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Watson Boone Duncan

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The Leadership of Methodism

BY REV. WATSON BOONE DUNCAN, A. M., PH. D.

An Address Delivered Before The Historical Society of The South
Carolina Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in
Columbia, S. C., November 27, 1906.

Mr. President and Members of the Historical Society of the South
Carolina Conference, Ladies and Gentlemen:

"The members of the Methodist Church residing in the town of
Columbia and its vicinity, being desirous of promoting the general in-
terests of religion, as well as the prosperity of their own Church, do
contemplate the erection of a convenient building for the public
worship of Almighty God, and beg leave to solicit the contributions
of their benevolent fellow-citizens to aid them in carrying their de-
sign into effect. And when it is remembered that the Methodists
cheerfully accommodate in their houses of public worship all persons
of decent behavior, and when not previously engaged, allow the free
use of them to ministers of other denominations who are in good
standing in their respective Churches, it is hoped that persons of
different religious persuasions will feel disposed to favor so laudable
an undertaking. As soon as a sufficient sum is subscribed to autho-
rize a commencement of the building, the work shall be begun and
prosecuted with all possible dispatch."

The above is the heading to a subscription list written in Colum-
bia on December 15th, 1803—one hundred and three years ago. The
list contains the names of the contributors with amounts given, ag-
gregating \$1,100 00. This Church, the first house of Christian wor-
ship built in Columbia, was finished in 1804 and stood on the same lot

now occupied by Washington Street Church. Rev. John Harper gave the lot as well as his time and influence to the erection of the first building. The first sermons preached in Columbia were by Rev. Isaac Smith, pastor of Santee Circuit in 1787. This faithful itinerant, in passing through Columbia, frequently preached in Col. Taylor's house. But the first preachers to have regular appointments in Columbia were Rev. John Harper, a Methodist, and Rev. Mr. Dunlap, a Presbyterian. This was in 1802-3. In December, 1803, as noted above, Rev. Mr Harper initiated the movement for the erection of the first Church building in the community. This fact suggests a suitable subject for our consideration this evening—"The Leadership of Methodism."

THE BACKGROUND OF METHODISM.

No picture, however admirable in design, can be skillfully executed without due regard to the background. So no study of Methodism can adequately express the glory and grandeur of the movement that does not present the historical setting of its beginning. No enterprise was ever more divine in its origin or providential in its development or marvelous in its achievements than the one we study at this hour. The crying need of the age realized its gratification in the response of Methodism. The social degradation, the intellectual anarchy, the moral pollution, and the spiritual apathy of the age had a striking contrast in the benevolent enterprise, the mental vigor, the ethical ideals, and the holy illumination of Wesley and his disciples. A study of ecclesiastical history reveals the record of how Christianity lost its original simplicity and spiritual power, and how it became a vast and lifeless system of ritualism, under the blighting effect of which public morals and private spiritual life became largely superseded by Church rites. Following the historical path we soon find ourselves groping in the gloom of the Dark Ages. The heroic efforts made to relieve the appalling situation were only partially effective. "In the year 1510", says Stephens, our most accurate historian, "an Augustinian monk walked, with desolate heart, the streets of Rome, and turning away from the pomp of her churches and the corruptions of the Vatican, sought relief to his awakened soul by ascending, on his knees, with peasants and beggars, the staircase of Pilate, which was supposed to have been trodden by Christ at his trial, and is now inclosed near the Lateran palace. While pausing on the successive steps to weep and pray, a voice from heaven seemed to cry within him, 'The just shall live by faith'. It was the voice of Apostolic Christianity and the announcement of the Reformation. He fled from the superstitious scene. Seven years later, the same monk nailed on the gate of the Church at Wittenburg the Theses which introduced Protestantism. They were as trumpet blasts echoing from the Hebrides to the Calabrias, and summoning Europe to a moral resurrection."

But though the Lutheran Reformation may be justly placed among the great epochs of Church history, it failed to re-incarnate the spirit of primitive Christianity. Though its cardinal principle was Justification by Faith, the Reformation took chiefly an ecclesiastical direction and largely expended its energies in a powerful effort to overthrow the organic system of popery, rather than the re-establishment of Apostolic doctrines and the revival of the original spiritual life of the Church. And aside from this, the Reformation retained many of the papal errors, especially in reference to the Sacraments and the priestly functions; its chief error, perhaps, lying in leaving the Church in the hands of the State. Hence after about forty years, it waned in moral power. For almost the same reasons the English Reformation proved ineffective. It also retained the papal errors in regard to the Sacraments, the sacerdotal offices, the constitution of the Church and its relation to the State. It had scarcely been established when it lost its power under Mary, while Cranmer, Latimer, Hooper, and Ridley, its chief promoters, perished at the stake.

But during all these bitter struggles, more or less of Apostolic religion existed among the people, and there was a growing discontent with the partial purification of the Church.

The act of uniformity fanned Puritanism into a burning flame. But, notwithstanding its many virtues, Puritanism was crippled by many vices. It established a High Churchism of its own and set up for itself higher Scriptural claims than were made by the most ardent advocates of the prelacy. In some respects its commonwealth marked the most famous period of England's history, but the reaction under the Restoration flooded the country with a demoralization greater than any that preceded.

The history of the time lying between the Restoration and the birth of Methodism is characterized by most startling evidences of the decay of religion and morals. Watts speaks of the general decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, both Dissenters and Churchmen, and calls upon everyone to use all possible efforts for the recovery of dying religion in the world.

Isaac Taylor says: "When Wesley appeared, the Anglican Church was an ecclesiastical system under which the people of England had lapsed into heathenism, or a state hardly to be distinguished from it." Even Lecky, after speaking of the low state of morals and religion says, in reference to Methodism: "The creation of a large, powerful, and active sect, extending over both hemispheres, and numbering many millions of souls, was but one of its consequences. It also exercised a profound and lasting influence upon the spirit of the Established Church, upon the amount and distribution of the moral forces of the nation, and even the course of its political history."

QUALIFICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP.

This brings us to the consideration of Methodism's qualification for leadership. There was the matchless founder of the movement. Lyman Abbott, in a lengthy review of Prof. Winchester's "Life of John Wesley," says: "Methodism was a movement from a narrow ecclesiasticism to a broad Catholicism, from a class religion to a democratic religion, from a religion of legalism to a religion of the spirit. John Wesley was its founder and leader because he himself passed through the transitions through which it was needful that the English people should pass. Beginning life as a High Churchman, he became a Broad Churchman; beginning life as a legalist, he became an apostle of spiritual liberty; always a cultivated gentleman, he gave himself to a ministry to the unkempt, stolid, and unintelligent masses of a peculiarly unimpressionable people."

"That century," says Prof. Winchester, "was rich in names the world calls great—great generals like Marlborough, great monarchs like Frederick, great statesmen like Chatham and Burke, poets and critics like Pope and Johnson and Lessing, writers who helped revolutionize society like Voltaire and Rousseau; but run over the whole brilliant list, and where among them all is the man whose motives were so pure, whose life was so unselfish, whose character was so spotless. And where among them all is the man whose influence—social, moral, religious—was productive of such vast good and of so little evil, as that exerted by this plain man who exemplified himself, and taught thousands of his fellow-men to know what the religion of Jesus Christ really means."

Dr. John Campbell had no special love for Methodism, but his admiration for Wesley was so great that he declared his belief that the founder of Methodism would yet be acknowledged the greatest Englishman that ever lived. On the tomb of Alexander of Macedon was written: "This is the grave of Alexander—his monument is two continents." So upon the memorial tablet of Wesley in Westminster Abbey might be truthfully inscribed: "His monument is two hemispheres saved to spiritual religion."

Then there were the faithful helpers and heroic successors of Wesley. There was Charles Wesley, the lyric poet of Methodism, whose diction was as pure as Addison's and whose poetic genius swept the entire field of human passion and experience. There was George Whitefield, whose courage enabled him to face even an angry mob, while his burning eloquence subdued them to patient, devoted hearers. There was John Fletcher, who, more than any other man since the rise of Christianity, possessed the mind that was in Christ Jesus. It is said that Voltaire, when challenged to produce a character as perfect as that of Jesus, at once mentioned Fletcher or Madeley. And there was Adam Clarke, who was one of the few encyclo-

pedic scholars of his age. He was not only erudite in attainments but was a preacher of great eloquence and power. The Colliers of Kingswood, the merchants of Liverpool, and the *Literati* of London melted under his preaching, and responded to his call to repentance. And Doctor Coke, who was the soul of the missionary enthusiasm that characterized the first movements of Methodism and laid the foundation of Modern Missions. He was ever agitated with a holy restlessness for the spread of the Gospel, until his tired body rested beneath the waves of the Indian Ocean, and he is entitled to an honorable place in the catalogue of the immortals. And Francis Asbury, the founder and father of American Methodism. He was one of the most devoted followers of Wesley, imbibing his spirit, emulating his zeal, and, like him, was more abundant in labors than any man of his age and country. Time would fail to speak of the valiant hosts of early itinerants, whose labors were just as faithful and whose achievements, in their spheres of activity, were just as successful.

Sir Christopher Wren, the great architect, was, at the age of thirty-one, commissioned to rebuild St. Paul's Cathedral. His task was completed when he was sixty. It is said that when he became old and feeble, he asked to be carried once a year to see the building. Over in the north of the Cathedral is his memorial tablet, bearing that famous Latin inscription, LECTOR, SI MONUMENTUM REQUIRIS, CIRCUMSPICE.—“Reader, if you would behold his monument, look about you.” So if we would behold the imperishable monument of these heroic pioneers of Methodism, we have but to look about us.

Added to this element of Methodism's equipment for leadership, is the marvellous system of Church Polity so providentially developed. Methodism was the resurrection of spiritual and primitive Christianity and its main purpose was the personal salvation of lost men and women. When as a student, Mr. Wesley began his ministrations to the poor and needy and the imprisoned, he had no idea of the results to follow his labors. As time passed, the work grew upon his hands and he soon found it necessary to effect some kind of organization, or leave those whom he had rescued from sin and shame to again become the easy pray of evil and perish. Hence, in 1739 he organized his “United Societies.” By this act, he planted the seed of organized Methodism, that marvelous system of Church government which has been such a mighty agency in the unparalleled success of our Church. It is fashioned after the divine ideal embodied and illustrated in Christ and His Apostles. The gospel came not into the world because it was asked for by the world. Rather, the opposite was the case. God loved the world and God sent His Son to seek and to save the lost world. Christ himself was an itinerant. He sent His Apostles, not because they were called, but because back of Him and them was the divine impulse of saving the lost.

The entire system of salvation, instead of beginning with the people and going back toward God, has its origin with God and then travels down and outward toward the people. This, in fact, is the fundamental idea in the economy of Christianity; and, likewise in the economy of Methodism, which is but the recovered ideal of Christianity. Paul travelled a circuit that embraced the Roman empire; Wesley, one that covered Great Britain; Coke, one that reached to the West Indies; and Whitefield, one that extended over New England—all, not because of an invitation from these regions, but because they were thrust out by this divine impulse to offer the Saviour to every creature.

And besides all this there are the sublime doctrines of our religion. There is, in many quarters, a sickly sentimentalism against creed. But let it be thoroughly understood that Methodism has a creed. A Church without a creed is like a man without a skeleton; and, it might be added, a creed without a Church, is like a skeleton without a man. Methodism holds as fundamental the universality of sin and the universality of the atonement. It moves through the world proclaiming to every soul a free and full salvation. It holds as fundamental the freedom of the human will, teaching that a measure of the Holy Spirit is given to every man, so that if he is lost it is not because Christ has not died for him, but because he will not accept. It further holds that salvation is by faith, that the state of grace is witnessed to by the Holy Spirit, and that a state of perfection in love is an attainment in the present life. We can easily see how a creed so simple and yet so all-comprehensive and so thoroughly scriptural would sooner or later win its way in the religious world. Hence every vital change made in the creeds of Christendom since the birth of Methodism has been a step in the direction of Arminian theology.

It might not be out of place to reproduce an old-time Methodist's sarcastic representation of the teaching prevailing in the communities in which he moved. Here it is: "Religion—if you seek it, you wont find it; if you find it, you wont know it; if you know it, you haven't got it; if you get it you can't lose it; if you lose it, you never had it." It is needless to say that Methodism reverses every clause of this and says: "Religion—if you seek it; you will find it; if you find it, you will know it; if you know it, you have got it; if you get it you may lose it; if you lose it, you must have had it."

Surely with such a matchless founder, with such a marvelous system of government, and such sublime doctrines, Methodism, even in its beginning, was well qualified for leadership. To this leadership we now turn our attention.

LEADERSHIP IN SPIRITUALITY.

Spirituality may be defined as the consciousness of the divine presence in the soul. The spiritual man is the man filled with a sense of the presence of God and of the force of spiritual laws, here and now, convinced of an immediate and conscious relation between himself and God. Mr. Wesley, in his experience, passed from a traditional belief in a mediate relationship with God, which was furnished mainly by the Church, to this living faith in the immediate relationship between the soul and its God; and this experience, which became for him a personal one, became for him a universal doctrine. He believed that this conscious experience was possible to all men, inasmuch as in all men there was a spiritual potentiality. Hence he felt it his duty and the duty of every believer to arouse men to this spiritual capacity and to a loyal and personal acceptance of the truth. He believed that such an experience was not confined to the elect, as was held by the Calvinist; nor to the cultured, as held by the High Church people; nor to the morally cultured, as held by the Puritans. The story of early Methodism, at least, is the story of an earnest and persistent effort to bring men of all classes into this glorious inheritance. There were three stages in the spiritual life of Mr. Wesley and each one performed its mission in his preparation for the great ministry. The first may be termed the ascetic period, by means of which he was led to a mastery over the human heart and was armed with power to search the conscience. The second was the Moravian period, by which he was led into the line of immediate conversion and the satisfactory attestation of the heart. While the third period was marked by the acceptance of the higher life of perfect love, or entire sanctification, which constituted him and his co-laborers the instruments for spreading scriptural holiness over the earth. This he declared was the great DEPOSITUM of Methodism, distinguishing it from every other form of the Christian Church. How grandly comprehensive, how profoundly Scriptural, how intensely practical is our system of truth! Indeed, it is the theology of the man whose supreme aim is the revival and extension of spiritual religion. Deeply conscious of man's utterly lost condition it reveals, as with the knife of the moral anatomist, the deep and festering depravity of the human heart. With a generosity paralled only in God's free sunlight, it visits every man with the offers of mercy. Knowing the reality of the supernatural communication to the spirit of man, it proclaims the glad tidings that the Holy Spirit will enthrone himself in every willing heart, bearing witness to sonship and comforting the soul. It teaches the possibility of a complete victory over sin by asserting a sanctification which is entire and a perfection, not final, but forever progressive.

It is no surprise that Chalmers labeled it "Christianity in earnest." Talmage says: "The thermometer of the Church universal stands

twenty degrees higher because of the furnace John Wesley built."

LEADERSHIP IN SCHOLARLY EXEGESIS.

The time has come when it is generally conceded on all sides that Mr. Wesley and his co-laborers were not only men of uncommon piety, but were men of extraordinary learning as well. Though a very busy man, Mr. Wesley gave ample time for the cultivation of those literary instincts with which he was so abundantly endowed. As a result, he became familiar not only with the great works of English Literature, but with those of the Greek, Latin, Italian, French, German and Spanish. Prof. Winchester says: "John Wesley was a scholar of the old school. He could stand Maculay's test of a scholar—he could read Greek with his feet on the fender." His acquaintance with the Scriptures was characterized by exceeding minuteness and accuracy. In his "Revised New Testament," used as a basis for his "Notes on the New Testament," he anticipated every important improvement made by the translators in the "Revised New Testament" of the present. No material facts in reference to the inspiration of the Holy Bible have been brought to light since his day. He recognized the necessary limitations and imperfections of a human transmission of the divine word, but tenaciously held to the truth of inspiration. He had as much intelligence as any of the modern critics, and exercised far greater wisdom in adjusting his faith to the revelations of advanced scholarship. His faith made a great preacher of him and his ministry was prolific in results, while the pulpits dominated by the theories of destructive criticism, by whatever name they may be called, have been cursed with spiritual paralysis. It was Wesley's faith in the Bible as the word of God, and not "baptized infidelity," that saved the English speaking world from Voltaire's skepticism and the calamity of the French revolutionists. Many of the theories of Voltaire and Tom Paine are now paraphrased and paraded before the public under the guise of "modern scholarship."

But Mr. Wesley was not alone in his attainments and scriptural knowledge. There was Adam Clarke, who rose so rapidly to eminence in literary achievements. He was more or less familiar with every branch of learning. He became skillful in Greek, Latin, Hebrew, Samaritan, Chaldic, Syriac, Arabic, Persian and Coptic languages as well as those of Western Europe. His great abilities and achievements were recognized by membership in the London, Asiatic, Geological, and other learned societies of his age. The enduring monument of his industry, learning, and piety is found in his "Commentary on the Holy Scriptures," which "has spread its banquet of wisdom and love in untold Christian homes on two continents, and is found today in the libraries of ministers and laymen of all denominations." Is

was a leader in the critical study of the Bible and, as such, has had no successor until the appearance of the "International Critical Commentary," now being issued by the Clarkes in London and the Scribners in America.

LEADERSHIP IN EDUCATION.

A movement that was born in a University would naturally be expected to advocate the education of the people; and the history of Methodism has not been disappointing in this respect. The creed of Methodism has ever taught the dignity and worth of our nature. Catching a true vision of both God and man as illustrated in Christ, it realized the kinship of the two natures and the possibility of the restoration of the latter to the glorious image of the former. So the work of the Church is not only evangelistic but educational. It must not only call men to repentance and faith, by which they realize their kinship to God, but it must, by educational process and means, develop the divine image in every man. This was the starting point of our Church. Wesley was himself an educator. Of course there were schools and colleges before his day, but the world undoubtedly owes to Methodism the idea of popular education. It was the product of our basic doctrine of the universality of human redemption. As early as 1740, Mr. Wesley took charge of the famous school at Kingswood, started by Whitefield, which was a leader in the education of the masses. The school was enlarged in 1748 and then Mr. Wesley entered upon his educational authorship. To provide for the needs of this school, and others as started, he prepared several text books, among which was "A Short English Grammar" and "A Short Latin Grammar." The latter book marked an epoch in educational work. It was the first Latin Grammar in English; all hitherto being in Latin and useless without a living teacher and making the study, even then, exceedingly difficult. But this example of Wesley is now universally followed. He wrote "Histories" of Rome and of England, Grammars of the Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and French Languages. These books, of course, would not rank with such works of the present, but they were leaders. Two years before Dr. Samuel Johnson published his "English Dictionary" Wesley had issued "The Complete English Dictionary," which reached a second edition in a few years. He prepared "Selections" from various authors for school use, which plan is so universally popular now. He also wrote an original work on elocution, the oldest in the English language, which, though condensed, contained all the fundamental principles governing public speaking. He wrote a Compendium of Logic which was also a pioneer in the English language. He wrote a concise book on Electricity, and while the world was still laughing at Franklin's claim of

discovery, Wesley was introducing the electrical treatment into hospital work. This fact alone illustrates two traits of Wesley's character—his promptness to see new truths and his fearlessness in proclaiming his views whether the world approved or not. Of course, since his day, others who have been wholly devoted to education have entered the field and have produced books in the various departments superior to Mr. Wesley's; but he was the first to feel the great need and to supply the means of education for the thousands of students that had been brought out by the great religious revival in his day. Christianity is the supreme stimulus of the intellect and a genuine revival fills the schools and colleges. Truly did Bishop Haven once say: "For fertility of invention and commanding influence on succeeding generations, Wesley deserves to rank among educators with Milton and Locke and Pestalozzi and Froebel."

When Mr. Asbury began as General Superintendent of the work in the United States one of his first acts was to draw up a plan to divide the whole Church into districts and establish a classical Academy in each district. In 1784, Ebenezer Academy was established in Virginia. In 1785, he laid the corner stone of Cokesbury College in Maryland. In 1790, Bethel Academy in Kentucky was started. This was succeeded by Augusta College and Transylvania University—all leaders in popular education.

The Wesleyan Female College at Macon, Georgia, established by the Methodists in 1836 was the first College for women in the world. As Miss Catherine E. Brewer received her diploma from this institution, on July 18, 1840, presented by Bishop Pierce, she little realized at that moment that she was the first woman in all the wide world to be graduated from the first chartered College for women and to receive the first diploma. But such was the case. In the long years that have passed since that day, so many changes have been wrought in woman's educational advantages, and in every sphere in which she moves, that it is hard to realize that the first woman graduate is still living. She is now Mrs. Catherine Brewer Benson, still living in Macon, Georgia, and is over eighty years old.

The first institution of its kind established in the great West was the Methodist College started in Cincinnati in 1840.

To Stephen Olin, a prince of early American Methodism, we owe more perhaps than to any other man of his age the movement for distinctively Christian education. In 1833, he became president of Randolph-Macon College and soon thereafter wrote to Bishop Andrew, saying, "I was never so fully convinced that we must educate our youth in our schools; and there is no work to which I so desire to consecrate myself." With this began his remarkable career as a Christian educator which culminated with his historic labors at the Wesleyan University.

The first college for women on Asiatic soil is being built by the Methodists, the consecrated Bishop Thoburn, whose abounding enthusiasm and masterful generalship render him a model missionary, laying the corner-stone.

It should be a fact of great gratification to this Historical Society that the late Dr. Samuel Lander wrote the first book ever published to teach reading without first learning the alphabet—the method now in almost universal use. The book was called “A Verbal Primer” and was issued while Doctor Lander lived in North Carolina and was so intimately connected with the educational interests of that State. But we should ever rejoice that the high estimation put upon mental discipline and culture by Wesley has ever exerted an abiding influence upon all the denominations that have sprung from his labors. Every Methodist body in Britain and in the United States, as well as in the countries of Europe and in mission fields and on the islands of the sea recognizes the obligation to provide school facilities. Edward Everett, in his day, said that there was no Church in the United States so successfully engaged in the cause of education as the Methodist Church. The educational movement of Methodism has widened with the years until today it has more schools, colleges, seminaries, and universities, under its own control than any other Protestant denomination in the United States.

LEADERSHIP IN SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK.

It is commonly accepted, though erroneously so, that the Modern Sunday School owes its origin to Robert Raikes. The world ought to give due praise to this philanthropic man for his pious labors; but he was not the originator of the Sunday School. This honor, and a distinct honor it is, belongs to Methodism. Bishop Stevens in his history of Georgia, records the fact that John Wesley organized and successfully conducted a Sunday School in Savannah, Georgia, in 1736, *the very year Robt. Raikes was born*. He also established one at Ephratah, Lancaster Conuty, Pa. in 1747, which continued uninterrupted for more than thirty years, until the building in which it was conducted was taken for a hospital during the Revolutionary War. Miss Hannah Ball, a pious Methodist of Wycombe, according to her Memoir by Rev. Thomas Jackson, established a Sunday School in that place in 1769, *twelve years before Mr. Raikes began his benevolent work*. For many years this deeply spiritual young Methodist woman carried on her work in Wycombe and was the instrument in training hundreds of children in the knowledge of God’s word. The very idea of Sunday School work was suggested to Raikes by Miss Sophia Cooke, another consecrated young Methodist, who afterward became the wife of the celebrated Samuel Bradburn. When Mr. Raikes was

lamenting the prevalence of Sabbath desecration by the young savages of Gloucester and seriously asked what could be done for their reformation, Miss Cooke modestly suggested, "Let them be gathered together on the Lord's day and taught to read the Scriptures, and taken to the house of God." The suggestion being adopted, the same young lady assisted Raikes in the organization of his school, and walked with him and his ragged urchins the first time they attended Church. John Wesley wrote to Mr. Raikes, encouraging him in his altruistic work. He also wrote of the fact that he had found these schools springing up in all their rounds, and urged the preachers to continue to organize everywhere.

About the same time, Bishop Asbury led in the movement for organized Sunday School work in America, starting a school in the house of Thomas Crenshaw, Hanover County, Virginia. This led to a general interest in the subject at a latter period, so that astonishing progress was made in the latter part of the 18th and the early part of the 19th Century. So in a few years Sunday Schools were organized in most all of our flourishing Churches, and this was followed by others throughout the country. It is but stating a truth of history to say that the improved methods of Modern Sunday School work are due to Methodist leadership. In 1865, Dr. John H. Vincent (now Bishop) began holding normal classes in Chicago and the next year he was called from there to New York, to take part in the supervision of the Sunday School work, and in 1866 he was made Secretary of the Sunday School Union. He at once formed a normal committee, and planned courses of study for Sunday School teachers, in the Bible and in the work of teaching. Under his directions, institutes and conventions were held in many places, classes of teachers were established, and a regular course of lessons was instituted, and the first Chautauqua assembly was held in 1874, under the auspices of the Sunday School Union of the Methodist Church. The Chautauqua normal course has been recognized from the beginning as the regular course for training teachers under the direction of this Church, although, the assembly soon became interdenominational and separated from the central office of the Union in New York. This has led to a complete revolution in Sunday School methods in all Churches, so that our good example is being universally followed and teachers' institutes and normal courses are being prepared for and used by every one.

LEADERSHIP IN MISSIONS.

Missionary activity is a necessary sequence of Methodist belief. A creed that holds universal atonement and the possible salvation of every man is inherently obliged to offer it to every man. Believing

that all men need the Gospel and that the Gospel is adapted to all men, the only reasonable conclusion is, that it is incumbent upon us to present it to all.

Methodism prepared the soil in which the modern missionary movement took root and out of which it grew. Prof. Warneck, who, by the way, was in no way biased in favor of Methodism, in his "History of Protestant Missions," in speaking of the period that marked the rise of this movement, says: "With the religious and moral life in such a sunken condition, it was impossible, in spite of all colonial progress, that a missionary life could strike root. There must first come a religious revival to make the dead bones live, and this revival came—one of the greatest and most permanent known in Christian Church history. It did not come along the way of literature, which Butler and others had entered in defence of the calumniated faith, valuable as are the services which the writings of these men rendered; and it did not come through the labors of the worldly church officers, neither of the State nor the free Church; these officers only repressed it. It came, as all great spiritual movements have ever come, through individual divinely endowed instruments. At the head of these men stood John Wesley and George Whitefield. In its beginnings this movement was not a missionary movement, but the new spiritual life which it brought fourth was the soil in which a new missionary life took root."

It is gratifying to realize that a writer of such prejudices should accord this praise, but, while he grants to Methodism the honor of preparing the soil, he utterly fails to see that the movement from the very beginning was inherently and necessarily missionary. Hardly had the great religious quickening begun, when, in 1735, John and Charles Wesley went out as missionaries to the Indians of North America. This was the missionary germ inherent in the work that afterward grew into the "world-parish." The Christian world is at last beginning to recognize the agency of the Wesleyan revival in the most wonderful undertaking in the last century, which has united all branches of Protestant Christianity in a mighty effort for the world's evangelization. As early as 1756 the demands of the destitute regions of England and Ireland were recognized by the Wesleyan Conference, and a fund was raised to supply them with the Gospel. This was the beginning of Home Missions.

In 1769 it became evident that there was great need for missionary work in America, and that it was time to enter the field. Mr. Wesley, in the Conference of that year, asked: "Who are willing to go to America as missionaries?" Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded to the call.

William Carey—peace to his ashes and honor to his name—is often referred to as the "Founder of Modern Missions." Let us briefly

examine the facts and then accord this honor to Doctor Coke, to whom it properly belongs. It was in October, 1792, that Carey preached his famous sermon and issued his effective pamphlet. The sermon and pamphlet led to the organization of the Baptist Missionary Society. Let us go back a little. In January, 1784, Doctor Coke organized a Foreign Missionary Society among the Wesleyans and published "A Plan of the Society for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathen." This was eight years before the Baptist Missionary Society, twelve years before the London Missionary Society, and sixteen years before the Church Missionary Society were organized. In this year, 1784, Coke was made Superintendent of Missions. In 1785 he sent missionaries to Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, and the island of Antigua. In 1787 he opened missions at St. Vincent, St. Christopher, and St. Eustatius. The next year five additional missionaries were sent to the West Indies. He travelled over Great Britain, soliciting contributions, selecting men for the work, and corresponding with the missionaries. In 1791 additional missionaries were sent to the West Indies and a mission established in the destitute regions of France. In 1792, the year of Carey's sermon, Methodist missions had so extended as to embrace Sierra Leone, Africa, while a little later the Feulah Country in Africa was included. In 1804 missionary work was opened in South America. The reports for that year show 15,846 members in the various fields of Methodist missions. Thus while Carey was pleading the cause of Missions before his unwilling brethren, the Wesleyan Methodists were planting missions in the West Indies, South America, Africa, and France, and numbered their converts by the thousand. So enthusiastic and consecrated was Doctor Coke that he supported some of the enterprises out of his own possessions. When pleading with the Conference to extend missionary operations to the East Indies some of his friends tried to dissuade him; but he replied: "If you do not let me go you will break my heart." He went, equipping the whole outfit with his own money. But on the voyage, the summons came to cease his labors on earth and transfer to higher realms of service. His body was lowered in mid-ocean, whence his ashes may be carried by the waves to the shores of every country that he coveted for his Lord.

We have but to walk a few feet from where we are to read, on the obelisk of Italian marble that marks the resting place of the Christly Capers, that fitting epitaph—"Founder of the Mission to the Slaves," or, we have but to turn our eyes to the beautiful white tablet on the wall that makes this building doubly sacred, to be convinced of the leadership of Methodism in this department of missionary activity.

On September 20, 1846, the Methodists of England launched the "John Wesley," the first ship built for the purpose of carrying the Gospel of peace to heathen lands, and of providing the means of intercommunication between missionary stations. Dr. Stephen Olin,

who was in London at the time, attended the exercises. Our Church pioneered, in Brazil and is to-day the leading Church in that Republic. We were among the first in Korea, the Phillipines, and West China. We have made notable contributions to the theory and practice of missions, such as the work of India. Young J. Allen is by far the most influential foreigner in China today, and for over forty years he has guided, with the skill of a master, the development of Christian Civilization in the East. May he have in the evening of life the joy of seeing China, the key to the Orient, come into the comity of nations. He is the most colossal figure in the entire missionary world, and when China's redemption is fully attained he should be crowned the chief hero of its greatest battle.

Methodism led the way in realizing that woman is the chief beneficiary of the Gospel and the principal factor in Church life. Hence it proceeded to organize the women into active missionary forces.

The Student Volunteer Movement began in 1895, among the students of the Canadian Methodist Church. It was soon taken up by others, but its chief promoter and greatest organizer is John R. Mott.

The recent Forward Missionary Movement, which is both educational and inspirational, is largely the outgrowth of an awakening among the Methodists in England, and the greatest City Mission in the world is the Wesleyan Mission in Manchester.

These facts, culled from a vast collection bearing on the same truth, are presented, not to depreciate others, but to claim for Methodism her leadership in modern Missions.

LEADERSHIP IN SOCIAL REFORMS.

George Elliot charges Christianity with "otherworldliness," meaning that its teachings have to do with the life beyond to the exclusion of the present life. This criticism grew out of a misapprehension of the teachings of Jesus. Christ Jesus laid down principles for the complete reconstruction of human society and the practical acceptance and application of these principles will establish the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth.

From the very beginning Methodism has recognized the social mission of Christianity and has ever been a leader in civic and social reforms. Mr. Wesley was not only a great preacher and revivalist, but was a great social reformer as well. He realized that the purpose of Christianity is not only to help men to a better world, but to better their condition in this one. So from his spiritual revival emanated influences that permeated and elevated social life. His benevolent spirit soon found expression in efforts for the poor, the imprisoned, the enslaved and the destitute. The first free medical dispensary in the world was established by him. Failing to secure

the aid of physicians, he said: "I will prepare and give them physic myself." Having for several years studied physic and anatomy, he was competent for his task. He wrote a medical book, "Primitive Physic," twenty-three editions of which were issued before his death. Green, in his "History of the English People," says: "The Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. The noblest results of the religious revival was the steady attempt, which has never ceased from that day to this, to remedy the guilt, the ignorance, the physical sufferings, the social degradation of the profligate and the poor."

In the Hulsean Lectures for 1895, by Rev. W. M. Ede, M. A., rector of Gateshead, occurs the following remarkable passage: "The man who did most to reform the social life of England in the last century was John Wesley. His appeal was direct; it was an appeal to the individual: his aim was to reach the heart and conscience of each man. Those whom he reached became changed characters and the changed character soon expressed itself in changed surroundings."

Mr. Wesley was a bitter opponent of slavery and his followers led in the campaign against this form of human oppression. The famous Christmas Conference pronounced against it. Our founder ever manifested the deepest interest in the laborer, and his followers have ever been friends to the struggling masses. Principal Fairbairn says: "Methodism, in its several branches, has done more for the conversion and reconciliation of certain of the industrial classes to religion than any other English Church." Dr. Joseph Parker, for many years pastor of City Temple, London, said: "Methodism holds the future, say what you will. It ought to hold it. It has strength enough to tackle all the problems with which society is at once divided and tormented."

LEADERSHIP IN OTHER THINGS.

The great Temperance Crusade is the result of Methodist leadership.

Methodism organized the first "Tract Society" and led in popularizing literature. It organized the first "Bible Society" and laid the foundation for the modern world wide dissemination of the Holy Scriptures.

Methodism gave to the world its greatest Sacred Lyric Poetry. Talmage says: "The Methodists taught the world how to sing." The only competitor Charles Wesley has in this field is Isaac Watts, and the unbiased student of hymnology must decide in favor of Charles Wesley. He left in manuscript form several thick quarto volumes of sacred and miscellaneous poems. He wrote six thousand, five hundred hymns. But his fame rests upon the quality of his productions rather

than the quantity. The competent and unbiased critic will scan the whole field of English Lyric Poetry without finding his equal. Charles Wesley occupies the same position among lyric poets that Shakespeare occupies among dramatic poets; and like Shakespeare, he does not describe a character or passion, he enacts it. Doctor Tefft, in his admirable study of this subject, says: "Charles Wesley, though keenly alive to everything beautiful in the material universe, rose so high in his lyrics as to lose sight of terrestrial objects, or touched upon them only for a moment to take his flight to more glorious themes. Wesley is never sentimental; he never adorns his poems with the fancies and bagatelles of the poetic art; he never fetters the soaring spirit by a burden, however gay and sweet, of empyrean stars of flowers of earth. Watts often begins his hymns where the lark closes his morning song—'at Heaven's gate;' and he then as frequently descends and perches upon some pretty bush, or lights upon some green and flowery bank, to conclude an anthem in the audience of beasts and birds, which should have closed at the foot of the very throne of God. Wesley, on the other hand, begins where Watts terminates his songs, and then rises at once on the pinions of a lofty and victorious faith, till, like the rapt apostle on the isle of the apocalypse, he falls prostrate amid heavenly splendor too refulgent for mortal sight."

Methodism has led the world in the production of pulpit oratory. In fact, its early history in this country was so marked by the number of its brilliant pulpit orators as to open a new era of popular eloquence. Their magic style and their graceful manners, including their extemporaneous method, have so taken possession of the public mind, that all classes of public speakers, excepting only the ministers of some of the smaller religious bodies, have been compelled by the pressure of the general taste to follow their example. The beautiful diction and graceful delivery of Whitefield, and Punshon, and Maffit, and Fisk; and Cookman, and Bascom, and Pierce, and Olin, and Cross, and a host of others, too numerous to catalogue, set the pace for pulpit activity for the modern world.

It was by a far-reaching providence that Methodism was driven from the Cathedrals and parish Churches of England to the Masses of the population, and even to the most degraded of those classes, and wrought its miracles among the multitude. The glory of the movement from the beginning has been its mission to the masses. But there has never been a time in the history of the movement when her leadership has not been successfully maintained in the circles of the cultured by a company of learned men of more than ordinary ability.

Our Church was the first to make provision for the worn-out preachers, their widows and orphans. Whitefield's orphanage in Georgia was the forerunner of the multitude of these benevolent institutions dotting our land.

American Methodism pioneered in the field of patriotism. When it was organized, it incorporated a rule requiring patriotic devotion to the government. Methodism was the first to officially recognize the government of the United States, the message of congratulation and pledge of patriotism being carried from the Conference to George Washington by Bishop Asbury. This patriotic example was soon followed by other denominations.

THE FUTURE OF METHODISM.

This is the fiftieth anniversary of the organization of this Historical Society, it having been formed at Yorkville in 1856, with W. A. Gamewell as President and Paul A. M. Williams as Secretary. It is, therefore, fitting, that, upon this Jubilee occasion, we rejoice over the marvelous leadership of Methodism in the past. But what of the future? The last report of the Census Bureau shows that Methodism has nearly two million more members than any other Protestant denomination on the continent, having, 6,429,815 actual communicants, with a Methodist population far outnumbering that of even the Roman Catholic. What is to be the future of this vast organization? One of the strong points of Methodism is its adaptability. There is a story called "The Parable of the Fairy Tent." Set it in the king's palace—this magic enclosure was not too large for the smallest room. When placed in the court-yard, it was large enough to shelter all the nobles. Brought out into the plain, it increased so in size that it covered the whole army of the king. There was infinite flexibility, infinite expansiveness.

So with Methodism, the greatest fact in the history of the Christian Church. It is equally at home and equally effective in the palace and in the hut; in the cathedral and in the little mission chapel, or even in a tent in a churchless region, or in the street among slums; with the cultured and the uncultured. It is at home everywhere, intelligible in every speech, comprehensible by every mind, and is without country or age. With a system of Church polity that is perfectly flexible, Methodism can never become antiquated; with a system of doctrine commensurate with the Bible, it can never become obsolete, until the Bible becomes obsolete and the idea of God becomes eliminated from the field of human thought.

Robert Miller once asked Mr. Wesley the question, "What must be done to keep alive Methodism when you are dead?" To which our wise founder replied: "The Methodists must take heed to their doctrine, their experience, their practice, and their discipline. If they attend to their doctrine only, they will make the people Antinomians; if to the experimental part only, they will make them enthusiasts; if to the practical part only, they will make them Pharisees; and if they do not attend to their discipline, they will be like persons

who bestow much pains in cultivating their garden, and put no fence around it.”

We have seen how the movement started by the Wesleys and their co-adjutors not only brought multitudes into the kingdom of grace, but saved the state; inaugurated great social and philanthropic enterprises, and laid the foundation for the modern missionary movement. The secret of all was the revival of pure and spiritual religion back of it all. So the hope of our future is in a new evangelism. With the spirit of original Methodism transferred to our age and adapted to modern conditions, we may solve all the civic and social problems that confront us. A fresh baptism of this spirit, which is the spirit of apostolic Christianity, will bring us into the realization of the fulness of the divine presence and will enable us, with clarified vision, to look upon the wider horizon of coming victories and glorious achievements.

