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# Some Factors of Methodism.

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An Address Delivered Before the Historical Society of the South Carolina Annual Conference, Methodist Episcopal Church, South, in St. John's Church, Rock Hill, S. C., Tuesday, November 25, 1913.

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By REV. J. E. MAHAFFEY.

*In order to preserve the valuable qualities of any product, with a view of maintaining its original standard of efficiency, it is necessary to have a clear understanding of what those qualities are, and how they stand related to each other in forming the product as a whole.*

With this purpose in view, and feeling that such a study cannot fail to be of interest to the South Carolina Conference, it is proposed on this occasion to point out some of the leading factors in the mightiest religious movement of modern times.

Methodism was a product.

It was the product of a desire for the power of Godliness. It had its beginning in the hearts of some students at Oxford University in 1729. Not satisfied with the *form* of Godliness which they had in common with many others, they desired the *power*. The outward manifestation of this desire and the methods pursued in obtaining it soon elicited in derision of these students the name "Holy Club", and later in the same spirit of derision, the name "Methodists", which had formerly been applied to a peculiar school of physicians because of their strict adherence to logical methods and processes,—a name, however, of which since then, many have learned to be proud.

These students were all zealous members of the Church of England and had no idea of founding a new religious body, but this beginning was the casting forth of "the handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit whereof should shake like Lebanon, and they of the city should flourish like grass of the earth." It was to be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season. Like their Master, despised and rejected of men, their names cast out as evil; mocked, mobbed and driven from place to place; having neither the patronage of rank nor the support of riches, they turned the world upside down. Their earnestness compelled attention,

their piety commanded respect, and their message awakened the consciences of sinners. Constables turned pale and sheriffs cried for mercy. They were the flying artillery of God's host, who went on their way praying, singing and preaching, until today Methodism is the strongest denomination in all Christendom.

Strange as it may seem to us in this our day of prosperity and popularity, the opposition which the Methodist movement first encountered was similar to that encountered by Paul and the apostles in the early days for the gospel's sake,—duplicated in England and reduplicated in America. They were beaten with lashes and stoned with stones. They had perils of waters and perils of the trackless wilderness; perils of painful watchings and hunger and thirst; perils of wild beasts and the more deadly tomahawk of bloodthirsty savages. The world, the flesh and the devil, sometimes gowned in the garb of clerical dignity and ecclesiasticism, all combined themselves in hostile array against the Methodists.

A few instances of the treatment which they received will show the utter depravity of the times:

At Sheffield a military officer led the mob. Stones flew from every direction, hitting the desk and endangering the people to such an extent that Charles Wesley announced that he would go out and face the mob in the open. Approaching the furious officer and handing him a tract, he went on with his sermon while the stones were pelting him in the face, and on closing with a prayer for sinners as servants of the devil, the infuriated officer drew his sword, pressed through the crowd and presenting it at Wesley's breast, demanded an apology or revenge for such an insult. Whereupon, Wesley opened his vest, and looking straight into the fiery eye of his foe, said gently: "I fear God and honor the king." The captain quailed and, letting down his sword, vanished from the scene.

That evening after Wesley had retired to the house of a friend the mob reorganized and came howling on, and continued all night, trying to break down the doors and actually tearing away one end of the house, "while Charles Wesley slept until five in the morning, when he began again preaching the Great Redemption." Later that day he preached in the town and "after he went from the chapel they left not one stone of it upon another." That night they again surrounded his lodging, broke in the windows and tried to tear it down. Meanwhile, weary, but fearless, and with the words: "Scatter Thou the people that delight in war", Wesley sank into the nursing of sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of toil and care, and awaking the next morning at five as usual, he comforted the brethren and went on to other places of labor and danger.

On another occasion, "A church-warden headed the mob and drove Wesley and his hearers from the parish, and there on the church-record stands to this day, the bill paid for liquor furnished on the occasion." This shows how great the need was for the kind of work

which the Methodists were doing, and to what extent a proud, prejudiced and worldly minded church will go in opposing it. Again at St. Ives, in the West of England, a mob broke through the windows of the chapel, tore up its seats, swearing that Wesley should preach there no more; and when he instantly resumed his preaching to the crowd assembled, they lifted their clubs and rushed upon him, but strange to say, not one struck him. After an hour or so the mob fell into a quarrel among themselves, broke the head of their own captain, who was the town clerk, and left Wesley and his people giving thanks to God for power to hold the field until victory came.

During a six weeks' protracted meeting John Wesley and John Nelson slept on the floor. Wesley used his overcoat for a pillow and Nelson had Burkitt's Notes on the New Testament for his. One morning about three o'clock Wesley turned over, and finding Nelson awake, clapped him on the side and said: "Brother Nelson, let us be of good cheer; I have one whole side left yet, for the skin is off but one side."

They were seldom invited to eat, and stopping one day to pick blackberries, Wesley said: "Brother Nelson, we ought to be thankful that there are plenty of blackberries. This is the best country I ever saw for getting a stomach, but the worst I ever saw for getting food. Do the people think we can live by preaching?" Nelson answered: "I know not what they may think; but one asked me to eat something as I came from St. Just, when I ate heartily of bread and honey." Wesley replied: "You are well off; I thought of begging a crust of bread of the woman where I met the people at Morvah, but forgot it until I had got some distance from the house."

Hundreds of well authenticated instances of imprisonment, suffering and persecution are recorded in Wesley's Journal and the Story of Methodism,—all of which were heaped upon the Methodists for the same reason that Christ Himself suffered at the hands of jealous and bigoted Pharisees who claimed to have a monopoly of the kingdom of God, but knew nothing of it in reality, and felt no concern for the lost multitudes of the poor and ignorant.

It took twenty-seven years to bring the pollen of Methodism from wind-swept Moorfields, England, to America; but coming, it revived the dying faith of Philip Embury in New York, where he preached the first Methodist sermon in America, down in the basement of his humble Barrack Street lodgings to Barbara and Paul Heck, John Lawrence, a hired man, and Betty, a colored servant. Here as elsewhere, fierce opposition was encountered, but the "poor had the gospel preached unto them" and the common people heard it gladly. The congregation soon outgrowing its basement quarters, rented a rigging-loft on Williams street as its preaching place, (quite an upward move for Methodism!) and soon after, Mrs. Heck, the real mother of American Methodism, at whose instance the first congregation had been assembled, now planned the building of the first "Wesley Chapel" in the world, on John street, where the fourth generation still continues to worship. Churches

were not heated in those days, and this was the first one ever built with a fire-place and chimney, in order to evade the law against the building of Dissenting churches in the city of New York.

#### CHURCHES IN AMERICA.

It cannot be said that the Methodist movement was facilitated by the absence of other churches which might claim to occupy the field. Just at this time New York and the colonies were pre-empted by strong, dominating and domineering church organizations. With a population of 18,000, New York had fourteen churches, representing nine different denominations. The Congregationalists had been here a hundred and forty years, and had 600 churches with 500 pastors. The Lutherans had been here a hundred and seven years, and had 25 churches with 60 ministers. The Dutch had been here a hundred and fifty-seven years, and had 364 churches with 364 ministers. All in all, including some others, about two thousand churches with fifteen hundred ministers.

Thus overshadowed by others and handicapped by poverty, persecution and calumny, the human outlook for Methodism was not promising; and yet, it has long since outstripped all of its predecessors, and now fills the earth with its glorious increase. A conservative estimate of the entire Methodist family, East and West, presents the astonishing summary of 55,808 ministers; 98,121 local preachers; 8,767,516 members, and 8,906,995 Sunday School scholars, with a total church property valued at more than \$400,000,000.00!

With a record like this, out of a beginning like that, may it not be well to pause a moment and ask: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozra?" Glorious in apparel! Traveling in the greatness of his strength!

#### WHAT IS METHODISM?

What is this Methodism that has stopped the mouths of lions, put to flight the armies of the aliens, quenched the violence of the fires of satanic opposition, and is filling the world with the light of a new and more glorious day? What is this Methodism, the tremendous power of which is not to be measured by its own churches and members alone, but whose mighty influence has given a new and Diviner coloring to other denominations as well? This Methodism whose revival fires sent sparks that rekindled on other smoldering altars the flames of living light?

The doctrines, methods and spiritual life of many other churches have been improved by contact with ours, and many of their sons and daughters have been born again at Methodist altars. Frequently boards of Deacons and Elders bait their hooks with their finest churches, fish for preachers in our clerical waters, and sometimes seem proud of what they catch. (Indeed, it might be said that some which they capture have traversed the length and breadth of many denominational skies

like blazing comets. To all of which, since our recent contact and better acquaintance with Halley's, one might say, "Yea verily"; for although the "gas" in their theology may be cyanogen in character, yet it seems not to be of sufficient weight to do much harm or good; and furthermore, like Halley's comet, the glory of their splendor shows brighter when not so close at hand.)

Methodist sons and daughters, ranking today among the foremost of the world are surely to be reckoned with. In letters, science and art and commerce they are at the very forefront. Her sons are to be found in State and National councils; they preside in Supreme Courts and over Commonwealth and Nation, and are leaders in armies and navies. While broadly fraternal and always ready to co-operate, Methodism is not dependent on any human alliances. It is in God that she lives and moves and has her being. This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes.

But in order to further account for this marvelous growth and unequalled development and achievement, let us further press our inquiries as to the real nature of this religious movement.

#### METHODISM WAS A NEW MANIFESTATION OF THE POWER OF GOD.

John Wesley and his associates, having the *form* of Godliness, had been seeking the *power*. God had answered their prayers, and was graciously leading them into the ways and experiences of this power, and now it was finding expression through them as His instrumentality. Hence, Methodism may further be defined as the embodiment of God's method of expressing this new manifestation of His power, and for the purposes of this address, we shall speak of these distinguishing characteristics as Some of the Factors of Methodism.

#### METHODISM A MESSAGE.

First of all to be noted is the fact that Methodism was a Message. It was a message from God, and a message for the times. It was the voice of another John the Baptist, crying in the wilderness: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." For there existed at that time a state of moral degeneracy unequalled since the Roman empire's carnival of uncleanness, Drunkenness, licentiousness and profligacy were rampant. Court and commons were alike, desperately wicked. Society was a seething mass of corruption.

Chill and gloom had settled upon England; Voltair and his like had poisoned France; Frederick of Prussia, with the Rationalists, was desolating the faith in the very home of Luther. Bishop Burnet affirmed that ruin was hanging over the entire Church. Secker, the archbishop of Canterbury, wrote that Christianity was ridiculed with little reserve, and the teachers of it with none at all. Southy says the clergy had lost all authority and all respect. A writer of the Independent churches

says that "piety was to be found nowhere except in their books." Darkness covered the earth and thick darkness the people. But the same Providence which had reared and trained Moses and John the Baptist, was now preparing John Wesley and his associates to rescue His Church and usher into the world a new Evangelism, glorious as a morning sun and powerful as a strong man to run a race.

For such a state of things there was but one remedy, and the mission of Methodism was to diagnose the case in such thundering tones of authority that time-serving, mammon-loving men and women might see and feel their undone condition and find a way of escape from the awful consequences of their sins. The message of Methodism, steel-ribbed and rock-bottomed, was sharper than any two-edged sword. It convinced men that though hand join in hand, wickedness should not go unpunished. Her voice was that of a new Isaiah, pleading like the one of old: "Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O house of Israel." Under this new manifestation of Divine power, men paused in their downward course; they turned from their transgressions, and beheld by faith the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. They were born again and made new creatures in Christ.

#### HER MESSENGERS FLAMING TORCHES.

And here we come in sight of another tremendous factor of Methodism. Her messengers were themselves the living embodiment of the preaching which they preached. They were flaming torches that many a time shown brightest under the darkest midnight skies of opposition and persecution. The same gospel seed sown by the cold hand of officialism will rot in the soil, because it is not able to warm it into life, but sown by men whose characters stand out like the prominence of great mountain peaks, it brings forth fruit,—some thirty, some sixty, and some an hundredfold.

John Wesley and his laborers were living witnesses to the saving power of the gospel which they preached. It had opened their blind eyes, unstopped their deaf ears, and healed their sin-palsied souls. It was the resistless might of conscious, personal salvation—the consciousness of Christ's power on earth to forgive sins—startling in its earnestness and melting in its tenderness—that bore down opposition and swept all before it. The love of Christ constrained them, and as God's ambassadors, they besought sinners to be reconciled to God, and though the denominational ship on which they sailed might at that time have seemed frail to some, they knew it was the old ship of Zion rehabilitated. Hence, they were not afraid it would sink from being overcrowded. They did not consider the Church a quarantine station, instituted to prevent improper persons from slipping through the Judgment bars into heaven. They believed that Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost, and that he tasted death for every man. Hence, like Him, they could stand on the front of the deck and say:

"Whomsoever will, let him come." And it should be gratifying to us, the sons and daughters of Methodism, to know that our doctrine, as well as our polity, has stood the test of the most searching fires, during the most critical period of advanced learning in the history of the world.

#### STYLE OF PREACHING.

Another factor which further explains the marvelous success of the Methodist movement was their style of preaching. They had liberty! They were neither bound by the shackles of manuscript, nor embarrassed by the opinions of men. They knew that their message was from God. They spake as men having authority, and it was accompanied with unction from on high. Others might read placid essays, indulge in philosophic somnolency, "smooth down the rugged text to ears polite, and snugly keep damnation out of sight", but not so with them. Their message was direct, delivered in the vernacular, and tremendously in earnest. It dealt, not so much with religious theory, but with religious experience. Like the apostle Paul, three things seemed to be constantly before their minds and on their hearts: a perishing world, an offended God, and a mediating Redeemer. To consciences deadened by sin, their message was a judgment bugle call to repentance, and to sinners choking in the thirst of consuming desire, their loving cry was: "Let him that is athirst come, and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Under such preaching mobs soon dispersed, fires died out, the leopard and the wolf lay down with the lamb and the kid, and the lion ceased to hurt and destroy in all God's holy mountain.

#### METHODIST POLITY.

The year 1743 marked the beginning of the "circuit-system." Wesley found it would never do to ramble, touch and go, leaving the results to the uncertain chances of the future. He and some of his helpers were still explorers and pioneers; but wherever he saw favorable indications, he fixed a simple plan by which at a stated time some one should be there to preach, and thus the itinerancy unfolded the "circuit-system" which early seemed to assume the harmony and regularity of the very solar system of the sky, and among the most conservative in all the sisterhood of churches, this system has now become the subject of admiring study and the object of generous praise. Many of them contemplate the adoption of this, along with other of our features.

With a doctrinal simplicity that is beautiful and broadly fraternal, insisting on essence rather than form, and a ritual that is chaste and impressive, Methodism binds her members and ministers together in classes and societies; and representatively in Quarterly, District, Annual and General Conferences, utilizing the varied talents of her ministers according to a plan which combines harmonious organic supervision with the highest regard for individual wellbeing—the highest unified effectiveness with personal and congregational representation. Meth-



odism not only sees to it that no preacher is without a church and no church without a preacher, but she has the further facility of adapting the one to the other according to their needs, and this has contributed no little to her phenomenal growth and the conservation of her glorious increase.

#### SPIRITUAL RELIGION.

Methodism stands for spiritual religion. Her very conception and birth was in a revival. It was a revival of ten years' duration that gave her form and being. The very breath on which she first subsisted and flourished, and must continue to subsist and flourish, was that of Almighty God, which came upon the dry bones of the valley and caused them to revive and stand upon their feet, an exceeding great army; and if Methodism ever thinks within herself to subsist in some other way, she will deceive herself and forfeit the only valid credential of her existence. And she must not make the mistake of trying to preserve spirituality by orthodoxy. She may rather preserve orthodoxy by preserving spirituality.

The spiritual revival which gave birth to Methodism, also gave new life to other denominations. It was no respecter of persons, and for Methodism to lose this distinguishing characteristic, would mean a distinct loss to Christendom at large. For nearly two centuries Methodism, as the salt of the earth and the light of the world, has maintained a standard of piety and spirituality that has been an inspiration to millions in other denominations, and for this reason, as well as her own self-preservation, she must carefully guard this important factor in all her glorious achievements.

While holding fast the form of sound words and sticking to the truth as it is in Jesus, Methodism is not narrow, nor does she ever engage in proselyting campaigns to get members from other churches. She has gathered her millions from the unconverted and unconcerned multitudes who were not in any church, and like her Lord and Saviour, she is not disposed to "forbid" any who can cast out a devil in His Name. Our breadth in this respect has sometimes been misinterpreted and used to our detriment. Some of our fathers, along with other broad-minded and fraternal spirits, have perhaps made unwarranted concessions concerning things not regarded as essential; but be that as it may, Methodism still finds more pleasure in casting the mantle of charity over the stupidity of others, than in casting stones at their inconsistencies.

#### THE SAME OLD BIBLE.

Methodism feels no necessity of re-writing the Bible to support her doctrines, nor has there ever been any material change in her Articles of Religion since the very beginning of her history as a church. The text books of science and philosophy have to be changed and revised. They are the result of human investigation, research and experiment; but the Bible is a Revelation from the God who knows no more today

than He knew thousands of years ago. He is not engaged in any kind of research, ancient or modern. His plan of salvation is not an experiment. However much light may be thrown on the Word of God, the last soul that is ever saved will be saved just like the first. Theology, like other sciences, may be and should be progressive, ever coming more and more into the knowledge of the truth; but this Word of God and the Kingdom of God abideth forever. They are as changeless as God Himself. "Thy word is truth" is one of the loftiest sentences ever written since time began; and another is like unto it: "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever." Theology is human, the Bible is Divine. A good use of scissors might improve the looks and quality of some theology very much; but keep your scissors out of this Bible, lest like Samson, it be shorn of its strength. A false mother is willing to accept the half of a dead child, rather than allow the real mother to possess her own living offspring; but the real mother will not consent to such death dealing dismemberment.

Neither are we to be adding anything to what is written in this Book, lest there be added to us the plagues that are written therein. Not even the plumage of the most beautiful fowls of air or water can be inserted in this Book. It is the Word of God and must stand forever; even after the last planet has crumbled into dust, and the last sun has been blotted out, this Word of God and this Sun of Righteousness shall shine on and on,—the same yesterday, today, and forever. Thanks be to God! Earthly kingdoms and constitutions and text books may change; but the Bible is the unchangeable text book of a kingdom that shall never be moved! Thanks be to God for the privilege, amid the passing, perishing things of this world, of standing unmoved on the Rock of eternal, unchangeable Truth—Truth as old as the ocean, as old as sunlight, as old as God, and resting upon eternal foundations!

#### A TIMELY QUESTION.

Having thus glanced at what Methodism is and what she has accomplished, justice and prudence require that we shall now consider the question: Is Methodism accomplishing *today* the mission for which God raised her up?

Some good and scholarly authorities tell us that we are neither failing nor retrograding in this respect; that our doctrines and polity remain unshaken; but that new conditions have arisen to which old methods cannot be applied, and that with this change of conditions comes also the shifting of emphasis to other points of view,—all of which sounds good—and well may we be thankful that ours is a system with sufficient elasticity to adapt itself to all the legitimate shiftings of progressive ages. But others equally sincere tell us that "Ichabod" is written over our doors; and while believing that both of these positions are perhaps extreme and untenable, at the same time there are some facts which we cannot afford to overlook or underestimate.

Dr. Carrol, the chief authority in statistics, questions whether the growth of Methodism is as remarkable as of old, and his figures indicate a recent and serious decline in our rate of increase. From 1880 to 1890 the increase was 1,261,709; from 1890 to 1900 the increase was 1,411,602, and from 1900 to 1910 the increase was only 927,275, which was a decline in growth of 439,327 during the last decade. Of course, slight variations might be expected and explained in various ways, but this is a difference too great to be explained or overlooked as an ordinary occurrence. The fact that ten thousand more preachers, fourteen thousand more pulpits, and two and a quarter million more members produced an increase 440,000 less than in the decade preceding it, is of momentous and grave concern to any calculating mind.

Well may we pause to ask: Is Methodism less aggressive? Is her ministry less earnest and evangelical? Does our passion for souls keep pace with the passion of finer churches and higher steeples? A Methodist Bishop once said: "The winning of men to Christ is not one of the things which a minister *ought* to do; it is the *one* thing which if he does not do, he has no credentials to be a minister in our Church." For more than a hundred years all Christendom has looked to Methodism for certain phases of successful evangelistic leadership, and did not look in vain. How stands the matter with us today? Where is the evangelistic power which for a long time distinguished Methodism as a flaming torch among the candlesticks of other churches? Surely we are come upon a time when Zion's watchmen should all awake and take the alarm they give, and preach and pray for a rekindling of the old time revival fires on our neglected and deserted altars.

We love our Church, not because she has become great in the earth, but because she is our spiritual mother. It was under her holy influence that we were born into God's kingdom. We love everything that Methodism stands for, and we must do nothing that would bring reproach upon her name or defeat to her labors. We must love her with a love that is keenly sensitive to shortcomings, and jealous of our standing in the sight of God. Only one Achan in the camp brought awful defeat and shame to Israel. If we are not accomplishing all that we should, it is time for deep heart searchings and self-examination.

#### NOT LIKE OTHERS.

Perhaps one of the most damaging tendencies that is slowly but steadily creeping along unawares, is that of trying to be like other denominations. No reflection on any is intended by this remark. If God did not intend that Methodists should be different from others, then why did He raise them up and start them off in that way? In a watch-factory many hands are at work on the different parts. Some are stirring the blaze, others making screws and rivets, another is fashioning the wheels, another the spring or the case, and so on; but they are all together making a watch. Many denominations are working away at

the salvation of this disordered world. The Presbyterians are putting in the screws and hammering the rivets; the Episcopalians are designing the beautiful cases; the Baptists are washing off the works; the Methodists must stir the flames, and temper and put in the springs until this old world keeps time to the song of Moses and the Lamb. It will never do for all to go to making and polishing the cases.

It is to be feared that many Methodists are no longer a "peculiar people." Their early history is a story of persecution unequalled since the times of the apostles, and it was heaped upon them because of their peculiarities. It is not so now. In many places they are getting to be as cold, and dignified, and proud, and formal as any others. They are getting to be a religious world-power, and it was just at this dangerous stage that the original apostolic Church lost her glory. In this gradual process of growing likeness and conformity, the one to the other, it may be well to inquire whether Methodism is leavening society or being leavened by it.

God raised up Methodism that He might "purify unto Himself a peculiar people." Other ecclesiastical bodies may have beautifully cushioned kneeling places for communion; our churches must have a kneeling place for penitents. Others may rejoice in "beautiful and entertaining services", chantings and genuflections; but for us, towering far above all these things, must be a message calling sinners to the mercy-seat, where Jesus answers prayer. Some have quit, and others never did sing "Come ye sinners, poor and needy"; because, they say, in the first place, we are not sinners; and secondly, we are not "poor and needy"; but Methodists must keep on singing it until the last sin-blighted, starving soul has learned that all the fitness Christ requireth is to feel our need of Him.

#### SOUND DOCTRINE.

Perhaps one of the greatest needs of our day, both in the pulpit and in periodical literature, is the setting forth of sound doctrine. In many places we have a majority in our churches who have no certain convictions concerning what they believe. Many of the early Methodists were without learning and culture, but they knew what they believed and believed in what they knew. No man was more broadly fraternal, nor less sectarian than John Wesley, and yet no man ever adhered more tenaciously and dogmatically to "Sound Doctrine" than he. Early Methodists were rooted and grounded in doctrine. In many places our people have so intermarried and brought into the family a tincture of other faiths and orders that the original type of know-so Methodist is becoming scarce. Doctrines and ideals far removed from us have been filtered through members mixed up with domestic and kinsfolk tangles, until we are settling down to a namby-pamby, goody-goody conclusion that no matter what a man believes, so he is honest in it and says nothing about it. And thus it comes to pass that while many of our people are educated in the text books of the schools, they are lamentably

ignorant of the text book of God's kingdom. We should remember it is the truth which God promises to bless with increase, and which, accompanied by the Spirit, is to convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment.

On one occasion when a Scotch army was engaged in battle, the ammunition gave out, and they had to wait for a new supply. They got news that a barrel of bullets was on the way. When it came they knocked out the head and found that it was a barrel of raisins sent by mistake. The battle was lost and they went down in awful defeat. The need of our day is less confectionery and more of the thrust and power of the omnipotent gospel. Many churches are dying of excellent sermons and splendid rhetoric. If we are to kill with the killing that makes alive, away with raisins and give us bullets. The doctrine of social service, altruism, fatherhood and sonship is beautiful and attractive; but there is no sonship of Divine sanction aside from an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ. A religious life and church enterprise that has its basis in anything else is spurious and will soon evaporate. The great need of our age is twice-born men and women who know what they believe and believe in what they know.

#### PUBLISHING INTERESTS.

John Wesley made much use of the printing press. Besides publishing about two hundred volumes in permanent form, tracts and leaflets were used extensively. They often prepared the way for the oral message and bore continuous testimony after the messenger was gone. But it was not until 1789 that a permanent plant was established by John Dickens in Philadelphia, with a capital of only \$600. From this small beginning the work has grown until today the publishing plants of Methodism are valued at not less than ten million dollars. With such facilities Methodist literature should cover the face of the earth, but somehow or other we are not wielding this strong arm of our power as we should.

In 1911, Russellism distributed three hundred and fifty million pages in the English language, and six million pages in foreign languages, teaching his pernicious views among the illiterate. Mormonism is using tons of literature, and supporting men to carry it from house to house, in disseminating its monstrous teachings among the poor of many lands. It is high time our Church should use again this strong arm of her power, even using the tract with greater vigor than ever in the cause of truth and deluded souls. Perhaps no part of our work is more neglected and none has in it more promise for good. The poor and illiterate of today are the rich and cultured of tomorrow, and the church that fails to look after the poor, will wake up just in time to hear the doxology of its own funeral. It is the poor grown strong, who have built our churches, endowed our schools, and financed our benevolent institutions.

## REVERENCE IN CHURCH.

The early Methodists made special preparation for religious services. A day of fasting and prayer preceded the Quarterly Conference and the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Work at home was arranged with reference to all religious meetings. They entered the place of worship in reverence, either kneeling at their seats or bowing the head in silent prayer. To them God's house was a holy place, both because of a sense of the Divine presence and because "this and that man was born there." No wonder they listened with profound interest and sometimes said "Amen" and "Glory be to God." Under such conditions a superhuman power attended the preaching, and the people went from the service feeling it was good to be there.

A great change has taken place in this respect, a change that stands for untold loss to our Church. A prominent minister returning to his home in England, reported that the thing which surprised him most while here was the irreverence which he saw in our churches, and it may seriously be feared that the additional equipment of the modern "up to date" church, comprising kitchen, dining room, game tables and other social attractions for neighborhood gatherings, will not improve this condition. Even in country places men spit on the floor and children romp in the aisles and altars, and over the pews between services, until every part of God's house is robbed of its sacredness in the memory and estimation of the people, and has become like an unfenced garden, trampled under foot by those who put religion to an open shame. O how great the need today for all to keep in mind when we go to church, that the place whereon we stand is holy ground.

## METHODIST WOMEN.

The story of Methodist progress is inseparably connected with her pious mothers and the self-sacrificing wives of her ministers, many of whom have done their noblest work as keepers at home, in rocking the cradles that rock the world. The mother of Moses, as a nurse, rendered a greater service to humanity than all the women who ever aspired to sit on thrones of earthly power; and Methodism will be cautious in undertaking to find for woman a higher and nobler calling than that of guiding well the affairs of her own household. Ever since the time of the first visit to the emptied sepulcher, consecrated womanhood has been able to find its best way to the largest service without intermeddling with the affairs of men. Some may be swayed by the restless, roving, raving spirit that has swept many out of their homes into disgraceful demonstrations in the public streets, but it should be remembered that making voters is vastly more important than casting a ballot. We can better afford corruption in politics than run the risk of marring the beauty and luster of a glorious womanhood; and after all, women would either vote with their husbands, fathers and brothers, or practice deception, or have a fuss in the family, and thus deal a fatal blow to the

very foundation of all government. Proofs of the benefits of woman suffrage have not yet been forthcoming. On the other hand, Colorado and New Zealand have recently defeated prohibition by heavy majorities, and Norway's divorce rate has quintupled within a few years. Methodism must stand firm in the old paths of apostolic sanction, rather than sidetrack into the ways of modern fads and fashions.

#### NOT FOR SALE.

Methodism, along with some other churches, is now having her forty days' temptation in the wilderness, and is being offered the kingdoms of this world and the glory of them. Our Bishops have answered in no uncertain tone the question now being asked: "Is Methodism for sale?"—but we want the answer recorded in the journal of the next General Conference, in big letters, and in the proverbial language found in many Quarterly Conference journals—"NOT AS YET." We can afford to be *put out*, in the streets of Nashville or any where else, with or without sox, but we cannot afford to *sell out* in any such way as that proposed. A subsidized Methodism would be no better than a subsidized anything else. Who could think of our great Church putting the knife to the very heart of her own spirit and polity and becoming the sychopant of millionaires whose vast wealth is the result of unscrupulous methods and heartless monopoly? No man can afford to sell his heart for boots; no, not even to be buried in.

A Bishop was once asked to take stock in a silver mine which was to be operated in the interest of Missions and Church Extension. He replied: "We have two mines already which are working with great success. One of them is 'Self-denial', situated in the Valley of Humiliation; the other is 'Consecration', which is entered on the heavenly side of the brook Peniel. These are glorious mines! Their riches are inexhaustible. There is enough in them to bring the world to Christ." Out of these mines has come the precious things of Methodism in the past, and from these mines we expect to keep on building churches and colleges, feeding orphans and sending Missionaries until the stars grow old, the sun grows cold, and the leaves of the judgment books unfold.

Methodist preachers may use organizations, employ specialists and bring all helpful reinforcements to their aid, but they must never think of transferring the burden of souls from their own troubled hearts to hired evangelists or singers, or cease to guide every department of their work as those who must give an account to God. Ours is a great opportunity and a great responsibility. Failure will be great if we fail, and fail we shall, unless we have power from on high. We cannot live long on the memories of the past. The work we have to do is immense, and God and heaven are in a hurry to have it done.

## CONCLUSION.

Civilization with its laws and customs may change, and human development may vary, but at the base man is man. The characters that moved across the stage of antediluvian history have their counterpart in those who play on it today, and it will always be true that there is no other name under heaven, whereby we may be saved, but the name of Jesus. His call sounds down the ages: "Ye must be born again." Some seek a sign and find a stumbling-block, others seek after knowledge and find foolishness; but we preach Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God,—the same yesterday, and today, and forever.

Therefore, go! Preach this gospel in byways, highways and hedges; in palace and hovel; in home and brothel; in camp and hospital; in senate and in slum; to the islands of the sea, and to the uttermost parts of the earth go; and as you go, preach, saying, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. He that loseth his life for Christ's sake shall find it; he that receiveth you, receiveth Him, and he that hath the Son, hath life.

The real efficiency of the Church is measured by that of her ministry, and the efficiency of the ministry is measured by the spirit of power and of sacrifice which they possess. It was this that gave to the world Abraham and Moses; that inscribed the names of Daniel and his fellows upon the very heart of time. It was this in the lives of Christ's disciples that set the world ablaze with heavenly fire. It was this that sent John Wesley from big armed chairs, cushioned pews and downy pillows to preach the gospel and sleep on the floor, say grace over a blackberry patch and hasten to the next appointment. It was this that brought our Lord from heaven to earth, and will bring His followers from earth to heaven, with songs of praise and everlasting joy.

O Brethren of the Ministry: Let us enter into the secret place of the Most High and dwell there until we so feel the burden of souls that we cry out with Jeremiah in a fountain of tears for the slain of the daughter of God's people, and with Paul's "Woe is me if I preach not the gospel." Willing to meet bonds or imprisonment; yea, even death itself, so that we may finish our course with joy, and this ministry of the gospel of the grace of God with honor. Then shall one chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight, and the fruit of the handful of corn upon the top of the mountains shall shake like Lebanon, and Methodism shall be to the Lord for a name, and for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off, and the wilderness and the desert place shall rejoice and blossom as a rose, until the song of the saved from every valley and hill-top of a redeemed world, shall mingle with the song of the saints in heaven, like the voice of many waters and mighty thunderings, ascribing praise, and honor, and glory, and dominion to Him Who was, and is, and shall be, for ever and ever.