



“You will know them by their fruits.” Mt. 7:16

The Life and Times of
The Rev. John Wesley M. A.

Founder of the Methodists

BY THE
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(*Father of the Revs. J. and C. Wesley*).

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PREFACE.

SIX Lives of Wesley have been already published, besides sketches almost innumerable. What then justifies the present writer in publishing another?

Hampson's, ready for the press when Wesley died, is extremely meagre, and was the work of an angry writer. Coke and Moore's, issued in 1792, was a hasty publication, written *currente calamo*, to get possession of the market; and, like most things done in haste, was exceedingly imperfect. Whitehead's, dated 1793-6, was composed in the midst of disgraceful contentions, and was tinged with party feeling.

Southey's, printed in 1820, has literary charms; but, unintentionally, is full of errors, and, for want of dates and chronological exactitude, is extremely confusing. Moore's, published in 1824, is the fullest and most reliable; but, to a great extent, it is a mere reprint of Whitehead's, given to the public about thirty years previously. Watson's, issued in 1831, was not intended to supersede larger publications, but was "contracted within moderate limits, and" avowedly "prepared with special reference to general readers."

These are the chief Lives of Wesley. Smaller ones are too numerous to be mentioned; and, besides that, they are not lives, but sketches.

The publications of Hampson, of Coke and Moore, of Whitehead, and of Moore, have long been out of print. Two Lives are still on sale,—Southey's and Watson's; but the former is defective in details, and is incorrect and misleading; and the latter, as already stated, was never meant to occupy the place of a larger work.

It has long been confessed that a Life of Wesley, worthy of the man, is a desideratum. Hampson, Coke, Moore, and Whitehead used, with a sparing hand, the materials which were already accessible to all, and added a few original papers, for the preservation of which every one feels grateful. Southey acknowledges that he "had no private sources of information"; and, in the list of books from which his

materials were chiefly taken, we find nothing but what is in the hands of most Methodist students. Watson says, he had “the advantage of consulting unpublished papers”; but it is not injustice to Watson, to say that very few of these “unpublished papers” were embodied in his book.

This is not ill natured depreciation of previous biographers, all of whom I revere, and wish to honour. But any ordinary reader, who will take the trouble, may easily perceive, that the Lives of Wesley that have been published, during the last seventy-six years, have contained no additional information worth naming.

In this interval, Wesley has yearly been growing in historic fame, until he is now, among all parties,—Churchmen, Methodists and Dissenters, papists, protestants and infidels, statesmen, philosophers and men of letters,—one of the greatest and most interesting studies of the age. The world wishes to know something more respecting the man, who, under God, was the means of bringing about the greatest reformation of modern times. Since the publications of Whitehead, Coke and Moore—his literary executors—innumerable letters and other manuscripts have come to light; but no subsequent biographer has used them. Besides, in the magazines, newspapers, broadsheets, pamphlets, tracts, and songs, published during Wesley’s lifetime, there is a mine of biographical material incalculably rich; but, hitherto, no one has taken the trouble to delve and to explore it.

Ought this apathy and negligence to continue longer? Is it right to keep the world, the church, and especially the Methodists, in ignorance of what exists concerning one of the most remarkable men that ever lived? I think not; and, hence, as no one else attempted it, I have done my best to collect these scattered facts, and to give them to the public in the following volumes.

For seventeen years, materials have been accumulating in my hands.

My own mass of original manuscripts is large. Thousands of Methodist letters have been lent to me. Hundreds, almost thousands, of publications, issued in Wesley’s lifetime, and bearing on the great Methodist movement, have been consulted. Many of Wesley’s letters, hitherto published only in periodicals, or in scarce books, have been used; and not a few that, up to the present, have never yet appeared in print. To mention all who have rendered me generous assistance is almost impossible; but I cannot deny myself the pleasure of naming the late Rev. Joseph Entwisle, Mr. Joseph Miller, of Newcastle, Mr. George Stevenson, of Paternoster Row, and last, but not least, the Rev. Elijah Hoole, D.D., for the ready access he gave me to the collection of manuscripts in the Wesleyan Mission House.

My greatest difficulty has been, not the want of materials, but that of making selections, and of giving in a condensed form all that I thought important. Nothing, likely to be of general interest, has been withheld.

Nothing, derogatory to the subject of these memoirs, has been kept back.

Whatever else the work may be, it is honest.

I have tried to make Wesley his own biographer. I have not attempted what may be called the philosophy of Wesley’s life. I leave that to others.

As a rule, intelligent readers wish only to be possessed of facts. They can form their own conclusions; and care but little about the opinions of those by whom the facts are collected and narrated. The temptation to moralise has oft been great; but I have tried to practise self denial. Wesley was not a designing man: cunning he had none: he was a man of one idea: his sole aim was to save souls. This was the philosophy of his life. All his actions had reference to this. He had no preconceived plans; and, hence, it is needless to speculate about his motives. The man is best known by what he did; not by what philosophers may suspect he thought. Holding these opinions, my one object has been to collect, collate, and register unvarnished facts; and I hope I have not altogether failed.

Much that is false, or erroneous, concerning Wesley, has been published; and it would have been an easy task to have refuted not a few of the statements which even Methodists as well as others have been accustomed to receive without gain-saying; but I had no room for this.

Besides, I had no wish to assume the part of a controversialist.

Comparison will show, that, in several instances, I differ from previous biographers; but I would rather that the reader should discover this for himself, than that I should state it. It may savour of unpardonable temerity to disagree with the distinguished men who have gone before me; but, if attacked, I am prepared to defend the ground that I have taken. To avoid encumbering the margin, I have omitted thousands of references; but I have them, and can give them, if required.

The work has been arduous; but it has been a work of love. I have not done what I wished, but what I could. A more literary and philosophic writer might have been employed; but no labour has been spared in pursuit of facts, and there has been no tampering with honour and honesty in stating them.

It is more than probable that this was the first likeness of Wesley ever taken. I only add, that I hope the reader will find the general Index at the end of Vol. III to be accurate and useful.

L. TYERMAN.

CLAPHAM PARK,

July 5th, 1870.

1739

LONDON in 1739 was widely different from what it is at present. The population, including Westminster and all the parishes within the Bills of Mortality, was about 600,000, or a fifth of the population now.

London Bridge was the only highway across the majestic Thames that the Londoners possessed; and that was covered with antique houses, from end to end, forming a sort of picturesque extension of Grace-church Street, from the Middlesex to the Surrey shore,—a narrow, darksome, and dangerous thoroughfare with an arched gateway at each end of it, generally bristling with spikes, and often adorned with the heads of traitors. The site of the present Mansion House was a fruit market, having on one side of it a row of shady trees and on the other a conduit, surmounted by an equestrian statue of King Charles II. Islington, Hoxton, Hackney, and Bethnal Green were country villages. On the Surrey side, all beyond the King's Bench prison was fields and open country. The Elephant and Castle stands where the small hamlet of Newington then stood. Walworth, Camberwell, Brixton, Peckham, and Clapham were rural haunts, far from the hum and noise of the great city. Even Lambeth was a vast conglomerated garden, extending from Kennington Common to what is now Westminster Bridge. Eastward—Blackwall, Poplar, Bow, and Stepney were somewhat distant collections of scattered houses, surrounded respectively by fields and gardens. Westward—Chelsea, Knightsbridge, Marylebone, and Tottenham Court were all in open country. Even Belgravia was a farm of arable and pasture land; while all the space, between Westminster and what is now Vauxhall Bridge, was a dreary tract of stunted, dusty, trodden grass, the resort of badger-baiters and other rampant blackguards, and known by the name of Tothill Fields.

Moorfields, the scene of Wesley's earliest evangelistic labours, and where he opened his Foundery meeting-house, was what would nowadays be called a park, laid out in grass plots, intersected by broad gravel walks, and the favourite resort of citizens seeking exercise and recreation.

Beneath a row of well grown elms was what the promenaders designated "the city mall," and which in the smartness of its company often rivalled the mall of St. James's Park. Here might be seen wives and daughters flaunting in all their finery and displaying their charms to city maccaronis, whose hats were cocked diagonally, and who gave themselves quite as many airs as the aristocratic coxcombs in the royal grounds. Under the trees were booths, whose fans, toys, trinkets, and confectionery found ready purchasers; while on the grass plots were erected mountebank diversions for the amusement of the people.

What a contrast between London then and London now! And yet, even then, London was thought to be dangerously too large. An able writer, in one of the magazines for 1762, argued that great cities are perilous to a nation's welfare; and in proof quoted Nineveh, Babylon, Persepolis, Tyre, Carthage, Rome, Athens, Memphis, Baalbec, Palmyra, Thebes, Jerusalem, etc. He contended that it was pernicious policy to suffer the eighth part of an entire nation to live in one crowded town; for when so many myriads lived on ground which produced nothing they were under the necessity of living by their wits—that is, by sharpening and over-reaching, and by inventing idle and vicious amusements. Hence it was that in London there was such a multiplication of playhouses, operas, ridottos, and masquerades; and that almost one-half of some of the London parishes was converted into brothels by bawds and pimps. The anonymous alarmist was doubtless treated with contempt, but his theory deserves attention.

London was great, but it was wicked. And no wonder. Riches in the case of nations, as in the case of individuals, often lead to extravagance and luxury. Thus it was in England, in the reign of the second George.

Superb edifices rose up on every hand, almost vieing with the palaces of princes. Carriages, glittering with gold and crystal, rattled over city pavements with the utmost ostentation. Ridottos, balls, masquerades, and midnight banquets, were of constant occurrence. Every night innumerable lamps illuminated public gardens, where hosts of fashionable and licentious fops might be seen lolling in gilded alcoves, killing time, and lulling their senses into an indolent oblivion. Arrayed in masks and the strangest dresses, gamblers, actors, and prostitutes mingled with persons of riches and of rank, and, amid the din of music and of dancing, conversed obscene discourse, and whispered indecent slanders. All classes caught the contagion, and even the tables of shopkeepers and mechanics were covered with costly dainties. Clerks and apprentices, servant-maids and cooks, decked themselves in apparel equal to that of their masters and mistresses; and finical sparks deemed it their privilege and right to frequent taverns, clubs, and theatres, adorned with the finest clothes, perukes, and jewellery.

What resulted from all this? Extravagance created greater wants than the people had means to meet. Patrimonial estates, and the gains of honest business were not enough to satisfy newly engendered appetites; and hence men appealed to an infernal sorceress, to correct, forsooth, the errors made in distributing the gifts of Providence. To eke out means which were found too scanty to gratify licentious and luxurious passions, robbery was made polite, and gambling an every day duty. Idleness threw the dice, and Folly built them into castles; Avarice clutched at gold, but Fraud, with a sly and quick conveyance, snatched it from his hand. Even ladies laid wagers at home, while their lords gambled abroad; and dice began to rattle on the costermonger's barrow as well as upon the hazard tables of the noble and the rich. Money was looked upon as omnipotent; and the more men got the more they wanted, and especially when it was spent upon their own indulgences. An avaricious, mercenary spirit became general, and chiefly for the sake of vain display and sensual pleasures.

Poverty treads in the footsteps of extravagance. There were more equipages kept, and yet more taxes

for the poor imposed; more diversions, and yet more want; more ladies of taste, and yet fewer housewives; more pomp, and yet less hospitality; more expense, and yet less frugality. In 1744, the grand jury of the county of Middlesex made a presentment to the effect, that “the advertisements in the newspapers were seducing the people to places for the encouragement of luxury, extravagance, and idleness; and that, by this means, families were ruined, and the kingdom dishonoured; and that, unless some superior authority put a stop to such riotous living, they feared it would lead to the destruction of the nation.” The town abounded with men who regarded honour, honesty, and virtue as the merest phantoms;—men with whom promises were not binding, obligations were nullities, and impudence a duty;—dastards who might slander their neighbours, ridicule their superiors, be saucy to their equals, insolent to their inferiors, and abusive to all; to-day spaniels, tomorrow bullies, and at all times cowards; to whom learning was a burden, and books were baubles; vice being their delight, and virtue their aversion; demons in disguise, all order and symmetry without, and yet all rancour and rottenness within.

The country was an apt imitator of the vices of the town. There the squire, having, by idleness and bad company, forgotten the little learning he acquired at college, too often devoted himself to drinking and debauchery; while the common people were ignorant, superstitious, brutal, and bad behaved. Workmen entered into combinations to extort higher wages than their labour merited, or than their masters could afford; and even parliament had to pass enactments limiting the salaries of tailors.

Smuggling was enormous; and, in 1744, it was calculated that, in the county of Suffolk only, not fewer than 4,500 horses were employed in carrying merchandise of a contraband character.

This dark picture might easily be enlarged, not from posterior writings, or even from the religious publications of the period, but from periodicals, magazines, and newspapers, which had no temptation to represent the customs, manners, usages, and vices of the age in a worse aspect than was warranted by facts. Wesley, as will be seen hereafter, used strong and startling language; but there is nothing in Wesley’s writings which exceeds the hideous delineations found in the popular literature published contemporaneously by other impartial and mere worldly writers, who are above suspicion. The Weekly Miscellany for 1732 broadly asserts that the people were engulfed in voluptuousness and business; and that a zeal for godliness looked as odd upon a man as would the antiquated dress of his great grandfather. It states that freethinkers were formed into clubs, to propagate their tenets, and to make the nation a race of profligates; and that atheism was scattered broadcast throughout the kingdom. It affirms that it was publicly avowed that vice was profitable to the state; that the country would be benefited by the establishment of public stews; and that polygamy, concubin-age, and even sodomy were not sinful.

In many respects the reign of the second George bore a striking resemblance to the present day. There was unexampled wealth, followed by luxury, display, dissipation, gambling, irreligion, and wickedness. The pastoral letters of Bishop Gibson, published at this period, show that most pernicious efforts were put forth to undermine religion, and to make men infidels. One class of writers laboured to set aside all Christian ordinances, the Christian ministry, and a Christian church. Another so allegorized the meaning of the miracles of Christ, as to take away their reality. Others displayed the utmost zeal for natural religion in opposition to revealed; and all, or most, under the pretence of pleading for the liberties of men, ran into the wildest licentiousness. Reason was recommended as a full and sufficient guide in matters of religion, and the Scriptures were to be believed only as they agreed or disagreed with the light of nature.

The same causes give birth to the same effects. Things reproduce themselves. The words of Solomon are as truthful now as when he wrote them,—”The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.”

By reviving religion, Methodism saved the nation more than a hundred years ago; and now that the nation presents the same aspect, to a great extent, as it presented then, and is threatened with the same disasters, is it not certain that nothing but an agency analogous to the Methodism then raised up will be found sufficient to check the progress of antiquated errors now revived; to stem the abounding licentiousness; and to make men feel that wealth is given, not to be spent in display and luxury, but in honouring God. And in promoting the happiness of the human race? The revival of religion, which occurred about the time when Methodism commenced its marvellous career, was a world-wide one.

The Moravian movement in Germany has been already noticed.

In America, the work began in 1729, the very year in which the Oxford Methodists formed their first society. The Rev. Jonathan Edwards fanned the fire into a holy flame by preaching the grand old doctrine of “justification by faith alone.” In the town of Northampton, New England, containing two hundred families, there was scarcely a single person at the beginning of the year 1735 who was not deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly seeking salvation; and from day to day, for months, there were undeniable instances of genuine conversion. Almost every house was a house of prayer, and, in all companies, Christ was the theme of public conversation. The revival which commenced at Northampton spread throughout the greater part of the colony. All sorts of people,—high and low, rich and poor, wise and unwise, moral and immoral,—simultaneously became the subjects of the Spirit’s strivings, and were converted. This remarkable movement took place only a few months before Wesley set sail for Georgia, and continued for several years afterwards. Mr. Edwards published a narrative of its most striking incidents; and also his “Thoughts” as to “the way in which it ought to be acknowledged and promoted;” and from these two invaluable treatises we collect the following facts.

In many instances, conviction of sin and conversion were attended with intense physical excitement. Numbers fell prostrate on the ground, and cried aloud for mercy. The bodies of others were convulsed and benumbed. As chaos preceded creation, so in New England confusion went before conversion. The work was great and glorious, but was accompanied with noise and tumult. Men literally cried for mercy; but the loudest outcries were not so loud as the shrieks of Voltaire or Volney, when the prospect of eternity unmanned them. Stout-hearted sinners trembled; but not more than philosophers at the present day would do, if they had equally vivid views of the torments of the damned to which sin exposes them. There were groanings and faintings; transports and ecstasies; zeal sometimes more fervid than discreet; and passion not unfrequently more powerful than pious; but, from one end of the land to the other, multitudes of vain thoughtless sinners were unmistakably converted, and were made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Frolicking, night walking, singing lewd songs, tavern haunting, profane speaking, and extravagance in dress, were generally abandoned. The talk of the people was about the favour of God, an interest in Christ, a sanctified heart, and spiritual blessedness here and hereafter. The country was full of meetings of persons of all sorts and ages to read, pray, and sing praises. Oftentimes the people were wrought up into the highest transports of love, joy, and admiration, and had such views of the Divine perfections, and the excellencies of Christ, that, for five or six hours together, their souls reposed in a kind of sacred elysium, until the body seemed to sink beneath the weight of Divine discoveries, and nature was deprived of all ability to stand or speak. Connected with all this, there were no enthusiastic impulses, or supposed revelations, but trembling reverence, the mildest meekness, and warmest charity. To use Edwards’ own language, “The New Jerusalem, in this respect, had begun to come down from heaven, and perhaps never were more of the prelibations of heaven’s glory given upon earth.”

Of course there were men who opposed and maligned this blessed work of God’s Holy Spirit; or, at all events, did their utmost to discredit it by exposing, as they thought, the infirmities of those who were the chief agents used in promoting it. Ministers were blamed for their earnestness in voice and gesture, and for addressing themselves rather to the passions of their hearers than their reason. Others were

censured for preaching the terrors of the law too frequently, and for frightening the people with hellfire discourses. Objections were raised against so much time being spent in religious meetings; though the objectors had been significantly silent when the selfsame persons had formerly spent quite as much time, and even more, in taverns, and in sinful pleasures. Some were disgusted at the new converts so passionately warning, inviting, and entreating others to be saved. Some found fault with so much singing, forgetting that singing is one of the great employments of the beatified in heaven; and others found equal fault with children being allowed to meet together to read and pray, thus, unintentionally perhaps, resembling the priests and scribes, who were sore displeased when the children saluted Christ by shouting "Hosannah in the highest!" Thus did men mutter discontent when they ought to have sung praises; and not a few fell into the sin of those in olden times, who said concerning Christ, "He casteth out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils."

At the very time that this marvellous religious revival broke out in America, a similar work was begun in Wales. Howel Harris was born at Trevecca in 1714, and, a few months before the Wesleys went to Georgia, found the forgiveness of sins, and was made unutterably happy by a Divine assurance of his adoption into the family of God. The Wesleys, however, had no acquaintance with him, nor he with them. While they were on the ocean he left his home in Wales, and entered the university from which they had so recently departed; but here he was so distressed with collegiate immoralities, that, after keeping but a single term, he returned to his native hills, and, without orders, began at once to preach the salvation which he himself experienced. It is a curious fact, not generally noticed, that the first lay preacher, in the great Methodist movement, was Howel Harris. He commenced preaching in Wales just when the Wesleys and Ingham commenced in Georgia; and, before Wesley reached Bristol in 1739, had been the means of a most glorious work being wrought in the neighbouring principality. Up to this period the morals of the Welsh were deplorably corrupt; and in this respect there was no difference between rich and poor, ministers and people; gluttony, drunkenness, and licentiousness were general. In the pulpits of parish churches the name of Christ was hardly ever uttered; and, in 1736, there were only six Dissenting chapels throughout the whole of northern Wales.

Harris first commenced visiting from house to house in his own native parish, and in neighbouring ones. Then the people flocked together, and, almost without knowing it, he began to preach. The magistrates and clergy threatened him; but their threats failed to silence him. For a maintenance, he set up a school, and meantime continued preaching. Numbers were convinced of sin, and these the young preacher, only twenty-two years of age, formed into small societies analogous to those of which he had read in Dr. Woodward's History. At the end of 1737, persecuting malice ejected him from his school; but, as in other instances so in this, it overshot its mark; for this, instead of silencing the preacher, made him preach more than ever. He now gave himself entirely to the work of an evangelist, and henceforth generally delivered three or four, and sometimes five or six, sermons every day to crowded congregations. A widespread reformation followed. Public diversions became unfashionable, and religion became the theme of common conversation. A few began to help him, of whom the venerable Rev. Griffith Jones was the most prominent. In 1737, this devoted clergyman instituted his movable free schools; and a letter published in the Glasgow Weekly History, of 1742, describes him as "one of the most excellent preachers in Great Britain." Not a few of the teachers in his peripatetic schools became Methodist preachers; and certainly their travels as instructors, as well as his own preaching tours, prepared the way for the Methodist itinerant ministry.

Thus was Howel Harris an itinerant preacher at least a year and a half before Whitefield and Wesley were; and, as the brave-hearted herald of hundreds more who were to follow after him, he met the fiercest persecutions with an undaunted soul and an unflinching face. Parsons and country squires menaced him, and mobs swore and flung stones and sticks at him; but he calmly pursued his way, labouring almost alone in his own isolated sphere until he met with Whitefield in the town of Cardiff,

in 1739. Whitefield says he found him “a burning and shining light; a barrier against profanity and immorality; and an indefatigable promoter of the gospel of Christ. During the last three years, he had preached almost twice every day, for three or four hours together; and, in his evangelistic tours, had visited seven counties, and had established nearly thirty societies; and still his sphere of action was enlarging daily.” Almost contemporaneous with this marvellous work across the Atlantic and in Wales, was another across the Tweed, in Scotland. The facts following are taken from “A Faithful Narrative, written by James Robe, A.M., Minister of the Gospel at Kilsyth,” and printed in 1742.

For years past, there had been a sensible decay in the life and power of godliness in Scotland; but, in 1740, Mr. Robe began to preach upon the doctrine of regeneration. Meanwhile, a glorious revival of the work of God occurred at Cambuslang; and, on April 25, 1741, at Kilsyth. Sixteen children began to hold prayer-meetings in the town of Kirkintilloch, and the godly excitement became general. On every hand were heard cries, groans, and the voice of weeping. On the 16th of May, above thirty persons were awakened under the ministry of Mr. Robe, and, in a short time after, hundreds were converted in the country round about.

Drunkenness, and swearing, and other flagrant sins were instantly abandoned; family worship was set up; meetings for prayer were established; and the people generally flocked to the house of God. Young converts held prayer-meetings in fields, barns, schoolhouses, and the manses of their ministers. Cambuslang, Kilsyth, Campsie, Kirkintilloch, Auchinloch, St. Ninians, Gargunnoch, Calder, Badernock, Irvine, Long Dreghorn, Kilmarnock, Larbert, Dundee, Bothwell, Muthill, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and other towns, villages, and parishes were visited with a most gracious outpouring of God’s Holy Spirit; and scenes of mercy were witnessed quite as striking as those which were occurring simultaneously both in England and America. Not a few of the converts, about one sixth of the whole, suffered such distress of mind, and were under such powerful religious influence, that they not only cried and shrieked aloud, but trembled, fainted, and were convulsed in their bodies most mysteriously—exhibiting the same physical affections as the converts in New England; and this evoked considerable opposition, and led the Associate Presbytery at Dunfermline, to pronounce the movement a “delusion, and the work of the grand deceiver.” Some were seized with such trembling that their friends had to render them support. Many of the females went into hysterics. Numbers, on finding peace, broke forth into rapturous weeping, and had their countenances so lit up with serenity and brightness, that their neighbours declared they had obtained not only new hearts, but new faces. A few, but not many, professed to have visions of hell, of heaven, of the devil, and of Jesus.

The writer gives these facts as he finds them. Mr. Robe, in his narrative, extending over hundreds of pages, endeavours to show that such effects were not without precedents, and quotes a great number of similar instances which had occurred, in different places, from the time of the Reformation downwards. It is no part of our purpose either to explain, justify, or condemn them. We shall shortly find the same kind of effects following the preaching of Wesley in England. At present, the reader is merely reminded of the wondrous and glorious fact, that the great Methodist revival of religion, begun in 1739, stood not alone; for God, in His sovereign mercy, was working works quite as great in Germany, America, and Scotland. The revival in Germany gave birth to the heroic, martyr-like Moravian church. That in America greatly prepared the way for Whitefield, and for the first Methodist missionaries to that huge continent. That in Scotland revived the almost expiring piety of the kirk across the border; and, doubtless, greatly contributed to the devout and increasing energy and zeal evinced by the different churches there from that day to this. And that in Wales has issued in results equally remarkable. God the Spirit is omnipresent, and can give a universal revival of truth and godliness as easily as a local one. It is, also, a significant fact, of vast importance, that the whole of these great revivals were begun by preaching the same kind of truth. Christian David, the carpenter, begun the work in Moravia by preaching the doctrine of salvation by simple faith in Christ; and so did Jonathan Edwards in America.

The revival at Kilsyth sprang out of Mr. Robe's sermons on regeneration; and no one need be told that these were the doctrines which formed the staple of Wesley's and Whitefield's sermons in Great Britain.

This is the truth pre-eminently needed by man, in all ages, and in all lands; and this is the truth which, wherever preached, is always honoured, by being made the means of man's salvation.

At the close of the year 1738, Wesley was almost uniformly excluded from the pulpits of the Established Church. During the whole of 1739, the only churches in which he was allowed to preach, were Basingshaw, Islington, St. Giles', and St. Katherine's churches, London; and the churches at Dummer, Clifton, Runwick, and St. Mary's in Exeter. The first two months of the year were spent in the metropolis; but, with the exception of expounding in a few private houses, Wesley had to content himself with preaching not more than half-a-dozen sermons. In the month of March, he set out for Oxford, and wrote the following hitherto unpublished letter to his friend Whitefield. The letter is long, but full of interest.

“March 16, 1739.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—On Thursday, the 8th instant, we breakfasted at Mr. Score's, Oxford, who is patiently waiting for the salvation of God. Thence we went to Mrs. Campton's, who has set her face as a flint. After we had spent some time in prayer, Mr. Washington came with Mr. Gibbs, and read several passages out of Bishop Patrick's Parable of the Pilgrim, to prove that we were all under a delusion, and that we were to be justified by faith and works. Charles Metcalfe withstood him to the face. After they were gone, we again besought our Lord, that He would maintain His own cause. Meanwhile, Mr. Washington and Mr. Watson were going about to all parts, and confirming the unfaithful; and at seven, when I designed to expound at Mrs. Campton's, Mr. Washington was got there before me, and was beginning to read Bishop Bull against the witness of the Spirit. He told me he was authorized by the minister of the parish to do this. I advised all who valued their souls to depart; and, perceiving it to be the less evil of the two, that they who remained might not be perverted, I entered directly into the controversy, touching both the cause and fruits of justification. In the midst of the dispute, James Mears's wife began to be in pain. I prayed with her when Mr. Washington was gone; and then we went down to sister Thomas's. In the way, Mrs. Mears's agony so increased, that she could not avoid crying out aloud in the street. With much difficulty, we got her to Mrs. Shrieve's, where God heard us, and sent her deliverance, and where her husband also was set at liberty soon after. Presently Mrs. Shrieve fell into a strange agony both of body and mind; her teeth gnashed together; her knees smote each other; and her whole body trembled exceedingly. We prayed on; and, within an hour, the storm ceased; and she now enjoys a sweet calm, having remission of sins, and knowing that her Redeemer liveth.

“At my return to Mrs. Fox's, I found our dear brother Kinchin just come from Dummer. We rejoiced, and gave thanks, and prayed, and took sweet counsel together; the result of which was, that instead of setting out for London, as I designed, on Friday morning, I set out for Dummer, there being no person to supply the church on Sunday. At Reading I found a young man, Cennick by name, strong in the faith of our Lord Jesus. He had begun a society there the week before; but the minister of the parish had now wellnigh overturned it. Several of the members of it spent the evening with us, and it pleased God to strengthen and comfort them.

“On Saturday morning, our brother Cennick rode with me, whom I found willing to suffer, yea, to die for his Lord. We came to Dummer in the afternoon: Miss Molly was weak in body, but strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Surely her light ought not thus to be hid under a bushel. She has forgiveness, but not the witness of the Spirit; perhaps because our dear brother Kinchin seems to think them inseparable.

“On Sunday morning we had a large and attentive congregation.

In the evening, the room at Basingstoke was full, and my mouth was opened. We expected much

opposition, but had none at all.

“On Monday, Mrs. Cleminger being in pain and fear, we prayed, and her Lord gave her peace. About noon we spent an hour or two in conference and prayer with Miss Molly; and then set out in a glorious storm; but I had a calm within. We had appointed the little society at Reading to meet us in the evening; but the enemy was too vigilant. Almost as soon as we were out of the town, the minister sent, or went, to each of the members, and began arguing and threatening, and utterly confounded them, so that they were all scattered abroad. Mr. Cennick’s own sister did not dare to see us, but was gone out on purpose to avoid it.

“On Tuesday I came to Oxford again, and from Mrs. Fox’s went to Mrs. Campton’s. I found the minister of the parish had been there before me, to whom she had plainly declared, that she had never had a true faith in Christ till a week ago. After some warm and sharp expressions, he told her he must repel her from the holy communion. Finding she was not convinced, even by that argument, he left her calmly rejoicing in God her Saviour.

“At six in the evening, we were at Mrs. Fox’s society; about seven at Mrs. Campton’s: the power of the Lord was present at both, and all our hearts were knit together in love.

“The next day we had an opportunity to confirm most, if not all, the souls which had been shaken. In the afternoon, I preached at the Castle. We afterwards joined together in prayer, having now Charles Graves added to us, who is rooted and grounded in the faith. We then went to Mr. Gibbs’s room, where were Mr. Washington and Mr. Watson. Here an hour was spent in conference and prayer, but without any disputing. At four in the morning I left Oxford. God hath indeed planted and watered: O may He give the increase.

“I am, etc.,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

Thus did the expelled minister employ his time and energies. The churches were shut against him; but he found work in cottages. Half-a-dozen sermons in church pulpits in three months! No wonder that Wesley escaped to Bristol. Silence to such a man was intolerable. Priests and their parasites had gagged him in the metropolis, and he now started for a new sphere of labour.

His friend Whitefield, during the first five weeks of the year, was more fortunate, and managed to preach about thirty sermons in consecrated edifices in and about London. How long this permission might have lasted, it is difficult to determine; but, at the beginning of February, Whitefield, like a flaming seraph, set off to Bath and Bristol. Perhaps his departure thither was hastened by a fracas which occurred only three days before at St. Margaret’s, Westminster, where he yielded to the pressure of the crowd, and preached, despite the opposition of the minister and his church officers.[1] Be that as it may, the news of the disturbance, published in the Weekly Miscellany, got to the west of England before him; and, on his arrival, all the churches were closed against him. In a few days, however, Mr. Penrose granted him the pulpit of St. Werburgh’s; and Mr.

Gibbs the pulpit of St. Mary Redcliff. The chancellor of Bristol interfered, and threatened that, if he continued to preach or expound in the diocese without licence, he should first be suspended and then expelled. This was the turning point. To muzzle Whitefield was impossible; and hence, being shut out of the Bristol churches, away he went, on February 17, and preached, in the open air, to two hundred colliers at Kingswood. This was the boldest step that any of the Methodists had yet taken; and perhaps none of them but the impulsive, large-hearted Whitefield would have had sufficient courage to be the first in such a shocking departure from Church rules and usages. The Rubicon was passed. A clergyman had dared to be so irregular as to preach in the open air, and God had sanctioned the irregularity by making it a blessing. At the second Kingswood service, Whitefield says he had two thousand people to hear him; and at the third, four thousand; while, at the fifth service, the four thousand were increased to ten. These were marvellous crowds to assemble out of doors in the bleak months of February and

March. No wonder that Whitefield's soul took fire. He declares he never preached with greater power than now. One day, he would take his stand on Hannam Mount; another, on Rose Green; and another at the Fishponds.

Then he ran off to Cardiff, and preached in the town hall; and then to Bath, and preached on the town common. Then we find him preaching to about four thousand at Baptist Mills; and, on March 18, his congregation at Rose Green was estimated at not less than twenty thousand, to whom he preached nearly an hour and a half.[2] A gentleman lent him a large bowling-green in the heart of Bristol, and here he preached, to seven or eight thousand people. In the village of Publow, several thousands assembled to hear him; and, at Coal-pit Heath and other places, the crowds were quite as great. All this transpired within six weeks, and, at nearly all these strange and enormous gatherings, Whitefield made a collection for his orphan house in Georgia. His soul expanded with his marvellous success. He wished to try the same experiment elsewhere; and hence he sent for Wesley to act as his Bristol and Kingswood successor.

Wesley arrived at Bristol on Saturday, March 31; and, the next day, heard Whitefield at the Bowling-green, Rose Green, and Hannam Mount, and was thus introduced to the vast congregations which Whitefield bequeathed to his godly care. He was once again ungagged, and, during the nine months from March to December, preached and expounded almost without ceasing.

Whitefield, on leaving Wesley at Bristol, made his way to London, preaching to assembled thousands at Gloucester and other places. The churches in the metropolis were all closed against him; but Moorfields and Kennington Common were still open; and here, to congregations consisting of tens of thousands, he rapturously proclaimed the glad tidings of salvation. In one instance, he computed his Kennington congregation at fifty thousand, to whom he preached an hour and a half. Eighty coaches were present, besides great numbers of people on horseback. On another occasion, his collection for the orphan house in Georgia amounted to upwards of £47, of which £16 were in half-pence. At another time, the concourse in Moorfields numbered nearly sixty thousand; and, at every service, he seems to have made collections for Georgia, himself acting as one of the collectors. He then made a short preaching excursion to Hertford, Northampton, and Bedford, where the stairs of a windmill served him for a pulpit. On returning to town, he received letters from Scotland, telling him that Ralph Erskine had turned field preacher, and had had a congregation of fourteen thousand people. In June, Wesley came to London to see him, and preached at Blackheath to twelve or fourteen thousand people, "the Lord giving him," writes Whitefield, "ten thousand times more success than He has given me." An embargo unexpectedly laid on shipping detained him in England a few weeks longer, during which he visited Hertfordshire, Essex, Gloucestershire, and other places. In July, he joined his friend Wesley in Bristol, and acknowledged that the congregations were much more serious and affected than when he had left them three months before. The Kingswood colliers, instead of cursing and swearing, now made the woods ring with their hymns of praise. At length, in the month of August, Whitefield set sail for America, where we must leave him until his return to England, in March, 1741.

Charles Wesley passed most of the year 1739 in London and its neighbourhood. His brother and his friends urged him to settle at Oxford; but he refused, without further direction from God. He preached in churches as long as he was permitted; and, when prohibited, followed the example of Whitefield and his brother.

For a moment, we must retrace our steps. As already stated, Wesley himself spent the first two months of 1739 in London. How was he occupied? On New Year's day, he was present at a remarkable lovefeast in Fetter Lane, which continued until three o'clock in the morning, and which consisted of himself, his brother, his clerical friends Whitefield, Ingham, Hall, Kinchin, and Hutchings, and about sixty Moravians. At the hour mentioned, the power of God came upon them so mightily, that many cried out for exceeding joy, others fell prostrate on the ground, and all joined in singing, "We praise

Thee, O God; we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord.” But even this marvellous manifestation of the majesty of God failed to remove Wesley’s doubts and fears; for, three days afterwards, we find him writing the bitterest things against himself, and concluding with the words, “Though I have constantly used all the means of grace for twenty years, I am not a Christian.”

The day after, January 5, seven of the despised Methodist clergymen (probably the seven just mentioned), held a conference at Islington, on several matters of great importance, and, after prayer and fasting, determined what they were in doubt about, by casting lots. “We parted,” says Whitefield, “with a full conviction that God was going to do great things among us;”[3] a conviction which was soon verified.

On January 7, they held another lovefeast at Fetter Lane, and spent the whole night in prayer and thanksgiving.[4]

January 25, Wesley baptized five adults at Islington, and makes a strange distinction, which shows that his views of the scriptural doctrine of salvation were still hazy and confused. He writes: “Of the adults I have known baptized lately, only one was at that time born again, in the full sense of the word; that is, found a thorough inward change by the love of God filling her heart. Most of them were only born again in a lower sense; that is, received the remission of their sins.” Let the reader compare this with a passage in Wesley’s sermon on “The Great Privilege of those that are Born of God,” and he will mark the difference.

“It has been frequently supposed, that the being born of God was all one with the being justified; that the new birth and justification were only different expressions, denoting the same thing: it being certain, on the one hand, that whoever is justified is also born of God; and on the other, that whoever is born of God is also justified; yea, that both these gifts of God are given to every believer in one and the same moment. In one point of time his sins are blotted out, and he is born again of God. But though it be allowed, that justification and the new birth are, in point of time, inseparable from each other, yet are they easily distinguished, as being not the same, but things of a widely different nature.

Justification implies only a relative, the new birth a real, change.

God in justifying us does something for us; in begetting us again, He does the work in us. The one restores us to the favour, the other to the image, of God. The one is the taking away the guilt, the other the taking away the power, of sin; so that, although they are joined together in point of time, yet they are of wholly distinct natures.”

Nothing can be more scriptural, or more clearly expressed than this; but comparison with the extract from his journal, above given, shows that, even in 1739, Wesley was far from being “a scribe instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.” He still had much both to learn and to unlearn; but it was a happy fact, that he was docile and eager to be taught. Four days after baptizing the adults at Islington, he sat up till near one in the morning with Whitefield and two other clergymen, earnestly listening to a midnight discussion concerning the doctrine of the new birth.[5] During the month of February, he had three separate interviews with bishops of the Established Church. On the 6th, he went with Whitefield to the Bishop of Gloucester, to solicit a subscription for Georgia.[6] On the 21st, he and his brother Charles waited on Potter, Archbishop of Canterbury, who showed them great affection; spoke mildly of Whitefield; cautioned them to give no more umbrage than necessary; to forbear exceptionable phrases; and to keep to the doctrines of the Church.

They told him they expected persecution; but would abide by the Church till her articles and homilies were repealed. From Potter, they proceeded direct to Gibson, Bishop of London, who denied that he had condemned them, or even heard much about them. Whitefield’s Journal, he said, was tainted with enthusiasm, though Whitefield himself was a pious, well meaning youth. He warned them against

Antinomianism, and dismissed them kindly.[7]

On the day after their interview with the Bishop of Gloucester, Whitefield, shut out of the London churches, set off on his tour to Bristol.

Three weeks later, Wesley wrote him an account of his proceedings in London.

“February 26, 1739.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—Our Lord’s hand is not shortened amongst us. Yesterday I preached at St. Katherine’s, and at Islington, where the church was almost as hot as some of the society rooms used to be.[8] The fields, after service, were white with people praising God. About three hundred were present at Mr.S——’s; thence I went to Mr. Bray’s; thence to Fetter Lane; and, at nine, to Mr. B——’s, where also we wanted room. To-day I expound in the Minorities at four; at Mrs. W——’s at six; and in Gravel Lane, Bishopsgate, at eight. On Wednesday, at six, we have a noble company of women, not adorned with gold or costly apparel, but with a meek and quiet spirit. At the Savoy, on Thursday evening, we have usually two or three hundred, most of them, at least, thoroughly awakened. On Friday, Mr. A——’s parlour is more than filled; as is Mr. P——’s room twice over.”[9] This extract will give the reader an idea of Wesley’s weekly labours in London, up to the time that he set out for Bristol. Every day had its day’s work. It was impossible for such a man to be idle: work was essential to his happiness, and almost to his existence.

Already the people began to have faith in the power of his piety and prayers. The parents of a lunatic besought his intercessions on behalf of their afflicted son, who, for five years past, had been in the habit of beating and tearing himself, putting his hands into the fire, and thrusting pins into his flesh. Wesley and his friends yielded to the request on February 17; and, from that time, the poor creature, though not fully freed from his calamitous affliction, had more rest than he had had for two years before. On the same day, a middle aged, well dressed woman, at a society-meeting in Beech Lane, was seized as with the agonies of death.

For three years, her friends had accounted her mad, and had bled and blistered her accordingly. Wesley prayed with her, and, five days after, she was victoriously delivered, and in a moment was filled with love and joy.[10] Within a fortnight, a third instance, somewhat similar, took place at Oxford, whither Wesley had gone for a brief visit. Hearing of a woman who was most violently opposed to the Methodist revival, he went to her and argued with her. This enraged her more and more. Wesley broke off the dispute, and began to pray. In a few minutes, the woman fell into an extreme agony, both of body and soul; and soon after cried out with the utmost earnestness, “Now I know I am forgiven for Christ’s sake;” and, from that hour, set her face as a flint to declare the faith which before she persecuted.

We have already seen that, at the beginning of the month of March, Wesley made a tour to Oxford, and while there wrote to Whitefield the long letter which has been already given. On his return to London, he received a most urgent request from Whitefield to proceed to Bristol without delay. Wesley hesitated; Charles objected; and the society at Fetter Lane disputed; but, at length, the matter was decided by casting lots. Wesley reached Bristol on March 31, and on April 2 Whitefield left, summing up the results of his first six weeks of out-door preaching thus: “Many sinners have been effectually converted, and all the children of God have been exceedingly comforted. Several thousands of little books have been dispersed among the people; about £200 collected for the orphan house; and many poor families relieved by the bounty of my friend Mr. Seward. And what gives me the greater comfort is the consideration that my dear and honoured friend Mr. Wesley is left behind to confirm those that are awakened; so that I hope, when I return from Georgia, to see many bold soldiers of Jesus Christ.”[11]

The next day he wrote to Wesley the following, which is now for the first time given to the public:—

“April 3, 1739.

“HONOURED SIR,—Yesterday I began to play the madman in Gloucestershire, by preaching on

a table in Thornbury Street. Today I have exhorted twice; and by-and-by shall begin a third time; nothing like doing good by the way. Be pleased to go to Kingswood, and forward the good work as much as possible. I desire you would open any letters that come directed for me, and send me a line to Gloucester. I wish you all the success imaginable in your ministry; and I pray God that my Bristol friends may grow in grace under it. Parting from them has struck a little damp upon my joy; but God will quickly revisit,

“Honoured sir, your unworthy loving servant, “GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

“The Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at Mr. Grevil’s,

“Wine Street, Bristol.”

On the day of Whitefield’s departure, at four in the afternoon, Wesley ventured to follow his friend’s example, and for the first time in England dared to preach in the open air. His text was appropriate and striking, Isaiah lxi. 1, 2. The place was “a little eminence in a ground adjoining to the city.” His feeling was deep. He says: “I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields; 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.”

Such were the prejudices and the feelings of the man who, for between fifty and sixty years proved himself the greatest out-door preacher that ever lived.

With the exception of a brief visit to London in June, September, and November, and of a short tour into Wales and another to Exeter, Wesley spent the whole of his time, from April to the end of 1739, in Bristol and its immediate neighbourhood. Though there are considerable gaps in Wesley’s journal, during which we lose sight of his texts and sermons, it is not too much to say that he delivered at least five hundred discourses and expositions in the nine months of which we speak; and it is a noticeable fact that only eight of these were delivered in churches,—six in the church at Clifton, one at Runwick, and one at Exeter. His preaching plan was as follows:—an exposition to one or other of the Bristol societies every night, and preaching every Sunday morning, and every Monday and Saturday afternoon. At Kingswood, including Hannam Mount, Rose Green, and Two Mile Hill, he preached twice every sabbath, and also every alternate Tuesday and Friday. At Baptist Mills, he preached every Friday; at Bath, once a fortnight, on Tuesday; and at Pensford, once a fortnight, on Thursday.

Another point is worth noticing. His chief, almost his only aim, was to explain to the people the plan of scriptural salvation; for, as may easily be seen, almost all his texts have an immediate bearing on this the greatest of all pulpit topics. Saved himself, his whole soul was absorbed in a grand endeavour to expound the truth which, above all other truths, is the means of saving sinners. “The points,” he writes, “I chiefly insisted upon were four: first, that orthodoxy, or right opinions, is, at best, but a very slender part of religion, if it can be allowed to be any part at all; that neither does religion consist in negatives, in bare harmlessness of any kind; nor merely in externals, in doing good, or using the means of grace, in works of piety, or of charity: that it is nothing short of, or different from, the mind that was in Christ; the image of God stamped upon the heart; inward righteousness, attended with the peace of God and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, that the only way to this religion is repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Thirdly, that by this faith, he that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, is justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus. And, lastly, that being justified by faith, we taste of the heaven to which we are going; we are holy and happy; we tread down sin and fear, and sit in heavenly places with Christ Jesus.”[12]

He further tells us that the reasons which induced him to begin preaching in the open air were—1. That he was forbidden, as by a general consent, though not by any judicial sentence, to preach in any church. 2. That the rooms in which he preached could not contain a tenth part of the people that were earnest to

hear. Hence, he adds, he determined to do in England what he had often done in a warmer climate, namely, when the house would not contain the congregation, to preach in the open air; and never had he seen a more awful sight than when, on Rose Green, or the top of Hannam Mount, some thousands of people were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God. He had no desire or design to preach in the open air till he was forbidden to preach in churches. It was no matter of choice, neither of premeditation. Field preaching was a sudden expedient, a thing submitted to rather than chosen; and submitted to, because he thought preaching even thus better than not preaching at all; first, in regard to his own soul, because a dispensation of the gospel being committed to him, he did not dare not to preach the gospel; and secondly, in regard to the souls of others, whom he everywhere saw seeking death in the error of their life.[13]

Some of his friends urged him to settle in college, or to accept a cure of souls: to whom he replied:—

“I have no business at college, having now no office and no pupils; and it will be time enough to consider whether I ought to accept a cure of souls when one is offered to me. On scriptural grounds, I do not think it hard to justify what I am doing. God, in Scripture, commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, reform the wicked, confirm the virtuous. Man forbids me to do this in another’s parish; that is, in effect, not to do it at all, seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall. Whom then shall I hear? God or man? If it be just to obey man rather than God, judge ye. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear, the glad tidings of salvation.”

Such was the position taken by Wesley and his friends. Their chief, their only business was to save souls. For this they had a world-wide commission. Nothing short of this could satisfy the yearnings of their nature. Unlike the old Puritans and others, they had no attacks to make on the despotic measures of the court and Church. “In their bosoms there was no rankling grudge against authorities; there was no particle of that venom which, wherever it lodges, infects and paralyses the religious affections.”[14] Their sole quarrel was, not with church or state authorities, but with sin and Satan; and their sole object was, not to make proselytes, but to save sinners.

Their congregations, says James Hutton, “were composed of every description of persons, who, without the slightest attempt at order, assembled, crying ‘Hurrah!’ with one breath, and with the next bellowing and bursting into tears on account of their sins; some poking each other’s ribs, and others shouting ‘Hallelujah.’ It was a jumble of extremes of good and evil; and so distracted alike were both preachers and hearers, that it was enough to make one cry to God for His interference. Here thieves, prostitutes, fools, people of every class, several men of distinction, a few of the learned, merchants, and numbers of poor people who had never entered a place of worship, assembled in crowds and became godly.”[15] Of course, persecution followed. “We continued,” says Wesley, “to call sinners to repentance in London, Bristol, Bath, and a few other places; but it was not without violent opposition, both from high and low, learned and unlearned. Not only all manner of evil was spoken of us, both in private and public, but the beasts of the people were stirred up almost in all places to knock these mad dogs on the head at once. And when complaint was made of their savage, brutal violence, no magistrate would do us justice.”[16]

The following may be taken as specimens of the opposition met with in 1739. On one occasion, Wesley had obtained permission to preach in Pensford church; but, just as he was setting out, he received a letter, saying that the minister had been informed that he was mad, and that, therefore, the permission was withdrawn. Not being allowed to occupy the church, Wesley took his stand in the open air; but in the midst of prayer, two men, hired for the purpose, began to sing ballads, which obliged Wesley and his friends to begin to sing a psalm, so as to drown one noise by another.

Another incident must be given. Bath, at that period, was perhaps the most fashionable city in England;

and the most renowned man in Bath was Richard, commonly called “Beau,” Nash. This accomplished rake, now sixty-five years old, was the son of a glass manufacturer in Wales, and was expelled from Jesus College, Oxford, for his intrigues and wild adventures. At the age of thirty, he was without a fortune, and without talents for acquiring one; and hence, to the end of life, became a gamester.

The visit of Queen Anne to Bath, in 1703, had made the city the favourite resort of people of distinction, and, ever after, the amusements of the place were put under the direction of a master of the ceremonies, this sovereignty of the city being decreed to Nash by all ranks of residents and visitors. King of Bath, he had rules posted in the pump-room, from which even royalty itself was not allowed to deviate. He prescribed the dresses in which ladies and gentlemen were to appear at balls, and imperatively fixed the number of dances to be danced. He himself wore a monstrously large white hat, and usually travelled in a post chaise, drawn by six grey horses, honoured with outriders, footmen, French horns, and every other appendage of a pretentious coxcomb. He lived by gambling, and scattered money with as much indifference as he won it. The city of which he was the dandy king was full of fashionable rogues. “Nothing,” says the Weekly Miscellany of that period, “nothing was to be seen in it but play and the preparations for it. Persons of all characters, distinctions, and denominations sat down to cards from morning till night, and from night till morning; and those who disagreed in everything else agreed in this.

On visiting Bath, Wesley was told that Nash meant to interfere, and was entreated not to attempt to preach. Wesley, however, was not the man to yield to a swaggering rake. He had gone to preach, and preach he would, and did; the threatenings of Nash having made his congregation much larger than was expected. Besides the poor, he had many of the rich and great. Soon after Wesley began his sermon, the “Beau,” in his immense white hat, appeared, and asked by what authority he dared to do what he was doing now. Wesley replied, “By the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by him who is now Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me, and said, ‘Take thou authority to preach the gospel.’” “But this,” said Nash, “is a conventicle, and contrary to act of parliament.” “No,” answered Wesley, “conventicles are seditious meetings; but here is no sedition: therefore, it is not contrary to act of parliament.” “I say it is,” cried the man of Bath; “and, besides, your preaching frightens people out of their wits.” “Sir,” said Wesley, “did you ever hear me preach?” “No.” “How then can you judge of what you never heard?” “I judge,” he answered, “by common report.” “Common report,” replied Wesley, “is not enough. Give me leave to ask you, sir, is not your name Nash?” “It is,” he said. “Sir,” retorted Wesley, “I dare not judge of you by common report.” The master of ceremonies was worsted, and, after a pause, simply asked what the people wanted; upon which an old woman begged Wesley to allow her to answer him, and, amid her taunts, the resplendent king of the pump-room sneaked away.

No wonder that the Methodists were opposed. Their preaching, their doctrine, and their whole behaviour were novel. “Being convinced,” writes Wesley, “of that important truth, which is the foundation of all real religion, that ‘by grace we are saved through faith,’ we immediately began declaring it to others. Indeed, we could hardly speak of anything else, either in public or private. It shone upon our minds with so strong a light, that it was our constant theme. It was our daily subject, both in verse and prose; and we vehemently defended it against all mankind. But, in doing this, we were assaulted and abused on every side, We were everywhere represented as mad dogs, and treated accordingly. We were stoned in the streets, and several times narrowly escaped with our lives. In sermons, newspapers, and pamphlets of all kinds, we were painted as unheard of monsters. But this moved us not; we went on testifying salvation by faith both to small and great, and not counting our lives dear unto ourselves, so we might finish our course with joy.”[17]

Wesley here mentions the attacks made upon them by the press. The following are specimens:—

The Scots Magazine, for 1739, remarks that “Whitefield and the two Wesleys offend against the rules

of the Christian church, by preaching in opposition to the opinions and instructions of the bishops.” “The Wesleys,” continues this Scottish censor, “are more guilty than Whitefield, because they are men of more learning, better judgment, and cooler heads. Let them go over to their proper companies, their favourites, the Dissenters, and utter their extemporary effusions in a conventicle; but not be suffered in our churches hypocritically to use our forms, which they despise. Let them carry their spirit of delusion among their brethren, the Quakers. Let them preach up their election and reprobation doctrines among the Calvinists; and their solifidian tenets among the Antinomians.

Let not such bold movers of sedition, and ringleaders of the rabble, to the disgrace of their order, be regularly admitted into those pulpits which they have taken with multitude and with tumult, or, as ignominiously, by stealth.”

The clergy also began to bestir themselves. On Trinity Sunday, a sermon on regeneration was preached in the parish churches of Greenwich, and of St. Peter the Poor, London, by the Rev. Ralph Skerret, D.D., chaplain to the Earl of Grantham. The sermon, in 8vo, thirty-six pages, was published; but is scarcely worth noticing. The Methodists, however, are spoken of as “restless deceivers of the people, who make it their daily business to fill the heads of the ignorant and unwary with wild, perplexive notions.”

Another sermon, preached before the university of Oxford, on August 5, by the Rev. John Wilder, M.A., rector of St. Aldate’s, on “The Trial of the Spirits,” brands the Methodists as “deceivers,” “babblers,” “insolent pretenders,” “men of capricious humours, spiritual sleight, and canting craftiness,” “novices in divinity,” casting “indecent, false, and unchristian reflections on the clergy,” “newfangled teachers, setting up their own fantastic conceits, in opposition to the authority of God, and so bigoted to their wild opinions, and so puffed up with pride and vanity at the success of their enthusiastic labours, that they all appear fully disposed to maintain and defend their cause by more than spiritual weapons, or to die martyrs for it.”

On the 14th of October, the Rev. Charles Wheatley, M.A., vicar of Furneux Pelham, Herts, preached in St. Paul’s Cathedral, London, a sermon against the “new enthusiasts,” on “St. John’s test of knowing Christ, and being born of Him.” The sermon, with notes, was published, in 8vo, thirty-one pages, but was not calculated to augment the fame of the honest and zealous churchman, who had already given to the public two important ritualistic works, entitled, “A Rational Illustration of the Book of Common Prayer,” and “An Historical Vindication of the Fiftyfifth Canon.” Mr. Wheatley is less abusive than Mr. Wilder; but yet he thinks it right to describe the Methodists as “rapturous enthusiasts, preaching up unaccountable sensations, violent emotions, and sudden changes;” and likewise “assuming to themselves, upon all occasions, the peculiar language of the Holy Ghost; equalling themselves to prophets and apostles; boasting of immediate inspirations; and laying a blasphemous claim to greater miracles than were ever wrought even by Christ Himself.”

Another opponent, in 1739, was Henry Stebbing, a doctor of divinity, a royal chaplain, and preacher to the Honourable Society of Gray’s Inn.

This gentleman published “A Caution against Religious Delusion,” in the shape of “a sermon on the New Birth: occasioned by the pretensions of the Methodists.” In this comparatively temperate production, the Methodists are charged with “vain and confident boastings, and with rash uncharitable censures;” with “gathering tumultuous assemblies to the disturbance of the public peace, and with setting at nought all authority and rule;” with “intruding into other men’s labours, and with encouraging abstinence, prayer, and other religious exercises, to the neglect of the duties of our station.” It is admitted that, when there are “so many combinations for vice,” “religious societies for praying, reading (if not expounding) the Scriptures, and singing psalms may be of use for the encouragement of virtue;” but the danger is lest the laymen, who were heads or leaders of these societies, should “grow

opinionated of themselves and fond of their own gifts, and should run into wild fancies until the pale of the Church is too strait for them." Before the end of the year 1739, Stebbing's sermon reached a sixth edition.

Another antagonist, more violent than Stebbing, was Joseph Trapp, D.D., who published, in 1739, a pamphlet of sixty-nine pages, entitled,

"The Nature, Folly, Sin, and Danger of being Righteous over-much; with a particular view to the Doctrines and Practices of certain Modern Enthusiasts Being the substance of four discourses lately preached in the parish churches of Christ Church and St. Lawrence Jewry, London; and St. Martin's in the Fields, Westminster. By Joseph Trapp, D.D." In this notable production, it is stated that, "for laymen to officiate in reading prayers to any assembly, except their own families, is an encroachment upon the office of those who are ordained to holy functions; and for them to expound or interpret Scripture is neither laudable nor justifiable, but tends to the confirmation, not the removal, of ignorance." For "a raw novice, though in holy orders" (like Whitefield), "to take upon him, at his first setting out, to be a teacher, not only of all the laity, in all parts of the kingdom, but of the teachers themselves, the learned clergy, many of them learned before he was born, is an outrage upon common decency and common sense; the height of presumption, confidence, and self-sufficiency; so ridiculous as to create the greatest laughter, were it not so deplorable and detestable as to create the greatest grief and abhorrence; especially when vast multitudes are so sottish and wicked as, in a tumultuous manner, to run madding after him." Trapp insinuates that the Methodists "teach such absurd doctrines, and second them with such absurd practices, as to give countenance to the lewd and debauched, the irreligious and profane. In their own imagination, their errors are the height of wisdom, and their vices the most perfect virtues.

They think themselves the greatest saints, when, in truth, they are under strong delusion, in the bond of iniquity, and in the gall of bitterness. They have set the nearest and dearest relations at variance; disturbed the quiet of families; and thrown whole neighbourhoods and parishes into confusion. They were half-dissenters in the Church, and more dangerous to the Church, than those who were total dissenters from it." "Methodism was nothing but a revival of the old fanaticism of the last century; when all manner of madness was practised, and all manner of villainy committed in the name of Christ." Its disciples, "like Solomon's madman, cast firebrands, arrows, and death; and send to hell (only because they are not of their own frantic persuasion) millions of Christians much better than themselves."

The author proceeds:—"For a clergyman of the Church of England to pray and preach in the fields, in the country, or in the streets of the city, is perfectly new, a fresh honour to the blessed age in which we have the happiness to live. I am ashamed to speak upon a subject, which is a reproach not only to our Church and country, but to human nature itself.

Can it promote the Christian religion to turn it into riot, tumult, and confusion? To make it ridiculous and contemptible, and expose it to the scorn and scoffs of infidels and atheists? To the prevalence of immorality and profane-ness, infidelity and atheism, is now added the pest of enthusiasm. Our prospect is very sad and melancholy. Go not after these impostors and seducers; but shun them as you would the plague." Such are fair specimens of the four fiery sermons preached by Dr. Trapp. Hypocrites, enthusiasts, novelists, ignes fatui, and glaring meteors are the best names which this reverend divine could find for the poor, peaceable, and persecuted Methodists.[18]

Another clerical adversary was "Tristram Land, M.A., late Fellow of Clare Hall, in Cambridge, Curate of St. James, Garlickhith; and Lecturer of the united parishes of St. Anthony and St. John Baptist." His sixpenny pamphlet of thirty pages was entitled, "A Letter to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield, with a Letter addressed to the Religious Societies." Whitefield is attacked for teaching the doctrine, that many are baptized without being born again; whereas Tristram Land insists that, according to the teachings of the

Church of England, “all infants, at the time they are baptized, are sanctified with the Holy Ghost; and that, though they may afterwards depart from the grace given, and fall into sin, they are not to be commanded to be baptized or born again a second time; for to be born more than once, in a spiritual sense, is just as impossible as to be born twice in a natural. All that can be done in this matter is to use the several means of grace; or, in one word, as the Scripture expresses it, they must be renewed again by repentance.”

This reverend gentleman then proceeds to describe the Methodists as “young quacks in divinity, running about the city, and taking great pains to distract the common people, and to break the peace and unity of the Church. They are like vain persons, who think themselves handsome, and are apt to despise others; for looking upon themselves as exquisite pictures of holiness and as patterns of piety, they represent us (the clergy) as dumb dogs, profane, and carnally minded. They talk much of the pangs of the new birth, their inward feelings, experiences, and spiritual miracles; but their faith is an ill grounded assurance, their hope an unwarrantable presumption, and their charity a censoriousness and a contempt of their brethren of different sentiments to themselves.” Good old Dr. Byrom, in a letter dated February 8, 1739, says, “The book against Mr. Whitefield by Mr. Land is thought a weak piece.”[19] No wonder.

Besides these, there was published “An Expostulatory Letter to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield;” also an octavo pamphlet of forty pages, entitled, “Observations and Remarks on Mr. Seagrave’s conduct and writings, in which his answer to the Rev. Dr. Trapp’s four sermons is more particularly considered.” In this latter production, it is asserted that Whitefield sinks the house of God into a playhouse, and turns religion to a farce; that prostitutes swarm at his meetings, and there make merchandise as at a country fair; that his congregations are such as crowd to a Smithfield show; and that Whitefield himself is an enthusiast, a blasphemer, and a wavering, wandering preacher of no establishment, but nearly attached to the Dissenting communion, and blending his sermons with a spice both of the Papist and Mahomedan.

In a “Faithful Narrative” of Whitefield’s life and character, it is stated that numberless lies and false reports have been raised in London to vilify his character, and to stigmatise his followers; and he was now branded as a mercenary knave. It was also reported that, in Georgia, he had been imprisoned and personally chastised for making the people mad with enthusiasm.

An “Expostulatory Letter” to Whitefield, “and the rest of his brethren, the Methodists of the Church of England,” octavo, forty pages, and signed “E.B.,” charges them with departing from the rubric in sprinkling children at baptism, thus prostituting a holy ordinance, and substituting an insignificant, unavailing thing, neither worthy of God, nor beneficial to men. It also urges them to be dipped themselves, and thus become exemplars to others.

Besides all these, an attack was made by a young man of eight-and-twenty, curate of All Saints’, Bristol, the Rev. Josiah Tucker, afterwards a doctor of divinity, and Dean of Gloucester. In a Letter, dated June 14, 1739, he accuses Whitefield of propagating “blasphemous and enthusiastic notions, which struck at the root of all religion, and made it the jest of those who sat in the seat of the scornful.” Wesley replied to this, and concludes by advising Tucker not to meddle with controversy, for his talents were not equal to its management. It would only entangle and bewilder him more and more. Besides, there was no pleasure in answering a man whose head was not adapted to the right directing of disputes.[20]

The next onslaught was more authoritative and serious. On August 1, 1739, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, published his “Pastoral Letter,” of fifty-five pages, “to the People of his Diocese; especially those of the two great cities of London and Westminster: by way of Caution against Lukewarmness on one hand, and Enthusiasm on the other.” Two thirds of this prelatical pamphlet are on enthusiasm, and are levelled against the Methodists. Numerous extracts are given from Whitefield’s Journal, to show—

1. That these enthusiasts claim to have extraordinary communications with God, and more than ordinary assurances of a special presence with them.
2. That they have a special and immediate mission from God.
3. That they think and act under the immediate guidance of a Divine inspiration.
4. That they speak of their preaching and expounding, and the effects of them, as the sole work of a Divine power.
5. That they boast, of sudden and surprising effects as wrought by the Holy Ghost in consequence of their preaching.
6. That they claim the spirit of prophecy.
7. That they speak of themselves in the language, and under the character, of apostles of Christ, and even of Christ Himself.
8. That they profess to plant and propagate a new gospel, as unknown to the generality of ministers and people, in a Christian country.
9. That they endeavour to justify their own extraordinary methods of teaching, by casting unworthy reflections upon the parochial clergy, as deficient in the discharge of their duty, and not instructing their people in the true doctrines of Christianity.

Thirteen days after the "Pastoral Letter" was published, Whitefield wrote an answer to it, and, in a firm but quiet and respectful way, replied to all the bishop's allegations. He concludes by charging Gibson with propagating a new gospel, because he asserts, that "good works are a necessary condition of our being justified in the sight of God." He maintains that faith is the only necessary condition, and that good works are the necessary fruit and consequence. "This," he writes, "is the doctrine of Jesus Christ; this is the doctrine of the Church of England; and it is, because the generality of the clergy of the Church of England do not preach this doctrine, that I am resolved, God being my helper, to continue instant in season and out of season, to declare it unto all men, let the consequences, as to my own private person, be what they will." If the bishop really believed his accusations to be true, his pastoral is a model of meek writing. On the other hand, Whitefield's answer is one of the smartest productions of his pen; its pith and point somewhat reminding us of the terseness which characterized his friend Wesley.

While Whitefield was skirmishing with the Bishop of London, Wesley was having a brush with the Bishop of Bristol. First they discussed the subject of faith as the only necessary condition of a sinner's justification before God. Then his lordship charged the Methodists with "a horrid thing, a very horrid thing," namely, "pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Ghost." The conversation concluded thus:

Bishop. "I hear you administer the sacrament in your societies." Wesley. "My lord, I never did yet; and I believe I never shall." Bishop. "I hear too, that many people fall into fits in your societies, and that you pray over them."

Wesley. "I do so, my lord, when any show, by strong cries and tears, that their soul is in deep anguish; and our prayer is often heard." Bishop. "Very extraordinary indeed! Well, sir, since you ask my advice, I will give it freely. You have no business here; you are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore, I advise you to go hence."

Wesley. "My lord, my business on earth is, to do what good I can."

Wherever, therefore, I think I can do most good, there must I stay, so long as I think so. At present, I think I can do most good here; therefore, here I stay. Being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received, I am a priest of the church universal; and being ordained as fellow of a college, I was not limited to any particular cure, but have an indeterminate commission to preach the word of God in any part of the Church of England. I conceive not, therefore, that in preaching here by this commission I break any human law. When I am convinced I do, then it will be time to ask, shall I obey God or man? But if I should be convinced in the meanwhile that I could advance the glory of God and the salvation of souls, in any other place more than in Bristol, in that hour, by God's help, I will go hence; which till then I may not do." [21] About the same time, a pamphlet of ninety-six pages was published, entitled, "The Life of the Rev. Mr. George Whitefield, by an Impartial Hand." Impartiality is pretended, but

hostility is seen. The object of the Life is evidently to make the subject of it a mark for the shafts of ridicule.

Accounts are given of the fracas in St. Margaret's church, Westminster, on Sunday, February 4. There is also "a method of confession drawn up for the use of the women Methodists," professedly taken from the original in Whitefield's or Wesley's own handwriting, and with which, it is alleged, the Deists are delighted. Among other questions, to be asked, as often as occasion required, were the following: "Are you in love? Whom do you love just now, better than any other person in the world? Is not the person an idol? Does any court you? How do you like him? How do you feel yourself when he comes, when he stays, and when he goes away?" A full account is, likewise, furnished of Joseph Periam, a young clerk to an attorney, who had been converted, partly by reading Whitefield's sermons on the new birth, and whom his friends had put into a madhouse—(1) Because he fasted for near a fortnight. (2) Because he prayed so as to be heard several storeys high. (3) Because he had sold his clothes and given the money to the poor. The Methodists are further charged with attempting to take away the liberty of the press; Wesley is accused of placing his converts, when delivered from their violent agitations and distortions, on an eminence, for others to behold them; and Whitefield is charged with saying, that he could produce two cobblers in Bristol, that knew more of true Christianity than all the clergy in the city put together.

His Journals are designated rhapsodies and repetitions of spiritual pride, vanity and nonsense; he is accused of wilful and notorious falsehood, and of taking pleasure in being abusive and scurrilous.

All this breathes fury; but the following taken from the Weekly Miscellany of July 21, 1739, surpasses it. The Methodist preacher stands on an eminence with admiring and subscribing crowds about him. He is young, which is good; looks innocent, which is better; and has no human learning which is best of all. He spreads his hands and opens his lip; as wide as possible. He talks of a sensible new birth; good women around him come to his assistance; he dilates himself; cries out; the hill swells into a mountain; and parturiunt montes, nascitur ridiculus mus. Then there is a chorus of ten thousand sighs and groans, deepened with the blowing of bassoons and horns. The Methodists are mad enthusiasts who teach, for dictates of the Holy Spirit, seditions, heresies, and contempt of the ordinances of God and man. They are buffoons in religion, and mountebanks in theology; creatures who disclaim sense and are below argument; visionary antics in gowns and cassocks; so buffeted by the devil as to be qualified to be confessors to the whole island; composing sermons as fast as they can write, and speaking faster than they think; and forming societies of females, who are to confess their love affairs one to another, and to take care that there shall be a supply of new Methodists for future generations.

In the same year, appeared a pamphlet, of twenty-eight pages, entitled "The Methodists; an Humorous, Burlesque Poem, addressed to the Rev. Mr. Whitefield and his followers." The frontispiece represents the great preacher addressing an immense crowd on Kennington Common, while, on the outskirts of the congregation, are coaches of all descriptions, and a gibbet on which three condemned felons are hanging. Describing the Methodists, the poem says:—

"By rule they eat, by rule they drink,
Do all things else by rule, but think—
Accuse their priests of loose behaviour,—
To get more in the laymen's favour;
Method alone must guide 'em all,
Whence Methodists themselves they call."

After this, the devil is represented as making a tour from Rome to Oxford, in the course of which he stole the bigoted madness of a Turk, and the wit of a modern atheist, both of which he drenched, dull and deep, in a literary Dutchman's brain, and then, making them his own, and pulling off his horns, and shoeing his cloven foot, dressing himself in a student's gown, and using for the nonce a distorted face,

and, because of the piety of its nasal tones, a Noncon parson's nose, he introduced himself to the Oxford Methodists, and gave them instructions how to act, so as to effect their purposes,—instructions too lascivious to be reprinted. As a very mild specimen of this foul-mouthed poem, we give another description of the Methodists:—

“All men of thought with laughter view,
Or pity, the mistaken crew;
Who, mad with Scripture, void of sense,
And thoughtless, novelists commence;
Swerve from the rules of mother Church,
And leave her basely in the lurch:
To holy Holt they all repair,
There join in folly and in prayer;
Next round the gaols they hovering fly,
To plague the wretches ere they die;
And while the children lisp their praise,
‘Bless ‘em!’ each good old woman says.”

At the risk of exhausting the reader's patience, we must notice another anti-Methodist pamphleteer, who, in 1739, did his little best to strangle the new-born system at its birth. This was a certain “James Bate, M.A., Rector of St. Paul's, Deptford; and formerly Chaplain to His Excellency Horatio Walpole, Esq.”

First of all, the redoubtable author gave to the world a pamphlet of thirty-eight pages, bearing the title, “Methodism Displayed; or Remarks upon Mr. Whitefield's Answer to the Bishop of London's Pastoral Letter.” In this production, Whitefield is charged with causing numbers of poor tradesmen to leave their families to starve, only to ramble after himself; in dividing the word of God, he violently divides text from context, and makes arrant nonsense of both; he shuffles and prevaricates; treats the bishop with saucy sneers; is guilty of flat falsehoods, disingenuous quirks, and mean evasions; perfidiously tramples upon the canons of the Church; and flies in the face of his diocesan with unparalleled pride and impudence.

Not having exhausted all his wrath, the same reverend gentleman, at the end of the year, issued another manifesto, of sixty-six pages, entitled, “Quakero-Methodism; or a Confutation of the First Principles of the Quakers and Methodists.” This was a dear shilling's worth, written in reply to a letter on Bate's former pamphlet “by T. S——y, Esq.” Bate asserts that the whole performance of the “Quakero-Methodist” (as T. S——y is called) may be ranked under the two heads of scurrility and sophistry; but as God, at whose altar he serves, has forbid him to return railing for railing, he will give no answer to the scurrility whatever. He then, notwithstanding this, proceeds to accuse his adversary of having “troubled the public with a load of stupidity, folly, and nonsense.” He alleges against him “insipid sneers, like the grins of an idiot;” he tells him that “the shortest cut for him to avoid writing nonsense is to lay down his pen;” that his “whole stock of knowledge has been laid in at some expounding house that was under the influence of the spirit of presumption, ignorance, pride, and arrogance;” and that “his arguments have never more than two gentle faults, false premises and a false conclusion.” He says, Whitefield “chews” the charges of the Bishop of London, “just as an ass mumbles a thistle, without either the courage to swallow it, or the sense to lay it down;” and concludes by assuring his opponent that he could have “goaded him with the sharpest, bitterest, and severest sarcasms, and have scourged his spiritual pride with wholesome severity;” but in mercy he has refrained from using such “a whip of scorpions.”

The magazines and newspapers of the period were filled with similar abuse of the poor Methodists. The writer has examined most of them, and has been struck with two facts:—(1) of those admitting letters and articles against the Methodists, the fairest and most moderate was the Gentleman's Magazine; and (2) the bitterest and most violent was the professedly religious Weekly Miscellany, a weekly folio sheet

of four pages. The following is a mild specimen from the latter, and refers not only to the movements of Wesley and Whitefield in the south of England, but of Ingham in the north. After accusing Whitefield of “behaviour disgraceful to the Christian religion and to the ministerial office,” the journalist proceeds to say that—

“The clergy had all refused him their pulpits, and the lord mayor the halls and markets of the city.” He was “a conceited boaster and heterodox intruder; whose next performance was to be accompanied with a chorus of ten thousand sighs and groans, deepened with bassoons. In the approaching winter, the town would be entertained with harlequin turned Methodist, by way of reprisals, since the Methodist had turned harlequin.

In Yorkshire, by the preaching of the Methodists, the spirit of enthusiasm had so prevailed, that almost every man who could hammer out a chapter in the Bible had turned an expounder of the Scripture, to the great decay of industry, and the almost ruin of the woollen manufacture, which seemed threatened with destruction for want of hands to work it.” “Methodism has laid aside play-books and poems, for Scripture phrases and hymns of its own composing. Its disciples were never easy but when they were in a church, or expounding the Bible, which they could do offhand, from Genesis to Revelation, with great ease and power. They had given away their finery to tattered beggars, resolving to wear the coarsest attire and to live upon the most ordinary diet. They hired barns, where they met at six in the evening; expounded, prayed, and sang psalms till towards ten; and then had a lovefeast to communicate their experiences, especially as to love affairs.” “Several fine ladies, who used to wear French silks, French hoops of four yards wide, bob-wigs, and white satin smock petticoats, were turned Methodists, and now wore stuff gowns, common night-mobs, and plain bays for Jennys.” Numbers of similar extracts might be given from the newspapers and periodicals of 1739; but the reader has had enough of scurrilous and lying hodge-podge to satisfy the cravings of the greatest gossip.

Such were the premonitory mutterings of the storm in which the Methodist movement was cradled. Mobs threatened; newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals fulminated their malicious squibs; prelates, priests, and doctors of divinity became militant pamphleteers; but, in the midst of all, Wesley and his friends calmly proceeded in their glorious calling. Some even, who were animated with a friendly feeling towards them, looked upon their course of conduct with alarm. Good Dr. Doddridge, in a letter dated May 24, 1739, writes:— “I think the Methodists sincere; I hope some may be reformed, instructed, and made serious by their means. I saw Mr. Whitefield preaching on Kennington Common last week to an attentive multitude, and heard much of him at Bath; but, supposing him sincere and in good earnest, I still fancy that he is but a weak man—much too positive, says rash things, and is bold and enthusiastic. I am most heartily glad to hear that any real good is done anywhere to the souls of men; but whether these Methodists are in a right way—whether they are warrantable in all their conduct,—whether poor people should be urged, through different persons successively, to pray from four in the morning till eleven at night, is not clear to me; and I am less satisfied with the high pretences they make to the Divine influence. I think what Mr. Whitefield says and does comes but little short of an assumption of inspiration or infallibility.”[22]

Another friend, Mr. T. Hervey, writing in the same month to Samuel Wesley, at Tiverton, says, that he is anxious “to stop the spread and prevalence of several very strange and pestilent opinions;” and expresses the hope that this may be done effectually by the elder brother of Wesley, whom he designates “the dear, but deluded man.” He then proceeds to state that—

“These pestilent opinions are—1. That the method of education, the distinction, order, degrees, and even robes and habits of the university are all anti-Christian. 2. That nothing is taught in it but learning which opposes the power of God. 3. That whoso is born of God is also taught of God, not in any limited sense, but so as to render the use of all natural means of no effect. 4. That all human learning, however said to be sanctified of God, entirely disqualifies a man from preaching the true gospel of Jesus Christ. 5. That none have a right to preach,

but such as are immediately called to it by the Holy Ghost. 6. That an established ministry is a mere invention of man. 7. That the Church of England and all its authority are founded on and supported by a lie; and that all who receive a power of preaching from it are in a state of slavery.”[23]

This was a kind and well meant letter, but it was pregnant with mistakes. Still it tends to show the enormous difficulties encountered by the Methodists at the commencement of their history. Sometimes they met a friend, though not often; and it is a pleasing duty to introduce godly Joseph Williams, of Kidderminster, as one who sympathised with their indefatigable endeavours to save the souls of their fellow men. Under the date of September 17, 1739, he writes concerning the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and Ingham:—

“The common people flock to hear them, and, in most places, hear them gladly. They commonly preach once or twice every day; and expound the Scriptures in the evening to religious societies, who have their society rooms for that purpose.” He then proceeds to give an account of his hearing Charles Wesley preach at Bristol. Standing on a table, in a field, the preacher, with eyes and hands lifted up to heaven, prayed with uncommon fervour and fluency. “He then preached about an hour in such a manner as I scarce ever heard any man preach. Though I have heard many a finer sermon, yet I think I never heard any man discover such evident signs of vehement desire” [to benefit his hearers]. “With unusual fervour, he acquitted himself as an ambassador for Christ; and although he used no notes, nor had anything in his hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his thoughts in a rich, copious variety of expression, and with so much propriety, that I could not observe anything incoherent through the whole performance, which he concluded with singing, prayer, and the usual benediction.

“Afterward, I waited on him at Mr. Norman’s. He received me in a very friendly manner. Before he would take any refreshment, he, with a few friends that waited on him, sung a hymn, and then prayed for a blessing, as at set meals. After tea, we sung another hymn; and then I went with them to the religious society, and found the place so thronged, that it was with great difficulty we reached the centre of it. We found them singing a hymn; he then prayed; and proceeded to expound the twelfth chapter of the gospel of St. John, in a sweet, savoury; spiritual manner.

This was followed by singing another hymn; and he then prayed over a great number of bills presented by the society, about twenty of which respected spiritual cases. Never did I hear such praying. Never did I see or hear such evident marks of fervency in the service of God. At the close of every petition, a serious Amen, like a gentle, rushing sound of waters, ran through the whole audience. Such evident marks of a lively fervent devotion, I was never witness to before. If there be such a thing as heavenly music upon earth, I heard it there. I do not remember my heart to have been so elevated in Divine love and praise, as it was there and then, for many years past, if ever. Notwithstanding some errors, which, as mere men, they may be liable to, I cannot but believe that God is with them of a truth, and hath raised them up in this day of general defection from gospel purity, simplicity, and zeal, for signal service and usefulness in His church.”[24]

In a letter to Charles Wesley, written in the month of September, 1739, Williams adds: “I heartily wish you God speed. I bless you in the name of the Lord. Fear not what men can do unto you. With Him your judgment is, and your reward with your God.”[25]

Such a testimony from a man so devout, enlightened, and justly famed as Joseph Williams, the Kidderminster carpet weaver, is quite as weighty as any testimony of an opposite character from either Bishop Gibson, or any priest or prelate then watching on the walls of Zion.

We must now return to Wesley at Bristol. Every night he expounded to societies. These were small gatherings of religious people, which had continued meeting for godly purposes for about the last fifty years;[26] for it is important to remember that the “Religious Societies” formed in the days of Dr. Horneck, previous to the abdication of King James, and again revived in the reign of Queen Mary, were not confined to London and Westminster, but existed in different towns throughout the kingdom. We

find them in Oxford, Nottingham, Gloucester, Bristol, Newcastle, Dublin, Kilkenny, and other places; and all acting substantially according to the same rules and regulations. They met to pray, sing psalms, and read the Scriptures together; and to reprove, exhort, and edify one another by religious conference. They also carried out designs of charity, such as supporting lectures and daily prayers in churches, releasing imprisoned debtors, and relieving the poor and sending their children to school. In 1737, Whitefield preached “a sermon before the “Religious Societies” at one of their general quarterly meetings in Bow church, London, from the text, Ecclesiastes iv. 9-12, in which he strongly advocated the practice of Christians meeting together for religious fellowship. “As coals,” says he, “if placed asunder, soon go out, but if heaped together, enliven each other, and afford a lasting heat;” so it is with Christians.

Such were the “Religious Societies” which existed for more than half a century before the formation of the “United Societies” of the people called Methodists; and in whose rooms and meetings, in London, Bristol, and elsewhere, Whitefield and the Wesley brothers, for a few years, were accustomed to read and explain the Scriptures almost every night. On arriving in Bristol, Wesley found such societies as these assembling in Castle Street, in Gloucester Lane, in Weavers’ Hall, in Nicholas Street, in the Back Lane, and in Baldwin Street, and at once began expounding to them the Epistle to the Romans, and other portions of the New Testament; and it is a remarkable fact that, with one or two exceptions, all the scenes about to be mentioned took place in these society meetings, or in private dwellings. We furnish them as we find them:

April 17. At Baldwin Street, we called upon God to confirm His word.

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

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

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

April 26. At Newgate, I was led to pray that God would bear witness to His word. Immediately one, and another, and another sunk to the earth; they dropped on every side as thunderstruck. One of them cried aloud. We besought God in her behalf, and He turned her heaviness into joy. A second being in the same agony, we called upon God for her also; and He spoke peace unto her soul. In the evening, one was so wounded by the sword of the Spirit, that you would have imagined she could not live a moment. But immediately His abundant kindness was shown, and she loudly sang of His righteousness.

April 27. All Newgate rang with the cries of those whom the word of God cut to the heart; two of whom were in a moment filled with joy, to the astonishment of those that beheld them.

April 30. While I was preaching at Newgate, a woman broke out into strong cries and tears. Great drops of sweat ran down her face, and all her bones shook; but both her body and soul were healed in a moment.

May 1. At Baldwin Street, my voice could scarce be heard amidst the groanings of some, and the cries of others calling aloud to Him that is mighty to save; and ten persons then began to say in faith, “My Lord and my God!” A Quaker, who stood by, was very angry, and was biting his lips,

and knitting his brows, when he dropped down as thunderstruck. The agony he was in was even terrible to behold. We prayed for him, and he soon lifted up his head with joy, and joined us in thanksgiving. A bystander, John Haydon, a weaver, a man of regular life and conversation, one that constantly attended the public prayers and sacrament, and was zealous for the Church, and against Dissenters, laboured to convince the people that all this was a delusion of the devil; but next day, while reading a sermon on "Salvation by Faith," he suddenly changed colour, fell off his chair, and began screaming, and beating himself against the ground. The neighbours were alarmed, and flocked together. When I came in, I found him on the floor, the room being full of people, and two or three holding him as well as they could. He immediately fixed his eyes on me, and said, "Ay, this is he I said deceived the people. But God has overtaken me. I said it was a delusion of the devil; but this is no delusion." Then he roared aloud, "O thou devil! Thou cursed devil! Yea, thou legion of devils! Thou canst not stay in me. Christ will cast thee out. I know His work is begun.

Tear me in pieces, if thou wilt; but thou canst not hurt me." He then beat himself against the ground; his breast heaving, as if in the pangs of death, and great drops of sweat trickling down his face. We all betook ourselves to prayer. His pangs ceased, and both his body and soul were set at liberty. With a clear, strong voice, he cried, "This is the Lord's doing; and it is marvellous in our eyes. Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, from this time forth for evermore." I called again an hour after. We found his body weak as that of an infant, and his voice lost; but his soul was in peace, full of love, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God.[27] The women of our society met at seven, and, during prayer, one of them fell into a violent agony; but soon after began to cry out, with confidence, "My Lord and my God."

May 12. In the evening, three persons, almost at once, sunk down as dead, having all their sins set in array before them; but, in a short time, they were raised up, and knew that the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the World, had taken away their sins.

May 16. While I was declaring at Baptist Mills, "He was wounded for our transgressions," a middle aged man began violently beating his breast.

During our prayer, God put a new song into his mouth.

May 19. At Weavers' Hall, a woman first, and then a boy, was overwhelmed with sin, and sorrow, and fear. But we cried to God, and their souls were delivered.

May 20. In the evening God spoke to three whose souls were all storm and tempest, and immediately there was a great calm.

May 21. Although the people had seen signs and wonders, yet many would not believe. They could not, indeed, deny the facts; but they could explain them away. Some said, "These were purely natural effects; the people fainted away only because of the heat and closeness of the rooms." Others were "sure it was all a cheat; they might help it if they would. Else why were these things only in their private societies?" To-day, our Lord answered for Himself; for, while I was preaching, He began to make bare His arm, not in a close room, neither in private, but in the open air, and before more than two thousand witnesses. One, and another, and another were struck to the earth; exceedingly trembling at the presence of His power. Others cried, with a loud and bitter cry, "What must we do to be saved?" And, in less than an hour, seven persons, wholly unknown to me till that time, were rejoicing, and singing, and, with all their might, giving thanks to the God of their salvation. In the evening, at Nicholas Street, I was interrupted, almost as soon as I had begun to speak, by the cries of one who strongly groaned for pardon and peace. Others dropped down as dead. Thomas Maxfield began to roar out, and beat himself against the ground, so that six men could scarcely hold him. Except John Haydon, I never saw one so torn of the evil one. Many others began to cry out to the Saviour of all, insomuch that all the house, and, indeed, all the street for some space, was in an uproar. But we continued in prayer, and the greater part found rest to their souls. I think twenty-nine in all had their heaviness turned into joy this day.

June 15. At Wapping (London), many of those that heard began to call upon God with strong cries

and tears. Some sunk down, and there remained no strength in them; others exceedingly trembled and quaked; some were torn with a kind of convulsive motion in every part of their bodies; and that so violently, that often four or five persons could not hold one of them. I have seen many hysterical and many epileptic fits; but none of them were like these, in many respects. One woman was greatly offended, being sure they might help it if they would; but she also dropped down in as violent an agony as the rest. Twenty-six of those who had been thus affected were filled with peace and joy.

June 16. At Fetter Lane, some fell prostrate on the ground; others burst out into loud praise and thanksgiving; and many openly testified, there had been no such day as this since January the first preceding.

June 22. In the society (Bristol) one before me dropped down as dead, and presently a second, and a third. Five others sunk down in half an hour, most of whom were in violent agonies. In their trouble, we called upon the Lord, and He gave us an answer of peace. All, except one, went away rejoicing and praising God.

June 23. This evening another was seized with strong pangs; but in a short time her soul was delivered.

June 24. In the evening, a gift and four or five other persons were deeply convinced of sin; and, with sighs and groans, called upon God for deliverance.

June 25. About ten in the morning J——e C——r, as she was sitting at her work, was suddenly seized with grievous terrors of mind, attended with strong trembling; but, at the society in the evening, God turned her heaviness into joy. Five or six others were also cut to the heart this day; and, soon after, found Him whose hands made whole.

June 26. Three persons terribly felt the wrath of God abiding on them at the society this evening. But, upon prayer being made on their behalf, He was pleased soon to lift up the light of His countenance upon them.

June 30. At Weavers' Hall, seven or eight persons were constrained to roar aloud; but they were all relieved upon prayer, and sang praises unto our God, and unto the Lamb that liveth for ever and ever.

July 1. A young woman sunk down at Rose Green in a violent agony both of body and mind: as did five or six persons, in the evening, at the new room, at whose cries many were greatly offended. The same offence was given in the morning by one at Weavers' Hall; and by eight or nine others at Gloucester Lane in the evening.

Here we pause. On June 25, Whitefield wrote to Wesley as follows:—

“HONOURED SIR,—I cannot think it right in you to give so much encouragement to those convulsions which people have been thrown into, under your ministry. Was I to do so, how many would cry out every night? I think it is tempting God to require such signs. That there is something of God in it, I doubt not. But the devil, I believe, interposes. I think it will encourage the French Prophets, take people from the written word, and make them depend on visions, convulsions, etc., more than on the promises and precepts of the gospel.”[28]

Twelve days after, Whitefield was in Bristol, and Wesley wrote as follows:—

“July 7. I had an opportunity to talk with Mr. Whitefield of those outward signs which had so often accompanied the work of God. I found his objections were chiefly grounded on gross misrepresentations of matters of fact. But next day he had an opportunity of informing himself better; for, in the application of his sermon, four persons sunk down close to him, almost in the same moment. One of them lay without either sense or motion. A second trembled exceedingly. The third had strong convulsions all over his body, but made no noise, unless by groans. The fourth, equally convulsed, called upon God, with strong cries and tears.

From this time, I trust, we shall all suffer God to carry on His own work in the way that pleaseth Him.”

This was an important crisis. Without expressing any opinion respecting these “signs,” as Wesley calls them, we cannot but admire Wesley’s wish and hope that God may be allowed to work His own work in His own way. Of all men living, Wesley was one of the least likely to desire novelties like these; but he was wise enough, and reverent enough, not to interpose when God was working, and to say, that, unless the work was done after a certain fashion, he should object to its being done at all.

Some, in modern times, have been in danger of doing this. Sinners have been undeniably converted; but because they have not been converted at the times, or in the places, or by the instrumentalities which men have chosen to commend, they have objected to such conversions, and tacitly desired not to have them multiplied. This was not Wesley’s way. He was one of the greatest sticklers for church order and religious decorum; but he was not the man to protest, that, unless God’s work was carried on in accordance with his own predilections, he should object to it altogether.

His words are golden ones, and worth remembering by all his followers:—”From this time, I trust, we shall all suffer God to carry on His own work in the way that pleaseth Him.”

Whitefield’s objections were silenced. He came, he saw, and he was conquered. He writes, under date of July 7:—

“I had a useful conference about many things with my honoured friend Mr. John Wesley. I found that Bristol had great reason to bless God for his ministry. The congregations I observed to be much more serious and affected than when I left them; and their loud and repeated Amens, which they put up to every petition, as well as the exemplariness of their conversation in common life, plainly show that they have not received the grace of God in vain.

Ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but how is it that ye cannot discern the signs of these times? That good, great good, is done is evident. What is it but little less than blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to impute this great work to delusion, and to the power of the devil?”[29]

We resume Wesley’s notices of what he designates the “signs” of the work of God.

July 23. On several evenings this week many were deeply convinced; but none were delivered from that painful conviction. I fear we have grieved the Spirit of the jealous God, by questioning His work; and that, therefore, He is withdrawn from us for a season. But He will return and abundantly pardon.

July 30. Two more were in strong pain, both their souls and bodies being well-nigh torn asunder. But, though we cried unto God, there was no answer. One of them cried aloud, though not articulately, for twelve or fourteen hours; when her soul was set at liberty. She was a servant, and her master forbid her returning to his service, saying, he would have none in his house who had received the Holy Ghost.

August 5. Six persons at the new room were deeply convinced of sin; three of whom were a little comforted by prayer.

August 11. In the evening two were seized with strong pangs, as were four the next evening, and the same number at Gloucester Lane on Monday; one of whom was greatly comforted.

August 14. Three at the new room this evening were cut to the heart; but their wound was not as yet healed.

A fortnight after this, Charles Wesley came to Bristol, and John removed to London. The work still progressed at Bristol. In one instance, a woman screamed for mercy, so as to drown Charles’s voice. On another occasion, he “heard on all sides the sighing of them that were in captivity.” “The Lord added to the church daily.” In London, numbers had been converted under the ministry of Charles Wesley, Whitefield, and others; but there is no evidence to show that there had been any

“convulsions” like those at Bristol. It is also a curious fact, that, though Wesley’s preaching on Kennington Common, in Moorfields, and in other places in the metropolis, was crowned with great success, there were hardly any instances of paralysing paroxysms analogous to those already mentioned. When he returned to Bristol, in October, we find a renewal of such cases.

October 11. A woman showed the agony of her soul by crying aloud to God for help. She continued in great torment all night; but, while we were praying for her in the morning, God delivered her out of her distress.

October 12. I was under some concern, with regard to one or two persons, who were tormented in an unaccountable manner; and seemed to be indeed lunatic, as well as sore vexed.

October 23. I was pressed to visit a young woman at Kingswood. I found her on the bed, two or three persons holding her. Anguish, horror, and despair, above all description, appeared in her pale face. The thousand distortions of her whole body showed how the dogs of hell were gnawing at her heart. The shrieks intermixed were scarce to be endured.

She screamed out, “I am damned, damned; lost for ever! Six days ago you might have helped me. But it is past. I am the devil’s now, I have given myself to him: his I am, him I must serve, with him I must go to hell; I will be his, I will serve him, I will go with him to hell; I cannot be saved, I will not be saved. I must, I will, I will be damned!” She then begun praying to the devil. We began, —“Arm of the Lord, awake, awake!” She immediately sank down as asleep; but, as soon as we left off, broke out again, with inexpressible vehemence: “Stony hearts, break! I am a warning to you. Break, break, poor stony hearts! I am damned, that you may be saved. You need not be damned, though I must.” She then fixed her eyes on the corner of the ceiling, and said, “There he is. Come, good devil, come. You said you would dash my brains out: come, do it quickly.

I am yours, I will be yours.” We interrupted her by calling again upon God; on which she sunk down as before: and another young woman began to roar out as loud as she had done. My brother now came in, it being about nine o’clock. We continued in prayer till past eleven; when God, in a moment, spoke peace into the soul, first of the first tormented, and then of the other. And they both joined in singing praise to Him who had “stilled the enemy and the avenger.”

October 25. I was sent for to one in Bristol, who was taken ill the evening before. She lay on the ground furiously gnashing her teeth, and after awhile roared aloud. It was not easy for three or four persons to hold her, especially when the name of Jesus was named. We prayed; the violence of her symptoms ceased, though without a complete deliverance.

In the evening, I was sent for to her again. She began screaming before I came into the room; then broke out into a horrid laughter, mixed with blasphemy. One, who apprehended a preternatural agent to be concerned in this, asking, “How didst thou dare to enter into a Christian?” was answered, “She is not a Christian—she is mine.” This was followed by fresh trembling, cursing, and blaspheming. My brother coming in, she cried out, “Preacher! Field preacher! I don’t love field preaching.” This was repeated two hours together, with spitting, and all the expressions of strong aversion. We left her at twelve, and called again at noon next day.

And now it was, that God showed He heareth prayer. All her pangs ceased in a moment: she was filled with peace, and knew that the son of wickedness was departed from her.

October 27. I was sent for to Kingswood again, to one of those who had been so ill before. A violent rain began just as I set out. Just at that time, the woman (then three miles off) cried out, “Yonder comes Wesley, galloping as fast as he can.” When I was come, she burst into a horrid laughter, and said, “No power, no power; no faith, no faith. She is mine; her soul is mine. I have her, and will not let her go.” We begged of God to increase our faith. Meanwhile, her pangs increased more and more; so that one would have imagined, by the violence of the throes, her body must have been shattered to pieces. One, who was clearly convinced this was no natural disorder, said, “I think Satan is let loose. I fear he will not stop here,” and added, “I command thee in the name of the Lord Jesus, to tell if thou hast commission to torment any other soul.” It was

immediately answered," I have. L——y C——r, and S——h J——s." We betook ourselves to prayer again; and ceased not, till she began, with a clear voice, and composed, cheerful look, to sing, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

The reader must be told that L——y C——r and S——h J——s lived at some distance, and, at the time, were in perfect health. The day after, they were affected in the same way as the poor creature just delivered.

Wesley writes:—

October 28. I called at Mrs. J——'s, in Kingswood. L——y C——r and S——h J——s were there. It was scarce a quarter of an hour before the former fell into a strange agony; and, presently after, the latter. The violent convulsions all over their bodies were such as words cannot describe. Their cries and groans were too horrid to be borne; till one of them, in a tone not to be expressed, said, "Where is your faith now? Come, go to prayers. I will pray with you." We took the advice, and poured out our souls before God, till L——y C——r's agonies so increased, that it seemed she was in the pangs of death. But, in a moment, God spoke; and both her body and soul were healed. We continued in prayer till past midnight, when S——h J——'s voice was also changed, and she began to call upon God. This she did for the greatest part of the night. In the morning, we renewed our prayers, while she was crying continually, "I burn! I burn! O what shall I do? I have a fire within me. I cannot bear it. Lord Jesus! Help! Amen, Lord Jesus!"

A few other cases occurred in 1739; and, notably, one on November 30, When seven persons were grievously tormented, and Wesley and his friends continued in prayer from the time of evening service till nine o'clock next morning, that is, for about fifteen hours, a case almost unparalleled in the history of the church of Christ.

These are strange and mysterious facts; and, what adds to the strangeness, is that, excepting the cases in London, on June 15, 16, and September 17, 18, all of them occurred in Bristol and its immediate neighbourhood. During the space of time which these extracts cover, Wesley preached at Bath, Kennington Common, Moorfields, Blackheath, Gloucester, Bradford, Wells, Oxford, and in several towns in Wales, and other places; but scenes like those above described were never witnessed except in Bristol. It is also a curious circumstance, that, though the preaching of Charles Wesley and of Whitefield was quite as faithful as the preaching of Wesley himself, and was far more impassioned, yet no such "signs" seem to have been attendant on their ministry as were attendant on his. Similar effects sometimes followed the preaching of Cennick, during Wesley's absence in London, but these occurred also either at Kingswood or in Bristol. Writing to Wesley under date of September 12, 1739, he says:—

"On Monday night, I was preaching at the school on the forgiveness of sins, when numbers cried out with a loud and bitter cry. Indeed, it seemed that the devil and the powers of darkness were come among us. My mouth was stopped. The cries were terrifying. It was pitch dark; it rained much; and the wind blew vehemently. Large flashes of lightning and loud claps of thunder mingled with the screams and exclamations of the people. The hurry and confusion cannot be expressed. The whole place seemed to resemble the habitation of apostate spirits; many raving up and down, and crying, 'The devil will have me; I am his servant! I am damned! My sins can never be pardoned! I am gone, gone for ever!' A young man was in such horrors, that seven or eight persons could scarce hold him. He roared like a dragon: 'Ten thousand devils, millions, millions of devils are about me!' This continued three hours, and what a power reigned amongst us! Some cried out with a hollow voice, 'Mr. Cennick! Bring Mr. Cennick!' I came to all that desired me. They then spurned me with all their strength, grinding their teeth, and expressing all the fury that heart can conceive. Their eyes were staring and their faces swollen, and several have since told me, that when I drew near, they felt fresh rage, and longed to tear me in pieces. I never saw the like, nor even the shadow of it before. Yet I was not in the least afraid, as I knew God was on our side." [30]

Such are the facts; nothing has been distorted, and nothing kept back.

They were occasionally repeated after the year 1739, but not often. A few cases subsequently occurred in Bristol, and also in London, and in Newcastle; but nearly all related in Wesley's Journals are contained in the extracts already given.

What shall be said concerning them? For a hundred and thirty years, they have been sneered at by Wesley's enemies, and have also puzzled Wesley's friends. *No such results attended Whitefield's ministry*, and Whitefield himself regarded them with suspicion and dislike. Charles Wesley, at Newcastle, in 1743, did his utmost to discourage them. He writes:—

“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. Many counterfeits I have already detected. The first night I preached here, half my words were lost through their outcries. Last night, before I began, I gave public notice that whosoever cried, so as to drown my voice, should be carried to the farthest corner of the room. But my porters had no employment the whole night; yet the Lord was with us, mightily convincing of sin and of righteousness. I am more and more convinced, the fits were a device of Satan to stop the course of the gospel.”[31]

Samuel Wesley was in great doubt respecting them, and, in a letter dated September 3, 1739, asks:—“Did these agitations ever begin during the use of any collects of the Church? Or during the preaching of any sermon that had before been preached within consecrated walls without effect? Or during the inculcating any other doctrine besides that of your new birth?”[32]

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

Erskine proceeds to state, that they have something, in Scotland, analogous to what had occurred in Bristol. Sometimes a whole congregation, in a flood of tears, would cry out at once, so as to drown the voice of the minister.[33]

The Rev. William Hales, D.D., in his “Methodism Inspected,” accounts for these paroxysms on “natural grounds; the sympathetic nature of all violent emotions being well known to those who have studied the physical and moral, constitution of man.”

Southey writes:—

“A powerful doctrine, preached with passionate sincerity, produced a powerful effect upon weak minds, ardent feelings, and disordered fancies. There are passions which are as infectious as the plague, and fear itself is not more so than fanaticism. When once these bodily affections were declared to be the throes of the new birth, a free licence was proclaimed for every kind of extravagance; and when the preacher encouraged them to throw off all restraint, and abandon themselves before the congregation to these mixed sensations of mind and body, the consequences were what might be anticipated.”

Southey forgets that “powerful doctrine” was preached, with as much “passionate sincerity,” by Whitefield and by Charles Wesley, as by Wesley himself; but without the same effects. Besides, it is untrue that Wesley ever “encouraged” the affected people “to abandon themselves to these mixed sensations of mind and body.”

The Rev. R. Watson writes:—

“That cases of real enthusiasm occurred at this and subsequent periods, is indeed allowed. There

are always nervous, dreamy, and excitable people to be found; and the emotion produced among these would often be communicated by natural sympathy. No one could be blamed for this, unless he had encouraged the excitement for its own sake, or taught the people to regard it as a sign of grace, which most assuredly Mr. Wesley never did. Nor is it correct to represent these effects, genuine and fictitious together, as peculiar to Methodism. Great and rapid results were produced in the first ages of Christianity, but not without 'outcries,' and strong corporeal as well as mental emotions. Like effects often accompanied the preaching of eminent men at the Reformation; and many of the Puritan and Nonconformist ministers had similar successes in our own country. In Scotland, and also among the grave Presbyterians of New England, previous to the rise of Methodism, the ministry of faithful men had been attended by very similar circumstances; and, on a smaller scale, the same results have followed the ministry of modern missionaries of different religious societies in various parts of the world. It may be laid down as a principle established by fact, that whenever a zealous and faithful ministry is raised up, after a long, spiritual dearth, the early effects of that ministry are not only powerful, but often attended with extraordinary circumstances; nor are such extraordinary circumstances necessarily extravagancies because they are not common. It is neither irrational nor unscriptural to suppose, that times of great national darkness and depravity should require a strong remedy; and that the attention of the people should be roused by circumstances which could not fail to be noticed by the most unthinking. We do not attach primary importance to secondary circumstances; but they are not to be wholly disregarded. The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire, but in the still small voice; yet that still small voice might not have been heard, except by minds roused from their inattention by the shaking of the earth and the sounding of the storm."

Isaac Taylor writes:—

"These disorders resembled, in some of their features, the demoniacal possessions mentioned in the gospel history. The bodily agitations were perhaps as extreme in the one class of instances as in the other; nevertheless, there is no real analogy between the two. The demoniacs were found in this state by Christ where He went preaching; they did not become such while listening to Him. Besides, in no one instance recorded in the Gospels or Acts, did demoniacal possession, or any bodily agitations resembling it, come on as the initial stage of conversion.

How then are we to dispose of such cases? Perhaps not at all to our satisfaction, except so far as this, that they serve to render so much the more unambiguous the distinction between themselves and those genuine affections which the apostolic writers describe and exemplify."

What says Wesley himself? With due deference to the great names quoted, we respect his testimony more than theirs: first, because he was, in sobriety of feeling, in depth of learning, and in clearness of judgment, at least their equal; and secondly, because his opinion was pronounced after being an eye-witness, whilst theirs is founded entirely upon the representations of others, and their own ideas of how things ought to be.

1. The cases were real, not pretended, and often ended in genuine conversion. "You deny," writes Wesley at the time,

"You deny that God does now work these effects; at least, that He works them in this manner.

I affirm both; because I have heard these things with my own ears, and have seen them with my own eyes. I have seen very many persons changed, in a moment, from the spirit of fear, horror, despair, to the spirit of love, joy, and peace; and from sinful desire, till then reigning over them, to the pure desire of doing the will of God. I know several persons, in whom this great change was wrought in a dream, or during a strong representation to the eye of their mind, of Christ either on the cross, or in glory. This is the fact; let any judge of it as they please." [34]

2. Why were these things permitted? Wesley says:

"Perhaps it might be because of the hardness of our hearts, unready to receive anything unless we see it with our

eyes and hear it with our ears, that God, in tender condescension to our weakness, suffered so many outward signs of the very time when He wrought this inward change to be continually seen and heard among us. But although they saw 'signs and wonders' (for so I must term them), yet many would not believe. They could not indeed deny the facts; but they could explain them away." [35]

3. How were these extraordinary circumstances brought about? Wesley again shall answer. Five years after—when he had heard all that his enemies had to say—when such convulsive agitations no longer happened—and when he had had sufficient time to test the genuineness of these remarkable Bristol and Kingswood conversions, and to form a calm judgment upon the whole, he wrote as follows:—

"The extraordinary circumstances that attended the conviction or repentance of the people may be easily accounted for, either on principles of reason or Scripture.

First, on principles of reason. For how easy is it to suppose, that a strong, lively, and sudden apprehension of the heinousness of sin, the wrath of God, and the bitter pains of eternal death, should affect the body as well as the soul, during the present laws of vital union;—should interrupt or disturb the ordinary circulations, and put nature out of its course? Yea, we may question, whether, while this union subsists, it be possible for the mind to be affected, in so violent a degree, without some or other of those bodily symptoms following. Secondly, it is likewise easy to account for these things on principles of Scripture. For when we take a view of them in this light, we are to add to the consideration of natural causes the agency of those spirits who still excel in strength, and, as far as they have leave from God, will not fail to torment whom they cannot destroy; to tear those that are coming to Christ. It is also remarkable that there is plain Scripture precedent of every symptom which has lately appeared." [36] We have nothing more to add. Perhaps the reader will think that more has been said than the thing deserved. We demur to that opinion. The phenomena recorded are among the most remarkable in church history; they are curious and mysterious; they have given rise to endless critiques, both friendly and otherwise, and, for such reasons, merit the space we have devoted to them. Dr. Hales' doctrine of "the sympathetic nature of all violent emotions," though true, is not sufficient to account for many of the instances related. Southey's opinion is flippant, and is based upon false assumptions. Watson's is of great importance, and, as contained at greater length in his *Life of Wesley*, is the most elaborate discussion of the subject that has yet been written. Isaac Taylor's, to some extent, coincides with Wesley's; which, upon the whole, is the clearest, fullest, and the best.

Other events, belonging to the year 1739, must now be noticed.

Kingswood, so often mentioned, was formerly a royal chase, containing between three and four thousand acres; but, previous to the rise of Methodism, it had been gradually appropriated by the several lords whose estates encircled it. The deer had disappeared, and the greater part of the wood also; coal mines had been discovered, and it was now inhabited by a race of people, as lawless as the foresters, their forefathers, but far more brutal; and differing as much from the people of the surrounding country in dialect as in appearance. They had no place of worship; for Kingswood then belonged to the parish of St. Philip, and was, at least, three miles distant from the parish church. [37] The people were famous for neither fearing God nor regarding man; and so ignorant of sacred things that they seemed but one remove from the beasts that perish. They were utterly without desire of instruction, as well as without the means of it. The place resounded with cursing and blasphemy. It was filled with clamour and bitterness, wrath and envyings, idle diversions, drunkenness, and uncleanness; [38] a hell upon earth. Only fifteen weeks before Whitefield's first visit, the colliers had risen with clubs and firearms, and gone from pit to pit threatening the lives of all the workmen who would not join them in defeating the ends of justice, in reference to a riot that had occurred a short time previously. At White Hill, four mines were filled up; and carts, reels, and ropes belonging to others were cut and burned. The soldiers were called out, and the swarthy rioters ran away. [39] Kingswood

was Whitefield's first field-pulpit, for here, on February 17, 1739, he began his glorious career of outdoor preaching. Within six weeks after this, the day before Wesley came to Bristol, Whitefield dined with the colliers, who contributed upwards of £20 towards the erection of a school. Four days after this, the miners prepared him another hospitable entertainment, after which he laid the foundation stone, knelt upon it, and offered prayer, to which the colliers said, "Amen." [40] On the same day, Whitefield took his departure from Bristol, leaving Wesley as his successor; and, with the exception of a visit of a week's duration in the month of July following, he was not at Kingswood again during the next two years. Whitefield began the school at Kingswood: the colliers gave upwards of £20; Whitefield collected £40 in subscriptions; and, on two subsequent occasions, he made collections for the same purpose, once when he preached his farewell sermon at Bristol, on July 13, before embarking for America; and once in Moorfields, when the sum of £24 9s. Was contributed. [41] This was all. The rest devolved on Wesley.

He alone was responsible for the payment of the debts incurred; and, for many months, wherever he went, he begged subscriptions for the colliers' school. The school itself consisted of one large room, with four smaller ones for the teacher's residence, and was not completed till the spring of 1740. [42] The object was to teach the children of the poor, first religion, and then to read, write, and cast accounts; but Wesley also expected to have "scholars of all ages, some of them grey-headed," who were to be taught, separate from the children, "either early in the morning, or late at night," so that their work might not be hindered by their education. [43] Within six weeks after Whitefield laid the first stone of Kingswood school, Wesley took possession of a piece of ground in the Horse Fair, Bristol, and began to build a room large enough to contain the societies of Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street. This was done without the least apprehension or design of his being personally engaged, either in the expense of the work, or in the direction of it; he having appointed eleven trustees, by whom he supposed the burdens would be borne. He soon found that he had made a great mistake. In a short time, a debt was contracted of more than £150, whereas the subscriptions of the trustees and of the two societies were not a quarter of that amount. This debt devolved upon him. He had no money, nor any human prospect or probability of procuring any; but he knew "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and he dared to trust Him. Besides this, Whitefield and other friends in London most strongly objected to the building being the property of trustees, on the ground that Wesley would be under their control; and, unless his preaching pleased them, they might eject him from the house he himself had built. Whitefield declared that, unless the trustship was destroyed, neither he nor his friends would contribute anything towards the expenses. Wesley yielded; the trustees were summoned; all agreed to the alteration; the deed was cancelled; and Wesley became the sole proprietor.

This, though insignificant at the time, was a matter of great importance; for, in this manner, nearly all the chapels, erected in the early part of his career, were vested in himself,—a thing involving serious responsibility, which, however, was honourably fulfilled; for trusts were afterwards created; and, by his "Deed of Declaration," all his interests in his chapels were transferred to his Legal Conference.

Thus we find Wesley, with no income whatever, except the small amount arising out of his Oxford fellowship, involved in what, to a poor man, were two serious undertakings. But even this was not all the burden that he took upon himself. He spent the beginning of November in London; and whilst there, two gentlemen, then unknown to him, came again and again, urging him to preach in a place called the Foundery, near Moorfields. With much reluctance he consented. He writes:—"Sunday, November 11, I preached at eight 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." [44]

He was then pressed to take the place into his own hands. He did so. The purchase-money was £115; but the place being "a vast, uncouth heap of ruins," a large sum additional to this had to be expended in

needful repairs, in building two galleries for men and women hearers respectively, and in enlarging a room for the society to almost thrice its present size. To meet this large expenditure, Ball, Watkins, and other friends lent him the purchase-money; and offered to pay subscriptions, some four, some six, and some ten shillings a year towards the liquidation of the debt. In three years, these subscriptions amounted to about £480, leaving however a balance of nearly £300, for which Wesley was still responsible.[45] From this it would seem that the entire cost of the old Foundery was about £800.

This was the first Methodist meeting-house of which the metropolis could boast, and a brief description of it may not be out of place.

It stood in the locality called “Windmill Hill,” now known by the name of Windmill Street, a street that runs parallel with City Road, and abuts on the north-west corner of Fins-bury Square. The building was placed on the east side of the street, some sixteen or eighteen yards from Providence Row; and measured about forty yards in front, from north to south, and about thirty-three yards in depth, from east to west. There were two front doors, one leading to the chapel, and the other to the preacher’s house, school, and bandroom. A bell was hung in a plain belfry, and was rung every morning at five o’clock for early service, and every evening at nine for family worship; as well as at sundry other times. The chapel, which would accommodate some fifteen hundred people, was without pews; but, on the ground floor, immediately before the pulpit, were about a dozen seats with back rails, appropriated to female worshippers. Under the front gallery were the free seats for women; and, under the side galleries, the free seats for men. The front gallery was used exclusively by females, and the side galleries by males. “From the beginning,” says Wesley, “the men and women sat apart, as they always did in the primitive church; and none were suffered to call any place their own, but the first comers sat down first. They had no pews; and all the benches for rich and poor were of the same construction.”[46]

The bandroom was behind the chapel, on the ground floor, some eighty feet long and twenty feet wide, and accommodated about three hundred persons. Here the classes met; here, in winter, the five o’clock morning service was conducted; and here were held, at two o’clock, on Wednesdays and Fridays, weekly meetings for prayer and intercession.

The north end of the room was used for a school, and was fitted up with desks; and at the south end was “The Book Room” for the sale of Wesley’s publications.

Over the bandroom were apartments for Wesley, in which his mother died;[47] and, at the end of the chapel was a dwelling house for his domestics and assistant preachers; while attached to the whole was a small building used as a coach-house and stable.[48] Why was the building called the Foundery? Because, for a number of years, it was used by the government in casting cannon. When Wesley bought it, the edifice had been a ruin for about twenty years. In 1716, whilst recasting the injured guns taken from the French in the successful campaigns of Marlborough, a terrible explosion blew off the roof, shook the building, killed several of the workmen, burnt others, and broke the limbs of not a few. This led to an abandonment of the place, and the removal of the royal foundery to Woolwich.[49] The next occupants were Wesley and the Methodists; and the echoes of prayer and praise succeeded the clang of anvils and the roar of furnaces of fire.

When first opened, it was described by Silas Told as “a ruinous place, with an old pantile covering,” the structure to a great extent consisting of “decayed timbers,” and the pulpit being made of “a few rough boards.”[50] It may be interesting, to the curious reader, to add, that a few years ago, the old Foundery bell, used in calling the people to the five o’clock preaching, was still in existence, and was attached to the school at Friar’s Mount, London; that, at the present moment, the old Foundery pulpit is preserved at Richmond, and is used by the Richmond students every week; and that the old Foundery chandelier is now in use in the chapel at Bowes, in Yorkshire.

This was really the cradle of London Methodism. Here Wesley began to preach at the end of 1739. The character of the services held in this rotten, pantile covered building may be learnt from Wesley's Works.

Wesley began the service with a short prayer, then sung a hymn and preached (usually about half an hour), than sung a few verses of another hymn, and concluded with a prayer. His constant theme was, salvation by faith, preceded by repentance, and followed by holiness.[51] The place was rough and the people poor; but the service simple, scriptural, beautiful.

No wonder, that such a priest, shut out of the elaborately wrought pulpits of the Established Church, and now cooped up within a pulpit made of "rough deal boards," should be powerful, popular, and triumphant.

Passing from pulpits to preachers, we must venture here to correct an error, which, from the first, seems to have been current in the Methodist community. All Methodist historians have assumed that Thomas Maxfield was Methodism's first lay preacher; that is, the first who was allowed to expound the Scriptures without being formally ordained to that holy service. This is a mistake. Thomas Maxfield was not converted until the 21st of May, 1739; and yet, a month after this, we find John Cennick, the converted land surveyor, employed with Wesley's sanction, in preaching to the Kingswood colliers.

Methodism's first lay preacher deserves a passing notice. He has never yet had justice done him, and we regret that limited space prevents justice being rendered even here.

John Cennick was the son of Quakers, and, from infancy, was taught to pray every night and morning. At thirteen years of age, he went nine times, from Reading to London, to be apprenticed to a trade, but all to no purpose, except that he was taken on trial by a carpenter, who refused to retain his services when the time was come for his being bound. In 1735, John was convinced of sin, while walking in Cheapside, and, at once, left off song singing, card playing, and attending theatres. Sometimes he wished to go into a popish monastery, to spend his life in devout retirement. At other times, he longed to live in a cave, sleeping on fallen leaves, and feeding on forest fruits. He fasted long and often, and prayed nine times every day. He was afraid of seeing ghosts, and terribly apprehensive lest he should meet the devil. Fancying dry bread too great an indulgence for so great a sinner as himself, he began to feed on potatoes, acorns, crabs, and grass; and often wished he could live upon roots and herbs. At length, on September 6, 1737, he found peace with God, and went on his way rejoicing. Like Howel Harris, he, at once, commenced preaching; and also began to write hymns, a number of which Charles Wesley, in July, 1739, corrected for the press.

We have already seen that, in March, 1739, Wesley and Cennick met at Reading. Shortly after that, Whitefield proposed that Cennick should become the master of the school in Kingswood, whose first stone was laid in the month of May; and, on the 11th of June, off he set on foot, from Reading to Bristol, sleeping all night in an old stable on his way. On arriving there, he found that Wesley had gone to London; but was invited to go to Kingswood to hear a young man (query, Thomas Maxfield?) read a sermon to the colliers. The place for meeting was under a sycamore tree, near the intended school. Four or five hundred colliers were assembled, but the young reader had not arrived. Cennick was requested to take his place; he reluctantly complied, preached a sermon, and says, "The Lord bore witness with my words, insomuch that many believed in that hour." Cennick preached again on the day following, and on the succeeding sabbath twice.

Meanwhile Howel Harris came; and, on the ensuing Tuesday, Wesley.

How did Wesley receive the two lay preachers? Harris went to Wesley's lodgings. They fell upon their knees; and Harris writes, "He was greatly enlarged in prayer for me, and for all Wales." Full of holy feeling, the Welsh evangelist crossed the channel, and found wider doors of usefulness than ever.

Cennick too was not restrained. He tells us, that many of the people desired Wesley to forbid him; but, so far from doing so, he encouraged him; and, thus encouraged, he preached constantly in Kingswood and the neighbouring villages for the next eighteen months, and sometimes supplied Wesley's place in Bristol, when he was absent, preaching in other towns.[52]

Honour to whom honour is due. We repudiate the wish to take from Maxfield a particle of fame, which of right belongs to him; but there cannot be a doubt that John Cennick was one of Wesley's lay preachers before Maxfield was. Neither is there aught contradictory to this in Wesley's writings. It is true, that Wesley, after mentioning that the first society was formed at the end of 1739, goes on to say: "After a time, a young man, Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel;"[53] but this is not opposed to the fact, that John Cennick had already helped him at Kingswood, Bristol, and other places. Myles thinks that it is probable, that Maxfield, Richards, and Westall were all employed by Wesley in the beginning of the year 1740.[54] Perhaps so; but we have already seen that Cennick was preaching, with the approbation and encouragement of Wesley, as early as the month of June, 1739.[55] This is not the place to pursue the footsteps of Methodism's first lay preacher. Suffice it to remark, though his career was comparatively short, in zealous and successful labour it is difficult to equal it. Cennick had his weaknesses; but, in deadness to the world, communion with God, Christian courage, and cheerful patience, he had few superiors. Despite his Calvinism and his differences with Wesley, we admire and love the man. He died in 1755.

Here then was another momentous step taken by the arch-Methodist.

Wesley had been bred within a strict ecclesiastical enclosure. He was firm in his attachment to the principles and practices of the English Church, and was far from being indifferent to the prerogatives of its priests; but he was far too wise and reverent a man to say that the salvation of the human family would be too dearly purchased if promoted by a departure from church usages. Christianity, though conserved by church order, does not exist for the sake of it. As a student of church history, Wesley must have known that, again and again, unless order had given way to a higher necessity, the gospel, instead of holding on its way in its brightness and in its purity, would, long ere now, in the hands of idolizers of ancient rules, have been extinguished in the very path where it ought to have shed an unceasing flame. In no man was there a greater combination of docility and courage; and hence, when Wesley met with men like Cennick, full of fervent consciousness of the reality, power, and blessedness of Christ's religion; and employing a style, terse from intensity of feeling, and copious from the fulness of their theme,—no wonder that, instead of forbidding, he encouraged them to preach the glorious truths, which they not merely understood, but felt.

This was a startling innovation; and, doubtless, horrified the stereotyped ministries and priesthoods existing round about; but the fields were white to the harvest, and the labourers were few; and Wesley could not, durst not, forbid an increase to the staff, because the added workers had not been trained in colleges, and came not in all the priestly paraphernalia of surplices and hoods, gowns and bands. No doubt he would have preferred the employment of clerics like himself; but, in the absence of such, he was driven to adopt the measure which we think the salvation of his system, and, in some respects, its glory.

"I knew your brother well," said Robinson, the Archbishop of Armagh, when he met Charles Wesley at the Hotwells, Bristol: "I knew your brother well; I could never credit all I heard respecting him and you; but one thing in your conduct I could never account for, your employing laymen." "My Lord," said Charles, "the fault is yours and your brethren's." "How so?" asked the primate. "Because you hold your peace, and the stones cry out." "But I am told," his grace continued, "that they are unlearned men." "Some are," said the sprightly poet, "and so the dumb ass rebukes the prophet." His lordship said no more.[56] The following letter of Whitefield has not been previously printed so fully as at present. As it was written at the time when Cennick began preaching, it may appropriately be inserted here. Its

references to other matters are also deeply interesting.

“LONDON, June 25, 1739.

“HONOURED SIR,—I suspend my judgment of Brother Watkins’ and Cennick’s behaviour till I am better acquainted with the circumstances of their proceeding. I think there is a great difference between them and Howel Harris. He has offered himself thrice for holy orders; him therefore and our friends at Cambridge I shall encourage: others I cannot countenance in acting in so public a manner. The consequences of beginning to teach too soon will be exceeding bad—Brother Ingham is of my opinion.

“I hear, honoured sir, you are about to print a sermon on predestination. It shocks me to think of it; what will be the consequences but controversy? If people ask me my opinion, what shall I do? I have a critical part to act, God enable me to behave aright! Silence on both sides will be best. It is noised abroad already, that there is a division between you and me. Oh, my heart within me is grieved!

“Providence to-morrow calls me to Gloucester. If you will be pleased to come next week to London, I think, God willing, to stay a few days at Bristol. Your brother Charles goes to Oxon. I believe we shall be excommunicated soon. May the Lord enable us to stand fast in the faith; and stir up your heart to watch over the soul of, honoured sir,

“Your dutiful son and servant,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

“To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at Mrs. Grevil’s, a Grocer in Wine Street, Bristol.”

We must proceed to another matter. Wesley writes:— “In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired, I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come. That we might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every Thursday, in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for the number increased daily,) I gave those advices, from time to time, which I judged most needful for them; and we always concluded our meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities. This was the rise of the United Society, first in London, and then in other places.”[57]

In another place, he writes:—

“The first evening about twelve persons came; the next week, thirty or forty. When they were increased to about a hundred, I took down their names and places of abode, intending, as often as it was convenient; to call upon them at their houses. Thus, without any previous plan, began the Methodist Society in England,—a company of people associating together to help each other to work out their own salvation.”[58]

No doubt the whole of this is strictly true; but there are other facts to be remembered.

By the preaching of the two Wesleys and of Whitefield, a large number of persons in London had been converted; and most of these had been incorporated in the Moravian bands. When Wesley went to Bristol, at the end of March, the work in London devolved, to a great extent, on his brother Charles. Disputes soon sprung up. On Easter day, Charles had a conversation with Zinzendorf “about motions, visions, and dreams, and was confirmed in his dislike to them.” On April 28, Whitefield preached in Islington churchyard; and, after he had done, Bowers, a Moravian, got up to speak. Charles Wesley says: “I conjured him not; but he beat me down, and followed his impulse.” On the 16th of May, a dispute arose, in the Moravian meeting at Fetter Lane, about lay preaching. Many were zealous for it; but Whitefield and Charles Wesley declared against it. In June, another Moravian, John Shaw, “the self-ordained priest,” as Charles Wesley calls him, “was brimful of proud wrath and fierceness”; and two others, Bowers and Bray, whom Whitefield designated “two grand enthusiasts,” followed Charles to Blendon, “drunk with the spirit of delusion.” In the Moravian society, Shaw “pleaded for his spirit of

prophecy”; and charged Charles Wesley “with love of pre-eminence, and with making his proselytes twofold more the children of the devil than they were before.” Many misunderstandings and offences had crept in; and Wesley came from Bristol to put things right. A humiliation meeting was held at Fetter Lane; and “we acknowledged,” says Wesley, “our having grieved God by our divisions; ‘one saying, I am of Paul; another, I am of Apollos’; by our leaning again to our own works, and trusting in them, instead of Christ; by our resting in those little beginnings of sanctification, which it had pleased Him to work in our souls; and, above all, by blaspheming His work among us, imputing it either to nature, to the force of imagination and animal spirits, or even to the delusion of the devil.” Things seem to have proceeded more smoothly till about September, when, in the absence of the two Wesleys, “certain men crept in among them unawares, telling them, that they had deceived themselves, and had no true faith at all. ‘For,’ said they, ‘none has any justifying faith, who has ever any doubt or fear, which you know you have; or who has not a clean heart, which you know you have not; nor will you ever have it, till you leave off running to church and sacrament, and praying, and singing, and reading either the Bible, or any other book; for you cannot use these things without trusting in them. Therefore, till you leave them off, you can never have true faith; you can never till then trust in the blood of Christ.’”[59]

This was a serious heresy; and, on November 1, Wesley hurried up to London to put a check to it. He acknowledges, that the Moravians still held the grand doctrine of justification by faith; and that the fruits of faith were “righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.” He testifies, that they were free from the sins of swearing, theft, gluttony, drunkenness, and adultery; that they had no diversions but such as become saints; that they regarded not outward adorning, and were not slothful in business. He confesses, that they fed the hungry, and clothed the naked; that their discipline was scarce inferior to that of the apostolic age; and, that every one knew and kept his proper place; but, despite all this, he found them far from perfect.

On first entering the society, he found Mr. Bray “highly commending the being still before God; and speaking largely of the danger that attended the doing of outward works, and of the folly of people running about to church and sacrament.”

On Sunday, November 4, the “society met at seven in the morning, and continued silent till eight.” In the evening, at Fetter Lane, “some of the brethren asserted in plain terms: 1. That, till they had true faith, they ought to be still; that is, to abstain from the means of grace, the Lord’s supper in particular. 2. That the ordinances are not means of grace, there being no other means than Christ.”

Three days later, Wesley had a long conference with Spangenberg, who substantially avowed the same opinions. At night, the Fetter Lane society sat an hour without speaking; and then there followed a warm dispute, to prove that none ought to receive the Lord’s supper till he had “the full assurance of faith.” Every day Wesley met with many “who once knew in whom they had believed, but were now thrown into idle reasonings, and were filled with doubts and fears. Many had left off the means of grace, saying they must now cease from their own works, and must trust in Christ alone; that they were poor sinners, and had nothing to do but to lie at His feet.”

Wesley did his utmost to correct this state of things, and then, on November 21, went back to Bristol. On his way, he came to Wycombe, where he unexpectedly met Mr. Gambold and a Mr. Robson. He writes: “After much consultation and prayer, we agreed—1. To meet yearly at London on the eve of Ascension day. 2. To fix then the business to be done the ensuing year; where, when, and by whom. 3. To meet quarterly there, as many as can; viz., on the second Tuesday in July, October, and January. 4. To send a monthly account to one another, of what God hath done in each of our stations. 5. To inquire whether Messrs. Hall, Simpson, Rogers, Ingham, Hutchins, Kinchin, Stonehouse, Cennick, Oxlee, and Brown will join with us herein. 6. To consider whether there be any others of our spiritual friends, who are able and willing so to do.”[60] This arrangement is important as indicative of Wesley’s purpose at this early period of his history; but it was never put into execution. The rupture with the Moravians

made it a dead letter.

Five weeks afterwards, he returned to London with a heavy heart.

“Scarce one in ten of the Moravians retained his first love; and most of the rest were in the utmost confusion, biting and devouring one another.” His soul was sick of their “sublime divinity.” He had a long conversation with Molther, one of their ministers, and ascertained that the difference between them was the following:—

1. The Moravians held that there are no degrees of faith; and that no man has any degree of it, before he has the full assurance of faith, the abiding witness of the Spirit, or the clear perception that Christ dwelleth in him. Wesley dissented from this.
2. The Moravians taught that the way to attain faith is to wait for Christ, and be still: that is, not to use the means of grace; not to go to church; not to communicate; not to fast; not to use private prayer; not to read the Scriptures; not to do temporal good; nor to attempt doing spiritual good; because it was impossible for a man to use means like these without trusting in them. Wesley believed just the opposite.
3. The Moravians thought that in propagating faith, guile might be used: (1) By saying what we know will deceive the hearers, or lead them to think the thing which is not; (2) by describing things a little beyond the truth, in order to their coming up to it; (3) by speaking as if we meant what we did not mean. Wesley denounced all this.
4. The Moravians believed that the fruits of their thus propagating the faith in England were: (1) Much good had been done by it; (2) many were unsettled from a false foundation; (3) many were brought into true stillness; (4) some were grounded on the true foundation, who were wrong before. Wesley, on the contrary, thought that very little good, but much hurt, had been done, by such proceedings.

This was the state of things when Wesley “began the first Methodist society in England.” He was dissatisfied with his old Moravian friends, and well he might. He had been prominent in the formation of their society at Fetter Lane, on the 1st of May, 1738; but his hopes and aspirations concerning it were blighted; and hence he formed another society of his own. Moravian heresies had, in London at least, corrupted the Moravian bands; numbers were offended; these and others repaired to Wesley; Wesley took down their names, and met them every Thursday evening for spiritual advice and prayer; success followed; and the Methodist society was instituted. We must return to this subject in the next chapter.

Wesley spent most of the year 1739 in Bristol and the immediate neighbourhood; but, at different times, he rendered important service in other places. At Blackheath, he preached to twelve or fourteen thousand people; and on Kennington Common to twenty thousand. In Moorfields, he had a congregation of ten thousand. In Gloucester he preached to seven thousand;[61] and in Bath, Bradford, and elsewhere, to great multitudes. He also preached, at least once, in the mansion of Lady Huntingdon, taking a bold text for such a fashionable audience: “The cares of the world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires of other things, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.”

He also met with some adventures and incidents worth mentioning. In riding to Rose Green, his horse suddenly fell, and rolled over and over. A gentleman, at Bradford, who had wished him good luck in the name of the Lord, told him that his fellow collegians at Oxford always considered him “a little crack-brained.” In one instance, the press-gang came when he was in the middle of his sermon, and seized one of his hearers. While preaching in Turner’s Hall, London, the floor gave way, but fortunately the vault below was filled with hogsheads of tobacco, so that the crowded congregation only sunk a foot or two, and he proceeded without further interruption. At Oxford, he was grieved to find that none now visited the workhouse and the prison, and that the Methodist little school was about to be given up. At Stanley, on a little green, he preached for two hours amid the darkness of an October night. At

Newport, he addressed “the most insensible, ill behaved people” he had seen in Wales; one old man cursing and swearing incessantly, and taking up a great stone to throw at him. The people of Wales generally he found as ignorant of gospel truth as the Cherokee Indians; and asks, “What spirit is he of, who had rather these poor creatures should perish for lack of knowledge than that they should be saved, even by the exhortations of Howel Harris, or an itinerant preacher?” Words these well worth pondering; for they are added proof, that Wesley, even as early as 1739, was not opposed to the employment of lay evangelists.

The principle upon which Wesley acted was to shrink from nothing that he judged to be conducive to his being made a Christian.[62] On this ground he went to Georgia, and to Germany; and says, “I am ready to go to Abyssinia or China, or whithersoever it shall please God to call me.” He was accused of being an enemy of the Church of England; but maintained that he was not. The doctrines he preached were the doctrines of the Church, as laid down in her prayers, articles, and homilies. He allows that there were five points of difference between him and many of the clergy; but he contends that they, not he, were unfaithful to the Church. The points were these:—1. Those from whom he differed spoke of justification, either as the same thing with sanctification, or as something consequent upon it. He believed it to be wholly distinct from sanctification, and necessarily antecedent to it. 2. They spoke of good works as the cause of justification. He believed the death and righteousness of Christ to be the whole and sole cause of it. 3. They spoke of good works as existing previous to justification. He believed that no good work is possible, previous to justification, and therefore no good work can be a condition of it; till we are justified we are ungodly, and incapable of good works; we are justified by faith alone, faith without works, faith producing all good works, yet including none. 4. They spoke of sanctification as if it were an outward thing. He believed it to be an inward thing,—the life of God in the soul of man; a participation of the Divine nature; the mind that was in Christ. 5. They spoke of the new birth as synonymous with baptism; or, at most, a change from a vicious to a virtuous life. He believed it to be an entire change of nature, from the image of the devil, wherein we are born, to the image of God; a change from earthly and sensual to heavenly and holy affections. “There is, therefore,” says he, “a wide, essential, fundamental, irreconcilable difference between us. If they speak the truth as it is in Jesus, I am found a false witness before God. But if I teach the way of God in truth, they are blind leaders of the blind.” He contends that [63] he “simply described the plain, old religion of the Church of England, which was now almost everywhere spoken against, under the new name of Methodism.”[64] Wesley was a great reader; and some of the most interesting entries in his Journals are his critiques on books; but, in 1739, he seems to have been too busy preaching to have had time for reading. The only notice of this kind is the following: “1739, October 23. In riding to Bradford, I read over Mr. Law’s book on the new birth. Philosophical, speculative, precarious; Behmenish, void, and vain! ‘O what a fall is there!’” This is a harsh reflection upon an old friend; but, about a year and a half before, there had been the unfortunate quarrel with William Law, already mentioned. See pp. 185-8.

Up to the present, Wesley’s mother had been his chief counsellor.

Immediately after his conversion in May, 1738, he went to Germany, and returned to England in September. It so happened, that he and his mother had no interview until nine months after this. Before he went to Herrnhuth, he had related to her the particulars of his conversion, for which “she heartily blessed God, who had brought him to so just a way of thinking.” Meanwhile, however, she had been prejudiced against him, and had entertained “strange fears concerning him, being convinced that he had greatly erred from the faith.” This was not of long continuance. Hence the following entry in Wesley’s journal:—

“1739, September 3.—I talked largely with my mother, who told me that, till a short time since, she had scarce heard such a thing mentioned as the having God’s Spirit bearing witness with our spirit: much less did she imagine that this was the common privilege of all true believers. ‘Therefore,’ said

she, 'I never durst ask for it myself. But two or three weeks ago, while my son Hall was pronouncing these words, in delivering the cup to me, "The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ which was given for thee," the words struck through my heart, and I knew God, for Christ's sake, had forgiven me all my sins.'

"I asked whether her father (Dr. Annesley) had not the same faith; and whether she had not heard him preach it to others. She answered, he had it himself; and declared, a little before his death, that, for more than forty years, he had no darkness, no fear, no doubt at all of his being accepted in the Beloved. But that, nevertheless, she did not remember to have heard him preach, no, not once, explicitly upon it: whence she supposed he also looked upon it as the peculiar blessing of a few; not as promised to all the people of God." [65]

Ever after this, Susannah Wesley resided chiefly in London, and attended the ministry of her sons John and Charles. She heartily embraced their doctrines, and conversed with the members of their society. Hence the following from one of her letters to Charles, dated December 27, 1739:—

"Your brother, whom I shall henceforth call Son Wesley, since my dear Sam is gone home, has just been with me, and much revived my spirits. Indeed, I have often found that he never speaks in my hearing without my receiving some spiritual benefit. But his visits are seldom and short; for which I never blame him, because I know he is well employed, and, blessed be God, hath great success in his ministry. But, my dear Charles, still I want either him or you; for, indeed, in the most literal sense, I am become a little child, and need continual succour. For these several days, I have had the conversation of many good Christians, who have refreshed, in some measure, my fainting spirits. I hope we shall shortly speak face to face. But then, alas! When you come, your brother leaves me! Yet that is the will of God, in whose blessed service you are engaged; who has hitherto blessed your labours, and preserved your persons. That He may continue so to prosper your work, and protect you both from evil, and give you strength and courage to preach the true gospel, in opposition to the united powers of evil men and evil angels, is the hearty prayer of, dear Charles,

"Your loving mother,

"SUSANNAH WESLEY." [66]

Reference is made in the above extract to the death of Samuel Wesley, which occurred on November 6, 1739, at the early age of forty-nine. Up to the very last, he was strongly opposed to the Methodist movement of his brothers. In a letter to his mother, written only seventeen days before his death, he says:—

"My brothers are now become so notorious, that the world will be curious to know when and where they were born, what schools bred at, what colleges of in Oxford, and when matriculated, what degrees they took, and where, when, and by whom ordained. I wish they may spare so much time as to vouchsafe a little of their story.

For my own part, I had much rather have them picking straws within the walls, than preaching in the area of Moorfields.

"It was with exceeding concern and grief, I heard you had countenanced a spreading delusion, so far as to be one of Jack's congregation. Is it not enough that I am bereft of both my brothers, but must my mother follow too? I earnestly beseech the Almighty to preserve you from joining a schism at the close of your life, as you were unfortunately engaged in one at the beginning of it. It will cost you many a protest, should you retain your integrity, as I hope to God you will. They boast of you already as a disciple.

"They design separation. They are already forbidden all the pulpits in London; and to preach in that diocese is actual schism.

In all likelihood, it will come to the same all over England, if the bishops have courage enough.

They leave off the liturgy in the fields; and though Mr. Whitefield expresses his value for it, he never once read it to his tatter-demalions on a common. Their societies are sufficient to dissolve all other societies but their own.

Will any man of common sense, or spirit, suffer any domestic to be in a band, engaged to relate to five or to ten people everything, without reserve, that concerns the person's conscience, howmuchsoever it may concern the family? Ought any married persons to be there, unless husband and wife be there together? This is literally putting asunder whom God hath joined together.

“As I told Jack, I am not afraid the Church should excommunicate him (discipline is at too low an ebb), but, that he should excommunicate the Church. It is pretty near it. Holiness and good works are not so much as conditions of our acceptance with God. Lovefeasts are introduced, and extemporary prayers, and expositions of Scripture, which last are enough to bring in all confusion; nor is it likely they will want any miracles to support them. He only who ruleth the madness of the people can stop them from being a formed sect. Ecclesiastical censures have lost their terrors; thank fanaticism on the one hand, and atheism on the other.

To talk of persecution from thence is mere insult. It is—

“To call the bishop, Grey-beard Goff,
And make his power as mere a scoff
As Dagon, when his hands were off.”[67]

Sixteen nights after writing the above, Samuel Wesley went to bed as well as usual. At three next morning, he was seized with illness, and, four hours afterwards, expired. John Wesley, at the time, was in London, and Charles in Bristol; but, as soon as possible, they hastened to Tiverton, where they rejoiced to hear that, several days before he went hence, God had given to their brother a calm and full assurance of his interest in Christ.

In reviewing the events of the year 1739, it only remains to notice Wesley's publications. These were the following:—

1. "An Abstract of the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Halyburton.

With recommendatory Epistle by George Whitefield, and Preface by John Wesley." Oswald: London. 1739.

Halyburton was a Scotchman, and was born in 1674. At the age of twenty-six, he became a Presbyterian minister. Ten years afterwards, he was appointed Professor of Divinity in the college of St. Andrews; but almost immediately was seized with pleurisy, and died in the thirtyseventh year of his age.

Wesley's preface is dated "London, February 9, 1739," and the book was published within a few weeks afterwards; for Wesley's brother Samuel, in a letter bearing date, April 16, 1739, says: "I have got your abridgment of Halyburton; and, if it please God to allow me life and strength, I shall demonstrate that the Scot as little deserves preference to all Christians, as the book to all writings but those you mention. There are two flagrant falsehoods in the very first chapter. But your eyes are so fixed upon one point, that you overlook everything else. You overshoot, but Whitefield raves." [68]

Wesley's abridged Life of Halyburton is a beautifully written, and most edifying book. Why did Wesley publish it? There can be but little doubt that his chief reasons were:—1. Because it contains a living exemplification of real religion. And 2. Because Halyburton's struggles, doubts, fears, and general experience, previous to his finding peace with God, through faith in Christ, bear a striking resemblance to the case of Wesley himself. After describing that the kingdom of God, within us, is holiness and happiness, and that the way of attaining it is a true and living faith, Wesley, in his preface, says: "This

work of God in the soul of man is so described in the following treatise, as I have not seen it in any other, either ancient or modern, in our own or any other language; so that I cannot but value it, next to the holy Scripture, above any other human composition, except only the 'Christian's Pattern,' and the small remains of Clemens Romanus, Polycarp, and Ignatius." In the same preface, Wesley propounds thus early a doctrine, which afterwards held a conspicuous place in the system of truth he taught. In answering the objection, that "the gospel covenant does not promise entire freedom from sin," he writes: "What do you mean by the word sin? Do you mean those numberless weaknesses and follies, sometimes improperly termed sins of infirmity? If so, we shall not put off these but with our bodies. But if you mean, it does not promise entire freedom from sin, in its proper sense, or from committing it, this is by no means true, unless the Scripture be false. Though it is possible a man may be a child of God, who is not fully freed from sin, it does not follow that freedom from sin is impossible; or that it is not to be expected by all. It is described by the Holy Ghost as the common privilege of all."

2. Another of Wesley's publications, in 1739, was entitled: "Nicodemus; or, a Treatise on the Fear of Man. From the German of Augustus Herman Francke. Abridged by John Wesley." Bristol: S. and F. Farley. 1739.

The subject of the treatise was peculiarly adapted to Wesley's present position; and the whole is written in his best, nervous, clear, classic style.

3. Wesley's third publication was two treatises of ninety-nine pages, 12mo; the first on Justification by Faith only; the second on the Sinfulness of Man's Natural Will, and his utter inability to do works acceptable to God until he be justified and born again of the Spirit of God: by Dr. Barnes. "With Preface, containing some account of the author, extracted from the Book of Martyrs. By John Wesley."

This was another book congenial to Wesley's present feelings; inasmuch as it was full of the great doctrine, which was now the theme of his daily ministry.

4. Towards the end of 1739,[69] Wesley published his tract, entitled "The Character of a Methodist." He states, that the name of Methodists is not one which they have taken to themselves, but one fixed upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. The tract was written at the urgent request of numbers of people, who were anxious to know what were "the principles, practice, and distinguishing marks of the sect which was everywhere spoken against." The distinguishing marks of a Methodist are, not his opinions, though the Methodists are fundamentally distinguished from Jews, Turks, and infidels; from Papists; and from Socinians and Arians: neither are the marks of a Methodist "words or phrases:" nor "actions, customs, or usages of an indifferent nature:" nor the laying of the whole stress of religion on any single part of it. "A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him; one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. His heart is full of love to all mankind, and is purified from envy, malice, wrath, and every unkind or malign affection.

His own desire, and the one design of his life is not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He keeps not only some, or most of God's commandments, but all, from the least to the greatest. He follows not the customs of the world; for vice does not lose its nature through its becoming fashionable. He fares not sumptuously every day. He cannot lay up treasures upon earth any more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot adorn himself, on any pretence, with gold or costly apparel. He cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice. He cannot speak evil of his neighbour. No more than he can tell a lie. He cannot utter unkind, or idle words. No corrupt communication ever comes out of his mouth. He does good unto all men; unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies." "These," says Wesley, "are the principles and practices of our sect;

these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men." Such were Methodists when Methodism was first founded in 1739. No wonder God was with them, and honoured them with such success. Is John Wesley's Character of a Methodist descriptive of all the Methodists living now? Would to God it were!

5. Another of Wesley's publications, in 1739, was entitled: "Hymns and Sacred Poems. Published by John Wesley, M.A., Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford; and Charles Wesley, M.A., Student of Christ Church, Oxford." London: 12mo, pages 223.

As this book has recently been reprinted by the Methodist Conference Office, ("Wesley Poetry," vol. i.) a detailed description of its contents is not necessary. Suffice it to remark, that, besides the productions of his brother, the volume contains at least twenty translations from the German by Wesley himself, and that these are among the finest hymns the Methodists ever sing. In fact, with a few exceptions, the hymns of the two Wesleys are the only productions in the book worth having. Many are devout but literary rubbish, and utterly unworthy of being used in public worship. Some of the poems are passable; a few are beautiful; but others might have been left, without any loss to the Christian public, in the limbo of oblivion. Had the publication consisted only of John and Charles Wesley's hymns, it would have been one of the choicest productions ever printed; as in other things, so in this, an admixture made it weak.

6. It may be added, that it was probably in 1739 that Wesley published an extract of his journal, from his embarking for Georgia, October 14, 1735, to his return to London, February 1, 1737; but of this we are not certain, the first edition being without date.

The substance of this has been already given, and hence we pass, at once to the year 1740.

1740.

THE Moravian wranglings brought Wesley to the metropolis in 1739; and, on the 3rd of January following, he left his friends, still "subverting one another's souls by idle controversies and strife of words;" and came to Bristol on January 9.

Here he purposed to remain; but within a month he was back to London. A young surgeon, of the name of Snowde, had met in Bristol a man of the name of Ramsey, who in a state of destitution and distress had applied to Wesley for relief. Wesley employed him in writing and in keeping accounts for him, and afterwards in teaching a school instituted by the Bristol society.[1] Ramsey brought the young surgeon to hear Wesley preach. Both were rascals, and availed themselves of an opportunity of stealing £30 that had been collected towards building Kingswood school. Snowde went off to London; fell in with his old acquaintance; committed highway robbery; was arrested, tried, and condemned to die. While in Newgate, awaiting the execution of his sentence, he wrote to a friend, adjuring Wesley, "by the living God," to come and see him before his death. Wesley, who had been robbed so sacrilegiously, started off, on a journey of more than two hundred miles, purposely to visit the convict thief. He found him apparently penitent, and having only a week to live. On the day before his sentence was to be executed, the poor creature wrote:—"I trust God has forgiven me all my sins, washing them away in the blood of the Lamb." Next morning a reprieve was sent, and, six weeks afterwards, he was ordered for transportation. Whether Wesley assisted in obtaining the commutation of his sentence we have no means of knowing;[2] but as soon as the affair was settled he returned to Bristol; where, with the exception of a brief interval of about a week's duration, he continued until the month of June.

The rest of the year, excepting about three weeks, was spent in London.

In Bristol, the work, in its outward aspects, was greatly altered.

Wesley writes:—"Convictions sink deeper and deeper; love and joy are more calm, even, and steady."

Still there were a few instances similar to those that had occurred in the previous year. On January 13, while he was administering the sacrament at the house of a sick person in Kingswood, a woman "sunk down as dead." A week after, she was "filled with the love of God, and with all peace and joy in believing." On January 24, after he had preached in Bristol, another woman caught hold of him, crying:—"I have sinned beyond forgiveness. I have been cursing you in my heart, and blaspheming God. I am damned; I know it; I feel it; I am in hell; I have hell in my heart." On April 3, the congregations in Bristol were remarkably visited; and "the cries of desire, joy, and love were on every side." Five weeks after, another phase of excitement was presented. The people began to laugh; and, though it was a great grief to them, the laughing spirit was stronger than they were able to resist. One woman, who was known to be no dissembler, "sometimes laughed till she was almost strangled; then she broke out into cursing and blaspheming; then stamped and struggled with incredible strength, so that four or five could scarce hold her; then cried out, 'O eternity, eternity! O that I had no soul! O that I had never been born!' At last, she faintly called on Christ to help her," and her excitement ceased. Most of the society were convinced, that those who laughed had no power to help it; but there were two exceptions: Elizabeth B—— and Anne H——. At length, says Wesley, "God suffered Satan to teach them better. Both of them were suddenly seized in the same manner as the rest, and laughed whether they would or no, almost without ceasing. Thus they continued for two days, a spectacle to all; and were then, upon prayer made for them, delivered in a moment." What are we to think of this? Wesley attributes it to Satan, and, in confirmation of his opinion, recites an instance which had occurred in his own history while at Oxford.

According to their custom on Sundays, he and his brother Charles were walking in the meadows, singing psalms, when all at once Charles burst into a loud fit of laughter. Wesley writes:—"I asked him if he was distracted; and began to be angry. But presently I began to laugh as loud as he; nor could we possibly refrain, though we were ready to tear ourselves in pieces. We were forced to go home without singing another line."

Amidst all this, however, there were happy deaths at Bristol. Margaret Thomas died in the highest triumph of faith, her will swallowed up in the will of God, and her hope full of immortality.[3] And one of the Kingswood converts "longed to be dissolved and to be with Christ;" some of her last words being, "I know His arms are round me; for His arms are like the rainbow, they go round heaven and earth." These were among the first Methodists that entered heaven; and, no doubt, it was deaths like theirs which prompted not a few of the triumphant funereal hymns that gushed so exultingly from the poetic soul of Wesley's brother.

The New Room at Bristol, as the first Methodist meeting house was called, was now opened. Wesley expounded and preached daily, choosing for exposition the Acts of the Apostles, and for sermons the greatest texts of the New Testament. He was also one of the most active of philanthropists. The severity of the frost in January threw hundreds out of work, and reduced them to a state bordering on starvation; but Wesley made collections, and fed a hundred, and sometimes a hundred and fifty, hungry wretches in a day. He visited Bristol Bridewell, and tried to benefit and to comfort poor prisoners, till the commanding officer gave strict orders that neither Wesley nor any of his followers should in future be admitted, because he and they were all atheists. Of these same Bristol "atheists," Wesley himself writes, "They were indeed as little children, not artful, not wise in their own eyes, not doting on controversy and strife of words; but truly determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Such they were when Wesley left them at the beginning of the month of June; and such his

brother found them. "O what simplicity," remarks Charles Wesley, "is in this childlike people! O that our London brethren would come to school at Kingswood! These are what they pretend to be. God knows their poverty; but they are rich." [4] Unfortunately broils generally broke out where Charles was pastor.

This was his affliction, if not his fault. Before June was ended, he began to "rebuke sharply" some who thought themselves elect. He also read his journal to the bands "as an antidote to stillness." When some of the people cried out, he "bade them to be quiet." He reprov'd Hannah Barrow before the assembled society at Kingswood; and exercised discipline upon others. All this might be proper and expedient; but it was evidently of little use; for, when his brother returned to Bristol on September 1, his first sermon was addressed to backsliders. He met with one who had become wise far above what is written; and another who had been lifted up with the abundance of joy God had given her, and had fallen into blasphemies and vain imaginations. Later in the year, he found many "lame and turned out of the way." There were "jealousies and misunderstandings." There had been a Kingswood riot, on account of the dearness of corn. Charles Wesley rushed into the midst of it, and, finding a number of his converted colliers, who had been forced to join the disturbers of the public peace, he "gleaned a few from every company," and "marched with them singing to the school," where they held a two hours' prayer-meeting, that God would chain the lion. He had to warn the people against apostasy. Some could not refrain from railing. John Cennick, in December, told Wesley that he was not able to agree with him, because he failed to preach the truth respecting election. The predestinarians formed themselves into a party, "to have a church within themselves, and to give themselves the sacrament in bread and water." [5] So that when Wesley, on December 26, went to Kingswood, in order to preach at the usual hour, there was not more than half-a-dozen of the Kingswood people to hear him, all the others having become the followers of Calvinistic Cennick.

There were other troubles in Bristol, in 1740. After several disturbances in the month of March, the mob, on the 1st of April, filled the street and court and alleys round the place where Wesley was expounding, and shouted, cursed, and swore most fearfully. A number of the rioters were arrested; and, within a fortnight, one of them had hanged himself; a second was seized with serious illness, and sent to desire Wesley's prayers; and a third came to him, confessing that he had been hired and made drunk to create disturbance, but, on coming to the place, found himself deprived of speech and power.

Concurrent with this unpleasantness, other parties used their utmost endeavours to prejudice the mind of Howel Harris, gleaning up idle stories concerning Wesley, and retailing them in Wales. "And yet these," says Wesley, "are good Christians! These whisperers, talebearers, backbiters, evil speakers! Just such Christians as murderers or adulterers!" The curate of Penreul averred, upon his personal knowledge, that Wesley was a papist. Another man, a popish priest named Beon, while Wesley was preaching in Bristol, cried out, "Thou art a hypocrite, a devil, an enemy to the Church. This is false doctrine. It is not the doctrine of the Church. It is damnable doctrine. It is the doctrine of devils." At Upton, the bells were rung to drown his voice. At Temple church, the converted colliers, and even Wesley's brother Charles, were repelled from the sacramental table, and threatened with arrest. William Seward, the friend and travelling companion of George Whitefield, came to Bristol, and renounced the friendship of the two Wesleys, "in bitter words of hatred;" and Mr. Tucker preached against them, and condemned their irregularities in reforming and converting men.

So much respecting Bristol: let us turn to London. For the first five months, in 1740, Charles Wesley was the pastor of the London Moravians and Methodists, but conjoined with him was Philip Henry Molther, who was the Moravian favourite.

Molther was a native of Alsace, and a divinity student in the university of Jena. In 1737, he became the private tutor of Zinzendorf's only son, and instructed him in French and music. On the 18th of October, 1739, he arrived in London, on his way to Pennsylvania. Bohler had left England; and the society in

Fetter Lane was under the care of the two Wesleys.[6] Being an ordained Moravian minister, the people were anxious to hear Molther preach. At first, he spoke to them in Latin, with the help of an interpreter; but shortly was able to make himself understood in English.

He was not satisfied with the Fetter Lane Moravians, for, says he, they had “adopted many most extraordinary usages.” The first time he entered their meeting, he was alarmed and almost terror stricken at “their sighing and groaning, their whining and howling, which strange proceeding they called the demonstration of the Spirit of power.” Molther, however, soon became extremely popular. Not only was the meetinghouse in Fetter Lane filled with hearers, but the courtyard as well. Within a fortnight after his arrival, Wesley came from Bristol, “and the first person he met with was one whom he had left strong in faith, and zealous of good works; but who now told him, that Molther had fully convinced her she never had any faith at all, and had advised her, till she received faith, to be still, ceasing from outward works.” This was on November 1; and what followed, to the end of 1739, has been related already.

In January, 1740, Molther requested Wesley to furnish him with a translation of a German hymn; and the magnificent one beginning, “Now I have found the ground wherein,” was the result. For this, Molther, in a letter dated January 25, 1740, thanks the translator, and says, “I like it better than any other hymn I have seen in English.” He then adds:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—I love you with a real love in the wounds of my Redeemer; and whenever I remember England, and the labourers in the kingdom of our Saviour therein, you come in my mind; and I can but pray our Lord, that He may open to you the hidden treasures of the mysteries of the gospel, which, as I have seen by two of your discourses, you want to know and to experience a little more in its depths. It is a blessed thing to preach out of that fulness, and by experimental notions of the blood of Christ. If you seek for this as an empty, poor sinner, it undoubtedly will be given you, because it is only for such; and when we cannot reach it with our desires, we may surely believe that our hearts are not empty vessels. This is a very great and important thing, and a mystery as well as all other things, unless the Lord hath revealed them unto us. I wish that our Saviour, for His own sake, may give you an entire satisfaction in this matter, and fill up your heart with a solid knowledge of His bloody atonement. My love to your brother Charles and all your brethren. I am your affectionate and unworthy brother, “P. H. MOLTHER.”[7]

From this vague and misty epistle, it is evident that the views of Molther were not entertained by Wesley. For this we are thankful. Who can tell what is meant by loving a man “in the wounds of the Redeemer”? And by having the heart filled “up with a solid knowledge of His bloody atonement”? With all his imperfections, Wesley had learned to express his ideas in language much preferable to this.

Molther remained in the metropolis till about September, 1740, when, instead of proceeding to Pennsylvania as he intended, he was recalled to Germany. During this ten months’ residence, his diligence was exemplary, but its results disastrous. In the daytime, he visited from house to house.

At nights, he met the bands, and often preached. James Hutton, in a letter to Zinzendorf, dated March 14, 1740, writes:—

“MOST BELOVED BISHOP AND BROTHER,—“My heart is poor, and I feel continually, that the blood of Christ will be a great gift, when I can obtain it to overstream my heart.

“At London, Molther preaches four times a week in English to great numbers; and, from morning till night, he is engaged in conversing with the souls, and labouring to bring them into better order. They get a great confidence towards him, and many of them began to be in great sorrow when they expected him to be about to go away. I humbly beg you would leave him with us, some time longer at the least. He continues very simple, and improves exceedingly in the English language. The souls are exceedingly thirsty, and hang on his words. He has had many blessings. The false

foundation many had made has been discovered, and now speedily the one only foundation, Christ Jesus, will be laid in many souls.

“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 almost into poor sinners, frightens him; but, at London, the spirit of the Brethren prevails against him. In a conference lately, where he was speaking that souls ought to go to church as often as they could, I besought him to be easy and not disturb himself, and I would go to church as often as he would meet me there; but he would not insist on it. He seeks occasion against the Brethren, but I hope he will find none in us. 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. I fear, by-and-by, he will be an open enemy of Christ and His church. His brother Charles is coming to London, determined to oppose all such as shall not use the means of grace, after his sense of them. I am determined to be still. I will let our Saviour govern this whirlwind. Both John Wesley and Charles are dangerous snares to many young women.

Several are in love with them. I wish they were married to some good sisters; though I would not give them one of mine, even if I had many.

“In Yorkshire, Ingham and W. Delamotte are united to the Brethren. Some thousand souls are awakened. They are a very simple people. Some months will be necessary to bring them into order, and Toltschig will not hurry as we Englishmen do.

“At Oxford, some good souls at first could not be reconciled with lay teaching, stillness, etc.; but now some will come to Christ.

About six are in a fine way. Fifty, or thereabouts, come to hear Viney three times a week, and he gets their hearts more and more.

He is poor in spirit, and gradually returns to first principles.

“At Bristol, the souls are wholly under C. Wesley, who leads them into many things, which they will find a difficulty to come out of; for, at present, I believe, it will not be possible to help them. First their leader must feel his heart, or the souls must find him out.

“In Wales, some thousands are stirred up. They are an exceedingly simple and honest people, but they are taught the Calvinistic scheme. However, the young man, Howel Harris, who has been the great instrument in this work, is very teachable and humble, and loves the Brethren.

“My father and mother are in the same state, or rather in a worse. My sister is much worse than ever. But, when grace can be received, they will be blessed instruments, and bring great glory to Him in whose heart’s blood I desire to be washed.

“I am your poor, yet loving brother, and the congregation’s child,“JAMES HUTTON.”[8]

This is a long, loose letter; but important, as descriptive of the Wesleys and of the work of God in general, from the standpoint of the Moravians.

They evidently thought themselves the prime, if not the only, instruments in the present great revival; and this, excepting Scotland, Wales, and Bristol, to a great extent, was true. The work they had already done and contemplated was marvellous. A curious letter, dated December, 1739, is published in Doddridge’s Diary and Correspondence, vol. iiii., p. 265, in which Zinzendorf addresses Doddridge as “the very reverend man, much beloved in the bowels of the blessed Redeemer, pastor of Northampton, and vigilant theologian.” Recounting the triumphs of the gospel, he tells the Northampton pastor that Switzerland has heard the truth; Greenland resounds with the gospel; thirty Caffrarians had been baptized; and a thousand negroes in the West Indies. Savannah, the Carolinas, Pennsylvania, Berbice,

and Surinam were expecting fruit; ten or fifteen heathen tribes in Virginia were about to be visited; Ceylon and Lapland had both been reached; the gospel was being preached in Russia; Wallachia was succoured; Constantinople was blessed; through the whole of Germany the churches were preparing for Christ; and the Brethren were about to go to the East Indies, to Persian Magi, and to New York savages. All this had been done within the last twenty years. The Moravians, like a hive of bees, were all workers. By the grace of God, they had accomplished wonders; and yet, in London at least, through false teaching, they were in danger of being wrecked. The Wesleys tried to keep them right; but, in doing so, incurred censure instead of receiving thanks. A long extract from one of James Hutton's letters has just been given; and another must be added. He writes:— "John Wesley, displeased at not being thought so much of as formerly, and offended with the easy way of salvation as taught by the Brethren, publicly spoke against our doctrines in his sermons, and his friends did the same. In June, 1740, he formed his Foundery society, in opposition to the one which met at Fetter Lane, and which had become a Moravian society. Many of our usual hearers consequently left us, especially the females. We asked his forgiveness, if in anything we had aggrieved him, but he continued full of wrath, accusing the Brethren that they, by dwelling exclusively on the doctrine of faith, neglected the law, and zeal for sanctification. In short, he became our declared opponent, and the two societies of the Brethren and Methodists thenceforward were separated, and became independent of each other." [9]

This is a painful subject; and hitherto, by both Moravian and Methodist historians, has been touched with a tender hand; but men have a right to know the foibles and follies of the good and great, as well as the virtues and victories for which they have been wreathed with honour.

Besides, the recent publication of the memoirs of James Hutton renders it requisite that something more should be said respecting the squabbles of 1740.

In the extracts just given, Hutton accuses Wesley of telling men that they were justified when they were not; of envy; of being at enmity against the Moravians; of being able to awaken sinners, but not to lead them to the Saviour; of being a dangerous snare to young females; and of being displeased at the decline of his popularity, and offended with the Brethren's easy method of salvation. Is all this true? Let us see. The Moravian statements have been given with the utmost honesty; let the reader take the Methodist statements on the other side.

Be it borne in mind, that Wesley was one of the original members of the Fetter Lane society, founded on the 1st of May, 1738; whereas Molther was first introduced among them in the month of October, 1739.

Uneasiness and cavils sprung up immediately after Molther's arrival; and, before the year was ended, Wesley had to come twice from Bristol to try to check germinating evils, and to put wrong things right.

On New Year's day, 1740, he writes: "I endeavoured to explain to our brethren the true, Christian, scriptural stillness, by largely unfolding these words, 'Be still, and know that I am God.'" The day after, he "earnestly besought them to 'stand in the old paths.' They all seemed convinced, and cried to God to heal their backslidings." Wesley adds: "He sent forth such a spirit of peace and love, as we had not known for many months before." Next day, January 3, Wesley set out for Bristol, and returned a month afterwards. He now found his old friends pleading for "a reservedness and closeness of conversation," which perplexed him. He was told that "many of them, not content with leaving off the ordinances of God themselves, were continually troubling those that did not, and disputing with them, whether they would or no." He "expostulated with them, and besought them to refrain from perplexing the minds of those who still waited for God in the ways of His own appointment."

Thus he left them on the 3rd of March. Meanwhile, "poor perverted Mr. Simpson" declared to Charles Wesley, that no good was to be got by what he called the means of grace, neither was there any obligation to use them; and that most of the Brethren had cast them off. Charles, accompanied by

Thomas Maxfield, called on Molther, who talked “against running after ordinances. They parted as they met, without prayer or singing; for the time for such exercises was past.” Maxfield was scandalized, and Charles Wesley foresaw that a separation was unavoidable. On Easter day, when preaching at the Foundery, he appealed to the society, and asked, “Who hath bewitched you, that you should let go your Saviour, and deny you ever knew Him?” A burst of sorrow followed; but, on going to Mr. Bowers’, in the evening, to meet the bands, the door was shut against him; and proceeding to Mr. Bray’s, the brazier, he was threatened with expulsion from the Moravian society. The day after, at Fetter Lane, Simpson reproved him for mentioning himself in preaching, and for preaching up the ordinances. He answered, that he should not ask him, or any of the Brethren, how an ambassador of Christ should preach. He adds: “I went home, weary, wounded, bruised, and faint, through the contradiction of sinners; poor sinners, as they call themselves,—these heady, violent, fierce contenders for stillness. I could not bear the thought of meeting them again.” Simpson said, “No soul can be washed in the blood of Christ, unless it first be brought to one in whom Christ is fully formed. But there are only two such ministers in London, Bell and Molther.’ Is not this robbing Christ of His glory, and making His creature necessary to Him in His peculiar work of salvation? First perish Molther, Bell, and all mankind, and sink into nothing, that Christ may be all in all. A new commandment, called ‘stillness,’ has repealed all God’s commandments, and given a full indulgence to corrupted nature. The still ones rage against me; for my brother, they say, had consented to their pulling down the ordinances, and here come I, and build them up again.” During the week, Simpson called upon Charles Wesley, and “laid down his two postulatums:—1. The ordinances are not commands. 2. It is impossible to doubt after justification.” In a society meeting, at the Foundery, he further stated that “no unjustified person ought to receive the sacrament; for, doing so, he ate and drank his own damnation;” and J.

Bray declared, that it was “impossible for any one to be a true Christian out of the Moravian church.”

Simpson wrote to Wesley wishing him to return to London; and, on April 23, he came, and found confusion worse confounded than ever.

“Believers,” said Simpson, “are not subject to ordinances; and unbelievers have nothing to do with them. They ought to be still; otherwise they will be unbelievers as long as they live.” Wesley writes: “After a fruitless dispute of about two hours, I returned home with a heavy heart. In the evening, our society met; but it was cold, weary, heartless, dead. I found nothing of brotherly love among them now; but a harsh, dry, heavy, stupid spirit. For two hours, they looked one at another, when they looked up at all, as if one half of them was afraid of the other.” “The first hour passed in dumb show; the next in trifles not worth naming.”[10] The two Wesleys went to Molther, who explicitly affirmed, that no one has any faith while he has any doubt; and that none are justified till they are sanctified. He also maintained, that, until men obtain clean hearts and are justified, they must refrain from using the means of grace, so called; but, after that, they are at perfect liberty to use them, or to use them not, as they deem expedient. They are designed only for believers; but are not enjoined even upon them.

Wesley was at his wits’ end; numbers came to him every day, once full of peace and love, but now plunged into doubts and fears. Just at this juncture, his brother printed his fine hymn, of twenty-three stanzas, entitled “The Means of Grace,” and circulated it “as an antidote to stillness.”[11] “Many,” said Charles, “insist that a part of their Christian calling is liberty from obeying, not liberty to obey. ‘The unjustified,’ say they, ‘are to be still; that is, not to search the Scriptures, not to pray, not to communicate, not to do good, not to endeavour, not to desire; for it is impossible to use means, without trusting in them.’ Their practice is agreeable to their principles. Lazy and proud themselves, bitter and censorious towards others, they trample upon the ordinances, and despise the commands of Christ.”

Wesley preached from the text, “Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die;” and “demonstrated to the society, that the ordinances are both means of grace, and commands of God.”[12] It was also probably at this period that he preached his able and discriminating sermon on the same

subject, and which is published in his collected works. He specifies as the chief means of grace:—1. Prayer. 2. Searching the Scriptures; which implies reading, hearing, and meditating thereon. 3.

Receiving the Lord's supper. He allows, however, that, if these means are used as a kind of commutation for the religion they were designed to serve, it is difficult to find words to express the enormous folly and wickedness of thus keeping Christianity out of the heart by the very means which were ordained to bring it in. All outward means whatever, if separate from the Spirit of God, cannot profit the man using them. They possess no intrinsic power; and God is equally able to work by any, or by none at all. Wesley then proceeds to prove from Scripture, that, "all who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the means which He hath ordained; in using, not in laying them aside." He likewise answers the following objections:—1. You cannot use these means without trusting in them. 2. This is seeking salvation by works. 3. Christ is the only means of grace. 4. The Scripture directs us to wait for salvation. 5. God has appointed another way—"Stand still, and see the salvation of God." Finally, Wesley concludes thus:—"1. Retain a lively sense that God is above all means, and can convey His grace, either in or out of any of the means which He hath appointed. 2. Be deeply impressed with the fact, that there is no power nor merit in any of the means. The opus operatum, the mere work done, profiteth nothing. Do it because God bids it. 3. In and through every outward thing, seek God alone, looking singly to the power of His Spirit, and the merits of His Son." The whole sermon is intensely Wesleyan; full of keenly defined and powerfully enforced Scripture truths. Let the reader read it: it will benefit both his head and heart; and, perused in the light of these painful facts, it possesses historic interest of great importance. Such a sermon must have had a powerful influence at such a time, and bold was the man, who, in the midst of such disputers, had the fidelity to preach it.

It was a time of great anxiety. The work in London was in danger of being wrecked; and, more than that, some of Wesley's oldest and most trusted friends, in this afflictive emergency, proved unfaithful.

The Rev. George Stonehouse, vicar of Islington, was converted in 1738, chiefly through the instrumentality of Charles Wesley, who, for a time, officiated as his curate. Many were the warm-hearted meetings, held, by the first Methodists, in the vicar's house. His affection for the two Wesleys was great; and, in November 1738, when they were forsaken by all their friends, and well-nigh penniless, he offered to find them home and maintenance; and yet, six months afterwards, he yielded to his churchwardens, and allowed Charles Wesley to be excluded from his church. Imbibing Molther's heresies, Stonehouse sold his living, married the only daughter of Sir John Crispe, joined the Moravians, and retired to Sherborne, in the west of England, where he fitted up a place capable of accommodating five hundred people, in which to hold Moravian meetings. In 1745, he had a lovefeast, the room being grandly illuminated with thirty-seven candles adorned with flowers; and all the sisters present being dressed in German fashion. Shortly after this, he abandoned the Brethren altogether,[13] and appears henceforth to have spent his days in inglorious stillness, enjoying the benefits of a quiet religion and a harmless life.[14]

Wesley sought counsel of his friend Ingham, and received in reply the following letter, full of piety and mistiness, and now for the first time published:

"OSSET, February 20, 1740.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,—You ask, what are the marks of a person that is justified, but not sealed?

"I cannot give you any certain, infallible marks. One to whom the Lord has given the gift of discerning could tell; but without that gift none else can know surely. However, it may be said, that justified persons are meek, simple, and childlike; they have doubts and fears; they are in a wilderness state; and, in this state, they are to be kept still and quiet, to search more deeply into their hearts, so that they may become more and more humble. They are likewise to depend

wholly upon Christ; and to be kept from confusion; for, if they come into confusion, they receive inconceivable damage.

“On the other hand, if they continue meek, gentle, still,—if they search into their hearts, and depend on Christ, they will find their hearts to be sweetly drawn after Him; they will begin to loathe and abhor sin, and to hunger and thirst after righteousness; they will get strength daily; Christ will begin to manifest Himself by degrees; the darkness will vanish, and the day-star will arise in their hearts.

Thus they will go on from strength to strength, till they become strong; and then they will begin to see things clearly; and so, by degrees, they will come to have the assurance of faith.

“You ask whether, in this intermediate state, they are ‘children of wrath,’ or ‘heirs of the promises’?”

“Without doubt, they are children of God, and in a state of salvation. A child may be heir to an estate, before it can speak, or know what an estate is; so we may be heirs of heaven before we know it, or are made sure of it. However, the assurance of faith is to be sought after. It may be attained; and it will be, by all who go forward.

“We must first be deeply humble and poor in spirit. We must have a fixed and abiding sense of our own weakness and unworthiness, corruption, sin, and misery. This it is to be a poor sinner.

“If I were with you, I would explain things more largely; but I am a novice; I am but a beginner; a babe in Christ. If you go amongst the Brethren, they are good guides; but, after all, we must be taught of God, and have experience in our own hearts. May the Spirit of truth lead us into all truth!

“I am your poor, unworthy brother,

“B. INGHAM.

“Rev. John Wesley, at Mr. Bray’s, Brazier, in Little Britain, London.”

This is a curious letter, and will help to cast light on some of the expressions which Wesley himself had used concerning his own experience, As yet, the Methodists had much to learn. Meanwhile, Ingham and Howel Harris came to London. Charles Wesley says, the latter, in his preaching, proved himself a son of thunder and of consolation. Cavilling, however, followed. Honest, plain, undesigning James Hutton “was all tergiversation, and turned into a subtle, close, ambiguous Loyola;” while Richard Bell, watch-case maker, seemed to think, that he and Molther and another were all the church that Christ had in England. A man of the name of Ridley rendered himself famous by saying, “You may as well go to hell for praying as for thieving;” and John Browne asserted, “If we read, the devil reads with us; if we pray, he prays with us; if we go to church or sacrament, he goes with us.”[15]

Ingham also, as well as Harris, “honestly withstood the deluded Brethren; contradicted their favourite errors; and constrained them to be still.” In the Fetter Lane society, he bore a noble testimony for the ordinances of God; but the answer was, “You are blind, and speak of the things you know not.” Wesley preached a series of sermons—1. On the delusion, that “weak faith is no faith.” 2. On the bold affirmation, that there is but one commandment in the New Testament, namely, “to believe.” 3. On the point, that Christians are subject to the ordinances of Christ. 4. On the fact, that a man may be justified without being entirely sanctified. These discourses were followed by five others, on reading the Scriptures, prayer, the Lord’s supper, and good works.

The result was increased commotion. Some said, “We believers are no more bound to obey, than the subjects of the king of England are bound to obey the laws of the king of France.” Bell declared that, for a man not born of God to read the Scriptures, pray, or come to the Lord’s table, was deadly poison. And Wesley, after a short debate, was prohibited preaching at Fetter Lane.

This brought matters to a crisis. Wesley had done all he could to correct the growing errors; but Molther was a greater favourite than Wesley; and the man, who had founded Fetter Lane society, was now, by Moravian votes, commanded to go about his business, and to leave the pulpit to his German superiors.

The thing had become an intolerable evil; and, at all hazards, the heresies must be checked. Substantially they may be reduced to two:—1. That there are no degrees of faith; or, in other words, that there is no justifying faith where there is any doubt or fear; or, in other words (for we feel it difficult to gripe such an abortive dogma), no man believes and is justified, unless, in the full sense of the expression, he is sanctified, and is possessed of a clean heart. 2. That to search the Scriptures, to pray, or to communicate, before we have faith, is to seek salvation by works; and such works must be laid aside before faith can be received.

This is not the place to confute such errors. Suffice it to say, that, before half-a-dozen years had passed, the London Moravians dropped the very doctrines, for opposing which Wesley was expelled from preaching in Fetter Lane. Their stillness was declared to mean, that “man cannot attain to salvation by his own wisdom, strength, righteousness, goodness, merits, or works. When he applies for it, he must cast away all dependence upon everything of his own, and, trusting only to the mercy of God, through the merits of Christ, he must thus quietly wait for God’s salvation.”[16] This is a doctrine to which Wesley raised no objection; but it was not the doctrine of Molther, Browne, Bell, Bray, and Bowers, in 1740. Then as to the doctrine concerning degrees in faith, it is right to add, that such a dogma was never taught by the general authorities of the Moravian church; but it was taught by Spangenberg, Molther, Stonehouse, and other Moravians in London,[17] the result being the disastrous confusion to which we are now adverting. Indeed, it is a notable fact, that, only two months after the Fetter Lane disruption, Wesley himself clears the Moravian church from the aspersion, that it held such heresies. They were the spawn of foolish fanatics, who regarded themselves Moravians, but were hardly worthy of the name. On September 29, 1740, Wesley having stated what the errors were, observes:—”In flat opposition to this, I assert: 1. That a man may have a degree of justifying faith, before he is wholly freed from all doubt and fear; and before he has, in the full, proper sense, a new, a clean heart. 2. That a man may use the ordinances of God, the Lord’s supper in particular, before he has such a faith as excludes all doubt and fear, and implies a new, a clean heart. 3. I further assert, that I learned this, not only from the English, but also from the Moravian church; and I hereby openly and earnestly call upon that church, and upon Count Zinzendorf in particular, to correct me, and explain themselves, if I have misunderstood or misrepresented them.” Wesley thus puts the blame on the right shoulders. It was not the Moravian church, but a few of its foolish ministers and members, at Fetter Lane, that circulated these heresies.

What was the result? If the Fetter Lane society did not exclude Wesley from their membership, they, on the 16th of July, expelled him from their pulpit; and hence, four days afterwards, he went with Mr. Seward to their lovefeast, and, at its conclusion, read a paper stating the errors into which they had fallen, and concluding thus:—”I believe these assertions to be flatly contrary to the word of God. I have warned you hereof again and again, and besought you to turn back to the ‘law and the testimony.’ I have borne with you long, hoping you would turn. But, as I find you more and more confirmed in the error of your ways, nothing now remains, but that I should give you up to God. You that are of the same judgment, follow me.”

Without saying more, he then silently withdrew, eighteen or nineteen of the society following him.

Two days afterwards, he received a letter from one of the Brethren in Germany, advising him and his brother to deliver up the “instruction of poor souls” to the Moravians; “for you,” adds the writer, “only instruct them in such errors, that they will be damned at last. St. Peter justly describes you, who ‘have eyes full of adultery, and cannot cease from sin;’ and take upon you to guide unstable souls, and lead

them in the way of damnation.”

The day following, the seceding society, numbering about twenty-five men and fifty women, met for the first time, at the Foundery, instead of at Fetter Lane, and so the Methodist society was founded on July 23, 1740.

A fortnight later, Wesley, “a presbyter of the church of God in England,” wrote a long letter “to the church of God at Herrnhuth,” in which he states, that, though some of the Moravians had pronounced him “a child of the devil and a servant of corruption,” yet, he was now taking the liberty of speaking freely and plainly concerning things in the Moravian church which he deemed unscriptural. He enumerates the heresies which have been so often mentioned. He tells them, that a Moravian preacher, in his public ex-pounding, said: “As many go to hell by praying as by thieving.” Another had said, “I knew a man who received a great gift while leaning over the back of a chair; but kneeling down to give God thanks, he lost it immediately through doing so.” He charges the Moravians with exalting themselves and despising others, and declares, that he scarce ever heard a Moravian owning his church or himself to be wrong in anything. They spoke of their church as if it were infallible, and some of them set it up as the judge of all the earth, of all persons and of all doctrines, and maintained that there were no true Christians out of it.

Like the modern Mystics, they mixed much of man’s wisdom with the wisdom of God, and philosophised on almost every part of the plain religion of the Bible. They talked much against mixing nature with grace, and against mimicking the power of the Holy Ghost. They cautioned the brethren against animal joy, against natural love of one another, and against selfish love of God. “My brethren,” concludes Wesley, “whether ye will hear, or whether ye will forbear, I have now delivered my own soul. And this I have chosen to do in an artless manner, that if anything should come home to your hearts, the effect might evidently flow, not from the wisdom of man, but from the power of God.” On September 1, Charles Wesley wrote to Whitefield in America, as follows:—

“The great work goes forward, maugre all the opposition of earth and hell. The most violent opposers of all are our own brethren of Fetter Lane, that were. We have gathered up between twenty and thirty from the wreck, and transplanted them to the Foundery. The remnant has taken root downward, and borne fruit upwards. A little one is become a thousand. They grow in grace, particularly in humility, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus.

Innumerable have been the devices to scatter this little flock. The roaring lion is turned a still lion, and makes havoc of the church by means of our spiritual brethren. They are indefatigable in bringing us off from our ‘carnal ordinances,’ and speak with such wisdom from beneath, that, if it were possible, they would deceive the very elect. The Quakers, they say, are exactly right; and, indeed, the principles of the one naturally lead to the other. For instance, take our poor friend Morgan. One week he and his wife were at J. Bray’s, under the teaching of the still brethren. Soon after, he turned Quaker, and is now a celebrated preacher among them. All these things shall be for the furtherance of the gospel.”[18]

Whitefield’s reply to this is unknown; but on November 24 he wrote as follows to James Hutton:—

“I have lately conversed closely with Peter Bohler. Alas! We differ widely in many respects; therefore, to avoid disputations and jealousies on both sides, it is best to carry on the work of God apart. The divisions among the Brethren sometimes grieve, but do not surprise me. How can it be otherwise, when teachers do not think and speak the same things? God grant we may keep up a cordial, undissembled love towards each other, notwithstanding our different opinions. O, how I long for heaven! Surely, there will be no divisions, no strife there, except who shall sing with most affection to the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne. Dear James, there I hope to meet thee.”[19]

Here, for the present, we leave the London Moravians. We say, for the present, for unfortunately we shall have to recur to them.

The year 1740 was a year of troubles. A month previous to the Fetter Lane secession, a man of the name of Acourt bitterly complained, that he had been refused admission to the society-meeting, by order of Charles Wesley, because he differed from the Wesleys in opinion. "What opinion do you mean?" asked Wesley. He answered, "That of election. I hold, a certain number is elected from eternity; and these must and shall be saved; and the rest of mankind must and shall be damned; and many of your society hold the same." Here we have another bone of contention.

Up to the time of Whitefield's visit to America, he and the Wesleys had laboured in union and harmony, without entering into the discussion of particular opinions; but now, across the Atlantic, Whitefield became acquainted with a number of godly Calvinistic ministers, who recommended to him the writings of the puritan divines, which he read with great avidity, and, as a consequence, soon embraced their sentiments.

Secrecy was no part of Whitefield's mental or moral nature. With the utmost frankness, he wrote to Wesley, informing him of his new opinions.[20]

Wesley was the son of parents who held the doctrines of election and reprobation in abhorrence. While at college, he had thoroughly sifted the subject for himself, and, in letters to his mother, expressed his views in the strongest language. Whitefield, on the contrary, was no theologian.

His heart was one of the largest that ever throbbed in human bosom; but his logical faculties were small. When he read the Calvinistic theory, he was not conversant with the arguments against it; and hence, with his characteristic impulsiveness, he adopted a creed, which far more powerful minds than his had not been able to defend. Southey remarks, with great truthfulness, that, "at the commencement of his career, Wesley was of a pugnacious spirit, the effect of his sincerity, his ardour, and his confidence." No wonder then that these two devoted friends were soon at variance.

One of Whitefield's letters, dated June 25, 1739, has been already given. The following is another, hitherto unpublished, written a week later:—

"GLOUCESTER, July 2, 1739.

"HONOURED SIR,—I confess my spirit has been of late sharpened on account of some of your proceedings; my heart has been quite broken within me. I have been grieved from my soul, knowing what a dilemma I am reduced to. How shall I tell the Dissenters I do not approve of their doctrines, without wronging my own soul? How shall I tell them I do, without contradicting my honoured friend, whom I desire to love as my own soul? Lord, for Thy infinite mercy's sake, direct me so to act, as neither to injure myself nor my friend! Is it true, honoured sir, that brother Stock is excluded the society because he holds predestination? If so, is it right? Would Jesus Christ have done so? Is this to act with a catholic spirit? Is it true, honoured sir, that the house at Kingswood is intended hereafter for the brethren to dwell in, as at Herrnhuth? Is this answering the primitive design of that building? Did the Moravians live together till they were obliged by persecution? Does the scheme at Islington succeed? As for brother Cennick's expounding, I know not what to say. Brother Watkin I think no way qualified for any such thing.

"Dear, honoured sir, if you have any regard for the peace of the church, keep in your sermon on predestination. But you have cast a lot. Oh! My heart, in the midst of my body, is like melted wax.

The Lord direct us all! Honoured sir, indeed, I desire you all the success you can wish for. May you increase, though I decrease! I would willingly wash your feet. God is with us mightily. I have just now written to the bishop. Oh, wrestle, wrestle, honoured sir, in prayer, that not the least alienation of affection may be between you, honoured sir, and your obedient son and servant in Christ,
"GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

"To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley, at Mrs. Grevil's, a grocer, in Wine Street, Bristol."

This was within three months from the time when Wesley, at Whitefield's request, began his career of

out-door preaching at Bristol.

Two months later, Whitefield was, a second time, on his way to America.

Wesley wrote to him, opposing the doctrine of election, and also enforcing the doctrine, that, though Christians can never be freed from “those numberless weaknesses and follies, sometimes improperly termed sins of infirmity,” yet it is the privilege of all to be saved “entirely from sin in its proper sense, and from committing it.”[21]

In reply, Whitefield wrote as follows:—

“SAVANNAH, March 26, 1740.

“MY HONOURED FRIEND AND BROTHER, —For once hearken to a child, who is willing to wash your feet. I beseech you, by the mercies of God in Christ Jesus our Lord, if you would have my love confirmed towards you, write no more to me about misrepresentations wherein we differ. To the best of my knowledge, at present, no sin has dominion over me; yet I feel the strugglings of indwelling sin day by day. I can, therefore, by no means, come into your interpretation of the passage mentioned in your letter, and as explained in your preface to Mr. Halyburton. If possible, I am ten thousand times more convinced of the doctrine of election, and the final perseverance of those that are truly in Christ, than when I saw you last. You think otherwise. Why then should we dispute, when there is no probability of convincing? Will it not, in the end, destroy brotherly love, and insensibly take from us that cordial union and sweetness of soul, which I pray God may always subsist between us? How glad would the enemies of the Lord be to see us divided! How many would rejoice, should I join and make a party against you! How would the cause of our common Master suffer by our raising disputes about particular points of doctrines! Honoured sir, let us offer salvation freely to all by the blood of Jesus; and whatever light God has communicated to us, let us freely communicate to others. I have lately read the life of Luther, and think it in nowise to his honour, that the last part of his life was so much taken up in disputing with Zuinglius and others, who, in all probability, equally loved the Lord Jesus, notwithstanding they might differ from him in other points. Let this, dear sir, be a caution to us. I hope it will to me; for, provoke me to it as much as you please, I intend not to enter the lists of controversy with you on the points wherein we differ.

Only, I pray to God, that the more you judge me, the more I may love you, and learn to desire no one’s approbation, but that of my Lord and Master Jesus Christ.”[22]

Two months after this, Whitefield wrote again:—

“CAPE LOPEN, May 24, 1740.

“HONOURED SIR,—I cannot entertain prejudices against your conduct and principles any longer, without informing you. The more I examine the writings of the most experienced men, and the experiences of the most established Christians, the more I differ from your notion about not committing sin, and your denying the doctrines of election and final perseverance of the saints. I dread coming to England, unless you are resolved to oppose these truths with less warmth than when I was there last. I dread your coming over to America, because the work of God is carried on here (and that in a most glorious manner), by doctrines quite opposite to those you hold. Here are thousands of God’s children, who will not be persuaded out of the privileges purchased for them by the blood of Jesus. There are many worthy experienced ministers, who would oppose your principles to the utmost. God direct me what to do! Sometimes, I think it best to stay here, where we all think and speak the same thing. The work goes on without divisions, and with more success, because all employed in it are of one mind. I write not this, honoured sir, from heat of spirit, but out of love. At present, I think you are entirely inconsistent with yourself, and, therefore, do not blame me, if I do not approve all you say. God Himself teaches my friends the doctrine of election. Sister H—— hath lately been convinced of it; and, if I mistake not, dear and honoured Mr. Wesley hereafter will be convinced also. Perhaps I may never see you again, till we meet in judgment;

then, if not before, you will know, that sovereign, distinguishing, irresistible grace brought you to heaven. Then will you know, that God loved you with an everlasting love; and therefore with lovingkindness did He draw you. Honoured sir, farewell!”[23]

A fortnight later, on the 7th of June, Whitefield, writing to James Hutton, says:—

“For Christ’s sake, desire dear brother Wesley to avoid disputing with me. I think I had rather die, than see a division between us; and yet how can we walk together, if we oppose each other?”[24]

He wrote again to Wesley as follows:—

“SAVANNAH, June 25, 1740.

“MY HONOURED FRIEND AND BROTHER,—For Christ’s sake, if possible, never speak against election in your sermons. No one can say, that I ever mentioned it in public discourses, whatever my private sentiments may be. For Christ’s sake, let us not be divided amongst ourselves. Nothing will so much prevent a division as your being silent on this head. I am glad to hear, that you speak up for an attendance on the means of grace, and do not encourage persons who run, I am persuaded, before they are called. The work of God will suffer by such imprudence.”[25]

On the 16th of July, Howel Harris wrote to Wesley:—

“DEAR BROTHER JOHN,—Reports are circulated that you hold no faith without a full and constant assurance, and, that there is no state of salvation without being wholly set at liberty in the fullest sense of perfection. It is also said, that I am carried away by the same stream, and, that many of the little ones are afraid to come near me. Letters have likewise informed me, that, the night you left London, you turned a brother out of the society, and charged all to beware of him, purely because he held the doctrine of election. My dear brother, do not act in the stiff, uncharitable spirit which you condemn in others. If you exclude him from the society and from the fraternity of the Methodists, for such a cause, you must exclude brother Whitefield, brother Seward, and myself. I hope I shall contend with my last breath and blood, that it is owing to special, distinguishing, and irresistible grace, that those that are saved are saved. O that you would not touch on this subject till God enlighten you! My dear brother, being a public person, you grieve God’s people by your opposition to electing love; and many poor souls believe your doctrine simply because you hold it. All this arises from the prejudices of your education, your books, your companions, and the remains of your carnal reason. The more I write, the more I love you. I am sure you are one of God’s elect, and, that you act honestly according to the light you have.”[26]

On the 9th of August, Wesley addressed Whitefield as follows:—

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for yours of May the 24th.

The case is quite plain. There are bigots both for predestination and against it. God is sending a message to those on either side.

But neither will receive it, unless from one who is of their own opinion. Therefore, for a time, you are suffered to be of one opinion, and I of another. But when His time is come, God will do what man cannot, namely, make us both of one mind. Then persecution will flame out, and it will be seen whether we count our lives dear unto ourselves, so that we may finish our course with joy. I am, my dearest brother, ever yours, “JOHN WESLEY.”[27]

In the same month, Whitefield wrote to Wesley:—

“CHARLESTOWN, August 25, 1740.

“MY DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—Give me leave, with all humility, to exhort you not to be strenuous in opposing the doctrines of election and final perseverance; when, by your own confession, you have not the witness of the Spirit within yourself, and consequently are not a

proper judge. I remember brother E—— told me one day, that he was convinced of the perseverance of saints. I told him, you were not. He replied, but ‘he will be convinced when he has got the Spirit himself.’ Perhaps the doctrines of election and of final perseverance have been abused; but, notwithstanding, they are children’s bread, and ought not to be withheld from them, supposing they are always mentioned with proper cautions against the abuse of them. I write not this to enter into disputation. I cannot bear the thought of opposing you; but how can I avoid it, if you go about, as your brother Charles once said, to drive John Calvin out of Bristol. Alas! I never read anything that Calvin wrote. My doctrines I had from Christ and His apostles. I was taught them of God; and as God was pleased to send me out first, and to enlighten me first, so, I think, He still continues to do it. I find, there is a disputing among you about election and perfection. I pray God to put a stop to it; for what good end will it answer? I wish I knew your principles fully. If you were to write oftener, and more frankly, it might have a better effect than silence and reserve.”[28]

A month later he wrote again as follows:—

“BOSTON, September 25, 1740.

“HONOURED SIR,—I am sorry to hear, by many letters, that you seem to own a sinless perfection in this life attainable. I think I cannot answer you better, than a venerable minister in these parts answered a Quaker: Bring me a man that hath really arrived to this, and I will pay his expenses, let him come from where he will.’ I know not what you may think, but I do not expect to say indwelling sin is destroyed in me, till I bow my head and give up the ghost. There must be some Amalekites left in the Israelites’ land to keep his soul in action, to keep him humble, and to drive him continually to Jesus Christ for pardon. I know many abuse this doctrine, and perhaps wilfully indulge sin, or do not aspire after holiness, because no man is perfect in this life. But what of that? Must I assert, therefore, doctrines contrary to the gospel? God forbid! Besides, dear sir, what a fond conceit is it to cry up perfection, and yet cry down the doctrine of final perseverance.

But this, and many other absurdities, you will run into, because you will not own election. And you will not own election, because you cannot own it without believing the doctrine of reprobation.

What then is there in reprobation so horrid? I see no blasphemy in holding that doctrine, if rightly explained. If God might have passed by all, He may pass by some. Judge whether it is not a greater blasphemy to say, ‘Christ died for souls now in hell.’ Surely, dear sir, you do not believe there will be a general gaol delivery of damned souls hereafter. O that you would study the covenant of grace! But I have done. If you think so meanly of Bunyan and the puritan writers, I do not wonder that you think me wrong. I find your sermon has had its expected success. It has set the nation a disputing. You will have enough to do now to answer pamphlets. Two I have already seen. O that you would be more cautious in casting lots! O that you would not be too rash and precipitant! If you go on thus, honoured sir, how can I concur with you? It is impossible. I must speak what I know. About spring you may expect to see,

“Ever, ever yours in Christ,

“GEORGE WHITEFIELD.”[29]

Wesley’s sermon was already published. Let us look at it. It was preached at Bristol; and, in some respects, was the most important sermon that he ever issued. It led, as we shall shortly see, to the division which Whitefield so devoutly deprecates; and also to the organisation of Lady Huntingdon’s Connexion, and to the founding of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales; and, finally, culminated in the fierce controversy of 1770, and the publication of Fletcher’s unequalled “Checks;” which so effectually silenced the Calvinian heresy, that its voice has scarce been heard from that time to this. Viewed in such a light, the difference between Wesley and Whitefield was really one of the greatest events in the history of Wesley and even of the religion of the age.

Wesley’s sermon, entitled “Free Grace,” was founded upon Romans viii. 32, and was printed as a 12mo pamphlet in twenty-four pages.

Annexed to it was Charles Wesley's remarkable "Hymn on Universal Redemption," consisting of thirty-six stanzas of four lines each.[30] It is also a noteworthy fact, that, notwithstanding its importance, it was never included by Wesley in any collected edition of his sermons; and, in his own edition of his works, it is placed among his controversial writings.

There is likewise a brief address to the reader, as follows:—

"Nothing but the strongest conviction, not only that what is here advanced is 'the truth as it is in Jesus,' but also that I am indispensably obliged to declare this truth to all the world, could have induced me openly to oppose the sentiments of those whom I esteem for their works' sake; at whose feet may I be found in the day of the Lord Jesus!

"Should any believe it his duty to reply hereto, I have only one request to make,—let whatsoever you do be done in charity, in love, and in the spirit of meekness. Let your very disputing show, that you have 'put on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, gentleness, longsuffering,' that even according to this time it may be said, 'See how these Christians love one another.'" Having laid down the principle that God's "free grace is free in all, and free for all," Wesley proceeds, with great acuteness, to define the doctrine of predestination; namely, "Free grace in all is not free for all, but only for those whom God hath ordained to life. The greater part of mankind God hath ordained to death; and it is not free for them. Them God hateth; and therefore, before they were born, decreed they should die eternally. And this He absolutely decreed, because it was His sovereign will.

Accordingly, they are born for this, to be destroyed body and soul in hell.

And they grow up under the irrevocable curse of God, without any possibility of redemption; for what grace God gives, He gives only for this, to increase, not prevent, their damnation."

Having effectually answered the objections of well meaning people, who, startled at a doctrine so spectral, say, "This is not the predestination which I hold, I hold only the election of grace," he sums up as follows:—

"Though you use softer words than some, you mean the selfsame thing; and God's decree concerning the election of grace, according to your account of it, amounts to neither more nor less than what others call, 'God's decree of reprobation.' Call it therefore by whatever name you please, 'election, preterition, predestination, or reprobation,' it comes in the end to the same thing. 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."

This presents the doctrine in all its naked, hideous deformity; but it is fair, and no Calvinian dexterity can make it otherwise.

Wesley then proceeds to state the objections to such a doctrine:—

1. It renders all preaching vain; for preaching is needless to them that are elected; for they, whether with it or without it, will infallibly be saved.

And it is useless to them that are not elected; for they, whether with preaching or without, will infallibly be damned.

2. It directly tends to destroy that holiness which is the end of all the ordinances of God; for it wholly takes away those first motives to follow after holiness, so frequently proposed in Scripture, the hope of future reward and fear of punishment, the hope of heaven and fear of hell.

3. It directly tends to destroy several particular branches of holiness; for it naturally tends to inspire, or increase, a sharpness of temper, which is quite contrary to the meekness of Christ, and leads a man to treat with contempt, or coldness, those whom he supposes to be outcasts from God.

4. It tends to destroy the comfort of religion.
5. It directly tends to destroy our zeal for good works; for what avails it to relieve the wants of those who are just dropping into eternal fire!
6. It has a direct and manifest tendency to overthrow the whole Christian revelation; for it makes it unnecessary.
7. It makes the Christian revelation contradict itself; for it is grounded on such an interpretation of some texts as flatly contradicts all the other texts, and indeed the whole scope and tenour of Scripture.
8. It is full of blasphemy; for it represents our blessed Lord as a hypocrite and dissembler, in saying one thing and meaning another,—in pretending a love which He had not; it also represents the most holy God as more false, more cruel, and more unjust than the devil, for, in point of fact, it says that God has condemned millions of souls to everlasting fire for continuing in sin, which, for want of the grace He gives them not, they are unable to avoid.

Wesley sums up the whole thus:—

“This is the blasphemy clearly contained in the horrible decree of predestination. And here I fix my foot. On this I join issue with every asserter of it. You represent God as worse than the devil. But you say, you will prove it by Scripture. Hold! What will you prove by Scripture? That God is worse than the devil? It cannot be.

Whatever that Scripture proves, it never can prove this; whatever its true meaning be, this cannot be its true meaning. Do you ask, ‘What is its true meaning then?’ If I say, ‘I know not,’ you have gained nothing; for there are many scriptures, the true sense whereof neither you nor I shall know till death is swallowed up in victory. But this I know, better it were to say it had no sense at all, than to say it had such a sense as this.”

In Whitefield’s letter, already given, and dated September 25, 1740, he states that already he had seen two pamphlets published against Wesley’s sermon. One of these probably was the following: “Free Grace Indeed! A Letter to the Reverend Mr. John Wesley, relating to his sermon against absolute election, published under the title of Free Grace.

London: 1740. Price sixpence.”

In a subsequent advertisement, Wesley writes, “Whereas a pamphlet, entitled, ‘Free Grace Indeed!’ has been published against this sermon, this is to inform the publisher that I cannot answer his tract till he appears to be more in earnest; for I dare not speak of ‘the deep things of God’ in the spirit of a prizefighter or a stageplayer.”

With great respect for Wesley, we feel bound to say, that this is not worthy of him. The pamphlet referred to is before us, and is written with great ability, earnestness, and good temper. Wesley was not bound to answer it; but he had no right thus to brand it.

About the same time, another pamphlet was published, on the other side, entitled, “The Controversy concerning Freewill and Predestination; in a Letter to a Friend. Recommended to Mr. Whitefield and his followers.” 8vo, pages 36. As the controversy continued, it waxed warmer. Here Whitefield is spoken of as a man of “heated imagination, and full of himself”; “very hot, very self-sufficient, and impatient of contradiction”; “dog-matical and dictatorial” in his way of speaking, and wont to finish his oracular deliverances “with his assuming air, Dixi.” The pamphlet concludes with a verse which contains the pith of the whole production:—

“Why is this wrangling world thus tossed and torn?
Free-grace, Free-will, are both together born;
If God’s free grace rule in, and over me,
His will is mine, and so my will is free.”

In the month of October, Howel Harris took up the question, and wrote to Wesley, telling him that preaching electing love brings glory to God, and benefit and consolation to the soul. He adds: “Oh, when will the time come when we shall all agree? Till then, may the Lord enable us to bear with one another! We must, before we can be united, be truly simple, made really humble and open to conviction, willing to give up any expression that is not scriptural, dead to our names and characters, and sweetly inclined towards each other. I hope we have, in some measure, drank of the same Spirit, that we fight the same enemies, and are under the same crown and kingdom. We travel the same narrow road, and love the same Jesus. We are soon to be before the same throne, and employed in the same work of praise to all eternity. While, then, we are on the road, and meet with so many enemies, let us love one another. And if we really carry on the same cause, let us not weaken each other’s hands.”[31] In another letter, addressed to John Cennick, and dated October 27, Harris writes in less temperate language:—

“DEAR BROTHER,—Brother Seward tells me of his dividing with brother Charles Wesley. He seems clear in his conviction, that God would have him do so. I have been long waiting to see if brother John and Charles should receive further light, or be silent and not oppose election and perseverance; but, finding no hope of this, I begin to be staggered how to act towards them. I plainly see that we preach two gospels. My dear brother, deal faithfully with brother John and Charles. If you like, you may read this letter to them. We are free in Wales from the hellish infection; but some are tainted when they come to Bristol.”[32]

In November, Whitefield wrote to Wesley as follows:—

“PHILADELPHIA, November 9, 1740.

“DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—I received yours, dated March 11, this afternoon. Oh that we were of one mind! For I am persuaded you greatly err. You have set a mark you will never arrive at, till you come to glory. O dear sir, many of God’s children are grieved at your principles. Oh that God may give you a sight of His free, sovereign, and electing love! But no more of this. Why will you compel me to write thus? Why will you dispute? I am willing to go with you to prison, and to death; but I am not willing to oppose you. Dear, dear sir, study the covenant of grace, that you may be consistent with yourself. Oh build up, but do not lead into error, the souls once committed to the charge of your affectionate, unworthy brother and servant, in the loving Jesus, “G. WHITEFIELD.”[33]

A fortnight later he wrote again to Wesley:—

“BOHEMIA, MARYLAND, November 24, 1740.

“DEAR AND HONOURED SIR,—Last night brother G—— brought me your two kind letters. Oh that there may be harmony, and very intimate union between us! Yet, it cannot be, since you hold universal redemption. The devil rages in London. He begins now to triumph indeed. The children of God are disunited among themselves. My dear brother, for Christ’s sake, avoid all disputation. Do not oblige me to preach against you; I had rather die. Be gentle towards the —— . They will get great advantage over you, if they discover any irregular warmth in your temper. I cannot for my soul unite with the Moravian Brethren. Honoured sir, adieu!

“Yours eternally in Christ Jesus,

“GEORGE WHITEFIELD.”[34]

Just at this time, Wesley was expounding Romans ix. At Bristol, where Calvinism was becoming rampant in the society. Charles Wesley writes: “Anne Ayling and Anne Davis could not refrain from railing. John Cennick never offered to stop them. Alas, we have set the wolf to keep the sheep! God gave me great moderation toward him, who, for many months, has been undermining our doctrine and authority.”[35] The difference was continued by Whitefield writing his “Letter to the Reverend Mr.

John Wesley; in answer to his sermon, entitled 'Free Grace';" with the motto attached, "When Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." The "Letter" is dated, "Bethesda, in Georgia, December 24, 1740." After reiterating his reluctance to write against Wesley, he proceeds to state, that he now did so at the request of a great number of persons, who had been benefited by his ministry. He accuses Wesley of having propagated the doctrine of universal redemption, both in public and private, by preaching and printing, ever since before his last departure for America. He says that Wesley, while at Bristol, received a letter, charging him with not preaching the gospel, because he did not preach election.

Upon this, he drew a lot; the answer was, "preach and print;" and, accordingly, he preached and printed against election. At Whitefield's desire, he deferred publishing the sermon until after Whitefield started for America, when he sent it out. Whitefield asserts, that, if any one wished to prove the doctrine of election and of final perseverance, he could hardly wish for a text more fit for his purpose than that (Romans viii. 32) which Wesley had chosen to disprove it. He charges him with giving an "equivocal definition of the word grace," and a "false definition of the word free;" and adds: "I frankly acknowledge, I believe the doctrine of reprobation, in this view, that God intends to give saving grace, through Jesus Christ, only to a certain number; and that the rest of mankind, after the fall of Adam, being justly left of God to continue in sin, will at last suffer that eternal death, which is its proper wages." In reply to Wesley, he argues that, because preachers know not who are elect, and who reprobate, they are bound to preach promiscuously to all; that holiness is made a mark of election by all who preach it; that the seventeenth article of the English Church asserts, that the doctrine of "predestination and election in Christ is full of unspeakable comfort to godly persons;" that dooming millions to everlasting burnings is not an act of injustice, because God, for the sin of Adam, might justly have thus doomed all; that God's absolute purpose of saving His chosen does not preclude the necessity of the gospel revelation, or the use of any of the means through which He has determined the decree shall take effect; that the doctrine of election does not make the Bible contradict itself, for though it asserts, that "the Lord is loving to every man, and His mercy is over all His works," the reference is to His general, not His saving mercy; that it is unjust to charge the doctrine of reprobation with blasphemy; and that, on the other hand, the doctrine of universal redemption, as set forth by Wesley, "is really the highest reproach upon the dignity of the Son of God, and the merit of His blood;" and Whitefield challenges Wesley to make good the assertion, "that Christ died for them that perish," without holding, as Peter Bohler had lately confessed in a letter, "that all the damned souls would hereafter be brought out of hell;" for "how can all be universally redeemed, if all are not finally saved?" In conclusion, he writes:—

"Dear sir, for Jesus Christ's sake, consider how you dishonour God by denying election, You plainly make man's salvation depend not on God's free grace, but on man's free will. Dear, dear sir, give yourself to reading. Study the covenant of grace. Down with your carnal reasoning. Be a little child; and then, instead of pawning your salvation, as you have done in a late hymn-book, if the doctrine of universal redemption be not true; instead of talking of sinless perfection, as you have done in the preface to that hymnbook; and. Instead of making man's salvation to depend on his own free will, as you have in this sermon, you will compose a hymn in praise of sovereign, distinguishing love; you will caution believers against striving to work a perfection out of their own hearts, and will print another sermon the reverse of this, and entitle it 'Free Grace Indeed'—free, because not free to all; but free, because God may withhold or give it to whom and when He pleases." [36]

About three weeks after the date of this letter, Whitefield set sail for England, bringing his manuscript with him. On his arrival in London, in March, 1741, he submitted it to Charles Wesley, who returned it to the author, endorsed with the words: "Put up again thy sword into its place." The pamphlet, however, was published; and Whitefield gave Wesley notice, that he was resolved publicly to preach against him and his brother wherever he went. Wesley complained to Whitefield—1. That it was imprudent to

publish his letter, because it was only putting weapons into the hands of those who hated them. 2. That, if he really was constrained to bear his testimony on the subject, he might have done it by issuing a treatise without ever calling Wesley's name in question. 3. That what he had published was a mere burlesque upon an answer. 4. That he had said enough, however, of what was wholly foreign to the question, to make an open and probably irreparable, breach between them. Wesley added:— "You rank all the maintainers of universal redemption with Socinians. Alas, my brother! Do you not know even this, that Socinians allow no redemption at all? That Socinus himself speaks thus, 'Tota redemptio nostra per Christum metaphora'? How easy were it for me to hit many other palpable blots, in what you call an answer to my sermon! And how, above measure, contemptible would you then appear to all impartial men, either of sense or learning! But, I assure you, my hand shall not be upon you. The Lord be judge between me and thee! The general tenour, both of my public and private exhortations, when I touch thereon at all, as even my enemies know, if they would testify, is 'Spare the young man, even Absalom, for my sake!'"[37]

David and Jonathan were divided. An immediate schism followed.

Wesley writes:—"In March, 1741, Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first breach, which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion.

Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate; but those who held particular redemption would not hear of any accommodation, being determined to have no fellowship with men that were 'in such dangerous errors.' So there were now two sorts of Methodists: those for particular, and those for general, redemption." [38] Here, for the present, we leave the subject; and turn to other matters.

In 1740, as in 1739, the pamphlets published against Methodism were many and malignant. One was entitled: "The important Doctrines of Original Sin, Justification by Faith, and Regeneration, clearly stated and vindicated from the misrepresentations of the Methodists. By Thomas Whiston, A.B." London: 1740. Pp. 70. Mr. Whiston is unknown to fame.

Wesley never noticed him; and, though his production is now before us, an analysis of its contents would weary the reader without instructing him.

Another was, "The Quakers and Methodists compared. By the Rev. Zachary Grey, LL.D., Rector of Houghton Conquest, in Bedfordshire,"—the laborious author of more than thirty different publications, a man of great ingenuity and research, but an acrimonious polemic, who died at Ampthill, in 1766.[39]

It is a curious fact, that Whitefield was far more violently attacked than the Wesleys were. "Aquila Smyth, a layman of the Church of England," accuses him of having published two letters against Archbishop Tillotson, "in the spirit of pride, envy, and malice;" and of having "detracted the most valuable works of other men, in order to aggrandize himself; and gain credit for his own weak, impudent, and wicked performances." His "behaviour exposes him to the scorn of every reader;" and his "consummate impudence" is unequalled in the Christian world.

There "is a juggle between him and Wesley to deceive their followers, and to prevent an inquiry into their corrupt and abominable doctrine;" and, finally, after calling him "a brainsick enthusiast," Smyth declares, that Whitefield has taken up five thousand acres in America, under the pretence of educating and maintaining such negroes as may be sent to him; but really because he hopes to realise from the transaction a more plentiful fortune than he could have gained in England by five thousand years of preaching.

So much for the spleen of Aquila Smyth. In the Weekly Miscellany, edited by Mr. Hooker, there appeared, in several successive numbers, fictitious dialogues between Whitefield and a country

clergyman, the object of which was to make Whitefield contemptible; and the whole were finished with a promise from the editor, that he would abridge, for the benefit of his subscribers, the history of the Anabaptists, and would show that there is a near resemblance between them and their descendants, the Methodists.

The Rev. Alexander Garden, the Bishop of London's commissary at Charlestown, in America, published a series of six letters on justification by faith and works, in which he accused Whitefield of "self contradiction," of "arrogant and wicked slander," and of being "so full of zeal that he had no room for charity." He contemptuously speaks of Whitefield's "apparent shuffles," "miserable distinctions," "mob harangues," and "false and poisoned insinuations." Whitefield "deceives the people, and has no talent at proving anything"; he is "a hairbrained solifidian, and runs about a mouthing"; he has "kindled a fire of slander and defamation, which no devil in hell, nor jesuit on earth, will ever make an effort to extinguish, but will fagot and foment it with all their might"; "he dispenses to the populace in a vehicle of cant terms, without sense or meaning"; and "in a mountebank way, he fancies himself a young David, and that he has slain Goliath."

Whitefield was again severely handled "by a presbyter of the Church of England," in an able pamphlet of forty-four pages, entitled "A modest and serious Defence of the Author of the Whole Duty of Man, from the false charges and gross misrepresentations of Mr. Whitefield, and the Methodists his adherents"; but this was a castigation which Whitefield merited, for his ill judged and unneeded letter, published in the Daily Advertiser of July 3, 1740.

The most violent attack of all was in an octavo pamphlet of eighty-five pages, with the title, "The Expounder Ex-pounded, by R——ph J——ps——n, of the Inner Temple, Esq." London. Some parts of this disgraceful production are too filthy to be noticed; they must be passed in silence. In other parts, Whitefield, for publishing his journal, is charged with "saddling the world with one of the grossest absurdities and impositions, that folly or impudence could invent"; "his book is nothing but a continued account of his intimate union and correspondence with the devil"; and he himself may be seen "upon the hills and house-tops, like another Æolus, belching out his divine vapours to the multitude, to the great ease of himself, and emolument of his auditors." "Charles Wesley lent him books at Oxford, which threw his understanding off the hinges, and rendered him enthusiastically crazy"; at college he "deemed a lousy pate humility, foul linen was heavenly contemplation, woollen gloves were grace, a patched gown was justification by faith, and dirty shoes meant a walk with God. In short, with him, religion consisted wholly in nastiness, and heaven was easiest attacked from a dunghill." These are the mildest specimens we have been able to select from this cesspool of a perverted intellect and a polluted heart.

Another pamphlet, published in 1740, and consisting of eighty-four pages, was entitled "The Imposture of Methodism displayed; in a letter to the inhabitants of the parish of Dewsbury. Occasioned by the rise of a certain modern sect of enthusiasts, called Methodists. By William Bowman, M.A., vicar of Dewsbury and Aldbrough in Yorkshire, and chaplain to the Right Honourable Charles, Earl of Hoptoun." As yet, neither the Wesleys nor Whitefield had been in Yorkshire; but Ingham and William Delamotte were there, and had been the means of converting a large number of the almost heathenised inhabitants of the west riding.

The reverend vicar tells his parishioners, that "an impious spirit of enthusiasm and superstition has crept in among them, and threatens a total ruin of all religion and virtue." He himself has been "an eye-witness of this monstrous madness, and religious frenzy, which, like a rapid torrent, bears down everything beautiful before it, and introduces nothing but a confused and ridiculous medley of nonsense and inconsistency." It was matter of thankfulness, "that the contagion, at present, was pretty much confined to the dregs and refuse of the people,—the weak, unsteady, mob, always fond of innovation, and never pleased but with variety;" but, then, the mob was so numerous in the west of

Yorkshire, that the danger was greater than was apprehended. The author declines to determine whether “these modern visionaries, like the Quakers, are a sect hatched and fashioned in a seminary of Jesuits; or whether, like the German Anabaptists, they are a set of crazy, distempered fanatics;” but certain it is, that their “enthusiasm is patched and made up of a thousand incoherencies and absurdities, picked and collected from the vilest errors and most pestilent follies, of every heresy upon earth.” “Their teachers inculcate, that they are Divinely and supernaturally inspired by the Holy Ghost, to declare the will of God to mankind; and, yet, they are cheats and impostors, and their pretended sanctity nothing but a trick and a delusion.” They had been allowed to use the pulpits of the Church, “till, by their flights and buffooneries, they had made the church more like a beargarden than the house of prayer; and the rostrum nothing else but the trumpet of sedition, heresy, blasphemy, and everything destructive to religion and good manners.” It was high time for the clergy to put an end to their “pulpits being let out, as a stage, for mountebanks and jackpuddings to play their tricks upon, and from thence to propagate their impostures and delusions.” “These mad devotionalists held, that it is lawful and expedient for mere laymen, for women, and the meanest and most ignorant mechanics, to minister in the church of Christ, to Preach, and expound the word of God, and to offer up the prayers of the congregation in the public assemblies.” They also taught, that “the new birth consists in an absolute and entire freedom from all kind of sin whatsoever;” and likewise “denounced eternal death and damnation on all who cannot conform to their ridiculous ideas.” “Whilst adopting to themselves the reputation of being the chief favourites of heaven, the confidants and imparters of its secrets, and the dispensers of its frowns and favours, they were really furious disciples of antichrist, reverend scavengers of scandal, and filthy pests and plagues of mankind.” Such are specimens of the meek language used by the reverend vicar of Dewsbury.

We have already noticed one production of the fiery and furious Joseph Trapp, D.D., published in 1739. The publication of that produced others, in 1740. One was entitled, “The true Spirit of the Methodists, and their Allies, fully laid open; in an answer to six of the seven pamphlets, lately published against Dr. Trapp’s sermons upon being ‘Righteous over much’”: pp. 98. The anonymous author says, that one of these six pamphlets is full of “false quotations, lies, and slanders,” and concludes with “an ungodly jumble of railing and praying.” The Methodists are branded as “crackbrained enthusiasts and profane hypocrites.” “The criterions of modern saintship are the most unchristian malice, lying, slander, railing, and cursing.” Whitefield is pronounced “impious and ignorant.” The “false doctrines and blasphemies of the Methodists, their field assemblies and conventicles in houses, are contrary to the laws of God and man, of church and state, and are tending to the ruin of both.” Another pamphlet, of 127 pages, was by Dr. Trapp himself, and entitled, “A Reply to Mr. Law’s earnest and serious Answer (as it is called) to Dr. Trapp’s discourse on being righteous over much.” The reverend doctor, as inflammable as ever, pronounces the Methodists “a new sect of enthusiasts, or hypocrites, or both; whose doctrines and practices tend to the destruction of souls, are a scandal to Christianity, and expose it to the scoffs of libertines, infidels, and atheists.” This is not an unfair specimen of the whole 127 pages. William Law, however, was far too stout an antagonist to be silenced by Dr. Trapp. His “Serious Answer” to Trapp’s sermons, and his “Animadversions” on Trapp’s reply, whilst written in the highest style of Christian courtesy, are witheringly severe.

They may be found in Wesley’s collected publications, edit. 1772, vol. vi.

Another doughty anti-Methodistic champion was the celebrated Dr. Daniel Waterland, chaplain in ordinary to his majesty, canon of Windsor, archdeacon of Middlesex, and vicar of Twickenham; one of the greatest controversialists of the age, who died at the end of the year of which we are writing, and whose collected works have since been published in eleven octavo volumes.

A few months before his death, Waterland preached two sermons, first at Twickenham, and next at Windsor, on regeneration, which, without mentioning the Methodists, were undeniably meant to serve

as an antidote to the doctrines they preached. These he published in the form of an octavo pamphlet of fifty-six pages, accompanied by a mass of notes in Latin, Greek, and English, from all sorts of authors. The title of the pamphlet is, "Regeneration Stated and Explained, according to Scripture and Antiquity, in a Discourse on Titus iii. 4, 5, 6;" and its subject may be inferred from the following definition:—"The new birth, in the general, means a spiritual change, wrought upon any person by the Holy Spirit, in the use of baptism; whereby he is translated from his natural state in Adam, to a spiritual state in Christ." Written from such a standpoint, the pamphlet of course was a tacit condemnation of the doctrines of the Methodists. It is immensely learned, but far from luminous; full of talent, but likewise full of error; exceedingly elaborate, but, to an equal extent, bewildering.

We shall mention only one other attack on Methodism and the Methodists made at this period. This was a pamphlet of fifty-five pages, with the title, "The Trial of Mr. Whitefield's Spirit, in some remarks upon his fourth Journal." The author makes himself merry with the discovery, that this new sect of enthusiasts, by taking to themselves the name of Methodist, have unintentionally stigmatised themselves with a designation which is branded in Scripture as evil. "The word /GSQFGKC, or Methodism, is only used twice throughout the New Testament (Ephesians iv. 14, and vi. 11), and in both places denotes that cunning craftiness whereby evil men, or evil spirits, lie in wait to deceive." It is alleged that Wesley, Whitefield, and their followers, "have taken an appellation, perhaps through a judicial inadvertence, which the Spirit of God has peculiarly appropriated to the adversary of mankind, and to those who are leagued with him in enmity to the interests of righteousness and true holiness." This was an ingenious hit; the writer, however, forgetting or misstating the fact, that the name of Methodists was not self-assumed, but imposed by others. "/GSQFGPUCKý Fgý GUVKý Vqý CRCVJUCK—to be a Methodist, says St. Chrysostom, is to be beguiled." And, from this, the author wishes the inference to be deduced, that, because the new sect of enthusiasts were called Methodists, they were all beguiled, and, of course, Wesley and Whitefield were the great beguilers. The remainder of the pamphlet is a critique on Whitefield's Journals, which, it must be admitted, were unguardedly expressed, and which, before being printed, ought to have been revised by a kindred spirit, possessed of a soberer judgment than Whitefield had.

The Methodist persecutions of 1740 were chiefly of a literary kind. It is true that Charles Wesley met with a rough reception at Bengeworth, where Henry Seward called him "a scoundrel and a rascal"; directed the mob to "take him away and duck him"; and actually seized him by the nose and wrung it. This was bad enough, but the treatment of John Cennick and his friends was even worse. While he was preaching at Upton, in Gloucestershire, the mob assembled with a horn, a drum, and a number of brass pans, and made a most horrid hubbub; the brass pans being also used in beating the people's heads, A man likewise put a cat into a cage, and brought a pack of hounds to make them bark at it.

Another fellow and his wife, who kept an alehouse at Hannam, rode through the congregation, thrashing the people with their whips, and trampling them beneath their horses' hoofs. Little children collected dust, which their upgrown patrons cast upon Cennick, who was also struck violently on the nose, and became a target at which to hurl dead dogs and stones.[40] But even violent and contemptuous treatment like this was not near so painful as the scurrilous attacks encountered through the press. In this way, the persecution of the Methodists was something more than a localised outburst of spleen and hate; for, in all sorts of squibs, they were gibbeted, and exposed to ridicule, throughout the kingdom.

Wesley's trials were not trifles; but, in the midst of all, he bravely pursued the path of duty; and, after the final separation from his foolish, fanatical friends at Fetter Lane, his labours in London were attended with considerable success. On August 11, while forty or fifty were praying and giving thanks at the Foundery, two persons began to cry to God with a loud and bitter cry, and soon found peace. Five days after, a woman, at Long Lane, fell down and continued in violent agonies for an hour. In

September, a great number of men forced their way into the Foundery, and began to speak big, swelling words; but, “immediately after, the hammer of the word brake the rocks in pieces.” A smuggler rushed in and cursed vehemently; but, when Wesley finished preaching, the man declared, before the congregation, that, henceforth, he would abandon smuggling and give God his heart.

Wesley’s efforts to do good were various. In London, he induced his friends to contribute the clothing they could spare, and distributed it among the poor of the Foundery society. In Bristol, besides visiting numbers of people “ill of the spotted fever,” he took into his Broadmead meetinghouse twelve of the poorest people he could find, who were out of work; and, to save them at once from want and from idleness, employed them for four months in carding and spinning cotton.

Wesley concluded this eventful year at Bristol, by holding a watchnight meeting, proposed by James Rogers, a Kingswood collier, noted among his neighbours for his playing on the violin, but who, being awakened under the ministry of Charles Wesley, went home, burnt his fiddle, and told his wife that he meant to be a Methodist. To his death, James was faithful, and, besides many other important services, was the first Methodist preacher that preached at Stroud in Gloucestershire.[41] This was the first watchnight meeting among the Methodists. The people met at half-past eight; the house was filled from end to end; and “we concluded the year,” says Wesley, “wrestling with God in prayer, and praising Him for the wonderful work which He had already wrought upon the earth.”

The meeting soon became a favourite one, and was held monthly.

Wesley writes: “Some advised me to put an end to this; but, upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believed it might be made of more general use.”[42] The church, in ancient times, was accustomed to spend whole nights in prayer, which nights were termed vigiliae, or vigils; and, sanctioned by such authority, Wesley appointed monthly watchnights, on the Fridays nearest the full moon, desiring that they, and they only, should attend, who could do it without prejudice to their business or families.

Little more remains to be said concerning 1740. During the entire year, Wesley preached in only three churches, namely at Newbury, and at Lanhithel, and Lantarnum, in Wales. His favourite text was Ephesians ii. 8, showing that his mind and heart were still full of the glorious truth, salvation by grace through faith in Christ.

One of his publications has been already noticed. Another was a third volume of hymns, pp. 209, by no means inferior to its predecessors in poetic excellence, or Christian character. The book is also possessed of considerable historic interest, containing, as it does, a long hymn of twenty-two verses, descriptive of Charles Wesley’s history up to this period; and likewise several hymns addressed to Whitefield; and one “for the Kingswood colliers.” The volume consists of ninety-six hymns and poems, only four of which are selected from other authors. The preface is remarkable, giving a description of the man possessed of a clean heart.

He is freed from pride, self will, evil thoughts, wandering thoughts, doubts, fears, etc. Wesley, a quarter of a century afterwards, declared that this preface contains the strongest account that he ever gave of Christian perfection; and admitted, that some of the statements needed correction; especially, that the perfect Christian is so “freed from self will as not to desire ease in pain;” that, “in prayer, he is so delivered from wanderings, that he has no thought of anything past, or absent, or to come, but of God alone,” etc. Wesley never taught anything respecting Christian perfection, but what was, either directly or indirectly, contained in this preface; but some of its strong assertions he wished to modify.[43] Another publication, issued in 1740, was entitled, “Serious Considerations concerning the Doctrines of Election and Reprobation.

Extracted from a late author.” 12mo, twelve pages. It is a condensed, well argued tract on what had

become a bone of contention between Wesley and his friend Whitefield. The address to the reader is beautiful: "Let us bear with one another, remembering it is the prerogative of the great God to pierce through all His own infinite schemes with an unerring eye, to surround them with an all-comprehensive view, to grasp them all in one single survey, and to spread a reconciling light over all their immense varieties. Man must yet grapple with difficulties in this dusky twilight; but God, in His time, will irradiate the earth more plentifully with His light and truth."

Another of Wesley's publications was a 12mo tract of nineteen pages, with the title, "The Nature and Design of Christianity, extracted from a late author" (Mr. Law); and another was Wesley's second Journal, extending from February 1 to August 12, 1738. 12mo, pp. 90.

The year 1740, in Wesley's history, was not marked with great religious success; but it was one of the most eventful years in his chequered life. There was a full and final separation from the Moravians; there was the separate organisation of the Methodist society at Moorfields; and there was the controversy with Whitefield. All these matters will again demand attention.

ENDNOTES

[1] Wesley's Works, vol. i., p. 331.

[2] Robert Ramsey did not long escape the hand of justice. About the Christmas of the year following, he was arrested for another crime, tried and condemned to die; and on January 14, 1741, with eleven other malefactors, was executed at Tyburn. While lying under sentence of death in Newgate prison, he requested Wesley to visit him; and twice his old master went, but was refused admittance. (London Magazine, 1742, p. 47; and Wesley's Works, vol. i., p. 331.) [3] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 251.

[4] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 242.

[5] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 264.

[6] Hutton's Memoirs, p. 50.

[7] Original letter, published in Wesleyan Times.

[8] Hutton's Memoirs, p. 48.

[9] Hutton's Memoirs.

[10] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 222.

[11] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 221. Hymn 92, in the Methodist Hymnbook, is an abridgment of it.

[12] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 222.

[13] See Hutton's Memoirs.

[14] Jackson's Life of C. Wesley.

[15] C. Wesley's Journal.

[16] Wesley's Works, vol. ii., p. 26.

[17] Ibid. vol. viii., p. 401.

[18] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. ii., p. 167.

[19] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 224.

[20] Benson's "Apology," p. 134.

[21] See Wesley's Works, vol. X, p. 257; orig. edition.

[22] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 156.

[23] Ibid. vol. i., p. 182.

[24] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 185.

[25] Ibid. vol. i., p. 189.

[26] Weekly History, No. 13: 1741.

[27] Whitefield's Works, vol. iv., p. 54.

[28] Ibid. vol. i., p. 205.

[29] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 212.

[30] See "Wesley Poetry," vol. i., p. 310.

[31] "Life and Times of Howel Harris."

[32] Weekly History, No. 13: 1741.

[33] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 219.

[34] Ibid. vol. i., p. 225.

[35] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 263.

- [36] Whitefield's Works, vol. iv., p. 72.
[37] Methodist Magazine, 1807, p. 6.
[38] Wesley's Works, vol. Viii., p. 335.
[39] Nichols' Literary Anecdotes, vol. ii., p. 541.
[40] Weekly History, No. 33: Nov. 2, 1741.
[41] Myles's History, p. 58.
[42] Wesley's Works, vol. Viii., p. 246.
[43] Wesley's Works, vol. Xiv., p. 306; and vol. xi., p. 366.
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1741.

WITH the exception of a week spent in the midland counties, about a month at Oxford, and three weeks in Wales, Wesley divided the year 1741, in almost equal proportions, between London and Bristol.

Whitefield arrived in England, from America, in the month of March; and, finding his congregations at Moorfields and Kennington Common dwindled down from twenty thousand to two or three hundred, he started off to Bristol, where he remained till the end of May, when he came back to London, and, on July 25, sailed thence to Scotland, writing six-and-twenty pastoralizing letters on the way, and arriving at Leith on July 30.

The next three months were spent with the Erskines and others, the leaders of the Seceders, who, in the year preceding, had been solemnly expelled by the General Assembly, and had had their relation to the national church formally dissolved. Whitefield's career of out-door preaching, and his success in Scotland, were marvellous. All the time, however, he was burdened with an enormous debt, incurred on account of his orphan house in Georgia, and was sometimes threatened with arrest.

On leaving Scotland, he proceeded direct to Wales, where, on the 11th of November, he married a widow of the name of James, and set up housekeeping with borrowed furniture, though, according to an announcement in the Gentleman's Magazine,[1] his wife had a fortune of £10,000. The rest of the year he spent chiefly in Bristol and the west of England.[2]

Charles Wesley, of course, alternated with his brother, though he preached far more at Bristol than in London. Ever and anon he composed one of his grand funeral hymns, and not unfrequently met with amusing adventures. In a Kingswood prayer-meeting, while he and others were praying for an increase of spiritual children, a wild collier brought four of his black-faced little ones, and threw the youngest on the table, saying, "You have got the mother, take the bairns as well." In another instance, a woman came to him about her husband, who had been to hear the predestinarian gospel, returned home elect, and, in proof of it, beat his wife.

For some months, in the year 1741, Charles Wesley was in danger of subsiding into Moravian stillness; and his brother wrote to him, "The Philistines are upon thee, Samson, but the Lord is not departed from thee." Gambold also, and Westley Hall, were inoculated with the same pernicious poison. Charles went off to Bristol, and on April 21 Wesley addressed to him the following:—

"I rejoice in your speaking your mind freely. O let our love be without dissimulation!

"As yet, I dare in nowise join with the Moravians: 1. Because their whole scheme is mystical, not scriptural. 2. Because there is darkness and closeness in their whole behaviour, and guile in almost all their words. 3. Because they utterly deny and despise self denial and the daily cross. 4. Because

they, upon principle, conform to the world, in wearing gold or costly apparel. 5. Because they extend Christian liberty, in this and many other respects, beyond what is warranted in holy writ. 6. Because they are by no means zealous of good works; or, at least, only to their own people. And, lastly, because they make inward religion swallow up outward in general. For these reasons chiefly, I will rather stand quite alone, than join with them: I mean till I have full assurance, that they will spread none of their errors among the little flock committed to my charge.

“O my brother, my soul is grieved for you; the poison is in you: fair words have stolen away your heart. ‘No English man or woman is like the Moravians!’ So the matter is come to a fair issue. Five of us did still stand together a few months since; but two are gone to the right hand, Hutchins and Cennick; and two more to the left, Mr. Hall and you. Lord, if it be Thy gospel which I preach, arise and maintain Thine own cause! Adieu!”[3]

In the month of May, a reunion of Wesley’s London society with the Moravians at Fetter Lane was solemnly discussed; and all the bands met at the Foundery, on a Wednesday afternoon, to ask God to give them guidance. “It was clear to all,” writes Wesley, “even those who were before the most desirous of reunion, that the time was not come: (1) because the brethren of Fetter Lane had not given up their most essentially erroneous doctrines; and, (2) because many of us had found so much guile in their words, that we could scarce tell what they really held, and what not.”

Wesley entertained no bitterness towards the Moravians He readily acknowledges, that they had a sincere desire to serve God; that many of them had tasted of His love; that they abstained from outward sin; and that their discipline, in most respects, was excellent: but, after reading all their English publications, and “waiving their odd and affected phrases; their weak, mean, silly, childish expressions; their crude, confused, and undigested notions; and their whims, unsupported either by Scripture or sound reason,”—he found three grand, unretracted errors running through almost all their books, namely “universal salvation, antinomianism, and a kind of new, reformed quietism.” No wonder that the thought of reunion was abandoned.

A month after the above meeting, at the Foundery, Wesley made a tour among the Moravians, in the midland counties. Here Ingham had preached with great success; and here Mr. Simpson, one of the Oxford Methodists, had settled as a sort of Moravian minister. During the journey, Wesley made an experiment which he had often been urged to make, namely that of speaking to no one on sacred things, unless his heart was free to it. The result was, that, for eighty miles together, he had no need to speak at all; and he tells us that, instead of having crosses to take up and bear, he commonly fell fast asleep; and all behaved to him, as to a civil, good-natured gentleman. On reaching Ockbrook, where Simpson lived, he found that though, a few months before, there had been a great awakening all round about, three-fourths of the converts were now backsliders. Simpson had drawn the people from the Church, and had advised them to abandon devotion. He said, there was no Church of England left; and that there was no scriptural command for family or private prayer. The sum of his teaching was: “If you wish to believe, be still; and leave off what you call the means of grace, such as prayer and running to church and sacrament.” Mr. Graves, the clergyman of the parish, having offered the use of his church to Wesley, the latter preached two sermons, one on “the true gospel stillness,” and the other from his favourite text—“By grace are ye saved, through faith.” From Ockbrook, Wesley went to Nottingham, where he found further evidences of backsliding. The room, which used to be crowded, was now half empty; and the few who did attend the services, instead of praying when they entered, sat down without any religious formality whatever, and began talking to their neighbours. When Wesley engaged in prayer among them, none knelt, and “those who stood chose the most easy and indolent posture which they conveniently could.” One of the hymn-books, published by the Wesleys, had been sent from London to be used in the public congregations; but both that and the Bible were now banished; and, in the place of them, lay the Moravian hymns and Zinzendorf’s sixteen sermons. Wesley preached twice in this Moravian meeting; and once in the market place, to an immense multitude, all of whom, with

two or three exceptions, behaved with great decorum.

After spending a week at Markfield, Ockbrook, Nottingham, Melbourn, and Hemmington, and also probably becoming acquainted with the Countess of Huntingdon, who lived in this locality, Wesley returned to town, on the 16th of June, and, a fortnight after, went to Oxford, where he met his old friend Mr. Gambold, who honestly told him, he was ashamed of his company, and must be excused going to the Moravian meeting with him.

At the beginning of September, Zinzendorf wished to have an interview, and, at his request, Wesley went to Gray's-inn Walk, a public promenade, to meet him.

Zinzendorf charged him with having changed his religion; with having quarreled with the Brethren; and with having refused to be at peace with them, even after they had asked his forgiveness. In reference to Wesley's doctrine of Christian perfection, the count became furious. "This," said he, "is the error of errors. I pursue it through the world with fire and sword. I trample upon it. I devote it to utter destruction. Christ is our sole perfection. Whoever follows inherent perfection, denies Christ. All Christian perfection is faith in the blood of Christ; and is wholly imputed, not inherent."

Wesley asked, if they were not striving about words; and, by a series of questions, got the obfuscated German to admit, "that, a believer is altogether holy in heart and life,—that he loves God with all his heart, and serves Him with all his powers." Wesley continued: "I desire nothing more. I mean nothing else by perfection, or Christian holiness."

Zinzendorf rejoined: "But this is not the believer's holiness. He is not more holy if he loves more, or less holy, if he loves less. In the moment he is justified, he is sanctified wholly; and, from that time, he is neither more nor less holy, even unto death. Our whole justification, and sanctification, are in the same instant. From the moment any one is justified, his heart is as pure as it ever will be."

Wesley asked again: "Perhaps I do not comprehend your meaning. Do we not, while we deny ourselves, die more and more to the world and live to God?"

Zinzendorf replied: "We reject all self denial. We trample upon it.

We do, as believers, whatsoever we will, and nothing more. We laugh at all mortification. No purification precedes perfect love." [4] And thus the conference ended.

"The count," said Mr. Stonehouse after reading the conversation, "is a clever fellow; but the genius of Methodism is too strong for him." [5]

Zinzendorf accused Wesley of refusing to live in peace, even after the Brethren had humbled themselves and begged his pardon. Wesley says there is a mistake in this. Fifty or more Moravians spoke bitterly against him; one or two asked his pardon, but did it in the most careless manner possible. The rest, if ashamed of their behaviour at all, managed to keep their shame a profound secret from him. [6]

As to the count's theory, that a man is wholly sanctified the moment he is justified—a theory held by the Rev. Dr. Bunting, at all events, at the commencement of his ministerial career [7]—we say nothing; but there can be no question, that his sentiments respecting self denial, and the right of believers to do or not to do what they like, are, in a high degree, delusive and dangerous. We have here the very essence of the antinomian heresy, and are thus prepared for an entry in Charles Wesley's journal:—1741. September 6.—"I was astonished by a letter from my brother, relating his conference with the apostle of the Moravians.

Who would believe it of Count Zinzendorf, that he should utterly deny all Christian holiness? I never could, but for a saying of his, which I heard with my own ears. Speaking of St. James's epistle, he said:

‘If it was thrown out of the canon, I would not restore it.’” The heresy of such a man was of vast importance; for, in this same year and month, September, 1741, Zinzendorf told Doddridge, that he had “sent out, from his own family of Moravians, three hundred preachers, who were gone into most parts of the world; and that he himself was now become the guardian of the Protestant churches in the south of France, sixty of which were assembling privately for worship.”[8] As already stated, Charles Wesley was in danger of falling into the Moravian heresy. The following is an extract from a letter addressed to Wesley by the Countess of Huntingdon, and dated October 24, 1741.

“Since you left us, the still ones are not without their attacks. I fear much more for your brother than for myself, as the conquest of the one would be nothing in respect to the other. They have, by one of their agents, reviled me very much, but I have taken no sort of notice of it. I comfort myself, that you will approve a step with respect to them, which your brother and I have taken: no less than his declaring open war against them. He seemed under some difficulty about it at first, till he had free liberty given him to use my name, as the instrument, in God’s hand, that had delivered him from them. I rejoiced much at it, hoping it might be the means of working my deliverance from them. I have desired him to enclose to them yours on Christian perfection. The doctrine therein contained, I hope to live and die by; it is absolutely the most complete thing I know. Your brother is also to give his reasons for separating. I have great faith God will not let him fall; for many would fall with him. His natural parts, his judgment, and the improvement he has made, are so very far above the very highest of them, that I should imagine nothing but frenzy had seized upon him.

“We set out a week ago for Donnington, and you shall hear from me as soon as I arrive, and have heard how your little flock goes on in that neighbourhood.”[9]

Methodists will learn, from this interesting letter, that they owe a debt of gratitude to the noble and “elect lady” of the midland counties.

We turn to Whitefield. On his arrival from America, in the month of March, he found his position far from pleasant.

First of all, there was the melancholy death of his friend, William Seward—really Methodism’s first martyr—a man of considerable property, but of meagre education and inferior talent; Whitefield’s travelling companion in his second voyage to Georgia, and who, at the time of his being murdered, in Wales, was itinerating with Howel Harris in Glamorganshire. At Newport, the mob had torn Harris’s coat to tatters, stolen his wig, and pelted him and his companion with apples, stones, and dirt. At Caerleon, rotten eggs were thrown in all directions, Seward’s eye was struck, and, a few days after, he was entirely blind. At Monmouth, their treatment was of the same kind as at Newport and Caerleon; but Seward bravely cried, “Better endure this than hell.” At length, on reaching Hay, a villain hit him on the head; the blow was fatal; and William Seward went to inherit a martyr’s crown, at the early age of thiryeight, on October 22, 1741.

Besides the death of Methodism’s protomartyr, there were other troubles which Whitefield had to carry. He had an orphan family of nearly a hundred persons to maintain; was above a thousand pounds in debt for them; and was threatened with arrest on account of a bill for £350, drawn, in favour of the orphan house by his dead friend, William Seward, but which had not been met by him. James Hutton, who had been his publisher, refused to have any further transactions with him. “Many of my spiritual children,” he writes, “who, when I last left England, would have plucked out their own eyes to have given me, are so prejudiced by the dear Messrs. Wesleys’ dressing up of election in such horrible colours, that they will neither hear, see, nor give me the least assistance. Yea, some of them send threatening letters, that God will speedily destroy me. As for the people of the world, they are so embittered by my injudicious and too severe expressions against Archbishop Tillotson, the author of the old Duty of Man, that they fly from me as from a viper; and, what is worst of all, I am now constrained, on account of our differing in principles, publicly to separate from my dear, dear old friends, Messrs. John and Charles

Wesley.”[10]

During his passage to England, Whitefield wrote to Charles Wesley as follows:

“My dear, dear brother, why did you throw out the bone of contention? Why did you print that sermon against predestination? Why did you, in particular, 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 then he proceeds to state, that he had written an answer to Wesley’s sermon on free grace, and was about to have it printed in Charlestown, Boston, and London.[11] About six weeks before his arrival in England, some one obtained a copy of the letter he had sent to Wesley, under the date of September 25, 1740,[12] (an extract of which is given in the previous chapter, page 316,) and had printed it without either his or Wesley’s consent, and circulated it gratuitously at the doors of the Foundery. Wesley heard of this; and, having procured a copy, tore it in pieces before the assembled congregation, declaring that he believed Whitefield would have done the same. The congregation imitated their minister’s example, and, in two minutes, all the copies were literally torn to tatters.

Three weeks after this, Wesley had to hurry off to Kingswood to allay the turmoils there. He met the bands, but it was a cold uncomfortable meeting. Cennick and fifteen or twenty of his friends had an interview with Wesley, who accused them of speaking against him behind his back.

They replied that they had said nothing behind his back which they would not say before his face; namely, that he preached up the faithfulness of man, and not the faithfulness of God.

After a lovefeast, held in Bristol on Sunday evening, February 22, Wesley related to the Bristol Methodists, that many of their brethren at Kingswood had formed themselves into a separate society, on account of Cennick preaching doctrines different to those preached by himself and his brother. Cennick, who was present, affirmed, that Wesley’s doctrine was false. Wesley charged him with supplanting him in his own house, stealing the hearts of the people, and, by private accusations, dividing very friends. Cennick replied, “I have never privately accused you.” Wesley, who, by some means, was possessed of a letter which Cennick had recently addressed to Whitefield, answered: “My brethren, judge;” and then began to read as follows:—

“January 17, 1741.

“MY DEAR BROTHER,—That you might come quickly, I have written a second time. I sit solitary, like Eli, waiting what will become of the ark. My trouble increases daily. How glorious did the gospel seem once to flourish in Kingswood! I spake of the everlasting love of Christ with sweet power; but now brother Charles is suffered to open his mouth against this truth, while the frightened sheep gaze and fly, as if no shepherd was among them. O, pray for the distressed lambs yet left in this place, that they faint not! Brother Charles pleases the world with universal redemption, and brother John follows him in everything. No atheist can preach more against predestination than they; and all who believe election are counted enemies to God, and called so. Fly, dear brother. I am as alone; I am in the midst of the plague. If God give thee leave, make haste.”

Cennick acknowledged the letter was his, that it had been sent to Whitefield, and that he retracted nothing in it. The meeting got excited, and Wesley adjourned the settlement of the business to Kingswood on Saturday next ensuing.

Here he heard all that any one wished to say, and then read the following paper:—

“By many witnesses, it appears that several members of the band society in Kingswood have made it their common practice to scoff at the preaching of Mr. John and Charles Wesley; that they have censured and spoken evil of them behind their backs, at the very time they professed love and esteem to their faces; that they have studiously endeavoured to prejudice other members of that society against them; and, in order thereto, have belied and slandered them in divers

instances.

“Therefore, not for their opinions, nor for any of them (whether they be right or wrong), but for the causes above mentioned, viz.

For their scoffing at the word and ministers of God, for their talebearing, backbiting, and evil speaking, for their dissembling, lying, and slandering:

“I, John Wesley, by the consent and approbation of the band society in Kingswood, do declare the persons above mentioned to be no longer members thereof. Neither will they be so accounted, until they shall openly confess their fault, and thereby do what in them lies, to remove the scandal they have given.” This is a remarkable document. It was hardly two years since Whitefield and Wesley began to preach at Kingswood, and yet here we have a large number of their converts charged with backbiting, lying, slandering, and other crimes. “How is the gold become dim!”

Were the former days better than these? We doubt it.

Here we also have the first Methodist expulsion; not for opinions, but for sins; not by the sole authority and act of John Wesley, but “by the consent and approbation” of the society, whose refractory members were to be put away. Such was Methodism, at its beginning.

Cennick, and those who sympathised with his sentiments, refused to own that they had done aught amiss; and declared that, on many occasions, he had heard both Wesley and his brother preach Popery.

Wesley gave them another week to think the matter over. They were still intractable; and alleged that the real cause of their expulsion was their holding the doctrine of election. Wesley answered, “You know in your conscience it is not. There are several predestinarians in our societies both at London and Bristol, nor did I ever put any one out of either because he held that opinion.” The result of the whole was, Cennick and fifty-one others at once withdrew, and the remainder, numbering about a hundred, still adhered to Wesley.[13]

Such was the first schism in Methodist history,—John Cennick the leader,—fifty of the Kingswood members its abettors,—and John Wesley and a majority of the Kingswood Society, the Court enacting their expulsion.

The writer’s chief object is to furnish facts, and therefore he refrains from comment on these transactions. No doubt Cennick was sincere.

After the risks he ran in preaching Christ, no one can doubt his Christian earnestness: but, having come to Kingswood at Wesley’s invitation, and having been employed by him as the teacher of his school, and also as an evangelist among the surrounding colliers, it would, at least, have been more courteous to have quietly retired from his present sphere of action, when he found his views different from those of his patron and his friend, than it was for him to pursue the controversial and divisive course he did.

John Cennick had a lion’s courage and a martyr’s piety; but his passions sometimes mastered his prudence, and, for want of the serpent’s wisdom, he often failed in exhibiting the meekness of the dove.

Whitefield arrived in London a few days after the Kingswood expulsion; and Wesley, on the 25th of March, hastened off to meet him.

Whitefield told him they preached two different gospels, and that he was resolved to preach against him and his brother wherever he preached at all. A weekly publication, of four folio pages, entitled “The Weekly History; or An Account of the most remarkable Particulars relating to the present Progress of the Gospel,” was immediately started by J. Lewis, Whitefield promising to supply him with fresh matter every week. This was really the first Methodist newspaper ever published. Of course, Calvinism was its inspiring genius. The principal contributors were Whitefield, Cennick, Howel Harris, and Joseph Humphreys.

The last mentioned was employed by Wesley as a sort of Moravian lay preacher, as early as the year 1738,[14] and was greatly attached to him. At this period, he was acting as Moravian minister at Deptford, and wrote to Wesley as follows:—

“DEPTFORD, April 5, 1741.

“DEAR AND REVEREND SIR,—I think I love you better than ever. I would not grieve you by any means, if I could possibly help it. I think I had never more power in preaching than I had this morning. And, if this is the consequence of electing everlasting love, may my soul be ever filled with it!”[15] In another letter, of three weeks later date, addressed to “Mr. M——,” he avows his belief in the doctrine of final perseverance, and proceeds to say:—

“The doctrine of sinless perfection in this life, I utterly renounce. I believe the preaching of it has led many souls into darkness and confusion. I believe those that hold it, if children of God at all, are in a very legal state. I believe those who pretend to have attained it are dangerously ignorant of their own hearts. I also see that, if I incline towards universal redemption any longer, I must also hold with universal salvation.”

He then add: “Last Saturday I sent the following letter to the Rev. Mr. J. Wesley.”

“REVEREND SIR,—I would have been joined with you to all eternity if I could; but my having continued with you so long as I have has led me into grievous temptation; and I now think it my duty no longer to join with you, but openly to renounce your peculiar doctrines. I have begun to do it at London; and, as the Lord shall enable me, will proceed to do it here at Bristol. I feel no bitterness in my spirit, but love you, pray for you, and respect you.

“I am, sir, your humble servant and unworthy brother, “JOSEPH HUMPHREYS.”

The above letter was sent to the editor of the Weekly History by Whitefield, accompanied by the following note:— “I would have you print this letter with my last. If you think it best, I would also have it printed in the Daily Advertiser. I see the mystery of iniquity, that is working, more and more.

“Ever yours,

“G. WHITEFIELD.”[16]

Humphreys and Cennick were now both at Kingswood, which was, for the time being, the head quarters of the Calvinistic schism. Here, in the month of April, the separatists got, from an old man, his copy of Wesley’s treatise against predestination, and burnt it.[17] About the same time, however, Wesley distributed a thousand copies among Whitefield’s congregation, and a thousand more at the Foundery;[18] and, in the same month, addressed the following characteristic letter to his friend.[19]

“April, 1741.

“Would you have me deal plainly with you? I believe you would; then, by the grace of God, I will.

“Of many things I find you are not rightly informed; of others you speak what you have not well weighed.

“‘The society room at Bristol,’ you say, ‘is adorned.’ How? Why, with a piece of green cloth nailed to the desk; and two sconces for eight candles each in the middle. I know no more. Now, which of these can be spared I know not; nor would I desire more adorning, or less.

“But ‘lodgings are made for me and my brother.’ That is, in plain English, there is a little room by the school, where I speak to the persons who come to me; and a garret, in which a bed is placed for me. And do you grudge me this? Is this the voice of my brother, my son, Whitefield?

“You say further, ‘that the children at Bristol are clothed as well as taught.’ I am sorry for it, for the cloth is not paid for yet, and was bought without my consent, or knowledge. ‘But those at Kingswood have been neglected.’ This is not so, notwithstanding the heavy debt that lay upon it.

One master and one mistress have been in the house ever since it was capable of receiving them. A second master has been placed there some months since; and I have long been seeking, for two proper mistresses; so that as much has been done, as matters stand, if not more, than I can answer to God and man.

“Hitherto, then, there is no ground for the heavy charge of perverting your design for the poor colliers. Two years since, your design was to build them a school. To this end, you collected some money more than once; how much I cannot say, till I have my papers. But this I know, it was not near one-half of what has been expended on the work. This design you then recommended to me, and I pursued it with all my might, through such a train of difficulties as, I will be bold to say, you have not met with in your life. For many months, I collected money wherever I was, and began building, though I had not then a quarter of the money requisite to finish. However, taking all the debt upon myself, the creditors were willing to stay; and then it was that I took possession of it in my own name; that is, when the foundation was laid; and I immediately made my will, fixing you and my brother to succeed me therein.

“But it is a poor case, that you and I should be talking thus.

Indeed, these things ought not to be. It lay in your power to have prevented all, and yet to have borne testimony to what you call ‘the truth.’ If you had disliked my sermon, you might have printed another on the same text, and have answered my proofs, without mentioning my name; this had been fair and friendly.”

The two friends were thus at variance; but every candid reader must honestly acknowledge, that Wesley triumphantly refutes Whitefield’s petulant objections.

Meanwhile, Whitefield’s adherents in the metropolis, within a few days after his arrival, set to work to erect him a wooden building near the Foundery, which they called “a Tabernacle, for morning’s exposition.”[20] On April 25, he went to Bristol, where Charles Wesley was officiating; and, three weeks after, wrote to a friend, saying, “The doctrines of the gospel are sadly run down, and most monstrous errors propagated. They assert, ‘that the very in-being of sin must be taken out of us, or otherwise we are not new creatures.’ However, at Bristol, error is in a great measure put a stop to.”[21]

So Whitefield thought, and yet, at this very time, Charles Wesley was preaching at Bristol and Kingswood, if possible, with greater power than ever. In June, however, Whitefield began to collect money for a rival meeting-house at Kingswood, and wished John Cennick to lay the foundation immediately, but to take care not to make the building either too large or too handsome.[22]

Wesley and Whitefield were divided; but Howel Harris, with his warm Welsh heart, tried to reunite them. In the month of October, Harris had loving interviews with both Wesley and his brother, and wrote to Whitefield, then in Scotland. Whitefield, easily moved in the path of Christian love, immediately addressed to Wesley the letter following:—

“ABERDEEN, October 10, 1741.

“REVEREND AND DEAR BROTHER,—This morning I received a letter from brother Harris, telling me how he had conversed with you and your dear brother. May God remove all obstacles that now prevent our union! Though I hold particular election, yet I offer Jesus freely to every individual soul. You may carry sanctification to what degrees you will, only I cannot agree with you that the inbeing of sin is to be destroyed in this life. In about three weeks, I hope to be at Bristol. May all disputings cease, and each of us talk of nothing but Jesus and Him crucified! This is my resolution. I am, without dissimulation,

“Ever yours,

“G. WHITEFIELD.”[23]

It was nearly two years after this that Wesley wrote the piece, in his collected works, entitled,

“Calvinistic Controversy” (vol. Xiii., p. 478). He says:—

“Having found for some time a strong desire to unite with Mr. Whitefield, as far as possible, to cut off needless dispute, I wrote down my sentiments, as plain as I could, in the following terms:— “There are three points in debate: 1. Unconditional election. 2. Irresistible grace. 3. Final perseverance.”

With regard to the first, Wesley expresses his belief, that God has unconditionally elected certain persons to do certain work, and certain nations to receive peculiar privileges; and allows, though he says he cannot prove, that God “has unconditionally elected some persons, thence eminently styled ‘the elect,’ to eternal glory;” but he cannot believe, that all those, not thus elected to glory, must perish everlastingly; or, that there is a soul on earth but what has the chance of escaping eternal damnation.

With regard to irresistible grace, he believes, that the grace which brings faith, and, thereby, salvation, is irresistible at that moment; and, that most believers may remember a time when God irresistibly convinced them of sin, and other times when He acted irresistibly upon their souls; but he also believes, that the grace of God, both before and after these moments, may be, and hath been resisted; and that, in general, it does not act irresistibly, but we may comply therewith, or may not. In those eminently styled “the elect” (if such there be), the grace of God is so far irresistible, that they cannot but believe, and be finally saved; but it is not true, that all those must be damned in whom it does not thus irresistibly work, or, that there is a soul living who has not any other grace than such as was designed of God to increase his damnation.

With regard to final perseverance, he believes, “that there is a state attainable in this life, from which a man cannot finally fall; and that he has attained this, who can say, ‘Old things are passed away; all things in me are become new;’ and, further, he does not deny, that all those eminently styled ‘the elect’ will infallibly persevere to the end.”[24] In reference to “the elect,” Henry Moore adds, that Wesley told him, that, when he wrote this, he believed, with Macarius, that all who are perfected in love are thus elect.

The document from which the above is taken, was written in 1743. As Mr. Jackson says, it “evidently leans too much towards Calvinism.” It is valuable chiefly because it shows Wesley’s anxiety to be at peace with Whitefield. The latter writes as though all the blame, in reference to the rupture in their friendship, lay with Wesley; whereas this was far from being true. Wesley honestly and firmly believed the doctrine of general redemption; and, because he preached it, and published a sermon in condemnation of the doctrines opposed to it, Whitefield worked himself into a fume, and wrote his pamphlet, in which he not only tries to refute Wesley’s teaching, but unnecessarily makes a personal attack on Wesley’s character, and taunts him about casting lots,—a wanton outrage, for which, in October, 1741, he humbly begged his pardon.[25] The intolerant, excessive zeal was altogether on the side of Whitefield. Wesley believed and preached general redemption; but raised no objection to Whitefield believing and preaching election and final perseverance. Instead of reciprocating this, Whitefield, in his pamphlet, blustered; and, in his letters, whined, until, the difference of opinion disturbed their friendship, and led them to build separate chapels, form separate societies, and pursue, to the end of life, separate lines of action. One of Wesley’s friends wished him to reply to Whitefield’s pamphlet. Wesley answered, “You may read Whitefield against Wesley; but you shall never read Wesley against Whitefield.”[26] In private, Wesley opposed Whitefield, but in public never. On one occasion, when the two friends met in a large social gathering, Whitefield mounted his hobby, and spoke largely and valiantly in defence of his favourite system. Wesley, on the other hand, was silent till all the company were gone, when, turning to the spurred and belted controversial knight, he quietly remarked, “Brother, are you aware of what you have done to-night?” “Yes,” said Whitefield, “I have defended truth.” “You have tried to prove,” replied Wesley, “that God is worse than the devil; for the devil can only tempt a man to sin; but, if what you have said be true, God forces a man to sin; and therefore, on your own system, God is worse than the devil.”[27]

Thus the gulf between Wesley and Whitefield was immense. “It was undesirable—indeed, it was impossible—that they should continue to address, in turn, the same congregations; for such congregations would have been kept in the pitiable condition of a ship, thrown on its beam ends, larboard and starboard, by hurricanes driving alternately east and west.”[28]

Being separated from Whitefield and the Moravians, Wesley began to purge and to organise the societies, which were now purely and properly his own. At Bristol, he took an account of every person—(1) to whom any reasonable objection was made; and (2) who was not known to and recommended by some, on whose veracity he could depend. To those who were sufficiently recommended, he gave tickets. Most of the rest he had face to face with their accusers; and such as appeared to be innocent, or confessed their faults and promised better behaviour, were then received into the society. The others were put upon trial again, unless they voluntarily expelled themselves. By this purging process, about forty were excluded.[29] He also appointed stewards, to receive and expend what was contributed weekly; and, finding the funds insufficient, he discharged two of the Bristol schoolmasters, retaining still, at Kingswood and Bristol unitedly, three masters and two mistresses for the two schools respectively.

In London, he adopted the same process, and set apart the hours from ten to two, on every day but Saturday, for speaking with the bands and other persons, that no disorderly walker, nor any of a careless or contentious spirit, might remain among them; the result of which was the society was reduced to about a thousand members.[30] Ascertaining that many of the members were without needful food, and destitute of convenient clothing, he appointed twelve persons to visit every alternate day, and to provide things needful for the sick; also to meet once a week to give an account of their proceedings, and to consult what could be done further. Women, out of work, he proposed to employ in knitting, giving them the common price for the work they did, and then adding gratuities according to their needs. To meet these expenses, he requested those who could afford it, to give a penny weekly, and to contribute any clothing which their own use did not require.

Here we have a new Methodist agency employed, Wesley had already permitted laymen to exhort and preach; he now authorised them to pay pastoral visits among his people. At present, they were mere visitors, and meetings analogous to the class-meetings of the present day did not exist.

The two Wesleys often addressed the societies apart, after they had dismissed the general congregation. They also fixed certain hours for private conversation; and now they appointed visitors to visit those who through sickness, poverty, or other causes, were not able to avail themselves of such assistance. This, as yet, was all. In the present sense, bands and classes there were none, except that each society, after the manner of the Moravians, was divided into male and female, and, perhaps, married and unmarried, bands, all of them watched over by Wesley or by his brother; and the sick and poor among them visited by persons appointed to that office. In Bristol, several members applied to Wesley for baptism, and he gave the bishop notice to that effect, adding, that they desired him to baptize them by immersion.[31] The Kingswood society, having been repelled from the sacramental table at Temple church; Charles Wesley gave them the sacrament in their own humble school; and, notwithstanding his high churchism, declared that, under the circumstances, if they had not had the school, he should have felt himself justified in administering it in the wood. In London, some of the members communicated at St. Paul’s, or at their own parish churches; but, during the autumn, on five successive Sundays, Wesley availed himself of the offer of Mr. Deleznot, a French clergyman, and used his small church, in Hermitage Street, Wapping, in administering the Lord’s supper to five successive batches of about two hundred members of his society (as many as the place could well contain), until all the society, consisting of about a thousand persons, had received it.[32]

To the members at Bristol, and doubtless also at London, Wesley gave tickets. On every ticket he wrote, with his own hand, the member’s name, “so that,” says he, “the ticket implied as strong a

recommendation of the person to whom it was given as if I had wrote at length, 'I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness.'" Wesley regarded these tickets as being equivalent to the GRKUVQNCK UWUVCVKMCK, "commendatory letters," mentioned by the apostle, and says they were of use: (1) because, wherever those who bore them came, they were acknowledged by their brethren, and received with all cheerfulness;

(2) when the societies had to meet apart, the tickets easily distinguished who were members and who were not; (3) they supplied a quiet and inoffensive method of removing any disorderly member; for, the tickets being changed once a quarter, and, of course, no new ticket being given to such a person, it was hereby immediately known that he was no longer a member of the community.[33]

The writer is possessed of nearly a complete set of these society tickets, from the first, issued about 1742, to those given a hundred years afterwards. Many of them bear the autographs of John and Charles Wesley, William Grimshaw, and other old Methodist worthies. The earliest are wood and copper-plate engravings, printed on cardboard, without any text of Scripture: some bearing the emblem of an angel flying in the clouds of heaven, with one trumpet to his mouth, and a second in his hand; and others of the Sun of Righteousness shining on a phoenix rising out of fire. Some have a dove encircled with glory; and others have no engraving whatever, but simply an inscription, written by Charles Wesley, "August, 1746." Some merely have the word "Society" imprinted, with the member's name written underneath; others have a lamb carrying a flag; and others a tree with a broken stem, Jehovah as a sun shining on it, and at its foot two men, one planting a new cutting, and the other watering one already planted. Some represent Christ in the clouds of heaven, with the cross in one hand and a crown in the other; and others represent the Christian kneeling before an altar, inscribed with the words, "Pray always and faint not." One represents Christ as washing a disciple's feet; and another, with a text of Scripture at the top, has four lines below, in which are printed, "March 25, June 25, September 29, December 25," with space left opposite to each for writing the member's name, and so making one ticket serve for the four quarters of a year. One bears the impress of an anchor and a crown; and another the image of old father Time, hurrying along, with a scroll in his hand, inscribed with "Now is the accepted time." Some are printed with black ink, some with red, and some with blue. About 1750, emblems gave place to texts of Scripture, which have been continued from that time to this.

The Methodist societies, as organised by Wesley, were thus fairly started in 1741. Meanwhile, Methodism on earth began to swell the inhabitants of heaven. At the very commencement of the year, Elizabeth Davis, of London, after she was speechless, being desired to hold up her hand if she knew she was going to God, immediately held up both. Anne Cole, on being asked by Wesley, whether she chose to live or die, answered: "I choose neither, I choose nothing. I am in my Saviour's hands, and I have no will but His." Another of the London members, when visited by Wesley, said: "I am very ill,—but I am very well. O, I am happy, happy, happy! My spirit continually rejoices in God my Saviour.

Life or death is all one to me. I have no darkness, no cloud, My body indeed is weak and in pain, but my soul is all joy and praise." Jane Muncy exclaimed: "I faint not, I murmur not, I rejoice evermore, and in everything give thanks. God is ever with me, and I have nothing to do but praise Him." In Bristol, a woman in her dying agonies cried out: "O, how loving is God to me! But He is loving to every man, and loves every soul as well as He loves mine." The last words of another were, "Death stares me in the face, but I fear him not." Hannah Richardson, who was followed to her grave by the whole of the Bristol society, the procession being pelted in the streets with dirt and stones, said: "I have no fear, no doubt, no trouble, Heaven is open! I see Jesus Christ with all His angels and saints in white. I see what I cannot utter or express." Sister Hooper cried, "I am in great pain, but in greater joy." Sister Lillington exclaimed, "I never felt such love before; I love every soul: I am all love, and so is God." Rachel Peacock sang hymns incessantly, and was so filled with joy that she shouted: "Though I groan, I feel no pain at all; Christ so rejoices and fills my heart." [34] And to all these may be added Keziah

Wesley. In a letter to his brother, dated March 9, 1741, Charles Wesley writes: “Yesterday morning, sister Kezzy died in the Lord Jesus. He finished His work, and cut it short in mercy. Full of thankfulness, resignation, and love, without pain or trouble, she commended her spirit into the hands of Jesus, and fell asleep.”[35]

These were triumphs in the midst of troubles; for, besides the anxiety and pain arising out of the differences with Whitefield and the Moravians, Wesley, in 1741, had to encounter no inconsiderable amount of unprincipled persecution. At Deptford, while he was preaching, “many poor wretches were got together, utterly devoid both of common sense and common decency, who cried aloud, as if just come from ‘among the tombs.’” In London, on Shrove Tuesday, “many men of the baser sort” mixed themselves with the female part of his congregation, and behaved with great indecency. “A constable commanded them to keep the peace, in answer to which they knocked him down.” In Long Lane, while Wesley was preaching, the mob pelted him with stones, one of great size passing close past his head. In Marylebone fields, in the midst of his sermon, out of doors, missiles fell thick and fast on every side. In Charles Square, Hoxton, the rabble brought an ox which they endeavoured to drive through the congregation. A man, who happened to be a Dissenting minister, after hearing him preach at Chelsea, asked, “Quid est tibi nomen?” and, on Wesley not answering his impertinence, the pedantic puppy turned in triumph to his friends, and said, “Ah! I told you he did not understand Latin.” Among other slanders concerning him, it was currently reported that he had paid a fine of £20, for selling Geneva gin; that he kept in his house two popish priests; that he had received large remittances from Spain, in order to make a party among the poor; and that, as soon as the Spaniards landed, he was to join them with twenty thousand men. It was also rumoured, that, in Bristol, he had hanged himself, and had been cut down just in time to save his life. The Scots Magazine, for August, had a scurrilous article to the following effect.

Above thirty Methodists had been in Bedlam, and six were there at present. Wesley had set up, at his Moorfields meeting-house, a number of spinning wheels, where girls who had absconded from their homes, and servants who had been discharged for neglecting their master’s business, were set to work, and were allowed sixpence daily, the overplus of their earnings going into Wesley’s pocket. Boys and girls mixed together, and were taught to call each other brother and sister in the Lord. They had to greet each other with a holy kiss, and to show the utmost affection and fondness, in imitation of the primitive Christians. In the rooms adjoining the spinning wheels were several beds, and when persons, in the Foundery congregation, fell into fits, either pretended or real, they were-carried out and laid upon these beds, that Wesley might pray the evil spirits out of them, and the good spirit into them, and thus convert them.

In refutation of this tissue of unmingled falsehoods, a writer says, in the same magazine, that he had visited the Foundery, and found it “an old open house, like the tennis court at Edinburgh;” but there were no bedchambers, and no spinning wheels; and, consequently, no runaway girls nor discarded menials. And, so far from above thirty Methodists having been sent to Bedlam, the writer had made inquiry in London, and was unable to hear of one.[36]

‘The Gentleman’s Magazine, for the same year (page 26), has a ridiculous letter, purporting to be from a Methodist to a clergyman, in which the clergyman is charged with turning “the Scriptures upside down,” and with calling the Methodists “expounding infildelfels.” Appended to the letter are annotations, stating that, in a certain barn, twenty or thirty Methodists rendezvous to hear a young schoolmaster preach, pray, and sing Wesley’s hymns; and that, recently, a mob of juveniles had chastised his ambition by throwing snowballs at him; but the preaching pedagogue, instead of ceasing, had cheered himself by singing hymns suitable to such adventurers; and a cobbler’s wife had been so excited by his dissertations upon the pangs of the new birth, that she imagined herself pregnant with devils, had been delivered of two or three, but still felt others struggling within her.

The Weekly Miscellany tells its readers that, in the assemblies of the expounding houses, lately erected in the outskirts of London by the Methodists, any one, who conceits himself inwardly moved, immediately sets up for a Scripture ex-pounder. In a long article, it pretends to show that the Methodist preachers are like the German Anabaptists—1.

Because they act contrary to the oaths they have taken. 2. Because of their invectives against the clergy. 3. Because they are against all rule and authority. 4. Because they let laymen and also women preach. 5. Because they preach in the streets. 6. Because they denounce vengeance and damnation against sinners. 7. Because they contend for absolute perfection in this life. 8. Because they pretend to be always guided by the Holy Ghost. And, 9. Because they hold the doctrine of community of goods.

The same abusive but vigorously written paper contains an attack upon the poor Methodists, by Hooker, the editor, begun in the number for March 14, and continued weekly until June 27, when this scolding periodical came to a well deserved termination. The following are a few selections:—

March 28.—Wesley pretends to cast out spirits from those whom he declares possessed of them; but he is “a grand, empty, inconsistent heretic; the ringleader, fomenter, and first cause of all the divisions, separations, factions, and feuds that have happened in Oxford, London, Bristol, and other places where he has been.”

April 25.—Wesley rebaptizes adults, on the ground that, really they have never been baptized before, the baptism of infants by sprinkling being no true baptism in his esteem. When Whitefield returned from Georgia, he preached at the Foundery, taking for his text, “O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?” For this he was immediately excommunicated from the Foundery pulpit, lest the people should think that Wesley was a conjuror. “Everybody allows that there are above twenty, and some say forty, spinning wheels at the Foundery.” “Wesley well knows how to breakfast with one of his devotees, dine with another, and sup with a third, all of which retrenches the charges of housekeeping at home. Those who sit in his gallery must subscribe five shillings a quarter, and those who stand, a penny a week. He who advances half-acrown a quarter is admitted into the close society; and he who doubles that amount becomes a member of the bands, where men and women stay all night, but for what purpose is known only to God and to themselves.

The price for resolving cases of conscience is threepence each. Wesley makes at least £50 by every edition of the hymns he publishes; and thus, by his preaching, his bookselling, his workhouse, his wheedling, and his sponging, it is generally believed that he gets an income of £700 a year, and some say above £1000. This,” adds the mendacious editor, “is priestcraft in perfection.”

May 9.—The writer speculates concerning what is likely to be the end of the Methodist movement. 1. Some think if the Methodists are let alone, they will, as a matter of course, fall to pieces. 2. Others think that the irreconcilable differences between Wesley and Whitefield will effect their ruin; for Whitefield has set up a conventicle of boards not far from Wesley’s Foundery; and while one calls the other schismatic, the other in requital calls him a heretic. 3. Some think that their congregations, by neglecting their business and their work, will be reduced to beggary, and this, of course, will ruin all. 4. Lastly, others think their conduct will be such that the government will find it necessary to suppress them.

June 13.—Proposes the erection of a Methodist edifice on Blackheath.

The foundation stone is to be the tombstone that prevented the resurrection of Dr. Emes, the famous French prophet. The principal entrance is to be adorned with statues of the most eminent field-preachers.

The hall is to be decorated with a piece, in which the principal figure is to be Enthusiasm, sitting in an easy chair, and just delivered of two beauteous babes, the one called Superstition, and the other

Infidelity. On her right hand must be a grisly old gentleman with a cloven foot, holding the new born children in a receiver, which the Pope has blessed, and gazing upon them with most fatherly affection. The pang room of the building is to be for the accommodation of those seized with the pangs of the new birth. All who run mad about election must be lodged in the predestination room,—which, by the way, is likely to be well peopled, and therefore must be large, as well as dark and gloomy, and must be adorned with the evolutions, intricacies, and involutions of a rusty chain, held at one end by the Methodistic founder, and at the other by the devil. The disputation room is, like a cockpit, to be round as a hoop, so that the disputants may have the pleasure of disputing in a circle. The expounding room is to be adorned with a picture of the founder, with a pair of scissors in one hand and a Bible in the other; a motto over his reverend head, “Dividing the word of God;” and all round about scraps of paper supposed to be texts newly clipped from the sacred Scriptures. The refectory is to have a painting to represent Wesley, Whitefield, and C.

Graves at supper, with Madam Bourignon presiding. Near her must be an ass’s head boiled with sprouts and bacon; and, at the other end of the table, a dish of owls roasted and larded. Having already helped Whitefield to the jaw bone of the ass’s head, and Wesley to the sweet tooth, she now gives Mr. Graves a spoonful of the brains and a bit of tongue, which he receives with a grateful bow. The foundation stone is to be laid on the first of April, and the procession to the site are to sing, not the psalms of David, for they are not half good enough, but a hymn of Wesley’s own composing.

Ridicule like this was even worse than being pelted with brickbats and rotten eggs.

The two Wesleys and Whitefield were often roughly treated; and so also was John Cennick, the Methodist Moravian. At Swindon, the mob surrounded his congregation, rung a bell, blew a horn, and used a fire engine in drenching him and them with water. Guns were fired over the people’s heads, and rotten eggs were plentiful.[37] At Hampton, near Gloucester, the rabble, chiefly soldiers, to annoy him, beat a drum and let off squibs and crackers. For an hour and a half, hog’s wash and foetid water were poured upon him and his congregation, who all the while stood perfectly still, in secret prayer, with their eyes and hands lifted up to heaven.[38] At Stratton, a crowd of furious men came, armed with weapons, clubs, and staves. Cudgels were used most unmercifully. Some of his congregation had blood streaming down their faces; others, chiefly women, were dragged away by the hair of their head. Sylvester Keen spat in the face of Cennick’s sister, and beat her about the head, as if he meant to kill her. The mob bellowed and roared like maniacs; but Cennick kept on preaching and praying till he was violently pulled down; when he and his friends set out for Lineham, singing hymns, and followed by the crowd, who bawled—”You cheating dog, you pick-pocketing rogue, sell us a halfpenny ballad!”[39]

In the midst of such treatment, Methodism went on its way, and prospered. It is a remarkable fact, that, during 1741, there were no stricken cases, like those which occurred in 1739, excepting two at Bristol; but there were many signal seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord. A man, who had been an atheist for twenty years, came to the Foundry to make sport, but was so convinced of sin, that he rested not until he found peace with God. At Bristol, on one occasion, “some wept aloud, some clapped their hands, some shouted, and the rest sang praise.” In Charles Square, London, while a violent storm was raging, “their hearts danced for joy, praising ‘the glorious God that maketh the thunder.’”

Two or three other important events, occurring in the year 1741, must be noticed.

At midsummer, Wesley spent about three weeks in Oxford. Here he inquired concerning the exercises requisite in order to become a Bachelor in Divinity. The Oxford Methodists were scattered. Out of twenty-five or thirty weekly communicants, only two were left; and not one continued to attend the daily prayers of the Church. Here he met with his old friend, Mr. Gambold, who told him he need be under no concern respecting his sermon before the university, which he had come to preach, for the

authorities would be utterly regardless of what he said. Here also he had a conversation with Richard Viney, originally a London tailor, but now the Oxford Moravian minister,—a man, as James Hutton tells us, whose person, delivery, and bearing prevented his sermons being acceptable to many, and yet a man, who, in this same year, was elected president of the society in Fetter Lane. Ultimately he removed to Broad Oaks, Essex, as the superintendent of the Moravian school; then, by casting lots, was condemned as an enemy of the work of God; and then joined Wesley's society at Birstal, which he so perverted, that they "laughed at all fasting, and self denial, and family prayer," and treated even John Nelson slightly.[40]

Wesley preached his sermon at St. Mary's, on Saturday, July 25, to one of the largest congregations he had seen in Oxford. His text was: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian;" and his two divisions, (1) what is implied in being almost; and (2) what in being altogether, a Christian.

The sermon is one of the most faithful that Wesley ever preached. It was printed by W, Strahan, 12mo, pages 21, and was sold at twopence.

It is almost certain, however, that this was not the sermon that Wesley meant to preach. After his decease, a mutilated manuscript in English was found among his papers, dated "July 24, 1741" (a month before he preached at Oxford), and also a copy of the same in Latin. This was a discourse on the text, "How is the faithful city become an harlot!" There can be no question that the sermon was written with the design of being delivered before the university, and that, for some reason, the design for the present was abandoned. The sermon, if preached, must inevitably have brought upon the preacher the ire of his hearers. While admitting that the university had some who were faithful witnesses of gospel truth, Wesley alleges that, comparatively speaking, they were very few. To say nothing of deists, Arians, and Socinians, some of the chief champions of the faith were far from being faultless. Tillotson had published several sermons expressly to prove that, not faith alone, but good works, are necessary in order to justification; and the great Bishop Bull had taken the same position. Wesley then proceeds to attack the members of the university in a way, perhaps, not the most prudent. He asks if it is not a fact, that many of them "believe that a good moral man, and a good Christian, mean the same?" He continues:—

"Scarcely is the form of godliness seen among us. Take any one you meet; take a second, a third, a fourth, or the twentieth. Not one of them has even the appearance of a saint, any more than of an angel. Is there no needless visiting on the sabbath day? No trifling, no impertinence of conversation? And, on other days, are not the best of our conversing hours spent in foolish talking and jesting, nay, perhaps, in wanton talking too? Are there not many among us found to eat and drink with the drunken? Are not even the hours assigned for study too commonly employed in reading plays, novels, and idle tales? How many voluntary blockheads there are among us, whose ignorance is not owing to incapacity, but to mere laziness! How few, of the vast number, who have it in their power, are truly learned men! Who is there that can be said to understand Hebrew? Might I not say, or even Greek? O what is so scarce as learning, save religion!"[41]

The remainder of this remarkable sermon is in the same strain. Its allegations, we are afraid, were true; but the sermon was far too personal to be prudent, and Wesley exercised a wise discretion in exchanging it for the other.

During the year 1741, while in Wales, Wesley was seized with a serious illness. Hastening to Bristol, he was ordered, by Dr. Middleton, to go to bed,—"a strange thing to me," he writes, "who have not kept my bed a day for five-and-thirty years." A dangerous fever followed, and the Bristol society held a fast and offered prayer. For eight days, he hung between life and death; and, for three weeks, he was kept a prisoner, when, contrary to the advice given him, he resumed his work, and began to preach daily.

This was a long interval of enforced retirement for a man of Wesley's active temperament; but it was

not unprofitably spent. As soon as he could, he began to read, and during his convalescence devoured half-a-dozen works. He read “the life of that truly good and great man, Mr. Philip Henry;” and “the life of Mr. Matthew Henry,—a man not to be despised, either as a scholar or a Christian, though not equal to his father.” He read “Mr. Laval’s ‘History of the Reformed Churches in France;’ full of the most amazing instances of the wickedness of men, and of the goodness and power of God.” He likewise read “Turretin’s ‘History of the Church,’ a dry, heavy, barren treatise.” He gave a second perusal to “Theologia Germanica,” and asks, “O, how was it that I could ever so admire the affected obscurity of this unscriptural writer?” He also “read again, with great surprise, part of the ‘Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius,’” and says, “so weak, credulous, thoroughly injudicious a writer have I seldom found.”

Among the pamphlets published against Wesley, during 1741, was one entitled: “The Perfectionists Examined; or, Inherent Perfection in this Life, no Scripture Doctrine. By William Fleetwood, Gent.” 8vo, 99 pages.

Fleetwood asserts that, of all the open and professed enemies of the gospel, the Methodists are the worst; “they are more destructive to religion than the papists or Mahometans;” “by their artful insinuations, and outward sanctity, they have drawn numbers of silly women after them; they plainly show themselves to be some of those of whom the apostle Peter prophesied, ‘Such as bring in damnable heresies, denying the Lord that bought them’;” “and are more like French enthusiasts, or rank papists, than true Christians.” The reader must guess the rest.

Another opponent was Joseph Hart, who published a small work on “The Unreasonableness of Religion, being Remarks and Animadversions on Mr. John Wesley’s Sermon on Romans viii. 32.” Of all the enemies Wesley had, Joseph Hart was one of the most persisting, for he scarcely ever preached without endeavouring, more or less, to explode Wesley’s doctrines, as tending to lead the people into dangerous delusions.[42] Another pamphlet, octavo, 75 pages, published during the year 1741, was entitled: “The Doctrine of Justification by Faith, stated according to the Articles of the Church of England. By Arthur Bedford, M.A., Chaplain to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.” This was written at the request of “a member of the religious societies in London,” who told the author, that, “there had been great disputes among them lately concerning this doctrine; some having advanced faith so high, as to make no necessity of a good life; and others having advanced works so high, as to make faith to consist only in a general belief, that the New Testament is the word of God.” The pamphlet is an able production, and is temperately written. To most of its sentiments, Wesley himself would have raised no objection.

It only remains to notice Wesley’s own publications during 1741.[43] Probably the first was his sermon, entitled, “Christian Perfection.” He writes: “I think it was in the latter end of the year 1740, that I had a conversation with Dr. Gibson, then bishop of London, at Whitehall. He asked me what I meant by perfection. I told him without any disguise or reserve. When I ceased speaking, he said, ‘Mr. Wesley, if this be all you mean, publish it to all the world.’ I answered, ‘My lord, I will’; and accordingly wrote and published the sermon on Christian perfection.”[44] The two divisions of this important sermon are: (1) in what sense Christians are not, and (2) in what sense they are, perfect. Wesley shows that no one is so perfect in this life, as to be free from ignorance, from mistakes, from infirmities, and from temptations. On the other hand, he proves that the perfect Christian is freed from outward sin; from evil thoughts; and from evil tempers. The sermon is elaborate, and has affixed to it Charles Wesley’s hymn on “The Promise of Sanctification,” consisting of twenty-eight stanzas, and beginning with the line,—“God of all power, and truth, and grace.”

Another of Wesley’s publications was, “A Collection of Psalms and Hymns.” Hitherto, all the hymn-books, except the first, had borne, on the title-page, the names of both the brothers; but this has the name of Wesley only.

A third was, "A Dialogue between a Predestinarian and his Friend." 12mo, eight pages. The object of this short tract is to show, from the writings of Piscator, Calvin, Zanchius, and others, that predestinarianism teaches, that God causes reprobates to sin, and creates them on purpose to be damned.[45]

Besides the above, Wesley published four abridgments from other works. 1. "The Scripture Doctrine concerning Predestination, Election, and Reprobation." 12mo, 16 pages.

2. "Serious Considerations on Absolute Predestination." 12mo, 24 pages. The tract proves, that the doctrine of absolute predestination is objectionable: (1) because it makes God the author of sin; (2) because, it makes Him delight in the death of sinners; (3) because, it is highly injurious to Christ our Mediator; (4) because, it makes the preaching of the gospel a mere mock and illusion; etc.

3. "An Extract of the Life of Monsieur De Renty, a late Nobleman of France. 12Mo, pages 67, De Renty usually rose at five o'clock; communicated every day; and spent his time in devotion and doing good.

For several years he ate but one meal a day, and even that was scanty and always of the poorest food. He often passed the night in a chair, instead of in bed, or would lie down upon a bench in his clothes and boots. He parted with several books, because richly bound; and carried no silver about him, but for works of charity. When his mother took from him a large portion of his property, he caused the Te Deum to be sung, beginning it himself. He was wont to say, "I carry about with me ordinarily a plenitude of the presence of the Holy Trinity." In visiting the sick, he would kindle their fires, make their beds, and set in order their little household stuff. His zeal for the salvation of men was boundless. "I am ready," said he, "to serve all men, not excepting one, and to lay down my life for any one." He established numbers of societies at Caen and other places, for the purpose of Christians assisting one another in working out both their own and their neighbours' salvation. He died at Paris, in the thirty-seventh year of his age, on April 24, 1649. De Renty was, in Wesley's estimation, a model saint.

4. The fourth and last abridgment published, in 1741, was entitled, "Reflections upon the Conduct of Human Life, with reference to Learning and Knowledge." 12mo, pages 36. This was extracted from a work written by Dr. John Norris, an old friend of Wesley's father, and one of the principal contributors to the Athenian Gazette.[46] The tract, throughout, is in a high degree rich and racy, and well worth reading. It unquestionably contains the great principles which guided Wesley in all his reading, writing, publishing of books, and educational efforts in general. He considered all kinds of knowledge useful; but, some being much more so than others, he devoted to them time and attention accordingly; and made the whole subordinate to the great purpose of human existence,—the glory of God, and the happiness of man. We finish the present chapter with a few sentences culled from the conclusion of this threepenny production:—

"I cannot, with any patience, reflect, that, out of so short a time as human life, consisting, it may be, of fifty or sixty years, nineteen or twenty shall be spent in hammering out a little Latin and Greek, and in learning a company of poetical fictions and fantastic stories.

If one were to judge of the life of man by the proportion of it spent at school, one would think the antediluvian mark were not yet out.

Besides, the things taught in seminaries are often frivolous. How many excellent and useful things might be learnt, while boys are thumbing and murdering Hesiod and Homer? Of what signification is such stuff as this, to the accomplishment of a reasonable soul? What improvement can it be to my understanding, to know the amours of Pyramus and Thisbe, or of Hero and Leander? Let any man but consider human nature, and tell me whether he thinks a boy is fit to be trusted with Ovid? And yet, to books such as these our youth is dedicated, and in these some of us employ our riper years; and, when

we die, this makes one part of our funeral eulogy; though, according to the principles before laid down, we should have been as pertinently and more innocently employed all the while, if we had been picking straws in Bedlam. The measure of prosecuting learning is its usefulness to good life; and, consequently, all prosecution of it beyond or beside this end, is impertinent and immoderate. For my own part, I am so thoroughly convinced of the certainty of the principles here propounded, that I look upon myself as under almost a necessity of conducting my studies by them, and intend to study nothing at all but what serves to the advancement of piety and good life. I have spent about thirteen years in the most celebrated university in the world, in pursuing both such learning as the academical standard requires, and as my private genius inclined me to; but I intend to spend my uncertain remainder of time in studying only what makes for the moral improvement of my mind, and the regulation of my life.

More particularly, I shall apply myself to read such books as are rather persuasive than instructive; such as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the Divine sense in the soul; being convinced, by every day's experience, that I have more need of heat than light; though were I for more light, still I think the love of God is the best light of the soul of man."

This is a long extract; but it is of some consequence, as furnishing a key to the whole of Wesley's literary pursuits—from this, the commencement of his Methodist career, to the end of his protracted life.

His aim was not to shine in scholarship, but to live a life of goodness.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Gentleman's Magazine, 1741, p. 608.
- [2] Philip's Life of Whitefield, p. 275.
- [3] Wesley's Works, vol. Xii., p. 102.
- [4] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. i., p. 481.
- [5] Ibid. p. 489.
- [6] Wesley's Works, vol. ii., p. 27.
- [7] Life of Dr. Bunting, vol. i., p. 395.
- [8] Doddridge's Correspondence, vol. iv., p. 56.
- [9] Methodist Magazine, 1798, p. 490.
- [10] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 257.
- [11] Benson's "Apology," p. 137.
- [12] Weekly Miscellany, March 14, 1741.
- [13] Cennick says: "When we were separated, we were in number twelve men and twelve women." ("Life of Cennick," p. 27.)
- [14] Wesley's Works, vol. iv., p. 473.
- [15] Weekly History, No. 11.
- [16] Weekly History, No. 4.
- [17] C. Wesley's Journal, vol. i., p. 267.
- [18] Wesley's Works, vol. Xii., p. 102.
- [19] Ibid. p. 147.
- [20] Whitefield's Works, vol. I, p. 257.
- [21] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 261.
- [22] Ibid. p. 271.
- [23] Ibid. p. 331.
- [24] Wesley's Works, vol. i., p. 401.
- [25] Whitefield's Works, vol. i., p. 331.
- [26] "Anecdotes of Wesley, by Rev. J. Reynolds." Leeds: 1828.
- [27] Ibid. p. 13.
- [28] Taylor's "Wesley and Methodism," p. 44.
- [29] Thirty more were expelled at a later period of the year.
- [30] Wesley's Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv., p. 178.
- [31] Wesley's Works, vol. Xii., p. 53.
- [32] Ibid. vol. Xiii., pp. 242, 293.
- [33] Wesley's Works, vol. Viii., p. 247.

- [34] C. Wesley's Journal.
- [35] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. i., p. 85.
- [36] Scots Magazine, 1741, p. 380.
- [37] Weekly History, No. 14.
- [38] Weekly History, No. 15.
- [39] Ibid. No. 24.
- [40] Hutton's Memoirs.
- [41] Wesley's Works, vol. Vii., p. 431.
- [42] "Friendly Remarks," published in 1772.
- [43] His sermon before the university has been mentioned already.
- [44] Wesley's Works, vol. xi., p. 359.
- [45] It was hardly honest of Wesley to publish this without a word of acknowledgment as to its author and origin. We have compared it with "A Dialogue between the Baptist and Presbyterian; wherein the Presbyterians are punished, by their own pens, for their cruel and selfdevouring doctrines, making God the ordainer of all the sins of men and devils, and reprobating the greatest part of mankind without any help of salvation. By Thomas Grantham, Messenger of the Baptized Churches in Lincolnshire. London: 1691." 4to, pages 18; and have no hesitancy in saying, that Wesley's Dialogue, abridged and altered, is taken from that of Grantham.
- [46] See "Life and Times of Rev. S. Wesley," p. 136.

Note this was merely an excerpt from Part I which has 638 pages. Part II has 1004 pages Part III has 1154 pages.
