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**HOW METHODISM BEGAN**
**By W. H. Daniels**

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THE ILLUSTRATED HISTORY OF METHODISM
By W. H. Daniels

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EXPLANATION

Part of the pages and digital text of "The Illustrated History of Methodism" by W. H. Daniels were sent to a distant volunteer for editing. So far as I know, little or nothing has been done to date on this editing, and after some inquiries which have neither resulted in the return of

the text nor the return of the missing pages to me, I have decided to publish only the first 6 Chapters of this work along with a part of the 7th Chapter under the title: "How Methodism Began." If at some point in the future the entire book again becomes available to HDM, we might consider doing the remainder of this work. Until such time, we present to our readers this small portion of Daniel's "Illustrated History of Methodism." Also, I have omitted publishing any of the book's many graphics with this portion of Daniels' volume. However, I have already placed a number of those pictures in the HDM Library as JPEG (JPG) graphics. -- DVM

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OFFICIAL INDORSEMENT OF DR. WHEDON
The Book Editor of the Methodist Book Concern

Office of the Methodist Quarterly Review,
805 Broadway, New York, Sept. 22, 1879

Rev. W. H. Daniels,

Your "Illustrated History of Methodism" is written with an accuracy, a life, and a freshness which will, I think, insure it a deserved and widespread popularity. The numerous engraved illustrations, fresh from their originals, aid to give reality to the narrative. Every Methodist who has not the time for reading Dr. Abel Stevens' great work should read yours. And not only Methodists, but all Protestant Christendom is interested in the wonderful revival, of which Wesley and Whitefield were leaders, and will find rich entertainment and quickening power in the perusal of your pictorial history.

D. D. Whedon

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PREFACE

During the last hundred and fifty years that little band of young men at Oxford derisively called "The Holy Club" has grown into a worldwide Christian communion. Its regular clergy numbers twenty thousand, its actual membership over three million, and its adherents about twelve million souls.

Methodism is supernatural. Such historic marvels as the Empire of the first Napoleon may be accounted for on natural principles, with a liberal mixture of the infernal; but the rise of this vast religious empire cannot be referred to the operation of any laws or forces known to state-craft or philosophy: science did not discover it, logic did not deduce it, kings did not will it, nor legislators enact it; but, like the new Jerusalem of the Apocalypse, it came down out of heaven: a divine benefaction of spiritual light, and joy, and power.

To worthily record the sweep of this divine movement would require the inspiration of a prophet and the experience of an apostle. Human sight is too slow to discover, and human speech

too weak to portray, the majesty and glory of this work of grace; and whoever thoughtfully approaches such a task must ever be oppressed to think how far this theme transcends his powers.

Another embarrassment is found in the immense mass of historic material which has accumulated in the archives of the Church. Hundreds of volumes, and almost countless pages in other forms, both written and printed, invite the research of the student and claim the attention of the historian: though this embarrassment partially disappears when he discovers to how great an extent his predecessors have reproduced the same materials in different forms.

Why then reproduce them still again?

To this question there are several replies. In the first place, it had become painfully evident to those in charge of the literature of our Church that her glorious and helpful history was generally neglected. The able and stately volumes of former authors have evidently been thrust aside by the mass of other and lighter reading constantly kept before our people, especially our young people, and it therefore became the plain duty of the official publishers of the Church to make an effort to restore its history to its lost place in popular attention and interest. With this end in view the present work was projected.

Again, a marked change has taken place in the historic methods since the voluminous works of Bangs and Stevens were written; new material has accumulated; the rapid improvement of the engraver's art invites its more liberal use than in any previous volume of Church history. In view of these facts it has been the endeavor of the Church authorities charged with such duties to furnish her people with a book which, by its freshness and beauty, as well as by its vigor and compactness of style, should attract them to the study of characters and events at once the most delightful and important.

To say that the size of this volume does not admit of even the briefest sketch of all our distinguished men and women is far below the truth. No work of any practical size could contain so much. God has so abundantly blessed our Church in this respects that the effort to record his bounty to Methodist minds and hearts would be like attempting to gather up and set forth the work of the sunshine and the rain upon this fruitful land of ours. Only a few representative characters and careers among the multitudes which, if they were not so many, would any one of them be worthy of a volume, can possibly find place in these pages.

The author is under especial obligations to the Rev. Tyerman and Dr. Smith for the assistance he has found in their large and admirable works; as well as to Dr. Jobson, the Wesleyan Book Steward, for the ample literary and artistic materials supplied. The American side of this volume owes much to Drs. Bangs and Stevens, to Bishop Simpson, from whose admirable "Cyclopedia," by the courtesy of the author and publishers, valuable literary and artistic matter has been obtained, to the leading literary men of the Methodist Church of Canada, and to the numerous biographers of our deceased celebrities, whose labors are almost oppressive in plentifulness and excellence. To the brethren who so cheerfully aided the author in his tour of research among historic scenes and places he here again expresses his thanks.

The annals of Methodism have long been a favorite study with him who now attempts to collate and record them. In a retrospect of his work there are portions of it which he wishes might have been done better; but he feels no twinge of self-condemnation in view of any known unfaithfulness or neglect. Others might have done better; he may do better in the future by the help of this additional experience; but he has certainly given himself unreservedly to this work, and done it "heartily as unto the Lord." May the Lord and the Church be pleased graciously and indulgently to accept it at his hands.

W. H. Daniels

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## INTRODUCTION

Having been requested to write an introduction to the "Illustrated History of Methodism," about to be published by our Book Concern, I most cheerfully comply; because I am in full accord with the general drift and purpose of the book, and more especially because I deem it of the first importance that our people should give more attention to the study of our history as a Church.

Methodism is not a new system of philosophy, ethics, or theology; neither is it a mere method in religion, as its name might imply. It does not belong to that class of institutions which can properly be said to be "founded" by anyone, as dynasties or schools are said to be founded, by this adventurer in politics, or that reformer in religion; and the author of this volume is right, as it seems to me, in saying that John Wesley was "as much the product as the promoter of Methodism." It was not John Wesley who founded Methodism so much as it was Methodism which founded John Wesley. The tide which bore him on in his wonderful career was one of those outpourings of waters such as the prophet saw in his vision; "first ankle deep, then rising to the knees, then to the loins, and finally waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." May God give to the Church a realization of the words of the angel who showed him the vision, and who said: "And every thing shall live whither the river cometh." Ezekiel xlvii, 9.

Wesley, before his conversion, was an ardent youth, capable of organizing and conducting a Holy Club; which, however fell to pieces on his first considerable absence from Oxford; but he was no more capable of planning and leading the great exodus of British souls out of State Church formalism than was Moses, just after he had finished his studies in the schools of Egypt, capable of leading a nation of slaves out from among the brick-kilns. In each case it was God's good please ure that the people should go out, and he raised up and trained a leader for them; but the real leader, in both cases, was He who dwelt in the fire and in the cloud. Neither Moses nor Wesley knew one day the pathway they should travel the next, and the most and best that can be said of either of these men is, what Paul says of himself: they were "not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." Acts xxvi, 19.

The author of this volume has drawn the portraits of his characters with a free, bold hand. It is somewhat of a surprise to find among some of the illustrations which so admirably adorn these pages the portrait of the great John Wesley as a very boyish-looking young man; for most of his admirers never think of him as less than sixty years of age. His ritualism, also, during those early

years in which he had such a "troublesome soul on his hands and did not know what to do with it," is placed in full and striking contrast with his experience and views after his conversion; a contrast somewhat startling to those who have never had any other than a general idea of the man; but which is true to the life, and useful withal, as showing that Wesley was what he was in the days of his power, not chiefly by means of his great talents and culture, but only by and through the abundant grace of God. They fail to understand him who speak of him as the "founder of Methodism." As well might the Apostle Peter be called the founder of Pentecost.

It is a matter of great satisfaction to me, and I trust it will be to the Church at large, that the author, in these pages, gives special prominence to the missionary spirit and history of Methodism, both in his account of the British Wesleyans, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It has come to my knowledge that certain detractions have been attempted against the workings of our Missionary Society. I wish, therefore, to say what my opportunities of observation enable me to say intelligently, that never since Methodism was planted in this land did our Church make more rapid progress in new fields than it does today: it is my sincere belief that the work of God moves one now as rapidly and efficiently in the missionary circuits and stations of our Church along our vast frontiers as it did when the frontiers were east of the Alleghenies.

In our foreign missionary fields the same comparison holds good. There are as many sinners from among the heathen in India and China converted and brought into the Methodist Episcopal Church, in proportion to the outlay of labor and money to that end, as there are from the regular Methodist congregations in New York, Philadelphia, or elsewhere in the United States. Or, to state the case in a financial way: it may be said that a dollar will go as far in the work of saving sinners in either our home missionary or foreign missionary circuits and stations as it will in our oldest and most favored localities in this land; and in no period of our history were results any greater in proportion to the outlay of labor and money than they are today.

In this work Mr. Daniels has seen proper to depart, in one noticeable instance, from certain fashions which some former writers have followed. He tells us that the heroic age of Methodism has not yet passed away -- a statement in which I concur, and which I wish most heartily to indorse. It is not necessary to under-value the present race of Methodist preachers in order sufficiently to honor the fathers; and it is a historic mistake to set forth the difficulties with which the fathers of our Church were obliged to contend as entitling them to a monopoly of heroic honors. If the privations, dangers, and sufferings which are cheerfully endured on our mission stations, in the destitute portions of great cities, in wild mountain regions of the interior, and in our border work both West and South, could only find a pen to write them and a voice to tell them, the story would be every way worthy a place beside that of the pioneer Bishop himself and of his glorious itinerant compeers.

Methodist preachers do not lie on the ground and sleep in the woods on their circuits in New York and Pennsylvania, for the simple reason that there is no occasion for such conduct; but they are doing this very thing yet in Western and Southern fields. Men are not mobbed and murdered in the United States for doing the work of a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church. Such things have been. But the time of persecution has passed away. If any doubtful brother is anxious to know whether there is still a call for heroism of the old stamp in the Methodist ministry, let him volunteer for some of our frontier appointments; and he may be able to satisfy himself,

within a very brief space of time, that these are heroic days -- martyr days, even -- of Methodism, as truly as in the closing years of the last century.

Our Church has never yet been frightened from its duty by difficulties. However hard the work, or however great the danger, there have always been eager volunteers for the service; and such, no less than heretofore, is the state of the case today.

At the risk of being misunderstood, though the fact is plain enough, I should like to call attention to what the author in this volume calls "The overflow of Methodism." For many years the social status of our societies was such that there was a constant temptation for persons who were converted among us to unite with some more popular body of believers; and thus the figures given in our minutes from year to year have not shown the whole number of conversions which have blessed the labors of our preachers and people. No accurate statement of this constant overflow can ever be made, but the movement has been considerable and important, and while we have grown less rapidly because of it, other denominations have been strengthened and cheered thereby. Perhaps, also, the doctrines and methods of our sister churches have through this agency been somewhat modified and inspirited. If so, we give thanks to Almighty God.

If Methodism were able to claim all its own it would probably be superior in numbers to all the other orthodox Protestant bodies in America put together: a state of things which would neither be good for us nor for our neighbors. No insignificant portion of the best working talent of other denominations has been under Methodist tutelage. We judge this large class of Christian workers to be all the more competent and effective on this very account, and we have no sympathy with those who accuse Methodism of some inherent weakness because it does not always retain in its own communion all persons converted at its altars.

A word ought to be added as a just commendation of this latest and best work of the author, whose accounts of other great religious movements have been so widely circulated and read, and which have proved so great a blessing, both in England and America. He has done his work well -- faithfully, loyally, wisely, lovingly. May it be approved by the great Head of the Church, and be a great and lasting blessing to our people.

William L. Harris

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Chapter 1
ENGLAND AND HER CHURCH IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

The history of Methodism opens in the latter part of the year 1729, at the University of Oxford, England, where four young men -- John Wesley, Charles Wesley, Robert Kirkham, and William Morgan had banded themselves together for mutual assistance both in scholarship and piety.

There was need enough for such mutual help, for at that day scholarship and piety were the two most unusual attainments among university men. To improve their minds these persons agreed to spend three or four evenings in the week together in reading the Greek Testament, the Greek and Latin classics, and on Sunday evenings, divinity. To improve their souls, they adopted a set of rules for holy living, including the exact observance of all the duties set forth in the Prayer Book of the English Church, besides such others as they were able to invent for themselves, all of which they kept as strictly and religiously as if they had found them laid down in the book of Exodus or Deuteronomy. Their exceptional diligence in study, and their still more remarkable sanctity of manners, soon brought down upon them a storm of ridicule and abuse, and the name "Methodist" was flung at them in derision on account of the clockwork regularity of their lives -- a name destined to become a title of honor, and to stand for the largest spiritual communion of Christians in the world.

England Under George II -- This was in the third year of the second of the Georges, a prince alike deficient in mental capacity and moral worth. In those days it was not the fashion for kings to practice the Christian virtues: indeed, the almost universal profligacy of royal courts would indicate that it was regarded as the high prerogative of kings and princes to break all the ten commandments, and the more frequently they did so the more did they display their dignity and power; since nothing could be a greater proof of royalty than a fearless disobedience of the law of God. English historians agree in condemning the manners and morals of the reigns of the four Georges; yet it is but just to set over against the repulsive pictures which they draw the still more infamous scenes which were constantly witnessed in the Roman Catholic countries of Europe. Bearing in mind then the fact that, with all its public and private abominations, Protestant England in the eighteenth century was a vast improvement on the England of any previous age, except during the Protectorate of Cromwell, the actual state of the kingdom, its rulers, its people, its schools, and its Church as compared with the Christian England of today may be studied with interest and profit; as showing how great a need still existed in this foremost country of Europe in religion, intelligence, and morals, of such a spiritual reformation in its religion as that with which

Great Britain was blessed under the leadership of that chief of all the great reformers, John Wesley.

This was the money era. There was nothing which could not be bought or sold. From the reeking royal court down through all the upper orders of society there was one long carnival of luxury, licentiousness, and display. Gold lace, velvets, brocades, and jewels were the current substitutes for virtue among women and honor among men; and with such examples set them by lords and ladies the poorer classes -- sometimes also called "the lower classes" -- of society, made all haste to fill themselves with pleasure by defiling themselves with sin.

In 1736 every sixth house in London was a gin-shop. The signboards of inns advertised to make a man drunk for a penny, dead drunk for two pence, and promised straw to lie on while he was getting sober. From these dens of iniquity bands of young men would sally forth by night for a drunken frolic, and commit every sort of depredation upon the persons and property of peaceable citizens, sometimes even torturing them with their swords, breaking heads, splitting noses, and submitting both men and women to the vilest possible indignities. The capital swarmed with desperate and shameless adventurers, plotting how to fasten themselves and their families upon the Church or the civil list, or picking up a precarious living as professional wits; telling vile jokes or singing lewd songs, not only in ale-houses and bagnios, [brothels] but also in the assemblies of polite society.

The ignorance of the common people was another curse of the kingdom. In the year 1715 less than twenty-five thousand of the children of the poor were sent to school; being only about one fourth of the number of scholars now in the Wesleyan Methodist day schools of England, to say nothing of the schools connected with the other communions.

As for law, it was plentiful enough, but justice was far more rare. The prisons were full to bursting; and there was a public hanging every week, by which large numbers of sinners, great and small, were assisted out of the world without perceptibly improving it. Neither the Tyburn gallows, nor the array of heads newly cut off for treason -- with which it used to be the custom to decorate Temple Bar and the gateway of old London Bridge availed to frighten the people into good behavior, since it was evident that what was called Justice in Great Britain was chiefly a means of protecting the king against his subjects, and defending the rich against the poor.

The Church "in" England, versus the Church "of" England -- But where was the Church all this while?

On the throne, in the person of the king; in the court, foremost in intrigue; in the house of Lords, where bishops hob-nobbed with peers of the realm; in grand cathedrals splendidly endowed; in fat livings all over the kingdom; in all the resorts of pleasure and fashion but not among the surging throngs of common sinners, who were so sunk in ignorance and atheism that they hardly knew, or boldly denied, that they had any souls to be saved. The Church of England, like that of Laodicea, though proud of its traditions, its wealth, and its power, was "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked." Its wealth and offices were constantly prostituted to personal and political ends. For royal favorites and zealous partisans it had titles, benefices, and preferments; for the masses of the people it had little else to give, in return for the conformity and

the tithes it exacted, except the forms of the holy sacraments, and a liturgy which might almost as well have been in papal Latin for any good the unschooled rustics could find in it as it was drawled or rattled out by some hall-starved curate, while his rector was giving himself up to a life of rural pleasure or courtly intrigue.

It is true, the Lord had a few faithful servants both among the clergy of the Establishment and the ministry of the Non-conformists Churches, but for the most part both priests and people were not only destitute of the power of godliness, but also of the form thereof.

In studying the history of the great Methodist revival, and its relation to the communion within which it commenced, it should not be forgotten that Christ has a Church in England, which is not of England; a Church older than Henry VIII; older than Augustine, the first Archbishop of Canterbury; older than the paganism of the Saxon conquest; older than the Romanism of the papacy. There were Christian Churches, and Christian martyrs too, in Britain long before that very prudent prince, the Emperor Constantine, could make up his mind to break with the Roman idolaters and allow himself to be baptized. There were British Christians, scattered by persecution among the Scottish highlands and the mountains of Wales, hunted by pagan Britons, and afterward by pagan Saxons; persecuted, now by Romanists in the name of the Pope, and now by Anglicans in the name of the King -- these are the people from whom has descended the true Anglican Church. The Church in England is spiritual, the Church of England is political; the one is from heaven, the other is of men; their historic lines sometimes cross each other, but they seldom coincide for any great length of distance or time.

Outline of English State-Churchism. -- A brief sketch of the career of the Church of England, as distinguished from the Church in England, though not essential to this history, will greatly assist in understanding many of the events which have a vital connection with the Wesleyan revival.

In the year 596 England was Romanized by Augustine; not the Saint of that name, but a Roman monk who was sent by Pope Gregory the Great to take advantage of the marriage of the heathen King of Kent with a Christian princess. This marriage was the beginning of political religion in England.

"Strangers from Rome" was the title by which Augustine and his forty monks introduced themselves to King Ethelbert -- Romans first, and Christians afterward -- and when they had made a Roman and a Christian of the King, his subjects dutifully followed him, and as many as ten thousand of them are said to have been baptized in a single day. Here beginneth the royal headship of the Church of England.

The monks now turned their attention to converting the pagans in other parts of the British islands; using mild measures at first, such as sprinkling the temples with holy water, taking down the idols Thor, Woden, and other Norse divinities, and setting up images of Roman saints; all this with a view to convert these British temples into Romish churches, and to displace the pagan by the Christian form with the least possible shock to the pagan mind. It was this politic Roman monk, Augustine, who, in the French city of Arles, in the year 597, was consecrated by Pope Gregory as the first Archbishop of Canterbury, and Metropolitan of England; and chiefly along his line of

policy and prelacy, with varying fortunes, but with always the same flavor of statecraft about it, the Church of England has ascended to our day.

From the beginning of the eighth to the middle of the sixteenth century the power of Rome over the English nation had increased, until the papal sanction was necessary to the settlement of all political, as well as spiritual, questions. The high offices in the English Church were at the disposal of the Pope; spiritual courts were established for the trial of "spiritual persons," whereby all crimes, murder not excepted, became frequent among ecclesiastics, for whom, so far as human law was concerned, any iniquity was safe; and so greedy were they of filthy lucre, and so successful in accumulating it, that at one time nearly half the wealth of England was under their control.

The Reformation under Luther, which promised so much for Europe, produced only a temporary impression upon the Church of England. Protestantism did, indeed, set up a new system of doctrine and discipline, which was a vast improvement on the ever-multiplying heresies of Rome; but the Reformation soon lost its power as a religion by aspiring after, or rather groveling after, political supremacy.

Meanwhile, Henry VIII of England projected a Reformation of his own. He had special use for a Church as well as for an army and navy, and in his hands the one was as much a political instrument as the other. In 1531 this infamous prince was proclaimed by his obedient convocation of English bishops as "The only and supreme lord, and, as far as the law of Christ permits, even the supreme head of the Church of England;" and in 1539 his Parliament passed an "Act for Abolishing Diversity of Opinions," by which those who ventured to hold different notions of faith and practice from those set forth in his royal manifesto were condemned "to suffer the pains of death as felons," or to be "imprisoned during the king's pleasure:"

In the liturgy which was prepared for the use of the new political Protestant Church in 1548, occurs this prayer:--

"From the tyranny of the Bishop of Rome and all his detestable enormities, good Lord, deliver us!" Yet, after centuries of intrigue, martyrdom, and murder, England had simply freed herself from the great Roman pontiff and set up a little pope of her own.

But Henry's Church was born to trouble. England was too rich a prize to be easily wrenched from the grasp of Rome, and hence it was that the kingdom swung back and forth from Anglicanism to Romanism and from Romanism to Anglicanism again; making, on one of these journeys, a detour into Presbyterianism; but having had too much of Cromwell and his roundheads, who must needs erect their religious opinions into a State Church like all the rest, the nation, after various religious contortions, lapsed into a condition of disgust at all religion; at least, all political religion; and there was mournfully little religion in England at that day of any other sort.

The path of the Church of England is plentifully stained with martyrs' blood as well as with that of a meaner sort; yet even this is void of power or praise to the political Church of the kingdom, since the fagot and the ax have served at different times in the name of the official religion, now to punish one form of faith and now another. The people of England have been

marched to prison in platoons, like coffles of slaves to the auction block, [coffle n. a line of animals, slaves, etc., fastened together. --Oxford Dict.] and some of her priests and bishops have been beheaded or burned "for their religion;" but with every martyr's memorial which one may meet, set up in honor of those who have sealed their faith with their blood, it is needful to inquire on account of what particular form of faith this particular martyr died for so many different reasons, in its crooked course down the centuries, has the established Church of England murdered men and women. Under the Romish system the State was held to be the creature and servant of the Church; in Protestant England, since the days of Henry and Elizabeth, the Church, i. e., the Establishment, had for the most part been the servant of the State. The old kings were treated like little deities, whose food and wine must be offered on bended knee; now they were prelates, whose opinions in religion, inspired by scheming ecclesiastics, constituted the orthodoxy of the Church, and whose will was, presumably, the will of God.

The apostasies and martyrdoms under the varying forms of Church law, which followed the accession of Papist or Protestant kings and queens, served still further to corrupt the morals of the kingdom. There was, indeed, an "Act of Toleration," which permitted Non-conformists to maintain their own forms of worship on condition that they should also support, financially, the established religion of the State; but in their eyes its worship was no worship, its ministry was no ministry, its sacraments no sacraments, while, on the other hand, they were denounced by the Church party as rebels, blasphemers, reprobates, in a state of sin and misery, and in danger of eternal damnation.

One deep and lasting impression, however, was made upon the people of England by these politico-religious oscillations, namely: hatred of the Pope. The reign of "bloody Mary," from 1553 to 1558, when Papacy was the State religion, aroused the wrath of the English people to such a degree that on her death and the accession of Elizabeth in 1558, the triumph of Protestantism was substantially complete, and to this day the party cry of "No POPERY!" will rouse the blood of English artisans and peasants, and call forth ringing cheers from almost any great assembly of free-born Britons. But the value of hatred as a saving grace, even though it be the hatred of the Pope himself, cannot be very considerable: Protestantism, pure and simple, is simply no religion at all: nevertheless, protesting and hating is so much easier than praying and loving that, in the eighteenth century, anti-popery had come to be considered a form of religious faith, and Protestantism was made to cover a multitude of sins.

The spiritual value of this last reformation, or revolution of the State religion, may be estimated in the light of the fact that when the transition took place from the extreme Popery of the reign of Mary to the extreme Protestantism of Elizabeth, nearly all the clergy of the State Church succeeded in overleaping the gulf without the loss of their places. Out of the nine thousand four hundred beneficed clergy of the Church of England, only one hundred and seventy-two quitted their offices or "livings" rather than change their religion. [1] No wonder that such a convenient "religion" rapidly sunk into contempt among a people whose love of what is genuine, as opposed to all pretension, is a well-known national characteristic. The "Anglican Church," says one of its most eminent bishops, "was an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it." But what else was to be expected from a Church whose constitution was a political contrivance invented to meet the exigencies of the State, whose offices were often given as bribes and presents from kings and nobles in recognition of partisan zeal or family claims, and whose sacraments even were regarded

by the clergy as exclusive official prerogatives more than as ordinances of the Lord! To seek for any substantial Christianity as the product of such a Church is only an attempt to gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles.

Throughout this wretched era the Lord had here and there some faithful servants to declare his pleasure and defend his word. These God-fearing men, although in a hopeless minority, lifted up their voices against the iniquities of the time, and from the outpourings of their shame and sorrow the most vivid pictures of the irreligion of the age may be drawn. It was an age that built the tombs of the martyrs, but which avoided the remotest approach to their heroic life and death.

The Bishop of Lichfield says: "The Lord's day is now the devil's market day: more lewdness, more drunkenness, more murders, more sin is contrived and committed on this day than on all the other days of the week together... Sin, in general, has grown so hardened and rampant as that immoralities are defended; yea, justified on principle. Every kind of sin has found a writer to vindicate and teach it, and a bookseller and hawker to divulge and spread it."

Bishop Burnet, in 1713, speaking of the candidates for ordination in the State Church, says: "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 parts of the Scriptures."

Bishop Butler, in the preface to his "Analogy," which is itself a piece of devout rationalism, declares that "it has come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious."

Sir John Barnard, once Lord Mayor of London, and for forty years its representative in Parliament, complains that "it really seems to be the fashion for a man to declare himself of no religion;" and Montesquieu, in his "Notes on England," says, that "not more than four or five members of the House of Commons were regular attendants at church."

Lecky, in his work entitled "England in the Eighteenth Century," describes the theology preached in the churches of the Establishment as little more than another form of rationalism. "It was," says he, "the leading object of the skeptics of the time to assert the sufficiency of natural religion. It was the leading object of a large proportion of the divines to prove that Christianity was little more than natural religion accredited by historic proofs and enforced by the indisputable sanctions of rewards and punishments. Beyond a brief in the doctrine of the Trinity and a general acknowledgment of the veracity of the gospel narratives, they taught little that might not have been taught by the disciples of Socrates and Confucius."

The Rev. Augustus M. Toplady, himself a minister of the Established Church, who died in 1778, said, in a sermon preached not long before his death: "I believe no denomination of professing Christians, the Church of Rome excepted, was so generally void of the light and life of godliness, so generally destitute of the doctrine and of the grace of the Gospel, as was the Church of England, considered as a body, about fifty years ago. At that period a converted minister in the Establishment was as great a wonder as a comet."

Such was the Established Church, the political as distinguished from the spiritual Church, under whose auspices in the eighteenth century the kingdom of Great Britain almost went back to barbarism. "If I had not been Prime Minister," said Premier Walpole, "I would have been Archbishop of Canterbury," and though he neither feared God nor regarded man, this place in the Church of England would, no doubt, have been within his reach if his personal ambition had taken that particular turn.

Irreligious Learning. -- The universities, too, with all their splendor of architecture and all their wealth of endowment, had fallen into a state of intellectual and moral stagnation.

In 1729 the heads of Oxford issued a notice complaining of the spread of open deism among the students, and urging that they be more carefully instructed in theology. But how was this to be done The writings of the Christian Fathers were too full of superstition for the classical taste of the times; they were, therefore, displaced by the literature of ancient Greece and Rome; and as for the Bible in Greek and Hebrew, few university men thought the book worthy their attention in any tongue whatever.

The Bishop of Chichester, in a letter to a young clergyman, says: "Name me any one of the men famed for learning in this or the last age who have seriously turned themselves to the study of the Scriptures... A happy emendation on a passage in a pagan writer, that a modest man would blush at, will do you more credit and be of more service to you than the most useful employment of your time upon the Scriptures, unless you resolve to conceal your sentiment and speak always with the vulgar."

The popular literature of the day, as to its morality, was quite down to the classical standard. Iniquities of speech, hidden from the unlearned, were dragged forth and exhibited in broad English; books and pictures held place on drawing-room tables which would now consign their publishers to prison; and even the mysteries of religion were turned into ribald jests. One of the most popular clergymen of the State Church so far prostituted his literary genius as to write a poetic burlesque on the last judgment, and none of the Church dignitaries called the clerical clown to account for his impiety, because the fashionable world was laughing at his wit.

The Dissenters -- that is to say, the Presbyterians, Independents, and Baptists -- though less conformed to this world, and holding less of it in their hands, were constrained to mourn over the wastes of Zion. Many of their ministers were immoral and negligent of their duty, spending their time and strength in sports and revels, or in scrambling for the best paying pastorates in their respective churches, with much of the same spirit as that which they so bitterly denounced in the clergy of the Established Church.

Surely such an England as this needed a revival of religion; not a "reformation," which would merely replace one State Church by another, but a coming to the front of the divine elements which priest-craft and politics had so long thrust out of sight.

State of Religion in Scotland. -- A glance at Scotland, where the Reformation, under the lead of grand old John Knox had done so great a work, shows that portion of the kingdom to have been burdened with over-much theology. Lecky gives this characteristic picture of a Scotch

congregation which was quite driven out of the meeting-house by a sermon preached by the son of their old minister, who had just come home within certain latitudinarian notions in his head, whereof one of the good elders complained to the father thus:--

"That silly lad has fashed a' the congregation wi' his idle cackle; he's been babbling the oor aboot 'the gude and benevolent God;' and the souls o' the heathen themsel' will gang to heaven if they follow the licht o' their ain consciences; but not ane word does the daft young lad ken nor speer nor say aboot the gude, comfortable doctrines of election, reprobation, original sin, and faith... Awa wi' sic a fellow!"

If this be a fair showing of Scotch taste in religion, it would appear that the spiritual condition of Scotland at this time was such as to indicate the need of another Reformation.

Ireland, where, a few years later, Methodism won some of its brightest triumphs, was, in the first half of the eighteenth century, thought to be hardly worth the notice of polite and respectable Englishmen. Among her people there were indeed many superior minds, but for the most part ignorance and superstition reigned supreme.

Methodism a Benediction. -- The Methodist revival, which must have been a gift from God out of heaven since there was nothing in the condition of this world out of which to produce it, was like a fresh breeze from the north on a sultry summer's day. Reeking odors from all manner of social and spiritual decay filled the air, and the few godly men in England were panting for a pure breath from the upper heavens. At length it came, sweeping along like the winds which God lets loose from his fists, swaying devout souls, breaking down stubborn sinners, spreading confusion where vice and wealth had wrought together to build themselves a tower or temple, overturning hopes built on false foundations, but quenching not the smoking flax nor breaking the bruised reed. It was Heaven's bountiful answer to the silent prayer of the world's great sorrow by reason of its great sin. In the midst of this spiritual darkness God raised up a bishop, a preacher, and a poet; three men the equals of whom have, probably, never been seen in the world at once since the apostolic days: the bishop was John Wesley, the preacher was George Whitefield, the poet was Charles Wesley. To these three men, and those whom they gathered to their standard, did the Lord commit the precious work of awakening the British kingdom to a sense of God and duty, and by them he wrought a reformation which stands alone in British history as a spiritual revival of religion without admixture of State-craft or the patronage of Parliament or King.

It has been lately claimed by one high in the English Church that these men were the product of England's ecclesiastical system, and that, therefore, the common judgment of history against the State Church of their day has been unjust. [2] As well might it be said that the carcass of Samson's dead lion produced the honey he afterward found in it. Nay, rather let it be said that God in his mercy set himself to save the English Church from its death and corruption; and that the Wesleys and Whitefield were the prophets whom he sent to prophesy to the bones of that valley, and to raise up from among the dead an exceeding great army to the praises of his infinite grace.

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Chapter 2

# THE WESLEY FAMILY

A careful student of human nature has said, "When God sets out to make a great man he first makes a great woman;" a statement eminently true in the case of John Wesley; but only one side of the truth, for on his father's side, as well as on his mother's side, he inherited great talents and high moral endowments.

The Wesley, or Westley, family was one of high respectability in the south of England. Its annals can be traced as far back as the fourteenth century, and it is interesting to find in almost every generation an eminent clergyman and scholar. Thus in 1403 George Westley was prebendary of Bedminster and Radeclyve; in 1481 John Westley, "bachelor in degrees," was rector of Langton Matraver; in 1497 John Wennesleigh was rector of Bettiscomb; in 1508 John Wennesley was chaplain of Pillesdon, all of which parishes were in the county of Dorsetshire, in which, after the lapse of one hundred and thirty years, the name of the family, which had undergone such changes in orthography, again appears, beginning with Bartholomew Wesley, the great grandfather of John and Charles Wesley, rector of Charrmouth and Catherston, who gained the title of "the fanatical parson" on account of his opposition to State Church pretensions and his sacrifices for the sake of his opinions. On the accession of Charles to the English throne, Bartholomew Wesley, as well as hundreds of other clergymen, was ejected from his "livings," and forbidden, by the "Five Mile Act," to approach within that distance of his former parishes.

John Westley, his son, was educated for the priesthood at the University of Oxford. During the civil war the splendid halls and chapels on which Cardinal Wolsey had lavished untold wealth were turned into storehouses, magazines and barracks; but when Cromwell became master of England under the title of "Lord Protector," the Oxford Colleges were repaired, the schools re-opened, and this John Westley, grandfather of John and Charles Wesley, was one of the first as well as one of the foremost scholars admitted thereto. In 1658, the year of Cromwell's death, he became the minister at Whitchurch, a small market town in Shropshire; but with the disappearance of the Commonwealth, and the re-establishment of the throne and the Episcopal form of Church Government, he was denounced as one of Cromwell's Puritans, seized by the State Church officers, and carried to prison at Blandford; but so admirable was his conduct at the examination that he was allowed to return to his parish, his gentleness and piety having quite disarmed his envious and spiteful accusers.

The 24th of August, 1662, was the day appointed for carrying into effect the "Act of Uniformity," by which the Episcopal form of government was to be fully restored in the Church, and by which all its ministers were required, not only to use the Book of Common Prayer, but also to avow their "unfeigned assent and consent to all and everything contained therein."

Mr. Wesley, who would not compromise his conscience for the sake of his "living," preached his farewell sermon on the preceding Sunday, August 17th, and thenceforth became an outcast and a wanderer, hunted from town to town, repeatedly thrust into prison, but ever maintaining his faith and his patience, unmoved alike by threats or promises, preaching the Gospel as he could find opportunity, and furnishing an admirable illustration of that tenet of his faith entitled "the perseverance of the saints," until his sufferings broke his heart and wore out his life, and he sunk into a premature grave about 1670.

Such was the grandfather and namesake of John Wesley, the Methodist: gentle, incorruptible, devout, with a conscience quick as the apple of an eye, and with a most unconquerable will. He could not be permitted to hold his place in the Church of England -- but that he was a true and faithful member of the Church in England there is no occasion to deny.

Samuel Westley, in the next generation, was also a clergyman. He was left an orphan in his infancy, which fact may account for the slight impression made upon him by the heroic sacrifices and sufferings endured by his father and grandfather in defense of the rights of conscience.

In the academy at Newington Green, a private school of the Dissenters, in which he was placed to be trained for a Non-conformist minister, he had for his school-fellows the famous Daniel De Foe, and a lad named Crusoe, after whom the immortal hero of the lonely island was named. Here young Westley soon distinguished himself as a writer, and when only seventeen years of age he was selected to reply to certain severe articles which had been published against the Dissenters; but the course of reading by which he sought to prepare himself for his task had the opposite effect upon his mind from what he had intended, for it led him to espouse the cause of the Establishment, and he became thenceforth a sturdy defender of the State Church, and an ardent Tory in polities, which sentiments in after years cost him no little trouble. Knowing the opposition he was sure to encounter from his mother, as well as from an old aunt, who appears to have offered an asylum to the widow and her family, and to have been his patron at school, young Westley left her house one morning very early, with only the sum of two pounds and sixteen shillings in his pocket, and started for Oxford, where he entered himself at Exeter College, where in due time he took his bachelor's degree.

In 1690 he was ordained as deacon in the Established Church, and presented to the small "living" of South Ormsby by the Marquis of Normanby. This nobleman, who owned the parish, thought to own its minister also, but the Reverend Samuel was not the man to be kept in subjection, and, having turned the marquis' mistress out of doors, who had insisted on being a visitor at the rectory, he himself was thrust out of his "living," but soon afterward obtained the rectorship of the parish of Epworth, in Lincolnshire, a position in the gift of the Crown, where he passed the remainder of his life, and where his two famous sons, John and Charles, were born; the former on the 17th of June, 1703, and the latter on the 18th of December, 1708. [3]

It would seem that the Ruler of events was planning these two men several generations beforehand, and was carefully developing just those elements of mind and body which were to be required in the great mission on which he had determined to send them. In the grandfather of the Methodist Wesley he seems to have arrived at the proper pattern for the great leader, John Wesley, and in their father, the ideal for the poet of this great revival, Charles Wesley; for John is almost John Wesley over again, while Charles is the facsimile of his father Samuel, though in both cases there is a very considerable ascent as well as descent.

The Mother of the Wesleys. -- All writers of Methodist history dwell with rapture on the talents and virtues of that admirable English matron, Mrs. Susanna Wesley; while to the devout student thereof the gracious purpose of God is manifest in preparing and uniting two such noble

lines of power and genius as those which were joined in the persons of Samuel Westley and Susanna Annesley.

This lady was the youngest daughter of Rev. Samuel Annesley, a nephew of the Earl Anglesea and a graduate of Oxford, where his studiousness and his piety were as admirable as they were rare. He was afterward settled in the parish of St. James, in London, and was also appointed lecturer at St. Paul's; but, being a Non-conformist, as those ministers of the Establishment were called who refused to submit to the "Act of Uniformity," he was ejected from his preferments, and, being a gentleman of fortune, he became a leader and benefactor among his Non-conformist brethren, who, like him, had been driven from their parishes, but who, unlike him, were poor.

Singularly enough, his daughter, while scarcely more than a child, passed through the same change of sentiment as that already mentioned in the case of her future husband. She, too, had studied the controversy between the Established Church and the Dissenters, and had thereby become an ardent friend of the Establishment. Thus it would appear to have been a part of the divine purpose that the great religious leader, John Wesley, should not only inherit that vigor of personal opinion which was the outcome of English Non-conformity, but that he should be born and reared within the bosom of the Established Church: a fact not to be forgotten in tracing his career as a Methodist and a Churchman.

In the year 1689 the Rev. Samuel Wesley and Susanna Annesley were married, the age of the bride being about twenty, and that of the bridegroom about twenty-seven. For about forty years this historic household dwelt in the parish of Epworth, the father dividing his time between the care of his parish and voluminous literary labors, chiefly in the form of poetry; while the mother kept at home, guided the house, bore children -- eighteen or nineteen of them in all, though only ten survived their infancy -- trained them in a school of her own, and also attended to such parish duties as the frequent absence of her husband left upon her hands. Of this great family three sons and seven daughters grew up to maturity. They all possessed unusual talents, and all three of the sons became ministers of the Established Church.

It seems almost incredible that the wife of a parish clergyman, upon a salary which was too small even to allow his family proper food and clothing, a lady of delicate health and of refined tastes, which were continually shocked by the rude people among whom she lived, should have been able to endure such toils and privations without losing either her spirit or her life; but in spite of all these depressing circumstances and surroundings she actually kept herself so far in advance of her college-bred sons, especially in things pertaining to the word and kingdom of God, that for years she was their acknowledged spiritual counselor and guide. Among other helpful things she wrote for them some most admirable expositions of Scripture, and of portions of the Book of Common Prayer. She grounded her children in the rudiments of learning; trained them up to be ladies and gentlemen, and, in spite of the continual misfortune which came upon the family because her husband was more of a poet and a politician than was good for him, she ever remained the same courteous, self-poised, far-seeing, courageous Christian woman.

Mrs. Wesley's Home School. -- The family of the rector was the only one in the parish that could boast of any learning; therefore if the children were not to grow up barbarians they must, of

necessity, for a long time be schooled at home. This great task fell almost wholly to the mother, and her success therein adds no little emphasis to the principles on which she conducted it. Her theory was that even in babyhood the child should be taught that one lesson which it was capable of learning, namely, submission; the next lesson was obedience, that is to say, intelligent submission to parental authority; the next lesson was piety, that is, intelligent and loving submission to God. At five years old it was her rule to begin their secular education, and from this time they studied regularly in the family school, of which Mrs. Wesley was both the teacher and mother.

Dr. Adam Clarke, whose Irish gallantry no doubt gave its heightened color to the boundless admiration in which he held the mother of the Wesleys, tells us that this great family of little children were wonderfully gentle and polite, not only to their parents and visitors, but to each other and to the servants as well; and that "they had the common fame of being the most loving family in the county of Lincolnshire."

Mrs. Wesley's "Conventicle." -- A glimpse of the illiterate and ungovernable rustics among whom they lived and labored is given in two of Mrs. Wesley's letters to her husband, while he was absent for some months in attendance upon the meeting of Convocation at London; but, what is of more importance, they contain an account of that notable effort on the part of Mrs. Wesley to promote true religion in her own family and among her neighbors by an irregular but wonderfully efficient means of grace, to wit, a private meeting at the rectory on Sunday evenings, conducted by Mrs. Wesley herself.

The curate who assisted the rector with the duties of his two small parishes, Epworth and Wroote, was, in the, judgment of Mrs. Wesley, unable to edify her husband's people, and, seeing the attendance at church fall off, she commenced to hold private meetings for her own family, and such others as chose to attend. These little services were similar to those conducted at the parish church, consisting of portions of the service from the Prayer Book, and a sermon read by Mrs. Wesley.

Not wishing to trespass upon her husband's rights by holding religious service in his parish without his consent, she wrote to him describing their little meetings, and mentioned that they were evidently doing the people much good. Mr. Wesley objected to this singular proceeding, and suggested that, to avoid the scandal of having a sermon read in public by a woman, she should find some man to read it.

Mrs. Wesley replied: "As for your proposal of letting some other person read. Alas! you do not consider what a people these are. I do not think one man among them could read a sermon without spelling a good part of it out. And how would that edify the rest?"

In relation to her husband's objection on the ground of her sex, she replies: "As I am a woman, so I am also mistress of a large family. And though the superior charge of the souls contained in it lies upon you, as head of the family and as their minister, yet in your absence I cannot but look upon every soul you leave under my care as a talent committed to me under trust by the great Lord of all the families of heaven and earth."

When the attendance at the little meetings at the parsonage had increased to between two and three hundred, the stupid curate, jealous of the woman for having a larger congregation in her house than he could draw at the parish church, wrote to his rector, complaining of this disorderly assembly -- this conventicle, [4] as irregular religious services were spitefully called -- and Mr. Wesley, whose High-Church notions always lay near the surface, at once wrote to his wife desiring her to suspend her meetings.

In reply Mrs. Wesley gives the following account of how she came to hold the meetings:--

"Soon after you went to London, Emily [one of her daughters] found in your study an account of the Danish missionaries, which, having never seen, I ordered her to read to me. I was never, I think, more affected with anything than with the relation of their travels, and was exceedingly pleased with the noble design they were engaged in. Their labors refreshed my soul beyond measure, and I could not forbear spending [a] good part of that evening in praising and adoring the divine goodness for inspiring those men with such ardent zeal for His glory, that they were willing to hazard their lives and all that is esteemed dear to men in this world to advance the honor of their Master, Jesus.

"For several days I could think or speak of little else. At last it came into my mind: Though I am not a man nor a minister of the Gospel, and so cannot be employed in such a worthy employment as they were, yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God, and if I were inspired with a true zeal for his glory and did really desire the salvation of souls, I might do somewhat more than I do. I thought I might live in a more exemplary manner in some things. I might pray more for the people and speak with more warmth to those with whom I have an opportunity of conversing.

"However, I resolved to begin with my own children; and accordingly I proposed and observed the following method: I take such proportion of time as I can best spare every night to discourse with each child, by itself, on something that relates to its principal concerns. On Monday I talk with Molly; on Tuesday with Hetty; Wednesday with Nancy; Thursday with 'Jackey;' ["Jackey" Wesley! who, since that day, ever conceived of John Wesley as a boy?] Friday with Patty; Saturday with Charles; and with Emily and Sukey together on Sunday.

"With those few neighbors who then came to me I then discoursed more fully and affectionately than before. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we had, and I spent time with them in such exercises. Since this our company has increased every night; for I dare deny none that asks admittance. Last Sunday I believe we had above two hundred, and yet many went away for want of room.

"But I never durst positively presume to hope that God would make use of me as an instrument m doing good; the furthest I durst go was -- It may be: who can tell?"

After mentioning the good which had been done -- among other things, that the meeting had wonderfully conciliated the minds of the people toward their pastor and his family, so that they could now live in peace among them -- Mrs. Wesley closes with these wifely and Christian sentences:-- "If you do, after all, think fit to dissolve this assembly, do not tell me that you desire

me to do it, for that will not satisfy my conscience. But send me your positive command in such full and express terms as may absolve me from all guilt and punishment for neglecting this opportunity of doing good, when you and I shall appear before the great and awful tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Such dutiful words from his wife and parishioner, which at the same time brought the rector face to face with God, and challenged him to exercise his right and power with the same obedient heart toward his superior as that she held toward hers, seems to have given a new turn to the argument, and to have left the victory with the woman; for we hear nothing more of the rector's objections, and "The Society," as Mrs. Wesley named her assembly, continued its meetings until the rector's return.

Epworth Politics. -- The sharpness and power of this lady's mind is suggested by her reference to the fact that her "conventicles" had been the means of establishing peaceful relations between the family of the rector and the people of the parish. This was touching her husband in a vital spot; for his political partisanship had kept the parish in a ferment of sullen ugliness which sometimes broke out into open violence against the rector and his family.

The bitterness of the quarrels between the two factions into which the parish and the kingdom were divided can hardly he appreciated at the present day. The reigning King was William III, Prince of Orange, who, with his wife, Mary, the eldest daughter of King James II, had come over from the Dutch Netherlands at the invitation of the leaders of the Protestant party in England, and possessed himself of the throne which James, on account of his tyranny in the interests of the Papists, had been compelled to abdicate.

James II was now dead, and the Papist party in England called Jacobites, claimed to hold allegiance to his son, known in history as the "Young Pretender," in whose interest the Jacobites were continually plotting and planning for another revolution, with a view to set up the Romish Church again as the Church of England. The Epworth rector was a firm supporter of William and Mary, but his wife, although as good a Protestant as himself, did not believe in the legitimacy of their title, though she prudently kept her opinion to herself.

One day at family worship the rector noticed that his wife did not say "Amen" in the proper place after the form of prayer for the king and royal family, and when the service was over he straightway inquired the reason.

"I do not believe in the title of the Prince of Orange," said Mrs. Wesley. This raised the patriotic wrath of her husband, who instantly replied:-- "If we have two kings we must have two beds." And he actually left his family and his parish and remained away from them for more than half a year, till Queen Anne, another daughter of the exiled James II, came to the throne, in whose title both the husband and the wife believed; whereupon the family was once more united.

If the learned and pious rector of the parish could make such an exhibition of bad temper over a difference of political opinion in his own household, what might not be expected of the rabble in the wild excitements of festivals and elections?

A Brand Plucked from the Burning. -- The parish of Epworth was divided against itself, and so wild was the zeal of the Jacobites on the one hand and the Orangemen on the other that it often broke out into deeds of violence.

The election for the county of Lincoln in May, 1705, was very bitter and exciting. Mr. Samuel Wesley, with more valor than discretion, entered warmly into the contest in support of the candidate of the Orangemen, who was, nevertheless, defeated; and, on his return from the polling-place at the county-seat, the Epworth Jacobites celebrated their victory by raising a mob, which surrounded the rectory and kept up a din of drums, shouts, noise of fire-arms, and such like, till after midnight.

The next evening one of the mob, passing the yard where the rector's children were playing, cried out, "O ye devils! we will come and turn ye all out of doors a-begging, shortly;" a threat which must have had a strange significance to the Wesleys, whose fathers had suffered that identical outrage at the hands of the Church to which the rector was now devoting his tongue and his pen. It would have been "an eye for an eye" if the Jacobites had been able to execute their threat by means of another revolution; but, as they were not, they kept up an infamous style of persecution, stabbing the rector's cows, cutting off a leg of his dog, withholding his tithes, arresting and thrusting him into jail for small debts, and finally, after one or two unsuccessful attempts, burning the rectory to the ground, and fulfilling their threat of turning him and his family out of doors.

This last event occurred when his son John was about six years old. In the dead of a winter's night the father was awakened by the fire coming into his chamber through the thatched roof, and, hastily arousing his family, they fled downstairs, and with great difficulty escaped with their lives. By some mischance little John was left behind, fast asleep; but being awakened, he sprang to the window and began to cry for help. It was too late; the house was filled with smoke and flame; there was not time to fetch a ladder, and the frantic father tried in vain to ascend the stairs, but they were already too far gone to support his weight; and, half dead with suffocation and frantic with distress, he fell on his knees and commended his poor lost boy to God. But meanwhile a stout man had placed himself against the wall of the house, and another had climbed upon his shoulders, and little Jack, leaping into his arms, was rescued out of the very jaws of the flame. The next instant the whole blazing mass of the roof fell in.

This fire occurred in the year 1709. The letters of Mrs. Wesley to her husband, above quoted, bear the dates of February 6th and 12th, 1712, whereby it would appear that the wrath of their enemies had followed them year after year until, in the absence of the rector, his wife, under the blessing of God, so established her influence with the people as to bring them in crowds to the rectory for prayer and instruction, thus becoming the real preacher of the Gospel of peace; after which time there is no further record of ill-will on the part of the Epworth people toward their pastor or his family.

John Wesley, in after years, was always deeply affected by this narrow escape from so terrible a death, and on the margin of a picture which was painted to commemorate the event he wrote the significant words:-- "Is not this a brand plucked from the burning?" The notable success of Mrs. Wesley's "Society," as appears from her letter to her husband, above quoted, in

harmonizing her husband's parish, after years of such confusion and violence, was an argument in favor of her course which could not be overthrown. It was evident that the Head of the Church was her patron and defender; and, what is especially noticeable, she understood how to use the fact of her wonderful success without descending to spiteful personalities in her discussions with her husband, or even abating one jot of the wifely duty and respect which she owed to him. John Wesley was afterward distinguished for his almost inimitable skill as a logician, who could win a victory in a debate with fewer words and in better temper than any other man of his time. Is it not plain that this amiable sharpness and this logical power were among his birth inheritances from his admirable mother?

Samuel Wesley as an Author. -- The father of the Wesleys was a poet, and, according to his theory, poetry and poverty naturally went hand in hand. His first curacy in London yielded him only thirty pounds a year, about one hundred and fifty dollars; but to this he added thirty pounds more by his literary work, and on this slender income he married Susan Annesley -- one of the most sensible things recorded of him -- and lived in lodgings until he received the "living" of South Ormsby, worth about fifty pounds a year.

In 1693 he published the first of his large poetic works entitled, "The Life of Our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; A Heroic Poem in Ten Books; Dedicated to Her Most Sacred Majesty [Queen Mary]; Attempted by Samuel Wesley, Rector of South Ormsby, in the County of Lincoln." This poem, however valueless in itself, earned for him the favor of his queen, who the next year returned his compliment by conferring on him the "living" of Epworth, and afterward that of Wroote, a poor little village a few miles distant, both together worth about two hundred and fifty pounds a year. These livings he held until his death; which event occurred on the 25th of April, 1735, in the seventy-second year of his age and in the thirty-ninth year of his service as rector of the parish of Epworth.

His other works are more remarkable for length than depth, and of the vast mass of rhyming rubbish which he threw off only a few stanzas have found place even in the Hymn books published by his own sons.

He possessed to a notable degree the power of persistent mental application, and what may be called the mechanical skill of versification, but without that divine enlightenment and that creative power in which consists the measureless difference between a sacred poet and a beater of rhymes.

The Rev. Samuel Wesley is entitled to no small honor for being one of the first men in England to perceive the opportunity and duty of carrying the Gospel into foreign parts. He even wrote out a plan for a great system of British missionary colonies or settlements in India, China, Abyssinia, and in the islands of St. Helena, St. Thomas, etc., which plan was approved by the Bishop of York; but for want of missionary spirit among the English clergy this scheme, which Adam Clarke declares was such as might easily have been carried into execution, was suffered to fall to the ground -- but not to perish, for his sons, John and Charles, inherited his missionary zeal, and their labors, with God's blessing, have resulted in a scheme of evangelization which has belted the earth with Methodist circuits and stations, and which will never be suspended till all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

With the other members of the Wesley family this volume has little concern. Samuel, the eldest son, became a learned and respectable minister in the Established Church, in which capacity he thought himself called upon to protest against the extravagances of his younger brothers; of the daughters, the most of whom grew up to be brilliant and talented women, those who care to know more can find what little there is on record in Dr. Adam Clarke's "Wesley Family."

The Charter House School. -- At the age of eleven "Jackey" Wesley, after five years' tuition in the home school taught by his mother, which was by far the best institution of learning he ever attended, was placed at the Charter House School in London. [5]

In this school the law of the strongest prevailed. All sorts of petty tyrannies were practiced by the big boys upon the little ones, and "Jackey" Wesley was no exception to their rule. The regular rations issued to the boys included meat as well as bread, but the big boys, like so many big dogs, would pounce upon the little chaps as they came from the cook's house with their rations in their hands, and rob them of their meat, thus forcing them to become vegetarians in spite of themselves, until they became strong enough to fight for their meat, and later on for that of their juniors also.

Such outrages have been defended on the ground that the hardship which this injustice inflicts is useful in teaching the small boy to be patient under difficulties, and to make the best of misfortunes; but there is little said concerning the savagery which is produced among the larger ones by this abuse of those whom circumstances have placed in their power. If the theory of these great schools were to train the youth of England to submit uncomplainingly to the impositions of unjust laws or the tyranny of usurped authority, nothing could be better adapted to that end than the system above mentioned. But "Jackey" managed to thrive in spite of his tormentors: taking a run every morning three times around the ample play-grounds, according to his father's direction, and eating his ration of bread with a good appetite, sharpened by the sight of some tall young gentleman (?) devouring two cold cuts of boiled beef or roast mutton, the one being his by right, the other "by conquest" -- a phrase which the British nation has done so much to translate from robbery into heroism.

Two years later his younger brother, Charles, was sent to school at Westminster, where his brother Samuel was one of the ushers, as certain of the younger assistant teachers were called, and who paid the cost of his younger brother's course of study. Little Charles was a spirited lad, well knit, active, and afraid of nothing, which qualities not only made him a favorite -- for boys are always hero-worshippers -- but gained him the title of "captain of the school." His leadership, however, was of a different sort from that which would have led him to rob his inferiors, cringe to his superiors, and fight his equals; he had a heroic spirit, and was as generous as he was brave.

Dr. Smith, in his admirable "History of Wesleyan Methodism," mentions a case in point:-- "There was a Scotch laddie at school, whose ancestors had taken sides with the Pretender, as the papist claimant to the throne was called, and who, in consequence, was greatly persecuted by the other boys; but the "captain" took him under his own special charge; defended him, fought for him, and saved him from what would otherwise have been a life of intolerable misery. This lad was James Murray, afterward the great Baron Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of England."

While Charles Wesley was a pupil at Westminster, a wealthy Irish gentleman, Garret Wesley, wrote to the Rev. Samuel Wesley inquiring if he had a son named Charles; giving out that he wished to adopt a boy of that name. The result was that for some years the school bills of the lad were paid on the stranger's account by his supposed agent at London; but when the question was submitted to the young man himself whether to go to Ireland, as the adopted son of Garret Wesley, or stay in England and take his chances as the son of a poor clergyman, he made choice of the latter, a decision which his brother John called a "fair escape;" and another boy became the heir of the Irish Wesley's name and fortune. This was Richard Colley Wesley, afterward Lord Mornington, and grandfather of the Duke of Wellington, whose name stands in the army list of 1800 as "The Hon. Arthur Wesley, Lieutenant Colonel of the Thirty-third Regiment;" more commonly written "Wellesley," which is only a modern corruption of the name, perhaps for the purpose of escaping the suspicion of relationship between the Irish duke and the Methodist reformers.

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## Chapter 3
## THE HOLY CLUB

In the year 1720 John Wesley, then a youth of seventeen, was admitted to Christ Church College, Oxford, to which college his brother Charles followed him six years after.

The excellent use he had made of his time at the Charter House gained for him a high position as a student at Oxford, and he soon became quite famous for his learning in the classics, and especially for his skill in logic. But Christ Church was, and still is, the most aristocratic, fashionable, and luxurious of all the Oxford colleges, whose ordinary function is to give a mild scholastic flavor to the manners of the prospective noblemen of the realm, and was, therefore, ill adapted to train a religious leader for his work.

On his arrival he was surprised at the extent to which all manner of dissipations, among which drinking and gambling were only the least disgraceful, prevailed at this central seat of British learning. For a time young Wesley was carried by the current out of his moral latitude; but not for long. Ever since his rescue from the flames his mother had felt impressed to devote herself with special care to the training of this son, toward whom there is in the family records a slight tinge of favoritism, and the suggestion of a presentiment in the mind of that good woman of certain great things which lay before him. In her private journal these words occur with reference to him, written not very long after the fire at the rectory:-- "And I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this child that Thou hast so mercifully provided for, than ever I have been; that I may do my endeavor to instill into his mind the principles of thy true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success."

Although John was saved through his mother's teachings and in answer to her prayers from falling into outward sins, the religious nature which he possessed did not very strongly manifest itself until sometime in his twenty-second year. Six years at the Charter House, with its classics and its ruffianism, and five years at Christ Church College, with its aristocratic iniquity, were not calculated to keep alive the memory of the godly training which he received at home. He confesses

himself to have lost his childish religion and to have become "a sinner," but not to any desperate degree; for the heavy sinning at Oxford implied heavy expense, and young Wesley was a poor man's son, who could not afford to be fashionably wicked, even if he had possessed that desire. We hear now and then of his debts, a frequent topic in the correspondence of the Wesley family; but, on the whole, his poverty proved his protection, and helped to develop the grace of frugality for which he afterward became conspicuous.

Wesley Ordained. -- In January, 1725, being then twenty-two years of age, he writes to his father for advice as to whether he should apply for ordination in the Established Church; he, like all the rest of the male Wesleys, taking to the priesthood with a hereditary instinct; and in the correspondence there is a hint that he had been the subject of some spiritual awakening, and was looking toward a clerical life not only as a means of living, but as a safeguard against habits of sin in which he was fearful of becoming confirmed.

His father replies that there is no harm in trying to obtain holy orders with a view to a respectable livelihood, "but that the principal spring and motive must certainly be the glory of God and the service of the Church in the edification of our neighbor. And woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so sacred a work."

His mother writes him as follows:--

Epworth, February 23, 1725

Dear Jackie:-- The alteration in your temper has occasioned me much speculation. I, who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operation of God's Holy Spirit; that by taking away your relish of sensual enjoyments he may prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature... I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation. If you have, the satisfaction of knowing it would abundantly reward your pains; if not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears than can be met with in a tragedy.

Now I mention this, it calls to mind your letter to your father about taking orders. I was much pleased with it, and liked the proposal well, but it is an unhappiness almost peculiar to our family that your father and I seldom think alike. I approve the disposition of your mind, and think the sooner you are a deacon the better, because it may be an inducement to greater application in the study of practical divinity, which, I humbly conceive, is the best study for candidates for orders. Mr. Wesley differs from me, and would engage you, I believe, in critical learning, which, though incidentally of use, is in no wise preferable to the other. I earnestly pray God to avert that great evil from you of engaging in trifling studies to the neglect of such as are absolutely necessary. I dare advise nothing. God Almighty direct and bless you. I wish all to be well. Adieu,

Susanna Wesley

One of the most successful educators in America has said that "one great want of our times is a society for the suppression of useless knowledge." Mrs. Wesley in her day was evidently of

the same opinion. With the constant example before her of a man of learning and genius wasting his lifetime in "beating rhymes," delving in Oriental literature to the neglect of the souls in his parish, turning the Gospel into a "heroic poem," and grinding out pious or classic platitudes in verse on every sort of occasion, appears to have been a powerful motive, with her in her efforts to prevent her sons from "engaging in trifling studies." Fortunately for John, he eschewed the counsel of his father and followed the advice of his mother, plunging into the study of "practical divinity," including such books as Thomas áKempis on "The Imitation of Christ," Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," etc.; and in the following September he was ordained a deacon in the Established Church.

John Wesley, "Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College." -- In 1726 he succeeded in obtaining one of the twelve Fellowships of Lincoln College, one of the smallest, poorest, and most scholarly of the nineteen colleges which are comprised in the University of Oxford, and thither he at once removed, glad to escape from his surroundings at Christ Church, and happy now in having a permanent means of support which would permit him to devote his life to the duties of a Christian minister and scholar.

Some of the Fellowships in the rich colleges at Oxford yielded an annual income of six or seven hundred pounds; those at Lincoln College, however, were far less valuable, but ample for the supply of his wants.

The position of Fellow was both honorable and easy. Its duties consisted in residing in the college, taking such part as might be agreeable in the general management of its affairs, and helping to maintain the college dignity by a life of learned leisure it was, in a word, a scholastic sinecure, [sinecure n. a position that requires little or no work but usu. yields profit or honor. -- Oxford Dict.] requiring some distinguished merit to obtain it, continuing until death, marriage, or the presentation of some fat "living," requiring little other college labor, except drawing the endowment money from the college bursar, [treasurer] and spending it in a manner becoming a gentleman. For a man of Wesley's turn of mind this was, indeed, a paradise. No more debts to haunt him; no more burdens to lay upon his poor father; an assured position among English scholars, and a comfortable home for life in the midst of the best helps to learning then to be found in the world. His ordination gave him additional respectability and influence; it would, also, secure for him a chance of succeeding to some of the small "livings" in the gift of the college, provided he wished to remain a "Fellow," or perhaps open up his way to an ample benefice in case he wished to become rector of a parish and make a start in the race for Episcopal honors.

There was great rejoicing at the Epworth rectory over the news that "Jackey" had gained a Fellowship at Oxford. The event served to perpetuate the clerical and scholarly honors of the family, and would add to their income, if in no other way, by relieving them of the support of this member of the family. Now perhaps mother and daughter might clothe themselves decently as became their station, which they hitherto had been prevented from doing, not so much by the smallness of their income as by its unfortunate management in the hands of the poet parson; and the father might now occasionally call on his clerical son to assist him in the duties of his parish, which, by reason of his literary schemes, had sometimes been sadly neglected.

Wesley's Scholastic Honors. -- In 1727 the Rev. John Wesley took his degree of Master of Arts, having already been honored by an election to the office of "Lecturer in Greek," and

"Moderator of the Classes." In 1728 he was ordained priest or presbyter by Dr. Potter, the Bishop of Oxford, though there is no evidence of his intention to devote himself to the pastorate.

His position as Greek lecturer attracted to him certain persons, who, like himself, read the Greek Testament for devotion; as well as a number of private pupils who sought his assistance in that department of learning. In Hebrew, too, Wesley was one of the best scholars of his time, he having commenced the study of it when little more than a child. Concerning his office of "Moderator of the Classes," he says: "For several years I was moderator in the disputations which were held six times a week at Lincoln College in Oxford, I could not avoid acquiring hereby some degree of expertness in arguing, and especially in pointing out well-covered and plausible fallacies. I have since found abundant reason to praise God for giving me this honest art. By this, when men have hedged me in by what they called demonstrations, I have been many times able to dash them in pieces; in spite of all its covers, to touch the very point where the fallacy lay, and it flew open in a moment." It is evident that Wesley was a distinguished scholar at Oxford, and even that he had achieved all these scholastic honors before he was twenty-five years of age.

In the next two years, 1727-29, John Wesley divided his time between Oxford and Epworth, at which latter place he served as curate to his father, and pursued his studies in "practical divinity" with his mother. There were, indeed, magnificent and famous halls of theology at the University, but Wesley seems to have been of the opinion that in none of them was there a doctor or professor who was equal to his mother. But at length the college authorities desired his return to Oxford for permanent residence on account of his duties as Moderator of the Classes, and he bade his old home farewell.

Charles Wesley the first "Methodist." -- His brother Charles had now been a student at Christ Church for more than two years, the first of which he spent in anything else except study. When reproved by his elder brother for his folly he would reply:--

"What! would you have me to be a saint all at once?" But soon after John had gone down to Epworth to assist his father, Charles became deeply serious. In a letter to his brother asking such advice as he had so lately scouted, he says:--

"It is owing in a great measure to somebody's prayers (my mother's, most likely) that I am come to think as I do, for I cannot tell how or where I awoke out of my lethargy, only it was not long after you went away."

Charles' piety first showed itself in honest, hard work with his books, then in attendance upon the sacrament of the Lord's Supper every week; and, being now desirous of doing something more by way of working out his salvation, he persuaded two or three of his young friends to join him in a systematic effort to attain a state of absolute holiness. They adopted a system of rules for holy living, apportioned their time exactly among their various scholarly and religious duties, allowing as little as possible for sleeping and eating, and as much as possible for devotion. It was this regularity of life that earned them the name of "Methodists," a term derived from the Greek word "methodikos," which signifies "One who follows an exact method;" but John Wesley subsequently turned the tables upon his adversaries in a dictionary which he published for the

"People called Methodists," in which he defined the word "Methodist" as "One who lives according to the method laid down in the holy Scriptures."

It thus appears that the Holy Club was organized by Charles Wesley while his elder brother was absent at Epworth; but when John returned to Oxford, Charles and his two friends, Kirkham and Morgan, received him with great delight, and, by reason of his superior age and acquirements, he at once became the head of their little fraternity.

His reputation as a scholar brought him certain young gentlemen who desired his personal instruction, and thus he became a private tutor as well as a college lecturer. Some of these pupils became interested in the plan of holy living which the members of the Club were so enthusiastically pursuing, and were permitted to attend the meeting of the Club as visitors, in the hope that they would at length become members.

John Wesley's views of his duty to his pupils appear in one of his addresses to the tutors of the University, who were, no doubt, amazed that this man, so much their junior in years and so much inferior to many of them in personal rank and clerical dignity, should venture to challenge their methods of ministry and offer such stinging advice:--

"Ye venerable men," he exclaims, "who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel thence the shades of ignorance and error and train them up to be wise unto salvation: Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? Do you continually remind those under your care that the one rational end of all our studies is to know, love, and serve the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent? Do you inculcate upon them, day by day, that love that alone never faileth, (whereas whether there be tongues, they shall fail, or philosophical knowledge, it shall vanish away,) and that without love all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, and vexation of spirit?... Let it not be said that I speak here as if all under your care were intended to be clergymen. Not so: I only speak as if they were all intended to become Christians." [6]

Pious Labors of the Holy Club. -- Besides their frequent meetings for the study of the Greek Testament and devotional exercises, the Wesleys and their two friends began a systematic visitation of the poor and the sick, and presently extended their charity to the poor debtors in Bocardo. This "Bocardo" was a room over the north gate of the ancient city wall, and at that time in use as the debtors' prison at Oxford. [It was from this place that Archbishop Cranmer was led forth to martyrdom, after having been led up to the top of the tower of St. Michael's Church adjoining the prison, to witness the burning of Ridley and Latimer, in order that the sight of their sufferings might move him to recant. This tower is seen in the center of the cut.]

To this work they devoted two or three hours every week; though before entering upon such a novel enterprise they thought it best to consult Mr. Samuel Wesley about it, who gave his approbation, provided the jailer was satisfied with it, and the bishop of the diocese had no objections.

It was, doubtless, a new experience for the Bishop of Oxford to have a Fellow of Lincoln College and two or three students of Christ's Church asking his permission to do any such undignified thing as to visit the poor, and preach the Gospel to the miserable wretches in the

debtors' prison; but, finding they were really intent upon this holy work, he graciously gave his consent, and thus the Holy Club entered upon its first apostolic ministry.

Like the man in the Gospel who was so well satisfied with himself, the members of the Holy Club fasted twice in the week; they denied themselves all luxuries and many comforts that they might have more money to give to the poor; they kept the forty days of Lent so strictly as to be half-starved when the great annual fast was over; they practiced all the rules for the attainment of holiness that they could find in the Book of Common Prayer, "De Imitationes Christi," Law's "Sermons," Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," "The Whole Duty of Man," etc., they sought for separation from the world, and managed to live, in the midst of the teeming folly and dissipation of Oxford, a life of almost monastic severity.

There is always something attractive in the life of a devotee, not always in spite of, but sometimes because of, the privations and sufferings which he endures. Oxford laughed at the members of the Holy Club; but among the young men, and young women, also, who lived in the town and observed the sanctity of the lives of these four men, there were those who were attracted rather than repelled. In 1732 the membership of the Club was strengthened by the addition of Messrs. Ingham, Broughton, Clayton, Gambold, and Hervey; the last name being familiar as that of the author of the well-known "Meditations." At one time the list of membership increased to twenty-seven, most of whom were members of the different colleges, or private pupils of John Wesley; and Mr. Clayton, in a letter to Wesley, gives us a glimpse of one of the lady members, whom he mentions as "poor Miss Potter" -- Could it have been the daughter of the bishop? -- and of whom he says: "I wonder not that she has fallen;" that is, fallen from the high ritualistic practices and painful devotions of the Holy Club.

And no wonder that some of the members should backslide when the self-mortifications enjoined by their rules were such as to earn the censure of good men as well as the ridicule of bad men; when the newspapers joined in the popular cry against them; when a mob would collect at the door of St. Mary's Church, where the Methodists were in the habit of receiving the Lord's Supper every week, and shamefully entreat them as they passed in; when certain Church authorities ridiculed and denounced them as "enthusiasts," "fanatics," "papists," "supererogation men," etc., the latter name being flung at them because they insisted on keeping all the fasts prescribed in the Book of Common Prayer, sometimes with such vigor as to leave them scarce strength enough to walk.

As the spiritual head of the Club, the youthful John Wesley published a book of prayers of his own composition for their private use; and that he held to auricular confession is proved by the following quotation from a sharp letter written him by his sister Emily, in reply to one of his own:--

"To lay 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 God never designed you to hold."

He also proposed the formation of a fraternity, a kind of monkish order, to which their habits were directly tending; but Clayton, who was at that time serving a parish in Manchester, and therefore caught an occasional glimpse of the great world which these Oxford devotees temporarily shut out from their reckoning, opposed the idea as a possible "snare for the consciences of weak brethren;" and thus England was spared the infliction of a Protestant Loyola in the person of Wesley, who, if he had been allowed to carry out his designs, was brave enough, learned enough, and heroic enough to have become the general of an order no whit less enterprising and ambitious than that of the Jesuits themselves.

The extent to which the success of the Holy Club depended on the personal magnetism of John Wesley is shown by the fact that while he was absent on a visit to his old home at Epworth, sometime in the year 1733, its membership dwindled from twenty-seven to only five; a reduction scarcely to be lamented, for a more perfect specimen of Pharisaism the Christian world has rarely seen; and its own members in after years confessed it to have been a futile effort to save themselves, instead of coming to the Saviour set forth in the word of God.

George Whitefield. -- It was during the decline and fall of the Holy Club that George Whitefield was added to its number; indeed, he appears to have been its last as well as its most notable accession.

This greatest preacher of modern times, if not of all times, by whose marvelous eloquence and spiritual power the Methodist revival was at first chiefly promoted, and who afterward divided with Wesley for awhile the honors of Methodist leadership, was born in the city of Gloucester, England, December 16, 1714. His father and mother kept the Bell Inn, but his father died when he was only two years old, and his mother, having but a mean opinion of her business, carefully kept her son from all connection with it, until the failing fortunes of the family, caused by his mother's second and unhappy marriage, made it needful for him to leave his school and take the place of potboy of the Bell. This was in his fifteenth year.

In a very frank account of himself, which Mr. Whitefield published when he was about twenty-six years old, he says:--

"I can truly say I was froward from my mother's womb. However the young man in the gospel might boast that he had kept all the commandments from his youth, with shame and confusion of face I confess that I have broken them all from my youth. Whatever foreseen fitness for salvation others may talk of, or glory in, I disclaim any such thing. If I trace myself from my cradle to my manhood, I can see nothing in me but a fitness to be damned." [7] Yet he says he had some early convictions of sin; that he was fond of being a clergyman, and used frequently to "imitate ministers reading prayers;" and that of the money which he used to steal from his mother for cakes and fruits and play-house tickets, he was accustomed to give a portion to the poor!

His talent for dramatic performances was noticed by the master of the school, who composed some small plays for him to act, sometimes even in a female character and dressed accordingly, of which he declares himself to be particularly ashamed, and of which he sets down his opinion thus:--

"And here I cannot observe with too much concern of mind how this way of training up youth has a natural tendency to debauch the mind, to raise ill passions, and to stuff the memory with things as contrary to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as light to darkness, as heaven to hell!"

While he was serving as tapster [tapster n. a person who draws and serves alcoholic drinks at a bar.] at the Bell, he was still dreaming of the life of a parson, and even composed two or three sermons, though he had no one to preach them to and, indeed, he was far enough from being fit to preach in any other respect except in his talent as a speaker. He was often anxious about his soul, and would sit up far into the night reading his Bible, thinking over his sins, and wishing he could go to Oxford and study for the holy ministry, a wish which, however wild it seemed at the time, was not long after gratified. Of this change from tapster to theologue he writes as follows:--

"After I had continued about a year in this servile employment, my mother was obliged to leave the inn. My brother, who was brought up for the business, married, whereupon all was made over to him, and I being accustomed to the house, it was agreed that I should remain as an assistant. But God's thoughts were not as our thoughts. It happened that my sister-in-law and I could by no means agree. I was much to blame, yet I used to retire and weep before the Lord, little thinking that God by this means was forcing me out from the public business, and calling me from drawing wine for drunkards to draw water out of the wells of salvation for the refreshment of his spiritual Israel."

It appears that during a visit to his brother at Bristol he had been powerfully wrought upon by the Holy Spirit, of which experience he says:--

"Here God was pleased to give me great foretastes of his love, and fill me with such unspeakable raptures, particularly once in St. John's Church, that I was carried out beyond myself. I felt great hungerings and thirstings after the blessed sacrament, and wrote many letters to my mother, telling her I would never go into the public employment again;" but from this state of grace he fell on returning to Gloucester, and being without employment, having forsworn the dram-selling, he fell in with idle companions, by whom he was led into secret vice, and almost into open apostasy from God, though it was impossible for him to be an infidel, toward which abyss he was led by the ideas and influence of some of his Gloucester companions.

One day an old school-fellow paid him a visit, and explained to him how it was possible for a poor lad to pay his way at college as a servitor, and George, who had been deeply impressed that God had some special work laid out for him, saw in this an open door through which, in spite of his poverty, he might pass to learning and the pulpit. With this view he at once resumed his studies at the Gloucester Grammar School, took up his religious duties, and presently became quite a noted leader in religion among the boys of his school.

"For a twelvemonth," he says, "I went on in a round of duties, receiving the sacrament monthly, fasting frequently, attending constantly on public worship, and praying often more than twice a day in private. One of my brothers used to tell me he feared this would not hold long, and that I should forget all when I came to Oxford. This caution did me much service, for it set me upon

praying for perseverance; and, under God, the preparation I made in the country was a preventive against the manifold temptation which beset me at my first coming to that seat of learning."

Whitefield at Oxford. -- At eighteen years of age Whitefield was admitted to Pembroke College, Oxford, and, being a polite and ready servitor, [servitor n. 2 hist. an Oxford undergraduate performing menial duties in exchange for assistance from college funds.] which trade line had learned at the Bell Inn, he at once became a favorite with the gentlemen of his college, who gave him all the patronage he could attend to, and thus placed him in a position of comparative independence.

As might be supposed, this young pietist suffered no little persecution for refusing to join in the "excess of riot" of some of his college acquaintances; but nothing could shake him. He had also heard of the Methodists and their Holy Club, and greatly desired to be among them, but his poverty, his modesty, and his youth, prevented him from presuming to seek acquaintance among persons so far above him. It happened, however, that he fell in with Charles Wesley, who was pleased with him, invited him to breakfast, introduced him to his brother John, who also took a kind interest in the lad, gave him private instructions in things of religion, and, greatly to his delight, introduced him to their little fraternity.

He was a young man of pleasing appearance, courteous manners, heroic courage; a soul capable of ecstasies, revelations, and all the heights and depths of religious emotions; a natural orator, of such dramatic power that in after years the prince of actors envied him; and so wonderfully endowed with faith and fervor, and so completely in harmony with the supernatural world, that he could make his vast audiences feel, if they did not see, the invisible and eternal realities of death and judgment, heaven and hell.

If Whitefield was a devotee before he became a member of the Holy Club, he was afterward a very fanatic. He was so bent upon conquering the flesh and attaining to the high spirituality of which he read in his books of devotion, that he would lie for whole hours together prostrate on the ground, or on the floor of his study, with his arms extended in the form of a cross, pouring out his soul in silent or vocal prayer, fighting desperate battles with the devil, whose presence he realized with the most vivid horror; he would sometimes expose himself in the cold until his flesh became almost black; he used the worst food -- coarse bread, and sage tea without sugar -- though his place as servitor gave him a chance at the best, for the remainder of the elegant repasts which he served to his wealthy patrons were regarded as the servitor's perquisites; he wore shabby clothes, put no powder on his hair, fasted till he was half starved, lived in alternate ecstasy and misery, attended the weekly communion at St. Mary's Church along with the other Methodists, visited the poor and the sick, and strove, through self-mortification, prayer, alms-giving, and frequent use of the sacraments, to become a saint of the holiest sort.

Whitefield's Experience of Conversion. -- That work of the Holy Spirit upon the soul of the believer in Christ which is now so well understood among Methodists, was at this time almost unheard of, even in the orthodox communion of the English Church. To be converted signified, in the doctrinal teachings of English pulpits, a gradual process by which, often through very slow degrees, a baptized member of the Church might, somehow or other, come into a salvable condition, at which, however, there was no expectation of his arriving until the hour and article of

death. Even to this day a minority only of the English clergy believe, experience and preach instantaneous conversion; and during the progress of the recent revivals in that kingdom under the leadership of the American evangelists certain of the clergy made bitter attacks upon the movement, denouncing it, among other reasons, because it gave so much prominence to the idea of "instantaneous conversion."

Whitefield, the dreamer, the enthusiast, the would-be martyr, was the first member of the Holy Club to come into this divine experience of regeneration, No member of the Holy Club, not even John Wesley himself, understood this heavenly mystery. Their ideas of holiness were of a condition of soul which could be worked up by prayers, fasts, alms, and sacraments. Of that state of grace which is wrought in the soul by the power of the Spirit of God through faith in the atonement of Jesus Christ, they had no knowledge, partly because they had no one to point out the force of the Scriptures which treat upon this point, and partly because they were so intent on making themselves holy that they overlooked the fact that salvation was by faith instead of by works.

In the awful struggles of soul through which Whitefield passed, his mind was so tormented that he could not perform his college duties, and for a time such was his behavior that he was actually believed to have become insane:--

"Near five or six weeks," he writes, "I was fighting with my corruptions, and did little else besides kneeling down by my bedside, feeling, as it were, a pressure upon my body as well as an unspeakable oppression of mind, yet offering up my soul to God to do with me as it pleased him. It was now suggested to me that Jesus Christ was among the wild beasts when he was tempted, and that I ought to follow his example; and being willing, as I thought, to imitate Jesus Christ, after supper I went out into Christ Church Walk, near our college, and continued in silent prayer under one of the trees for near two hours. The night being stormy, it gave me awful thoughts of the day of judgment. The next night I repeated the same exercise at the same place... Soon after this the holy season of Lent came on, which our friends kept very strictly, eating no flesh during the six weeks except on Saturdays and Sundays. I abstained frequently on Saturdays also, and ate nothing on the other days, except Sundays, but sage tea without sugar and coarse bread. I constantly walked out in the cold mornings till part of one of my hands was quite black. This, with my continued abstinence and inward conflicts, at length so emaciated my body that at Passion-week, finding I could scarce creep upstairs, I was obliged to inform my kind tutor of my situation, who immediately sent a physician to me. This caused no small triumph among the collegians, who began to cry out, 'What is his fasting come to now?'

"This fit of sickness continued upon me for seven weeks, and a glorious visitation it was. The blessed Spirit was all this time purifying my soul. All my former gross and notorious, and even my heart sins, also, were now set home upon me, of which I wrote down some remembrance immediately, and confessed them before God morning and evening...

"About the end of the seven weeks, and after I had been groaning under an unspeakable pressure of body and mind for above a twelvemonth, God was pleased to set me free... I found and felt in myself that I was delivered from the burden that had so heavily oppressed me. The spirit of mourning was taken from me, and I knew what it was truly to rejoice in God my Saviour, 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, save a few casual intermissions, ever since. Now did the Spirit of God take possession of my soul, and, as I humbly hope, seal me unto the days of redemption."

It was during this time that John Wesley had helped him out of his despondency and advised him to continue his performance of the external duties of religion. At a time when he was tempted to abandon them and give over the struggle in despair, Charles Wesley lent him a book to read, entitled, the "Life of God in the Soul of Man," from which he learned that "a man may go to church, say his prayers, receive the sacrament, and yet not be a Christian;" and this book through the blessing of the divine Spirit, was the means of bringing him into the experience of saving grace. "Holding the book in my hand," he says, "I thus addressed the God of heaven and earth:--

"'Lord, if I am not a Christian, for Jesus Christ's sake show me what Christianity is, that I may not be damned at last.' I read a little further, and discovered that they who know anything of religion know it is a vital union with the Son of God -- Christ found in the heart. O, what a ray of divine light did then break in upon my soul!

"I know the place: it may, perhaps, be superstitious, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed himself to me, and gave me a new birth." This was in the year 1735, when Whitefield was in his twenty-first year.

Cool-headed, cool-hearted rationalists will certainly scoff at such a radical, terrible, glorious conversion as that of George Whitefield. Half-way-covenant believers, whose sluggish souls were never stirred to the depths, perhaps because their souls have no depths to be stirred, will say that this man was the victim of a pious delusion; materialists will call his supernatural experience a case of fanatical enthusiasm; but they who through faith have been made "partakers of the Divine nature" will understand the mystery and pray for the multiplication of such experiences among both ministry and people.

The decided character of Whitefield's testimony concerning his conversion is worthy of special attention, occurring, as it does, at a time when the doctrine of Assurance of Faith was very rarely heard. Whitefield was saved so gloriously that he had no difficulty in recognizing the fact. Is it true, then, that the reason why so many professing Christians are in doubt about their experience of saving grace is to be found in the fact that their experience of grace really amounts to so little? Yea or nay, this certainly is true, that all the great souls whom God has set to be leaders in his Church have passed through the same deep convictions, and fought the same desperate battles with the powers of darkness, as those recorded of this Apollos of the eighteenth century. They have not only been baptized with water, but also with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

It was three years after this that the Wesleys came into the experience of the new birth. They approached it with scholarly research, Whitefield with absolute desperation; they were gentlemen, he was only a poor, despised servitor who felt himself unworthy of their notice; they were teachers and in holy orders, he was a poor, brokenhearted devotee, lost in the abyss of his own depravity, and only crying out for God; they were Pharisees, he was a publican -- and of course he came into the kingdom long before them.

The doctrines of the Holy Club were orthodox. They were the doctrines of the Book of Common Prayer, flavored with mysticism and somewhat tainted with popery. John Wesley, as has been seen, was instructed by his mother in the theology of his dissenting grandfather Dr. Annesley, as well as in that of the Established Church, of which his father was a champion. Besides these, Mrs. Wesley held certain views of her own; as, for instance, she rejected the doctrine of unconditional election of a part of the human race to eternal glory, and reprobation of the remainder to eternal woe; and taught her son to believe that this inference of the Westminster doctors was a slander against the justice of God. The whole Wesley family accepted the Apostles' Creed as the best statement of theoretical religion; so also did the Holy Club, and they strove after inward holiness by the practice of outward morality and by the help of all the means of grace of which they had any knowledge.

What was the fault of all this?

None at all; it was good as far as it went; but it was only one side of the subject -- the human side; it was an attempt to train and develop the old nature into a state of holiness, instead of seeking for the new nature which is born of God; it was trying to turn the carnal mind from its enmity toward God, instead of displacing it with the mind that was in Christ; it was cultivating the corrupt tree so as to make it bring forth good fruit; it was going about to establish their own righteousness, whereby they overlooked the righteousness that is by faith.

In those days, while, as Bunyan has it, Mr. Wesley was in charge of Mr. Legality, he thus speaks of his work:--

"I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labor. Indeed, it could not be that I should, for I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of believing in the Gospel; taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance." Nevertheless, while those who could not comprehend him called him "a crack-brained enthusiast," his outward piety was the admiration of the pious, as well as the despair of the profane. As a High-churchman of the most ultra sort, Wesley believed that one who had been baptized by a regularly ordained clergyman of the Church of England or of the Church of Rome was thereby made a Christian, and the chief difference he saw in such persons was in the degree of their faithfulness to the vows taken by godfathers and godmothers on their behalf. Repentance with him was synonymous with reformation, that is, repentance toward one's self and his own past life instead of repentance toward God; faith with him signified holding correct religious opinions, and being in fellowship with the Established Church; but of that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ which claims him as a personal and present Saviour the Holy Club had a very faint conception.

The Witness of the Spirit they understood to be no more than a kind of spiritual glow which might be supposed to indicate the divine approbation, instead of the inter-communion between the soul of the regenerated believer and the Holy Spirit of God, whereby he assures them of their having passed from death unto life.

"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit," saith the apostle, "that we are the children of God;" and again, "For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are

sanctified, whereof the Holy Spirit is witness to us." But the Holy Club looked for a perfecting themselves by themselves, with the help of God, to be sure, and they sought for a sense of God's smile upon the success of their efforts to please him. They made a splendid effort to attain salvation by law, and they came as near to it, no doubt, as any class of men since the world began; they were admirable specimens of theological and ecclesiastical piety; but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than they. The whole land was blatant with heresy and reeking with vice, and they determined to oppose the tide.

With what?

With exhortations; with condemnations of sin; with sacraments and liturgies; and, above all, with the power of pious example.

No wonder they failed. It is hard work for a man to lift himself. Even their miserable parish in Bocardo, on which they spent so much time and money, was little credit to them, for the poor debtors took their alms, listened to their prayers and preaching, and relapsed into brawling and fighting again as soon as they were gone. The preacher was not yet converted himself; how, then, could he be expected to strengthen his brethren? Only Whitefield, out of this whole company of Oxford devotees, had escaped from the bondage of self-righteousness, and found his way into the liberty of the children of God.

Why was he thus favored above the rest?

Evidently because he was the first to reach the point of absolute despair of being able to save himself.

The Holy Club Broken Up. -- Not long after his conversion Whitefield, prostrated in body by his terrible struggles of soul, left Oxford for a visit to his home in Gloucester; Gambold was ordained and settled as a curate in the little village of Stanton-Harcourt; Broughton went up to London as curate at The Tower; Ingham took a curacy in Essex; the two Wesleys went up to Westminster, where their brother Samuel resided; Hervey went home to Hardingstone, and for a season Oxford was clear of its Methodists.

Had the fire burned out?

Not at all. God was only scattering the brands that he might set the whole kingdom in a blaze.

The subsequent careers of the different members of the Holy Club are various; some of them painful. William Morgan was the first to represent the Club above, he having, shortly after its dissolution, fallen into a melancholy or mania which presently resulted in his death. Charles Klinchin, a lovely character, soon followed him. James Hervey will be loved and honored as one of the brightest examples of Christian living, and the author of "The Meditations," one of the sweetest devotional compositions in the English language. On the other hand, the High-churchism of Clayton was a serious blot on his clerical career. Broughton's usefulness was crippled and cut short by his imperfect, stunted, stereotyped views of Christian truth. Westley Hall, who married

one of the Wesley sisters, was a disgrace both to his family and the Church; though it may be charitably hoped he died a penitent. John Whitelamb, another of Wesley's brothers-in-law, sank down into an ecclesiastical village drone. Gambold was a good man, though injured by the visionary and fanciful notions of the Moravians. Ingham was for many years one of the most successful evangelists, whose work was blessed to the conversion of multitudes of souls throughout England and Ireland; but by reason of certain ill-judged connections which he formed, his last days were not his best.

From year to year this band of brothers, the Oxford Methodists, drifted further and further apart in their views of doctrine and Church government, and at length were even brought into painful collision with each other; but, with the exception of Hall, they were all sincere, earnest, laborious ministers of Christ, while the Wesleys and Whitefield have attained a place in the history of the Church which will render their fame immortal.

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## Chapter 4
## THE MISSION TO AMERICA

A Soul to be Saved -- It was John Wesley's intention after he had obtained his Fellowship at Lincoln College to spend his life at Oxford in efforts to save his soul. This was all the time uppermost in his mind. He studied the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures to save his soul; he fasted and prayed to save his soul; he preached in churches and taught in prisons to save his soul; he fed the hungry and clothed the naked to save his soul; he led a life of severity and self-mortification and made himself the object of ridicule and abuse to save his soul. Poor man! He had a troublesome soul on his hands, and did not know what to do with it.

His old father, now about to die, greatly desired John to succeed him in the Epworth rectorship, but the son resisted all his fatherly entreaties on the plea that he could save his soul better at Oxford than at Epworth. His father then urged that his ordination vows made it his duty to take a parish as soon as one could be had; whereupon he yielded the point, for duty was, with him, the end of all argument, and applied for the Epworth "living;" but his overmuch severity in religion had reached the ears of certain men who had the power of influencing the appointment, and his application was refused. Now his way was clear; he could stay in Oxford, give himself up to pious studies and labors, be a Methodist of the saintliest sort, and, somehow or other, manage to save his soul.

The Colony of Georgia -- On the 25th of April, 1735, Samuel Wesley died, and after the burial his son John went up to London, where a strange experience awaited him.

Just at this time the project of James Edward Oglethorpe (afterward General) for colonizing a crowd of poor debtors, who by his influence had been released from the prisons of England, was receiving much attention. Those were the days of harsh government. The gallows was the penalty for petty thefts; thousands of men in Great Britain rotted in prison for the misfortune of being poor; a small debt was quite enough to expose a struggling debtor to the penalty of imprisonment, and an indiscreet bargain doomed many a well-meaning dupe to lifelong

confinement; for, once within the walls of a debtors' prison, a poor wretch was often as completely lost to the world as if he had been in his grave.

Oglethorpe, whose attention had been attracted by this great abuse, obtained a Parliamentary Commission to inquire into the state of the English prisons, the result of which was, that a large number of debtors were released from confinement and restored to light and liberty.

But what was to be done with these people, to whom, indeed, the prison had opened its doors, but against whom all other doors were now shut?

There was still a small strip of sea-coast in America which had not been "granted" to anybody, bounded by the Savannah River on the north and the Altamaha on the south; and here, by royal charter, was located the Colony of Georgia; the country being vested in a board of twenty-one trustees for a period of twenty-one years, "in trust for the poor." The sum of thirty-six thousand pounds was raised by public subscription to aid this popular charity, ten thousand of it being a donation from the Bank of England, and in the month of November, 1733, the first shipload of superfluous English poverty, comprising one hundred and twenty persons, with Oglethorpe at their head, landed at the spot where now stands the beautiful city of Savannah.

The next year their numbers were increased by a company of persecuted Protestants from Saltzburg, in Germany, whose afflictions coming to the knowledge of the English Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, led to the proposal to settle them also in Georgia; which kind offer they joyfully accepted, and soon became a thriving community, fearing God and loving one another. Three other ship-loads of emigrants subsequently reached the colony; one of Scotch Highlanders, one of Moravians, while the third was a mixed multitude, which had been attracted by the accounts of this open door into a new world, and with whom Oglethorpe returned a second time to America, taking with him the pious young "Fellow of Lincoln College" as their spiritual adviser.

John Wesley was sent out to Georgia by the Society above-mentioned as a kind of missionary chaplain, at a salary of £50 a year. He was accompanied by his brother, Charles Wesley; by Ingham, one of the Holy Club from Oxford; and by a young man named Delamotte, who had become a great admirer of Mr. Wesley, and who, against the wishes of his family, turned his back on a good business opening at home to become the servant of this missionary in the wilds of North America.

But what has changed the purpose of this Oxford devotee?

Nothing. The purpose is not changed; only the means of its accomplishment.

Here are his own words relative to this momentous step out from his beloved Oxford into the Western wilderness:--

"My chief motive is the hope of saving my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text, no vain philosophy to corrupt it, no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its

unpleasing truths. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are, therefore, fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God."

Fine people, those savages! A greater amount of pious ignorance and absurdity it would be hard to express in the same number of words.

After setting forth how much easier he expects it will be for him to lead a life of sanctity in the wilderness, where most of his temptations will be removed, he continues in the following strain:--

"I have been a grievous sinner from my youth up, and am yet laden with foolish and hurtful desires; but I am assured, if I be once converted myself, God will then employ me both to strengthen my brethren and to preach his name to the Gentiles.

"I cannot hope to attain the same degree of holiness here which I may there. I shall lose nothing I desire to keep... It will be no small thing to be able, without fear of giving offense, to live on water and the fruits of the earth... The pomp and show of this world have no place in the wilds of America."

In all this ridiculous letter there is not one word about a sense of duty. So far as it is possible to gather from Wesley's own writings, he never felt that God was sending him across the sea, or that the American heathen had any claim upon him; it was only one of his many schemes of self-mortification to help him in saving his soul.

Was it, then, a delusion of the devil?

Judging by his ridiculous failure, one might answer, Yes. Judging, also, by his distinguished unfitness for such a mission at this period of his life, it would be easy to reach the same conclusion.

But there is another side to the question. John Wesley is now thirty-two years old; a man as notable for sanctity as he is eminent for learning. He is a great honor to his college, and a valuable assistant in its scholastic work. He knows more of books and less of human nature than any other man in Oxford whose record has come down to our times; he is a presbyter of the Church of England, on which account he claims that he belongs to a superior order of mortals, though as yet he does not think himself in a state of saving grace, and has only an official ministry to offer; and so completely is his common sense blindfolded by the rituals of his Church and his own clerical pretensions, that if he is ever to amount to anything as a minister of the Gospel those traditional bandages must be torn from his eyes.

A more remarkable mixture of learning and ignorance, of piety and pretension, of dogmatism and devotion, than that which made up the character of John Wesley at this transitional period of his life, it is difficult to imagine. He is turning his back upon those surroundings and duties which are most congenial to his scholarly tastes and habits, and actually anticipating with pleasure a life among a crowd of savages. Civilization has its vices, which interfere with his great

desire for holiness; he therefore eagerly exchanges it for barbarism, and dreams of saving his soul with the help of an Indian hut. He is taking his life in his hand, half expecting, and wholly willing, to lose it. He will preach for awhile among the colonists of Savannah, till he finds how to begin his mission among the Indians, of whom he thinks as so many "little children," destitute both of opinions and character, "willing to learn, and eager to do, the will of God;" and when this path opens before him he will bid adieu to the temptations of this vain and wicked world, and bury himself in the woods.

All this he deliberately chooses to do without any call of God to a missionary life, without any fitness for it except heroism, without any love for it except what results from his misapprehension of it, without any especial love for the souls to whom he proposes to minister, and without any clear sense of love for God, in whose name he is going to do it: he is simply about to make a grand experiment, to see if something will not come of it that will help him to save his soul.

But if his self-appointed mission be only a piece of devout self-righteousness, he fulfills it in a manner worthy of admiration. He is traveling the wrong road, but it is a splendid sight to see how he pushes on; his zeal is not according to knowledge, but his Father in heaven understands this singular child, and is giving him a chance to toss upon the stormy bosom of the ocean, to dash his head against the trees of the wilderness, to wade through swamps, to freeze and starve, to be duped and abused, and be made the scapegoat of a scandalous quarrel, all with the evident purpose of widening the scope of his vision, driving some of the pious conceit out of him, showing him how weak and contemptible a thing is merely official religion, and, withal of opening his understanding, through the teachings of some of the simple-minded Moravians, to that pivotal doctrine of the Wesleyan revival -- the regeneration of the penitent sinner by the power of the Holy Ghost through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

It was arranged that Charles Wesley should go out to Georgia as the Governor's secretary, and he now took orders as a clergyman, that he might assist his brother in his ministry. The two Wesleys, Ingham, and Delamotte, made a solemn agreement in writing to the effect that in order to maintain unity among themselves, no one of the four should undertake anything of importance without consulting with the other three; that all questions should be decided by vote; and that in case of an even division of opinion the matter, after being laid before the Lord, should be decided by lot.

During the voyage they were as methodical and industrious as ever; dividing their time, from four o'clock in the morning until eight o'clock in the evening, with brief allowance for meals, between prayers, reading the Scriptures, writing sermons, preaching, catechizing the children on board, giving personal instruction to chosen individuals among the crew and passengers, and attendance upon the daily religious services of the Moravians, who, with their bishop, David Nitschmann, were going out to join their brethren in Georgia.

On one occasion the ship encountered a terrible storm, and the sea broke over the deck while the Moravians were singing their evening hymn. The other passengers screamed with terror, but the Moravians calmly sang on, as if nothing had happened. After the service was over, Wesley said to one of them:--

"Were you not afraid?"

"I thank God, no," was his reply.

"But were not your women and children afraid?"

"No. Our women and children are not afraid to die."

This incident made a profound impression upon Wesley's mind, for he records it in his Journal with the remark, "This is the most glorious day which I have ever seen."

These Moravians were "regular" Christians, having the three orders of the ministry, Bishops, Priests, and Deacons, according to the English and the Romish ritual; therefore John Wesley with a clear conscience joined in their worship of God, which he would by no means have done had they been Presbyterians, Baptists, or Quakers. They were far in advance of him in the experience of salvation, and he had the sense to see it, and the humility to confess it, and also to ask advice of their chief men in respect to the work he had laid out for himself in America.

The voyage from Cowes to the Savannah River was made in fifty-seven days, during which Oglethorpe treated the missionaries with great kindness. On one occasion, when some of the officers and gentlemen on board took liberties with Wesley and his friends, Oglethorpe indignantly exclaimed, "What mean you, sirs? Do you take these gentlemen for tithe-pig parsons? They are gentlemen of learning and respectability. They are my friends, and whoever offers an affront to them insults me." This was quite enough, and thereafter the Methodists were treated with respect.

A Word in Season -- Oglethorpe was irritable, but noble hearted and generous. One day Wesley, hearing an unusual noise in the General's cabin, entered to inquire the cause; on which the angry soldier cried:

"Excuse me, Mr. Wesley; I have met with a provocation too great to bear. This villain, Grimaldi, [an Italian servant,] has drunk nearly the whole of my Cyprus wine, the only wine that agrees with me, and several dozens of which I had provided for myself. But I am determined to be revenged. The rascal shall be tied hand and foot, and be carried to the man-of-war; for I never forgive."

"Then," said Wesley, with great calmness and gentleness, "I hope, sir, you never sin."

Oglethorpe was confounded. His vengeance was gone. He put his hand into his pocket, pulled out a bunch of keys and threw them at Grimaldi, saying, "There, villain! take my keys, and behave better for the future."

Wesley's Scholarship -- The remarkable powers of mind possessed by John Wesley are indicated by these facts: There was a large number of German-speaking people among the ship's company, his Moravian friends and others, and he at once commenced the study of the German language, that he might converse with, and preach to, them. When he reached Savannah he

discovered some Frenchmen and Italians also, and toward the close of his polyglot mission we find him publicly as well as privately instructing them all in their own tongues.

The following is a list of his Sunday appointments at Savannah:--

"1. English prayers from five o'clock till half-past six.

"2. Italian prayers at nine.

"3. A sermon and the Holy Communion for the English, from half-past ten to about half-past twelve.

"4. The service for the French at one; including prayers, psalms, and Scripture exposition.

"5. The catechizing of the children at two.

"6. The third English service at three.

"7. After this a meeting in his own house for reading, prayer, and praise.

"8. At six o'clock the Moravian service began, which he was glad to attend, not to teach, but to learn." [8]

Besides this he held two services for the Germans during the week, one at the village of Hampstead and one in the town of Savannah, and two services for the French, at the village of Highgate and in town. He afterward studied Spanish in order to converse with some Spanish Jews.

Wesley's mission opened prosperously. His census of his new parish in 1737, gives the number at five hundred and eighteen souls. The only other settlements in Georgia were the French and German villages above named, which lay four or five miles to the southwest; the little hamlet called Thunderbolt, six miles to the southeast the Moravian town of New Ebenezer, nineteen miles distant; Darien, the settlement of the Scotch Highlanders, eighty miles, and Frederica, on St. Simond's Island, a hundred miles to the south of Savannah.

Besides these there were some thousands of Choctaw, Chickasaw, Cherokee, Creek, and Uchee Indians within the limits of the colony; a lazy, drunken, gluttonous, murderous crew, absolute pagans, sunk in all the depths of savagery, some of whom would occasionally make their appearance at the white settlements to trade, to beg, and to steal; but from first to last Wesley never found among them any of those docile little children of nature who were "ready to hear, and eager to do, the will of God;" and never during the nearly two years which he spent in America did he find how to make even a beginning of preaching the Gospel among them, they being determined "not to hear the great word which the white man had to teach." It was, therefore, necessary that he should devote himself wholly to the Europeans. His brother Charles and Mr. Ingham presently went with a few colonists to lay out the village of Frederica, above mentioned, and John Wesley and his devoted follower, Delamotte, began their pastoral work at Savannah.

Troubles Thicken -- But the people who smiled on him because of his friend, the Governor, soon began to frown on him because of himself. The doctrines and practices whose rigidness and severity had incensed a learned and church-going community like Oxford, were not likely to find favor among such a motley crowd as that in Oglethorpe's little domain of Georgia. He read morning and evening prayers publicly every day, preached very plain and searching sermons on Sunday, which cut to the bone, and caused a good many sinners to be "exceeding mad" against him for what they called his "satires upon particular persons." He organized another Holy Club, which met three times a week for Scripture reading, psalm-singing, and prayer, and he and young Delamotte each set up a little school.

Mr. Tyerman, in his admirable "Life and Times of John Wesley," relates this characteristic incident:--

Some of the boys in Mr. Delamotte's school were too poor to wear shoes and stockings, on which account those who could boast of being shod used to tease them for going barefoot. The teacher tried to correct this small cruelty, but failed, and reported his want of success to his master.

"I think I can cure it," said Wesley, "and if you will exchange schools with me I will try." Accordingly, the next Monday morning the teachers exchanged schools, and what was the surprise of Wesley's new scholars to see their teacher and minister coming to school barefoot! Before the week was ended it began to be fashionable in that school to dispense with shoes and stockings, and nothing further was heard of persecution on that account.

In writing home to his mother Mr. Wesley describes his new home as "pleasant beyond imagination, and exceedingly healthy," though he says that some of his parishioners are already very angry at him.

While the revolt against his spiritual authority was gathering strength his brother and his friend Ingham were meeting with similar trials at Frederica. Charles Wesley began by magnifying his office and carrying out his ritualistic notions with a high hand. He also attempted the practical but impracticable office of settling the quarrels of certain scolding women; and in one way and another brought himself into such bad odor with these semi-barbarians that they actually denied him a place to sleep, and he was forced to make his bed on the ground.

They filled the ears of the Governor with stories against him, and in a short time the secretary was out of favor with his master, whereupon, having no visible protection, his few friends forsook him, he was charged with mutiny, and his life became so intolerable that within three weeks after his arrival at Frederica he dispatched Ingham to Savannah for advice. The elder brother made all haste to visit the scene of hostilities, but his office as peacemaker was a sad failure; for he had only just returned to Savannah when Charles made his appearance there, having been actually put to flight by the outrageous treatment of his parishioners. The brothers then exchanged their fields of labor, but in a month and a day John Wesley, also, was forced to abandon his cure of souls at Frederica and to return to Savannah, having been, as he says, "betrayed, scorned, and insulted by those I had most labored to serve."

After five months Charles Wesley returned to England to beg for re-enforcements, and at the end of the first year Ingham followed him, having accomplished literally nothing of all the pious purposes with which they set out. John Wesley and his faithful Delamotte remained for another year, when they, too, were glad to escape under circumstances which his enemies for a hundred years have used to traduce Wesley's character and belittle his fame.

During the second year, in spite of the sad experience he had suffered, John Wesley kept on in his course of High-Church dogmatism. With him a direction set down in the Prayer Book was in those days almost as binding as a text of Scripture; and by both these books, not by either without the other, he determined to stand or fall. He insisted on baptizing infants by immersion unless it was declared by the parents that they were too feeble to bear it; he would not allow persons to stand as godfathers and godmothers who did not certify that they had received the Holy Communion; he refused the Lord's Supper to those who did not give previous notice of their intention to present themselves; his visitation from house to house was looked upon as a systematic espionage; and it was charged that he attempted to establish a system of confessions, fasts, and other religious mortifications, which, though well enough in accordance with the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, were not at all agreeable to these Savannah colonists, whom their zealous minister was trying either to lead or drive into the kingdom of heaven. He rigidly excluded all Dissenters from the Holy Communion until they gave up their principles and submitted to be rebaptized by him; nevertheless he received Roman Catholics as good and regular Christians, on which account his enemies denounced him as a Romanist in disguise.

In Georgia, says Tyerman, "Wesley was treating Dissenters with the supercilious tyranny of a High-Church bigot." He watched his flock too closely to suit their notions of liberty; he used his influence with the Governor to have strict laws enacted for the promotion of outward morality; and to such a degree did he cross the tastes and temper of the motley crowd, that certain of the baser sort were actually ready to kill him. One stout virago [virago n. 1 a fierce or abusive woman. 2 archaic a woman of masculine strength or spirit.] invited him into her house, and having overpowered him -- for Wesley was a small, weak man -- she cut off all the long auburn locks from one side of his head, leaving the other side untouched; and the persecuted man, by way of making the most of his sufferings for the truth's sake, actually appeared in the pulpit with his hair in this one-sided condition.

In January, 1737, Wesley and Delamotte paid another visit to Frederica, where they arrived after having lost their way in the woods, waded breast deep in swamps, and slept on the ground in their wet clothes, which were frozen stiff in the morning. But the people of that wretched settlement were as intractable as ever, and, after spending some twenty days among them, during which his life was repeatedly threatened, Wesley left the place forever, and returned to face his enemies at Savannah, who were preparing a long indictment against him.

An Escape from Matrimony -- To make matters worse, Wesley fell in love with a beautiful and accomplished young lady, who had first sought his help in learning the French language, and, later, his instruction in religion. She was the niece of the wife of one Thomas Causton, an unscrupulous adventurer who had so far won the good opinion of Governor Oglethorpe as to be made chief magistrate of the colony, which office he administered with the most ridiculous state and dignity.

For a time the affairs of the two young people went on smoothly enough. Causton, who acted as the young lady's guardian, was pleased with the match, the Governor did all he could to help it on, the lady herself was an apt scholar, if not in her French, at least in her piety, and when her clerical lover fell sick she nursed him as faithfully as if she had been his wife already. Thus the poor missionary had one ray of sunshine in his dark and stormy sky. But, alas for him! This learned gentleman, who in after years developed so great a knowledge of men, never could understand a woman. He was quite impressible to female charms; used while at Oxford to write pious letters to highborn ladies signing himself "Cyrus," and addressing them by like fanciful titles:-- chief of whom was "Aspasia," whose real name was Mary Granville, a niece of Lord Lansdowne, a beautiful, wealthy, and accomplished woman, who was half captivated by the extraordinary learning, piety, and courtesy of the chief of the Oxford Methodists. But "something happened" -- nobody knows what -- and John Wesley was still a bachelor; a little lonely, perhaps, and well he might be in such a wretched lodge in the wilderness.

Miss Sophia Christiana Hopkey was a proper young person, of a thoughtful and studious turn of mind, as anxious to learn as Wesley was to teach -- the most promising lamb in all his troublesome flock; and this young missionary did just what almost any other man might have done in a similar case, that is to say, he bestowed a larger amount of pastoral care on this sweet parishioner than was strictly necessary, and suffered her to capture what there was left of his heart.

But his pupil, Delamotte, for some reason or other was displeased with the drift of affairs, and ventured to ask his master if he really meant to marry the girl; whereupon Wesley, who in such matters was ever of a doubtful mind, laid the subject before his friends, the Moravian elders. Delamotte was too active in the business, as appears from the fact that when Mr. Wesley appeared to submit his case before the synod of Moravians he found his pupil already there among them.

"Will you abide by our decision?" asked Bishop Nitschmann.

"I will," replied Mr. Wesley, after some hesitation.

"Then we advise you," said Nitschmann, "to proceed no further in the matter."

[Some of W. H. Daniels' statements about John Wesley seem to be too harsh and judgmental, including those in the following paragraphs about Wesley's manner of courting of Sophia Hopkey and his discontinuance of that courtship. What prompted the author's occasional criticisms of John Wesley, I know not, but the book seems to be otherwise well-written. I wonder, if the author had been born and raised in the same environment and time as that of the Wesley's whether he might not have been a little more charitable in some of his remarks about their behavior prior to their conversion. -- DVM]

"The will of the Lord be done," responded Wesley; and from that time, says Moore, one of his biographers, "he avoided everything that tended to continue the intimacy with Miss Hopkey, and behaved with the greatest caution toward her;" a course of conduct which might have been more to his credit if he had entered upon it earlier.

In Mr. Wesley's counsels to young Methodist preachers he lays down this rule: "Take no step toward marriage without consulting with your brethren;" a piece of extra scriptural advice which certainly was not supported by his experience in this case, unless, indeed, he was of the opinion that if he had consulted with the brethren at an earlier stage of the proceedings. He might have saved himself a great deal of trouble; however that may be, it is certain that by publicly submitting this delicate question to the decision of the Moravian elders, and blindly binding himself to obey their will, he committed the supreme blunder in that list of absurdities which make up the record of his mission to America.

Of course the lady was indignant that her priestly lover, having won her, should ask the Moravian brethren whether or no he might take her, and she showed her resentment by immediately marrying another man, one Williamson, of whom Mr. Wesley, in his Journal, expresses this somewhat spiteful opinion:--

"March 8. Miss Sophy engaged herself to Mr. Williamson, a person not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, or knowledge, or sense, and, least of all, for religion."

Four days afterward they were married, and of this event the afflicted lover writes: "What thou doest, O Lord, I know not now, but I shall know hereafter." That he was deeply wounded there can be no doubt, for after a lapse of nearly fifty years, in looking back upon that sad experience he says: "I was pierced through as with a sword. But our comfort is, He that made the heart can heal the heart." It never for one moment appears to enter his mind what grief he may have caused the young lady whom he sacrificed to the opinions of men that had no right to judge the case at all, and his pious resignation is a poor atonement for his manifest unfaithfulness to the woman he loved, whose affections he had sought, and who, according to all accounts, was every way worthy to be his wife.

If this had been the only unfortunate experience of this kind in the career of the great Methodist it might be possible to accept the above pious expressions as evidence of an exquisite agony, of life-long martyrdom, in consequence of his half-formed judgment that a priest ought not to marry, at least, not without the approval of his brethren; but this was his third love affair, [9] and he afterward had two more rather notable ones, as we shall see, the last of which resulted in a hasty and ill-assorted marriage; therefore, it is difficult to be very much moved by these sorrowful words, or even to charge over to the Lord what was the plain result of his own misdoing. A heart once broken may be an object of tender sympathy, but a heart broken several times over, even though it be the heart of John Wesley, is somehow suggestive of frailty, as well as of affection.

Miss Sophy declares that when Wesley learned of her engagement to Williamson he renewed his addresses in the most vehement manner, and even offered to give up some of his severe, High-Church practices, on account of which he had become so obnoxious to the colonists, and to settle down with her at Savannah! [10] -- the personal character of this lady is highly praised by Mr. Wesley's chief biographer, who accepts her statement without contradiction -- but after such behavior there was no pardon possible. Besides, she was now pledged to another, and, if Wesley was willing to break his vow to the Moravians, Miss Sophy would not break hers to her affianced husband.

It is not a little amusing to read in the solemn pages of some of Wesley's biographers the grave surmises of what calamities would have befallen if he had not "escaped" from this, and that, and the other love affair; how he would in one case have settled into a mere country parson, in another have come to be a life-long missionary to the Georgia Indians, etc. As if the Lord could not make use of John Wesley married as well as John Wesley single! Is not matrimony a means of grace? And has not God been able to make great use of other married men?

If there is any blessedness in "escaping" from impending matrimony to which he by his own conduct was repeatedly "exposed," then John Wesley is entitled to be congratulated on his good fortune; but sensible men, and all women whatever, are more likely to look on such halting between two opinions as an evidence of pitiful weakness instead of providential protection. And why, on the latter supposition, was he suffered at last to fall into the hands of the widow Vazeille, who used actually to tear his hair?

Mrs. Williamson was still one of his parishioners, and when, some months after her marriage, he gave her some pastoral reproof, and at another time publicly repelled her from the Lord's Supper, her husband and her former guardian took up the quarrel, framed the indictment above mentioned, and cited the missionary to appear before his high mightiness, Mr. Chief Magistrate Causton for trial, on the charge of various priestly tyrannies, and especially for the affront to Mrs. Williamson, whose husband sued for damages for defamation to the amount of one thousand pounds.

The whole colony was in an uproar. It was said, of course, that Mr. Wesley had refused the Lord's Supper to the lady because she had refused to marry him; to which he replied that he had given her the Eucharist several times since her marriage, and that the reason of his refusal on this occasion was, that she did not give notice to him, according to the rubric in the Prayer Book, of her intention to present herself at the Lord's table, and, therefore, his act could not be understood in the light of a public defamation of her Christian character and standing; the more because he had treated several other persons in the same way. To the other charges he replied that the acts complained of were ecclesiastical in their character, and over such cases Mr. Justice Causton's court had no jurisdiction, notwithstanding that the grand jury of Savannah had found a true bill against him.

In the action for damages he prepared to defend himself, and demanded an early trial, but it was put over from time to time on various pretexts; and after the seventh postponement, the plaintiff, finding he could neither obtain justice nor be of any use as a minister under such conditions, gave up in despair, and announced his purpose of returning to England.

Upon this the magistrates demanded that he should give bail for his appearance when wanted, but Wesley still defied their authority, and in return they gave orders that he should not be permitted to leave the colony, and forbidding any person to assist him in so doing. They also brought another minister to perform service in the parish, a Mr. Dixon, who was chaplain to some soldiers at Frederica; and thus practically supplanted Mr. Wesley in his office.

Wesley's Farewell to Georgia -- That same evening Wesley, with four other fugitives, who had reasons of their own for getting away, started in an open boat for Port Royal, in South Carolina; which place they reached after hard toiling and rowing by sea, and great hardships by land, on the 6th of December, 1737. On the 8th Mr. Delamotte rejoined his master, at Port Royal, when they took a small craft and started for the port of Charleston, which they reached on the 13th. On the 22d John Wesley bade a long good-bye to the inhospitable shores of North America, and on the 1st of February reached England, only one day after George Whitefield had set sail for the very colony that he had been compelled to leave.

It appears that when their much-abused minister had actually gone and left them, some of his old parishioners began to feel more kindly toward him, and managed to find a good word to say of him to his friend Whitefield, when he arrived; for Mr. Whitefield, in a letter from Georgia, says: "The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people, and he has laid a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake."

Foundation of what? Neither Mr. Whitefield nor anyone else has ever been able to tell.

Mr. Wesley himself writes in a different strain.

"Many reasons I have to bless God for my having been carried to America, contrary to all my preceding resolutions. Hereby I trust he hath in some measure humbled me and proved me, and shown me what was in my heart. I went to America to convert the Indians; but O, who shall convert me?...

"This, then, I have learned in the ends of the earth -- that I am fallen short of the glory of God; that my whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable... that my own works, my own sufferings, my own righteousness, are so far from reconciling me to an offended God, so far from making an atonement for the least of those sins which are more in number than the hairs of my head, that the most specious of them need an atonement themselves or they cannot abide his righteous judgment... 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." This strong statement he afterward modified by remarking that even then he had "the faith of a servant, but not of a son."

Blessed is the man who can learn wisdom from his own mistakes; and such a man was John Wesley. When he set out for Georgia he was brave enough to face all manner of death if thereby he could save his soul; when he returned he had the added courage to confess himself to have been in the wrong. Then he was compassing sea and land to save his own soul; now he is crying out to the Lord to save it for him.

He was also in a way to be cured of his dogmatism, though the progress was slow on account of the severity of the disease. In referring to his refusing the Holy Communion to a godly man at Savannah because he had not been baptized by a minister of his own order, Wesley, some ten years after, writes thus: "Can any one carry High-Church zeal higher than this? And how well have I since been beaten with mine own staff."

From this time he dwelt continually upon salvation as the gift of God through faith in Jesus Christ. His first sermon on his return to London was at the Church of St. John the Evangelist, from the text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." His second was at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn, on "Though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing." On both of which occasions he gave such offense that the doors of those churches were henceforth shut against him.

Truly those English Christians were hard to please. When at first he preached human virtue and sacramental holiness, they denounced him as a fanatic and now, when he preaches the failure of human righteousness and the all-sufficiency of saving grace, they shut their pulpits against him. In the one case he cut into their worldliness, in the other he wounded their pride. He has not yet attained unto that sense of personal salvation of which his Moravian friends have told him, but he has pretty effectually gotten rid of himself. He has tried his great experiment, and it is a failure: the self-contained piety of the Holy Club, which he has preached and practiced on both sides of the ocean, now appears but little better than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. If there is to be any real salvation it must come from Jesus Christ, for "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified." Thus the orthodox ritualist has come to be in doctrine, and soon will be in experience, the evangelical Christian. He has been of small account as a missionary to Georgia, but Georgia has been of great account as a training-school for him.

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## Chapter 5
## WHITEFIELD ORDAINED, AND THE WESLEYS CONVERTED

No sooner were the Wesleys gone on their mission to Georgia than their chief pupil came to the front to begin that wonderful career on account of which it may he said of him, as was said of John the Baptist, "There was a man sent from God whose name was" George Whitefield.

On the 20th of June, 1736, Bishop Benson ordained him deacon, and he went forth to preach, with almost apostolic power, the gospel doctrine of regeneration. The "boy parson," as he was called, was but little past twenty-one years old when he took the holy vows of ordination in the old cathedral of his native town of Gloucester, concerning which event he writes to a friend, as follows:--

"I can call heaven and earth to witness that when the Bishop laid his hands upon me I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfold, and, I trust, without reserve, into his almighty hands."

Of his outfit of sermons, he says: "Never a poor creature set up with so small a stock. I thought I should have time to make at least a hundred sermons with which to begin my ministry. But so far from this being the case, I have not a single one except that which I made for a small society, and which I sent to a neighboring clergyman to convince him how unfit I was to take upon me the important work of preaching." This discourse, of which he had so poor an opinion, was on "The

Necessity and Benefit of Religious Society," and three days afterward he preached it to a great congregation in the church where, in his infancy, he had been baptized.

The tapster of the Bell Inn was now come to be a parson! from standing behind the bar he was come to stand in the pulpit! and all Gloucester must needs come to hear the youthful prodigy, who was doing such great credit to their town. Here is his account of this maiden effort:--

"Gloucester, June 30, 1736

"My Dear Friend: Glory! glory! glory! be ascribed to the Triune God! Last Sunday, in the afternoon, I preached my first sermon in the Church of St. Mary de Crypt, where I was baptized, and also received the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Curiosity, as you may easily guess, drew a large congregation together. The sight at first a little awed me, but I was comforted with a heart-felt sense of the divine Presence, and soon found the unspeakable advantage of having been accustomed to public speaking when a boy at school, and of exhorting and teaching the prisoners and poor people at their houses while at the University. By these means I was kept from being daunted overmuch. As I proceeded I could see that the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amid a crowd who knew me in my childish days, I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority. A few mocked, but most for the present seemed struck; and I have since heard that a complaint has been made to the Bishop that I drove fifteen mad. The worthy prelate, as I am informed, wished that the madness might not be forgotten before next Sunday."

"He preached like a lion," was the comment of one of his simpleminded hearers on the "boy parson's" first sermon.

The Gloucester people greatly desired to have Mr. Whitefield settle permanently among them, but he declined all their kind plans and offers, and on the 30th of June returned to Oxford, where, a few days after, he took his degree of Bachelor of Arts. It was his intention to spend a few years at this seat of learning, but there was larger and better work laid out for him. Rev. Broughton, one of the early members of the Holy Club, and now chaplain of The Tower, in London, wrote to him to come up and fill his place for a time, as he desired to be absent in the country, and young Whitefield, with great trembling, consented.

He had been but a month in London, preaching with great success, when letters came from the Wesleys in Georgia desiring that more ministers be sent out to their assistance, and at once the heart of Mr. Whitefield was fired with missionary zeal; but many friends who had noticed his wonderful power and genius advised him to remain in England. After his return to Oxford he received the offer of a very profitable curacy in London, which he declined, though he was almost penniless and somewhat in debt, for no other apparent reason than that he did not hear the voice of God calling him in that direction.

The return of Charles Wesley from Georgia in December of that year was the signal for Whitefield to offer himself as a missionary to America. In his letter to that gentleman he ventures to ask him why he chose to go out as secretary to Mr. Oglethorpe instead of going in the character of a laborer in the Lord's vineyard, when by his own account there was such great need of such godly service -- a question which must have probed the heart of this double-minded man very deeply.

"Did the Bishop ordain us, my dear friend, to write bonds, receipts, etc., or to preach the gospel? Or dare we not trust God to provide for our relations without endangering, or at least retarding, our spiritual improvement? But I go too far. You know I was always heady and self-willed."

This brief extract is of value in showing the utter forgetfulness of all things else with which Mr. Whitefield was throwing himself into his work, and at the same time it gives a hint of the filial duty which the Wesleys so faithfully performed toward their mother, now a widow, and dependent on her sons for support.

The offer of the "boy-parson" having been accepted, he made ready for immediate departure. The little fleet with which he was to sail was to take out some soldiers for the defense of British interests in the Southern Colonies of America against the Spaniards, who were beginning to trouble them; and as in those slow-going days such matters were not settled in haste, it was a whole year before everything was quite ready and the three ships actually put to sea.

And an eventful year it proved; for in 1737 England was startled from its ecclesiastical slumbers as it never had been before. The little cloud which first appeared at Oxford now overspread the heavens, and blessings began to pour down in torrents. This young missionary, whose intended departure across the sea was an excuse for his irregularity, became a roving evangelist, and so wonderful was the success that attended his labors that his name was heralded all over the kingdom. He was soon in great request as a preacher of charity sermons on behalf of schools, orphanages, and the like, and, with a careful foresight of what he might need in his new and distant parish, he also improved the opportunity by raising about three hundred pounds for his Georgia mission.

But the great business of this young preacher, whose lips had been touched by a live coal from God's altar, was to disseminate Methodism throughout England. He raised a thousand pounds or so for charity, because people would give to him when they would not to another man; but he had a higher mission than to carry a contribution box, high as that much-abused mission may be. The collections were only incidental, like the miracles of the apostles, and in both cases they served to establish the power and authority of the minister, while the real business in hand was to preach the Gospel to the poor; in which work Whitefield far excelled all men who had ever preached in that kingdom.

Whitefield's Theology -- The burden of the English pulpit in those days was morality toward God and loyalty to the king. The people were exhorted to be good and they would be happy; a doctrine which is well enough as far as it goes, but which falls lamentably short of the purposes for which the Gospel was ordained. The doctrine of regeneration was not then, and is not now, a very popular one among the English clergy. The pious and pugnacious [pugnacious adj. quarrelsome; disposed to fight. -- Oxford Dict.] Toplady, afterward one of the thorns in Wesley's side, has been quoted to the effect that fifty years before his day "a converted minister in the Establishment was as great a wonder as a comet;" and now, also, the case was very much the same.

This was, however, the doctrine of all others which Whitefield knew how to preach. His religious experience was not one of those faint, intermittent, long-drawn, half-unconscious

processes of grace which certain orthodox religious teachers (so-called) set forth as the appropriate thing for all persons who wish to serve God elegantly and easily, he had been born again, and he knew it; knew when, and where, and by what power; he had passed suddenly from nature's darkness into the marvelous light of God's favor; he had been transformed by the renewing of his mind; the Holy Spirit had been poured out upon him; he had bathed in seas of joy and reveled in floods of glory; no wonder, then, that for a time he preached little else but regeneration.

This was almost like preaching a new religion to the people, so little had they heard of a salvation which is God's free gift; which begins by giving sinners new hearts, and which changes the motives, as well as the manner, of their lives. No wonder, therefore, that the churches in which he preached were crowded almost to suffocation, and that multitudes were obliged to go away for want of even standing room, or a chance to look in at the doors or windows. At Gloucester, Bristol, and Bath in particular, he was overwhelmed with people, not only those who came to listen to his wonderful sermons, but those who came to him for personal instruction; while the "inquiry meetings" in those early beginnings of the Methodist revival were worthy patterns for those of our own time.

The second sermon Whitefield ever preached, and the first he ever published, was upon the text, "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;" in which he likens this mystery to the work wrought in the body of Naaman the leper. The regenerate man, or the man who is in Christ, he says, is indeed the self-same man, but he has been "made anew." Another of his sermons was from the text, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian," which, like many another discourse of his, was made to serve the double purpose of awakening sinners and drawing unprecedented sums of money from their purses for the treasury of the Lord.

His charity sermon on the "Widow's Two Mites" would seem to have been rather a practical affair; but Mr. Whitefield speaks of it as other men speak of their most successful spiritual appeals, and says that under it "God bowed the hearts of the hearers as the heart of one man." After which we are prepared for his next sentence, "Almost all, as I was told by the collectors, offered most willingly." One of his notable sermons was upon "Early Piety;" another, on the "Nature and Necessity of the New Birth;" another, which he preached to the soldiers in the great cabin of his ship at Gibraltar en route to America, was on "The Eternity of Hell Torments;" but whether he was preaching of hell or heaven, of sin or salvation, for charity or otherwise, he kept his hearers continually face to face with the Scriptures, with the personal government of God, with the actual facts of eternal life and death, and with the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit.

There is one word which, better than any other, describes Whitefield's preaching:--supernatural.

In his day it was usual for preachers to measure the invisible by the visible, and attempt to discern spiritual truths by natural means. Not so with Whitefield. He dwelt among the divine realities which he found described in the word of God, and by hearing him relate his experience people began to take in the idea that salvation amounted to something; that it was real and tangible; not the unconscious effect of sacraments administered by the clergy, but a divine communication; Christ in the soul, hell put under foot, and heaven actually begun.

After some months he went up to London to see if his expedition was ready to sail, and here, as in the provinces, he was set upon to preach charity sermons, some of the London churches being opened to him on account of his money-raising abilities, which would otherwise have been closed against him on account of his "extravagant" notions about the conversion of sinners. Two of the city clergy offered him the use of their pulpits if he would cut out certain parts of his sermon in which he treated of regeneration; but, said the boy-parson, "This I had no freedom to do, so they continued my opposers."

Unlike his teachers, the two Wesleys, George Whitefield was on friendly terms with Dissenters, some of whom used to invite the young minister to their houses to commune with him on his favorite doctrine of regeneration. "If the doctrine of the new birth and justification by faith was preached powerfully in the Church," said they, "there would be but few Dissenters in England."

Whitefield says he found their conversation "savory," and imagined the best way to "bring them over was not by bigotry and railing, but by moderation and love and undissembled holiness of life." But this did not at all suit the High-Church clergy of the metropolis, one of whom called him a "pragmatical rascal," and denounced the whole body of Dissenters in savagely apostolic style; that is to say, in the style of those half-fledged apostles who forbade the casting out of devils by one who did not belong to their own company.

In spite of this, and, indeed, partly because of it, Whitefield's popularity increased till it became almost impossible for him to walk the London streets on account of the crowd that gathered about him. He says: "I was constrained to go from place to place in a coach to avoid the hosannas of the multitude. They grew quite extravagant in their applause, and had it not been for my compassionate High-priest, popularity would have destroyed me. I used to plead with Him to take me by the hand and lead me through this fiery furnace. He heard my request, and gave me to see the vanity of all commendations but his own."

A report was circulated by his jealous enemies that the Bishop of London, at the request of the clergy, was about to silence this young enthusiast; but when he waited on that dignitary to inquire about it he found that no such sword was hanging over his head. Bishop Gibson was a man of sound judgment and real piety, whose great power and influence, both in Church and State, led his enemies to call him the "London Pope;" and with this prelate on his side the young missionary had nothing to fear at the hands of curates and rectors, who hated the new preaching because it showed them to be still in their sins.

Praying Without a Book -- All this while Mr. Whitefield had tried to keep within the usages and traditions of the Establishment. He read prayers out of the Prayer Book in all public services; but on one occasion, in a little meeting with some friends, his over-burdened soul broke out of ritualistic bounds, and for the first time he attempted to pray extempore. "Some time, I think in October," says he, "we began to set apart an hour every evening to intercede with the great Head of the Church to carry on the work begun, and for the circle of our acquaintance, according as we knew their circumstances required. I was mouth unto God, and he only knows what enlargement I felt in that divine employ. Once we spent the whole night in prayer and praise, and many a time at midnight, and at one in the morning, after I had been wearied almost to death in preaching, writing,

and conversation, and going from place to place, God imparted new life to my soul, and enabled me to intercede with him for an hour and a half and two hours together. The sweetness of that exercise made me compose my sermon on 'Intercession.'"

Whitefield Sails for Georgia -- On the 6th of January, 1738, Whitefield, having been duly appointed to the cure of souls in Savannah, and having persistently declined all the advantageous propositions which loving friends and wealthy admirers could make to detain him, amid the tears and prayers of the multitudes, who literally blocked his path, went on board his ship at Gravesend and set his face toward America.

The Conversion of Charles Wesley -- Among the Methodists of America it has always been regarded as a strange thing for a minister to come into the holy office without a new heart. God grant that it may always be so! But the first form of Oxford Methodism was nothing but a desperate human effort after holiness, and none of the Holy Club except Whitefield had thus far experienced that divine mystery, the new birth.

During the most of this notable year, 1737, Charles Wesley had been in England, working and worrying over Georgia affairs.

The wretched state of mind in which at this time he was living will appear from the following extract from his Journal:--

"January 22, 1737. I called upon Mrs. Pendarvis while she was reading a letter of my being dead. Happy for me had the news been true! What a world of misery would it have saved me!"

During the month of February he was very ill, and while lying at death's door Peter Bohler, one of the Moravian missionaries who was in London waiting for a ship to Georgia, called upon him, and, after prayer, said to him:--

"You will not die now. Do you hope to be saved?" "Yes," answered Charles Wesley. "For what reason do you hope it?" "Because I have used my best endeavors to serve God." Bohler shook his head and said no more, at which Wesley thought him very uncharitable. "What!" he continues in his Journal, "are not my endeavors a sufficient ground of hope? Would he rob me of my endeavors? I have nothing else to trust to." [11]

Here is another extract from his Journal, which shows him still in the dark:--

"April 25. Soon after five, as we were met in our little chapel, Mrs. Delamotte came to us. We sung, and fell into a dispute whether conversion were gradual or instantaneous. My brother John was very positive for the latter, and very shocking; mentioned some late instances of gross sinners believing in a moment. I was much offended at his worse than unedifying discourse. Mrs. Delamotte left us abruptly. I stayed, and insisted that a man need not know when first he had faith. His obstinacy in favoring a contrary opinion drove me at last out of the room. Mr. Broughton [one of the Oxford Methodists] was only not so much scandalized as myself."

Charles Wesley was neither the first nor the last to be scandalized by the "obstinacy" of wiser men than himself. It is rather "unedifying" to have one's prejudices overthrown by obstinate, uncomfortable facts.

Soon after this his illness, increased upon him so that he had to be carried about in a chair; but he still kept on with his "endeavors," and "used" a great deal of prayer for conversion. Besides his friend Peter Bohler, there was one Mr. Bray, a Smithfield brazier, an ignorant man but a happy believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, to whose house he was carried, and who showed him the way of faith more perfectly, whereupon he began to cry out to God most earnestly, and to beg that Christ would come to him and save his soul. The following brief notes from his Journal set forth his progressive state of mind:--

"May 13. I waked without Christ, yet still desirous of finding him. At night my brother came, exceeding heavy. I forced him, as he had often forced me, to sing a hymn to Christ, and almost thought He would come while we were singing."

"May 14. Found much comfort in prayer and in the Word. I longed to find Christ, that I might show him to all mankind. Several persons called today and were convinced of unbelief. Some of them afterward went to Mr. Broughton, and were soon made as easy as Satan and their own hearts could wish."

"May 17. Today I first saw 'Luther on the Galatians.' Who would believe our Church had been founded upon this important article of justification by faith alone! I am astonished I should ever think this a new doctrine. I spent some hours this evening in private with Martin Luther, who was greatly blessed to me. I labored, waited, and prayed to feel, 'Who loved me and gave himself for me!' When nature, near exhausted, forced me to bed, I opened the book upon 'For He will finish the work, and cut it short in righteousness.' After this comfortable assurance that he would come and would not tarry, I slept in peace."

The "opening of the book" was one of the customs of the Holy Club. They treated the Bible as a holy oracle to be consulted on all occasions, and for the settlement of all spiritual questions. The manner of doing it was by opening the book at random, and reading the first passage on which the eye happened to rest. This habit is frequently referred to in the Journals of the Wesleys, and sometimes in that of Whitefield. It was one of the "superstitious practices" alleged against them by their enemies, and often apologized for by their friends, though God seems at times to have greatly comforted them thereby.

"Sunday, May 21, 1738. The Day of Pentecost. I waked in hope and expectation of His coming. At nine my brother and some friends came, and sang a hymn to the Holy Ghost. My comfort and hope were hereby increased. In about half an hour they went. I betook myself to prayer, the substance as follows: "O Jesus, thou hast said, 'I will come unto you.' Thou hast said, 'I will send the Comforter unto you.' Thou hast said, 'My Father and I will come unto you, and make our abode with you.' Thou art God, who canst not lie. I wholly rely upon thy most true promise. Accomplish it in thy time and manner." After this prayer, as he was composing himself to sleep, one of his friends, moved by what he thought to be the direction of the Lord, came to the door of his room and recited these words in his hearing:--

"In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities."

"O that Christ would but speak thus to me! I cried, feeling, at the same time, a strange palpitation of heart. I said, yet feared to say, 'I believe! I believe!'"

His friend and host, Mr. Bray, being sent for, came, and "opened the book" again at these words: "Blessed is the man whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." The two friends then prayed together, after which Wesley "opened the book" for himself; first at the text, "And now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is ever in thee;" and next his eye caught these words, "He hath put a new song into my mouth, even praise unto our God."

"I now," he continues, "found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ. My temper for the rest of the day was mistrust of my own great, but before unknown, weakness. I saw that by faith I stood, and [that it was] the continual support of faith which kept me from falling. I went to bed still sensible of my own weakness, (I humbly hope to be more and more so,) yet confident of Christ's protection."

Thus this Oxford scholar, this ordained clergyman, this "successor of the apostles," this "holy" man, was forced to lay down all trust in his own "endeavors," and to grope in the dark for the knowledge of that Gospel of which he was already an accredited teacher, and to learn, at last, through the teachings of an ignorant Smithfield brazier, and one of the poor women of his humble household, the way of being saved through faith in Jesus Christ. The old fire of Pentecost was kindled anew in his soul on this anniversary of that glorious day. His body also, as well as his soul, was that day healed; for John Wesley writes: "I received the surprising news that my brother had found rest to his soul. His bodily strength returned, also, from that hour:" and then he piously adds, "Who is so great a God as our God?"

The Conversion of John Wesley -- John, the elder brother, was only four days behind the younger in entering the kingdom of God. For years he had possessed religion enough to make him miserable, as well as to enable him to make other people so. He was the holiest man of the Holy Club; but his Pharisaism had been already broken down by what he had learned in America; and he had reached the point of believing that there is such a work as regeneration, wrought by the Holy Spirit, and that this work may be done instantly the moment a sinner believes on Jesus Christ with all his heart. He confesses himself to have been greatly humbled, and professes his desire for "that faith which none can have without knowing that he hath it." From the Moravians in Georgia, and from the Moravian priest, Peter Bohler, in London, he had learned. something of the righteousness which is by faith; something of a sense of pardon which gives constant peace, and something of a work of the Holy Ghost upon the soul which gives dominion over sin. At first he was surprised, and resisted these truths as the inventions of man, but the faithful Peter Bohler plied him with texts of Scripture and facts of Christian experience till the master of logic was utterly driven from his former conclusions, and brought up face to face with his privilege and duty of immediate and conscious salvation, as the free gift of God.

Why he should have been "surprised" to learn that his brother Charles had attained this experience it is difficult to imagine, unless there was, after all, a lurking doubt in his mind of the truth of the doctrine he had begun to defend. But here was another precious proof of its soundness; now he was sure of his ground. He did not possess this saving faith, but, according to the advice of his friend Peter, he began to preach it till he should have it, and then, because he had it, he could preach it all the more.

About this time he wrote down some good resolutions with regard to his own behavior, and soon after wrote them over again, as if the first writing were not strong enough to hold. Here they are:--

"1. To use absolute openness and unreserve with all I should converse with.

"2. To labor after continued seriousness; not willingly indulging myself in any the least levity of behavior, or in laughter -- no, not for a moment.

"3. To speak no word which does not tend to the glory of God: in particular, not to talk of worldly things. Others may: nay, must. But what is that to thee? and

"4. To take no pleasure which does not tend to the glory of God; thanking God every moment for all I do take, and, therefore, rejecting every sort and degree of it which I feel I cannot thank him in and for."

It is singular to note that while John Wesley was confessing his own want of saving faith he should be blessed of God in leading others into it; among the rest a condemned felon in Newgate, to whom he had at first refused to preach at all, on the ground that he had no faith in death-bed repentance, and repentance by a man about to be hanged was very much after that sort. His unlooked-for success with this prisoner led him to dwell on the theme of conscious pardon of sin through faith in the Redeemer in the discourses which he preached in some of the London churches, but the word that was so blessed to the criminal was rejected by the more fortunate sinners who made up Wesley's London congregations, and, one after another, the doors of the London churches were closed against him. For instance, a few days after his sermon in St. Ann's Church, on "Free Salvation by Faith in the Blood of Christ;" he makes this entry in his Journal:--

"I was quickly apprised that at St. Ann's, likewise, I am to preach no more. So true did I find the words of a friend, wrote to my brother about this time: 'I have seen upon this occasion, more than ever I could have imagined, how intolerable the doctrine of faith is to the mind of man; and how peculiarly intolerable to religious men.'"

The "turning point" of John Wesley's experience is of such vital importance, not only to him, but to the whole history of the great revival of religion of which he was, under God, the chief promoter, that it is worthy the careful study of all who may open this volume; his own account of it is, therefore, transferred to these pages almost entire:--

"What occurred on Wednesday, 24, I think best to relate at large, after premising what may make it the better understood.

"I believe till I was about ten years old I had not sinned away that 'washing of the Holy Ghost' which was given me in baptism; having been strictly educated and carefully taught that I could only be saved "by universal obedience, by keeping all the commandments of God;" in the meaning of which I was diligently instructed. And those instructions, so far as they respected outward duties and sins, I gladly received, and often thought of. But all that was said to me of inward obedience, or holiness, I neither understood nor remembered. So that I was indeed as ignorant of the true meaning of the Law as I was of the Gospel of Christ.

"The next six or seven years were spent at school; where, outward restraints being removed, I was much more negligent than before, even of outward duties, and almost continually guilty of outward sins, which I knew to be such, though they were not scandalous in the eye of the world. However, I still read the Scriptures, and said my prayers, morning and evening. And what I now hoped to be saved by was, 1. Not being so bad as other people. 2. Having still a kindness for religion. And, 3. Reading the Bible, going to church, and saying my prayers.

"Being removed to the University for five years, I still said my prayers both in public and in private, and read, with the Scriptures, several other books of religion, especially comments on the New Testament. Yet I had not all this while so much as a notion of inward holiness; nay, went on habitually, and for the most part very contentedly, in some or other known sin: indeed, with some intermission, and short struggles, especially before and after the Holy Communion, which I was obliged to receive thrice a year. I cannot well tell what I hoped to be saved by now, when I was continually sinning against that little light I had, unless by those transient fits of what many divines taught me to call repentance.

"When I was about twenty-two my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same time the providence of God directing me to áKempis' 'Christian Pattern,' I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, very angry at áKempis for being too strict; though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before: and meeting likewise with a religious friend, which I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and pray for, inward holiness. So that now, 'doing so much, and living so good a life,' I doubted not but I was a good Christian.

"Removing soon after to another college, I executed a resolution which I was before convinced was of the utmost importance -- shaking off at once all my trifling acquaintance. I began to see more and more the value of time. I applied myself closer to study. I watched more carefully against actual sins; I advised others to be religious according to that scheme of religion by which I modeled my own life. But meeting now with Mr. Law's 'Christian Perfection' and 'Serious Call,' although I was much offended at many parts of both, yet they convinced me more than ever of the exceeding height and breadth and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in so mightily upon my soul that everything appeared in a new view. I cried to God for help, and resolved not to prolong the time of obeying him, as I had never done before. And by my continued endeavor to keep his

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.

"In 1730 I began visiting the prisons; assisting the poor and sick in town; and doing what other good I could, by my presence or my little fortune, to the bodies and souls of all men. To this end I abridged myself of all superfluities, and many that are called necessaries of life. I soon became a by-word for so doing, and I rejoiced that my name was cast out as evil. The next spring I began observing the Wednesday and Friday fasts, commonly observed in the ancient Church; tasting no food till three in the afternoon. And now I knew not how to go any further. I diligently strove against all sin. I omitted no sort of self-denial which I thought lawful: I carefully used, both in public and in private, all the means of grace at all opportunities. I omitted no occasion of doing good; I for that reason suffered evil. And all this I knew to be nothing, unless as it was directed toward inward holiness. Accordingly this, the image of God, was what I aimed at in all, by doing his will, not my own. Yet when, after continuing some years in this course, I apprehended myself to be near death, I could not find that all this gave me any comfort, or any assurance of acceptance with God. At this I was then not a little surprised; not imagining I had been all this time building on the sand, nor considering that 'other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid' by God, 'even Christ Jesus.'

"In this refined way of trusting to my own works and my own righteousness, (so zealously inculcated by the mystic writers,) I dragged on heavily, finding no comfort or help therein, till the time of my leaving England. On shipboard, however, I was again active in outward works; where it pleased God of his free mercy to give me twenty-six of the Moravian brethren for companions, who endeavored to show me 'a more excellent way.' But I understood it not at first. I was too learned and too wise. So that it seemed foolishness unto me. And I continued preaching, and following after, and trusting in, that righteousness whereby no flesh can be justified.

"All the, time I was at Savannah I was thus beating the air. Being ignorant of the righteousness of Christ, which, by a living faith in him, bringeth salvation 'to everyone that believeth,' I sought to establish my own righteousness; and so labored in the fire all my days. I was now properly 'under the law;' I knew that 'the law' of God was 'spiritual; I consented to it, that it was good.' Yea, 'I delighted in it, after the inner man.' Yet was I 'carnal, sold under sin.' Every day was I constrained to cry out, 'What I do, I allow not: for what I would, I do not; but what I hate that I do. To will is' indeed 'present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good which I would, I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do. I find a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me;' even 'the law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,' and still 'bringing me into captivity to the law of sin.'

"In this vile, abject state of bondage to sin I was indeed fighting continually, but not conquering. Before, I had willingly served sin; now it was unwillingly; but still I served it. I fell, and rose, and fell again. Sometimes I was overcome, and in heaviness, sometimes I overcame, and was in joy. For as in the former state I had some foretastes of the terrors of the law, so had I in this, of the comforts of the Gospel. During this whole struggle between nature and grace, which had now continued above ten years, I had many remarkable returns to prayer; especially when I was in trouble: I had many sensible comforts; which are indeed no other than short anticipations of the life of faith. But I was still 'under the law,' not 'under grace;' (the state most who are called

Christians are content to live and die in:) for I was only striving with, not freed from, sin; neither had I the witness of the Spirit with my spirit, and could not; for I 'sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law.'

"In my return to England, January, 1738, being in imminent danger of death, and very uneasy on that account, I was strongly convinced that the cause of that uneasiness was unbelief; and that the gaining a true, living faith was the 'one thing needful' for me. But still I fixed not this faith on its right object; I meant only faith in God, not faith in or through Christ. Again, I knew not that I was wholly void of this faith; but only thought I had not enough of it. So that when Peter Bohler, whom God prepared for me as soon as I came to London, affirmed of true faith in Christ, (which is but one,) that it had those two fruits inseparably attending it, 'dominion over sin, and constant peace from a sense of forgiveness,' I was quite amazed, and looked upon it as a new gospel. If this was so, it was clear I had not faith. But I was not willing to be convinced of this. Therefore I disputed with all my might, and labored to prove that faith might be where these were not; especially where the sense of forgiveness was not: for all the Scriptures relating to this I had been long since taught to construe away, and to call all Presbyterians who spoke otherwise. Besides, I well saw, no one could, in the nature of things, have such a sense of forgiveness, and not feel it. But I felt it not. If then there was no faith without this, all my pretensions to faith dropped at once.

"When I met Peter Bohler again he consented to put the dispute upon the issue which I desired, namely, Scripture and experience. I first consulted the Scripture. But when I set aside the glosses of men, and simply considered the words of God, comparing them together, endeavoring to illustrate the obscure by the plainer passages; I found they all made against me, and was forced to retreat to my last hold, 'that experience would never agree with the literal interpretation of those Scriptures. Nor could I therefore allow it to be true, till I found some living witnesses of it.' He replied, he could show me such at any time; if I desired it, the next day. And accordingly the next day he came again with three others, all of whom testified, of their own personal experience, that a true living faith in Christ is inseparable from a sense of pardon for all past, and freedom from all present, sins. They added with one mouth that this faith was the gift, the free gift, of God; and that he would surely bestow it upon every soul who earnestly and perseveringly sought it. I was now thoroughly convinced; and by the grace of God I resolved to seek it unto the end: 1. By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon my own works or righteousness, on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up. 2. By adding to the constant use of all the other means of grace continual prayer for this very thing, justifying saving faith, a full reliance on the blood of Christ shed for me; a trust in him as my Christ, as my sole justification, sanctification, and redemption.

"I continued thus to seek it (though with strange indifference, dullness, and coldness, and unusually frequent relapses into sin) till Wednesday, May 24. I think it was about five this morning that I opened my Testament on those words, 'There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, even that ye should be partakers of the divine nature.' 2 Pet. i, 4. Just as I went out I opened it again on those words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice; O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? For there is mercy with thee;

therefore shalt thou be feared. O Israel, trust in the Lord: for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate Street, where one was reading Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation: and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.

"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 openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace, and victory over sin, are essential to faith in the Captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsels of his own will.

"After my return home I was much buffeted with temptations; but cried out, and they fled away. They returned again and again. I as often lifted up my eyes, and He 'sent me help from his holy place.' And herein I found the difference between this and my former state chiefly consisted. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace. But then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now, I was always conqueror.

"Thursday, 25. The moment I awaked, 'Jesus, Master,' was in my heart and in my mouth; and I found all my strength lay in keeping my eye fixed upon him, and my soul waiting on him continually. Being again at St. Paul's in the afternoon, I could taste the good word of God in the anthem, which began, 'My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord: with my mouth will I ever be showing forth thy truth from one generation to another.' Yet the enemy injected a fear, 'If thou dost believe, why is there not a more sensible change?' I answered, (yet not I,) 'That I know not. But this I know, I have "now peace with God," and I sin not today, and Jesus my Master has forbid me to take thought for the morrow.'"

Wesley at Herrnhut -- In nothing is the grace of God more manifest than in changing John Wesley, the recent High-Church bigot, into a docile, teachable inquirer after the truth. It was hard for this learned priest to become a "little child," but all things are possible with God.

Being now converted and saved, one of his first steps was to seek further instruction in the things of God from the Moravian brethren, whose chief settlement was the famous little community of Herrnhut, [12] in Upper Lusatia, near the borders of Bohemia. This settlement was made by a company of Lutheran converts, who were compelled to fly for their lives before the soldiers of the Pope and the devil, in Moravia, and who were afforded an asylum in Saxony, and a home on the estates of Nickolas Ludwig, Count of Zinzendorf. This nobleman, who was also a Saxon bishop, was not only the patron of this band of exiles, but was otherwise largely devoted to works of charity and religion. He maintained an orphanage near his castle at Marionborn, and he afterward claimed that from his own estates he had sent out three hundred preachers of the Gospel into all

parts of the world. This was the origin of that body of Christians now known as the United Brethren.

In the company of these devout believers, who, in spite of Papal persecutions and Protestant backsliding were still holding up the evangelical doctrines of the Lutheran Reformation, Wesley found great delight and no little sound instruction; especially in the sermons of the pastor of this flock, Christian David, and in the personal testimonies given at their social meetings. One after another these simpleminded men, wise only in the word of God, would declare what he had done for their souls, and by the substantial agreement of their experiences with his own Wesley was comforted and confirmed.

The determination of Wesley to go to the very depths of this matter of experimental religion, and his absolute abandonment of himself for that purpose, appears in an incident related of him during the few weeks' visit above mentioned. Like the Moravians themselves, he submitted to be governed by the Count and Bishop Zinzendorf, as well as to be instructed by the godly pastor Christian David, and the Count, with a view of testing his reverend pupil for spiritual pride, and to mortify it if any should be found, sent Wesley into the fields to dig like a common laborer. He meekly obeyed. After he had been at this work for awhile the Count came out and directed him to take his place in his carriage, as he was going to call upon a neighboring nobleman.

"Pray allow me to make my toilet," said Wesley.

"By no means," answered the Count; "it will help to mortify your spiritual pride to go as you are." And there was nothing to do but submit.

No wonder that Wesley, on his return from Herrnhut, was troubled with doubts about some of the fashions which prevailed even in that primitive community of Christian believers; though, on the whole, he says he would have been glad to spend his life among them.

During this absence in Germany his brother Charles was making himself very useful among the prisoners, and among the poor of London, as well as at the meetings of the societies. His Journal abounds with cases of conversion, as if, having himself been born of God, he could hardly think of any other theme than regeneration by the Holy Ghost.

His eldest brother, Rev. Samuel Wesley, was greatly offended at such doctrine, and opposed it with all his might. To him it appeared absurd that a baptized and confirmed member of the Anglican communion, and a regularly ordained successor of the apostles withal, should state that he was not a Christian until after he had been "born again." Some of the Wesley sisters, however, sympathized with their "enthusiastic" brothers, John and Charles. In September his sister "Kezzy," as he calls her, a member of the Established Church in full communion, came to him and begged him with tears to pray for her; saying that she believed there was a depth of religion she had not yet fathomed, and "that she was not, but longed to be, converted."

Concerning this interview her brother Charles says: "I used Pascal's prayer for conversion over her." He evidently had not yet learned to pray without a book. His elder brother, John, had now over-passed this ceremonial stage of religion, as appears from the following entry in his

Journal, in April, 1739: "Being at Mr. Fox's Society, my heart was so full that I could not confine myself to the forms of prayer which we were accustomed to use there. Neither do I purpose to be confined to them any more."

Mrs. Wesley's Conversion -- The mother of the Wesleys, having heard her son Samuel's account of what he regarded as the absurdities of his brethren, wrote a letter to them in which she took them to task for the wild extravagances that followed their preaching; but later on, being made personally acquainted with the progress of the work of God under their hands, she changed her criticisms for commendations, and afterward herself entered into the same blessed experience of saving grace.

The following, from John Wesley's Journal, under date of Sept. 3, 1739, shows how defective were even the most evangelical teachings of the 17th and 18th centuries on the subject of experimental religion:--

"Monday, Sept. 3. -- I talked largely with my mother, who told me that till a short time since she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having forgiveness of sins now, or God's Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. 'Therefore,' said she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son, Hall, was pronouncing those words, in delivering the cup to me, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," the words struck through my heart, and I knew God for Christ's sake had forgiven me all my sins.'

"I asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith, and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered he had it himself; and declared, a little before his death, that for more than forty years he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being 'accepted in the Beloved.' But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few; not as promised to all the people of God."

Several of the daughters are also mentioned in the Journal as being happily converted; and at last Samuel himself, shortly before his death, which occurred November 6, 1739, just as the Methodist revival was getting fairly under way, emerged from his cave of traditional darkness into the light of conscious salvation.

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## Chapter 6
## THE GOSPEL IN WORD AND IN POWER

Prison Ministry. -- The churches being closed against them, the Wesleys were glad to gain an audience in the prisons. Both the brothers were often found in the cells of the men about to die, and to them it was an especial cause of joy to find that Christ was "able to save unto the uttermost" all who came unto God by him, though in their more promiscuous prison services they must have sometimes been almost at their wits' end what to do with their rough and vicious auditors.

Here are some extracts from the Journal of Charles Wesley, relating to this sorrowful but successful ministry:-- "July 12th. I preached at Newgate to the condemned felons, and visited one of them in his cell, sick of a fever: a poor black, that had robbed his master. I told him of One who came down from heaven to save lost sinners, and him in particular; described the sufferings of the Son of God, his sorrows, agony, and death. He listened with all the signs of eager astonishment. The tears trickled down his cheeks while he cried, 'What! was it for me?'"

"July 15th. Rejoiced with my poor, happy black, now believing the Son of God loved him and gave himself for him."

"July 18th. At night I was locked in with Bray, in one of the cells. We wrestled in mighty prayer. All the criminals were present, and al] delightfully cheerful. Joy was visible in all their faces."

"July 19th. By half past ten we came to Tyburn. Then were brought the children appointed to die. We had prayed before that our Lord would show there was a power superior to the fear of death. They were all cheerful, full of comfort, peace, and triumph, assuredly persuaded Christ had died for them, and waited to receive them into paradise. None showed any natural terror of death: no fear, or crying, or tears. I never saw such calm triumph, such incredible indifference to dying.. .. I could do nothing but rejoice: kissed Hudson and Newington: took leave of each in particular. Exactly at twelve they were turned off. When the cart drew off not one stirred or struggled for life, but meekly gave up their spirits. That hour under the gallows was the most blessed hour of my life." The notion of condemned felons going to paradise by way of Newgate and Tyburn was not at all agreeable to the high notions of the Loud on clergy. Their idea of religion was more respectable: salvation was for well-bred people, who went regularly to Church. It does not seem to have entered their minds but that Jesus Christ came to call the righteous, or that the first trophy

were to be saved by his respectability, the communion of the Established Church was an excellent place for the process: but the Wesleys and Whitefield declared that salvation was by faith alone; whereby the high privileges of wealth, education, and station, as well as the high prerogatives of the clergy, who claimed the monopoly of sacramental grace, were all ignored and trampled on. It was too common, too easy, too low: any body might be a Christian and go to paradise on such terms; and what then would become of the Established religion and the apostolic clergy? No wonder these Methodists were shut out of the churches; yet this worked together for good, since it was through this dark passage that God brought them out into broader, clearer light, and, under the blue dome of his own cathedral, set them preaching to thousands upon thousands in the open fields.

Societies and Bands. -- It will be remembered that Mrs. Wesley named her assembly at the Epworth rectory a "Society:" a name that has held a prominent place in Methodist history, and which is still in use by British Wesleyans to designate an organized congregation, which they modestly refrain from calling a "Church."

It was also at the meetings of what the Moravians called "Societies" that Wesley caught the idea of using the testimony of converted persons concerning their experience of salvation, to supply, in some measure, the lack of service on the part of the ministry. There were but very few clergy in England who could take care of a company of young converts, or carry on the work of

bringing others to a saving knowledge of Christ: and as the revival of spiritual religion began to spread, it became necessary to set these little companies thus to take care of, and edify, one another, while the Moravian "Societies" in London afforded him and his friends that religions fellowship which he could not find in his own communion on account of his "extravagance" and "enthusiasm." Those little confidential companies of Moravians at Herrnhut, who used to meet every week and turn their hearts inside out, in order to receive counsel from, or give encouragement to, their brethren, greatly interested him, and for some time after his return from Germany he appears as a leader in the "Societies" at Fetter Lane, Bear Yard, Gutter Lane, and at the Society in Aldersgate Street, so memorable as the place of his conversion.

What were these Societies? Some of them were companies of United Brethren, gathered by the Moravian missionaries; others were the remnants of certain religious assemblies of people belonging to the Established Church which had been organized during a notable revival in London in 1699. It may have been from these London Societies that Mrs. Wesley borrowed the name of her meeting in the Epworth rectory.

One of these "Societies" was organized by the Wesleys themselves before the visit of John to Herrnhut, and so great was its success that it was able to erect a chapel in Fetter Lane, London, from which it was called the Fetter Lane Society. This continued to be the head-quarters of the Methodist movement until Wesley's secession therefrom, as will presently appear. The following extract from Wesley's Journal will indicate the nature and purpose of these "Societies," and also of the smaller "bands" into which the Society was divided:-- In obedience to the command of God by St. James, and by the advice of Peter Bohler, it is agreed by us.

1. That we will meet together once a week to "confess our faults one to another, and pray one for another, that we may be healed."

2. That the persons so meeting be divided into several bands, or little companies, none of them consisting of fewer than five, or more than ten, persons.

3. That every one in order speak as freely, plainly, and concisely as he can, the real state of his heart, with his several temptations and deliverances, since the last time of meeting.

4. That all the bands have a conference at eight every Wednesday evening, begun and ended with singing and prayer.

5. That any who desire to be admitted into this Society be asked, "What are your reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open, using no kind of reserve I Rave you any objection to any of our orders?" (which may then be read.)

6. That when any new member is proposed, every one present speak clearly and freely whatever objection he has to him.

7. That those against whom no reasonable objection appears be, in order for their trial, formed into one or more distinct bands, and some person agreed on to assist them.

8. That after two months' trial, if no objection then appear, they may be admitted into the Society.

9. That every fourth Saturday be observed as a day of general intercession.

10. That on the Sunday seven-night following he a general love-feast, from seven till ten in the evening.

11. That no particular member be allowed to act in any thing contrary to any order of the Society: and that if any persons, after being thrice admonished, do not conform thereto, they be not any longer esteemed as members.

There were "Societies" of this kind in Bristol and elsewhere, and it was in connection with the Bristol Societies that the Methodist revival began in that portion of the kingdom.

Whitefield's Return from America. -- Near the end of the year 1738 Whitefield and Wesley's old friend and pupil, Delamotte, returned from Georgia. As yet Mr. Whitefield had only taken deacon's orders, and must needs return to England to be ordained a priest: besides, he was desirous of establishing an orphanage at Savannah, after the manner of the famous institution of Professor Francke, in Germany, and for this he must resume his course of charity sermons among his English friends and admirers. But he found the churches were closed against him, as well as against his friends, the Wesleys, and he was glad to be received by the "Societies," which, under their labors, were fast becoming a power in the British capital.

Power Accompanies the Word. -- It sometimes appears to be the purpose of God to break into the minds and consciences of men with signs and wonders, when they refuse admittance to his Gospel in any other way. These signs and wonders are so many exclamation points to catch the eye of heedless sinners. The attention of the eye is more quickly caught than that of the ear; people will go by thousands to see a prodigy, who would not be called out by the simple preaching of the Gospel; thus, through their curiosity, God makes a way into their minds for his truth, and thereby his kingdom is extended. Miracles and marvels are thus doubly useful, first u testimony to the truth of the word which they accompany, and second, as a strong attraction to bring the multitude within the circle of its power.

The strange scenes which often accompanied the early services of the Methodists in England are plentifully mentioned in Mr. Wesley's Journal. He claims them as evidence that God is with him, and defends himself from the storm of abuse which he encountered on account of them by boldly declaring their supernatural or subternatural character. The Lord and the devil, he was quite sure, both took these striking methods of showing their interest in the Methodist revival. But let Wesley himself speak:-- "Thursday, Nov. 25, 1738. While I was preaching at Newgate on these words, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life,' I was insensibly led, without any previous design, to declare strongly and explicitly that God willeth 'all men to be' thus 'saved;' and to pray that, 'if this were not the truth of God, he would not suffer the blind to go oat of the way; but, if it were, he would bear witness to his word.' Immediately one, and another, and another, sunk to the earth: they dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and he turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for

her also; and he spoke peace unto her soul, In the evening I was again pressed in spirit to declare that 'Christ gave himself a ransom for all.' And almost before we called upon him to set to his seal, he answered. One was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately his abundant kindness was showed, and she loudly sung of his righteousness."

"Friday, 26. All Newgate rang with the cries of those whom the word of God cut to the heart. Two of whom were in a moment filled with joy, to the astonishment of those that beheld them." Again he writes: "While I was declaring that Jesus Christ had 'given himself a ransom for all,' three persons, almost at once, sunk down as dead, having all their sins set in array before them. But in a short time they were raised up, and knew that 'the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world' had taken away their sins'

Still again: "One who had been a zealous opposer of 'this way' sent and desired to speak with me immediately, He had all the signs of settled despair both in his countenance and behavior. He said he had been enslaved to sin many years, especially to drunkenness; that he had long used all the means of grace, had constantly gone t& church and sacrament, had read the Scripture, and used much private prayer, and yet was nothing profited. I desired we might join in prayer. After a short space he rose, and his countenance was no longer sad. He said, 'Now I know God loveth me, and has forgiven my sins, And sin shall not have dominion over me; for Christ hath set me free.' And according to his faith it was unto him."

"April 17, 1739. At Baldwin Street [one of the Societies in Bristol] we called upon God to confirm his word. Immediately, one that stood by cried out aloud, with the utmost vehemence, even as in the agonies of death. But we continued in prayer till a new song was put into her mouth, a thanksgiving unto our God. Soon after, three other persons were seized with strong pain, and constrained to roar for the disquietude of their heart. But it was not long before they likewise burst forth into praise to God their Saviour. The last who called upon God, as out of the belly of hell, was a stranger in Bristol; and in a short space he also was overwhelmed with joy and love, knowing that God had healed his backslidings."

"April 21. At Weavers' Hall, [another Bristol ' Society,'] a young man was suddenly seized with a violent trembling all over, and in a few minutes sunk to the ground. But we ceased not calling upon God till he raised him up full of peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

"April 24. At Baldwin Street a young man, after a sharp though short agony, both of body and mind, found his soul filled with peace, knowing in whom he had believed."

"I did not mention J n H n, a weaver, who was at Baldwin Street the night before. He was (I understood) a man of a regular life and conversation, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the Church, and against Dissenters of every denomination. Being informed that people fell into strange fits at the Societies, he came to see and judge for himself. But he was less satisfied than before; insomuch that he went about to his acquaintance, one after another, till one in the morning, and labored above measure to convince them it was a delusion of the devil. We were going home, when one met us in the street, and informed us that J u H n was fallen raving mad. It seems he had sat down to dinner, but had a mind

first to end a sermon he had borrowed on 'Salvation by Faith.' In reading the last page he changed color, fell off his chair, and began screaming terribly, and beating himself against the ground. The neighbors were alarmed, and flocked together to the house. Between one and two I came in, and found him on the floor, the room being full of people, whom his wife would have kept without, but he cried aloud, 'No, let them all come; let all the world see the just judgment of God.' Two or three men were holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes upon me, and, stretching out his hand, cried, 'Ay, this is he who I said was a deceiver of the people. But God has overtaken me. I said, It was all a delusion, but this is no delusion.' He then roared out, 'O thou devil! Thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay. Christ will cast thee out. I know his work is begun. Tear me to pieces if thou wilt; but thou canst not hurt me.'

He then beat himself against the ground again; his breast heaving at the same time as in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook. ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty."

Sunday, May 20. "A young man sunk down as one dead; but soon began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarcely hold him. His name was Thomas Maxfield. Except John, I never saw one so torn of the evil one. Meanwhile many others began to cry out to the 'Saviour of all' that he would come and help them, insomuch that all the house (and indeed all the street for some space) was in an uproar. But we continued in prayer; and before ten the greater part found rest to their souls."

"I was called from supper to one who, feeling in herself such a conviction as she had never known before, had run out of the Society in all haste that she might not expose herself. But the hand of God followed her still; so that after going a few steps she was forced to be carried home; and when she was there, grew worse and worse. She was in a violent agony when we came. We called upon God, and her soul found rest. About twelve I was greatly importuned to go and visit one person more. She had only one struggle after I came, and was then filled with peace and joy. I think twenty-nine in all had their heaviness turned into joy this day.?'

"Friday, October 28. I met with a fresh proof that 'whatsoever ye ask, believing, ye shall receive.' A middle-aged woman desired me to return thanks for her to God, who, as many witnesses then present testified, was a day or two before really distracted, and as such tied down in her bed. But upon prayer made for her, she was instantly relieved, and restored to a sound mind."

In another place he says: "I began reading prayers, and preaching, in Gloucester-green Workhouse; and on Thursday, in that belonging to St. Thomas's parish. On both days I preached at the castle. At St. Thomas's was a young woman, raving mad, screaming and tormenting herself continually. I had a strong desire to speak to her. The moment I began she was still. The tears ran down her cheeks all the time I was telling her 'Jesus of Nazareth is able and willing to deliver you.' O where is faith upon earth? Why are these poor wretches left under the open bondage of Satan? Jesus, Master! Give thou medicine to heal their sickness; and deliver those who are now also vexed with unclean spirits!"

"Tuesday, Oct. 23, 1739. At eleven I preached at Bearfield to about three thousand, on nature, bondage, and adoption. Returning in the evening, I was exceedingly pressed to go back to a young woman in Kingswood. (The fact I nakedly relate, and leave every man to his own judgment of it.) I went. She was nineteen or twenty years old; but, it seems, could not write or read. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. It was a terrible sight. Anguish, horror, and despair, above all description, appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured. But her stony eyes could not weep. She screamed out, as soon as words could find their way, 'I am damned, damned; lost forever. Six days ago you might have helped me. But it is past. I am the devil's now. I have given myself to him. His I am. Him I must serve, With him I must go to hell. I cannot be saved, I will not be saved. I must, I will, I will be damned.' She then began paying to the devil. We began, 'Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!' She immediately sunk down as asleep; but, as soon as we left off, broke out again, with inexpressible vehemence, 'Stony hearts, break! I ain a warning to you. I am damned, that you may be saved.' She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling, and said,' There he is; ay, there he is; come, good devil, come. Take me away. I am yours. Come just now. Take me away.' We interrupted her by calling again upon God: on which she sunk down as before; and another young woman began to roar out as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o'clock. We continued in prayer till past eleven, when God in a moment spoke peace into the soul, first of the first tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praise to Him who had 'stilled the enemy and the avenger."

"Wednesday, 24. I preached at Baptist Mills on those words of St. Paul, speaking in the person of one 'under the law,' (that is, still 'carnal, and sold under sin,' though groaning for deliverance,) 'I know that in me dwelleth no good thing.' A poor woman told me afterward, 'I does hope as my husband wont hinder me any more. For I minded he did shiver every bone of him, and the tears ran down his cheeks like the rain'" It would be easy to make a whole chapter of such cases, but these will serve to show the power which accompanied the word as preached by the leader of the Methodists, and which afterward gave similar testimony to the truth under the ministry of the first Methodists in America. Nor were these marvels found among Methodists alone.

The very same superhuman influences are mentioned in the history of the great revival, which began at about the same time, at Northampton, in Massachusetts, under the ministry of that famous Congregationalist divine, Dr. Jonathan Edwards. [13] The same agonies and ecstasies are also mentioned in connection with other great historic revivals of religion, and it is to be regretted that so many good people who have felt themselves called upon to denounce these "extravagancies" should have overlooked the book of the Acts of the Apostles, whose records, if carefully studied, would have given them a more intelligent, as well as a more orthodox view of the case.

In one of his replies to a clerical opponent, in May, 1739, Mr. Wesley says:-- "The question between us turns chiefly, if not wholly, on matter of fact. You deny that God does now work these effects: at least, that he works them in this manner. I affirm both; because I have heard these things with my own ears, and have seen them with my eyes. I have seen (as far as a thing of this kind can he seen) very many persons changed in a moment from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy, and peace; and from sinful desire, till then reigning over them, to

a pure desire of doing the will of God. These are matters of fact, whereof I have been, and almost daily am, an eye or ear witness. What I have to say touching visions or dreams, is this: I know several persons in whom this great change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to the eye of their mind, of Christ either on the cross, or in glory. This is the fact; let any judge of it as they please. And that such a change was then wrought appears (not from their shedding tears only, or falling into fits, or crying out: these are not the fruits, as you seem to suppose, whereby I judge, but) from the whole tenor of their life, till then many ways wicked; from that time, holy, just, and good.

"I will show you him who was a lion till then, and is now a lamb; him that was a drunkard, and is now exemplarily sober; the whore-monger that was, who now abhors the very 'garment spotted by the flesh.' These are my living arguments for what I assert, namely, 'That God does now, as aforetime, give remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, even to us and to our children; yea, and that always suddenly, as far as I have known, and often in dreams or in the visions of God.' If it be not so, I am found a false witness before God. For these things I do, and by his grace will, testify."

And further, on this point, he writes in his Journal:-- "Perhaps it might be because of the hardness of our hearts, unready to receive any thing unless we see it with our eyes and hear it with our ears, that God, in tender condescension to our weakness, suffered so many outward signs of the very time when he wrought this inward change to be continually seen and heard among us. But although they saw "signs and wonders," (for so I must term them,) yet many would not believe. They could not indeed deny the facts: but they could explain them away. Some said, 'These were purely natural effects; the people fainted away only because of the heat and closeness of the rooms.' And others were 'sure it was all a cheat: they might help it if they would. Else why were these things only in their private societies: why were they not done in the face of the sun?'

"Today our Lord answered for himself. For while I was enforcing these words, 'Be still, and know that I am God,' he began to make bare his arm, not in a close room, neither in private, but in the open air, and before more than two thousand witnesses. One, and another, and another was struck to the earth; exceedingly trembling at the presence of his power. Others cried, with a loud and bitter cry, 'What must we do to be saved?' And in less than an hour seven persons, wholly unknown to me till that time, were rejoicing, and singing, and with all their might giving thanks to the God of their salvation."

Concerning these singular bodily exercises already mentioned, the Rev. Ralph Erskine wrote to Wesley thus: "Some of the instances you give seem to be exemplified, in the outward manner, by the cases of Paul and the jailer, as also Peter's hearers, (Acts ii.) The last instance you give of some struggling as in the agonies of death is to me somewhat more inexplicable, if it do not resemble the child of whom it is said, that 'when he was yet a-coming, the devil threw him down and tare him.' I make no question, Satan, so far as he gets power, may exert himself on such occasions, partly to mar and hinder the beginning of the good work, in the persons that are touched with the sharp arrows of conviction; and partly, also, to prevent the success of the Gospel on others. However, the merciful issue of these conflicts, in the conversion of the persons thus affected, is the main thing."

Erskine also mentions that they have something in Scotland analogous to what had occurred in Bristol. Sometimes, he says, a whole congregation, in a flood of tears, would cry out at once, so as to drown the voice of the minister.

The Rev. Richard Watson writes upon this point:-- "That cases of real enthusiasm occurred at this and subsequent periods, is indeed allowed. There are always nervous, dreamy, and excitable people to be found; and the emotion produced among these would often be communicated by natural sympathy. No one could be blamed for this unless he had encouraged the excitement for its own sake, or taught the people to regard it as a sign of grace, which most assuredly Mr. Wesley never did. Nor is it correct to represent these effects, genuine and fictitious together, as peculiar to Methodism. Great and rapid results were produced in the first ages of Christianity, but not without 'outcries,' and strong corporeal as well as mental emotions. Like effects often accompanied the preaching of eminent men at the Reformation and many of the Puritans and Non-conformist ministers had similar successes in our own country. In Scotland, and also among the grave Presbyterians of New England, previous to the rise of Methodism, the ministry of faithful men had been attended by very similar circumstances."

Besides these "bodily exercises," there were about this time two or three triumphant deaths among the Methodist converts, whose dying testimonies added further confirmation of the blessed truth of regeneration through faith in Jesus Christ: and these and other such experiences, wrought into hymns by Charles Wesley, the poet of the great revival, then began to cheer the souls of believers with songs which were destined to be heard and echoed all around the world.

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## Chapter 7
## THE WORLD IS MY PARISH

Field Preaching. -- It was the impetuous Whitefield who set the example of field preaching, but his older brethren, the Wesleys, were soon led to follow it.

Whitefield, now returned from his first visit to America, had been ordained as a priest by his old friend Bishop Benson, who says of him: "Though mistaken on sonic points, I think Mr. Whitefield a very pious, well-meaning young man, with good abilities and great zeal." Going to Georgia had not cured him of any of his "enthusiasm," or shorn him of any of his strength. Again the churches from which he was not shut out were overwhelmed with people, thousands of whom were glad to hear, even from the church-yard, the wonderful preacher whom they could not approach near enough to see, and they found the preaching to be the same doctrine over again: Regeneration by the Holy Ghost; and the same practical outcome: conversion of sinners, and collections for the Georgia mission.

At Bristol, the scene of his great success the year before, he was now denied the use of the churches, and was obliged to content himself with a sermon on "The Penitent Thief" to the prisoners in Newgate; but even here he did not omit the collection, which, on this occasion, he tells us, amounted to fifteen shillings. Here, also, the State-church authorities pursued him, and at

their instance the mayor and magistrates commanded the jailer not to allow him to preach again in the prison, giving as a reason that "he insisted upon the necessity of being born again."

What harm it could possibly do the Newgate prisoners to be born again the magistrate did not say; the point to be gained was, to silence this too faithful, too orthodox, too evangelical preacher. But the Gospel was in him as a fire shut up in his bones. He was sent to preach: God had called him to do that work in his boyhood: for it he had been ordained both deacon and priest: sinners needing new hearts were terribly plenty: and, besides, there was his Orphan House to be built in Georgia: therefore, he must preach: heaven and earth demanded it.

Bristol and Kingswood. -- There was a village of colliers at Kingswood, near Bristol, a people whom he already knew to be almost in a state of barbarism, and on whom nothing was so likely to take saving effect as his favorite doctrine of regeneration. They were evidently too far gone in sin to be repaired; any work that could reach their case must include a new nature and begin with a new birth. Here on Sunday, February 17th, 1739, for the first time in England, George Whitefield preached in the open air. His congregation was made up of about two hundred of the Kingswood corners, and of his experience in this connection he writes: "I believe I was never more acceptable to my Master than when I was standing to teach these hearers in the open fields." On the 4th of March following he preached again in the open air at a place called Baptist Mills, to a congregation of three or four thousand people. The sight of this great throng elated him: "Blessed be God!" says he, "all things happen for the furtherance of the Gospel: I now preach to ten times as many people as I should if I had been confined to the churches. Surely the devil is blind; so are his emissaries, or they would not so confound themselves."

The State-church of England was a part of the machinery of the Government, The Church was the instrument of the State. The means of grace were matters for which Englishmen might be taxed. The regular clergy held their places by act of Parliament as well as by personal and political favor; they were therefore manageable. But the people called "Methodists," who were now becoming so numerous and so troublesome, were not disposed to submit to the political monopoly of religion claimed by the clergy and magistrates; and as for Whitefield, while he desired to do nothing contrary to his ordination vows in the Establishment, he could by no means refuse to heed the call of the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls, by whom he was appointed a preacher of righteousness. The churches were the property of the Establishment, but the out-of-doors belonged to the Lord; therefore when Whitefield found himself shut out of the Church of England, he straightway adjourned his services to the church of God.

It was a bold thing to do, but Whitefield does not seem to have been conscious of any great courage in the matter. He was already somewhat callused by the abuse of his enemies, and to be called bad names by them did him little harm. On one occasion, at Coal-pit Heath, in the neighborhood of Bristol, while he was preaching to a congregation of many thousands, a "gentleman" who was drunk interrupted him, called him a "dog," declared that he ought to be "whipped at the cart's tail " -- which was one of the modes of punishment in that day -- and offered money to any one who would pelt him with mud and stones; but the colliers were the friends of the preacher, and instead of pelting him they pelted his adversary until the overzealous "gentleman" was glad to make his escape and leave the Methodist to go on with his sermon. At Haunam Mount he preached to four or five thousand people, of which service he writes:-- "The sun shone very

bright, and the people, standing in such an awful manner around the mount in the profoundest silence, filled me with holy admiration."

Two days later he estimates his congregation at ten thousand, but the voice of the preacher was so loud and clear that it could be distinctly heard by every one in the vast assembly. At Rose Green, in Kingswood, his congregation covered three acres, and was computed at twenty thousand souls, upon which he exclaims: "The fire is kindled in the country, and all the devils in hell shall not be able to quench it." Among these crowds of poor people Whitefield collected about two hundred pounds for his Georgia orphanage, much of it with his own hands, in his own hat, which latter was sometimes almost filled with half-pence, and the carrying of such a weight through such a crowd caused him to complain of the lameness of his arms.

Besides his public ministrations he gave personal instruction to inquirers in the divine mysteries of faith and regeneration: he was also teaching his brother Methodists how to carry on their work without any just cause of offense to the rich and the mighty, and in a way by which, without the help of their money or their influence, the Gospel could be preached to the ignorant and the poor. Out-door preaching was not forbidden by the Prayer Book, though not contemplated by the men who made it. Such services were, indeed, irregular, but no one could say they were unlawful. On several previous occasions, after preaching a charity sermon by special request in some Church, Whitefield had felt himself impelled to go out and preach in the church-yard to the larger congregation which awaited him there, and this new departure had already developed in him a larger freedom of manner than was fashionable at that time. When, therefore, he took to field preaching he easily broke away from the stiffness which prevailed within church walls, and began at once to strike out boldly and freely to reach the hearts of the people, multitudes of whom would never have heard the word of life if Whitefield and his brother Methodists had not brought it out of the Church to them in the woods and fields. It was the miracle of feeding the five thousand over again. That was an out-of-door service, too, and was doubtless intended to be prophetic as well as humane.

Wesley Takes to the Fields. -- It was now necessary for Mr. Whitefield to leave the neighborhood of Bristol, but he could not bear the thought of leaving this great flock to be scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd, therefore he wrote to his friend John Wesley at London to come down to Bristol and carry on the work which he had begun; and, much to the grief of the London Societies, among whom Wesley had come to be a spiritual leader, as well as much against the prejudices of his brother Charles, who was shocked at the idea of any thing so irregular as an out-of-door service, he consented to make trial of this new method of work. But first the call was made a subject of special prayer by the brethren, after which the matter was submitted to the "test by lot," a common practice among the Moravians, and the lot decided that he should go.

Charles Wesley appears not to have been satisfied with the knowledge of the divine will obtained in this manner, and submitted the case to the further test of "opening the book;" whereupon, the book being placed upon its back and allowed to fall open, the first text which caught his eye was, "Son of man, behold I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke, yet thou shalt not groan nor weep." Thus to all appearances it was the will of God that John Wesley should go down to Bristol, at which place he arrived on Saturday, the 31st of March, 1739. He would have gone to the ends of the earth on the strength of such a call.

Of his first service in Bristol Mr. Wesley writes: "Saturday, 31. In the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to thin strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday; having been all my life (till very lately) so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church."

"April 1, 1739. In the evening (Mr. Whitefield being gone) I began expounding our Lord's sermon on the mount (one pretty remarkable precedent of field preaching, though I suppose there were churches at that time also) to a little society which was accustomed to meet once or twice a week in Nicholas Street."

"Monday, 2. At four in the afternoon I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation, speaking from a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city, to about three thousand people. The Scripture on which I spoke was this, (is it possible any one should be ignorant, that it is fulfilled in every true minister of Christ?) 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor. He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind: to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.'"

"The World is My Parish." This utterance of Mr. Wesley, which is perhaps more quoted than any other of his sayings, marks the long step in advance which he took when he began to preach in the fields. As a Churchman he was forbidden to preach in the parish of any clergyman without his consent; but Wesley understood the jurisdiction of the local minister to be confined to the church and those premises which properly belonged thereto; but that it should extend to all the commons, fields, and forests, he could not for a moment allow. When he was questioned as to his good faith in holding out-of-door services without the consent of the local clergy, he replied: "You ask, 'How is it that I assemble Christians who are none of my charge, to sing psalms, and pray, and hear the Scriptures expounded? and think it hard to justify doing this in other men's parishes, upon catholic principles.'

"Permit me to speak plainly. If by catholic principles you mean any other than scriptural, they weigh nothing with me: I allow no other rule, whether of faith or practice, than the Holy Scriptures: but on scriptural principles I do not think it hard to justify whatever I do. God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another's parish; that is, in effect, to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom, then, shall I hear, God or man? 'If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge you.' 'A dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me; and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel.' But where shall I preach it upon the principles you mention? Why, not in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America; not in any of the Christian parts, at least, of the habitable earth. For all these are, after a sort, divided into parishes. If it be said, 'Go back, then, to the heathens from whence you came:' nay, but neither could I now (on your principles) preach to them: for all the heathens in Georgia belong to the pariah either of Savannah or Frederica.

"Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty, to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to; and sure I am that his blessing attends it. Great encouragement have I, therefore, to be faithful in fulfilling the work he hath given me to do. His servant I am, and as such am employed according to the plain direction of his word, 'as I have opportunity, doing good unto all men:' and his providence clearly concurs with his word, which has disengaged me from all things else, that I might singly attend on this very thing, 'and go about doing good.'"

The Kingswood School. [14] One of the first thoughts of the converted colliers at Kingswood was the need of Christian education for their children, and Mr. Whitefield, at his farewell service, April 2, 1739, laid the corner-stone of a school; but the plans and the cornerstone comprised the chief assets of the enterprise when it fell into the hands of Mr. Wesley, who succeeded Whitefield in the care of the Kingswood mission. The following account of the work of grace among this benighted people, from Mr. Wesley's Journal, gives a vivid picture of the life of a great class of persons in the England of that day; a population numbering hundreds of thousands, and scattered all over the mining districts of the kingdom: "Few persons have lived long in the west of England who have not heard of the corners of Kingswood; a people famous, from the beginning hitherto, for neither fearing God nor regarding man: so ignorant of the things of God that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish; and, therefore, utterly without desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it.

"Many last winter used tauntingly to say of Mr. Whitefield, 'If he will convert heathens, why does not he go to the corners of Kings-wood?' In spring he did so. And as there were thousands who resorted to no place of public worship, he went after them into their own wilderness, 'to seek and save that which was lost.' When he was called away others went into 'the highways and hedges to compel them to come in.' And by the grace of God their labor was not in vain. The scene is already changed. Kingswood does not now, M a year ago, resound with cursing and blasphemy. It is no more filled with drunkenness and uncleanness, and the idle diversions that naturally lead thereto. It is no longer full of wars and fightings, of clamor and bitterness, of wrath and envyings. Peace and love are there. Great numbers of the people are mild, gentle, and easy to be entreated. They 'do not cry, neither strive,' and hardly is their 'voice heard in the streets;' or, indeed, in their own wood, unless when they are at their usual evening diversion, singing praise unto God their Saviour.

"That their children, too, might know the things which make for their peace, it was some time since proposed to build a house in Kingswood; and after many foreseen and unforeseen difficulties, in June last the foundation was laid. The ground made choice of was in the middle of the wood, between the London and Bath roads, not far from that called Two-Mile Hill, about three measured miles from Bristol.

"Here a large room was begun for the school, having four small rooms at either end for the school-masters (and perhaps, if it should please God, some poor children) to lodge in. Two persons are ready to teach so soon as the house is fit to receive them, the shell of which is nearly finished; so that it is hoped the whole will be completed in spring, or early in the summer." Such was the beginning of that famous institution which for many years has been one of the chief training

schools of the English Methodist preachers; its doors being now open only for the sons of Wesleyan ministers in active service.

Wesley spent the remainder of the year 1739 at Bristol and vicinity, where, in about nine months, he preached and expounded no less than five hundred times; all these services, with only eight exceptions, being held in the open air.

Wesley and Beau Nash. The singular spectacle of a clergyman of the Church of England, in gown and bands, standing on a table, or in a cart, or on the stump of a tree in the open fields, surrounded by a multitude of unwashed, uncombed, uncultivated people, down whose smutty faces the tears had washed little faces white, was something so wonderful as to attract the notice of the "higher classes," and accordingly, among the crowds were often seen the carriages of the nobility and gentry, to whom, however, the preacher was quite as plain and faithful as to the ruder portion of his audience, on which account he was regarded, in certain quarters, as a very rude and even dangerous person. How stupid of him not to be able to discern between sin in the rich and sin in the poor!

During a visit to the neighboring city of Bath, which was at that time the center of the English world of luxury, fashion, and leisure, a notorious rake and gambler called Beau Nash, who was the acknowledged leader in Bath society, attempted to break up one of Wesley's out-of-door meetings. Soon after the preacher had commenced his sermon the dandy appeared in gorgeous array, and impudently demanded "By what authority dare you do what you are doing now "By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon my head and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel,'" was Mr. Wesley's deliberate reply.

"But this is a conventicle," said Nash, "and contrary to act of Parliament."

"No," answered Wesley, "conventicles are seditious meetings, but here is no sedition; therefore it is not contrary to act of Parliament.

"I say it is," stormed the fellow; "and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits."

"Sir," said Wesley, "Did you ever hear me preach? How can you judge of what you never heard?"

"I judge by common report."

"Is not your name Nash?" asked Wesley.

"It is," said the beau.

"Well, sir, I dare not judge you by common report," was Mr. Wesley's stinging reply. The pretentious fop was confounded, especially when an old woman in the congregation took part in

the argument against him, and instead of breaking up the "conventicle," as he had boasted he would do, he was glad enough to sneak away and leave Wesley to finish his sermon.

John Wesley and his Critics. The preaching of Wesley was of a much less florid and enthusiastic style than that of Whitefield, but the crowds that waited on him were equally large. In the plainest speech he talked the plainest theology, mixed with the most downright common sense, and the multitudes seemed to relish it quite as well as they did the brilliant rhetoric of his pupil; his word, also, was attended with greater spiritual power. Whitefield's sermons were always "collection sermons," while Wesley was wholly intent on teaching his hearers the lesson which he himself had so long been striving to learn, namely, bow to save their souls. He also took frequent collections, it is true, but the financial feature was far less prominent under Wesley than it was under Whitefield.

If Wesley had held to his Holy Club notions, and simply taught the duties of religion, there would have been little or no complaint; but when he declared that without saving faith in Christ there was no salvation, even for the aristocracy and clergy, their indignation knew no bounds. One of his favorite texts was, "By grace are ye saved through faith," and he constantly insisted that it is the grace of God, and not their own efforts at goodness, which brings salvation within reach of any believer.

It was not long before both the pulpit and the press opened their guns upon him, He was denounced as "a restless deceiver of the people;" an "ignorant pretender;" a "new fangled teacher, setting up his own fanatical conceits in opposition to the authority of God;" a "rapturous enthusiast;" a "Jesuit in disguise;" and, worst of all, "a Dissenter." "Every-where," says Wesley, "we were represented as 'mad. dogs,' and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard-of monsters, but this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves so that we might finish our course with joy."

As a specimen of the churchly criticisms on John Wesley, this, from a sermon by Rev. Joseph Trapp, a London Doctor of Divinity, will suffice. He accuses Wesley of "outraging common decency and common sense;" says his course is "so ridiculous as to create the greatest laughter, were it not so deplorable and detestable as to create the greatest grief and abhorrence, especially when vast multitudes are so sottish and wicked as in a tumultuous manner to run maddening after him. Go not after these impostors and seducers," he cries, "but shun them as you would the plague. I ain ashamed to speak upon a subject which is a reproach, not only to our Church and country, but human nature itself. To the prevalence of immorality and profanity, infidelity and atheism, is now added the pest of enthusiasm."

This tirade he published in a pamphlet entitled "The Nature. Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous Over Much; with a Particular View to the Doctrines and Practices of Certain Modern Enthusiasts." All this, and much more to the same purpose, because a plain-spoken young minister of the Establishment was preaching the plain Scripture doctrine of salvation by faith, and doing that preaching out of doors!

Whitefield, also, was treated to his full share of abuse, since his favorite doctrine of regeneration was no whit more acceptable to the English Pharisees than Wesley's teachings on salvation by faith. One Thomas Tucker, a young clergyman, in a bitter attack on Mr. Whitefield, accused him of "propagating blasphemies and enthusiastic notions which strike at the root of all religion, and make it the jest of those who sit in the seat of the scornful;" to which Wesley replied on Whitefield's behalf by advising Tucker not to meddle with controversy, since his talents were not equal to its management, and it would only entangle and bewilder him.

Charles Wesley and Ingham were also at work on the same lines, but for a time they appear to have escaped persecution under cover of. the tumult which raged around the two chief apostles of the Methodist revival.

The next onslaught was much more authoritative and serious. In August, 1739, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, published a "Pastoral Letter by way of Caution against Lukewarmness on the One Hand, and Enthusiasm on the Other," a large part of which was leveled against the Methodists, whom he accuses of claiming divine inspiration in their preaching, and special divine direction in their personal affairs; forgetting, no doubt, that both these benedictions were promised to believers in the word of God. But the thing which troubled the Bishop the most was, the fact that the Methodists boasted of "sudden and surprising effects as wrought by the Holy Ghost in consequence of their preaching;" and that they endeavored "to justify their own extraordinary methods of teaching by casting unworthy reflections upon the parochial clergy, as deficient in the discharge of their duty, and not instructing their people in the true doctrines of Christianity."

To this "pastoral letter" Whitefield wrote an answer, in a firm but respectful tone, turning the tables upon the Bishop, and charging him with propagating a "new gospel;" quoting from the Bishop's writings the statement that "good works are a necessary condition of our being justified in the sight of God;" while Whitefield reasserted that faith is the only necessary condition of justification, and that good works are the necessary fruit and consequences of a saved condition of soul. "This," says Whitefield, "is the doctrine of Jesus Christ this is the doctrine of the Church of England; and it is because the generality of the Church of England today fail to preach this doctrine that I am resolved, God being my helper, to continue, in season and out of season, to declare it unto all men, let the consequences as to my private person be what they will."

"The Methodists," says another critic, "are mad enthusiasts, who teach, for dictates of the Holy Spirit, seditions, heresies, and contempt of the ordinances of God and man. They are buffoons in religion, and mountebanks in theology; creatures who disclaim sense and are below argument." This writer also accuses Whitefield of "behavior disgraceful to the Christian religion and to the ministerial office." "The clergy," says he, "have all refused him their pulpits, and the Lord-Mayor the halls and markets of the city. He is a conceited boaster and heterodox intruder, whose next performance may be accompanied with a chorus of ten thousand sighs and groans, deepened with bassoons." In view of the alarming progress of Methodism he makes his pitiful moan as follows:

"In Yorkshire, by the preaching of the Methodists the spirit of enthusiasm has so prevailed that almost every man who can hammer out a chapter in the Bible has turned an expounder of the Scripture, to the great decay of industry and the almost ruin of the woolen manufacture, which

seems threatened with destruction for want of hands to work it Methodism has laid aside play-books and poems for Scripture phrases and hymns of its own composing. Its disciples are never easy but when they are in a church or expounding the Bible, which they can do off-handed from Genesis to Revelation with great ease and power. They have given away their finery to tattered beggars, resolving to wear the coarsest attire and live upon the most ordinary diet. Several fine ladies, who used to wear French silks, French hoops four yards wide, bob-wigs, and white satin smock petticoats, are turned Methodists, and now wear stuff gowns!"

Alas, alas! What was to become of England if Methodism went on at such a rate? Still, we must not be unmindful of this sinister compliment to the Yorkshire Methodists for their extraordinary knowledge of the word of God. Such a talent for "expounding the Bible" "from Genesis to Revelation," with such "power and ease," ought to have mitigated the grief of this churchly man over such awful calamities as a fine lady turned Methodist, and her lamentable downfall from "white satin smock petticoats" to "stuff gowns."

One Penruel, a curate of the Establishment, declared that of his personal knowledge John Wesley was a Papist; but the Papists, for their part, denounced him; so there was an end to that slander.

Whether the attacks of the press and the pulpit were intended to excite the mob against the Methodists, it is impossible to say; but that these attacks were well calculated to that end cannot be denied. On one occasion a mob gathered from the worst purlieus in Bristol filled the streets and alleys near the place where Wesley was preaching, and also filled the air with a perfect din of shouts, groans, and curses; but it was remarked that within a fortnight one of the chief rioters hanged himself, and a second, being seized with serious illness, sent for Mr. Wesley to come and pray with him.

Dr. Doddridge on the Methodists. There were, however, some godly men of high position who saw and felt the divine power which accompanied the new revival, and who bore brave testimony to the faithfulness and soundness of its leaders; as proof of which take the following extract from a letter written by the Rev. Dr. Doddridge. Under the date of September 17, 1739, he writes concerning the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham: "The common people flock to hear them, and in most places hear gladly. They commonly preach once or twice every day; and expound the Scriptures in the evening to religious societies, who have their society rooms for that purpose." He then proceeds to give an account of his hearing Charles Wesley preach at Bristol, standing on a table, in a field. "He then," continues Dr. Doddridge, "preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach.

Though I have heard many a finer sermon, yet I think I never heard any man discover such evident signs of vehement desire." "With unusual fervor he acquitted himself as an ambassador for Christ; and although he used no notes, nor had any thing in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety that I could not observe any thing incoherent through the whole performance, which he concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction."

Thus in various ways the Methodist revival was promoted, and its leaders vindicated and protected, both by the praise of godly men, and the powers of the upper world.

The "New Room" and the "Old Foundry." The first Methodist house of worship was that erected by John Wesley in Bristol in 1739, for the accommodation of the Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street "Societies." It was not dignified by the name of "church" or even "chapel," but was simply called "The New Room."

More familiar to readers of Methodist history, however, is the first Methodist preaching-house in London. This was the famous "Old Foundry," the purchase of which Mr. Wesley undertook on his own sole responsibility, and which, as the cradle of London Methodism, deserves a somewhat minute description.

In November, 1739, Mr. Wesley was invited by two gentlemen, who were strangers to him to preach in an unused and dilapidated building in London near the Moorfields; where on Sunday November 11th, he preached to two large congregations. In the morning at eight o'clock there were about five thousand, and at five in the evening, seven or eight thousand persons present. The place had formerly been used as a government foundry for the casting of cannon, but somewhat more than twenty years before this a terrible explosion had occurred which blew off the roof and otherwise injured the building, killing and wounding a considerable number of workmen. This accident led to the abandonment of the Old Foundry and the removal of the works to Woolwich.

The purchase-money was £115; but the place being "a vast mammoth heap of ruins," a large sum additional to this had to be expended in needful repairs. To meet this expenditure some friends lent him the purchase money; and offered to pay subscriptions, some four, some six, and some ten shillings a year toward the liquidation of the debt. In three years these subscriptions amounted to about £480, leaving, however, a balance of nearly £300, for which Wesley was still responsible. From this it would seem that the entire cost of the Old Foundry was about £800.

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 northwest corner of Finsbury Square. The building measured about forty yards in front, from north to south. There were two front doors, one leading to the chapel, and the other to the preacher's house, school, and bandroom. A bell was hung in a plain belfry, and was rung every morning at five o'clock for early service, and every evening at nine for family worship; as well as at sundry other times. The chapel, which would accommodate some fifteen hundred people, was without pews; but on the ground floor, immediately before the pulpit, were about a dozen seats with back rails, appropriated to female worshippers. Under the front gallery were the free seats for women; and under the side galleries, the free seats for men. The front gallery was used exclusively by females, and the side galleries by males. "From the beginning," says Wesley, "the men and women sat apart, as they always did in the primitive Church; and none were suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews; and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction."

The bandroom was behind the chapel, on the ground floor, some eighty feet long and twenty feet wide, and accommodated about three hundred persons. here the classes met; here, in winter,

the five o'clock morning service was conducted; and here were held, at two o'clock on Wednesdays and Fridays, weekly meetings for prayer and intercession. The north end of the room was used for a school, and was fitted up with desks; and at the south end was "The Book Room," for the sale of Wesley's publications.

Wesley's arrangements for the Foundry congregation were carried out in all his London chapels until four years before his death, when, greatly to his annoyance, the lay authorities at City Road Chapel set aside his policy and allowed families to sit together. Over the bandroom were apartments for Wesley, in which his mother died; and at the end of the chapel was a dwelling-house for his domestics and assistant preachers; while attached to the whole was a small building used as a coach-house and stable.

Some Moravian Heresies. The "Societies" in London, in whose fellowship the Methodists of this period lived and labored, were at first wholly composed of pious Episcopalians and Moravians, chiefly the latter; but a large number of persons who had been converted under the preaching of Whitefield and the Wesleys were soon incorporated into them, and frequent dissensions arose between the older and younger members, which John Wesley, who was now the recognized leader among them, was ofttimes called upon to settle. He could not be absent even for a few weeks without finding a quarrel on his return, either concerning the peculiar teachings of some newly arrived Moravians from Germany, or because of some petty personal grievance; or, it might be, a rebellion against the authority of Charles Wesley, who in the absence of his elder brother felt a very great responsibility of management, and who, from first to last, had a decided talent for making trouble; or perhaps the chronic jealousy of some of the Germans had broken out into open war against the Wesleys, and held that as new-comers and novices they should he more in subjection; while the English converts fought for the rights and prerogatives of the Methodists under whose preaching they had been converted.

On one occasion Mr. Wesley, returning from a brief absence, found them contending over the Moravian notion of "Quietism," as it has been called; that is to say, the alleged duty of the inquirer after God to wait in absolute spiritual silence and inaction until the Lord should appear to do his saving work in the soul. There was one Molther, who aspired to be a theological doctor, and who taught, among other things, that faith does not admit of degrees; there must he either the full assurance by the Holy Ghost of the indwelling of Christ, or else there is no faith at all; while Wesley, following a higher authority, had taught them to look first for "the blade," then for "the ear," then for "the full corn in the ear." Some of the Moravians, in their attempts to honor the doctrine of salvation by faith, proceeded to the extravagance of teaching that believers were not bound to obey time moral law, any more than the subjects of the King of England were bound to obey the King of France; while Wesley believed and taught that Christ came, not to destroy, but to fulfill the law.

One of the Germans, named Bell, insisted that it was deadly poison for a man to come to the Lord's Supper, or even to read the Scriptures and pray, until he was born of God. "If we read," said he, "the devil reads with us; if we pray, he prays with us; if we go to the sacrament, he goes with us." "Weak faith is no faith," said another. "As many go to hell by praying as by thieving," said a third.

Against these wild notions Wesley, who knew more of the true Moravian doctrine than the renegade Moravians themselves, contended with all his might, whereupon the Fetter Lane Society, of which he was one of the original members, voted to exclude him from its list of ministers, though they did not, at this time, expel him from membership.

Mr. Wesley Leaves the Moravian Society. On the 20th of July, 1740, four days after the action above mentioned, Mr. Wesley went to one of the Fetter Lane love-feasts, and at its conclusion read a paper stating the errors into which they had fallen, and concluding thus: "I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the 'law and the testimony.' I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But, as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me." Without saying more he then silently withdrew, eighteen or nineteen of the society following him. So ended John Wesley's connection with the Moravian Church in 'which he had learned so much and labored so well.

It would seem as if God were thus cutting his chosen servant loose from one tie after another which shortened his liberty and hindered his work. His heart clung to the regular methods of the ministry of the Establishment, but for no offense save that he preached too well and with too much success the Establishment turned him out of doors. The societies of his Moravian brethren, his first spiritual teachers, were then his chosen resting-place; but from this limited ministry and fellowship he was now compelled to take his departure and strike out into all the world alone. The Fetter Lane Society was only too well named; it was a heavy clog to his feet; henceforth, in soul and body, the great leader must be free.

An attempt was made by Count Zinzendorf, the following year, to bring Mr. Wesley back into the Moravian field, but without avail. The Count, with his usual manner of authority, charged Wesley with changing his religion, quarreling with the brethren, and teaching false views of Christian perfection. But Wesley had now outgrown the Moravian leading-strings. The Count, whom he had once obeyed with abject submission, could no longer play the Pope over him, and as for the Moravian theology, Wesley says: "Waiving their odd and affected phrases; their weak, mean, silly, childish expressions; their crude, confused, and undigested notions; and their whims, unsupported either by Scripture or sound reason, I find three grand, unretracted errors running through almost all their books, namely, universal salvation, antinomianism, and a kind of new, reformed Quietism." No wonder the proposed reunion failed.

The Methodist "United Society." From the Fetter Lane love-feast Wesley and the seceders proceeded to the Foundry, where, on the 23d day of July, 1740, he formed them into the first "United Society," on a plan much resembling those from whose fellowship he had departed. There were twenty-five men and forty-eight women in attendance. With this little band of Methodists the world was to be overrun.

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ENDNOTES

1 "Smith's "History of Wesleyan Methodism," vol. i, p. 3.

2 Dean Stanley, at his Methodist Reception in St. Paul's M. E. Church, New York, 1879.

3 Rev. Samuel Wesley left the "t" out of the family name about the time of his removal to Epworth.

4 The famous "Conventicle Act" was passed by the British Parliament in 1664. It forbade the assembly of more than five persons besides the resident members of a family for any religious purpose not according to the Book of Common Prayer. Mrs. Wesley's conventicle was, however, strictly according to that book, for she used no other service than that laid down in it.

5 The name of this school is derived as follows: In the days when the monasteries of England were numerous, rich, and powerful, the order of Carthusian monks established a monastery on this site which they called a Chartreuse, the name given to their religious houses in the various parts of Europe; but in the time of Henry VIII this monastery shared the fate of many others, and the ruins of it were at length purchased by Thomas Sutton, who repaired the edifice and built a hospital, and established a school therein, on whose double foundation or endowment eighty pensioners of not less than fifty years of age, and forty-two boys as charity scholars, were to be maintained. The allowance from the endowment to each scholar was forty pounds a year, and it was no small piece of good fortune to the Epworth rector to secure one of these scholarships for his son John.

6 Wesley's Works," vol. 1, page 42.

7 Tyerman's "Life of George Whitefield."

8 Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley."

9 "The Living Wesley," by Dr. Rigg.

10 Tyerman's "Life and Times of Wesley," p. 149.

11 Jackson's "Life of Charles Wesley," p. 110.

12 Herrnhut means: "Watch Hill".

13 13 The revival which commenced at Northampton spread throughout the greater part of the colony. All sorts of people -- high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise, moral and immoral -- simultaneously became the subjects of the Spirit's strivings, and were converted. This remarkable movement took place only a few months before Wesley set sail for Georgia, and continued for several years afterward. Mr. Edwards published a narrative of its most striking incidents, in which he says:-- In many instances conviction of sin and conversion were attended with intense physical excitement. Numbers fell prostrate on the ground, and cried aloud for mercy. The bodies of others were convulsed and benumbed. As chaos preceded creation, so in New England confusion went before conversion. The work was great and glorious, but was accompanied with noise and tumult. Men literally cried for mercy; but the loudest outcries were not so loud as the shrieks of Voltaire or Volney, when the prospect of eternity unnerved them. Stout-hearted sinners trembled; but not

more than philosophers of the present day would do if they had equally vivid views of the torments of the damned to which sin exposes them. There were groanings and faintings; transports and ecstasies; zeal sometimes more fervid than discreet; and passion not infrequently more powerful than pious; but, from one end of the land to the other, multitudes of vain, thoughtless sinners were unmistakably converted, and were made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Frolicking, night-walking, singing lewd songs, tavern-haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in dress, were generally abandoned. The talk of the people was about the favor of God, an interest in Christ, a sanctified heart, and spiritual blessedness here and hereafter. The country was full of meetings of persons of all sorts and ages, to read, pray, and sing praises. Oftentimes the people were wrought up into the highest transports of love, joy, and admiration, and had such views of the divine perfections and the excellencies of Christ, that for five or six hours together their souls reposed in a kind of sacred elysium, until the body seemed to sink beneath the weight of divine discoveries, and nature was deprived of all ability to stand or speak. -- Tyerman's Life and Times of Wesley

14 Kingswood was formerly a royal chase, containing between three and four thousand acres; but previous to the rise of Methodism it had been gradually appropriated by the several lords whose estates encircled it. The deer had disappeared, and the greater part of the wood also. Coal mines had been discovered, and it was now inhabited by a race of people as lawless as the foresters, their forefathers, but far more brutal; and differing as much from the people of the surrounding country in dialect as in appearance. They had no place of worship, for Kingswood then belonged to the parish of St. Philip, and was at least three miles distant from the parish church.

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THE END