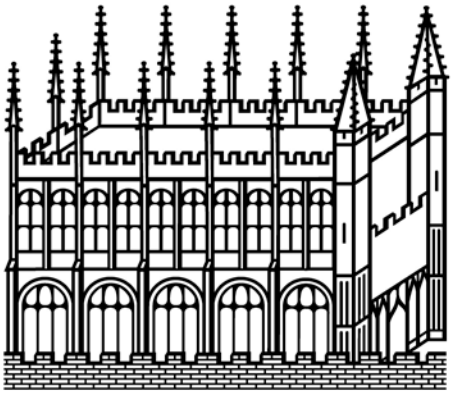

WESLEY
THE WORTHY
AND
WESLEY THE CATHOLIC

O.T. DOBBIN. L.L.D.

Wesley the Worthy,

AND

Wesley the Catholic.

Wesley the Worthy,

AND

Wesley the Catholic.

LONDON:
REED AND PARDON, PRINTERS,
PATERNOSTER ROW.

Wesley the Worthy,

AND

Wesley the Catholic.

BY

REV. O. T. DOBBIN, LL.D.,

TRINITY COLLEGE, DUBLIN.

WITH INTRODUCTION

BY

REV. W. ARTHUR, M.A.

LONDON:

WARD AND CO., PATERNOSTER ROW.

1852.


BIBLIOTHECA BODLEIANA

THE EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE two papers reprinted in this volume appeared originally in periodical publications; the former, in our "Journal of Sacred Literature," an excellent Quarterly, conducted by Dr. Kitto, for January, 1849; the latter, in "The Methodist Quarterly Review," for April, 1850, published in New York, United States. There is a happy concurrence of view between both the writers, on the unsectarian character of the original religious movement of the Founder of Methodism, and the catholicity of the master spirit which directed that movement throughout. This appears to have formed the chief attraction for the pencil of both; and the portrait drawn is to be regarded as, in a great degree, an offering laid upon the altar of the Evangelical Alliance. Whatever may be the defects of the delineation in either case, none can fairly charge the authors with wanting a genial appreciation for the subject on which they have sought to exercise their skill.

The author of the second article, "Wesley the Catholic," is the Rev. Charles Adams, M.A., of Cambridgeport, Massachusetts, North America. This gentleman was born in 1808, at Stratham, New Hampshire, and educated at Bowdoin College, Maine, where he passed B.A. in 1833, and M.A. in 1836. For the last fourteen years he has been a minister of that very numerous and influential religious body, the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Adams has published the following works:—A Treatise on Christian Union; The Ministry for the Times; The New Testament Church Member; The Women of the Bible; and Evangelism in the Middle of the Nineteenth Century. Everything he has written, it need scarcely be added, breathes the purest catholic spirit. For these particulars, the Editor is indebted to the courtesy of the learned Editor of "The Methodist Quarterly Review," the Rev. J. McClintock, D.D. How refreshing is it to know, that on the parched ground of controversy all over the world, the dews of Divine charity are falling, to revive the fading graces of Christianity; and that, where the mission of so many appears to be to wound and divide, that of some, at least, is to unite and heal!

For the brief Introduction, the Editor is indebted to the kind acquiescence of the Rev. W. Arthur, M.A., whose courtesy of compliance is only equalled by the ability which guides his pen. This gentleman has recently laid the world under the deepest obligation by his Memoir of the successful merchant and

true philanthropist, Samuel Budgett, Esq.; but quite as much for the enlightened commercial morality he expounds and enforces, as for the facts of that gentleman's history which he records. The comment is in every way worthy of the text; and the text is, throughout, a nineteenth-century embodiment of the hundred and eleventh and hundred and twelfth Psalms.

O. T. DOBBIN.

Hull College.

INTRODUCTION

BY

REV. W. ARTHUR, M.A.

He whom Providence makes a wonder must become a study. John Wesley is, therefore, increasingly an object of attention; and thoughtful men desire to know the springs of his power. Great works ever reflect back upon their authors the interest they have themselves excited; and thus, as men encounter the results of Wesley's labours in every nook of England, on every shore of our Colonies, and in every state of America, they naturally turn back to the man, and inquire into his mental and moral characteristics. That those who are called his own followers should study him, is only natural; but, as time widens the range over which his memory spreads, and dissipates many misconceptions through which it was formerly seen, it is equally natural, that from the Catholic Church, and from the philosophic

world, eyes should search for the true character of this universal agent, in the new forms and combinations which Christianity has exhibited in our day.

Wesley, like other great objects, is looked upon from every possible point of view;—from that of the close admirer, before whose vision, like an eminence near at hand, he reaches to the heavens, surpassing all other greatness,—to that of the distant observer, who sees his form dimly rising among the crowd of lofty names. Dr. Dobbin views him, neither from the closest, nor yet from the most distant point. He is not a follower, and yet he is not a stranger. He does not look up to him as a father in Christ; yet he does look to him with the love of very near kindred, and the veneration of very great indebtedness. But the sense of kindred has in it no spirit of clanship; the sense of debt, no personal tone: the kindred is catholic as the brotherhood of Christian love; the debt common as that we owe to all God's instruments for universal good. Dr. Dobbin, though never identified with Wesley's theology or church order, follows Wesley the Churchman, Wesley the Arminian, Wesley the Revivalist, Wesley the Founder of English Methodism, and of American Methodist Episcopacy, till all these distinctions merge in Wesley the Worthy—every man's benefactor, and Wesley the Catholic—every Christian's brother. His is not a mere intellectual analysis, like a phrenologist's — estimating brain through a hard bony medium; it is rather the searching of a soul after a

soul, trying through the flexible countenance and open eye to discover the heart which lies below. "Wesley had a heart to be studied, as well as a head," he cries; and after that heart he goes. Nor will any one follow his search without feeling, every now and then, that his own breast is heaved by sympathy with the beating of one of the most marvellous hearts which ever the hand of the Creator fashioned, or the Spirit of the Redeemer warmed. Dr. Dobbin is not a disciple; but he does not, and, in fact, he could not, hide that he is a friend and lover. He lays bare to the cold eye of the critic a heart burning with noble emotions, which the study of Wesley has kindled; and, pointing to his man, only asks the same close study before you say whether his love is excessive or just.

It is not necessary to enter into an estimate of Dr. Dobbin's delineation: he may admire too much or too little; he may hurt one preconception, and indulge another; he may not meet the exact views of Methodist, Churchman, or Dissenter; but he tells them all, in warm language, what an honest man has seen in John Wesley's genius, principles, and mission; and none of them will listen to him without being the better. It is a fervent study of a great head, a great heart, and a great life, calculated to bless the least of us with some great impulses.

Methodists are well accustomed to be misunderstood. Their theology, their polity, even their religious meetings, are often described by serious men

with ludicrous incorrectness. A recent description of a class-meeting, for instance, is as like the reality as if Methodism were all in Japan, and its observer in Essex. Nor is any point more misconceived than the position Methodism holds to other Churches. It is a position which naturally pleases none, but it is capable of being understood by all; yet none will understand it.

The author of the leading paper in this volume, and his *collaborateur*, the Rev. Charles Adams, find its true reason in the remarkable catholicity of Wesley; and once in sight of its source, they understand the rest, and give a just view of it. Nor is there one portion of this book more calculated to profit all parties than that in which is brought out the unsectarian spirit which Wesley ever breathed, and which enforces upon all—especially on those who bear Wesley's name—the duty of cherishing a like temper. The Editor has in this Work made a valuable contribution towards the spread of a catholic spirit; and that is manifestly his aim. He does not want to spread Methodism, Dissent, or Episcopacy, but to breathe into all systems more of that charity which life ever engenders, and from which fellowship springs. Nor will he have laboured in vain. The Master whom he serves will not withhold a blessing from his work, but will make it the medium of conveying life to many who are languishing, and love to many who are narrow.

WESLEY THE WORTHY.

THE length of time which has elapsed since the death of the founder of Methodism, together with the unusually full details of his personal history we possess, and a century's experience of the working of his system, puts us in a fairer position than those who lived at an earlier period to pass an equitable judgment upon the merits of that extraordinary man. This opening remark is a key-note to the strain of the observations that will follow upon John Wesley. We are not blind to his faults, but even these will be found to have sprung from the sincerity, openness, and native simplicity of his character. Southey evidently did not understand him, although not wanting in a due share of admiration for the subject of his memoir; while in all those qualities which make the expert craftsman he claims an eminence exclusively his own. Neither Hampson nor Whitehead, nor Coke and More, nor Watson himself, the rival and castigator of the more recent biographer, have produced anything comparable for enchaining interest to the work of the late accomplished Laureate. It stands alone, a Life by which Wesley will be known to

a wider extent and a more distant day than by any besides. Sectarian sensitiveness may be ruffled at the defectiveness of the representation; yet we know not where, out of the circle of the Wesleyan body, the choice of a biographer could have more happily fallen than on Robert Southey. His Wesley has all the essentials of a good Life. It is full and genial; brings out the best points with consummate skill, and cannot fail to leave the impression upon the mind of every unbiassed reader, that a general appreciation of the great English Reformer animated his task, and shed a tolerably friendly hue over his delineation.

We regret that we cannot extend our encomium to the notes of Coleridge, more damaging certainly to their author from their coarsely and studiously depreciating strain than to Wesley. Familiar as we are with the incidents of a career that was notorious for unmanfully shirking all life's "purposes sublime," and for wasting in inglorious inaction the extraordinary powers with which he was endowed, we confess that nevertheless we never contemplated anything he has done or left undone with such pain as these discreditable annotations. Coleridge is the last man from whom the public will tolerate the censure of a life spent in self-denying labour and devotion to the cause of the poor, to which England, humanity, and religion, are so greatly indebted.

We own that we are desirous to give Wesley the benefit of a fresh review of his career. We think there is one way of doing him justice, in which we have not been preceded by any critic. We would fain examine the philosophy of his history on his own principles, sum up the results, and thus take the

measure of the man. There are salient points, as we conceive, in his belief, motives, publications, and actions, looming out from the general tenor of his course, on which it were well to take our stand for a while, as affording an advantageous survey of the whole. Could we hope to carry our readers with us in our selection of these, we might promise ourselves something like a general agreement in our conclusions. We should be sanguine, however, beyond all warrant of history and precedent, did we anticipate an issue in our own case undisturbed by the passions of the present or reflections of the past. The premises will be denied, the processes vitiated by rampant prejudice on the part of others, even where the light of calm contemplation is not disturbed or dimmed by the presence of our own. We will to our task notwithstanding, pleasant but difficult, applying to it in all its breadth the poet's creed,—

> "Full hard it is to read aright
> The course of heavenly cause, or understand
> The secret meaning of the Eternall might
> That rules men's waies, and rules the thoughts of living wight." *Faërie Queene*, ix. 6.

The POSITIVE merits of John Wesley were of a distinguished order, and will come in for discussion when we sum up his character; meanwhile we shall take occasion to dwell upon his COMPARATIVE greatness.

The incidents of history and the objects of nature derive much of their impressiveness from the circumstances surrounding both. Contrast is essential to grand effects. The massacre at Bethlehem gathers blackness from the infant age of the victims; and the

frantic leap of Niagara contrasts finely with the oily smoothness of the river above the Fall. The voyager near "earth's central line"—the region of perpetual sun and frequent calm; where the surface of the sea is unbroken with a billow, yet the bulk of the ocean moves together like some monster labouring under an oppressive load

> "In torrid clime
> Dark heaving, boundless, endless, and sublime"—

marks the huge sweltering gambols of the whale, and hears the loud hiss and rush of the jet he projects into the air, best in the cool grey and death-like stillness of the early dawn. The level and the quiet of all around convey the most vivid and instantaneous impressions to the watcher's eye and ear; and "There is that leviathan!" (Ps. civ. 26) bursts from the lips with an assurance and a rapture which its unwieldy *pas seuls* would not awaken amid the stirring activities of day and the distraction of stormier scenes and wilder moods.

And having traversed under a burning summer sun the length of some Swiss valley, and encountered in your fatiguing march, knapsack on shoulder and staff in hand, the varieties of mid-winter temperature by the mer de glace, and the heat of the dog-days in deep, serene, and sheltered nooks, where air to breathe seems almost as great a rarity as wind to blow, where the fumes of the rank vegetation and the wild flowers are stifling and unhealthy,—what think you is the fittest time and place to hear the thunder of the avalanche, and trace and tremble at its fall? It is just at that cool hour when, refreshed at your hostelry, your

sense of weariness is removed, but sufficient languor remains to tame down your mind into harmony with the scene, and you wander out some half-mile from your temporary home, like the orphan patriarch of old, to meditate at eventide. The sun has just set over the Jungfrau or Schreckhorn, and, liberal of its cosmetics, has laid its red upon the dead cheek of the everlasting snow. There is not a breeze stirring. The brief twilight is just about to close in night. The wing of the last loitering bee has been folded in its hive. The beetle has droned his sonorous vesper hymn. All is silence, uninterrupted by a sound, except perchance at distant intervals the faint bleat of the goat on the rock high overhead, or the whistle of some shepherd-pipe in the hand of the rustic returning from his labour:—

> "For here the patriarchal days
> Are not a pastoral fable; pipes in the liberal air
> Mix with the sweet bells of the sauntering herd."

Then on the startled ear that has been learning wisdom at the feet of silence bursts a crack, like the sharp instantaneous report of a rifle, followed and drowned on the moment by a confused rustle, hoarse rumble, and afterwards a heavy thunderous sound of fall and concussion comparable to nothing so much as the cadence of ten thousand woolpacks dropped together upon a boarden floor. The danger is not near, but the vibrations of the air and the almost breathless hush of the evening make it seem so. A mountain of snow and commingled ice has fallen up some gorge that debouches on our valley, and a spray of snowy particles, which rises cloudwise into the darkening sky, shows the scene and the nature of

the ruinous visitation. The tranquillity of the hour makes the crash more loud, the devastation more appalling. Amid lightning, tempest, and thunder, the chief effect had been lost—the avalanche had been unnoticed—the crown of majesty had fallen unheeded from the monarch mountain's head.

A phenomenon with like effect appealing to a different sense will show itself in other scenes. As the traveller approaches Rome from the south, leaving Naples with its charms and its cheats, its lazzaroni and its liveliness, its exquisite sky and sea, with its execrable superstition, dirt, and frivolity behind; but notwithstanding all its drawbacks, where

> "Simply to feel that we breathe, that we live,
> Is worth all the joys that life elsewhere can give,"

and passing the sounding sea, and the dismal marish, lofty Terracina, and lowly Fondi, at length tops the range that incloses the Campagna southward, what object is it chiefly arrests the eye? In that great ocean of a plain, a hundred miles by fifty, the seeming crater of some gigantic volcano with its sulphur streams and its noisome stenches, like a barque upon the waters floats imperial Rome, the object most conspicuous in the eternal city the wondrous cupola, which speaks her the queen of architectural grandeur, resting like a diadem upon her brow, and bearing no remote resemblance to the tiara of her pontiff ruler; —nothing besides can arrest the gaze. The eye takes in in its sweep the mountain line of the northern and eastern horizon, Soracte empurpled by distance with its sister ridges on the right, the silver sea with Ostia on the left. It marks the ruins that here and

there stud the plain, the tombs, the towns, the towers, the arches, and the aqueducts, the long reaches of which last stretch in picturesque continuity here and there, like a caravan of mules winding over the sierras of Granada. We stand on the brow of Albano, sheltering ourselves from the mid-day sun under the shade of some broad plane-tree, luxuriant elm, or embowering vine, and see—we cannot but see—the tomb of Pompey, the ruins of Bovillæ, Frattochie, Torre di Mezza Via, perhaps even Metella's tomb, and catch glimpses now and then of the unequalled Via Appia, its geometrical rectitude in striking contrast with the serpentining Tiber; but above all, and beyond all, we look upon that group in the centre of the picture, that lone mother of dead empires, "the Niobe of nations"—Rome. All objects besides are unattractive; the mountains too distant, the ruins too bare, the wild flowers of this huge prairie too minute and commonplace for special attention; all things near the soil, too, quiver in the dazzling light and burning heat of noon; but high above the undulating vapour, and towering in its golden sheen up into an angelic sky, rises the colossal creation of Buonarotti's genius. We glance at other objects; we gaze at this. It breaks the line of our northern horizon with a pomp and pretension that nothing besides can dare. It looms out of the bosom of the "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" foreground, a pleasant and most exciting landmark, an ecclesiastical Eddystone, in the unbillowy sea of the Campagna. This greatest of man's works, which would be insignificant beside the works of God—the Alps or the nearer Apennines, is here great, comparatively so, just as a man of five feet

stature would be a giant among Lilliputians of one. We speak not of its moral interest, which is superlative and enchaining, but of its material inches, whereby it overtops almost every object within a circuit of twenty miles. Look from any extremity of the Campagna to the centre, and St. Peter's, like a stone Saul, overmeasures all competing altitudes by the head and lofty shoulders.

And this brings us, by a roundabout way possibly, to the point at which we aim—a comparative estimate of the greatness of John Wesley by the littleness of the times in which he lived. Our purpose has been too obvious, we trust, to need the application of our figures. We mean simply to imply that Wesley was that waterspout and snowy spray-jet, roaring in the stillness of morning, and arched over the calm surface of the sea on the grey canvas of the horizon;—Wesley that ice-crash rasping down the mountain-side, startling the ear of silence in Helvetian solitudes, upsetting the equilibrium of all things, shaking the earth and air and the listener's frame, like the spasm of an earthquake;—Wesley, in fine, that dome, "the vast and wondrous dome," lofty in proportions, perfect in symmetry, suspended in mid-air, by the happy conception of him whose great thought, like all great thoughts, was manifestly inspired, "a heavenly guest, a ray of immortality," and which aërial pile, wander where we will within its range, is the attracting centre of vision, the cynosure of all eyes.

In the particular field Wesley took upon him to cultivate, he stood alone, or almost alone, and his position adds magnitude to all his dimensions. He fills the picture. It were scarce exaggeration to

travestie the Grand Lewis's terse egotism, "The State! that is I," and put it into our reformer's mouth at the commencement of his career—"Religion! that is I." The religious sensibility of England lay dead or chained in "the breathless, hushed, and stony sleep" of the Princess Dormita and her retinue in the fairy tale. He alone seemed awake to the exigencies of the times, the responsibilities of the ministry, the corruption of manners, and the value of souls. This statement will of course be understood with all the qualification truth demands on behalf of some exemplary parish clergymen who sparsely enlightened the darkness around them, but who never passed into the broad sunshine of general reputation or extensive influence. There were those, we gladly own, who bowed not the knee to the prevailing dissoluteness or indifference; but, like angels' visits, these were few and far between. And it is not to be denied that in many non-conformist places of worship, under the combined influence of the persecutions of earlier years, general contempt, and their close-borough constitution and government which took them out of the healthful and conservative current of public opinion, vital religion was becoming a name, and the doctrine of the Cross passing into "another Gospel" in which the Cross had no place. Arianism, with stealthy steps, was creeping in upon the fold of Presbyterianism "for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy;" while Independency either withered into a cold protest against the established episcopacy, shot into seed in the unhealthy luxuriance of hyper-Calvinism, or was too insignificant to be of any account whatever in an ecclesiastical notice of the period.

The general condition of the Church of England was deplorable. There was no lack of learning and respectability in many quarters, but as a whole its state could not satisfy a conscientious observer. The study of the Greek language, and the introduction of the theology of the Greek school since the Reformation, together with various political causes, had combined to produce a latitudinarian and moderated style of preaching and acting amongst the clergy at large. The best men were most entirely under the influences we have named. Their learning, their enlightened hatred of the fanaticism under the Commonwealth, and an honourable sense of the advantages of their position, made them carefully shun the excesses of non-conforming zeal, and generously avoid giving offence to conscientious dissenters. The names of Tillotson and Tennison, Doctors Samuel Clark and Jortin, will tolerably fairly represent the reigning spirit of the better part of the clerical body about the commencement of the eighteenth century, while others were contented to be as devoid of evangelical unction as they, without their accomplishments and decent behaviour. But in the ministry of souls moderation is madness, and want of zeal death. Men betake themselves to a formal minister as they do to the gravedigger, an inevitable but unpleasant functionary, whose services they never relish, and whose inane moralities cannot edify. Such unfortunately was the ecclesiastical condition of England when the Wesleys arose, and it is no breach of charity to aver, that, weighed in the balances of heaven, the existing ministry throughout the country was found at that period, as to its most exalted aims and divine results,

utterly wanting. We are not blind to the subordinate advantages a widely-established corporation of more or less educated men must entail upon a land,—men by their profession the friends of order, decency, and humanity; but at the same time we cannot forget that the church is neither a police-court, a philosophical school, nor an almonry. Men may be mild magistrates, wise teachers, exemplary country gentlemen, without fear and without reproach on the score of morals and manners, and yet be destitute of the spirit of their office and ignorant of its claims. We draw the veil over anything worse which presents itself for comment in the clerical profession at that period. There was enough in the aspect of the times, even upon the most indulgent showing, to make the mission of some such agent as John Wesley a necessity as imperative as the mission of one of the judges in the straits and abjectness of Israel, or the requisitions of the economic law that the demand regulates the supply.

There is a story told of one of the curates of Wesley, the father, too illustrative of this statement, and too provocative of moderate mirth, to be omitted.

Just after one of the rector of Epworth's visits to London, he was waited on by one of his parishioners, who complained of the teaching of his curate in his absence—how meagre it was—how destitute of the doctrines of the gospel—how he seemed to preach nothing to his congregation except the duty of paying their debts, and behaving well among their neighbours; adding, as he charged him with this fault, "Surely, sir, there is more in the gospel than this." The rector replied, "There certainly is; I will hear

him myself." He accordingly sent for the curate, and when that miserably incompetent functionary made his appearance, he told him that he wished him to preach next Sunday, and said, "You can have no objection, I suppose, to prepare a sermon on any text I give you." The curate consented, of course, and the text assigned him was that important and evangelical one, containing, as it were, the very marrow of the gospel—"WITHOUT FAITH IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO PLEASE GOD," Heb. xi. 6. When the Lord's-day came round, Mr. Wesley read the prayers, and the curate preached the sermon. The text was given out with due solemnity, and the exordium pursued the following course:—"It must be confessed, friends, that FAITH is a most excellent virtue; and it produces other virtues also. In particular, it makes a man pay his debts as soon as he can," &c. Thus launched upon his familiar element, this ill-taught divine prosed away his quarter of an hour, enforcing his old and only theme. No wonder that enlightened piety was revolted, and religion starved, by such poverty-stricken fare as this; yet there is reason to believe this to be a sample, rather than an exceptional case, of the teaching in the Established Church at this period. Samuel Wesley and his wife knew better; but they were bred Nonconformists.

In such circumstances was Providence nurturing a man for the hour, while the hour was as divinely and obviously prepared for the man. And neither from kingly courts nor cloistered cells was the hero of "this strange eventful history" to come—the man that was to work wider change upon the religious and social aspect of England than has ever been effected by any

Reformer since Christianity visited our shores. In truth, his sympathies were neither with the monk nor the monarch, but, a child of the people, as all great Reformers have been, his sympathies were with the masses—the men from whom he sprung. He was reared amid obscurity, poverty, and rebuke—rebuke that implied no disgrace, poverty which piety hallowed, obscurity that bred no discontent—and he never forgot the discipline of his childhood, nor the tradition of his poor but godly parentage, and his heart ever found its most genial soil amid the humble, holy, and enduring people of God. Of ambition, with which he has been most recklessly charged, he seems to have been absolutely incapable, except the ambition of doing good. He had rather suffer any day than shine; in fact, to suffer, if by that be meant to labour to fatigue, and self-denial to austerity, became a necessity of his nature, while to shine was as deliberately rejected as this was pursued. And it was this thorough oneness of mind, propension, and condition with the people which prompted and controlled his career. He looked at the Man through the frieze jacket of careful thrift and "the looped and windowed raggedness" of abject penury; yea, he looked at him in the haunts of vice and the prison-house of the criminal, and saw written upon him, even there, in indubitable presence, the image, though sorely mutilated, of God, just as beneath the jewelled cap of maintenance and the purple of nobility, he saw no more. Not knowing, therefore, or not heeding the distinctions that obtain among men, the object of his ministry was—man. He was swayed by no class predilections, or unsocial partialities, save that his high sense of duty and the

special demands of his mission made him prevailingly the friend of the friendless and the comforter of the lowly. In this aspect of his work, his imitation of Christ was pre-eminent, in that his labour of love was specially consecrated "to seek and to save that which was lost."

But we anticipate, and must glance at the boy Wesley, and the circumstances which proved the Campus Martius, to train him for his lifelong conflict "with the rulers of the darkness of this world, with spiritual wickedness in high places."

Close bordering on the winding Trent, in one of the richest portions of Lincolnshire, is the parish and manor of Epworth, the church standing upon an elevation reached by a gentle ascent about four miles from the river, but shaded from view by a shoulder of the hill. Right well do we remember our pilgrimage to that memorable spot four short years ago; our readers may divine the day by consulting their almanacks for the birthday of our gracious Queen, in the year of our Lord 1848. This occasion, as we are loyalists to the very core of our nature, we never fail to observe as a holiday, we and all our house. The heavens smiled propitiously on our purpose, for never did a brighter spring sun pour gladness into the heart than that which shone upon us as we crept blithely along the road that gradually swept up from the ferry. Our sensations we will not attempt to describe, as we paced the pathway of the quiet old country town, where the first relic we picked up was the characteristic one of a torn page of the New Testament. Enthusiasm upon paper is vapid as the lees of wine; it wants the first element of enthusiasm

—life. The imagination of our readers must therefore supply the want of graphic power in our pen. Suffice it to say, that it was with more than common emotion we looked upon the font where the man, whose genius made the celebrity of the place, had been baptized; upon the communion table where Wesley had often officiated, yet whence he had been rudely repulsed by an intemperate and ungrateful priest, who had owed his all to the Wesleys; on the tombstone of his father, which on that occasion and subsequently served the itinerant John for a pulpit, from which he addressed weeping multitudes in the churchyard; on the withered sycamore, beneath whose shade he must have played; and, finally, through the courtesy of the rector, the Hon. and Rev. Charles Dundas, on the parsonage, now scarcely recognizable for the same from the improvement it has received at the hand of wealth, guided by the eye of taste, though old Jeffrey's room still retains much of its ghostliness. The day that revealed to us all these and sundry memorabilities, is one to be noted with chalk in our calendar.

The lower ground of the isle of Axholme, in the midst of which Epworth stands, had from time immemorial, been subject to almost constant submersion from the river, and was little better than a Mere, the title Leland gives it in his "Itinerary." Its value, however, was so obvious to the eyes of both natives and foreigners, that a charter to drain this whole country side was given to Cornelius Vermuyden in the time of the Stuarts; and the thing was done, to the rescue of a considerable part of the king's chase from the dominion of the lawless waters, and to the

increase of the arable and pasture land of the neighbourhood to the extent of many thousand acres of "a fine rich brown loam, than which there is none more fertile in England." To this parish the father of our hero was presented in the year 1693, as a reward for his merits in defending from the press the Revolution of 1688. The living was of inconsiderable amount, under £200 per annum, but by no means contemptible to a waiter upon Providence, whose clerical income had never before averaged £50 per year, and was the more agreeable as it promised to lead to something better, since the ground of his present advancement was the recognition in high places of the opportune loyalty of the literary parson. Here, with a regularly increasing family, without any corresponding increase of stipend, the exemplary rector laboured for ten years ere the birth of his son John, "contending with low wants and lofty will," with the dislike and opposition of his unruly parishioners, with his own chafed tempers and disappointed expectations, with serious inroads upon his income by fire and flood, and with the drag-chain of a poverty that pressed upon the means of subsistence, and which his literary labours availed little to lighten. Few things are more impressive than the peep he gives us into his domestic history in his half jocular half serious defence from the ungenerous charges of his elder brother Matthew, that he had not turned his resources to such good account for his family as he might have done. He calls his letter "John O'Style's apology against the imputation of his ill husbandry."

After some preliminary matter, he thus proceeds:—

"When he first walked to Oxford, he had in cash £2 5*s*.

"He lived there till he took his bachelor's degree, without any preferment or assistance except one crown.

"By God's blessing on his own industry, he brought to London £10 15*s*.

"When he came to London he got deacon's orders and a cure, for which he had £28 in one year; in which year for his board, ordination and habit, he was indebted £30, which he afterwards paid.

"Then he went to sea, where he had for one year £70, not paid till two years after his return.

"He then got a curacy of £30 per annum, for two years, and by his own industry he made it £60 per annum.

"He married, and had a son, and he and his wife and child boarded for some years in or near London, without running into debt.

"He then had a living given him in the country, let for £50 per annum, where he had five children more; in which time, and while he lived in London, he wrote a book* which he dedicated to Queen Mary, who gave him a living in the country [Epworth], valued at £200 per annum, where he remained for nearly forty years, and wherein his numerous offspring amounted with the former to nineteen children.

"Half of his parsonage-house was first burnt, which he rebuilt; some time after, the whole was burnt to the ground, which he rebuilt from the foundations, and it cost him above £400, besides the furniture, none of which was saved; and he was forced to renew it.

"Some years after, he got a little living [Wroote], adjoining to his former, the profits of which very little more than defrayed the expenses of serving it, and sometimes hardly so much, his whole tithe having been in a manner swept away by inundations, for which the parishioners had a brief; though he thought it not decent for himself to be joined with them in it.

"Many years he has been employed in composing a large book,† whereby he hopes that he may be of some benefit to the world, and in a degree amend his own fortunes. By

* The Life of Christ. † Dissertations on Job.

sticking so close to his work, he has broke a pretty strong constitution, and fallen into the palsy and gout. Besides, he has had sickness in his family, for the most of the years since he was married.

"His greater living seldom cleared more than five score pounds per annum, out of which he allowed £20 a year to a person who married one of his daughters. Could we on the whole fix the balance, it would easily appear whether he has been an ill husband, or careless and idle, and taken no care of his family.

"Let all this be balanced, and then a guess may easily be made of his sorry management. He can struggle with the world, but not with Providence; nor can he resist sickness, fires, and inundations."

The defence is able and satisfactory, and our sympathies gather round the "busy bee" whose active industry and zeal could not shield his hive from spoliation and misfortune, while many a contemporary drone surfeited in abundance, and wore out a useless life in luxury, self-indulgence and criminal ease. Ere his son John, the future father of Methodism, had completed his third year, the rector of Epworth was in gaol for debt. The exasperation of party, which he took no means to allay, but rather chafed and provoked—for he gloried in his "church and state politics," being "sufficiently elevated" *—brought down upon him the unmanly vengeance of his creditors, and they spited their political opponent by throwing him into prison. This affliction brought him friends, who succeeded in procuring his release after an incarceration of some months, but neither enlarged his resources nor increased his prudence. He seems to have been a stern if a faithful pastor.

* John O'Style's Dissertations.

and when called to encounter prejudices, to have met them with prejudices as virulent of his own.

Into such a home as all this bespeaks, needy but not sordid, poverty-stricken yet garnished by high principle and dogged resolution, full of anxieties for temporal provision, yet free from the discontent that dishonours God, was John Wesley ushered, on the 17th of June, 1703. For all that made the comfort of that home, the joy of his childhood and the glory of his riper years, the great reformer was indebted to his mother, as who, that is ever great or good, is not?

An atmosphere of soft delight surrounds our mother, and we are safe and purely happy by her side. She is the guardian angel to whom is committed the care of the young spirit just bestowed on us by Heaven, to habituate it by her gentle touch and kind words to a world of thorns, and briars, and tears, which a sterner monitor would repel, or harsher indoctrination crush and destroy. The calyx or the closing petal is not a more fitting home for the dew-drop, the parent nest for the callow bird, or the blue summer's sky for the fleecy cloud, than a mother's tutelage for the early years of her child. Poetry cannot picture her fitness, —it is simply true and divine:

> "The very first
> Of human life must spring from woman's breast;
> Your first small words are taught you from her lips,
> Your first tears quench'd by her, and your last sighs
> Too often breathed out in a woman's hearing,
> When men have shrunk from the ignoble care
> Of watching the last hour of him who led them."

Never was child more fortunate in a maternal guide than young Wesley, and never could mother claim

more exclusively the credit of her son's early training. At eleven years of age he left home for the Charter-house-school, London, but up to that period he was educated by his mother. Literary composition, correspondence, and parochial and secular duties, fully employed his father; but amid the domestic cares of fifteen living children, his pious and gifted mother found time to devote six hours daily to the education of her family. We scarcely know where we could light upon a document which can parallel with this which we subjoin, for its good sense, piety, and sound appreciation of the infant mind.

"In order to form the mind of children," observes this excellent mother and teacher, in a letter to her son in after years, explanatory of her method of procedure, "the first thing to be done is to conquer their will. To inform the understanding is the work of time, and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to bear it; but the subjecting the will is a thing that must be done at once, and the sooner the better; for, by neglecting timely correction, they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity as would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world, they pass for kind and indulgent whom I call cruel parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must be afterwards broken. When the will of a child is subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of its parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked, and others reproved; but no wilful transgression ought to be forgiven children without chastisement, less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence may require. I insist upon conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly

done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

"I cannot dismiss this subject yet. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children insures their wretchedness and irreligion; whatever checks and mortifies it promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we consider that religion is nothing else than doing the will of God, and not our own; that the one grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happiness being this self-will, no indulgence of it can be trivial, no denial unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who studies to subdue it in his child, works together with God in the renewing and saving a soul. The parent who indulges it does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, salvation unattainable, and does all that in him lies to damn his child, soul and body, for ever.

"Our children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and bed-time constantly; to which, as they grew older, were added a short prayer for their parents, and some portion of Scripture, as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days. They were taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after meals, which they used to do by signs before they could kneel or speak. They were quickly made to understand that they should have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak respectfully for what they wanted."

We must be excused for making another short extract, on the ground of its great wisdom and beauty. Among several by-laws enumerated for the government of the children, the following occur:

"3. That no child should ever be chid or beat twice for the

same fault; and that if they amended, they should never be upbraided with it afterwards.

"4. That every signal act of obedience, especially when it crossed their own inclinations, should be always commended, and frequently rewarded, according to the merits of the case.

"5. That if ever any child performed an act of obedience, or did anything with an intention to please, though the performance was not well, yet the obedience and intention should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed how to do better in future."

There is much more of equal excellence on this head, but we forbear: yet must we indulge ourselves with one more extract of a loftier strain, to show how well this excellent lady was qualified to instruct persons of more advanced years, and in the most exalted profession. On her eldest son's becoming a clergyman, she wrote to him to the following effect:—

"I hope that you retain the impressions of your education, nor have forgot that the vows of God are upon you. You know that the first fruits are Heaven's, by an unalienable right; and that, as your parents devoted you to the service of the altar, so you yourself made it your choice, when your father was offered another way of life for you. But have you duly considered what such a choice and such a dedication impose? Consider well what separation from the world—what purity—what devotion—what exemplary virtue—are required in those who are to guide others to glory! I say EXEMPLARY; FOR LOW COMMON DEGREES OF PIETY ARE NOT SUFFICIENT FOR THOSE OF THE SACRED FUNCTION. You must not think to live like the rest of the world; your light must so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and thereby be led to glorify your Father which is in heaven.

"I would advise you, as much as possible, in your present circumstances, to throw your business into a certain METHOD, by which means you will learn to improve every precious moment, and find an unsuspected facility in the per-

formance of your respective duties. Begin and end the day with him who is the Alpha and Omega; and if you really experience what it is to love God, you will redeem all that you can for his more immediate service. I will tell you what rule I used to observe when I was in my father's house, and had as little, if not less liberty, than you have now [as teacher in Westminster-school]:—I used to allow myself as much time for recreation as I spent in private devotion; not that I always spent so much, but I gave myself leave to go so far, but no farther. So in all things else: appoint so much time for sleep, eating, company, &c., &c.; but, of all things, I command you, I beg, I beseech you to be very strict in observing the Lord's-day. In all things, endeavour to act upon principle; and do not live like the rest of mankind, who pass through the world like straws upon a river, which are carried which way the stream or wind drives them. Often put this question to yourself, Why do I this, or that? why do I pray, read, study, use devotion, &c.? By this means, you will come to such a steadiness and consistency in your words and actions, as becomes a reasonable creature, and a good Christian."

Would there were more such mothers addressing their sons in this strain, in prospect of the awful responsibilities of the ministerial office; then might we confidently hope for more such sons, for all Mrs. Wesley's came to be distinguished, though the fame of the world-renowned subject of our sketch has in a measure outshadowed theirs.

Passing from under the tutelage of his accomplished mother, John Wesley became at the Charterhouse a sedate, quiet, and industrious pupil. The regularity of system which characterised the man was even then visible in the boy, taking his methodical race round the garden thrice every morning. His excellent habits were rewarded by the esteem of his masters,

and his election six years afterwards to Christ's Church College, Oxford. At the University he maintained the reputation for scholarship acquired at school, and ere long was chosen a Fellow of Lincoln, and appointed Greek Lecturer and Moderator of the Classes to the University. And here properly begins the religious life of the young reformer. Prior to his ordination, which took place in 1725, he had devoted himself to such a course of reading as he considered most likely to conduce to his spiritual benefit, and qualify him for his sacred office. Upon the mind of one so religiously and orderly brought up, the Ascetic Treatises of Thomas-à-Kempis, and Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, would naturally make a deep impression, the more as their earnest strain would contrast so favourably with the epicurean insouciance, or the stolid fatalism of his classic favourites. The highest effort of Pagan heroism and philosophy was to invite their dead to the feast and orgie, and mock at death by crowning him with flowers, while of all the sublimer objects of life they were as ignorant, as to its more serious duties they were unequal. Surfeited with their dainties which he had relished as a child, when he became a man he put away childish things with the loathing of a matured and higher taste. Assistant to his father for two years in the adjacent living of Wroote, and engaged thus in the actualities of the ministry, his soul found more and more occasion for self-examination, self-renunciation, and devotion to the solemn work of his calling. Impressions deepened upon his mind, which could not fail to issue in great good to the Church of Christ,—impressions made by his temper of body, early train-

ing, and the studies and duties of his vocation. His views were very imperfect of the doctrines of grace, but his heart was undergoing that process of preparation for their full disclosure and ready reception which might be resembled to turning up the fallow ground. He was not far from the kingdom of God.

While the young clergyman was engaged in the searchings of heart attendant upon his early experience, and was prosecuting the labours of his country cure, God was maturing at Oxford a system of events which was to issue in the result he sought—light to the understanding, peace to the conscience, purity to the life, and an assured sense of the Divine forgiveness. Charles Wesley, the younger brother, during John's two years' absence on his cure, seemed to have waked all at once from the religious apathy of his under-graduate course, and falling in with two or three young men of kindred feelings with his own, they associated for mutual improvement and religious exercises. They received the Sacrament weekly, and practised certain very obvious but very unusual austerities in regard to food, raiment, and amusement, quite sufficient to draw upon them general observation. The world, which has a keen sense of the ridiculous, saw in all this only oddity and folly—and in sooth it is no necessary adjunct of real religion—perhaps thought it something still less worthy of respect—hypocrisy, and love of notoriety. But observers could have borne even with these defects better than with what they found in the enthusiastic objects of their dislike—earnest practical godliness, which intimidation could not daunt nor ridicule shame. They gave these parties, therefore, the names of Sacra-

mentarians, Bible-bigots, Bible-moths, the Holy, and the Godly Club. But from the orderly method of their life, the name Methodists, that of an ancient sect of physicians, gradually stuck to the latter party, one not altogether new in its applications to religion any more than the Puritans (Cathari) of an earlier date. This title they neither sought nor shunned. If it gave no glory it implied little reproach. But they justified their religious views by the practical value of their measures. They could appeal to their works as their best vindication. Their acquittal were triumphant were the tree of their profession judged by its fruits. We know not where, out of the Gospels, a more successful appeal is made in favour of practical godliness, THE RELIGION OF GOOD SENSE AND GOOD WORKS, than in the document we are about to submit to our readers. Never was there less enthusiasm, fanaticism, rant (O si sic omnia!) in any page of letter-press — never more convincing ratiocination, more clear exposition of duty, than in its dozen quiet interrogations:

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

"Whether all Christians are not concerned in that command, While we have time let us do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the household of faith?

"Whether we shall not be more happy hereafter the more good we do now?

"Whether we may not try to do good to our acquaintance among the young gentlemen of the University?

"Particularly, whether we may not endeavour to convince them of the necessity of being Christians, and of being scholars?

"May we not try to do good to those who are hungry, or naked, or sick? If we know any necessitous family, may we not give them a little food, clothes, or physic, as they want?

"If they can read, may we not give them a Bible, or a Prayer Book, or a Whole Duty of Man? May we not inquire now and then how they have used them, explain what they do not understand, and enforce what they do?

"May we not enforce upon them the necessity of private prayer, and of frequenting the church and sacrament?

"May we not contribute what we are able towards having their children clothed and taught to read?

"May we not try to do good to those who are in prison?

"May we not release such well-disposed persons as remain in prison for small debts?

"May we not lend small sums of money to those who are of any trade, that they may procure themselves tools and materials to work with?

"May we not give to them who appear to want it most a little money, or clothes, or physic?"

Such is their apology—a probe for the conscience, which searches the latent wound, but only searches to heal—a promptuary of every good word and work—a brief but weighty preface to a life of labour and of love—a whole library of folio divinity in small—the casuistry of an honest and good heart resolved in a handful of questions—the law that came by Moses, clothed in the inimitable grace and truth that came by Jesus Christ—a most Holy Inquisition of which no brotherhood need be ashamed—the beatitudes of our Lord charged home, and chambered in the heart by the impulse of an earnest query—a Tema con variazioni, making melody in the heart unto the Lord while breathing deep-toned benevolence toward man. If ever church originated in an unexceptionable source it was this. If ever one could challenge its founda-

tion as resting on the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone, it was this. If ever church was cradled, as its Lord was cradled, in supreme glory to God and good-will to man—if ever church at its birth was an incarnation of the first and chief commandment, charity, the sum and end of the law, it was this church.

This is more than can be said of any of the great moral revolutions of the world. Almost all the more remarkable changes in human opinion, the truths as well as the errors, have been mixed with a considerable alloy of human infirmity in their origin and conduct. Envy and selfishness, and pride and ambition, have shown themselves in various degrees, as moving powers in the world of thought and religion; and though the results under Divine superintendence have been overruled to good, the process has been faulty. We cannot say, for we do not believe, that there was not much of human passion at the bottom of the indignant Luther's breach with Rome, while ingenuous Protestantism must blush over the sensuality and cruelty of Henry VIII. Even the self-denying non-conformists do not show so bright, when we reflect that the majority of them, in closing their ministry in the church on St. Bartholomew's day, did never perhaps belong to what is popularly called the Church of England, nor object so much to the imposition of a particular prayer-book, as to any prayer-book at all, being in fact Presbyterians and Independents. But here, alike free from the infirmities of Aletharch, or Heresiarch, free from selfish aim or end, unfraught with doctrinal pride, uninflated by youthful presumption, a few good men go forth, a second college of apostles,

ordained with a like ordination, having the unction of the Holy One, and charged with the same divine mission, "to seek and to save that which was lost," freely receiving from Heaven, and freely giving in return. Language and imagery would fail us in depicting, sooner than our soul cease from admiring, the purity and sublimity of the object these compassionate men sought by their personal consecration, their visits of mercy, and their prayers:

> "I can't describe it though so much it strike,
> Nor liken it; I never saw the like."

Looking down, like the divine humanity of the Son of God from the height of his priestly throne, far above every feeling save that of sorrow for the sufferings and sins of men, their eyes suffused with pitiful tears, and they resolved to do what they could. Suffice it to say that, baptized in such a laver as this, the Methodist church which has since attained a respectable maturity, has never renounced the principles that hallowed its early dedication,—has kept the whiteness of its garments unsullied by the pollutions of the world,—has raised visibly everywhere the banner of mercy to the bodies and souls of men, and can say still, as it professed then, "I am free from the blood of all men."

John Wesley will be found to have given currency by his course of action to a set of divine ideas easily acted upon, but not always clearly apprehended, which make up the sum of personal religion, and without which, it may be added, personal religion cannot exist. This is the philosophy of his career, perhaps very imperfectly understood by himself,

probably never drawn out by him in a systematic form, yet sufficiently obvious to us who look back upon his completed life, and live amid the results of his labours. Immersed in the complexities of the game, the turmoil of the storm in which his busy life was cast, the unceasing struggle of his soul with the gigantic evils of the world, he could neither observe nor analyse, as we can do, the elements arrayed against him, nor the principles evolved in the conflict that were ministrant to his success. As we are in the habit of raising instinctively the arm, or lowering the eyelid to repel or shun danger, so he adopted measures and evolved truths by force of circumstances more than by forethought, those truths and measures so adapted to his position as a preacher of righteousness amid an opposing generation, that we recognize in their adaptation and natural evolution proof of their divineness. They are the same truths which were exhibited in the first struggles of an infant Christianity with the serpent of Paganism, and when exhibited again upon a like arena seventeen centuries afterwards, with similar success, are thus proved to be everywhere and always the same, eternal as abstract truth, and essential as the existence of God.

The first grand truth thrown up upon the surface of John Wesley's career, we take to be THE ABSOLUTE NECESSITY OF PERSONAL AND INDIVIDUAL RELIGION.

To the yoke of this necessity he himself bowed at every period of his history: never even when most completely astray as to the ground of the sinner's justification before God, did he fail to recognize the necessity of conversion and individual subjection to the laws of the Most High. What he required of

others, and constantly taught, he cheerfully observed himself. Very soon after starting upon his course did he learn that the laver of baptism was unavailing to wash from the stain of human defilement, the Supper of the Lord to secure admission to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and church organization to draft men collectively to heaven by simple virtue of its corporate existence. These delusions, whereby souls are beguiled to their eternal wrong, soon ceased to juggle him, for his eye, kindled to intelligence by the Spirit of God, pierced the transparent cheat. He ascertained at a very early period that the church had no delegated power to ticket men in companies for a celestial journey, and sweep them railroad-wise in multitudes to their goal; consequently that this power, where claimed or conceded, was usurpation on the one hand, and a compound of credulousness and servility on the other, insulting to God and degrading to man. But he began with himself. We suppose he never knew the hour in which he did not feel the need of personal religion to secure the salvation of the soul. He was happily circumstanced in being the son of pious and intelligent parents, who would carefully guard him against the prevalent errors on these points. He never could have believed presentation at the font to be salvation, nor the vicarious vow of sponsors a substitute for personal renunciation of the world, the flesh, and the devil: and he early showed this. When the time of his ordination drew nigh, and he was about to be inducted into the cure of souls, he was visited with great searchings of heart. His views of the mode of the sinner's acceptance with God were confused indeed; but on the subject of

personal consecration they may be said never to have varied. Fighting his way, as he was called to do, through a lengthened period of experimental obscurity, "working out his salvation with fear and trembling," we nevertheless cannot point to any moment in his spiritual history in which he was not a child of God. What an incomparable mother must he have had! what a hold must she have established upon his esteem and confidence, to whom this Fellow of a college referred his scruples and difficulties in view of his ordination, and whom his scholarly father bade him consult when his own studious habits and abundant occupations forbade correspondence with himself! Animated to religious feeling about this time, he made a surrender of himself to God, made in partial ignorance, but never revoked. "I resolved, he says, "to dedicate ALL my life to God, ALL my thoughts, and words, and actions; being thoroughly convinced there was no medium; but that EVERY PART of my life (not SOME only) must either be a sacrifice to God or myself,—that is, in effect, to the devil." And his pious father, seconding his son's resolve, replies: "God fit you for your great work! fast, watch, and pray! believe, love, endure, and be happy!" And so he did according to his knowledge, for a more conscientious clergyman and teacher, for the space of ten years, never lived than the Rev. John Wesley, fellow and tutor of Lincoln.

But there was a whole world of spiritual experience yet untrodden by him amid the round of his college duties, ascetic practices, and abounding charities. His heart told him, and books told him, and the little godly company who met in his rooms all told him, in tones more or

less distinct, that he had not yet attained—that he was still short of the mark—that the joys of religion escaped his reach, though its duties were unexceptionably performed. His course of reading, the mystic and ascetic writers, together with the dry* scholastic divinity that furnishes the understanding but often drains the heart, tended to this result, to fill the life with holy exercises rather than to overflow the soul with sacred pleasure. Of the simple, ardent, gladsome, gracious piety of the poor, he yet knew next to nothing. But God was leading him through the wilderness of such an experience as this by a right way to a city of habitation, doubtless that he might be a wise instructor to others who should be involved hereafter in mazes like his own. He looked upon religion as a debt due by the creature to the Creator, and he paid it with the same sense of constraint with which one pays a debt, instead of regarding it as the ready service of a child of God. A child of God could not be other than religious; but, more than this, he would not if he could; religion is his

"Vital breath,
It is his native air."

---

* Our censure of the scholastic divinity only reaches to the case in hand, as amongst our favourite authors we reckon Thomas Aquinas, and the Master of the Sentences. We are glad to be able to justify our partiality by such respectable authority as that of Luther. In his book "De Conciliis" (tom. vii. p. 237), he writes thus of Peter Lombard:—"Nullis in conciliis, nullo in patre tantum reperies, quam in libro sententiarum Lombardi. Nam patres et concilia quosdam tantum articulos tractant, Lombardus autem omnes; sed in præcipuis illis articulis de Fide et Justificatione nimis est jejunus, quanquam Dei gratiam magnopere prædicat."

But Wesley did not understand as yet the doctrine of free pardon, the new birth, and the life of faith: he therefore worked, conscientiously and laboriously worked, but like a slave in chains. But God sent some poor Calvinists to teach him these truths; and he was not too proud to learn from very humble but sufficiently enlightened teachers, a few Moravian emigrants that sailed in the same vessel with him to Georgia. Their unaffected humility, unruffled good temper, and serenest self-possession in prospect of death when storms overtook the ship, struck him forcibly, and made him feel that they had reached an eminence in the divine life on which his college studies, extensive erudition, and pains-taking devotion had failed to land himself. He, therefore, sat himself at their feet; he verified the scripture metaphor, and became "a little child." In nothing was the lofty wisdom of John Wesley and his submission to divine teaching more apparent than in this, that he made himself a fool that he might be wise. Salvation by grace, and the witness of the Spirit, were taught him by these God-fearing and happy Moravians; and his understanding became full of light. It was only, however, some three years afterwards, subsequent to his return to England, which took place in 1738, that the joy of this free, present, eternal salvation flowed in upon his soul. The peace of God which passeth all understanding took possession of heart and mind through Christ Jesus, and for fifty years afterwards he never doubted, he never could doubt, of his acceptance with our Father who is in heaven. The sunshine of his soul communicated itself to his countenance, and lighted all his conversation. To speak with him was to speak with an angel of God.

From that time he began to preach a new doctrine, a doctrine of privilege as well as duty, of acceptance through the Beloved, and assured sense of pardon, and the happiness of the service of God. And God gave him unlooked for, unhoped for success. Excluded by almost universal consent from the churches of the Establishment, he betook himself to barns, and stable yards, and inn rooms; and ultimately, with Whitefield, to the open air, in the streets and lanes of the city, in the hills and valleys, on the commons and heaths of our native land, and with power and unction, with the Holy Ghost and much assurance did he testify to each of his hearers the doctrine of personal repentance and faith,—the necessity of the new birth for the salvation of the soul. And signs and wonders followed in them that believed: multitudes were smitten to the ground under the sword of the Spirit; many a congregation was changed into a Bochim, a place of weeping; and amid sobs, and tears, and wailings, beneath which the hearts of the most stubborn sinners quailed, one universal cry arose, "What must we do to be saved?" John Wesley's divine, simple, scriptural answer was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

His personal experience of the efficacy of the prescription gave confidence to his advice. The physician had been healed himself first: he had been his own earliest patient: ke knew the bitterness of the pain, the virulence of the disease, and he had proved the sanative power of his remedy. The ordeal of the new birth he had tried before he recommended it to others. He had visited the pool of Bethesda, and could therefore speak well of its waters.

And well might it work such change to have the

necessity of personal religion insisted upon with such unprecedented particularity and pointedness. He singled out each hearer; he allowed no evasion amid the multitude; he showed how salvation was not by a church, nor by families, nor by ministers, nor by ordinances, nor by national communions, but by a deep singular individual experience of religion in the soul. His address was framed upon the model of the scripture query, "Dost THOU believe upon the Son of God?"

A second truth developed in the ministry of John Wesley, is THE ABSOLUTE NEED OF SPIRITUAL INFLUENCE TO SECURE THE CONVERSION OF THE SOUL.

Conversion is not a question of willing or not willing on the part of man: the soul bears no resemblance to the muscles of the healthy arm, which the mere will to straighten and stiffen throws into a state of rigid tension at the instant, and retains them so at pleasure. The soul is in the craze and wreck of paralysis: the power of action does not respond to the will: the whole head is sick, the heart faint. To will is present with us, but how to perform that which is good we know not. The sick man would be well, but the wish is unavailing till the simple, the leech, and the blessing of the Most High conspire to invigorate. Just so is it with the soul; it must tarry till it be endued with power from on high, but not, be it understood, in the torpor of apathy, nor in the slough of despair, no, but wishing, watching, waiting. Though its search were as fruitless as that of Diogenes, it must be seeking, nevertheless, just as, though the prophet's commission be to preach to the dead, he must not dispute nor disobey. We must strive to enter in although the gate be strait and the way narrow: we must be feeling

after God, if haply we may find him, though it be amid the darkness of nature and the tremblings of dismay. We may scarce have ability to repent after a godly sort, yet ought we to bring forth "fruits meet for repentance." With God alone may rest the prerogative to pronounce us "sons of Abraham," yet, like Zaccheus, must we work the works becoming that relation, and right the wronged and feed the poor. While, then, we emphatically announce the doctrine that the influence of the Holy Ghost is necessary to quicken, renew, and purify the soul, we do at the same time repudiate the principle that man may fold his hands in sleep till the divine voice arouse him. Nothing short of a celestial spark can ignite the fire of our sacrifice, but we can at least lay the wood upon the altar. None but the Lord of the kingdom can admit to the privilege of the kingdom, but at the same time it is well to make inquiry of him who keeps the door. John was only the bridegroom's friend, the herald of better things to come, yet "Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," did but its duty in flocking to him to hear his tidings, and learn where to direct its homage. To endangered men the night was given for far other uses than for sleep: the storm is high and the rocks are near, the sails are rent, and the planks are starting beneath the fury of the winds and waves,—what is the dictate of wisdom, of imperious necessity? what but to ply the pump, to undergird the ship, to strike the mast, haul taut the cordage, "strengthen the things that remain," and trust in the Most High. If safety is vouchsafed, it is God who saves. So in spiritual things man must strive as if he could do everything, and trust as if he

could do nothing; and in regeneration the Scripture doctrine is, that he can do nothing. He may accomplish things leading thereto, just as the Jews ministered to the resurrection of Lazarus by leading Christ to the sepulchre; but it was the Divine voice that raised the dead. Thus sermons, scriptures, catechisms, and all the machinery of Christian action, will be tried and used, dealt out by the minister and shared by his flock; but with each and all must the conviction rest that it is not by might of mechanism, nor by power of persuasion conversion is brought about, but by the Spirit of the Lord of Hosts.

This truth was grievously lost sight of in Wesley's days, sunk in the tide of cold morality that inundated the land, and consigned it to a theosophy less spiritual than that of Socrates or Plato. But up from the depths of the heathenish flood our great reformer fished this imperishable truth, a treasure-trove exceeding in value pearls of great price, or a navy of sunken galleons. And throughout his ministry this shone with unequalled light; for if anything distinguished it more than another from contemporary ministries, it was the emphatic prominence it assigned to the Spirit's work in conversion. This was the Pharos of his teaching, the luminous point which led the world-tost soul into the haven of assured peace and conscious adoption. And much need was there that this dogma should have received this distinctive pre-eminence and peculiar honour, for it was either totally forgotten, coarsely travestied, or boldly denied. Bishops could so far forget themselves as to call William Law, because he asserted it, one who "obscured a good understanding by the fumes of the

rankest enthusiasm, and depraved a sound judgment still further by the prejudices he took up against all sobriety in religion."* Wesley is styled, because he asserted it, a hypocrite and madman, moved to seek selfish ends by sectarian craft; an impure zealot, vengeful and unforgiving.† And the experience of multitudes who professed to have undergone that change which the Spirit alone can produce, is pithily termed "the ecstatic ravings of modern fanatics."‡

But that we have it under his own hand, we should have been reluctant to lay the following phrase at Warburton's door: "I will venture to say, that the devil was here only in the office of man midwife to the new birth."§ Of the fanaticism of contributing in any measure to the new birth of souls, we must entirely acquit the bishop, as the whole strain of his efforts bore against the recognition of its possibility in the sense in which regeneration is now understood. If there be intelligibility in language, and his words are a correct clothing of his style, he maintains that the special influence of the Holy Ghost has ceased, because the circumstances have ceased which called for miraculous interpositions and gifts. For instance, the apostles were more ignorant than men now-a-days, therefore He must enlighten them; the prejudices of the world were then arrayed against Christianity, and He must remove them; a profession of religion exposed to martyrdom, He must therefore miraculously support under trial. But now the condition of things is so changed for the better, that He is needed

* Warburton's "Doctrine of Grace," vol. i. p. 5, note.
† Ibid. vol. ii. p. 12. ‡ Ibid. vol. i. p. 2.
§ Ibid. vol. ii. p. 4.

no longer; ergo, He is no longer vouchsafed. How rosy the hue with which the good bishop invested the prevailing temper of mankind toward the religion of Jesus in modern days, let this extract show:—

"The nature and genius of the gospel were so averse to all the religious institutions of the world, that the whole strength of human prejudices was set in opposition to it. To overcome the obstinacy and violence of these prejudices, nothing less than the power of the Holy One was sufficient. He did the work of man's conversion, and reconciled an unbelieving world to God. At present, whatever there may be remaining of the bias of prejudice it draws the other way." *

Most impotent and unscriptural conclusion! Paul, what sayest thou? "The carnal mind is enmity against God," Rom. viii. 7. Nay—that cannot be—respectable authorities now say, "At present the bias of prejudice draws the other way." "Alienated from the life of God, by the ignorance that is in them, through the blindness of their hearts." Nay, not so, surely, "for at present the bias of prejudice draws the other way." And James, what sayest thou? "The friendship of the world is enmity with God; a friend of the world is the enemy of God." This must surely be some mistake; for a learned authority affirms, that "at present the bias of prejudice draws the other way." And John, what sayest thou? "Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you." "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." Happy we, who are assured that hate to the church is metamorphosed into a totally different feeling; that love to the world, which is the rejection of God, has passed away; and that "at present the bias of prejudice draws the other

* Warburton's "Doctrine of Grace," vol. ii. p. 3.

way!" And Peter, what sayest thou? "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial that is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." Ah, Peter, well was it to try and console the suffering brethren in those days; at present, in the sunshine of universal approval, we can sing, "The bias of prejudice draws the other way." And, Lord of all power and might, what sayest thou?—thou that art the Amen, the faithful and true Witness: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." "I came not to send peace, but a sword." More enlightened than the Sovereign of this dispensation, nous avons changé tout cela—"at present the bias of prejudice draws the other way." It is a prize in the lottery of general estimation to be a professor of serious religion; at least so the bishop wills it, in that sentence on which we have been ringing the changes, as unevangelical in its sentiment, as contradicted by fact. Witness the slanders poured upon the sainted head of Wesley, and the ten thousand entries in his Journal that speak of persecution, and outrage, in some cases almost unto death. Witness the incompatibility of his and Whitefield's erratic but earnest labours, with the continued favour of the authorities of their church.

Witness it, thou bloody scaffold on Tower-hill, and charred stake of Smithfield, if the prejudice against vital religion has passed away. Witness it, ye wars of the Reformation, ye dungeons and depopulated towns of France, ye blood-stained valleys of Savoy.

Witness the friendships it has cooled, the ties it has broken, the hearts it has severed, the complacent smiles it has darkened into frowns, the charities of domestic

life it has extinguished, the arms with which it has furnished husband against wife, and parent against child in all ages, our own no less than the past; the citizens it has robbed of their rights, the servants of their bread, the Christians of their grave. Witness it, hoary chronicles of bygone centuries; witness it, the course of concurrent events; witness it, pillory and outrage of Leighton, Penry, and Bastwick, and others, whose names are written in heaven; witness it dungeon, and unrighteous trial of Penn and Fox, of Baxter and Bunyan.

Witness it, ye more than two thousand spiritual heroes, who took no counsel with flesh and blood, when the world's hostility left ye no choice but to deny self or deny your Master; witness it, ye pilgrim fathers, who sought sanctuary in the wilderness, "from unreasonable and wicked men;" witness it, thou glorious company of the apostles, thou noble army of martyrs—the holy church throughout all the world—that never had known it otherwise; witness it, ye never-dying stars, that looked in sadness upon the promptings of Cain's and Ishmael's and Esau's hate, that as it was, so is it now, and thus must it ever be, the seed of the bondwoman must needs persecute the seed of the free; witness it, ye pleasant winds, if ever ye bore one song of praise to heaven, that was not saddened by the impiety of the blasphemer, the curse of the gainsayer; witness it, thou body of Christ upon earth, in thy present history, thy scanty numbers, thy narrow resources, thy crippled influence and power. Yet "the bias of prejudice" is in thy favour. Alas! we lack the proof that it is so. Where are thy kings and queens, and mighty men, and chief captains,

thy judges, thy magistrates, and thy nobles, donning thy livery, and doing thy bidding, and blessing thy name, and bowing the reverent knee? Ay witness, thou despised and impoverished religion of the Crucified, in all-convincing tones, and with the irresistible argument of facts, that he who stated the bias of popular favour to be now with thee, spoke what he did not know, and testified what he had not seen; misread facts, misunderstood human hearts, and wholly misconceived of thee; for, despite his asseveration, it is still as true as ever, that "not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are." 1 Cor. i. 26—28. But our theological systems start evidently from different poles, and if they meet, can only clash, so long as Warburton gravely maintains, that the Spirit's abiding with us for ever is "verified by the sure deposit of the Spirit of Truth in sacred Scripture:" and so long as he quarrels with the fanatics, because they seek spiritualization, "as if that rule [of faith] was so obscure as to need the further assistance of the Holy Spirit to explain his own meaning; or so imperfect, as to need a new inspiration to supply its wants."

Having now dealt with the truths that bear upon personal religion and individual subjection to the truth, as well as the means whereby this was to be effected —the direct agency of the Divine Spirit—things insisted upon with untiring energy by John Wesley,

we now turn attention to the views which our great reformer put forth regarding Christians in their associated capacity. He knew full well, none better than he, that the individual believer is not a unit, an isolation, a monad, complete in his own sufficiency, spinning round himself like a top upon its peg, rejoicing in the music of its complacent hum; no, but a joint in a system, a member of a body, a fraction of a whole, a segment of an orb, which, incomplete without its parts, becomes only by their adhesion terse and rotund. Every portion of the Christian community, like every portion of the body politic, is related to every other portion. When a man becomes a Christian he is inducted into a fraternity, made free of a sodality and guild, with the interests of which he becomes so intimately bound up, that his pulse dances in its health and languishes in its decay. The figure of Scripture becomes experimental truth, "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it," 1 Cor. xii. 26. He is disjoined from his former association with worldly men; the bad blood of his unconverted alliances is drawn off, and that of a new fellowship infused, and he becomes a member of its body, of its flesh, and of its bones. A homogeneity is established between himself and all the other parts of this spiritual incorporation; and while in matters of faith, obedience, and personal responsibility he retains his individual manhood, in all that affects the fortunes and duties of the church he thrills with a quick sympathy as the remotest nerve will with the brain. And this corporate life he only lives, enjoys its advantages and answers its ends, while he lives in conjunction, in ob-

servance of Divine ordinances and visible worship, with men like-minded with himself, the regenerate sons of God. For developing this feature of the Christian life, Wesley made provision in the arrangements of his system, and this he did by prominently recognizing this further third principle, namely:—

THAT THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST IS A SPIRITUAL ORGANIZATION, CONSISTING OF SPIRITUAL MEN ASSOCIATED FOR SPIRITUAL PURPOSES.

This is the theory of that Church, of which he was for several years the laborious and conscientious minister, and is nowhere more happily expressed than in its nineteenth Article:—"The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in the which the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments be duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." But this beautiful and scriptural theory was to a great degree an unapproachable ideal in this country until that system arose under the creative hand of Wesley, which made it a reality, and gave it a positive existence, "a local habitation and a name." It is true the name he gave it was not Church, it was The Society, and in other forms and subdivisions, bands, classes, &c., &c., but in essence it was the same; it was the union and communion of the Lord's people for common edification and the glory of Christ. As soon as two or three converts were made to those earnest personal views of religion he promulgated, the inclination and necessity for association commenced. It was seen in his Oxford praying coterie; seen in his fellowship with the Moravians; and afterwards fully exemplified in the mother-society at the Foun-

dery, Moorfields, and in all the affiliated societies throughout the kingdom. The simple object of these associations was thus explained in a set of general rules for their governance, published by the brothers Wesley, in 1743. The preamble states the nature and design of a Methodist Society to be "A company of men, having the form and seeking the power of godliness; united, in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation. There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into these societies—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins." They were further to evidence this desire:—"1. By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind. 2. By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men. And 3. By attending upon all the ordinances of God. Such are, the public worship of God; the ministry of the Word, either read or expounded; the supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the Scriptures; and fasting and abstinence." Whether we regard the design of the association given in these terms, or the specification of duty, we seem to trace a virtual copy of the articular definition of the church recently cited. Wesley never failed to recognize the scriptural distinction between the church and the world, nor to mark it. While he viewed with becoming deference the kingdoms of this world, and bowed to the authority of the magistrate as the great cement of human society, the clamp that binds the stones of

the edifice together, he saw another kingdom pitched within the borders of these, differing from them in everything and infinitely above them, yet consentaneous with them, and vesting them with its sanction, itself all the while purely spiritual in its basis, laws, privileges, and sovereign. Blind must he have been, to a degree incompatible with his general perspicacity, had he not perceived this. The men who possessed religion, and the men who possessed it not, were not to be for a moment confounded. They might be neighbours in locality and friends in goodwill, but they were wide as the poles asunder in sentiment. The quick and the dead may be placed side by side, but no one can for ever so short a period mistake dead flesh for living fibre, the abnegation of power for energy in repose. The church and the churchyard are close by, but the worshippers in the one and the dwellers in the other are as unlike as two worlds can make them. The circle within the circle, the company of the converted, the imperium in imperio, the elect, the regenerate, Wesley always distinguished from the mass of mankind, and made special provision for their edification in all his organisms.

And, in sooth, the marked and constant recognition of this spiritual incorporation it is which gives revealed religion its only chance of survival in the world. To forget it is practically to abolish the distinction between error and truth, between right and wrong. There is no heresy more destructive than a bad life. To class the man of good life and the man of bad together; to call them by the same name and elevate them to the same standing, is high treason against

the majesty of truth, poisons the very spring of morality, and does conscience to death. A nation cannot be a church, nor a church a nation. The case of Israel was the only one in which the two kingdoms were co-extensive, conterminous. A member of a nation a man becomes by birth, but a member of a church only by a second birth. Generation is his title to the one, regeneration to the other. The one is a natural accident, the other a moral state. Citizens are the sons of the soil, Christians are the sons of Heaven. To clothe, then, the members of the one with the livery and title of the other, without the prerequisite qualification and dignity, is not only a solecism in language, but an outrage upon truth. It is to reconcile opposites, harmonise discords, blend dissimilitudes, and identify tares with wheat, light with darkness, life with death. It is the destruction of piety among the converted, for they see the unconverted honoured with their designation, advanced to their level, obtruded upon their society. It is ruin to the souls of the unconverted; because without effort of their own, without faith or prayer, or good works, or reformation, or morals, they are surprised with the style and title, the status and rewards of Christian men. This is, unfortunately, the practice on a large scale; the theory is otherwise and unexceptionable. Imbued with a deep sense of the beauty and correctness of the theory, Wesley did only what was natural and right when he sought to make it a great fact—a substance, and not a shadow—in the church militant. In this he not only obeyed a divine injunction, but yielded to the current of events. By a natural attraction his converts were drawn together.

Like will to like. "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another;" and "all that believed were together." The particles were similar, the aggregate homogeneous. They had gone through the same throes, rejoiced in the same parentage, learned in the same school, and embraced the same destiny. They owned a common creed, "one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all;" resisted a common temptation, took up a common cross, and, in common, renounced the world, the flesh, and the devil. They came together on the ground of identity of character, of desire for mutual discipline and benefit, and of community of feeling and interest. It is obvious to perceive that Wesley did not originate this communion, whether it were for good or evil; for it was an ordinance of God, in its primal institution, and in this particular instance arose out of the very nature of the case. Wesley could not have prevented it, except by such measures as would have undone all he had done. God's believing people found one another out, and associated by a law, as fixed and unalterable as that kali and acid coalesce, or that the needle follows the magnet. But while he did not enact the law which God's people obeyed in this close intercommunion and relationship, he understood and revered it, and furthered and regulated the intercourse of the godly by the various enactments and graduated organizations of his system. He set the city upon the hill, and bade it be conspicuous; the lamp upon the stand, and bade it shine; the vine upon the soil, and said to it, Be fruitful. He set it apart, and trimmed it, and hedged it in; convinced that such separation as Scripture enjoins (2 Cor. vi.) was essen-

tial to its growth and welfare—a truth the Christian law teaches, and individual experience confirms. Every benefit the institution of a church might be supposed to secure, is forfeited when the church loses its distinctive character and becomes identified with the world.

But neither to glorify their founder by their closer combination, nor for self-complacent admiration, nor to be a gazing-stock for the multitude, nor for the tittle tattle of mutual gossipry, did John Wesley segregate his people; no, but for their good and the good of mankind. The downy bed of indolence for the church, or the obesity that grows of inaction, never once came within his calculations as their lot. To rub the rust from each other, as iron sharpeneth iron, was the first object of their association; and the second, to weld their forces together in the glowing furnace of communion for the benefit of the world. They were to rejoice in the good grapes of their own garden, and sweeten, by inoculation and culture, the sour grapes of their neighbour. They were to attract all goodness to themselves, and where it was wanting create it, after the Arab proverb, "The palm-tree looks upon the palm-tree, and groweth fruitful!" It was as the salt of the earth they were to seek to retain their savour, and not for their own preservation alone. No one ever more sedulously guarded the inward subjective aspect of the church, its self-denying intent, its exclusion of the unholy and unclean, than John Wesley; and no one ever directed its objective gaze outward and away from itself, "to have compassion on the ignorant and out of the way," with more untiring industry than he. He knew the church's mis-

sion was more than half unfulfilled, while it locked itself up in its ark of security and left the world without to perish. He was himself the last man in the world to leave the wounded to die, passing by in his superciliousness, and asking, "Who is my neighbour?" and the last to found a community which should be icy, selfish, and unfeeling. He was a working minister, and fathomed the depth and yielded to the full current of the truth, that the church must be a working church. Armed at all points with sympathies, which brought him into contact with the world without, the church must resemble him in this. He was an utterly unselfish being; he, if ever any, could say—

> "I live not in myself, but I become
> Portion of that around me."

To work for the benefit of men, when he might have taken his ease, became a necessity of his nature, moulded upon the pattern of his self-sacrificing Master, and the law of his being must be that of the church's. The church must "do or die." It must be instant in season, out of season. It must go into the highways and hedges. It must beseech men to be reconciled to God. It must compel them to come in. It must give no sleep to its eyes, nor slumber to its eyelids, till its work be done. It must stand in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths, and cry, "O ye simple, understand wisdom; and ye fools, be ye of an understanding heart!" It must gather all the might of its energies, and lavish all the wealth of its resources, and exhaust all the influences it can command, and coin all the ingenuity

of its devices into schemes for the saving benefit of the world. Thus, not merely conservative of the truth must the church be for its own edification and nurture, but also diffusive of the truth for the renewal and redemption of all around.

And these were grand discoveries a hundred years ago, of which the credit rests very mainly with the founder of Methodism, although mere common-places now. It is true they were partially and speculatively held even then; but very partially, and in the region of thought rather than of action. Some saw the truth of the matter, but it was in its proverbial dwelling, and the well was deep,—just perceptible at the bottom, but beyond their grasp; while to the many the waters were muddy, and they saw it not at all. There were no Bible, Tract, or Missionary Societies then to employ the church's powers, and indicate its path of duty. But Wesley started them all. He wrote, and printed, and circulated books in thousands upon thousands of copies. He set afloat home and foreign missions. The church and the world were alike asleep; he sounded the loud trumpet of the gospel, and awoke the world to tremble, and the church to work. Never was such a scene before in this land. The correctness and maturity of his views amid the deep darkness surrounding him is startling, wonderful — like the idea of a Catholic church springing up amid a sectarian Judaism. It is midday without the antecedent dawn; it beggars thought; it defies explanation. A church in earnest as a want of the times is even now, in these greatly advanced days, strenuously demanded and eloquently enforced by appeal after appeal from the press, the

platform, and the pulpit; but Wesley gave it practical existence from the very birth-hour of his society. His vigorous bantling rent the swathing bands of quiet self-communing, and prevalent custom, and gave itself, a young Hercules, to the struggle with the inertia of the church, and the opposition of the world. Successfully it encountered both. It quickened the one and subdued the other, and attained by the endeavour the muscular development and manful port and indomitable energy of its present life. John Wesley's church is no mummy-chamber of a pyramid—silent, sepulchral, garnished with still figures in hieroglyphic coif and cerecloth, but a busy town, a busier hive, himself the informing spirit, the parent energy, the exemplary genius of the whole. Never was the character of the leader more accurately reflected in his troops. Bonaparte made soldiers, Wesley made active Christians.

The last principle we shall notice as illustrated by his career has relation to THE NATURE AND WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

A grand discovery lying very near the root of Methodism, considered as an ecclesiastical system, it was the fortune of John Wesley to light upon, not far from the outset of his career,—a discovery quite as momentous and influential in the diffusion and perpetuation of his opinions as that with which Luther startled the world in 1525. Luther published the then monstrous heresy, that ministers who are married can serve the Lord and his church as holily, learnedly, and acceptably as celibate priests and cloistered regulars; and our hero found out that men unqualified by university education for orders in the church were the very fittest instruments he could employ in the itine-

rant work of early Methodism. Rough work requires rough hands. The burly pioneer is as needful in the army as the dapper ensign, and the hewer of wood in the deep forest as the French-polisher in the city. Now this was a great discovery,—up to that period a thing unknown. The Roman Church knew nothing of such a device—its orders of various kinds bore no approximation to it; the Protestant Churches knew nothing of it—presbyter and bishop were at equal removes from it; the very puritans and non-conformists knew nothing of it, they being in their way as great sticklers for clerical order and their succession as any existing body,—the more pardonable, as some were living in the early part of Wesley's history who had themselves officiated in the churches of the Establishment. His discovery was, that plain men just able to read, and explain with some fluency what they read and felt, might go forth without licence from college, or presbytery, or bishop, into any parish in the country, the weaver from his loom, the shoemaker from his stall, and tell their fellow-sinners of salvation and the love of Christ. This was a tremendous innovation upon the established order of things everywhere, and was as reluctantly forced upon so starched a precisian as John Wesley, as it must have horrified the members of the stereotyped ministries and priesthoods existing around. But as in Luther's case so here—"the present necessity" was the teacher: "the fields were white to the harvest, and the labourers were few." We have ample evidence to show that if he could have pressed into the service a sufficient number of the clerical profession he would have preferred the employment of such agents exclusively; but as they

were only few of this rank who lent him their constant aid, he was driven to adopt the measure which we think the salvation of his system and in some respects its glory. The greater part of the clergy would have been unfitted for the work he would have allotted them, even had they not been hampered by the trammels of ecclesiastical usage. This usage properly assigns a fixed portion of clerical labour to one person, and to discharge it well is quite enough to tax the powers of most men to the utmost. Few parish ministers, how conscientious and diligent soever, will ever have to complain of too little to do. But Wesley had a roving commission, was an "individuum vagum," as one of the clergy called him, and felt himself called by his strong sense of the need of some extraordinary means to awaken the sleeping population of the country, to overleap the barriers of clerical courtesy and ecclesiastical law, invading parish after parish of recusant incumbents without compunction or hesitancy, at the overweening impulse of duty. However much some clergymen may have sympathised with him in religious opinion, it is easy to understand how many natural and respectable scruples might prevent their following such a leader in his church errantry. They must, in fact, have broken with their own system to give themselves to his, and this they might not be prepared to do. They might value his itinerating plan as supplementary to the localised labours of the parish minister, but at the same time demur to its taking the place of parochial duty, as its tendency was and as its effect has been. Thus was Wesley early thrown upon a species of agency for help which he would doubtless sincerely deplore at

first, namely, a very slenderly equipped but zealously ardent and fearless laity, but which, again, his after experience led him to value at its proper worth, and see in the adaptation of his men to the common mind their highest qualification. "Fire low" is said to have been his frequent charge in after life to young ministers,—a maxim the truth of which was confirmed by the years of an unusually protracted ministry and acquaintance with mankind. A ministry that dealt in perfumed handkerchiefs and felt most at home in Bond Street and the ball-room, the perfumed popinjays of their profession; or one that, emulous of the fame of Nimrod, that mighty hunter before the Lord, sacrificed clerical duty to the sports of the field, prized the reputation of securing the brush before that of being a good shepherd of the sheep, and deemed the music of the Tally-ho or Hunting Chorus infinitely more melodious than the Psalms of David; or, again, one composed of the fastidious student of over-refined sensibilities, better acquainted with the modes of thought of past generations than with the actual habits of the present, delicate recluses and nervous men, the bats of society, who shrink from the sunshine of busy life into the congenial twilight of their library, whose over-educated susceptibilities would prompt the strain—

> "O lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
> I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed!"

these would have utterly failed for the work John Wesley wanted them to do. Gentlemen would either to a great degree have wanted those sympathies that should exist between the shepherd and the flock, or

would have quailed before the rough treatment the first preachers were called to endure. Although the refinement of a century has done much to crush the coarser forms of persecution, it must not be forgotten that the early ministers of Methodism were called to encounter physical quite as frequently as logical argumentation. The Middle terms of the syllogisms they were treated to were commonly the middle of the horsepond, and their Sorites the dungheap. Now the plain men whom Wesley was so fortunate as to enlist in his cause were those whose habits of daily life and undisputing faith in the truth of their system qualified to "endure hardness as good soldiers." They were not over-refined for intercourse with rude, common people, could put up with the coarsest fare in their mission to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to the poorest of the poor, and were not to be daunted by the perspective of rotten eggs and duckings, of brickbats and mandamuses, which threatened to keep effectually in abeyance any temptation to incur the woe when all men should speak well of them. Hence among the first coadjutors of the great leader were John Nelson, a stonemason; Thomas Olivers, a shoemaker; William Hunter, a farmer; Alexander Mather, a baker; Peter Jaco, a Cornish fisherman; Thomas Hanby, a weaver, &c. &c. &c.

Thus the ministry that was to fasten upon the people was rightly taken from among the people,—a point never to be lost sight of by any religious body aiming at popular influence. In the same proportion as the teachers are selected from the aristocracy or the middle classes, the field of labour will be confined to those classes, and the poor will, by a law that on the

broad scale admits of no exceptions, throw themselves into the hands of persons of their own rank. This in some measure accounts for the little success of the established churches of this empire in their ministry to the poor; why, through the long night of their history, they have toiled and caught of this class comparatively nothing. It gives a reason, too, in part why the poor are gradually receding more and more from Independency, Quakerism, and Wesleyan Methodism itself, into the bosom of the Primitive Methodists, the Ranters, the Bible Christians, &c., the humble but earnest preachers of evangelic religion to the lower classes, but, alas! it is to be feared in the great preponderance of instances, into the blasphemies of infidelity, the school of the pothouse, and the excitements of crime. The church militant must never forget that its highest mission is to the lowest, and that it is then most divine when it can most confidently affirm, after its Master, "to the poor the Gospel is preached!" Might we raise the solemn and affectionate warning to the Established and the Wesleyan Churches of this land, to whom, the one by legal position and the other by its origin, more expressly seems to appertain the office of ministering to the poor, we should say, the Established Church wants what it has not, what it never had, but what it is evidently awakening to see its want of—lay preachers of the humblest class to meet the spiritual necessities of the humblest class. The Scripture readers and visitors are well in their way, and in populous parishes absolutely essential as helps to the overtasked clergy, but they are not the kind of agents we mean. Forms of prayer read together with chapters and sermons at domiciliary visits,

while they may be acceptable to the already well-disposed and thoughtful poor, will not impress the unimpressed, nor attract the careless. These must have warm, impassioned, plain addresses from plain artisans, men of their own rank and stamp, only fired with the zeal of benevolence and gifted with a natural eloquence. The raw material for this sort of labourer in the vineyard exists in ample abundance everywhere, and the clergyman might press it into the service of the Lord, with infinite advantage to the souls of men, of society at large, and of his church in particular. But then the labourer of this class must be prepared more usually to preach and to pray without book, must speak as seldom as possible in schoolrooms and regular places of assembly, considering the highways and hedges, the workshop and the back lane as his church, and must not be fettered, and hampered, and thwarted, and fretted by the busy intermeddling of the rector, at the instance of ecclesiastical punctilio or professional jealousy.

And to our Wesleyan friends we next venture to say, looking in upon their polity from without, with no unfriendly eye, that the poor are as effectually slipping away from your control as from that of the Establishment. We name not the Independents, the only other considerable body in the country, because they never had the poor—that is, the very poor of the class we mean—and do not appear ever likely to have. The voluntary principle has not sufficiently developed its resources among their churches, and we question if it ever will, to admit of their hitherto undertaking any mission which does not promise to be speedily remunerative and self-supporting. But if ye followers of

John Wesley lose your poor, you lose your strength and peculiar honour and original claim upon Christian regard, ill compensated by taking your rank co-ordinately with two or three other communions which minister to the middle classes. This will indicate your growth, opulence, and respectability, undoubtedly, that you have lived down reproach, that you have a fund of external trapping which gives you importance in the general eye—ample machinery, intelligent workmen, wealthy and numerous capitalists embarked in the concern; but the glory is departed if the poor are not specially cared for, and drawn in in larger numbers into your society. From the poor, up to a recent period, your ranks have been chiefly recruited; it was they who swelled your numbers so rapidly in the early years of Methodism; and if this source of increase is dried up to any considerable extent, it will tell unfavourably ere long on the prosperity, reputation, and spirituality of the body. Any church that is to an observable degree unsuitable to the poor, disliked by the poor, and deserted by the poor, has failed to the same degree in one main object of its establishment, and fails to the same degree in securing the blessing of the God of the poor.

Another point in regard to the ministry to which Wesley gave habitual prominence, was the duty of making that profession a laborious calling. The heart and soul of his system, as of his personal ministry, he made to be WORK. Work was the mainspring of his Methodism, activity, energy, progression. From the least to the largest wheel within wheel that necessity created, or his ingenuity set up, all turned, wrought, acted incessantly and intelligently too. It was not

mere machinery; it was full of eyes. To the lowest agent of Methodism, be it collector, contributor, exhorter, or distributor of tracts, each has, besides the faculty of constant occupation, the ability to render a reason for what he does. Work and wisdom are in happy combination—at least, such was the purpose of the contriver, and we have reason to believe has been in a fair proportion secured. And the labour that marks the lower, marks pre-eminently the higher departments of the system. The ministry beyond all professions demands labour. He who seeks a cure that it may be a sinecure, or a benefice which shall be a benefit to himself alone—who expects to find the ministry a couch of repose instead of a field for toil—a bread-winner rather than a soul-saver by means of painful watchings, fastings, toils and prayers—has utterly mistaken its nature, and is unworthy of its honour. It is a stewardship, a husbandry, an edification, a ward, a warfare, demanding the untiring effort of the day and unslumbering vigilance of the night to fulfil its duties and secure its reward. It is well to remember that the slothful and the wicked servant are conjoined in the denunciation of the indignant Master—"Thou WICKED and SLOTHFUL servant!"

Where there may be sufficient lack of principle to prompt to indolence and self-indulgence, there are few communions which will not present the opportunity to the sluggish or sensual minister. But the Methodist mode of operations is better calculated than perhaps almost any other for checking human corruption when developing itself in this form. The ordinary amount of official duty required of the travelling preachers is

enough to keep both the reluctant and the willing labourer fully employed.

And Mr. Wesley exacted no more of others than he cheerfully and systematically rendered himself, daily labour, even to weariness, being the habit of his life. A glance at his employment at some two or three periods of his career will dispel the mystery attending the marvellous productiveness of his pen, and multiplicity of his labours, but only to heighten our respect for the industry, perseverance, and conscientiousness, of the saint and herald of mercy. On the voyage out to Georgia in the year 1735, his day was thus apportioned:—

"We now began to be a little regular: from four in the morning till five, each of us used private prayer. From five to seven we read the Bible together, carefully comparing it with the writings of the earliest ages. At seven we breakfasted: at eight were the public prayers. From nine to twelve learnt the languages, and instructed the children. At twelve we met to give an account to one another what we had done since our last meeting, and what we designed to do before our next. At one we dined. The time from dinner to four, we spent in reading to those of whom each of us had taken charge, or in speaking to them severally as need required. At four were the evening prayers; when either the lesson was explained, (as it always was in the morning), or the children were catechised and instructed before the congregation. From five to six we again used private prayer. From six to seven I read in our cabin to two or three of the passengers, of whom there were about eighty English on board, and each of my brethren to a few more in theirs. At seven I joined with the Germans in their public service; while Mr. Ingham was reading between the decks to as many as desired to hear. At eight we met again to instruct and exhort one another. Between nine and ten we went to bed, where neither the roaring of the sea, nor

the motion of the ship, could take away the refreshing sleep which God gave us."

This, it must be acknowledged, was pretty close occupation in an ill-found transport, a hundred years ago, crowded with emigrants, and subject to every inconvenience. The gratuitous devotion of the young chaplain, when arrived at Savannah, to manifold labour will be found to be equally worthy of our admiration:—

"On the Lord's-day," he writes in his Journal, "the English service lasted from five to half-past six. The Italian, with a few Vaudois began at nine. Next came service for the English, including the sermon with the holy communion, continued from half-past ten till about half-past twelve. The French service began at one. At two I catechised the children. About three began the English service. After this was ended I joined with as many as my largest room could hold, in reading, prayer, and singing praise. And about six the service of the Germans began, at which I was glad to be present, not as a teacher, but as a learner."

This is no artist's sketch of himself, hung up in his studio as a specimen of his skill, or poet's portrait prefixed to doggrel dithyrambs, with "eye in a fine frenzy rolling," to gratify personal vanity, or lure love-sick misses; but the grave unvarnished report of a grave earnest man, who knew there was little to commend in it, for in doing his utmost he only did what was his duty to do. Yet was he the prince of missionaries, however humble his self-estimate might be, the prime apostle of Christendom since Luther; his pre-eminent example too likely to be lost sight of in this missionary age, when the church, in the bustle of its present activities, has little time to cherish recollections of its past worthies, or to speculate with clearness on the

shapes of its future calling and destiny. But in one sense he was more than an apostle. By miracle they were qualified with the gift of tongues, for missions to men of strange speech; but Wesley did not shrink from the toil of acquiring language after language, in order to speak intelligibly on the subject of religion to foreigners. The Italian he acquired that he might minister to a few Vaudois; the German, that he might converse with Moravians; and the Spanish, for the benefit of some Jews among his parishioners. Such rare parts, and zeal, and perseverance, and learning, are seldom combined in any living man. We have never seen nor heard of any one like Wesley in the capacity and liking for labour; we indulge, therefore, very slender hopes of encountering such a one in the remaining space of our pilgrimage. In our sober judgment, it were as sane to expect the buried majesty of Denmark to revisit the glimpses of the moon as hope to find all the conditions presented in John Wesley show themselves again in England. We may not look upon his like again. His labours in a particular department—that of preaching—astound from their magnitude; although these, far from being the sum total of his occupations, were but a fraction of a vast whole, and a sample of the rest. During fifty-two years, according to his biographers, he generally delivered two sermons a-day, very frequently four or five. Calculating, therefore, at twice a-day, and allowing fifty sermons annually for extraordinary occasions, which is the lowest computation that can be made, the whole number in fifty-two years will be forty thousand four hundred and sixty. To these may be added an infinite number of exhortations to the societies after preaching,

and other occasional meetings at which he assisted. Add to these his migrations and journeyings to and fro, and none can say that his life was not well filled up. In his younger days he travelled on horseback, and was a hard but unskilful rider. With a book held up before his eyes by both hands, and the rein dropped on the horse's neck, he often travelled as much as fifty, sixty, or even seventy miles a-day; from the quickness of his pace and unguardedness of his horsemanship, endangering his own and the good steed's limbs by frequent falls. At a later period he used a carriage. Of his travels, the lowest calculation we can make is four thousand miles annually, which in fifty-two years will give two hundred and eight thousand miles; that is, if he had ridden eight times round the globe on which we dwell, he would have had a handsome surplus of miles remaining, to have done his achievement into Irish measure. Of the salutary effect of these abundant labours upon his frame we have his personal testimony at a very advanced age. His was a "cruda viridisque senectus" to the last, and he himself a memorable instance of the worth of the OPEN-AIR-AND-HARD-WORK-CURE, a process of more certain value and ready application at all times than hydropathy, homœopathy, or any of the thousand quackeries of the present day. On his attaining his eighty-fifth year, he enters the following reflections in his Journal:—

"I this day enter on my eighty-fifth year; and what cause have I to praise God, as for a thousand spiritual blessings, so for bodily blessings also! How little have I suffered yet by 'the rust of numerous years?' It is true I am not so agile as in time past: I do not run or walk so fast as I did; my sight is a little decayed; my left eye is grown dim, and hardly serves

me to read. I have daily some pain in the ball of my right eye, as also in my right temple, (occasioned by a blow I received some time since), and in my right shoulder and arm, which I impute partly to a sprain, and partly to the rheumatism. I find, likewise, some decay in the memory, with regard to names and things lately past; but not at all with regard to what I have read or heard twenty, forty, or sixty years ago. Neither do I find any decay in my hearing, smell, taste, or appetite (though I want but a third part of the food I once did), nor do I feel any such thing as weariness either in travelling or preaching. And I am not conscious of any decay in writing sermons, which I do as readily, and I believe as correctly, as ever.

"To what cause am I to impute this, that I am as I am? First, doubtless, to the power of God, fitting me for the work to which I am called, as long as he pleases to continue me therein; and next, subordinately to this, to the prayers of his children. May we not impute it, as inferior means, 1. To my constant exercise and change of air? 2. To my never having lost a night's sleep, sick or well, at land or sea, since I was born? 3. To my having sleep at command, so that, whenever I feel myself almost worn out, I call it, and it comes, day or night? 4. To my having constantly, for above sixty years, risen at four in the morning? 5. To my constant preaching at five in the morning, for above fifty years? 6. To my having had so little pain in my life, and so little sorrow or anxious care? Even now, though I find pain daily in my eye, temple, or arm, yet it is never violent, and seldom lasts many minutes at a time.

"Whether or not this is sent to give me warning that I am shortly to quit this tabernacle I do not know; but, be it one way or the other, I have only to say—

"'My remnant of days
I spend to his praise,
Who died the whole world to redeem;
Be they many or few,
My days are his due,
And they all are devoted to him!'"

We shall not complete the picture of John Wesley "the aged," unless we draw upon Mr. Alexander Knox, the accomplished correspondent and faithful friend of Bishop Jebb, who furnishes us with the following portrait of his venerable acquaintance:—

"Very lately I had an opportunity for some days together of observing Mr. Wesley with attention. I endeavoured to consider him not so much with the eye of a friend, as with the impartiality of a philosopher; and I must declare every hour I spent in his company afforded me fresh reasons for esteem and veneration. So fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance; every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation we might be at a loss whether to admire most his fine classical taste, his knowledge of men and things, or his own overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw, in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion. No cynical remarks on the levity of youth imbittered his discourse; no applausive retrospect to past times marked his present discontent. In him even old age appeared delightful, like an evening without a cloud: and it was impossible to observe him without wishing fervently,

'May my latter end be like his!'"

After the view we have presented of the life and labours of our hero, it may be almost superfluous to attempt A DELINEATION OF HIS CHARACTER. As we recollect, however, a promise to this effect at the commencement of this sketch, we cannot quit ourselves of

our obligation without touching upon this head. To enter upon its minute analysis, or seek to delineate it in its more subtle lines or delicate shades, our purpose forbids. The time and space would be wanting, while there is no lack of liking for the task. We shall therefore confine our further remarks to an illustration of what we conceive to be the leading traits of John Wesley's character, never so specified, that we are aware of, before, yet lying so palpably on the surface, that they have only to be named to be recognised. Without the pre-eminent qualities in question, no one was ever great and good; and as we have no scruple in calling him great and good beyond easy comparison, so are these qualities to be found developed in him to an unusual degree. They made him what he became, the successful reformer of his age, and one of England's noblest worthies, while his system will make him a benefactor to millions yet unborn.

The distinctive features of character we unhesitatingly ascribe to him, are AN INDOMITABLE FIRMNESS, and A BOUNDLESS BENEVOLENCE. John Wesley was a man in a singular measure tenax propositi. Where he thought himself certainly right nothing on earth could move him. In all such cases this quality is a great virtue, but in cases of a different complexion it is a great fault. In questions of doubtful propriety and prudence it will bear the ugly names of obstinacy and self-will. But stigmatise it as we please there never was a great man without a strong will, and an infusion of self-reliance sufficient to raise him above the dauntings of opposition and reliance upon props. It is a heritable quality, as transmissible from father to son, as the sage or "foolish face." Wesley certainly

derived it from his parents. The daughter of the eminent nonconformist rector of Cripplegate, Dr. Annesley, who, at thirteen years of age had studied the state-church controversy, and made up her mind, with force of reason too, to contemn her father's decision, and take her place for life on the other side, cannot be supposed to have been wanting in firmness; who, further, would never renounce her Jacobite respect for the jus divinum of the Stuart kings, nor say Amen to her husband's prayers for him of the Revolution, nor bow beneath the thousand ills of her married life, and pursued the onward, even, and unwearying tenor of her way, undismayed by censure, uncrushed by poverty and domestic cares, unchanging and unchanged to the last, could not be wanting in it. Nor was the sire less endowed with it, though there was more of petulant and human passion in its display in him. The man whose whole life was a perpetual struggle with circumstances, and war with opinions, and a series of ill-rewarded efforts—the wight who stole away from the dissenting academy, whence they sohoed him in vain, and without consulting friend or relative, tramped it to Oxford, and entered himself a penniless servitor; who afterwards, a right loyal but very threadbare clergyman, rode off in a huff from his wife, nor rejoined her for a twelvemonth, till the death of King William released him from his sturdily kept but unrighteous vow—who "fought with wild beasts," for high church of the highest order, and shrank from no cuffs he caught in such a cause; and who, when his "Job" was consumed in the fire that burnt his parsonage, sat down to renew the labour of years, and re-compose and re-write his learned Latin folio: these are so many indi-

cations of indomitable firmness, that we should be blind as moles to overlook its presence in his character. John Wesley had the same unbending sinew. He too was made of stern unpliant stuff, and to drive the Tiber back to its sources were as easy a task as to turn him back from a course deliberately chosen with the approval of his judgment. Opponents, strong and numerous enough, he had to encounter, to justify concession, had he been so disposed, nor was reason always so visibly on his side but he might have paused. We shall name an occasion or two such as rarely occur in the life of a good man, which signalised the lordliness of his will, and proved him to be endowed with a rare determination. We omit the ridicule and minor persecutions provoked by the religious singularities of his early career, as not sufficient to turn even an aspen-minded man who had any earnest devotion about him, from his way, and note his first most trying decision, that by which he was led to renounce his father's living.

Shortly before his father's decease it occurred to the head of the family, looking anxiously forward to its fortunes, and those of his parish, how desirable it would be that his son John should succeed him in his cure, at once for the perpetuation of the religious care he had exercised over his parishioners, and that his wife and daughters might retain their accustomed home at the parsonage. Here was every consideration to move a susceptible man,—regard for souls, veneration for a parent in the ministry, respect for hoar hairs grown grey in the service of the church, and Christian and family ties of more than ordinary strength, all put before him in a strain of uncommon force and pathos

by his father in his final appeal. Thus wrote the aged father to his son at Oxford:—

"Thus is the case before us: put all the circumstances together: if you are not indifferent whether the labours of an aged father, for above forty years in God's vineyard, be lost, and the fences of it trodden down and destroyed; if you consider that Mr. W. must in all probability succeed me if you do not, and that the prospect of that mighty Nimrod's coming hither shocks my soul, and is in a fair way of bringing down my grey hairs with sorrow to the grave;—if you have any care for our family, which must be dismally shattered as soon as I am dropt—if you reflect on the dear love and longing which this poor people has for you, whereby you will be enabled to do God the more service, and the plenteousness of the harvest consisting of near two thousand souls, whereas you have not many more souls in the University—you may perhaps alter your mind, and bend your will to His, who has promised if in all our ways we acknowledge Him, he will direct our paths."

We do not profess to be ourselves the rock fortress that could have withstood such artillery as this. We incline to fear that the red hot shot of arguments like these must have fired our magazine and blown up our defences. But none of these things moved our hero. He was devout, affectionate, and filial, but firm; so notoriously so, that his elder brother Samuel, writing to him on the subject, in December, 1734, says: "Yesterday I received a letter from my father, wherein he tells me you are unalterably resolved not to accept of a certain living if you could get it. After this declaration I believe no one can move your mind but Him who made it." The question was, in fact, decided, and he was not to be shaken from his determination, the ground of decision being, not the comparative merits of Epworth and Oxford, as fields of usefulness, but

something more exclusively personal. He felt as many a man in earnest about salvation has felt before and since, that the care of his own soul is of prime importance, and must be especially regarded in every measure we adopt; that the neglect of self is ill compensated by saving benefit to others, or any advantage of an earthly kind. For reasons given with great length and clearness, in a letter to his father, he concluded a continued residence at Oxford essential to his soul's peace and welfare. "The point is," he says, "whether I shall or shall not work out my salvation, whether I shall serve Christ or Belial." The semi-monastic life of the university was essential to the very life of piety in his heart, according to his views at that juncture; therefore Epworth, with its long list of prudential make-weights, kicked the beam.

Now Wesley was HUMANLY right. His personal relation to eternity outweighed all other considerations to his awakened soul. He felt, as few men feel, how solemn a thing it is to die. His resolution was based upon the sentiment of his own hymn in after days:—

"A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky."

And Wesley was DIVINELY right. If ever the Spirit of God had to do with the moral movements of men, its operation is discernible in this case. It was of infinite moment to the world that Wesley's decision should have been what it was, and of equal moment to his own peace of conscience that it should have been correct. The mode in which he viewed the question, sets him right in the court of conscience, and the results that

followed justified his decision. His father would have involved him in a maze of nice casuistry—puzzled him by a complex tangle of motives and influences—but wiser than he, and more free from bias, the son looks at it in the simple, proper light, that of duty, and gives utterance to the following sentiments, which are sublimely true:—

"I do not say that the glory of God is to be my first, or my principal consideration, but my only one: since all that are not implied in this are absolutely of no weight; in presence of this they all vanish away, they are less than the small dust of the balance. And indeed till all other considerations were set aside, I could never come to any clear determination; till my eye was single my whole body was full of darkness. Every consideration distinct from this threw a shadow over all the objects I had in view, and was such a cloud as no light could penetrate. Whereas so long as I can keep my eye single, and steadily fixed on the glory of God, I have no more doubt of the way wherein I should go, than of the shining of the sun at noon-day."

Well said, clear head, and stoutly done, brave heart, though there were natural yearnings and fond misgivings in thy way! IN QUESTIONS OF DUTY thou didst clearly see DUTY ALONE IS TO BE CONSULTED. Thou didst not consult with flesh and blood; these had crushed thy conscience and warped thy will, and reversed thy decision. Thou didst take the matter to the infallible oracle, Him that sitteth upon the throne; like Hezekiah thou didst lay it upon the altar of the Most High, and tremulously say, "That which I know not teach thou me," and thou wert rewarded with a divine intimation, "This is the way!" Thou didst thus hate thy father and thy mother, and thy house, and take up thy cross for Christ's sake and the Gospel's;

but thy more than natural, thy CHRISTIAN firmness, reaped its recompense even here, for thou receivedst a hundredfold now, even in this time, houses and brethren, and sisters and mothers, and children; and long since, hast thou received in heaven, eternal life. Stoic fortitude, Roman daring, hide your heads before such firmness as this. Epictetus is a jest, and Regulus, "egregius exul," a fable, when compared with this plain narrative of modern heroism. Here, however, was one of the leading features of John Wesley's character, broadly portrayed, deeply coloured, boldly thrown up from the canvass, and giving happy omen of his future career.

The firmness which marked his decision here, the same which forbade discouragement and retractation at Oxford, where, after a short absence, he found his flock of twenty-seven persons reduced to five, and which made him resist the authorities at Georgia, was peculiarly shown in his relations to the Church of England throughout his life. In the line of remarks this topic opens, we shall describe simply the facts of the case, and neither apologise for Wesley nor condemn the Church. He was never a Dissenter in his own view of the word, and never wished his followers to be. Nevertheless, there is a prevailing order in the proceedings of every community, and this order, in his own church, he did not hesitate to disturb, at the instance of what he deemed sufficiently valid reasons. Whatever his followers may urge in defence of his measures, they were obviously at odds with ecclesiastical order. We have a very remarkable conversation of John Wesley with the Bishop of Bristol, in the year 1739, on the subject of justification by faith, in which, after

disposing of that topic, Wesley's proceedings are canvassed in the terms we shall presently cite, the whole going in proof of two things, the one how careful he was in the outset of his career to encroach as little as possible upon canonical order, and the other, that, at the call of apprehended duty, he was prepared to go any lengths in violation of it.

The Bishop says: "Mr. Wesley, I will deal plainly with you: I once thought you and Mr. Whitefield well-meaning men, but I cannot think so now. For I have heard more of you; matters of fact."—

* * * *

Mr. Wesley.—"Pray, my Lord, what are those facts you have heard?"

Bishop.—"I hear you administer the sacrament in your societies."

Mr. W.—"My Lord, I never did yet, and believe never shall."

Bishop.—"I hear too, many people fall into fits in your societies, and that you pray over them."

Mr. W.—"I do so, my Lord, when any show, by strong cries and tears, that their soul is in deep anguish; I frequently pray to God to deliver them from it, and our prayer is often heard in that hour."

Bishop.—"Very extraordinary indeed! Well, Sir, since you ask my advice, I will give it you very freely. You have no business here. You are not commissioned to preach in this diocese. Therefore I advise you to go hence."

Mr. W.—"My Lord, my business on earth is to do what good I can. Wherever, therefore, I think I 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. As to my preaching here, a dispensation of the Gospel is committed to me, and woe is me if I preach not the Gospel, whereever I am in the habitable world. Your Lordship knows, being ordained a priest, by the commission I then received, I am a

priest of the Church Universal; and being ordained a 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 do not, therefore, conceive 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."

Whatever the effect of this dainty speech upon the equanimity of the good bishop, the other party was doubtless as calm as men of strong will and fixed determination usually are, and as respectful as his punctilious courtesy would constrain him to be. The incident was John Wesley to the life, and laid open with sufficient clearness the terms upon which his co-operation with the Establishment was to be retained. They were just these. If I am allowed to combat the prevailing vices of the land, the ignorance, irreligion, semibarbarism, and brutality in my own way, irregular it may be, but desperate cases require desperate remedies, and if you, clergy and bishops, will undertake to feed and watch over the restored wanderers I bring back to the fold;—or if you will not do so much as this, but will simply NOT OPPOSE the measures I employ to do good—why thus and then I am yours, unreservedly and entirely yours; but if you malign and thwart and persecute an earnest brother who would help you to do your work, and whose heart bleeds over the perishing souls of his fellow-creatures, why then be it known to you, that by a commission higher than that of the Archbishop of Canterbury, I am

authorised and determined to persevere. Souls must be awakened, converted, saved; if in connexion with the church of my adoption, covered with its shield and sanction, well; but if not, the work must be done at all hazards.

Watson has well expressed this in his "Memoirs of Wesley." He says of the administration of the Lord's Supper during canonical hours by the founder of Methodism in a few of his chapels, that it was "a measure which, like other inconsistencies of a similar kind, grew out of a sense of duty, warring with and restrained by strong prepossessions."

And this is the language of all his further acts of disconformity to the existing order of things in the Establishment. He never contemplated the formation of a sect, much less of an enemy or rival to the Church of England. A sect nevertheless grew up by stress of circumstances, frowned upon and thrown off by its mother, yet clinging with natural fondness to the parent who still disowns it, and with that sect he feared not in evil and in good repute to identify himself. Crossed in his course by those authorities he would fain have conciliated, and of whom he never allowed himself to speak evil, he would not be turned from it. His mind was made up. Opposition wrought the contrary way with him. Pressure did but confirm his resolution as it hardens concrete. His parish was the world. He would not provoke enmity; he would not give offence; but he would call no man Master to the enslavement of his opinions or the fettering of his free action. He had a divine Master, and to Him alone would he refer his conduct—to Him alone stand or fall.

That Wesley had looked the bugbear separation in

the face, and was not to be frightened even by such a contingency from his apprehended duty, is demonstrated by the Minutes of Conference, so early as 1744, nearly fifty years before his death. In these the question is asked: "Do you not entail a schism on the Church? that is, is it not probable that your hearers, after your death, will be scattered into all sects and parties? or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?" And to this the answers are: "1. We are persuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe, notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead."

Every reader of it must allow that this is a most remarkable document—more like prophecy than speculation—for as it surmises so it was. If they were thrust out—these few good men in Methodism's earliest days—they were prepared to go out, with no misgivings as to their guidance, and no fears as to their fortunes; and, we may add, with few regrets, except for those whom they were to leave behind them, who thus counted themselves unworthy of eternal life. Thus early, then, before circumstances eventuated in excision, the strong-hearted reformer showed that he did not fear the thing Dissent, although he never courted nor owned the name.

The history of Wesley's relations to the Established

Church is traced with elaborate skill in "The Wesleyan Methodist Magazine" for 1829, in a series of papers generally understood to be from the practised pen of Dr. Humphrey Sandwith, a short paragraph from which we venture to extract:—

"Unequivocal as were Mr. Wesley's professions of fidelity to the Church, his actions, to a prejudiced mind, have the semblance of inconsistency. As a departure from strict churchmanship may be mentioned field-preaching, the employment of lay-preachers, the erection of chapels unconsecrated and not subjected to ecclesiastical jurisdiction, the use of extempore prayers himself, and the encouragement of them in his societies, class-meetings, band-meetings, love-feasts, and watch-nights, under an economy exclusively his own; and the annual conferences of his preachers. When to these obvious innovations we add the commencement of a financial economy for the support of the preachers and the spread of religious truth, we perceive the rudiments of a system intended indeed to be auxiliary to, but partly independent of the Church of England. The true solution of the whole case, and one which obviates the charge of inconsistency, is Mr. Wesley's persuasion that he was bettering the Establishment by measures which he hoped would eventually be recognised. The apology for his numerous deviations is to be found in the settled conviction of his mind, that they were sanctioned by the Divine blessing; and that the adequate occasion of his mission was the total degeneracy of the Church. Acting from this impulse, and without any previous design or plan at all, 'everything arose just as the occasion offered.' And while his attachment to the Church was truly conscientious, equally so was his determination to innovate as Providence should direct him. His language, equally with his actions, indicated the self-impelling convictions of the Reformer. 'Nevertheless,' says he, 'as the generality even of religious people, who do not understand my notions of acting, and who on the one hand hear me profess that I will not separate from the Church, and on the other, that I do vary from it

in these instances, they will naturally think I am inconsistent with myself. And they cannot but think so, unless they bear in mind my two principles :—the one, that I dare not separate from the Church,—that I believe it would be a sin so to do ; the other, that I believe it would be sin not to vary from it in the points above mentioned.' "

He was clearly not a nonconformist in his own apprehension, whatever he may be in ours. But he had embarked upon a sea of conscientious service, and he evidently did not much care whither it drifted him. Like Columbus, he was confident that it would land him in the proper place. He therefore looked out upon the waste before him, as fearless as the high-souled Genoese,—

> " Or like stout Cortes, when with eagle eyes
> He star'd at the Pacific, and all his men
> Looked at each other with a wild surprise—
> Silent upon a peak of Darien."

This is evidently the philosophy of the case, as felt by Mr. Wesley. But so completely had the venerable leader of the movement habituated himself to the independent action of his society, that nothing could have been more in accordance with the current of his life, principles, and anticipations (see " Minutes of Conference " for 1744, just cited), nor more certainly have secured his approval, than the distinctive position this body has since taken up, neither controlled by the Church of England, nor hostile to it. That body seems to have embodied in the happiest way the spirit and pattern of its founder, when it defined its general policy towards the Establishment in the following terms :—" Methodism exists in a friendly relation with the Establishment. In all its official writings and

sanctioned publications, though often called to defend itself against intemperate clergymen, it treats the Church itself with respect and veneration, and cordially rejoices in the advance of its religious character and legitimate moral influence."

This in our judgment is right and dignified, and just what the founder of Methodism would have approved. We would not have any church in ITS CORPORATE CAPACITY exceed a simple protest in its opposition to the Established Church of the country. But our views on this head would be very imperfectly stated, if we did not add, THAT EVERY INDIVIDUAL OF EVERY RELIGIOUS BODY SHOULD BE LEFT AT PERFECT LIBERTY TO ENTERTAIN HIS PRIVATE CONVICTIONS, AND TO PUBLISH THEM IN ANY WAY HE MAY THINK BEST, EITHER BY THE PRESS OR OTHERWISE—UNHAMPERED EITHER BY THE CORPORATE ACTION OF HIS CHURCH, OR THE EXPRESSION OF ITS OPINION. The limit we assign to aggression by one ecclesiastical body upon another ecclesiastical body, we would be the last to impose as a fetter upon the spontaneous activities or the settled convictions of individuals. That may be imperative in them which would be highly inexpedient in a religious community.

In the unbending firmness of our hero we see much of the gracious man,—the man whose heart is established with grace,—but we see also in it largely the man John Wesley. We fancy we perceive in it no less somewhat of the sturdiness of the national character. John Bull will not be badgered and browbeaten any more than he will be coaxed and cajoled into what his strong determination opposes; and Wesley in his nervous English, his practical wisdom, his steady good

sense, and his unconquerable will, displayed some of the most respectable and salient points of the Saxon character, belonging by unmistakeable evidence to that family of the Bulls, which, notwithstanding all its faults, has no few qualities to admire. There is in his rigid firmness, moreover, something of his puritan ancestry,—one point at least in which Bishop Warburton was right. His blood was vitiated with their stubborn humour, if it be a vice. He belonged to the tribe of Ishmael by both father's and mother's side at a single remove, and he could not be expected to turn out other than he did. But we pause; John Wesley was frank, generous, open, simple as a child, confiding, plastic and persuasible where a man had right upon his side, but where himself was right he was positive—to a fault?—no, to perfection; and it had been a less miracle to move a mountain into the sea than to move him from his purpose. This goes far to explain the man and his work.

One of his letters to a bishop may be quoted here, in proof of his fixed determination to let no trifles impede his course of imagined duty. It is almost epigrammatic in its brevity, and breathes in its very curtness the "Wha daur meddle wi' me?" of Scottish defiance. Objection was made, it would appear, to his occupying the pulpits of the Establishment after he had become fully committed to his spiritual knight-errantry, and the following is the laconic vindication of his right:—

"My Lord,—Several years ago, the churchwardens of St. Bartholomew's informed Dr. Gibson, then Lord Bishop of London, 'My Lord, Mr. Bateman, our rector, invites Mr. Wesley very frequently to preach in his church.' The Bishop

replied, 'And what would you have me do? I have no right to hinder him. Mr. Wesley is a clergyman regularly ordained, and under no ecclesiastical censure.'

"I am, my Lord,
"Your Lordship's obedient Servant,
"JOHN WESLEY."

To no one was Regent Murray's saying at the grave of John Knox ever more applicable than to our intrepid modern John :—

"There lies one who never feared the face of man."

UNBOUNDED BENEVOLENCE was another leading trait in his character. This was the basis of his life, the spring of his self-denial and his labours. A recluse at Oxford, musty folios, and metaphysics, could not extinguish the smouldering fire within—

"He thought as a sage, but he felt as a man."

Afterwards the fire burst forth; he kindled, as he flew over the world, a flaming seraph of mercy to mankind.

At the University, his benevolence led him into frightful prisons and condemned cells, into hospital and lazar-house, from the society of the common-room and beloved books, to converse with felons and miserable sufferers. It curtailed his bread and his dress, it debarred him of the comfort of a well-shorn head, it led to a course of self-sacrifice and effort for the benefit of the wretched and the sinful, which put his sincerity sorely to the test, and lasted with his life. His heart bled for the world; he beheld sin bursting out in blotches of sorrow all over the face of society, and he longed to purify, console, and heal. He could not look upon men drawn unto death, and

ready to be slain, without attempting their rescue. He saw no hope for their bodies or their souls but in the labours and voluntary gifts of Christians for their salvation. He felt for their fate, but, eminently practical, he felt in bed and board, in clothing and comfort. His was sumptuary sensibility more than tearful, active compassion rather than passive. Merely because more easy of illustration, and not for a moment putting it in comparison with the ardour of his soul to do good, we adduce his monetary benevolence in proof of our point—a benevolence which would give all, do all, reserve nothing, provided it could but win a revenue of glory to God and happiness to wretched men. Never did any man part with money more freely. His charities knew no limit but his means. He gave away all that he had beyond bare provision for his present wants. He began this procedure early, and never left off till he had done with earth. In his first year at college he received £30, and making £28 suffice for his necessities, he gave away in charities 40*s*. The next year he received £60, but still making £28 meet his expenditure, he gave away £32. The third year he received £90, and gave away £62. His receipts in the fourth year increased by the same sum as before, and out of £120 he gave away all but his primitive £28. And thus he acted through life, having given away in charities, it is believed, as much as £30,000, without a moment's thought for himself; his hands open as day, his heart the dwelling-place of kindness. His generous and unstinted liberality finds its most convincing proof in his circumstances at death. He had often and publicly declared that his own hands should be his executors,

and that, if he died worth £10 beyond the value of his books, and other inconsiderable items, he would give the world leave to call him a thief and a robber. He MADE all he could, and his publications were numerous and profitable; he SAVED all he could, not wasting so much as a sheet of paper; and then he GAVE all he could, with an angel's sublime disregard of gold and silver, and the wealth the world sets such store by. The notion that he must be enriching himself prevailed even among those who ought to have known better. Need we wonder, then, that he received a letter from the Board of Excise, telling him that the Commissioners could not doubt but that he had plate, of which he had neglected to make entry, and requiring him immediately to send a proper return. The following was his answer:—"Sir, I have two silver teaspoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread. Your obedient servant, JOHN WESLEY." His chaise and horses, his clothes, and a few trifles of that kind, were all, his books excepted, that he left at his death. Thus he laid not up treasure upon earth, but in heaven—a good foundation against the time to come, that he might lay hold upon eternal life. Free from the love of money and the impulse of ambition, the two most ordinary motives of action among civilized men, what powerful principle sustained him in his lifelong career of labour and endurance, self-denial and responsibility? One that never entered into the calculation of his unfriendly critics and biographers—A STRONG SENSE OF DUTY SPRINGING FROM LOVE TO GOD. The stanza of

the hymn, so much upon his lips on his dying bed, is the key that unlocks his heart, that opens up the mystery of a life otherwise inexplicable:—

"I 'll praise my Maker while I 've breath,
And when my voice is lost in death
Praise shall employ my noblest powers:
My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
While life and thought and being last,
Or immortality endures."

And when the daughters of music were brought low, and the death-rattle was heard in his throat, when lip and limb were alike stiffening in the paralysis and collapse of death, the last feeble effort of his voice was put forth in syllabling

"I 'll praise—I 'll praise."

Thus died John Wesley,—an end in harmony with his life. Our Euthanasia shapes itself into resemblance to his dismissal:—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

But we cannot leave our subject even here, without adverting to one of the finest forms in which the benevolence of this great man showed itself—one of the finest forms, in fact, which it can assume amid the war of parties and clash of religious discord—namely, HIS ENLARGED CHARITY TOWARD RELIGIONISTS OF EVERY NAME. We believe there is no instance on record in which he was the assailant; and that it was only when covered with the blackest aspersions affecting his character and creed that he came forth to make his modest, and in most cases, convincing apologies. The unmeasured invectives of many a Thersites,

both in the church and in the world, he met with the philosophic gentleness and gravity of a Ulysses. He seldom forgot, in the heat of polemics, what was due to himself as a gentleman, a scholar, and a Christian.

His CATHOLICITY is seen in the constant object of his labours, which was not to raise a new sect among other sects, but to revive the languid spirit of religion in all, and especially in his own beloved church. That ever his work and people took another direction, was not owing to any crafty scheme, long a-hatching in his own bosom, but to the bent of circumstances and the preference of the people themselves. And here we feel bound to interpose another measure of the greatness of our hero, subordinate it may be, yet worthy of distinct observation—it was this. Not that with the skill of an architect he drew his elaborate plan before he set to work, perfect in its elevation and details, minute in its specifications, and accurately calculated as to cost in every particular. The only cost he ever counted was the amount of personal devotedness he was prepared to exhibit; and there, in truth, he knew no reserve. He was ready to lay down his life for the sake of the Lord Jesus. His greatness is rather seen in the wonderful adaptation of his plans to the surprising emergencies of his career; in meeting every difficulty as it rose, with the exact measure that relieved it; in looking, with the coolness of a consummate general, on every part of the field, and directing his forces, with the accuracy of a machine, rather than with the contingencies incidental to a mass of independent minds. I know not how, with sufficient strength, to express my admiration of Wesley's singular greatness in this point of view. To

sketch a beautiful theory, and help to work it out, is an accomplishment within reach of most minds; but to meet emergencies with masterly measures, is the rare felicity of few. A crisis is usually met by temporary expedients, which often only complicate the distress, more perplexingly embarrass the difficulty, and, even where successful for the moment, are but of shortlived efficacy; but the eminence of John Wesley's talent is shown, and the beauty and perfection of his plans, in the flexibility and perpetuity of his system. Precisely the same machinery which he called into operation at the bidding of necessity, is in operation now, when the necessity that evoked it has ceased to exist, thus proved to be as adapted for the maturity of a great connexion, as for its infancy:—its governing conference, its itinerating ministers, its stewards for its temporalities, its classes, payments, love-feasts, for the nurture of the hopeful, the teaching of the ignorant, the edification of all. Like our unequalled British constitution, a positive blessing we will not consent to part with for the possible advantages of parchment constitutions and enthusiast theories, it is a system of wise adaptations and gradual growth. Such is the system of the founder of Methodism, attaining a harmony and precision of working, during the forty years of its consolidation under his own eye, and exhibiting since then a power of development in proportion to any supposable demand upon it, which it were hard, perhaps impossible, to improve. Esto perpetua! Long may it remain a monument of his far-reaching wisdom, the creation of his pious zeal, a pattern to the church, and a blessing to the world! But to return to the catholicity of Wesley. Though

he was thrown up, by force of events, to the surface of a great ecclesiastical sea, over whose subject deep he rode with princely port, stilling the noise of the waves and the tumult of the people, a very Neptune in his regal car, whose sovereignty every crested billow seemed to own by instant subsidence—yet never did he seek proselytes to mere Methodism, perfectly satisfied if his neighbours were the converted people of God, whatever communion they might belong to. The author of this sketch ventures to hope, that he himself loves from his heart every creature of God, and cannot recollect any period of his religious life in which he would cross his threshold to make any pious man of any communion a member of his own, yet would he be reluctant to put his charity in comparison with that of this heavenly-minded man. In Wesley it was the element he breathed, the garb he habitually wore, the very life of his life, the very soul of his soul. He gave no countenance to proselytism, and deprecated at least the name of separation. He never put his peculiar views above the fundamentals of the faith; nor, where the differences were the greatest between himself and others, did he for a moment forget that "charity which is the bond of perfectness." Candour must admit, however, that invective fell without lack of stint upon the clerical body at large, and all supposed hindrances to the work of the enthusiastic predicants. But not from Wesley himself. It neither adds to our respect for the men, nor our satisfaction in the work, that they should have gloried in opening their mouths so freely "against the letter-learned clergymen of the Church of England" (Whitefield's Journal), and in denouncing "the learned rabbis

of the Church of England" (Seward's Journal), as the Scribes and Pharisees of his generation. None but a very coarse appetite could digest diet so strong as the following against Archbishop Tillotson:—"Judas sold his Lord for thirty pieces of silver; the archbishop got a better price, perhaps thirty bags of gold, or more."—Lavington's "Enthusiasm of the Papists and the Methodists Considered." So far from indulging in such reflections as these, the great founder of Methodism believed that a strong vein of piety ran through the life and death even of many Romanists, the monks of La Trappe and Ignatius Loyola himself. He believed that Pelagius, the Montanists, and other early heretics, as they are called, might be wise and holy men, despite their ignominious reputation; and, while he vindicates the orthodoxy of Michael Servetus, has, in the same breath, a word of commendation for John Calvin: "I BELIEVE THAT CALVIN WAS A GREAT INSTRUMENT OF GOD; AND THAT HE WAS A WISE AND PIOUS MAN." His enlarged charity deemed the heathen capable of eternal life, and opened heaven even to the brute creation. Wesley was a man to be loved. In these speculative views he may have been right or wrong; but they are an index to his soul, and prove that whatever else he may have been, he was certainly not a narrow sectarist, nor a cruel bigot. In all the atlases in his library, there was not one little map devoted to a Methodist heaven. The distinctive point of his Arminian creed, that REDEMPTION IS FOR THE WORLD, proves him to have been a person of large, generous, all-comprehending sympathy and love. His sentiments on ecclesiastical controversy are so apposite, that we must do ourselves the pleasure of adducing them:—

"We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom; but if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? just as much as it avails the devil and his angels! I will not quarrel with you about any opinion; only see that your heart be right towards God, that you know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, that you love your neighbour, and walk as your Master walked, and I desire no more. I am sick of opinions; I am weary to bear them; my soul loathes this frothy food. Give me solid and substantial religion: give me a humble and gentle lover of God and man, a man full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy; a man laying himself out in the work of faith, the patience of hope, the labour of love. Let my soul be with these Christians, wheresoever they are, and whatsoever opinion they are of. 'Whosoever *thus* doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.'"

And we add, capping this declaration with our heart's heartiest approval, Let every one that readeth this, say Amen. In illustration of this feature of his character, we have great pleasure in transferring to our pages the fine anecdote of the casual interview between the venerable Charles Simeon, then a young Calvinistic clergyman, and the aged apostle of Methodism, so creditable to the wisdom and piety of both:—

Three or four years after Simeon, whose name has since become sacred in the annals of the church of Christ, was ordained, this young minister had an opportunity of conversing with the great founder of Arminian Methodism; and, wishing to improve the opportunity to the uttermost, began to question him thus:—

"Sir, I understand you are called an Arminian; now I am sometimes called a Calvinist, and therefore, I suppose, we are to draw daggers. But, before I begin to combat, with your

permission, I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction. Pray, sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved that you would never have thought of turning unto God, if God had not put it into your heart?"

"Yes," said the veteran, "I do indeed."

"And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by anything that you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?"

"Yes, solely through Christ."

"But, sir, supposing you were FIRST saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards, by your good works?"

"No; I must be saved by Christ, from first to last."

"Allowing, then, that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?"

"No."

"What, then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?"

"Yes, altogether."

"And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?"

"Yes; I have no hope but in Him."

"Then, sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification, my final perseverance. It is in substance all that I hold, and as I hold it; and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree."

This is a true witness. It does not prove that Arminianism and Calvinism, as systems of theology, are the same. Far from it; but it does prove, that all systems taking justification by faith for their basis must be in their essential features much alike; that the caricatures which rival combatants have pre-

sented of both, bear remote resemblance to the reality of either; and that the ground of salvation among the followers of Arminius and Calvin is in fact the same—the free grace of our risen Redeemer.

Unlike many, unlike most enduring celebrities, Wesley was successful, popular, appreciated during his lifetime, nor had to wait for posthumous praise. This was, doubtless, owing in part to the practical bent his genius took, which was calculated to win popular regard, but also to the unequalled excellence he displayed in the line he had chosen. The man who was known to have travelled more miles, preached more sermons, and published more books than any traveller, preacher, author, since the days of the apostles, must have had much to claim the admiration and respect of his contemporaries. The man who exhibited the greatest disinterestedness all his life through, who has exercised the widest influence on the religious world, who has established the most numerous sect, invented the most efficient system of church polity, who has compiled the best book of sacred song, and who has thus not only chosen eminent walks of usefulness, but in every one of them claims the first place, deserved to be regarded by them, and by posterity, as no common man. A greater poet may rise than Homer or Milton, a greater theologian than Calvin, a greater philosopher than Bacon or Newton, a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame, but a more distinguished revivalist of the churches, minister of the sanctuary, believer of the truth, and blessing to souls, than John Wesley—never. There was in his consummate nature that exquisite balance of power and will, that

perfect blending of the moral, intellectual, and physical, which forms the ne plus ultra of ministerial ability and service. In the firmament in which he was lodged he shone and shines "the bright particular star," beyond comparison, as he is without a rival.

But had not the subject of our sketch his failings? Of course he had; but it is not our business to discuss them now. Had we not possessed acuteness enough to detect them ourselves, to say that we were familiar with Bishop Lavington's shrewd, humorous, and thoroughly clever book, with all the added venom of Polwhele's annotations, would be quite enough to show that few faulty features of his proceedings had escaped our notice. We admit that he was an enthusiast, but only to the degree in which a man more than ordinarily filled with the Holy Ghost would be an enthusiast. We allow that he was fanatical at times; but this only amounts to the confession that he had some taint of human infirmity, cleaving to a nature in the main noble, self-possessed, and wise. We put our finger on one instance of fanaticism;—the ordination of some of his ministers by the Greek bishop Erastus, a person of questionable pretensions, and who, not knowing one word of English, performed the service in Greek—an unedifying rite. But fanaticism is confined to no period. This finds its parallel in our days. On the first day of the year 1843, writes an American missionary from Constantinople, a religious service was held, in which Greeks, Armenians, Hebrews, Italians, and English sang at the same time, to the same tune, IN THEIR DIFFERENT TONGUES, a hymn of praise, to the great delight of those who shared in the medley, and to the seeming approval of all the

religious publications which have recorded the occurrence. To ourselves it always seemed an instance of gross fanaticism and folly. It is not reasonable, therefore not right. The fanaticism of John Wesley rarely went beyond this. His faith in humanity was so great, that anything man would aver he would receive. Some absurdities were sure to spring from so capacious a belief; and having nothing to suspect in himself, he never suspected others. He was perhaps the only public man that ever lived, of whom it could be said, he habitually formed too favourable an opinion of those about him. The consequences were sometimes annoying, but the cause was a virtue, not a blemish. His greatness was so tempered with goodness—his nature, so sturdy and conscientious, was nevertheless so overlaid with an unslumbering, genial, godlike sympathy for his race—a golden thread of pervading kindness runs so unbrokenly through his life—that no one who can appreciate the force of rare ability, combined with a spotless character and singular sweetness of disposition, can wonder how he became so early a celebrity—

Οὐ τὸ μυρίον κλέος
Διῆλθε κῆπί νύκτα καὶ πρὸς ἀῶ,

and that his name is now the symbol of all that is holy and just and good. Say, gentle reader, as you pass his tomb, in the language of the Sicilian muse—

Χαιρέτω οὗτος ὁ τύμβος . . . ἐπεὶ
Κεῖται τῆς ἱερῆς κοῦφος ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς.

WESLEY THE CATHOLIC.

THE more than ordinary movement within the last few years, looking toward a higher state of union and fellowship among the several sects or divisions of Christians, ought certainly to be ranked among the most interesting of the signs of the times. The existing state of the Church Catholic—a state of distinction into what are termed denominations or families, and grounded upon certain differences of theological views, —is certainly a startling fact; and, taken in connexion with the consequent divisions of heart, as well as of head, and the numerous misunderstandings of each other's views and characters—the mournful waste of energies and time in religious controversy, and the occasion thus given to the enemies of true religion to blaspheme—the fact alluded to comes to bear an aspect as melancholy as it is startling. That there is wrong, great wrong, somewhere, is indubitable. The existing position of the Church of God on earth is not the original and apostolic position; it is not that prayed for by Christ, in the seventeenth chapter of John; it is not that, consequently, with which Christ is well pleased; and, finally, it is not the position of

the Church of God on high, nor as that Church will be through eternity.

Such being the truth, it is by no means to the point, we think, to enumerate, as is sometimes done, the supposed advantages of the present attitude of the Catholic Church; and especially with a view to indicate that such an attitude is, for the sake of these advantages, ordered in God's providential dispensations. Solemn trifling, nay, worse than trifling, should we deem it, if that is imputed to God which, when predicated of men, makes, as saith an apostle, their damnation to be just. The truth is, the present division of Christians for opinion's sake is evil,—a veritable moral evil, a sin; and the God of providence, therefore, is not to be charged with it. But being sinful, it becomes, as a matter of course,—especially to the deeply thoughtful and pious man,—a subject not merely for speculation, but alarm. Not only are his eyes open to the sad spectacle before him, but his heart is crushed and bleeding at the sight. He stands amazed, and weeps before God, as well for the desolations of Zion, as for the wickedness of the surrounding nations. And such a man is prepared, above others, to hail with exceeding interest the first and smallest effort toward a happier and holier state of things.

It has been somewhere written, since the agitation of the matter of Christian union commenced,—written, too, by a strong pen, and beyond the pale of Methodism,—that no division of the Church Catholic holds a more eligible position for the promotion of such union, and none would be more likely to step forth in prominent action for a consummation so devoutly to be wished, than the Methodist Episcopal Church. Nor

has the history, thus far, of this enterprise gone to falsify, altogether, an encomium so precious and honourable. That some of the strongest and noblest men of the Methodist ministry have arisen to the rescue,—that the bishops, to a man, it is believed, are deeply interested in the movement,—that thousands of others, whose names are more widely known in heaven than upon earth, are ready, and waiting, and longing,—these, and such as these, are promises more beautiful than the blossoms of the opening year, or the bright dawning of the sunny day. To this very day there are tears of happiness in remembrance of the names that, in 1846, went on that pilgrimage over sea, that they might stand up in the name of American Methodism in behalf of the union of the Church militant. And while some of those men of God have since passed away to heaven, the reflection is most welcome and refreshing, that one of their last earthly endeavours was for the triumph of the spirit of Christ among all his scattered followers.

In view, then, of the recent yearnings and efforts of good men after a wider and firmer fellowship among the disciples of the Saviour; and in view, especially, of the relation of Methodism to this great enterprise, it has strongly impressed the writer of this article as being not an untimely or ineffectual presentation, if a voice, though of one dead, might speak out here—and a voice the most potent in the ears of Methodism, of all voices save those of inspiration.

The chief aim of this paper, therefore, will be, to illustrate the catholic position of the founder of Methodism.

THE CATHOLICISM OF JOHN WESLEY'S PERSONAL

OPINIONS constituted one of the marks—if, indeed, we may not say THE ONE MARK—distinguishing him from the Church of England, with which he was always connected. The attitude of the English Church toward other communions of Christians, and especially toward Dissenters, was nearly the same then as now. Whatever may have been the differing opinions of the Church ministers and laity as to the doctrines of the Thirty-nine Articles, yet the principle, for aught we know, was as rife then as now, that there is no Church without a bishop, and no bishop aside from the apostolical succession in the matter of ordination. The Nineteenth Article read then, as now, that "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered;"—and what the "due administration" of the sacraments means, in an Episcopal mind, needs not to be recited here. Thus the genuine Churchman, on either side of the Atlantic, or wherever he may move among his fellow-men, does contemplate, and from his principles must contemplate, all churches but his own as mere organizations or societies, as not entitled to the name of churches, and as being, in fact as well as in theory, without the pale of the Catholic Church. Accordingly, Mr. Palmer, in his book on the Church, cuts off at one fell swoop every "Dissenter" (as he calls them), whether in England or America, and writes all their communions, in both countries, as "forming no part of the Church of Christ." That the same strong views obtained extensively in Wesley's time, is entirely obvious from his own history, even were there no other sources of evidence bearing upon such a question. So, also, every one who has read

of Wesley knows that, from the date of the commencement of his evangelical career, he had, and could have, no sympathy with such views. It is true, that, with all its faults, he loved the Church of which he was a member and minister. He loved that Church to the last, and adhered to its communion to his dying day. Nay, more than this, he was disposed to attach all his societies to the national Church by a tie never to be dissolved. Yet there was no exclusiveness, there was no withdrawal from church-fellowship with any Christian of any communion. From all those cords of bigotry, that, to this day, prevent so many from true catholic fellowship, he broke away as Samson snapped the withes of Delilah. He loved the Church of England much, but he loved the Holy Catholic Church more; nor was there any power competent to deprive him of the freedom he asserted to shout always and everywhere the apostolic blessing, saying, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen!" He who is sometimes called the founder of Methodism was a true-hearted member of the English hierarchy, while yet he differed from it as the eagle on the wing differs from his fellows encaged. His name, and even his heart, were there; yet he felt himself to be a freeman in Christ Jesus, and would "not be brought under the power of any" thing that would tend to narrow the amplitude of his charity, or burden the wings of his lofty flight. Did his Church virtually say, "Preach nowhere save in duly consecrated places?" "This will never save the world," he responds; and presently, in halls where bishops never walked, and again on Kennington Common, or in Moorfields, encompassed by thousands, he proclaims, fearlessly, the

Lord Jesus. Did the canon say, "Pray at the public worship none but the written prayers?" yet Wesley —and none, better than he, loved his Church's liturgy —would, after all, pray as "circumstances directed." Must none be encouraged or allowed to preach until upon their heads the sacred hands were laid, and the apostolic power conferred? Wesley thought so once, —but the Spirit is falling as the showers of lovely dew, and converts are multiplying as the drops of the morning, and John Nelson is already astonishing his neighbours in Yorkshire with the story of his conversion, and exhorting them to the same great grace, with exhortation so backed by sacred quotation as to sound very like a sermon;—and, in fact, a sermon it becomes. Meanwhile, Wesley—though nearest to it of all mortal men—is, after all, not ubiquitous; and as he is careering in the north, "helpers" are needed in the south, and vice versâ;—and preach those helpers will, and preach they do; and, what is more and better still, the Lord is working with them with signs following. And John Wesley was not the man to withstand God; and just so soon as he saw the lay preachers indubitably helping forward the great object from which his clear eye never wandered, then, Churchman as he was, this same Wesley loved to have it so. The truth was, his was a Churchman's head, but God had sanctified his heart, and made it a catholic heart, of course; and the catholic heart failed not to modify the Churchman's head, until, at length, head and heart had no controversy; and this modern apostle, well balanced and duly commissioned, ran, like a giant, the race of holy charity and evangelization.

From this great crisis in Wesley's history, no one

should write him a Churchman on the one hand, nor a sectary on the other. Here and now, we see him emerging into the great Catholic Communion, and allying himself indissolubly to the whole of Christ's body; and he selects his place near to the heart of Jesus, and struggles for the stand-point and vision of the great Saviour himself, as He glances upon the entire fellowship of his disciples, and upon the world on whose behalf He wept and died.

The catholicism of Wesley is seen IN THE PLATFORM OF HIS SOCIETIES. And what was this platform? What were the general or special opinions contemplated? What was its array of symbols and of dogmas? There was nothing of all this. Taking his position as nearly as possible in the very centre of heavenly illumination, and standing there, as the angel in the sun, he saw that the religion of Christ was eminently a matter of the heart and life. A world of responsible and sinful beings, exposed to instant and remediless ruin, yet within reach of a mighty Saviour, this was enough for Wesley. He forgot creeds, and articles, and confessions. He dispensed with every Procrustean theory, and overlooked all the lumber of worldly wisdom. In rearing the gate of admission to his society, he sought to copy Christ alone. Jesus had said, "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out;" and, hence, Wesley dared not open a gate more narrow. For what was his society? "A company of men having the form, and seeking the power, of godliness; united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." What, then, were the conditions of mem-

bership and fellowship? "There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies,—a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins;"—it being understood that this "desire" is evinced by the appropriate fruits.

Now, it cannot be said, it is true, that there is nothing like a creed here. There are the implicated notions of sin, of wrath to come, of salvation from both, as well as an appropriate effort toward such salvation. Yet these are not to be ranked with what we call human symbols, or dogmas. The terms are all from the Scriptures; while the proposition into which they enter, and which forms the platform of Methodist membership, may be viewed as a mere Scriptural quotation, rather than as a sentence of uninspired rhetoric. He who will take the pains to look, will not fail to discern that before he has traversed the first three chapters of his New Testament, he has found, and in only two texts of Matthew, not merely the ideas, but the very language, which this platform submits to his belief. Wesley saw, in the preaching of the Baptist, that there was such a thing, in so many words, as "fleeing from the wrath to come;" and saw, likewise, in the angel-message to Joseph, that there was such a thing, in so many words, as "to be saved from their sins;" and these two Scripture things, in their veritable Scripture dress, and embracing, as they do, the world's great want, these he adopted as his proposition or motto, and on this foundation invited the world—all, of whatever creed or party, tribe or nation—to join him in the pursuit of eternal life.

"Mind the one thing needful," was an admonition that seemed for ever sounding in the ears of John Wesley. He was observant as any other man of non-essentials. None had a keener sensibility of tastes and preferences. But he sternly and religiously held all these to their place. They must remain subordinate. His solemn eye was fixed, like the apostle's, steadily upon the everlasting life of a world. This was his goal, this was the centre of all his multifarious plans and varied energies, and the interpreter of all his apparent irregularities. To compass this he rose early, laid his grasp upon time's smallest fragments, expanded every day into a life, laid all learning and genius under contribution, broke loose from human disabilities and burdens; laid open the great Gospel enterprise; retired from human formulas deeply within the Scriptures; became a little child; laid his hand implicitly within the hand of the great and everlasting Father, and yielded to walk where he led the way; saw theories inwrought and long cherished in his heart's strongest sympathies fading gradually into trifles; and stood forth the man of his age, who was to exhibit a spectacle to the world, to angels, and to men, of true catholicism as well as of indomitable zeal. "I have thought I am a creature of a day: passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit, come from God, and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence, I am no more seen: I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing,—the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore." There stands Wesley. There, in that extract of such transcendent simplicity and sublimity, may be

seen the man. Immortal life was in his eye; and when another might be found of a like spirit and longing, he asked no more. Such a one was welcome to his Christian embrace, and fellowship, and society. Satisfied of an effective desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin, he thought it not worth his while to inquire or dispute about anything else. Each one might have his own views of predestination, free-grace, perseverance, baptism, as well as a multitude of other points of speculation and differing opinions. Every earnest seeker of salvation was welcome to his society, and dear to his heart. It was thus that he commenced, and here he stood to the last. "But whether ye will hear," he writes in the last year of his life, "or whether ye will forbear, we, by the grace of God, hold on our way; being ourselves still members of the Church of England, as we were from the beginning, but receiving all that love God, in every church, as our brethren, and sister, and mother. And, in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions or in modes of worship; but barely that they fear God and work righteousness." "They (Methodists) are themselves no particular sect or party; but they receive those, of all parties, who endeavour to do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with their God."

One or two extracts, already recited, may suggest to us that the catholicism of Wesley may be read, IN DIVERS EXPRESS SENTIMENTS WHICH HE UTTERED, AS WELL AS IN THE GENERAL TENOR OF HIS WRITINGS. Will the reader take the trouble to review a few brief specimens which we here venture to spread before his eye?—

"I dare not exclude from the Church Catholic all those congregations in which any unscriptural doctrines, which cannot be affirmed to be 'the pure word of God,' are sometimes, yea, frequently, preached; neither all those congregations in which the sacraments are not 'duly administered.' Certainly, if these things are so, the Church of Rome is not so much as a part of the Catholic Church; seeing therein neither is 'the pure word of God' preached, nor the sacraments 'duly administered.' Whoever they are that have 'one spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one God and Father of all,' I can easily bear with their holding wrong opinions, yea, and superstitious modes of worship; nor would I, on these accounts, scruple still to include them within the pale of the Catholic Church."—*Sermon on the Church.*

If any one should be startled because the charity of the above extract appears to look kindly even upon the Roman communion, yet all this will not, in the least degree, interfere with the design of this article. And should the following extract be esteemed as having an original and appropriate application to a single society or denomination, yet the internal evidence will be seen to be sufficient to mark it as being the mind of its author toward all that profess the Christian name:—

"O beware, I will not say of forming, but of countenancing or abetting any parties in a Christian society! Never encourage, much less cause, either by word or action, any division therein. In the nature of things, 'there must be heresies [divisions] among you;' but keep thyself pure, leave off contention before it be meddled with; shun the very beginning of strife. Meddle not with them that are given to dispute,—with them that love contention. I never knew that remark to fail:—'He that loves to dispute does not love God.' Follow peace with all men, without which you cannot effectually follow holiness. Not only 'seek peace,' but 'ensue it;'—if it

seem to flee from you, pursue it nevertheless. 'Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Happy is he that attains the character of a peace-maker in the Church of God." —*Sermon on Schism.*

The religious partisan, of any denomination, would do well to read carefully the whole sermon against bigotry; but he should deeply ponder and inwardly digest such sentiments especially as the following:—

"Every one is either on God's side, or on Satan's. Are you on God's side? Then you will not only not forbid any man that casts out devils, but you will labour, to the uttermost of your power, to forward him in the work. You will readily acknowledge the work of God, and confess the greatness of it. You will remove all difficulties and objections, as far as may be, out of his way. You will strengthen his hands by speaking honourably of him before all men, and avowing the things which you have seen and heard. You will encourage others to attend upon his word, to hear him whom God hath sent. And you will omit no actual proof of tender love which God gives you an opportunity of showing him. If we willingly fail in any one of these points, if we either directly or indirectly forbid him 'because he followeth not us,' then we are bigots."

"Am I not sorry that God should thus own and bless a man that holds such erroneous opinions? Do I not discourage him, because he is not of my church, by disputing with him concerning it, by raising objections, and by perplexing his mind with distant consequences? Do I show no anger, contempt, or unkindness of any sort, either in my words or actions? Do I not mention behind his back his (real or supposed) faults, his defects, or infirmities? Do not I hinder sinners from hearing his word? If you do any of these things, you are a bigot to this day."

"O stand clear of this! But be not content with not forbidding any that cast out devils. It is well to go thus far, but do not stop here. If you will avoid all bigotry, go on.

In every instance of this kind, whatever the instrument be, acknowledge the finger of God; and not only acknowledge, but rejoice in his work, and praise his name with thanksgiving. Encourage whomsoever God is pleased to employ, to give himself wholly up thereto. Speak well of him wheresoever you are; defend his character and mission; enlarge, as far as you can, his sphere of action; show him all kindness in word and deed; and cease not to cry to God in his behalf, that he may save both himself and them that hear him. . . . . If he forbid you, do not you forbid him. Rather labour, and watch, and pray the more, to confirm your love toward him. If he speak all manner of evil of you, speak all manner of good (that is true) of him."—*Sermon against Bigotry.*

It would be esteemed unpardonable, in this connexion, to pass by the sermon on "A Catholic Spirit," which, as it more professedly treats upon this subject, would thus especially be expected to speak out with appropriate clearness and emphasis.

The following well-known passage may be taken as characteristic of the discourse, and of the man that wrote it:—

"I dare not, therefore, presume to impose my mode of worship on any other. I believe it is truly primitive and apostolical; but my belief is no rule for another. I ask not, therefore, of him with whom I would unite in love, Are you of my church? of my congregation? Do you receive the same form of church government, and allow the same church officers with me? Do you join in the same form of prayer wherein I worship God? I inquire not, 'Do you receive the supper of the Lord in the same posture and manner that I do?' Nor, whether in the administration of baptism, you agree with me in admitting sureties for the baptized, in the manner of administering it, or the age of those to whom it should be administered? Nay, I ask not of you (as clear as I am in my

own mind) whether you allow baptism and the Lord's Supper at all. Let all these things stand by. We will talk of them, if need be, at a more convenient season. My only question, at present, is this :—'Is thine heart right, as my heart is with thy heart?' . . . . If it be, give me thine hand."—*Sermon on a Catholic Spirit.*

Comment upon language like that of these extracts is utterly nugatory. With such statements of this great man lying before us, one of two verdicts is alone possible. Either the father of Methodism was an arrant hypocrite, or he was eminently a CATHOLIC ;—not a minister of any party, but a minister of "The Holy Catholic Church" scattered over the world.

It only remains to observe briefly how fully his catholic professions were carried out IN HIS ACTUAL MOVEMENTS AND PRACTICE; for who has not keenly felt, that, in this important quality as in others, there may be a broad distinction between words and actions?

Well, then, it has been already submitted in this paper, that, as a matter of fact, the canons of the Church of England proved, in more instances than one, entirely too stringent for the zeal and catholicity of Wesley. They would, indeed, have curbed him and hedged him about, if any human power could have done it; for love and respect for the Establishment seemed well-nigh constitutional with him, and, in fact, never died out of him. It was a love such as many waters could not quench, nor many floods drown. But, as already observed, another and a diviner principle arose, and overpowered the former, strong as it was; and Churchism became subordinate to catholicism in the great heart of Wesley. "Put these two principles together," he says:—"First, I will not separate

from the Church;—yet, secondly, in case of necessity, I will vary from it, and inconsistency vanishes away." We are not careful here to endorse either the consistency or inconsistency; our business is with the Catholicism,—and this is easily detected in the second principle, asserting, "I will vary from the Church in cases of necessity." Now turn over a single leaf of the same sermon, and this great matter of "necessity" is all revealed at once. "We, by the grace of God, hold on our way;—being ourselves members of the Church of England, as we were from the beginning, but receiving all that love God, in every Church, as our brethren, and sister, and mother. And in order to their union with us, we require no unity in opinions, or in mode of worship, but barely that they fear God and work righteousness." Here, again, are the two principles; and the "necessity" of the second principle is explained, and the explanation amounts to nothing more nor less than catholicism!

Harmonious with this appears the great whole of Wesley's singular career. We may refer to the fact, that no Christian, or Christian company, who were seeking after salvation, did he ever thrust away from his fellowship. We may refer to the fact of his known and constant sympathy with all ministers and Christians, whether of the Church or not, who were earnest for the reviving of religion. We may refer to the fact of his repeated attempts to form a union of different parties of pious men against the common foe. We may instance his uniform dislike to theological controversy, and his eagerness to devote all his energies to the immediate work of the conversion and salvation of men. We may specify, also, his unfeigned gratification when-

ever intelligence reached him of religious prosperity in any part of the world, and in whatever section of the great Christian family. We must not forget, likewise, his perfect love and fellowship for his distinguished fellow-labourer, Whitefield,—who, though differing from Wesley, as differs any decided Calvinist from an Arminian equally decided, was yet dear as his own soul to the man to whom unity of opinions was subordinate, fearing God and working righteousness, everything.

But specification seems out of place here, where a whole long and splendid ministry was one unbroken scene of zeal and charity, as catholic and disinterested as they were conspicuous and brilliant. Nor can we, perhaps, more appropriately conclude this view of one of the greatest and best men of modern times, than by his own portrait of a catholic man;—and he that carefully surveys the picture shall not fail to discern the features of the accomplished artist himself.

"A man of a catholic spirit is one who, in the manner above mentioned, gives his hand to all whose hearts are right with his heart;—one who knows how to value and praise God for all the advantages he enjoys with regard to the knowledge of the things of God, the true Scripture manner of worshipping him, and, above all, his union with a congregation fearing God and working righteousness;—one who, retaining these blessings with the strictest care, keeping them as the apple of his eye, at the same time loves—as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as members of Christ, and children of God, as joint partakers now of the present kingdom of God, and fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom—all of whatever opinion, or worship, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, who love God and man; who, rejoicing to please, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abstain from evil, and zealous of

good works. He is a man of a truly catholic spirit, who bears all these continually upon his heart; who, having an unspeakable tenderness for their persons, and longing for their welfare, does not cease to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cause before men; who speaks comfortably to them, and labours, by all his words, to strengthen their hands in God. He assists them to the uttermost of his power, in all things spiritual and temporal. He is ready to spend and be spent for them; yea, to lay down his life for their sake."—*Sermon on a Catholic Spirit.*

In the remainder of this article, and with direct reference to the foregoing view and sketch, we beg leave, and with sincere and profound deference, to submit a few grave propositions or inquiries.

WHETHER, OR NOT, THE PROMINENT FEATURE OF WESLEY HEREIN DISCUSSED HAS LEFT ITS FULL AND PROPER IMPRESS UPON THE METHODIST FAMILY?

This is, of course, an inquiry which should not be touched incautiously. It would ill become any one, without due consideration, to pronounce, either favourably or unfavourably, upon so large and important a section of the professed disciples of Jesus Christ. It is with trembling, therefore, that we enter it as our soberest judgment, that the negative of this momentous inquiry is the truth. Circumstances, such as need not be recapitulated too fully, appear to have operated, both in the old and new world, to dampen, more or less, that pure and Catholic flame, amid which this class of Christians first arose and flourished. Then, to omit further notice of all other lands, the Methodism of the United States has, almost from the beginning, assumed the form of a sect, and has ever since been cutting its way, necessarily, amid older denominations, while it has been reaching for the spread of Scripture

holiness over these lands. Under such circumstances, it was, at least, quite natural that more or less of friction should ensue; and that here, as well as beyond the Atlantic, there should arise opposition against this novel and bustling neighbour, and especially if, here as there, spiritual coldness should characterize, to a greater or less extent, the pre-existing Churches.

What, under the circumstances, was so natural to happen, is a matter of history. Methodism has not traversed this wide-spread country without some collision with Christians and ministers beyond its pale; while even down to this late day, may now and then be heard the echoing of some distant theological skirmish. Meanwhile, past conflicts are, it is to be feared, too sacredly remembered; and the spirit of sect—a spirit of early intrusion, of facile growth, and of late eradication, has, without question, been far too prevalent in our communion.

If this be so, then to recall and contemplate that phase of Wesley's character toward which this article has glanced, will be as timely and important as its tendency will be healing and refreshing. None, of course, will understand us as appealing to that great man, as to any superhuman authority. We shall be understood rather as referring to one who, though fallible, and partaking of human imperfection, yet stands out before the eyes of Methodism as confessedly one of the brightest and purest of uninspired examples —a man whose spirit and charity, as well as his activity and efficiency, approximated as near to perfection as any seen along the reach of many centuries. It could assuredly operate no harm to any class of Christians or Christian ministers, to study faithfully

this aspect of that sublime character; while consistency itself would suggest, that, for those who really and profoundly reverence his name and worth, the study seems peculiarly appropriate. It cannot be denied that much of Wesley's impress is upon the denomination to which he, instrumentally, gave existence. His opinions in theology and church polity have commanding influence wherever Methodism is known. But Wesley had a heart to be studied, as well as a head—and a heart that answered to the head with a harmony never surpassed in mortal man. No man can claim to be a genuine Wesleyan who contents himself with receiving the mark of Wesley's mind, without obtaining, in his own person and being, the full moral and spiritual impression of Wesley's heart.

WHETHER, OR NOT, THE SPIRIT OF WESLEY POINTS THE METHODIST CHURCH TO ANY SPECIAL ACTIVITY TOWARDS TRUE CATHOLICISM?

This inquiry, it would seem, must be answered affirmatively, just as certainly as any such special activity could be predicated of Wesley himself. Of him, we think, it has been shown above, that he was as eminent for catholicity as he was for energy: also, that it was one of his strong and persevering endeavours to awaken and promote this heavenly spirit wherever he moved. Exactly this is the lesson which his example and spirit convey to all his observant admirers. "My children," he seems to say, "the time is short—and salvation is all. See to it that ye love one another with pure hearts fervently; and that ye love all who love our Lord Jesus Christ. Labour not for sect, but to build up the whole Catholic Church. Leave off contention before it be meddled

with. Repress the first risings of the spirit of strife, partyism, variance, or hatred. Stand not aloof from your neighbour for opinion's sake. Is his heart right with thy heart? that is, does he love the same Saviour, and is he labouring to bring sinners to the same heaven? Then give him your hand. You cannot, indeed, think exactly as he does; yet sympathize with his spirit—rejoice in his prosperity. Help him, as you may be able, in the work of the Lord. Wait not for him to love you. Nay, love him, and pray for him, and seek to aid his success, though he may stand aloof from you, and count you an intruder and a heretic. Labour to diffuse the spirit of heavenly charity through all the families and tribes of the spiritual Israel. Your province is not to divide, but to bind together with ties of holy brotherhood and affection. You are to inflict no needless wounds, but to heal, rather, the lacerated body of Christ. It ill becomes you to say, 'Stand by, for I am holier than thou.' Covet, rather, to lie at the feet of all Christ's little ones. Breathe out no sounds of harshness—jarring the sweet harmonies of heavenly fellowship. Study peace—kindness—universal love. Remember that the saints are going home—and there shall be no night there. While on their way, there is some darkness. They see not exactly alike, but their hearts are all leaning toward Jesus, and he loves them all as one, and prays that they all may be one, like the oneness of himself and the Father. And so they will be. Yet a few days, and there will be one fold and one shepherd. The fire is already kindling that shall burn up all the chaff of division. Cherish that kindly fire, for it is holy. Run, all of you; run for the bright

consummation, when the discords of Zion shall have slept their last sleep, and when no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon; but the redeemed shall walk together there, while there shall be nought to hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain."

Would not exhortations like these flow from the lips of Wesley, were he permitted to speak, this day, to the myriads of his followers?

WHETHER, OR NOT, THE WESLEYAN SYSTEM IS, AS A WHOLE, SPECIALLY FAVOURABLE TO ACTION IN THIS DIRECTION?

A momentous inquiry this! And it strongly invites a more ample and elaborate discussion than can be afforded in this connexion. Yet we are ready to submit at once—and we do so with unfeigned pleasure—that here, again, the affirmative has the truth. For, in the first place, whoever refers to the Wesleyan theology—by which expression we only mean the theology which Wesley received and taught, and which Wesleyan ministers generally receive and teach—he will find there all the great cardinal principles of the Church Catholic: the Trinity, Atonement, Depravity, the Holy Spirit's Influence, Justification by Faith, Regeneration, Sanctification, General Judgment, and Final and Eternal Rewards and Punishments. These truths are honestly believed and faithfully preached in Methodism. And they are the capital truths of the general Church of Christ on earth. Then, as to the distinctive dogmas, and such as have produced the different organizations, or families, in the Church Catholic, there appears to be no one of these which, so far as the Methodist family is concerned, need hinder Methodism from

tendering a catholic and holy fellowship to every one of the other families. Contemplate now a true Wesleyan minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church. To the Congregationalist of New England, or the Presbyterian of the West, Midst, or South, this man may turn, saying, "Brother! your views and mine touching the Decrees do doubtless differ, as truly, and, it may be, almost as widely, as you differ among yourselves upon the same subject. On the naked question of Absolute Perseverance, there is, to be sure, a more certain and direct issue between us;—while even here we meet in practice,—both parties alike urging the inspired exhortation to take heed lest we come short at last. These, and other minor differences of opinion, are no sufficient reason for withdrawing from you my fellowship. 'Give me thine hand.'" Turning to one of the great Baptist family, and uttering the same sentiments with regard to whatever of Calvinism may be existing there, he may add as follows: "But, brother! you doubt my baptism, and the inspiration of my practice on this subject; and for one or both of these reasons, you think you cannot consistently invite me to your communion-table, though you count me a Christian. I appreciate your difficulty and your explanation;—while, on my own part, let me add, no such difficulty lies in my path. I doubt neither your baptism nor your piety. 'Give me thine hand.'" Turning yet again, and addressing himself to the Protestant Episcopalian, whether bishop, priest, or deacon, we seem to hear him saying, "Brother! to you the dogma of apostolical succession—succession not only of doctrine, but of bishops—appears vital to the existence of the

ministry and Church,—and therefore you cannot, as you think, consistently recognize me as a duly authorized minister of the Lord Jesus; though you can and do judge me, and the Christian family with which I am associated, to be sincere followers of Christ; and can, and do, extend fellowship to us as such. Brother! your difficulty is obvious, and is, moreover, deeply painful to me. But, blessed be God! no such difficulty exists with me. I as fully recognise you as a minister and member, both of the Church Catholic, as myself—and myself as you. 'Give me thine hand.'"

So true it is, that, in the theology of Methodism, there lies no obstacle to the most enlarged catholicity —as well of its ministry as of its membership:—while, on the other hand, this same theology, viewed as a whole, is, of necessity, highly promotive of a result so beautiful and so desirable. Glance at two points only for illustration:—

Methodist theology presents salvation as practically possible to all that hear the Gospel invitation. The Methodist minister, without a solitary misgiving, invites the entire multitude to Christ and to heaven:— while his liberal views touching the freeness and fulness of God's mercy give him, so to speak, a kind of predisposition to look kindly and charitably upon all the professed disciples of the Saviour. The logic may be written somehow thus: The grace of Christ, in his view, is infinitely free to every one. Here are multitudes of various Christian denominations who profess to have received that free grace. Their profession, under the circumstances, and where conduct does not forbid, renders it highly probable that they are, in fact, Christians. Being Christians, they are fellow-

citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith; and fellowship and catholicity toward them would seem to be the inevitable result.

Provided, especially, that another doctrine of the Wesleyan theology goes out, not in theory merely, but in the deep experience of the heart. We shall be understood as referring to the doctrine of Holiness —in other words, of intense and perfect love to God, and to all Christians, as bearing, more or less, His glorious image. We have read of a love in the heart of a man—a love for the Church of Christ on earth,—impelling him to all sacrifices and labours, so that he would very gladly spend and be spent for the saints; and that too, even though the more abundantly he loved them, the less he might be loved by them. A love like this is set forth in the Wesleyan theology. But he who feels it, will think as meanly of division lines as did the great apostle;—and will call them "carnal" as surely as he did, and will receive with rapture the inspired declaration, that not one family or sect, but "all are yours."

And now if we refer, secondly, to the Methodist polity—that other grand feature of the Wesleyan system—the same view will, we think, be borne out; namely, the special adaptation of this system to the promotion of a catholic spirit. Here, again, we will illustrate in two instances only, and these must be stated with great brevity.

First, then, the itinerancy—the capital feature of the Methodist polity—tends greatly to discourage those local attachments that have, in many instances, conduced sadly to narrowness of views, if not to downright bigotry. The itinerant minister and pastor does,

indeed, become attached to his society and people—perhaps, under ordinary circumstances, sufficiently so. Yet he has not time, and because he has not time, he has not so strong inducement, to become thus attached unduly. His danger is less than that of other ministers to love a particular society, so as to become comparatively indifferent to the Church generally. The itinerant minister, as, in the course of his ministry, he passes from station to station, forming a true Christian attachment to many, and counting all the societies of his church as, in no mean sense, his own, and constantly enlarging his acquaintance, meanwhile, with his brethren of other communions—does naturally, and, if true to himself, unavoidably, become expansive in his views and spirit, and better qualified than under other circumstances he could be, to imbibe and exhibit the catholicity of the Gospel. He learns more and more, and by personal observation, that true religion and holy living are not confined to his own church. He sees, and cannot avoid seeing, that Christ has many chosen ones in various circles,—and some, where he once imagined the great Gospel change could never be realized.

Secondly, the itinerancy essentially aids the catholic spirit in Methodist ministers, by the freedom of position which it gives them relatively to the people of their charge. It is not meant that the Methodist minister is, in theory or in fact, independent of his people;—and if, at any time, he should venture to assume such a ground, no marvel if the people be disposed to afford him some painfully impressive evidence of his mistake. At the same time, the itinerant minister enjoys a freedom which is felt to be of great value.

From the very fact of his itinerant position—of his known transient stay—and of the missionary relation which, in a sense, he sustains to the Church and the world, he is conscious of a freedom not possessed by every settled and local minister. He feels a freedom to think—a freedom to preach what he thinks—a freedom to love Christians, whether his church-members approve him entirely or not. And when it comes to pass that this conscious freedom is associated with a holy, pious heart, the result can hardly fail to be catholicity.

Thus, unless we have mistaken this whole subject, the Wesleyan system, including its two prominent points of theology and polity, is highly favourable to the cultivation of a catholic spirit;—on the one hand, interposing no obstacle to any and all Christian effort for its promotion; and, on the other, prompting and encouraging to such effort, both in ministry and laity.

WHETHER, OR NOT, THE PROMOTION OF CATHOLICITY MAY BE SAID TO CONSTITUTE ANY PART OF METHODISM'S SPECIAL PROVINCE AND CALLING?

Here, again, the answer must be affirmative; or else we have surveyed the whole subject of Methodism from a wrong stand-point. Let us revert, for a moment, to the commencement of this great providential agency and enterprise. What, then, was the idea—the one all-absorbing idea of Wesley's mind, as, under God, he set in motion this at once most simple and most strange machinery? The reviving of religion. When, in the solemn march of this extraordinary agency, there came up the necessity of "Helpers"—preaching-houses — circuits — appointments — conferences—publications, and the rest—what now was the one great thought in the mind of John Wesley?

The reviving of religion. When, in revolving years, Helpers had grown up to be strong and influential, as well as numerous, and "societies" had spread themselves far over the United Kingdom, and the numbering up of the people was no longer by hundreds, but by tens of thousands; and when the earlier persecutions had spent their force, and were sinking to repose; and when Wesley had now traversed far along the sublime race allotted him—what, then, was his one great idea? The reviving of religion. When missionaries had already been sent by him to this western world, and when he set apart Dr. Coke, with directions to him to set apart Francis Asbury to the superintendency of the American department of this work of God, which, for almost half a century, had been blessing England; and when the patriarch, turning his aged eye this way, saw the upspringing and outspreading of the same glorious flame that had traversed the father-land—what, still, was the one hope and thought of Wesley? The reviving of religion. That vast and eminently sanctified mind could not be filled by any object less than the wide-spread baptism of the Holy Ghost, and the union of all Christ's followers for the world's evangelization and salvation. From the sublime eminence whereon he stood, he looked down with consummate pity upon all the little broils, animosities, and strifes of words growing out of sectarianism, whether in or out of the Church of England. He answered, in Christ's kingdom, to Mr. Macaulay's masterly portraiture of William of Orange, among the monarchs of Europe. As the one and capital policy of the latter was to unite all the other powers, both of Britain and the Continent, in a mighty

league against Louis of France, so did the great religious hero and statesman strike for a universal reviving of religion, and for a coalition, co-extensive with Christendom, against the prince of darkness, and for the spiritual and eternal freedom and happiness of the nations. Imagining, for a moment, Wesley of the eighteenth century to be transferred to the nineteenth; and, in 1846, to have been flying over England, as one hundred years before,—what intelligent Methodist doubts that when the great and good came up, in that year, to London—came from the four winds of heaven, and formed the Evangelical Alliance—who doubts, we repeat, that there would have stood forth, in lofty prominence, in that rejoicing assembly—his catholic heart swelling with exultation unutterable — the founder of Methodism, and of the Methodist Episcopal Church? Of that gathering—of its purposes and of its results—we may think and speak lightly, if we please. One thing is as certain as the rising of to-morrow's sun—John Wesley would have been there.

"But what of all this?" Much every way, we answer. The ministry and laity of the Methodist Episcopal Church do either sympathize with the founder of their organization, in the great features of his character and example, or else they are false to their profession. But Wesley was certainly a Catholic —a Catholic in theory—a Catholic in practice—beyond any man of modern times. He did most diligently eschew all war for the sake of opinions, and in all his protracted ministry faithfully maintained, so far as in him lay, and engaged his followers to maintain and set forward, QUIETNESS, PEACE, AND LOVE, AMONG ALL CHRISTIAN PEOPLE;—one of the solemn things which

every ordained elder in Methodism has promised, before God and his people, to observe and endeavour.

FINALLY, WHETHER, OR NOT, METHODISM MAY HAVE ASSUMED TOO FULLY THE SECTARIAN FORM?

We feel obliged to yield this also up to the affirmative; and we do so with a distress and anguish such as never can be written. Here, likewise, that we may come at the truth adequately and fully, we must go back and ponder "the beginnings;" and still survey the movements and spirit of the man whom we all delight to honour. That John Wesley, in the outset of his peculiar ministry, designed the erection of no new and separate sect; and that, so far as Great Britain, at least, is concerned, he persisted in this design to the last, are points insisted upon by all the more candid of his biographers—fully illustrated by his own express statements and persevering practice; and will not, it is presumed, be called in question by any reader of this article. His grand design, or drift, has already been repeatedly asserted. It was, we say once more, the reviving of religion. It is entirely well known, and calls for no proof or illustration, that Wesley always disclaimed the formation of a separate sect. Note the little piece of history herein following, to wit:—

Toward the close of 1739, John Wesley formed a society of eight or ten religious persons, who, as one of their rules, met on Thursday evening of each week. The purpose of the society was purely spiritual. Exhortation and prayer, with sacred song, were the exercises, and aiding each other to work out their salvation was the object. No question was asked whether the members belonged to the Establishment,

or to the Dissent, or to neither. No interference was contemplated with any existing church or organization, except it were by the spiritual benefit arising from the society, to infuse a higher spiritual life and activity into such church, to which, as well as to the society, one or more members may have belonged.

Now, having written these few words, we need write no more. This brief sketch embraces the gist of the whole history. There was the seed whence has sprung up, to the astonishment of Christendom—and since the elm before your door was planted—the colossal tree of Methodism. But who, let him ever so minutely dissect that seed, can discern the sectarian element? It is not there. And if, as the tree arose and spread itself, there chanced, among its fruits of healing, the bitter apple of sectarianism, it came of an exotic and spurious scion, inserted by another hand than Wesley's. The English Church, it is true, he always loved, and always wished that Methodism might be a part of that Establishment, and avoid all separation from it. Yet this strong preference was but the fruit of his catholicism, and his aversion to the existence of any separate sect. Still, if the union he desired could not exist consistently with the highest prosperity of the Church Catholic, he would submit. "Church or no Church," writes he to his brother, "we must attend to the work of saving souls." And again, "I neither set it up (the Establishment), nor pull it down; but let you and I build the city of God." In other words, the largest possible salvation was Wesley's longing. To build up any party—even his own beloved Church of England—was a trifle that must not come into comparison. He would build only the

city of God; and to the last he asserted of the Methodists, that "they were of no sect or party; but they receive those of all parties who endeavour to do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God."

But what shall be said of American Methodism—of the Methodist Episcopal Church? When, after the revolution, the Methodists of this country were set off, by Wesley, from the parent connexion, and formed by him into a distinct organization, under the superintendency of Coke and Asbury, was not this a sectarian movement? It may appear so—it certainly does appear so—to such as have always been accustomed to look coldly and suspiciously upon the career of that extraordinary man. But we venture to affirm that Methodists, and Methodist ministers, should know Wesley better—and better appreciate a soul that was wedded to the soul of Jesus—and moved and beat as in eternity—and sickened at the idea of sectism, on the one hand, as it did at that of bigotry on the other. We discuss not here either the fact or the mode of the separation—as an act of Wesley—of American from English Methodism. Our business is with Wesley's heart;—and as that heart contemplated the growth, in this country, of the same great agency which had wrought such wonders in the father-land, it was still, with him, nought save a reviving of religion. He stood a venerable and holy man of God—his locks whitened by that multitude of years, whose strength, saith Inspiration, is labour and sorrow; and yet, as leaning upon his staff he looked this way, and as every western breeze wafted to his ear glad tidings from these "ends of the earth," his spirit grew young

again, and he worshipped, and shouted in his rapture, "What hath God wrought!"

No. True Methodism, assuming its founder to have been also its personification, is without sectarianism, whether in the old world or the new. True, it now goes forth in the form of a church organization, both here and in England, while this form it took, on this side of the Atlantic, with the co-operation and approval of Wesley himself. It seemed a matter of necessity; yet never including the doleful necessity of partyism. It is still, and everywhere, unless it be changed to another thing, a reviving of religion; stretching itself for such a reviving everywhere, and among every denomination of Christians—organized for this very purpose—blessing and helping all Christians and Christian denominations, and injuring none—towering above sectarianism, and flying with the everlasting Gospel to preach to them that dwell on the earth. Contemplating daily renewals of the scenes of Pentecost—the outpourings of the Spirit—the baptism and prophesying of sons and daughters—heavenly visions of old men and young—wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath—the calling upon the name of the Lord, and the promised salvation to all that call.

"Daily renewals of the scenes of Pentecost—the outpouring of the Spirit"—the revival and triumph of religion! What has all this to do with sectarianism? Exactly what the fire has to do with hay, wood, and stubble. Religious partyism is one of the prominent and baleful fruits of spiritual decline and coldness. When the fire of God descends upon the Church, it dissipates this bad thing as rapidly and as surely, as when Jesus whipped the thieves out from the temple

of the Lord. Just as certain as Christ comes in, this goes out. Nor will it bear His glorious presence, more than the cold iceblock will retain its form and existence under the vertical and burning sun.

O! is it not this heavenly baptism that is needed this moment upon the Methodist Episcopal Church? Needs there not the mighty shower to gladden and refresh the multitudes—urging us, if we have wandered, back to the original—the true position and action—and calling us again to the childlike simplicity—the undying zeal—the all-abounding love of Wesley the Catholic!

REED AND PARDON, PRINTERS, PATERNOSTER ROW, LONDON.

Works Published by

WARD AND CO., 27, PATERNOSTER ROW.

Now ready, in 1 vol. 8vo, price 10*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

Christophany; The Result of Original Investtigations into the Manifestations of the Son of God, under the Old Testament Dispensation. By the late Rev. G. B. KIDD. Edited by the Rev. O. T. DOBBIN, LL.D.

Just published, in crown 8vo, price 2*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

Lectures to Young Men. By the Rev. H. W. BEECHER, Brooklyn, New York. With an Introduction by the Rev. O. T. DOBBIN, LL.D., Trinity College, Dublin.

Now ready, in 12mo, price 4*s.* cloth,

The Believer's Charter. By the Rev. D. Dewar, D.D., LL.D., Principal of Marischal College and University, Aberdeen; and Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the same University.

Second and Revised Edition, post 8vo, 4*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

The Domestic Prayer Book. By the Rev. George Smith, Poplar.

Just published, in fcap. 8vo, 1*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

The Atoning Lamb: A Scriptural Exhibition and Enforcement of our Lord's Vicarious Death: embracing the Principal Questions involved in the Atonement for Human Transgression; and forming a Hand-book for the General Reader on this fundamental doctrine of Revealed Truth. By Rev. WILLIAM GRIFFITHS, Hitchin.

In fcap. 8vo, a New Illustrated Edition, carefully revised,

Biblical Topography. Lectures on the Position and Character of the Places mentioned in the Holy Scripture. By SAMUEL RANSOM, Classical and Hebrew Tutor in Hackney Theological Seminary.

In fcap. 8vo, price 2*s.* cloth,

Use and Abuse; or, Right and Wrong,—in the Relations to Labour,—of Capital, Machinery, and Land. By WILLIAM M'COMBIE, Author of "Hours of Thought," "Moral Agency," &c.

In the press, post 8vo,

The Training and the Work of an Apostle. Fifty-two Short Sermons on the Life and Labours of the Apostle Peter. By B. B. WOODWARD, B.A., late Minister at Wortwell, Norfolk.

In fcap. 8vo, 428 pp., price 3*s.* 6*d.* cloth, 4*s.* roan, gilt,

The Believer's Theological Pocket Companion; Theological Readings for every Day in the Year. By GEORGE BAGLEY, Minister of the Gospel.

Fcap. 8vo, 3*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

Tower Church Sermons. By the Rev. A. Monod, Paris; the Rev. Dr. KRUMMACHER, Berlin; the Rev. T. BINNEY, London. Edited by T. BINNEY.

In 1 vol. royal 12mo, price 2*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

The Pulpit and the People; or, An Inquiry into the Cause of the Present Failure of Christian Agency. By PETER RYLANDS, Author of "The Mission of the Church."

In 12mo, 2*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

Æternitas; or, Glimpses of the Future Destinies of Man. By WILLIAM BATHGATE.

Second Edition, post 8vo, 3*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

A Dissertation on Church Polity. By A. C. Dick, Esq., Advocate.

In fcap. 8vo, price 3*s.* 6*d.* cloth,

Village Lectures on Popery: Exhibiting the Chief Doctrines of Romanism; and illustrating some of its Practices, by Personal Observations made during a Residence in Rome. By Rev. W. ELLIS, Author of "Polynesian Researches," &c.

Price 1*s.*, fcap. 8vo,

Paul's "Man of Sin" identified with Papal Anti-Christ. By JOHN MORISON, D.D., LL.D.

Third Thousand, in 18mo, price 1*s.* cloth,

The Irish Scholar; or, Popery and Protestant Christianity: a Narrative. By the Rev. T. W. AVELING.