men of less business ability than he possessed, a reliance on himself that not merely overbore, but ignored opposition. This is only to say that he had the defects of his qualities. In the third place he was a giant in debate. Opponents might ' stand up to ' him courageously, but they were overmatched by a force and a skill that were not invariably used with the consideration legitimately due to weaker brethren. We may add that his supremacy was as manifest without as within his own church. In the formation of the Evangelical Alliance, for instance, his word carried scarcely less weight than it did with regard to the affairs of Wesleyan Methodism.

All Dr. Bunting's mental qualities—even if we add his

vehemence, resistless logic, and straightforwardness in thought and action—would have accomplished comparatively little, if it had not been for his character, his profound spirituality, and his humility. The man who, before his reception into full connexion, could answer, as modestly as confidently, to the question ‘Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and His work?’ ‘I habitually do’ was no mere statesman and governor. The reader of his *Memoirs* almost loses sight of the great leader in the contemplation of one who walked with God. In the pulpit his appeals to the conscience were passionate and overwhelming. Busied with connexional affairs, his heart was in circuit work. When set aside for departmental work, he urged his preference for the Leeds Circuit to which he was engaged, and one reason for his choice was that he might be away from the headquarters in London. His premiership was thrust upon him. ‘Through busiest life’ ’midst ‘pain and care and strife’ he lived the life of faith, and shared in the blessing of the pure in heart.

His
spirituality.

The disastrous agitation which had but begun in 1850 is usually traced to Bunting’s policy. There is a certain or uncertain amount of truth in this; the *Fly-Sheets* were directed principally against Bunting and those who agreed with him. There was genuine rebellion against a one-man administration. But it must be remembered that the real troubles, the disruption of the church, began only after Bunting’s retirement. We may well believe that his statesmanship would have guided the vessel of the state to a very different destination. One lamentable result of his long pre-eminence was that the men who had to weather the storm had depended on his counsel and leadership. Their hands were unaccustomed to the helm. It may well be forgiven them if they lost some nerve, and were hurried into precipitate action. In this connexion it is of some suggestiveness that Bunting’s favourite among the younger men was William Arthur, whose views by no means accorded with all the official action of the Conference both before and after Bunting’s retirement. Dr. Rigg, it is true, calls

Bunting Arthur's 'patron,' and defends the phrase, depriving it, however, of all bad sense. But William Arthur was no man's disciple. Of keen intellect, devout enthusiasm, and singularly persuasive power, he held for many years an almost unique position in the Conference and in the Connexion. His chief memorial is *The Tongue of Fire*.

Robert
Newton.

Like Bunting, Robert Newton was President four times, and Secretary for several years. He was the second of the three great clerical orators of Methodism. His popularity was so great that, at length, he was freed from circuit work that he might spend his whole time preaching on special occasions. His handsome and commanding physique, his grand voice, his rushing eloquence, his flaming enthusiasm, his telling gestures brought him nearer to the typical orator than either Bradburn or Punshon. His throne was the pulpit; he never attempted the platform reputation of his later peer. It is impossible in a few lines to convey any idea of the immediate effect of his preaching. The years that he hastened about the country, preaching constantly Sundays and week-days, have him for their most prominent figure in the circuits. Much of Bunting's work was done in office and committee; Newton was always before the public eye. His visits were times of spiritual refreshing. Few popular preachers have shown less desire merely to please or captivate an audience. He had a message to deliver; he was emphatically an ambassador, a special envoy, for Christ. His themes were singularly few; but their repetition never palled. People would eagerly flock to hear the same sermon for the sixth or seventh time.

Soul-
winners.

The men who were called to the high places of the field were occupied necessarily with business and administration. They did not lose their spirituality; often their preaching retained the dew of its youth. But we can hardly catch from them a clear idea of the ordinary life of Methodism. Let us glance at the career of two men who, whatever their eminence, were wholly and solely Methodist preachers. William Bramwell completed his probation at Wesley's last Conference. A sincere member of the Church

of England, he had 'received the evidence of pardoning love' while partaking of the Lord's Supper. This he afterwards lost, but obtained again through the instruction of John Wesley. He joined the society, and entered upon that course of diligent spiritual self-culture and zeal for the salvation of sinners which he continued to his life's end. He felt called to the itinerancy, but the difficulties of his circumstances seemed insuperable. Even before his conversion, he had been a man of prayer, often spending long night-hours, his knees pressed against coarse sand, in agonizing appeal against himself to God. The question of the ministry could be settled only by prayer. He spent thirty-six consecutive hours in a disused sandpit pleading for light upon his path. At length it came. There was no doubt about his call, and the 'way opened.' From the first his ministry was marvellously useful both in the conversion of sinners and the edification of believers. He himself followed hard after and clave close to God, and God's right hand upheld and sustained him. In 1793 we find him at Dewsbury, his career of success checked; the societies are prosperous, but there is no great out-pouring of the Spirit. Twelve months of well-nigh hourly prayer ensued. Then came such a blessing that there was no room even to receive it. The outpouring of the Spirit was as remarkable in its sanctifying as in its converting influences. Frequent love-feasts were filled with astonishing testimonies of deliverance from the power of darkness and of walking in the light. Similar experiences, though not with so long waiting, occurred in Bristol, Northampton, Leeds, Hull. The last year of his life, 1817-18, was spent in the Salford Circuit. The year was darkened by 'strong conflicts,' final efforts of the wicked one against Bramwell's soul. The clouds broke whenever he entered the pulpit; never had he preached with more fervour or more blessed results. In the little chapel at Barton, during the last love-feast Bramwell held, 'upwards of thirty souls were set at liberty.' Bramwell possessed great physical power. After a Sunday spent in preaching, praying, sick-visiting

class-meeting, walking a score of miles, he would return home absolutely unfatigued, to spend, probably, the greater part of the night in prayer.

David Stoner (*d.* 1826) was endowed with less than average bodily strength, but he resembled Branwell in fervour and in spiritual experience. Better educated, and of finer mental mould than Bramwell, and of rarer oratorical power, he was for some half-dozen years the most popular minister in the ordinary work. His popularity did no damage to his religious life; he was scarcely aware of it, for he estimated his own abilities at a very low rate. His immediate success in preaching was perhaps greater than Bramwell's, but he lacked Bramwell's geniality. His self-diffidence caused an extreme taciturnity in private intercourse, and a repellent manner which only the few who could penetrate his humble reserve learnt was manner only. After a service at which there had been a single conversion, he was overheard to exclaim, 'I am thankful for one soul, but oh, I want thousands.' The prayer was answered. Like Bramwell he preached entire sanctification, and saw multitudes enter into full redemption. The days of his last illness were glorious beyond imagination. Literally his last breath was spent in the prayer, 'Lord, save sinners! Save them by thousands, Lord! Subdue them, Lord! Convert them, Lord!' The official obituaries of that date are reticent of laudation, and even more reticent of regret; but the notice of David Stoner breaks through the rule, tells of the defeated hopes that had been entertained, and calls him 'a burning and a shining light.'

Local
preachers.

Eminent in the great army of local preachers¹ were two Yorkshiremen—'Sammy' Hick and Jonathan Saville. Between the physique of the two a wider contrast could not have existed: the former brawny, vigorous; the latter an undersized, almost dwarfish, cripple. Both had the gift

¹ By decisions obtained in 1848 it was settled that local preachers, as well as ministers, were exempt from paying tolls on the highways on the Lord's Day, when travelling to their appointments in their own or other circuits. (*WMM*, 1848.)

of humour, Saville in the less degree. Hick laboured at his trade till his later years, but he travelled about Yorkshire and the neighbouring counties, always gathering large audiences of gentle and simple, preaching conversion and holiness, and witnessing signs following. Saville's sphere was narrower, partly because his broken and unset thigh would not permit him to ride. Often invited to larger places, he cared chiefly for the villages, and the pleasure of the Lord prospered in his hands. More of the orator than 'the Village Blacksmith,' he was no less humble. Both men were enthusiasts in the cause of missions. Their influence in popularizing foreign missions cannot easily be exaggerated.

Till 1835, and indeed for some time afterwards, there was a considerable company of women who published the gospel. Mary Barrett (Mrs. Taft) may serve as a specimen. From her conversion till her marriage she journeyed from place to place, preaching with an energy and an effectiveness equal to the foremost of her brethren. Afterwards she confined her labours chiefly to her husband's circuits; but Mr. and Mrs. Taft made one powerful personality. In 1835 the Conference expressed strong disapproval of female preaching, not so much for its own sake as because of certain concomitants. The Connexion approved; and female preaching almost ceased to exist for a protracted period.

Women
preachers.

Revivalism was the note of the Methodism of the middle age, especially of the earlier part. Neither preachers nor people were content with steady, slow progress. They were grateful for this, but they looked for, and obtained, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. These revivals were not always decorous; an eager desire to escape from imminent danger does not observe conventional propriety. Breaches of etiquette, passionate outcries, physical disturbances exposed Methodism to misrepresentation and animadversion, from the severely judicial condemnation of the *Quarterly Review* to the *chroniques scandaleuses* of Polwhele's untruthful and comically malicious *Anecdotes*. Necessarily offences against good taste, deviations from the habits of polite society, abounded.

Revivalism.

The revivals, however, were justified of their children through changed lives and triumphant deaths. A typical revivalist was John Smith of Cudworth, who, warned that his exertions must shorten his days, replied that God had given him such a view of the state of the perishing around that he was quite unable to control his emotions or lessen his efforts. The answer reminds us of one motive that exercised an overwhelming influence over the preachers, both itinerant and local, of this period. They believed firmly in an endless hell and in the malignant and ever-present personality of the devil and his angels. Side by side with this was an exultant faith in the universal love of God to man. They thus judged that if One died for all then had all died, and the love of Christ constrained them—

With cries, entreaties, tears to save,
To snatch them from the gaping grave.

Whatever he may have meant by it, Tennyson's description—

An' Muggins 'e preached o' Hell-fire, an' the loov o' God to men,

is true not only as regards the little Lincolnshire chapel, but as to London and Newcastle. Stoner's urgent and repeated appeals for instant decision to men who had not forty days' grace like the Ninevites, but might not have twenty minutes', drew their force not merely from the reality of the terror of the Lord, but also from the bleeding heart and the wounded side of Christ. This two-fold urgency was not the property only of men like Bramwell, Smith, and unknown peasants, but of thinkers and authors like Watson, of scholars like Benson and Clarke, and saints like Joseph Entwisle. It was the underlying force of the missionary enterprise. It was carried on to a later date by such men as Thomas Collins, John Rattenbury, and Charles Richardson. These preachers never lost the sense of their own rescue. They prayed and toiled that—

every fallen soul of man
Might taste the grace that found out me,
That all mankind with me may prove
Thy sovereign everlasting love.

Every sermon told their own experience, not merely of conversion, but of daily renewal and growth. When they sang—

Me to save from endless woe
 The sin-atoning Victim died ;
 Only Jesus will I know,
 And Jesus crucified,

their affirmations signified pardon and cleansing, and the crucifixion of the old man with the lusts thereof.

On faithfulness to doctrine directly influencing the experience of salvation the Conference laid great but necessary stress. When, in 1806, Joseph Cooke practically denied the witness of the Spirit and taught that the faith that justifies was in itself meritorious, the Conference remonstrated with him in brotherly fashion, and only required him not to preach his new views. He pledged himself to silence about them, and incontinently broke his pledge. Thereupon he ceased to be recognized as an itinerant. Some years later Adam Clarke rejected the Eternal Sonship, on metaphysical grounds, thus erring from one of the fundamental verities of the Christian faith. The Conference condemned the aberration in unmistakable terms, and instructed Richard Treffry, junior, to write a treatise expounding the challenged doctrine. But there was no thought of interfering with Clarke's ministry. He kept his philosophic doubt out of the pulpit ; it did not hinder his preaching a full, free, and present salvation through Jesus Christ.

Doctrinal
purity.

Nor were the children neglected. The Saturday afternoon class for children, conducted by ministers, was, for many years, almost universal in places where ministers resided. Sunday schools, though frequently taught by Methodists and held on Methodist premises, were, at first, left pretty much to themselves. They were regarded as private enterprises, to be encouraged and assisted, but not to be recognized as part of the machinery of the church. This attitude resulted, in the main, from the generally

Sunday
schools.

undenominational character of the schools. Even when schools were actually Methodist the Conference went no further than to advise the preachers to 'get themselves elected on the managing committees' (1816); and some counsel was tendered to teachers and committees (1817). It was not till 1827 that rules for the management of Wesleyan Methodist Sunday schools were issued, and even then they were not compulsory on schools founded before the date of issue.

Day schools.

In 1833 and the following year a resolution was passed by the Conference approving of the establishment of Wesleyan Methodist Day schools. It seems to have remained nearly a dead letter. But in 1836 a step was taken which led to the formation of the Education Committee. Richard Treffry, William Atherton, and Samuel Jackson were appointed to report as to 'our Sunday and other schools.' Their report was presented to the Conference of 1837. There were 3,339 Sunday schools, 59,277 teachers, 341,442 scholars. A full quarter of the preaching-places had no Sunday school attached to them. There were nine 'daily infant schools' and twenty-two 'week-day schools for elder children.' The report emphasized in the strongest terms the necessity for religious and denominational education. The Conference adopted the report, and, in 1838, established the Education Committee, giving to its charge both Sunday and Day schools. Two results followed—the organization of Sunday schools in connexion with almost every chapel, and the establishment of Catechumen Classes, for which Samuel Jackson, with some help from his brother Robert, prepared a scheme of instruction.

Lord
Melbourne's
Bill.

The new Committee watched carefully the action of the Government with regard to matters educational. With the Committee of Privileges, it protested successfully against Lord Melbourne's Bill (1839) for establishing National Training Colleges with combined secular and separate religious instruction, pronouncing the scheme 'corrupt and anti-scriptural.' It gave to the *Minute* of June 3, 1819, offering grants to denominational Training

Colleges its prompt and hearty approval, declaring that 'it is the duty of every section of the Church of Christ to educate their (*sic*) own children in their own way in the best manner they are able.' In 1841 a scheme of religious instruction in Wesleyan Methodist Day Schools was formulated, which, with little alteration, held its ground till 1870.

In 1843 John Scott proposed a scheme for the erection of seven hundred new Day Schools in seven years. The greater part of this scheme was carried into effect. Four years later Government grants were accepted for the Day Schools, but the most stringent precautions, sanctioned by the Committee of Council, were taken to prevent the slightest interference with religious teaching. Up to 1848 the educational policy of Methodism was the training of its own children in its own schools, with daily religious services and instruction, the Bible in the Authorized Version being the lesson-book, though the teaching of the Catechism was encouraged.

Great extension of Day Schools.

At the Liverpool Conference of 1820 a decrease of 4,638 members was reported, the first decrease since 1766, when the statistics were reported for the first time. A document of considerable importance was issued, embodying a series of resolutions on which the assembled preachers proposed to act. This was their answer to the question 'What measures can we adopt for the increase of spiritual religion among our societies and congregations, and for the extension of the work of God in our native country?' Their spirit may be judged from the first three paragraphs.

First decrease in membership.

1. We, on this solemn occasion, devote ourselves afresh to God; and resolve, in humble dependence on His grace, to be more than ever attentive to personal religion, and to the Christian instruction and government of our own families.

Liverpool. Minutes.

2. Let us endeavour, in our public ministry, to preach constantly all those leading and vital doctrines of the Gospel, which peculiarly distinguished the original Methodist preachers, whose labours were so signally blessed by the Lord, and to preach them in our primitive method—evangelically, experimentally, zealously, and with great plainness and simplicity; giving to

them a decided prominence in every sermon, and labouring to apply them closely, affectionately, and energetically to the consciences of the different classes of our hearers.

3. Let us consecrate ourselves fully and entirely to our proper work as servants of Christ and His church, giving ourselves 'wholly' to it, both in public and in private, and guarding against all occupations of our time and thoughts, which have no direct connexion with our great calling, and which would injuriously divert our attention from the momentous task of saving souls, and taking care of the flock of Christ.

Another resolution reads :

Let every Methodist preacher consider himself called to be, in point of enterprise, zeal, and diligence, a home missionary, and to enlarge, and extend, as well as keep, the circuit to which he is appointed.

Various practical suggestions follow as to pastoral visitation, outdoor preaching, and observance of the Lord's Supper, cottage prayer-meetings, and regular attendance at the class-meetings. Benson and Watson were instructed to prepare catechisms so that children might be taught Methodist doctrine. The *Minutes* are written in a concise and solemn style that approaches to stateliness. Seldom has a Christian church sent forth a worthier or more weighty document. It was directed to be read annually in the Circuit Preachers' Meeting, and before 'the conversation on the state of the work of God' in the May District Meetings.

VI

METHODIST
APOLOGIES.

Literary
Assaults.

For some years after Wesley's death Methodism was exposed to literary assaults of various degrees of importance. The earliest of these Benson's *Defence of Methodism* met with sufficient substance and not insufficient skill. Edward Hare, too, showed himself a powerful controversialist, particularly in defence of the 'Doctrine of Assurance taught by Methodists.' Southey's *Life of Wesley*, of which the sub-title was *The Rise and Progress of Methodism*, was pub-

lished in 1820. From Methodists themselves it did not receive a warm welcome. Watson exposed its defects and misunderstandings in the ablest and most finished of all his productions. Alexander Knox issued some 'Remarks' in defence of Wesley, the justice of which Southey eventually acknowledged. In spite of the legitimate objections which may be taken to Southey's *Life*—and they are many and serious—it rendered one invaluable service to Methodism. The sect almost everywhere spoken against could be despised no longer. The portrait of Wesley, noble despite its erroneous lines and mistakes of proportion; the generous, dexterous miniatures of his helpers; the appreciation of the beneficial effect of Methodism, notwithstanding an utter lack of sympathy with evangelical religion; the fame and influence of the author, placed the men and the movement upon a secure pedestal in the eyes of the literary world, and shamed scurrilous detractors into an appearance of respect.

An idea of the impression produced by Methodism on the outsider may be gained from Crabbe's *Borough* (1810). The Fourth Letter, 'Sects and Preferences in Religion,' contains a description of 'Methodists of two Kinds—Calvinists and Arminians.' With the former the poet has scant sympathy :

See yonder Preacher to his people pass,
Borne up and swelled by tabernacle gas;
Much he discourses, and of various points,
All unconnected, void of limbs and joints;
He rails, persuades, explains, and moves the will
By fierce, bold words, and strong mechanic skill.

The account is evidently prejudiced, for the contempt of education—

Have I this learning? When the Lord would speak,
Think ye He needs the Latin or the Greek?—

is strangely discordant with the scholarliness of many preachers in the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Of

Methodism proper the picture, though not free from sarcasm, is by no means unfavourable :

This is the ancient stock by Wesley led ;
 They the pure body, he the reverend head ;
 All innovation they with dread decline,
 Their John the elder was their John divine.
 Hence still their morning prayer, the swelling hymn,
 The varied accent, and the active limb ;
 Hence their implicit faith in Satan's might,
 And their own matchless prowess in the fight.

To Satan are traced both Calvinism and Antinomianism :

To this deceit you have but one reply
 Give to the Father of all Lies the lie.

Book Room.

The quantity and quality of the literature of the middle age of Wesleyan Methodism are surprising. Wesley regarded the Book-Room and its business as his own private property, though the profits had been devoted religiously to the work of God, chiefly for the support of the preachers. A court of law, after a friendly suit, declared that 'all his books, pamphlets, etc.,' belonged to seven trustees (all preachers), who were bound 'to apply all the profits unto the solace and benefit of the Conference.' Acting under legal advice, the seven transferred the property to the Conference itself. Henceforth the profits were assigned, mainly but not exclusively, to the support of worn-out ministers and ministers' widows. A Book Committee was appointed in 1793. It was composed of 'all the preachers stationed in London,' with seven 'corresponding members.' The latter section speedily disappeared. The Book-Room, though its pecuniary profit was of the highest importance, was never conducted merely as a publishing and book-selling business. It was regarded as an integral part of the work of God. It cared much more for the character of the literature circulated than for financial success.

The Conference selected its best business men for the Book-Stewardship—George Whitfield, Robert Lomas, John Mason ; and its ablest men for the Editorship—Joseph

Benson, George Story, Jabez Bunting, Thomas Jackson. The foremost men of Wesleyan Methodism—*e.g.* Richard Watson, Adam Clarke, Thomas Thompson—sent contributions, unremunerated, to the *Magazine*. The title of the official periodical, hitherto *The Arminian Magazine*, became in 1798 *The Methodist Magazine*, 'its controversial warfare having been accomplished.' Bunting (1822) prefixed *Wesleyan* to *Methodist*, to avoid confusion with the Primitive Methodist and Bible Christian publications. A magazine for young people, *The Youth's Instructor*, was begun in 1817, and endured some forty years. The *Christian Miscellany*, to meet the wants of those for whom the *Magazine* was too expensive and too erudite, commenced in 1846.

Naturally one of the earliest publications of the newly constituted Book-Room was a *Life of Wesley* (1792). It was the joint work of Coke and Moore. It is almost incredible that for more than twenty years this was accepted as sufficient by the People called Methodists.¹ In 1824 Moore published a two-volume *Life*, intended to supersede Southey's. It probably effected its purpose for Methodists, and for them only. It was invaluable, however, as a piece of apologetic. Watson's *Life* was prepared at the request of the Conference, and was supposed to be a popular summary of facts and principles. If we judged by internal evidence alone, we should decide undoubtedly that the ascription of the book to the man who wrote the *Reply* to Southey was a literary libel. Even Dr. Rigg cannot bring himself to say a good word concerning it.

Lives of
Wesley.

Of other biographical literature it must suffice to say that it was immeasurably rich in spiritual experience. Benson's *Life of John Fletcher* (superseded now by Tyerman's and F. W. Macdonald's), the memoirs of Hester Ann Rogers, Bramwell, Stoner, and Atmore's *Methodist Memorial*, inadequate as it is, can only be mentioned.

The four great Commentaries—Coke's, Benson's, Clarke's, Sutcliffe's—were read eagerly and widely by Methodists ;

Methodist
Commen-
taries.

¹ Whitehead's *Life*, 1796, can scarcely be counted.

Clarke's circulated largely among the general public. Watson began a commentary on the New Testament; the specimen published causes real regret that it was not finished. Watson and Wood compiled *Theological Dictionaries*, Dr. Townley three volumes of *Illustrations of Biblical Literature*, well abreast of the scholarship of its day. Watson's *Institutes* was for many years the theological text-book of the Methodist ministry.

Numerous works were written in defence of Methodist doctrine and polity; from Benson's *Apology*, through Crowther's *Portraiture*, to Thomas Jackson's *Letter* in reply to the strictures of Dr. Pusey. The bulk of this controversial literature is considerable; but it must be remembered that assaults on Methodism poured from the press. Dr. (subsequently Archbishop) Magee, for instance, actually contrived to fill several pages in vilifying Methodism in a volume on *The Scriptural Doctrine of Sacrifice*. Half a score of Visitation Charges misrepresent the Methodist people with more or less excuse. Whole volumes were devoted to arguments against Methodism, sometimes grave and respectful, oftener absurd and ignorant. It was not love of polemics that stirred so many Methodist pens, but the stern necessity of turning the enemy to the gate. Like Israel in the days of Deborah and Barak, Methodism needed warriors that could handle the staff of the scribe.

It is impossible even to catalogue Adam Clarke's publications. They were by no means confined to theology and religion as his work on the Rolls MSS. exemplifies. Drew's metaphysical disquisitions obtained for him an honorary M.A. from Scotland, and the offer of a chair in the University of London.

Dr. Osborn's *Outlines of Wesleyan Bibliography* extends twenty years beyond 1848, but four-fifths of his list of publications by 'Preachers in the Wesleyan Connexion' relates to the middle age. The number of sermons, biographies, and theological works is surprising, when we bear in mind the scanty opportunities of culture enjoyed by the brother-

hood. One work deserves special mention—Thomas Powell's *Apostolical Succession*. The book has conspicuous faults, especially in its patristic sections, while the growth of knowledge has made it obsolete. But the helplessness of High Churchmen in the presence of its main argument was conspicuous. Several replies were published, not one of which attempted to meet its principal contention.

VII

The case of Joseph Rayner Stephens illustrates the attitude of Methodism both towards party politics and towards other churches than its own. Stephens was on the staff of *The Christian Advocate*, a newspaper edited by his elder brother, which spent most of its strength in violent, not to say abusive, assaults on the Church of England, Methodism as represented by Dr. Bunting, and, in a scarcely less degree, the Dissenting denominations. Early in the year 1834 Stephens spoke at a meeting and became the corresponding secretary of a 'Church Separation Society.' In defiance of his superintendent he introduced his politics into the pulpit and into church meetings. The Conference required him to resign his secretaryship and to eschew party politics. Whereupon he asked and received permission to withdraw from the itinerancy. Subsequently he became one of the ablest of the Chartist advocates.

About the same time there appeared, the one in Staffordshire, the other in Cornwall, two revivalists of great power, devotion, and success. Both were young local preachers consumed with zeal, impatient of regularity and restraint, and both, subsequently, showed in the denominations they founded a masterfulness which ended in revolt. Before he came under the influence of Lorenzo Dow, Hugh Bourne had felt himself commissioned to preach the word wherever he could find an audience.¹ His preaching, indoors and out-of-doors, had been instrumental in many conversions. Dow told him wonderful stories of American camp-meetings ;

TRoubLED
TIMES.

Joseph
Rayner
Stephens.

Primitive
Methodism,
1811

¹ For a fuller account of Bourne *vide infra*, pp. 565 ff.

Bourne believed that camp-meetings might be introduced into England, and thereby people might be reached who were inaccessible to ordinary methods. The first English camp-meeting was held at Mow Cop in 1807, and was followed by others. The results more than met the expectations of the promoters. The Conference disapproved of the camp-meetings for prudential reasons. They presented temptations to and opportunities for immorality; they gave rise to serious scandal. Bourne looked only at the 'hundreds of conversions,' and thought the scandal merely the offence of the cross; he would not, therefore, obey the Conference prohibition. He was put off the local-preachers plan, and his ticket withheld. The case of William Clowes was technically parallel. These two, in conjunction with James Steele, who was separated from the society on somewhat similar grounds, formed the Primitive Methodist Connexion. They made no attempt to draw members after them. They simply went out into the highways and hedges to gather men to Christ by the methods they held to be the most efficient.

From their own standpoint they were justified; it does not follow, however, that the Conference is to be condemned. In common fairness we must note that open-air preaching was not even discouraged; the objection was wholly and solely against camp-meetings, which were not deemed suitable to English soil. Attacks in the press on alleged Methodist irregularities were frequent and dangerous at this time, and the Conference was therefore unusually sensitive. As to the 'expulsions,' it must be remembered that we possess only one side of the evidence, unquestionably given in good faith, but no one conversant with Wesleyan Methodist usages and law can accept it in its entirety. But if we give Bourne and his comrades credit for sincere devotion to the kingdom of God, we must mete out like measure to the Wesleyan Methodist authorities.

Upon William O'Bryan's heart the spiritual destitution of villages in his own neighbourhood, Devon, lay heavily.¹ He

¹ For a fuller account of O'Bryan *vide infra*, pp. 503 f.

carried the gospel to them with impassioned speech and laborious self-denial. Converts gathered round him, new places were opened, and at last one new chapel was built. The new societies were recognized by the circuit authorities and the new places put on the circuit plan. O'Bryan's work was encouraged and helped. But soon a serious difficulty arose. Not only did O'Bryan claim to go where he would and to do as he would, he objected to the application of some Methodist rules to the new societies. Consequently his name was dropped from the plan, and he deemed his membership terminated. But as he was allowed to become a local preacher in an adjoining circuit, there could have been no formal expulsion. In his fresh sphere, the former process was repeated, with the inevitable result. He went forth and founded the Bible Christian denomination. It was plainly impossible for Methodism, as then constituted, to employ such a very free lance. The fact that a second opportunity was given to him and that in a few years he was deposed by his own people from the headship of the body he had originated go far towards justifying the action of Wesleyan Methodism. Yet few men have been dominated by a burning pity for mankind more thoroughly than he was.

The Leeds organ case turned nominally upon the technical interpretation of a rule.¹ The trustees of Brunswick Chapel decided to place an organ in the building. A great outcry sprang up: to some extent there was genuine prejudice against the instrument and the 'churchy' proclivities it was supposed to symbolize, but to a much greater extent the notion of leaders, local preachers, and other officials was that the trustees were infringing their rights. The organ could not be erected without the consent of the District Meeting, which was refused. The trustees appealed to the Conference, which reversed the decision of the District Meeting. Thus the Conference defended the right of local courts against its own Committee. The judgement declared that the District Meeting had no further jurisdiction than to see that regulations had

The Leeds
organ.

¹ *Vide* also *infra*, p. 515.

been observed and no improper burden brought upon the estate. In ordinary circumstances the decision would have been distinctly popular. The dissentients, however, asserted that the Conference had no power to review the findings of the District Meeting—the decision of which they claimed to be final—a contention that struck at the whole constitution of the Conference. After violent agitation a large number of officers and members withdrew, and formed one of the bodies which afterwards composed the United Methodist Free Churches. That the trustees were ill-advised in pressing their determination against such strong feeling may be acknowledged, but the Conference, sitting as a court of appeal, could and did decide no more than that the trustees, in this particular instance, were acting within their powers. The claim of the seceders was for local self-government by the officials and by an enlarged Leaders' Meeting. The real question at stake was: Connexionalism or Congregationalism—the supremacy of the Conference as the final court of appeal, or of the court of the individual church. So long as certain Methodists preferred the latter, the difference was certain to come to a head sooner or later. Nevertheless terrible damage was done to Leeds Methodism, and a bitterness of spirit was created that bore poisonous fruit in subsequent agitations. It must be admitted that if one party showed unnecessary violence the other was not always actuated by sweet reasonableness.

The
'Church
Methodists.'

Two small secessions claim notice for their accidental interest rather than their importance. The last of many efforts to treat Methodism as a subordinate ally of the Established Church occurred in 1823, when Mark Robinson, of Beverley, propounded a scheme for rendering Methodism a sort of minor order within the Church of England, recognized by the episcopate and locally subject to the parish clergyman. It was little more than a scheme of Coke's, known as 'the Lichfield plan,' in attenuated form. Coke had proposed the ordination of certain itinerant preachers. Even at that day the Conference would have none of it, and the Anglican authorities refused it. Robinson wished to give

the preachers an inferior position to that suggested by Coke. He received some unofficial support from the Establishment, but practically none from Methodism. Thereupon a small body of 'Church Methodists' was formed, which gradually dwindled into nothingness. But the proposals drew from Dr. Sandwith an able defence of the ecclesiastical position of Wesleyan Methodism from a layman's standpoint; some brilliant pamphlets from Charles Welch, a Hull schoolmaster; and a manifesto by Richard Watson published in the *Magazine*, which declared emphatically, 'We are, in the proper sense, a Church of Christ, according to the Scriptural model.'

The 'Arminian Methodists' held Sandemanian views as to the nature of saving faith. They formed a small body in Derby and its neighbourhood, and hence were known as 'the Derby Faith.' The prohibition of female preaching synchronized with the beginning of this denomination, and Elizabeth Evans¹ and her husband attached themselves to it for a while, but eventually returned to Wesleyan Methodism. Herbert Spencer's father held a distinguished place in the body. The Derby Faith is the only secession on account of doctrine that Methodism has suffered.

The Derby
Faith.

From one point of view the agitation of 1833-5 is the most important and dangerous that Methodism has known: from another it is the most trivial and provoking.² The legal proceedings consequent upon it settled permanently the control of the Conference over the chapels and the right and power of the Conference to administer its own discipline. On the other hand, the disturbance itself arose from the turbulence of a single man who did not even profess to raise any question of principle, except on second thoughts and as a weapon of offence.

Warren's
agitation.

Samuel Warren's ability as a lawyer and a debater had raised him to a position of much influence. He favoured the Theological Institution scheme, though he wished to substitute 'College' for 'Institution,' and seemed to think that the propriety of the scheme depended upon the name.

¹ *Vide infra*, p. 520.

² *Vide also infra*, p. 517.

When the name was decided against him, he began to oppose the scheme as a whole. Dr. Bunting was chosen 'President of the Institution'—a purely honorary office, carrying with it no emolument and little power. Bunting had no desire for the dignity, and accepted it only after much persuasion and argument. At the Conference of 1834 Warren proposed a resolution practically rejecting the system recommended. It was soon evident that personal aspects of the case limited his view. He abstained carefully from assigning any reasons for his opposition, but denounced at great length and with much vigour Bunting's 'ambition.' Immediately after Conference he published his oration in pamphlet form. At this time 'conversations' in the Wesleyan Conference were strictly private, and a freedom was allowed possible only while the 'conversations' were 'in band.' The President remonstrated with him in a brotherly tone. He then published a second pamphlet, reiterating and increasing his charges, and proposing constitutional changes. His next step was to declare that the President had no authority over his (Warren's) circuit, and he went on to destroy Methodist institutions within that circuit. A special District Meeting suspended him from all ministerial functions. To that he paid no heed whatever. The trustees of Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, therefore inhibited him from its pulpit, and their example was followed by the trustees of the other chapels in the circuit. Thence sprang the lawsuit that terminated in the Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst's decision in favour of the Conference on all points.

A decision of more importance to Wesleyan Methodism cannot be imagined; had the judgement gone in Warren's favour, Wesleyan Methodism, as a Connexion, would, *ipso facto*, have ceased to be. The disciplinary authority of the Conference would have been annihilated. United Societies might or might not have been possible, but a single church Methodism could not have been. The decision marks the end of a lengthy stage in the consolidation of Methodism, in its progress from society to church. Incidentally, it testified to the legal skill with which the Deed of Declaration

had been drawn.¹ Neither its meaning nor its validity has been questioned since.

Beaten in the law courts, Warren continued his disintegrating efforts in the circuits, notable for the first raising of the cry 'Stop the supplies!' A small secession arose which eventually joined the Wesleyan Reformers and formed the United Methodist Free Churches. Warren eventually took orders in the Established Church, and obtained a living in Manchester.

Very little legislation resulted from the Warrenite troubles. The machinery of the Minor District Meeting as a court of appeal was improved, and the powers of superintendents defined more strictly. A right of memorial to Conference was given to Quarterly Meetings, and, in certain circumstances, to private members. But the last rule was worded so awkwardly that it proved of small practical utility.

The *Watchman* newspaper was commenced in January 1835, with Dr. Sandwith as editor. It was not an official publication; but for many years it actually represented Wesleyan Methodism and exerted strong influence over it, as an organ of literature and thought as well as of defence of polity and policy, and by the dissemination of information and news. Its strong conservative temper cannot be omitted from any estimate of the forces of the times. Nor, on the other side, must we forget the revolutionary era which soon began on the continent, the spent waves of which reached the United Kingdom.

The
Watchman.

External prosperity was checked but little by the Warrenite secession. Save in 1835, when the decrease was 951, the membership increased steadily. Chapels and schools were built with unprecedented rapidity. All the Connexional funds stood at a high level. The centenary of Wesleyan Methodism was celebrated in 1839. Central and other meetings of great spiritual power were held. A sum of £222,589 was raised, more than double the highest estimate which the most sanguine had ventured to suggest at the

Centenary
celebration.

¹ For the Deed of Declaration see vol. ii. Appendix B.

memorable inaugural meeting. Of this amount £40,000 was devoted to foreign missions, and £30,000 for the Centenary Hall. More than £70,000 was allocated to the Theological Institution. In 1834 a small college for students for the ministry had been opened at Hoxton. The Centenary grant provided the Connexion with two colleges—Didsbury (opened 1842) and Richmond (opened 1843). The objection to the collegiate training of accepted candidates for the ministry, sincerely felt by a considerable minority at first, had died away. The colleges were opened amidst universal rejoicing.

The *Fly*
Sheets.

Yet underneath the phenomenal prosperity mutterings of an ominous restlessness were making themselves heard. James Everett had opposed both the Theological Institutions and the Centenary Celebration, but he had withdrawn his opposition, and had destroyed some fifteen hundred copies of a pamphlet which he had written against the second scheme. Peace seemed to reign throughout the societies. But before the Centenary year had closed there appeared a volume of *Wesleyan Takings; or, Sketches of Ministerial Character as exhibited in the Wesleyan Conference*. This (and later a second series) was written generally in a spirit of clever depreciation, defects were exaggerated, excellences suppressed. Then in 1846–8 the *Fly Sheets* were circulated. These were anonymous letters, bearing no publisher's name, attacking Bunting and his supporters, and stooping to libellous insinuations. More open assaults against Methodist leaders and administration were delivered in the *Wesley Banner* and the *Wesleyan Times*. Plainly the Connexion was on the eve of ferment, feverish and forceful.

The strength of the antagonism was spent on Bunting. Yet it was clear that his premiership must determine shortly, if only from old age. To his principal opponents both the Conference and himself had acted, on the whole, with fairness. Jacob Stanley was President in 1845, William Atherton in 1846, and Joseph Fowler Secretary in 1848—all three often leaders of the opposition. Next to Dr. Newton the most popular preacher in Methodism was Dr. Beaumont, and he

rarely lost an opportunity of expressing his 'liberal opinions.' The more carefully and minutely the history of 1839-48 is studied, the greater grows regret at the literary pestering of those years. To say the least it was *unnecessary*, even from the standpoint of the principles of those who encouraged it. If slowly, Wesleyan Methodism was travelling surely towards constitutional change, which would have been brought about in orderly fashion, had it not been for irritation caused to both sides by literary productions the spirit of which no one now defends.

In answer to the question, 'Who have now ceased to be recognized as ministers among us?' the *Minutes* for 1849 say: '2. Samuel Dunn, James Everett, William Griffith,' the figure 2 indicating that their dismissal was disciplinary, but not with regard to character. The legal ground of their expulsion was their refusal to answer the 'brotherly questions' which the Conference possessed an indubitable right to put, which each of the three had consented to when he was received into full connexion. There was, however, a difference between the cases. Dunn and Griffith had declared boldly and honestly their inability to abide by the laws of Methodism; Everett, the chief offender, had taken refuge in silence. The question put concerned the authorship of the *Fly Sheets*. No one now defends the anonymity or the spirit of these secret attacks on private character. We may, therefore, pass them by, and simply point out that no alternative existed between expulsion of the men who defied the law and the reduction of that law to a futile absurdity. It will be noticed that neither the matter nor the manner of the *Fly Sheets* was brought to trial, solely because the action of the three men implicated rendered such a proceeding impossible. At the same time the Conference was faced by a condition of affairs that rendered some action imperative. For three successive years large decreases had been reported in the membership. The societies were in a state of unrest and disturbance; some before the expulsions took place. There was, however, a broader and deeper matter than the mere question

The
Conference
of 1849.

of ministerial discipline. The three had made themselves the mouthpieces of certain demands, some of them reasonable enough intrinsically, others altogether impossible as changes in Methodist polity. To some people the three were martyrs to the cause of liberty ; to others they were traitors to their church. There was room for endless and acrimonious disputes.

Our period ends in the very midst of the agitation. We cannot review it as a whole. It is sufficient to say that there were serious errors on both sides, owing mainly to the excitement of the hour.

Experi-
mental
religion.

It is easy to make too much of the agitations : indeed, it is hard not to do so. Through all, we have noticed that Methodism was true not only to its doctrines but to its experience. The well-known story of Tennyson's visit to Mr. Wildman, 'an old friend of mine in these parts' (Mablethorpe), illustrates the temper of the ordinary Methodist. Tennyson describes his host and his wife as 'two perfectly honest Methodists.' He continues, 'When I came I asked her after the news, and she replied, "Why, Mr. Tennyson, there's only one piece of news I know—that Christ died for all men."' A beautiful picture of Methodist life is given in the *Memoirs of Emma Tatham*, a young poetess whose premature death prevented the fulfilment of the high promise of her early years. Her prayer—

O Thou whose poetry and love in one
Walk forth where'er Thou art, and hand in hand
Encircle heaven and earth, Thou above praise
Exalted infinitely ; O great God !
Hear me, and make me a pure golden harp
For Thy soft finger. Might I be Thy bard,
Hidden from all, singing to Thee alone—

expressed the desire felt by multitudes of Methodists for quiet, lowly service for and uninterrupted intercourse with God. The same spirit is exhibited in Eliza Hessel, with less of genius, with perhaps more of culture, and with equal devotion and intense sincerity. It is in the record of such

lives and in the inexhaustible treasure of Methodist biography rather than in the story of the 'agitations' that the true history of Methodism is written.

The great strides that Methodism had made are manifest.¹ At Wesley's death Methodism occupied an anomalous position. It scarcely knew whether it was a church or a private society. Before 1848 its ecclesiastical status was undoubted. Looking at its various branches, we see a great church (or set of churches); one in doctrine, one in aim, one in life, divided only or mainly by forms of government and details of discipline. These last were by no means unimportant, especially as related to the theory and practice of the pastorate; but they are small in comparison with the unity of doctrine and experience.

Develop-
ment of
Methodism.

During this period Methodism received its baptism of blood. It was often 'by schisms rent asunder,' though rarely 'by heresies distressed.' Yet, at the end of the time as at the beginning, it could be said:

THE BEST OF ALL IS, GOD IS WITH US.

¹ Membership (1848) Great Britain, 338,861; Ireland, 23,142; Foreign Stations, 97,451; total, 459,454. Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland, 492. No. of ministers, including preachers on trial: Great Britain, 1195; Ireland, 163; in Foreign Stations, under the English Conference, 368. Total, 1726.

CHAPTER II
*WESLEYAN METHODISM—THE LAST
FIFTY YEARS*
1849—1908

Since then, my God, Thou hast
So brave a palace built ; oh, dwell in it,
That it may dwell with Thee at last !

HERBERT.

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CHAPTER II

WESLEYAN METHODISM—THE LAST FIFTY YEARS

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List add: *Reports* of the various funds and societies, especially those of the Jubilee year of each organization. Files of the *Watchman* and *Methodist Recorder*. There is a large pamphlet literature, of which a good collection is treasured in the library of Didsbury College. A group of secondary authorities is constituted by a long series of biographies, memoirs, and reminiscences, notably those of Jabez Bunting (vol. i., ed. by his son, 1859; ii. 1887), T. Jackson (1873), and B. Gregory (1903).

I

THE central years of the nineteenth century form one of the darkest periods in the history of Wesleyan Methodism. They were marked by agitation and convulsion, due primarily to the choice of a perverse method of securing a modification in the relations between the laity and the ministry in the administration of the business of the church. The question in dispute was one that might have been legitimately raised, and that has since received a solution by reasonable degrees in the desired direction. But the question itself was soon obscured by the publication of a series of slanders, in which little respect was shown for age or long service or purity of motive. A stubbornness, that was neither free from malice nor nice in its choice of weapons, awakened resentment, and, human nature being what it is, led inevitably to retaliation; and a conflict between two not irreconcilable views, or rather between two types of temperament that might have been taught by patience to dwell together in unity, actually retarded the progress which both parties with unequal fervour desired.

**AFTER THE
AGITATION.**
The immediate effects of the agitation.

Of this bitter controversy the details are on every ground better forgotten. Ostensibly the cause of complaint was the undue concentration of power in the hands of the pastorate ; but the strife soon degenerated into one amongst the pastors themselves, the controlling influence of Dr. Bunting and his immediate associates becoming especially the rock of offence. These discussions reached their climax at the Conference of 1849, when it had become imperatively necessary that the pastorate as a Christian organization should be purged of the responsibility for the scurrilous and anonymous publications, of which the so-called *Fly Sheets* were amongst the worst. Three ministers, who declined to accept the condition of continued fellowship that they should refrain from writing or encouraging such offensive publications, were excluded from the fellowship. It is not easy to see how in the actual circumstances of the day any other course could have been righteously or honourably adopted. The following months witnessed an extension of the agitation, but with the important difference that its leaders were no longer fighting against the flag under which they professed to serve. A large number of secessions from the mother church took place, some through the breaking-up of the local societies to which the seceders were attached or in search of the quiet that could not be found in confusion and worry, others through the inconsiderate sternness with which in the emergency the regulations of the Conference were interpreted and enforced. Men who were convinced of the wisdom of important changes in administration were forced into a false position by the impossibility at the time to concede any change, and could extricate themselves only by withdrawal. On the whole the loss of membership due directly or indirectly to this ill-conceived agitation amounted in the course of a few years to not less than a hundred thousand ; and the effect did not cease to be felt until 1856. Some of the seceders attached themselves to other Methodist bodies. Others associated themselves with the expelled ministers, and formed the church of the Wesleyan Reformers, which afterwards by amalgamation helped to con-

stitute the United Methodist Free Churches, whose membership after the union was just below forty thousand. The majority of those who withdrew passed, at least for a time, out of the church-life of Methodism, and their descendants to-day are to be found in almost every religious community.

With as little delay as the excitement permitted, the Conference proceeded to revise some parts of its constitution and discipline which were open to objection. A large committee was appointed to consider the numerous memorials, in which modifications of usage were suggested with solicitude or demanded with violence; and in the later stages laymen were associated in the deliberations. The report was presented to the Conference of 1852, which so defined the Quarterly Meeting as to make it really representative of the opinions of the official and active laity of the circuit, whilst at the same time investing it with the double right of appointing a jury of appeal in certain cases of discipline, and of approaching Conference directly and freely. Three principles only were reserved as outside review. They are officially enumerated as 'the integrity of the pastoral office, the inviolability of the connexional principle, and the authority of district committees.' The third may be taken as a corollary or practical consequence of the second, which is necessarily inviolate in the case of men who have deliberately adopted a corporate and organized, instead of a congregational, system of church order. The first principle is defended on Scriptural grounds, as it might have been also on the ground of the reasonable and effective transaction of business. Concerning the application of one or another of these principles there is room for difference of opinion, though in legal procedure the precedent of Rome is superior to that of Greece; but their renunciation would be fatal to the ecclesiastical form impressed upon Methodism from the beginning, and binding its separate societies into a compact and disciplined unity. Independency as a theory allows local self-government of the completest kind, and has its advantages. At the opposite pole is connexionalism, which requires the sacrifice of some personal

Extension
of the
power
of the
Quarterly
Meeting.

Mainten-
ance of
connexior-
alism.

likings, but also has its advantages. Men have not yet learned how to combine the two, except as a mixture whose component elements are mutually repulsive, or as a figure moulded of iron and miry clay. More than half a century ago Wesleyan Methodism had discovered the stability and the aggressive fitness and force that are supplied by a unifying organization; and the policy has been consistently followed of knitting together the constituent parts with a view to greater efficiency, but of suspecting proposals that involved eventual disintegration.

The Relief
and
Extension
Fund.

In the agitation of the years that followed 1849, Dr. Bunting was prominent as an object of attack, but his age and failing health made him generally in comparison with his previous activity little more than a passive and pathetic spectator. He took part with occasional vivacity in the proceedings of 1852, which were really but a continuation of the policy he had promoted for years in the gradual adaptation of Wesleyan Methodism to the altering conditions of the day. The following year he supported the proposal to raise a large sum of money to relieve the financial distress that had overtaken several of the Methodist funds, partly through the secession of so large a number of adherents. The amount eventually raised was £82,242, under the title of the Relief and Extension Fund—a remarkable sign of vitality when the circuits everywhere were straitened by their local losses, and Methodism was thought by its detractors to be crippled and dying.

Jabez
Bunting
and
Robert
Newton.

Indications, however, of the passing away of the old order were not wanting. As far back as 1799, Jabez Bunting and Robert Newton¹ had together entered the ranks of the ministry. Their gifts and their work were different, their friendship was unbroken. Both in their prime were men of commanding stature, stately and dignified. Only herculean strength could have stood the toils and journeys of the public life of Newton. He is said to have travelled not less than six thousand miles a year, at a time when coaches supplied the speediest mode of locomotion between the

¹ *Vide also supra*, p. 410.



DR. ROBERT NEWTON, President, 1824-32-40-48.

WILLIAM ARTHUR, President, 1866.

DR. JABEZ BUNTING, President, 1820-28-36-41.

DR. W. BURT POPE, President, 1877.

DR. W. MORLEY PUNSHON, President, 1874.

larger centres of population. Endowed with a rich voice of extraordinary compass, master of a simple style which attracted the fastidious and held the attention of all, he preached the gospel to crowds that listened unweariedly and were moved to devotion by the theme and the magnetism. Had he proclaimed a new crusade, he would not have lacked a great following. As an orator, he ranks between Whitefield and Punshon, combining some of the gifts of each, and marking an intermediate stage in elaboration between the free speaker and the master of sentences. In 1854 he died after a short illness, with the praise of God upon his lips. Four years later (June 16, 1858), he was followed by Jabez Bunting, who, after having borne many burdens, was made 'perfect through sufferings.' He was a strong man, masterful though not wilful, great in the pulpit, quick and patient in debate, a statesman of the first order in foresight and loyalty, a born leader of men, and yet a little child in the awe of his soul at the thought of the Father. For half a century he had exerted his powers in the promotion of many good works, both outside and within his own church; and so far was he from being a foe to progress or intolerant of change, that to his influence especially may be traced the introduction and control of that easy adaptability which has shown itself increasingly of late years a prominent quality of Methodism. In church polity he was a progressive, long before that abused and misleading name had been invented; and the progress he advocated was that of law and development, in which the new issues out of the old, and carries with it the fruit of the life and thought of the generations preceding.

After the death of Bunting modifications of rule and order proceeded in the same direction, and successive steps were taken to recognize the legitimate functions, and to enlarge the opportunities, of the laity. By 1861 the system of consulting a mixed committee of review before the session of Conference had been extended to every department of ordinary administration, and the practice of constituting a part of the committee by election was fully

Stages in
the
adoption
of lay
representa-
tion.

established. In 1870 the elective element was enlarged, and a sounder rule of choice prescribed, by the investment of every British district with a right to send a lay representative to each of these preparatory committees. The next stage was reached in 1877, when a scheme of lay representation in the Conference itself was adopted, and directed to be brought into operation the following year. By this scheme the ministers met first by themselves as the pastors of a common flock, and took counsel on matters relating directly to themselves or to the spiritual interests of the people. Afterwards a representative session, in which the lay delegates were equal in number to the ministerial, discussed and settled the business of all the funds and of the various administrative departments of the church. In both cases the decisions required for their legal validity to be confirmed by the vote of the Legal Hundred, a safeguard devised by Wesley himself against many perils ; but such confirmation has never been withheld, nor is there any need in practical church politics to consider the possibility of its being withheld under present conditions.

A mixed
session
of
Conference.

Marking this great change were several features, significant either of the altered spirit of the times or of the course which future legislation was likely to take. The change is said to have been 'effected without the loss of a single minister or the alienation of one member' (*Thanksgiving Fund Report*, p. ix). Rumour at the time made it the actual cause of a couple of resignations, for which other reasons were assigned ; and it is not impossible that the sympathies of a few adherents were weakened. With a qualification of that meagre kind, the statement may be taken as literally correct. An alteration of such magnitude and far-reaching consequences has probably never before taken place in any free church with less friction or bitterness. The laity were admitted to an almost equal degree of control by a process that involved the exclusion of a corresponding number of ministers, and yet the prevalent and almost universal sentiment was that of relief and confident goodwill. A Thanksgiving Fund was quickly started, and

altogether the sum of £297,518 was raised. Thereby a number of debts were extinguished, and resources provided for several necessary extensions.

As the years passed, the original order of sessions by which precedence was given to the meeting of the pastors was found to interfere with the prompt and easy transaction of business. The necessary change was made at the last Conference of the century ; and the still existing arrangement, by which matters of general administration are settled before the pastors meet for mutual counsel, was tried for the first time at Newcastle-on-Tyne in 1901. The result must be pronounced an almost unqualified success.

Changes
in the
order of the
sessions.

The union of ministers and laymen in the representative sessions [so writes one of the wisest and most experienced of Methodist officials¹] has been the greatest blessing that ever came to our church. This representative body has proved sanely conservative and safely progressive. Year by year its influence and importance have increased. Its moderation and impartiality have won the confidence of all sections of the church, and there is a growing conviction that the future of Methodism would be safe in its keeping, with whatever enlarged powers it might be entrusted.

From the final phrase in that quotation it will be inferred rightly that the vision of a single Conference, supreme in all questions, whether administrative or pastoral, is not absent from all Methodist eyes. Its latest appearance above the sky-line has been provoked by the exigencies of another problem, which has repeatedly presented itself in the course of the last half-century. By the Deed Poll which Wesley enrolled, he both prescribed the constitution of the Conference and defined its powers of appointing ministers to the use of its property, restricting such appointment in the case of each chapel-trust to a period of three years. In Wesley's own time the conditions were such as to warrant this restriction and to make it wise. But with the lapse of a century the conditions have so greatly altered that the

Disad-
vantages of
itineracy.

¹ H. J. Pope, *Extension of the Term*, 27 f.

question is open to discussion, even from a theoretical and academic standpoint, whether the church is making the best use of its ministers by cutting up their short service into brief periods, of which the longest must not exceed three years. The obvious disadvantage is to break all continuity in the minister's relations with his people. He cannot root himself anywhere, but is no sooner beginning to do so in one place than he is removed to another ; and they are left to be tended by a mixed and composite pastorate, with the possibility that one good man's influence, before it has fruited, may be neutralized by that of another, the temperaments and ways of good men being by no means always alike. In practice, the system is one which, like the law of the survival of the fittest, cares nothing for the comfort of the individual ; and ministers would care even as little for their own comfort, if they could be assured that by its sacrifice the effectiveness of the church would be increased. On that point there is not yet any general consent, the arguments or anticipations on either side being so closely balanced that a prevalent attitude is one of readiness to experiment without prejudice. A restriction, of which the present utility is uncertain, is of necessity galling and indefensible ; and its removal may reasonably be desired by those who expect better service thereby, and conceded by those whose judgement wavers.

The
evasion of
the Deed
Poll.

The hindrance that stood in the way was the eleventh clause of the Deed Poll.¹ Until certain of its provisions were repealed, it appeared impossible to extend the term of ministerial service by any other method than that adopted by the Conference of 1893. 'The necessity of exceptional appointments for a longer period than three years to missions and in some special cases to circuits' was then distinctly recognized ; and a legal device for evading the law was commended for provisional adoption. After three years' tenure of a benefice, another appointment was technically made, the previous holder continuing to occupy and to exercise all his previous prerogatives except those directly relating to the trust-property. The plan was not thought

¹ For Deed Poll see vol. ii. Appendix B.

even in 1893 to be so wise or safe as to be fit for application generally and in ordinary cases. Nor has satisfaction with it increased in the interval. It is recommended on high expert authority as involving no real breach of the law and imperilling no vested interest; it secures an extension of the term of ministerial appointment in instances where any other course would be dangerous, if not disastrous; and it cannot be carried out against the will of the people concerned. Nevertheless there is a lingering sentiment that such an evasion is a temporary expedient, and not the kind of solution such a difficulty should eventually receive.

The matter is again being examined by a committee under a reference which raises the central question, whether legislation should be invoked to extend the powers of appointment contained in the Deed Poll. Assuming what is doubtful, that sufficient unanimity exists to obtain a modifying Act of Parliament, opinion is at present divided as to the character and range of the provisions that should be substituted. The bare repeal of the eleventh clause is advocated by some, who are met with the objection that thereby a conference of ministers alone, for to that session belongs the responsibility of fixing and revising the pastorates, would be invested with the unrestricted patronage and usufruct of all the benefices in Methodism. As a legal safeguard in place of the present restriction, and to preserve the nice balance of power that now marks the Methodist economy, it has been suggested that the final right of appointment might be vested in a representative assembly composed equally of ministers and laymen. The *Legal Hundred* would thereby be superseded; and purely ministerial questions might be delegated to a pastoral body whose members were elected from and by the ordained ministry.

One notable feature of the discussion is the absence of excitement. The standpoint of the disputants on either side is equally impersonal, whilst between them lies a great multitude, whose interest has hardly yet been excited, and whose confidence in one another and in general equity is superb. So long as the integrity of the pastoral office is not

Modification
of the
system.

Discussion
without
excitement.

threatened, any alteration that seems likely to promote connexional efficiency has before it a probable fate of discussion without warmth, and decision according to assumed utility. The storm of half a century ago has become a great calm, and the surface of good-will is barely rippled even by proposals that involve a change in administration from the very depths.

II

FOREIGN
MISSIONS.

Affiliated
Conferences.

Methodism originated in this country as a response to woe and sin. Wesley was stirred by a sense of the need of the people both to proclaim to them a Saviour, and to succour them with a variety of secular aids ; and the church he founded has not ceased in its responsibility to Christ to apply itself to the varied relief of men. In its missions abroad the years at the beginning of our half-century may be rightly called the period of affiliated conferences. The policy was carried out on a large scale of investing the missions in a colony or country with the obligations of self-government, financial and other help being continued as long as necessary. In 1852 the first French Conference was held at Nismes, and three years later the first Australasian Conference was held at Sydney. A year earlier the mission in Eastern Canada had been transferred to the Upper Canada Conference, which was constituted in 1833, dissolved in consequence of differences of opinion on colonial politics in 1840, and reconstituted in 1847. In 1875 the various Conferences in Canada were united into the Methodist Church of Canada, and eight years later all the various Methodist bodies in the Dominion amalgamated. In 1883 a South African Conference was formed, comprising all the stations south of the Vaal ; and two years later independence was given to the oldest missions of the church in the West Indies.¹ In the last case alone has the action proved mistaken. Tornados, earthquakes, and above all the prolonged commercial depression of the islands led to such administrative and financial difficulties

¹ For further on these Conferences, see vol. ii.

that recently (1904) the step was retraced, and a great sum is now being raised in this country in behalf of the native churches. In 1897 the missions in Germany were united with those of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and the amalgamation has proved advantageous in almost every way. The waste and confusion of the presence of two organizations, kindred in spirit and common in aim, have been terminated; and the joint body is bearing a needed testimony to the gospel in a land whose churches have sometimes suffered from formality and barrenness.¹

Meanwhile, as these free developments of organization were proceeding, Christianity was being carried into other lands, and opportunities seized for the introduction of an aggressive form of Protestantism. In the first month of 1853 the mission in China, privately commenced a couple of years before, was taken over by the Missionary Society. The next year, as soon as the country had been opened by a treaty with the king, a representative was sent to Lagos. Garibaldi's successes made Protestant missions possible in Italy; first Milan was occupied in 1860, Naples in 1863, and in 1870 Rome was added to the list of stations. Into Spain and Portugal an entrance was made in 1869. Upper Burma was annexed to the British Empire in 1886, and the following year steps were taken to establish a Methodist mission there. Continuously, as opportunity served, agents were pushed forwards from the older centres in India, China, and Africa, until now parts of those countries are covered with a network of missions. The meshes are almost hopelessly large, and each knot is so small as to seem unable to bear the tension and the strain; but the places have been occupied for Christ, and in missionary work a genuine start is a guarantee of progress and success. The Women's Auxiliary originated in 1858 in the appointment of a small committee of ladies to choose female teachers for the East and to provide money for their support. Zenana visitation and a variety of other ministries were quickly undertaken; and the organization has proved an adjunct of the highest value to the society,

New
missions
and
modes.

¹ *Vide infra*, vol. ii. book iv. chap. ii., and book v. chap. ii.

irresistible in its appeals whether for consecrated workers or for generosity on the part of such as cannot serve in person.

A missionary society, if it be faithful to its calling, must find itself in recurrent financial straits. It has continually to advance as the gracious Providence of God prepares the way ; but for support in its enterprises it has to look to men of smaller heart and purpose. The result is of necessity a sanguine unwillingness to pass openings by and an alternating discovery that resources are not increasing in proportion to the need. Debts are always to be expected when a spiritual quickening in the home churches is not the accompaniment of foreign enterprise. Partial relief may be secured by the raising of special funds for special missions, as in 1853 and the following years when the charges of the new mission to China were thus defrayed. Ten years later came the fiftieth anniversary of the foundation of the Missionary Society, and with it an opportunity and a condition of sentiment of which the church was not slow to make use. A Jubilee Fund was initiated, of which the produce amounted eventually to £179,973. That amount enabled the premises of Richmond College to be bought as a training-school for missionary students, and large grants to be allocated to needy stations and purposes. The consequence was both a valuable addition to the equipment of the society and the extension of interest in its operations through the church at home. A further contribution of £63,869 was made from the Thanksgiving Fund on its close in 1884, and twenty years later a sum of £80,000 was paid from the Twentieth Century Fund. The close of the period intervening between those two dates was marked by criticism and trial, by indignation on the part of the ardent supporters of the Society, and by the alienation of waverers. But whenever the suspicions of unwise administration or defective control were formulated into charges, the evidence taken on either side was itself the surest acquittal. And no sooner had the century closed than a great outburst of practical enthusiasm took place, due partly to the quiet emergence of the society from enveloping earth-born gloom, but especially to a revived sense of loving obliga-

Financial
straits.

Outbursts
of
generosity.

tion to a Saviour whose own redeeming love admits of no restriction. The accumulated debts of the Society were discharged, and a substantial addition to its revenue was made through a kind of godly rivalry in the promise of increased annual subscriptions.

III

For religious work within this country Wesleyan Methodism is equipped with a variety of organizations, to which the merit belongs of ingenuity in beneficence with elasticity in method. The Home Missionary Fund proper, if to some extent central and controlling, is far from being its most costly or best-staffed means of helping the needy or sinful. At the beginning of our period it was known by the unfortunate name of the Contingent Fund, and it administered an income that was considerably less than ten thousand pounds, chiefly in aid to circuits unable to support their own ministers or to accommodate all of them with houses. In 1856, largely through the energy of Charles Prest, a distinct step in advance was taken. The uninspiring title was relegated to a secondary place, and the familiar double-barrelled name adopted of the Home Mission and Contingent Fund. At the same time an urgent recommendation was made, that public meetings should be held in every circuit to explain the condition and needs of the people, both in large centres of population and in the rural districts, and to obtain additional resources for the extension of the work of God at home. An increase of membership, the first since the troubles of 1851, of nearly three thousand was reported. Two years later it was decided to appropriate a sum for the support of a class of home missionaries, who were charged with the duty of introducing Methodism into new places or reviving it where it had declined. Both of these kinds of work have been continued on a progressive scale, and both are equally work of an intrinsically missionary character. Not Methodism only, but evangelical Christianity, would in many a place have been left without any organized representation,

FIFTY
YEARS OF
AGGRESSIVE
ENTER-
PRISES.
Home
Missions.

Charles
Prest.

District
mission-
aries.

if not without any witness, but for the wise support, that has often meant to some struggling cause the difference between life and death. Meanwhile the neglected populations have not been overlooked. Agents of every kind, clerical and lay, married and single, itinerant amongst a group of widely scattered villages or localized in a single pulpit, have been employed; and the dexterity of missionary enterprise shows no signs of being overtaxed by the diversity of human need.

The
Connexional
Fund.

With the close of the century a further change was made in the title of this fund. At last the name 'contingent' disappeared altogether; and the functions were divided, those relating chiefly to aggressive work and the assistance of weak circuits being committed to the 'Home Mission' Fund, while the others were relegated to a new fund appropriately named 'Connexional.' Its income is raised by an annual collection in the circuits, and it bears such charges as are involved in the maintenance of Methodism as a united and corporate church. A few other charges that cannot well be allocated to any separate circuit are included; but the central function of the fund is to supply the necessary resources for welding together the circuits into a unity, and to make that unity effective in administration and control. The cost of preserving this unity of Wesleyan Methodism, as a church system with lines of force knit into a compact and single agency, appears to be about two thousand pounds a year, apart from contributions in aid of sick or aged ministers and encouragement given to the circuits to improve their staffs. In this respect Methodism must be classed as the cheapest church in Christendom; and the advantages of a free connexional system are bought at a low price.

Methodism
in watering-
places.

There are not many kinds of needy people or conditions to which the missionary enterprise of Methodism has not at some time been directed. As early as 1861 the attention of Conference was called to the watering-places, which improved modes of locomotion and changes in habit were causing to spring up all round our coasts. In some of them

there was no Methodist place of worship at all ; and where there was one, it bore traces of the simple times when it was built, and was often entirely unattractive to persons who had grown up in the surroundings of another age. The problem was to equip the multiplying resorts on the seaside with places of worship, in which Methodists would feel at home, and in which also an earnest and evangelical gospel would be proclaimed. Dr. Punshon, whose fame as a lecturer and preacher was then at its highest, took the matter in hand, and undertook to raise ten thousand pounds within five years by means of lectures and of private appeals to his friends. The effort proved successful ; £1,719 12s. 7d. was paid in as the proceeds of public lectures, and the total amount aimed at was exceeded. Thirteen new chapels were built, and in other cases enlargements and improvements were effected ; and, best perhaps of all, general interest was excited in the recreation resorts of the people, of which few are yet without a suitable place of worship. The difficulty to-day, as at the close of the last century, is not the want of accommodation so much as the habit of regarding the week-end holiday as one from worship as well as from work ; and the problem now is to recover the ancient gladness of associated worship and substitute it again for the irksomeness and unholy sense of relief that have in part displaced it.

From the seaside to the barrack-room is a long step, but not for the missionary. Methodism has always been a little fond of soldiers and sailors ; John Wesley himself was. To him, as to his successors, discipline and energy, the power of keeping step and promptness of initiative, have always ranked high among the virtues. At Fontenoy the Methodist soldiers went into battle singing Wesley's hymns ; and he himself finds room in his *Journal* (i. p. 478) for a vivid description of one of them, laid legless across a cannon, and 'exhorting all that were round about him.' The first step in organizing the work in the army seems to have been taken in 1859, when a committee of advice and direction was appointed by the Conference. Three years

Christian
work in the
army.

later gratitude was expressed for the spiritual success of the work, and an attempt was made to establish relations with the War Office on a satisfactory basis. So encouraging were the results, both evangelical and administrative, that the next year the perils and needs of seamen became a special subject of study, and efforts for their benefit were planned upon a larger scale.

Soldiers'
and
Sailors'
Homes.

In the history of the application of evangelism few claims are more imperative than those of the homeless men who are herded in great barracks or hurried from port to port. Outside of their confined or crowded quarters they used to be left to the cruel perils of the streets, with no opportunities for either legitimate amusement or wholesome refreshment. Their needs were considered in detail at the Conference of 1890, when, in addition to a long series of regulations for the better adjustment of the garrison chaplaincies to the circuit system, directions were given for inquiry as to the management and methods of Soldiers' and Sailors' Homes of proved success. The inquiry was soon followed by a scheme for the multiplication of such homes wherever the fighting forces of the country congregate. A fund was raised for the purpose, and the latest returns give forty-one as the number of homes under the direction of the Wesleyan Army and Navy Board, of which all are practically self-supporting, and none enforce a denominational test. More than a hundred thousand men annually avail themselves of the sleeping accommodation provided. An attractive centre of quiet and pure social life is secured, whilst Christian influence is brought to bear through several ready channels. It is a common observation to-day that the personnel of the British imperial forces has improved. The soldier or sailor is as handy and active as ever, as fit for the work that has not yet ceased to be necessary ; but he is no longer without self-restraint, and conventionally a reprobate. To effect that change, several causes have combined, including the spread of education, both elementary and hygienic ; but not the least important has been the provision by these homes of comfort competing with that of the canteen, and

their encouragement of a sentiment which is altering the *morale* of both army and navy. In the two branches of service there are now twenty-three thousand declared Methodists. Intemperance is becoming an exception ; and the consistency of a religious life elicits respect. One of the aims of Christianity is the elimination of warfare ; but as long as it continues to be the final means of settlement in international disputes, the more thoroughly the army and navy are christianized the more speedily will come the reign of peace.

If soldiers and sailors have sometimes behaved as children, powerless to resist temptation in their relief from the restraints of a necessarily stern discipline, there are other children in even graver peril, whom the church has not neglected. Wesley himself, on his second visit to Newcastle, founded an orphanage there in his confident way. He bought a plot of ground for forty pounds, and, having twenty-seven shillings left, proceeded with the erection of buildings that were to cost seven hundred pounds. The rest of the money came in as he expected ; and the place served for long as a training-ground for deaconesses, though Wesley's intention of making it a refuge for destitute children was never carried out. The site is now shown to interested visitors ; but more than a century had to pass without any serious attempt to care for children in need or moral peril. A beginning was made by Dr. T. B. Stephenson, at that time a minister in Lambeth, who, with the help of like-minded friends, gathered a few forsaken waifs into houses, and tended their bodies and souls. The enterprise quickly grew, and its importance and value were recognized by the Conference of 1871. 'Considering the great number of children,' so ran the notable resolution—

Wesley's
Orphanage.

T. B.
Stephenson.

who are deprived of suitable guardianship by the death or vice or extreme poverty of their parents, so that they are only too likely to fall into criminal ways, and that many of these have a special claim upon the practical sympathy of Methodists, the Conference recognizes the establishment of the Children's

The
Children's
Home.

Home, and commends the undertaking to the support of the Christian public,

due provisos being appended. Two years later Dr. Stephenson was relieved from circuit work, and enabled as principal to devote his whole time to the institution he had founded. One branch after another was added, for cripples and convalescents, with hospitals for the sick and a home in Canada as an emigration centre, until now a network of philanthropic agencies has been linked together. Two thousand children are resident in the various branches, where they are mothered by godly women, trained with a view to self-support, and compassed about with Christian influences. In itself the organization is contributing directly to the solution of one of the most pressing social difficulties. To withdraw children out of the submerged depths, and to prevent others from sinking down through no fault of their own, are two achievements of the utmost value to the civil life of the country. When the impetus to rise is Christian in its origin and methods, there is provided a better guarantee of the stability of the results, of which the good quality has been shown abundantly for more than a generation. In the support and management of the Home valuable help has for some years been rendered by members of the three denominations that now constitute the United Methodist Church, as well as by members of other evangelical churches.

Lay
missioners
and
voluntary
service

Indirectly also the Children's Home has proved a great advantage to the church in providing both opportunity for service, and service that is attractive and irresistible in its appeal. An army of workers had to be gathered together, as the number of children in the Homes increased. By no means the least benefit that has accrued to Methodism from this organization, as from the great institutions that have grown up in many of the larger towns, has been to elicit the self-denying activities of men and women, whose leisure was becoming a snare to them. Whatever their aptitude, they are able now to find some congenial way of doing good ; and the service of others reacts to the strength-

ening of all good principles and purposes in themselves. This had become a prominent feature as early as 1876, when the Conference commended the Home 'as an agency for training converted young men and women for Christian service and enterprise.' The training was practical and well supervised, defective, if at all, upon the intellectual side, neither time nor occasion serving to equip the probationers for anything more than evangelistic work amongst the uneducated. They passed to the staffs of refugees, industrial schools, hospitals, and the like, and showed by their alacrity and readiness of initiation an increased capability of helping others. A few proceeded into the ranks of the ministry, both in this country and in Canada, where in their careers they justified the labour spent upon them.

It is, however, in the training of women that the best results have been obtained. Early Methodist opinion was not in favour of the preaching of women. The Conference of 1803 pronounced it both unnecessary and generally undesired, but proceeded to formulate the conditions under which it might be allowed in extraordinary cases. Gradually public sentiment has changed; and to-day, though a woman does not seem to everybody to be in her best place when she is in the pulpit, there are confessedly some ministries for which she is better fitted than are men, and others which should even be committed to her exclusively. An order of deaconesses thus naturally arose, with centres of training in the Children's Home, at Halifax and Leicester, and at several of the headquarters of the larger town-missions. In the first year of the present century some of these were concentrated, mainly again on the initiation and through the zeal of Dr. Stephenson, at Ilkley in the Wesley Deaconess Institute, which has representatives in many of the British Districts, in Ceylon, China, Africa, and New Zealand. Their activities are well reported of, and provide means of bringing the gospel of Christ and the grace of skilled sympathy into lives that are almost outside the reach of other Christian agencies. For work amongst the sick poor, amongst women in trouble and girls in peril,

Deaconesses.

The Ilkley
Institute.

these sisters of the people are an indispensable part of the equipment of a fully organized church ; and their devotion and modesty, the warmth of their sympathy and the quietness of their ways, are telling directly to the glory of Christ in the relief of human distress.

Central
Halls.

If judgement be pronounced according to the scale of magnitude, of cost, or of the visibility of blessed results, a yet more important child of Methodism, as a father of Home Missions, is to be found in the system of Halls that are rising in many of the larger centres of population in the country, and in which evangelistic and social work form together the two-edged sword of aggression. Two out of many causes deserve prominent mention, as contributing to the movement which has placed in so many towns a nucleus of restless and irrepressible Christianity. The one was the opportunity and silent appeal ; the other was a stirring of heart or quickening of fervour, which impelled men to respond.

The
appeal of
the empty
chapel and
the needy
people.

The opportunity was presented by the existence in crowded thoroughfares of a number of large chapels, haunted by memories but forsaken of worshippers. When the chapels were built, the people lived around them ; and the accompaniments of worship were such as the people liked. Gradually a great change had passed over the habits, industrial and social, of the very classes to which the frequenters of these chapels belonged. Fifty years of the nineteenth century is in regard to change equivalent to a century and a half at an earlier period. By the application to the arts of new discoveries in science, distance had been partially destroyed, and the interests of life increased a hundredfold. The merchant ceased to live over his shop, or the manufacturer in an *annexe* to his warehouse. Factories were needed for the accommodation of the machines which the use of steam-power crowded into a single area. Trade relations multiplied and became complex, as new processes were invented, and foreign markets were brought near. The centre of the towns was wanted as room to work in, and the people crowded out at nightfall to their homes in the distant suburbs

or in the humbler streets lying between. Meanwhile the standard of comfort was steadily rising. Literature, which John Wesley was amongst the first to cheapen and thus render generally accessible, and the arts, aesthetic and decorative, produced in the tastes of men a modification corresponding with that which the changed conditions of labour produced in their lives. The old chapels, with their tiers of high galleries and tomb-like pews, were deserted and repellent, beloved by ever-lessening groups of venerable saints, but to young sinners entirely unattractive. Whatever the zeal of the preacher, it is one of the first conditions of his doing good that he should have a congregation to preach to ; but congregations were not to be drawn into these old sanctuaries by any of the time-honoured means. The memory of what the place had been when in the period of its glory the Spirit of God came down, the knowledge of what it was, were heart-breaking to the burdened pastor. The crowds in their Sunday promenading passed to and fro, whilst in the cheerless slums hard by the poor herded and the sin-stricken were dying. From both quarters the appeal came—the empty chapels crying for worshippers, the needs of the people pleading in the name of Christ for something that would help and save. As the years passed, good men continued to ponder ; and when the two conceptions met in their minds of the possibility of adaptation and of its immediate and pressing need, the difficulty was not far from settlement.

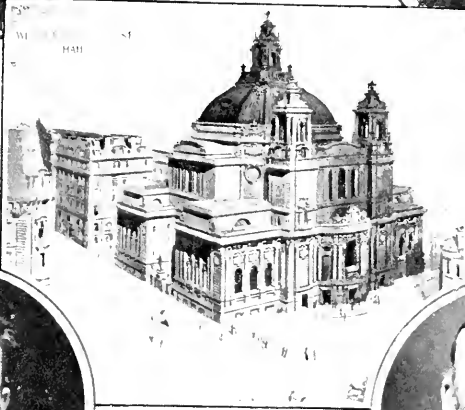
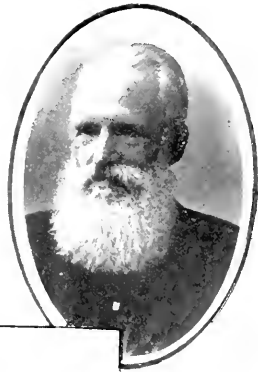
Whilst the emptying chapels may have been the external source of the incitement to activity, little would have been done but for the quickening of heart and purpose which created the internal readiness to act. That was the impelling force, begotten of God, that led to what is now frequently spoken of as the forward movement in Methodism. It made itself felt simultaneously in men of very varied temperament, and affected a diversity of minds. Fundamentally it was a revival of the spirit of evangelism in the early Methodist form, according to which the primary business of the church is not to conserve ancient traditions or to watch the unfolding of a line of development, but to glorify Christ by saving

The
revived
spirit of
evangelism.

souls. Good men, in some of whom imagination predominated whilst others were masters of order and method, felt their hearts strangely stirred ; the strange influences were sometimes beyond analysis, and set in motion processes, apparently hesitating and uncertain, but issuing always in the welcome of every token of divine approval. Minds characterized by stability shrank from the commendation of what seemed to them unholy rashness, but were unwilling to condemn any enterprise which included conversion amongst its aims. Practical men were impatient of schemes in which possibilities were valued on the estimate of the sanguine, whilst between object and means there was no obvious proportion. Yet the feeling was general, and grew in strength as the years passed, that the interests of Christ's Kingdom and the peril of human souls required such a modification of the church's methods as would bring sinners and the gospel into actual contact. The needed temper was present, men of the right type were waiting for their commission ; and this combination occurred at a time when the emptying central chapels provided suitable sites for the new machinery. It was altogether a conjunction of circumstances, of which the meaning could hardly be mistaken ; and by fidelity to evangelical truth and elasticity in its expression and enforcement, several of the silent sanctuaries have been turned into hives of Christian industry, where sin is put to shame and the poor praise God.

The
Forward
Movement
and its
three
stages.

In this movement three stages may be traced with some distinctness. A time of preparation and growing evangelistic desire was followed by the elaboration of a widespread organization, of which the effects are appearing in the successes of a social ministry of reformation which is at the same time a religious ministry of reconciliation. Two events occurred in 1875 which make that year a convenient starting-point. It was the year in which Charles Prest died, and in which also Charles Garrett was appointed to open and to take charge of a mission in Liverpool. Charles Prest's administration of the Home Mission Fund was an advance on that of his predecessors in the two qualities of a dislike of



DR. W. FIDDIAN MOULTON,
President, 1890.

HUGH PRICE HUGHES, President,
1898.

SIR WM. MCARTHUR, *d.* 1887.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY HALL,
WESTMINSTER.

CHARLES GARRETT, President,
1882.

THOMAS CHAMPNESS, 1832-1905.

SIR FRANCIS LYCETT, *d.* 1880.

a policy of mere consolidation and a readiness to support new aggressive enterprise. He was much hampered by the traditions of his day and the smallness of the resources that were available. His determination was nevertheless to carry Methodism into new localities, and to win glory for Christ from amongst people who were outside the range of the influences of ordinary church-life. With him the principle of conservation was neither discredited nor neglected, but official and weighty support was at hand for any reasonable proposal of aggression.

Of his younger contemporaries there were several who were men of ready utterance and glowing sympathy, evangelists by both consecration and gifts. Their type, if not their leader, was Charles Garrett, who, after stirring Manchester for half a dozen years, passed on to Liverpool, where three years later the whole of his time was needed by the mission he had founded. He was a Dorsetshire man, of strong convictions and winsome spirit, a power in the civic life of the two great Lancashire centres in which his best work was done, and a master of pathos. When he preached or spoke, his audience might wonder for a time at the thinness of the matter or the inconsequence of the reasoning; then came some little story of heroism and grace, and the coldest heart in the congregation was won. He was one of the principal founders of the Manchester and Salford Lay Mission, which developed afterwards into the great organization whose headquarters are now the Central Hall. His far-reaching influence deepened in the Methodist community generally the sense of responsibility for the sin and misery of the world. The same sense of responsibility seized at the same time a number of prominent men, laymen and ministers, kindred in spirit but differing in gifts; and the time was evidently come when a great movement in advance might and must be made, with the confidence that the Connexion at large would support it.

Charles
Garrett.

In 1886 the Manchester mission was fairly started, the old chapel in Oldham Street having been turned into a great hall with suitable premises for the conduct of a social and

Hugh Price
Hughes.

religious mission of the modern type. In London a beginning had already been made with missions to the populations in the South and East ; but the next year Hugh Price Hughes was appointed to the West-Central mission, and at once both publicity and a great impetus were given to a movement that had proceeded in comparative obscurity before. It had been local and sporadic, almost parochial in its interest and in its appeals ; it became for a time the subject of supreme interest within Methodism, of observation and comment without. Hughes was a Welshman in his prime. He was born in Carmarthen in 1847. To the fervour of a Celt were added natural gifts of the first order. Fluent in speech, he excelled in debate, whilst at the same time insatiable of work. He was tender in his touch of stricken hearts, and a flame of indignation against wrong. If his conceptions of relative value were not always consistent, the impetuosity which saw but one truth and set upon but one aim made him an advocate who could count upon securing the verdict. His evangelical theology, in which the redeeming love of Christ was closely knit with the Father's grace, provided him with an endless variety of preachable themes ; and in the pulpit as soon as he had found his way to any one of them, his audience were compelled to listen. He was so far a sacramentarian as to hold that the partaking of bread and wine in the Eucharist was an appointed symbol of mystic participation in the life of Christ, bringing a special blessing to the communicant. His ministry was an integrating force which drew sinners to Christ and preserved their fellowship with Him amidst the obligations of mutual service. He was in sympathy with the attempts to clothe old truths in current dress, but unsurpassed by any of his brethren in his loyalty to the truths themselves ; and to Christ he surrendered himself in a devotion that was without measure and without pretence.

The spread
of the
movement.

St. James's Hall in Piccadilly was taken as the headquarters of the West London Mission ; and the choice was characteristically hailed by the missionary because of ' the strategic and spectacular value ' of the position. Hughes was a

fighting-man by nature, never to all appearance more happy than when in evidence. Not only was the mission work kept in a variety of ways before the attention of the public, but the effect was to bring the entire scheme, of which the enterprises in London were but parts, out of obscurity into notice and notoriety. A passion for the provision of halls and mission centres spread and grew, until but few of the larger towns are now without them. At present they number forty-one; and each becomes gradually a hive of philanthropic agencies, that soon begin to tell upon the life of the towns in which they are placed. That at Manchester is probably the largest and the best equipped. Its social work branches out into an almost confusing variety of organizations for the help of the poor and the imperilled; and in its services it is said that every Sunday evening of the year fifteen or sixteen thousand people have the gospel preached to them. 'What are these amongst so many?' may well be asked by any one who has observed the increasing aggregation of the people in the towns and who has pondered the probable consequences. The obvious answer is that a good work has been begun, which, with all its costliness in men and money, is tending powerfully to the regeneration of sinners and to the improvement of their conditions of life. The issue is not yet; but amongst the facts already abundantly demonstrated are the unreduced power of Christianity to uplift and save, and the elasticity of Methodism as a practical means of extending the Kingdom of God.

Almost parallel with the development of missions to crowded populations, though on a less ample scale, has been the care for the villages, which the movements of modern civilization have tended to deplete. Many of them, once thriving centres with thriving noneconformist churches, are now, like the old chapels, half empty and haunted by silences. To this two principal causes have contributed. In some districts an intolerant clergy have usurped a degree of authority which was fatal to freedom of religious worship; and in others social barriers have been erected, by which convinced Nonconformists have been excluded not only from

The depletion of the villages.

the amenities which they could spare, but even from the legitimate exercise of influence in civil life. Members of the large communities north of the Trent are apt to imagine that disciples of all creeds can now live together in goodwill and mutual respect. A short residence in some of the remoter hamlets of the eastern or south-western counties would show them that the day of religious disabilities is by no means over. To conform with Anglican usages may be said to be a condition of tranquil life in some of the villages, and those who enforce the condition by small persecutions must be held responsible so far for the migration to the towns. For the larger cause, involving such associated factors as the absence of remunerative employment, of means of recreation, of convenient housing, and the possibilities of a career, no economical remedy has yet been discovered. With this double defect, of tyranny within the little hamlet and a periodical outflow of its most vigorous life, the villages have a claim for help which Methodism has been neither slow to recognize nor reluctant to meet. From the villages have come a great host of preachers, with officials who are prominent in every department of service; back to them should stream in natural gratitude whatever will tend to the enrichment of personal life or to the support of the gospel of religious freedom.

Amalgama-
tion of
rural
circuits.

Amongst the many attempts of the last half-century to promote the evangelization of the villages, two are noteworthy for different reasons. The one may be described as imposed from without in the deliberate intention to substitute a system of combined strength for the weakness of unrelated units. The other is an organization that has grown from small beginnings, initiated by one man of rude but consecrated genius, who followed what he thought the guidance of Providence, and left to Methodism the heritage of a great apparatus for doing good. Almost before the decline in numbers due to the difficulties of 1849 was stayed, a tendency to divide circuits showed itself, and continued in exercise until within a dozen years of the close of the century. For the convenience of working and to obviate the loss of

time in travelling, the ideal circuit outside the large towns was a cluster of villages round a fairly populous centre with a staff of two or at the most three ministers. In prosperous times, before the industries began to concentrate themselves at convenient points on the lines of railway, the system answered well. But when the people began to follow the industries, the struggle for existence in many such circuits became almost hopeless. Depression induced languor; languor and dullness were fatal to aggressiveness. Until the bicycle became popular, no union of such circuits could be effected without exposing the staff to labour in travelling that would reduce their efficiency in the pulpit and pastorate. With that easy means of locomotion at hand, the policy of amalgamating two or three of these circuits has been adopted, and substantial improvement is in several instances already reported. The policy is an astute application of the law of the strength of union, and the accompanying disadvantages are to some extent discounted by requiring a certain degree of concentration of service on the part of each minister. Whether the scheme will be of permanent benefit and worthy of adoption over a larger area, it remains for the present generation to prove.

Methodist work in the villages would be impossible but for the immense numbers of local preachers who for Christ's sake voluntarily and at their own cost serve the pulpits of the Connexion. A large proportion of them come from the country, and are strong men who can drive a straight furrow and describe the ways of God, but who have never had the chance of acquiring much secular knowledge. These men, his 'brothers in the smockfrock,' as he used to describe them, were the men whom Thomas Champness loved. During his residence in Rochdale in 1886 he opened a home for evangelists, where they were trained for the work of local preachers, colporteurs, and lay missionaries. A little later a stock of gospel cars was secured; and these have increased to the number of twenty-nine, and are kept steadily employed in suitable parts of the country, the attendants preaching in the open air and spreading pure literature. Permanence

Thomas
Champness.

Cliff
College.

has been given to the enterprise by the establishment of Cliff College, in Derbyshire, where accommodation is provided for nearly a hundred men, whose training is expressly designed to make them effective evangelists.

Other aids
for local
preachers.

Attention in other respects to the needs or equipment of lay preachers has been continuous and eager. In 1873 the Conference was moved by the consideration of the great importance of their services and 'the desirableness of maintaining, and, if possible, increasing their efficiency' to appoint a committee to ascertain what means could be adopted with this purpose in view. A report was received each year from the committee, which was evidently perplexed by the ever-recurring problem how to enforce amongst volunteers the obligations of discipline and training. In 1876 the establishment was advised of a theological class in each circuit, wherever practicable, and arrangements were made for the preparation of a course of study for the guidance of persons on probation for the office of local preacher. Twelve years afterwards, little or nothing having been done, the matter was taken up again. The next year another special committee was appointed, this time in charge of the secretary of the Home Mission Fund, 'to consider in detail plans for the training of local preachers, the provision of suitable literature at small cost,' and various other matters. In 1892 'the subject of a graduated course of reading' was remitted to yet another committee. The course prepared was adopted the following year; and subsequently a standing committee was appointed, by which a scheme of voluntary study and annual examination has been carried out, greatly to the advantage of the men who have presented themselves. A serious, though perhaps unavoidable, defect is the absence of any provision to make study obligatory after the close of the year of probation. Encouragement and persuasion are the only influences that can be employed; and the most hopeful sign is the evident rise of a sentiment amongst local preachers themselves in favour of a ministry that is at once self-disciplined, devout, and aggressive. To relieve the physical needs of these valuable men, in sickness

or in age, a sum of £8,000 was granted from the Thanksgiving Fund to be invested, the interest to be distributed from time to time for the benefit of the necessitous. The amount is quite inadequate, though it has enabled fifteen hundred grants to be made ; and in course of time the original benefaction will probably be enlarged by bequests and donations. Amongst the local preachers themselves there has been established a benefit or Mutual Aid Association (not limited to Wesleyans but embracing several sections of British Methodism), which has already proved of the utmost value, and will not appeal in vain to those who recognize the indispensable character of the service rendered to the church of Christ by these faithful men.

Yet another department of work that may rightly be classed as home-missionary comprises the organizations for the promotion of temperance amongst both adults and the young. The matter was seriously taken in hand for the first time at the Conference of 1873, when, in response to suggestions from several synods, a committee was appointed to promote certain contemplated legislation, ' to inquire into the question of intemperance . . . and to consider by what means, in consistency with the unity and harmonious working of our connexional system as to its discipline and worship, the influence of Methodism may be most effectually employed for the remedy of this widespread and demoralizing evil.' Such inquiry was followed the next year by the discovery that no good thing in Methodism would be imperilled by the concentration of its influence against so great an evil ; and the basis for an organization was prescribed, one ' which would admit of the hearty co-operation of all persons, whether they be abstainers or non-abstainers.' In 1875 a Temperance Committee was formed upon this basis, and sanction was given to the establishment of Bands of Hope in connexion with the Sunday Schools. Two years later Adult Temperance Societies on the same double basis were brought into existence ; and in 1890 gratification was expressed at the success of the movement, and it was decided to set apart a minister whose whole time should be given to

Promotion
of
temperance.

the promotion of temperance. A further step was taken on the plea that a dual basis in dealing with such an evil as intemperance is unsatisfactory, a compromise and a symptom of weakness ; and in 1892 sanction was given to the formation of societies on the pledge of total abstinence alone in places where this was thought to be the most desirable method of working. The official statistics are a little confusing ; but the Temperance Societies appear to have doubled in number by the end of the century, whilst the membership of the Bands of Hope increased by twenty-six thousand.

Other
social
work.

A variety of social work of other kinds has been undertaken, some by the express direction of the Conference, but the greater part on private initiation, without official recognition though with general approval. In 1887 the establishment at Brixton of a Home for the Rescue of Fallen Girls was reported to the Conference, which commended the institution and all kindred work to the sympathetic support of the church. Three years earlier a standing committee on Social Purity was constituted ; and if its activity has been maintained with a decorous and seemly absence of ostentation, its annual reports are an evidence of its vigilance and zeal. It is concerned with ' the duty of watchful care over all moral interests,' and is carrying a holy war into the enemy's country by pleading for the ' repression of all social customs which are hostile to a high-toned morality.' In 1890 the Bermondsey Settlement was opened with a view to provide a centre for religious, educational, and social work, which has expanded into a number of associated agencies for increasing the attractiveness and comfort of life, and for doing good. Since the beginning of the present century another settlement magnificently housed has been founded in connexion with the Leysian Mission in City Road, and a Union for Social Service has been formed with a programme of a practical cast.

Chapel
extension.

In the extension of chapel-building, the fifty years are able to give a good account of themselves. Before 1854 the administration of chapel affairs was complicated and

occasionally uncertain. There were a General Chapel Fund and a Chapel Relief Fund, administered by different committees, and yet a third committee that went by the name of the Chapel-building Committee. Between these different authorities it was not unlikely that an innocent minister would go astray, even if his wits survived the peremptory injunction, printed in formidable italics :

No superintendent shall allow or sanction the opening of a new chapel in his circuit, or reopening of one that has been enlarged, until the Building Committee have officially certified, that the conditions on which such erection or enlargement was sanctioned have been fulfilled.

The need for chapels was pressing, but at that time of financial straitness the contraction of debts would have been folly. Yet such were the simplicity and efficiency of the plan on which the department was now remodelled that, with the aid of the great Relief and Extension Fund, hundreds of thousands of pounds of debt were in the course of a few years removed from the trust property of Methodism. Widespread discontent and irritation were thereby checked or removed, and both means and energy were set free for the extension of the Kingdom of Christ.

Since that date few radical changes have been made in the system of administering the great trust-estates of Methodism, though modifications with a view to expedite the dispatch of business have been introduced as needed. In 1866 the rules of administration were carefully revised in the interest again of simplicity and order, and a Board of Trustees for Chapel Purposes was established. It was almost an anticipation in ecclesiastical affairs of the appointment of an official trustee for the administration of private estates, with the further advantage of the elimination alike of expense and of complaints. Investments for various local objects, amounting in the aggregate to nearly £86,000, are now held by the Board, and the right application of the income is subject to few of the uncertainties that attach to

The
Board of
Trustees.

the best and most honourable private control. Other improvements in method have been adopted, as the business of the chapel office has extended, and new exigencies have arisen. One measure of the progress of Methodism is available in the statement for which the present secretary of the committee is responsible, that more than two new chapels a week have been built for the last fifty years at an average cost of £200,000 a year. If the first disastrous decade be omitted, the average annual expenditure has been but little less than a quarter of a million sterling.¹

Metropolitan
Chapel
Fund.

For the benefit of London a Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund was established in 1861, and in little more than twenty years aided in the erection of seventy-eight chapels. Its resources were so nearly exhausted in 1885 that a new fund under the same name was instituted, upon which the claims have been so numerous and exacting that it also has now reached practically the limits of its usefulness. Year after year the population of London is streaming out in every direction and annexing great areas of country. The problem of London Methodism is consequently twofold, if it be not even manifold. There are the emptying chapels in the older districts, where the population is steadily changing in character and sinking in the scale of prosperity ; and there are the new districts, some of them crowded parallelograms of featureless houses, where Methodism must needs be represented and must do her share in the proclamation of the gospel. Since the present century opened, much anxious attention has been given to the subject in several of its aspects ; but the matter is urgent,

¹ Two Acts affecting trust estates and premises have been passed at the instance of Wesleyan Methodist members of Parliament, of much service to all the Methodist Churches and the Free Churches generally. By *The Trustees' Appointment Act*, 1890, the provisions of the Act of 1850 were made applicable to chapel, school, manse, and similar trusts, so that trustees in meeting can appoint new trustees by a resolution, with a memorandum of the same duly signed by the superintendent minister or other chairman. By *The Marriage Act*, 1898, trustees and governing bodies can appoint an authorized person—the resident minister is recommended—in whose presence marriages can take place in a chapel registered for marriages, without the presence of the registrar.

for dying men cannot wait long for the aid they need against a dreariness that either deadens the soul or reacts in an almost irresistible incitement to vice.

Meanwhile the provinces with Scotland and Wales have not been neglected. A Fund for the Extension of Methodism in Great Britain was established in 1874 on the proposal of Sir Francis Lycett and Mr. W. Mewburn, who started it with munificent donations. It was designed originally to increase the resources at the disposal of the Home Mission, Chapel, and Theological Institution committees; but ultimately it was confined to aid in the erection of a thousand chapels in the villages and smaller towns of the country, the other needs being taken over by the Thanksgiving Fund. Double that number of cases have been aided, and the Fund is now practically exhausted. In 1867 sanction was given by the Conference to the formation of a Relief and Extension Fund for Scotland, but several years elapsed before the scheme assumed a practical form. The design was to assist in the erection of chapels and manses, and in 1878 operations were commenced. A sum of about £12,000 stands to the credit of the Fund, which has contributed materially to the equipment of Methodism in Scotland. Wales, too, has its Chapel Funds, that for North Wales established in 1867 and that for South Wales in 1873. They are but small institutions, as might be expected, but they are of great value in the poorer rural districts of the interior, and they illustrate the working of the principle of self-government with neighbours at hand to help. A further application of that principle was made in 1898, when the Welsh Wesleyan Methodist Assembly was created and invested with various functions, the aim being to arouse 'a sense of unity which cannot exist while Welsh Methodism is split into two unequal, unrelated fragments,' and to evoke a hearty and national response to a national appeal. The change was agreeable as involving the recognition of a powerful racial sentiment; hitherto it has been attended by no practical inconvenience, and it may be regarded as an experiment in the direction

Funds for
extension of
Methodism.

Relief
Fund for
Scotland.

Chapel
Funds for
Wales.

of relieving an overburdened Conference by the delegation of some of its duties to an association of synods.

IV

METHODISM
AND
EDUCATION.

Primary
education :
principles
adopted.

In regard to primary education the position of the Conference has been consistent, though fluctuation of opinion can be traced in important groups of its members. The idea of a national secular system has always been rejected ; and it may almost be said that the starting-point in every discussion has been the doctrine, taken as axiomatic, that no scheme of sound education can be devised from which religion is excluded. Where opinions differed for a time was at the next stage of the argument, whether responsibility for the education of the young rested upon the churches or the State, and whether any co-operation between the two was wise or even legitimate. The question was settled practically in the years immediately preceding our period, when it was decided to accept the financial aid offered by the Government for the first time in a Minute of the Committee of Council, dated June 28, 1847. After and before that date, there were eminent men who argued that the State had no right to interfere with the matter of education at all except to the extent of seeing that it was being attended to. It was fervently pleaded that parents and the churches alone were concerned, and that, if the churches consented to share the task with the State, the State would have in due course to countenance and help the teaching of Romanism and of every form of belief.¹ The answer to the plea, then as now, was its complete impracticability. Fifty years have passed, during which several of the churches have been supremely immobile, whilst among large classes of the people the sense of parental responsibility has probably declined. To-day very few men are disposed to complain that the State should undertake to organize national education, for the simple reason that otherwise in a large number of the most needy cases there would be no

¹ Rigg, *Reminiscences*, 105 ff.

education at all. In the Conferences of fifty years ago there were two views, if not two parties, a majority who cordially supported the policy of co-operation with the State, and a minority, including some distinguished and influential men, who regarded such a policy as wrong in theory, but tolerated it in the absence of any practicable scheme of their own. Gradually the latter party has disappeared, theories that are irreducible to practice possessing little vitality amongst busy men not responsible for them. The opposition to grants-in-aid shrank first into silence as the conditions came to light, and was slowly transmuted into a disposition to welcome those grants as the magnitude of the task was recognized. To receive such grants carries with it an obligation to submit to the interference or control of the State ; and after much discussion a fuller policy was formulated, to which the Conference has committed itself by repeated declarations. The essentials enumerated are three. The first is that a Christian unsectarian school should be placed within reasonable distance of every family, the control being vested in an elective body acting over a district of sufficient area. The second requires that no increased grant of public money should be made to denominational schools without the condition of adequate and representative public management. The third reads, ' That no national system of education, which shall exclude from the day schools the Bible, and religious instruction therefrom by the teachers, suited to the capacities of children, will meet the necessity of the country.' It is possible that the Conference might be persuaded under new circumstances to modify one of the clauses ; but it is evident that Methodism is fully committed to the principles of elective popular control and of the permeation of the educative process by religion.

Steps had been taken before our period to provide a suitable Training College for Teachers. In 1847 it was reported that an eligible site had been secured in London on reasonable terms and in a locality likely to furnish an adequate supply of children for a Model or Practising

Training
colleges.

School. Progress was delayed through paucity of means. Three years later, notwithstanding the serious effect of the current agitation upon the finances of the Connexion, it was decided to raise a further sum of £10,000 for the purpose of completing the college. When it was found the following year that the funds were still deficient, meetings were ordered to be held in every circuit with a view to obtain the necessary resources. At last the scheme was completed, and the Westminster Normal Training Institution was opened on October 6, 1851, with ten students, a number that was doubled in the course of a few years. The total cost of site and buildings was £38,249 ; a chapel was added in 1872, when also the Southlands College for the training of female teachers was established. At present accommodation is provided for about 259 students, whose technical training is shown by results to be adequate, and whose sympathy with religion fits them generally to be charged with the religious education of the young.

Secondary
and
higher
education.

In secondary education the part played by Methodism before the present century was deliberate but tentative, the constitution of the Board of Management dating from 1903. When the Thanksgiving Fund was raised, the sum of £10,000 was assigned to the promotion by way of grants of the establishment of middle-class boarding-schools in several districts where they were greatly needed. A dozen or fifteen schools have thus been aided, certain powers being reserved to the Conference in consequence. At a still earlier date schools were opened at Sheffield and Taunton, under conditions and stipulations of a similar kind. All these were proprietary schools ; and it is doubtful whether the system of education in the country is developing in a way which will admit of the continued prosperity of such schools, except for a time in the cases of girls, and of boys who are delicate in health or otherwise disqualified for wholesome, if indiscriminate, intermixture with their peers. A private school has all the advantages arising from the direct and interested supervision of its head, but finds it hard to live on account of the multiplication of facilities for

secondary education. Under a church-aided proprietary system these advantages are in the best instances partially lost, and there is no compensation in the form either of an inexhaustible treasury or of a keen-eyed voluntary vigilance. The defence of the action of Methodism is that, whilst far from ideal, it is the best at present practicable. To do nothing, while its children are being proselytized in some schools and secularized in others, would be to disregard one of its primary responsibilities. The ultimate alternative seems to lie between the absorption of all secondary education into a national system from which the sectarian element is rigidly excluded, and the hopeless attempt to plant Methodist public schools within reach of every part of the country. In the transition period everything possible needs to be done to provide the middle classes with opportunities of a sound education with evangelical religion as its controlling factor.

Since the abolition of university tests in 1871, many lads from the great schools for ministers' sons have found their way to Oxford or Cambridge, where a due proportion have distinguished themselves. London, too, and the younger universities, that have never openly associated learning with oppression, have stimulated an increasing number of youths of both sexes to continue their studies. These are tendencies which Methodist sentiment has encouraged, as is shown by the appropriation of the sum of £4,000 out of the Twentieth Century Fund, of which the income is to be applied in assisting young Methodists to obtain a university education. Much more than sentiment is to be seen in the establishment of the Leys School at Cambridge, a project which was formally completed at the Conference of 1875. The school was equipped at great cost with a view to provide the joint advantages of the best possible education with the training in self-respect and manliness characteristic of the oldest public foundations in the country. For a quarter of a century it has steadily grown in favour; and its alumni are now to be found serving the Church and the State in various spheres of influence, in the ranks of commerce and industry as well

The Leys
School.

as amongst the ministers and teachers of the people. The property is held by trustees for educational purposes in connexion with Wesleyan Methodism, and its alienation rendered as far impossible as the law of the land permits. The first headmaster was Dr. W. F. Moulton, a saintly and scholarly man, whose influence on many of the boys proved enduring, and whose skill in biblical study fitted him for active membership of the company for the Revision of the New Testament. On the associated company for the Revision of the Old Testament sat Dr. J. D. Geden, a master of many tongues, with a body too frail for the service of the rich mind that tenanted it. Both ranked as princes in Methodism.

Sunday
schools.

Sunday schools have always been a popular institution in Methodism, and in the northern counties many of them have attained a great size. At the beginning of our period they were established in most of the circuits, but were not bound together by much general legislation beyond a few prohibitions, as of the sale of books on Sunday or the teaching of the art of writing. The great year for organization was 1874, when a Sunday School Union was formed. Its care was entrusted to a minister who was also charged with the duties of the visitation of day schools, but was transferred the next year to a vigorous man who was relieved from other work, and who in disposition and sympathy was exactly fitted for his post. The Union prospered greatly; and in a quarter of a century the number of scholars on the rolls was increased by a quarter of a million. The Wesley Guild, 'to awaken and deepen the Christian life in the young people of the congregation and Sunday school,' was added as an independent though supplementary institution in 1896. Recently there has been evidence of a change of habit or view, of which indications appear in some of the figures of the official returns. The Sunday school is obviously becoming less popular or attractive. No longer do the children in many places as a matter of course find their way to the school, and attend with fair regularity up to adolescence. For some reason, not exactly defined at present, the tie

Their
increased
importance.

which holds them is less easily knit and more easily broken ; and this is occurring at a time when it has become especially desirable that the children of the country should be brought under strong and continuous religious influence. What is apparently needed is to bring the school to a position nearer the centre of the church's organization, and to quicken the sense of the obligation to serve in the hearts of the best-equipped men and women of the congregation. As opinion is now tending, it may well be that the whole responsibility for the religious part of the education of the children will before long be thrown upon the parents, who are showing little readiness to respond, and upon the churches, who are in many cases increasing their future burden by remissness. Methodism should not forget the teaching of history in all modern civilizations, that the church or creed that cares for the children can count upon support in the next generation ; whereas, if the young are neglected, the penalty is desertion, with a reduction of the scale on which God can be glorified.

At the beginning of our period the Theological Institution of Methodism had two colleges for the training of the ministry at Didsbury and Richmond respectively, the one opened in 1842 and the other the following year. Both have been enlarged on different occasions or better adapted for their purpose, until now they provide accommodation together for a hundred and thirty students. The premises at Richmond were afterwards purchased by the Missionary Society, and set apart for the training of men for work abroad. Subsequently a better arrangement was adopted, by means of which the foreign students were distributed amongst all the colleges, with the effect of quickening missionary interest in the home students and making more real the unity of the ministry and of the church all the world over. A third college was opened at Headingley in 1868, and a fourth at Handsworth in 1881. In all these branches of what is strictly one Institution, administered by a central committee on a plan which permits of the maintenance of a uniform system and of any such interchanges in residence as are thought desirable, students to the number of 254 are housed, main-

The
Theological
Institution.

Supreme
necessity of
a trained
ministry.

tained, and trained. They are all accepted candidates for the ministry, with future careers ensured to them on good behaviour and continued evidence of competence. The training is directed to make them effective ministers, faithful in the pastorates of their church, and in its pulpits workmen with no need to be ashamed. In its range it is an introduction to all the departments of theological and biblical study ; in its spirit it is practical rather than academical, the great aim being so to elicit, inform, and co-ordinate the powers of each man that he will be both able and prompted to render the best service of which he is capable. That the design is on the whole well considered and well carried out, is shown by the good work done by these trained men in difficult stations in many parts of the world. The great defect is the brevity of the prescribed period of training. The Conference has on two or three recent occasions directed that the present three years' course should be extended to four, as soon as circumstances allow ; but that proviso is, and threatens for some years to continue, fatal to improvement. As a matter of fact, the church has outgrown its Institution ; and though the colleges are filled year after year, they cannot supply sufficient trained men to meet the demands of the flourishing church. The obvious and only reasonable conclusion is that the Institution must be enlarged. An immediate addition of eighty places would barely suffice to enable the term of residence to be extended. Methodism has never shown clearer signs of vitality than now ; and if it is to hold its own in a generation that is rising in the scale of education, the proper training of its ministry must stand near the head of its programme.

V

POSITION
AND OUT-
LOOK AT
THE CLOSE
OF THE
CENTURY.

By the end of the nineteenth century Wesleyan Methodism had become a great national church, well equipped and generous, with peace within its borders, and with a network of agencies enwrapping most of the country and catching men of different tastes and training. It had entered into

public life, and was beginning to bring its form of religious influence to bear directly upon the settlement of great moral questions. In protest against evil its voice was not raised in vain; whilst it was ready to take part in any wise effort to improve the conditions of life or to vindicate the rights of conscience. The principle of keeping clear of party politics was accepted as a counsel of wisdom by the various classes of members, though occasionally some of them were disposed to condone little breaches on their own part and to complain of transgression on the part of others. On the whole the attitude of mediation was fairly maintained; and the church remained in doctrine midway between Rome and Rakow, in polity almost as far removed from episcopacy as from independency, and in practice a refuge and home for the lovers of an undiluted worship. Were Methodism in all its branches a unity in organization as well as belief, its public influence would of necessity be largely increased. At a comparatively early date in our period steps were taken without much success to prevent overlapping and the multiplication in the villages of small chapels belonging to different Methodist bodies. In 1881 an œcumenical conference of all the Methodist churches in America and the Colonies as well as Great Britain was held in London, and was followed by a second at Washington in 1891, and a third again at London in 1901. The necessary result was to express and promote good feeling; but of anything like an organic union amongst all the Methodist bodies even of this country alone, the century closed without any trustworthy sign or any generally prevalent and outspoken desire.

A measure of the generosity, if not of the financial resources, of Wesleyan Methodism may be found in the Twentieth Century Fund, for the collection of which arrangements began to be made before the close of our period. The need of money in order to carry out a variety of schemes of advance was the stimulus and the distinguishing feature of the movement. The Fund was closed in 1908, when Sir R. W. Perks, to whose advocacy and skilful management success was largely due, announced a total sum to credit of

A great
national
church.

The
œcumenical
Conferences.

The
Twentieth
Century
Fund.

£1,073,782, collected at an inclusive cost of less than thirty thousand pounds. As the result several departments of work have been able to avail themselves of opportunities that had fully come; though in other departments, notably that for the training of ministers, not advance only, but even adequacy is hindered by the paucity of means.

Preaching :
theology ;
worship

In the general progress of the country, alike in education and in good manners, the Methodist laity and clergy have shared. The scholarship of its ministry has distinctly risen, whether judged by the academical test or by the shrewder one of the knowledge of a subject with its bearings. A similar improvement in the average quality of the preaching has taken place. In their days men like Newton or Punshon stood alone, with many imitators but few acknowledged rivals. Of the imitators of Punshon only two or three survive; otherwise the rhetorical style, charming and irresistible as it was on the master's lips, is extinct. Occasionally a specimen may be met with of the slipshod style at the other extreme, with colloquialisms and worn-out slang used to conceal the poverty of the preacher's thought or his superiority to the need for preparation. But the average quality of the preaching is both high, and higher than it used to be; and sermons in which side-issues are shunned, and a vital message is pressed strenuously home, are increasing in number. In theology the outstanding feature is loyalty to evangelical truth with more tolerance for small differences of opinion. Sympathy is traceable with all the main tendencies of religious thought, whether mystical or moderately rationalistic; but all these are kept from extravagant expression by a predominantly evangelical aim. Decorum and order, without any loss of sincerity and heartiness, are the general marks of the public services of worship, though the occasions are possibly more frequent when the officiating minister intlicts his own preferences upon an unwilling but patient congregation. The two forces are opposite but unequal, and the resultant motion is in the direction of reverence and spiritual profit.

W. B. Pope. The outstanding theologian of the period was Dr. W. B.

Pope, who combined an unflinching loyalty to Christ with both mystical and sacramentarian tendencies that were rigidly checked and harmonized. His mind moved easily amidst a great accumulation of knowledge ; and though as far as doctrine was concerned his intellectual sympathies were mainly with the past, he stood as a theologian at the parting of the ways, ' holding to the faithful word,' and not prepared to commit himself entirely to the new views and points of view that modified the climate of his later days. Indirectly, however, by example he prepared men to welcome fresh light and to attempt untried methods ; and the influence of his saintly stability is not yet spent.

Methodism at the close of the half-century differed little in spirit and purpose from what it was at the beginning. To Dr. J. H. Rigg, its Nestor, whose ministry covers the whole period, and who is still living in honoured retirement, beloved by the men whose predecessors he convinced and led, belongs the principal credit for the preservation of the continuity and distinctive features of his church. In the same direction was exerted the great influence of Dr. George Osborn, whose love of the past made him the most ardent of Methodist antiquarians. He was a stout opponent of change, in usage or formulary ; other features of his character revealed themselves in his editorship of the poems of John and Charles Wesley ; and the blended tenderness and strength won the admiration of a large company of disciples.

James H.
Rigg.

G. Osborn.

Some tendencies are, however, visible which make the direction of the future development of Wesleyan Methodism a little ambiguous. Complaints may be heard that the circuit system is weakening ; that mission halls are still on their trial, and are not proving in every respect an unqualified success ; that the cost of connexionalism is heavy at a time when local resources are approaching exhaustion. The complaints are not in every place without justification. Nor do they touch the deepest symptoms of the health or sickness of the body ecclesiastic. If it has tried, it has certainly failed to keep in contact with the great majority of the working class, or to reach that most neglected group

Defects and
weak-
nesses.

of the population, the men who live in private houses let on a quarterly or annual tenancy. A few of these men often form the strength of the free churches in their neighbourhood ; the great bulk of them rarely favour any church with their presence, and are left almost entirely alone by all the churches. Apparently also Methodism is failing to train men and women for the responsible work of the leadership of its society classes. It can staff little committees without number for advisory or executive purposes ; but its famous class-meetings are in many places declining for lack of suitable leaders, whilst its useful social work is left incomplete through the inability to crown it with a carefully tended godliness.

Fidelity to
evangelical
truth and
aim.

Yet, with all its patent defects, and apart from a spasmodic disposition to overlook relative values, it may fairly be claimed that Methodism has been faithful to its mission. That was defined by John Wesley as the spread of Scriptural holiness ; and amongst the most characteristic means he employed was the gathering together of seriously minded people into classes for mutual help and edification. It was such an objective visualization of the principle of communion as Christendom had never before seen. Until the end of the century the class-meeting remained the chief expression of fellowship between Methodists, whilst participation in the Lord's Supper continued to be the holy rite in which membership of the One Body was confessed and recognized. An alternative destiny seems to lie in the near future. Methodism will either retain her peculiarities, with such modifications as changing conditions require, and address her appeal to certain temperaments and certain specific needs of the human soul ; or, ceasing to have a character of her own, she will range herself with the colourless churches that are Christian institutions and answer a Christian purpose, but the co-existence of which side by side can be defended on no sound principle of economy, efficiency, or need.

The
outlook.

BOOK III

BRITISH BRANCHES OF METHODISM

CHAPTER I

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND THE WESLEYAN REFORM UNION

1797—1908

When the affairs of the nation are distracted, private people are . . . justified in stepping a little out of their ordinary sphere. They enjoy a privilege, of somewhat more dignity and effect, than that of idle lamentation over the calamities of their country. They may look into them narrowly ; they may reason upon them liberally ; and if they should be so fortunate as to discover the true source of the mischief, and to suggest any probable method of removing it, though they may displease the rulers for the day, they are certainly of service to the cause of government.

BURKE, *Thoughts on the Causes of the Present Discontents*.

One is your Teacher, and all ye are brethren. . . . One is your Master, even the Christ.—MATT. xxiii. 8, 10, R.V.

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CHAPTER I

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH AND THE WESLEYAN REFORM UNION

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List add *Minutes* and *Magazines* (*Arminian Mag.* 1822-8 for B.C.M.); Jubilee (M.N.C. 1848, B.C.M. 1866) and Centenary (M.N.C. 1897) Memorial vols.; the large collections of works by the leaders, and contemporary publications, in the Hobill Library, Ranmoor College, Sheffield; the Everett Collection, Victoria Park College, Manchester, and Everett's Diaries (20 vols.), unpublished MSS., etc., in the writer's custody. Kilham: GRUNDELL and HALL, *Life* (1799), with autobiography, etc. (1799); BLACKWELL, *Life* (1835); TOWNSEND, *Life* (1889). Important biographies are: HULME—Allin (1881); COOKE (1886); STACEY—Ridgway (1862); TOWNSEND—Stacey (1891); S. L. THORNE—O'Bryan (1888); JOHN THORNE—James Thorne; LUKE—Bourne (1906); BAXTER—Eckett in *Memorials of Free Methodism* (1865); CHEW—Everett (1875), Griffith (1885); BOADEN—Chew (1896); DINNOCK—Dunn (1890). EVERETT, *Methodism as it is* (1863-5), and GREGORY, *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism* (1899), contain valuable material. See also REDFERN, *Modern Developments* (1906); SALT, *Memorial* (1822), BAGGALY, *Digest* (1862), and TOWNSEND, *Handbook* (1899), M.N.C.; BOURNE, *Origin and History* (1905), B.C.M.; KIRSOP, *Historic Sketches* (1885) and ASKEW, *Manual* (1899), U.M.F.C.; and EAYRS, *Our Founders, A Short History of Three Churches and their Union* (3rd ed., 1908).

I

ACCEPTING M. Auguste Sabatier's classification as in his title, *Religions of Authority and the Religion of the Spirit*, it is not difficult to place Methodism. When Wesley felt his heart 'strangely warmed' on that epochal night in 1738, Methodism was born. It was a creation of the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. By one side of his nature, however, Wesley firmly adhered to the principle of authority; moreover, he was throughout his lifetime by conviction a member and minister of the Church of England as by law established, in which much deference

INTRODUC-
TORY.

Methodism,
a religion of
the Spirit.

is paid to authority. Conflict between this and the free spirit which animated him and his followers as Methodists was inevitable. When the soul has been awakened to spiritual realities, and believes that its intuitions and experiences are next in value to the teachings of Holy Scripture, it is impossible to circumscribe its movements in matters of religion by the commands of external authority. When he obtained assurance of salvation, Wesley became the subject of this conflict. By birth and preference an aristocrat, a ceremonialist, and a conservative, he was carried by conviction to the democracy, felt that 'church or no church we must attend to the work of saving souls,' and became the most daring innovator of his age. The same conflict was experienced by his followers individually and among them collectively. Now mystic freedom, and anon constituted authority, was in the ascendant. Wesley had freely violated authorized ecclesiastical canons and rubrics. Acting upon similar convictions, regnant in them as in him, many of his followers were led to claim electoral, administrative, and legislative rights in their church. They believed that all renewed souls were members of the royal priesthood. The constitutional history of Methodism is a record of the interplay of authority and freedom.¹ One result has been the secession of many members from the parent stock in England and America, or the growth by its side of other Methodist communities. Of nine hundred thousand enrolled Methodists in Great Britain, almost four hundred thousand are in its branch churches. These were until recently six in number; they are now four. This Book of our *History* is devoted to the origin and history of these branches. In this chapter we deal with those which now compose the United Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Reform Union.

Similar
origin of
these
churches,
now united.

The Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christian Methodists, and the United Methodist Free Churches, three communities which became one as the United Methodist Church (1907), had a similar origin towards the close of the

¹ *Supra*, pp. 16, 27.

eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth century. Their rise and form were affected by the religious, social, and political conditions of their time. The shadow of the French Revolution sobered or stirred the thoughts of all men ; and the followers of Kilham are not concerned to deny the influence of that revolt,¹ the need for which all admit, though its methods must be condemned. It was time to reject Bishop Horsley's dictum that 'all that the people had to do with the laws was to obey them.' Similar surface connexions may be traced between the Reform movements in English politics and those in Methodism. There is more than a coincidence between the Reform Act of 1832 and the rise of the Wesleyan Methodist Association three years later : between the European revolutions, the Chartist rising, the movement for ecclesiastical and social relief led by Cobden and Bright in this period, and the agitations in Wesleyan Methodism, 1846-52. The cause of these uprisings among Methodists was not, however, simply the spirit of the time. It was, they believed, the Spirit of God leading them to claim the full heritage of freedom to which as Methodists they had been directed. The basal contention in each of these three periods of Methodist controversy was for the rights of the community of church members against government by a clerical order. So were these protests regarded by those who made them. They wrought oftentimes in sad sincerity—as we write of them ; feeling that the faults which they dealt with 'ought to be approached, like those of a father, with trembling awe and pious solicitude.' Time has brought these protesters much justification and imitation, as it does to all reformers, whose fault often is that they are in advance of their age.

At each secession or new commencement its leaders naturally looked towards those who preceded them in making similar protests. Sympathetic service was rendered by one to another, and federal or organic union between them was frequently discussed. Amalgamation was accomplished in stages, except as to a small remnant. It will therefore

Influence of
the time.

¹ *Supra*, p. 360.

be accurate and convenient to trace these streams at the same time as far as possible, as they flow side by side until they become one.

II

1791—1814

THE FIRST
SECESSION.

Parties
among
Methodists.

While Wesley lay dying, Joseph Bradford, his travelling companion, sent to the Methodist societies this urgent message, 'Pray, Pray, Pray.' His concern was not for the departing leader so much as for his followers, who at his death must face a crisis. None could claim and to none would be rendered the submission made to Wesley. As he said, he 'was a centre of union both to the preachers and the people.' Six years before his death trustees at Shelley, Huddersfield, reserved the right to say from which Conference they would receive a preacher, should there be two Conferences after that event. More than fifty pamphlets dealing with these matters were issued. Three parties emerged. One urged that the attitude of their venerable father should be strictly followed—a counsel which might be variously interpreted, for Wesley admitted that he 'varied' from the Church of England. As Beaumont finely said later, 'Wesley, like a strong and skilful rower, looked one way, while every stroke of his oar took him in an opposite direction.' This section claimed that the Conference of preachers took the place of Wesley, and should continue his special work. Another, led by many wealthy trustees, demanded that anything which indicated independence of the Church of England and implied that the societies were not within its pale, should be discontinued. These forbade the administration of the Lord's Supper in Methodist chapels by the Methodist preachers, and also the holding of Methodist services in church hours. The hours of service at the Octagon Chapel, Bradford, were 9 a.m., 1 p.m., and 5 p.m., and the Lord's Supper was never administered there; nor in Kirkgate Chapel until 1810.¹ At Great Queen

¹ *The Bradford Antiquary*, July 1902, art. 'Kirkgate Chapel,' by Mr. J. Norton Dickons.

Street Chapel, London, the preachers were set aside, and a clergyman, sometimes one imprisoned for debt in the Fleet Prison, was secured to administer the holy ordinance.¹ Not until 1826 were Methodist preachers allowed to give it in City Road Chapel.² The third party, like fifty lay delegates who met at Redruth (June 1791)³ desired to complete the work of separation begun by Wesley and made necessary by the condition and attitude of the Church of England. Such formulated principles of self-government for the Methodist societies and circuits; claimed the right to receive the ordinances at the hands of their own ministers, freedom to worship at convenient hours, and the co-operation of laymen with the preachers in church courts. The condition and position of Methodism were grave and perplexing. No one was more concerned than Kilham, who at the death of Wesley was a preacher of some six years' standing.

Alexander Kilham was born July 10, 1762, at Epworth, which was thus the birthplace of the first Reformer as of the Father of Methodism.⁴ His father, Simon Kilham, of whom Alexander was the eldest son, was a linen weaver, superintended the education of his children at home, and brought up his four sons to his own trade. The parents were devout church-folk and Methodists. Young Kilham's delight in reading *The Saints' Everlasting Rest* was followed by indulgence in the common, but not the coarser youthful follies of his time. A helpful companionship steadied him, and during a revival among the Epworth Methodists, in his twentieth year, he experienced the great change.

After I had mourned and wept for three or four hours, I found a sudden change upon my mind. I could not weep if I might have had all the world; I found a great love for everyone around me—my heart was filled with unspeakable joy.

¹ *WMM*, 1885, p. 143; *Methodist Recorder*, Winter No., 1895, p. 33.

² Telford, *Wesley's Chapel*, p. 46.

³ Smith, *HWM*, ii. 702.

⁴ The entry on the Register of Baptisms at Epworth Church is: '1762. Alexander, Son of Simon and Elizabeth Kilham, August 6. J. Gibson, curate.' To authorities cited some interesting items are added, by H. J. F. in *WHS*, v. 122, 123.

Forthwith he went from house to house to share his gladness. With companions, of whom his intensity and industry made him the acknowledged leader, he planned the evangelization of the neighbouring villages. His first sermon was preached at Luddington. Preachers and others urged him to enter the ministry. Mr. R. C. Brackenbury¹ visited Epworth and inquired for a travelling companion. Kilham, who had become the successful market representative of his father's sacking manufactory, applied to Brackenbury and was engaged by him. He says, 'I went to travel with Mr. Brackenbury in the same capacity that Mr. Bradford travelled with Mr. Wesley.' The young man benefited greatly by the preaching, conversation, and instruction of Brackenbury. Their united labours founded Methodism in the Channel Islands, notwithstanding perilous persecutions. Kilham declined his leader's proposal to recommend him to Wesley as an itinerant, and remained at Brackenbury's residence, Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire, while that gentleman travelled in search of health (1784). Kilham was constantly taking the place of disabled preachers; and at length, on the recommendation of the Grimsby Circuit, he was appointed by Wesley as an itinerant. After Grimsby, he travelled in the Gainsborough, Pocklington, Whitby, Newcastle-on-Tyne, Aberdeen, and Alnwick Circuits. Of the last two he was superintendent. He was ordained in 1792.² Kilham had his full share of persecution, and was sometimes the subject of remarkable interposition of Providence. In the Scarborough Circuit half a pound of gunpowder was put under the place where he was expected to stand while preaching, and a train laid secretly to some distance. Unaware of this, Kilham changed his position, and so was unharmed.

1785.

His interest
in constitu-
tional
questions.

Early in his course Kilham was obliged to face questions of church polity. Compelled by persecution to license

¹ *Supra*, p. 317.

² The certificate is dated May 19, and signed by Joseph Cownley and Charles Atmore—'having been Ordained ourselves Elders of the Church of God by the late Rev. John Wesley and other ordained Ministers.' This document is preserved at Ranmoor College, Sheffield.



WM. THOM, 1751-1811, President of the first M.N.C. Conference, Leeds, 1797.

WILLIAM O'BRYAN
'Bible Christian.'

W. GRIFFITH,
1806-1887.

ALEXANDER KILHAM, the 'first Methodist reformer,' 1797.

ROBERT ECKITT, 1797-1862, President of the Wesleyan Methodist Association.

JAMES EVERETT, 1784-1872, who, with Dunn and Griffith, led the Wesleyan Reformers, 1819.

SAMUEL DUNN
1797-1882.

himself as a Dissenting preacher under the Toleration Act, he consistently declined to have his second child baptized by a clergyman. He became convinced that the Methodists should complete their separation from the Established Church, should claim their 'gospel privileges,' and that radical changes must be made in the societies at the death of Wesley. Two months after that event, a circular from the church party—'the signal gun fired from Hull'—called out Kilham's pen. The Newcastle-on-Tyne Society circulated his answer throughout the connexion. His defence of his aged superintendent, Cownley, who had dispensed the Lord's Supper to the Methodists, and his pamphlet asserting their scriptural rights to this ordinance, was warmly commended by leading preachers. Nevertheless he was censured by the next Conference and the pamphlet condemned. His pamphlet, signed 'Aquila and Priscilla,' was one of the heaviest blows in the conflict at Bristol and elsewhere for the right of the Methodists to receive the Lord's Supper at the hands of their preachers in their own chapels. Another pamphlet, signed 'Truceman and Freeman,' urged the union of lay officers with the preachers in the control of a circuit, and that a delegate from the circuit should represent it in the annual Conference. These proposals reflect the Presbyterian polity as Kilham conceived it to be working in Aberdeen while labouring there. They were in contrast with a plan now proposed, and thrice rejected by the Conference (1795) for constituting certain ministers Methodist bishops. Against this proposal Kilham directed argument and scorn in a brochure signed 'Martin Luther.' He was commonly known as the author of these pamphlets, and was encouraged in his efforts by some leading preachers; but he wrote under transparent *noms de plume* lest his advocacy should be discounted by his youthfulness, or lest heavy cost should fall upon him by unpaid letters being sent to him in reply.

Fifty-eight preachers signed Kilham's petition asking for explanation of ambiguous phrases in the Plan of Pacification

1792-4.

His proposals.

1795.

adopted by the Conference. He approved this plan as an instalment; but further consideration convinced him that to secure full scriptural liberty, root and branch reforms were required. The Conference of preachers retained ultimate authority; it could withdraw the rights it had granted. Many petitions of the societies and members had been strangely treated. Lay co-operation with the preachers was clearly necessary. Kilham therefore published at Ahwick a booklet entitled *The Progress of Liberty, amongst the people called Methodists. To which is added the Out-Lines of a Constitution. Humbly recommended to the serious consideration of the preachers and people late in connection with Mr. Wesley.* Upon its contents Kilham was tried by the Newcastle District Meeting, and ultimately expelled by the Conference. Its general principles were afterwards embodied in the constitution of the Methodist New Connexion. In it he acknowledges the authorship of his other works and urged that, notwithstanding concessions, something 'needed to be fixed to prevent any preacher from acting contrary to the interests of the societies as well as to make the preachers act in concert with each other.' He claimed that the consent of members should be obtained to the admission and expulsion of members,¹ and the appointment of class-leaders; that lay preachers should be examined and approved by the Leaders' and Circuit Meetings; that any preacher proposed for the itinerancy should be approved by the Circuit Meeting; that lay delegates should be appointed by the Circuit Meetings to the District Meeting, and by the District Meetings to the Conference of Preachers; with them, 'to transact the affairs both spiritual and temporal.'

Since largely adopted.

With these statesmanlike and prescient proposals, since largely adopted in Methodism,² Kilham gave instances of

¹ The first expulsion of Methodist members, by Wesley, was 'by the consent and approbation of the Band Society at Bristol' (*Journal*, February 28, 1741); but often Wesley acted on his own authority.

² Gregory, *Wes. Meth. Mag.* 1888, p. 466, italicizes the following as Kilham's anticipations of features of policy afterwards adopted in the Wesleyan Methodist Church: '*The strict preliminary Theological examin-*

abuses under the system then in vogue, which he exposed with painful directness. This gave his opponents an occasion, and quondam friends of reform an excuse, for uniting against him. His trial took place at the London Conference of 1796 in Wesley's Chapel. He was examined upon his works, and charges based upon statements considered abusive made in them were set forth. Kilham complained that his requests did not secure him a copy of the charges. If more formal than then customary, it would have been well had his wish been met. Adam Clarke secretly marked for him the places in the pamphlets to which the charges alluded. The Conference adjudged his replies insufficient; and on these charges and for disturbing the societies by his writings, Kilham was expelled on Thursday, July 28. Smiles and tears chased each other over Kilham's face during these three days of his trial: smiles when it was gravely asked whether he or the Conference was being tried; tears as his changeable friend Bradburn stood beside the communion table while the preachers signed the document confirming the expulsion. He pleaded:

Expulsion
of Kilham,
1796.

It was the system I attacked, and I only wished to meddle with those that countenanced it so far as appeared necessary to make it sink into contempt for ever.

He readily expressed his regret for some inaccurate particulars given, and for the warmth of his language, albeit it was the manner of his time. When he published his *Trial* he submitted much evidence in support of his contentions. No charge was alleged against his character, teaching, abilities, or diligence. He acknowledged his trial as fair, according to the nature of the court; but such a court was part of the system he condemned. Nor would his convictions permit him to use the opportunity offered to him of return at the price of submission and silence.

ation of Local Preachers, and the formation of a Local Preachers' Meeting; the strengthening of the Lay element in Methodist administration in the District Meetings, in the Connexional Committees, and in the Representative Session of the Conference.'

Demands of
the societies.

The condition of the societies justified his continued protest. He communicated with them by his *Methodist Monitor*. For some time separate buildings had been in use at Leeds, Chester, Liverpool, and Newcastle, where such as wished might have the ordinances administered. At Manchester, Sheffield, Hull, Huddersfield, and other centres committees were formed or circulars issued asking for the improvements named in Kilham's *Constitution*, and urging that lay delegates be appointed to assemble at the next Conference. Stockport charged its representatives never to forgo the admission of delegates to the District Meetings and Conference. At Hanley the society resisted the action of the High Church trustees who lived at Burslem and had fixed 7 and 9 a.m. as the hours for service. Local preachers, leaders, trustees, and stewards signed a petition to Conference begging its adoption of measures which would make preachers and people one. For this they were required to deliver up their plans and class-papers, told that they were no longer members, and the chapel was locked against them. Their petition to the Leeds Conference, with others like it, was thrown out, and it was freely stated that no concessions would be made. Handbills were displayed in the town stating that those who had signed the petitions were no longer members.¹ Clearly feeling ran high, and on both sides action was precipitate and drastic.

1797.

As at several preceding Conferences, there was a convention of trustees at this, which assembled at Leeds. These delegates represented the three different parties before referred to. Kilham was appointed to attend their Convention²; but he waived his right and was willing to be left out of account if only peace and scriptural liberty were secured. Negotiations were conducted between the Convention and the Conference, some concessions were added to

¹ *New Meth. Mag.* 1814, p. 399.

² *Dict. of Nat. Biography, in loc.*, infers that Kilham was appointed a lay delegate to Conference and did not attend. No such appointment was then possible; moreover Kilham applied by letter to be present, as appointed, at the Convention, but was refused admission (*Methodist Monitor*, vol. ii. 357).

the Plan of Pacification, and the majority of the trustees professed themselves satisfied. Not so all; nor were the people's delegates who had assembled in Ebenezer Chapel content. These asked the Conference for the reforms for which Kilham had contended, saying that all their propositions 'appeared to be founded on the Scriptures and in every respect reasonable and just.' When the Conference of preachers rejected the proposed admission of lay representatives into District Meeting and Conference, the delegates suggested that these should meet apart from the preachers and that no new law be passed without their concurrence. This also was rejected. A copy of the Plan of Pacification with the additions thereto was the answer of Conference. These gave to the leaders the veto upon the admission or expulsion of members and upon the acceptance of society officers, and allowed a circuit to postpone for one year obedience to a new law made by the Conference of preachers; but they left the right of all nominations with the preacher, forbade any meetings without his presence, and failed to unite duly appointed representatives with the preachers in the church courts, or to recognize the members of the church as the ultimate source of authority.

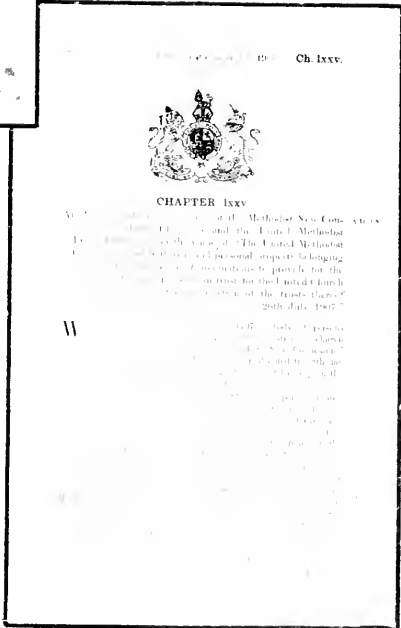
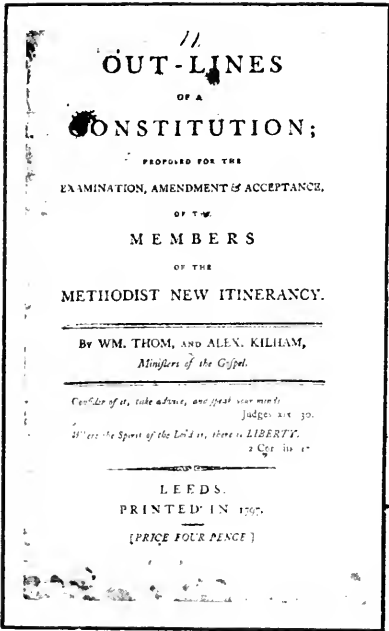
Although these reforms were probably as advanced as the leaders and the majority of Methodists could then accept, the ultimatum left the 'delegates of the people' and their circuits no alternative but separation from the church of their fathers which they so dearly loved. They believed that the legalized brotherly co-operation of preachers and people was necessary in order to secure permanent peace. Subsequent controversies and developments illustrate and justify their opinion. On the day of the answer by Conference, August 9, three of the preachers who were prepared to follow their professions by their acts—William Thom, Stephen Eversfield, and Alexander Cummin—met with Kilham and the delegates, and in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, formed 'The New Itinerancy,' the Methodist New Connexion. Of this, the first of its Conferences, Thom was elected President, and Kilham as Secretary. In the centres

METHODIST
NEW CON-
NEXION
FOUNDED.

already named and in Nottingham, Macclesfield, Alnwick, Oldham, and other towns the people consistently came forth, in all about five thousand. When their representatives met at Huddersfield to plan the preachers, they were reported as Jacobites, and soldiers surrounded the house in which they gathered. The adherents were grouped in wide circuits, as 'Manchester, Stockport, Macclesfield, etc.' Several local preachers rendered exceptional service in this trying time. Owing to the fewness of the workers they often preached four times and walked fifty miles in a week. One such was Christopher Heaps, of Leeds. His home was the resting-place of Kilham, amid his incessant journeyings in these stormy months, and the pleasant rendezvous of the friends of reform. As his father had protected Wesley, so Heaps heartened Kilham. Heaps desired to unite the Presbyterian polity with the Arminian doctrines of Methodism, and with its itinerancy. He and those who observed the Lord's Supper at the separate room, Bethel, were called Sacramentarians, and Tom-Paine Methodists, and were maltreated in the streets.

Second
Conference.

The second Conference, held in Sheffield at Whitsuntide, 1798, was composed of fifteen preachers with seventeen lay delegates from ten circuits. It adopted a Constitution which had been prepared and submitted to the circuits by Kilham and Thom. Kilham was not to render much more service to the young community. His labours had been abundant and successful. While stationed at Sheffield that year his ministry was indeed powerful, and the crowds which thronged to hear—as many as fifteen hundred persons on a week-day—could not be accommodated. Here too he showed himself an early friend to the Sunday-school movement. Naturally his presence was desired in every part of the field. His animation, disinterestedness, and faith in his principles inspired all. Stationed in Nottingham by the Conference of 1798, he journeyed thence on horseback in November to Wales. Already exhausted by his extraordinary labours, the wild weather disabled him. Nothing, however, could abate his zeal or lessen his delight in service.



THE CONSTITUTION OF THE METHODIST NEW CONNECTION, 1797.

THE ACT OF PARLIAMENT AUTHOURISING THE METHODIST UNION OF 1907.

By December he was busy again at his work. He was now prostrated by hemorrhage of the lungs, induced by violent cold. In much pain, he was rapturously conscious of the divine presence and approval, and wished only that his work as reformer had been done more faithfully. He died December 12, 1798, and was interred at Hockley Chapel, Nottingham. Elogy and eulogy were poured forth upon the name and work of the intrepid young preacher and reformer, who, dying so early—he was but thirty-six—had accomplished so much of permanent worth and had deeply attached many to himself. 1798.

Kilham's work as reformer had been allowed to obscure his efforts as an evangelist. This was his first and last and most beloved labour.¹ His passion for souls and his appeals in sermon and letter recall those of Baxter. His deathbed utterance was characteristic: 'Tell all the world that Jesus is precious.' None doubted his piety. Bramwell said that 'he had few equals, and has left no superior as an honest, straightforward man.' When preparing some of his pamphlets he solemnly dedicated them to God, and he felt himself dependent upon prayer. He was transparently honest and ingenuous, and relied upon the same qualities in others. While a brave, sanguine soldier, he lacked the caution and discrimination essential to a general. He was a miser of his moments, and, for his opportunities, equalled Wesley in his constant reading, notetaking, and writing. Often four or five hours' sleep a night were made to suffice, and this when he preached seven or eight times a week. There is a vigorous pulse in his writing; his style is terse and lucid, bright with humour, and sometimes pointed with satire. His many manuscripts have few corrections upon them, although he often wrote while conversing with those about him. That he grasped regulative principles none will deny. Simpson, vicar of Macclesfield, the gifted author of *A Plea for Religion*, heard Kilham's address there, and declared, 'No man in

Kilham's
work and
character.

¹ *Vide* the large number of his unpublished sermons; also *A Son of Issachar: A Story of the Times of Wesley and Kilham* (1897), by the present writer.

England can overturn his reasoning on church government.' Like many reformers, he was in advance of his time. His youthfulness was urged as a disqualification, as had been the case with the Wesleys and their reforming coadjutors when commencing their work. In person Kilham was above the middle height. He was twice married. Wesley permitted his marriage to Miss Grey, of Pickering, while he was in the midst of his probation, as this lady was able and willing to provide for herself. His second marriage was to Miss Hannah Spurr, of Sheffield. She survived him, and was distinguished as the foundress of schools for poor children in Great Britain and Ireland, and as one of the earliest lady missionaries to Sierra Leone.

Thom.

Bereft of Kilham, the young struggling church owed much to his faithful complementary coadjutor Thom (1751—1811). In his limited sphere, he was the Melancthon, as Kilham was the Luther, of reformed Methodism. Thom was born in Aberdeen, was well educated, trained in the tenets of the Scots Church, and became an apt classical, mathematical, and Biblical scholar. Wesley appointed him a member of the Legal Conference, corresponded with him familiarly, and published his grave, impressive likeness in the *Arminian Magazine*. These were singular marks of approval for a junior preacher. Brackenbury was converted while Thom laboured in the Grimsby Circuit, and assisted him there. Under Thom's discourses sometimes 'men dropt down as if dead, slain by the sword of the Spirit.' Forbidden to give the ordinance in the Leeds chapels before the division, he did so in Bethel, a separate building used by the Methodists there. His letter of resignation to the Conference indicates his sincerity, courage, and noble tolerance :

I am determined neither to make the pulpit nor the press the vehicle of abuse ; but if I should be called upon to speak to the point in controversy among us, I shall press into the service of the cause arguments drawn from Scripture and the primitive customs of the Church of Christ.

At the division Thom was superintendent of Halifax, then

the fourth country Methodist circuit in importance and numbers. In the new Connexion he served as Book-Steward (1803—11) with a life seat in Conference, of which he was six times President. He fervently declared at the end of his life that the steps of separation from the Wesleyan Methodists were good steps. Throughout the Connexion Thom was deferred to as a father. His constructive statesmanship equipped it with the necessary departments and funds; his calm, steady character consolidated its fellowship; his discourses, addressed rather to the understanding than to the emotions, his orderliness and culture, laid the lines of development which the Connexion never left. For a century afterwards its ministry more frequently resembled that of Thom than the burning evangelism of Kilham.

The foremost lay leaders of this period were Hall and Heginbottom. Robert Hall (1754—1827) was a personal friend of Wesley and a distinguished Methodist for fifty years. His chemical researches improved the process of bleaching lace, and he was so beloved personally that Ned Ludd promised that his works should not be attacked. He introduced Kilham to the Nottingham reformers (1796), and devoted wealth and literary gifts to enforce his principles and defend his character. With the famous blind preacher, John Grundell, he also edited Kilham's *Life*, and he composed the felicitous epitaph upon his memorial. He was the first lay secretary of the new Conference. Samuel Heginbottom (1756—1829) of Ashton-under-Lyne, was the economist of the new community. Suffering disablement through an accident while riding, he planned the Beneficent Fund for assisting disabled and aged ministers and their widows and orphans. He also secured the establishment of the Paternal Fund for the support and education of preachers' children. A wise counsellor and generous friend, sometimes his caustic wit stung the disloyal or such as failed to appreciate the importance of sound connexional finance and administration.

Notwithstanding extraordinary difficulties and privations, which recalled those of the earlier days of Methodism, the

Lay leaders.

Ministers
and laymen.

records of this period frequently express the delight of the churches in their practice of the 'principles of gospel liberty' and their gratitude to the 'faithful few who safely steered our little vessel with its precious treasure into its desired haven.' Already there were seen the mutual respect, brotherly regard, and co-operation of minister and layman, and the family feeling which in a unique degree were characteristic of this church. The ministry had a recognized status. A probation of four years was passed. The Conference of 1801 publicly received ministers who had travelled as probationers. In 1808 it was enacted that at the close of probation the preacher should attend Conference that he might be formally received into full connexion. The title 'Reverend' was commonly worn by the ministers in 1820.

Circuits,
allowances,
services.

Ministration to the churches was difficult. They were scattered over wide areas, and preachers were few. The Leeds Circuit was fifty miles in extent. The young preacher at Hull might obtain relief only by exchanging with his brother at Nottingham. These were 'travelling' preachers indeed. Their sustentation was meagre. Few would say, 'Put me in the priest's office that I may eat a piece of bread.' The first preachers had £3 per quarter and board allowance. At Hanley (1805-7) this was 4s. a week. A married preacher was allowed the same quarterage, without allowance for his wife. In 1802 it was increased to £4 4s. per quarter, and board to 12s. per week. Unmarried preachers often found ten shillings their total weekly income. In 1813 allowances were increased. Married preachers at Ashton in 1835 received a total quarterly sum of £21 9s. 6d.¹ Allowances were then made for the support of a family. Amounts paid for coals, candles, servant's wages, sickness, etc., varied; as did the preachers' houses provided by the circuits. Simeon Woodhouse told² of three families, those of two married preachers and the chapel-keeper, living under a chapel. Small wonder that under the early conditions many

¹ *History of M.N.C. Barnsley Circuit*, p. 8. *M.N.C. Mag.* 1907, p. 488. See also *Minutes and Rules*.

² *M.N.C. Mag.* 1850, p. 414.

preachers soon ceased from 'travelling' or died in the work. Of eighty-four preachers admitted in the first seventeen years, almost half the number resigned after an average service of six years. Among those who desisted was Richard Watson,¹ happily to resume his illustrious labours in the parent church. The Methodist New Connexion accepted him while in obscurity and sorrow, afforded him an opportunity of developing his remarkable powers (1803-11), and thrice elected him secretary of the Conference. Some of his noblest discourses were preached while he was in the Connexion, and he vigorously defended its principles during the same period.

A visitor to the services of the Connexion would have been unable to distinguish them from those of the older community. Worship had the same simplicity, homeliness, and lengthiness. Not until the middle of the century was a fourth hymn allowed in a service. A promising young preacher must discourse for an hour. Shuttleworth (1811-1869) often preached for two hours. The first Conference authorized an issue of Wesley's hymns, with the significant addition of sacramental and festival hymns; also Wesley's sermons in penny numbers. Kilham's *Methodist Monitor* gave place to the *Methodist Magazine* (1798). Thomas Hannam, an enthusiastic bookman at Leeds, edited the first four volumes. The same means of grace and officers were appointed as in the older fellowship. The first class-ticket is dated 'September 1797,' and bears a serial letter 'A,' and a suggestive text (1 Pet. iii. 13). To the question 'Who are considered members?' the Conference answered, 'Only those who meet in class.'

Methodist
character of
the new
church.

The Connexion had twice as many churches or societies as it had suitable buildings for their use, and it was disturbed by litigation. This was necessary to secure several buildings which the majority of their trustees and worshippers wished to carry with them into the new church. Sometimes to avoid conflict buildings were quietly surrendered. At Halifax the six or seven seceders took a small room in

¹ *Vide supra*, p. 398.

Northgate. It is now represented by eighteen sanctuaries in the three circuits of that town. At Hanley William Smith opened his house, and began with the Ridgways to lay broad and deep the foundation of influential circuits.

A pioneer church.

Thus the Connexion was founded and extended. By 1814 it numbered 8,292 members in 207 churches, with 44 ministers, 229 local preachers, and 101 chapels. Its progress had been lessened by the too early death of Kilham, and sometimes hindered by discontented idealists and adventurers. Moreover, in a reactionary age, it had dared to trust the people, when the distrustful and the timid pointed to the spoliation of fair France, and hated reform, however beneficent. The Connexion had often to fight for its life, and opprobrious epithets as Jacobin, Paineite, Leveller, and Revolutionary, were fixed upon those who only hated despotism in all its forms and degrees. History shows, however, that not seldom has a small body served as pioneer and path-finder for larger ones. Greece which gave the world the poetic and plastic arts, and Palestine with its divine evangel, were among the smallest of lands and peoples; but they opened kingdoms of truth and beauty to all nations and peoples and tongues. And the Methodist New Connexion opened a path upon which later Methodist leaders and reformers walked; close by the side of which reunited Methodist churches have chosen their way; and, with the passing of the years, the course of the noble mother of all draws near and yet more near to a common meeting-place for all.

III

1815—1826

THE RISE OF
THE BIBLE
CHRISTIAN
METHODISTS.

Excepting only Middlesex, no county has contributed so many eminent men to the making of England as Devon. In social and religious development, however, it was fifty years behind the general condition of the country at the beginning of the last century. The people were grossly superstitious, and labourers seemed little better than serfs.

Wages had improved but little upon the five or six shillings a week paid all the year round during the eighteenth century, and stood at a shilling a day, while in 1800 wheat was 113s. a quarter, and the quarter loaf 1s. 10d. Green's description of the clergy at the rise of Methodism was still true there: 'With almost a single exception they were the idlest and most lifeless in the world.' One of them being complimented upon his sermon said, 'I have mine from a very good hand.' Sport was their chief concern. Sydney Smith's biting names for the church orders as Nimrods, ramrods, and fishing-rods, instead of bishops, priests and deacons, were often accurate. One clergyman was hailed as the best boxer, another as the best hunter in the district. Three hard-drinking clerics in succession had charge of one parish. The darkest pages in O'Bryan's journal tell, with lamentings, of the gross immorality of some clergy; and too often it was 'as the priest, so the people.' Howe had left his beloved people at Torrington 'all in tears,' when he led a godly band of clergy who suffered ejection for conscience' sake in 1662; but Dissent had almost disappeared in areas of forty, and even seventy miles. The county had been comparatively neglected by the Methodists. Almost twice the size of Cornwall in area and population, Devon had but thirty-two chapels in 1812, whereas Cornwall had one hundred and twenty-two.

Devon, a
needy
sphere.

O'Bryan saw these things, and was 'the honoured instrument God employed in founding the Bible Christian (Methodist) Connexion.'¹ His way was prepared by the labours of Daniel Evans, curate of Shebbear Church, north of Dartmoor, Devon, and those of Cradock Glascott of Hatherleigh, one of Lady Huntingdon's itinerants, who were in sharp contrast with the clergy in general. Evans had been quickened in the great revival which swept over Cornwall and the West of England in 1814.

William O'Bryan, whose family name was also given as Bryan and Bryant, cherished the tradition of descent from

¹ See his 'Rise and Progress of the Connexion of People called Arminian Bible Christians,' in *The Arminian Magazine*, 1823 et seq.

one of three brothers who became officers under Cromwell in Ireland, and, following him to England, settled in Cornwall. William and Thomasine O'Bryan lived at Gunwen Farm, Luxulyan, where their son William was born, February 6, 1778. His father owned several farms and considerable interest in tin mines, and lived in affluence. His early feats as wrestler or pedestrian, walking fifty miles a day, were rivalled by those of the son. O'Bryan's parents were Methodists, his mother being most devout. His grandfather was a Quaker, and it is easy to trace this strain in O'Bryan and his followers. During a visit to the neighbourhood in O'Bryan's boyhood, Wesley laid his hand upon the boy's head and offered the prayer, at once a prophecy and an inspiration, 'May he be a blessing to hundreds and to thousands!' Several narrow escapes from death also impressed him with the belief that he was a dedicated spirit. In 1795, he says, 'The Lord spoke peace to my soul, revealing Himself as my prophet, priest, and king.' Educated, and with ample leisure, O'Bryan had given time to painting, engraving, and the study of theology and history. The French Revolution gave vivid interest to the latter. He was sent to learn the business of a draper and mercer. On attaining his majority he was appointed churchwarden and overseer of the poor.

Upon his conversion he had successfully exhorted his neighbours to the same choice, and his peace of mind fluctuated as he continued or neglected this work. Often he 'longed for the whole world, if possible, to be gathered together that he might rush in among them' and save them. He first spoke publicly in 1801. He burned with holy ardour. The downs round Bodmin echoed his vehement prayers as he returned from his work as lay preacher. Days and nights of fasting and prayer raised fears for his health, while his incessant visitation of the people led the clergyman to think him deranged. The perusal of the book, *A Drop of Honey from the Rock Christ*, and the hearing of a sermon by Dr. Coke at Bodmin (1805), with his apt use of its illustrative text on the sealing of the Spirit, brought O'Bryan relief from agonies of mind again incurred by his lessened labours as an

evangelist. Recovery from sickness finally secured him for this work to which he was clearly called (1808). He assisted the Methodist preachers and opened preaching-places in eight parishes on the north coast of Cornwall, among them being Newquay (1809). There a piece of timber washed in by the sea was retained by the people towards a chapel which was soon erected ; and, failing connexional help, O'Bryan begged its cost. He extended his work in places where there were no Methodists or Dissenters, as at Mawgan, where he was told, 'It is time for some Christian to come.' His method was to preach on three occasions and then form a class-meeting. The Cornwall Wesleyan Methodist District Meeting (1810) did not accept him as an itinerant, as he had a family, although he offered guarantees for its support. So he continued his wide itinerations, declining to be restricted to one circuit and its plan when needy places called him. These irregularities led to his expulsion in the same year from among the Methodists, and this without trial at a Leaders' Meeting, although a member of twenty years' standing. By the friendship of James Odgers, the superintendent of the Bodmin Circuit, he was induced to rejoin the Methodists (1814), and the societies he had established were attached to their circuits. He now gave up other employment, and finding that twenty parishes in North Devon were destitute of Methodist preaching, he began missionary labours among them, soliciting the gifts of the pious to support him as his means were exhausted. His home was now at St. Blazey, and here his class-ticket was withheld, and he was regarded as again excluded from the society for non-attendance at the class for three weeks. O'Bryan's references to these disciplinary acts are exact and repeated. Questions concerning the necessity for them and the measure of authority behind them are not easily answered.¹ Martinets often make short work of such fervid irregulars as O'Bryan.

Preaches as
a Methodist
in neglected
places.

Expelled.

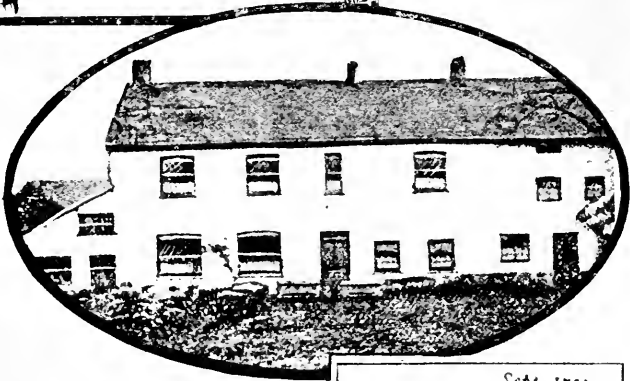
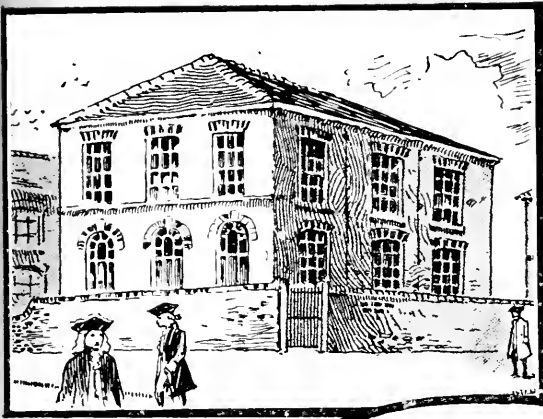
¹ *Vide The Rules of Society ; or, a Guide to Conduct, for those who desire to be Arminian Bible Christians ; with a Preface, stating the causes of the separation between William O'Bryan and the People called Methodists.* Preface by O'Bryan (Launceston, 1818).

Surely a pathetic figure his, as he starts upon his missionary tours. He has provided for his family, and has the approving love of his gifted and devoted wife ; but he feels the thousand natural heartbreaks of husband and father as he fares forth not knowing whither, nor for how long. His wife and children bear him company a little way. Then he forces himself from them, setting his face steadfastly, heartened by past success, 'goaded on by imperious duty,' and hearing sadder cries than those of his weeping child : 'That was no time to parley, nor did I dare look back, before I knew that I was out of the hearing of my babes and wife.'

His mis-
sionary
tours.

An attempt to secure his services for the Stratton Wesleyan Mission failed, as the superintendent minister declined to preach where O'Bryan did, and the latter was unwilling to submit to comparative silence. A complete separation from the Wesleyan Methodists, whom he loved as his own soul, seemed inevitable. He says he had spent the former 'six years in the school of experience.' Such a vigorous and adventurous worker needed the confidence and elasticity of later times. If the labours of these years were largely absorbed by the Wesleyan Methodists and lessened the number of those who gathered round him afterwards, they testify to his devotion and his unwillingness to promote division. The community soon to be formed was not a secession from Methodism. It was composed of such as found the services of the Establishment insufficient, and of the unattached, the neglected, and wicked. O'Bryan courteously approached the clergy before preaching in their parishes, and like Wesley declared, 'I wish my hearers to attend the Establishment, and do enforce on them the practice of her doctrines.'

O'Bryan now planned out his work in North Devon in eighteen places which he served fortnightly. Dartmoor Prison shared in his labours. James Thorne met him at Cookbury, and gave him the invitation to Shebbear out of which so much was to grow. Consistently with his rule not to preach where the gospel was already proclaimed, he



The
United Methodist Church.
 FOUNDED 1907.
 DECEMBER QUARTER, 1907.
Clara W. S. Eayrs
 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
 for brethren to dwell together in unity!
 —Psalm cxxxviii. 1.
E.C.

Sept. 1797.

And who is he that
 will harm you, if ye be
 followers of that which
 is good?
 I PETER, III. 13.
 A
Maria Hoff

EBENEZER CHAPEL, LEEDS, where the first M.N.C. Conference was held, 1797.

LAKE FARM HOUSE, SHEPPAR, DEAN, where the Bible Christian Society was formed, 1815.

FIRST CLASS-TICKET OF THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, 1907.

FIRST CLASS-TICKET OF THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION, 1797.

hesitated, as Evans was there. John Thorne, another brother of the same important family, of Lake Farm, Shebbear, begged him to come, and he consented. The results became historic. On that Monday evening, October 9, 1815, after repeated requests, he enrolled twenty-two members. This was the first class formed since his resolve to separate. Its members were church-goers, and no services were held in church hours. It was not until the advent of a clergyman, whose sermon the elder Thornes declared 'had no Christ in't,' that it was decided to build a chapel. This society was the nucleus of the Bible Christian denomination. Shebbear became its Mecca.

The first separate society formed, 1815.

James Thorne (1795—1872), who preached on the cornerstone of this first chapel (1817), honoured O'Bryan as the founder of the new community ; he was himself its master-builder. During fifty years of service he devoted to it his vigorous intellect so diligently disciplined, his finances, his sober eloquence and administrative gifts ; above all, his deep piety. He was the second son and third child of John and Mary Thorne, was piously trained, and a confirmed member of, and school-teacher in, the Established Church. Asking no questions as to remuneration, he began to itinerate in the new church (1816), called thereto by O'Bryan, with the approval of the local preachers and members. Praise wounded him, he said, and his humility and diffidence almost made him give up preaching. For long he lacked the sense of acceptance with God, and only preached in the hope that, if doomed to hell himself, he might save others therefrom. Assurance was given with the long-sought blessing of sanctification. His first Christmas Day in the work began at 4 a.m., and was filled by preaching, testifying, and praying with penitents, with only two hours' intermission for sleep until seven the following morning. Frequently he preached five times a day, often thrice before breakfast, or walked forty miles and then preached. Brutal opposition was bravely borne, and magisterial neglect or injustice was dismissed with the quaint remark, ' Poor " Justice " was gone and only " Esquire " remained.' With William Lyle he

Thorne.

founded the Kent mission (1820), where in a year almost four hundred members were enrolled. Triumphs of grace were won among the profligate and outcast.

The work
spreads.

At the first Quarterly Meeting of the new denomination, held January 1, 1816, at the house of O'Bryan, who had removed to Holsworthy, 237 members were reported; fifteen months later they numbered 1,112. The significant comment is added, 'Converts were more plentiful with us than money.' But who would wonder or complain when, as at Week St. Mary, bands of children gathered, uncalled and secretly, in class-meetings; or as at Langdon, youths met together, unprompted, for worship in the fields? Sometimes the sound of their prayer and song floated out on the still night air across far-stretching fields and attracted wayfarers from market or tavern. Soon the cries of penitents rose to the listening heavens, and faith caught echoes of their joy mingled with that of the workers on earth over sinners repenting. Opposition melted before such ardour. With other farmers at Milton Damerel, Hatton Rattenbury joined the parson in a vestry-meeting there, to prevent the coming of O'Bryan. Meanwhile, Mrs. Rattenbury, who was his first convert in Devon, was praying that their counsels might be overruled. In the midst of them, Rattenbury leapt up and said, 'If no one else will take him in, I will.' O'Bryan came; a church was formed; Rattenbury became the first circuit steward, and his home a centre of wide evangelistic effort. In 1817 a small community of devoted Methodists at Truro and the West of Cornwall, followers of Mr. Boyle, who some time before had seceded from the Wesleyan Methodists, united with the new community; but aggression, not accretion, was its note. Enthusiasm possessed its leaders and members like that of St. Francis of Assisi, and a mystic love of poverty and suffering which rivalled his. Many waters could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. No task to which they were driven by the Spirit made them afraid. Within a few years of their founding in Devon, they were ranging over the West of England, the Isle of Wight, Kent, and Northumberland. William Mason

Heroic
labours

was overcoming extraordinary manifestations of the powers of darkness and, notwithstanding brutal ill-treatment, claimed Bristol and Monmouthshire for Christ. By 1822 Catherine Reed and Ann Cory were wooing crowds of tired wanderers in London to their true resting-place; and O'Bryan's daughter Mary, though but young, was wondrously endued and like a mother in Israel was tending blighted and broken-hearted women of the city, where, she declared, missionaries were wanted as much as in the interior of Africa. Henry Freeman, flung into Horsemonger Gaol for fourteen days for preaching in the open air, made the prison a temple of song and a parish for service, and stretched out his hands to the crowds within and outside the palisades of its yard as if he would lift them all to the Saviour.

Much of the pioneer work was done by women. From the first women were recognized as equal workers with their brothers in Christ. O'Bryan's sermon on this subject is an almost irresistible argument from Scripture, reason, history, and experience. His wife was the first of a goodly company of female preachers whose devotion exceeded, if possible, that of their brethren. It was not intended at first that any women should itinerate; but their holy daring, so seemly and attractive, most of all their success in bringing all classes to decision, secured them this freedom. Thorne reminded a clergyman who objected to them that he acknowledged a woman as the head of his church. By 1819 there were thirty travelling preachers, sixteen men and fourteen women; and in 1823 one hundred women were serving as preachers, local or itinerant. Three of them must be named.

Women as
pioneers.

Johanna Brooks Neale, expelled for testifying in Morwenstow parish church, preached outside it with much power. With O'Bryan she conducted a revival in 1823 which added hundreds to the churches and eight preachers to the itinerancy. Even more remarkable was the Ringsash revival, when the claims of inquirers necessitated services day and night. Mary Toms exercised a ministry so gracious, and possessed such power in prayer, that her coming was hailed

by the needy of body and soul. Impressions of persons and places who needed her were often found upon acquaintance to be exactly accurate. Of these was the Isle of Wight, which she was determined to evangelize, 'if she had to walk every step of the way over burning coals and beg her bread from door to door.' Thwarted by other appointments, she reached it in 1823, and spent herself in laying broad and deep foundations for her church there. Mary Ann Werrey did the like for the Scilly Isles (1821) and Guernsey (1823). In the former, nine months' work, during which she often preached ten times a week, secured 141 class-meeting members and the erection of a chapel. Curiosity, hate, and fear met her at Guernsey; but she wrote: 'Methinks I hear the shouts of victory over the mountains of prejudice before the battle begins.' Her faith was greatly honoured, as it was in Jersey, where her companion was O'Bryan's daughter Mary, 'the Maiden Preacher,' who could preach in French and English. Miss Werrey believed herself called to Northumberland, where she established a mission. Then, trudging from town to town with her message, though homeless, hungry, and ill, she disappeared—how or where none knew. But her last record was 'The Lord is mine and I am His.'

Methodist
doctrines,
ordinances,
and
experiences.

The doctrines taught in this new church were strictly Methodist. The experience of sanctification was sought and obtained as definitely as that of conversion. The ordinances were observed, including the baptism of infants. The meaning of spiritual emotion was emphasized. O'Bryan's words at a crisis in his life were 'I knew—I felt. To feel is to know.' Like Wesley, he believed himself the subject of particular providences in the smallest things, and was vividly conscious of the opposition of the powers of evil. The Celtic element of the West must be remembered. Bible Christians were greatly affected by dreams, mysterious voices, signs and tokens; and often to high moral ends. The extraordinary physical phenomena of early Methodism sometimes reappeared here. Under the preaching, even at sight of the preacher, men and women,

young or old, behaved as if under demoniacal possession. Relief was obtained as they yielded themselves to the claims of Christ.

Persecution of the Methodists had generally subsided; but the passionate earnestness of these provoked a recrudescence of it. Where the magistrates did not aid and abet their persecutors, they generally declined to protect them from assault. Thorne had good cause to ask, 'O England, is this thy liberty of conscience.' Parish relief was sometimes conditioned upon non-attendance at their services. 'Starve you we will,' said a clerical guardian to Widow Lock, 'unless you forsake these meetings.'

Like the earlier Methodists, these had their name found for them. 'Bryanites' was the simplest. O'Bryan speaks of Methodism and Bibleism. He heard that in the West of Cornwall 'we were called by some "Shining Lights," and by others "Free Willers," and in Devonshire "Bible Christians."' The last contrasted those who in church used Bible and Prayer Book and these who on village green, in farm shed, and everywhere used only or chiefly one book and appealed to it for everything. 'That it might be better known who we were,' O'Bryan says he added a word, and his followers were known as Arminian Bible Christians. The first name was dropped in 1828, and Methodist added later. Perhaps it has not been sufficiently recognized that the Society of Friends had considerable influence upon their early development. They were sometimes called Quaker Methodists. In friendly hospitality, financial assistance, and active co-operation the Friends were often with them. The characteristic simplicity of early Methodism was thus reinforced among them, and appeared in the archaic terms, sober dress, dislike of human titles, dependence upon the inner light, and in the opportunity of service enjoyed by godly women.

All the work was of a missionary character, but a society for such work was established (1821). The first year's income was £92. With this humble beginning, by 1865 the society had gathered £70,000, and Thorne declared that

Names
given and
used.

there was good ground for believing that for every pound given a soul had been saved. Much privation was endured, alike by subscribers and agents, that the work might go forward. The sum allowed for two men and three women as missionaries in London in 1823 was £9 10s. per quarter for all five of them, and board and lodgings £8 12s. 6*d.*, a total of £18 2s. 6*d.* The receipts were £14.

First Con-
ference,
1819

The first Conference was held on August 17, 1819, at Baddash, near Launceston. Twelve itinerant brethren attended. O'Bryan presided, and Thorne was chosen secretary. There were eight chapels, 2,389 members, and the preachers were appointed to twelve stations. Doctrines were discussed and settled, female itinerancy was approved, and a deed for securing chapels to the Connexion was adopted. In the societies and circuits there were the usual Methodist officers, under other names. The Leaders' Meeting was called the Elders' Meeting; the circuits were in charge of pastors, the title 'superintendent' being reserved for the chairman of a district. District Meetings were established in 1824, and lay representatives from them attended the Annual Conference with the preachers. The polity developed along Presbyterian lines, and to these the body adhered faithfully at some cost. Like Wesley, O'Bryan claimed paternal authority. He objected to the lay vote in the Conference, and after admitting that, claimed that his single vote was to decide any case though the whole Conference held an opposite view upon it. This involved his separation from the Conference in 1829. Only two of the eighty-eight itinerant preachers, with several hundred members out of a membership of 7,599, followed him. Six years later a reunion was effected. O'Bryan left for New York. He formed a circuit at Bethany, preached with great power and withstood heretical teachers, and extended Methodism in Canada and in several States of the Union. On his frequent visits to England he preached in the churches of the Connexion. His last years were passed in beautiful simplicity and calmness and in full assurance of faith. With strange prevision he closed his

journal and planned out his last hours, and died in 1868 at the patriarchal age of ninety. Samuel Thorne, Thorne's younger brother, took over O'Bryan's publishing liabilities. As printer, publisher, editor of monthlies and newspapers he suffered for, defended, and disseminated the principles of the Connexion. Some of his enterprises were adopted by the Connexion.

Free to formulate a Constitution, the Conference enrolled a deed (1831). By it the annual Conference, composed of the superintendents of districts with ministerial and lay representatives of the same, was constituted the supreme organ of government, and 'in order to prevent priestly domination' every fifth Conference was to be composed of exactly equal numbers of ministers and laymen. District Meetings were composed of the itinerant brethren with a steward, and every fifth year both stewards, from each circuit in the district. Members were to be received as such by ministers, with the approbation of the church-members.

This church thus closely resembled the Methodist New Connexion in its polity. It was one of the earliest complaints against O'Bryan that he 'travels as a preacher upon the plan of the Kilhamites.' Why was another community established? The answer is simple. The cause was lack of intercourse and communication. The Methodist New Connexion had then no Cornish circuits. Devon and Cornwall were then more remote from the Midlands and the North of England than the Shetlands are now from Land's End. The wild doings of the Luddites and Captain Swing in the manufacturing districts stirred scarcely an echo in the West. The world forgetting, by the world forgot, these ardent workers had scarce a thought for anything except the pressing tasks of winning souls to Christ and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord. The accession of George IV., in 1820, seemed to matter little to Billy Bray compared with the fact that three years later he believed himself to be 'a King's son' by adoption into God's family through Jesus Christ.

The Consti-
tution re-
sembled that
of the
M.N.C.

IV

1827—1857

THE UNITED
METHODIST
FREE
CHURCHES.
Connected
protests.

Meanwhile, protests against clerical government and what some regarded as departures from simplicity in worship had been followed by another secession from the parent body. This took the name of the Protestant Methodists. Small at first, the ripples of this controversy disturbed a wide surface. The constitutional problems raised continued unsettled and coalesced with those of 1835 and 1849. These three controversies related to the same principles, arose sequentially, and their results were ultimately gathered into one community—the United Methodist Free Churches. Here began nearly thirty years of warfare in Wesleyan Methodism on matters of church government. On the one side was the Conference, still composed exclusively of preachers, determined to retain its authority inviolate and to exercise it in circuit and church through the superintendent ministers; on the other side was a growing opposition to ministerial absolutism, and a determination that the local centres should possess a large share of self-government, and participate by freely-chosen representatives in the control of the Connexion. We do not propose to recall all the details of those dark and cloudy days. The authorities named above are from a mass of publications which appeared on every aspect of the controversy. It will be well if their heated pages have been perused for the last time. An impartial consideration leaves the impression that protest and reform were necessary, and that some of the means employed on both sides in the conflict, though used sincerely, were unworthy.

THE PRO-
TESTANT
METHO-
DISTS.

The occasion of the formation of the Protestant Methodists (1827) was the erection of an organ in Brunswick Wesleyan Chapel, Leeds. Several trustees, with whom rested the legal right of application for permission, desired its erection, but the great majority of the leaders, members,

and local preachers of the circuit were opposed to it. They feared that an organ would bring with it cold, stately, even popish ceremonial, in place of the hearty free services enjoyed by many Methodists. Wesley had counselled 'Sing no anthems,' and warned all against formality. Organs were found in only three Methodist chapels in his lifetime. Strange as these sentiments appear to us, they were entitled to respect. Violation of them had caused much trouble, and the consent of Conference was required before an organ could be installed. Every application must first be made to the District Meeting, 'and if it obtain their sanction shall then be referred to a committee at the Conference, who shall report their opinion as to the propriety of acceding to the request.' The Leeds application was not sanctioned by the District Meeting; but contrary to the obvious interpretation of the rule, the meeting unwisely explicitly allowed an appeal to Conference for permission to erect the instrument. Conference granted it. This was regarded as a breach of its own regulations, and 'an act of arbitrary and unjustifiable power.' For organizing opposition to this and the like procedure, Matthew Johnson (1796—1864) was suspended from his office of local preacher. Seventy Leeds local preachers made common cause with him, and ceased their labours. The suspension was approved by a Special District Meeting. Its composition was by some deemed illegal: among those present without legal status was Jabez Bunting, now rising to his deserved eminence; and here he maintained his high doctrine of pastoral supremacy. Richard Watson, who had now joined the parent body, stated at Conference its view that the superintendent minister alone must regulate worship: the people had no right to meddle with it. 'The Leeds organ cost £1,000 and one thousand members,' for the latter were expelled or seceded as a result of this controversy. These formed the nucleus of the Protestant Methodists. They held their first service in Ebenezer Methodist New Connexion Chapel, Leeds. What Dr. Benjamin Gregory styles a 'painful and humiliating chapter' in Wesleyan history spread indigna-

Johnson.

1827.

Constitutional questions.

tion and suspicion far beyond Leeds. The South London Wesleyan Circuit approached the Conference. It was—

deeply concerned to find principles avowed and authority exercised under the highest sanction, which if admitted will overturn everything of right or privilege on the part of the laity, and place societies in abject subservience to the Conference and its official agents.

Mr. Robert Eckett, a member of Great Queen Street Society, London, contended in a pamphlet that the Leeds protesters had not been dealt with according to the provisions of 1795-7. Bunting admitted that he was correct in this view. Philip James Wright, then a youth in membership with the Southwark Circuit, withdrew, joined the Methodist New Connexion, entered its ministry (1832) and became a distinguished preacher and exponent of its polity. The growing Sunday-school work was also the occasion of some disagreement. Local initiative and need were not always sufficiently considered. Instruction in secular subjects, writing, etc., on the Lord's Day was sometimes summarily prohibited; with the result that, as at Newchurch (1822) and Hayfield, disruption occurred among the workers (1836).

The Protestant Methodists held an annual assembly until 1836, when, numbering several thousand members, they and their ministers united with the Wesleyan Association. James Sigston, the coadjutor of Johnson, was its President in 1839, and Johnson was four times its secretary. Sigston was a famous schoolmaster and educationist, and the friend and biographer of Bramwell. Johnson wielded a facile pen: witness his *Recollections of Leeds Methodism*. As shown elsewhere, an almost simultaneous agitation for lay rights in the Methodist Church was in progress in the United States.

Proposed
Theological
Institution,
1834.

Much graver were the results of the next controversy. Its occasion was the establishment of a Theological Institution by the Wesleyan Methodist Conference for the training of its young preachers. Those who objected to this soon

passed 'from the Institution to the Constitution,' and protested against the powers held by the preachers and the Conference under it. While desiring able preachers, many devout Methodists feared that young preachers trained together upon one system might lack the variety, originality, and force of the fathers. Probably their sincere though mistaken protest helped to define the institution as for theological rather than classical training. Unhappily a personal question complicated their protest. Bunting was designated President of the Institution (an office never since held by any one), though already senior missionary secretary. Dr. Samuel Warren, the father of the famous novelist, at first favourable to the Institution, now opposed it, believing that the proposed appointments would 'throw additional power into the hands of individuals' towards whom jealousy was felt already. Warren was superintendent of the Manchester Circuit, and there and beyond continued his opposition. For this he was suspended by a special District Meeting. He unwisely sought restitution by a suit in Chancery, which he lost (1835). He was expelled by the Conference of that year, and travelled the country in exposition of some of the reforms he desired. When they were embodied in regulations he was unwilling to accept them. Leaving those who adopted them, he became a clergyman of the Established Church.

Warren.

The constitutional aspect of the matter was that in the judgement of not a few the establishment of such an institution was new legislation. By the Leeds concessions (1797) and the exposition which accompanied them, such was not to be enforced until a year's opportunity had been allowed for the expression of the mind of the Connexion upon it. As in the Leeds organ case, there seemed here a breach by Conference of its own laws. In the course of his legal proceedings Warren had discovered that neither the Plan of Pacification nor its completion, the Leeds Concessions, had been inserted in the official records of the Conference. The oversight was at once remedied; but in the electric atmosphere of the time many easily believed

Constitutional aspects.

that a systematic effort was in progress to withdraw from the laity such liberties as they possessed. Many officers of the four Manchester circuits formed themselves into a Grand Central Association, and agreed that until reforms were granted financial support should be withheld from Connexional funds. A fortnightly journal, *The Watchman's Lantern*, threw light on the work of the Association, and *The Illuminator* on the Conference side. The former was printed at Liverpool, which soon became another storm-centre. There David Rowland, a local preacher, and other class-leaders were expelled for aiding this movement. Of twenty-seven leaders nineteen declared his expulsion null and void and 'anti-Methodistical, unconstitutional, and unjust.' Rowland was afterwards President and thrice a secretary of the Association.

Expulsions.

It was in Rochdale, however, that the demands of the reform party were most clearly stated and their weight and force increased. Eighty-seven trustees and other officers petitioned the Conference (1835) with a summary of grievances, and declared that the sole remedy was the immediate admission of the people to such a share of power as should make their concurrence necessary in all matters of legislation, finance, and discipline. Among the signatories of this important document was John Petrie (1791—1883), a distinguished Methodist and civic leader, the close friend and coadjutor of Cobden and Bright in the Corn Law and Church Rate agitations. Bright was wont to refer to Petrie's life as a guarantee of the reality of religion. He was an early stalwart of the Association and its treasurer sixteen years. At Manchester upwards of a hundred delegates, from forty-seven towns, adopted the principles of the Rochdale petition. They reassembled in Sheffield, where the Wesleyan Conference was held (1835). Weary of waiting for an opportunity to present their views, Petrie and the Rochdale representatives joined the Association delegates. The Conference refused to receive any who sympathized with them. Mr. Robert Eckett, who had been suspended three weeks previously with others in London

The
Rochdale
petition.

for evincing interest in reform, was, however, heard by a Conference committee, as he presented an appeal signed by a hundred trustees and class-leaders there. Such immaterial concessions as the Conference made to these demands were, as even Dr. George Smith admits, too limited or too late. It declared that an offence being proved to the satisfaction of a Leaders' Meeting, the superintendent preacher had the sole right of deciding the sentence to be passed upon the offender, even the extreme penalty of expulsion. This pastoral duty and power was vested in the ministry. The Conference also declared its right to institute any inquiry in any District Meeting as to the conduct of any preacher even though not accused.

The laws
of 1835.

The first Assembly of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, as the protesting association was soon called, was held in Manchester in the following August. Warren was its President and Matthew Johnson Secretary. Eighty-four delegates were present and five itinerant preachers. The constitution was completed a year later at Liverpool. Johnson's legislative abilities were conspicuous. The Association accepted Methodist doctrines, ordinances, and institutions, while it gave independence in circuit and church affairs. Its Assembly, which called out, appointed, and controlled ministers, was composed of representatives freely elected by the circuits from their ministers or laymen; the number sent being in proportion to the membership. Eckett was the advocate of this free election, while some delegates preferred the method of the Methodist New Connexion, which composed its Conference of a minister and layman from each circuit.

WESLEYAN
METHODIST
ASSOCIATION.

Naturally that Connexion had watched this conflict with the deepest interest. By voice and pen its eminent minister Thomas Allin condemned the autocratic features of Wesleyan polity and offered to the new reformers that of his Connexion. Its Conference did the same; but the negotiations failed. Considerable numbers of seceders from the Wesleyan Methodists in Gateshead and Dudley and their districts did, however, join the Methodist New Connexion. 1835-6.

Eckett.

Eckett was the dominant personality in the new denomination. Born at Scarborough in 1797, he removed to London, acquired wealth as a builder, retired from business, and entered the ministry of the Wesleyan Methodist Association for which he had diligently qualified himself (1838). He served it and the United Methodist Free Churches gratuitously until his death. 'The great little man,' as he was often styled, more than filled the vacancy in leadership made by Warren's departure. His *Exposition of the Laws of Conference Methodism* is a cogent argument for liberal principles in church government. He held almost every office of the Association in turn, was thrice President, and served for thirteen years as editor. His versatility, vigour, and ceaseless labour were remarkable. He had much legal knowledge and an advocate's volubility. Ever a fighter, the Methodist Rupert of debate, he spared neither institutions nor men whose principles he disapproved. His fearless, almost fierce advocacy of his opinions secured their acceptance, despite defects of manner, because of his tenacity, sincerity, and large-heartedness. He died suddenly in 1862.

Protestant
and Arminian
Methodists join
the Association,
1836-7.

The Association grew at first by accretion. About eight thousand members seceded or were expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist societies. The Protestant Methodists, and the Independent Methodists of Scarborough with their minister Matthew Baxter, united with the Association in 1836; as did the Arminian Methodist Connexion, with its leader, Henry Breeden, and six other ministers, in the next year. The latter body had been formed by some six hundred members and four local preachers who had withdrawn or had been expelled from the Wesleyan Methodist Society in Derby (1831). They accorded a large measure of ability to the human will in the work of salvation, were ardent revivalists and favoured the employment of female evangelists. Among those who seceded and laboured for a while as an Arminian Methodist was Elizabeth Evans, a typical Methodist woman and worker. She bowed all types and classes around her in loving gratitude for her gospel ministries and tactful, tender love, as she does under

the name of Dinah Morris in *Adam Bede*, where she has been so movingly portrayed by her niece, George Eliot. Samuel Sellars, a quaint and zealous minister, was another worker thus brought to the Association. In 1838 several Wesleyan churches in Jamaica united with it.

By the year 1839 the Association numbered 28,000 members, and had 600 chapels. This being the Centenary year of Methodism, the young church claimed its inheritance in the past and expressed its gratitude in a Thank-offering Fund for the help of its Home and Foreign Missions, Sunday Schools, and superannuated ministers and aged and needy local preachers. The next year it embodied its polity in a Foundation Deed. This contained a provision for any desired alterations at decennial periods, except in doctrines and fundamental principles. The Association continued its witness and work until 1857, when by its union with the Wesleyan Reformers the body known as the United Methodist Free Churches was formed.

As readers of the Book of Judges with its wars and fightings come next upon the pastoral idyll of Ruth, or the wayfarer from the battles of Charles I. and his Parliament might come upon the hallowed calm and industry of Little Gidding, so we note that, undisturbed by the controversies just chronicled, the Bible Christians were busy gathering in the fruits of a revival (1839) which added two thousand to their membership, and increased it by one-fifth. Three years later there was a similar harvest, making the membership 14,599. The colonial missions by which this church was so greatly to glorify God and serve English-speaking peoples in Canada and Australasia were also commenced in this period.

William Reed (1800—1858) was now in the zenith of his influential ministry. He was of a notable family of land-owners of Holwell, North Devon, and was at first styled the Bryanite boy-preacher. Two brothers and a sister also entered the ministry. In Shebbear Circuit four hundred members were added during two years of his labour. His

PROGRESS
OF OTHER
SECTIONS.

Bible
Christians.

spiritual experience was 'like the tide when it comes in quite smooth,' and he had wondrous power in prayer. He was the ablest preacher in the Connexion. When descanting upon the Atonement and other great themes his eloquence recalled that of Robert Hall, and seemed almost irresistible. He was missionary secretary nine years, and four times President of Conference, though hours of pleading with him were necessary on the first occasion to overcome his diffidence. He said, 'It is better to have a shower of stones and dirt than a volley of praise.' As notable, and typical of several preachers in the Connexion was the eccentric evangelist William Metherall Bailey (1795—1873). Born at Jacobstow, Cornwall, he declined a university training and the ministry of the Establishment, in order to enter that of this church. His outward reward was much persecution. On one occasion he was stoned for two miles by two hundred men and boys, and at Crondall forty men formed a club to drive him away. His extraordinary success and long residence in the Isle of Wight helped to make his community 'the established church' there. Evangelical Arminianism has had few more earnest exponents. His motto, 'All for Christ, and Christ for all,' was his doctrine and ethic. Interrogation and application with witty allusions like those of Rowland Hill arrested and instructed his hearers. When taunted with his poverty he counted souls his hire and declared that God paid him 'three hundred a year.'

Their
privations.

All this service was rendered upon allowances which involved continuous sacrifice and privation. The payments had been increased, but in 1839 probationary preachers received only £10 yearly; female preachers, £7 each, with board and lodging; married preachers had £30, with a furnished house and an allowance for children. Their work lay among small towns and scattered villages; few populous and fewer wealthy centres were possessed by them. The results are therefore the more significant, while the service was truly heroic. Notwithstanding their meagre salaries, the preachers led the way in financial enterprises,

and when connexional deficits arose they assessed themselves to meet them. In 1836 such a special gift averaged £6. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer 'for the sake of the Name.' The ablest were often the readiest. Matthew Robins left a delightful home to enter the ministry in 1831, itinerated upon £35 a year, and merrily recounted that his round of the Devonport Circuit occupied six weeks, during which his fare every day was fish and potatoes. Evangelical fervour was united in him with exceptional gifts of administration and charm of manner. He was four times President.

Temperance work was regarded as only second in importance to evangelistic. Thorne became a pledged abstainer, and founded the first temperance society in the Connexion in 1837. Its chapels were placed at the service of this cause long before others welcomed it. Connexional rules sanctioned the holding of teetotal meetings occasionally, instead of the week-night service, and preachers were appointed to them on the circuit plan. At the Conference of 1840, thirty-two of the thirty-three itinerant preachers present were total abstainers, and fourteen of the seventeen laymen. The Conference declined, however, to make the temperance pledge a condition of acceptance into the ministry (1854). This church gave to the United Kingdom Alliance several notable agents.

Temperance effort.

Happily this evangelical and reforming zeal was not unfriendly to culture. Thorne had steadily supplemented his education, for he loved learning passionately. 'He had the manners of one nobly born, and the aptitudes and instincts of a scholar.' With several connexional leaders he established in 1841 a proprietary grammar school for boys, taking over the school founded by his brother Samuel, provision being made for the reception of preachers' sons on easy terms. Prospect Place, Shebbear, was secured, a situation which fostered connexional loyalty. Thorne acted as governor (1844—1870) and consciously and unconsciously imparted that evangelical tone which, with sound scholarship, marked its pupils. The school was taken

Connexional schools.

over by the Conference (1847). One of its most distinguished scholars (the Right Honourable Chief Justice Way, D.C.L., of South Australia), enriched the college at its jubilee celebration (1891) with the gift of the historic Lake Farm. Later the training of ministerial students was also conducted at the college. A similar successful institution for girls was established at Bideford (1882).

Methodist
New Con-
nexion
extensions

During this period the Methodist New Connexion had also enlarged its borders. A mission had been established in Ireland, with a nucleus of Wesleyan Methodists who had seceded in 1798. It secured sixty-nine spheres of labour (1825-40). The Rev. John Addyman founded a mission in Upper Canada (1837), winning success wherever he went as an apostle of love. At home, Abraham Scott, by his ministry (1801-50) and his numerous theological, expository, and apologetic works, among them an edition of Fletcher's works, earned a high place among the honoured doctors of the universal Church. So did Thomas Allin (1784-1866), one of the most distinguished ministers of Methodism. He was born at Broseley, Shropshire, and joined the Connexion at Hanley. He acquired argumentative skill in doctrinal controversies with companions in an earthenware-printer's shop. His itinerant ministry was early closed through constitutional weakness; but he gave himself unreservedly to the duties of theological tutor, which office he was the first to hold in the Connexion. As an eloquent preacher, a philosophic and constructive theologian, and as a controversialist, Allin displayed abilities of the highest order. Saintliness of character made them the more impressive.

Such leaders and defenders were needed, for a fiery trial was at hand. Joseph Barker was an erratic genius. He early attained popularity as a minister by his attractive address and the fruits of his wide reading, always at command. His style was singularly pellucid, and few men could on occasion more skilfully make the worse appear the better reason. He was one of the earliest advocates of total abstinence, and his lectures, *The Gospel Triumphant*,

were an unanswerable condemnation of Owen's defective socialism. Nothing abashed Barker. His vigorous, but ill-balanced mind dared anything and everything in turn. One object at a time filled his vision. It was magnified to the exclusion of all others. Soon it was discarded and another received similar treatment. Step by step he forsook the truth. He refused to administer the ordinances or use the organization of the Connexion. These vagaries were only symptomatic of deeper estrangement, which ended in infidelity and a position but slightly removed from atheism. After much forbearance, the Conference expelled him. With characteristic calmness and effrontery he there declared 'Thomas Allin and William Cooke have told sixty lies in sixty minutes!' Unfortunately he carried with him from the Connexion a large number whom his enticing speech and specious socialistic schemes had led astray. Twenty-nine churches with 4,348 members were lost by it. He was tried and acquitted on a charge of sedition and conspiracy while associating with the Chartists. Returning from the United States he tried during sixteen years to undo some of his mischief. Dr. Cooke and other connexional leaders were profoundly solicitous for his recovery to the truth. Barker told the steps of his return, and the story is a valuable human document which may, in parts, be compared and contrasted with Newman's *Apologia*. The devotion of the Connexion to the central verities of Christianity is one of the brightest pages in Methodist history. It was followed by an outburst of financial generosity, led by the ministers in order to repair the breaches and losses sustained. During the period (1860—1885) many of its noblest sanctuaries were built. This controversy had another result.

1841.

Barkerite
losses.

Dr. William Cooke (1806—84) was born at Burslem, where a memorial school bears his name. Hanley Circuit sent him into the ministry. Increases of 250 members at Stockport, and 430 on the Irish Mission, accompanied his superintendence. He often rose at 4 a.m. and studied until noon, so accumulating stores of classical and theological knowledge

These enabled him to expose the sophistries of Barker at Newcastle-on-Tyne, in a public discussion which lasted ten nights. Forced thus into controversy, he became an apologist and preacher of national fame and one of the most voluminous and popular theologians of Methodism. His *Christian Theology* was a text-book for ministerial students in the junior Methodist bodies for a generation. His works had a sale of half a million copies. His treatise *The Deity* is a profound and valuable study. Under his editorship for twenty-two years connexional publications produced a profit of £600 per annum. He was thrice President and received every sign of appreciation. Another defender of the faith, and a connexional leader, was Samuel Hulme (1806—1901), who was President when a minister of only fourteen years' standing and twice afterwards. His sermons and lectures in defence of Christian truth and Protestantism secured national attention. Massive in style and rising by cogent trains of argument, his eloquence overwhelmed his opponents as in the Barkerite discussions, and secured his objects as in the founding of the Chinese mission.

Deed Poll.

The confiscation of several estates by the Barkerites, and costly litigation to retain or regain others, made urgent the long-felt need of a legal embodiment of the Connexion. It had now reached its jubilee. The deed was signed by every member of the fiftieth Conference, which was held in Manchester (1846). It contained a statement of the Methodist doctrines held; recited the Constitution adopted in 1798, with the minor changes subsequently made; and gave legal identity to the Connexion by appointing twenty-four persons, twelve ministers and twelve laymen, its Guardian Representatives. It also provided for a septennial revision of the Constitution by the Conference with the approval of the circuits. A Model Trust Deed was also settled. Two years earlier the Connexion had been drawn more closely together by grouping the circuits in Districts having annual meetings. Like the Conference, these were composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen.

The Jubilee was celebrated with much rejoicing. The principles of the Connexion had been tested, and their worth displayed by the events of Methodist history.¹ At this Conference a Thanksgiving Fund was inaugurated, by which £7,700 was contributed for connexional projects. A commanding and estimable figure in the Jubilee celebrations, and entitled to his eminence, was John Ridgway (1786—1860), of Hanley, long styled the King of the Potteries, and by his biographer, Dr. Stacey, a Prince in Israel. The son of Job Ridgway, one of the Hanley separatists, he was true to the liberal Methodist traditions of his family as he was to its potter's craft. For this church he published an important *Apology*, and was connexional editor (1812—16); as a potter he was reckoned next to Wedgwood for the excellence of his porcelain. The office of lay ruling elder was never better filled than by him. Dr. Bunting styled him the 'Prince of Laymen' in Methodism. Bethesda Church, Hanley, and all the churches seemed to be his charge, especially during the Barkerite troubles. His wisdom and patience secured the legal settlement of the Connexion just referred to. The rise of the platform as an educational instrument found him prepared by his training as lay preacher to use it, and he magnified his office. Slave emancipation, civil and religious liberty, peace and social reform were his themes.

Jubilee of
the
Connexion,
1846.

Once more we must return to our 'book of the wars.' It remains to tell the story of the expulsion or secession of one hundred thousand members from the Wesleyan Methodist societies, their formation into the Wesleyan Reform Union, and the amalgamation of the great majority of them with the Wesleyan Methodist Association. The united body was known for fifty years as the United Methodist Free Churches. Only so much of the painful story need

THE
REFORM
AGITATION.

¹ Its home membership was almost 20,000, while 30,000 persons attended its services in Canada; ministers and missionaries numbered 141, local preachers 775, chapels 334, scholars 38,037, with teachers 6,635. About £5,000 was raised annually for connexional funds.

be told as will explain the rise of an important community, and by examples illustrate the lessons since wisely learned.¹

Some causes.

The course of Wesleyan Methodist history and the constructive statesmanship of its leaders at this period are described in earlier pages.² Unhappily at this period, as all now admit, the Wesleyan Conference seemed often to be animated by a spirit which ill brooked opposition. Honours, indulgence, tolerance fell stintedly, it was thought, to any but those of the dominant party. Often impatience was shown at suggestion or criticism from elsewhere. Even the gladness of the Centenary celebrations could not exorcise this spirit. It had frequently embodied itself in Jabez Bunting, whose piety, pulpit power, and especially his constructive statesmanship made his wish almost irresistible. His devoted son speaks of his father's masterfulness. In the oncoming critical years he did not exercise 'all his usual influence in guiding his brethren.' It was his wish 'that the sentence on Mr. Everett himself might leave unbolted the door for his return.' Notwithstanding Bunting's advocacy of lay co-operation in church courts, he had steadily sought to conserve all ultimate authority in the pastorate. 'The Kilhamite practice of proposing names at a Leaders' Meeting is one of our abominations,' he said; though in very few instances did it occur in Wesleyan Methodism. No freely elected and therefore strictly representative layman sat in any church court. The secrecy maintained about the inception and development of policy bred suspicion. The Conference sat with closed doors throughout its sessions. Projects the most necessary and laudable thus shrouded in mystery seemed portentous to the uninitiated and captious.

Growing temperance sentiment.

Historians have not sufficiently recognized the influence in this tempestuous period of the growing sentiment among Methodists in favour of total abstinence from intoxicants. Traditionally they were committed to the war against in-

¹ Nine hundred and twenty-six controversial books and pamphlets appeared, 1846-56.

² *Vide supra*, pp. 407-409, 430-432.

temperance, but they had not maintained the vigorous protest of their founder. *The Methodist New Connexion Magazine* of 1799 lengthily instructed its readers in the art of brewing porter. Two generations later home-brewed beer was often the common beverage at circuit-meeting dinners and Sunday-school festivals. The Wesleyan Conference of 1836 bewailed the sin of intemperance; but that of 1841 required the use of *bona fide*, which was understood to mean fermented, wine at the Lord's Table, and closed the chapels against teetotal meetings. Thereupon some hundreds of Wesleyan Methodists seceded in Cornwall; later they joined the Methodist New Connexion. Indulgence had caused a fall from high eminence in the past, and was now imperilling some others; but not many Wesleyan Methodist preachers were abstainers, and few boldly advocated total abstinence. A ministerial temperance declaration signed in 1848 bore the names of only 25 in that church, while 42 ministers of the Wesleyan Methodist Association, and 111 Primitive Methodist ministers signed it. Hugh Price Hughes, afterwards a stalwart in this cause, styled the band of abstaining students at Richmond College in 1865 the 'insane society.' The father of one of the editors of this volume, on his entrance into Didsbury College, was solemnly reprimanded by the Governor for having joined a political association, his real offence being that he had become a teetotaller—the only one then in the college. So late as 1882 Charles Garrett, upon his election as President, caught an echo of the earlier opposition to his advocacy of this cause in the jocular greeting, 'Lo, this is he that cometh by water.' Obviously all these facts must be viewed in the light of the general habits and practices of the periods referred to. Conviction was, however, growing rapidly. Most of 'the Men of Preston' were Methodists, and an increasing number felt that their ministers and churches should lead the way in temperance reform for the individual and the state.

These personal, connexional, and constitutional matters furnished the topics of four pamphlets. They were styled *Fly Sheets from the 'Private Correspondent'*; were anonymous,

The
Fly Sheets,
1844-8.

and without printer's or publisher's name ; and each closed with the words ' By order of the Corresponding Committee for detecting, exposing, and correcting abuses. London, Manchester, Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham, Leeds, Hull, Glasgow.' Under the headings ' On Location, Centralization, Secularization,' ' The Presidential Chair, the Platform and Connexional Committees,' ' Anonymous Publications,' ' Reclaimed Ground,' ' Reasonings,' ' The Core and Cure of Misrule,' ' Floating Opinions,' the various opinions said to exist and the reforms desired were dealt with. These pamphlets were crowded with details and personalities. They were sent post paid to ministers only. Later they were partly reprinted and widely sold. Intense feeling was aroused. The Conference rejoinders appeared in *The Watchman*, and in anonymous brochures as *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*. It is admitted that these, in parts, were as reprehensible as the publications which they censured. The *Fly Sheets* were condemned ; but for a considerable time no authorized attempt was made to refute the grave charges therein made or insinuated. Joseph Fowler (Secretary of the Conference, 1848) characterized a *Fly Sheet* as execrable and bemoaned the results of the agitation ; but he was constrained to say :

I am asked to declare that the *Fly Sheets* are wicked lies. I cannot, for it is well known that many of the sentiments therein have been mine for years.

Every endeavour was made to discover the author or authors. George Osborn was permitted to test ministers by procuring their signature to a Declaration that they had not contributed to the *Fly Sheets* and had no sympathy with their strictures. More than one thousand signed this ; for some time two hundred and fifty-six refused to do so ; thirty-six, despite pressure, still declined.

Suspicion as to the authorship of the pamphlets fell chiefly upon James Everett. As the supposed author of *Wesleyan Takings, Centenary Sketches of Ministerial Character*, he had aroused some bitterness ten years before. He was now summoned to the Conference in Manchester

(1849) with his ministerial friend John Burdsall. They were interrogated as to their authorship of the *Fly Sheets*. Both declined to answer. Everett said, 'I demand the name of my accuser, the charges against me in writing, and an opportunity to defend myself in a constitutional way.' J. C. George and James Bromley also refused to answer. William Griffith declined unless he might add explanatory observations, as did also Samuel Dunn. The Conference censured Burdsall, Walton, George, and Bromley, the last named of whom was expelled the next year. It expelled Everett for contumacy, and Dunn and Griffith because they declined to discontinue sending communications to *The Wesleyan Times* or to stop the publication of *The Wesley Banner*. It should be noted that throughout no charge was made against the character of any of these ministers or as to their efficiency. They were amongst the most eminent and laborious ; some were beloved by all.

Expulsion
of ministers
by Wesleyan
Conference,
1849.

James Everett (1784—1872), the foremost of them, was born at Alnwick. His education was slight and he received no systematic training before entering the Wesleyan ministry (1807). He soon became widely popular. As unsatisfactory health compelled his superannuation, he was employed for some time at the Book-Room, London. He then established himself as a bookseller in Sheffield, later in Manchester. Called back into circuit work in 1834, he again retired in 1842, residing in York, whence he travelled and preached throughout the country. Upon his expulsion he freely used his intimate knowledge of Methodism and his large influence in aiding the Reform Movement. In all, Everett preached 13,000 sermons, travelled 320,000 miles, and was the author of forty works.¹ Among them are the important work *Adam Clarke Portrayed*, and the widely popular *Village Blacksmith*. Everett was also a pleasing versifier. He was strongly attached to Methodism, and preached its doctrines with exceptional power and attractiveness. He was no ordinary minister of whom Bunting said 'he

Everett.

¹ The controversial work, *Methodism as it is*, is omitted from list in *Dict. Nat. Biography*. It bears his name at the end of vol. ii.

would be acceptable in any circuit, and may make his choice.' His mental endowments were large and varied, though not of the first order; his industry was tireless; his powers were well developed, especially those of observation. He intermeddled with all knowledge; things rare and curious were his delight,¹ and his collection of Methodist treasures was unique.² The caricatures and pen portraits from his hand are singularly clever and are mingled satire and humour. He was the literary Hogarth of Methodism; Cobden likened him to Boswell. A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles and willing to dredge any waters for his material and to use any weapon, he was fearlessly mordant or admiring in turn, whether in declared authorship or under the dangerous shield of anonymity. Those who knew him closely declared him to be sincere, steadfast, and unselfish, though some of them disapproved his methods.

Dunn
1797-1882).

Samuel Dunn was born at Mevagissey, and became a minister in 1816. He was the first missionary to the Shetland Isles, a friend of Adam Clarke, and a fervid evangelist—witness his *Wesley Banner*. Seventy volumes of theology and biography bear his name. After his expulsion and advocacy of reform he was for nine years pastor of Camborne Free Church, which afterwards united with the Methodist New Connexion. Dunn did not join the United Methodist Free Churches, but after a brief ministry in New York, ministered as desired amongst the Methodist churches of Cornwall.

Griffith
1806-1883).

William Griffith, who was the son of William Griffith, Wesleyan minister, was born in London and educated at Kingswood. He was converted when twelve years old, became a schoolmaster, and entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1828. His passionate love of justice and civil and religious liberty led him to adopt the cause of Methodist reform. This he greatly aided by his contributions to *The*

¹ Dr. Adam Clarke, Everett's personal friend, playfully requested him to send him 'the horn-book out of which Eve taught Cain his letters!'

² Some were secured for the U.M.F.C. College, Victoria Park, Manchester. Many of the Wesleyana were purchased by Tyerman (1862) for his *Life of John Wesley*.

Wesleyan Times. After the secession he was for twenty years minister of the Methodist Reformers in Derby. They joined the united body in 1864, of which he had become a minister in 1857. The highest offices of that community were offered him, and he was elected President of the Assembly; but he declined all official honours. He was widely known as a fearless champion of freedom, and his vital godliness, consistent character, varied knowledge, and ample service extorted admiration from his strongest opponents. Griffith was tall and of herculean strength. His stentorian eloquence seemed to carry all before it.

The expulsion of these ministers caused sensation and alarm. They determined to make their appeal to the people, whom they regarded as 'a yet august thing than parliament or king' or Conference. The embittering and ominous cries, 'No supplies,' 'No surrender,' 'No secession,' were raised. If the methods which these terms connoted were deemed the only effective ones by those who desired reform, it is also realized how much pain and loss their use entailed upon honoured and beloved servants of God and upon His church. Lifelong friends and ministers and church members were ranged as bitter combatants, and blows were struck on both sides which were only less painful to those inflicting them than to those upon whom they fell. Extraordinary feeling was manifested. Vast gatherings of sympathizers were held in the chief centres. The widespread sympathy with the expelled ministers evinced by several churches, newspapers, and the public found a sharp contrast in the expulsion by the Wesleyan ministers from the societies of those members who sympathized with the expelled ministers or suggested the need of reform. This seemed to supply irrefragable proof of the charges of ministerial absolutism and arbitrariness, and to 'put a tongue in every wound.' Heavy losses in membership occurred year after year, fifty-six thousand, or twenty thousand, or ten thousand in number. The expulsions or secessions numbered together more than one hundred thousand, almost one-third of the membership of the societies. Dr. Greeves, a later

They appeal to the people.

Expulsion of members from the churches.

President of the Wesleyan Conference, said that these—

consisted of the ardent, the enthusiastic, the passionately fervent, who, if they had remained among us and had been duly restrained and modified by the conservative section, would have done the work which in their absence has been achieved by the Salvation Army. They might also, with God's blessing, have arrested at a much earlier stage the portentous development of Anglican clericalism.

At length many on both sides cried in anguish, 'Shall the sword devour for ever?' William Arthur, a beloved leader in Wesleyan Methodism, who supported the Conference policy, said that—

more alienation was produced by unguarded assertion of Conference prerogative and what the people called priestly power than by the attacks of disaffected laymen and disaffected ministers.

It must be added with sadness that many thousands of those who left their ancestral spiritual home never found their way into the new one, nor, it is feared, into any Christian community. Moreover, suspicion spread everywhere; the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians, and the Wesleyan Methodist Association had fewer members in 1855 than in 1850.

Assembly
of Reform
delegates.

Eight months after the Conference of expulsions (1849) four hundred delegates from groups of reformers met in Albion Chapel, London, and by deputation approached the President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. He declined to receive them. A like fate met petitions bearing fifty thousand signatures presented by the delegates, who had resumed their sessions in Exeter Hall, and desired to confer with the Wesleyan Conference then also sitting in London. The ground of rejection given was that the petitions were not from individual members or duly constituted meetings. It is said that John Scott proposed in the Conference that the petitions be used as grounds for unofficial conferrings; but consideration of this was unfortunately then made impossible by the arrival of the legal limits of the Conference sessions. The delegates were

deprived of church membership, as were many thousands of the petitioners and their sympathizers.

Distinguished among such cases was that of William Hardy Cozens-Hardy (1807—1895), of Letheringsett Hall, Holt, Norfolk, whose son became the Right Honourable Lord Justice Cozens-Hardy, Master of the Rolls, and retained a practical interest in the results which followed his father's protest. An extensive landowner and linked with the aristocracy, Cozens-Hardy was strongly attached to Methodism and served it with noble simplicity as he mingled freely with those of the household of faith and led their devotion and gifts. With his friend Joseph Colman he was expelled upon the charge of having 'violated the discipline of the Connexion by attending a public meeting at Walsingham, and thereby disturbing the peace of that circuit.' His bold resistance of manifest injustice was invaluable at a critical juncture. It was unwisely said to some Reform trustees by claimants for the Conference, 'The chapels are ours, the debts are yours.' This position he successfully assailed in a Chancery suit (1851), the burden and expense of which were borne by him.

Legal
questions.

Some who sympathized with reform, but had not yet been expelled, sought to act as mediationists. Led by Edmund Heeley, of Birmingham, two thousand prominent church workers petitioned the Conference. Though continued for two years, their efforts were unavailing. When the earlier signatories numbered seven hundred, they were all omitted by the President (Dr. Hannah), when he called some laymen to confer with him. John Booth Sharpley, thrice Mayor of Louth, devoted his judicial, literary, and organizing gifts to peacemaking; but in vain. He had deeply studied the genius of Methodism, and desired freedom for its scriptural development. At length he led a thousand expelled or seceding members into the ranks of the Reformers (1852).

Mediation-
ists.

For seven years (1850-6) delegates from the Reformers met at the same time and place as the Wesleyan Conference, and addressed it by letter. They asked that the expelled might

be reinstated, and that the laws which permitted such expulsions should be repealed ; that the transactions of the church courts should be in the presence of representatives of the people ; that the members of the church or their representatives should control the admission and exclusion of members and the appointment of officers ; and that while the connexional principle was retained in its integrity, local courts should be independent as to their internal economy. At length the Conference requested that it should receive no more of these communications from the Reformers.

The Reformers desire a union of liberal Methodists, 1854.

The sixth meeting of the delegates invited the sections of Methodism other than the Wesleyan to negotiate with them with a view to union upon these principles. The Bible Christians and Primitive Methodists postponed answering until they had consulted their Conferences. William Martin, of Altrincham, a polished orator and lucid, vigorous writer, urged the Reformers to unite with the Methodist New Connexion. His letter to Lord John Russell had cogently set forth the case of the Reformers, and he had early contended that the admission of lay representatives to church courts was the basal reform needed. But his counsel and example were unwelcome ; especially in view of the fact, notwithstanding the courteous personal approaches of Cooke, that the Methodist New Connexion generally maintained an unbending attitude. A few parties of Reformers joined the Connexion ; but in general they dreaded even its brotherly rule. Moreover they had been imbued with an incorrect view of Kilham and his service to Methodism. Everett later made the *amende honorable* for his misrepresentations of him.

Response of the Wesleyan Methodist Association.

The Wesleyan Methodist Association, which had expressed a desire for the union of liberal Methodists, responded to the invitation of the Wesleyan Reformers and appointed representatives to confer with theirs. Eckett, while disapproving some of the methods of the Reformers and appreciating the difficulties of the Conference, sought to aid the former by turning their attention to the reforms required. It was found that few and slight modifications were needed in the constitution of the Association to meet the views of the

Reformers. A basis of union was adopted by their annual Delegates' Meeting and the Annual Assembly of the Association (1855), and representatives of both were empowered to complete the union. This was done at Exeter Hall, London, May 14, 1857. The united community held its first Assembly in Baillie Street Chapel, Rochdale, July 29, following. The name chosen was the United Methodist Free Churches. Everett was elected president, and Eckett secretary. The combined membership was 39,968, with 110 preachers and 769 chapels. Of these the Reformers contributed then 19,113 members and 500 chapels and several preachers. The process of amalgamation and increase continued for several years. Aggressive evangelistic efforts, signally owned of God, still further augmented the numbers.¹ The Foundation Deed of the Association was adopted as that of the united body. Matthew Baxter was President of the Association in the year preceding the union, and exercised his versatility, tact, and strength as editor during these critical years (1854-60). With Everett he prepared a hymn-book for the churches, which served until 1889. Legal difficulties then preventing the adoption of the Wesleyan book, a new one, prepared by a committee, was issued. The sale of 70,000 copies in six months indicated the need for the book, and also its excellence.

THE UNITED
METHODIST
FREE
CHURCHES,
1857.

Patience, tact, and resource in rare degree were needed to consolidate the older body and the scattered newer portions into one consistent structure. If it soon became impossible to distinguish them, it was because those who with much pain had done the work of contention now gave themselves to that of construction. The trowel replaced the sword. Among such Joseph Massingham, Joseph Chipchase, George William Harrison, William Gandy, and Hildreth Kay should be named. John Benson, of Newcastle-on-Tyne, was as helpful as any. Like Kay he was early called away by death; but his widow, a mother in Israel, continued his service and

The process
of amal-
gamation.

¹ By 1862 the statistics were 60,880 members with 8,229 on trial, 3,715 class-leaders, 2,871 local preachers, 211 itinerant preachers, 965 chapels with 394 preaching-rooms, and 122,320 scholars.

wide philanthropy for a generation. Sometimes it seemed that the endeavour to maintain an exact equipoise between connexionalism and circuit independence absorbed time and strength needed for more important tasks. Occasionally in these early days the minister was referred to as the paid agent, and the divine blessing asked upon the work of 'our servant, Thy minister.' It took fifty years to extirpate the dread of ministerial and Conference 'autocracy.' In many cases respect and love for a minister personally and as a man of God won recognition of his office as placing him *primus inter pares*, and he was very highly esteemed in love for his work's sake. The connexional bond became effective, and the Annual Assembly exercised real control. Consolidation was assisted by the stay of several ministers beyond the usual term of three years. In this the Association and the united body anticipated the modification of the itinerancy which the parent church effected later in special cases.

Remoter
results of
this
conflict.

The establishment of a large community of liberal Methodists was not the only result of this agitation. Dr. Rigg believes that it 'taught the Connexion, and in particular the Conference, lessons of the highest importance.'¹ Moreover, as the wars and fightings of Cromwell's days and the sufferings of Bunyan and Baxter ultimately secured the peaceful revolution and settled liberties of 1688, so we may believe that this conflict found its sequel in the admission of laymen into the Wesleyan Conference in 1877,² in strong and deep interest in Temperance work, in the measure of publicity now given to Conference proceedings and the greater freedom enjoyed by the press in regard to them. Nor must we omit to append to the scenes we have outlined some glimpses of healings and amenities brought by the years. Bunting felt that the sad events had taught wisdom and that a like treatment of such cases would not be repeated.³ While visiting the London Œcumenical Conference of 1881 Griffith

¹ *Ency. Brit.* vol. xvi., 9th ed., art. 'Methodism.'

² *Vide* the valuable *Report of the Proceedings of a Committee on Lay Representation* (1876).

³ *Vide* a letter from Dr. Dixon to Dunn (1869) quoting Dr. Bunting, in *Samuel Dunn, Memoir and Sermons*, by the Rev. J. D. Dinnoek.

was thanked for his efforts for reform by some who remembered the conflicts of thirty years earlier. There, too, he and Osborn met, clasped hands, and tears softened sad memories. Dunn committed to Hugh Price Hughes, then only twenty-six, the task of healing the breach. In a crisis in his own life, Hughes thought of joining one of the junior Methodist Churches, endeavouring to unite them, and then making overtures to the parent Church, that all might be one. His weekly journal fostered Christian freedom and fraternal feeling among Methodist communities, and their re-union became a dominant purpose in his life.

While most of the Reform Societies were thus united with the Association, some continued their protest against any degree or form of Conference authority. By a Delegate Meeting held in Sheffield in 1859 these formed themselves into the Wesleyan Reform Union. They declared that each church should exercise all ecclesiastical government, including the appointment and removal of its own ministers. In 1860 it had 34 circuits and 16 separate churches, 21 ministers, 701 local preachers, 12,516 members, and 378 chapels and rooms. By further amalgamations with the United Methodist Free Churches these numbers were lessened considerably. Since 1881 increases have been reported. Recently the Home Missionaries and Deaconesses reported that since 1881, 12,000 converts had been won upon their stations. Contributions for foreign missions were handed to the Congo and China Inland Missions. The leaders of this church have been strong temperance advocates, and it is probably more permeated with these principles than any other Methodist community.

At its Jubilee Celebration (1899) the Conference of the Union adopted and enrolled its principles in a Reference Deed. Representatives of the Union shared in the earlier negotiations which culminated in the union of three Methodist denominations (1907); but a proposal to discontinue fuller participation was carried in the Conference (1904) by a small majority

THE
WESLEYAN
REFORM
UNION.

V

1857—1907

THE WORK
OF FIFTY
YEARS.

Fifty years of effort in the three churches (1857—1907) can only be summarized. Each aimed at complete equipment and extension.

In the
METHODIST
NEW CON-
NEXION.

The Methodist New Connexion carried out its project for an institution for ministerial training, stirred thereto by the plans, systematic generosity, and early death of Thomas Firth of Sheffield, and by the gifts of his brother Mark Firth. The latter served as missionary treasurer, and made benefactions to his native city amounting to £150,000. Dr. James Stacey (1818—1891) was the first college principal. His versatile and refined gifts of mind and character, sedulously cultivated notwithstanding frail health, excited the devotion of his students and of the cultured classes within and beyond his church to an almost unique degree. His utterances and writings had severe sculptural beauty, and were illumined by rare intelligence and intense conviction. His successors for ten and twelve years respectively were Dr. William Cocker and Dr. Thomas Dickson Crothers. Cocker (1816—1902) was an Apollo in dignified bearing and an Apollos in platform and pulpit oratory. Crothers (1831—1902) was a dialectician and ecclesiastical statesman, singularly accurate in statement and suitable in expression. Bishop Butler and his school probably never had a closer student or more luminous expositor.

Ministerial
training.

William Booth (General Booth) resigned the ministry in 1861. Formerly a Wesleyan Methodist, he and his future wife, Catherine Mumford, who had been dismembered in the troubles of 1849, at length joined the Connexion. Mr. Booth received some training under Dr. Cooke, whose *Theology*, and the doctrinal tenets of the Connexion, he afterwards used in his expositions and instructions for his officers. He was eminently successful as an evangelist, and facilities were afforded for his services beyond his circuits. These did not suffice; and Mr. Booth-Tucker

Evangelistic
effort and
extension.

doubts if 'the Salvation Army could have been manufactured within the borders of any existing denomination.'¹ Much of the widespread evangelistic and redemptive effort of the new organization evinced the genius of Methodism. John Whittaker Williams and several lay evangelists conspicuously maintained the evangelistic tradition in the Connexion. Williams combined logic, passion, and compassion in his appeals, and behind them lay a holy, transparent life, innocent of selfishness. John Shaw, of Pudsey, laboured as a lay preacher and evangelist for thirty-three years in the homes and churches of a wide district. His meagre education and strange ways were more than balanced by his piety, lovableness, and quaint sayings. He was a 'living, speaking, walking Bible.' Abraham Lockwood, 'the Bishop of Berry Brow,' was converted under a tree on Almondbury Common, Huddersfield, the Bethel to which he often resorted. A singing, gladsome, resourceful worker, he established the famous Yorkshire annual love-feast still held. His childlike trust in God and his audible rebukes of the Tempter made many wise.

Connexional extension and consolidation owed much to the ministry and departmental labours of William Baggaly and Alexander M'Curdy, and the generosity of Joseph Love, of Durham, who contributed £100,000 towards the erection of churches, chiefly in the Connexion. Constitutional changes were not numerous. The systematic training of ministers had prepared for an extension (1868) of their stay in the circuits, when desired, from the term of three to that of five years. The Connexion was the first English church to recognize Bands of Hope as a department (1869). The weekly offering system as supplementing the familiar class and ticket money obtained sanction in 1866; and in 1889 the Conference, while retaining and varying the conduct of the class-meeting as an invaluable means of grace and the class-book as the only basis of enumeration, stated the

Constitutional
changes.

¹ The resignation was by letter to the President eight weeks after Conference, and was not sudden and dramatic, as it is sometimes described.

formal conditions of membership as three : attendance upon public worship ; the ordinance of the Lord's Supper ; and at the class-meeting, or the fellowship meeting, or the church meeting. This court was empowered to elect a small number of representatives to the Leaders' Meeting. There also the Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour was represented as a class-meeting. An annual token of membership was added to the class ticket, and monthly communion tickets were issued. In several of these features the three communities soon to unite approximated to a common usage. A new hymn-book was issued in 1862, Henry Piggin being the chief compiler and editor. It was a notable advance, and enriched worship for more than forty years. Then representatives were appointed by Conference to act with the committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Church and representatives of the Wesleyan Reform Union in producing the excellent collection *The Methodist Hymn-Book* (1904) now in general use.

The
Centenary,
1897.

The Centenary Conference held in South Street Church, Sheffield, had the venerable pioneer missionary, John Innocent, as President and Sir C. T. Skelton as Secretary. Congratulations were received from all the Methodist churches. Notable celebrations were also held in Woodhouse Lane Church, Leeds, the successor of Ebenezer, on the one hundredth anniversary of the historic gathering there ; at Kilham's birthplace ; and in Wesley's Chapel, London, where a memorial window was placed by Alderman Joseph Hepworth. Centenary offerings for local enterprises amounted to £100,000 with £10,250 for connexional projects. An Extension Fund (1900) of £6,000 was made a permanent department by the bequest of £45,000 under the will of John Henry Warhurst, of Manchester. Two other distinguished lay leaders should be referred to. Alfred Ramsden (1827—1892) was seven times Secretary of Conference, and as local preacher and editor and proprietor of *The Halifax Courier* he aided the upward growth of a large district. Sir John James Harwood (1832—1906), one of the most influential of Manchester men, was a Sunday-school superin-

tendent, class-leader, and for fifty-four years a local preacher of distinction.

Three hundred chapels were erected by the Bible Christians in fourteen years (1850—1864). Some took the place of humble, dearly loved sanctuaries. On the advent of a new clergyman they were expelled from a barn at Clovelly. For fifteen months the church gathered every Sunday for worship in the open air, near the restless, troubled sea, and there held class-meetings and observed the Lord's Supper. Others broke into the moral gloom of Bream in the Forest of Dean and erected a church where the people were little better than banditti like those of the days of Lorna Doone. Little wonder that the names of their sanctuaries, as Great Deliverance, Rehoboth, Providence, often commemorated their victories over wicked wildness or bigotry; or that the Bi-Centenary (1862) of the heroic exodus under the Act of Uniformity was celebrated throughout the Connexion with exceptional fervour. William ('Billy') Bray (1794—1868) was typical of several workers whose doings and sayings adorned the Gospel and enriched Methodist literature. A drunken, lascivious miner, he was impressed by reading Bunyan's *Visions*, and so greatly changed by conversion that 'they said I was a *madman*, but they meant I was a *gladman*.' For forty years his little nimble figure moved about Cornwall, singing, praying, shouting, preaching the gospel and teetotalism. Unaffected by poverty or difficulty, he declared that as he lifted one foot it seemed to say 'Glory' and the other followed with 'Amen.' Like the Friars, he seldom used a text, but began with a verse of a hymn or a story. Half a million copies of his *Life* were sold, and it was translated into several languages.

The Jubilee Conference reported 750 chapels, 2,000 itinerant and local preachers, 26,000 members, 40,000 scholars, and 8,000 teachers. Some years, as 1876, were marked by phenomenal increase. In the midst of such encouragements Thorne died (1872), and was interred at Shebbear. His wife, who was a true helpmate, survived him two years.

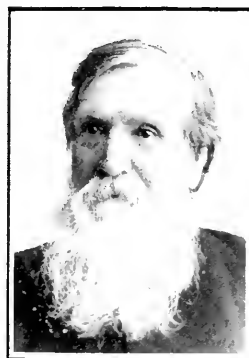
THE BIBLE
CHRISTIANS :

their rapid
progress.

Jubilee
Conference
1865.

The noble features of his manhood had taken on the mellow beauty of age, whilst his intensity remained. Nothing could stand before the flame of love in his heart. He never forgave himself a wasted moment. To read theology with him was a liberal education. A sublime simplicity exalted him above all, while it endeared him to all. His life was rooted in the deep things of God. Few are the highways of Devon and Cornwall which have not wayside oratories consecrated by his tarryings, that there he might meet the angel and obtain the blessing.

Frederick William Bourne (1830—1905) was the fellow labourer and successor of Thorne, and ranked with him and O'Bryan. He was born at Woodchurch, Kent, entered the ministry (1850), was appointed editor and treasurer for the Connexion. For thirty-four years he was its leader and representative figure. His business aptitude brought him an offer of £1,000 a year for his services. Such offers were refused that he might build up his beloved community. To it he gave the large profits of his *Life* of Billy Bray, of which a thousand copies were sold every month for thirty years. Much of his *History* of the Connexion is as idyllic in style as it is in subject. He had made much of the history which he recorded. Next to his evangelistic passion was that for church reunion, especially of Methodism, and his last days were gladdened by Pisgah sights of the good land towards which he had led his followers through drear tracts of disappointment. From its founding he was an influential member of the National Free Church Council. Two other distinguished leaders, in different spheres, should be named. James Horswell (1815—1906) ran his course with that of the Connexion. He prevented the extinction of the work at Plymouth (1841) and the strong circuits of the Three Towns are the outcome of his policy. In the Corn Law and Free Trade agitations he was the champion of the poor. He was the agricultural expert of the West, and an enthusiast for education in and beyond his own communion. James Clarke Hook (1819—1907), grandson of Adam Clarke and one of the chief landscape painters of the



JAMES THORNE, 1795-1872.
THOMAS ALLIN, 1781-1866.

DR. WILLIAM COOK, 1806-1884.
F. W. BOURNE, 1850-1905.
RICHARD CHEW, 1827-1895.

MARMADKE MILLER, 1827-1884.
DR. JAMES STACY, 1818-1891.

period,¹ ranks with Smetham, a tutor at the Westminster Training College, as finding delight in the fervour and fellowship of Methodism. Hook's paintings and etchings of seafaring and West Country life immortalized scenes where the church he loved had wrought wondrously. His beautiful home afforded relief and cheer to his pastors amid the difficulties of the Crondall mission.

Financial enterprises—as the Jubilee Fund, the Thanksgiving Fund (£7,193), and the New Century Fund (£25,000), noble efforts considering the resources of the churches—had increased the possibility of union with other sections of Methodism. By such unions in other lands Bourne computed that the Connexion had lost fifteen or sixteen thousand members from its own rolls, while fifty thousand were lost in ten years by emigrations and removals.

In the United Methodist Free Churches, the flame of devotion and evangelistic effort often burned brightly. James Caughey ministered to it. At an earlier period a large number of those who afterwards became Wesleyan Reformers were strongly attached to him. He now conducted services in their churches. He was an approved minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church, who spent several years in England constantly preaching to vast crowds. Dramatic, sensational, novel, and sometimes questionable in method, none doubted his piety and extraordinary gifts. Few could resist his appeals for decision, and many thousands were led to Christ by him. Meanwhile John Guttridge (1819—1886) was wielding great influence upon his own countrymen. His open-air temperance orations and gospel appeals swayed multitudes during thirty years of circuit work, and afterwards in an extended itinerancy of exceptional range and value. During twenty-five years he travelled one thousand miles a month, constantly preaching or lecturing. In the period of the American Civil War, his messages did much to keep

THE
UNITED
METHODIST
FREE
CHURCHES.
Develop-
ments.

Evangelistic,
temperance,
and social
effort.

¹ Ruskin broke into a dithyrambic chant concerning Hook's 'Luff, Boy!' See *Ency. Brit.*, *in loco*; also *Art Annual*, 1888.

Lancashire patient and sympathetic towards freedom for the slaves, notwithstanding the Cotton Famine. His visits to home or church seemed a Pentecost. Rare John Guttridge! His books had a large circulation. So had the *Strange Tales from Humble Life* in which John Ashworth (1813—1875) told of the moral transformations wrought at the Chapel for the Destitute which he established in Rochdale. It was a centre of wise and redemptive service. Ashworth was a pioneer in modern social Christianity, and preached a gospel for body and soul. Millions of copies of *Strange Tales* were sold in many languages. Like Dickens he had exact and pitiful knowledge of the poor; and a descriptive style admirably compared with that of Defoe.

Deaconess
Institute.

Aggressive evangelistic effort was systematized in 1883. Ministerial and lay evangelists were employed and mission cars for open-air and village work. Latterly much of such service was rendered by deaconesses from the training home, Wandsworth. This was founded in memory of William Bowron (1810—1890) by his sons. His departure as a Wesleyan missionary was postponed, and the ship in which he would have sailed was lost with all hands. To him this indicated duty at home. Later his pleadings secured the commencement of a mission in New Zealand. Prosperity in business was accompanied by distinction as an eloquent speaker, preacher, and temperance advocate. Lord Shaftesbury's interest in evangelistic work began in a mission founded by Bowron. After 1849 he united with John and Thomas Cuthbertson, sometimes likened to Cheeryble Brothers, in vigorous service in the London circuits of the Wesleyan Reformers. He issued the first circular in the founding of the Wesleyan Methodist Local Preachers' Mutual Aid Association. The deaconesses were continuously employed as evangelists and at mission centres and city churches. An extension committee in London, directed by its ministerial president, Ira Miller, and inspired by the munificence of Mr. William Mallinson, erected there twenty-five churches in twenty-eight years, at a cost of £110,000. George Spencer Knight was known as the

' father ' of Manor Mission, Bermondsey, and dedicated to it his wealth and leisure. His greatest gifts were his character and influence, more radiant and attractive than the noble memorial window given by him, for the Connexion, to Wesley's Chapel.

Connexional leaders greatly assisted the founding and early development of the United Kingdom Alliance. A Temperance League was formed also in their own community (1880), and a minister was set apart to its service—the first in Methodism so employed. The League doubled the number of the Bands of Hope in the Connexion, and secured 35,000 pledges in two campaigns. Upon its initiative a temperance lesson was included quarterly in the International series, and Temperance Sunday was annually observed in the Free Churches of Great Britain and Ireland.

While the suspicion against the preparatory systematic training of ministers was passing away, the theological scholarship of Thomas Townend and others sustained the Methodist tradition. Thomas Hacking (1814—1893) during thirty years steadily promoted ministerial culture and was a shining example of it. He was the first principal of the Theological Institute, Manchester. His successor, 1881—1894, Anthony Holliday, was at once father, brother, friend, and teacher to the students, and established a mission to employ their gifts whilst in training. By the generosity and efforts of Alderman James Duckworth, of Rochdale, the Institute was enlarged and an endowment of £20,000 secured. The education of the sons of ministers and laymen was promoted by the founding of Ashville College, Harrogate (1877).

Ministerial
training.

Richard Chew (1827—1895) was closely associated with all these developments. Neither Everett nor Griffith had the gift of constructive statesmanship; Chew possessed it in large measure. During thirty-five years' consecutive service on the Connexional Committee, his sagacity and resourcefulness moulded the policy which full confidence in him led the Assembly and churches to adopt. The

Some
leaders.

abolition of the invidious and injurious Home Missionary system, under which some ministers held lower rank than their brethren, was one of many radical improvements effected by his guidance. He loved and lived the gospel which he preached. There was no man to whom the churches owed more of what was best in them than Marmaduke Miller (1827—1889). As to young David, all hearts turned to him. His utterances by pen and tongue were powerful; but it was declared that Miller 'was better than anything he wrote, better than any sermon he preached.' No tempting offer could draw him from his denomination, of which he was the best-known representative for a generation. He often took the platform with his friends Dale and Maclaren in urging national reforms. As a controversialist he was eminently fair. Laymen, almost entitled to be called 'lay bishops,' associated themselves with ministerial leaders in the service of the churches and of their towns and districts. They were neither worldly nor other-worldly, but united their religious with their civic, social, and national duties. Two such were elected President of the Assembly: Henry Thomas Mawson (1883) and Alderman James Duckworth (1894). Five chief magistrates of Rochdale in succession were members of this church; Thomas Watson, M.P., the donor of its Infirmary, was connexional treasurer. Oliver Ormerod fully shared and often inspired the heroic deeds and enthusiasm for which Baillie Street Church became famous. He was the lifelong friend of Bright, and his co-worker. His literary gifts are noted upon a public monument in Rochdale. William Butler was as eminent and beloved in Kingswood and Bristol, and John Henry Crosfield in Manchester. Both these leaders founded churches and served the city. So did Abraham Sharman (1802—1885), who was regarded in Sheffield as 'a permanent institution always doing something joyous for those within his reach.' He gave while living and left by will many thousands of pounds for circuit and connexional enterprises, and regarded what 'a man gives as the salt on what he has left.'

It was significant of the growing confidence felt that, while free to elect their chairman, church courts seldom chose any one but a minister, and they appointed ministers in large numbers as representatives to District Meeting and Assembly. In 1851 forty-four of the seventy representatives were laymen; in later Assemblies ministers were often two-thirds in number of those elected. Ministers and laymen loyally co-operated in successful financial efforts, as in contributing £30,000 in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary (1883) of the union, in raising a Wesley Memorial Fund, and the Twentieth Century Fund. This amounted to £104,765 of which £53,552 was paid to a central fund controlled by the Assembly. During the half-century decreases in membership were reported on eight occasions, totalling 2,632, and forty-two increases, totalling more than 50,000. Missionary enterprises are noticed elsewhere.

Growth of confidence and connexionalism.

VI

Such developments in sentiment and practice as have been noted in these three communities, which held principles in common, convinced their leaders that separate existence could not longer be justified, albeit each was never better able to maintain it than at this period, and this with growing usefulness.¹ Repeated endeavours to secure union had prepared the way.² Moreover it was found upon examin-

THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH.

¹ Statistics of the three communities at the time of union (1907):

	Methodist New Connexion		Bible Christian Methodist		United Methodist Free Churches		Totals
	Home	Foreign	Home	Foreign	Home	Foreign	
Ministers	204	11	206	14	438	30	903
Local Preachers ..	1,123	165	1,515	5	2,983	460	6,251
Church Members ..	37,009	2,979	32,202	2,442	79,948	10,922	194,147
Probationers and Junior Members	4,866	1,487	2,429	2,977	7,617	9,269	
Churches and Preaching-rooms	457	215	640	7	1,324	301	2,944
Sittings provided ..	164,566	—	150,365	—	399,862	—	714,793*
Cost of estates and buildings	£1,128,298	—	£855,682	—	£2,410,397	—	£1,394,377*
Debt	£153,030	—	£163,851	—	£440,112	—	£756,993*
Sunday schools ..	457	53	570	—	1,237	121	2,438
Scholars	87,741	659	45,847	2,170	189,168	5,986	331,571
Teachers	10,959	53	7,416	30	24,824	485	43,767

* 1905, latest complete returns—England only.

² Vide vol. ii. book vi. chap. ii.

An
enabling
Act of
Parliament.

ation that the communities were singularly complementary to one another in their localities and institutions at home and abroad. The union was legalized by *The United Methodist Church Act, 1907*,¹ necessitated by the enrolled deeds of the Connexions; but the Act was so drawn as to render unnecessary such sanction for any future developments. As it secured immunity from legal controversies which sometimes followed the reunion of churches, and ensured absolute autonomy for the church constituted under it, the Act attracted attention and was widely studied. By virtue of the Act, the three bodies held a Uniting Conference by resuming together their Annual Conferences of that year, which had been duly adjourned. As empowered and so assembled, they separately and unitedly passed the uniting resolutions, and this unanimously; and adopted a Deed Poll of Foundation containing a Constitution and Methodist doctrinal tenets. It also adopted a Model Deed for estates.

Constitu-
tion.

By the Constitution the Circuit Meetings consisted of the ministers, lay preachers, and officers of the circuit, the stewards of the churches, and representatives from them and the schools and trusts in the circuit. In all local courts the superintendent minister or his representative presided, provision being made against ministerial absolutism. District Meetings consisted of the ministers, resident connexional representatives, one steward from each circuit, and lay representatives equal in number to all these officers. These meetings appointed ministerial and lay representatives to the Annual Conference in equal numbers. This supreme court had also twenty-four Guardian or legal Representatives appointed for a renewable term of six years. Ministers and laymen were appointed in equal numbers as Guardians, and also by the District Meetings and Conference upon the ministerial Stationing Committee. The ministerial term was four years, subject to annual appointment, with extension to seven years by a two-thirds vote of the circuit meeting, and beyond that period by special vote of Conference. The Constitution provided for revision at decennial periods, after consideration of the alterations by the circuits and the approval of two consecutive Conferences.

¹ *Vide Appendix E, vol. ii.*

The basis of membership was stated in the Deed Poll of Foundation as :

Repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ evidenced by a life in harmony therewith, and by attendance at the Lord's Supper, together with the practice of Christian fellowship, as provided for in the class-meeting or such other means of grace and Christian ordinances as may be recognized from time to time in the United Methodist Church.

The proceedings of the Uniting Conference (September 17-19) excited national interest, and occasioned an outburst of congratulations. Those from the Wesleyan Methodists gained welcome emphasis from the fact that this historic Conference was held, by their invitation, in Wesley's Chapel, London, which was thus linked again with the story of the churches which there became one. Robert Bird of Cardiff, who had earned the title 'The Lay Missionary of Union,' witnessed, though in much weakness, the consummation he had so devoutly and earnestly wrought for. Deference to age and service was paid by this youngest Christian community. The Conference chose as President the Rev. Edward Boaden, the oldest departmental officer in British Methodism and, by this election, the most venerable President since Wesley. The Rev. George Packer was chief secretary.

The Uniting Conference and the union effectuated by it after four years of preparation were in some sort a summation of the events referred to in this chapter. A notable fact indicative of the real unity and strong connexional spirit was that a suggestion that some gifts to the Thanksgiving Fund inaugurated at that Conference might be retained for local enterprises found little support. The whole sum of 100,000 guineas was devoted to connexional objects, and one-fourth was subscribed at that Conference. Another united effort was a simultaneous evangelistic mission conducted by interchange of ministers, and greatly owned of God. As designated by the Uniting Conference, Dr. W. J. Townsend was President of the first Annual Conference of the United Church, held in Hanover Church, Sheffield, in 1907. It was abundantly manifest that the union was a reality.

The
Uniting
Conference,
1907.

Efforts of
the United
Church.

CHAPTER II

*THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH AND THE
INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCHES*

1796—1908

The little cloud increases still
That first arose upon Mow Hill,
It spreads along the plain.

HUGH BOURNE'S *Hymn-Book*, 1821.

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CHAPTER II

THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH AND THE INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCHES

AUTHORITIES.—To the General List add : **PRIMITIVE METHODIST:** For early history the vols. of Bourne's MS. Journals are the chief authority ; also Clowes' published *Journal* and BOURNE'S *History of the Primitive Methodists, giving an Account of their Rise and Progress to the Year 1822* ; WALFORD, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the late Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1854) ; HEROD, *Biographical Sketches* ; Lives of Clowes by DAVISON and W. GARNER, and memoirs of Bourne, Clowes, and the early preachers in *The Primitive Methodist Magazines*. General Histories : PETTY, *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its Origin to the Conference of 1859* ; the same brought down to 1870 by JAMES MACPHERSON ; KENDALL, *Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, 2 vols., 1905, based on fresh study of the documents. **INDEPENDENT METHODISTS:** *A Short History of Independent Methodism*, 1905. BOURNE'S *Journal* has many contemporary references to Peter Phillips. T. P. BUNTING, *Life of Jabez Bunting* (vol. i., 1859) has some valuable references to the Revivalists and Band-Room Methodists.

I

QUITE distinct from the three parties which can be clearly recognized in Methodism after the death of Wesley, was that Revivalism which was so marked a feature of the time. The word 'Revivalists' is not ours. We find it ready to our hand. The word has its distinct connotation and is historical. It is frequently met with in Methodist biographies and the literature of the time. The name was given and accepted as denoting, not a party, so much as a certain temper and tendency often found in the popular, emotional, aggressive Methodism of the beginning of the nineteenth century. Revivalism had to be reckoned with and had consequences. Those who so far embodied its spirit as to call

REVIVALISM
AT THE
BEGINNING
OF THE
NINETEENTH
CENTURY.

themselves Revivalists, Mr. T. P. Bunting tells us in his *Life* of his father, often 'occasioned considerable uneasiness to the Fathers of the Connexion, and to the more intelligent and pious of the junior preachers.' There were Revivalists at Sheffield, at Halifax, and at Leeds (1803) where their cause was espoused by William Bramwell. We read of a zealous band of Revivalists at Stockport who visited and held meetings at various towns.

The
Band-Room
Methodists.

Manchester was a strong centre of Revivalism. Here the Band-Room Methodists withdrew at the beginning of 1806, declining to have the conducting of their Bands brought under the authority of the Leaders' Meetings and the preachers. The attitude taken by the authorities to these and such as these may be gathered from an extract from an official statement published after the Manchester secession.

For several years, some of our members in different societies have appeared remarkably zealous in public worship, and have shown a disposition to assume the name of *Revivalists*; but a wish to preserve the union of the body induced us to check, with constant care, every distinction that in the least tended to a party spirit.¹

That the Revivalists were zealous and well-intentioned is admitted; but they are charged with a lack of humility, with censoriousness and irreverence.

Points at
issue.

As between the Revivalists and the constituted authorities it was a question of church statics *versus* church dynamics. The points at issue were practical rather than theoretical. They did not turn on points of doctrine or, in the first instance, on the form and constitution of the Methodist societies; much less did they turn on the attitude the societies should take to the Established Church or to Dissent. These questions, so vital to many, did not greatly concern the Revivalists. They were accustomed to regard evangelistic work and the edification of the individual believer as the things which mattered. These things were to be followed

¹ *Life of Bunting*, Appendix K.

as the judgement and conscience of the individual himself, or the group to which he belonged, might determine. Church order and regulation were of much less moment than soul-saving and individual edification; these must be attended to whatever became of church order. Methods which had been useful and allowed in Wesley's day ought to be allowed still. Now, considering what Methodism had been and had done, and the classes of society from which it was mainly recruited, Revivalism was a symptom of vitality and of good promise for the future. But, on the other hand, it was urged that events had taken place, and a stage of development been reached, that made the settlement of Methodism on sure and stable lines a matter of prime necessity. If the societies, bereft of their leader and guide, were not to go to pieces, they must be held and knit together by the exercise of authority and discipline to which all must bow. There must be a limit to self-direction, even in the best of causes. Everything must be done according to the rubric. Thus the Revivalists and those responsible for the settlement of Methodism under pastoral authority did not find it easy to adjust their differences. They often found themselves in opposition and at cross purposes.

Revivalism was a soil full of the germs of life. Some of its many outgrowths bore odd names; but by far the greater number have long since passed away and been forgotten. They perished quickly like the gourd. Some few were absorbed. But there were exceptions. Three Methodist Churches that were revivalistic in their origin still flourish after the lapse of a century. With two of these we are concerned—the Independent Methodists and the Primitive Methodists. We have to show how these forms of Revivalism, after passing through intermediate stages of development largely determined by personal factors, at length settled into permanent and well-ordered churches. The history which we relate will still further illustrate what has already been written concerning Revivalism and its relation to parent Methodism.

Passing and permanent forms of Revivalism.

II

**THE
INDEPENDENT
METHODIST
CHURCHES.**

The
cottage-
church at
Warrington,
1796.

In 1796 the Methodist society at Warrington was peculiarly placed and circumstanced. It was a society apart and largely self-contained. There was no resident minister. Northwich, the circuit town, was twenty-five miles distant, and there were few Methodist societies in the neighbourhood. As a consequence the society was almost entirely dependent on its own officials for its government and edification. Yet the society made no complaint of its isolation. Indeed it was well content with things as they were and long had been. One special feature of the society's life was the regular holding of cottage-meetings—meetings like the famous one in Aldersgate Street at which the heart of John Wesley was 'strangely warmed.' But, in the year 1796 aforesaid, proposals reached the society from the official authorities to the effect that a minister should be placed at Warrington, and that the cottage-meetings should cease. The former proposal was waived, and not carried out until fifteen years later, but the discontinuance of the cottage-meetings was pressed and enforced. One meeting, however, disregarded the mandate and, as a consequence, was no longer regarded as forming part of the society. It continued to meet and make provision for its own sustenance and growth.

Peter
Phillips.

As yet the cottage-church was without a name or any specially distinctive feature calling for one. It was reserved for Peter Phillips (1778—1853), a godly chairmaker of Warrington, to mould its character and guide its future. He was a youth of nineteen, when, in 1797, he first comes before us. Events had driven him to the study of the Christian ministry in the light of the New Testament. The result of his examination, we are told, made him a convinced unbeliever in a separate and salaried ministry. By its previous history, the cottage-church was prepared to take the impress of his views, which ever since have been distinctive of the Independent Methodists. He preached his first sermon in the summer of 1801; and, as his memorial tablet records, for more

than fifty years he continued to preach the gospel, travelling for that purpose more than thirty thousand miles, and preaching upwards of six thousand times.

The
Quaker
Methodists.

Soon a name for the new denomination was forthcoming. Some members of the Society of Friends resident in the neighbourhood were drawn by natural affinity to this offshoot of Methodism. In the lethargy and decline which had come upon their society, they could not but admire a zeal that recalled the heroic times of their own early history. Some of the Friends were led to throw in their lot with Peter Phillips and his church. The union resulted in an interesting interchange of qualities. The Methodists adopted the Quaker's plainness of dress and speech ; the Quakers learned to sing as heartily as the Methodists themselves. Outsiders were quick to fasten on the two factors of this unusual combination and, by a sure instinct, struck out the two names ' Quaker Methodists ' and ' Singing Quakers.' The former name took, as it deserved to do, and one cannot but regret its disappearance from the muster-roll of the Churches.

The First
Conference
of
Federated
Societies,
1806.

The time came when disconnected societies of various origin, after consultation in Manchester, agreed to unite on a federal basis. The name Independent Methodists was taken, and an annual Conference instituted, that of 1806 being reckoned as the first. It seems certain that some of the societies that were parties to this agreement had an earlier origin than the church at Warrington ; but it is due to the continuity, the prominence, and the clear and open history of that church that, with its old Friars Green Chapel, reminiscent of Lorenzo Dow and the pioneers of Total Abstinence, that it came to be regarded as the mother-church of Independent Methodism. It is also a tribute to the cumulative influence of a long and useful life that Peter Phillips is looked upon as the founder of the denomination—an honour to which, while living, he preferred no claim.

In 1833 the associated societies, while reserving the right to retain their local names, agreed to style themselves, The United Churches of Christ. In 1841 the title United Free Gospel Churches was tried ; but it failed to satisfy many

who wished to associate themselves with the great Methodist family in name as well as in spirit. By a unanimous vote, taken in 1898, the generic name Independent Methodist Churches was resumed. The denomination, now numbering 9,614 members, is recognized as one of the branches of Methodism. As such it has its representative at the Methodist Ecumenical Conferences, on the Methodist Concerted Action Committee, and its numerical returns are included in the annual statistics of Methodism. It has its Book-Room at Warrington, its denominational magazine, its hymnal, and its foreign missions in India. During late years efforts have been made with encouraging results to strengthen the Methodist or connexional element in the denomination.

The name Independent Methodists resumed, 1898.

III

The largest offshoot of British Methodism is the **PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHURCH**, formed in 1811 by the amalgamation of the Camp-Meeting Methodists with the Clowesites. Both sections were forms of that Revivalism which was so rife at the opening of the nineteenth century, and both were closely allied in the circumstances of their origin as well as in spirit and purpose. As the origin of the Independent Methodists seems to have turned on the holding of band and cottage-meetings, so the origin of Primitive Methodism turned on the establishment of camp-meetings—a modification of the old field-preaching brought about by American example and influence. Probably we shall find reason to conclude that these special forms of service were the symbols and standards of the cause round which the battle of conflicting tendencies was waged, rather than the cause itself. The cottage-meetings stood for liberty in worship, and the sufficiency of the lay ministry; camp-meetings stood for the paramount claim of evangelism, and for freedom to initiate or vary its methods.

THE
PRIMITIVE
METHODIST
CHURCH.

1800—1811

For our purpose it is needful to go back to the Christmas Day of 1800. Mow Cop's 'bleak and frowning summit' is inseparably associated with the origins of Primitive Methodism. At that time it looked down on a district which bore no good name for religion or morality. Hugh Bourne (born 1772), a moorland carpenter, was now for business purposes fixed for a time in this neglected part of Staffordshire. He had been converted three years before, like Baxter, through the instrumentality of books, and, after a short period of hesitancy, had joined the Methodist Society. He was constitutionally shy, somewhat dour, yet—strange union of opposites—courageous and doggedly persistent. His significance for our history began when he took up the task of trying for the soul of his cousin, Daniel Shubotham, a collier, in whose experience were strange alternations of conviction and dissipation that might almost suggest a double personality. Breaking through his shyness, Bourne spoke freely to his cousin of the spiritual manifestation of Christ to the believer (John xiv. 21), and, in parting, put into his hands a written account of his own conversion. Obedience to the evangelistic impulse made him an enlarger of the Kingdom of God. Shubotham's conversion soon followed, and Hugh Bourne's strength became as the strength of ten from the comradeship of Daniel, who had the boldness and vehemence as yet lacking in himself. Another converted collier was added to their number, and they became as a threefold cord.

The new century began with a local revival which worked a moral transformation until, by May 1801, much of the country lying on the slopes and under the shadow of Mow had been evangelized. The methods pursued were thoroughly revivalistic. 'Conversation-preaching'—direct speaking of man to man on spiritual things—and cottage prayer-meetings, very lively and loud, yet kept under strict regulations, were some of the means employed. The rule that no meeting should continue beyond an hour and

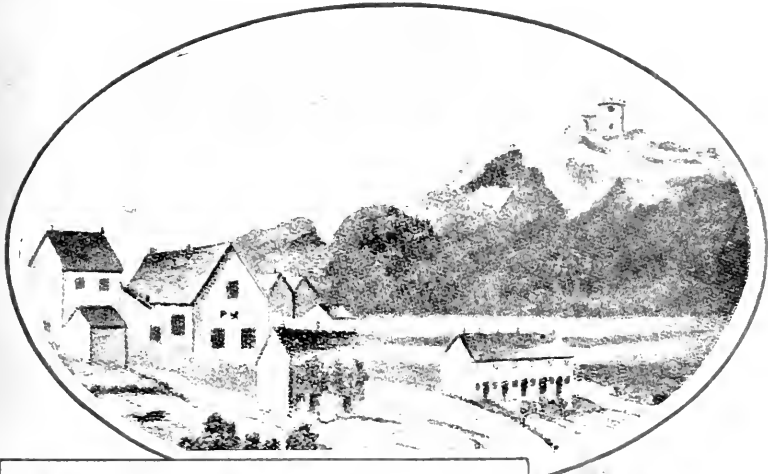
THE
FORMATIVE
PERIOD
1800-11.

Hugh
Bourne.

The
Methodist
Revivalists,
1801-7.

a half sometimes left no time for persons to engage who wished to do so. When at the close of one of these meetings disappointment on this score was expressed, Shubotham remarked: 'You shall have a whole day's praying on Mow some Sunday and then you'll be satisfied.' The promise was afterwards repeated and kept in mind, and no doubt helped on its own fulfilment. Before long Shubotham gave a corner of his garden as site for a chapel, and Hugh Bourne was pressed to superintend its erection. This he did to his cost in anxiety, labour, and money, though, in regard to the last, he was afterwards recouped by the authorities. All this time the revival was nominally a Methodist one; yet it went on without the direction or oversight of the circuit authorities. Classes had been formed, a chapel had been built, and yet they were not recognized. Bourne had begun to preach, and he had charge of one class and often took part in leading another, yet his name never stood on the Burslem circuit plan, nor was he a member of a leaders' meeting, or ever anything more than a chapel trustee. The fact is, the movement was begun by Methodist Revivalists and was irregular. It was only in 1802 that, yielding to strong importunity, the classes were received and the chapel at Harriseahead taken over and duly supplied with preachers and the sacraments. All this illustrates in a striking way the singular relation that existed at the time between official Methodism and the freer Revivalism that was at its skirts rather than in its bosom.

In 1804 Mow was visited by a second revival, which extended to Tunstall and other parts of the Burslem Circuit. The revival was largely the outcome of two visits paid by the Revivalists of Stockport to Congleton. They spoke much on Christian Perfection and pressed it upon the attention of believers as an attainable experience. The Harriseahead contingent caught the fire, and at a memorable love-feast shortly afterwards held there, James Steele, a leading official from Tunstall, was, to use Bourne's words, 'turned into a Revivalist.' A remarkable work of grace broke out in Tunstall which is noteworthy as resulting in the con-



Thursday February 13
1812
He called a meeting and
made plans for the next
Quarter and made some
other regulations. In partic-
ular he took the name
of the Society of the
Primitive Methodists

MAY, 1810

But we desire to hear of thee
What thou thinkst. It is our will
Learning thou art we know that
even where it is, we are against!

Act. 1830. 22

A H E

Primitive Methodist Connexion,
First camp meeting held May 31, 1807
First class formed in March, 1810

August, 1809.

Children's children are the crown of
old men, and the glory of children
are their fathers. Prov. xxi. 6

March 1810

Mow Cop, where the famous camp-meeting was held.
EXTRACT FROM BOURNE'S JOURNAL.

EARLY CLASS-TICKETS OF THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CONNEXION.

version of William Clowes, a master-builder of Primitive Methodism, and of others who were to do it yeoman service.

A greater contrast than that between Bourne and Clowes (born 1780) cannot well be imagined. The contrast was apparent at a glance. They were different in form, carriage, and facial feature; but there were much deeper differences than these. Bourne had a mind more vigorous, better disciplined and furnished with knowledge; but Clowes had a richer emotional nature, a livelier imagination, a more fluent utterance; he was also stronger in the social qualities, and in that indefinable but very real thing we are accustomed to call personal magnetism. His soul was 'full of music'; and he had a voice which in some of its inflections could search the soul, and an eye before which the mocker and would-be persecutor often quailed. In his unregenerate days he had followed pleasure only too well. When in Hull working at his trade as a potter, through his own folly he fell into the hands of the press-gang, and was only freed by the interposition of friends. Thoroughly alarmed, he lost no time in returning to Tunstall, where the revival of 1805 was in progress. Conviction came upon him like a strong man armed, and for a time his distress was great. But his deliverance was just as great, and the change it produced unmistakable. Conversion in his case was like some great upheaval of nature which changes the very contours of the landscape. His growth in Christian experience and knowledge was rapid. He discharged his debts, fasted and prayed, drew up rules for holy living, opened his house for prayer-meetings, took part in efforts for repressing Sabbath-breaking, became an active member of a Tract Mission, and as such walked many miles and did real evangelistic work in the homes of the people. He also became the leader of two classes, and in course of time his initials appeared on the plan as an exhorter.

William
Clowes.

So far the movement, with HARRISEHEAD as its centre, differed little from many similar local movements elsewhere. The day's praying on Mow Cop was still *in nubibus*, and no one knew when, or precisely how, it was to be brought

Lorenzo
Dow.

about ; for there were hindrances. But the coming of Lorenzo Dow to these parts helped to solve the problem. Soon after his arrival from America on his first visit to this country (Christmas 1805), Peter Phillips, almost by chance, heard him preach in a New Connexion Chapel in Liverpool, and gave him an invitation to Warrington, offering to place Friars Green Chapel at his service. It was well that in Peter Phillips' hospitable home Dow found shelter and a base for his evangelistic work, for he was almost friendless, and had no certain prospects. So far from giving him recognition, the leaders of Methodism (Dr. Adam Clarke excepted) regarded him, ecclesiastically, as an undesirable alien, as one who was irregular in his movements and the cause of irregularity in others. Though the attitude of official Methodism did not close *all* Methodist chapels against Dow, it obliged him to rely mainly upon those who were outside Methodism, or on that section of its societies in closest sympathy with Revivalism. Dow laboured extensively in South Lancashire and East Cheshire. He was an enigma to many, and they eyed him askance. His appearance at first sight was not prepossessing. He was of sallow complexion and wore his hair so long that it hung over his shoulders. He had, too, his oddities of speech and manner. One hardly knows what to make of the alleged instances of his discernment of character and of a prevision of the future amounting to second-sight. It is certain they were believed in at the time, and had their influence in inducing many to see and hear him. Lorenzo Dow was an extraordinary man, if for no other reason than that, as an evangelist, his journeyings were almost continental in their range. He itinerated extensively in Ireland in times of great political unrest, running continual risks. He made a preaching tour in Canada and travelled thousands of miles in the United States, enduring hardships and encountering perils, so that we marvel how a man who lived only fifty-six years should have done and suffered so much. But what chiefly concerns us here is Dow's share in the establishment of English camp-meetings.

Camp-meetings began in America in 1799. In his sermons and addresses while in England Dow often referred to these meetings, and the good they had been the means of accomplishing. Yielding to the request of Hugh Bourne and his friends, Dow visited Harriseahead, and in the service specially dwelt on the usefulness of camp-meetings. The next morning at five and nine o'clock he gave farewell addresses at Congleton, at which both Bourne and Clowes were present. The former bought two pamphlets, one a *Defence of Camp-meetings* by S. K. Jennings, the other, by Dow himself, giving an account of their origin and the method of conducting them. This was in April 1807, and, on May 31, the first English camp-meeting was held. Dow's own evidence, as given in an entry in his *Journal* made on his second visit to England in 1818, is conclusive as to his influence in precipitating the movement :

When I was in this country before, a meeting on Mow Hill had been talked about, and I was drawn to speak particularly on the origin, progress, and consequences of camp-meetings in America. This affected the minds of the people who were in the spirit of a revival, and, from a combination of antecedent circumstances, they now resolved to spend a whole Sabbath Day together in prayer for an outpouring of the Spirit of God, which they had agitated, but could not bring to bear until now.

In his own mind, Hugh Bourne had planned for a camp-meeting to be held at Norton-on-the-Moors in August to counteract the evils of the Wake. But the Harriseahead people were now eager to carry out their long-cherished desire to have a day's praying on Mow ; and, finding that a favourer of camp-meetings was planned at Harriseahead on May 31, it was at once decided it should be held on that day, Hugh Bourne gladly acquiescing. The appointed day came. Rain fell in the early morning as Clowes made his way to the ground ; but soon the sky cleared. Dow's public references to camp-meetings and his widely circulated pamphlets had done their work, so that people came from

First camp
meeting,
May 31,
1807.

far and near to learn what a camp-meeting was like. The Independent Methodists (as they were now called) were present in force. Peter Phillips and his wife had driven from Warrington in time for the opening at six o'clock, and there were those who took part that day who had come from Yorkshire and even from Ireland. Before the day was over it was necessary to have four preaching-stands, for no ordinary voice was equal to the compassing of such an audience. The stands were but rude cairns built up for the occasion out of Mow's own fragments, but from these vantage-points four distinct congregations were simultaneously reached. Clowes, who had taken an active part in the day's proceedings, returned to his home at nightfall weary, but thankful for what he had seen and heard, and especially thankful for the converts that had been won.

Camp meetings and the law of the land, in 1807.

The camp-meeting on Mow had been allowed, apparently on the understanding that as it was the first so also it would be the last. When, therefore, it was published that a second and third would shortly be held, official opposition began to show itself, and gradually became more pronounced. The preachers of the Burslem and Macclesfield Circuits put out bills against camp-meetings. Many who had favoured the movement now wavered and held back. Nor was this all; opposition threatened from an entirely different quarter. The Conventicle and Five Mile Acts were still in force against unlicensed preachers, and a master-potter of the neighbourhood announced his intention of setting the law in motion to put down camp-meetings. This might have proved no mere empty threat; for Lord Ellenborough, presiding over the Queen's Bench, had expressed doubts whether the Toleration Act really shielded any except those who were ministers of one congregation who had been duly ordained to that office. Such views as these found embodiment in Lord Sidmouth's reactionary Bill (1811) to amend the Toleration Act, which happily was thrown out, having effected nothing except calling into existence The Protestant Society for the Protection of Religious Liberty. In the very year the obnoxious Con-

venticle and Five Mile Acts were repealed (1812) James Wood suffered distraint of goods in default of payment of a fine of £20, for preaching in the street of Audlem. True, the judgement of the lower court was reversed on appeal, and this reversal was sustained on a counter-appeal to the King's Bench. But all this goes to show that when camp-meetings began in England their promoters and abettors had risks to run from the straining of the laws then on the statute-book. The threat of the master-potter might have deterred a man less resolute than Hugh Bourne from going forward. The future of camp-meetings and all it involved hung in the balance. We can see now that the issue largely depended upon the personal qualities of one man—Hugh Bourne. To secure himself as far as possible, he went to the trouble and expense of procuring a licence for the ground of the second Mow camp-meeting (July 19), erecting thereon a wooden tabernacle and two tents: he also procured a preacher's licence for himself. The master-potter rode blustering on to the camp-ground, but after some conversation with Hugh Bourne rode quietly away. His eye had probably caught sight of the notice warning the disturbers of a lawful assembly of the pains and penalties they incurred.

Mow
second
camp-
meeting,
July 19,
1807.

Of all the early camp-meetings the third, held at Norton-on-the-Moors on August 23, is, historically, the most important; for, before it was held, the Liverpool Conference of 1807 had given its judgement, and the judgement was adverse. Naturally, the preachers of the Burslem Circuit, the storm-centre of the movement, lost no time on their return in endeavouring to preserve their societies from complicity with what the Conference had pronounced to be 'highly improper and likely to be of considerable mischief.' The result was that Bourne found himself with a diminished number of active supporters. Norton camp-meeting was duly held on the days of the parish Wake, and though there were some notable absentees and a shortage of labourers, it fulfilled its purpose, and was pronounced a success. Men naturally turn to Mow Cop rather than to Norton, for there is more to engage and impress the imagina-

Norton, the
crucial
camp-
meeting.

tion in the former ; but to those who judge of events by their significance and results, Norton overtops Mow. It is not always the *first* step that is the most difficult : sometimes it is harder to go on than to begin.

The
expulsion of
Hugh
Bourne.

The direct, but deferred, consequence of Norton camp-meeting was the expulsion of Hugh Bourne by the June Quarterly Meeting of 1808, ostensibly on the ground that he had not attended his class. The charge was true in fact ; though, had Bourne been permitted to answer for himself, he might have pleaded in extenuation that he had been engaged on the Sundays in evangelizing here and there, and, when the season came round, in holding camp-meetings. But the plea might not have been admitted, since Bourne was not an accredited preacher, and camp-meetings were discountenanced. We shall probably be right in concluding that the real reason of his unchurching was afterwards disclosed to him by his superintendent, viz. ‘That he had a tendency to set up other than the ordinary worship.’

Camp-
meeting
Methodists,
1808-11

The most satisfactory feature of this episode was Bourne’s own conduct in relation to it. He uttered no shrill complaints, attempted no schism, but paid up his arrears of class-money and applied himself with redoubled energy to his work. For it should be noted that, soon after his expulsion, he gave up his secular calling that he might devote himself entirely to evangelistic work. His carefully written journals of the time reveal an amount of labour in journeying, visiting, and preaching that raises our astonishment. In 1809 he engaged James Crawfoot as an itinerating evangelist, giving him instructions to labour alternately in East Cheshire and West Staffordshire, and to advise his converts to join the churches to which they felt most inclined.

Crawfoot
the
mystic.

Crawfoot had lost his position as a local preacher in the Northwich Circuit through having taken the pulpit for the Independent Methodists at Warrington one week-night when they were disappointed of a preacher. His monthly meetings in the forest of Delamere were famous in their

way, and had earned for his followers the names of ' Magic ' and ' Forest Methodists.' Crawfoot was a man of mystical bent, and talked much with Bourne, who drank in his words, of the deep things of God—of the power to be exercised by faith in silent waiting upon God, of the true nature of spiritual conflicts, of taking the burden of others, and such-like themes. Bourne was the more ready to assimilate such teaching because of its affinity with what he had imbibed from his early reading in the books of the ' primitive Quakers' and his intercourse with those who were still locally known as the Quaker Methodists. With these his relations were close and frequent. In one of his many visits to Warrington, we find him assisting at a kind of round-table conference for the purpose of discussing the best means of helping forward the revival begun by Lorenzo Dow, and extended by the Camp-meeting Methodists. Besides Peter Phillips and Bourne himself, Dr. Paul Johnson of Dublin and Mr. Sigston (of Leeds ?) were present. As a result of this conference, it was decided to publish and widely circulate the *Life of Benjamin Abbott*, and Bourne went to Leeds on foot to see after making some additions to the book.

As yet the Camp-meeting Methodists were not a distinct community, but rather a mission-band whose labours were auxiliary to those of the regular churches. In some cases, as at Ramsor in 1809–10, they supplemented the regular fortnightly services by supplying the pulpit on the alternate Sunday. As W. F. Slater says: ' The societies which Bourne formed were allowed to go under the protection of the older body.'¹ In the nature of things this *modus vivendi* could not last long; nor did it. The inevitable change turned on the refusal of the Burslem Circuit to take over the Stanley Society. The terms, being unacceptable, were declined. March 1810 has come to be popularly and officially regarded as the beginning of Primitive Methodism, but, strictly speaking, it only marks the date when the Camp-meeting Methodists became a distinct community. Written

Camp-meeting Methodists a distinct community, March 1810.

¹ Slater, *A Manual of Modern Church History* (1895), p. 181.

plans were now prepared whereon are found Ramsor and Wootton in Derbyshire and the Dowite society of Risley in Lancashire; while the fact that Warrington, Stockton Heath, and Macclesfield also stand on the plan shows that interchanges between the Independent and Camp-meeting Methodists still went on.

The
Clowesites
1810-11.

In June 1810 William Clowes was deprived of his plan, and in the September following his ticket of membership was withheld, on the ground that he attended camp-meetings contrary to the Methodist discipline. Many of the members of his classes, being unwilling to part from their leader, insisted upon sharing his exile. A home was found for the unchurched in the house of Mr. Smith, Tunstall, where for two years a weekly service for prayer and preaching had been held. Clowes had been accustomed to attend these lively Friday evening services, at which Hugh Bourne and others of the Camp-meeting Methodists were frequently present. Probably we shall not be far wrong in concluding that it was Clowes' connexion with this Revivalist conventicle, as much as his frequenting the Ramsor camp-meetings, that brought on him the major penalty. This view is confirmed by the fact that James Steele, of Tunstall, was deprived of his offices of Sunday-school superintendent and the leadership of two classes, because, it was alleged, he had attended a love-feast in Mr. Smith's kitchen. The local historian, in referring to these disciplinary measures, says they were taken against 'a party' whose evident purpose was 'the recovery of the simplicity and uniformity of Primitive Methodism.' James Steele's severance from the Methodist Society involved the loss of many of his members and scholars who voluntarily went out with him. The kitchen-church soon became the centre of a small circuit. Two working men contributed ten shillings a week, in order that Clowes might give all his time to evangelization. Some of the incidents which occurred in these early missionary excursions are recorded in Clowes' published *Journal*. The kitchen having become too small to accommodate the Clowesites, as they were called, a remove was made to a

warehouse. Preparations were soon made for building a chapel in Tunstall of such a form that it could easily be converted into four small dwelling-houses.

1811—1843

Before the opening of the Tunstall chapel, July 13, 1811, an important event occurred. The Clowesites, reinforced by James Steele and his followers, resolved on making common cause with the Camp-meeting Methodists. A joint meeting was held on May 30, which agreed on union and arranged for society tickets to be printed. The tickets simply bore the date 'May, 1811,' and the significant text: 'But we desire to hear of thee what thou thinkest: for as concerning this sect, we know that everywhere it is spoken against.' Subsequent meetings on July 26, 1811, and February 13, 1812, put the cope-stone and name-plate on the new fabric; for at the former meeting it was decided that Crawfoot and Clowes should be fully given up to the work of preaching, and be supported by the contributions of the 200 members who constituted the new denomination. At the latter meeting the name Primitive Methodist was taken.

THE HOME MISSIONARY PERIOD OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM. Circuit enterprise, 1811-43. The Clowesites and Camp-meeting Methodists unite.

At first the new denomination did not spread widely or rapidly. It would be a mistake to figure it as devouring its way like fire amongst dry stubble or bounding forward like a young athlete. Until 1816 the entire Connexion was comprised in Tunstall Circuit, and its numerical progress was slow. The social condition of the country at the time, the sparse population of the district in which the community was planted and had to do its work, and other external causes, may go some way to account for the inconsiderable advance made in these first years. But Bourne had his own characteristic explanation to offer. It was, he held, the policy deliberately adopted by the majority that was responsible for such comparatively meagre results. Thus early the denomination had its problems to face: to choose between rival policies. The old antithesis still

'The Tunstall non-mission law.'

persisted in a somewhat changed form. The question now was, whether consolidation or extension should be the watchword of the newly formed community. The majority—of which James Steele, the Circuit Steward, was probably the most influential representative—favoured the policy of consolidation. It was said :

Let us move cautiously ; not weaken ourselves by covering too much ground, but confine ourselves within our present limits, and give our strength to the building up of our societies.

To Bourne this policy was extremely distasteful. To him, with his strong convictions of the necessity of aggressive evangelization, it seemed anomalous and nothing less than a suicidal policy for Primitive Methodism to begin its career by surrendering, or even holding in abeyance, the very principle which had given it birth. Had Clowes been free to follow his bent, he, too, would have elected to be ‘ a missionary at large ’ instead of being, as was his lot until 1819, a ‘ round preacher ’ of the Tunstall Circuit. In this division of opinion it is not suggested there was any bitterness of feeling or any rupture of the bonds of good fellowship. Consolidation was duly attended to. Chapels were built at Talke, Cloud, Rocester, and other places. Yielding to strong pressure from the societies, Bourne drew up rules for their government. After careful drafting, the rules were submitted to all the members and their judgements thereon respectfully considered. The rules in their amended form were confirmed in January 1814. It is interesting to find embedded in one of these rules that sentence of Wesley which Bourne had found so helpful in his own experience : ‘ It is certain that opinion is not religion, not even right opinion.’ One cannot but note, too, the catholic and altruistic spirit which breathes in the counsel :

Therefore walk in wisdom to them that are without, and honour all men, highly esteeming pious people of all denominations ; and endeavour to make this society a blessing unto all people.

In these Rules, which not only were for the people, but also from and by the people, a democratic church-basis was laid, broader, perhaps, than the denomination has even yet been able to cover. Ever fertile in practical ideas, Bourne sought to extend the work of God by setting on foot a Tract Mission at Hlland, in Derbyshire, out of which sprang a local revival, and by establishing and providing for Sunday schools, the first one being at Boylestone.

The 'Tunstall non-mission law' was the name given to the prevailing policy by those who did not like it; and it was the ignoring and virtual breaking of this law by certain irregulars that led to a far-reaching extension which Bourne characterized as 'a new founding of the Connexion.' Tunstall had the wisdom to accept the forcing of its hands with a good grace, and, in 1819, took its place as a powerful missionary circuit. Foremost of these irregulars was John Benton. His adhesion to the Connexion more than made up for the loss of Crawfoot, who had withdrawn in 1813, to become the head of some small societies named after himself. The last two of these reunited with Primitive Methodism in 1831, one of their lay pastors, William Mottram, being the grandson of Samuel and Elizabeth Evans, better known as 'Dinah' and 'Seth Bede.' Benton maintained that 'Primitive Methodism should be allowed to go through the nation as it was intended to do.' Like Bourne, he had private means, and not only laboured himself as an evangelist, but often contributed to the support of others. In this case he offered £3 a quarter towards a missionary's salary. His offer was declined, and he declined his plan. When the plan was sent after him, he returned it, after writing the following lines at the back :

A plan from God I have to mind,
A better plan I cannot find:
If you can, pray then let me know,
And round the circuit I will go.

Benton got a thousand copies of Lorenzo Dow's hymn-book printed, and set off to mission on his own account

Benton
breaks the
non-
mission
law, 1814.

among the Staffordshire villages on the borders of Derbyshire. Here he carved out a small circuit which (1814) he handed over to Bourne as the superintendent, and then with Eleazar Hathorn, who had been one of the preachers at the first camp-meeting, he went evangelizing amongst the villages of Derbyshire. Converts were made, such as John Ride and John Harrison, who were to become notable missionaries. With the help of the villagers, Belper was missioned, and a society formed which Bourne soon had the satisfaction of taking over and setting in order. Belper is the Primitive Methodist Antioch; for the lively singing of the villagers through the streets of the town suggested the nickname 'Ranters'—a name much more easily given than shaken off. In this way Benton's disregard of the non-mission law led to the enlargement of Tunstall Circuit, which now reached from Belper, in Derbyshire, to Risley, in Lancashire, and from Roggin Row, in Cheshire, to Wyrley and Cannock, in South Staffordshire.

Whether it were cause or effect or merely a coincidence, it was observed that, with the official suspension of an aggressive policy, there had set in a decline in the effectiveness of camp-meetings. With pain Hugh Bourne saw his old ideal of a camp-meeting with a variety of exercises—much praying, lively singing, and short, pointed speaking—giving way to long preaching, listless hearers, and dwindling companies. To him in his perplexity light again came from the West. One day his friend Peter Phillips put into his hand J. Marsden's *Journal*, in which was the description of a particular camp-meeting held near New York. This suggested to Bourne the holding of camp-meetings with the praying services arranged in a system of praying circles. With this idea before him he sketched out a plan and distributed it amongst the societies, hoping that some might be led to adopt it. A powerful camp-meeting on the new model was held at Mercaston in June 1816, which inaugurated the great revival in the Midlands of 1817-18. Sarah Kirkland, of Mercaston, a very acceptable preacher, had already preached and founded a society in Derby, and

also in Nottingham, where a strong society was now worshipping in a disused factory in the Broad Marsh, and Nottingham soon superseded Derby as the head of the second circuit of the Connexion.

The revival of 1817-18 was ushered in by a great camp-meeting in Nottingham Forest, held on Whit Sunday, 1816. 'Boanerges' Benton was the leader in this revival, though he was assisted by such men as John Wedgwood and John Harrison, and especially by Sarah Kirkland, who was the Connexion's first female travelling preacher. Mr. William Lockwood, of East Bridgford, a gentleman of means and a Methodist local preacher, threw himself heartily into the revival and took his share of persecution. For two or three years he had travelled as a Methodist preacher, and as such had been looked up to by the Camp-meeting Methodists of Staffordshire, because of his known sympathy with their cause. In 1817 the revival was mainly in Nottinghamshire, with extensions into Lincolnshire. Then it turned towards Leicestershire, and Loughborough became a centre for evangelization westward. In 1818 Loughborough became the third circuit. On its plan of 1822 are forty-two places situate in five counties, among the places being Barrow, Leicester, and Coventry. In this revival-movement seventy-five places were visited, and had regular services on the Lord's Day established at them. Many preachers were raised up, who, in their turn, became the enlargers of the Connexion, including such men of note as Thomas King and the three Garners. Hugh Bourne was General Superintendent of the Connexion from 1814 to 1819, and as such the revival added greatly to his journeyings and labours. We see him in his journals moving about amongst the newly formed societies, overseeing matters in his own exact, methodic way. Clowes, too, was privileged to take part in the revival, and for him to take part was to give it impetus. In 1817, and again in the following year, he itinerated through the revival area, and his *Journal* bears witness to the remarkable scenes in which he moved. Brief though his visits were, they were crowded with labour and full of

The great
Revival in
the
Midlands,
1817-18.

incident. Finally, as if to round off the revival and link it with its fontal beginnings, Lorenzo Dow in 1818 went over the track of the revival in company with Hugh Bourne and Dorothy Ripley, the Quakeress, beginning at Leicester and ending at Barlestone camp-meeting.

We have dealt at some length with the revival in the Midlands of 1817-18, because it was one and the first of a series of revivals which largely determined the future whereabouts of Primitive Methodism, and in other ways left abiding results. It had features in common with the great revivals which succeeded it—revivals equally significant, though we have not the space to follow them in detail. This one may stand as a sample of the rest. Moreover, this first revival was so timely in its visitation, so answerable to the actual conditions of the district it affected, as to encourage the belief that it was indeed disposed, timed, and located by Divine Providence. It followed close upon the track of the Luddites and the Levellers. A variety of causes had contributed to produce widespread wretchedness, discontent, and disaffection. Among these causes may be named the long war with its bitter legacy of evil, the wholesale enclosure of the commons, the iniquitous corn law, a succession of bad harvests, and the abuses of a corrupt and expensive Government. To these things there must be added the far-reaching effects of the industrial revolution. Numbers of misguided, desperate men banded themselves together to destroy the machines which they blamed for loss of employment or lowered wages. In June 1817 six men were hanged at Leicester for a night-attack on a factory at Loughborough. The Luddites were put down; but the roots of disaffection remained, and the disaffection ever took on a more political complexion. Trade outrages threatened to turn into insurrection. The extremists looked forward to a general rising, and hence were called 'Levellers.' The more moderate chose the title and the rôle of 'Radical Reformers.' The Government repressed both with a heavy hand, not scrupling to make use of informers and *agents provocateurs* to effect its purpose. In

The
Luddites
and
Levellers.

November 1817 three men, the victims of odious espionage, were hanged and afterwards beheaded at Derby. At Peterloo the Government won an inglorious victory over the Radical Reformers by its armed attack on the great gathering in St. Peter's Field, Manchester.

August 26,
1819.

It was amid such conditions and incidents as these that the revival won its way. The older denominations had their own special anxieties at this time. They had to keep their societies together, relieve their necessitous poor, and especially endeavour to keep them from yielding to bitterness and despair, or from being 'drawn away and enticed' by the prevailing spirit of lawlessness. But, from the very nature of the case, it was otherwise with the missionaries of the revival. They had no societies to shield; no chapels and few rented rooms in which to worship. They had perforce to carry on an open-air propaganda and seek to form their societies from amongst those who were outside the churches. They had to go right down amongst the people and come in touch with Luddites and Levellers, many of whom, as reliable evidence shows, were laid hold of and brought to a better mind. They had no difficulty in getting an audience. Not only at camp-meetings, but at open-air services in town or village—sometimes even early in the morning—their congregations were usually extraordinarily large. In their journals the missionaries often express astonishment at the numbers who came together to hear them, and, though they may sometimes be wrong when they venture on an estimate of numbers, the fact that crowds waited on their preaching is incontestable. Curiosity, and the longing to escape from the dull sense of misery, largely explain those crowds. The very nickname the missionaries were known by—opprobrious though it was—served to gain for them a readier hearing. The name told little of the character and purpose of the strangers. Many suspected they were but Levellers or Radical Reformers in disguise, who chose this method to spread their views and gain adherents. So curiosity was piqued, and as soon as the word went round, 'The Ranters have come!'

The success
of the
Revival.

men came together on village-greens or market-places. As a rule they were not hostile crowds the missionaries addressed—at least, not in the manufacturing districts. It was another matter when their advent waked up some sleepy conservative market-town or cathedral city, or when they delivered their message to the dependants and hangers-on of some great landed proprietor. Then they might count on a rough reception. It was at Grantham that John Wedgwood was pulled down while preaching at the market-cross and led off to prison ; it was at Newark Mr. Lockwood was played upon by the town fire-engine as though he had been a conflagration, until, half-drowned, he could but gurgle, ‘ You can’t quench the fire within ! ’ ; it was at Lincoln Mr. Clowes was made to bleed by a stone some miscreant had flung ; it was at ducal Bottesford the church bells and a brass band were both requisitioned to drown the preacher’s voice ; and it was at Shelford, another aristocratic preserve, where two poor ‘ mud-and-stud ’ parish cottages were pulled down in succession because their occupants had opened them for preaching. The cases of persecution thus glanced at are not a tithe of those which actually occurred during the great revival, and these are alluded to simply to show the kind of localities which were the favourite habitat of persecution, and the sort of people who were its ministrants. What was true at the beginning remained true to the end of the era of persecution.

Persecution.

1819 an epochal year.

Book-Room established.

First Conference, 1820.

The year of Peterloo, 1819, was a notable period in Primitive Methodism. It was a year of endings and beginnings—a junction of converging and radiating lines. It saw the issuing of the denominational magazine, which, since 1820, has been uninterruptedly published. Hugh Bourne was Editor until 1842, and, as General Book Steward, his brother James presided over the Book-Room established in 1821 at Bemersley, in Staffordshire. The same year saw also the holding of the Preparatory Meeting at which the main lines of connexional polity were laid down. That meeting decided that the first Conference of 1820 should be constituted of delegates from the circuits in the pro-

portion of two laymen to one travelling preacher. The 'two-to-one principle,' as it was called, becoming incorporated in the Connexion's deed-poll, henceforth determined the constitution of the Conference, and has largely served to differentiate the polity of the Connexion. It was also in January 1819 that Clowes entered Hull by invitation. In six months Hull was to become the fourth circuit, and have a chapel ready for opening. The entry into Hull is interesting as marking a period. Missionaries from Nottingham had already reached Gainsborough and Trent side ; and so the movement, which began hard by the sources of the Trent, and followed the course of that river, had now, like the Trent, reached the estuary of the Humber and the sea.

The years 1819 to 1824 were years of remarkable geographical extension and numerical increase. In 1819 four circuits constituted the entire Connexion. Of these Tunstall, Nottingham, and Hull were to be the chief dynamic centres of that aggressive evangelism of which we see the results in the seventy-two independent stations of 1824. These were now grouped into four Districts, and district representation henceforward took the place of direct circuit representation in Conference. On its resumption in 1819 of missionary labours, Tunstall turned to Manchester, South Staffordshire, and to the coal and iron district of South Shropshire. It also had its remarkable Cheshire Mission begun by John Wedgwood. The results of this forward movement were soon seen in the formation of the Darlaston, Oakengates, Burland, and Manchester Circuits which, in their turn, became powerful agents of propagandism. From Darlaston has sprung the present West Midland District. Burland missioned Chester and Oswestry, lent a helping hand to the missioning of Liverpool, and, later on, had its distant Northampton Mission. By 1842 there were eight circuits on the stations which derived their origin from Manchester, one of these being the Isle of Man.

Extension,
1819-24.

Tunstall
circuit's
missions.

Nottingham directed its attention to Lincolnshire. Its missionaries skirted the Wash and entered Norfolk, where

Nottingham
circuit's
missions.

by 1824 four circuits and several branches had been formed. Sheffield, missioned by Nottingham, had also by 1824 carved out no less than seven circuits, chiefly in the West Riding, but also including Chesterfield and Bradwell, in Derbyshire.

Hull
circuit's
missions.

Hull operated north of an imaginary line stretching across the country from the Humber to the mouth of the Ribble. As early as 1822, Clowes, who was Hull's leading missionary, observed that Hull Circuit reached from Spurn Point to Carlisle, and he could preach his way night by night from Newcastle to Hull on ground he had himself missioned and 'broken up.' By 1824 Hull had made seventeen circuits (including the entire newly formed Sunderland District), with an aggregate membership of 7,660, while it still retained 3,772 members, and had thirty preachers under its control for the working of its many branches and missions. The result of all this aggressive activity is seen in the numerical returns. In 1819 the entire membership of the Connexion was 7,842. By 1824 it had risen to 33,507; so that in the short space of four years the Connexion had more than quadrupled its numbers. Such progress greatly exceeded that of early Methodism.

Methods.

How was it all done? Certainly not by a Moltke-like study and application of the principles and methods of evangelistic strategy and tactics. We are dealing here with results, with dry facts and figures; but, when we read the intimate journals of the men who did the work, or of those who came under its influence, we feel we are moving in the region of spiritual forces. There were hard-headed, far-seeing officials at the three divisional headquarters, no doubt; but the missionaries themselves, who travelled on foot and preached from county to county, were simple evangelists, like Wedgwood and Braithwaite, Oxtoby and Batty: men of one idea, which possessed them, and made them indifferent equally to the good and to the evil things of the world—to its toil, privations, and often to its contumely and ill-treatment. We cannot but feel that strong faith, prayer, zeal, allied with common-sense, cheerfulness, and tact, had a great deal more to do with the simultaneous

revivals of 1819-24 and those which followed than had deeply considered methods of proselytism. It is thoughts like these which make the period 1811-43 an object-lesson still, not merely to Primitive Methodism, but to Methodism in general, anxious as it is to give practical exhibition of its possession still of the 'vivid evangelic feeling'—the 'true missionary rudiment,' as Isaac Taylor called it. So far as method does at all enter into the explanation of the results achieved, this may be said : The covering of the midland and northern counties of England was, no doubt, furthered by the strategic position of the three circuits, which formed so many bases for the distinct but combined movements. If it were not strategy, it looks much like it. We have three divisions of the same army, not getting into one another's way, but leaning on their own particular base and having their own distinct tract of country in which to operate. Then, too, the system of branches and circuit missions followed was excellently adapted for rapid extension. By the system of branches, introduced in 1819, a powerful circuit, like the three primary ones already named, could oversee and lend a hand to the missions they had established. The branches' affairs came under the purview of the Home Branch, as it was called. Interchanges of preachers amongst the various branches were easily effected. The monetary deficiencies of weak branches could be made good, and when a branch was strong enough to be self-supporting, it was let go with a blessing to become itself the mother of circuits.

In the years 1825-8 the Connexion traversed a crisis—the most serious in its century's history, and compared with which the one passed through at its beginning was as nothing. The merely nominal increase of seventy-five members reported in 1825, the 'No Returns' of the two following years, and the heavy decrease of 1,897 reported for the year 1828, show plainly that something was seriously wrong. Other grave symptoms were not wanting. Some of the circuits were heavily in debt ; familiar names unaccountably disappear ; and the preparation of the Connexional deed-poll was suspended ; it was not signed and sealed until February 1830.

A
connexional
crisis,
1825-8.

The Connexion had grown too fast for its strength, and it needed building up. There was also internal trouble calling for surgery. 'They want discipline,' said a candid critic of the Primitives—the Rev. Daniel Isaac, Wesleyan minister. It was true: they *did* want discipline, and they got what they wanted—or needed. The state of things occasioned Hugh Bourne acute distress. He now ranged himself on the side of the consolidators and became the unflinching advocate of stern measures. His hand can be seen in the enactments made at this time with a view to preserve the Connexion. By the passing of the stringent rule of 1826 that 'No Circuit must be allowed to run into debt,' little encouragement was held out to idle or incompetent preachers. In one year, we are told, thirty 'runners-out of circuits were parted with.' Not all of these were necessarily idle or incompetent. Some of them were worthy men with families which they now saw no reasonable prospect of supporting. But the excessive demand for labourers undoubtedly had led to the employment of some who were unfitted for their position. The ministry needed purging, and 'Bourne's purge' was administered. Men who had crept in from other churches—ambitious, discontented, factious, disturbers of the peace of the societies and the main hindrances to their progress, were dealt with summarily. By 1829 the worst was over: the crisis was past. The Scotter Conference of that year was declared to have been the best the Connexion ever had. At that village Conference it was decided that Hull and Tunstall Circuits should combine to send missionaries to the United States, and the deed-poll, after being read and approved, was ordered to be executed.

The crisis did not interrupt the geographical advance of the Connexion, though it served to retard its numerical progress. The Midlands seem to have been the main area of the disturbance, and its tremors scarcely affected the distant outposts. Even while it was in progress, Clowes was doing hard mission-work in London and in Cornwall on behalf of Hull Circuit. Various circuits by their distant missions in South Wales and in Gloucestershire and Wilt-

shire were securing a foothold for the great extension that went on in the 'thirties.

The outstanding feature of this time is the advance alike made in East Anglia and in Wessex. It was in 1825 that—largely from considerations of economy and convenience—the six circuits in Norfolk were grouped as a district with thirteen ministers and an aggregate membership of 1,546. By 1842, under the labours of such men as John Smith, and especially of Robert Key, a famous pioneer, it comprised nineteen circuits with fifty-nine ministers and 9,072 members. It had covered East Anglia, penetrated into Essex and Hunts, and from 1828 to 1834 London, with its Kent missions, stood on its stations. By the self-denying evangelization of these years work was done amongst the peasantry of East Anglia which abides. The religious, social, and even political results of that work will compare with what has been achieved by the Connexion for the miners of Northumberland and Durham, or the fishermen of Filey and Flamborough. And yet pioneering was carried on amidst considerable social unrest and persecution. These were the days of the Rick-burners. Often did the missionary see the distant glow in the sky which told that the emissaries of 'Captain Swing' were at their fell work, and that the farmer's stacks of precious grain and farm-buildings were going up in flame.

Progress in
East
Anglia,
1825-42.

But it was in Wilts, Berks, and Hants that persecution was hottest. In any persecution-map these charming southern counties would have to be heavily shaded; for there persecution was most frequently encountered, and in its worst forms. The peasantry in their blindness did not know who were their best friends. Thomas Russell, an early pioneer, was more than twice or thrice brutally handled by the mob. A cruel boycott prevailed. Local preachers were evicted from their farms. Cottagers who sheltered the missionary or lent their rooms for religious services did so at the risk of losing their employment or being turned out of their dwelling. To save his people from such consequences the preacher had often to walk long distances to secure a night's

Fierce
persecution
in
Brinkworth
Circuit.

lodging, and often had to pinch and starve. Worse even than this was the persecution that went on under the forms of law. In 1830 T. Russell was sentenced to serve three months with hard labour in Abingdon House of Correction for selling some books without a licence. What he sold were connexional hymn-books and magazines, and they were sold to a constable-informer. In 1834 Messrs. Ride and Bishop, two leading ministers, were confined twelve days in Winchester Jail while finding bail to appear at the Sessions for holding a missionary meeting in the open air, as the cottages available for services would not accommodate the congregations expected. The plot of ground on which the missionary meeting was held was one which had frequently been used for open-air services.

We are not writing a martyrology, or pages might easily be filled with the recital of facts such as these illustrative of the social condition of those counties in the 'thirties of last century, and of the part played by squire and parson in those evil days.' The experiences of these early years of pioneering were burnt into the memory of the denomination and largely served to determine its attitude towards all questions affecting the liberty and welfare of the people.

Despite all oppositions and hindrances, so much progress was made in the southern counties that Brinkworth, which had been made a circuit in 1826, became in 1835 the head of a new District including stations as widely separated as Worcester and St. Ives in Cornwall, Luton in Bedfordshire, and Tredegar in South Wales. The denomination took a firm hold of Berkshire, the county for which Ride and Russell wrestled in prayer on the ridge of Ashdown, so that now there are probably more Primitive Methodist congregations in the county than there are belonging to any other religious community.

Looking back for a moment upon what must be regarded as pre-eminently the missionary period of the denomination's history, certain minor factors contributory to the success of the movement should not be overlooked. As Primi-

Progress in
Wessex,
1825-42.

Minor
factors in
the success
of the
period,

tive Methodism was revivalistic in its origin, one might naturally expect to find its progress furthered in various localities by those whose sympathies were with this form of religious life. Such indeed we find to have been the case. It was at the invitation of one Methodist revivalist that Clowes entered North Shields, and of a number of such that he began his mission in Leeds. In many cases sympathizers attached themselves by choice to the new denomination, as did young John Flesher at Silsden ; in other cases they were 'dealt with' for showing active sympathy with the 'Ranters,' and afterwards took service with them, as was the case with Thomas Batty, 'the Apostle of Weardale.' On the other hand, it should not be forgotten that hundreds who were won by Primitive Methodist agency did not choose, for various reasons, to identify themselves with the denomination.

Another striking feature in the evangelization of the early period was the extent to which women participated in the work. The fact has not had full justice done to it in the earlier histories of Primitive Methodism. But the fact is of some consequence for the light it throws on the early attitude of the denomination towards female preaching and for the question it raises : How far did this extensive employment of women, in a work usually regarded as exclusively belonging to men, really contribute to its success ? Primitive Methodism began with the belief practically held that there was no sex limitation in church work. Hence, not only were females extensively employed as local preachers, as the early plans show, but also as travelling preachers and missionaries. It is only when we carefully examine the *Minutes of Conference* and get behind the bare initials of the preachers which often serve to disguise their sex, that we become aware how large was the use made of female agency. From the *Minutes* of 1832 we can make out that thirteen preachers on the stations were women, and there may have been years when the number was even larger. Some of these, like Mary Porteous and Elizabeth Smith, as their published memoirs testify, came not one whit behind the most laborious

Women
preachers.

and successful missionaries of the hardier sex, and the record of the entire class of which they were the eminent representatives is one of which the denomination has no reason to be ashamed. The closest search reveals scarcely any flaw. For blamelessness of life and devotion they will compare favourably with their brethren. With insignificant exceptions they were exempt from persecution. The fact points to the instinctive chivalry even of the rough crowds of pre-Victorian days, as well as to the prudence and tact of the women-preachers themselves. Undoubtedly, the extensive employment of women in evangelistic labour was one of the factors in its success as well as one of its most marked features.

Service of
song.

Brief mention, too, should be made in this connexion of the service of song which played so important a part in the missionary period. The early Hymn-Book, with its lively stirring tunes, was exceedingly popular, and in great demand, as the printers who issued so many pirated editions of it well knew. Often the sale of the Hymn-Book on new ground was so large as to yield a revenue which made the mission almost self-supporting.

1843—1853

A
TRANSITION
PERIOD,
1843-53.

1843 marks
a period.

The superannuation of Bourne and Clowes in 1842 led to the direction of affairs falling into other hands and to great and far-reaching changes. The most statesmanlike and influential mind of this transition-time was John Flesher, who succeeded Bourne as editor. A short experience at Bemersley served to convince him that an obscure hamlet in the Potteries was no longer the place in which the 'Connexion's central wheel of management' should revolve. He brought about the removal of the Book-Room to London in 1843, and located it on premises belonging to Sutton Street Chapel, which he himself had lately built. Flesher also drew up proposals for the reorganization of the General Missionary Committee, with its headquarters also to be in London. The proposals were adopted by the Conference of 1843, and at

General
Missionary
Committee
formed.

once many of the Circuit Missions were taken over, Hull leading the way by surrendering those under its control. The step was regarded as experimental and was taken cautiously. The surrender of the mission stations was not made absolute, but remained optional. For a time, therefore, the two systems—the circuit and the departmental—went on together. At first the circuit missions outnumbered those under the care of the Committee. But as the years passed, more and more were freely surrendered, though it was not till 1862 that the last two were taken over. The regulations of 1843 brought a well-defined and not inglorious period to the beginning of its close. The period of circuit predominance and missionary enterprise was gradually giving way to centralization. Yet the lessons of those early years have not been wholly lost. There are indications that a return, with modifications, to the old system is felt to be quite compatible with the existence of a strong central missionary authority. It is found that the district, if not the circuit, may be made an effective unit for initiating and carrying on true aggressive work within its own bounds.

The year 1843 saw also the commencement of missions in Australia and New Zealand. The flow of emigration from these shores had borne many adherents of the Connexion to the Antipodes, who, from their new homes, made urgent appeals for missionaries to be sent to them. This was rendered possible by the spirited offer of the Sunday schools of the Connexion to undertake the cost of the missions. Thus, when the era of geographical extension in England seemed to be closing, there opened out in these distant southern lands a vista of still greater possibilities of expansion.

Colonial missions begun, 1813.

1853—1885

What may very fittingly be regarded as the ERA OF CONSOLIDATION began in 1853 after the death of the first leaders of the Connexion. Clowes died in Hull, universally lamented, March 2, 1851—the sixtieth anniversary of John Wesley's

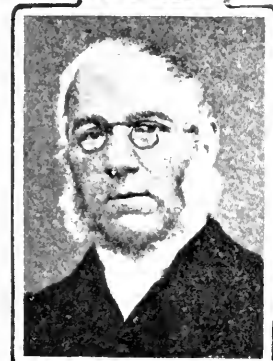
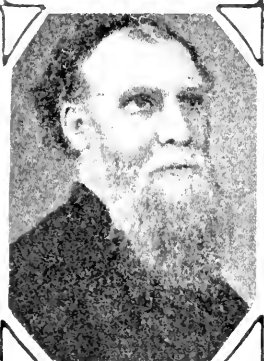
THE DISTRICT PERIOD : CONSOLIDATION, 1853-85.

Death of
Clowes,
1851, and
Bourne,
1852.

death. Hugh Bourne's death soon followed—October 11, 1852. There is pathetic suggestiveness in the fact that the proximate cause of his death was a painful disease of a limb—the penalty nature exacted for his excessive journeyings on foot. The passing of the leaders; the retirement of John Flesher after his consolidation of the *Minutes* and his preparation of the new Hymn-Book, which provoked a somewhat heated controversy; the acceptance at last by the powerful Hull Circuit of partition (1854) and its willingness to make some of the branches so long retained—in deference to the wishes of Clowes—into independent circuits,—these are so many signs that we have entered upon the Middle Period of the denomination's history when, in form, it was a Connexion of confederated districts. The four districts of 1824—Tunstall, Nottingham, Hull, and Sunderland—had in 1842 become seven by the addition of Norwich, Manchester, and Brinkworth. By the creation of Leeds District (1845), Bristol (1848), and London (1853), the number of districts had by 1853 become ten, and such the number remained until 1873, when the West Midland District was formed by the partition of Tunstall District. Thus for well-nigh a quarter of a century the ten districts were suffered to remain intact, to pursue their own chosen lines of development.

The ten
districts,
1853-78.

Districts bulked largely in those days. So much was this the case that, just as in the first period we have the flourishing of circuits, so in the 'fifties and 'sixties we have the flourishing of districts. Various causes contributed to this result; one of the chief being the laws regulating Conference representation. During the greater part of this time the Conference was composed of some eighty persons, including the twelve permanent members required by the provisions of the deed-poll, and the four persons who had been appointed at the previous Conference, who were almost invariably the connexional officers of the time. The remaining members consisted of six elected representatives from each of the ten districts. The ministerial section of these representatives, twelve in number,



HUGH BOURNE, 1772-1852.
JOHN PETTY, *d.* 1868.
PETER PHILLIPS.

JOHN FLESHER, *d.* 1874.
HUGH GILMORE,
DR. ANTLIFF, *d.* 1884.

WM. CLOWES, 1780-1851.
C. C. MCKIMIE, *d.* 1896.
LORENZO DOW.

was composed of those who had been ministers for eighteen successive years, and superintendents for twelve ; the forty lay representatives were required by the rule to have been officials of twelve years' standing. The stringency of this law, passed in 1845, was only partially relaxed in 1865, and the natural effect of its working was to exclude many aspiring men who had all the qualifications for doing good service in Conference, except the one indispensable qualification required by the statute. It also tended to give to the Conference itself the character of a *gerousia*, a court of the elders, cautious and conservative both in temper and legislative action. Moreover, the Conference was seclusive as well as somewhat exclusive. It rather shunned than courted publicity. The public religious services, and especially the Conference camp-meeting, were usually crowded and enthusiastic, but the business sessions were fenced round with restrictions. No one was suffered to enter except he bore an official permit, which was closely scrutinized by the doorkeeper, lest, failing in his duty, he should be censured or even fined for his negligence.

When we turn from the Conferences to the District Meetings of the Middle Period, we cannot but be struck with the contrast presented. At these annual gatherings every circuit was represented. The multiplication of circuits within the district area did but serve to increase the number of representatives at these yearly synods. Within the bounds of their own district the men shut out from the Conference, as well as the men who were eligible for appointment thereto, could, without let or hindrance, use all the legitimate influence of which they were capable, and they could watch, or it may be assist, its results at the District Meeting, when legislative proposals or administrative affairs were under discussion. The District Meeting was *the* gathering of the year. Its crowning interest rested in the stationing of the preachers for the next twelve months, which took place in open meeting ; for the invitation system now in vogue did not then obtain, and the district boundaries stood close and rigid, so that it was only in exceptional

District
Meetings.

cases that a transference took place of a preacher from one district to another. Now much of this is changed. With the coming in of the invitation system something of the vivid interest that once attached to District Meetings has faded.

' District-
ism.'

It is just here that a knowledge of the prevailing ' Districtism ' of the Middle Period may serve in turn both as lamp and key. It illustrates features and workings of Primitive Methodism fast receding into remoteness. It explains how District Meetings gained in power, popularity, and prestige at the expense of Conference. It explains the nature and genesis of the ' District Man.' He had probably spent the whole of his ministry within the limits of a particular district. He had an intimate acquaintance with its men and affairs, only possible in the conditions then actually existing. The conditions are gone, and the ' District Man ' has gone with them. ' Districtism ' may also serve as a key to explain some of the developments of connexional life which succeeded it. It had, of course, its limitations and drawbacks. It had even its dangers, as we shall see. But it also had its advantages, and rendered essential service to the denominational life. Within the close area of the district, as in a garden fenced round, idiosyncrasies were developed, experiments tried, ideals steadily pursued, and convictions were acquired which grew in strength as to what was the right and fitting thing to be done for and by the Connexion. In short, ' Districtism ' made for originality and variety by which the denominational life has been enriched. In this way almost every considerable later advance made by the Connexion may be traced back to its beginning in some particular District whose leading men believed in it, and persistently pressed it upon the attention of others until they gained their end. It is more than probable that the movement which resulted in the vital changes of 1842-3 had its inception and driving power in the Hull District. But that apart, the Hull District led the way to a bolder policy in chapel-building—a policy which may be said to have been inaugurated by the building

Its
enterprise.

of Clowes' Memorial Chapel in 1852. From a very early date the Norwich District advocated the starting of foreign missions. The first African missionary meeting in the Connexion was held at Swaffham District Meeting in 1852. The district never rested till the Jubilee Conference of 1860 gave an undertaking to enter upon the foreign field. To the Sunderland and Manchester Districts belongs the credit of having early striven to secure a better educated ministry—an ideal which for some years made little appeal to most of the other districts. The issuing of *The Christian Ambassador* (1854), whose lineal descendant is *The Primitive Methodist Quarterly Review*, was the outcome of this striving, as also the earlier formation of a Preachers' Association. The early practical endeavours made by J. Macpherson and others in the Manchester District to assist probationers in their studies gradually led to the admission of a limited number of students to Elmfield College in 1865, and to the establishment of the Sunderland Institute, with Dr. William Antliff as Principal, in 1865. To the Leeds District may be traced the beginnings of the Sunday School Union, established in 1875, as also the efforts to place chapel property on a better financial footing. In short, it is probable that each district has contributed something, which in its origin was specially its own, to the good of the Connexion.

In the Transition and Middle Periods of its history Primitive Methodism had not yet emerged from its obscurity, though at the end of the periods it was beginning to do so. There is little for the historian to chronicle relating to the time that is of a striking or dramatic character. The Connexion went quietly on doing its own work, and though consolidation was one of the most marked features of the time, evangelization was by no means neglected; nor was it without its tangible results, as the numerical returns attest. Home missionaries, under the direction of the General Missionary Committee, toiled at the front. In the circuits, under the district system, a good deal of intra-aggression went on—both missioning and re-missioning; while revivals, quite of the old type, were experienced in various

Emergence
from
obscurity.

parts of the Connexion. Two of these, which occurred in the widely contrasted districts of the Black Country and the Dales of Northumberland, are worthy of passing mention. Under the searching ministry of John Petty—afterwards Editor, President, and Governor of Elmfield College—a tide of religious influence swept over the district of which Darlaston was the centre, that resulted in large accessions to the societies, in great material extension, and the formation of a new circuit. In the Dales of East and West Allen, where C. C. M'Kechnie—afterwards Editor and President—was labouring in 1859, a revival broke out which added four hundred to the societies in a few months, besides augmenting the local Methodist Societies. Both these revivals are noteworthy as having occurred in localities in which Primitive Methodism had been founded in a great revival. Those creative revivals of the past were now recalled and repeated in the course of the regular ministry of two of the most cultured ministers the denomination possessed at the time. In 1843 the membership of the Connexion was 85,565; in 1860, the jubilee year of the denomination, it stood at 132,114, and 8,251 was reported as the increase for the year; in 1875 it had reached 165,410. But here again, as in the first period, the tale of progress is not an uninterrupted one. For in the years 1853-4-5 the heaviest decreases the denomination has experienced were reported, amounting in the gross to 4,126. The decreases may fairly be attributed to external rather than to internal causes. The discovery of gold in California and Australia led to a rush to the gold-fields. In the two years 1852-4, 1,132 members were lost by emigration. Then came the Crimean War, and its effect in the dearness of provisions; also devastating storms and floods in East Anglia. Lastly there was widespread agitation in the mother-church of Methodism, and, though the leaders of Primitive Methodism were anxiously resolved to maintain strict neutrality, it was not done without loss. All these things combined left their mark on the numerical returns.

Rapid
increase.

Con-
nexionalism.

If church unity is a thing to be desired, then one can

view the 'passing' of 'Districtism' with little regret, notwithstanding the good it undoubtedly had accomplished. For 'Districtism' had its dangers, not the least being District Particularism—the tendency to look at everything from a district standpoint. There was, too, the danger of jealousy creeping in. 'Ephraim' might 'envy Judah, and Judah vex Ephraim.' Especially was there the possibility of this when, as the effect of the law of 1876, which put representation to Conference on a numerical basis, some of the larger districts acquired a preponderating influence in the chief assembly. The enactments of 1872 (invitation within districts) and 1879 (invitations irrespective of district boundaries) were fatal to 'Districtism.' The logical and inevitable result of the law of 1879 was the dividing of the more powerful districts into more equal areas for administration. When the Sunderland District, that stretched from Sunderland to Whitehaven, and from Northallerton to Berwick, accepted dismemberment in 1885, and became three, the palmy days of 'Districtism' were over.

1885—1908

During the closing years of last century the denomination in some way acquired a deeper sense of its own true church life. The feeling worked upwards. It was so strong and widely diffused that at last it obtained official recognition and expression. On the revision in 1901 of the *Consolidated Minutes*—the codified laws of the denomination—the word 'Connexion,' with its suggestion of a mere mechanical unity, was displaced wherever possible by the word 'Church.' Every class-ticket issued since 1901 also bears witness to the same feeling and tacitly prefers the same claim. What have been the recent developments in the life of the denomination which justify this change of nomenclature? Let some of the features of later Primitive Methodism be noted, a beginning being made with those relating to internal economy and administration.

FROM 'CONNEXION' TO 'CHURCH,' 1885-1908.
The title 'Church' assumed.

Legislation
and
administra-
tion.

In accordance with the scientific spirit of the age, the trend of legislation in recent years has, on the whole, been in the direction of unification, simplification, and efficiency. So also has been the result of the working of the various Connexional Funds and Committees. As to legislation: a great step was taken, as we have seen, towards unification by what is known as the connexional as opposed to the old district method of stationing. Till that change was made in 1879 and had begun to do its work, complete organic unity could hardly be claimed. In the direction both of unification and simplicity was the legislation of 1893, significantly called the 'Unification of the Funds,' which went on the principle that church obligations should be borne equally by all. Again, the mechanical system which gave the same number of Conference delegates to districts, whatever their size and numerical strength, broke down. For a time Conference made the needful adjustments year by year until, in 1876, representation was put on a numerical basis. Efficiency in administration was furthered by the division of the larger districts into smaller areas, thus bringing a larger number of talents into requisition, and giving effect to the essentially Presbyterian polity of Primitive Methodism. We see the same tendency at work in the administration of missionary affairs. The requirement of 1876 that the whole—and not a fractional part—of the missionary money raised on a station should be sent to the Treasurer is an instance in point. The logical result of this requirement was the Sustentation Fund of 1898, to ensure each minister a minimum salary. Tending to greater efficiency was the establishment of the representative Missions Quarterly Committee, followed up as it was by the abolition of the Fortnightly Committee and the appointment of an executive. In no department has there been greater improvement than in all that relates to church property. In 1871 Conference urged building committees to recommend that one-half of the cost of a building at least should be raised within twelve months of opening. By 1882 the recommendation had hardened into a requirement, and twelve months shortened to six. The

Church
property.

natural tendency of this legislation has been greatly accelerated by the steady action of important institutions : The General Chapel Fund (1847) with its sectional Loan Fund ; the Successful Insurance Co. (1864) with its large grants to trustees ; the Chapel Aid Association (1889), ' a triumph of financial genius,' and the Church Extension Fund (1900). Not only has church property been largely augmented, but it is in a much sounder financial position than it was in 1871, before which year the cost and value of new erections were not given.

In the first sixty years the denomination acquired property amounting to one million, and in the last thirty-five years it has built additional property amounting to four millions. Of the first million, half was left as debt, but of the last four, 16s. 8d. out of every pound has been raised and paid.

While much of this improvement is undoubtedly due to the social advance of the church and to increased liberality, very considerable credit must also be given to the combined working of legislation and the Funds and Associations just mentioned. The Book-Room may be referred to here as an example of the efficient working of a department. Though its chief business is to disseminate pure literature in the homes of the people and to circulate its own high-class magazines, it has, since its establishment in 1843, given £175,779 out of the profits of its working to various connexional institutions.

Turning now from internal economy and administration, we glance at some other aspects of church life, more important and essential, as they have shown themselves in recent years. In regard to missions, it must be confessed the Primitive Methodist Church does not raise as much *per capita* for home and foreign missions as do the sister churches. But in the last decade there has been some improvement, though there is still room for more. In 1889 the church by its representatives entered into ' the clear open field of untouched heathendom ' and succeeded in establishing a promising mission in South Central Africa as well as in Southern Nigeria. By

Missionary
advance,
1889.

the Missionary Jubilee Thanksgiving Fund, inaugurated at the Norwich Conference of 1892, the £50,000 then aimed at was raised, and some of the most needy Connexional Funds largely assisted. Some fruits of the missionary sowing of the Connexion in other lands were ungrudgingly surrendered, when the churches in Canada with their 8,223 members became part of the great Methodist Church of Canada. So, too, 11,683 members were parted with when Methodist Union was consummated in Australia.

Evangelism is still the first charge upon the Church, and its special claims have not been forgotten. From 1874 to 1886 George Warner was set apart as a Connexional Evangelist. In 1888 Joseph Odell on his own responsibility established the Evangelists' Home in Birmingham, which for sixteen years supplied circuits with trained evangelists. Four leading ministers are now engaged in visiting the churches and holding evangelistic missions.

Social
service.

Amongst other outstanding features of later Primitive Methodism which betoken the possession of true church-life must be noted : the ever-deepening interest taken in social questions, and the attention bestowed on the higher education of the ministry and the training of local preachers. In 1895 the Missionary Executive made an important pronouncement with regard to social service : ' We recognize social work as a part of Christian endeavour and service.' This was much more than a theoretic pronouncement. It indicated a deliberately chosen attitude to existing facts that could not be ignored ; it foreshadowed a policy, and implied the sense of responsibility in relation thereto. It was the devoted labours of one of its own missionaries, in Clapton, London, N.E., carried on for many years, which drew forth the pronouncement referred to. The social work is still carried on in Clapton under other guidance, but he who began it is doing a still greater work in the Whitechapel District, with the Working Lads' Institute as its centre. Christian work on social lines is also being carried on at Surrey Chapel, Blackfriars, and at St. George's Hall in Southwark, which has its Training Home for sisters of the

people and a network of agencies. The Connexional Orphanage at Alresford, Hants, is perhaps the most popular institution in the denomination. A second Orphanage, arranged on the most modern and approved plan, has recently been opened at Harrogate. The Primitive Methodist Church has also its Local Preachers' Aid Fund, and its Union for Social Service, sanctioned by the Conference of 1906. For the different sections of the one Methodist Church ever show their unity of origin by the similarity of their organization and departments.

In common with other Methodist Churches, Primitive Methodism, during its century of existence, has done much directly, and still more indirectly, for the upraising of the working classes amongst whom its chief work has been done. There has always been a strong temperance sentiment in the Connexion. As early as 1832 the Conference pronounced in favour of Temperance Societies. The Trades Unions have found their most trusted leaders in the ranks of the local preachers, and some of these are sitting as labour members in the present Parliament.

The Primitive Methodist College, Alexandra Park, Manchester, was opened in 1881. Its successive enlargements in 1897 and 1906 were due to the remarkable generosity of the layman whose name it now bears. In Hartley College the Church possesses one of the largest and best-equipped denominational colleges in the kingdom; and this is but one of the donor's many benefactions to the Church of his birth.

Ministerial
training.

Primitive Methodists are now commemorating their Centenary. The celebration appropriately began by the holding, on May 25, 1907, of an immense camp-meeting on historic Mow Cop. The celebration will extend to 1910, and will include a Thanksgiving Fund by which it is expected to raise £100,000, which will be devoted to the extension and consolidation of the Church in its various departments. By means of the press and platform the history of Primitive Methodism during the century of its existence is being made more widely known amongst its adherents; and—what is

The
Centenary.

still more important—the truth is being emphasized and driven home, that the fervid evangelism which is the secret of the success of the past is as indispensable as ever, if the denomination is to justify its continued existence and be worthy of its first leaders and its makers.

END OF VOLUME I

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