

John Wesley - Evangelist: Chapter 7

A Decade of Evangelistic Toil (1741-1750)

THE MORAL CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY

BEFORE entering more fully upon the record of Wesley's evangelistic career, it is needful briefly to consider the moral and religious state of the country, which called so loudly for the work he was raised up to accomplish. The story of the nation's degeneracy has been so often told, that it tends almost to weariness to repeat it. But it has been well observed that justice to a reformer can never be done until the tendencies against which his effects are directed are well understood. It is not difficult to fix upon definite conditions of the national life of the time, which made reformation an absolute necessity, if the nation was not to suffer from those consequences which take the form of judgment, and which so frequently follow upon gross degenerations of human society. There is a common consensus of testimony that, in the earlier decades of the eighteenth century, England presented the appearance of a deplorable degradation in the national manners, affecting not only one but all sections of society; and showing itself, not merely in a few details of national life, but in many, the results of a process of decline which had been stealthily advancing.

With almost unvarying voice our best historians of the last century represent the preceding one as having reached the lowest conditions of civilized corruption, and their testimony is supported by innumerable contemporary records. Wesley was himself a credible witness, and his account, written at this time in the first part of his, *Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, is fully corroborated by many contemporary and subsequent Writers. Many incidents in his history, as we have already seen, and as we shall further see in the course of this narrative, throw into strong relief the ignorance and gross sinfulness of the manes of the people.

It is not possible under the imperative limitations of these pages to enter minutely into the details of the national degeneracy; but this is the less necessary, as full accounts are to be found in all the histories of the time. A few examples must suffice.

The authorized teachers of religion were many of them deplorably deficient in either good principles or loftiness and purity of character' Within the Church heresy was rife, and moral conviction was lacking, or where not lacking was feeble; and even amongst the best of her sons the principles of the Reformation were widely departed from. Alas! the fountains of moral influence were not pure. One of the bishops of the time says: 'I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over the Church, and, by consequence, over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough, God knows; but that which heightens my fears rises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen.' He deplores the condition alike of the clergy and the candidates for Holy Orders. 'The case is not much better,' he says, 'in many who, having got into Orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the Scriptures, or any other good book, since they were ordained.'

Less surprise will be excited by the above statement when it is remembered that, as Justin McCarthy affirms, in those days, 'Men took Orders with no thought of the sanctity of their calling, of the solemn service it exacted, of its awful duties and inexorable demands. They wished merely to keep famine from the door, to have food and fire and shelter, and they took Orders as under other conditions they would have taken the King's shilling, with no more feelings of reverence for the black cassock than for the scarlet coat.' With this the testimony of a late bishop painfully coincides:—'All over England, country livings were often filled by hunting, shooting, gambling, drinking, card-playing, swearing, ignorant clergymen, who cared neither for law nor gospel, and utterly neglected their parishes. When they did preach, they either preached to empty benches, or else the hungry sheep looked up and were not fed.'

An acute observer on the side of orthodoxy noticed that there was at this time little sceptical speculation in England, because there was but little interest in any theological question; and a great sceptic described the nation as settled into the most cool indifference with regard to religious matters that was to be found in any nation in the world. Latitudinarianism had spread widely, but almost silently, through all religious bodies, and dogmatic teaching was almost excluded from the pulpit. In spite of occasional outbursts of popular fanaticism, a religious languor fell over England, as it had fallen over the Continent.

William Law describes the country as 'a Christian kingdom of pagan vices, along with a mouth-belief of an Holy Catholic Church and Communion of Saints.' Canon Overton says, 'This description very accurately portrayed the state of England. It was a Christian kingdom, inasmuch as it had not rejected Christianity as an historical faith; on the contrary, I imagine that at few periods has belief, in one sense, been more general than it was at this time, just after the utter collapse of Deism. But it was full of pagan vices. Law hardly drew too dark a picture when he said, "There is not a corruption or depravity of human nature, no kinds of pride, wrath, envy, malice, and self-love, no sorts of hypocrisy and cheating, no wantonness of lust in every kind of debauchery, but are as common all over Christendom as towns and villages.'" 'As a proof of this,' he adds, in a note, 'see Rapiu, Smollett, Horace Walpole, Secker's Charges, Wesley's Journals, etc., passim. In fact, the almost unanimous voice of all contemporary writers echoes the dreary wail.'

Lecky, who has given minute consideration to the national history of the eighteenth century, has portrayed with painful minuteness the condition of the manners of the age, and his dark details are confirmed by many concurrent testimonies.

That the opening years of the century witnessed the greatest inactivity and degradation of the two Universities is made obvious by many writers, and, as the subject has been already referred to, it need not be further considered. But is it any wonder that the moral condition and the intellectual attainments of the bulk of the clergy were so low when the state of college life was so deplorable? Moreover, in the Presbyterian seminaries Arianism was slowly deepening into Socinianism, and the religious societies which, in the previous century, had promised to exert a widely beneficial influence had unhappily sunk into comparative insignificance.

A latent scepticism and widespread indifference prevailed everywhere amongst the more educated classes. The old religion seemed everywhere loosening its hold upon the minds of men, and it had often no great influence even on its defenders. Butler, in the preface to his *Analogy*, declared that 'it had come to be taken for granted that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious.' He speaks elsewhere of 'the general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by every one, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons.'

The Court, which is always so influential for good or evil upon the conduct and manners of the people generally, was, in the time now under review, in a grievously immoral condition; its coarse corruption during the reign of the two Georges is matter of common notoriety. And down through the several grades into which human society is necessarily divided the fatal evils: of immoral living were prevalent.

Amongst the ruling classes there was a low standard of political honour; political Corruption, indeed, was perhaps the most glaring vice of English society. It is said that only some half a dozen of the members of Parliament attended public worship. The manners and tastes of the country gentry were often to the lowest degree coarse and illiterate; the bulk of the country squires vegetated on their estates, cut off from communion with the world, without an occupation but that of hunting, or an ambition but that of being the deepest sot of the quorum.

If such was the condition of the gentry, no wonder that the lower orders, stimulated by the example of their 'betters,' and unrestrained by either religious principles or moral training, should so far descend as to warrant the period being described as one of social barbarism.

The drama has always exerted a powerful influence in moulding the taste and manners of the people. The profligacy of the stage, during the generation that followed the Restoration, can hardly be exaggerated. The theatres were sources of great corruption, the English stage being far inferior to the French in decorum, modesty, and morality.

The prevailing coarseness of fashionable life and sentiment was but little mitigated by the Press. The writings of Swift, Defoe, Fielding, Coventry, and Smollett are sufficient to illustrate the great difference which, in this respect, separated the first half of the eighteenth century from our own day.

One of our recent historians remarks, 'The Church was absolutely out of touch with the great bulk of the people. The poor and the ignorant were left quietly to their own resources. The clergymen were not, indeed, by any means a body of men wanting in personal morality, or even in religious feeling; but they had little or no religious activity, because they had little or no religious zeal. They performed perfunctorily their perfunctory duties, and that, as a rule, was all they did Atterbury, Burnet, Swift, all manner of writers who were themselves ministering to the Church of England, unite in bearing testimony to the torpid condition into which the Church had fallen Things were still worse in the Church of Ireland. Hardly a pastor of that Church could spell three words of the language of the Irish people.'

Turn where we will in our survey of the nation, we encounter a state of things the most deplorable, and at the same time the most portentous. From the highest estates in the land—the Court, the Parliament, the Church, the schools of learning, the rich landed proprietors—down to the traders and the great populace, all present features which call loudly for the advent of the religious reformer. It is painful even to imagine what might have been the issue had not an arrest been put upon this process of moral decay.

Honourable exceptions were to be found among both clergy and laity in the Establishment, and amongst the Dissenters — the faithful ones who mourned over the national debasement, but were powerless to grapple with it. They shone like stars in a dark night; but what the nation needed was the bright light of a morning's sun. Now, when the darkness was the deepest, that light arose. When the moral condition of the country seemed to be nearing its lowest ebb, and the people to be approaching the utmost limit of degradation, it was then that it pleased Divine Providence to raise up suitable agents, fitted to arrest the downward tendency, and to inaugurate a new era. By a most remarkable process of preparation, as the previous pages will have shown, were the servants of the Divine will made ready for their high calling. Individual endowment, high culture or peculiar gifts, a personal regeneration, a severe religious discipline, habits of self-denial approaching austerities, a fearless intrepidity, indomitable zeal, and fervent enthusiasm, together with an utter unworldliness and the most deeply rooted faith in their mission, in their truth, and in the Divine co-operation—God working with them—were amongst the high qualities which fitted these devoted men to be suitable instruments for the accomplishment of a great moral and spiritual reformation.

Attention is arrested by the wonderful work of reclamation which Wesley and his fellow-labourers began, and to so surprising an extent carried out, but of which work he must ever be considered the chief leader and the chief actor. And that, not merely because his career

was longer than theirs, nor that he was endowed in a higher degree than they, with the qualifications needed for the head of a great work; but mainly because of his gigantic and varied labours, his irrepressible activity, and his unswerving persistence in the use of the most effective measures. He was not Only the chief leader of the movement; he was the soul of it. In doing honour to Wesley, however, it is not needful to hide from view his coadjutors, or to throw their work into the shade. A fragile instrument in the Divine hand, fitted, called, and used by a Divine power, his work was very great. But others also were called and qualified; and right gladly did he welcome them, one and all, whoever could render the smallest aid. Never was a leader in a great enterprise freer from jealousy of any honour which his co-workers gained. Whitefield, with his spiritualized dramatic power, his self-consuming labour, and his brilliant success; Charles Wesley, not only the chosen hymnist for them all, but a far mightier preacher than he is generally supposed to have been—perhaps in his earlier course not a whit behind either of the other two; Fletcher, later on, with his seraphic spirit, his powerful pen, and his fervant labour; the gradually widening circle of sympathetic clergymen and others who aided him in the work; and not least the itinerating 'lay helpers,' a noble band of men, toiling in heroic service, and often penetrating where the almost ubiquitous chief could not go ever ready to do his bidding, as he, with a general's skill, disposed them over the wide field of conflict; those of the lay preachers who were not set apart for the work, but who, as they were able, followed their trades and preached their sermons in their own neighbourhood, and hence were called 'local preachers'; the needful leaders of the 'classes' of believers, among whom were many godly, useful, and honoured women; the stewards who took charge of all financial affairs; and many others, each contributing according to his ability to the carrying on of the great campaign—all were welcomed, all were duly recognized and honoured, and even loved, for their work's sake.

But Wesley was the leader. He was acknowledged as such, even at Oxford, immediately on his joining the 'godly club,' and his position was never disputed; and he was the chief worker. None did so much as he. He travelled more, he preached more, he wrote more than any of them. It is his work that these pages are designed to illustrate. He stands before us as the great champion in this holy campaign, with his unparalleled labours, his great powers of endurance, his unwavering fidelity, and with the conviction deepening and settling in his soul that he was the messenger of God to a benighted people. To this work he devoted his entire strength and time without hasting, and equally Without resting. Like many of his co-workers, he endured 'hardship, fatigue, calumny, and brutal treatment at the hands of fierce mobs. Like a brave captain, he was in the thickest of the fight, never hesitating to take the place of the greatest danger or of the greatest toil. He preached from early morning till the shades of night began to fall; I he pressed on to his preaching stations in all weathers and at all hours, having his plans in his pocket, his books and papers in his saddle-bags, or on the shelves fitted up in his chaise—his travelling 'machine.' His pen was as ready as his tongue, astonishing all who know the extent of his writings; his letters were innumerable. The originals or copies of upwards of two thousand of these fugitive leaves have been preserved to this day.

Amongst the many qualities that distinguished him, not the least was his indomitable steadfastness of purpose. It will have been observable to the readers of the previous pages how many and how great obstacles presented themselves in his path; but they were powerless to divert him from it. It is still more observable how many causes for discouragement seemed to be continually arising around him. But it is equally surprising that they had so little effect upon him. He did not abate his labours in the slightest degree on account of them. The relapse of converts, in the very unfavourable circumstances in which they were placed, seemed but to spur him to fresh endeavours to reclaim the ones add to defend the faithful, The defection of friends', no more than the open antagonism of his enemies, diverted his steps from his course—no, not for an hour. He was content to stand alone, sustained by the deep and immovable conviction that, as he was called to his work by a Divine authority', so he would be upheld by a Divine support.'

It is not hour power to trace his steps through the long years, and to keep pace with him in his rapid passage from town to town and from village to village, along the 250,000 miles that careful estimates give as the extent of his travelling over these isles, in the one great service of calling upon a slumbering people to awake and arise, that Christ might give them light. So minute a record is impossible, though the materials are to a large extent at hand. To some degree this has been done hitherto, in order to give an idea of the multiplicity and variety of his occupations, and of his ceaseless devotion to the great work he had in hand. Subsequent statements must be more general, noting only the more striking incidents and whatever may specially indicate the development of what Wesley was accustomed to call 'the Work of God,' for how interesting soever the individual incidents may be it would weary us to peruse the account of them. What was it, then, patiently to accomplish them!

This year, with the exception of about a month at Oxford, three weeks in Wales, and one week in the Midlands, Wesley divided his time in almost equal proportions between London and Bristol. Charles Wesley alternated with him though he preached more at Bristol than in London.

In the closing days of 1740, we saw the first streaks of cloud in the partial defection of Wesley's valuable lay helper at Kingswood—John Cennick. The following year opened amidst alternations of joyous exultation at the manifested power of God, and sorrowful indications of the frailty of man. Assembling all the Bands of both Bristol and Kingswood, Wesley related what God had done for them by him, and what return they had made for several months past by their continual disputes, divisions, and offences, causing him to go heavily all the day long. But other scenes gladdened him. Many were receiving benefit from his labours in preaching and expounding, so that he writes, in the joy of his heart, 'In the evening our souls were so filled with the spirit of prayer and thanksgiving that I could scarce tell how to expound, till I found where it was written, "My song shall be always of the loving kindness of the Lord. With my mouth will I ever be showing Thy truth, from one generation to another."'

Returning to London, he met the Society at the Foundry. 'Here,' he says, January 22, 'I began expounding where my brother left off, viz. 1 John iv. He had not preached the morning before [i.e. at the five-o'clock service], nor intended to do it any more.'

This points to a defection on Charles Wesley's part that demands a brief consideration. Charles himself evidently alludes to his danger of being drawn aside, and, as it would seem, to his escape, as far back as June 22 of the previous year, when he writes, 'I concluded the day at the men's love-feast [at Bristol]. Peace, unity, and love are here. We did not forget our poor distracted brethren that were, till the Moravians came, How ought I to rejoice at my deliverance out of their hands and spirit! My soul is escaped out of the snare of the fowler. Abii, erupi, evasi. And did I not love the lambs of Christ [a Moravian term], indeed, the grievous wolves, I would see your face no more. I am no longer a debtor of the gospel to you. Me ye have fairly discharged; but if you reject my testimony, others receive it gladly.' Three days before this he had described to the Society at Oxford, 'The stillness of the first Christians Acts ii. 42); who continued in the Apostles' doctrine, and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and /n prayers.' And in April of that year he wrote the hymn entitled, The Means of Grace, which, he says, he' printed as an antidote to stillness.'

In the first three months of this year there is an entire blank in Charles Wesley's Journal; but it is evident that much of this time was spent by him in London, and it is probable that while there he came again under the influence of the Moravians, and particularly of his friends Mr. Hutchins, Mr. Stonehouse, Vicar of Islington, Mr. Chapman, and of his brother-in-law, Mr. Westley Hall, who kept aloof from the Foundry, associated with the Moravians, reached for them, and appeared to .be inclined to join with them.

However, on February 12, Wesley wrote, 'My brother returned from Oxford, and preached on the true way of waiting for God: thereby dispelling at once the fears of some, and the vain hopes of others, who had confidently affirmed that Mr. Charles Wesley was still already, and would come to London no more.' But in this Wesley appears to have been too sanguine, for on April 21, soon after Charles had returned to Bristol, Wesley wrote to him from London a letter, in which, after referring to several matters, he gives full and abundant reasons why he could 'in nowise join with the Moravians,' and adds what may further explain his earnest repudiation of them:

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

This letter is endorsed by Charles, 'When I inclined to the Germans.'

Whether Charles Wesley was at once delivered out of the snare is not apparent; but on Sunday, July 20, he writes, ' Our hope was much confirmed by those words; which I enforced at Kingswood, "Stand still and see the salvation of the Lord;" or, as it is afterwards expressed, " Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward." ' I discoursed in the afternoon on the same subject from Isa. lxiv. 5: "Thou meetest those that remember Thee in Thy ways," etc. Hence I magnified the law of Christian ordinances, exhorting those who wait for salvation, to be as clay in the hand of the potter, by stirring themselves up to lay hold on the Lord. God gave me much freedom to explain; that most active, vigorous, restless thing, true stillness'

The entire episode may be closed by the following extract from a letter addressed by the Countess of Huntingdon to John Wesley, which shows alike the danger into which Charles had fallen and his indebtedness to her ladyship for his rescue:

'October 24, 1741.

'Wisdom is justified of her children. Your answer to the former part of mine has quite silenced me on that subject. But I believe your brother's Journal will clear up my meaning more fully w you, for I should labour very much to have as few snares in his way as possible. Since you left us, the small ones are not without their attacks. I fear much more for him than for myself, as the conquest of the one would be nothing to the other. They have by one of their agents reviled me very much, but I have taken no sort of notice, as if I had never heard it. I comfort myself very much that you will approve a step, with respect to them, your brother and I have taken. No less than his declaring open war with them. He seemed under some difficulty about it at first, fill he had free liberty given him to use my name, as the instrument in God's hand that had delivered him from them. I rejoiced much at it, hoping it might be a means of working my deliverance from them. I have desired him to enclose to them yours on Christian Perfection. The doctrine therein contained I hope to live and die by; it is absolutely the most complete thing I know. God hath helped your infirmities; His Spirit was with you of a truth. You cannot guess how I in Spirit rejoice over it.

'Your brother is also to give his reasons for quite separating; and I am to have a copy of the letter he sends them to keep by me. I have great faith God will not let him fall; He will surely have mercy on him, and not on him only, for many would fall with him. I feel he would make me stagger through his fall; but I fly from them as far as pole from pole; for I will be sound in my obedience. His natural parts, his judgment, and the improvement he has made, are so far above the very highest of them, that I should imagine nothing but frenzy had seized upon him; but when I consider him, with so many advocates for the flesh about him, having the form of angels of light, my flesh trembleth for fear of him, and I should have no comfort did I not know assuredly, that He that is for him is greater than he that is against him.

'When you receive his Journal, you will rejoice much when you come to Thursday, October 15'

Had Charles Wesley been drawn away from his steadfastness to the truth, and from his faithful alliance with his brother, the consequences would have been irreparable. Happily, that calamity was averted, and his service in the great evangelistic enterprise was exceeded only by that of Wesley himself; while by his unparalleled evangelical hymns he renders an ever-enduring ministry to the Church of Christ on the earth.

Fresh outbreaks of popular violence now appeared, as, for instance, at Deptford, 'where many poor wretches were got together, utterly void both of common sense and common decency. They cried aloud as if just come from the tombs. But the word was with power; and many of them were altogether confounded.' Before he could begin to preach on Shrove Tuesday, 'many men of the baser sort, having mixed themselves with the women, behaved so indecently, as occasioned much disturbance. A constable commanded them to keep the peace. For which they knocked him down.' A few days afterwards, while he was preaching in Long Lane, Southwark, 'the host of the aliens gathered together, and one large stone went just over his shoulder.'

All things being settled according to his wish, he left London, February 17. He found a painful state of affairs in Kingswood and the neighbourhood, mainly caused by the attitude assumed by Cennick, who, with fifteen or twenty others, came and told him he 'preached up man's faithfulness, but not the faithfulness of God.' There was trouble also at Bristol, where he inquired, as fully as he could, concerning the divisions and offences, which, notwithstanding the earnest cautions he had given, began afresh to break out.

He spent an unhappy month in striving to reconcile the now fluctuating Society at Kingswood, but without effect. Cennick declared, 'We are willing to join with you. But we will also meet apart from you. For we meet to confirm one another in those truths which you speak against.' The inevitable division took place; fifty-two sympathizers with Cennick withdrew, whilst upwards of ninety were left. Wesley occupied much of his time in visiting many sick persons, and in regulating the Bristol Society, which had been much injured by these sad disputes.

He then, having arranged matters better than he expected to do, returned at his brother's request to London, where he set apart four hours every day except Saturday for speaking with any who desired it, and an hour every day to examine the 'Bands,' that no disorderly or careless or contentious person might remain amongst them. Sickness being very prevalent, he settled a regular method of visiting, eight or ten persons having offered themselves for the work, 'who,' he says, writing to his brother, 'are likely to have full employment; for more and more are taken ill every day.' This work was very greatly extended afterwards.

On May 1, Wesley writes, 'In the evening I went to a little love-feast which Peter Böhler made for those ten who joined together on this day three years, "to confess our faults one to another." Seven of us were present; one being sick, and two unwilling to come. Surely the time will return, when there shall be again

""Union of mind, as in us all one soul""

He is compelled to separate from them; notwithstanding he sighs for union.

On the following day he had a conversation of several hours with Peter Böhler and Spangenberg. The subject of conversation was, 'a new creature;' Spangenberg's account of which was thus given: 'The moment we aim, justified, a new creature is put into us. This is otherwise termed, the new man.

'But, notwithstanding, the old creature, or the old man, remains in us till the day of our death.

'And in this old man there remains an old heart, corrupt and abominable. For inward corruption remains in the soul as long as the soul remains in the body.

'But the heart which is in the new man is clean. And the new man is stronger than the old; so that though corruption continually strips, yet, while we look to Christ it cannot prevail'

But Wesley did not believe in the necessary abiding of this corruption till death. He taught his people earnestly to seek its entire destruction. This his friends, the Fetter Lane people, called his doctrine of 'sinless perfection'—a term which he entirely repudiated. He preached a 'Christian Perfection,' justifying the use of the term not only from Scripture, but also from the Collect in the Communion Service, 'Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love Thee, and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name,' The elevation of the ideal of the Christian life was one of the great services rendered by Wesley to the Church.

In the following week he records, 'We agreed to meet for prayer and humbling our souls before God, if haply He might show us His will concerning our re-union with our brethren of Fetter Lane. And to this intent all the men and women Bands met at one in the afternoon.

Nor did our Lord cast out our prayer, or leave Himself without witness among us. But it was clear to all, even those who were before the most eagerly desirous of it, that the time was not come.'

One of the prominent events of the year 1739 had been the preaching and publication of the sermon on Free Grace, to which was appended a hymn of thirty-six stanzas, on Universal Redemption, by Charles Wesley. It is a remarkable discourse—one of Wesley's ablest—a thoughtful and vigorous treatment of the subject, clear in statement and conclusive in argument. No effective reply to it has ever been written. Wesley seems to have felt it necessary to make an early and strong pronouncement upon the question. He was alive to the fact that erroneous doctrine was being circulated amongst the Societies, causing division, and seducing some of the members from their steadfastness. Tyerman describes the sermon as in some respects the most important one Wesley ever issued. He says, 'It led to the division which Whitefield [not more than Wesley] deprecates, and also to the organization of Lady Huntingdon's Connexion, and to the founding of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales; and finally culminated in the fierce controversy of 1770, and the publication of Fletcher's unequalled Checks to Antinomianism, which so effectually silenced the Calvinian heresy, that its voice has scarcely been heard from that time to this.' Perhaps this is ascribing too much to the influence of this single sermon. It was the avowal of the doctrine, rather than any particular discussion of it, that led to the results just named. But the sermon marks the beginning of the controversy, the course of which Tyerman has indicated.

During Whitefield's first visit to America, there was no sign of Calvinistic teaching; nor even during the time he spent in England after his return, until immediately before his second embarkation, when in a sermon on Gen. iii. 15, preached at Stoke Newington a fortnight before he set sail, and afterwards published in a volume of sermons, he made three references to 'the elect,' affirming in one of them that, 'The truth is this: God, as a reward of Christ's sufferings, promised to give the elect faith and repentance, in order to bring them to eternal life; and both these, and everything else necessary for their everlasting happiness, are infallibly secured to them in this promise, as Mr. Boston, an excellent Scotch divine, sweetly and clearly shows, in a book entitled, A Covenant of Grace;' thus disclosing one source of his views.

Tyerman thinks that Whitefield imbibed these sentiments from the sermons of the Brothers Erskine, with which he had declared himself much pleased and edified, recommending them and Bishop Hall's Christ Mystical, and Boehme's Sermon, to all. Tyerman is therefore correct in saying that Whitefield's Calvinism was 'born in England about the month of June, 1739, but was cradled and greatly strengthened in America in 1740.'

Although both Wesley and Whitefield were fervent and resolute in preaching each his own view of the truth, yet they were sincerely desirous that the difference in their opinions should not lead to any diminution of their brotherly regard and affection. Their correspondence during Whitefield's second stay in America amply testifies to this. Some of Whitefield's letters, while affirming his growing belief in the doctrines of electing love, were most tenderly pathetic in their asseverations of affection and regard for his old friends. Wesley, on his part, carefully avoided anything that was likely to disturb their happy fellowship. Whitefield, however, assisted, it is said, by some of the ministers in America, prepared a reply to Wesley's sermon on Free Grace, and published it in Charlestown and Boston. During his voyage home he wrote a letter to his friend Charles Wesley, dated February 1, 1741, in which he says, 'My dear brethren, why did you throw out the bone of contention Why did you print that sermon against predestination Why did you, in particular, my dear brother Charles, affix your-hymn, and join in putting out your late hymn-book How can you say you will not dispute with me about election, and yet print such hymns, and your brother send his sermon over, against election, to Mr. Garden and others, in America Do not you think, my dear brethren, I must be as much concerned for truth, or what I think truth, as you God is my Judge, I always was, and hope I always shall be, desirous that you may be preferred before me. But I must preach the Gospel of Christ; and that I cannot now do without speaking of election.' Referring, to his answer, he adds, 'If it occasion a strangeness us, it shall not be my fault. There is nothing in my answer exciting to it that I know of. O, my dear brethren, my heart almost bleeds within reel Me. thinks I could be willing to tarry here on the waters for ever, rather than come to England to oppose you.'

Arriving in London in the month of March, Whitefield submitted his answer to Charles Wesley, who returned it endorsed with the words, 'Put up again thy sword into its place;' and this led to the postponement of its publication for a time.

Towards the close of the month Wesley writes, 'Having heard much of Mr. Whitefield's unkind behaviour since his return from Georgia, I went to him to hear him speak for himself, that I might know how to judge. I much approved of his plainness of speech. He told me, he and I preached two different Gospels; and therefore he not. only would not join with, or give me the right hand of fellowship, but was resolved publicly to preach against me and my brother, wherever he preached at all. Mr. Hall, who went with me, put him in mind of the promise he had made but a few days before, that, whatever his private opinion was, he would never publicly preach against us. He said that promise was only an effect of human weakness, and he was now of another mind.' Accordingly he did preach against the Wesleys by name both in Moorfields and elsewhere, And even when invited to occupy-the pulpit at the Foundery, before some thousands of people, and with Charles Wesley sitting at his side, 'he preached the absolute decrees in the most peremptory and offensive manner.'

Whitefield was thus betrayed into a course of action that brought him even more pain than it gave to others. He was the victim at the time of many untoward and conflicting circumstances. His strained relations with the Wesleys had become an underlying, if unacknowledged, source of sorrow to him. His profound love and regard for them did not harmonize with his actions towards them, so

that his heart was divided. His pecuniary responsibilities in connection with the Orphan House at Georgia were very great. He was also being severely handled by various critics for his injudicious letters on Archbishop Tillotson's *Whole Duty of Man*. For a time his popularity waned. It is said that the twenty thousand who used to assemble at his preaching services had dwindled down to two or three hundred. He himself tells that, instead of there being thousands to attend him, scarce one of his spiritual children came to see him from morning to night; and that on one occasion, when he was preaching on Kennington Common, scarcely a hundred persons were present to hear him. Wesley's withering exhibitions of election and reprobation were not likely to add to the attractiveness of the teacher of them. But, above all, imprudent sympathizers with his views goaded him on to actions which he would probably never have committed, had he been left to the impulses of his own generous nature. There were not wanting unwise persons who sought to foment a quarrel, as when, in the beginning of February of this year, a private letter from Whitefield to Wesley having been surreptitiously printed, great numbers of copies were distributed both at the door and in the Foundery itself. Fortunately Wesley procured one, and, after preaching, related the naked fact to the congregation, and told them, 'I will do just what I believe Mr. Whitefield would, were he here himself,' and tore it in pieces before them all, every one who had received it doing the same; so that in two minutes there was not a whole copy left among them. Wesley some time afterwards wrote, 'In March, 1741, Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first breach, which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those who believed universal redemption had no desire to separate; but those who held particular redemption would not hear of any accommodation, being determined to have no fellowship with men that were "in such dangerous errors." So there were now two sorts of Methodists: those for particular, and those for general, redemption.'

This separation must be looked upon as a peculiarly painful and lamentable occurrence in the early morning of the great Revival. What seemed to be the opening of a bright day was overcast with clouds. But after a short time had elapsed, the old fellowship was restored, and suffered no further interruption to the day of Whitefield's death.

Whitefield speedily recovered his popularity. He preached much in England, and towards the close of the year had a most hearty reception in Scotland; and in the following year the remarkable revival at Cambuslang took place. He sailed again for America in August, 1744. Early in 1766 Wesley wrote, 'Mr. Whitefield called upon me. He breathes nothing but peace and love. Bigotry cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes;' and Whitehead, in confirmation of the perfect restoration of affection and friendship, refers to the fact that Whitefield in his last will written with his own hand, about six months before his death, says, 'I leave a mourning-ring to my honoured and dear friends, and disinterested fellow-labourers, the Rev. Messrs. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them, in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgment about some particular points of doctrine.' And Whitehead further mentions the oft-repeated desire of Whitefield that Wesley should preach his funeral sermon. This melancholy service Wesley performed in the year 1770, both at the chapel in Tottenham Court Road, and at the Tabernacle, Moorfields, and bore most ample testimony to the many excellent qualities, the life-consuming zeal, the almost unparalleled labours, the overpowering eloquence, the wonderful success of his dear friend.

Although at this time Wesley suffered much from pain and weakness, he did not abate his labour. To his spirit, at once charitable and methodical, a fresh outlet for energy now appeared.

Many of the Society lacking food and clothing, and being without employment, while others were sick and ready to perish, and he being unable alone to meet their necessities, he called on the United Society to bring what clothes they could spare, and to give weekly contributions of a penny or more, as they could afford, for the relief of the poor. He then arranged to employ the needy women in knitting, giving the common price for their work, and adding to it as they required. Over these he appointed twelve inspectors, whose duty embraced the visitation and relief, every other day, of all the sick in their several districts, and the provision of such things as were needful for them. They met together once a week to give an account of their work, and to consult what further could be done.

At the pressing instance of his brother, he repaired on May 18 to Bristol. As he entered the room at the close of his brother's sermon, some wept aloud, some clapped their hands, some shouted, and the rest sang praise, with whom all presently joined.

Here he spent a week, during which he found abundant employment in examining the new members of the Society, visiting the sick—not one of whom he found either fearing or repining—preaching, and adjusting the pecuniary affairs of the Society and of the school at Kingswood. He then set out early to return to London. On the following day he rejoiced with a little society at Windsor, and in the evening preached at the Foundery. Finding his friend Mr. Piers, of Bexley, 'much shaken by the "still" brethren,' he spoke plainly to him; the snare was broken, and he left him rejoicing in hope and praising God for the consolation. Little wonder that many of the simple-minded and ignorant of the people embraced the 'still' delusion, when even clergymen were the victims of it. He exhorted a crowded congregation not to receive the grace of God in vain, and enforced the same on the Society, which now numbered about nine hundred persons.

The gradual extension of his work now begins by his taking a week's tour into the country, at the earnest persuasion of Lady Huntingdon. During the two days of his outward journey into Leicestershire, he made an experiment which he had been often and earnestly pressed to do, viz. 'speaking to none concerning the things of God, unless his heart was free to it,' with the result that he spoke to none at all for fourscore miles together; that he had no cross either to bear or to take up, and commonly in an hour or two fell fast

asleep; that he had much respect shown to him as a civil, good-natured gentleman; and he adds, 'O how pleasing is all this to flesh and blood! need ye compass sea and land, to make proselytes to this' He passed through Northampton to Markfield, where there had been a great awakening, but a 'still' preacher had been there, and three parts in four were as fast asleep as ever. He passed on to Ogbrook, where the 'still' teacher was instructing the people, if they would believe, to be still; not to pretend to do good (which they could not till they believed); and to leave off what they called the means of grace, such as prayer, and running to church and Sacrament.] Being offered the use of the church by his friend Mr. Caspar Greaves, Wesley explained the true gospel stillness, and on the following morning preached to a large congregation. He then rode on to Nottingham, where a society had been formed, but he found it withered: the room half full that was formerly crowded within and without; none used any prayer, nor knelt when prayer was offered; and the hymnbook [one of those published by the Wesleys, and which had been sent for use in the congregation] and the Bible had vanished, 'supplanted by the Moravian hymns and the Count's sermons!' He expounded, but 'with a heavy heart,' and again the next morning; and in the evening at Markfield, where the church was quite full. After the early morning service he set out for Melbourne, where, the house being too small for the company, he stood under a large tree and preached; and again at Hemington, where the people had to stand about the door and windows. Tyerman thinks it was probably in this journey that he formed the acquaintance of the Countess of Huntingdon, who lived in the neighbourhood, at Castle Donington. In this particular he is in error, her ladyship having been for some time well known to the Wesleys, and already a member of the Fetter Lane Methodist Society. The following day being Sunday, he rode into Nottingham, and at eight o'clock preached in the marketplace to 'an immense multitude of people,' returning to Markfield in the afternoon, where the crowded church was so hot that he had difficulty in reading the service. Finding 'abundance of people' could not get in, he went out to them and preached; and again in the evening in the church. On his way to London the next day, he 'read over, in the way, that celebrated book, Martin Luther's Comment on the Epistle to the Galatians,' when he declared himself utterly ashamed that he had so esteemed this book merely because he had heard it commended by others, or had only read excellent extracts from it. Now he declares that the author 'makes nothing out, clears not up one considerable difficulty, is shallow on many passages, muddy and confused on almost all; that he is deeply tinctured with mysticism throughout, and hence often dangerously wrong.' He apprehends the real spring of the grand error of the Moravians, as then taught, was following Luther for better for worse. Coming to London in the evening of the next day, he preached on Gal. v. 15, and, quoting Luther's comment, openly warned the congregation against the treatise, and publicly withdrew whatever recommendation he had ignorantly given of it. Some portions of Luther's comment had however been very helpful at an earlier period, especially to Charles Wesley, on the subjects of faith and justification.

The next day he rode to Oxford, and found there remained among the poor only two of the twenty-five or thirty weekly communicants. Not one attended the daily prayers of the Church, and the once united company was torn asunder and scattered. Here he remained a week, during which time he consulted Mr. Gambold concerning the subject of his University Sermon. Mr. Gambold told him it was of no moment, For, said he, 'all are so prejudiced they will mind nothing you say.' At this time he inquired 'concerning the exercises previous to the degree of Bachelor in Divinity.' Some days after he again met Mr. Gambold, who honestly told him that he was ashamed of his company, and; therefore must be excused from going with him to the Society.

Returning to London, he preached in Short's Gardens, and on the: following Sunday at Charles' Square, when the rabble brought an ox, which they strove, but vainly, to drive amongst the people; for the beast wheeled round and round, one way and the other, and at length broke through the midst and made clear away. Being in Bristol, he went over to Abingdon, at the earnest request of some that were there; but records, 'so stupid, senseless a people, both in a spiritual and natural sense, I scarce ever saw before. Yet God is able of these stones to raise up Children to Abraham.'

On July 25 he preached before the University to a numerous Congregation, on The Almost Christian, and set out in the afternoon to preach the following day at the Foundry. He is engaged every hour in preaching, visiting the sick, or the members of the Society, and expounding. The latter does not appear to have been a hurried exercise, for, in one case, when the ninth chapter of Romans came in turn, he continued 'an hour longer than usual, and was persuaded that most, if not all, who were present saw that this chapter has no more to do with irrelative predestination than the ninth of Genesis.' He also began a course of addresses on the Book of Common Prayer.

On September 3 he held a prolonged conversation with Zinzendorf, in Latin, which he records in his Journal, appending a letter to the Moravian Church written a short time before. In these he declared, he says, in the plainest manner he could, the real controversy between himself and the Moravians, an unpleasing task, which he had delayed as long as he could with a clear conscience.

At the desire of Mr. Deleznot, a French clergyman, for whom he had already preached,' after having been long importuned,' Wesley officiated in the Hermitage-street Chapel, Wapping, where he administered the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper to about two hundred members of the Society, as many as the place would well contain. The same number attended on the following Sunday, and so on each Lord's day, until the whole Society, numbering about a thousand, had attended; those who had the Sacrament at their own parish churches being advised to attend there.

Repairing to Bristol, he met his brother, with Mr. Jones, of Fonmon Castle, who was now convinced of the truth as it is in Jesus. At Kingswood the house was filled from end to end, and they continued ministering the Word of God, and in prayer and praise, until the morning. He paid two brief visits to Wales, preaching wherever he went. On his meeting with Howel Harris, Humphreys, and

Seward—all now distinctively of the Calvinistic party—they 'fell upon their favourite subject.' Wesley begged for prayer instead of controversy, and Harris gave up some points and strove earnestly to secure peace.

Arriving at Bristol, he found sickness very rife, and was fully engaged in visiting the sufferers. As he was riding to Kingswood, his horse fell, and attempting to rise fell again upon his rider. Wesley was helped into a house, where, ever keeping his one business before him, he found three persons who 'did run well, but Satan had hindered them.' Before he left they resolved to set out again. He reached Kingswood in the afternoon, and preached, and returning to Bristol preached again; then spoke at a meeting of the Society, and afterwards attended a love-feast. He writes, 'I remember nothing like it for many months; a cry was heard from one end of the congregation to the other, not of grief but of overflowing joy and love.'

In the early part of November, Wesley rejoiced much in the comfort that he found both in public and in private. This was, however, soon followed by a very severe attack of illness, which continued for a month.

Not being suffered to go to church as yet, he communicated at home. He was advised to remain indoors some time longer, but, not apprehending it necessary, he went to the New Room, and expounded for half an hour. He preached every day during the following week without inconvenience; then, thinking he might go a little further, he preached on one day both at Kingswood and at Bristol, and afterwards spent an hour with the Society, and about two hours at the love-feast. His body, however, could not keep pace with his mind, and the next day he had another attack of fever; but it did not last long, and he gradually recovered, and entered again fully upon his labours.

He now felt obliged to exercise discipline upon more than thirty of the little company at Bristol, whom he found to be not adorning the gospel. He returned to London in time to preach on Christmas Eve, and to meet the Society afterwards; 'when,' he Says, 'we scarcely knew how to part, our hearts were so enlarged towards each other.'

On the last day of the year he was again attacked by the fever, but he attended a funeral, as he had promised to do, and 'could not refrain from exhorting the almost innumerable multitude' that gathered round the grave. He afterwards preached, and met the Society, when 'many cried with a loud and bitter cry.' About ten o'clock he left them and retired to rest.

Many particulars of Wesley's labours have already been given, but it is impossible to chronicle all. Every hour, literally every moment, from four o'clock in the morning, was bought up for devotion' to his Work. If an interval occurred between his public services, his meetings of the Societies, his visitations to the sick, he seized it for writing or for close reading. For the latter even the time spent on horseback was utilized, as we have seen.

On the morning of the new year Wesley awoke in a strong fever, but consented to keep his bed on condition that every one who desired it should have liberty to speak with him. Fifty or sixty people did so. That night he slept well, to the astonishment of all, the apothecary in particular, who said he had never seen such a fever in his life.

Two days after; he met the leaders of the Bands morning and afternoon, and joined with a little company in 'the great sacrifice of thanksgiving.' In the evening, it being the men's love-feast, he desired they would come up; and those whom the room would not contain stood without, while with one mouth they praised God.

On the 4th he, 'waked in perfect health,' and preached morning and evening every day during the week. On the Saturday, while he was preaching, 'a rude rout lift up their voice on high.' He 'fell upon them without delay. Some pulled off their hats, and opened their mouths no more; the rest stole out one after another.'

He wrote, 'While I Was explaining at Long Lane "He that committeth sin is of the devil," his servants were above measure enraged. They not only made all possible noise (although, as I had desired before, no man stirred from his place, or answered them a word), but violently thrust many persons to and fro, struck others, and brake clown part of the house. At length they began throwing large stones upon the house, which, forcing their way wherever they came, fell down, together with the tiles, among the people, so that they were in danger of their lives. I then told them, "You must not go on thus; I am ordered by the magistrate, who is, in this respect, to us the minister of God, to inform him of those who break the laws of God and the King; and I must do it if you persist herein; otherwise I am a partaker of your sin." When I ceased speaking they' were more outrageous than before. Upon this I said, "Let three or four calm men take hold of the foremost, and charge a constable with him, that the law may take its course." They did so, and brought him into the house, cursing and blaspheming in a dreadful manner. I desired five or six to go with him to Justice Copeland, to whom they nakedly related the fact. The Justice bound him over to the next sessions at Guildford. I observed that when the man was brought into the house, many of his companions were loudly calling out, "Richard Smith, Richard Smith," who, as it afterwards appeared, was one of their stoutest champions. But Richard Smith answered not; he was fallen into the hands of One higher than they; as also a woman who was speaking words not fit to be repeated, and throwing whatever came to hand, whom He overtook in the very act. She came into the house with Richard Smith, fell upon her knees before us all, and strongly exhorted him never to turn back, never to forget the mercy which God had shown to his soul.' A good instance of what Wesley called 'the lion becoming a lamb.' They had no more disturbance at Long Lane; and

they withdrew their prosecution on the offender promising better behaviour.

On the following day he preached at Chelsea on the faith which worketh by love. He was very weak, he tells us, when he entered the room; 'but the more "the beasts of the people" increased in madness and rage, the more was I strengthened, both in body and soul; so that I believe few in the house, which was exceeding full, lost one sentence of what I spoke. Indeed, they could not see me, nor one another at a few yards' distance, by reason of the exceeding thick smoke, which was occasioned by the wildfire and things of that kind, continually thrown into the room, But they who could praise God in the midst of the fires were not to be affrighted by a little smoke.'

After the exclusion of some who did not walk according to the gospel, he found that the London Society comprised eleven hundred members.

An interesting subject at this point claims our attention.

From the time Wesley began to preach to his fellow-countrymen, after his return from Georgia, there gradually opened before him the grand idea of spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land, which he presently discerned to be the purpose of Divine Providence in raising up Methodism. This idea gave shape to all his plans and organizations. If this was not attained, the aim of Methodism was not fulfilled; and all agencies were welcomed only as they promised to aid in this one purpose. Whatever was not contributory to it was beside the mark. The first step towards this end was, of course, the preaching of the gospel, and that to all. But before he could make the experiment of preaching the Word, and leaving it, and those who accepted it, to the contingencies of individual fidelity, he had been trained in the Moravian school to guard and culture the spiritual life of the believer. This was the lesson overlooked by Whitefield; and, although it is impossible adequately to estimate the great benefits of his extraordinary labours yet it must be acknowledged that it lacked the continuity and discernible permanence which characterized Wesley's work from the beginning.

Wesley had the covert of the Society, and every convert to the truth was encouraged to enter within the protection of its fellowship, and was, after due probation, enrolled as a member. But why enter the Society Was this the sum of all things Certainly not. It was a means to an end. We have seen that within the Society were little companies called 'Bands,' each several 'Band' meeting under the care of a senior, sometimes called a 'leader,' for purposes of mutual encouragement and help. Special, even frequent meetings of the Society', apart from the congregations, were held, where the Scriptures were expounded, Christian duties enforced, and unfaithfulness checked. But beyond this, each member of the Society was personally visited, and his individual life watched over and cared for by Wesley himself. He carried in his pocket, written out by himself, and renewed from time to time, the name and address of every one, even when the Society was numbered by several hundreds. By almost superhuman effort he visited them in their homes, as frequently as his strength and astounding activity enabled him, even when their residences extended 'from Westminster to Wapping'—from one end of London to the other.

This was the earlier condition of things: we now witness the development of the Society, from its imperfect to its complete organization, and the establishment of the Methodist class-meeting.

Setting out from London by way of Chippenham (which he reached with difficulty, the weather being so exceedingly rough and boisterous that he had much ado to keep on his horse), he came to Kingswood, Bath, and Bristol. Here he spent some days with all those who desired to remain in the United Society; and on the 15th of February took a step which was fraught with the utmost importance to the whole framework and the future history of Methodism. The incident in itself was comparatively trifling. Wesley thus relates it: 'I was talking with several of the Society :in Bristol concerning the means of paying the debts remaining on the Horsefair Room, when one, a Captain Foy, stood up and said, "Let every member of the Society give a penny a week till all are paid." Another answered, "But many of them are poor, and cannot afford to do it." "Then," said he, "put eleven of the poorest with me; and if they can give anything, well. I will call on them weekly; and if they can give nothing, I will give for them as well as myself." It was done. In a while some of these informed me, they found such and such an one did not live as he ought. It struck me immediately, "This is the thing; the very thing we have wanted so long.'" In it he saw at a glance a means of relief from what was becoming too gigantic a task even for him — his personal visitation of the Society at their own homes. 'I called all the leaders of the classes (so we used to term them and their companies), and desired that each would make a particular inquiry into the behaviour of those whom he saw weekly. They did so. Many disorderly walkers were detected. Some turned from the evil of their ways. Some were put away from us. Many saw it with fear, and rejoiced unto God with reverence. As soon as possible, the same method was used in London and all other places.'

He goes on to say, 'It was the business of a leader — (1) To see each person in his class, once a week at the least, in order to inquire how their souls prosper; to advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give toward the relief of the poor. (2) To meet the minister and stewards of the Society, in order to inform the minister of any that are sick, or of any that are disorderly and will not be reprov'd; to pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

'At first they visited each person at his own house; but this was soon found not so expedient. And that on many accounts—(1) It took up more time than most of the leaders had to spare. (2) Many persons lived with masters, mistresses, or relations, who would not suffer

them to be thus visited. (3) At the houses of those who were not so averse, they often had no opportunity of speaking to them but in company, etc. Upon all these considerations, it was agreed that those of each class should meet all together.' Thus all the ends designed could be secured. 'After an hour or two spent in this labour of love, they concluded with prayer and thanksgiving.' The class-meeting thus became a distinguishing characteristic of the Methodist Society, and has continued to be such to the present day.

By the meeting together of the members for prayer and praise and spiritual intercourse, the class was raised from being a mere convenient arrangement for the oversight of individual members, into a means of Christian fellowship and mutual spiritual ministering, in which the scriptural idea of communion is realized in the most practical and serviceable manner; the aim being to help each member to save his own soul, and to aid him in the saving of the souls of his brethren. This has ever since been the nature of the Methodist class-meeting; and to its influence must be traced the compactness and effective organization of the Methodist Church.

Subsequently, with a view to the further consolidation of the Society, 'I determined,' he says, 'at least once in three months to talk with every member myself, and to inquire at their own mouths, as well as of their leaders and neighbours, whether they grew in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ To each of those whose seriousness and good conversation I found no reason to doubt, I gave a testimony under my own hand, by writing their name on a ticket prepared for that purpose; every ticket implying, as strong a recommendation of the person to whom it was given as if I had wrote at length, "I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness."'

These tickets were: renewed quarterly; and so supplied a quiet and inoffensive method of removing any unworthy member by simply withholding the ticket. When meetings of the Society apart from the congregation were held, the tickets were: required to be shown. Wesley found his precedent for the use of these tickets in the commendatory letters mentioned in 2 Cor; iii. 1.

In the following year Wesley published the Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, dated February 22, 1742-43, and signed by himself alone; all subsequent editions bearing the signatures of both the brothers.

After relating the particulars given above, it is added:

4. There is only one condition previously required in those who desire admission into these Societies; viz., a desire to flee from the wrath to come, to be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practised. Such as

The taking the name of God in vain:

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling

Drunkenness; buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity:

Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing;

The using many words in buying or selling;

The buying or selling uncustomed goods;

The giving or taking things on usury; i.e. unlawful interest:

Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers:

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us:

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God; as, —

The putting on of gold or costly apparel;

The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus;

The singing those songs or reading those books which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God;

Softness, and needless self-indulgence:

Laying up treasures upon earth;

Borrowing without a probability of paying; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

5. It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation.

Secondly, 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:

To their bodies, of the ability that God giveth,

by giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked,

by visiting or helping them, that are sick or in prison;

To their souls,

by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all they have any intercourse with;

trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that 'we are not to do good, unless our heart be free to it.'

By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be;

employing them preferably to others,

buying one of another,

helping each other in business; and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.

By all possible diligence and frugality, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world; and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely, for the Lord's sake.

'6. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, 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 or abstinence.

'7. These are the General Rules of our Societies: all which we are taught of God to observe, even in His written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule, both of our faith and practice. And all these we know His Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways: we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

John Wesley

Charles Wesley.'

May 1, 1743.

At the end of the month he set out for Wales. At Cardiff he met Mr. Jones of Fonmon; at Wenvo the church was thoroughly filled. In the evening, though in weakness and pain, he preached at Fonmon; the next morning at eight o'clock at Bonvilstone four miles away. At Lantrissant [Llantrisant] the clergyman declared himself willing to allow him the use of the church, but 'the Bishop had forbidden him.' Preaching at Lanissan [Llanishen], he was much refreshed in meeting there 'the little earnest Society.'

While taking part, after his return from Wales, in a 'watch-night' service at Kingswood, his voice was lost in the cries of the people. About a hundred of them walked home together, rejoicing and praising God. A week after, he rode to Pensford, at the earnest request of several residents. But he had no sooner begun to preach than a great company of rabble, hired, as was afterwards found, for that purpose, came furiously upon the company, bringing a bull which they had been baiting, and now strove to drive in among the people. But the beast was wiser than his drivers, and continually ran, either on one side or the other, while the company quietly sang praise to God, and prayed for about an hour. 'The poor wretches,' says Wesley, 'finding themselves disappointed, at length seized upon the bull, now weak and tired, after having been so long torn and beaten both by dogs and men, and by main strength partly dragged and partly thrust him in among the people. When they had forced their way to the little table on which I stood, they strove several times to throw it down, by thrusting the helpless beast against it, who of himself stirred no more than a log of wood. I once or twice put aside his head with my hand, that the blood might not drop upon my clothes, intending to go on, as soon as the hurry should be a little over. But the table falling down, some of our friends caught me in their arms, and carried me right away on their shoulders, while the rabble wreaked their vengeance on the table, which they tore bit from bit. We went a little way off, where I finished my discourse, without any noise or interruption.'

Returning to London, he preached in the French chapel at Wapping. The next day he met by appointment several 'earnest and sensible men,' to whom he showed the difficulty he had long found of knowing the people who desired to be under his care. After much consideration they all agreed there was no better way to meet the difficulty, and to come to a sure, thorough knowledge of each person, than to copy the Bristol plan, and divide the whole into classes under the inspection of suitable persons in whom he could confide. 'This,' he says, 'was the origin of our classes in London, for which I can never sufficiently praise God; the unspeakable usefulness of the institution having ever since been more and more manifest.'

On Friday, April 9, they held the first watch-night in London (similar meetings had previously been held in Kingswood); on which he says, 'We commonly choose, for this solemn service, the Friday night nearest the full moon, either before or after, that those of the congregation who live at a distance may have light to their several homes. The service begins at half an hour past eight, and continues till a little after midnight. We have often found a peculiar blessing at these seasons. There is generally a deep awe, upon the congregation, perhaps in some measure owing to the silence of the night; particularly in singing the hymn with which we commonly conclude:

'Hearken to the solemn voice!

The awful midnight cry!
Waiting souls rejoice, rejoice,

And feel the Bridegroom nigh!'

For a long time past the watch-nights have been confined to an annual service held in the last hours of the old year and the first moments of the new a practice now general in most of the churches. For these services Charles Wesley composed a number of hymns, which were published in a pamphlet entitled, *Hymns for the Watch-night*. But the popular hymn, beginning:

'Come, let us anew,

Our journey pursue,

Roll round with the year

,
And never stand, still till the Master appear,'

which for a century and a half has been sung by tens of thousands at the opening of each new year, was not then written. It was published some years afterwards in a pamphlet of *Hymns for the New Year*. There was not a single unusual step taken by Wesley to which objection was not made. But he seldom acted without previous consideration. When the watch-nights were first observed at

Kingswood, some advised him to put an end to them. He says, 'Upon weighing the thing thoroughly, and comparing it with the practice of the ancient Christians, I could see no cause to forbid it. Rather, I believe it might be of more general use;' and he joined them at the next meeting. In reply to a clergyman he after, wards wrote, 'You charge me with holding "midnight assemblies." Sir, did you ever see the word vigil in your Common Prayer-book Do you know what it means If not, permit me to tell you, that it was customary with the ancient Christians to spend whole nights in prayer; and that these nights were termed vigiliae, or vigils. Therefore, for spending a part of some nights in this manner, in public and solemn prayer, we have not only the authority of our own Church, but of the universal Church, in the earnest ages.'

He met his old friend Whitefield again, and was persuaded of his sincerity in declaring, his earnest desire to join hand in hand with all who love the Lord Jesus Christ.

He was on the point of setting out for Bristol, when, receiving an earnest request from the Countess of Huntingdon to hurry to Leicestershire to see a lady, Miss Cowper, who was at Donnington Park lying at the point of death, he repaired thither. On the way he was overtaken by a serious man, who, he says, 'was quite uneasy to know "whether I held the doctrine of the decrees as he did." But I told him over and over, "We had better keep to practical things, lest we should be angry at one another." And so we did for two miles, until he caught me unawares, and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me, "I was rotten at heart, and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers." I told him, "No; I am John Wesley himself." Upon which,

'Improvisum aspris veluti qui sentibus anguem Pressit;

he would gladly have run away outright. But, being the better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavoured to show him his heart, until he came into the street of Northampton.' He passed on from Donnington to Birstal, where he received from the well-known John Nelson the account of the strange manner in which he had been led.

Nelson, a Yorkshire mason, while working in London, heard Whitefield preach in Moorfields, and was deeply impressed. The preaching was pleasant to him, Nelson says, and he loved the man; so that, if any one offered to disturb him, he was ready to fight for him; but, he adds, 'I did not understand him, though I might hear him twenty times, for aught I know . . . I was like a wandering bird, cast out of the nest, till Mr. John Wesley came to preach his first sermon in Moorfields. Oh, that was a blessed morning to my soul! As soon as he got upon the stand, he stroked back his hair, and turned his face toward where I stood, and, I thought, fixed his eyes on me; his countenance struck such an awful dread upon me, before I heard him speak, that it made my heart beat like the pendulum of a clock.' After his conversion, Nelson returned to his home in Birstal. Here many pressed him with questions concerning the 'new faith.' He acknowledged himself to be a believer, and that he was 'as sure his sins were forgiven as he could be of the shining of the sun.' This being noised abroad, more and more came to inquire. Unawares he began to quote, explain, and enforce portions of Scripture. This he did at first in his house, but, the company greatly increasing, he was compelled, on returning from his day's work, to stand at his door and speak to the people. Many accepted his word, and a society was established in Birstal. Here Wesley preached 'to several hundreds of plain people, and spent the afternoon in talking severally with those who had tasted of the Word of God.' From Birstal he went to Newcastle, reading by the way Xenophon's Memorabilia, and, as was his wont, recording his judgment upon it.

Wesley was now entering upon the extension of his work beyond the spheres to which hitherto he had been confined. In going to Birstal and Newcastle, which were entirely new scenes of labour to him, he believed that he was following the leading of Divine Providence, for indications of which he watched and patiently waited, and was ever ready to respond to them when they were made known. These two places stand out prominently in all Wesley's future operations, and in all the subsequent chronicles of the revival. For students of the history of Methodism they have a kind of classical interest.

He reached Newcastle in the evening of Friday, May 28. After a short refreshment he walked into the town, of which he writes:

'I was surprised: so much drunkenness, cursing, and swearing (even from the mouths of little children}, do I never remember to have seen and heard before in so small a compass of time. Surely this place is ripe for him who "came not to call the right, us, but sinners 60 repentance." . . . At seven o'clock on Sunday morning I walked down to Sandgate, the poorest and most contemptible part of the town; and, standing at the end of the street with John Taylor, began to stag the hundredth psalm. Three or four people came out to see What was the matter; who soon increased to four or five hundred. I suppose there might be twelve or fifteen hundred before I had done preaching; to whom I applied those solemn words, "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His stripes we are healed."

'Observing the people, when I had done, to stand gaping and staring upon me, with 'the most profound astonishment, I told them, "If you desire to know who I am, my name is John Wesley. At five in the evening, with God's help I design to preach here again."

'At five, the bill on which 'I designed to preach was covered, from the top to the bottom. I never saw So large a number of people together, either in Moorfields, or at Kennington Common. I knew it was not possible for the one half to hear, although my voice was then strong and clear; and I stood so as to have them all in view, as they were ranged on the side of the hill. The word of God which I set

before them was," I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely." After preaching, the poor people were ready to tread me underfoot, out of pure love and kindness. It was some time before I could possibly get out of the press. I then went back another way than I came; but several were got to our inn before me; by whom I was vehemently importuned to stay with them, at least, a few days; or, however, one day more. But I could not consent; having given my word to be at Birstal, with God's leave, on Tuesday night.'

Leaving Newcastle, he rode to Boroughbridge; and thence to Birstal, where a multitude of people had gathered. He began to speak to them about seven o'clock, and could not conclude till half-past nine.

He also preached near Halifax, and near Dewsbury Moor, twice; at Mirfield; at Adwalton, in a broad part of the highway; again at Birstal, where 'all the hearers were deeply attentive;' at Beeston, where he read Jacob Behmen's *Mysterium Magnum*, and pronounced it to be 'most sublime nonsense; inimitable bombast; fustian not to be paralleled.' Riding for Epworth, he finished Madame Guyon's *Short Method of Prayer* and *1;es Torrents Spirituals*, in which he found that the still brethren 'only retailed from this poor quietist.'

Returning thus to Epworth, after an interval of some years, he was soon discovered by two or three poor women; one of them was an old servant of his father's. He inquired if they knew any in Epworth who were in earnest to be saved. 'I am, by the grace of God,' said one of them, 'and I know I am saved through faith; and many here can say the same' thing.' The next day being Sunday, his companion, John Taylor, after the service, stood in the churchyard and gave notice, 'Mr. Wesley, not being permitted to preach in the church, designs to preach here at six o'clock.' At which time Wesley stood on his father's tombstone and preached to such a congregation as he believed Epworth never saw before. Being earnestly pressed by many, not only of Epworth but of several adjoining villages, and finding the still brethren had been here also, he remained for some days, preaching and speaking severally with those, in every place, who had found or waited for salvation; each evening taking his stand on his father's tomb. We learn that a whole waggon-load of these new heretics had been brought by their angry neighbours before a justice of the peace, Mr. George Stovin, of Crowle, a town near by, who inquired what they had done; at which there was a deep silence. At length one said, 'Why, they pretend to be better than other people; and besides, they pray from morning to night.' 'But have they done nothing besides' 'Yes, sir,' said an old man; 'an't please your worship, they have converted my wife. Till she went among them, she had such a tongue! And now she is as quiet as a lamb.' 'Carry them back, carry them back,' replied the justice, 'and let them convert all the scolds of the town.'

At Epworth 'striking effects accompanied the preaching. One evening on every side, as with one accord, the people lifted up their voices and wept; the following evening several dropped clown as dead, and amongst the' rest was such a cry as almost drowned the voice of the preacher. But their mourning was turned into joy and their cries into songs of praise.

A gentleman was present at one service who pretended not to be of any religion at all, and who had not attended worship of any kind for thirty years. Wesley, observing him to be standing motionless as a statue, said, 'Sir, are you a sinner' He replied in a deep and broken voice, 'Sinner enough;' and continued staring upwards till his wife and a servant or two, who were all in tears, put him into his chaise and carried him home. Calling upon him some years after, Wesley was agreeably surprised to find him strong in faith, though weak in body, and able to bear testimony that for a long time he had been rejoicing in God, without either doubt or fear; and was now waiting for the welcome hour, when he should depart and be with Christ.

On Sunday, Wesley preached at Haxey at seven; morning and afternoon at Wroot, where the church, which had been offered to him, could not contain the people; at six he preached in Epworth church, yard,' to a vast multitude,' when, he says, 'I continued with them for near three hours; and yet we scarce knew how to part'—and this: was[the fourth service in the day! He makes the following reflection: 'O let none think his labour of love is lost because the fruit does not immediately appear. Near forty years did my father labour here; but he saw little fruit of all his labour. I took some pains among this people too; and my strength seemed to be spent in vain. But now the fruit appeared. There were scarce any in the town on whom either my father or I had taken any pains formerly, but the seed sown so long since now sprang up, bringing forth repentance and remission of sins.'

On the following day he set out for Sheffield, to seek one David Taylor, 'whom God had made an instrument of good to many souls.' Not finding him, he was minded to go forward, but the people constrained him to stay and preach both morning and evening. Taylor arriving, Wesley learned from him; and recorded, for his own future guidance, that he (Taylor) had occasionally exhorted multitudes of people in various parts; but after that, he had taken no thought about them, so that the greater part were fallen asleep again. A confirming testimony to the prudence of that defensive care which Wesley was striving to exert over his converts.

Passing on from Sheffield, he preached at Barley Hall, subsequently ,the scene of many hallowed services, where many were melted down and filled with love to their Saviour. The next morning he began preaching about five, but was compelled to break off in the middle of his discourse; for, he says, 'their hearts were so filled with a sense of the love of God, and our mouths with prayer and thanksgiving,' after a time he resumed his sermon.

Leaving Sheffield, he passed on to Ripley, Donnington Park, Ogbrook, Melbourne, Markfield, Coventry, and Evesham; preaching wherever he came, and. gathering together the little Society in every place where one had: been established: which, at least, meant almost every town through which he had previously passed. In each Society he corrected such errors or evils as had troubled them. He

passed on to Stroud, preaching in the market-place at noon, where 'there would probably have been more disturbance, but that a drunken man began too soon, and was so senselessly impertinent that even his comrades were quite ashamed of him.' In the evening he preaching on Minchin-Hampton Common, where were 'many of Mr. Whitefield's Society.'

On the following day, Sunday, June 27, he preached at Painswick at seven; at ten attended the church; in the afternoon at Runwick, at the close of the afternoon service, he addressed 'a vast multitude of people;' and concluded the day by another service on Minchin-Hampton Common. The next day he rode to Bristol, where he found disputing had done much mischief. As he was coming out of Newgate, one poured out such a flood of cursing and bitterness as he 'scarce thought was to be found out of hell.' So the spirit of evil, whose territory was being assailed, found expression through its agents. He was occupied for fully four days in composing the little differences which had arisen amongst his Bristol people.

Riding to Cardiff, he found much peace and love in the little Society there. On the following day (July 7) he returned, preaching to a small attentive congregation near Henbury, and before eight reaching Bristol, where he had 'a comfortable meeting with many who knew in whom they believed.' 'Now, at length,' he says, 'I spent a week in peace, all disputes being laid aside.' He returned to London on July 20.

Thus ended Wesley's first extended evangelistic tour, in which it may be noticed that he always awaits the indications of circumstances he would, perhaps more correctly, say the indications of Providence—before proceeding to preach and establish societies in fresh places. It will also be observed that little sporadic societies sprang up in different parts of the country from various causes, without his direct intervention. It may further be noticed that he begins to travel in company, if possible, and it soon became the practice for one or other of his helpers to join him in his excursions.

Various circumstances prepared the way for Wesley's visits. In Wales, for example, Howel Harris, a preacher of great power, of whom it was said, 'He tears all before him like a large harrow,' had laboured since 1735, and had organized thirty societies, called 'Private Experience Societies,' before either Whitefield or Wesley visited the Principality.

On his return to London, Wesley found his mother on the borders of eternity; but she had no doubt or fear, nor any desire but (as soon as God should call) to depart and be with Christ.' Three days afterwards she passed away. He thus describes the scene, and the burial: 'Friday, July 23.—About three in the afternoon I went to my mother, and found her change was near. I sat down on the bedside. She was in her last conflict; unable to speak, but I believe quite sensible. Her look was calm and serene, and her eyes fixed Upward, while we commended her soul to God. From three to four the silver cord was loosing, and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then, without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty. We stood round the bed, and fulfilled her last request, uttered a little before she lost her speech: "Children, as soon as I am released, sing a psalm of praise to God.'" On the following Sunday, he says, 'Almost an innumerable company of people being gathered together, about five in the afternoon, I committed to the earth the body of my mother, to sleep with her fathers. It was one of the most solemn assemblies I ever saw, or expect to see on this side eternity.' Thus closed the chequered earthly life of this saintly woman, who had gained for herself an almost peerless position among the wives and mothers of England.

'August 8, I cried aloud in Radcliff Square, Why will ye die, O house of Israel Only one poor man was exceeding noisy and turbulent. But in a moment God touched his heart. He hung down his head; tears covered his face; and his voice was heard no more. I was constrained this evening to separate from the believers, some who did not show their faith by their works. One of these was deeply displeased, spoke many very bitter words, and went abruptly away. In a day or two afterwards he sent a note, demanding the payment of one hundred pounds, which he had lent about a year before, to pay the workmen at the Foundry. Two days afterwards he came and said he wanted his money, and could stay no longer. I told him I would endeavour to borrow it; and desired him to call in the evening. But he said he could not stay so long, and must have it at twelve o'clock. Where to get it, I knew not.' Wesley adds, 'Between nine and ten, one came and offered me the use of an hundred pounds for a year; but two others had been with me before, to make the same offer. I accepted the banknote which one of them brought; and saw that God is over all'

On the way to Bristol he read over 'that surprising book, The Life of Ignatius Loyola, surely one of the greatest men that ever was engaged in the support of so bad a cause! I wonder any man should judge him to be an enthusiast. No, but he knew the people with whom he had to do. And setting out (like Count Z——) with a full persuasion that he might use guile to promote the glory of God or (which he thought the same thing) the interest of His Church, he acted in all things consistently with his principles.'

At Oxford he met his brother and Mr. Charles Caspar Graves. Mr. Graves, formerly a student of Magdalen College, Oxford, was converted under Charles Wesley's ministry, and became one of the Oxford Methodists after the Wesleys had left. His friends, believing him to be 'stark mad,' removed him from his college. Almost coerced by them into compliance, he addressed a document to the fellows of his college, renouncing the principles and practices of the Methodists, declaring his sorrow that he had given offence and scandal by attending their meetings, and promising to offend no more. Two years afterwards, under a deep conviction of his error, he wrote again, confessing that he had acted under the influence of a sinful fear of man, and in deference to the judgment of those whom he held to be wiser than himself; and he now openly retracted his former assertion, and declared that he knew no principles of the Methodists (so-called) which were contrary to the Word of God, nor any practices but what were agreeable both to Scripture and the laws of the Church.

He became a very useful clergyman, and a friend and fellow-labourer of the Wesleys.

Having 'regulated' the Society here and at Kingswood, he returned to London, reading on the way 'that excellent tract, Mr, Middleton's Essay on Church Government,' and 'once more the Life of that good and wise (though mistaken) man, Gregory Lopez.' Being pressed to visit a poor murderer in Newgate, he objected that the turnkeys, as well as the keeper, hated the Methodists, and had refused to admit him even to one who earnestly begged it the morning he was to die. However, he went, and to his surprise found all the doors open to him. While he was exhorting the sick malefactor to call upon God, the rest of the felons flocked round, to whom he spoke 'strong words concerning the Friend of Sinners, which they received with as great signs of amazement as if it had been a voice from heaven.' When he came into the common hall, one of the prisoners, asking him a question, gave him occasion to speak among them, more and more still running together, while he declared God was not willing any of them should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

Going by desire, on Sunday, September 12, to preach in an open place commonly called the Great Gardens, lying between Whitechapel and Coverlet-Fields, he found a vast multitude gathered, and called upon them to repent and believe the Gospel. 'Many of the beasts of the people,' he writes, 'laboured to disturb those of a better mind. They endeavoured to drive in a herd of cows among them; but the brutes were wiser than their masters. They then threw whole showers of stones, one of which struck me just between the eyes. But I felt no pain at all, and when I had wiped away the blood, went on testifying with a loud voice that God hath given to them that believe, not the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and of a sound mind. And by the spirit which now appeared through the whole congregation, I plainly saw what a blessing it is, when it is given us, even in the least degree, to suffer for His name's sake.' He carried the scar on his forehead to the end of life.

On the day following the incident just related, he set out after the early service, preached at nine at Windsor, and the next evening came to Bristol, where he spent a fortnight in examining the Society, and in speaking severally to each member. The next two months were spent alternately at London and Bristol, where he daily pursued his evangelistic work and watched over his societies.

On Monday, November 8, at four, he set out from London for Newcastle, and preaching at various towns on the way, he arrived on Saturday, and at once met the wild, staring, loving Society. His brother had been labouring here for some weeks, but had just returned to London.

On Sunday he began preaching at five o'clock ('a thing never heard of before in these parts'), when 'the victorious sweetness of the grace of God was present with His word.' At ten he went to All Saints, where was such a number of communicants as he had scarce seen but in London or Bristol. At four he preached in the square of the Keelmen's Hospital, and met the Society at six. On Monday morning he began, at five, expounding the Acts of the Apostles.

Each afternoon he spoke severally with the members of the Society. On Tuesday evenings he expounded the Epistle to the Romans, and after the sermon met the Society.

Struck by the different manner in which God is pleased to work in different places, he says, 'The grace of God flows here with a wider stream than it did at first either in Bristol or Kingswood; but it does not sink so deep. Few are thoroughly convinced of sin, and scarce any can witness that the Lamb of God has taken away their sins.' He adds, 'I never saw a work of God in any other place so evenly and gradually carried on. It continually rises, step by step. Not so much seems to be done at any one time as hath frequently been at Bristol and London, but something at every time. It is the same with particular souls. I saw none in that triumph of faith, which has been so common in other places. But the believers go on calm and steady. Let God do as seemeth Him good.' He began to visit the surrounding places. On Sunday, 28th, after preaching in the room at five, and in the hospital at eight, he walked about seven miles to Tanfield Leigh, where a large congregation was gathered from all the country round about, but 'so dead, senseless, unaffected a congregation' he had scarce seen. His experience here, as at many other places, led him to determine not to strike one stroke in any place where he could not follow the blow. In Newcastle he secured a piece of ground on which to build a room for the Society, and removed into a lodging adjoining. The extreme

cold prevented the building from being at once begun, but on Monday, December 30, the first stone of the new house was laid. This was afterwards known as the Orphan House, it being used, amongst other purposes, as a school for orphans. The building was computed to cost 700, towards which Wesley had twenty-six shillings in hand. Many were positive it would never be finished, or that he would not live to see it covered. But he was of another mind, nothing doubting that, as it was begun for God's sake, He would provide what was needful for the finishing. Tyerman says: 'It was hallowed by associations far too sacred to be easily forgotten. Here one of the first Sunday Schools in the kingdom was established, and had not fewer than a thousand children in attendance. Here a Bible society existed before the British and Foreign Bible Society was formed. Here was one of the best choirs in England; and here, among the singers, were the sons of Mr. Scott, afterwards the celebrated Lords Eldon and Stowell. Here was the resting-place of John Wesley's first itinerants; and here colliers and keelmen, from all parts of the surrounding country, would assemble, and after the evening service, would throw themselves upon the benches, and sleep the few remaining hours till Wesley preached at five next morning. It became the northern home of Wesley and his helpers, and the centre of northern Methodism for many years.'

While he was preaching on the site in the evening, he had frequently to stop, while the people prayed and gave thanks to God.

At Horseley, the house being too small, he preached in the open air, though a furious storm began. 'The wind,' he says, 'drove upon us like a torrent, coming by turns from east, west, north, and south. The straw and thatch flew round our heads, so that one would have imagined it could not be long before the house must follow; but scarce any one stirred, much less went away, until I dismissed them with the peace of God.' The next day he preached at Swalwell, when again the wind was high and extremely sharp, but none went away. The following day, after preaching as usual in the Square, he took horse for Tanfield, being more than once nearly blown off his horse. At three he preached to a multitude of people, and afterwards met the Society in a large upper room, which rocked to and fro with the violence of the storm.

As he took his farewell before the largest company he had seen in Newcastle, they hung upon him, so that he could with difficulty disengage himself; as it was, 'a muckle woman' kept her hold, and ran by the horse's side to the Sandgate. He and his companion, Jonathan Reeves, reached Darlington that night, and Boroughbridge the last day of the year, and spent the first day of the new year at Epworth.

'In this year,' Wesley writes, 'many societies were formed in Somersetshire, Wiltshire, Gloucestershire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire, and Nottinghamshire, as well as the southern parts of Yorkshire. And those in London, Bristol, and Kingswood were much increased.' And every society became a centre of religious light and Christian activity and influence, and prepared the way for the extension of the evangelist's visits.

Wesley commenced the year at Epworth, where he preached at five o'clock, and on his father's tomb at eight; but he was denied the Sacrament by the curate. 'Pray tell Mr. Wesley,' said he, 'I shall not give him the Sacrament; for he is not fit.' At Birstal he found many had been turned aside by the Germans.' He arrived in Sheffield wet and weary, then pressed on to the poor colliers at Wednesbury, where his brother had preceded him. He preached in the Town Hall morning and evening, and in the open air. Many were deeply affected, and about a hundred desired to join together. In two or three months they were increased to between three and four hundred. Passing through Evesham, he came to Stratford-on-Avon, where 'most of the hearers stood like posts; but some mocked, others blasphemed, and a few believed.' The remainder of the month was spent in and near Bristol. Returning to London, he and his brother visited the whole of the Society, which occupied them for some days, from six in the morning till six in the evening.

About the middle of February he set out for Newcastle, where he found that the good impressions made on the minds of some of the people were not deep, and that it was necessary to put away more than sixty of them for various gross offences. He was led to conclude, from the unhappy instances that he had met with in all parts of England, that it was a great evil for people to be half-wakened, and then left to themselves, to fall asleep again; and he resolved not to attempt to deepen an impression which had no evidence of being permanent.

He preached in the shell of the new preaching house, then in course of erection; when a great multitude gathered, most of whom kept watch far into the night.

He visited Placey, a small colliery village about ten miles north of Newcastle, the inhabitants of which had always been in the first rank for savage ignorance and wickedness of every kind. He tells us that he felt great compassion for these poor creatures, from the time he first heard of them, and the more because all men seemed to despair of them. He set out with a guide, an unusually high north wind driving the sleet in their faces, which froze as it fell, so that they could barely stand when they arrived. He stood and declared Him who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The poor sinners, he says, quickly gathered together, and gave earnest heed to the things which were spoken; as they did again in the afternoon, in spite of the wind and snow, He visited them again and again, and had occasion greatly to rejoice over his labours.

Returning from Newcastle through Knaresborough, Leeds, Birstal, and Sheffield, he came to Wednesbury, where he found comparative quiet. On the Sunday afternoon he attended service in the church, and 'never heard so wicked a sermon, and delivered with such bitterness of voice and manner.' Knowing what ill effects would be produced by it, he endeavoured to fortify the minds of the people. While he was speaking, a neighbouring clergyman in a very drunken state rode up and, after many 'unseemly and bitter words, laboured much to ride over the people.' All this bore its fruit in a short time, as we shall see.

After a week's rest and peace at Bristol, being refreshed in mind and body, he made a tour through part of Wales; and all went well except at Cowbridge, where a mob, 'headed by one or two wretches called gentlemen, continued shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and throwing showers of stones almost without intermission.' So, after some time spent in prayer for them, he dismissed the congregation. He returned to Bristol, and after a fortnight's work there repaired to London.

On Trinity Sunday he began services in a chapel in West Street, Seven Dials, built some sixty years before by the French Protestants. This was for years afterwards the scene of many remarkable Methodist services. It was the custom of the Wesleys, when in London, to administer the Lord's Supper every Sunday. The first service in West Street was a sacramental service, which lasted no less than five

hours, so great was the concourse of communicants. Wesley was afraid his strength would not hold out for his other work; but says, 'God looked to that; so I must think, and they that will call it enthusiasm, may.' In the evening he preached at the Great Gardens to an 'immense congregation;' then met the leaders of the classes, and after them the Bands. 'At ten at night,' he says, 'I was less weary than at six in the morning.' The following Sunday the service lasted six hours, so he divided the communicants into three companies that there might not be more than 600 at one time. He was gladdened to find that few out of the 1950 members, to which the Society had grown, had lapsed from their steadfastness.

Charles had been itinerating northwards, and his labours and successes had kept pace with his brother's. In Wednesbury a society of above three hundred members had been formed. Here a piece of ground having been given on which to build a preaching-house, he 'consecrated it by an hymn'; and then walked with many of the brethren to Walsall singing. He was received with noisy greetings by the rough people. Standing on the steps of the market-house, he opened his Bible to preach. He says, 'An host of men was laid against us. The street was full of fierce Ephesian beasts (the principal man setting them on), who roared and shouted and threw stones incessantly. Many struck without hurting me. I besought them in calm love to be reconciled to God in Christ. While I was departing, a stream of ruffians was suffered to bear me from the steps. I rose, and having given the blessing, was beat down again. So the third time, when we had returned thanks to the God of our salvation. I then from the steps bade them depart in peace, and walked quietly back through the thickest rioters. They reviled us, but had no commission to touch a hair of our heads.' After endeavouring to confirm the faith of the converts, he left for the north, there to meet with yet more violent treatment.

Wesley was not surprised at the news from Staffordshire; 'nor should I have wondered,' said he, 'if after the advices they had so often heard from the pulpit, as well as from the episcopal chair, the zealous, high-minded Churchmen had risen and cut all the Methodists in pieces.' Consulting a legal authority, he was assured he might have an easy remedy, if he resolutely prosecuted 'those rebels against God and the King.'

He then started for the north. At Newcastle he found that, though some had fallen away, about six hundred continued faithful together for the hope of the gospel. Having been moved, ever since his first visit to Newcastle, at the crowds who every Sunday sauntered to and fro on the Sandhills, he resolved to find them a better employ, and walked straight from the church thither, and gave out a verse of a psalm. 'In a few minutes,' he says, 'I had company enough, thousands upon thousands crowding together.' He had proof that the very mob of Newcastle in the height of their rudeness had some humanity left, for though they made so great a noise that his voice could scarcely be heard, yet they did not throw anything, nor did he receive any personal harm. He had a similar congregation in the High Street at Sunderland. At Lower Spen, one of his people, John Brown, by his rough and strong, though artless words, had left deep convictions in the hearts of his neighbours, so that they were prepared for the message, 'He that believeth hath everlasting life.'

Out of his favourite congregation at Placey, he 'joined together a little company who desired repentance and remission of sins.' In these simple words is explained his usual method of proceeding with those who were deeply impressed under his preaching, by which means the country became gradually covered with a network of societies, and in them the ignorant and feeble were gathered as lambs in a fold, and were watched, and tested, and trained in truth and godliness.

Returning with John Downes, of Horsley, who for thirty years afterwards rendered service as a preacher, and left his name indelibly marked on the pages of early Methodism, he came to Darlington.

He spent a few days in the neighbourhood of Birstal, preaching at as many of the little towns as he could, and returned slowly to London, so ending a tour of two months, full of interest and adventure.

A chapel at Snowsfields, on the Surrey side of the river, built by a Socinian lady, having been offered him, he announced his design to preach there, when a zealous woman warmly replied, 'Will Mr. Wesley preach at Snowsfields Surely he will not do it Why, there is not such another place in all the town. The people there are not men, but devils.' But Snowsfields became a valuable Methodist centre. Three weeks after, he started for Bristol. He 'rode softly' to Snow Hill, when, the saddle slipping, he fell over the horse's head. Some boys helped him, but cursed and swore all the time. He spoke plainly to them, and they promised to amend. Two or three men helping him to mount swore at almost every word. He says, 'I turned to one and another, and spoke in love. They all took it well, and thanked me much.' The horse cast a shoe, which gave him the chance of talking closely with the smith and his servant. He says he mentions these little circumstances to show how easy it is to redeem every fragment of time, when we feel any love to those souls for whom Christ died. It was in this way that the evangelist pursued his work, ever on the alert to seize an opportunity for striving to redeem men from evil, either singly or in crowds.

He now designed to extend the area of his labours to Cornwall, which his brother and one or two of the lay preachers had already visited, and where, in the future, he was to reap a most abundant harvest. Setting out from Bristol, he made no considerable stop until he reached St. Ives, which became for a time the centre of Cornish Methodism, and where was a Society of about a hundred and twenty persons, Who had been gathered together on Dr. Woodward's plan, and with whom the Methodists had had intercourse through a Captain Turner of Bristol, who some time before had put in his vessel there. Wesley spent three weeks, here and in other towns, preaching at every available opportunity. He also paid a visit to St. Mary's, one of the Scilly Isles. His congregations varied from a

handful of people to ten thousand who gathered at Gwennap on his second visit. The disposition of the people was peculiar, some seeming 'pleased and unconcerned,' on others a little impression was made, the rest showing 'huge approbation and absolute unconcern'; in one place he observed 'an earnest stupid attention,' while at another he found 'much goodwill, but no life'; in another the people were 'amazed, but he could find not one who had any deep or lasting conviction.' But after a time he is able to record that at St. Ives, 'the dread of God fell upon us while I was speaking, so that I could hardly utter a word.'

At length a change came over the scene, for, while he was preaching at St. Ives, the mob of the town burst into the room, and created much disturbance, roaring and striking those that stood in the way, 'as though Legion himself possessed them.' Finding the uproar increased, he went into the midst, and brought the ringleader up to the desk, receiving a blow on the side of the head while doing so. 'After which,' he says, 'we reasoned the case, until he grew milder and milder, and at length undertook to quiet his companions.' On one Sunday he preached at four different places, and, feeling no weariness at all, concluded the day with the Society at St. Ives, rejoicing and praising God.

After his return to Bristol, he made a brief tour into Wales, preaching, praying, and talking hour by hour. Then, fearing his strength would not suffice for preaching more than four times in the day, he abridged his service with the Society at Cardiff in the early morning to half an hour, afterwards taking two services at the Castle, one in Wenvo church, and one in Porthkerry. He employed several days in examining and purging the Bristol Society, which, after several were put away, still consisted of more than seven hundred persons. He gave the next week to Kingswood, and found but a few things to reprove.

The Leaders now brought in what had been contributed in their several classes toward the debt incurred in the building of the New Room, which was at once discharged. This was the end in view when the Society was first divided into classes (see p. 366). The contributions were afterwards given to the poor, and subsequently to the work of God generally.

On his way to the Midlands, he preached at Painswick, Gutherston, and Evesham, and the next day called on the Rev. Samuel Taylor, of Quinton, Gloucestershire, a powerful and impressive preacher, and a successful itinerant evangelist: one of several clergymen—like the Revs. John Hodges of Wenvo, Henry Piers of Bexley, Charles Manning of Hayes, Vincent Perronet of Shoreham, John Meriton of the Isle of Man, Richard Thomas Bateman of St. Bartholomew's the Great, London, and others—who, being much benefited by the ministry of the Methodists, and thoroughly sympathizing with their laudable aims, identified themselves with them, welcomed them to their pulpits, and attended their Conferences. Passing through Birmingham, he came to Wednesbury, where he met with such treatment as seems almost incredible, and where he appeared likely to end his days. His brother followed him in two or three days, and gives the following graphic account:

'I was much encouraged by the faith and patience of our brethren from Wednesbury; who gave me some particulars of the late persecution. My brother, they told me, had been dragged about for three hours by the mob of three towns. Those of Wednesbury and Dadaston were disarmed by a few words he spoke, and thenceforward laboured to screen him from their old allies of Walsall; till they were overpowered themselves and most of them knocked down. Three of the brethren and one young woman kept near him all the time, striving to intercept the blows. Sometimes he was almost borne upon their shoulders through the violence of the multitude, who struck at him continually that he might fall. And if he had once been down he would have rose no more. Many times he escaped through his lowness of stature; and his enemies were struck down by them. His feet never once slipped; for in their hands the angels bore him up. The ruffians ran about asking, "Which is the minister" and lost and found and lost him again. That Hand which struck the men of Sodom and the Syrians blind withheld or turned them aside. Some cried, "Drown him I throw him into a pit" Some, "Hang him up upon the next tree I" Others, "Away with him I away with him I" and some did him the infinite honour to cry, in express terms, "Crucify him I" One and all said, "Kill him!" But they were not agreed what death to put him to. In Walsall several said, "Carry him out of the town: don't kill him here; don't bring his blood upon us!"

'To some who cried, "Strip him, tear off his clothes I" he mildly answered, "That you need not do: I will give you my clothes, if you want them." In the intervals of tumult, he spoke, the brethren assured me, with as much composure and correctness as he used to do in their Societies. The Spirit of glory rested upon him. As many as he spoke to, or but laid his hands on, he turned into friends. He did not wonder (as he himself told me) that the martyrs should feel no pain in the flames; for none of their blows hurt him, although one was so violent as to make his nose and mouth gush out with blood.

'Two justices remanded him to the mob. The Mayor of Walsall refused him protection when entering his house, for fear the mob should pull it down. Just as he was within another door, one fastened his hand in his hair, and drew him backward almost to the ground. A brother, at the peril of his life, fell on the man's hand, and bit it, which forced him to loose his hold.

'The instrument of his deliverance at last was the ringleader of the mob, the greatest profligate in the country. He carried him through the river upon his shoulders. A sister they threw into it. Another's arm they broke. No further hurt was done our people; but many of our enemies were sadly wounded, The minister of Darlaston sent my brother word, he would join with him in any measures to punish the rioters; that the meek behaviour of our people, and their constancy in suffering, convinced him the counsel was of God; and he wished all his parish Methodists.'

Wesley himself tells us that a lusty man 'just behind struck at him several times with a large oaken stick; with which, if he had struck him once on the back of his head, it would have saved him all further trouble; but every time the blow was turned aside, he knew not how; that another came rushing through the press, and, raising his arm to strike, on a sudden let it drop, and only stroked his head, saying, 'What soft hair he has.' He says that from the beginning to the end he found the same presence of mind, as if he had been sitting in his study; that he took no thought for one moment before another, only once it came into his mind, that if they should throw him into the river, it would spoil the papers that were in his pocket. For himself he did not doubt but he could swim across, having but a thin coat and a light pair of boots. 'The next morning,' he says, 'as I rode through the town on my way to Nottingham, every one I met expressed such a cordial affection that I could scarce believe what I saw and heard.' He closes his account by inserting the following document, as great a curiosity of its kind, he believed, as was ever seen in England:

'To all High Constables, Petty Constables, and other of his Majesty's Peace Officers, within the county of Staffordshire, and particularly to the Constable of Tipton : —

Whereas, we, his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said county of Stafford, have received information that several disorderly persons, styling themselves Methodist preachers, go about raising' routs and riots, to the great damage of his Majesty's liege people, and against the peace of our Sovereign Lord the King.

'These are in his Majesty's name, to command you, and every one of you, within your respective districts, to make diligent search after the said Methodist preachers, and to bring him or them before some of us his said Majesty's Justices of the Peace, to be examined concerning their unlawful doings.

'Given under our hands and seals, this 12th day of October, 1743.

'J. LANE,

'W. PERSEHOUSE.'

And these were the two justices who refused to give him a hearing.

From Nottingham he passed on to Grimsby, narrowly escaping drowning in crossing the Trent. At Grimsby he designed to preach at the Market Cross, but the rain prevented, and they were at a loss what to do, when a woman that was a sinner' offered a convenient place. In the evening service the poor creature cried out, 'O, sir! what must I do to be saved' Wesley, who had been informed of her case, replied, 'Return instantly to your husband.' 'How can I He is above a hundred miles off, at Newcastle-on-Tyne.' He said, 'I am going for Newcastle in the morning; you may go with me. William Blow shall take you behind him. And so he did'—a singular and touching incident. He remained at Newcastle about three weeks, preaching and regulating the Societies in and around, returning, through the principal towns on his way, to London, where he finished up the remaining weeks of the year in examining the Society, in which, after he had put many aside, there remained about 2,200 members.

Early in the new year Wesley left London for Bristol, to examine the Society; 'not before it was needed. For the plague was begun; many crying out, "Faith! Faith! Believe! Believe!" but making little account of the fruits of faith, either of holiness or good works.' Few things could give him more pain than such conduct. At the end of the month he returned to London, and received most gratifying accounts of the work which John Haime and other Methodist soldiers, then engaged in the war on the continent, were doing amongst their comrades.

Finding that many deserving persons were in great want, he made an appeal to the Society for help, which resulted in an immediate contribution of near 50 (afterwards raised to 200), which he 'began laying out the very next hour in linen, woollen, and shoes.'

Painful reports still reached him of fresh riots at Wednesbury, and also at Birmingham and Nottingham, where his brother had been labouring. As gross misrepresentation of the facts had been spread abroad, he issued a tract entitled Modern Christianity Exemplified at Wednesbury, consisting of signed documents by eye-witnesses. It is a severe Indictment of the persecutors.

He had arranged to leave town, but a proclamation having been published requiring all Papists to go out of London, he determined to stay another week, that he might cast off all occasion of reproach, on the ground of his belonging to the Papists. Then, a brief visit to Bristol was followed by a summons from the Justices of Surrey to attend their court, where he took the oaths to his Majesty, and signed the declaration against popery, thus publicly clearing himself from the foolish charge of complicity with the Church of Rome.

The brothers now agreed that it was enough for one of them to stay in London, while the other endeavoured to strengthen and extend the Societies in other parts of the country. Accordingly Wesley set out on March 26 for a three months' tour. He now paid his second visit to Cornwall, where scenes similar to those already recorded daily occurred. Now he was appealing to drunken and swearing men and women whom he met with on his way; now traversing the snowclad hills and downs, or arriving at his destination wet and weary, after

having been battered by wind and hail and rain for hours together, to preach to the assembled multitudes, whom even rain-storms and hail could not drive away; now he is saluted with loud huzzas, and stones and dirt; then finding abundant reward in the fidelity and growth of the Societies. Once he attends the Church services to hear his 'sect' declaimed against as enemies of the Church, Jacobites, Papists, and what not; an announcement that bore its fruit in a larbarous assault upon some of his preachers, frustrated, however, by the prompt action of the mayor of the Place.

After nearly a month spent in Cornwall, he took ship to Wales, and spent a week in going from town to town, at length reaching Fonmon Castle, where he 'found a natural wish for ease and a resting-place. But not yet: eternity is at hand!' He little knew that forty-seven years' hard labour lay before him.

From Bristol he set out for the north, preaching at Gloucester; at Cheltenham, on 'By grace are ye saved through faith,' 'to a company who seemed to understand just as much of the matter as if he had spoken Greek;' at Gutherton, where he found a people of another kind, with whom he had a remarkable blessing at five the next morning; at noon he preached at Stanley; at three at Tewkesbury; and in the evening in the once stately Benedictine Abbey at Evesham. Thence he proceeded to Birmingham, Sheffield, and Epworth, where he went immediately to return thanks to one who had befriended poor John Downes, lately pressed for a soldier, and hurried off to Lincoln gaol because he was a preacher. Riding from Epworth toward Fishlake, he was met by two or three persons, who begged him not to go that way, for, said they, the town was all up in arms, many having made themselves drunk, and so were ready for any manner of mischief. He accordingly to Sykehouse another way: some reporting the mob was just a-coming, and would certainly fire the house, or pull it to the ground, he told them that then the only way was to make the best use of it while it stood, and began expounding at once.

He then took the shortest road to Birstal, where he learnt that John Nelson, his faithful helper, had on that very ground been pressed for a soldier. Wesley, mindful of his suffering friend, wrote letters to him. He paid a visit to Lancashire, at the request of John Bennet, a successful lay preacher, who formed many Societies in the counties of Chester, Derby, and Lancaster, and of whom we shall hear more presently. He spent a quiet week in Newcastle, being much engaged in writing; then another in visiting the classes, and afterwards, for some days, those in the country. On the Sunday, before leaving, he attended six services, in five of which he himself officiated.

At Durham he met John Nelson and Thomas Beard, 'another quiet and peaceable man who had latterly been torn from his trade and wife and children, and sent away as a soldier, for no other crime, either committed or pretended, than that of calling sinners to repentance.'

On his return to London, the first Conference was held in the Foundry. This event marked so distinctive an epoch in the history of Methodism, and inaugurated so many new and interesting features in the great movement, that it is needful to give some particular account of it. Hitherto Wesley had called to his help such persons as he judged to be fitted by personal character and suitable gifts to take part in the work. That work, as he simply described it, was 'to call sinners to repentance.' He chose the spheres of their labour, and held himself responsible for their maintenance; they engaging to be obedient to him, as sons to a father. During the evangelistic tours which he had already made, he had discerned the signs of a great work opening out before him. Wherever he went, numbers of the spiritually famished people received the Word, notwithstanding the abounding indifference, wickedness, and antagonism. Acting in harmony with the principle he had avouched— 'the world is my parish' —he proceeded to roam abroad over the country, without regard to ecclesiastical boundaries. This course, we have seen, he had already justified—at least to his own satisfaction. The abounding sinfulness of the spiritually destitute and neglected people, the inefficiency of so large a number of the clergy, the knowledge that a gospel of salvation had been committed to his trust, and the proofs which were continually presenting themselves that his truth and his method availed to the saving of the guilty, constituted, in his view, a veritable call of God; while the convictions wrought upon his mind in regard to this work he believed were made by the Spirit of God. The openings which presented themselves were providential openings. He sought the Divine guidance in all his ways, and he accepted the course of events as a Divine response to his prayer. He believed that God was with him; that he was an agent of the Divine will; that he was carrying out the Divine behests. The fruits of his work, as truly as the fruits of the field, he believed to be of God. In events where others saw only ordinary contingencies, he saw the Divine arrangement. If he was laid low in affliction, it was the Lord's hand that smote him; if he was restored, or defended from a danger, it was by the same power. To such an extent did he thus acknowledge God in all his ways, that his opponents, at least, judged him to be the victim of enthusiasm, which, in a godless age, was synonymous with any recognition of a Divine interposition in the affairs of men. He strove to live and think and speak for God. To God he rendered his account. An approving conscience was to him the voice of God. God was with him. So he believed. What others believed of him was a matter of supreme indifference. Let him be called an enthusiast: that was to him no longer a term of reproach. A fanatic he was not. He never looked for results without adequate means. He had a high sense of human duty and responsibility. He saw the need of human prudence and sagacity. God worked through His instruments, not independently of them; therefore let those instruments strive to be as efficient as possible. Let them bring to their work their best powers, cultivated as far as circumstances would allow, their utmost prudence, their most careful judgment, their ripest experience, and their most fervent, even fiery zeal. Let them combine for this purpose. He did not believe himself to be infallible., any more than he believed any one else to be; he knew the need of brotherly help. Then let each contribute his measure of counsel and suggestion for the guidance of all. Therefore let them confer.

He gives the following account of the first of these notable gatherings: In June, 1744, I desired my brother and a few other clergymen to

meet me in London, to consider how we should proceed to save our own souls and them that heard us. After some time, I invited the lay preachers that were in the house to meet us. We conferred together for several days, and were much comforted and strengthened thereby.

'After some time spent in prayer, the design of our meeting was proposed, namely, to consider: 1. What to teach; 2. How to teach, etc.; and 3. What to do, i.e. how to regulate our doctrine, discipline, and practice.'

They then proceeded to consider the doctrine of Justification; and, on the day following, the doctrine of Sanctification. Then points of discipline were discussed; and finally the question of any further union with the Moravians, or with Mr. Whitefield. To the latter they would propose a conference, when he returned to London; the former' absolutely decline it.' It was proposed that those who could should meet again on November 1, at Newcastle; February 1, at Bristol; May 1, at London. But the next meeting was not held until August 1, 1745, when it assembled in London, and the conference became an annual assembly.

The 'minutes' of the meetings were taken down by Wesley in a small pocket memorandum-book, and a similar copy was made by John Bennet. It is not probable that a general minute book was provided, but each of those who were present could have a copy. Both Wesley and Bennet added the minutes of the succeeding four years (1745-48). Of these sufficient portions have been preserved to enable us to trace the order of procedure with exactness. The whole of the minutes were drawn up in the form of questions and answers (a favourite method of Wesley's), which by their perspicuity and exactness show Wesley's hand throughout.

The following are some of the questions considered:

'Q.9. Do we separate from the Church A. We conceive not. We hold communion therewith for conscience' sake, by constantly attending both the word preached and the Sacraments administered therein.

'Q. 12. Do not you entail a schism on the Church —i.e. Is it not probable that your hearers after your death will be scattered into all sects and parties Or that they will form themselves into a distinct sect A. 1. We are persuaded the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the Church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe, notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole Church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live, for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead.'

Four interesting questions were asked bearing directly on their present work. To the question, 'Is field-preaching unlawful' the reply is, 'We do not conceive it is contrary to any law, either of God or man. Yet (to avoid giving any needless offence) we never preach without doors when we can with any conveniency preach within.' And to 'What is the best way of spreading the gospel' the response is, 'To go a little and a little farther from London, Bristol, St. Ives, Newcastle, or any other society. So, a little leaven would spread with more effect and less noise, and help would always be at hand.'

This interesting gathering being ended, Wesley proceeded to 'purge the Society of all who did not walk according to the Gospel,' reducing the number to less than nineteen hundred; 'but number,' he says, 'is an inconsiderable circumstance.'

On August 24 of this year he preached at Oxford his last sermon before the University. Dr. Kennicott, then an undergraduate at Wadham College, says of him, 'He came to Oxford some time before, and preached frequently every day in courts, public-houses, and elsewhere. On Friday morning, having held forth twice in private, at five and at eight, he came to St. Mary's at ten o'clock. There were present the vice-chancellor, the proctors, most of the heads of houses, a vast number of gownsmen, and a multitude of private people, both brethren and sisters. He is neither tall nor fat; for the latter would ill become a Methodist. His black hair [dark auburn] quite smooth, and parted very exactly, added to a peculiar composure in his countenance, showed him to be an uncommon man. His prayer was soft, short, and conformable to the rules of the University. His text was Acts iv. 31. He spoke it very slowly, and with an agreeable emphasisHe is allowed to be a man of great parts, and that by the excellent Dean of Christ Church (Dr. Conybeare); for the day he preached, the Dean generously said of him, "John Wesley will always be thought a man of sound sense, though an enthusiast." However, the vice-chancellor sent for the sermon, and I hear the heads of colleges intend to show their resentment.'

Charles said, 'At ten I walked with my brother, and Mr. Piers and Meriton, to St. Mary's, where my brother bore his testimony before a crowded audience, much increased by the racers. Never have I seen a more attentive congregation. They did not let a word slip them. Some of the Heads stood up the whole time, and fixed their eyes on him. If they can endure sound doctrine like his, he will surely leave a blessing behind him.' Wesley himself says, 'I preached, I suppose for the last time, at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul.' He left Oxford about noon, preached at Wycombe in the evening, and returned to London next day. Here very painful news reached him of the brutal treatment of the Society by the mob in Cornwall; whilst, On the other hand, he received further gratifying accounts of the work done by Methodist soldiers in the army in camp near Brussels. A brief trip to Bristol Completed the travelling for the year.

The year had scarce begun, when he made the following reflection: 'I had often wondered at myself, and sometimes mentioned it to others, that ten thousand cares, of various kinds, were no more weight or burden to my mind than ten thousand hairs to my head. Perhaps I began to ascribe something of this to my own strength. And thence it might be, that on Sunday, 13, that strength was withheld, and I felt what it was to be troubled about many things. One, and another, hurrying me continually, It seized upon my spirit more and more, till I found it absolutely necessary to fly for my life; and that without delay. So the next day I took horse, and rode away for Bristol.' We do not recall another instance of a similar failure. But he had no sooner reached his Bristol home than his soul was lightened of her load, of 'that insufferable weight which had lain upon his mind, more or less, for several days;' and to his great joy he found reason to offer a psalm of praise for the state of the Bristol and Kingswood Societies.

He returned to London, and set out for Newcastle in company with one of his lay preachers—Richard Moss. They found travelling exceedingly difficult, as they were piloted through 'the mire and water and snow,' and still more so when not only 'the snows became deeper, which made the causeways in many places unpassable' (and turnpike-roads were not known in these parts of England till some years after), 'but likewise because the hard frost succeeding the thaw had made all the ground like glass. We were often obliged to walk,' he says, 'it being impossible to ride; and our horses several times fell clown while we were leading them Many a rough journey have I had before, but one like this I never had; between wind, and hail, and rain, and ice, and snow, and driving sleet, and piercing cold. But it is past.' Such troubles sat lightly upon him.

While at Newcastle he received a visit from a Mr. Adams, of Osmotherley, about forty miles distant, who, having heard strange accounts of the Methodists, could not rest till he had inquired for Himself. Wesley invited him to stay, if he could live on 'our Lenten fare. He remained several days, and returned home satisfied with his journey. A fortnight later Wesley, preaching at Northallerton, met the same Mr. Adams with several of his neighbours. On his expressing a wish that Wesley could have time to preach in his house at Osmotherley, he replied he would have time, and ordered the horses out immediately. They reached the village between nine and ten. In an hour the people were gathered together, and at eleven o'clock at night he preached to them. It was after midnight ere he lay down, but he thanked God he felt no weariness at all. Yet he had preached that morning at half-past four at South Biddick, at eight in the open at Chester-le-street; and had reproved a company of swearers at Darlington. He preached again the next morning at five, to a large congregation, many of the people keeping watch all night for fear they should not wake in the morning. He found many of them were, or had been, Papists, and Adams had been their priest. From that day to this there has always been a Society in Osmotherley.'

At Grimsby he preached to a 'stupidly rude and noisy congregation;' but he singled out the leader, and fastened upon him, till he chose to withdraw. He was cheered by words addressed to him in conversation by a clergyman who had been led to salvation by reading some of his writings. At Epworth he preached 'in the house' at five; about eight at the cross, and again in the evening 'to most of the adults of the town;' and in the church listened to another railing accusation. At Birstal he was constrained to continue his discourse 'an hour longer than usual;' God pouring out such a blessing that he knew not how to leave off. At John Bennet's request he next visited several places in Lancashire and Cheshire. He preached at Altrincham at five (as he had done the previous evening), at nine near Stockport, about noon at Bongs in Derbyshire, and at five near Chapel-en-le-Frith, where a miller, near whose pond he stood, let out the water, which fell with a great noise;' but it was labour lost, for he was so strengthened that he was heard to the outskirts of the crowd. He came on through several towns to Wednesbury, where the madness of the people had been stilled, and he preached without any noise or hindrance at all. Thence he hastened to Gosta Green near Birmingham, where he had appointed to preach; but it was dangerous for any who stood to hear, for the stones and dirt were flying from every side, almost without interruption, for nearly an hour. At Oxford he felt he could not spend a single day without heaviness of heart for his brethren's sake.

Early in June he again reached Bristol, where he found the Antinomians had tried to seduce his people, but not more than seven out of seven hundred were turned out of the way. During a month's tour in Cornwall he preached by invitation in several churches; but he met with the rudest and most violent treatment by mobs, equalled only by that which he received at Wednesbury. He was also subject to gross annoyance by the press-gang, and by weak or wicked magistrates and constables. His deliverance at Falmouth seemed to him more strikingly providential than even his rescue at Walsall.

Finding his way to Wales, he felt, 'as it were, in a new world, in peace and honour and abundance ;' and in company with his friend Mr. Hodges, Rector of Wenvo, pursued his work with vigour and joy. He spent some time in Bristol, and in visiting the little Societies in Wilts and Somerset. At the beginning of August the second Conference was held. The views expressed at the previous Conference on Justification and Sanctification were reviewed and expanded, especially in their practical aspects, and several matters of discipline were considered. One question relates to Wesley in particular. 'Q. 10. Can I attend any more Societies than I do — seeing this would imply the spending less time with the rest. A. It seems not; at least, till the Societies already formed are more established in grace.' But circumstances seem soon to have over-ridden this opinion. 'Q. Can I travel less in order to write more A. As yet it does not seem advisable.' The question, 'Can we have a seminary for labourers yet' and the answer, 'Not till God gives us a proper tutor,' may partly explain why this matter was so long deferred.

The Conference over, he returned to London. Many were grieved at an advertisement which Count Zinzendorf had directed to be published, declaring that 'he and his people had no connection with Mr. John and Charles Wesley;' on which Wesley remarked, 'I believed that declaration would do us no more harm than the prophecy which the Count subjoined to it—that we should soon run our

heads against the wall. We will not,' he dryly adds, 'if we can help it.'

Leaving London for a second journey to the north, he called on Dr. Doddridge at Northampton. At Leeds he preached and met the Society, the mob pelting them with dirt and stones great part of the way home. The next night the company was larger, so was the mob, 'and in higher spirits, being ready,' he says 'to knock out all our brains, for joy that the Duke of Tuscany was Emperor!' At Newcastle the inhabitants were in the utmost consternation, news having been received that the Pretender had entered Edinburgh; but a great concourse of people listened to him in the evening. The town being put into a state of siege, he took the opportunity of preaching at Gateshead, where, in one of the services, the congregation was so moved that he began again and again, and knew not how to conclude. After remaining in Newcastle and the neighbourhood about seven weeks, he passed through the West Riding of Yorkshire and Cheshire, into Staffordshire. At Wednesbury town end he stuck fast in the quagmire in the dark; some coming with candles, he left them to extricate his horse, while he walked on to the house where he was formerly mobbed, and preached; and on the following day (Sunday), at five and eight, at Wednesbury, then to church; at one at Tipton, probably at church again in the afternoon; at four again at Wednesbury, 'to well-nigh the whole town;' then would come the Society meeting. Thus his work was beginning to tell on the town, though it did not seem to affect his strength.

From London he retired to Newington, to finish the Farther Appeal; he also wrote A Word to a Drunkard. He spent an hour with an interesting convert, Mr. John Frederick Lampe, musical composer for Covent Garden Theatre, a professed infidel, who had been brought to a better mind by reading the Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion

The alarms still increased in London on account of the nearer approach of the Jacobite rebels. A National Fast was proclaimed. Services were held throughout the City, and Wesley preached at the Foundery at four in the morning, at nine at West Street, and at five in the evening at the Foundery again. He says, 'abundance of people were present, as also (we understood) at every place of worship throughout London and Westminster. We had within a short time given away some thousands of little tracts among the common people. And it pleased God hereby to provoke others to jealousy. Insomuch that the Lord Mayor had ordered a large quantity of papers dissuading from cursing and swearing to be printed, and distributed to the Train-bands. And this day An Earnest Exhortation to Serious Repentance was given at every church door, in or near London, to every person who came out; and one left at the house of every householder who was absent from church. I doubt not but God gave a blessing therewith. And perhaps then the sentence of desolation was recalled. It was on this very day that the Duke's army was so remarkably preserved in the midst of the ambuscades at Clifton Moor.'

Having received a long letter from Mr. Westley Hall, his brother-in-law, pressing him and his brother to renounce the Church of England (for their not complying with which advice he soon renounced them), he wrote in reply at full length. Some of the sentiments therein expressed may be here recorded, as they contain certain Church principles from which Wesley ere long withdrew. On the charge that they undertook to defend some things that were not defensible by the Word of God, he replies:

'We believe it would not be right for us to administer either Baptism or the Lord's Supper, unless we had a commission so to do from those Bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the Apostles.

'We believe there is, and always was, in every Christian Church (whether dependent on the Bishop of Rome or not) an outward priesthood, ordained by Jesus Christ, and an outward sacrifice offered therein, by men authorized to act as ambassadors of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

'We believe that the threefold order of Ministers is not only authorized by its Apostolic institution, but also by the written word;' and he desired to hear and weigh whatever might be said to the contrary.

Charged, further, with giving up some things which were defended by Acts of Parliament, he replies, 'Do you not here quite overlook one circumstance, which might be a key to our whole behaviour—namely, that we no more look upon these filthy abuses which adhere to our Church [such as many of the laws, customs, and practices of the Ecclesiastical Courts] as part of the building, than we look upon any filth which may adhere to the walls of Westminster Abbey as part of that structure.'

To a third charge, that they defended and practised other things in open contradiction to the orders of the Church of England, he declares (1) They would obey all the laws of that Church—the Rubrics, but not the customs of the Ecclesiastical Courts, 'so far as they could with a safe conscience;' a reservation which he avowed at the Conference. (2) That they would obey, with the same restriction, the Bishops, as executors of those laws. But their bare will, distinct from those laws, they did not profess to obey at all. This principle he applied to field-preaching, the use of lay-preachers, and the rules and directions given to the societies; and he knew neither the man who had forbidden these, nor the law by which he could forbid them. Neither did he know the Rubrics which forbade persons to communicate in the chapels. Wesley's attitude towards the Church of England is clearly set forth in this document. He was, he aimed to be, a loyal and obedient son of the Church. But the action of many of the clergy and of some of the Bishops towards him and his work was such as to compel him to discriminate between the authority of the Bishops when administering the true laws of the Church, and when merely giving effect to their own prejudices. It is somewhat singular that he should have been led so precisely to define his views on Church organization immediately before those views underwent the marked change which is presently to be indicated.

In addition to his extensive travelling, which had gradually increased during the first half of this decade, Wesley had devoted much time to the preparation of various books and pamphlets for the press, the use of which he always regarded as a valuable subsidiary to his primary work of preaching. His brother also had been active in poetical writing. Wesley's publications in these five years included twenty-six pamphlets of extracts from different writers on important doctrinal and practical subjects; a dialogue on Predestinarianism, and two dialogues on Antinomianism; three pamphlets specially addressed to Methodists; five others on various topics; three sermons; eight tracts for free distribution 'Words' addressed to different classes of people, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, Drunkards, etc. He also issued three valuable volumes, being slight abridgements of Scougal's *Life of God in the Soul*, and of Law's *Christian Perfection and Serious Call to a Religious Life*; together with *Instructions for Children*, being lessons adapted to the youngest; *A Collection of Receipts for the Poor*; *A Collection of Prayers for Families*; *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns*, which was used in some of his congregations for nearly a hundred years; a small *Collection of Hymns*; and *A Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems*, in three volumes. But the work which most effectively represents his powers as a writer, and which exerted a greater influence than any of his writings at that time, was the *Earnest Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*. It is a clear statement of the principles and work of Wesley and of the Methodists generally, and a triumphant vindication of them from many charges, and at the same time a most impressive condemnation of the conduct of the clergy. It contains also an appeal—earnest indeed—to the members of the Church of England first, and to others, on the moral state of the nation. It is a vigorous and eloquent production. 'These earnest and dignified defences deserve to be mentioned by the side of the Apologies of the early Church. Charles Wesley had also produced two small publications of Hymns on God's Everlasting Love; An Elegy, of five hundred and seventy lines, on the Death of Robert Jones, Esq., of Fonman Castle; one volume of Hymns and Sacred Poems; two pamphlets of Hymns for Times of Trouble and Persecution; a volume of Hymns on the Lord's Supper, and a number of Hymns on the Nativity.

Although during this year much of Wesley's time was absorbed by London, yet he spent upwards of five months in traversing the country in pursuance of his evangelistic work, reiterating his appeals to the spiritually indifferent, and proclaiming the Gospel to all, lovingly and with great earnestness. The course of his journeys lay, in the first instance, to Bristol, thence to Newcastle; returning by way of Bristol to London—a tour which occupied a little over two months. No explanation has been given why he chose this particular route in the early and severe months of the year. The journeys were full of interest as usual, and the labour was not in any way abated.

Within a month after writing to his brother-in-law Hall the letter which has just been considered, in which he declared his belief in the High Church doctrine of Episcopacy, its apostolical succession and authority, he was riding westward; reading, as he rode, the *Inquiry into the Constitution, Discipline, Unity, and Worship of the Primitive Church*; at first published anonymously, but now known to have been written by (at the time) Sir Thomas (afterwards Lord) King. On which he remarks, 'In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that Bishops and Presbyters are (essentially) of one order, and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others.' Wesley's wide reading and open mind, of course exposed him to change of view, even on the highest subjects of human thought. The immediate bearing of all this on his future procedure will appear in the minutes of the Conference of the following year, and at later periods in his career, particularly in his presbyterial ordinations of preachers, first for the American, then for the Scottish, and ultimately for the English Methodist Churches.

In the middle of February, Wesley, in company with one of his helpers, set forth for Newcastle. They pushed their way, he says, 'through thick and thin.' The brooks were so swollen with the late rains, that the common roads were impassable; but their guide, knowing the country, brought them through the fields, so that they escaped the dangerous waters. They reached Evesham wet and dirty enough. Setting out from Birmingham before it was light, they soon found the rain changed to snow, which the northerly wind drove full in their faces, encrusting them over from head to foot in less than an hour's time. He adds, 'We inquired of one, who lived at the entrance of the moors, which was our best way to Stafford. "Sir," said he, "'tis a thousand pound to a penny that you do not come there to-day. Why, 'tis four long miles to the far side of this common; and in a clear day I am not sure to go right across it: and now all the roads are covered with snow; and it snows so, that you cannot see before you." However, we went on, and I believe did not go ten yards out of the way till we came into Stafford.' In the evening he preached, and joined a few together as a society.'

At Leeds, when returning from preaching, he was followed by a great mob, who threw whatever came to hand. He was struck several times, once or twice in the face. He walked to the Recorder's, and told him the case, who promised to prevent the like for the time to come. He reached Newcastle, but not by Way of the dales, the snow being so deep. Here he had abundance of occupation in visiting the sick, for a raging sickness was baffling all the efforts of the physicians, and spreading daily in the town. No less than two thousand of the soldiers were supposed to have died since their encampment there. At Placey, where he delighted to preach, in the middle of the sermon, a vehement storm began which was driven full upon them by the north-east wind; but the congregation regarded it not, and stood their ground to hear the Word.

At Nottingham the work had been greatly hindered by the trifling and disorderly conduct of some of the Society. He made short work of it, cutting off all such at a stroke, and leaving only the little handful who, as far as could be judged, were in earnest to save their souls. Alas for the evil surroundings, and the low life of the town! Returning to Birmingham, he found that Antinomianism of a very bad type had taken root there and in the neighbourhood. He gives the following conversation, 'dreadful as it is,' between himself and one their 'pillars,' wherein, as he says, 'every serious person may see the true picture of Antinomianism full-grown; and may know what these men mean by their favourite phrase, of being "perfect in Christ, not in themselves":—"Do you believe you have nothing to do with the Law of

God' 'I have not; I am not under the Law; I live by faith.' 'Have you, as living by faith, a right to everything in the world' 'I have; all is mine since Christ is mine.' 'May you then take anything you will anywhere Suppose out of a shop, without the consent or knowledge of the owner' 'I may, if I want it; for it is mine. Only I will not give offence.' 'Have you 'also a right to all the women in the world' 'Yes, if they consent.' 'And is not that a sin' 'Yes, to him that thinks it is sin; but not to those whose hearts are free.' He adds, 'The same thing that wretch, Roger Ball, affirmed in Dublin, Surely these are the firstborn children of Satan.' This is as difficult for us to understand as are some of the conditions of life in the Corinthian Church. But how greatly, such a state of things must have increased the Evangelist's labour and sorrow!

On reaching Bristol, he laid the first stone of a new and larger school-house at Kingswood.

On his way to London he preached at Brentford, when many got together and threatened great things. But he took two or three of their chiefs by the hand, and desired them to come in, They did so, and were calm and silent. It was his rule, he afterwards informs us, confirmed by long experiences always to look a mob in the face.

Returning to Bristol after a month's stay in London, he held his third Conference, at which were present John and Charles Wesley, four clergymen, and four or five lay assistants. The meeting was not regarded as a clerical one, for 'the most serious and sensible Band Leaders where the Conference is, and any pious and judicious stranger who may be occasionally in the place,' were judged to be of 'the properest persons to be present.' Points of doctrine and discipline, and many practical questions, were discussed. Some of the questions have a special interest as affecting the evangelistic work. E.g. 'Q. In what view are we and our helpers to be considered A. Perhaps as extraordinary messengers, designed of God to provoke the others to jealousy' — a conviction that was afterwards deepened and more clearly defined. 'Q. What is a sufficient call of Providence to a new place, suppose Edinburgh or Dublin A. (1) An invitation from some one that is worthy, from a serious man, fearing God, who has a house to receive us. (2) A probability of doing more good by going thither than by staying longer where we are. Q. Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased to pour out His spirit more abundantly A. We ought, and at that time to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest. Q. Should we insist more on people's going to church Shall we set them the example at Bristol A. We will make a trial of the effect of it, by going to St. James's Church every Wednesday and Friday'

There were this year from twelve to eighteen assistants in different parts of the country, which was now, for the first time, divided into seven parts, or 'circuits,' as they were termed. They were: '1. LONDON (which includes Surrey, Kent, Essex, Brentford, Egham, Windsor, Wycombe). 2. BRISTOL (which includes Somersetshire, Portland, Wilts., Oxfordshire, Gloucestershire). 3. CORNWALL. 4. EVESHAM (which includes Shrewsbury, Leominster, Hereford, and from Stroud to Wednesbury). 5. YORKSHIRE (which includes Cheshire, Lancashire, Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutlandshire, Lincolnshire). 6. NEWCASTLE. 7. WALES.' To each of these circuits, one, two, or three preachers were appointed for the ensuing three months. All things were in their initial stages; but arrangements were thus made to carry the Methodist message through the length and breadth of the land, as circumstances permitted. John and Charles Wesley take their turns with the rest. Wesley was to itinerate in the London, Bristol, Evesham, Newcastle, and Wales circuits.

Returning to London directly after the Conference, Wesley settled the 'preaching houses' at Bristol, Kingswood, and Newcastle in the hands of trustees, reserving only to himself and brother 'the liberty of preaching and lodging there.' With a view to prevent expense to the poorer members of the Society, as well of health as of time and money, he persuaded them to leave off the use of tea, which was both an expensive and an injurious luxury, himself setting the example. At about the same time he instituted a 'Lending Stock' for the benefit of poor tradesmen in London, who needed a little money to enable them to carry on their business. He collected 50 for the purpose, and lodged it. in the hands of stewards, who lent it in small sums, to be returned within three months. Incredible as it might seem, no less than two hundred and fifty were thus helped in one year. He subsequently was able to raise the sum to 120. By this simple device hundreds of the honest poor were helped in their difficulties. One notable example was that of the once penniless Lackington, whose book sales in eighteen years were more than a hundred thousand volumes, whose income reached to 5000 a year.

He left London on July 21 for his visit to Wales and Cornwall, which occupied him until the early part of October; The entire tour comprised a series of daily and frequent services in churches, houses, or the open air, as circumstances required or opportunity offered, and no considerations of personal comfort or ease were permitted to arrest his fervent and ceaseless labour. Many interesting scenes were witnessed. At Bridgewater he expected much tumult, 'the great vulgar stirring up the small;' but in this he was happily disappointed, an action at law against the rioters, and 'the awe of God which fell upon them,' keeping the whole congregation quiet. At Road the mob threatened loudly; but he adopted his usual plan and looked them in the face, when they stood as men astonished, and neither spoke nor stirred till he had concluded his sermon. Even at Wycombe, it being the day on which the mayor was chosen, abundance of rabble full of strong drink came to the preaching on purpose to disturb, but they soon fell out among themselves, and he finished his service in tolerable quiet. Thus the brave man went on, step by step, undaunted by danger and undeterred by toil, making his appeal, earnestly, ceaselessly; mad by God's blessing it was continually finding its response in the hearts of the people.

One of Wesley's characteristics was his tender pity for the poor and the suffering; and his ingenuity in deriving means for their relief was often called into play. Some of his methods have been noticed. He now attempted another, and as yet untried, method of relieving suffering poverty, the gratuitous dispensing of simple medicines. He had already instituted a society for the visitation of the sick.

Choosing forty-six of those who volunteered for this work, he divided London into twenty-three parts, and directed two volunteers to visit the sick in each division, in order to inquire into their disorders and to procure advice for them, to relieve those who were in want, to advise them on spiritual matters, and 'to do anything for them which he (or she) could.' The expense of this was very great for the Society to bear; he tried sending the sufferers to the hospitals, and seeking medical advice for them; but the advantage was small, and he 'saw the poor people pining away, and several families ruined, and that without remedy.' He then thought of what he calls a desperate expedient. 'I will prepare and give them physic myself.' He felt warranted in doing this because for six or seven and twenty years he 'had made anatomy and physic the diversion of his leisure hours.' He took to his assistance an apothecary and an experienced surgeon. The first day thirty persons came for the relief; in three weeks the number increased to three hundred; and in six months to twice that number. This charitable work was continued for several years, until the expense became greater than he could bear. Thus he sought to relieve and rescue the indigent and ignorant sufferers, while bending his utmost energies to redeem the immoral. However far he may have been from effecting all at which he aimed, he set in motion an amount of Christian philanthropy that bore good fruit in after years. In the following year Wesley issued a work entitled *Primitive Physic*. It contained an admirable series of advices on preserving and improving the health, with a collection of simple receipts of remedies easily procured; and if some of the remedies now create a smile, it must be remembered that they were mostly the remedies then in use by the faculty, and quite in harmony with the existing state of medical knowledge. The book passed into more than thirty editions.

He spent most of a week in December at Lewisham in writing. He tells us that he resumed his vegetable diet, which he had now discontinued for several years, and found it to be of use both to soul and body; but a serious illness two years afterwards obliged him to return to the use of animal food.

The first month of the next year was divided between London and Bristol. At the latter place he had one of his many narrow escapes from death, being thrown violently from his horse; but, though much bruised, he rode for two hours and preached. The next day, finding it difficult to walk, he applied one of his 'primitive' remedies—warm treacle—which he says took away all the pain in an hour, and the lameness in a day or two. Early in February he set out for the north, encountering the most violent storms of wind, rain, snow, and hail nearly the whole way; but still he rode and preached, and rode again.

At Newcastle he read over with some young men a compendium of rhetoric, and a system of ethics; and did not see why a man of tolerable understanding might not 'learn in six months' time more of solid philosophy than is commonly learned at Oxford in four (perhaps seven) years.' He narrowly examined the Society, now reduced from eight hundred to four hundred members; but he accepts the old proverb, 'the half is more than the whole.' He found great cause to rejoice in all the societies around Newcastle, where he continued to labour until the middle of April; then into Yorkshire, making Birstal his centre; then into Lancashire, where, after preaching at several places, he came to Rossendale, and 'preached to a large congregation of wild men; but it pleased God to hold them in chains, so that when he had done none offered any rudeness, but all went quietly away.' He reached Manchester early in the afternoon of the same day, where he had no thought of preaching, but found that public notice had been given that he would do so. He now felt himself to be in a strait. The house would not contain a tenth part of the people who had assembled, and he knew not 'how the unbroken spirits of so large a town would endure preaching in the street;' besides, having ridden a swift trot for several hours in a sultry day, he was both faint and weary. 'But] he says, 'after considering I was not going a warfare at my own cost, I walked straight to Salford Cross. A numberless crowd of people partly ran before, partly followed after me. I thought it best not to sing, but, looking round, asked abruptly, "Why do you look as if you had never seen me before Many of you have seen me in the neighbouring church, both preaching and administering the Sacrament." I then began, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found: call upon Him while He is near." None interrupted at all, till, as I was drawing to a conclusion, a big man thrust in, with three or four more, and bade them bring out the engine. Our friends desired me to remove into a yard just by, which I did, and concluded in peace.' He then rode to Davyhulme, where he was refreshed both in preaching and in meeting the Society.

He passed on through Cheshire to Sheffield, Nottingham, Wednesbury, and Birmingham, reaching London towards the close of May, after an interesting and encouraging, though toilsome tour.

On the last Sunday in May, after the early five-o'clock service, he preached at seven to a large and well-behaved congregation in Moorfields, and in the afternoon delivered a charity-sermon, at the request of his friend Bateman, in St. Bartholomew the Great, when the church and entrances were so crowded that it was with difficulty he could be got in. Preaching there again a fortnight after, he was compelled to admire the behaviour of the people, none of whom betrayed either lightness or inattention.

At the fourth Conference, held in London in June, those present repeated their resolve to examine all their principles from the foundation. It was agreed that each could Submit to the judgment of the rest in speculative things, only so far as his own judgment was convinced; in practical affairs, as far as possible 'without wounding our several consciences.' Beyond this, they concluded, no Christian could submit either to Pope, Council, Bishop, or Convocation. This, they said, is that grand principle of every man's right to private judgment, in opposition to implicit faith in man, on which the Reformers at home and abroad proceeded: 'Every man must think for himself, since every man must give an account for himself to God.'

They further discussed the doctrines of justification by faith, and entire sanctification. They held that 'a church in the New Testament

always means a single congregation: that there is no instance or ground therein for a national Church, such being a mere political institution.' The three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons they held to be plainly described in the New Testament, and to have generally obtained in the Churches of the Apostolic age; but they were not assured that God designed the same plan should obtain in all ages, for it is not so asserted in Holy Writ; and, if this were essential to a Christian Church, it would follow that the foreign Reformed Churches are not parts of the Church of Christ—a consequence full of shocking absurdity.' The Divine right of episcopacy, they say, was first asserted in England about the middle of Queen Elizabeth's reign, till which time, 'at the bishops and clergy in England continually allowed and joined in the ministrations of those who were not episcopally ordained. There must be in the nature of things numberless accidental variations in the government of various Churches, no determinate plan of Church government being appointed in Scripture; and no thought of uniformity was entertained until the time of Constantine.'

On the question of field-preaching, it was feared they had limited it too much; (1) because it was their calling to save the lost, whom they must seek, for they could not expect they would seek them; (2) because they were peculiarly called by going out into the highways and hedges (which none would do if they did not) to compel them to come in; (3) because, though 'the house will hold all that come' to the house, it would not hold all that will come to the field; and (4) because they had always found a greater blessing in field-preaching than in any other preaching whatever.

There were found to be more than twenty lay itinerant assistants, and nearly forty who helped 'only in one place'-hence afterwards called 'local-preachers.' The journeys of the former for the following half-year were fixed, John and Charles Wesley taking their places with the others. The above examples, some of the principal subjects discussed, show not only that the Society was settling down more and more into an organized body, but also that the dominating Principles of Church government in Wesley's mind were at that time undergoing a change.

The Conference over, after preaching three times on the Sunday, he started in the evening for his western journey. On the way he found the usefulness of his little tract, A Word to a Swearer. Setting out one morning at three o'clock, he reached Exeter wet to the skin, where, staying to dry his clothes, he wrote A Word to a Freeholder, in anticipation of an election. His experiences during this tour were similar to those of the previous year. In some places there were changes for the better, as at St. Ives, where he walked to church 'without a single huzza,' rejoicing in the improvement wrought in so short a time; in other places he met with very rough treatment. On two occasions he walked into the midst of riotous mobs, took the ringleaders by the hand, talked to them and quieted them at once. Sometimes the service was interrupted, while at other times the gathering of large numbers greeted him, and gladdened him by their quiet attention. Returning to Bristol, he made his way through Wales to Holyhead, and crossed to Dublin. Here one of his lay-helpers, Thomas Williams, had preceded him, holding his first service probably on Oxmantown Green, near to the Royal Barracks, so often afterwards used for similar services. Multitudes attended Williams's services in the open air, and many were the seals to his ministry, one of whom was Mr. William Lunell, a banker, a member of a noble Huguenot family, who rendered much service to the little Society of Methodists. The account of his signal success had induced Wesley to extend his sphere of action to Ireland. He landed on the morning of Sunday, August 9, and hearing the bells ringing for church, he went at once, and in the evening preached, at the request of the curate, the Rev. Moses Rouquier, A.M., to 'as gay and senseless a congregation' as he had ever seen.

Whitefield had preached in Dublin, in 1738, on his return from his first visit to America. But no society had been formed until 1745, when a pious soldier gathered together a small company of serious persons and preached to them. About this time Benjamin la Trobe, a young Baptist student, became the leader of this little band, until John Cennick, Wesley's helper in Kingswood, now a Moravian, took charge of it. A curious story is told of him. Preaching one day, probably on Christmas Day, he referred to 'the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes,' when one of his hearers, a priest, perhaps not knowing the word was in the Bible, called him a 'Swaddler.' The mob took up the designation, and the same spread with rapidity. Cennick had left Dublin when Williams went. The Methodists assembled in an old Lutheran church in Marlborough street, at the corner of Talbot Street, capable of holding four hundred persons, and four or five times that number in the yard. Here Williams was accustomed to preach; and here Wesley also preached. Many of the rich were there, and many ministers of every denomination; and, though he spoke closely and strongly, none were offended. Indeed, so cheering were appearances, that he believed, if he or his brother could have been there for a few months, there might have been a larger society than even in London itself.

Each morning during his stay he gathered together the Society of about two hundred and eighty members, many of whom appeared to be strong in faith, and of a more teachable spirit than in most parts of England. He explained the rules at large to them. He was led to observe that of the people who came to him few were Irish. 'At least ninety-nine in a hundred,' he says, 'remain in the religion of their fathers, and no wonder, when the Protestants can find no better way to convert them than penal laws and Acts of Parliament.' This brief stay of a fortnight, confined to Dublin, was the first of forty-two visits paid by Wesley to Ireland. Tyerman estimates that he spent at least half a dozen years of his laborious life in the Emerald Isle. Methodism has always had a band of devoted ministers in Ireland, whose labours have been characterized by godly fervour, steadfast fidelity, and intrepid zeal. Many of them have been eminent for their high attainments and usefulness.

On his return voyage, being detained by a calm, he had opportunity of 'talking largely with his fellow-passengers and the sailors,' many of whom received his word with gladness. Landing at Holy-head, he returned to Bristol through Wales, preaching wherever he came. At

Garth he met his going to Ireland, to whom the first news that was brought to him on his arrival in Dublin was, 'the little flock stands fast in the storm of persecution, which arose as soon as my brother left them.' Sad was the state of things there now. The mob had broken into the 'room' and destroyed all before them, tearing away the pulpit, benches, and window-cases, and burning them openly before the gate. Charles says, 'The popish mob, encouraged by the Protestants, are so insolent and outrageous, that, whatever street we pass through, it is up ha arms.' But he stayed not his hand, beginning his ministry in the open air with 'Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people,' etc. 'None made disturbance,' he says, 'till I had ended. Then the rabble attended us with the usual compliments to our lodgings.'

Wesley returned to London, and preached in his favourite place, Moorfields, morning and evening, for some days. He records, 'I know no church in London (that in West Street excepted) where there is so serious a congregation.' At Reading a large company of bargemen, hired to pull down the preaching-house, were induced to attend the service. At the close one of the chief of them rose up and said, 'The gentleman says nothing but what is good; I say so; and there's not a man here shall dare to say otherwise.' The remainder of the year was spent in ceaseless and blessed labour, Of Christmas Day he wrote, 'We met at four, and solemnly rejoiced in God our Saviour. I found much revival in my own soul this day; and so did many others also. Both this and the following days I strongly urged the wholly giving up ourselves to God, and renewing in every point our covenant, that the Lord should be our God.'

In the opening of another year it may be remarked that there is no variation from the record of previous years in the entireness of Wesley's self-dedication to the one supreme aim of his life. It is a daily, hourly devotion to the sacred work of publishing the sinner's Friend, and of labouring to raise and brighten the lives of the miserable multitudes around. The year was begun by a service at four o'clock in the morning amid the sounds of joy and thanksgiving. He found that during the previous year about three hundred persons had received his medicines occasionally; about one hundred had taken them regularly, and submitted to a proper regimen, of whom more than ninety were completely cured; the expense being a little over 40. Two hundred and fifty-five persons had been relieved by the 'Lending Stock' in eighteen months.

After a month spent in London he passed on through Bristol (where he began the enlargement of the 'Room') and Wales to Holyhead, en route to Ireland, to take the place of his brother, who, with his companions, had endured the most cruel and barbarous treatment at the hands of the wildest mobs, barely escaping with their lives. Wesley himself had already had two narrow escapes from death by accident, and one from the rudeness of a rough mob, who at Shepton Mallet pelted him with dirt, stones, and clods, and then wrecked his lodgings; but he had happily eluded them. Being detained a fortnight at Holyhead, waiting for a boat, he traversed the country around preaching. Asked to write some little thing to prevent the people leaving the Church, he wrote, A Word to a Methodist, which was immediately translated into Welsh and printed. The fervent Calvinistic Methodists were drawing the people from the poor pittance of spiritual food they received in the churches. Gair Ir Methodist Owaith is probably the only tract or pamphlet Wesley wrote that has been wholly lost. The Welsh Methodists would not be likely to reprint it.

Wesley reached Dublin on March 8, and remained in Ireland nearly three months. At this time there were ten preachers in Ireland, including the two Wesleys and their companions. They had now three 'preaching-houses' in Dublin; one in York Street, called Dolphin's Barn; one in Marlborough Street; and one in Skinner's Alley. Wesley formed a high opinion of the Irish character. 'So civil a people as the Irish in general, I never saw, either in Europe or America.' He was very laborious, preaching almost incessantly. But his great exertions and continuous exposure, together with the unsuitable nature of the food provided for him, at one time reduced him to extreme feebleness. The energy of his purpose, however, broke through everything, and, encouraged by the numbers of people that gathered to hear him, he still preached, though at times hardly able to stand. The work was, moreover, gradually being consolidated by the persevering efforts of his lay assistants.

He returned through Wales to Bristol, and to London, arriving on June 1. On the following day the fifth Conference assembled in the Chapel House in Tower Street. On the one Sunday that he spent at Bristol he preached at four o'clock in the Weaver's Hall; at seven in the Old Orchard; at ten at Kingswood; and again at two 'under the sycamore tree.' Again at five in the Old Orchard; then back to Kingswood, where, after preaching five times, he closed the day with a love-feast. On the following Sunday he preached twice in Moorfields.

The business of this Conference was confined to practical or disciplinary questions, and to matters affecting the new school at Kingswood, which was soon to be opened. For some time Wesley had been desirous of founding a Christian school 'which would not disgrace the Apostolic age.' Accordingly, partly with contributions from friends (an anonymous lady giving him 800), and partly from the income of his Fellowship, he purchased land at Kingswood, and erected a building suitable to his purpose. He had laid the foundation-stone on April 7, 1746, and the building was opened on Midsummer Day of this year. Close attention was given by the Conference to the affairs of the new school, in which it was decided to receive children between the years of six and ten, and 'to train them in every branch of useful learning, from the alphabet till they were fit as to all acquired accomplishments for the work of the ministry.' The curriculum was to include Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Rhetoric, Geography, Chronology, History, Logic, Ethics, Physics, Geometry, Algebra, Music. The children were to rise at four and go to bed at eight. No time was to be allowed for play, because 'he who plays when he is a child, will play when he is a man.' Provision was made for a course of instruction, extending over several years. No child was to be received unless his parents agreed 'that he should observe all the rules of the school, and that they

Would not take him away from school, no, not a day, till they take him for good and all.' Provision was also made for a four years' course of academical learning, after the school course was completed. This school did not supplant the one which had been opened some years before for the children of the colliers, and which was continued for sixty years longer. But it was designed for the children of parents living at a distance, and those of his travelling preachers; and he may have had in view the forming of a seminary for the training of his preachers themselves.

One important decision of the Conference was to refuse the advice which had been urged upon them, 'to preach in as many places as they could, but not to form any societies.' They had tried it for more than a year, in a large tract of country, from Newcastle to Berwick-upon-Tweed, and there was scarce any fruit of it remaining. The country was now divided into nine circuits, Ireland being one. He returned to Bristol to open the Kingswood School.

For nearly three months before returning to London he continued his work on his way north as far as Berwick, spending much time in and near Newcastle, then returning to the West Riding of Yorkshire; thence into Lancashire, through Staffordshire, and on to London; and after remaining a few days he set out for another month's journey westward, and into Cornwall. In many places he was gladdened by the obvious signs of improvement in the behaviour of the people; as at Wednesbury, 'where every man, woman, and child behaved in a manner becoming the gospel'; and at Epworth, where 'Sabbath-breaking and drunkenness were no more seen, and cursing and swearing were rarely heard.' The fear of God had spread in an uncommon degree at Grimsby; while in Newcastle and in all the country societies around, he found not only an increase of numbers, but more of the life and power of religion. At other places, however, mob violence was as outrageous as ever, and in some places was truly appalling. Leaving Haworth with his travelling companions, Mr. Mackford, Mr. Grimshaw, the zealous incumbent, and a devoted lay preacher named Colbeck, he came to Roughlee, a village near Colne, and preached. When he was halfway through his discourse a mob from Colne 'came pouring down the hill like a torrent.' After exchanging a few words with their captain, a deputy constable, to prevent a contest he consented to go with him to a Justice of the Peace; but he had scarce gone ten yards when one of the crowd struck him with his fist in the face with all his might, and another threw his stick at his head. Here he made a little stand, when another of the ruffians came cursing and swearing in a most shocking manner, and, flourishing his club over Wesley's head, cried out, 'Bring him away.' They were then hurried off to a public-house, where his worship awaited them, who required Wesley to promise he would come to Roughlee no more; but he replied he would sooner cut off his hand than make such a promise. When he was leaving the house, one of the mob beat him to the ground, and when he rose again, the whole body came about him like lions, and forced him back into the house, from which, however, he escaped. But his companions, leaving by another door, were immediately closed in by the mob, who tossed them to and fro with the utmost violence, throwing Mr. Grimshaw down, and casting upon him dirt and mire of every kind. Mackford they dragged by the hair of his head, and inflicted upon him injuries from which he never recovered. Wesley was also subjected to very rough treatment at Bolton; but no serious results happened to him from it.

Being invited by the minister of Goodshaw to preach in his church, he went thither, read the prayers, and, finding the church would not hold the assembled crowd, he went out and stood on the church wall and preached, afterwards making this reflection: "I wonder at those who still talk so loud of the indecency of field-preaching. The highest indecency is in St. Paul's Church, when a considerable part of the congregation are asleep, or talking, or looking about, not minding a word the preacher says. On the other hand, there is the highest decency in a churchyard or field, when the whole congregation behave and look as if they saw the Judge of all, and heard Him speaking from heaven."

He returned to London, having received the following letter from his friend Whitefield, who had lately arrived from America, after an absence of nearly four years: —

London, September 1, 1748.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

'My not meeting you in London has been a disappointment to me. What have you thought about an union I am afraid an external one is impracticable. I find, by your sermons, that we differ in principles more than I thought; and I believe we are upon two different plans. My attachment to America will not permit me to abide very long in England; consequently, I should but weave a Penelope's web if I formed societies; and if I should form them, I have not proper assistants to take care of them. I intend therefore to go about preaching the gospel to every creature. You, I suppose, are for settling societies everywhere; but more of this when we meet. I hope you don't forget to pray for me. You are always remembered by, reverend and clear sir, yours most affectionately in Christ Jesus,

'George Whitefield.'

Having examined the society, and transacted other business, he repaired to Cornwall; after a month's absence, he returned about the middle of October, and spent the rest of the year in and near London.

The year 1749 was marked by incidents in Wesley's personal history that were of considerable interest both to him and to Others.

Reference must be made to these events, but to enter minutely into a description of them would" divert attention from the main Object of these pages. He had designed to visit Rotterdam early in the year, but, being pressed to answer Dr. Middleton's book against the Fathers," he remained in London, and spent nearly twenty clays 'in that unpleasing employment.' About the middle of February he started on a great missionary tour, and did not return to London until early in August. At Kingswood he gathered together seventeen of his preachers, and read lectures to them daily on Theology, Logic, and the Rules for Action and Utterance, as he used to do to his pupils in Oxford. He also met the children of the four schools—the boys who were boarded in the new school, and the girls in the old; and the day scholars, both boys and girls.

At the beginning of April he started on a journey, through Wales, attending his brother's wedding at Garth on the 8th. This interesting occasion is described as 'a solemn day, such as became the dignity of a Christian marriage.' 'Prayer and thanksgiving,' Charles says, 'was our whole employment. We were cheerful without mirth, serious without sadness. A stranger, that intermeddleth not with our joy, said, "It looked more like a funeral than a wedding.'" But they were all joyful, John more so than any of them. This was a very happy union. Charles continued his missionary labours for some years, his wife occasionally accompanying him. After a time he withdrew from the longer journeys, confining his labours mainly to London and Bristol; preaching with great power and usefulness, and writing his numerous hymns, until his death in 1788. His wife survived him until 1822, dying in great peace, in the ninety-seventh year of her age.

After the wedding, Wesley went forward to Holyhead, and crossed over to Dublin. His first labours, after a fortnight in Dublin, were expended in the southern provinces of Munster and Leinster, where he passed from town to town, preaching to audiences who eagerly listened to his words. At Limerick, where he stayed between two and three weeks, much good was done. 'The more I converse with this people,' he says, 'the more I am amazed. That God hath wrought a great work is manifest. And yet the main of them, believers and unbelievers, are not able to give a rational account of the plainest principles of religion. It is plain God begins His work at the heart; then the inspiration giveth understanding.' At Rathcormack he was heartily received by the Rev. R. Lloyd, in whose church he preached, many Roman Catholics venturing to the service and forming 'a very serious part of the congregation:' the next day he preached in the church again twice, when 'the hearts of the people seemed to be as melting wax;' and never since his coming to Ireland had he been so much refreshed as in praying for them, and in calling them to accept the 'redemption that is in Christ Jesus.'

At the close of the service word was brought that a storm of riot and violence had broken forth with terrific fury at Cork, whither he was going. His friends, judging it to be undesirable for him to stay there, he, for this time at least, was compelled to yield, and he rode through the city without stopping. The fiendish violence of the mob has no parallel in all the annals of Methodist persecution. The most uproarious and disgraceful scenes were continued for a whole year, during which many of the poor Methodists and their sympathizers were seriously and shamefully injured, their houses wrecked, and much of their property destroyed. Wesley's preaching in Ireland was with great power, and many persons were savingly converted from sin to righteousness. His lay helpers had been faithfully ministering to the societies since his previous visit, especially in the two southern provinces. Wherever he went the people seemed to give earnest heed to the preaching. At Portarlington, a town inhabited chiefly by French, he was gladly received by the clergyman. At the close Of service in the church he walked to the market-place, the whole congregation following him. Here he preached to a more brilliant company than he had seen anywhere in Ireland, unless in St. Mary's at Dublin; yet all, both high and low, behaved with becoming propriety. On a second visit in a few clays he formed a society of sixty Persons, and on a third visit two days later he preached again, and scarce knew how to leave off, all the people seeming to be so deeply affected. The society was increased to above one hundred members. But while he rejoiced, he reminded himself of the parable of the seed.

Riding two miles further on, he preached, and, though it rained the whole time, and he was thoroughly wet before he had done, the rain driving full in his face, it moved neither hearers nor preacher. It is an impressive picture that presents itself of this delicate, frail-looking gentleman, scrupulously careful respecting his dress and appearance, standing unmoved in pouring rain, bent upon making his appeal to men to forsake sin and be reconciled to God, entirely indifferent to personal convenience, undeterred by rudeness of men or by unpropitious skies.

On returning to Dublin, he preached on the Green, morning and evening, to larger congregations than he had seen there before. After a stay in Ireland extending over a full quarter of the year, he sailed to Bristol, regulated the society there, and the schools at Kingswood, and returned to London, where he remained three weeks, and then rode forward to the north on a journey which occupied more than two months and a half. He left London for the north at the close of August, reaching Newcastle in about a week. At this time an incident occurred which greatly affected him for a while. At the Orphan House in Newcastle, Grace Murray, a devoted Christian woman, the widow of a sea captain, Was engaged in various works. She was exceedingly useful in meeting several of the classes and bands for women, and in visiting the sick in and around the city; at the same time acting as matron of the Orphan House, which was the home of Wesley and the preachers when they were in Newcastle. Wesley very highly prized her services, and became much attached to her. During a brief illness, she nursed him in the Orphan House, and the attachment ripened into affection. She also nursed John Bennet, one of Wesley's helpers, in an illness of six weeks' duration. Bennet became enamoured of her, and made proposals of marriage to her. Wesley's views of marriage having changed, he also made proposals to her; but whether before or after Bennet had done so, does not clearly appear. From her own distinct statement, written some time after, it was not till she had C gone too far with John Bennet to turn back&TMs' that Wesley distinctly and definitely proposed marriage. Certainly both were her suitors at the same time. One of her friends is reported to have said to Bennet, 'If Grace Murray consult her ambition, she will marry Mr. Wesley; if she consult her love, she will

marry you '—which she finally decided to do. Her language was peculiar. She said to Wesley, 'I love you more than anybody in the world; but if I don't marry him he will go mad.' Even making allowance for the difficult position in which she was placed, it does not seem possible entirely to exculpate her from a want of decision; nor is it easy to understand how Wesley could press his suit, when he knew that her affections were, to some degree at least, bestowed on another. But he believed that she was engaged to him first; he loved her as he had never loved any one but his mother; and he was thoroughly persuaded that in many ways, all of which he has minutely stated, she was fitted to be of the greatest possible help to him in his work, and so would very much increase his usefulness. This must be regarded as one of his strongest reasons for desiring to marry her. It is only by giving the utmost weight to the reasons adduced by him, that we can understand how he could be more useful than he was, seeing his entire time and all his powers were wholly devoted to the service of God and the welfare of his fellow-men. Charles Wesley and some others were wishful that he should not marry; and, in order to prevent it, they hastened on the marriage with Bennet, during Wesley's absence in Cumberland, nothing being allowed by him to interfere with his primary work. 'I need add no more,' says Wesley, in an account he gives of the affair, 'than that if I had had more regard for her I loved than for the work of God, I should now have gone on straight to Newcastle, and not back to Whitehaven. I know this was giving up all; but I knew God called.' The day before what proved to be the wedding-day, Wesley dedicated to God in fasting and prayer, and found his will more resigned. He preached in the morning at five o'clock in the open air, when 'the darkness and rain were little hindrance either to himself or the congregation.' He also preached in the evening. On the following day, he says, 'I felt no murmuring thought, but deep distress. I accepted the just punishment of my manifold unfaithfulness, and therefore could not complain; but felt the loss both to me and the people, which I did not expect could ever be repaired.' This day and the following were spent in riding to Leeds; and on the latter day he was in the saddle from five in the morning till nine at night, saving the brief time spent at meals.

At Leeds he met his brother, Mr. Whitefield, and Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, When there was much weeping, confession, and explanation, with forgiveness and reconciliation. The next day Whitefield and Wesley preached, and on the following day Wesley preached three times. He then set off to Newcastle, giving vent to his sorrow in a most pathetic poem of thirty-one stanzas, which he composed as he rode along. On his way he preached at Birstal and Leeds, when the congregations were so large at both places that, although his voice was stronger than it had been for years, and he spoke with all the strength he had, yet the words did not reach two-thirds of the congregation. He reflects, 'Who would have expected such an inconveniency as this, after we had been twelve years employed in the work Surely none will now ascribe the number of the hearers to the novelty of field-preaching.'

Returning to Leeds, he rode, at the desire of John Bennet (so little of unfriendly feeling did Wesley harbour), to Rochdale. On entering the town, they found the streets lined on both sides with multitudes of people, shouting, cursing, blaspheming, and gnashing upon them with their teeth. Finding it impracticable to preach 'abroad,' he went into a large room open to the street, and cried aloud, 'Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts;' and the Word prevailed; none opposed or interrupted, and a Change came over the people. They went on to Bolton in the evening, and had no sooner entered the main street than they discovered that 'the lions of Rochdale were lambs in comparison with those at Bolton.' He says, 'Such rage and bitterness I scarce ever saw before, in any creatures that bore the form of men.' His companions were very rudely dealt with. Perceiving a favourable opportunity, he walked down into the thickest of the crowd that filled the house, and called for a Chair. Then 'the winds were hushed, and all was calm and still. My heart was filled With love, my eyes with tears, and my mouth with arguments. They were amazed, they were ashamed, they were melted down, they devoured every Word. What a turn was this! O how did God change the counsel of the old Ahithophel into foolishness, and bring all the drunkards, swearers, Sabbath-breakers, and mere sinners in the place, to hear of His plenteous redemption.' At Wednesbury he was greatly comforted; at Birmingham, not a scoffer, nor a trifler, not even an inattentive person, could he discern. He retired to Kingswood to write, and then to Shoreham, and afterwards to Lewisham, for the same purpose; dosing the year in London, where, on one day, he preached four times, and the following day three times, besides holding four meetings.

The Conference of this year was held in London, on November 16. Assistants were appointed to the nine great circuits, and each was instructed to travel with Wesley through all the societies in his circuit. Wesley did not publish the Minutes of this Conference, nor of any subsequent Conference, until 1765; but in the course of this year he published an abstract of the proceedings of the five previous Conferences in two small pamphlets, which were printed in Ireland during his stay there.

The year 1750, the last of the first decade of Wesley's evangelistic labours, differed in nowise from the others in the variety, toilsomeness, and interest of his work. He travelled as before, with the same exposure to rough weather and rougher groups of men. But he braved all, and his indomitable spirit carried him successfully through all his toils, and finally conquered all opposition. Even in Cork, where for a whole year violence and persecution had continued, he succeeded in making a stand and preaching, notwithstanding many threats and many efforts to prevent him.

He spent nearly seven months away from London in his various tours, which began at the end of February, when, after three weeks in and near Bristol he went through Wales to Holyhead, and embarked for Dublin. He remained in Ireland from April 7 to July 22, travelling backwards and forwards, mainly in the southern provinces, and finding amidst his labours, and, at times, his physical weakness, abundant encouragement in his work. But, indeed, he was little dependent upon cheering signs. If they were present, they called for joyous thanksgiving; if absent, for renewed and patient exertion.

On leaving Dublin, towards the end of July, he sailed to Bristol, and, after a week's stay, pushed on to Cornwall, where he spent a

month, preaching to large assemblies and small, encountering occasional rudeness, but generally receiving a calm and attentive hearing. He then occupied a week in his return to London, preaching at the several places through which he passed. Then, after a fortnight spent in London, he went down to Bristol for a month, returned, and passed the rest of the year at the Foundery. Imperative restrictions of space prevent any further detail of the year's labour. It was of the same heroic, self-devoted character,—the same calm intensity of purpose, the same indifference to external circumstances, and the same concentration of effort in the all-absorbing appeal to the conscience of the nation.

It will have been observed that Wesley occasionally retired to the houses of some of his friends. It was with the object of securing quiet, where he could give undisturbed attention to writing. During the half decade now ended he had published many works of different kinds, and had projected others. In 1746 he commenced his *Lessons for Children*, which, issued in four parts, comprised nearly four hundred pages, in which 'the most useful portions of Scripture, such as children may most easily understand, and such as it most concerns them to know, are set down in the same order and (generally) the same words as in Holy scripture.' He wrote and published, in addition to those previously named, eleven pamphlets on religious and practical subjects; ten others being defences of Methodism against her assailants; a fifth extract from his *Journal*; a *Compendium of Logic*; short Latin and English grammars, and nine Latin reading-books, for use in the school at Kingswood. He also edited and published eleven pamphlets of hymns written by his brother. But his most considerable publications during this period were three volumes of sermons, containing the most carefully expressed statements of his doctrinal views. To these a fourth volume was afterwards added. These four volumes, containing forty-three sermons, formed, together with *Notes on the New Testament*, published subsequently, the standard doctrinal basis of Methodism. But the largest work that he projected, and at this time began to publish, was entitled, *A Christian Library*. It extended to fifty small volumes, and consisted of the choicest pieces of English practical Divinity that he could find. Most of the pieces were abridged from ponderous tomes; and all were divested of every unnecessary word, a work in which he certainly excelled. This was a noble and benevolent undertaking, but too costly to be within the reach of his societies; the price being more than 6s. He lost more than 200 by the effort. It might have been a more successful enterprise had the books been published as separate and independent volumes. This collection of practical Christian teaching has never been estimated as Wesley hoped it would be; nor as the character of the work and the labour bestowed upon it deserved.

A decade of Wesley's evangelistic work has now, to some extent, been illustrated sufficiently, without presenting the daily details, to make known in what manner he spent these ripened years of his life. The record shows that every hour was carefully and scrupulously bought up and devoted to his one great work—his uninterrupted appeal to the heart and conscience of the people of these islands, and to the conservation of the fruits of his labour. Every morning he held his five-o'clock service, save when travelling required him at that hour, or earlier, to be on the road. At almost every town through which he passed he held at least one service, most frequently in the open air—the number of services held each day depending not on his convenience, but on the possibilities of time and the attendance of the people. If he remained in any place, it was in order to regulate his societies there; or to make it a centre around which he could itinerate. His time when he was in London was engrossed by public and private services, by benevolent enterprises, by attention to the society, or by retirement for literary purposes. He was never unoccupied. He had long accustomed himself to account for every hour of every day. This had been habitual with him since he began his *Pocket Diary* in 1723 or 1724. And this astounding monotony of labour was continued without a break, save when severe illness absolutely forbade; and the illness must be severe, for what would have silenced other men he broke through with a holy daring, again and again casting off the threatening of disease by more active toil. A cold, a headache, or a weariness was rather a call to effort than a prohibition of it.

Although the previous pages are far from presenting a full and minute account of his daily activities, it is beyond the limits of possibility to present the remainder of his life with even an equal measure of minuteness, though the materials are at hand. It must suffice to glance at each decade in succession, and to say that a second, a third, a fourth, and a fifth decade were filled up by the same unwearying industry, the same undaunted, uninterrupted labour. His evangelistic tours were continued to the last year of his life; his multiplied services, early and late, 'abroad' or 'within,' were not diminished as long as it was possible for him to move from place to place.

A complete itinerary, showing Wesley's journeys for fifty years, is before the writer. There is not a break in the whole series. The number of places visited during one of the years is less than usual; this was due to the detention of a serious illness. A specimen from each of the remaining four decades is given (1760, 1770, 1780, 1790). All the intermediate years correspond to these. It is an extraordinary, an unparalleled record. But his *Journals*, and the accumulated material gathered by various writers, must be searched for the details. It is impossible to present them here.