THE LIFE

OF

JOHN WESLEY

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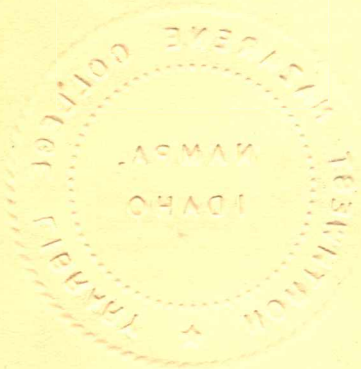

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INTRODUCTION.

THE greatest historian of the eighteenth century, who has brought to his task clear insight and unlimited resources of learning, has devoted one of his most interesting chapters to "The Religious Revival." He thus expresses his deliberate judgment on the far-reaching results of Methodism :—"Although the career of the elder Pitt and the splendid victories by land and sea that were won during his ministry form unquestionably the most dazzling episodes in the reign of George II., they must yield, I think, in real importance to that religious revolution which shortly before had begun in England by the preaching of the Wesleys and Whitefield."* Mr. Lecky's verdict is substantially approved on all hands. The late lamented J. R. Green† says: "The Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy. . . . But the noblest result of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical suffering, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor."

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* Lecky, ii., 521.

† "History of the English People," p. 730.

No one can tell what the fate of England would have been but for the Great Revival. Mr. Lecky assigns to Methodism a prominent place among those influences which saved this country from the revolutionary spirit which laid France in ruins, and shows how "peculiarly fortunate" it was that the vast extension of manufacturing industry in the later part of the century had been "preceded by a religious revival which opened a mainspring of moral and religious energy among the poor, and at the same time gave a powerful impulse to the philanthropy of the rich."

Such considerations appeal to all students of English life. Mr. Lecky has not forgotten another side of Methodism—its work in the house of mourning and the house of death. Wesley's rejoicing, "Our people die well," reminds us that the influence on individual history is even more notable than the influence on society at large. One indeed laid the foundation for the other. Wesley was content to take the old method, the salvation of the world soul by soul.

Three names stand high above the rest of the Methodist company. Whitefield was the orator, Charles Wesley the hymnist and preacher. John Wesley was the central figure, "who embodied in himself not this or that side of the vast movement, but the very movement itself."* Whitefield died twenty years before Wesley, and a large part of his strength was given to America; Charles Wesley's active itinerancy only lasted about eighteen years; but for half a century John Wesley was the

* Green, p. 719.

best-known man in England. He never ceased to devote himself to the work with the same energy he showed at the beginning of the field-preaching. Wesley is one of the most interesting figures in religious biography. "Few things," Mr. Lecky says, "in ecclesiastical history are more striking than the energy and the success with which he propagated his opinions. He was gifted with a frame of iron, and with spirits that never flagged."*

Wesley's life will therefore never cease to fascinate all readers, as it fascinated Samuel Taylor Coleridge. He belongs to the universal Church. One community bears his name; all Churches have caught his spirit. Erroneous views of his character are gradually losing ground. Southey himself was convinced of his mistake in describing ambition as one of Wesley's ruling motives, and no one would venture to repeat the charge. Other errors still hold their place. Miss Wedgwood speaks of Wesley's "cold self-sufficiency," and says that his brother Charles "was of a richer and softer nature" than he. Others have represented him as harsh and austere. The tribute of his friend Alexander Knox and the testimony of his niece, Miss Wesley, show him, however, in the most attractive light—a man born to love and to be loved. For him there was no happy home, as for his brother; but if he had married Grace Murray, Miss Wedgwood's comparison would not have been possible. As to the charge of self-sufficiency, we must remember that Wesley was left alone at an early stage of the Revival. There is abundant

* Lecky, ii., 627.

evidence that he yearned for congenial fellowship, but that also was largely denied him. What could he do but brace himself for his mission? Must his very fidelity be turned into an occasion of reproach?

In preparing this volume, no available source of information has been neglected. The aim of the biographer has been to set the character and work of one of the greatest benefactors of his country and the world in a light which may attract general readers, and lead others to catch the spirit which moved the great evangelist. On disputed topics the writer has endeavoured to express his own views in such a way as to give no cause of offence to reasonable men of any party. Some important and interesting particulars have been gleaned which are found in no previous Life of Wesley, so that the book will not, it is hoped, be without interest for all students of the Evangelical Revival. As far as possible, obligations to other workers are acknowledged in their proper place. The Rev. Dr. Rigg and Mr. G. J. Stevenson, author of the "Memorials of the Wesley Family," who have read the proof-sheets and made many valuable suggestions, have laid the writer under a debt which he can scarcely hope to repay. Special thanks are also due to the Rev. Andrew Stone, of Lincoln College, for some interesting facts about Wesley's life at Oxford.

CHAPTER I.

ANCESTRY AND PARENTAGE.

JOHN WESLEY was born at Epworth Parsonage on June 17th, 1703. A notable ancestry links the founder of Methodism to all the stirring scenes of Nonconformist persecution and controversy during the seventeenth century. Bartholomew Wesley, his great-grandfather, was the son of Sir Herbert Wesley, of Westleigh, Devonshire, and Elizabeth de Wellesley, of Dangan, county Meath, in Ireland. He studied medicine and divinity at Oxford, the university to which his son, grandson, and three great-grandsons afterwards followed him. He married the daughter of Sir Henry Colley, of Kildare, in 1619. Nothing is known about his history till 1640, when he became Rector of Catherston, a little village in the south-west of Dorsetshire. He also held the neighbouring living of Charmouth, but both together only yielded their incumbent an income of £35 10s.

The one event of historic interest in his life is connected with the flight of Charles II. after the battle of Worcester, in September, 1651. It was arranged that Charles should cross over to France from Charmouth. The boat in which he was to reach the vessel that lay waiting for him did not come at the appointed time, so that the party had to stay all night at an inn. In the early morning one of their horses was taken to be shod. The blacksmith declared that its shoes had been made in

the north of England. When the ostler said that the party of strangers had sat up all night, suspicion was aroused. The ostler ran to consult Mr. Wesley at the church, but as he was reading prayers, there was considerable delay, and Charles was gone before any measures could be taken to prevent his escape. Bartholomew Wesley made no secret of his intention to capture the King. He told a friend in jest that if ever Charles came back, he would be certain to love long prayers, because "he would have surely snapt him" if the prayers had been over earlier.* An account of this scene describes Wesley as the "puny parson." The Rector of Charmouth was therefore a little man, like all the Wesleys.

After the Restoration he was ejected from his living. This trouble fell upon him nearly six months before the general ejection on St. Bartholomew's Day, 1662. His skill in medicine, which had formerly enabled him to render signal service to his poor parishioners, now became his sole means of support. His great-grandson John Wesley inherited his love of medicine, and, as we shall see, found his skill of great service to himself and others. For some time after his ejection, Bartholomew Wesley lived quietly among his old parishioners in Charmouth. He cast in his lot with the persecuted Nonconformists, but no violence seems to have been used against a man who had won general respect by his benevolence and his blameless character. He was probably compelled to leave the district after the Five Mile Act was placed on the statute books; but we only know that he did not long survive his son, who died in 1678.

This son bore the name which afterwards became known in every corner of the kingdom—John Wesley, or Westley,

* *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1785, p 87.

as the name was spelled till Samuel Wesley, the Rector of Epworth, dropped the "t." His life forms a painful contrast to that of his illustrious grandson, but their spirit and their aims were one. The first John Wesley was born in 1636. As a schoolboy, he was under deep religious conviction. He had a diary, in which he described all the events of his outward life, as well as the workings of his own heart. This diary, which he kept almost to the close of his life, was entrusted by his widow to Dr. Calamy. All trace of it is now lost. It would have been no small privilege to compare it with his grandson's famous journals.

As a student at New Inn Hall, Oxford, his seriousness and diligence remind us much of the Oxford Methodists seventy years later. He applied himself particularly to the study of Oriental languages, in which he made great progress. Dr. Owen, the Vice-Chancellor, had a special regard for the devout and promising young student, who left the University, about the end of 1657 or the beginning of 1658, a warm supporter of Owen's views on questions of Church government. He did not seek episcopal ordination, but joined himself at Weymouth to a small company of Christian people, called a "gathered Church." Among them he first exercised his gifts as a preacher. He found his way among the fishermen, and at Radipole, a village near Weymouth, formed a little Church. His preaching won general favour among "judicious Christians and able ministers," and led to the conversion of many souls.

In 1658, he found a more important sphere. The Vicar of Winterborn-Whitchurch died, and the people chose him as their pastor.* He was at once approved by the

* He says that he was not called to the *office* but to the *work* of the ministry.

Triers, Cromwell's Board of Commissioners, who examined every candidate for Holy Orders. The village where he now laboured was five miles from Blandford. It seems to have had a population of four or five hundred people. The income was only thirty pounds. An augmentation of £100 a year was indeed promised, but political changes prevented the fulfilment of this promise.

Shortly after his appointment to this living, in 1659 or 1660, he married Miss White, daughter of the patriarch of Dorchester. This young lady was the niece of Dr. Fuller, the Church historian, who describes her father "as a grave man, who would yet willingly contribute his shot of facetiousness on any just occasion." He had been persecuted by Laud for preaching against Arminianism and the ceremonies. During the civil war, Prince Rupert's soldiers plundered his house and took away his library. He then fled to London, where he was appointed minister of the Savoy. John White was one of the two assessors appointed to assist Dr. Twisse, the first Chairman of the Westminster Assembly. Dr. Burgess, the other assessor, was his wife's brother, and offered a prayer a full hour long from the pulpit of St. Margaret's when the House of Commons and the Assembly met together to sign the "Solemn League and Covenant." Mr. White was sometime Rector of Lambeth, and was offered the wardenship of New College in 1647; but he refused this post to return to his much-loved flock at Dorchester, among whom he died on July 21st, 1648, at the age of seventy-four.

Miss White had therefore lost her father nearly twelve years before her marriage. The Restoration soon wrecked the peace of their home. In the summer of 1661, the young preacher was committed to prison for not using the Book of Common Prayer in his church. Next year

his ministry was brought to an end by the Act of Uniformity. He preached his farewell sermon to a congregation of friends in tears, from the text, "And now brethren, I commend you to God and the word of His grace."

Wesley inserted in his journal for 1765* a long conversation between the first John Wesley and Gilbert Ironside, Bishop of Bristol, in which the young pastor defends his position, and shows that his ministry had both a divine call and a divine blessing. "I may be excused," says John Wesley, "if it appears more remarkable to me, than it will do to an unconcerned person." This dialogue was carefully recorded in the Vicar's manuscript diary. The Bishop dismissed him with the words, "Farewell, good Mr. Wesley." His frank, manly spirit had evidently made the happiest impression. The Bishop's approval did not, however, protect the first John Wesley from his enemies.

The young minister lived sixteen years after the ejection of 1662. When compelled to leave Whitchurch, he wished to settle in Melcombe; but the authorities prohibited his residence there under heavy penalties: a fine of twenty pounds on the owner of any house where he might reside and five shillings a week on himself. The Dissenters of Ilminster, Bridgwater, and Taunton, treated him with great kindness. He frequently preached for Joseph Alleine and Mr. Norman, of Bridgwater, as well as to other Nonconformist congregations. Early in May, 1663, a friend at Preston, near Weymouth, offered him a house rent free. Here he remained some time, seizing every opportunity of doing good that presented itself, until he was invited to become the pastor of a congregation at Poole. This position he

* Works, iii., 215, latest edition.

seems to have held until his death. Despite all his caution, he was imprisoned four times under the oppressive laws of his day, and was once obliged to hide himself for a considerable time to escape persecution. Dr. Calamy says he was greatly supported in many troubles, and was often seasonably and wonderfully relieved; but the death of many eminent Christians who were his friends and the increasing rage of the enemies of true religion broke down his spirits. His fight with poverty and trouble closed in 1678, at the age of forty-two years.*

The founder of Methodism was the true successor of this devoted man. His itinerant ministry, his care for the fisher-folk, his unflinching loyalty to his principles, his success in winning souls, and his simple godly life were all reproduced in his illustrious grandson. The first John Wesley was cautious, moderate, singularly open to conviction. By reading Philip Nye's book on the lawfulness of hearing ministers of the Church of England, his scruples about liturgical service were so far removed that he was able to attend church. He greatly wished to go as a missionary to America, but his purpose was twice foiled by circumstances. That task also was reserved for his more fortunate descendant. His widow survived him for thirty-two years. They had a numerous family, but only the names of four have been preserved. She lived in London during the last years of her life, supported mainly by her sons, Matthew, the London doctor, and Samuel, the Rector of Epworth.

Samuel Wesley was educated at the Free School, Dorchester, until he was fifteen. He was almost fit for the University, but had no means of going there. His Dis-

* Calamy says he was about thirty-three, but see Stevenson's "Wesley Family."

senting friends, however, sent him to London, where he was trained for the Nonconformist ministry. He afterwards saw reason to change his views on the points in controversy with the Church of England. Nonconformity had lost its early devotion. The students at the academy where young Wesley was when he resolved to go to Oxford read the lewdest books. They were encouraged also to write lampoons on the Church. Samuel Wesley was promised a considerable gratuity if he would translate some Unitarian works, but happily he declined the task when he saw what it was. At the time when he was attracted toward the Church of England, he was living with his mother and an old aunt, whom he would have greatly grieved by any intimation of such feeling. He knew no one belonging to the Established Church who could advise him in his sore perplexity. But Samuel Wesley was equal to any emergency. He earnestly sought God's guidance, calmly weighed all the points at issue, then rose early one morning and set out on foot for Oxford, where he entered himself as a "servitor" at Exeter College.

By this step the Wesley family was again united to the Church which had cast them out. Samuel thus enjoyed the advantages of an Oxford training such as both his father and grandfather had received. For many years his life was a sharp struggle. By indomitable industry he supported himself at the University. He entered with two pounds five shillings in his pocket, and left, at the end of five years, with ten pounds, though during his whole term of residence his family and friends had only given him five shillings. He performed his duties as servitor, composed exercises for other students, gave instruction as a private tutor, and collected all his youthful verses, which were published by John Dunton under the title "Maggots;

or, Poems on Several Subjects never before handled." The headings of several pieces may be said to justify this claim to novelty: "The Tame Snake in a Box of Bran," "The Grunting of a Hog," "A Cow's Tail," "A Hat Broke at Cudgels." Such subjects are aptly described as "never before handled" by the muse. It is pleasant to add that the busy student found time to visit the prisoners at the Castle. In later life he often thought of those endeavours to do good with no small satisfaction.

Samuel Wesley took his degree as Bachelor of Arts in June, 1688, and his M.A. degree at Cambridge in 1694. On August 7th, 1688, Dr. Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, ordained him deacon at his palace at Bromley. The following February, Dr. Compton, Bishop of London, admitted him to priest's orders in St. Andrew's, Holborn. After holding a curacy at a stipend of twenty-eight pounds a year, he became chaplain on board a man-of-war. Then he took another London curacy. His salary was thirty pounds; his restless pen added thirty pounds more to his income. Such was the condition of his finances when he married Susanna Annesley.

A special providence seems to have presided over the marriage of the mother of the Wesleys. She was both beautiful and accomplished. More than all else, she was a woman of rare judgment and sterling piety. Her mind was both clear and strong. Her husband's heart safely trusted in her during all the troubles of their long married life, and her gifted sons at Oxford felt that her advice on all subjects both of practical and speculative divinity was of the greatest value. Mrs. Wesley's prudent counsels were also of conspicuous service at several crises of the Evangelical Revival.

Susanna Wesley's father was Dr. Samuel Annesley, 'the St. Paul of the Nonconformists." He was Vicar of

St. Giles', Cripplegate, but was ejected in 1662. He afterwards formed a congregation at Little St. Helen's (now St. Helen's), Bishopsgate Street, which was licensed, after the Declaration of Indulgence, in 1672. The Annesley family was settled in Nottinghamshire before the Conquest. The grandfather of the Nonconformist divine was Viscount Valentia, his uncle was the first Earl of Anglesea. John Wesley's mother was therefore a lady both by birth and breeding,—a fact which must not be lost sight of in studying the character of her children. Mrs. Annesley, like the wife of the first John Wesley, was a Miss White. Her father, John White, was also a member of the Assembly of Divines, in which his namesake, the patriarch of Dorchester, was one of the assessors. He was a barrister, much patronised by the Puritans, and, as member for Southwark, took a leading part in the events which led to the execution of Charles I. Susanna Wesley was the twenty-fourth child of this marriage. She was familiar with the whole controversy between the Nonconformists and the Church of England, and the year before Samuel Wesley went to Oxford had calmly weighed the points at issue and cast in her lot with the Church. She was only thirteen years old at the time when she made this important decision. During the year 1682, in which she made this choice, young Samuel Wesley was present at her sister's marriage to John Dunton, the noted bookseller. It is therefore probable that the young people, who thus left the Nonconformity for which their parents had suffered so much, were already attached to each other, and acted in concert in making this momentous change.

The first eighteen months of their married life seem to have been spent in London, where their first child, Samuel, was born in February, 1690; but in August, 1690, Samuel Wesley became Rector of South Ormsby, whence he

removed to Epworth early in 1697. Here he remained as Rector for thirty-nine years, until his death in 1735. His work was embittered by the turbulent Fenmen, then "almost heathens."* A terrible half-century of riot and outrage preceded his appointment. Cornelius Vermuyden, the Dutchman who drained the country, found himself in a nest of hornets. The Fenmen refused to accept compensation for their rights of pasturage, burnt the crops of the foreign settlers, and tried to drown them by laying the whole district under water. Samuel Wesley was not the man to conciliate such unruly people. His first twelve years at Epworth were therefore full of bitter trouble.

This brief notice of Wesley's ancestry will show that he was descended from a long line of English gentry and clergymen. The highest education and the best breeding had been enjoyed by both sides of the house for many generations.

* S. Wesley, jun., in Letters, published by Dr. Priestley, p. 43.

CHAPTER II.

CHILDHOOD AT EPWORTH.

JOHN BENJAMIN WESLEY, born on June 17th, 1703, was the fifteenth of the Rector's nineteen children. He received the names of two brothers, John and Benjamin, who had died in infancy, but he never used the second name. At the time of his birth there were six children in the Rectory; the rest were dead. Samuel, the only boy, was thirteen years old, and was preparing to enter Westminster School the following year. Charles Wesley was not born for more than four years afterwards.

Epworth, the Lincolnshire town which is honoured as the birthplace of John and Charles Wesley, was then a market-town of about two thousand inhabitants. Its population has not increased for two hundred years. It is the principal place in a strip of land once enclosed by five rivers—the Idle and Torr, on the west and south; the Trent, on the east; the Ouse, the Don, and the broad tidal estuary of the Humber, to the north. This was the Isle of Axholme.* Three of the rivers are now only to be traced by the willow trees which mark their former channels. About ten thousand people lived in this strip of country, which is ten miles long and four broad. The fine old church at Epworth, with its massive tower,

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* Old spelling, Axeye Holm; Axe is Celtic for water. Island is said to be added in Saxon, Danish, and Norman. So that the name is in itself a history of England.

has been made familiar by the well-known picture of Wesley preaching on his father's tomb. It stands on rising ground, and when seen from the old Market Place appears to command the town. It is dedicated to St. Andrew. The Parsonage in which John and Charles Wesley were born was destroyed by fire February 9th, 1709. The Rector described his home at South Ormsby as "a mean cot, composed of reeds and clay." The Epworth Parsonage was superior to this. Stonehouse in his "History of the Isle of Axholme"* quotes a description of it in 1607. It was a three-storied building of timber and plaster, thatched with straw, and had seven principal rooms, a kitchen, hall, parlour, buttery, with three large upper rooms and some others for common use. A small garden, a thatched barn, a dovecot, and other outside premises were attached. The whole covered about three acres. In this old house John Wesley was born and taught to read. The present Rectory, a long brick building, "with a high-pitched tiled roof rising from a bold projecting cornice, is an excellent specimen of the sterling unpretentious architecture of the day, a quiet, genuine Queen Anne house, very unlike the crude heaps of incongruities, devoid of repose, which now pass by that name. The garden, with its smooth lawn and long straight walks, bordered with old-fashioned flowers, with hedges of sweet-peas, foxgloves, sweet-williams, and snapdragons, beds of odoriferous pinks, and a wealth of roses, is a delicious pleasure-ground, in the true old English sense of the word, the rival of which one might go far to find." Such is the description of the Rectory given in the *Saturday Review*.† The house remained almost unaltered from Wesley's

* Page 151. † August 1st, 1885. The Lincoln Architectural Society in the Isle of Axholme.

boyhood up to 1883, when it was considerably enlarged,* but the air of comfort and quiet prosperity which the Rectory now wears was certainly not its aspect in the days of Samuel Wesley. When John was only two years old his father was committed to Lincoln Castle for debt by his enemies, so that the household was familiar enough with poverty in his childhood. The house was rebuilt within a year at a cost of £400, but the Rector's resources were so straitened that even thirteen years afterwards it was not half furnished.

A good picture of John Wesley's boyhood is gained from Susanna Wesley's account of the training of her children, written at his request on July 24th, 1732.† That training may be said to have begun with the children's birth. Even during the first three months of their life, which were mostly spent in sleep, they were dressed and undressed and their clothes were changed at fixed times. After that period they were, if possible, laid in the cradle awake and rocked to sleep. Until the children were brought into a proper course of sleeping this rocking continued up to the time fixed for them to awake. At first three hours were allowed in the morning, three in the afternoon; then the time was reduced to two hours, until at last they needed no sleep during the day. The children were taught to fear the rod when they were only a year old and to cry softly. By this means the Epworth Parsonage, though full of children, was as quiet as if there had not been one in the house.

As soon as possible, the little table and chairs were set near the family dinner-table, where they could be easily overlooked. The children were taught to ask softly for anything they wanted and to eat whatever was provided

* Some charred timbers of the old Rectory were then found, and pieces distributed as souvenirs. † Works, i., 387.

for the family. As soon as they could handle a knife and fork they sat at the table with their parents. No eating or drinking between meals was allowed. Evening prayers were over at six o'clock. The children then had supper, and at seven o'clock were prepared for bed. First, the youngest was undressed and washed, then the rest in turn. All were in bed by eight.

Mrs. Wesley's first care was to teach her children obedience. She knew that this was not only the way to rule well her large household, but also to secure the happiness of her boys and girls. "I insist," she says in her interesting letter, "upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind." One result of this training was seen in times of illness. There was no difficulty in getting these model children to take even the most unpleasant medicine.

Religious training began as early as possible. Even before they could kneel or speak, they were taught to be quiet at family prayers, and to ask a blessing by signs. As soon as they could speak they repeated the Lord's Prayer morning and evening. A prayer for their parents, some collects, Catechism, and Scripture, were added as soon as they were able to learn them. No profane or rude words were ever heard in the Parsonage. The children were taught to ask quietly for what they wanted. Crying never won anything in this home. No one was allowed to speak to the servants without saying, "Pray give me such a thing." The little people were always

expected to say "*Brother* John" or "*Sister* Kezzy." The code of honour observed among them allowed no promise to be broken, no gift reclaimed. No one attempted to take what belonged to his brother or sister. Confession of a fault always averted punishment, so that many temptations to falsehood were removed.

Mrs. Wesley was the schoolmistress of the Parsonage. The glimpse of the local schoolmaster, John Holland, "whose kindness" young Samuel Wesley, who was under him for one year, "wore on his knuckles," and who reduced himself and his family to the verge of starvation by his wickedness, makes us thankful that the mother of the Wesleys was their teacher. Her grandson, Samuel Wesley,* says that she had the happy talent of imbuing a child's mind with every kind of useful knowledge in such a way as to stamp it indelibly on the memory. She began her work as soon as her children were five years old. The day before the little scholar was initiated all household matters were carefully arranged, and every one was strictly charged not to enter the schoolroom from nine to twelve, or from two to five. If we except Kezzy, as to whom her mother's plans were unfortunately overruled, all the children learned their letters the first day save two of the girls, who took a day and a half. For this Mrs. Wesley thought them very dull, but when she knew other children better she altered her opinion. After the alphabet was mastered the children were taught to spell and read first a line, then a verse. No lesson was left till it was perfect. Before the close of morning school each repeated what had been learned; before work was finished in the afternoon the whole day's task was repeated. No loud talking or playing was

* See MS. Reminiscences in British Museum.

allowed in school; every one kept close to work. The progress made was such that Mrs. Wesley herself, who was not easy to please, says, "It is almost incredible what a child may be taught in a quarter of a year by a vigorous application if it have but a tolerable capacity and good health."

The Parsonage was a constant scene of trouble. In 1702 two-thirds of it was burnt down; two years later all the Rector's flax was destroyed. Samuel Wesley made himself many enemies by the prominent share he took in the controversy between the High Church party and the Dissenters. During a contested election he also embroiled himself with his parishioners by his zealous efforts on behalf of the Tory candidate. His lot was cast among a people proverbially turbulent and lawless. The Dutch settlers of the Commonwealth had been roughly treated by the natives of Axholme. All law and order was suspended. Epworth Church was defaced, and the Ten Commandments were torn in pieces by one of the rioters. The house of a Mr. Reading, who collected rents and had shown great enterprise in the cultivation of the soil, was twice burned down by the half-civilised mob, who used the weapons familiar to Irish agrarian outrage. John Wesley ascribed the greatest calamity his father ever suffered to the malice of his unscrupulous parishioners.

On February 9th, 1709, the memorable fire at the Rectory took place. It broke out between eleven and twelve at night, when all the family were in bed. The roof of the corn-chamber was burnt through before any one was aware of the danger. Some of the fire fell upon Hetty Wesley's bed, in a little room adjoining. She at once ran to call her father, who lay in the red chamber. He had heard some one crying "Fire!" in the street a little while before, but did not understand that his own house was in

danger. He roused his family and told them to make haste, because the roof was falling fast, and only a thin wall or door kept the flames from the staircase. They had not even time to put on their clothes. Mr. Wesley, with the nurse and two of the children, got downstairs into the garden; the servants and two others escaped through the window. After three fruitless attempts Mrs. Wesley waded through the fire, which scorched her legs and face. At last all were safe save John, then five and a half years old. He had been asleep in the nursery, with three of his sisters, his little brother Charles, and the nurse. When the alarm was given, the nurse snatched up Charles, the youngest child, and bade the rest follow her. John was left in bed fast asleep. In a few minutes he awoke, and, seeing how light the room was, called to the maid to take him up. As no one answered, he put his head out of the curtains and saw streaks of fire on the ceiling. The child jumped out of bed and went to the door, but found that all beyond was in a blaze. He then climbed on the chest which stood near the window. The Rector tried to rush through the flames, which enveloped the staircase, to rescue his boy; but though he made two attempts, holding his trousers above his head as a kind of shield, the fire beat him down. He then went into the garden; and, calling his family around him, all kneeled down whilst he commended the child to God A man below, however, had seen John, and would have run for a ladder; but another spectator said there was no time to lose, and suggested that a light man should be set on his shoulders, so as to lift the little fellow out of the window. The first time the man fell down, but he was helped up again, and was thus able to reach the child. Just as they rescued him the whole roof fell in. Fortunately, it fell

inwards, or the boy and his brave deliverers would have been crushed by the weight.

When John was brought to his father by the brave men who had rescued him the Rector cried out, "Come, neighbours, let us kneel down; let us give thanks to God! He has given me all my eight children; let the house go; I am rich enough." Nothing was saved. In about fifteen minutes the building, with all its furniture, books, and papers, was utterly destroyed. John Wesley's wonderful escape always filled him with gratitude. In one of his early prints a house in flames is represented below his own portrait, with the words, "Is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" * One interesting reference to the event is found in his journals. On Friday, February 9th, 1750, whilst holding a watchnight service in his West Street Chapel, London, "About eleven o'clock," he says, "it came into my mind, that this was the very day and hour in which, forty years ago, I was taken out of the flames. I stopped, and gave a short account of that wonderful providence. The voice of praise and thanksgiving went up on high, and great was our rejoicing before the Lord." Both he and the Methodist people knew by that time for what blessed work he had been spared.

The fire at the Rectory deranged all Mrs. Wesley's plans for nearly a year. Her children were kindly received into several families; and Kezia, their nineteenth child, was born one month after the fire. They were allowed to do as other boys and girls did. They talked with the servants; they ran about and played with other children, both good and bad. John was received into the house of Mr. Hume, a neighbouring clergyman, about

* Moore, i., 115.—See a portrait by Virtue in 1743.

the misfortunes of whose family he heard a sad account on his return from Georgia.* After the Parsonage was rebuilt Mrs. Wesley began a strict reform. The children had grown careless about the Sabbath, had learned several songs and bad things "which before they had no notion of." They had lost their good manners, and had acquired "a clownish accent and many rude ways." Before the fire no children could be found more obedient to their parents, or better disposed towards religion. Mrs. Wesley felt that she had a difficult task, but she set herself bravely to recover the lost ground. Several new features were now introduced into the training. Psalms were sung both at the opening and close of school. The mother little knew what service her two sons were by-and-bye to render to the cause of sacred song. The habit of general retirement at five o'clock which John and Charles Wesley so carefully observed in later life was then entered upon. The oldest child took the youngest that could speak, the second the next, and thus all the children formed themselves into pairs to read over the Evening Psalms, with a chapter from the New Testament. Before breakfast the Morning Psalms and a chapter of the Old Testament were read in the same way.

John Wesley's escape made his mother the more zealous for her boy's true welfare. Two years after the fire she wrote in the book where she noted down her private meditations,† "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 endeavour to instil into his mind the principles of Thy

* Coke and Moore's "Wesley," 137.

† Moore, i., 116.

true religion and virtue. Lord, give me grace to do it sincerely and prudently, and bless my attempts with good success." Such was the effect of her training that his father admitted John to the Communion when he was only eight years old.* He says in his journal,† "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."

The year 1712 was an eventful one in John Wesley's childhood. Whilst his father was in London, attending Convocation, Mrs. Wesley was greatly quickened by an account of the labours of the young Danish missionaries Ziegenbalgh and Plutscho, sent out in November, 1705, under the auspices of Frederick IV., the King of Denmark, to the East Indies for the conversion of the heathen in Malabar. Not long before she had begun to hold services in her kitchen on Sunday evenings for her family and servants. There was no afternoon service during her husband's absence, and his curate was a dry unevangelical preacher, whose religion was summed up in the duty of paying one's debts, which formed the constant theme of his ministry. Mrs. Wesley, therefore, felt it necessary to read with her children and servants. One boy told his parents of the meetings. They begged leave to come, and others joined them, but the number was seldom more than forty. After she read the account of these devoted missionaries, Mrs. Wesley became more zealous. She chose the best and most awakening sermons, and spent more time with the people in religious exercises.

* Benson's "Apology," p. 1. † Works, i., 98.

On the first Sunday in February, 1712, more than two hundred people were present; and many went away because there was no room. John and Charles Wesley were in their mother's congregation. Charles was only four; but John, who was eight and a half, must have followed these services with peculiar interest. The curate appealed to his rector to discourage these novel assemblies, but Mrs. Wesley's defence was so complete that her husband would not interfere. She also resolved to set apart some time every evening to converse privately with each child "in something that relates to its principal concerns." John's turn came on Thursday. How he prized the opportunity may be seen from his letter to his mother, written when he was Fellow of Lincoln. "If you can spare me only that little part of Thursday evening which you formerly bestowed upon me in another manner, I doubt not but it would be as useful now for correcting my heart, as it was then in forming my judgment."

In the April of 1712, John and four more of the Parsonage children had the small-pox. His mother gives a pleasant glimpse of her boy in a letter to her husband in London. "Jack has borne his disease bravely, like a man, and indeed like a Christian, without any complaint, though he seemed angry at the small-pox when they were sore, as we guessed by his looking sourly at them, for he never said anything."* This anecdote is characteristic. Mr. Wesley told Adam Clarke† that when he was a child, and was asked to have fruit or anything else between meals, he would quietly reply, "I thank you. I will think of it." The fact is that Mrs. Wesley did not allow her children to take anything between meals, and John was so well trained that he made this discreet answer.

* Moore, i., 116. † "Wesley Family," ii., 321.

He would never do anything till he considered it well. This habit often gave him some appearance of hesitation. His father once said to Mrs. Wesley, "I profess, sweetheart, I think our Jack would not attend to the most pressing necessities of nature unless he could give a reason for it."* He told John himself, "Child, you think to carry everything by dint of argument; but you will find how very little is ever done in the world by close reason." "Very little indeed," is Mr. Wesley's comment.†

In January, 1714, he was nominated for the Charterhouse. With the exception of some time spent as his father's curate at Wroote, he never lived at Epworth again. He was a frequent visitor, however; and we shall see that he retained his connection with the Lincolnshire town till the close of his long life. It witnessed some of the most blessed scenes of his itinerant ministry. On July 9th, 1779, in connection with a visit, he says, "How true is this trite remark:

> Nescio quâ natale solum dulcedine cunctos
> Ducit, et immemores non sinet esse suâ!
>
> ---
>
> The natal soil to all how strangely sweet!
> The place where first he breathed who can forget!"

That day he preached to a great congregation at his usual stand—the cross—in the market-place. Next day he says, "Taking a solitary walk in the churchyard, I felt the truth of 'One generation goeth, and another cometh.' See how the earth drops its inhabitants, as the tree drops its leaves!"‡

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* "Wesley Family," ii., 321.
† Works, xii., 412
‡ *Ibid.*, iv., 158.

CHAPTER III.

GOWN-BOY AT CHARTERHOUSE.

A MEMORANDUM in Wesley's own writing shows that on January 28th, 1714, he was nominated by the Duke of Buckingham on the foundation of Charterhouse. His Grace, who was at that time Lord Chamberlain, had long been a friend of the Wesleys. Within a week of their disastrous fire the Rector sent an account to him, with a description of his boy's deliverance. The Duke and Duchess had given £26 17*s.* 6*d.* to help Samuel Wesley during his financial troubles in 1703, so that they were old friends. This nomination introduced John Wesley to that famous school for which he cherished a life-long affection. It celebrated its centenary in the year he came up from Epworth. Its founder—Thomas Sutton, the merchant prince—who died at Hackney on December 12th, 1611, at the ripe age of seventy-nine, had resolved to devote his vast wealth to some worthy charity, and after long and anxious thought, determined to found a hospital or home for the poor or aged and also a free school. At first he intended to erect the buildings at Little Hallingbury, in Essex, but he afterwards bought Howard House for £13,000. This mansion, the home of the dukes of Norfolk, had formerly been a Carthusian monastery, in which both Sir Thomas More and Dean Colet "found a temporary retreat from the cares of the world." The house was founded in 1372, and perished at the dissolution of

the monasteries in Henry VIII.'s reign. Its prior suffered on the scaffold rather than betray his trust.

The property passed into the hands of the Howards in 1565. The Duke of Norfolk, who was beheaded because of his correspondence with Mary, Queen of Scots, was living here at the time he was committed to the Tower. He was released after an imprisonment of some months, and returned to his mansion, under the surveillance of Sir Henry Nevil. He spent much time in beautifying his house, but in 1571 he was again in the Tower. John Wesley's warm sympathy with the unfortunate Queen may have been first stirred by the associations of his school. The property, confiscated for a time by Elizabeth, was afterwards restored to the Howards. In 1603 James I. made this mansion of the family, that had suffered so much for his mother, his first home when he reached London. He kept court there for four days, and knighted more than eighty gentlemen. Such were the historic associations of the Charterhouse. Seven full-length portraits which were entrusted to the care of one of the officers of the hospital by the Duchess of Monmouth, who intended to claim them when happier days dawned, still remain on the walls where they hung in John Wesley's time. The monastery, which was on the system of La Grande Chartreuse, bequeathed its name to the famous foundation of Sutton. Charterhouse is simply a corruption of Chartreuse. In its "Governors' Room," where the managers of the charity used to meet, almost all the illustrious men of England from the time of Henry VIII. to the Restoration have been familiar figures.*

The school was opened on October 3rd, 1614, with forty boys on the foundation, who were educated free of charge,

* Dr. W. Haig Brown's "Charterhouse, Past and Present.'

and wore gowns of broad cloth lined with baize. Hence they were called gown-boys. A schoolmaster and an usher had charge of their education. About sixty "town-boys" who were not on the foundation were admitted on payment of school fees. The number of these scholars steadily grew. In 1677 there were forty-four boys on the foundation, but forty was the usual number.

During all the time John Wesley was at the Charterhouse Dr. Thomas Walker was the schoolmaster. He had been appointed in 1679, after four years spent as usher, and held the post till 1728. Andrew Tooke, who succeeded him as schoolmaster, was usher during John Wesley's school-days. Both had been gown-boys. Dr. Walker was sixty-seven years old when John Wesley entered Charterhouse. For forty years he had devoted himself to the school. The inscription on a memorial tablet in the chapel speaks of his exceedingly accurate knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and of his diligence in the discharge of his office. Richard Steele, Joseph Addison, Law, Bishop of Carlisle, Benson, Bishop of Gloucester, and Dr. Davies, the President of Queen's College, Cambridge, who was reputed to be the best Latin scholar of his day in England, were all educated under him. He died on June 12th, 1728, in the eighty-first year of his age. Wesley's quietness, regularity, and application are said to have made him a special favourite with Dr. Walker.*

Andrew Tooke, the usher, was Gresham Professor of Geometry, a Fellow of the Royal Society, and an author of some eminence. His "Pantheon," a school summary of heathen mythology, went through at least twenty-two editions. He was forty-one when John Wesley entered, and had been usher for nineteen years. He died at the

* Southey, i., 25.

age of fifty-eight, having held the headmastership for three years.

Any picture of Wesley's school would be incomplete without some reference to the hospital and its pensioners. No Thackeray had yet arisen to immortalise those eighty decayed gentlemen for whom Thomas Sutton's bounty provided an asylum in their declining years. But the very fact that the school and the hospital were parts of one great institution must always have been impressive. The Master of Charterhouse was both the head of the hospital and a governor of the school. He must be carefully distinguished from the schoolmaster. For one year after Wesley became a scholar this high office was held by Thomas Burnet, whose writings enjoyed a great reputation among all the scholars of Europe. Addison wrote a Latin ode in praise of his "Telluris Theoria Sacra," a learned work on terrestrial revolutions. He had successfully resisted James II.'s attempt to intrude a Roman Catholic on the foundation, not quailing even before the brutal Jeffreys. Archbishop Tillotson's recommendation won him the position of secretary and chaplain to William III. He was an intimate friend of Godfrey Kneller's. He died in 1715, at the age of eighty. Dr. King, who had been Preacher of Charterhouse for twenty years, was Burnet's successor. On January 20th, 1726, Dr. Byrom says that he went with Dr. King and two other friends to the Horn Tavern, where they had a pleasant time together. He says that Dr. King always carried in his pocket a copy of the "Imitation of Christ."

The system of fagging seems to have been in full force during Wesley's schooldays. His life there was one of much privation. The elder boys * took the animal food

* Moore, i., 117.

from the juniors,* so that he says, "From ten to fourteen I had little but bread to eat, and not great plenty of that. I believe this was so far from hurting me, that it laid the foundation of lasting health." Isaac Taylor† says, "Wesley learned, as a boy, to suffer wrongfully with a cheerful patience, and to conform himself to cruel despotisms without acquiring either the slave's temper or the despot's." One thing helped much to preserve his strength. His father had given him strict injunctions to run round the garden, which was of considerable extent, three times every morning. Wesley was careful to obey that injunction.‡

One pleasant instance of the influence he exerted at school has been preserved. Mr. Tooke, the usher,§ one day missed all the little boys from the playground. He found, when he began to search, that they were all in the schoolroom around Wesley, who was relating to them instructive stories, which proved more attractive than the playground. Mr. Tooke expressed his pleasure, and wished the boy to repeat this entertainment as often as he could find listeners. A malicious construction has been given to this story. John Wesley is said to have harangued his schoolfellows from the writing desks, and when taken to task by Mr. Tooke for associating with such little boys, to have answered, "Better rule in hell than serve in heaven." Fortunately Charles Wesley's daughter, who had received the true account from her father, was able to confute these statements.

About the time that Wesley entered Charterhouse, his

* Works, iii., 402.
† "Wesley and Methodism," 23.
‡ Moore, i., 117.
§ Stevenson's "Wesley Family," 483.

brother Samuel returned from Oxford to his old school at Westminster as usher. He seems to have married in 1715, and lived close to Dean's Yard. Charles, their youngest brother, came up to Westminster School in 1716, so that the three Wesleys were all in London together for four years, until John went to Oxford in 1720. We catch a glimpse of one pleasant meeting, and see how much Wesley's progress gratified his scholarly brother Samuel. In 1719, when the Rector was in doubt as to the future of Charles, Samuel wrote, "My brother Jack, I can faithfully assure you, gives you no manner of discouragement from breeding your third son a scholar." Two or three months later he tells his father, "Jack is with me, and a brave boy, learning Hebrew as fast as he can."*

Wesley was elected to Christ Church, which he entered on June 24th, 1720.† In 1630 there were twenty-seven exhibitioners at the universities from the foundation of Charterhouse, at a cost of four hundred and thirty-two pounds to the house.‡ The number seems to have varied from twenty-four to twenty-nine. The school thus secured for Wesley the best education he could receive in England. He cherished a life-long feeling of affection for the place, and took a walk through it every year when in London.§ One of these visits forms a singularly interesting link to the thoughts and feelings of the schoolboy. On Monday, August 8th, 1757, he says, "I took a walk in the Charterhouse. I wondered that all the squares and buildings, and especially the schoolboys, looked so little. But this is easily accounted for. I was little myself when I was at

* Whitehead, i., 381.
† Tyerman, i., 19.
‡ The annual pension allowed was afterwards twenty pounds.
§ Moore, i., 117.

school, and measured all about me by myself. Accordingly, the upper boys, being then bigger than myself, seemed to me very big and tall, quite contrary to what they appear now, when I am taller and bigger than them."*

Charterhouse was not a fashionable school like Westminster, so that we do not find many aristocratic names among Wesley's schoolfellows. Charles Wesley's journals refer to not a few of his contemporaries at Westminster, men of title and position. His brother mentions one of his schoolfellows who lived half a mile from Barnard Castle. When he visited that place in May, 1764, this Mr. Fielding invited him to breakfast. "I found we had been schoolfellows at the Charterhouse; and he remembered me, though I had forgot him. I spent a very agreeable hour with a serious as well as sensible man." Four years later he lodged at this gentleman's "lovely house" during his stay in Barnard Castle. Twenty years after his first visit he came again to the neighbourhood, and found that both Mr. Fielding and his wife were dead. His son had let the house to a stranger.†

On June 13th, 1748, the journals record a visit which seems to show that Wesley was at the Charterhouse. "I spent an hour or two with Dr. Pepusch." On April 29th of the same year Charles Wesley writes, "Mrs. Rich carried me to Dr. Pepusch, whose music entertained us much, and his conversation more." Mrs. Rich, who had been converted under Charles Wesley's ministry, was the wife of the proprietor of Covent Garden Theatre, and had free access to all the best musicians of the time. Pepusch

* Works, ii., 421.

† *Ibid.*, iii., 176, 335; iv., 279.

had been organist at the Charterhouse for eleven years, and lived there after his appointment. Wesley was evidently as much interested as his brother by the conversation of the aged musician. He makes a careful note of it in his journal. Dr. Pepusch asserted that the art of music was dead. He maintained that it depended on nature and mathematical principles, which only the ancients understood in their perfection. Tallis and Purcell had made efforts to revive it, but the present masters had no fixed principles at all. Such was the conversation which seems to have taken place within the precincts of the Charterhouse.

One incident of Wesley's schooldays shows that he was a high-spirited youth. "I remember," says Alexander Knox, "Mr. Wesley told us that his father was the person who composed the well-known speech delivered by Dr. Sacheverell at the close of his trial, and that on this ground, when he, Mr. John Wesley, was about to be entered at Oxford, his father, knowing that the Doctor had a strong interest in the college for which his son was devoted, desired him to call on the Doctor in his way to get letters of recommendation. 'When I was introduced,' said Mr. John Wesley, 'I found him alone, as tall as a maypole, and as fine as an archbishop. I was a very little fellow, not taller' (pointing to a very gentlemanlike but very dwarfish clergyman who was in the company) 'than Mr. Kennedy there. He said, "You are too young to go to the University; you cannot know Greek and Latin yet. Go back to school." I looked at him as David looked at Goliath, and despised him in my heart. I thought, "If I do not know Greek and Latin better than you, I ought to go back to school indeed." I left him, and neither entreaties nor commands could have again brought me back to him.'"

One word about Wesley's religious life at Charterhouse

is necessary. At the time of his conversion, in 1738,* after describing his earlier life at home, he proceeds, "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." It is evident that the old notions of "universal obedience" in which he had been so carefully trained at home had broken down. He was, he says, as ignorant of the true meaning of the Law as of the Gospel. More evangelical teaching would probably have preserved him from the "outward sins" to which he refers. We must not, however, forget how sensitive his conscience was. A schoolboy who read his Bible morning and evening had not gone far astray.

On Founder's Day, December 12th, *1727*, the stewards for the annual dinner of old Carthusians were Dr. King (Master of the Charterhouse), Mr. John Wesley, Mr. Robert Vincent, and Mr. Edward Doyley. The sum of £34† was paid to Mr. West, the cook for the dinner; wines, etc., cost £30 5*s.* 6*d.*; "paid musick, as in number two French horns, £12 12*s.*" Eighty-four persons were at the

* Works, i., 98.

† These particulars and the bill of fare have been kindly furnished by the Rev. Andrew Clark, of Lincoln College. When we state that roasted pike, fried whitings, flounders, spitched eels, shrimps, tongues, udders, pigeons, venison pasties, chines and turkeys, lamb and ragouts, wild fowls, sweetbreads and

dinner, of which the total expenses were £92 11s. Mr. Vincent paid the bills. At the time of this dinner Wesley had been Fellow of Lincoln College for more than eighteer months.

asparagus, almond tarts, roasted lobsters, pear tarts, sirloir of roasted beef, fruit, jellies, custards, and florentines, figure on this bill of fare, it will be seen that the stewards made a good bargain. They met "at the Crown behind the Exchange" on November 27th to arrange for the dinner, and again on Monday, December 4th. These meetings cost four pounds. "It was judged that twelve servants were enough to wait at the table." The preacher for the day was Mr. Thomas Rowel, "on account of Mr. Blackwell's indisposition."

CHAPTER IV.

EARLIER YEARS AT OXFORD, AND CURACY AT WROOTE 1720—1729.

WESLEY entered Oxford University in June, 1720, a week after his seventeenth birthday. His undergraduate days, like those of his brothers, Samuel and Charles, were spent at Christ Church, Cardinal Wolsey's famous college. He had an allowance of forty pounds a year as a Charterhouse scholar.* Dr. Wigan, an eminent classical scholar of that time, was his first tutor,† but he soon removed to a country living, and Mr. Sherman became his successor. Mr. Badcock describes Wesley at the age of twenty-one as "the very sensible and acute collegian, baffling every man by the subtleties of logic, and laughing at them for being so easily routed; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments."‡ He was "gay and sprightly, with a turn for wit and humour." His wit was polished, and all his writing showed the gentleman and the scholar. He had already begun to exercise his poetic gift, and sent one of his compositions to his father, who told him, "I like your verses on the sixty-fifth Psalm, and would not have you bury your talent." To his brother Samuel

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* Tyerman, i., 26.

† Whitehead, i., 381.

‡ *Westminster Magazine*, 1774, p. 180.

he sent some stanzas after the Latin, composed as a college exercise.* This description of "Chloe's favourite flea" employed him, he says, above an hour on the day before he wrote to his brother. It certainly shows the ease with which he could turn a rhyme. The pleasant vein of his correspondence may be gathered from a letter dated on his twenty-first birthday. Samuel had broken his leg. "I believe," says John, "I need not use many arguments to show I am sorry for your misfortune, though at the same time I am glad you are in a fair way of recovery. If I had heard of it from any one else, I might probably have pleased you with some impertinent consolations; but the way of your relating it is a sufficient proof, that they are what you don't stand in need of. And indeed, if I understand you rightly, you have more reason to thank God that you did not break both, than to repine because you have broke one leg. You have undoubtedly heard the story of the Dutch seaman who, having broke one of his legs by a fall from the mainmast, instead of condoling himself, thanked God that he had not broke his neck. I scarce know whether your first news vexed me, or your last news pleased me more; but I can assure you, that though I did not cry for grief at the former, I did for joy at the latter part of your letter. The two things which I most wished for of almost anything in the world were to see my mother and Westminster once again; and to see them both together was so far above my expectations, that I almost looked upon it as next to an impossibility. I have been so very frequently disappointed when I had set my heart on any pleasure, that I will never again depend on any before it comes. However, I shall be obliged to you if you will tell me,

* Moore, i., 120.

as near as you can, how soon my uncle" (Annesley) "is expected in England, and my mother in London.

"Since you have a mind to see some of my verses, I have sent you some, which employed me above an hour yesterday in the afternoon. There is one, and, I am afraid, but one good thing in them, that is, they are short." *

The young collegian seems to have been disappointed again. Mrs. Wesley came to London to meet her only brother, Mr. Annesley, who was in the service of the East India Company. The newspapers had announced that he was to arrive by a certain vessel, and she came to meet him; but unfortunately he did not sail in that vessel, and was never again heard of.†

Wesley's health during his first years at college was far from vigorous. In a letter to his mother in 1723 he says that whilst walking in the country his nose bled so violently that he was almost choked. He was only able to stop the bleeding by plunging into the river.‡ He was apparently in a chronic state of financial embarrassment. His tutor told him that he would make the fees as low as possible, but he had a constant struggle to make both ends meet. In August, 1724, his mother wrote to ask whether he had any reasonable hopes of being out of debt. She was much concerned for a kind friend that had lent him ten pounds, and encouraged him to hope that they might pick up a few crumbs for him at Epworth before the end of the year. This friend afterwards paid himself out of Wesley's exhibition.§ His father helped him a little; but his own heavy debts, now amounting to three hundred and fifty pounds, left very little either for his home or his children. In one letter he expresses a hope that he will "have no occasion to remember

* Whitehead, i., 382.
† *Ibid.*, i., 383.
‡ Tyerman, i., 25.
§ *Ibid.*, i., 26, 27.

any more some things that are past."* In weighing this sentence, we must not, however, forget Wesley's scanty allowance at Christ Church. It is quite possible that a sprightly young student may not have acted with such rigid economy as the Rector deemed to be necessary. It is not likely that much more than this is meant. On November 1st, 1724, he tells his mother that a great many rogues were about Oxford, so that it was not safe to be out late at night. A gentleman whom he knew was standing at the door of a coffee-house about seven one evening. When he turned round his cap and wig were snatched off his head; and though he followed the thief to a considerable distance, he was unable to recover them. "I am pretty safe from such gentlemen," he adds, "for unless they carried me away, carcase and all, they would have but a poor purchase." These were the days when robbers took special pleasure in stealing the perukes of gentlemen in full dress, who sometimes found it necessary to sit with their back to the horses, lest a piece of the back of the carriage should be cut out, and the head-dress stolen.† The same letter refers to Jack Sheppard's escape from Newgate, which was then exciting great attention in Oxford, and to Dr. Cheyne's "Book of Health and Long Life," a plea for temperance and exercise. The writer condemned salted or highly seasoned food, and recommended a diet of two pints of water, one of wine, with eight ounces of animal and twelve of vegetable food per day. This book led Wesley to eat sparingly and drink water, a change which he considered to be one great means of preserving his health.‡

* Tyerman, i., 30.

† Dr. Doran's "London in the Jacobite Times," i., 395.

‡ Works, iii., 402.

When he went to Oxford, Wesley still "said his prayers," both in public and private, and read the Scriptures, with other devotional books, especially comments on the New Testament. He had not any notion of inward holiness, but 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 he was obliged to receive three times a year. "I cannot well tell," he says, "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."* A conversation which he had late one night with the porter of his college made a lasting impression on his mind, and convinced him that there was something in religion which he had not yet found. At first Wesley indulged in a little pleasantry but when he found that this man had only one coat, and that though nothing had passed his lips that day but a drink of water, his heart was full of gratitude, he said, "You thank God when you have nothing to wear, nothing to eat, and no bed to lie upon. What else do you thank Him for?" "I thank Him," answered the porter, "that He has given me my life and being, and a heart to love Him, and a desire to serve Him."†

The beginning of 1725 seems to have been marked by a great increase of spiritual desire. Wesley was not yet twenty-two. He thought of entering the Church, and consulted his parents. His father wished that he should devote himself to "critical learning," but Mrs. Wesley was greatly pleased by his desire to take orders. His father

* Works, i., 98.

† Rev. John Reynolds, "Anecdotes of Wesley," p. 8.

wrote him on January 26th, 1725, to express his pleasure that his son had such a high conception of the work of a minister, and to point out the motives that should govern his choice of such a life. "The principal spring and motive, to which all the former should be only secondary, must certainly be the glory of God and the service of His Church in the edification of our neighbour. And woe to him who, with any meaner leading view, attempts so sacred a work." His shrewd sense is seen in another paragraph: "You ask me which is the best commentary on the Bible? I answer, The Bible itself. For the several paraphrases and translations of it in the Polyglot, compared with the original, and with one another, are, in my opinion, to an honest, devout, industrious, and humble man, infinitely preferable to any comment I ever saw. But Grotius is the best, for the most part, especially on the Old Testament." * It was in this letter that he told his son he thought it too soon for him to take orders. He changed his opinion, however, before long.† He urged him to give himself to prayer and study, and promised that he would help him with the expenses of ordination.‡ About this time Wesley began to study the "Imitation of Christ," which he had often seen, but never studied carefully. It taught him that true religion was seated in the heart, and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as our words and actions. He was very angry with A Kempis for being too strict, though he only read Dean Stanhope's translation; but nevertheless he frequently found much sensible comfort in the reading, such as he had been a stranger to before. Wesley's love of A Kempis never failed. In 1761 he told his friend Byrom that "Thomas a Kempis was next to the Bible." Up to 1725

* Whitehead, i., 385. † *Ibid.*, i., 386. ‡ Tyerman, i., 33.

Wesley had never had any religious friend. Now he was fortunate enough to meet with one, though we do not know his name, who became a true helper. He began to alter the whole form of his conversation, and earnestly sought to lead a new life. He took the Lord's Supper every week, watched against all sin in word or deed, and began to strive and pray for inward holiness. "So that now, doing so much and living so good a life," he says, "I doubted not but I was a good Christian." *

Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," which Wesley met with and studied in 1725, when he was thinking about his ordination, led him to make a more careful use of all his time. He now began to keep those journals which afterwards became such a storehouse of facts about his wonderful itinerancy and his evangelical mission. The difficulties which arose in reading Kempis and Taylor he referred to his father and mother, whose luminous answers did much to form his opinions and save him from asceticism.

Whilst preparing for orders, Wesley won his first convert. Somewhere about the midsummer of 1725,† he and a young gentleman with whom he was intimate quietly left the company in which they were, about eight o'clock one evening, and went to St. Mary's Church to see the funeral of a young lady with whom both of them had been acquainted. As they paced one of the aisles, Wesley asked his companion if he really thought himself his friend, and if so, why he would not do him all the good that lay in his power. When his friend began to protest, Wesley entreated that he might have the pleasure of making him a whole Christian, to which he knew he was halt persuaded already. He

* Works, i., 99. † *Ibid.*, xii., 10.

reminded him that he could not do him a greater kindness, as both of them "would be fully convinced when they came to follow that young woman." Wesley's companion became exceedingly serious, and the good impression was abiding. Eighteen months after this conversation he died of consumption. Wesley saw him three days before his death, and preached his funeral sermon at his special request.

Wesley's financial difficulties were overcome by his father's help, and he was ordained deacon in Christ Church Cathedral on Sunday, September 19th, 1725, by Dr. Potter, then Bishop of Oxford, who also admitted him to priest's orders in the same place on September 22nd, 1728.* Dr. Hayward, who examined him for priest's orders, put one question to him of which Wesley's whole after-history was an illustration, "Do you know what you are about? You are bidding defiance to all mankind. He that would live a Christian priest, ought to know, that whether his hand be against every man or no, he must expect every man's hand should be against him."†

In a sermon, "On Attending the Church Service," Wesley refers to a counsel given him by Dr. Potter, when Archbishop of Canterbury, which also made a lasting impression on his mind: "If you desire to be extensively useful, do not spend your time and strength in contending for or against such things as are of a disputable nature, but in testifying against open, notorious vice, and in promoting real essential holiness."‡

Soon after his ordination, in 1725, Wesley delivered his first sermon. On October 16th, 1771, he says, "I preached at South Lye. Here it was that I preached my first sermon, six-and-forty years ago. One man was in

* Whitehead, i., 397. † Works, xii., 21. ‡ *Ibid.*, vii., 185.

my present audience who heard it. Most of the rest are gone to their long home."* The little village of South Leigh is about three miles from Witney. On January 11th, 1726, he preached a funeral sermon at Epworth for John Griffith, the son of one of Samuel Wesley's parishioners. He dwelt mainly on the folly of indulging grief except for sin from the text 2 Sam. xii. 23. His references to the young man were singularly concise. "It is of no service to the dead to celebrate his actions, since he has the applause of God and His holy angels, and his own conscience. And it is of little use to the living, since he who desires a pattern may find enough proposed as such in the sacred writings." His testimony to Griffith is forcible, though brief. "To his parents he was an affectionate, dutiful son; to his acquaintance an ingenuous, cheerful, good-natured companion; and to me a well-tried, sincere friend."†

After his ordination Wesley quietly pursued his divinity studies. But the matter of pressing interest was his election to a Fellowship at Lincoln College. He devoted himself to the classics and other branches of study, as well as to his "academical exercises." His father had mentioned the Fellowship in his letter on January 26th, 1725. During the following summer Wesley's friends earnestly exerted themselves on his behalf. When Dr. Morley, the Rector of Lincoln, was approached on the subject, he said, "I will inquire into Mr. Wesley's character." He afterwards gave him leave to stand as a candidate, and exerted himself to secure his election. "In July," Wesley's father says, "I waited on Dr. Morley, and found him more civil than ever. I will

* Works, iii., 444.

† *Methodist Magazine*, 1797, p. 425.

write to the Bishop of Lincoln (the visitor of the college) again, and to your brother Samuel the next post. Study hard, lest your opponents beat you." * His opponents at Lincoln College tried to weaken his chance of election by ridiculing his serious behaviour, but timely letters from home helped Wesley to show a firm front against this factious opposition.

On August 2nd, 1725, his father sent him a beautiful little note of encouragement from Wroote :—

"DEAR SON,—If you be what you write I shall be happy. As to the gentlemen candidates you mention, does anybody think the devil is dead, or asleep, or that he has no agents left? Surely virtue can bear being laughed at. The Captain and Master endured something more for us before He entered into glory, and unless we track His steps, in vain do we hope to share His glory with Him.

"Nought else but blessing from your loving father,

"SAMUEL WESLEY." †

On March 17th, 1726, Wesley was unanimously elected Fellow of Lincoln College. The Fellowship was for natives of Lincoln county, and had been previously held by John Thorold, afterwards Sir John Thorold, who resigned on May 3rd, 1725, but the college had kept the Fellowship vacant. Wesley was admitted on March 28th. The fact that Sir John Thorold was a member of Lincoln College and Wesley's predecessor in this fellowship forms a pleasant link between the itinerant evangelist and the Lincolnshire squire, who preached twice a week, and is

* Whitehead i., 398

† Tyerman, i., 39.

called "our new star of righteousness" in the correspondence of the day.* Sir John Thorold wrote three theological treatises, which bear witness to the profound interest he felt in all religious questions. He was the great-grandfather of the present Bishops of Rochester and Nottingham (Dr. Thorold and Dr. Trollope).

Wesley's father wrote him a letter, addressed "Dear Mr. Fellow-Elect of Lincoln," enclosing a bill for twelve pounds on Dr. Morley, which he had paid to the Rector's use at Gainsborough, near which town Dr. Morley held the living of Scotton. "You are inexpressibly obliged to that generous man," he says. The expenses connected with the election had greatly taxed Samuel Wesley. He had not much more than five pounds to keep his family from the end of March till after harvest. "What will be my own fate God knows. *Sed passi graviora*" ("But we have suffered heavier troubles"). "Whatever I am, my Jack is Fellow of Lincoln."† John's letter to his brother Samuel shows how timely his father's unexpected help had been. All his debts were paid, the expenses of his "treat" defrayed, and he had still above ten pounds in hand. If he could get leave to stay in the country till his college allowance commenced, he felt that this money would meet all claims upon him.‡

Wesley's first impressions of his new college were very favourable. "I never knew a college besides ours whereof the members were so perfectly well satisfied with one another, and so inoffensive to the other part of the University. All I have yet seen of the fellows are both well-natured and well-bred; men admirably disposed as well to preserve peace and good neighbourhood among

* Mrs. Delaney's Letters, ii., 8.

† "Life and Times of S. Wesley," p. 399. ‡ Works, xii., 17

themselves, as to promote it wherever else they have any acquaintance." *

How thoroughly economical he was another letter shows.† He wore his hair remarkably long, and flowing loose upon his shoulders.‡ His mother urged him to have it cut for the sake of his health. He thought that it might improve his complexion and appearance to do so, but these were not sufficiently strong reasons to make him incur an expense of two or three pounds a year. In this letter occurs the famous sentence which henceforth became Wesley's motto, "Leisure and I have taken leave of one another. I propose to be busy as long as I live, if my health is so long indulged me."

Charles Wesley came up to Christ Church in 1726, soon after John's removal from that college to Lincoln. His father had been so much pressed by the efforts made for John that he did not expect that he could do anything for Charles when he went up to the University, though he afterwards promised to give him ten pounds a year.§ John and Samuel seem to have carefully considered what Charles could do to lighten his expenses. Mr. Sherman, John's tutor, suggested that his brother might let his room in Christ Church and take a garret in Peckwater, so as to gain about six pounds a year, but John did not approve of this suggestion. Charles, however, was better off than his brother had been. He came up from Westminster, anxious to enjoy himself, and when John spoke to him about religion would answer warmly, "What, would you have me to be a saint all at once?" and would hear no more.

In April, 1726, Wesley obtained leave of absence from

* Works, xii., 17. † Priestley, p. 8. ‡ Whitehead, i., 436.
§ Stevenson, "Wesley Family," p. 127.

the University, and spent the summer in Lincolnshire. He generally read prayers and preached twice every Sunday, besides assisting his father in parish work. He steadily kept up his own studies, and had many opportunities of conversation with his father and mother on religious subjects and matters of general interest, which, with his own reflections, are carefully noted in his diary.* He still cultivated the muse. He had sent two pieces of his poetry to his brother Samuel in March.† Whilst at Epworth he began a paraphrase on Psalm civ., which gives abundant evidence of his vigour of thought and power of versification. His mother gave him some judicious advice about this time, which he carefully followed. "I would not have you leave off making verses; rather make poetry your diversion, though never your business." ‡

On October 21st, 1726, the young Fellow returned to Oxford. His description of Lincoln College shows how congenial were his new surroundings. Dr. Morley was his friend, and the twelve Fellows formed a pleasant little society. "Wesley's room," with a vine creeping round the window, known as "Wesley's vine," is still pointed out to visitors.§ His reputation as a scholar and a man of literary taste was now established in the University. On November 6th he was chosen Greek lecturer and moderator of the classes. Dr. Whitehead says that his skill in logic was universally known and admired.‖ He proceeded Master of Arts on February 14th, 1727, and acquired considerable reputation in his disputation for his degree. He told Henry Moore that he delivered three lectures on the occasion, one on natural philosophy, entitled, "De

* Whitehead, i., 403. † Works, xii., 17.
Whitehead, i., 407. § Tyerman, i., 45. ‖ Vol. i., 403

Anima Brutorum;" one on moral philosophy, "De Julio Cesare;" a third on religion, "De Amore Dei."*

The Rev. Andrew Clarke, of Lincoln College, has kindly supplied the following particulars of Wesley's connection with that college.† On May 6th, 1726, he was nominated by the Sub-rector to preach the sermon at St. Michael's Church on St. Michael's Day, which was always delivered by one of the Fellows. Wesley was nominated again in 1732. He was appointed Claviger (or keeper of one of the three keys of the treasury) on November 6th, 1726, and again in 1731, each time for a twelvemonth. From 1726 to 1730 he was lecturer in logic; from 1726 to 1728, and again from 1729 to 1734, lecturer in Greek; from 1730 to 1735, lecturer in philosophy. All these appointments date from November 6th. On May 6th in three different years,—1737, 1743, and 1749,—Wesley was nominated by the Sub-rector to preach the sermon by a Fellow in All Saints' Church, on the dedication festival of that church. In 1731, 1737, and 1743, he was chosen, with another Fellow, to preach the Lent Sermons at Combe Lingu, Oxon. In 1737 Wesley was in Georgia, but the sermons might be preached by a substitute. The Pocket Guide for Oxford in 1747 says that Lincoln College had its Rector, twelve Fellows, nine scholars, twenty exhibitioners, and about seventy other students.

* Moore, i., 144.

† When Wesley entered Lincoln College, Dr. Morley was Rector, John Brereton, afterwards Rector of Great Leighs, Essex, Senior Fellow and Sub-rector for the year. The other Fellows were Dr. W. Lupton (Prebendary of Durham; died December 13th, 1726), Knightly Adams (afterwards Rector of Great Leighs), William Vesey (Chaplain of St. Michael's, Oxford), Thomas Vaughan, John Tottenham, Euseby Isham (Rector 1731—

After taking his Master's degree Wesley felt that his time was more at his own disposal. Hitherto the University curriculum had been the guide of his studies. Now he was able to follow the plan of work which he had marked out for himself. He had fully come over to his mother's opinion that there were many truths that it was not worth while to know. He even laid aside a controversy between Bishop Hoadly and Bishop Atterbury when he had reached the middle of it. "I thought the labour of twenty or thirty hours, if I was sure of succeeding, which I was not, would be but ill rewarded by that important

1755), Richard Hutchins (Rector 1755—1781. "The college never had a better Rector in its history, and few of its benefactors have been more munificent"), Michael Robinson (Chaplain of All Saints', Oxford, Rector of Great Leighs), Benjamin Mangey (died 1730), Charles Dymoke, John Wesley.

The Fellows of Lincoln were required to take orders within a year, and to secure their B.D. degree within seven years after they became M.A. Wesley escaped the obligation to proceed as Bachelor of Divinity. John Crosby, treasurer of Lincoln Cathedral in 1476, founded a fellowship which required its holder to study canon law and take a degree in that faculty. After the Reformation the degree in civil law took its place. When a Fellow found it inconvenient to take his B.D. he was elected to this canonist fellowship, which he held till he had taken his B.D. After Dr. Morley vacated this, in 1703, eight other Fellows had held it from three to five years each. On July 13th, 1736, when in Georgia, Wesley was elected to it. He would not give it up, as he did not wish to take his B.D., and held it till 1751. The result was that he was the junior in college standing of all Fellows who took the degree. These facts explain Wesley's inquiry on June 18th, 1741, about "the exercises previous to the degree of Bachelor in Divinity."

Though admitted Fellow on March 28th, 1726, Wesley, according to custom, received nothing for half a year. On September 28th, his first "commons" was paid. This was 1*s.* 4*d.* per week when in residence. In 1731 and 1732 he received

piece of knowledge whether Bishop Hoadly had understood Bishop Atterbury or no."*

A letter from one of the Fellows of Lincoln College at the close of 1727 may show in what high esteem Wesley was held in his college. Mr. Fenton had a perpetual curacy, which kept him from Oxford, so that he had not seen Wesley.

"LINCOLN COLLEGE, *December 28th*, 1727.

"SIR,—Yesterday I had the satisfaction of receiving your kind and obliging letter, whereby you have given me a singular instance of that goodness and civility which is essential to your character, and strongly confirmed to me the many encomiums which are given you in this respect by all who have the happiness to know you. This makes me infinitely desirous of your acquaintance. And when I consider those shining qualities which I hear daily mentioned in your praise, I cannot but lament the great misfortune we all suffer in the absence of so agreeable a person from the college. But I please myself with the thoughts of seeing you here on Chapter-day, and of the happiness we shall have in your company in the summer. In the

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£2 15*s.* 4*d.* from this source; in 1735, £1 9*s.* 4*d.*; in 1739, 8*s.*; in 1740, 4*s.* 8*d.* From obits, allowances of 1*s.*, 8*d.*, or 6*d.* given to all Fellows in residence on the anniversary of the death of eleven college benefactors, Wesley received an average of 7*s.* 8*d.* in the years before he went to Georgia, the maximum attainable being 9*s.* 4*d.* a year. In 1740 he had 6*d.*

The "buttery" books, in which charges for beer, bread, butter, and cheese appear, show that Wesley's expenses for such articles were much the same as those of the other resident Fellows, and rather smaller than those of many of the undergraduates. The charges against him vary from 2*s.* 3*d.* to 13*s.* 3*d.* a week in items from a farthing upwards.

Works. xii., 9.

meantime, I return you my most sincere thanks for this favour, and assure you, that if it should ever lie in my power to serve you, no one will be more ready to do it than, sir,

"Your most obliged and most humble servant,

"LEW. FENTON." *

Wesley had fixed hours of work in the morning and afternoon, and never suffered himself to deviate from the plan he had laid down. Monday and Tuesday were thus devoted to the Greek and Latin classics; Wednesday to logic and ethics; Thursday to Hebrew and Arabic; Friday to metaphysics and natural philosophy; Saturday to oratory and poetry, chiefly composing; Sunday to divinity. At intervals he studied French, which he had begun to learn two or three years before, and read a great number of modern books on all subjects. He first read an author regularly through; then, on a second perusal of the book, he transcribed the important or striking passages. Euclid, Keil, Gravesande, Sir Isaac Newton, and other mathematical writers, whose works he weighed with great care, are mentioned in his diary. He also sometimes amused himself with experiments in optics.†

Wesley's removal from Christ Church to Lincoln had one happy result. As soon as he determined to become a real Christian, not merely a nominal one, he found that his acquaintance were as ignorant of God as himself; but whilst he was aware of his ignorance, they were not aware of theirs. He tried to help them, but without success. "Meantime," he says, "I found, by sad experience, that even their harmless conversation, so called, damped all my good resolutions. I saw no possible way of getting rid of them, unless it should please God to remove me to

* Whitehead, i., 414. † *Ibid.*, i., 411.

another college. He did so, in a manner contrary to all human expectation. I was elected Fellow of a college where I knew not one person." He was aware that many would call upon him for various reasons, but he had made up his mind to have no chance acquaintance. He narrowly observed the temper and behaviour of all who came, and determined that he would only cultivate the friendship of those who were likely to lead him on the way to heaven. He did not return the visits of those who were not of this spirit. Such people, therefore, gradually left him to himself. When he wrote this account he said that this had been his invariable rule for about threescore years.*

Wesley behaved as courteously as he could, but he was determined both to redeem the time and save his own soul. On March 19th, 1727, he tells his mother that the conversation of one or two friends, of whom he should always speak with gratitude, had first taken away his relish for most other pleasures. He had now begun to lose his love for company—"the most elegant entertainment next to books,"—so that, unless the persons had a religious turn of thought, he felt much better pleased without them. He was inclined to prefer some more retired position than he had at Oxford, where he might fix his habits of mind "before the flexibility of youth was over." A school in Yorkshire had lately been offered him, with a good salary. What charmed him most, however, was the description of the place which some gentlemen had given him the previous day. It lay in a little valley, so hemmed in by hills that it was scarcely accessible. There was no company in the school, and scarcely any outside. This account, which his visitors thought would

* Works, vi., 473.

put such a post out of the question, strongly attracted Wesley. He adds, "I am full of business, but have found a way to write without taking any time from that. It is but rising an hour sooner in the morning, and going into company an hour later in the evening, both which may be done without any inconvenience."*

About this time, probably in 1728, he began that system of early rising which he continued till the end of his life. He used to awake every night about twelve or one, and remain awake some time. He felt convinced that he lay longer in bed than nature required, and procured an alarum which awoke him at seven next morning, nearly an hour earlier than the previous day. He still lay awake as usual. Next morning he rose at six, with the same result. The following night he set his alarum for five, but he awoke as before. The fourth day he rose at four, and slept all through the night. He could say, after sixty years, that he still rose at four o'clock, and that, taking the year round, he did not lie awake a quarter of an hour together in a month.† It must be remembered that in later years, after a long, wearisome ride on a hot day, Wesley would lie down and sleep for ten or fifteen minutes. He would then rise refreshed for his work. He never could bear to sleep on a soft bed.‡

On August 4th, 1727, he left Oxford to assist his father, who held the small living of Wroote in addition to that of Epworth, and found it difficult to pay a curate or to get one to his mind. He had been anxious for some time to have his son with him. Wesley's principal work lay at Wroote, whilst his father stayed at Epworth, but they seem to have made occasional changes. Wesley went to Westminster to visit his brother Samuel on August 4th;

* Works, xii., 11. † *Ibid.*, vii., 69. ‡ Whitehead, ii., 471.

then he set out for Lincolnshire, where he acted as his father's curate until November, 1729.

Wroote was a little village surrounded by bogs, about five miles from Epworth. The Wesleys seem to have lived there from 1725 until John Wesley came over to help his father. The road between Epworth and Wroote was so rough that Samuel Wesley felt that his son could not get from one place to the other without hazarding his health or life.* The journey had to be made by boat. It was impossible to go afoot or on horseback, because the waters were out in the Fen Country. The boat took them as far as Scawsit Bridge; then they walked across the Common to Epworth. It was by no means a pleasant passage. The water washing over the side of the boat laid up the Rector in June, 1727, just before John Wesley came home to help him. During one of these journeys, in 1728, he also had a narrow escape from drowning. The boat was driven by the fierce stream and wind against another craft, and filled with water.† The church at Wroote was a small brick building; the parishioners were unpolished and heavy.‡ They appear in singularly unattractive colours in some lines written by Wesley's clever sister Hetty:—

> High births and virtue equally they scorn,
> As asses dull, on dunghills born;
> Impervious as the stones their heads are found,
> Their rage and hatred steadfast as the ground.§

From its inaccessible position through bogs and floods the place had been called "Wroote-out-of-England." The rude country folk still treasured up the strange stories about William of Lindholme, the hermit, known as a wizard in league with the evil one.

* Stevenson's "Wesley Family," 127. † *Ibid.*, i., 129.
‡ Tyerman, i., 58. § "Oxford Methodists," 378.

Wesley's work at Wroote had not much immediate fruit. It is included in his description, "From the year 1725 to 1729 I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labour. Indeed, it could not be that I should; for I neither laid the foundation of repentance, nor of believing the Gospel; taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance."*

He made several visits to Oxford during these two years of parish life. In October, 1727, though suffering from the ague, which was endemic in that part of Lincolnshire, he went up to the University. This journey seems to have been made on election business, at the request of the Rector of Lincoln College, of whose kindness he entertained such a lively sense that he used to say, "I can refuse Dr. Morley nothing." We find one other reference to this friend. At the end of January, 1751, at the pressing request of Dr. Isham, then Rector of Lincoln College, Wesley went to Oxford to vote for a member of Parliament. The candidate for whom he voted was not elected, but he did not regret his journey. "I owe much more than this to that generous, friendly man, who now rests from his labour."† He travelled on horseback, and spent ten days at his college. The journey was painful, as his ague often made him feel very ill on the road. On July 27th, 1728, he went up to the University by way of London, and was ordained priest by Dr. Potter, who had himself been a Fellow of Lincoln. Next year, on June 16th, he spent about two months at Oxford, where he found the little Society of Methodists already meeting together under the leadership of his brother Charles.

John Wesley's life at Wroote was the only experience

* Works, viii., 468. † Whitehead, i., 413; Works, viii., 226.

he had as an English parish clergyman.* On April 13th, 1759, he called on Mr. Romley, of Burton, near Epworth, one of his former parishioners, a lively, sensible man, eighty-three years old, by whom, he says, "I was much comforted."† In September, 1767, after Wesley had preached in the riding-school at Northampton, to a large and deeply serious congregation, he mentions that a lady, who had been one of his parishioners at Epworth nearly forty years before, waited on him. He took tea at her house next day.

The quiet life at Wroote was broken in upon by a letter from Dr. Morley, dated October 21st, 1729. He told Wesley that it was felt necessary, in order to discipline and good government, that the junior Fellows who were chosen Moderators should personally attend to the duties of their office unless they could get some other Fellow to preside for them. Mr. Hutchins had been kind enough to promise to take Mr. Fenton's place, so that he might not be compelled to give up his perpetual curacy; Mr. Robinson would have supplied Wesley's, but he had to serve two cures fourteen miles distant from Oxford, and the roads for ten miles at least were as bad as those around Epworth. "We hope," says the Rector, "it may be as much for your advantage to reside at college as where you are, if you take pupils, or can get a curacy in the neighbourhood of Oxon. Your father may certainly have another curate, though not so much to his satisfaction; yet we are persuaded that this will not move him to hinder your return to college, since the interest of college and obligation to statute requires it." This letter brought Wesley back to Oxford, to become the head of the Methodist movement in the University.

* His curacy near Oxford was scarcely parish work.

† Works, ii., 473.

CHAPTER V.

OXFORD METHODISM.

WESLEY returned to Oxford on November 22nd, 1729. Dr. Morley's letter had suggested that he might take pupils or a curacy. He himself put eleven pupils under Wesley's care immediately after his return, and in this work he continued until his mission to Georgia. Dr. Morley died on June 12th, 1731, and was succeeded by Dr. Isham on July 9th. The journal for 1776* shows what a zealous tutor Wesley was. "In the English colleges," he says, "every one may reside all the year, as all my pupils did; and I should have thought myself little better than a highwayman if I had not lectured them every day in the year but Sundays." In later years he sometimes read lectures to his preachers on theology, logic, and rhetoric, in much the same manner as with his pupils at the University. As a tutor he was singularly diligent and careful, and laboured earnestly to make those under his charge both scholars and Christians.†

It will have been observed that Wesley was called to Oxford to preside at Moderations. Public disputation formed a large part in the University training of those days. The Moderator was the chairman and arbitrator at such discussions. At Lincoln College these exercises were held every day, so that the junior Fellow gained a

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* Works, iv., 77. † *Ibid.*, i., 417.

thorough grasp of all the niceties of formal logic, which proved invaluable to him amid the heated and often captious controversies of later days. He gratefully refers to this training in a well-known passage of his works. "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 discerning and 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 call 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."*

Such was Wesley's life during the last six years he spent at Oxford. But the surpassing interest of these years is found in the rise of Methodism in the University. We have seen that Charles Wesley, who had come up from Westminster School in 1726, spent his first year in diversion, and rebuffed his brother when he spoke to him about religion. Whilst John was at Wroote, however, Charles became more serious. He had devoted himself to study, and soon found that diligence led him to seriousness. In the beginning of the year 1729 he wrote to consult John about keeping a diary, and expressed his conviction that, though at present he was deprived of his brother's company and assistance, yet he was persuaded that it was through his means that God would establish the work He had begun. In May, 1729, on the eve of John's visit to Oxford, Charles tells him of a modest, humble, well-disposed youth who had fallen into vile hands. Charles had been able to rescue

* Works, x., 353.

him, and the friends now took the Sacrament together every week. He felt the need of help himself. "I earnestly long for and desire the blessing God is about to send me in you. I am sensible *this* is my day of grace, and that upon my employing the time before our next meeting and next parting will in great measure depend my condition for eternity."*

John Wesley came in June and spent two months with his brother. During his stay he passed almost every evening with the little Society which had gathered round Charles. The call from Dr. Morley must have given no small pleasure to these friends. Charles Wesley, who was nearly twenty-two, had taken his degree, and become a college tutor. He was now fairly launched, as his father reminded him in an affectionate letter written in January, 1730. Beside the Wesleys, William Morgan, a commoner of Christ Church, and Robert Kirkham, of Merton, seem to have been the principal members of this little Society. When Wesley came to Oxford he was at once recognised as their head. Gambold, who was introduced to him a few months after his return, and who joined the Methodists, says, "Mr. John Wesley was always the chief manager, for which he was very fit; for he not only had more learning and experience than the rest, but he was blest with such activity as to be always gaining ground, and such steadiness that he lost none. What proposals he made to any were sure to charm them, because they saw him always the same. What supported this uniform vigour was the care he took to consider well of every affair before he engaged in it, making all his decisions in the fear of God, without passion, humour, or self-confidence; for though he had naturally a

* Jackson, "Charles Wesley," i., 15.

very clear apprehension, yet his exact prudence depended more on humanity and singleness of heart. To this I may add that he had, I think, something of authority in his countenance, though, as he did not want address, he could soften his manner, and point it as occasion required. Yet he never assumed anything to himself above his companions. Any of them might speak their mind, and their words were as strictly regarded by him as his were by them."

The name of "Methodists" was given to the friends before John Wesley came into residence.* A young gentleman of Christ Church, struck with the exact regularity of their lives and studies, said, "Here is a new sect of Methodists sprung up." In December, 1730, Wesley tells his parents, that he expected the following night to be in company "with the gentleman who did us the honour to take the first notice of our Society. I have terrible reasons to think he is as slenderly provided with humanity as with sense and learning. However, I must not let slip this opportunity, because he is at present in some distress, occasioned by his being about to dispute in the schools on Monday, though he is not furnished with such arguments as he wants. I intend, if he has not procured them before, to help him to some arguments that I may at least remove that prejudice from him, 'that we are friends to none but those who are as queer as ourselves.'" † The name "Methodist" was quaint, and not inappropriate. The members of the little Society were soon known by it throughout the University. The title was not new. It was used to describe an ancient school of physicians who thought that all diseases

* Whitehead, i., 420.

† Miss Wedgwood, "John Wesley," p. 57.

might be cured by a specific method of diet and exercise. In 1639, there is a reference in a sermon preached at Lambeth to "plain packstaff Methodists," who despised all rhetoric.* About forty years before it found its most famous application it was given to Dr. Williams and other Nonconformist divines to describe their views on the method of man's justification before God.† "Methodist" was not the only name given to the Society. The Reforming Club, the Godly Club, the Holy Club, Sacramentarians, Bible Moths, Supererogation men, and Enthusiasts were all in use.‡ John Wesley was called the Curator, or Father of the Holy Club.§

At first the four friends met every Sunday evening, then two evenings a week were passed together, and at last every evening from six to nine. They began their meetings with prayer, studied the Greek Testament and the classics, reviewed the work of the past day, and talked over their plans for the morrow. They met either in John Wesley's room, or in that of some other member of the Society. After prayers, the chief subject of which was charity,‖ they had supper together, and John Wesley read some book. On Sunday evening they read divinity. They fasted on Wednesday and Friday, and received the Lord's Supper every week, coming to Christ Church when the Sacrament was not given in their own colleges A system of self-examination brought all their conduct under searching review. On Sunday they examined themselves as to the "Love of God and simplicity," on Monday on "Love of Man." A glance at the entire

* Crowther.

† Other instances of the use of the word in 1706 and 1741 will be found in Thomas Jackson's Life of Charles Wesley, i., 18.

‡ Jackson, i., 29. § Works, i., 12, 13. ‖ Gambold's letter.

scheme will show how carefully the Oxford Methodists sought to order their lives. They studied to do the will of God in all things, to pray with fervour, to use ejaculations or hourly prayers for humility, faith, hope, love, and the particular virtue they set themselves to seek each day. The members repeated a collect at nine, twelve, and three, and had their stated times for meditation and private prayer. The "Love of Man" led them to inquire whether they had been zealous in doing good, had persuaded all they could to attend the means of grace and to observe the laws of the Church and the University, or had shown all kindness and used all prayer for those around them.

The 24th of August, 1730, was a memorable day for the little Society. Up to this time they had quietly pursued their studies and their devotional exercises, doing all the good that lay in their power. Now they entered upon that work of charity which was to bear such blessed fruit. Mr. Morgan, the son of a gentleman in Dublin, led the way. He had visited a man lying at the jail under sentence of death for the murder of his wife, and had spoken to one of the debtors there. What he saw convinced him that much good might be done by any one who would take pains to teach the prisoners. He spoke so often of this that John and Charles Wesley went with him to the Castle. They now agreed to visit there once or twice a week. Morgan also led the way in the visiting of the sick. The friends were soon busy enough. They resolved to spend an hour or two a week in looking after the sick, provided that the minister of the parish in which any of these lived should not be opposed to it.

John Wesley wrote his father an account of their work, asking his counsel, that nothing might be done rashly. On September 21st, 1730, he replied, "And now, as to

your own designs and employments, what can I say less of them than *valde probo;* and that I have the highest reason to bless God that He has given me two sons together at Oxford, to whom He has given grace and courage to turn the war against the world and the devil, which is the best way to conquer them?" He expresses his satisfaction that they had such a friend as Mr. Morgan to break the ice for them, and says that he must adopt him as his own son. "Go on then," he adds, "in God's name, in the path to which your Saviour hath directed you, and that track wherein your father has gone before you! For when I was an undergraduate at Oxford I visited those in the Castle there, and reflect on it with great satisfaction to this day. Walk as prudently as you can, though not fearfully, and my heart and prayers are with you."

His father advised them to lay their plans before any clergyman who had the oversight of the prisoners. In obedience to this advice, Wesley waited upon Mr. Gerrard, the Bishop of Oxford's chaplain, who had the spiritual care of any condemned prisoners. He heartily approved of their visits and of John Wesley's intention of preaching at the prison once a month. Soon afterwards he also communicated to them the Bishop's satisfaction with their work. Thus encouraged, they laboured with fresh zeal. Their numbers did not grow fast. A year after John Wesley's return to Oxford there were only five members in the Holy Club. Some, no doubt, had joined them and withdrawn. Mr. Kirkham, of Merton, reported to his friends that he was much rallied for his connection with them, and that the Club had become a common subject of mirth at his college. So far were the young Methodists from any desire to offend the prejudices of the University that Wesley at once wrote to his father for further advice.

Never does the father of the Wesleys appear to greater advantage than in the counsels which he gave. "I question," he says on December 1st, 1730, "whether a mortal can arrive to a greater degree of perfection than steadily to do good, and for that very reason patiently and meekly to suffer evil. Bear no more sail than is necessary, but steer steady." The outcry still continued. The young Methodists quietly asked both friends and opponents whether it did not concern all men to imitate Him who went about doing good. If so, had they not a clear call to visit the poor, the sick, and the prisoners that they might do them all the good that lay in their power? Mr. Gerrard, the Bishop's chaplain, formed a high estimate of Wesley. He told George Lascelles, who was an opponent of the Methodists, that Wesley "would one day be a standard-bearer of the Cross, either in his own country or beyond the seas."* A Miss Potter, probably the daughter of the Bishop of Oxford, read with Wesley, and was under the influence of Oxford Methodism for a time.†

To their deep sorrow, Morgan went home to Ireland in consumption. This devoted young man, who had "broken the ice" for the Wesleys, and led them to engage in those works of charity which they delighted to fulfil for nearly sixty years, died in peace on August 26th, 1732. "He kept several children at school, and when he found beggars in the street he would bring them into his chambers and talk to them." Mr. Gambold, who gives these particulars, joined the little Society about six months before his death, and was greatly impressed by "his calm and resigned behaviour, hardly curbing in a confident joy in God." Samuel Wesley, jun.,‡ wrote

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1832, p. 793.
† *Wesleyan Times*, October 1st, 1866.
‡ Moore, i., 192.

some "In Memoriam" verses, which beautifully describe his zeal and devotion :—

> No fair occasion glides unheeded by;
> Snatching the golden moments as they fly,
> He, by few fleeting hours, ensures eternity.*

Morgan died early, but his care for the poor and for the prisoner was the legacy which he left to his friends the Oxford Methodists. His impress is thus stamped on every page of Methodism. Robert Kirkham, son of a Gloucestershire clergyman, left Oxford to become his uncle's curate in 1731. The Wesleys were now the only members of the first group. But others were added to the circle. John Gambold, afterwards a Moravian bishop, had come up to Oxford from the country determined to find some religious friend. One day an old acquaintance entertained him with some sketch of the whimsical Mr. Charles Wesley. This account had a different effect from that which was intended. Gambold began to think that Charles Wesley might be a good Christian. He at once went to his room, and became his fast friend. He was afterwards introduced to John Wesley, and cast in his lot with the despised Methodists. Benjamin Ingham, their companion in the mission to Georgia, joined them in the year Morgan died. Thomas Broughton, afterwards secretary of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, became a member of the Society the same year. John Clayton was added to their number in the spring of 1732. Mr. Rivington, the bookseller, had mentioned him to the two Wesleys when they called at his shop in London, seven or eight months before, but they did not make his acquaintance till Clayton met John Wesley in the street, and introduced himself, giving Mr. Rivington's

* John Wesley's Works, i., 15.

"service." Clayton first suggested that the friends should observe the fasts of the Church, a suggestion they at once adopted. James Hervey, whose works once enjoyed such popularity, joined the brotherhood somewhat later than Clayton. Two or three pupils of Wesley and Clayton and one of Charles Wesley's also became members of the Society.

The most important addition was made on the eve of the mission to Georgia. George Whitefield had come up to Oxford strongly prepossessed in favour of the Methodists. He greatly admired their devotion, and wished to join them, but no opportunity offered. At last, hearing that a poor woman in one of the workhouses had attempted to cut her throat, he sent the news to Charles Wesley. The messenger, an old apple-woman, was strictly charged not to mention his name, but happily she did not observe her instructions. Charles Wesley at once invited Whitefield to breakfast with him next morning. In this remarkable way that life-long friendship commenced which contributed so greatly to the Evangelical Revival. Whitefield joined the Society, and soon won a convert of his own. He gives* an interesting sketch of the circumstances which kept down the numbers of the Oxford Methodists. Some fell away in time of temptation; others were turned aside by the displeasure of a tutor or the head of a college; whilst the "change of gown" consequent on a higher degree, and the fear of reproach, led many more to forsake the little company.

No sketch of the Oxford Methodists would be complete without some reference to Wesley's self-denying charity. The members of the Holy Club were accustomed to give away each year whatever remained after they had made

* Jackson's "C. Wesley," i., 25

provision for their own necessities. Many friends also contributed every quarter to their relief fund. This was employed to release those confined for small debts, or to purchase books, medicine, and other things needed for their work. When they found any poor family that deserved help, they saw them at least once a week, sometimes gave them money, read to them, and examined their children.

Wesley was foremost in all this good work. "I abridged myself," he says, "of all superfluities, and many that are called necessaries of life." * This self-denial was practised at a time when he was far from robust. His brother Samuel, who visited Oxford in the spring of 1732, afterwards wrote a poetical epistle, in which he asks :—

> Does John seem bent beyond his strength to go,
> To his frail carcase literally foe,
> Lavish of health, as if in haste to die,
> And shorten time, t' ensure eternity? †

When he had an income of thirty pounds a year he lived on twenty-eight, and gave away two. Next year he received sixty pounds, and gave thirty-two in charity. By limiting his expenses to the same sum, he was able to give away sixty-two pounds the third year, and ninety-two the fourth. One cold winter's day a young girl, one of those whom the Methodists maintained at school, came to his room. He noticed her thin linen gown and her half-starved look, and inquired if she had no clothes more suitable for winter wear. When he learned that she had not, he put his hand in his pocket, but found that he had scarcely any money. Immediately he thought, "Will thy Master say, 'Well done, good and faithful

* Works, i., 99. † *Ibid.*, viii., 228. ‡ *Ibid.*, vii., 36.

steward? Thou hast adorned thy walls with the money which might have screened this poor creature from the cold! Oh, justice! Oh, mercy! Are not these pictures the blood of this poor creature'?"* By denying himself, Wesley was able to pay the mistress and clothe some, if not all, of the children.† There were about twenty scholars. Wesley's journal for October, 1739, shows how deeply he regretted that this useful work had afterwards been given up because there was no one to support it.

The fidelity and care with which the friends carried on their prison work is shown by a letter from Mr. Clayton to Wesley, who was then in London. It is dated August 1st, 1732. The prisoners in "Bocardo," a debtors jail above the north gate of the city, had done nothing but quarrel since Wesley left Oxford. Those in the Castle were more hopeful. The Methodists set those prisoners who were more advanced to teach the rest. All could now read tolerably well save two, one of whom read moderately; the other, a horse-stealer, knew his letters, and could spell most of the monosyllables. Two boys could say the Catechism to the end of the Commandments, and could repeat the morning and evening prayer in "Ken's Manual." Clayton had watched over the school, as well as the prison, and had obtained leave to visit St. Thomas' Workhouse twice a week. The letter mentions the prisoners by name, and shows how intimately the particulars of each case were understood by these practical philanthropists. They spared no pains to awaken better feeling and to save the prisoners from any relapse into their old habits.

Wesley's life during the last six years at Oxford was

* Works, vii., 21.

† Gambold. See Whitehead's "Wesley."

devoted to his work as a tutor and to his labours of love in connection with the Oxford Methodists. For a few months in the early part of 1730 he held a curacy eight miles from Oxford, for which he received a salary at the rate of thirty pounds a year. He was the more willing to accept this duty because it enabled him to keep his horse, which he began to fear that he must part with.* In 1731 he and Charles began to converse in Latin. They afterwards found the facility thus acquired of great advantage in their intercourse with the Moravians. The habit was kept up to the end of their lives. During the spring of this year the brothers walked over to Epworth, where they stayed three weeks, and then returned on foot to Oxford. This visit taught them that four or five-and-twenty miles was an easy and safe day's journey in hot weather as well as cold, and that it was easy to read as they walked for ten or twelve miles without feeling faint or weary.† Mr. Kirkham assured them, on the word of a priest and a physician, that if they would take the same medicine once or twice a year, they would never need any other to save them from their family gout. They felt in every way stronger for their journey. "The motion and sun together, in our last hundred and fifty miles' walk, so thoroughly carried off all our superfluous humours, that we continue perfectly in health, though it has been a very sickly season."

Wesley was in London in 1731, and again in the summer of 1732, when he was chosen a member of the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. During the latter visit he went over to Putney to see William Law, then tutor to young Mr. Gibbon, the

* *Wesleyan Times*, May 12th, 1766.

† Works, xii., 6, 11.

father of the historian. Law's books, which Wesley met with after he became Fellow of Lincoln, had produced a profound impression on his mind. By Law's advice, he now began to read the "Theologia Germanica," and other Mystic books. He admired these writings, but escaped the snare of Mysticism, and gave up reading such works even before he went to Georgia. He soon saw, in fact, that practical religion was impossible for those who lived in the dreamland of Mysticism. The Mystic writers made good works appear mean and insipid to him. He never resigned himself entirely to this quietism, nor felt able to omit what God enjoined; but yet, he wrote, as he was returning from Georgia, "I know not how, I fluctuated between obedience and disobedience. I had no heart, no vigour, no zeal in obeying, continually doubting whether I was right or wrong, and never out of perplexities and entanglements. Nor can I at this hour give a distinct account how I came back a little toward the right way; only my present sense is this—all the other enemies of Christianity are triflers; the Mystics are the most dangerous; they stab it in the vitals, and its serious professors are most likely to fall by them."* In 1733 he was at Epworth twice. In the January visit his horse fell over a bridge not far from Daventry, and Wesley had a narrow escape of his life. In May he spent a Sunday with his friend Clayton, in Manchester, and then went on to see his father.

The way in which Wesley laid himself out to help his pupils may be seen in the excellent counsels on reading which he gave to one of them. "You, who have not the assurance of a day to live, are not wise if you waste a moment. The shortest way to knowledge seems

* On January 25th, 1738 (Whitehead, ii., 57).

to be this: 1. To ascertain what knowledge you desire to attain. 2. To read no book which does not in some way tend to the attainment of that knowledge. 3. To read no book which does tend to the attainment of it, unless it be the best in its kind. 4. To finish one before you begin another. 5. To read them all in such order that every subsequent book may illustrate and confirm the preceding." * He also wrote a sermon for his pupils on the duty of receiving the Lord's Supper as frequently as possible.†

The sermons which he preached before the University in 1733 and 1734 deserve notice. Of the first, on "The Circumcision of the Heart," he said in 1765 ‡ that it contained all that he then thought concerning salvation from all sin, and loving God with an undivided heart. The sermon in 1734 Charles Wesley describes as his brother's "Jacobite sermon," for which he was "much mauled and threatened more." § Wesley had, however, shown it to the Vice-Chancellor before he preached it, so that he was able to answer all objectors. Nothing further is known about this discourse. But Law and Clayton were both non-jurers, and Wesley may have used some expression which was misconstrued. He had already become an itinerant preacher. During the year 1734 he travelled more than a thousand miles. He had before learned to read as he walked. He now began the practice of reading on horseback, which made him a well-read man even amid the unceasing toils of later life. So incessant were his labours, and so abstemious his diet, that his health was much affected. His strength was greatly reduced, and he had frequent returns of blood-

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1850, p. 1064. † *Ibid.*, 1787, p. 229.
‡ Works, iii., 213. § Priestley's Letters, p. 15.

spitting. One night in July the hæmorrhage was so serious that it awoke him out of his sleep. The violence of this attack, and the sudden way in which it came on in the darkness, made him cry, "Oh, prepare me for Thy coming, and come when Thou wilt." His friends were greatly alarmed. But by the advice of a physician, joined with proper care and daily exercise, Wesley gradually regained his strength.*

His father's health was fast breaking up. It was evident that he could not long be spared. Anxious discussions were held as to the future of the family. The Rector wished his eldest son to take some steps to secure the next presentation to the living, but Samuel would not listen to the proposal. It was then suggested that John Wesley should become Rector of Epworth. This arrangement would preserve their old home, endeared by nearly forty years of family life.† The Rector had spent much money on rebuilding the Parsonage and improving his glebe. He was, therefore, anxious that it should not pass out of the family. He was solicitous for his parishioners also. He mentions some "mighty Nimrod," the prospect of whose succession was almost enough to bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave. The people had a "great love and longing for John." Considerable pressure was put upon him by his father, and especially by his eldest brother, to persuade him to take the living. But Wesley was clearly convinced that this was not his vocation. He puts the whole matter very forcibly in one letter,‡ "Another can supply my place at Epworth better than at Oxford, and the good done here is of a far more diffusive nature. It is a more extensive benefit to sweeten the fountain than to do the

* Moore, i., 208. † Priestley, p. 50. ‡ Works, xii., 24.

same to particular streams." This was a sufficient answer to all appeals. His work as the head of the Oxford Methodists had been rightly estimated by his father: "I hear my son *John* has the honour of being styled the *Father of the Holy Club;* if it be so, I am sure I must be the grandfather of it; and I need not say that I had rather any of my sons should be so dignified and distinguished, than to have the title of 'His Holiness.'" * In considering the advantages of his position at Oxford, Wesley gives a prominent place to the benefits which he derived from association with friends of kindred spirit. He had no trifling visitors, except about an hour in a month, when he invited some of the Fellows to breakfast. There were the workhouses and prisons to visit, the scholars to watch over; there was neither care nor uncertainty as to his income, and he had a fund of about eighty pounds, which he could use in charitable work. Such arguments for continuing at Oxford are intelligible enough. It is somewhat strange, however, to find the man on whom unbounded responsibility afterwards sat so lightly stating that the care of two thousand souls at Epworth would crush him, and that he would not be able to stand his ground for a single month against intemperance in sleeping, eating, and drinking, or against irregularity in study and general softness and self-indulgence.† Such fears serve to show John Wesley's high ideal of duty. They also prove that the man whose restless itinerancy is the marvel of all readers of the journals sacrificed his own inclinations to devote himself, body and soul, to his evangelistic work. A short time before his father's death, John Wesley seems to

* Whitehead, i., 426. † Works, i., 179.
‡ Priestley, "Letters," 21.

have yielded to the wish of his family about the living at Epworth, but he was not successful in any application he made for it.* Mr. Oglethorpe interested himself in the matter, but without result.

On April 25th, 1735, Samuel Wesley, died at the age of seventy-two. He had exhausted his strength in his efforts to finish his learned treatise on the Book of Job, which was almost through the press at the time of his death. John Wesley had spent some time in London overlooking the printing in 1734, and was able to present a copy to Queen Caroline, to whom it was dedicated, before he sailed for Georgia. John and Charles were by their father's side during his last hours. His mind and heart were at rest. He said to John, "The inward witness, son, the inward witness; this is the proof, the strongest proof, of Christianity." The day before his death he told Charles, "The weaker I am in body the stronger and more sensible support I feel from God." His family gathered round his bed, and showed forth the Lord's death together. The dying man received the Sacrament with difficulty, but soon seemed to revive. John Wesley asked him, "Sir, are you in much pain?" He answered with a smile, "God does chasten me with pain; yea, all my bones with strong pain. But I thank Him for all; I bless Him for all; I love Him for all." He spoke many words of comfort to his family, and often laid his hands upon the head of his son Charles with the exhortation: "Be steady. The Christian faith will surely revive in this kingdom; you shall see it, though I shall not." To his daughter Emily he said, "Do not be concerned at my death; God will then begin to manifest Himself to my family." John Wesley read the Commendatory Prayer by his father's

* Priestley, "Letters," 53.

bed. "Now," said the dying man, "you have done all." Just before sunset he entered into rest. Three days later he was buried "very frugally, yet decently, in the churchyard, according to his own desire." A few months more, and the happy circle at the University was broken up. The devotion which had made the Oxford Methodists instant in all good works was now to pass through a sharp trial in America before it found its highest field in the labours of the Great Revival.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MISSION TO GEORGIA.

ON October 21st, 1735, John and Charles Wesley sailed for Georgia. A charter had been obtained from George II. in June, 1732, creating the narrow strip of country between South Carolina and Florida into a British colony. It lay between the river Savannah on the north and the Alabama on the south, with a coast line of rather more than sixty miles. This territory was vested in twenty-one trustees, of whom Colonel (afterwards General) Oglethorpe was the chief. As a member of Parliament, he had interested himself greatly in the sufferings of small debtors, and had obtained a committee to inquire into the state of the prisons. Many unfortunate debtors were thus released. Oglethorpe's practical sympathy led him to devise some means of support for his new constituency. The colony was thus founded for the benefit of the poor, and he became its governor. Parliament voted £10,000, the Bank of England £10,000, and before long £36,000 was raised to carry out the work.

In February, 1733, one hundred and twenty emigrants, under the care of Oglethorpe, reached the spot where Savannah now stands. A year later, a party of Protestants, driven out from Salzburg, in Germany, because they had renounced popery, settled in the colony where England had offered them an asylum. Some Scotch

Highlanders and Moravians followed. The emigrants with whom the Wesleys sailed were the fifth company that went to find a home in Georgia. Oglethorpe had returned to England after spending a year in the colony, bringing with him some of the Indians of the district, whose visit helped largely to increase public interest in the whole scheme.

Dr. Burton, of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, was one of the trustees for the colony. He was no stranger to the Oxford Methodists, and urged them to undertake a mission to Georgia. Oglethorpe, who had been a friend and correspondent of Samuel Wesley, was also anxious to secure the co-operation of his sons. John Wesley sought advice from his brother Samuel and from William Law. He also went to Manchester to consult his friend Clayton. Thence he travelled to Epworth, to lay his plan before his mother. Her answer was, "Had I twenty sons, I should rejoice if they were all so employed." Wesley therefore expressed his willingness to undertake the mission on September 18th. He was sent out by the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, who allowed him fifty pounds a year. His motives in accepting this mission were a sincere desire to work out his own salvation and a longing to preach Christ to the Indians. He imagined that the pomp and show of the world could have no place in the wilds of America.

Charles Wesley, much against the will of his brother Samuel, accepted the position of secretary to the Governor. He was ordained just on the eve of the voyage. Benjamin Ingham, at John Wesley's express request, accompanied the brothers. Charles Delamotte, the son of a Middlesex magistrate, could not bear to be separated from Wesley. His family were greatly opposed to his going out, but at last granted a reluctant consent. These were the

four friends who sailed in the *Simmonds*.* At Westminster, on Tuesday afternoon, October 14th, they took boat for Gravesend, where their vessel lay. Dr. Burton, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. James Hutton accompanied them. Charles Morgan was the brother of their early friend who had broken the ice for the Wesleys at Oxford, and induced them to visit the prisoners and the sick. It is pleasant to find him filling his brother's place in this farewell scene. Mr. Tyerman says that he and Kirkham, after the Oxford days, "drift away into the great ocean of forgetfulness and leave no trace behind them." Wesley's journals show, however, that he visited Morgan near Dublin in July, 1769. James Hutton had been introduced to the Wesleys at Oxford, whilst there on a visit. He invited the brothers to stay at his father's house in Westminster when they came to town. The Huttons lived in College Street, next door to the house in which Samuel Wesley resided whilst usher of Westminster School. When John Wesley came to London, a sermon he preached led to the conversion of young Hutton and his sister. James Hutton greatly wished to go to Georgia, but his parents were not willing for him to take a step which would interfere so much with his business prospects. Morgan and Hutton remained at Gravesend on Wednesday and Thursday. Each day the friends received the Lord's Supper together.

The *Simmonds* lay for a week at Gravesend after the party went on board. Mr. Oglethorpe thoughtfully assigned them two cabins in the forecastle, in order that they might have more privacy. That which the Wesleys occupied was of good size, so that the four friends could comfortably meet together in it to read and pray. They

* Or *Symond* (F. Moore's "Georgia").

found twenty-six Moravians on board, going out to the colony under the care of David Nitschman, their bishop. As soon as his friends returned to London, John Wesley began to learn German in order to converse with them. The Methodists were now busily employed. They rose at four and went to bed between nine and ten. Every moment of the day was mapped out. The first hour after they rose was given to private prayer; then they read the Scriptures, and compared them with the writings of the primitive Church. Breakfast was ready at seven. Public prayers were at eight. The friends then separated to various studies until noon. John Wesley learnt German. Charles wrote sermons. At twelve they met to pray and devise plans for the good of themselves or their fellow-passengers. Dinner was at one. John Wesley then talked with the passengers about religion until four o'clock, the hour for public prayers. From five to six was spent in retirement. At six, supper was served. John Wesley then read in his cabin to a few of the passengers, and at seven attended the Moravian service. The friends spent another hour together, and then lay down to rest on their mats and blankets. Neither the roaring of the sea nor the motion of the ship could disturb their well-earned rest.* It is evident that the little company of Methodists were as devoted to their work on board ship as at the University.

Besides the crew and the Germans, there were about eighty English passengers on board. The *Simmonds* was a vessel of two hundred and twenty tons, under the command of Captain Joseph Cornish; the other vessel, the *London Merchant*, also chartered by the trustees, was about the same size. Her captain was called John

* Works, I., 18, and "Oxford Methodists,' 68.

Thomas. One of his Majesty's sloops, the *Hawk*, Captain Joseph Gascoigne, which had been ordered to proceed to Georgia for the defence of the colony from the Spaniards, sailed with them, but soon parted company under stress of weather. Mr. Oglethorpe was to have sailed in the *Hawk*, but he preferred to stay with the emigrants. He spared no pains to secure the comfort of his company. When the weather was fine he visited the *London Merchant* to see that all on board were properly cared for. The Methodist party dined at Oglethorpe's table. There were two hundred and twenty-seven passengers in the two ships.*

The vessels were detained at Cowes till December 10th. Charles Wesley, who was known to the clergyman, preached three or four times in the church during the five weeks spent here. At last they were able to set sail with forty vessels that had been becalmed like themselves. Their voyage was a succession of storms. John Wesley, ashamed of his unwillingness to die, asked himself, "How is it thou hast no faith?" The good impression already made on his mind by the humility and devotion of the Moravians was increased by their fearlessness in the tempest. He found that they were delivered from the spirit of fear, as well as from pride, anger, and revenge. Whilst they were singing a psalm the sea broke over the vessel, split the main sail in pieces, and poured in between the decks as if the great deep had already swallowed them up. The Germans calmly sang on. Even the women and children were not afraid to die. Their spirit made the deeper impression on Wesley because the English passengers were trembling and screaming with terror. It was too good an opportunity to be lost. He went about

* F. Moore's "Voyage to Georgia."

among his own countrymen trying to show them the difference between him that feareth God and him that feareth Him not.

On the 5th of February, 1736, the *Simmonds* sailed into the Savannah river. Next morning, at eight, the emigrants set foot on American soil. Wesley and his friends knelt down with the Governor to thank God for their safety amid all the perils of the sea. Mr. Oglethorpe then took boat for Savannah, leaving the emigrants to assemble on shore and await his return. Next day he was with them again. Mr. Spangenberg, a Moravian minister from Savannah, came with him. Wesley sought his advice about his own work. Spangenberg asked him a few questions. His first inquiry, "Does the Spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?" surprised Wesley so that he did not know what to answer. The German observing this, asked, "Do you know Jesus Christ?" He paused, and said, "I know He is the Saviour of the world." "True," was the reply; "but do you know He has saved you?" Wesley answered, "I hope He has died to save me." Spangenberg only added, "Do you know yourself?" Wesley replied, "I do." "But I fear they were vain words," is his comment. Wesley's heart clave to this faithful friend. He made many inquiries about the Moravian Church at Hernhuth, and spent much time in the company of the German settlers.

The scene of Wesley's ministry was the town of Savannah, which lay on an eminence forty or fifty feet above a bend of the fine river, which at that point was about a thousand feet across. The settlement was a mile and a quarter in circumference. It had forty houses, all of the same size, belonging to the first settlers, and a hundred to a hundred and fifty built more recently,

some of which were two or even three stories high. Their planed boards and a coat of paint gave an air of comfort to these homes.* The Court House served as a church. Wesley found Mr. Quincy, the minister whom he was to succeed, still in Savannah, so that he did not get possession of his wooden parsonage until the middle of March. He lived on board the *Simmonds* for three weeks; then he and Mr. Delamotte lodged with the Germans. During these first weeks Wesley had some pleasant intercourse with the Indians, who gave him a very hearty reception. He hoped that God had a great work for him to do amongst them.

On Sunday, March 7th, Wesley began his ministry at Savannah by preaching on the Epistle for the day, the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. He described the death-bed of his father at Epworth, and another death-bed which he had seen in Savannah. The people crowded into the church, and listened with deep seriousness and attention to their new pastor. Such was the general interest awakened by his ministry that ten days later a ball arranged by a gentleman had to be given up. The church was full for prayers, whilst the ball-room was almost empty. The influence which he exerted may also be seen from another incident. A lady assured him when he landed that he would see as well-dressed a congregation as most he had seen in London. Wesley found that she was right. He soon began to expound the Scriptures which relate to dress with a forcible application. From that time he saw neither gold nor costly apparel in the church. The ladies of his congregation were generally dressed in plain linen or woollen.† About seven hundred people were

* F. Moore's "Georgia," p. 24.

† Works, xi., 474.

under his pastoral care.* Savannah itself had about 518 inhabitants.† The Parsonage, which comfortably accommodated Wesley and his friends, had many conveniences, with a good garden. Charles Wesley and Ingham went on to Frederica, a hundred miles south of Savannah; John Wesley and Delamotte remained in Savannah. Before the end of the month Wesley had arranged weekly Communion and morning and evening prayers. Delamotte had begun to teach a few orphan children. Their work was interrupted by the arrival of Ingham from Frederica with news of Charles Wesley's painful situation. Neither the form nor the power of godliness existed among the settlers there. They had slandered Charles Wesley to the Governor, and Mr. Oglethorpe had weakly allowed himself to deal most harshly with his secretary. Charles Wesley was denied even the commonest comforts, and his life was in peril through the malice of his unscrupulous enemies. John Wesley and Delamotte started in haste to Frederica, whilst Ingham remained in charge of the church and school at Savannah. The troubles at Frederica were greatly relieved by this visit, but little could be done in such a soil. By the middle of May business brought Charles Wesley to Savannah, and John took his place for five weeks in Frederica. He laboured with great zeal, but with small success. After Charles Wesley sailed for England in August, 1736, John Wesley spent some days in Frederica. He found less prospect than ever of doing good. Many of the people were "extremely zealous and indefatigably diligent" to hinder the work, and few of those who were of a better mind durst show their feeling for fear of the displeasure of the opponents. He says, "After having beaten the air in this unhappy place for

* Tyerman, i., 142. † Works, xii., 16.

twenty days, on January 26th, 1737, I took my final leave of Frederica. It was not any apprehension of my own danger, though my life had been threatened many times, but an utter despair of doing good there, which made me content with the thought of seeing it no more."

Wesley's labours were now confined to Savannah. He had less prospect than ever of preaching to the Indians, for which purpose alone he had gone to America. The trustees for the colony had appointed him minister of Savannah without his knowledge, but he only consented to hold that post until the way opened for his mission to the heathen. The serious parishioners had importunately urged him to watch over them a little longer till some one could supply his place, and he was the more willing to accede to this request because the Indians were engaged in wars, which left them no time, they said, to listen to the Gospel. At the end of February, 1737, Mr. Ingham started for England to enlist fresh workers for the mission. By his hands Wesley forwarded a letter of thanks for the parochial library sent out by Dr. Bray and his associates to Savannah. In it he gives an account of the school which Mr. Delamotte conducted. There were thirty or forty children, who learned to read, write, and cast accounts. Before morning school, and also after the work of the day was over, Delamotte catechised the younger children; in the evening the older scholars were instructed. Mr. Wesley catechised all on Saturday afternoon, and on Sunday before evening service. Immediately after the Second Lesson a select number of the scholars repeated their Catechism in the church. Wesley afterwards explained and applied what had been repeated both to the children and the congregation. Some of the boys in Delamotte's school were inclined to despise those who came without shoes

or stockings. Wesley, therefore, took his friend's post, and went to his work barefoot. The boys were amazed, but Wesley kept them to their books, and before the end of the week had cured them of their vanity. The pains taken with the children bore good fruit. On Whit-Sunday, 1737, four of them, who had been carefully trained every day for several weeks, were admitted to the Communion at their own earnest and repeated desire. Their zeal stirred up many of their companions. The children began to attend more carefully to the teaching, and a remarkable seriousness appeared in their whole behaviour and conversation.

Wesley's later Sundays in America were full of work. He read prayers in English from five to half-past six, at nine in Italian to a few Vaudois. From half-past ten to half-past twelve he had an English service, with sermon and Communion. At one he held a French service, at two instructed the children, at three read evening prayers. After this Wesley joined with as many as his largest room would hold in reading, prayer, and praise, and at six attended the Moravian service, "not as a teacher, but a learner." On Saturdays he read prayers in French and German in two neighbouring settlements. In cases of serious illness he visited the sick every day. His work in Savannah won him general respect. He says that he had ease, honour, and abundance—what he neither desired nor expected in America.

A fortnight later the storm began to burst. On Sunday, August 7th, he says, "I repelled Mrs. Williamson from the Holy Communion." This lady was the niece of Mr. Causton, the storekeeper and chief magistrate of Savannah. During the voyage to America, Mr. Oglethorpe had been much struck with Wesley's ability, and felt that if it were not for what he regarded as his religious enthusiasm, he

might greatly help him in the colony. He tried, therefore, to get Wesley married. Miss Sophia Hopkey, Mr. Causton's niece, was the lady whom he thought most eligible. She was beautiful, elegant in her manners, and intelligent. Wesley was introduced to her a month after his arrival in Georgia. Miss Hopkey afterwards went to Frederica. John Wesley wrote about her to his brother on March 22nd. "I conjure you," he says, "spare no time, no address or pains, to learn the true cause of the former distress of my friend. I much doubt you are in the right. God forbid that she should again, in like manner, miss the mark. Watch over her; help her as much as possible. Write to me how I ought to write to her." *

When Wesley visited Frederica in October he found that her religious life had suffered much in that uncongenial place. "Even poor Miss Sophy was scarce the shadow of what she was when I left her. I endeavoured to convince her of it, but in vain; and to put it effectually out of my power so to do, she was resolved to return to England immediately. I was at first a little surprised, but I soon recollected my spirits and remembered my calling." After speaking of his efforts for the people he adds: "My next step was to divert Miss Sophy from the fatal resolution of going to England. After several fruitless attempts I at length prevailed; nor was it long before she recovered the ground she had lost." The young lady became his comforter when the Governor returned from an expedition and took no notice of Wesley. When he mentioned this to her she said, "Sir, you encouraged me in my greatest trials; be not discouraged yourself. Fear nothing; if Mr. Oglethorpe will not, God will help you." Two days later they took

* Whitehead, ii., 15.

boat together for Savannah. They were six days on the way. Mr. Wesley significantly describes it as "a slow and dangerous, but not a tedious passage."

Miss Sophy took every opportunity of being in Wesley's company. She begged him to assist her in her French, and when he was laid by with a fever, brought on by his yielding to Oglethorpe's wish that he should show the people that he did not consider it wrong to eat animal food, she waited on him day and night during his five days' illness. She consulted Oglethorpe as to the dress which would be most pleasing to the young clergyman, who disliked all gaudy attire. Henceforth she always dressed in white. In December, 1736, Wesley advised her to sup earlier, and not immediately before she went to bed. He says, "She did so, and on this little circumstance what an inconceivable train of circumstances depend!—not only 'all the colour of my remaining life' for her, but perhaps all my happiness too, in time and in eternity." So far all seemed to favour a marriage between Wesley and this young lady. On February 5th, however, difficulties arose. It was not till another month had passed that Wesley became convinced that he ought not to marry Miss Hopkey. His friend, Mr. Delamotte, asked him if he intended to marry her, and plainly showed him the lady's art and his own simplicity. Delamotte's suspicions led Wesley to consult the Moravian bishop who had come over in the *Simmonds*. Bishop Nitschman said that the matter needed to be carefully weighed, but expressed no opinion at the moment. Some time after Wesley resolved to lay the case before the Elders of the Moravian Church. When he entered the house where they were assembled he found Delamotte with them. He explained the purpose for which he had come. The Bishop answered that they had considered his case, and asked whether he would

abide by their decision. Wesley, after some hesitation, replied that he would. "Then," said Nitschman, "we advise you to proceed no further in this business." Wesley meekly said, "The will of the Lord be done." He behaved with great caution, though he clearly saw what pain the change in his conduct gave to Miss Hopkey. He determined, by God's grace, to pull out his "right eye." But he could not yet find courage for the painful task. The lady, however, helped him. She became engaged to Mr. Williamson, one of the settlers, a young "man of substance," * on March 8th, and married him four days later. The husband, to quote Wesley's description, was "not remarkable for handsomeness, neither for greatness, neither for wit, or knowledge, or sense, and least of all for religion." Wesley made the following entry in his journal: "On Saturday, March 12th, God being very merciful to me, my friend performed what I could not."

Wesley's trouble threw fresh light on Ezekiel's bereavement. He had often thought the command not to mourn or weep at such a loss was one of the most difficult ever given, but he never really understood the difficulty till now, when, "considering the character I bore, I could not but perceive that the word of the Lord was come to me likewise." Forty-nine years afterwards the sorrow was still fresh in his mind. "I remember when I read these words in the church at Savannah, 'Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke,' I was pierced through as with a sword, and could not utter a word more. But our comfort is, 'He that made the heart can heal the heart.'" It was a severe trial. Wesley had walked with Mr. Causton to his country lot on March 7th, and plainly felt that if God had given him such

* Coke and Moore's "Wesley," 119.

a retirement with the companion he desired, he might have forgotten the work for which he was born, and have set up his rest in this world.

Before long he saw that it was well he had not followed his own inclination. Mrs. Williamson was not so pious as he had supposed. On July 3rd he told her of some points in her behaviour which he thought reprehensible. She was extremely angry, said that she did not expect such treatment from him, and at the turn of the street through which they were walking home from the Communion service abruptly left him. Next day Mrs. Causton expressed regret for her niece's behaviour, and wished to have Wesley's objections in writing. He furnished these, and also wrote kindly to Mr. Causton. Five weeks later Wesley repelled Mrs. Williamson from the Communion. She had not expressed her regret for the faults which he had pointed out, nor made any promise of amendment. The storm now burst. Up to this time Wesley had worked in Savannah with great success. The people loved him; his services were well attended, and everything prospered. It is not correct to speak of his mission in Georgia as a failure. But all was changed by this faithful exercise of discipline. Mr. Causton was determined to revenge what he regarded as the insult offered to his niece. Wesley refused to answer for his conduct in a purely ecclesiastical matter before a civil court. Nevertheless he was summoned to appear. A grand jury, carefully chosen from those likely to condemn Wesley, found ten bills against him. He was charged with speaking and writing to Mrs. Williamson without her husband's consent, with repelling her from the Communion, with not declaring his adherence to the Church of England, with dividing the service on Sundays, and with other matters. The first count alone was of a civil nature,

and Wesley had a complete answer to that. He had only written once to Mrs. Williamson since her marriage, and that at Mr. Causton's request, in reference to those things in her conduct which he disapproved. Wesley attended six or seven courts to answer this charge, but his enemies were careful to allow him no opportunity to clear himself. Twelve of the grand jurors who dissented from the finding of the majority sent a statement to the trustees of the colony, in which they clearly answered all the charges. As to repelling Mrs. Williamson, Wesley had often declared in full congregation that, according to the rubric, he required previous notice from any one desiring to communicate. He had actually repelled several persons for non-compliance. The other matters were either misstatements or concerned points entirely outside the province of the grand jury. The protesting minority was composed of three constables, six tithing-men, and three others. If the jury had been constituted, as it ought to have been, of the four constables and eleven tithing-men, no bill could therefore have been found against Wesley. An account of the colony, published in 1741,* shows Causton's tyranny and insolence in a very clear light. He threatened juries, contradicted his colleagues on the bench, and was perfectly intoxicated with power. He was, in fact, a man of no position or character, who had left England because of some charge in connection with the revenue.

When it became clear that he would not be allowed to justify himself, Wesley consulted his friends whether he should not return at once to England. He was not able to preach to the Indians, and felt that he could do Georgia greater service by representing the true state of things to the trustees than by remaining at Savannah. His friends

* Jackson, "C. Wesley," i., 94.

all agreed that he ought to go, but not yet. This was on October 7th. Meanwhile his enemies continued to plot against him. On November 22nd, Mr. Causton went so far as to read some affidavits to Wesley, in which it was stated that he had abused Mr. Causton in his own house, calling him a liar and a villain. All Wesley's friends now felt that the time for his departure had come. He at once told Mr. Causton that he intended to leave Savannah immediately, and put an advertisement in the Great Square stating that he would shortly sail for England, and asking that those who had borrowed books from him would return them as soon as convenient. On December 2nd, two hours before he was to set out for Carolina, the magistrates sent for him, and told him he must not leave the colony, because he had not answered the allegations. Wesley easily disposed of this frivolous attempt to put him in the wrong, and refused to give bail for his appearance at their court. They then issued an order requiring all officers of the colony to prevent his departure. This step was simply taken to save appearances; the magistrates were only too glad to be relieved of the presence of a faithful reprover whom they could neither silence nor intimidate. As soon as evening prayers were over, about eight o'clock on Friday, December 2nd, 1737, Wesley took boat, with three friends, for Carolina, on his way to England.

Mr. and Mrs. Williamson and their son, who was intended for the Church, are mentioned by a correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine*,* who seems to have met them some years before at their house in Smith Street, Westminster. This writer had gone out to Georgia as a boy in the same ship as Mr. Williamson.

* 1792, p. 24

He lodged at Mr. Causton's, attended Wesley's early morning prayers, and tells us that he himself was not insensible to the beauty and virtues of Miss Hopkey. Wesley had gone out as a missionary, with an allowance of £50 from the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. He did not wish to accept even this small amount. He sent the trustees an account of a year's expenses for Mr. Delamotte and himself, which, deducting extraordinary charges, such as the repairs of the Parsonage and journeys to Frederica, amounted only to £44 4*s.* 4*d.* He wished to take nothing more than this, but yielded to the advice of his brother Samuel, who pointed out it might be unjust to his successor to refuse, and that he might give his stipend away as he thought good. During the troubles of his last weeks in Savannah ten pounds arrived from the Vice-Provost of Eton. Wesley says he had been for several months without a shilling in the house, but not without peace, health, and contentment. He had given up animal food and wine before the *Simmonds* left Gravesend, and had confined himself chiefly to rice and biscuit. This course he followed in Georgia. Oglethorpe, as we have seen, once invited him to dinner, and begged that he would show those who reported that he held it wrong to eat animal food and drink wine that they were mistaken. Wesley complied, and was in consequence seized by a fever, which laid him aside for five days. With this exception he enjoyed splendid health in Georgia. The warm climate entirely cured him of the spitting of blood, which had lasted several years.* He continued to eat little, and carefully limited his hours of sleep. He was incessantly at work, visiting, preaching, and teaching the children. He took part of the three hundred acres of

* Works, iii., 402.

glebe land at Savannah to form a good garden, and frequently worked in it with his own hands. During his journeys in the colony he often slept all night in the open air, exposed to all the dews that fell; sometimes he was wet through with dew and rain, but he never took any harm from the exposure. He wore Indian shoes, and slept rolled up in a blanket.* Though he travelled through places infested with wild beasts, he would never carry a weapon. He said that he had a cane to try the depth of the rivers through which he had to wade, but would not have a ferrule at the end of it lest it should look like a weapon.†

After a trying journey of ten days, Wesley reached Charlestown. The party lost their way in the woods, and suffered greatly from cold and hunger. Mr. Delamotte, who had joined Wesley on the way, stayed with him some days. He then returned to Savannah. On the 22nd December Wesley went on board the *Samuel*, Captain Percy, bound for England. One of his parishioners from Savannah, a young gentleman who had been a few months in Carolina, and a Frenchman, sailed with him. At first he suffered much from the motion of the vessel, but a return to his old diet soon relieved him. There were about twenty souls on board. All received Wesley's counsels kindly. He felt strangely reluctant to speak to them at first, and even went among the sailors for several days intending to do so without being able. At last he took courage, and spoke to every one on board. To the Frenchman, who had no one else with whom he could converse, Wesley read and explained a chapter in the New Testament every morning. He also taught two negroes and instructed the

* *Westminster Magazine*, 1792, p. 24.

† Reynolds' "Anecdotes," p. 37.

cabin-boy. His leisure was spent in abridging M. de Renty's life, which he finished on 6th January. The vessel met a hurricane in the middle of the month, but made a good passage. On Wednesday morning, February 1st, 1738, Wesley landed safely at Deal, at half-past four.

This voyage was a time of great heart-searching. On Sunday, January 8th,* Wesley was clearly convinced of unbelief. He had not the faith in Christ that preserves from fear. St. Cyprian's Works, which he read during his voyage, delivered him from the vain desire of solitude, by which he had long hoped to make himself a Christian. He was still troubled by the fear of death. He had shown his faith by his works, giving all his goods to the poor, and following after charity. But if a storm arose, he began to doubt. What if the Gospel were not true, if all his zeal and suffering had been in vain? "I went to America to convert the Indians, but oh! who shall convert me?" This was the burden of his soul in the hour when fear of death terrified him. He closes his Georgian journal with that painful summary of the lessons of his mission:—"It is now two years and almost four months since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgian Indians the nature of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the meantime? Why (what I the least of all suspected), that I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God." He speaks, as St. Paul spoke to the Corinthians, of his labours and sufferings, but confesses that these did not entitle him to be called a Christian. He had learned in the ends of the earth that he was fallen short of the glory of God. He now desired with all his heart to find that faith which would deliver him from fear and doubt, and bring the sensible assurance of acceptance with God.

* Works xii., 33.

The blessing for which Wesley longed was near at hand. We cannot altogether accept his statements in this review of the past. He himself saw things in their true light some years later, when, in republishing his journals, he added four brief notes. "I, who went to America to convert others, was never myself converted to God," is his statement. His note, "I am not sure of this," expresses the feeling with which we read his words. "I am a child of wrath," is his groan on the ocean. "I believe not," is the later verdict. "I had," he says, in another note, "even then the faith of a *servant*, though not that of a *son*." The blessing of confidence in God, which he craves, is truly described as "the faith of a son." Wesley was only able to read his own history aright when all things had become new. He was still in darkness, but yet a few more steps, and he knew the joyful sound, and walked in the light of God's countenance.

Whitefield, who landed in Georgia on May 7th, 1738, bears emphatic testimony to the results of his friend's mission. "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. Oh that I may follow him as he has followed Christ!" *

* Whitefield's "Journals."

CHAPTER VII.

PREPARATION FOR THE GREAT REVIVAL.

WESLEY read prayers and expounded a portion of Scripture to a large company at Deal before he set out for London. He reached "Feversham" on the same evening. He now caught his first glimpse of English life after his absence in America, and of the need for a great revival of true religion in his native land. "I here read prayers, and explained the Second Lesson, to a few of those who were called Christians, but were, indeed, more savage in their behaviour than the wildest Indians I have yet met with." He expected a cold reception from Mr. Delamotte's family at Blendon, but he no sooner mentioned his name than their welcome constrained him to say, "Surely God is in this place, and I knew it not!" His brother Charles, who had been in England for fourteen months, had prepared the way for him here. Mrs. Delamotte and her whole family had been won over. She had been indignant with the Wesleys because her son Charles had gone with them to Georgia, but some weeks before Wesley's visit she had acknowledged that she loved her son too well. From that time her behaviour to Charles Wesley was entirely changed.

In the evening of Friday, February 3rd, 1738, Wesley was again in London. None of his friends knew of his return. When his brother Charles was told, on the

Friday afternoon, that John had come back, he could not believe it till he saw him. They met that night, when Charles learned the deplorable state of the colony. Mr. Oglethorpe, who was in England, was evidently annoyed by the unvarnished account which Wesley gave to the Board of Management. The trustees themselves were surprised to hear such news, and to learn how scanty the population was. Wesley said that he had reason to believe that some of them had not forgiven him for his statements. Mr. Oglethorpe told Charles that his brother must take care, as there was a strong spirit raised against him, and people said he had come over to do mischief to the colony. Wesley's sole purpose, of course, was to help the settlers, and he was not the man to hide any of the facts. In October the trustees removed Causton from all his offices, and refused to accept his accounts as correct.

More important events now claim attention. Among the reasons to bless God which Wesley mentions in connection with his mission to Georgia was his introduction to many members of the Moravian Church at Hernhuth, and the fact that he had learned German, Spanish, and Italian, so that his "passage was opened to the writings of holy men" in those languages. The day before he gave the trustees of Georgia an account of the colony, he met, at the house of a Dutch merchant, Mr. Weinant, Peter Böhler and two friends who had just landed from Germany. When Wesley found that they had no friends in London, he secured them lodgings near Mr. Hutton's, in Westminster, where he generally stayed whilst in London. From that time he lost no opportunity of conversing with them. Böhler was twenty-five years old. He had studied theology at the University of Jena, and had just been ordained by Zinzendorf for work in Carolina. On February 17th the Wesleys travelled to Oxford

with their new friend. Wesley talked much with him, but did not understand his views, and was greatly puzzled when Böhler said, "My brother, my brother, that philosophy of yours must be purged away." Böhler, in a letter to Count Zinzendorf, gives his impressions of his new friends: "I travelled with the two brothers, John and Charles Wesley, from London to Oxford. The elder, John, is a good-natured man; he knew he did not properly believe on the Saviour, and was willing to be taught. His brother, with whom you often conversed a year ago, is at present very much distressed in his mind, but does not know how he shall begin to be acquainted with the Saviour. Our mode of believing in the Saviour is so easy to Englishmen that they cannot reconcile themselves to it; if it were a little more artful, they would much sooner find their way into it." *

Wesley spent a couple of days at Oxford, where he preached at the Castle on Sunday to a numerous and serious congregation. Then he returned to London. Ten days later he saw his mother once more at Salisbury. He was just ready to start for Tiverton to visit his eldest brother, when he received a message that Charles was dying at Oxford. He set out without delay, but found, to his great relief, that the danger was past. By this means he renewed his intercourse with Böhler, who was still at Oxford, and had been at Charles Wesley's side in his illness. "By him," he says, "(in the hand of the great God), I was, on Sunday, the 5th" (March, 1738), "clearly convinced of unbelief, of the want of that faith whereby alone we are saved." Wesley immediately concluded that he was unfit to preach. He consulted Böhler, who urged him to go on. "But what can I preach?" said

* *Wesleyan Magazine*, 1854, p. 687.

Wesley. "Preach faith *till* you have it," said his friend, "and then, *because* you have it, you *will* preach faith." This sound advice Wesley followed. It is interesting to know that the first person to whom he offered salvation by faith was a prisoner who lay under sentence of death at the Castle. Here, in the place to which his friend Morgan had introduced him more than seven years before, he began his work as a preacher of the righteousness of faith. The incident is the more remarkable because Böhler had many times asked Wesley to speak to this man, but he had refused because he was a zealous assertor of the impossibility of a death-bed repentance. Wesley's prejudices were yielding at last.

A short journey to Manchester, which he took in the middle of March with his friend Mr. Kinchin, Dean and Fellow of Corpus Christi College, another Oxford Methodist, shows how carefully he embraced every opportunity of doing good. All hearts seemed to open to him and his friend. They had prayer at the inns, and spoke to the servants as well as to those whom they met on their journey, with the happiest effect. Peter Böhler had returned from London when they again reached Oxford. He amazed Wesley more and more by his description of the holiness and happiness which are the fruits of living faith. Wesley began to read the Greek Testament again that he might judge whether this teaching was of God. He and Mr. Kinchin visited the condemned prisoner. They prayed with him, first using several forms of prayer, and "then in such words as were given" them at the moment. The man, who had knelt down in great heaviness, rose up after a time, saying eagerly, "I am now ready to die. I know Christ has taken away my sins; and there is no more condemnation for me." Soon afterwards he died in perfect peace,

Up to this time, in every religious Society he visited, Wesley had been accustomed to use a collect or two, then the Lord's Prayer. Afterwards he expounded a chapter in the New Testament, and concluded with three or four collects and a psalm. On the Saturday after the scene in the Castle, his heart was so full in a meeting of Mr. Fox's Society that he could not confine himself to the forms of prayer generally used. "Neither do I purpose," he adds, "to be confined to them any more, but to pray indifferently, with a form or without, as I may find suitable to different occasions." This marks a notable step in Wesley's preparation for his evangelistic work.

Before the end of April he was convinced that Böhler's views on the nature and fruits of faith were truly Scriptural. As yet he could not understand how it could be instantaneous, but, to his astonishment, the Acts of the Apostles showed that nearly all the conversions there described were instantaneous. He was ready to conclude that such wonders were only wrought in the first ages of Christianity, but the testimony of several living witnesses taught him that God still wrought thus in many hearts. "Here ended my disputing," he says; "I could now only cry out, 'Lord, help Thou my unbelief!'" Wesley found his friends as much prejudiced against instantaneous conversions as he himself had been. When he spoke on the subject at Blendon, Charles Wesley was very angry, and told him he did not know what mischief he had done by talking thus. Both of the brothers refer to the conversation in their journals. Charles says, "We sang, and fell into a dispute whether conversion was gradual or instantaneous. My brother 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, a man need not know when first he had faith. His obstinacy in favouring the contrary opinion drove me at last out of the room. Mr. Broughton was only not so much scandalised as myself." Wesley had struggled too long with his own doubts to be impatient with those who had not yet reached the same position as himself. He adds to his own account of his brother's indignation at this discussion the significant words, "And, indeed, it did please God then to kindle a fire, which, I trust, shall never be extinguished."

Wesley was recalled from Oxford on the 1st of May by the return of his brother's illness. He found Charles at the house of James Hutton, near Temple Bar. Here, on the same evening, a little Society, formed by the advice of Böhler, met for the first time. It was afterwards transferred to Fetter Lane. The Wesleys were closely associated with it until the excesses of the Moravian teachers compelled them to withdraw. The friends agreed to meet every week, to form themselves into bands of five to ten members, and to speak freely to each other about their religious life. The bands were to have a general meeting every Wednesday evening, and a lovefeast once a month on a Sunday evening from seven to ten. All who wished to join the Society were to remain on trial for two months. Two days after the Society was formed Charles Wesley was convinced by a long and particular conversation with Böhler of the true nature of evangelical faith. Next day this friend, who had been so greatly blessed to the brothers, embarked for Carolina. Wesley says, "Oh, what a work hath God begun since his coming into England, such an one as shall never come to an end till heaven and earth pass away!"

The brothers were now resolutely seeking after this living faith. Their friend Mr. Stonehouse, the Vicar

of Islington, was also convinced of the truth. On Whit-Sunday, rather more than a fortnight after Böhler left London, Charles Wesley found the joy and peace he sought. He was suffering from another attack of his pleurisy. Just as he was about to remove from James Hutton's to his father's, Mr. Bray, "a poor, ignorant mechanic," who knew nothing but Christ, came to see him. Charles felt that he was sent to supply Böhler's place, and removed to his house in Little Britain instead of going to Westminster. Here he found peace. John Wesley and some friends had visited him on the morning of Whit-Sunday, and had sung a hymn to the Holy Ghost. Afterwards John went to hear Dr. Heylyn, the popular Rector of St. Mary-le-Strand. He was well known to the Doctor, in concert with whom it had been arranged that he should prepare an edition of A Kempis. His friend and counsellor, William Law, had also been Heylyn's curate in the days when he was such "a gay parson that Dr. Heylyn said his book" ("The Serious Call") "would have been better if he had travelled that way himself."* Wesley assisted the Doctor with the Communion, as his curate was taken ill in the church. After this service he heard the surprising news that his brother had found rest to his soul.

Wesley remained in much heaviness until the following Wednesday, May 24th, 1738. At five that morning he opened his Testament on the words, "There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises." In the afternoon some one asked him to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, "Out of the deep have I called unto Thee, O Lord. . . . 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."

* Byrom's "Journals," i., 523.

That evening he went very unwillingly to a Society in Aldersgate Street where some 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." Wesley at once began to pray earnestly for his enemies, and publicly testified to all present what he now felt. He was much tempted when he returned home, but when he prayed the temptations fled. He soon found how different they were from his former struggles. Then he was sometimes, if not often, conquered; now he was always conqueror.

Charles Wesley's journal gives us a happy description of this memorable night: "Towards ten, my brother was brought in triumph by a troop of our friends, and declared, 'I believe.' We sang the hymn with great joy, and parted with prayer." "The hymn" was one Charles Wesley had composed the previous day on his own conversion. He had laid it aside for fear of pride, but resumed it when Mr. Bray encouraged him "to proceed, in spite of Satan." Now the brothers were able to sing it together.

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

The position which Wesley now took up gave no small scandal to some of his old friends. The Huttons, of

* Hymn 30, Wesleyan Hymn Book.

Westminster, and his brother Samuel were especially troubled. Mrs. Hutton wrote to Samuel Wesley at Tiverton within a fortnight after the memorable scene at Aldersgate Street. Whilst her husband was reading a sermon of Bishop Blackall's to one of the religious Societies of the time assembled in his study, Wesley stood up and startled them by the statement that five days before he was not a Christian. Mr. Hutton answered, "Have a care, Mr. Wesley, how you despise the benefits received by the two Sacraments." Mrs. Hutton was not in the study at the time. Wesley, however, repeated his statement in the parlour, where they met for supper. Mrs. Hutton then said, "If you have not been a Christian ever since I knew you, you have been a great hypocrite, for you made us all believe that you were one." Wesley explained his meaning. "When we renounce everything but faith and get into Christ, then, and not till then, have we any reason to believe that we are Christians." The Huttons were in the parlour, with their son and daughter, their niece, two or three ladies who boarded at the house, two or three of Wesley's "deluded followers," and two or three gentlemen who knew Wesley, but did not yet share "his notions." Mrs. Hutton dreaded the effect on her own children, who reverenced Wesley so greatly. She calls him "my son's pope."

Though Wesley had now attained to the righteousness of faith, his mind was not fully at rest. He was often in heaviness through manifold temptation, and was not a little perplexed by the conflicting counsels of his friends. At last he made up his mind to visit the Moravian settlement at Hernhuth. He had fully resolved on this journey before he left Georgia, and had written to Count Zinzendorf. He now saw that the time for his visit was come. "My weak mind could not bear to be thus sawn asunder. And

I hoped the conversing with those holy men, who were themselves living witnesses of the full power of faith, and yet able to bear with those that are weak, would be a means, under God, of so establishing my soul, that I might go on from faith to faith, and 'from strength to strength.'" Three weeks after his "conversion" he sailed from Gravesend to Rotterdam.

Before describing this interesting visit it is necessary to speak of Wesley's correspondence with his friend and adviser William Law. He met with Law's "Christian Perfection" soon after he became Fellow of Lincoln College, and when the "Serious Call" was published it exercised a powerful influence on his mind. He had already determined to live a religious life. He was much offended by several things in Law's books, and "had objections to almost every page," * but they convinced him more than ever of the exceeding height, breadth, and depth of the law of God. The light flowed in upon his soul so mightily that everything appeared in a new aspect, and he determined to keep all the commandments of God.† He paid several visits to Mr. Law at Putney, and in 1734 consulted him about one of his pupils, who had lost all relish for religious duties.

After Peter Böhler left London Wesley wrote to Mr. Law. He had been trying for twelve years to order his life according to the "Serious Call;" for two years he had regularly preached after the model of Law's books. Now that the light had come, he naturally remembered his master. On May 14th, 1738, he wrote a letter in which he explained to Mr. Law how his teaching had broken down in practice. Both he and his hearers acknowledged that the Law was wonderful, but all were

* Works, viii., 366. † *Ibid.*, i., 99.

convinced that it was impossible to make it the rule of life. Wesley adds, "Under this heavy yoke I might have groaned till death had not a holy man, to whom God lately directed me, upon my complaining thereof, answered at once, 'Believe, and thou shalt be saved.'" He inquires why Mr. Law did not give him this advice, and beseeches him to consider whether the true reason was not that he did not possess this faith himself.

The last paragraph of the letter might have been softened with advantage, but Wesley would not have felt justified without speaking plainly. "Once more, sir, let me beg you to consider whether your extreme roughness and morose and sour behaviour, at least on many occasions, can possibly be the fruit of a living faith in Christ? If not, may the God of peace and love fill up what is yet wanting in you." Mr. Overton, Law's biographer,* says that "there was an asperity of manner, a curtness of expression, an impatience of everything that appeared to him absurd and unreasonable, . . . which made most men with whom he came into contact rather afraid of him." So much for the truth and meaning of the charge. There is nothing in this letter that is inconsistent with Wesley's high esteem for the man who had so greatly influenced his religious life and character. The utmost that can be said is that it is very plain speaking. But that was characteristic of Wesley, and surely twelve years of bondage to form may justify such freedom, quite apart from the more important fact that Wesley had learned the way of faith, to which he feared that his friend was still a stranger.

Law replied on May 19th. He reminds Wesley that he himself had prepared a translation of A Kempis, and asks

* "William Law," p. 59.

that the fault of not leading him to faith may be divided between them. He satisfactorily explains his conversation with Böhler, to which Wesley had referred. He reminds Wesley that he had put the "Theologia Germanica" into his hands, and if that book did not plainly lead to Christ, he "was content to know as little of Christianity" as Wesley was pleased to believe. This letter has been described as a triumphant answer, which clearly proves that Wesley was no match for his distinguished correspondent. But whatever Law may have felt about Christianity, he had not guided the Wesleys into the way of faith. They were groaning under the yoke till Böhler was sent to lead them into peace. That fact remains, and Law's letter did not shake Wesley's position. Wesley was far too able a reasoner to lose sight of the essential point. Hence his answer to Mr. Law, which must be acknowledged to be a complete reply. He carefully separates all extraneous questions, and quietly holds Mr. Law to the main issue, that he had not done anything to lead him to grasp that great truth "He is our propitiation, through faith in His blood." This letter is so important that a facsimile is given of the draft copy which afterwards came into the hands of the Rev. Henry Moore. The corrections show with what care Wesley prepared his reply.

Mr. Law wrote another letter,* but it calls for no special comment. Law protested against any attempt to make him responsible for defects in Wesley's knowledge. His impression of Wesley is interesting. "You seemed to me to be of a very inquisitive nature, and much inclined to meditation." For this reason he had put the "Theologia

* C. Walton's "Notes and Materials for a Biography of Law." Printed for private circulation. 1854.

Germanica" into his hands. Charles Wesley's journal for 1739 describes an interesting visit which he paid to Law, with his friend John Bray.* Law was sorry that the Methodists had not been dispersed into livings where they might have leavened the Church. Charles Wesley told him his experience. "'Then am I,' said he, 'far below you (if you are right), not worthy to bear your shoes.' He agreed to our notion of faith, but would have it that all men held it; was fully against the laymen's expounding, as the very worst thing, both for themselves and others. I told him he was my schoolmaster to bring me to Christ; but the reason why I did not come sooner to Him was my seeking to be sanctified before I was justified. . . . Joy in the Holy Ghost, he told us, was the most dangerous thing God could give. I replied, 'But cannot God guard His own gifts?' He often disclaimed advising, 'seeing we had the Spirit of God,' but mended upon our hands, and at last came almost quite over." This is a pleasant sequel to the correspondence.

In 1756 Wesley published "An Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Law." This was occasioned by some of Law's later writings, which Wesley thought erroneous and likely to lead many astray. This has been described as an "angry pamphlet," as his first letter to Law has been called an "angry letter."† Anger is far enough from both. They are calm and dispassionate throughout. Law describes it as "a juvenile composition of emptiness and pertness, below the character of any man who had been serious in religion but half a month." The pamphlet can be found in Wesley's Works,‡ and every one may judge

* Vol. i., 159.

† Overton's "English Church," ii., 72.

‡ Vol. ix., 466—509.

how far these strictures are deserved. Wesley quietly comments on various passages from Law's writings. "I have now, sir, delivered my own soul; and I have used great plainness of speech, such as I could not have prevailed on myself to use to one whom I so much respect on any other occasion." This is a fair description of a calm, well-reasoned treatise, which, notwithstanding Law's strictures on its emptiness and pertness, clearly shows what a blow that eminent writer had struck at the roots of all vital Christianity by his perilous Mysticism. Dr. Byrom, Law's devout disciple, who was also the friend of Wesley, notes in his journal,* that he urged Wesley "to repent of that wicked letter." Wesley stayed with his old friend a considerable time, and talked very freely with him, but Byrom was only able to prevail upon him to say that if he published a second edition of the letter, "he would soften some expressions in it." Two years later, in April, 1761, when Wesley was again in Manchester, Byrom returned to the subject, but could not bring Wesley to say anything more about this tract than he did on his previous visit. He added, "I do not treat him" (Law) "with contempt, as he does me." Mr. Overton † does ample justice to Wesley's position in this publication. He says, "The letter was not 'wicked,' nor 'unchristian,' nor 'ungentlemanly,' nor did it deserve the entire obliteration which Byrom suggested. The question with him would be, Is such teaching likely to do my people practical harm? And remembering that he had seen what had been the practical effect of the sort of diluted Mysticism of the London Moravians upon his people, we can hardly wonder that he concluded that

* Part ii., pp. 593, 629. † Life of Law, p. 383.

harm would be done. Hence this well-meant, if not very judicious attempt to counteract the evil."

Wesley had taught his people to read Law's "Serious Call" and his "Christian Perfection." He often referred to Law in the highest terms, as "that strong and elegant writer," "that great man," etc. In his sermon "On a Single Eye," he spoke of the "Serious Call" as "a treatise which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the English tongue, either for beauty of expression or for justness and depth of thought." These words were spoken only eighteen months before Wesley's death. His brother Charles used to call Law "our John the Baptist." He shut the brothers up under "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" till they groaned for deliverance. Many painful years might have been spared them had he acted the part of Peter Böhler, and led them to rest on the atonement of Christ for salvation. The Wesleys had a strong case against him in this respect, and John Wesley stated it fairly, with a sincere desire for the best interests of a man whom he never ceased to love and honour. His pamphlet supplied the people whom Wesley had taught to read his earlier books with a much-needed antidote to Law's later views.

Wesley's visit to the Moravian settlement of Hernhuth, on the borders of Bohemia, in 1738 gave him confidence in the teaching by which he had gained peace of mind and heart. Continental travelling was not very pleasant in those days. At Goudart several inns refused to entertain the party. With much difficulty they "at last found one, where they did us the favour to take our money for some meat and drink and the use of two or three bad beds." Ingham, Wesley's companion in Georgia, was with him. There were three other English travellers and three Germans. At Frankfort Wesley had a pleasant interview

with Peter Böhler's father. At Marienborn he found Count Zinzendorf, who had hired a large house, where about ninety people of different nationalities lived together. Wesley lodged with one of the members of this community a mile from Marienborn. He had come to seek living proofs of the power of faith; people saved from inward and outward sin by "the love of God shed abroad in their hearts," and from all doubt and fear by the abiding witness of "the Holy Ghost given unto them." These witnesses he now constantly met with. He usually spent the day in talking with those who could either speak Latin or English, as he could not converse easily in German. He stayed a fortnight, heard Zinzendorf preach, and attended a conference where the Count spoke largely on justification and its fruits.

On August 1st, after a journey which illustrates the annoyances to which travellers on the Continent were exposed in those days, Wesley reached the Moravian settlement. Hernhuth lay about thirty miles from Dresden, on the border of Bohemia. About a hundred houses stood on some rising ground, with high hills at a distance. There were evergreen woods on two sides, gardens and cornfields on the others. The settlement was on the highway from Zittau to Löbau. The Orphan House stood in the middle of the one long street, an apothecary's shop below, a chapel, which would seat about six hundred people, above. At a small distance from either end of the Orphan House ran a row of houses, forming two squares. The Count's house was a small plain building, like the rest, with a large garden, in which vegetables and fruit were grown for the common use.

Wesley and his friends had a convenient lodging assigned them in the house for strangers. He found a Mr. Hermsdorf, whom he had often talked with in

Georgia; and this friend did everything in his power to make the visit useful and agreeable. Wesley zealously attended public services, lovefeasts, and conferences. Christian David, the founder of the Church at Hernhuth, came two days after Wesley reached the place. He had been converted from Popery, and had preached far and wide throughout Moravia, till his name was a household word. When persecution arose his converts found a retreat at Hernhuth. David was only a carpenter, but he was a man of great devotion and spiritual insight. Wesley heard him preach four times. Each time he chose just the topic that the English visitor would have desired him to choose. The abstract of these discourses in the journals shows with what care Wesley weighed his teaching. Christian David gave him a clear and full account of his own life and of the founding of the settlement at Hernhuth. These particulars, with the experience of other members of the community and a description of its discipline and constitution, will be found at length in Wesley's second journal. He was greatly refreshed in spirit by his sojourn at Marienborn and Hernhuth. So many living witnesses to the reality of saving faith inspired him with confidence. He could doubt no more. "I would gladly have spent my life here," he says; "but my Master calling me to labour in another part of His vineyard, on Monday, 14th, I was constrained to take my leave of this happy place; Martin Döber, and a few others of the brethren, walking with us about an hour. Oh, when shall THIS Christianity cover the earth, as the 'waters cover the sea'?"

Wesley reached London on Saturday night, September 16th, 1738, a month after he left Hernhuth. He had been absent from England three months. On Sunday he says, "I began to declare in my own country the glad tidings

of salvation, preaching three times, and afterwards expounding the Scripture to a large company in the Minories." This was at the house of Mr. Sims, where Charles Wesley had preached the two previous Sunday evenings, the first time to two hundred, and the next to three hundred hearers. The brothers met each other on the night of John's arrival. "We took sweet counsel together," Charles says, "comparing our experiences." Next night also he writes, "My brother entertained us with his Moravian experiences." Charles also had much to tell. Mrs. Delamotte and her son William, who had been greatly prejudiced against the new teaching, had now received it to their own salvation. He was able to speak of Jack Delamotte, the first convert of the hymnology of the revival. In singing "Who for me, for me, hast died," he had found the words sink into his soul, and could have sung for ever, being full of delight and joy. Charles returned from Blendon in June, rejoicing that seven souls had been led to Christ by his ministry. His visits to Newgate and the hour spent under the gallows at Tyburn, which he describes as the most blessed hour of his life, all showed John what a work God had already begun. Nor was he without a share in the harvest. At Blendon, whilst Charles was reading his brother's sermon on faith, the gardener found that blessing. Next evening, when he read it again at the house of Mr. Piers, the Vicar of Bexley, "God set His seal to the truth of it, by sending His Spirit upon Mr. Searl and a maidservant, purifying their hearts by faith." Such facts show how the brothers must have rejoiced together. John had come from Germany, laden with testimonies to the power of grace. Charles had been reaping in English homes and in English prisons the success which showed that the fields were white already to harvest.

The next six months were spent between London and Oxford, with one visit to Bristol. Wesley preached in all churches that were open to him, and in various "Societies." He visited Newgate and the Castle and city prisons at Oxford. He lost no opportunity of doing good. The journals show that Wesley's mind was not yet fully established in the faith. Charles Delamotte, his old companion in Georgia, troubled him not a little. He stayed with Wesley at Oxford four or five days, and told his friend that he was still trusting in his own works, and did not believe in Christ. Wesley begged of God an answer of peace, and opened on those words, "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."

On the threshold of the Great Revival, a few words may be devoted to its special teaching. Throughout life Wesley was faithful to all the doctrines of the Reformation and the English Church. Repentance for sin, justification by faith, and holiness of heart and life were the constant themes of his ministry and his writings. His long bondage to doubt made him careful to show the way of acceptance. The doctrine of assurance, on which he laid such stress, appears in an alluring light in his brother's hymns and in his own sermons. Wesley rendered inestimable service by bringing out into clear light the blessed truth that no Christian need walk in darkness, but may rejoice in the assurance of acceptance with God. Entire sanctification was set in its proper light as the goal towards which every Christian should press. Wesley fixed no time and prescribed no methods for this work. He was content to urge his people to grow in grace, and to strive to gain all the mind that was in Christ.

The opening paragraphs of his "Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion" are perhaps the finest epitome

of the ruling purpose of the Great Revival. The lifeless, formal religion of the time was a sad contrast to that religion of love which they had found. The love of God and all mankind "we believe to be the medicine of life, the never-failing remedy for all the evils of a disordered world, for all the miseries and vices of men. Wherever this is, there are virtue and happiness going hand in hand. There is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, the whole image of God, and at the same time a peace that passeth all understanding, and joy unspeakable and full of glory. . . . This religion we long to see established in the world, a religion of love, and joy, and peace, having its seat in the inmost soul, but ever showing itself by its fruits, continually springing forth, not only in all innocence (for love worketh no ill to his neighbour), but likewise in every kind of beneficence, spreading virtue and happiness all around it." Wesley then shows how he and his friends had long wandered in darkness, having no man to guide them into "the straight way to the religion of love, even by faith." The blessed change it had wrought in their own souls gave them confidence in urging all to seek the same joy. "By this faith we are saved from all uneasiness of mind, from the anguish of a wounded spirit, from discontent, from fear and sorrow of heart, and from that inexpressible listlessness and weariness, both of the world and ourselves, which we had so helplessly laboured under for many years, especially when we were out of the hurry of the world and sunk into calm reflection. In this we find that love of God and of all mankind which we had elsewhere sought in vain. This, we know and feel, and therefore cannot but declare, saves every one that partakes of it both from sin and misery, from every unhappy and every unholy temper."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BEGINNING OF THE GREAT AWAKENING.

THE condition of England when Methodism appeared has been described by all writers in the most sombre colours. Southey says, "There never was less religious feeling, either within the Establishment or without, than when Wesley blew his trumpet, and awakened those who slept." In 1732 the *Weekly Miscellany** states that zeal for godliness looked as odd upon a man as the dress of his great-grandfather. Freethinkers' clubs flourished. In August, 1736, Dr. Byrom drank tea with Mr. Rivington, the bookseller, Wesley's friend and publisher. Rivington said that many of the young men of his parish had left off all public service and professed Deism, and that there was a visible decline in the sale of good books.† Bishop Burnet found the Ember Weeks the burden of his life. Candidates for ordination were scandalously ignorant of the Bible. Dr. Watts‡ called upon every one to use all efforts "for the recovery of dying religion in the world." Archbishop Secker, then Bishop of Oxford, asserts "that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height

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* Tyerman, i., 217.
† Byrom's "Journals," ii., 63.
‡ Preface to his "Humble Attempt."

in the metropolis of the nation, and is daily spreading through every part of it." It had already brought in, he says, "such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligate intemperance and fearlessness of committing crimes in the lower, as must, if this torrent of iniquity stop not, become absolutely fatal." This charge was delivered in the very year the Wesleys were led into the light. In 1741 the Bishop mourns again over "this unhappy age of irreligion and libertinism." Isaac Taylor says that Methodism preserved from extinction and reanimated the languishing Nonconformity of the eighteenth century, "which, just at the time of the Methodistic revival, was rapidly in course to be found nowhere but in books." * Besides the moral and religious reformation wrought among the colliers of Kingswood and the north, as well as among the Cornish miners, the Evangelical Revival leavened the Church of England with its own spirit. The Church had grown corrupt. Its best friends mourned that the clergy laboured under more contempt than those of any other Church in Europe because they were so remiss in their labours.† They would never regain their influence, Burnet said, till they lived better and laboured more. Their preaching seemed as if its sole aim was to fit men for this world.‡ The population had doubled since the settlement of the Church under Elizabeth, towns and cities had far outgrown their old proportions, yet no endeavour had been made for any adequate increase of religious instruction. The old religion, Lecky says,§ seemed everywhere loosening around the minds of men; and it had often no great influence even on its defenders. Montesquieu

* "Wesley and Methodism," p. 54.
† Southey's "Wesley," i., 279.
‡ Lecky, ii., 544.
§ *Ibid.*, ii., 530.

affirmed that not more than four or five of the members of Parliament were regular attendants at church.*

In 1736 every sixth house in London was a grogshop,† and the ginsellers hung out boards announcing that they would make a man drunk for a penny, dead-drunk for twopence, and find him straw to lie on till he recovered from his carouse. Cellars strewn with straw were actually provided for this purpose. Lecky gives some painful pictures of the time.‡ In 1735 the quantity of British spirits distilled was 5,394,000 gallons; twenty-one years before it was only two million, and in 1684 little more than half a million gallons. In 1742 it was more than seven millions. The London medical men stated in 1750, when more than eleven million gallons were consumed, that there were fourteen thousand cases of illness, most of them beyond the reach of medicine, that were directly attributable to the mania for gin-drinking. Parliament found this gigantic evil tax its resources to the utmost. The Mohocks—a club of young gentlemen, formed in 1712—committed the most horrible outrages in the streets of the metropolis. Neither men nor women were safe from these drunken fiends. It was a favourite amusement with them to squeeze their victim's nose flat on his face and bore out his eyes with their fingers. Their prisoners were pricked with swords or made to caper by swords thrust into their legs. Women were rolled down Snow Hill in barrels. Watchmen and constables were utterly inefficient. Robbers often defied all attempts to seize them, and kept the city in terror by day as well as by night.

* "Notes sur l'Angleterre."
† Tyerman's "Wesley," i., 62
‡ "England in the Eighteenth Century," i., 479—491

The great awakening was now to begin. Isaac Taylor* says, "No such harvest of souls is recorded to have been gathered by any body of contemporary men since the first century;" and on the ground of "expansive and adventurous Christian philanthropy," he holds that the founders of Methodism have no rivals. On December 11th, 1738, Wesley, who was then at Oxford, heard that Whitefield had returned from Georgia. He at once hastened to meet him. Next day he says, "God gave us once more to take sweet counsel together." When Wesley returned from Hernhuth he found that the little Society in Fetter Lane had increased from ten to thirty-two members. Here, on New Year's Day, 1739, the Wesleys, Whitefield, Ingham, Hall, Kinchin, Hutchins, and some sixty others held a lovefeast. "About three in the morning, as we were continuing instant in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, insomuch that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from that awe and amazement at the presence of His majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.'"

In this way the year which saw the dawn of the Revival was ushered in. Oxford Methodism gave its name to the new movement, but it knew little about the righteousness of faith which the friends had at last attained. The preachers of the Evangelical Revival were able to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord. Oxford Methodism had no such message to deliver, and without such a message there could have been no revival. Whitefield was the pioneer in field-preaching. His popularity from the beginning of his ministry was unbounded. The whole city

* "Wesley and Methodism," pp. 130, 135

of Bristol was stirred by his early sermons, and when he came to London the people flocked to hear him with the same eagerness. He sailed for Georgia in January, 1738, with the view of assisting Wesley. On his return to England his popularity was undiminished. He soon found, however, that he would not be allowed to preach in churches. He had come to England to collect money for his orphan-house in Georgia, but all doors were closed. When he visited Bristol he was shut out of the pulpits, and was not even allowed to preach to the inmates of the prison. Two clergymen were bold enough to offer him their churches, but the Chancellor of the diocese threatened that Whitefield should be suspended and expelled if he continued to preach in the diocese.

Whitefield felt that he had a message to deliver thousands were eager to hear it. He remembered that his Master taught by the lake or on the mountain; and moved by this example, on February 17th, 1739, he ventured to preach to the colliers at Kingswood in the open air. There were two hundred people in his first congregation, but the second time he preached there were two thousand. Soon ten or twenty thousand gathered to hear him. A gentleman lent him a large bowling-green in the heart of Bristol, where he preached to a vast congregation. For six weeks he had glorious success. Then he wrote to Wesley, urging him to come and take charge of the work in Bristol and Kingswood, whilst he visited other places. Wesley was fully employed in London, where he was invited to expound the Scriptures in many of the religious Societies of the time as well as in the Society at Fetter Lane. He describes one week's work in a letter to Whitefield. On Sunday, February 25th, he preached first at St. Katharine's, then at Islington, where the church was crowded and very hot. "The

fields, after service, were white with people praising God." At a later hour three hundred were present at a Society in the Minories; thence he went to Mr. Bray's house, and after the Society meeting at Fetter Lane, to another house, where also they "wanted room." On Tuesday evening he had meetings at four, six, and eight; on Wednesday a women's meeting; on Thursday two or three hundred met at the Savoy; on Friday a friend's parlour was more than filled, and another room was twice filled by eager listeners.*

Wesley was reluctant to leave such promising work, but Whitefield and his friend Seward urged him in the most pressing manner to come to Bristol without delay. At this time both the Wesleys were accustomed to seek for direction, as a last resort, in any emergency by opening the Bible and looking at the first text that met their eye. This strange custom they and their friends had learned from the Moravians. All the verses which Wesley thus found seemed to threaten some great disaster. Charles Wesley would scarcely suffer the journey to be mentioned, but when he opened his Bible on those words, "Son of man, behold, I take from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke; yet shalt thou not mourn or weep, neither shall thy tears run down," his opposition was silenced. The Society at Fetter Lane was consulted about the journey, but could reach no conclusion. At last it was decided by lot that Wesley should go to Bristol.

On Saturday, March 31st, he met Whitefield in that city. He stood in his friend's congregation next day with conflicting feelings. "I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he

* Whitefield's "Journal."

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." The same day Whitefield left the city. Wesley spent the evening with a little Society in Nicholas Street, where he expounded the Sermon on the Mount—a pretty remarkable precedent of field-preaching, as he calls it. In this way he got ready for his first out-of-doors sermon. It was four o'clock on Monday afternoon when he "submitted to be more vile." From a little eminence in a ground adjoining the city he spoke to three thousand people from Luke iv. 18, 19: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor." "Is it possible," he asks, "that any one should be ignorant that it is fulfilled in every true minister of Christ?" Wesley and his hearers little thought how gloriously it would be fulfilled in himself for more than half a century.

He remained in Bristol till June 11th, 1739. He had reason to say, "Oh, how has God renewed my strength, who used ten years ago to be so faint and weary with preaching twice in one day!" He read prayers every morning at Newgate, and expounded the Scripture in one or more of the religious Societies every evening. On Monday afternoon he preached out of doors near Bristol, on Tuesday at Bath and Two Mile Hill alternately, on Wednesday at Baptist Mills, every other Thursday near Pensford, every other Friday in another part of Kingswood, on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning at the Bowling Green. On Sunday he also preached at eleven near Hannam Mount, at two at Clifton, at five on Rose Green. After this he sometimes visited one of the Societies, and then held a lovefeast. His

congregation at seven in the morning often consisted of five or six thousand people. Services like these taxed his strength to the utmost.

A few days after he reached Bristol three women agreed to meet together weekly in a little Society; four young men also met in the same way. On the 9th of May a piece of ground was taken in the Horse Fair, near St. James' Church yard, where a room was to be built large enough to contain the Societies at Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street, with their friends. Three days later the foundation stone of this first Methodist preaching-place was laid, with great thanksgiving. Wesley had appointed eleven feoffees, on whom he relied to provide funds and take charge of the work. He soon found his mistake. The trustees did nothing to raise money. The whole work was ready to stand still. Wesley took upon himself the payment of the workmen. Before he knew where he was he thus incurred a liability of more than a hundred and fifty pounds. The subscriptions did not reach forty pounds. Whitefield urged Wesley to take the building entirely into his own hands, as the feoffees would have power under the deed to turn him out if he did not preach as they wished. This was excellent advice. Wesley therefore cancelled the deed, and took the whole responsibility upon himself. Money he had not, nor any human prospect or probability of procuring it. "But I knew," he says, "'the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof,' and in His name set out, nothing doubting."

Bristol witnessed many strange scenes under Wesley's ministry. These scenes did not, however, begin in that city. On January 21st, 1739, whilst he was expounding at Mr. Sims', in the Minories, all were surprised to hear a well-dressed, middle-aged woman suddenly cry out as in the agonies of death. Her cries continued some time, and

she seemed in the sharpest anguish. Next day she called on Wesley, at his special request. He learned that she had been under strong conviction of sin three years before, and had suffered such distress of mind that she had no comfort or rest day or night. She consulted the clergyman of the parish, who told her husband that she was stark mad, and advised him to send for a physician. The doctor blistered and bled his patient, but could discover no remedy. Under Wesley's word she found a faint hope that He who had wounded would undertake her cause, and heal the soul which had sinned against Him. Such scenes became frequent in Bristol, both in the Society rooms and in the open air. Men and women cried out aloud under Wesley's word, as in the agonies of death. Prayer was then offered for them, and before long they were generally able to rejoice in God their Saviour. Sometimes a violent trembling seized the hearers, and they sank to the ground. At one meeting in the Baldwin Street room Wesley's voice could scarcely be heard for the groans and cries of the people. A Quaker, who was greatly displeased at what he regarded as dissimulation, was biting his lips and knitting his brows, when he dropped down in a moment. His agony was terrible to witness. Prayer was made; and he soon cried out, "Now I know thou art a prophet of the Lord."

One of the most remarkable cases was that of John Haydon, a weaver. He was a stout Churchman, regular in all his life and habits. He heard that people fell into strange fits at the meetings, and came to see for himself. At Baldwin Street, on the night when the indignant Quaker was struck down, Haydon had his wish. After the meeting he went about among his friends till one o'clock in the morning, labouring to persuade them that it was all a delusion of the wicked

one. He sat down to dinner on the day after this meeting, but wished to finish "a sermon which he had borrowed on 'Salvation by Faith.'" As he read the last page he changed colour, fell from his chair, and began screaming terribly and beating himself against the ground. The neighbours flocked about the house. Between one and two Wesley, who was often called to visit people in such circumstances, was told in the street of this occurrence, and came into the house. The room was full of people. Haydon's wife would have kept them outside, but he said, "No; let them all come; let all the world see the just judgment of God." He was lying on the floor, held by two or three men, when Wesley entered, but at once fixed his eye on him. Stretching out his hand, he 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." No sooner had he spoken than he began to beat himself on the ground. His breast heaved, and great drops of sweat rolled down his face. Wesley and his friends prayed earnestly till the sufferer's pangs ceased; both body and soul were then set at liberty. In the evening Wesley visited him again. The man's voice was gone, and he was as weak as a child, but he was full of peace and joy.

Similar convulsions seized some of Wesley's hearers in London and in Newcastle. It is a striking fact that they occurred chiefly under John Wesley's ministry. Charles Wesley was more impassioned as a preacher, Whitefield was more vehement and exciting, but Wesley's calm and measured argument, in which every word went home to

the hearts and consciences of his hearers, was most frequently attended by these convulsions of body and mind. There is no doubt that some cases were impostures. In August, 1740, Charles Wesley had to talk sharply to a girl of twelve, who now confessed that she had cried out or pretended to be seized with fits about thirty times, in order that Wesley might take notice of her. In June, 1743, at Newcastle, Charles Wesley ordered one girl to be carried out. She was violent enough in her cries till she got outside, but when she was laid outside the door she found her legs and walked off. Another night he gave notice that whoever cried so as to drown his voice should be quietly carried to the end of the room. This timely warning produced such a good effect that his "porters" had no employment the whole service.

Charles Wesley gives a judicious account of these convulsions. "Many, no doubt, were, at our first preaching, struck down, both soul and body, into the depth of distress. Their *outward affections* were easy to be imitated." At Newcastle, where he declared that he thought no better of any one for crying out or interrupting his work, all listened quietly. There is no doubt that he acted wisely. He regarded "the fits" as a device of Satan to stop the work, and found that "many more of the gentry" came when quiet was restored. People who hoped to attract attention by their convulsions soon found that it was not worth while to distress themselves. But when all deductions have been made, many of the earlier cases are still unaccounted for. No explanation meets these cases save that which ascribes them to intense conviction of sin. This has often been known to throw body and mind into an agony of distress. When the Bechuanas began to embrace Christianity, after Robert Moffat had laboured for nine years without success, the chapel at Kuruman

was filled with a storm of sobs and cries which made it almost impossible to continue the service. Before the rise of Methodism similar scenes had been witnessed in New England, and even in Scotland. A physician who suspected that fraud had much to do with these manifestations was present at a meeting in Bristol. One woman whom he had known many years broke out "into strong cries and tears." He could hardly believe his own eyes. He stood close to her, observing every symptom, till great drops of perspiration ran down her face, and all her bones shook. He was puzzled, because he saw at once that this was neither fraud nor any natural disorder. When both body and soul were healed in a moment the doctor acknowledged the finger of God.

One of Wesley's visits to Bath, in June, 1739, is memorable for his encounter with Beau Nash. There was great excitement in the city when it was known that Nash would come to interrupt the service. Wesley was entreated not to preach, but he would not yield to such an unworthy suggestion. The event showed that he was right. Bath was at that time the most fashionable watering-place in England. More than eight thousand families are said to have visited it every year.* James Hervey, who stayed there four years after his friend Wesley's encounter with Nash,† says, "Every one seems studious of making a gay and grand appearance. It is, I think, one of the most glittering places I ever beheld. 'Anointed with oil, crowned with rose-buds, and decked with purple and fine linen,' they sport away their days, chanting to the sound of the viol, drinking wine in bowls, and stretching themselves on

* Lecky, i., 554.
† "Oxford Methodists." p. 231.

couches of ivory." Nash was king of the revels. He was an adventurer and a gamester, but all Bath acknowledged his rule and carefully observed the regulations which he posted in the pump-room. Ball-dresses and dances were all fixed by the Beau. His equipage was sumptuous. He usually travelled from Bath to Tunbridge in a post chariot and six greys, with outriders, footmen, French horns, and every other appendage of expensive parade. He always wore a white hat, and, to apologise for this singularity, said he did it purely to secure it from being stolen; his whole dress was tawdry.*

Wesley had a much larger audience than usual. The rich and great came with the crowd to witness the expected discomfiture of the Methodist preacher. They were "sinking apace into seriousness," whilst Wesley showed that the Scripture had concluded all under sin, when Nash appeared, and coming close to the preacher, asked by what authority he did these things. All the people waited for the answer. The King of Bath must have presented a strange contrast to the Methodist clergyman. Wesley quietly replied that he preached "by the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the (now) Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands upon me, and said, 'Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.'" Nash then said that the meeting was a conventicle; but Wesley quietly told him that it was not a seditious meeting, and was, therefore, not a conventicle, nor contrary to the Act of Parliament. Foiled here, Nash simply repeated his assertion, and turned to a more promising accusation. "I say it is. And, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir," said

* Life of R. Nash. London, 1772. P. 49.

Wesley, "did you ever hear me preach?" "No," was the answer. "How then can you judge of what you never heard?" "Sir, by common report," said Nash. "Common report is not enough. Give me leave, sir, to ask, Is your name Nash?" The Beau answered, "My name is Nash." Wesley replied, "Sir, I dare not judge of you by common report: I think it is not enough to judge by." Nash had had enough on that head. He paused a while to recover himself, then said, "I desire to know what this people comes here for." Wesley had no need to speak. A woman in the company broke out, "Sir, leave him to me; let an old woman answer him. You, Mr. Nash, take care of your body; we take care of our souls; and for the food of our souls we come here." Nash slunk away without uttering another word. Wesley had come off with flying colours. His quiet answers may have shown the fashionable gamester his folly in meddling with a man who was such a thorough master of fence, and the poor woman's happy sally completely turned the tables on him. James Hervey, during his visit in 1743, also wrote Nash a faithful letter, in which he called on him to repent before the books should be opened at last, so that the King of Bath was not left without reprovers.

As Wesley returned to his friend's house the street was full of people who hurried to and fro, "speaking great words." When, however, Wesley answered their inquiries by saying, "I am he," they were silent at once. Several ladies followed him to Mr. Merchant's. He went into the room where he was told that they were waiting to speak to him. "I believe, ladies, the maid mistook, you only wanted to look at me. I do not expect that the rich and great should want either to speak with me, or hear me, for I speak the plain truth—a thing you hear little of, and do

not desire to hear." A few words passed between them; then Wesley retired.

He was recalled to London in the middle of June, 1739, by letters which reported that great confusion had arisen in the Society at Fetter Lane for want of his presence and counsel. He reached the metropolis on June 13th. After receiving the Sacrament at Islington Church, Wesley met his mother, whom he had not seen for a year. He had then read her an account of the work of grace in his own heart, which she greatly approved. She heartily blessed God, who had brought her son to so just a way of thinking. Whilst Wesley was in Germany some one forwarded a copy of that paper to one of his relations, who sent an account of it to Mrs. Wesley. Wesley found her under strange fears that he had erred from the faith. The true facts had been so utterly disguised that his mother did not recognise the paper which she had heard from end to end. This matter was happily cleared up; and the mother of the Wesleys spent her last years at the Foundery, rejoicing in the spread of Methodism, and rendering no small service to her son by her wise counsels.

The evening of his arrival Wesley met the Society at Fetter Lane. A French prophetess had strangely imposed on the simple-minded people. She professed to be immediately inspired, and roared outrageously when Charles Wesley prayed. He had wrung a confession from one man that clearly showed she was a woman of immoral life, but Bray was vehement in her defence. When John Wesley met the Society her champions were much humbled, and all agreed to disown her. He was able to report that it pleased God to remove many misunderstandings and offences that had crept in, and to restore in good measure 'the spirit of love and of a sound mind." Two members

of the Society who had renounced all connection with the Church of England were left off the roll.* On the Saturday all met together to humble themselves before God for their unfaithfulness. A great blessing rested upon them. No such time had been known since the memorable New Year's outpouring.

Wesley stayed five days in London. He had not only succeeded in restoring peace at Fetter Lane, but had taken his place as a field-preacher in London. The day after his arrival he went with Whitefield to Blackheath. Twelve or fourteen thousand people had assembled. Whitefield surprised him by asking him to preach in his stead, "which I did," he says, "though nature recoiled, on my favourite subject, 'Jesus Christ, who of God is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.' I was greatly moved with compassion for the rich that were there, to whom I made a particular application. Some of them seemed to attend, while others drove away their coaches from so uncouth a preacher." He preached on Sunday morning at seven, in Upper Moorfields, to six or seven thousand people (Charles Wesley says, "above ten thousand people, as was supposed"), and at five in the evening on Kennington Common to about fifteen thousand. The following Sunday Charles Wesley ventured to follow his brother's example. He had been driven from his curacy at Islington by the action of the churchwardens, and had gone with Whitefield to his open-air services, but as yet he had not ventured to preach out of doors in London. The three friends were now enlisted in this work.

Wesley made four journeys from London to Bristol in

* See Chapter X. The Methodist Society had not yet been formed.

1739. He visited Oxford four times, made a short stay in Wales, and went to Tiverton with Charles Wesley, when they heard of their eldest brother's death. The first three months of the year were mainly spent in London; then Wesley was in Bristol for five months, so that he was only able to devote about two months more that year to London.

Samuel Wesley, the eldest son of the Rector of Epworth, died at Tiverton on November 6th, 1739, in his fiftieth year. He had anxiously followed the later course of his brothers, and was greatly opposed to their field-preaching. Only seventeen days before his death he remonstrated with his mother for countenancing "a spreading delusion, so far as to be one of Jack's congregation." "For my own part," he says, "I had much rather have them picking straws within the walls than preaching in the area of Moorfields." * Samuel Wesley was a good Christian, though his Church principles were so stiff. In the seclusion of his school life, he was quite unable to understand the constraint which led his younger brothers to go into the highways to declare the Gospel to the perishing. They were quite as loyal Churchmen as he, and had been as ardent in their support of order, but necessity was laid upon them to preach the Gospel. Samuel Wesley died in faith. "My poor sister," says John Wesley, "was sorrowing almost as one without hope. Yet we could not but rejoice at hearing, from one who had attended my brother in all his weakness, that, several days before he went hence, God had given him a calm and full assurance of his interest in Christ. Oh, may every one who opposes it be thus convinced that this doctrine is of God!"

* Priestley, p. 109. The reference is to Bedlam, which had not yet been moved from Moorfields to its present site.

CHAPTER IX

THE MORAVIAN AND CALVINIST CONTROVERSIES.

UP to this time the Wesleys, who had been shut out of the churches, had preached in the open air, or "expounded" at the Society in Fetter Lane and other similar Societies. Some better arrangements were now essential. Wesley says, "On Sunday, November 11th, 1739, I preached at eight o'clock to five or six thousand, on the spirit of bondage and the Spirit of adoption, and at five in the evening to seven or eight thousand, in the place which had been the King's foundery for cannon.* Oh, hasten Thou the time when nation shall not rise up against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." This foundery became the head-quarters of Methodism until City Road Chapel was built in 1778. In 1716, when the damaged cannon taken by Marlborough from the French were being recast there, a tremendous explosion tore off part of the roof, and broke down the galleries, killing several of the workmen, and injuring others. A young Swiss called Schalch had foreseen the danger and warned the Surveyor-General of the Ordnance. All who would take warning left the place and thus escaped. Schalch was appointed Master Founder, and directed to choose another locality for casting the King's cannon. He chose

* Whitehead, ii., 125.

the rabbit-warren at Woolwich. The old building was thus left in ruins. It stood, about fifty feet from Providence Row, on the east side of Windmill Hill, now Tabernacle Street, parallel with City Road, and a few yards to the east of it, just above Finsbury Square. The building had a frontage of forty yards, with a depth of about thirty-three.

It was in November, 1739, that two gentlemen, who up to that time were entire strangers to Wesley, asked him to preach here. Wesley consented. He was afterwards pressed to buy it. The purchase money was a hundred and fifteen pounds, but heavy repairs and necessary alterations raised the expense to about eight hundred pounds. Galleries had to be erected for men and women, the Society-room had to be enlarged, and the whole structure thoroughly repaired. Some friends, including Mr. Ball and Mr. Watkins, lent Wesley the purchase money; and subscriptions were raised. The first year two hundred pounds was contributed, the next a hundred and forty pounds, but the people were so poor that five years after the opening there was still a debt of three hundred pounds. There were two entrances, one leading to the chapel, the other to the preachers' house, the school, and the band-room. The chapel would seat about fifteen hundred people on its plain benches. Men and women sat apart, and no one was allowed to claim any place as his own: those who came first sat down first. The women sat in the front gallery and under it, the men in the side galleries and in the seats below them. About a dozen benches, with rails at the back, were provided for women in front of the pulpit. In the band-room, behind the chapel, classes and prayer-meetings were held. One end of it was fitted up as a schoolroom; the other became Wesley's "Book

Room," where Methodist literature was sold. Above the band-room were Wesley's apartments; at the end of the chapel stood the house for the preachers. A coach-house and stable completed the accommodation.

The Foundery was closed for repairs in the early part of 1740. Silas Told, who afterwards became Wesley's schoolmaster there, attended the five o'clock service one morning in June, 1740. He found it a ruinous place, with an old pantile covering, decayed timbers, and a pulpit made of a few rough boards. Exactly at five o'clock a whisper ran through the congregation, "Here he comes! here he comes!" Wesley stepped forward in his robes, and gave out a hymn. The singing enraptured the stranger, but he did not like the extempore prayer, because he thought it savoured too much of Dissent. His prejudice quickly abated when Wesley began to preach from the words, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you." The friend who had brought Told to the Foundery asked him how he liked Mr. Wesley. He replied, "As long as I live I will never part from him."

The time had now come when the importance of having a Methodist centre became clear. A month after Silas Told's visit to the Foundery the final breach at Fetter Lane occurred. We have seen that Wesley was recalled from Bristol in June, 1739, by the grave disorders which had sprung up. He was able to restore peace; but the mischief was not at an end. At Oxford in December he received disquieting accounts from London. Scarcely one in ten retained his first love; most of the rest were in the utmost confusion, biting and devouring one another. Wesley had a long and particular conversation with Mr. Molther, a Moravian minister, who had come to England on October 18th, on his way to Penn-

sylvania. He became very popular, and remained in London till September, 1740, when he was summoned to Germany. Molther soon caused trouble by teaching that no man had any degree of faith unless he enjoyed the full assurance of faith and the abiding witness of the Spirit. He maintained that the gift of God which many had received through Peter Böhler's labours was not justifying faith. Wesley could not accept doctrines which were opposed to all his own experience and to the plain teaching of the New Testament. Molther also held that the way to find faith was to be "still." Those who desired the blessing were to give up the public means of grace. They were not even to pray or to read the Scriptures, nor to attempt to do any good works.

On New Year's Day, 1740, Wesley tried to teach the Society the true Scriptural doctrine of stillness from the words, "Be still, and know that I am God." Two days later such a spirit of love and peace as they had not known for months rested upon the Society. Before February closed he found, however, that some of the members, not content with neglecting the means of grace, were constantly disputing with those who were of a better spirit. At the end of April the trouble became more serious. Wesley at once returned to London when he heard of the confusion. His brother Charles had suffered much during the previous weeks. Mr. Stonehouse and Charles Delamotte had both been led astray. Charles Wesley foresaw that a separation was now inevitable. He was not the man to make any truce with those who dishonoured the ordinances of God, but he was exposed to no small annoyance in consequence of his firmness. One of the fanatics declared that there were only two ministers in London—Molther and Bell—who were true believers. John Bray asserted that it was

impossible for any one to be a true Christian out of the Moravian Church.

When Wesley came to London he and his brother had an interview with Molther, who still defended his erroneous views. Wesley was utterly at a loss what to do. More than fifty persons, who had been greatly troubled by this new gospel, spoke to him. "Vain janglings" sounded in his ears wherever he went. At Fetter Lane one evening the question of ordinances was broached. Wesley begged, however, that they might not be always disputing, but might rather give themselves to prayer. During his ten days' stay Wesley laboured, both by his public addresses and his visits, to undo the mischief and save the erring; but the difficulty was only postponed. When he returned to London in the beginning of June he began to expound the Epistle of St. James as an antidote to the temptation to leave off good works. Poor Stonehouse said that he was going to sell his living, because "no honest man could officiate as a minister in the Church of England." At one meeting in Fetter Lane Mr. Ingham bore noble testimony for the ordinances of God and the reality of weak faith. But they would neither receive his saying nor Wesley's.

On Sunday, June 22nd, Wesley says, "Finding there was no time to delay without utterly destroying the cause of God, I began to execute what I had long designed,—to strike at the root of the grand delusion." From the words, "Stand ye in the way; ask for the old paths," he gave an account of the manner in which God had worked two years before, and showed how tares had recently been sown among the wheat. During the following week he laboured every day to guard the members at the Foundery against the errors that were rife. On July 16th the Fetter Lane Society resolved that Wesley should not be allowed to preach there. "This

place," they said, "is taken for the Germans." When some asked if the Germans had converted any soul in England, whether they had not done more harm than good by raising a spirit of division, and whether God had not many times used Mr. Wesley to heal their divisions when all were in confusion, some of the agitators even ventured to assert that they were never in any confusion at all. At eleven o'clock Wesley withdrew from this useless debate.

Two days later he received the Sacrament, with his mother and a few of his friends. They afterwards consulted as to the course they should adopt. All saw that matters had reached a crisis, and were of one mind as to the course to be pursued. The following Sunday evening, July 20th, Wesley went, with Mr. Seward, afterwards one of the leading Calvinists, to the lovefeast in Fetter Lane. He said nothing till the conclusion of the meeting; then he read a paper which in a few sentences summed up the controversy, and gave expression to his conviction that their teaching about weak faith and the ordinances was 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 another word he withdrew, eighteen or nineteen others accompanying him.

The Methodist company, thus separated from the rest, now met at the Foundery. Twenty-five men joined it. All but two or three of the fifty women in band at Fetter Lane desired to cast in their lot with the Wesleys. Some weeks before—on June 11th—the Wesleys and Ingham

had succeeded in remodelling the bands at Fetter Lane, so that those who still observed "the ordinances" might not be scattered one or two in a band of disputers and be harassed and sawn asunder, as they had so long been. Charles Wesley summed up the result in his journal: "We gathered up our wreck,—'raros * nantes in gurgite vasto,' for nine out of ten are swallowed up in the dead sea of stillness. Oh, why was this not done six months ago? How fatal was our delay and false moderation!" † The step then taken did something to preserve the faithful remnant who now met at the Foundery. This breach at Fetter Lane is a painful subject. But every one must share Charles Wesley's regret that the separation was not made earlier. His brother hoped against hope. His patience and longsuffering were characteristic. At last he was forced to take some step. The Fetter Lane Society had virtually expelled him on the Wednesday before he read his paper. He had no other course but to enter his protest and withdraw, with any whom he could save from the perilous snare of these teachers.

The Evangelical Revival now began to bear precious fruit in London. Up to this time the controversies and errors of Fetter Lane had been fatal to growth. In a letter to Zinzendorf on March 14th, 1740, James Hutton says that "John Wesley, being resolved to *do* all things himself, and having told many souls that they were justified who have since discovered themselves to be otherwise, and having mixed the works of the Law with the Gospel as *means* of grace, is at enmity against the Brethren. Envy is not extinct in him. His heroes falling every day into

* Æneid, i., 122—"some scattered swimmers in the vast abyss."

† C. Wesley's "Journals," i., 239.

poor sinners frightens him; but at London the spirit of the Brethren prevails against him. I desired him simply to keep to his office in the body of Christ, *i.e.*, to awaken souls in preaching, but not to pretend to lead them to Christ. But he will have the glory of doing all things." The latter sentence explains the former. Wesley was to gather in converts; the Brethren were to stamp their own likeness upon them. It was no wonder that Wesley was "resolved to *do* all things himself." If he had neglected that, his labour would soon have been undone. We have seen how calmly and patiently he treated the Moravians. His heroes were turned into poor sinners, Hutton says; that is, they were led to deny the work of grace which had been wrought in their hearts. James Hutton's feelings were far different from those he once cherished towards the man who led him to Christ.

Molther and the disturbers at Fetter Lane were teaching doctrines opposed to the spirit of their own Church. On September 29th, 1740, Wesley earnestly called upon the Moravian Church, and Count Zinzendorf in particular, to correct him if he had misunderstood their tenets. He had learnt from them, as well as from the English Church, that a man might have a degree of justifying faith before he is wholly freed from doubt and fear, and might use the ordinances of God before he gained the full assurance of faith. Molther and his supporters entirely denied this. Wesley's Society soon outstripped the Moravian Church. In 1743, when the Methodists in London numbered 1,950 members, the Moravians of the metropolis were only about seventy-two.

On his return from Hernhuth in 1738, Wesley began a letter to his friends there in which he says, "But of some things I stand in doubt, which I will mention in love and meekness. . . . Is not the Count all in all among you?

Do you not magnify your own Church too much? Do you not use guile and dissimulation in many cases? Are you not of a close, dark, reserved temper and behaviour?" * The letter was not sent, but it shows that Wesley had already detected some germs of that spirit which afterwards led to the separation. In September, 1741, Wesley and Zinzendorf had an interview at Gray's Inn Walk; but it led to no practical result. When Mr. Stonehouse read the conversation, he remarked, "The Count is a clever fellow; but the genius of Methodism is too strong for him." † Four years later Zinzendorf inserted an advertisement in the *Daily Advertiser* to the effect that the Moravians had no connection with the Wesleys. A prophecy was added that the brothers would "soon run their heads against the wall." "We will not if we can help it," was Wesley's comment.‡ The Count's later life fully justified Wesley's position. His influence on the Moravian Church was singularly unhealthy, and Antinomianism spread among the English members of the community. Wesley's painful experience did not prevent him from paying a high tribute to his old friends. "Next to the members of the Church of England," he says, "the body of the Moravian Church, however mistaken some of them are, are in the main, of all whom I have seen, the best Christians in the world." §

Before the breach with the Society at Fetter Lane, signs of a still more painful struggle had appeared. The Calvinist controversy separated the Wesleys from George Whitefield, who had long been as their own soul, and divided Methodism into two camps. Grave and long was

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* Works, viii., 381.
† Moore, i., 489.
‡ Tyerman, i., 477; Hutton, 143.
§ Works, viii., 379.

the strife of opinion. No other subject has so profoundly stirred Latin Christianity as the question of free-will and Divine sovereignty. From the days of St. Augustine this has been the great theological battle-ground of the West. Even in Reformation times, when the struggle with Rome assumed its most terrible proportions, this controversy rent Protestantism into two hostile sections, and turned Lutheran and Calvinist into deadly foes. It is no wonder, therefore, that such a controversy divided the workers of the Evangelical Revival into two parties. As early as 1725 Wesley had corresponded with his mother on this subject, and had taken up his own position. He was not, therefore, likely to abandon his views nor even to keep them to himself, as Whitefield suggested that he should do.

In 1740 Wesley published his sermon on "Free Grace." He sums up the doctrine of "election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation" in one sentence: "The sense of all is plainly this—by virtue of an eternal, unchangeable, irresistible decree of God, one part of mankind are infallibly saved, and the rest infallibly damned; it being impossible that any of the former should be damned, or that any of the latter should be saved." Mrs. Wesley, in a striking letter on election in 1725, tells her son, "I think you reason well and justly against it." Then she expresses her own views. "I firmly believe that God from eternity has elected some to eternal life; but then I humbly conceive that this election is founded on His foreknowledge, according to Romans viii. 29, 30. Whom, in His eternal prescience, God saw would make a right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, He did predestinate and adopt for His children." Such were substantially the views Wesley held in his famous sermon. So early as July 2nd. 1739, Whitefield had urged him

to "keep in" his "sermon on predestination." He went to America soon afterwards, whence he wrote several letters to his friend on the subject in controversy. In the States he found himself among ministers who were zealous for Calvinism. He read the books which they recommended, so that his own convictions became stronger. When Wesley published his sermon on "Free Grace" in 1740, he told his readers in a brief "Address" that nothing save the strongest conviction that he was indispensably obliged to declare this truth to all the world could have induced him to oppose the sentiments of those whom he esteemed so highly for their works' sake. He begged any one who might feel bound to contest his views to do so in love and meekness. Charles Wesley was perfectly in accord with his brother. He wrote a hymn of thirty-six verses which was printed at the end of the sermon.

> And shall I, Lord, confine Thy love
> As not to others free?
> And may not every sinner prove
> The grace that found out *me*?
>
> ---
>
> Doom them an endless death to die,
> From which they could not flee
> O Lord, Thine inmost bowels cry
> Against the dire decree!

Whitefield was much disturbed by the publication of this sermon. During his voyage to England, in an affectionate letter to Charles Wesley, dated February 1st, 1741, he says, "My dear, dear brethren, why did you throw out the bone of contention? Why did you print that sermon against predestination? Why did you in particular, my dear brother Charles, affix your hymn, and

join in putting out your late hymn-book? How can you say you will not dispute with me about election, and yet print such hymns, and your brother send his sermon over to Mr. Garden and others in America?" The answer was simple. The Wesleys felt it their duty to speak plainly. They mentioned no names, but quietly set forth their own views. All must allow that the leaders of the greatest popular revival ever known in this country were not at liberty to be silent. Whitefield might argue that he did not know the elect, and was therefore bound to offer the Gospel to all. But such an argument would not satisfy the Wesleys. Calvinism was spreading. Antinomianism was creeping into their Societies. There was no time to lose in coping with the growing mischief.

Whitefield brought with him from America an answer he had prepared to Wesley's sermon. This manuscript letter he submitted to Charles Wesley, asking his advice whether he should print it or not. Charles returned it endorsed, "Put up again thy sword into its place." Whitefield, however, did not take this advice, but published his letter. John Wesley had no objection to fair argument; but he considered Whitefield's letter a burlesque upon an answer. He also greatly regretted that Whitefield should have mentioned him and his brother by name, so that it seemed like a public attack upon his old friends. Whitefield began to preach against the Wesleys by name in Moorfields and other places. Once, when invited to the Foundery, he preached the absolute decrees in the most peremptory and offensive manner. Some thousands of people were present, and Charles Wesley sat beside him. The rupture was soon complete. Whitefield refused to hold any connection with those who believed in free grace. The Society at Kingswood was rent asunder by this controversy, so that it did not look up again for years. John

Cennick, the schoolmaster there, was one of Wesley's lay-preachers, and owed his position entirely to his kindness. Yet Cennick did not scruple to use all his influence to spread dissension. When two women publicly railed against Charles Wesley, he did not even attempt to interpose. One day in May, 1741, when Charles Wesley was passing the Bowling Green in Bristol, a woman cried out, "The curse of God light upon you," with such uncommon bitterness that he turned to speak to her. He stayed heaping coals of fire upon her head, till at last she said, "God bless you all." When he visited Wales one man publicly left the room because he would not reprove Howel Harris for his Calvinism. Such facts show the bitterness of feeling that was aroused by this painful controversy.

The brothers were now left alone. Whitefield refused to work with them; their companions in Georgia—Ingham and Charles Delamotte—had become Moravians. Stonehouse, Gambold, Westley Hall, Hutton, and others also joined the Germans. For a time Wesley feared that his brother would follow their example. Charles had said, "No English man or woman is like the Moravians." John tells him, "The poison is in you: fair words have stolen away your heart." Charles seemed to have forgotten the struggle against stillness, in the bitterness of the more recent controversy, and drew comparisons favourable to the Germans. Whatever his danger may have been, his preaching soon showed that he was as much opposed to their doctrine of "stillness" as ever. About this time a reunion with the Moravians was discussed, but when the "bands" met together to consider the matter, all agreed that the time had not come. The erroneous doctrines were not renounced, and the Fetter Lane Society spoke with such guile that scarcely any one could tell what they really believed. Wesley did not give up hope

of a reconciliation. In August, 1743, he summoned his brother Charles in haste from Cornwall to a conference with Whitefield and the Moravians. He was even willing to make unjustifiable concessions for the sake of peace; but as neither Whitefield nor the Moravians would take part in the conference, the whole matter fell through.

CHAPTER X

THE METHODIST SOCIETIES.

WESLEY was familiar with the religious Societies of the Church of England. He found there congenial spirits, to whom he often expounded the Scriptures, after his return from Georgia. Dr. Horneck, curate at the Savoy and Canon of Westminster, Mr. Smithies, curate of Cripplegate, and William Beveridge, the great Oriental scholar, who was Rector of St. Peter's, Cornhill, and afterwards Bishop of St. Asaph, were the founders of these Societies. Their popular and awakening ministry led to the conversion of many young men, whom they advised to meet together once a week to edify each other. The members related their religious experience, and maintained a fund to relieve the poor, pay the debts of prisoners, and educate children. In 1678, a year after the formation of the Society, two stewards were elected to manage its charities. The religious Societies were under a cloud during the reign of James II., when every private gathering was an object of suspicion to the authorities; but a great step in advance was taken by the reading of public prayers every night at eight o'clock in St. Clement Danes Church. A crowded congregation attended. A monthly lecture which was established also became very popular.

After the Revolution a rule was passed that every member should try to gain others. The numbers now grew so rapidly that Societies were formed in all parts

of London. Great care was taken that no one should be admitted who would lower the religious tone of the meetings. The Societies and those who sympathised with them then set themselves to check the scandalous vice of the times. The Lord Mayor and other London magistrates lent their countenance to the scheme. The Society for the Reformation of Manners* was thus formed. Sunday markets were closed, houses of ill-fame shut up, and great success crowned the work. John Wesley's father preached a sermon on behalf of this Society in 1698. In 1735 it was stated that the number of prosecutions for debauchery and profaneness in London and Westminster since the foundation of the Societies had been 99,380. Abuses sprang up, however, in connection with this detective work, and the Society soon sank into insignificance.† James Hutton, in his narrative of the awakening in England, says that the religious Societies "had so settled down into lifelessness, that the majority of their members were altogether slumbering or dead souls, who cared for nothing but their comfort in this world, and as they had once joined this connection, they were willing to continue in this respectable pastime on Sunday evenings, by which, at small expense, they could enjoy the pleasure, and fancy themselves better than the rest of the world who did not do the like."‡

On May 1st, 1738, the Wesleys and their friends in London, acting on the advice of Peter Böhler, had formed a little religious Society. They were to meet together every week to confess their faults and pray for one another. The Wesleys were no strangers to the bless-

* Josiah Woodward's "Account of the Religious Societies."

† Lecky, ii., 547.

‡ Benham's Life of James Hutton, p. 9.

ing of religious fellowship. The Oxford Methodists had found that the only way in which they could keep alive their zeal and spirituality was to meet frequently together. A serious man, whom John Wesley took a long journey to visit, about the time when Methodism arose at Oxford said to him, "Sir, you are to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve Him alone; you must, therefore, find companions, or make them; the Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." On board the *Simmonds*, the little party of Methodists met several times every day to pray and help each other. In Savannah * Wesley advised the serious part of his congregation to form themselves into a Society, which should meet once or twice a week, in order to promote spiritual life. Out of their number Wesley selected some for a more intimate union with each other. These he met himself on Sunday afternoons. Peter Böhler's suggestion, therefore, being in harmony with Wesley's whole course, recommended itself to him at once. Wesley says the first rise of Methodism was at Oxford, in November, 1729, when four friends met together, the second at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty met at his house, the third when the Society in London was formed. The members first met at the house of young James Hutton, near Temple Bar. When that became too small they removed to the chapel at 32, Fetter Lane.† The original number of members was ten. Three years after the Society was formed, a reunion was arranged. Seven of the first members thus met together; one was sick; two were unwilling to attend. Peter Böhler, who had returned from America, was present.

* Whitehead, xiii., 305. † Life of James Hutton.

Three years had brought great changes. The Wesleys had withdrawn from Fetter Lane; Whitefield had separated from the Wesleys. "Surely," says Wesley, "the time will return when there shall be again 'union of mind, as in us all one soul.'" When Wesley got back from the Continent in September, 1738, the Society at Fetter Lane had increased to thirty-two. By the beginning of 1739 it had about sixty members. Up to the time of Molther's arrival it made steady progress, fed continually by the Wesleys' preaching in London.

The Society at Fetter Lane was not a Moravian Society. On May 2nd, 1738, the day after its formation, James Hutton wrote to Zinzendorf asking that Peter Böhler might remain in England as a Moravian preacher on his return from Carolina. The petition was signed by himself and thirteen others, but neither of the Wesleys joined in the request. The Society had no connection with the Moravians except in the personal friendship and sympathy of its leading members till Molther's arrival. He could scarcely speak in English, but four weeks after his arrival in this country, on October 18th, 1739, he made an attempt to preach. He told Count Zinzendorf that the Society had been mainly under the care of the Wesleys until this time.* Wesley states that he was only a private member; but there is no doubt that his influence † was considerable, and that the converts of the early Methodist preaching added to the numbers of the Society. James Hutton says, "In June, 1740, he" (Wesley) "formed his Foundery Society, in opposition to the one which met at Fetter Lane, and which had become a Moravian Society." Wesley's journals and his letters to the Rev. Mr. Church expressly state that "the 'reasoning and disputing,' the

* Life of James Hutton, 53, 54. † Works, viii., 424.

'biting and devouring one another,'" which he found on his arrival from Bristol on December 19th, 1739, was not among "the Moravians, but the English brethren of Fetter Lane before their union with the Moravians."* The Wesleys, therefore, were never Moravians nor members of a Moravian Society, as has been so often stated. Molther's visit to England marks the beginning of the conversion of the Fetter Lane Society into a Moravian Society.

About fifty women and twenty-five men followed Wesley to the Foundery in July, 1740. A nucleus had already been gathered there. In the latter part of 1739, seven months before the breach with the Fetter Lane Society, eight or ten persons, who appeared deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption, came to Wesley. Many who were awakened under the Methodist preaching had already spoken to him. They were surrounded by difficulties; every one sought to weaken, none to strengthen their hands. Wesley's advice was always, "Strengthen you one another. Talk together as often as you can. And pray earnestly with and for one another, that you may 'endure to the end and be saved.'" They wished him to counsel and pray with them himself. Wesley, therefore, asked for their names and addresses. He soon found that the number was too great for him to visit them at their own homes. "If you will all of you come together," he said, "every Thursday, in the evening, I will gladly spend some time with you in prayer, and give you the best advice I can." This important step was taken at the end of 1739. Their number increased daily. Wesley gave them counsel, always closing "with prayer suitable to their necessities." When Wesley began to

* Works, viii., 424.

preach in Bristol in the spring of 1739, a few persons agreed to meet weekly like those in London. After the meeting-house there was built several small Societies, which already met in various parts of the city, were joined to the Methodist Society. Those at Baldwin Street and Nicholas Street are specially mentioned in the arrangements for building the room in the Horse Fair. As the work spread Methodist Societies were also formed at Kingswood and Bath.*

The Wesleys visited these Societies, but there was as yet no adequate provision for pastoral oversight. Financial necessities at Bristol led to one great step in advance. A large debt still remained on the room in the Horse Fair. On February 15th, 1742, many of the friends met together to consult about its payment. A Captain Foy stood up and suggested that every member should give a penny a week till the debt was paid. Some one objected that many of the people could not afford to do this; but he replied, "Then put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well: I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as for myself. And each of you call on eleven of your neighbours weekly; receive what they give, and make up what is wanting." The person who took charge of the contributions was called a leader, the company under his care a class. After this arrangement was made the visitors sometimes reported to Wesley that certain members did not live as they ought. He at once saw that this was the very thing he had long been wanting. He called the leaders together and desired each to make particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he visited weekly. By this means many "disorderly walkers" were detected. Some

*Works, xiii., 308.

turned from the evil of their ways; others were put out of the Society. The new organisation was introduced into the metropolis and all other places as soon as possible. It bore the best fruit. In London especially it was a vast gain.* On February 1st, 1742, there were already eleven hundred members of the Society scattered from Wapping to Westminster. Wesley could not easily discover what their life was in their own homes and their own neighbourhood. Some who were inconsistent did much harm before he was aware of it. The pastoral care of the Societies had till then rested entirely on the Wesleys. The first step towards transforming the leaders into a lay pastorate was taken when Wesley requested them to make special inquiries about the Christian consistency of those from whom they collected contributions. It was soon found to be inconvenient for the leaders to visit the members at their own homes. It took up more time than many of them could spare. In some cases masters and relatives were much opposed to these visits. There was no opportunity for the members to strengthen each other's hands, or meet face to face for the removal of any misunderstandings that arose. It was therefore arranged that the members of each class should meet together for an hour or two every week.†

By these means Methodism was provided with an organisation which remains unchanged to this day. The secret of its endurance and of the high spiritual tone which it has maintained among its members is to be found here. Wesley abundantly recognised the blessing of these weekly meetings to the Society. "It can scarce be conceived what advantages have been reaped from this little prudential regulation. Many now happily ex-

* Works, i., 356. † *Ibid.*, viii., 253, etc.

perienced that Christian fellowship of which they had not so much as an idea before. They began to "bear one another's burdens," and naturally to "care for each other." As they had daily a more intimate acquaintance with, so they had a more endeared affection for, each other. Objections were raised, of course. "Many were at first extremely averse to meeting thus." Some looked on the class as a restraint; others said they were ashamed to speak before company. When any one objected that there were no such meetings when he joined the Society, Wesley replied, that it was a pity that they had not been held at first, but that the need and benefit of them was not then known. He regarded it as one of the great advantages of Methodism that it was able to change whatever could be changed for the better, and to learn by every day's experience. He set himself to answer the more plausible objection that the leaders had neither gifts nor grace for such work by meeting them once a week for counsel. If any one was remarkably deficient in qualifications, Wesley promised that he would try to exchange him for a better leader if the objectors spoke to him of such cases. He took care, however, to point out that God had greatly blessed the work even of humble leaders.

These arrangements were introduced into Methodism during the year 1742, when the great extension of Wesley's itinerancy took place by his visit to Newcastle. It provided a lay pastorate at the time when the growth of the work made it essential to have a vastly increased staff. Restless as was the itinerancy of the brothers, they could only pay occasional visits to the country Societies. The leaders lived on the spot, and met their classes every week at the appointed hour. By this means the work made steady progress, even when the

brothers and their lay-preachers were called away to other scenes of labour. Their converts were knit together and kept from wandering back into the world. Bands had been formed at Fetter Lane consisting of not less than five or more than ten members of the Society; married men met together in one band, married women in others; single men and single women had bands of their own. It was thought that greater freedom and fuller help would be secured by grouping them thus. The "Select Society" or "Band" at the Foundery formed an inner circle composed of the more advanced Christians, to whom Wesley gave advice which might help them to "go on unto perfection." The visitation of the classes once a quarter by Wesley or his preachers and the use of a ticket of membership which might secure the discipline and privacy of the Society seem to have begun in 1742.* In August, 1737, Wesley joined with the Germans in Georgia in one of their lovefeasts. Wesley was greatly interested in these survivals of the ancient Church. He, therefore, introduced them into his own Societies.† At first they were only open to the Methodist bands, but by-and-bye all the Society joined in them. After partaking of bread and water, the meeting was devoted to religious experience.

Wesley early resolved, by the grace of God, not "to strike a blow" in any place where he could not follow it up.‡ At Mullingar, in Ireland, on July 10th, 1750, for instance, he declined an invitation to preach made by the sovereign of the town (the Irish title for mayor). "I had little hopes," he says, "of doing good by preaching in a place where I could preach but once, and where none but me could be suffered to preach at all." When he visited a

* Myles' "Chronological History," 19.
† *Ibid.*, 19. ‡ Works, i., 416.

new place and found that those who had been awakened desired to join his Society, Wesley used to explain its purpose, and receive those who were willing to become members. At Newport, in the Isle of Wight, in 1781,* he says, "After preaching, I explained the nature of a Methodist Society, of which few had before the least conception." Sometimes the whole congregation begged to remain to his Society meetings. They crowded in with the members, or exhibited such eagerness to hear that Wesley could not refuse them admittance.† He was well repaid at Barnard Castle in June, 1763. "It was a day of God's power. They all seemed to take the kingdom by violence, while they besieged heaven with vehement prayer." The financial affairs of the Society were under the care of stewards. This arrangement was first made in London. A few days after the Foundery was taken, some of the friends told him that they would not sit under him for nothing. When Wesley replied that his fellowship supplied all his needs, they reminded him of the expenses of the lease and repairs of the Foundery. One man offered to receive the subscriptions and pay accounts.‡ Wesley thus found his first steward. The number was afterwards raised to seven. They met every Thursday morning at six, and distributed all the money paid them up to the previous Tuesday night. All the finance of his Societies was thus placed under the management of suitable persons chosen from their own number. As the growth of Methodism called for division of labour, it was simply made on these lines.

The watchnight service, which has been adopted by so many evangelical Churches, was first kept in 1740, at

* Works, iv., 218. † *Ibid.*, iii., 135, 161, 197.
‡ *Ibid.*, viii., 311.

the suggestion of a Kingswood collier. Before their conversion the colliers used to spend their Saturday night at the public-house. Now it was devoted to prayer and praise. Wesley heard that they met thus in Kingswood School. Some advised him to put an end to such meetings, but he could see no cause to forbid them. Rather he believed the watchnight might be introduced elsewhere. He sent word that he would join in the service on the Friday nearest full moon, and on the previous Sunday announced that he would preach. Methodism thus gained one of its most popular and useful services. At first watchnights were held once a month, then once a quarter, from half-past eight to twelve. The service is now confined to the last night of the year.

Wesley felt himself responsible for every side of his people's life. He was not content to be their adviser in spiritual matters only, but laboured to make them model citizens and subjects. In March, 1755, on a visit to the west of England, Wesley "found Bristol all in a flame; voters and non-voters being ready to tear each other to pieces." He was suffering from a severe cold, and had not recovered his voice so as to preach or even to speak to the whole Society, but he desired those members who were "freemen" to meet him. He mildly and lovingly informed them "how they ought to act in this hour of temptation," and had good reason to believe that the greater number profited by the advice. What his election rules were may be seen from another record. At Bristol, on October 3rd, 1774, he says, "I met those of our Society who had votes in the ensuing election, and advised them—

"1. To vote, without fee or reward, for the person they judged most worthy.

"2. To speak no evil of the person they voted against.

"3. To take care their spirits were not sharpened against those that voted on the other side."

Extracts might be multiplied to show how necessary and how effectual such counsels were.

Wesley was equally careful to preserve his Society from defrauding the revenue. Smuggling was carried on in all parts of the country in those days to an extent which now appears almost incredible.* Wesley states that "the numbers concerned therein, upon all our coasts, are far greater than can be imagined." In 1744 it was estimated that not less than four thousand five hundred horses were employed in the trade in Suffolk alone.† In July, 1753, the stewards of West Cornwall met at St. Ives. When Wesley began to examine the Society he soon found that he could not proceed. "Well-nigh one and all bought or sold uncustomed goods." In the evening he met all together, and told them they must put away this abomination or see his face no more. All promised to do so, and the plague seemed to be stayed.‡ At Sunderland in 1757 he warned the Society that he would no more suffer smuggling, than robbing on the highway. Next day he examined every member on this subject. A few would not promise to refrain, so that he was obliged to cut them off. Two hundred and fifty were of a better mind. Two years later § he spoke to each of the Society there again on this matter. "Most of the robbers, commonly called smugglers, have left us," he says, "but more than twice the number of honest people are already come in their place. And if none had come, yet should I not dare to keep those who steal either from the King or subject." In a letter written from

* Works, ix., 225.
† Tyerman, i., 216.
‡ Works, ii., 413.
§ *Ibid.*, ii., 490.

Chatham to Joseph Benson, who was grappling with smuggling at Sunderland, Wesley says, "'The Word to a Smuggler' is plain and homely, and has done much good in these parts." The tract thus aptly described was published in 1767. There is no escape from its reasoning. It shatters every subterfuge, and proves that all who buy uncustomed goods are as guilty as the actual smuggler himself. Those who excused themselves by saying, "But I do not know that it was run," did not escape. "No! Did not he that sold it tell you it was? If he sold it under the common price, he did. The naming the price was telling you, 'This is run.'" He points out that those who defrauded the revenue increased the burden of taxation on all honest men. "Therefore every smuggler is a thief-general, who picks the pockets both of the King and all his fellow-subjects."

Any one who studies Wesley's relation to his Societies will soon see how resolutely he set himself to grapple with the vices of his day. Wherever Methodism was planted it contributed in no small degree to a general reformation of manners. It made its members better citizens, and raised the whole standard of morality. No truce was ever made with sin. At Rye, in January, 1778, Wesley preached, as usual, to a crowded congregation. "How large a Society would be here could we but spare them in one thing! Nay, but then all our labour would be in vain. One sin allowed would intercept the whole blessing."

London was the choicest of Wesley's Societies. At Manchester, in May, 1783, he was greatly delighted with the select Society. "I believe there is no place but London where we have so many souls so deeply devoted to God."*

* Works, iv., 247, 273, 280.

A year later at Whitby he says, "I met such a select Society as I have not seen since I left London. They were about forty, of whom I did not find one who had not a clear witness of being saved from inbred sin. Several of them had lost it for a season, but could never rest till they had recovered it. And every one of them seemed now to walk in the full light of God's countenance." Such a tribute helps us to understand the high character of the London Society. The old preachers often trembled when they were called to labour among the experienced and devoted Methodists of the metropolis. Not a few came with reluctance. But they soon found that their hands were borne up by the people, so that their work prospered, and the happy fellowship with some of the oldest and best members Methodism possessed proved no small blessing to them. For both the Wesleys London Methodism cherished the warmest affection. Charles felt so deeply the loving interest of the Society at the time of his marriage, that he writes, "Surely both Jesus and His disciples are bidden." Nowhere was he more beloved or more happy than at London. It was the same with his brother. In December, 1741, he met the Society. "We scarce knew how to part, our hearts were so enlarged toward each other." Years only deepened the love and sympathy with which London Methodism regarded its founder. This was, indeed, true of all the Societies. Wesley had sacrificed everything—ease, wealth, honour—to give himself wholly to the work of God; and he was honoured not only by the abounding success of Methodism, but by the reverence and love of all his people.

CHAPTER XI.

THE EXTENSION OF THE WORK.

WESLEY'S journey to Newcastle in 1742 forms an important stage in his itinerant life. He had been much exercised during the early successes of field-preaching at Bristol in 1739 about the unusual manner of his ministration there. After much prayer and careful weighing of all objections, he felt that he could still adhere to the views expressed in a letter to his friend, the Rev. James Hervey, some time before, and printed in his journal.* In that letter occurs the famous phrase on the memorial tablet erected to the Wesleys in Westminster Abbey: "I look upon all the world as my parish." The practical outcome of this principle was gradually exhibiting itself. Up to the spring of 1742 Wesley's labours had been confined mainly to London and Bristol. At Oxford he was a frequent visitor, and many places on the road between the two Methodist centres enjoyed his ministry. Wales and various adjacent towns and villages had been visited from Bristol. He had also found his way to the Moravian Societies in Nottingham and other places. The year 1742 saw the boundaries of his great circuit stretched to the extreme north of England. John Nelson, who had been converted under Wesley's first sermon in Moorfields, afterwards returned to his home at Birstal, in

* Works, i., 200; "Oxford Methodists," 412.

Yorkshire. His labours soon changed the face of the whole town. So many came to hear him read and exhort that he had to stand at the door of his house and talk to the crowd that stood within and without. Six or seven people were converted every week, and the greatest profligates and drunkards in the county were changed. Nelson begged Wesley to come to his help. The Countess of Huntingdon was also anxious that the colliers on the Tyne should share the blessing which the colliers of Kingswood had already found.

The immediate cause of Wesley's journey, however, was a summons from Leicestershire to visit his dying friend Miss Cowper, who lived with the Countess of Huntingdon. He had arranged to start for Bristol on the day this call reached him, but set off to the north at once. From Donnington Park he pushed on to Birstal, and sent for Nelson to his inn. Wesley now heard from the heroic stonemason the story of his fifteen months' labour, and himself preached to the people. On May 28th he reached Newcastle. He found that he had not come too soon. In his first walk through the town he says, "I was surprised: so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing (even from the mouths of little children), do I never remember to have seen and heard before in so small a compass of time. Surely this place is ripe for Him 'who came not to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance.'" He could find no one who appeared to care for religion. At seven o'clock on the Sunday morning, he walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of the town, with his travelling companion, John Taylor. Standing alone at the end of the street, they began to sing the hundredth Psalm. Three or four people came out to see what was the matter. Soon the number increased to four or five hundred, and before the service was over twelve or

fifteen hundred assembled. Wesley's text was, "He was wounded for our transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed."

When the sermon was over, the people stood gaping and staring at the preacher in profound astonishment. Seeing their amazement, he said, "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help, I design to preach here again." At the appointed hour, the hill on which he intended to stand was covered from top to bottom. Neither at Moorfields nor at Kennington Common had he seen such an audience. Wesley knew that even his voice, strong and clear though it was, could not reach one half of this vast concourse; but he stood where he had all in view, ranged on the side of the hill. Then he explained and applied that promise, "I will heal their backsliding; I will love them freely." Wesley had never received such a welcome as he found in the metropolis of the north. The poor people, he says, were ready to tread him under foot out of pure love and kindness. For some time he was quite unable to get out of the press. When at last he reached his inn, several people were waiting there who "vehemently importuned" him to stay at least a few days, or even one day longer. Wesley had promised to be at Birstal on Tuesday, so that he could not comply with their request. But about two months later Charles Wesley took his brother's place. Before the year was out Wesley himself was with them again.

He set out from Newcastle after his first visit at three o'clock on the Monday morning. He was welcomed everywhere. The mistress of the inn at Boroughbridge, where he stayed for the night, begged that she and her family might join in Wesley's evening devotions. Next

morning, between four and five, she joined them again at prayers. Riding through Knaresborough, where they had no intention of stopping, a young man begged Wesley to go to his house. There he learned that some words spoken to a man as he and his companion passed through the place on their way to Newcastle had set many in a flame. A sermon they had given him had travelled from one end of the town to the other. Just then a woman begged to speak with Wesley. At her house he found five or six of her friends, one of whom had long been under deep conviction. They spent an hour together in prayer with great blessing. Such incidents were God's call to thrust in the sickle, for the harvest was ripe.

The most interesting part of this preaching tour was Wesley's visit to Epworth. After spending a few days in the neighbourhood of Birstal, he rode on to his native place. He does not seem to have been at Epworth since he consulted his mother about his mission to Georgia seven years before. Not knowing, as he says, whether there were any left who would not be ashamed of his acquaintance, Wesley took up his quarters at an inn in the middle of the town. Here an old servant of the Parsonage, with two or three other poor women, found him out. When he asked if she knew any in the place who were in earnest to be saved, she answered, "I am, by the grace of God; and I know I am saved through faith." Many others, she assured him, could rejoice with her. In this happy way Wesley spent his Saturday night at Epworth. Next morning he offered to assist Mr. Romley, either by preaching or reading prayers. But the drunken curate would have none of his help. The old church was crowded in the afternoon in consequence of a rumour that Wesley would preach. Mr. Romley gave them a sermon on "Quench not the Spirit," in which he said that

enthusiasm was one of the most dangerous ways of doing this, and enlarged in a very florid and oratorical manner on the character of an enthusiast. Every one knew the application he had in view.

As the people flocked out of church they learned that they were not to be disappointed. John Taylor stood in the churchyard and gave notice, "Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, designs to preach here at six o'clock." When the hour came such a congregation assembled as Epworth had never seen before. Wesley stood near the east end of the church, upon his father's tombstone, and cried, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." He was urged to visit the neighbouring villages, and though very anxious to pursue his journey, he could not resist the appeal. Through the influence of Moravian teachers in the district, many had forsaken church; others were plunged in doubt. Wesley yielded to their entreaties, and remained for seven days more. He visited the neighbouring villages, and preached every evening on his father's tomb. During the week he went to see a justice of the peace in a neighbouring town who had shown a candour and good feeling which were rare in those days. A waggon-load of the new heretics had been carried before him by their angry neighbours. When he asked what these people had done, there was deep silence. No one seemed to have thought of such an insignificant matter. One of the accusers at last found a voice. He informed the magistrate that they pretended to be better than other people, and prayed from morning to night. "But have they done nothing beside?" he inquired. "Yes, sir," said an old man; "an't please your worship, they have *convarted* my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! And now she is quiet as a lamb." "Carry

them back, carry them back," replied the justice, "and let them convert all the scolds in the town."

On the Saturday evening many in the churchyard congregation dropped down as dead. Wesley's voice could scarcely be heard for the cries of those who were seeking rest; but their sorrow was soon changed to praise. One gentleman, who had not been at public worship for more than thirty years, stood there as motionless as a statue. His chaise was outside the churchyard; his wife and one or two servants were with him. Wesley, seeing him stand thus, asked abruptly, "Sir, are you a sinner?" With a deep and broken voice, he answered, "Sinner enough." He "continued staring upwards till his wife and a servant or two, all in tears, put him into his chaise and carried him home." This touching scene has a happy sequel. The impression then made was never effaced. Ten years later, in April, 1752, Wesley says, "I called on the gentleman who told me he was 'sinner enough' when I preached first at Epworth on my father's tomb, and was agreeably surprised to find him strong in faith, though exceeding weak in body. For some years, he told me, he had been rejoicing in God, without either doubt or fear, and was now waiting for the welcome hour when he should 'depart and be with Christ.'"

On the last Sunday of this visit, Wesley preached morning and evening at Wroote, where John Whitelamb, his brother-in-law, was Rector. He had been Samuel Wesley's amanuensis whilst he was writing his book on Job, and was afterwards John Wesley's pupil at Oxford. Mary Wesley, his wife, only lived nine or ten months after their marriage. Whitelamb had been in Wesley's congregation on the first Sunday when he preached in Epworth churchyard. The little church at Wroote would

not hold the people who came from all the district to hear their old friend and minister, who had laboured among them for two years with such acceptance. After three other services on the Sunday Wesley took his stand at six o'clock on his father's tomb. A vast multitude had assembled from all parts. "I continued among them for near three hours; and yet we scarce knew how to part." His reflections upon the work at Epworth have peculiar interest. "Oh, let none think his labour of love is lost because the fruit does not immediately appear. Near forty years did my father labour here; but he saw little fruit of his labour. I took some pains among this people, too; and my strength also seemed spent in vain. But now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed sown so long since now sprang up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins."

Five weeks later, after visiting Sheffield and Bristol, Wesley returned to London. He found his mother on the borders of eternity. She had no doubt or fear. Her one desire was to depart and be with Christ. Wesley's description of the work at Epworth must have filled his mother's heart with joy. Her Rectory services had borne witness to her intense desire for the salvation of the people. Her labour also was bearing fruit. After the account of her burial, Wesley inserted in his journal the letter to her husband in which she justifies her services. She also had been, he reminds his readers, in her measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness. She died on Friday, July 23rd, three days after her son's return. Her five daughters were with her. Charles Wesley, who was absent on one of his evangelistic tours, was the only member of her family who was not at her side. Her children, standing around her bed, fulfilled her last

request, made just before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God."

Mrs. Wesley had spent her last days at the Foundery, where she lived in her son's apartments. She was thoroughly identified with all the early phases of the Great Revival. Samuel Wesley had ventured to offer some remonstrance because she was present at John's open-air service at Kennington in September, 1739. Three or four weeks before that service, whilst her son-in-law, Mr. Hall, handed her the cup at the Sacrament, with the words, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee," the words, she said, "struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven *me* all *my* sins." On the Monday before she went to Kennington she told John Wesley the blessing she had found. When he asked whether her father, Dr. Annesley, had not the same faith, she replied that he had it himself, and declared shortly 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 he never preached explicitly on the subject, and Mrs. Wesley had scarcely ever heard such a thing mentioned as having forgiveness of sins now, or the witness of the Spirit. From the time of this service her heart was filled with peace. She took part in the consultation held at the Foundery before Wesley read his final protest on his withdrawal from the Fetter Lane Society. She also rendered important service when the subject of lay-preaching was exercising Wesley's mind.

On Sunday, August 1st, 1742, she was buried in Bunhill Fields, close to the Foundery. An innumerable company of people gathered at five o'clock in the afternoon. Great was the mourning when Wesley read, "I commit

the body of my dear mother to the earth." * He afterwards spoke from the words, "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened. And the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." "It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side eternity." The mother lived on in her sons and in the glorious work which they were doing for God and their country. Her name has become one of the household names of the world. Isaac Taylor says, with great justice,† "The Wesleys' mother was the mother of Methodism in a religious and moral sense; for her courage, her submissiveness to authority, the high tone of her mind, its independence, and its self-control, the warmth of her devotional feelings, and the practical direction given to them, came up and were visibly repeated in the character and conduct of her sons."

Wesley spent the three months after his mother's death between London and Bristol. He travelled over the high-road between the two cities five times in these months. On November 8th he set out from Bristol to Newcastle. Charles Wesley had just left on his way to London, after a few weeks' visit. The work at Newcastle was different from any that Wesley had yet seen. He says, "The grace of God flows here with a wider stream than it did at first either at Bristol or Kingswood. But it does not sink so deep as it did there. Few are thoroughly convinced of sin, and scarce any can witness that the Lamb

* Stevenson, "Wesley Family," p. 226.

† "Wesley and Methodism," p. 19.

of God has taken away their sins." A week later he adds that he never saw a work of God so evenly and gradually carried on. It constantly increased. So much did not seem to be done at any one time as had often been accomplished in Bristol or London, but the work always made steady advance both in the Society and in individual members. Wesley spent nearly seven weeks in Newcastle, preaching constantly in the town and the outlying district. He was detained by the endeavour to find a site for a preaching-place. At last Mr. Stephenson, a merchant in Newcastle, whose descendant, an ex-mayor of the city, is one of its best-known Methodists, offered a plot of ground, forty-eight by ninety feet, for forty pounds. Next day Wesley signed an agreement. Within a week he had taken a lodging near the ground, but the intense frost made it impossible to begin the building. Wesley never felt such cold. His desk stood within a yard of the fire, yet he could not write for a quarter of an hour together without his hands being quite benumbed.

The first stone of the "house" was laid on December 20th. People flocked from all parts. Three or four times during the evening service Wesley was forced to pause in his sermon that the congregation might pray and give thanks. The cost of building was estimated at seven hundred pounds. Many asserted that it would never be finished, or that Wesley would not live to see it covered in. "I was of another mind," he says, "nothing doubting but, as it was begun for God's sake, He would provide what was needful for the finishing it." Wesley's courage will be better appreciated when it is known that he began to build with only twenty-six shillings in hand. His confidence was not disappointed. Soon afterwards a Quaker, who had heard of his scheme, sent him the following letter:—

"FRIEND WESLEY,—I have had a dream concerning thee. I thought I saw thee surrounded with a large flock of sheep, which thou didst not know what to do with. My first thought when I awoke was, that it was thy flock at Newcastle, and that thou hadst no house of worship for them. I have enclosed a note for one hundred pounds, which may help thee to provide a house." * Supplies came in from time to time, so that the work was pushed on rapidly. Wesley called it "The Orphan House," apparently after Francke's schools at Halle, which he had seen with great interest during his Continental journey in 1738.

Wesley preached his farewell sermon on December 30th to a vast congregation. Men, women, and children hung upon him, so that he could not disengage himself. When at last he got to the gate and took horse, one woman kept her hold, and ran by his side down to Sandgate. Seven weeks later he returned, as the work at Newcastle needed special oversight during the building of the Orphan House. At last, on March 25th, 1743, he preached in the shell of the building on "The Rich Man and Lazarus." A great multitude assembled and kept a watchnight there. The Orphan House stood just outside Pilgrim Street Gate. It had a blessed history. Its school, under the care of a master and mistress, provided for forty poor children. One of the first Sunday-schools in the north, with a thousand scholars, met there; it had its Bible Society before the British and Foreign Bible Society was established. In its choir, one of the best in the country, the sons of Mr. Scott, afterwards the celebrated Lord Eldon and Lord Stowell, were sometimes found. The colliers and keelmen of the district were so eager to hear the Wesleys that they would lie down

* Moore, i., 551.

on the benches after evening service and sleep till the hour for the early morning preaching. The Newcastle of Wesley's time was very different from the city of to-day.* Sir William Blackett's mansion then stood in its extensive pleasure-grounds on what is now the centre of the place. When Wesley visited the town in June, 1759, he found it in all its summer beauty. It called forth from him the high tribute, "Certainly, if I did not believe there was another world, I should spend all my summers here, as I know no place in Great Britain comparable to it for pleasantness." "The Newcastle of Wesley's time," says a recent writer, "must have been indeed one of the most beautiful spots under the canopy of heaven, with its castle and its churches and quaint groups of red-tiled, old-timbered houses, nestling amongst orchard trees, with patches of meadow and garden here and there, and all hemmed in by the encircling wall, with its gateway, towers, and its turrets, which, an old writer tells us, was the finest town-wall in Europe, and very like those of Avignon and Jerusalem in appearance." †

During the year 1742 many Methodist Societies were formed in Northumberland, Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Nottinghamshire, as well as in the southern parts of Yorkshire.‡ Charles Wesley's journal for this year has not been preserved, but glimpses of him may be caught in Newcastle, Bristol, and London. He was devoting himself to the labours of an itinerant's life with an ardour and success scarcely, if at all, inferior to his brother's. Whitefield was now working on his own lines, but the

* Tyerman, i., 385.

† R. J. Charleton, in *English Illustrated Magazine*, November, 1885.

‡ Works, xii., 311.

Wesleys had already gathered a band of lay-preachers around them, who were rendering inestimable service in extending and consolidating the work.

We may here refer to Wesley's connection with his old university after his return from Georgia. He was a frequent visitor to Oxford, and some important steps of his preparation for the Great Revival were taken there.

Two pleasant glimpses of Wesley, at Lincoln College, are given in his journal. On Saturday, December 8th, 1739, he came into his old room, "from which I went to Georgia. Here, musing on the things that were past, and reflecting how many that came after me were preferred before me, I opened my New Testament on those words (oh, may I never let them slip!), 'What shall we say, then? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the Law.'"* A month later he was in his room once more, looking over the letters he had received for sixteen or eighteen years. Few traces of inward religion were found there. Only one of all his correspondents declared that the love of God was shed abroad in his heart. Wesley did not then understand his words. He adds, "He was expelled out of his Society as a madman, and, being disowned by his friends, and despised and forsaken of all men, lived obscure and unknown for a few months, and then went to Him whom his soul loved." Wesley preached before the University in 1738 and 1741. He was bound to take his turn in the

* Rom. ix. 30—32.

pulpit, or pay three guineas for a substitute. His last sermon was on Friday, August 24th, 1744. The races brought many strangers to Oxford, who swelled his congregation at St. Mary's. The Vice-Chancellor, the Proctors, and most of the heads of houses were present. Charles Wesley, Mr. Piers, and Mr. Meriton had come down to support the preacher. The little band of friends walked together to and from this memorable service. "Never have I seen a more serious congregation," Charles Wesley wrote. "They did not let a word slip them. Some of the heads stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes on him." The Vice-Chancellor sent the beadle for Wesley's notes, which he sealed and forwarded to him immediately. Wesley admired the wise providence of God in this request. By this means every man of eminence in the University read his sermon. He was not allowed to preach again. But the beautiful description of Scriptural Christianity and the touching appeal to the venerable men who were more especially called to form the tender minds of youth show how unworthy and unfounded were the "false and scurrilous" accounts of it which, Wesley tells us, were published in almost every corner of the nation. Gibbon and Adam Smith both bear witness how deeply Oxford then needed reformation. Serious religious instruction or efficient tuition was almost unknown. Wesley was never more faithful, more tender, or more truly Scriptural in his teaching than in the sermon which led to his exclusion from the pulpit of his university. Dr. Conybeare, the learned Dean of Christ Church, said on the day of the sermon, "John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast."* Dr. Kennicott, the Hebrew

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1866, p. 44.

scholar, then an undergraduate at Wadham College, heard this sermon. He says Wesley's "black hair, quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man." He speaks of the agreeable emphasis with which the preacher read his text. Kennicott did not like Wesley's reflections on the University, but was greatly impressed by his sermon. "Had these things been omitted, and his censures moderated, I think his discourse as to style and delivery would have been uncommonly pleasing to others as well as to myself. He is allowed to be a man of great parts." *

Wesley resigned his Fellowship on June 1st, 1751, wishing the Rector and Fellows "constant peace and all felicity in Christ." From November 6th, 1739, his leave of absence had been regularly renewed every six months, till November 6th, 1750, when he asked this favour for the last time. His place was not filled till May 10th, 1754, because there was no candidate duly qualified by county. Robert Kirke, B.A., of Lincoln College, was then chosen as his successor.

* *Methodist Magazine*, 1866, 44.

CHAPTER XII.

ENCOUNTERS WITH THE MOB.

NO man was so familiar with the English mobs of his day as John Wesley. In almost every place he visited opposition was, sooner or later, stirred up against the despised Methodists. We have already seen how Beau Nash tried to silence him at Bath in June, 1739. Next day Wesley was at Priest Down. He stood in the open air, where two men, hired for the purpose, began to sing a ballad. Wesley spoke a few mild words, but as they were without effect, he and his friends were compelled to sing a psalm, which drowned the voices of the disturbers, and utterly silenced them. Prayer was then offered, and the men seemed utterly confounded.* In London and Bristol violent opposition broke out both from high and low. "The beasts of the people," Wesley says, "were stirred up almost in all places to 'knock these mad dogs on the head at once.'" At first no magistrate would listen to any complaints against this brutal violence. On April 1st, 1740, however, the rioters in Bristol, who had long disturbed the Methodists, were so increased as to fill, not only the court before the place of meeting, but a considerable part of the street. The Mayor sent them an order to disperse; but they set him at defiance. He then ordered several of his officers to take the ringleaders into custody.

* Works, i., 199.

These received a severe reprimand at the Quarter Sessions. When they began to excuse themselves by saying many things against Wesley the Mayor cut them short, saying, "What Mr. Wesley is is nothing to you. I will keep the peace; I will have no rioting in this city." The Methodists of Bristol thus found a deliverer.

London was soon as quiet as Bristol. One Sunday evening in September, 1740, when Wesley stepped out of the coach at the Foundery, the mob, who had gathered in great numbers about the door, quite closed him in. He blessed God that the time he had long looked for was come, and at once began to speak on "righteousness and judgment to come." The noise was so great that at first only a few heard, but the silence spread from the little ring around him, till even those on the skirts of the crowd were perfectly quiet. Wesley withdrew from this novel congregation amid general marks of goodwill. "They all showed me much love, and dismissed me with many blessings." The following Tuesday, many who came into the Foundery like lions were quickly subdued. Tears trickled down the faces of those who had just before blasphemed and contradicted. On the Thursday a great number of men got into the Foundery and disturbed the service; but they were soon silent, and did not hear in vain. "I wonder," Wesley says, "that the devil has not wisdom enough to discern that he is destroying his own kingdom. I believe he has never yet, any one time, caused this open opposition to the truth of God without losing one or more of his servants, who were found of God while they sought Him not." A fortnight later these scenes were repeated, but Wesley's tact and self-possession secured a complete victory. Experience gave him perfect facility in handling disturbers. In October, 1740, a London crowd came to drown his

voice by shouting. No sooner had they begun than he turned upon them, "and offered them deliverance from their hard master. The word sank deep into them, and they opened not their mouth."

On December 31st, 1741, Sir John Ganson, the chairman of the Middlesex bench, called upon Wesley, and said, "Sir, you have no need to suffer these riotous mobs to molest you, as they have done long. I and all the other Middlesex magistrates have orders from above to do you justice whenever you apply to us." Two or three weeks later the Methodists did apply for redress. Justice was done, though not with rigour, and from that time the persecuted people had peace in London. Sir John referred to George II. when he spoke of "orders from above." Wesley told Henry Moore, late in life, that one of the Oxford Methodists, who had become a Quaker, settled at Kew.* He was rich and much respected. Permission was given him to walk in the royal gardens, where he often had conversation with the King. One day the monarch asked him if he knew the Wesleys when he was at Oxford, adding, "They make a great noise in the nation." The Quaker replied, "I know them well, King George, and thou mayst be assured that thou hast not two better men in thy dominions, nor men that love thee better, than John and Charles Wesley." When the troubles of the Methodists were discussed by the Council, the King took a firm stand: "I tell you, while I sit on the throne, no man shall be persecuted for conscience' sake." †

Wesley had been in considerable peril at Long Lane, Southwark, in February, 1741, where the mob threw many large stones, one of which went just over his shoulder.

* Moore, ii. [illegible]

† Works, vi., 393.

On January 25th, 1742, whilst speaking from the words, "He that committeth sin is of the devil," the rabble made all the noise they could, and pushed violently against the hearers. They struck some of them, and broke down part of the house. Wesley had instructed the Methodists to keep their seats and not answer the disturbers. They carefully observed his counsels. When, however, their enemies began to throw large stones, which forced their way through the roof, and fell with the tiles among the people, Wesley saw that the people were really in peril of their lives. He then told the rioters, "You must not go on thus; I am ordered by the magistrate, who is, in this respect, to us the minister of God, to inform him of those who break the laws of God and the King. And I must do it if you persist herein; otherwise I am a partaker of your sin." This appeal only made them more outrageous. Wesley then said, "Let three or four calm men take hold of the foremost, and charge a constable with him, that the law may take its course." One man was brought in cursing and blaspheming in a dreadful manner. Five or six men took him to Justice Copeland, who bound him over to appear at the next sessions at Guildford. When the rioter was brought into the house some of his companions shouted, "Richard Smith! Richard Smith!" This man was one of their stoutest champions. Now, however, he made no response. He had been deeply convinced of sin, and came into the room with a woman who also had been actively promoting the disturbance. This woman fell upon her knees and urged Smith never to forget the mercy God had shown him. The prosecution against the man, who had been carried before the magistrate, was suffered to drop, as he submitted and promised better behaviour.

When Methodism began to spread over England in

1742, persecution and riot were the order of the day. Staffordshire has won for itself unenviable notoriety as the headquarters of opposition. In January, 1743, Wesley visited Wednesbury, where his brother had spent a few days. He preached in the Town Hall morning and evening, and also in the open air. About a hundred members were gathered into Society, who increased within two or three months to between three and four hundred. Mr. Egginton, the Vicar, was at first friendly to the Methodists, and told Wesley that the oftener they came the better he should be pleased. Wesley heard him preach a plain, useful sermon, and almost all the congregation at the church went down to the preaching-place, a large hollow half a mile from the town, which would hold four or five thousand people. They stood in a semicircle, tier above tier. The hollow would not contain the multitude gathered from all parts, so that they overflowed on all sides. When Wesley returned in April he found things surprisingly altered. The inexcusable folly of Mr. Williams, one of Wesley's preachers, had transformed the Vicar into a bitter enemy. Williams had abused the clergy and aroused their hatred by his unworthy spirit. But though the Vicar was thoroughly enraged, he had not yet won over the people. They were extremely quiet and attentive to Wesley's preaching. On the Sunday he says that he had never heard so wicked a sermon, and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner, as the Vicar preached. Wesley tried to prepare the members of Society for the storm which he was sure must soon break upon them. Whilst he was speaking "a gentleman rode up very drunk, and after many unseemly and bitter words, laboured much to ride over some of the people." The trouble seemed nearer when he learned that this man was also a clergyman in the district. A month later Charles

Wesley was with "our dear colliers at Wednesbury." He consecrated a piece of ground given for a preaching-place by singing a hymn upon it, and ventured to Walsall, where, he says in his graphic way, the street was full of fierce Ephesian beasts.

In June the storm burst on the poor Methodists. Wesley received the news of the terrible six days' riot on Saturday, June 18th. It was necessary for him to stay in London for his Sunday services, but he set out early next morning to assist them as far as he could. He rode over to Tamworth to consult Counsellor Littleton whether his people could be protected from such outrage. This gentleman told him that there was an easy remedy if the persecutors were rigorously prosecuted. Three months later Wesley visited the sufferers once more. He had preached unmolested at mid-day in the centre of Wednesbury. In the afternoon, whilst he was busy writing at the house of one of the Methodists, a cry arose that the mob had gathered before the door. The friends prayed that God would disperse the mob, and in half an hour all had melted away. Wesley now said this was the time for him to go, but the people were so urgent that he sat down again. Before five o'clock his worst fears were realised. The mob beset the house in greater numbers than ever. One and all shouted, "Bring out the minister; we will have the minister." Wesley asked some one to take their captain by the hand and lead him in. After a few words the lion became a lamb. Wesley now asked him to bring one or two of the bitterest opponents inside. He soon returned with a couple who "were ready to swallow the ground with rage; but in two minutes they were as calm as he." After such skilful preparation, Wesley went out, and calling for a chair, asked, "What do any of you want with me?" They told him that they

wanted him to go with them to the magistrate. "That I will," said Wesley, "with all my heart." The few words he spoke had such effect that the mob shouted, "The gentleman is an honest gentleman, and we will spill our blood in his defence." Wesley now set out for the magistrate's house with two or three hundred rioters; the rest dispersed to their homes. Darkness and heavy rain came on in less than half an hour, but they pushed on another mile to the justice's house at Bentley Hall. He sent word that he was in bed, and advised them to go home and be quiet. The charge as stated to the magistrate's son was ridiculous enough. "Why, an't please you, they sing psalms all day; nay, and make folks rise at five in the morning." They now went to another magistrate at Walsall. He also sent word that he was in bed. These very magistrates had just issued an order calling all officers of justice to search for and bring to them any Methodist preacher found in the district. Fifty of the rioters now undertook to convey Wesley home. They had not gone a hundred yards, when the mob of Walsall burst upon them. It was between seven and eight o'clock. Wesley's convoy were weary and greatly outnumbered. They tried to stand against the new-comers, but many were knocked down, and the rest ran away, so that Wesley was left in the hands of his new enemies. The woman who led the first mob, however, ran into the thickest of the Walsall rioters, and knocked down three or four of them, but she was overpowered and held down by three or four men, who beat her with all their might. She would probably have been killed had not "honest Munchin," the leader of the Walsall rioters, interposed. She was then allowed to crawl home as well as she could.

It was in vain for Wesley to speak, for the noise was

like the raging of the sea. He was dragged along to the town. When he attempted to enter an open door, a man caught him by the hair and pulled him back. He was then hurried through the main street from one end of the town to the other. This was the town which Charles Wesley had found full of "fierce Ephesian beasts" five months before. Their hour had now come. Wesley felt neither pain nor weariness, but continued to speak to all who could hear. At last he stood at the door of a shop and gained a hearing. When he asked them to let him speak, many cried out, "No, no! knock his brains out; down with him! kill him at once." Others said, "Nay, but we will hear him first." For a quarter of an hour Wesley spoke. Then his voice failed, and the tumult began once more. His voice soon returned, and he broke out in prayer. The man who led the mob now turned and said, "Sir, I will spend my life for you. Follow me, and not one soul here shall touch a hair of your head." Two or three of his companions confirmed this, and got close to Wesley; the gentleman in the shop, who had prevented his entrance lest the mob should pull it to the ground, shouted, "For shame! for shame! Let him go," and an "honest butcher" pulled back four or five of the fiercest rioters. The mob now fell back, and Wesley passed through them, surrounded by his champions. On the bridge the opposition rallied again. Wesley and his friends therefore went down one side, crossed the mill-dam, and a little before ten o'clock safely reached Wednesbury. During these five terrible hours Wesley was as self-possessed as if he had been in his study. It came into his mind once that if he were thrown into the river, the papers in his pockets would be spoiled, but he knew that he could swim across, as he had a thin coat and light boots. Though he had to go downhill on a slippery road,

he never stumbled nor made the least slip. A lusty man just behind him struck at the back of his head several times with a large oaken stick, but every time the stroke was turned aside. He escaped many blows through his low stature, and his enemies were knocked down by them. One man raised his arm to strike, but suddenly dropped it, and stroked his head, saying, "What soft hair he has!" The gentleman in the shop where Wesley stopped was the mayor. Wesley, of course, was not aware of this, but the mob knew the chief magistrate, and were somewhat checked by his presence. The first whose hearts were touched were the captains of the rabble, one of whom had been a prizefighter at the bear-garden of the district.

Four members of Society—three men and one woman—stood by Wesley from first to last. None received a blow save William Sitch, who held Wesley's arm from one end of the town to the other. He was knocked down, but soon got to his friend's side again. Wesley asked him what he looked for when the mob came upon them. "To die for Him who had died for us," was his noble answer. Joan Parks, the heroic young woman who shared Wesley's perils, was as free from fear as if she had been quietly at home. All through the struggle she felt a confident persuasion that God would deliver them. Wesley lost one flap of his waistcoat and a little skin from his hand in this tumult. The flap of the other pocket, in which was a bank-note, was only half torn off. Wesley had been hardened by encounters with the mob. Two years before, he says, a piece of brick grazed his shoulders; a year later a stone struck him between the eyes at the Great Gardens; a month before his Walsall experiences he received a blow in a riot. This night he received two: one as the rioters bore him into Walsall, the other as he came out. One man struck him on the breast with all his might, another hit

him in the mouth with such force that the blood gushed out, yet he felt no more pain from either blow than if, to use his own illustration, they had touched him with a straw. When he reached Wednesbury the friends were praying for him in the house from which he had started. His sufferings awoke general sympathy. Many whom he had never seen came to rejoice in his escape. Next morning, as he rode through the town, he says, "Every one I met expressed such a cordial affection that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard." Charles Wesley met him at Nottingham. He says that his brother "*looked* like a soldier of Christ. His clothes were torn to tatters.' Charles Wesley, who went straight from Nottingham to the scenes of the rioting, adds some interesting particulars. The greatest profligate of the country was his brother's deliverer, and carried him through the river on his shoulders. This man, "honest Munchin," Charles Wesley admitted on trial into the Methodist Society five days after the riot. Since that night he had been constantly under conviction of sin. Charles asked what he thought of his brother. "Think of him?" was the answer; "that he is a mon of God; and God was on his side, when so mony of us could not kill one mon." The real name of this convert was George Clifton. He died in Birmingham in 1789, two years before Wesley, at the age of eighty-five. He was never weary of telling the story of the night when God saved him from laying his hand on His servant.*

Cornwall vied with Staffordshire in the fierceness of its opposition to the Methodists. But the brunt of the Cornish opposition was borne by Charles Wesley. The story of his visit to St. Ives in July, 1743, is one of

* Tyerman, i., 413

the most interesting pages of his itinerant life. The resolute mayor of that town saved the Methodists from outrages such as their brethren in Staffordshire groaned under. Wesley, who was at St. Ives two months later, had one brush with the mob. They rushed into the room where he was preaching, roaring and striking those that stood in the way. He tried to inspire his friends with his own calmness, but they were not so familiar with such scenes. Finding the uproar increase, he went into the midst and brought the captain of the mob up to the desk. Wesley received one blow on the side of the head. He and the leader of the rabble reasoned together, till the man was quite won over, and undertook to quiet his companions. When Wesley visited the place again in April, 1744, he found that the mob had pulled down the preaching-place, "for joy that Admiral Matthews had beat the Spaniards." "Such," he adds, with his keen satire, "is the Cornish method of thanksgiving. I suppose if Admiral Lestock had fought too, they would have knocked all the Methodists on the head." For a time there was great peace, but Wesley received news from Cornwall six months later which made him say that the war against the Methodists was "everywhere carried on with far more vigour than that against the Spaniards."

The riot at Falmouth in July, 1745, was one of the most serious Wesley ever faced. His tact and courage were never more conspicuous. He escaped without the slightest injury. "I never saw before," he says—"not at Walsall itself—the hand of God so plainly as here." At Bolton, in Lancashire, Wesley had also to face bitter opposition. But the disturbers came in for the worst blows themselves. Wesley took his stand at the Cross in August, 1748, when the great wild mob tried to throw him down from the steps on which he stood. They pushed

him off once or twice, but he stepped up again and continued his discourse. Stones now began to fly. Some of the rioters got behind Wesley on the Cross to thrust him down. They thus enjoyed the sweets of persecution. One man was bawling at Wesley's ear, when a stone struck him on the cheek, and he was still. Another was forcing his way down to push the preacher off, when a missile struck him on the forehead. The blood ran down from the wound, and his course was stayed. A third man had got close to Wesley and stretched out his hand, when a sharp stone hit him smartly on the joints of his fingers. He was thus effectually disabled.

Fourteen months later Wesley gained a signal victory over the Bolton mob. He had come from Rochdale, where multitudes of people filled the streets, "shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon us with their teeth." Their rage had compelled him to abandon his intention of preaching in the street, and to hold his service in a large room. He found, however, that the people at Rochdale were but lambs compared with those at Bolton. "Such rage and bitterness," he says, "I scarce ever saw before in any creatures that bore the form of men." They followed in full cry to the house where Wesley stayed, and filled the street from end to end. When there was a slight lull in the storm, one of the party ventured out, but he was rolled in the mire by the rioters, so that when he scrambled into the house again he could scarcely be recognised. The friends inside heard the ringing of a bell which summoned all the forces together, and quietly awaited the attack. Wesley was upstairs when news was brought that the mob had rushed into the house. Two of his friends were busy reasoning with them. Wesley quietly walked down into their midst. They had filled every room below. The scene

can only be described in his own words. "I called for a chair. The winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled with love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed; they were ashamed; they were melted down; they devoured every word. What a turn was this! Oh, how did God change the counsel of the old Ahithophel into foolishness, and bring all the drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place to hear of His plenteous redemption." Next morning the preaching-place was crowded to excess at five o'clock. Wesley spoke a good deal longer than he was accustomed to do. But the people were not satisfied. He therefore promised to preach again at nine, in a meadow near the town. Hearers flocked from all sides. Wesley adds, "Oh, how have a few hours changed the scene. We could now walk through every street of the town, and none molested or opened his mouth, unless to thank or bless us."

The Irish mobs sometimes gave Wesley a warm reception on his visits to their country. At Cork, in 1750, the mayor sent the town drummers and his sergeants to disturb the congregation. They came down to the preaching-place with an innumerable mob. The drummers were noisy enough, but Wesley continued his discourse. When he went out he asked one of the sergeants to keep the peace; but he answered, "Sir, I have no orders to do that." The rabble threw whatever came to hand, but nothing hit the preacher. He walked forward quietly, looked every man in the face, the rioters opening right and left as he passed along. When he reached his friend's house a Papist stood in the door to prevent his entrance. Just then one of the mob aimed a blow at Wesley, which knocked this woman down flat. He had nothing to do but step in. No one

followed him. Ten days later another immense mob assembled near the barracks in Cork, where Wesley was preaching. When he had done seven or eight of the soldiers marched in front, and a whole troop behind, so that he passed safely through the rabble with his military body-guard.

Wesley never failed in tact and resource during his encounters with the rioters. It was his rule, confirmed by long experience, always to look a mob in the face.* However much the mob threatened, he never swerved. In Cornwall, in July, 1745, as he stood preaching on a high wall, the rabble appeared. He kept his eye steadily on them. Many were softened, and grew calmer and calmer. One of their champions, however, who feared that all their plans were going to be defeated, went round and suddenly pushed Wesley off the wall. He fell on his feet without any hurt, and finding himself beside one of the warmest opponents, who was on horseback, took hold of his hand and reasoned with him. The man refused to be convinced, but he and all the rest grew much milder, and parted from the preacher with great civility. At Bath, in February, 1742, many noisy persons were gathered at one end of the room. Wesley slipped from his place and took up a position amongst them. Seeing this, the greater part of them stole to the end from which Wesley came, and began to cry aloud again. He paused to give them full scope, then began "a particular application," which very soon put them to silence. His congregations were sometimes disturbed by a single noisy opponent. In the market-place at Nottingham a man thus began to contradict and blaspheme. He was standing close to the preacher's back, but when Wesley turned he slunk

* Works, ii., 19, 33.

behind a pillar and disappeared. The opposer sometimes played his part so badly that even his comrades disowned * him or thrust him out of the place.†

As Wesley became known throughout the kingdom, the people themselves disposed of the disturbers. One man at Lisburn, in July, 1756, contradicted him while he was preaching, but the mob handled him so roughly that he was soon glad to hold his peace. A clergyman at Bandon‡ planted himself near Wesley in the main street, with a large stick in his hand, and interrupted the service. Before he had uttered many words two or three women dragged him into a house and sent him away through the garden. This maudlin opponent was about to indulge in familiarities with the woman who conducted him, and she had to cuff him soundly before she could escape. A young gentleman of the town next presented himself, along with two companions, who had pistols in their hands, but the people quietly bore him away. A third disturber was more furious, but a butcher of the town, who was not a Methodist, effectually cooled his courage by two or three hearty blows on the head. At Grimsby a young gentleman and his companions once quite drowned Wesley's voice, so that his large audience was kept without a sermon. A poor woman at last disposed of him by reciting a few passages of his life so wittily and keenly that the laugh of his companions was turned against him, and he was only too glad to slink away. A popish miller at Athlone § got up once to preach just opposite to Wesley, but when some of his comrades threw a little dirt at him he leaped down to fight them, and was roughly handled in the fray. A few days later Wesley

* Works, i., 478.
† *Ibid.*, i., 467.
‡ Works, ii., 189.
§ *Ibid.*, iii., 229.

met with more noise and stupid, senseless impudence than he had experienced since he left England; but the chief man of the town silenced one of the disturbers, and another was knocked down by a hearer who was not a Methodist, so that the congregation soon had peace.* At another place a gentleman gave those who would not attend to his signs a stroke on the head with his stick, and thus effectually quieted a congregation that was inclined to be noisy.† At Burnley in 1784, high and low, rich and poor, flocked from all quarters to hear Wesley. All were eager to listen save the town-crier, who began to bawl amain. His wife, however, ran up, clapped one hand on his mouth, and seized him with the other, so that he could not utter a word.‡

Wesley's chaise-boy figures honourably in this record. His master had preached to a crowded congregation in a colliery village near Pembroke, when a gentleman broke in and ordered the people to go home and mind their business. As he used some bad words, the driver reproved him. He replied fiercely, "Do you think I need to be taught by a chaise-boy?" The "boy" had been an apt pupil. "Really, sir, I do think so," was the answer.§ Every form of opposition was tried during Wesley's long itinerancy. Mill-dams were let out;‖ church bells were jangled;¶ drunken fiddlers** and ballad-singers†† were hired; organs pealed out; drums were beaten. From such encounters Wesley generally came off victorious. Once a man was sent to cry fresh salmon‡‡ at a little distance from a multitude of "unawakened" hearers at

* Works, iii., 230.
† *Ibid.*, iii., 365.
‡ *Ibid.*, iv., 284.
§ *Ibid.*, iv., 106.
‖ Works, i., 494.
¶ *Ibid.*, ii., 21, 495.
** *Ibid.*, ii., 22.
†† *Ibid.*, i.
‡‡ Works, iii., 407.

Leicester, but no one regarded him. On another occasion a Papist began to blow a horn as soon as Wesley gave out his text; but a gentleman stepping up, snatched away his horn, and without ceremony knocked him down.*

Wesley's caution was not less conspicuous than his courage. A good illustration of this may be drawn from the account of his visit to Pocklington in April, 1752. It was fair-day. There was no Society, and scarcely any one in the town was awakened. The room provided for preaching was only five yards square, and Wesley was anxious to have a bigger place. Some one suggested a yard. But when he went to see it he found that "it was plentifully furnished with stones, artillery ready at hand for the devil's drunken companions." Fortunately a gentleman offered a large barn, where the tears of Wesley's congregation fell as the rain. His long experience in such matters had just been supplemented at Hull the previous day. Clods and stones flew about him on every side, but nothing touched him. When he finished his sermon he found that his coachman had driven quite away. A lady kindly offered Wesley and his wife a place in her coach. It had nine occupants, three on each side and three in the middle. The mob formed an escort, throwing in at the windows whatever came first to hand. Wesley quaintly adds, "But a large gentlewoman, who sat in my lap, screened me, so that nothing came near me." One of Wesley's preachers took the mob in hand at Norwich with the best results. John Hampson was a man of splendid physique, the very ideal of a muscular Christian. Once, when Wesley left the preaching-place, the rioters assumed a threatening attitude. Hampson came forward as his champion. Wesley wished him to

* Works, iii., 278.

withdraw, but his preacher answered with a thundering voice, "Let me alone, sir; if God has not given you an arm to quell this mob, He has given me one, and the first man who molests you here, I will lay him dead." Hampson's loud voice and big threat answered the purpose The mob took care to keep at a safe distance.

Wesley's character and work, joined to the consistent lives of his members, gradually won happier days for the persecuted Methodists. Peace was not, however, secured without further appeals to law. Sometimes a threat was enough. In March, 1745, as Wesley was walking up Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, a man called after him. Wesley stood still. The fellow came up, used much abusive language, pushed Wesley once or twice, and then went away. Wesley found that this man had long annoyed the members of the Orphan House. Next day, therefore, he sent the following note:—

"ROBERT YOUNG,—I expect to see you between this and Friday, and to hear from you that you are sensible of your fault; otherwise, in pity to your soul, I shall be obliged to inform the magistrates of your assaulting me yesterday in the street.

"I am, your real friend,

"JOHN WESLEY."

Within two or three hours the offender came and gave ample promise of amendment. In 1751 the Methodists of Wrangle, in Lincolnshire, were violently assaulted by the mob, their goods destroyed, and their lives endangered. The magistrate refused redress. Wesley wrote a calm remonstrance, but "Mr. B——" was not wise enough to accept advice. The sufferers, therefore, applied to the Court of King's Bench, and he was after-

wards glad to let them worship God in their own way.* A mob at Stalbridge was effectually quieted by the same means. The rioters got the hearing of the case postponed for eighteen months on one pretext after another, but this only increased their bill of costs when they were found guilty. The Methodists were now left in peace.† At Faversham, where he was informed that the mob and the magistrates had agreed to drive Methodism out of the town, Wesley told the people after his sermon what they had been constrained to do with the magistrate at Rolvenden, who perhaps would have been richer by some hundred pounds had he not meddled with the Society. "Since we have both God and law on our side," he concluded, "if we can have peace by fair means, we had much rather; we should be exceeding glad; but if not, we *will* have peace."

The journals often allude to the attitude of the magistrates. Wesley says that the baser sort stood at a distance, but made no disturbance, when he preached at Colchester in 1758, because they knew that the magistrates were determined to suffer no riot.‡ He gratefully acknowledges the quiet enjoyed at Scarborough, "since God put it into the heart of an honest magistrate to still the madness of the people."§ When speaking of a Gloucester magistrate who had tamed the rioters, he adds, "So may any magistrate, if he will; so that wherever a mob continues any time, all they do is to be imputed not so much to the rabble as to the justices."‖ At Manchester in 1759¶ he notes that wretched magistrates, who, by refusing to suppress, encouraged the rioters, had long occasioned

* Works, ii., 240, 256.
† *Ibid.*, iii., 263.
‡ *Ibid.*, ii., 462.
§ Works, iii., 168.
‖ *Ibid.*, iii., 313.
¶ *Ibid.*, ii., 477

constant trouble, but some were now of a better mind. In the later years of Wesley's itinerancy it was rare to find an unfriendly magistrate. At Drogheda, in June, 1785, the mayor and several of the magistrates took care that no one should disturb his congregation. At Waterford, in May, 1787, a file of musketeers paraded at the door of the Court House, where he preached, at the order of the mayor. At Newark, in February of the same year, Wesley deferred his service for half an hour at the request of the mayor, who wished to attend with some of the aldermen. At Congleton, in April, 1790, the minister, mayor, and all the heads of the town were at the service. The mayor of Bristol invited Wesley to preach at his chapel and dine with him at the Mansion House.* Everywhere Wesley now found a welcome. The reproach of the Cross had ceased, for him at least, long before his itinerancy closed. His visits to all parts of the country assumed the character of public holidays, when all classes united to welcome the venerable itinerant. The particulars grouped together in this chapter illustrate Isaac Taylor's verdict, "When encountering the ruffianism of mobs and of magistrates, he showed a firmness as well as a guileless skill which, if the martyr's praise might admit of such an adjunct, was graced with the dignity and courtesy of the gentleman." †

* Works, iii., 409.

† "Wesley and Methodism," p. 50.

CHAPTER XIII.

WESLEY AS A TRAVELLER.

We have already referred to Wesley's life in Georgia and his visit to Germany in 1738. His range was afterwards more limited, but he knew the United Kingdom better than any man of his time. In the summer of 1731 he walked from Oxford to Epworth. On his return to the University he learned that four or five-and-twenty miles was an easy and safe day's journey, in hot weather as well as cold. Then also he made another discovery, that it was easy to read as he walked for ten or twelve miles. It beguiled the journey,* and caused no additional fatigue. Wesley was no mean pedestrian. The year before he sailed to Georgia he walked a thousand and fifty miles † to preach in the churches round Oxford. A large part of his travelling on the Continent in 1738 was done on foot. Wesley never lost his zest for walking. In Ireland in 1758, when a horse was brought for him without saddle or bridle, he set out on foot.‡ A saddle was then found, and some one galloped after him at full speed with the horse. Ten years later § he walked on seven or eight miles before his servant overtook him with his carriage. At Bristol, in September, 1788, he says that his friends, more kind than wise, would scarce suffer him to walk. "It seemed so sad a thing to walk five or six

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* Works, xii., 6.
† Whitehead, i., 453.
‡ Works, ii., 447.
§ *Ibid.*, iii., 348.

miles! I am ashamed that a Methodist preacher, in tolerable health, should make any difficulty of this." The old man of eighty-five had not lost his enjoyment of a good walk. Most of Wesley's journeys were made on horseback. There were no turnpikes in the north of England, and the London stage-coach went no further than York.* In many parts of the northern counties neither coach nor chaise had ever been seen. It was not till 1773 that Wesley began regularly to use a carriage. He travelled between four and five thousand miles a year. Mr. Hampson says,† "He was a hard but unskilful rider; and his seat was as ungraceful as it appeared uneasy, with a book in his hand and his hands up to his head." Notwithstanding Mr. Hampson's criticism, Wesley was no mean horseman, though his habit of reading may have made him appear ungraceful. In June, 1750, he mentions ninety miles as his longest day's journey on horseback. He started at four o'clock that morning, and was not in bed till twelve. He had been nearly twenty hours in the saddle. His own horse grew tired, so that he left it behind and borrowed that of his companion.

Wesley was familiar with all the discomforts of the road. His horses fell lame or were maimed by incompetent smiths. Sometimes there were more serious accidents. In July, 1743, he and John Downes rode from Newcastle to Darlington. They had young horses, which were quite vigorous the day before, but now both seemed unwell. The ostler went in haste for a farrier, but both animals died before they could discover what was the matter with them. In June, 1752, a young strong mare which Wesley borrowed at Manchester fell lame before he reached

* Southey, i., 407. † Life of Wesley, iii., 191.

Grimsby. Another was procured, but he was "dismounted" again between Newcastle and Berwick. When he returned to Manchester, he found that his own mare had lamed herself whilst at grass. He intended to ride her four or five miles, but some one took her out of the ground. Another which he had lately bought ought to have been forthcoming, but she had been taken to Chester. In one journey his horse became so exceeding lame that it could scarcely set its foot to the ground. Wesley could not discover what was amiss. He rode thus seven miles till he was thoroughly tired, and his head ached more than it had done for months. He says, "What I here aver is the naked fact. Let every man account for it as he sees good. I then thought, 'Cannot God heal either man or beast by any means, or without any?' Immediately my weariness and headache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant. Nor did he halt any more that day or the next. A very odd accident this also!"

Wesley had some remarkable escapes during his long itinerancy. At Bristol, in June, 1739, his horse suddenly pitched upon its head, and rolled over and over.* He only received a little bruise on the side, and preached without pain to six or seven thousand people. A few months later some one riding sharply came full against him, and overthrew both Wesley and his horse, but they received no hurt.† Once the fall of his horse upon him ‡ brought one or two women out of a neighbouring house, who kindly helped him in to rest. Here he found three people who had gone astray, and was the means of restoring them all. An accident in 1747 was more dangerous.§ Wesley

* Works, i., 206.
† *Ibid.*, i., 227.
‡ Works, i., 343.
§ *Ibid.*, ii., 41.

was riding through St. Nicholas' Gate, Bristol, when a cart came swiftly down the hill. There was just room for it to pass, but the carman was walking beside his waggon, and filled up all the space. Wesley called to him to go back, but the man took no heed, so that Wesley was obliged to hold in his own horse. The shaft of the cart came against his horse's shoulder with such violence as to force it to the ground. Wesley was shot over its head like an arrow out of a bow, and lay with arms and legs stretched out against the wall, he knew not how. The wheel ran by close to his side, but only dirtied his clothes. A man took Wesley into his shop, where he cleaned himself a little, and set out again for Wick. He returned to Bristol in time to preach. A report that he was killed had spread far and wide, so that his friends received him with great rejoicing. His shoulders, hands, sides, and legs were a little bruised; his knees and his right thigh were more painful. Some warm treacle, he says, took away all the pain in an hour, and the lameness in a day or two. A restive horse once ran backward and tumbled head over heels with Wesley in the saddle. He rose unhurt and went on his journey on the same animal, which was sobered at last.* At Canterbury his mare was struck on the leg with such violence by a stone that sprang out of the pavement that she dropped down at once. Wesley kept his seat, but his horse, in struggling to rise, fell again and rolled over him. His right leg seemed powerless, and he was very sick, but an honest barber came out, lifted him up, and helped him into his shop. Wesley felt very sick, but took a glass of water, and was soon able to proceed. On the way to Shoreham, in December, 1765, his horse fell in the Borough, Southwark, with Wesley's leg

* Works, ii., 91.

under it. He managed to go on in the coach, but for many months he suffered from the effects of this accident.

Wesley was out in some terrible storms. His northern journey in February, 1745, was the roughest he had ever had up to that time. There were, as we have seen, no turnpike-roads then in the north, and the causeways were like glass. The horses often fell down while Wesley and his companion were leading them. Gateshead Fell was a pathless waste of snow. No roads could be seen, but a Newcastle man overtook the travellers and guided them safely into the town. "Many a rough journey have I had before," says Wesley, "but one like this I never had, between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold." Next February, on his way from Birmingham to Stafford, the driving snow crusted him and his companion over from head to foot in less than an hour. A man who lived at the edge of the moors said, "Sir, 'tis a thousand pound to a penny that you do not come there to-day." He told them that it was four miles across, and even in a clear day he himself could not always go straight over. Wesley nevertheless pushed on, and, though all the roads were covered with snow, did not go ten yards out of the way till he reached Stafford. The same month in 1747 found him in similar circumstances. Snow covered everything, and the wind seemed as if it would overturn both man and beast. A violent storm of rain and hail which they met whilst passing across an open field drove through their coats and boots, freezing as it fell even upon their eyebrows. They had scarce strength or motion left when they reached their inn at Stilton. On Stamford Heath the snow-drifts almost swallowed them up. Next morning the servant reported that there would be no travelling that day, as the roads were quite filled up by a fresh fall of

snow. "At least, we can walk twenty miles a day, with our horses in our hands," said Wesley.

Such particulars will show what a bold and untiring traveller Wesley was. In April, 1770, when he was in the Highlands, he pushed on to Inverness, though three young women who attempted to cross the mountain which he had to climb had been swallowed up in the snow. He was brought to a stand at the top by the snow-drifts, but dismounted, and striking warily out of the way, sometimes to the right, sometimes to the left, reached his destination safely, after many a stumble. In his eighty-third year he was the same fearless traveller as at the beginning of the Great Revival. An old inhabitant of Helston used to tell with great pride a story about Wesley. This man was then ostler at the London Inn, and drove the traveller on to St. Ives, as his own coachman did not know the road. When they reached Hayle, they found the sands between that town and St. Ives covered by the rising tide. A sea-captain earnestly begged Wesley not to venture across, but he had arranged to preach at a certain hour. Looking out of the carriage window, Wesley shouted, "Take the sea, take the sea." Before long the horses were swimming. Wesley put his head out of the window to encourage the driver, who feared every moment that they would be drowned. His long white hair was dripping with the sea-water. "What is your name, driver?" he asked. The man told him it was Peter. "Peter," was the answer, "fear not: thou shalt not sink." When they were safely in St. Ives, Wesley first saw that his driver had warm clothing, refreshment, and fire; then he himself went on to the chapel to preach to the people.

Wesley's stages were carefully arranged, so that he might hold as many services as possible on the way. Notice was given of his coming, and sometimes whole

villages and towns flocked to hear him. It was necessary for him to adhere carefully to his plan. Sometimes he did break through it, as at Epworth, when he held his eight days' mission in the churchyard. But this was a striking exception to his rule. At Bedford, in March, 1758, after his sermon on "The Great Assize," the judge sent Wesley an invitation to dine. He had promised to be at Epworth on Saturday, and as it was now Friday, he was compelled to send an excuse. Wesley had already been detained for twenty-four hours by a change in the day appointed for his sermon. Between one and two in the afternoon he set off in haste. Thirty miles of rough travelling lamed the horse, but he took a post-chaise early next morning. He might have spared himself the expense, for driving on the frosty road was so tedious, that Wesley's companion reached Stamford with the lame horses as quickly as the post-chaise. He made the next stage on horseback, then hired another post-chaise. The waters were out in the Isle of Axholme. Fortunately, Wesley had heard of a man in the neighbourhood who knew the roads. Under his guidance, he reached Epworth between nine and ten on Saturday night. "After travelling more than ninety miles, I was little more tired than when I rose in the morning." This characteristic incident illustrates Wesley's determination to keep his engagements at all costs.

Wesley read his history, poetry, and philosophy on horseback. He says in 1770 that thirty years before he had wondered how it was that no horse stumbled while he was reading. He could find no other reason than that at such times he threw the reins upon his horse's neck. After more than a hundred thousand miles of such travelling, he scarcely remembered any horse, except two "that were always falling head over heels," that fell or

made any serious stumble while he rode with a slack rein. He was convinced that a slack rein would prevent stumbling if anything could do so.*

In March, 1772, Wesley says, "I met several of my friends, who had begun a subscription to prevent my riding on horseback, which I cannot do quite so well since a hurt which I got some months ago. If they continue it, well; if not, I shall have strength according to my need." When he set up his carriage, the itinerancy of Wesley's later life became more easy than the long rides of former years. He spent ten hours a day as much alone as if he had been in a wilderness, and always had a store of books with him. In 1786 he travelled seventy-six miles in one day, and preached three times. "Still I was no more tired than when I rose in the morning." Three years later he refers to two other days' travelling of eighty and seventy-eight miles.† Riding on horseback became difficult from want of practice. Whilst in the Dales, in June, 1784, he was forced to ride.‡ "Being but a poor horseman, and having a rough horse, I had just strength for my journey, and none to spare; but after resting a while, I preached without any weariness." § In 1773 he took chaise from Salisbury at two in the morning, and in the evening came to London. Six months later, whilst at Congleton, he received a letter which called him in haste to Bristol. He spent two hours in that city, and was back at Congleton on the Friday afternoon. He left on the Wednesday at one in the afternoon, so that he had travelled two hundred and eighty miles, "no more tired (blessed be God) than when I left." In August, 1768, he made a similar journey between Bristol

* Works, iii., 392.
† *Ibid.*, iv., 334, 448, 467
‡ Works, iv., 96.
§ *Ibid.*, iv., 3.

and London. He reached the metropolis at one in the morning, found that his wife was out of danger, and after staying an hour came the same afternoon—"not at all tired"—to Bristol. In October, 1782, he took chaise from Portsmouth at two in the morning, and reached London in the afternoon. Such were some of Wesley's feats in travelling.

His chaise sometimes stuck fast, so that he had to borrow a horse and ride on,* or the axle-tree broke and overturned the carriage; † his chaise-springs ‡ suddenly snapped, but the horses instantly stopped, and he stepped out without the least inconvenience. On the way to Sligo in 1778 his carriage got well through two sloughs.§ By the help of seven or eight countrymen, one of whom carried Wesley over on his shoulders, they struggled through the third. The fourth was more difficult. Wesley was helped out, and walked forward. His friends with the stronger horse managed to get the chaise through, but with great difficulty. In December, 1784, a snow-storm upset all Wesley's plans. His carriage could scarcely get on. He walked great part of the way from Tunbridge Wells to Robertsbridge, which he reached after the time appointed for his service. An hour after nightfall he came to Rye, but the preaching-place was filled with serious hearers, so that he did not repent of his labour. Next day, even with two pairs of good horses, it was hard work to do fifteen miles in five hours. This record was outdone in his journey to Wrestlingworth thirteen days later. "Having a skilful guide, who rode before the chaise, and picked out the best way, we drove four miles in only three hours." In October, 1785,

* Works, iv., 46, 267; iii., 382.
† *Ibid.*, iv., 431.
‡ Works, iv., 67
§ *Ibid.*, iv., 123.

Wesley was told that he could not get over the Ely roads. They ran between two banks, and had many bridges, where the coachman must "drive to an inch." Wesley was anxious to reach London, and pushed forward at once. A further glimpse of the Fen-country is given in his journal for November, 1774. A gentleman met him with a chaise when he went to Ely. "Oh, what want of common-sense! Water covered the high-road for a mile and a half. I asked, 'How must foot-people come to the town?' 'Why, they must wade through,'" was the answer. Two days later a friend led the horse in a place where water and mud reached up to his mid-leg. "We fenmen do not mind a little dirt," he said. Wesley had by-and-bye to take to horseback, as the chaise could not go on. Then a boat, twice as large as a kneading-trough, was called into requisition. In his later years Wesley sometimes took the whole coach for himself and his friends. In August, 1787, he thus engaged the coach from Bolton to Birmingham. They had six inside and eight outside, so that the conveyance broke down. It was patched up, and went on to Congleton, where another was obtained. This also broke down, and one of the horses was so tired that it could scarcely set one foot before the other. Wesley was two hours late, and stepped from the coach into the pulpit. A large congregation was awaiting him. Once, when he had taken the coach from Bristol, the clerk "faced him down" that he had secured it for another day. But Wesley's friends spoke so strongly that another coach was soon provided. Sometimes the coach was already full, so that he had to take a post-chaise,* or make the best arrangement he could.

* Works, iv., 359, 366, 432.

All Wesley's plans were exactly mapped out. He once sent to take two places in the coach for Lynn, where he was to preach "in their new house." The messenger, "mending my orders," took them in the diligence, which only reached the place between nine and ten at night, so that Wesley was robbed of one of the three evenings which he intended to give the people. We have one pleasant picture of a night journey. Two years before his death, Wesley took the night mail-coach for Bristol. "Having three of our brethren, we spent a comfortable night, partly in sound sleep and partly in singing praise to God." Some journeys were trying. One diligence* in which Wesley travelled let in air on all sides, so that he and his friends could scarcely preserve life.

He never lost an opportunity of doing good in these journeys. On the way to Colchester in the stage-coach, in November, 1771, he "met with two agreeable companions, whose hearts were quite open to instruction." A counterpart to this is found in the journal for February, 1779. "I went to Norwich in the stage-coach, with two very disagreeable companions called a gentleman and gentlewoman, but equally ignorant, insolent, lewd, and profane." A young officer with whom he once travelled swore incessantly. Wesley quietly asked if he had read the Book of Common Prayer, for if he had, he might remember the collect which began, "Almighty and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire or deserve." The young fellow was effectually cured for that journey at least by this neat reproof.

It will easily be understood that Wesley never had a

* Works, iv., 297, 343.

moment to lose. Once, when he was kept waiting for his chaise, he was heard to say, "I have lost ten minutes for ever." He always expected his coachman to be ready at the precise moment fixed. "Have the carriage at the door at four," he said to him at Hull in 1788. "I do not mean a quarter or five minutes past, but four." In the later years of his life Wesley's visits to all parts of England were gala-days. Friends often trooped out to meet the venerable patriarch and escort him to the place in triumph. When he returned to London, they sometimes came out to meet him as far as Cobham or Hatfield.* Dublin welcomed him in like manner, and Cork sent out thirty horsemen to escort him to the city.† In the June before his death he had preached at Beverley in the afternoon, and was to be at Hull the same evening. About forty friends from Hull met and dined with him at Beverley. The pleasant conversation made them quite forget the time. Wesley suddenly pulled out his watch, bade his friends good-bye, and was gone before they had recovered from their surprise. They just managed to overtake the punctual traveller before he reached Hull.

Wesley's most perilous ride was in the neighbourhood of Newcastle in 1774. Mr. Hopper, one of his preachers, and Mr. Smith, who had married Wesley's stepdaughter, were on horseback; Mrs. Smith and her two little girls were with Wesley in the chaise. On the brow of a hill both the horses suddenly started off without visible cause, and flew down like an arrow out of a bow. In a minute Wesley's man fell off the box. "The horses went on full speed, sometimes to the edge of the ditch on the right, sometimes on the left." They avoided a cart, dashed over a narrow bridge, and rushed through an

* Works, iv., 51, 495. † *Ibid.*, iv., 305, 315, 385.

open gate more skilfully than if the man had been holding the reins. A gate on the far side of the farmer's yard into which they rushed was shut. Wesley thought this would certainly stop them, but the end of the chariot-pole struck the centre of the gate, and the horses dashed through as if it had been a cobweb. They were now galloping over a cornfield. The little girls cried out, "Grandpapa, save us!" Wesley replied, "Nothing will hurt you; do not be afraid." He felt as calm as if he had been sitting in his study. The horses were fast approaching the edge of a precipice. Just then Mr. Smith, who had been in full pursuit, managed to overtake them. He rode in between the runaway horses and the precipice. The horses stopped in a moment. Had they gone on ever so little, all must have been dashed over the brink together. The coachman received no hurt by his fall, so that the marvellous deliverance was complete.

No account of Wesley's travel would be complete without some reference to his experience at sea. He crossed the Atlantic twice, paid three visits to the Continent, and sailed forty-two times across the Irish Channel. His voyages across the Atlantic prepared him for many a rough passage between England and Ireland, or across the Solent and to the Isle of Man. Wesley was a good sailor. A strong gale and rolling sea made most of the passengers sick enough near Holyhead in 1773, but did not affect him at all.* He was not so fortunate in July, 1778. A strong north-easter made the sea so lumpy, that it affected him as much as a storm. He lay down at four in the afternoon and slept most of the time till four in the morning. Like all passengers in those days, he had some weary waiting for change of wind. In 1748, when he reached

* Works, iii., 489.

Holyhead, all the ships were on the other side. He was detained twelve days. The time was not wasted. He preached several times, and read prayers at his inn. He also wrote "A Word to a Methodist," at the request of a clergyman, who said he would take it as a favour if Wesley would write some tract advising his members not to leave the Church and not to rail against the clergy. The delay, however, tried his patience. He says, "I never knew men make such poor, lame excuses as these captains did for not sailing. It put me in mind of the epigram,

> 'There are, if rightly I methink,
> Five causes why a man should drink,'

which, with a little alteration, would just suit them :—

> 'There are, unless my memory fail,
> Five causes why we should not sail:
> The fog is thick; the wind is high;
> It rains, or may do by-and-bye;
> Or—any other reason why.' "

After a week of waiting he made a little tour into the country. There was no more probability of a passage than when they reached Holyhead. This was on Wednesday. On the following Monday Wesley found all the packet-boats still there. He took lodgings in a private house, as he was determined not to stay any longer at the inn.* At midnight, however, the wind changed, and he was soon on his way to Dublin. Two years later he was delayed quite as long.† Their little vessel was twice driven back by the storm, and they had to wait several days for better weather. Wesley found it useful to be in suspense,‡ so that he might learn to "lean absolutely on His disposal

* Works, ii.. 86 † *Ibid.*, ii., 179. ‡ *Ibid.*, ii., 268.

who knoweth and ruleth all things well." * After his plans had been thus deranged in 1760, he says, "Oh, how good it is to have no choice of our own, but to leave all things to the will of God." † Wesley's passages were made in all kinds of vessels. Some were little and uncomfortable. But signs of improvement appear in his later years. He speaks of the *Kildare* in 1771 as "abundantly the best and cleanest ship which I have sailed in for many years." ‡ She was eclipsed by the *Hawk*. § "So fine a ship I never sailed in before. She never shipped one sea, and went more steady than I thought was possible."

His services on board ship are pleasant features of Wesley's busy life. His fellow-passengers generally treated him with signal respect. One exception must be made. In March, 1750, "the famous Mr. Gr——, of Carnarvonshire, a clumsy, overgrown, hard-faced man," was on board the vessel in which he sailed for Dublin. When Wesley was about to lie down, this man tumbled in, pouring out a volley of ribaldry, obscenity, and blasphemy. Wesley retired to his own cabin, and some of Mr. G——'s companions took him away. When the vessel was driven back to Holyhead, this man came with a rabble of gentlemen to disturb Wesley's service. He burst open the doors, struck the old landlord several times, "kicked his wife, and with twenty full-mouthed oaths and curses, demanded, 'Where is the parson?'" The landlord put Wesley into another room. Mr. G—— climbed on a chair to look if Wesley were on the top of a bed, but fell full length on the floor. The bully now retired for a time. About nine he came again with his friends. The

* Works, iii., 14.
† *Ibid.*, ii., 382.
‡ Works, iii., 425.
§ *Ibid.*, iv., 41

landlord's daughter, who was standing in the passage with a pail of water when he burst open the door, covered him with it, either intentionally or in her fright, from head to foot. This cooled his courage, so that when the landlord slipped past him and locked the door, he was very glad to pledge his word of honour that if he was allowed to go out, none of his friends should come in. Such an incident is a marked exception to the usual civility and seriousness of passengers and crew when Wesley was on board. Sometimes he was asked to pray with the passengers. In July, 1762, the captain of the vessel in which Wesley crossed over from Dublin asked him if he would not read prayers to them on the Sunday morning. "All who were able to creep out were willingly present" at prayers and sermon. One week-day in July, 1771, many gentlemen were on board, and begged for a sermon. All listened with deep attention.* On his way to Holland in 1786 he received the same request, and found his congregation "all attention." †

The most interesting of these services on board ship was in March, 1758. Wesley embarked at Liverpool for Dublin. In addition to his own party, consisting of himself and four friends, there were seven other cabin passengers and "many common ones." "So good-natured a company," he says, "I never met with in a ship before. The sea was as smooth as glass, the sun shone without a cloud, and the wind was small and quite fair." About nine Wesley prayed with the passengers, and then lay quietly down. Next day they were becalmed off Holyhead. Wesley and his party seized the opportunity to speak to their fellow-passengers. From that time no oath, no immodest or passionate word, was heard while they

* Works, iv., 300, 344. † *Ibid.*, iii., 489.

were on board. Next day the calm continued. Wesley and his companions assembled on the quarter-deck, where they no sooner began to sing a hymn than both passengers and sailors gladly assembled. Such is Wesley's account. Francis Okeley, who had been a Moravian, was travelling with him. A letter sent by this friend to Dr. Byrom,* whom he visited in Manchester shortly before, gives another description. "I think I may say we had one of the most agreeable voyages from Liverpool to Dublin that could be wished, ship, captain, passengers, as agreeable as could be expected, and a smooth, calm sea and clear, serene sky throughout. Mr. Wesley preached on the quarter-deck to all in the ship between Penmenmawr hills, on the Welsh coast, and Holyhead. They were attentive, serious, and satisfied. In a word, we did and said what we pleased, which was, I believe, usefully improved." This beautiful record may close this sketch of Wesley's half-century of travel. Wherever he went, on foot or on horseback, in coach or in sailing vessel, he was a pleasant companion, who generally won all hearts, and never lost an opportunity of doing good.

* Byrom's "Journals."