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W. H. Hodges

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The Contribution of Methodism to the Spiritual Life of the World

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By REV. W. H. HODGES

THE CONTRIBUTION OF METHODISM TO THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE WORLD

Since the ascension of our Savior the age in the world's history has been called the dispensation of the Holy Spirit. The people who have honored Him, He has honored. And in proportion to their surrender to Him has been their power or ability both to receive and bestow blessings.

When any one force has been acting along a given line, and has been moving men to great achievements, to unselfish service and consecrated living, we are moved to ask the source of that power. When asked the distinctive characteristic of Methodism the informed, without hesitation, will answer, "Its spiritual life."

Methodism has been called "A Child of Providence," because Mr. Wesley did not expect to found a Church. However, it is not too much to say that Mr. Wesley and his co-workers were moved by the Spirit, and co-operated with the Spirit in their work of gathering the people, and organizing the Methodist Church. Thus they were building more wisely than they knew; for the true author and founder of the Methodist Church is the Holy Ghost. Should the great Methodist Church ever cease to move in harmony with her high origin, she will become as weak as was Samson when shorn of his locks. For the Holy Spirit who planned in her foundation is still the source of her life and power. The Church designed of God to "spread Scriptural holiness through the land" was God's thought for humanity manifesting itself in the lives of men. In every extension of the Methodist Church we see that thought further revealing itself to men.

It goes without saying that the Church called Methodist has the very highest authority for her existence, and she has been working through the years with the highest, the holiest and the best. God himself has been back of her and with her as she has made her triumphal march of blessing and peace in every land upon which the sun shines. The seal of the Divine approval has been upon her. When we think of her wonderful achievements we exclaim: "What hath God wrought!" The most critical and exacting could not ask for greater proof of her Divine origin and authority than what the Methodist Church has accomplished and is doing today.

The Methodist Church has never had to recede from a single rule of faith and doctrine since her foundation. Why? Because her articles of belief were based on Truth eternal. Surely "the work of righteousness, shall be peace and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever." The world has seen nothing like the revival spirit of the Methodist Church since the day of Pentecost; and if the Apostles ever had a rival on earth it has been the consecrated Methodist preacher.

The phenomenal growth of the Methodist Church has been one of the marvels of the world. The world now expects that the people called Methodists shall manifest great spiritual life and power and the zeal and good works that flow from such a life. Methodism has become a synonym for great thinking, great loving, and great living, and a heavenly vision that sees the kingdoms of this world becoming the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ. She recognizes that she must not be a laggard but a leader in the warfare between truth and untruth that the Kingdom of God wages on earth.

The Women of the Methodist Church

In the early beginnings of the Methodist Church women figured most conspicuously. No Church ever owed more to her women than the Methodist. It is safe to say that but for the great soul and consecrated spirit of Susanna Wesley the world would never have heard of her famous sons. Stevens in his history calls her the "foundress" of Methodism. Even when her two great sons, John and Charles, by their preaching and singing, were changing the whole trend of thinking and living for two continents and had attained unto a fame that the world will not let die, they still carried many of their problems to their mother and were always deferential to her opinions. Yet this great woman, blessed by the Spirit, taught by the Spirit, and guided by the Holy Spirit seems never to have recognized the great truth till long after her children were grown. This to us is a great wonder. And it was a wonder to her "Jacky," the boy who filled such a tender place in her affections, that this mother of his, the greatest woman on earth to him, should claim the witness of the Spirit as a new experience. Yet in middle life or beyond Mrs. Wesley stated to her son John that she had rarely heard of forgiveness of sins now or of the Holy Spirit's bearing witness with our spirits that we are the children of God; and that that was the common privilege of believers, till her sons John and Charles and Mr. Whitefield were preaching that glad truth to the people. She, some time after, at a Communion Service, put it to the test, and from her own personal experience she learned that God for Christ's sake had forgiven her sins, and that the Holy Spirit had borne witness with her spirit to that joyous truth. So this blessed doctrine of the witness of the Spirit must have been peculiar to the Methodist preachers of Susanna Wesley's day. This mother in Israel, from

one of the greatest and best cultured families in England; whose father was Dr. Samuel Annesley, whose grand-uncle was the Earl of Anglesea, whose father and grandfather were preachers, whose husband and sons preached the everlasting Gospel, never knew of the witness of the Spirit till her sons and their co-workers proclaimed this glad truth to the common people. This great woman, great from any viewpoint, brought up in the lap of Christianity, knowing God as her Father and Jesus Christ as her Elder Brother and Savior, did not recognize till late in life, the Holy Spirit as her Teacher and Helper. How much more she might have done in her home and community had she sooner recognized His gracious presence and His hallowed influences and claimed His promises to her. Some one has said: "The world has yet to see all that God will do for the one who is wholly consecrated to Him."

When Mrs. Wesley was asked about John and Charles' going as missionaries to far away, and what was then uncivilized Georgia, she has been quoted as having said: "If I had twenty sons I should rejoice that they were all so employed though I should never see them again." (1)

No Spartan mother could ever have had the sublime faith or known the spirit of consecration that Susanna Wesley had. And she had a wisdom for training youth that Solomon never knew, and a courage that would have shamed earth's greatest warriors. She could call her husband "Master," and yet take a stand against him at any cost to herself, when she believed him to be wrong.

"In the War of the Spanish Succession a day having been appointed for fasting and prayer for the success

(1) The Story of Methodism by Drs. Luccock & Hutchinson. By permission.

of English arms, the rector's wife refused to have any part in the proceedings, for, said she, since I am not satisfied of the lawfulness of the war, I cannot beg a blessing on our arms till I have the opinion of one "wiser and a more competent judge than myself on this point, namely, whether a private person that had no hand in the beginning of the war but did always disapprove of it, may, notwithstanding, implore God's blessings upon it and pray for the good success of those arms which were taken up, I think, unlawfully." (1).

Susanna Wesley lived in a day when there were severe restrictions upon woman's education even in the upper classes. But she was educated herself, and saw to it that her daughters were educated. Her father and grandfather had given up their positions for conscience sake. She was such a non-conformist as to refuse to conform to her father's non-conformity. When a girl of thirteen years, she reentered the church that had cast her father out. We have had much to say of Susanna Wesley, but any touch upon the history of Methodism would be incomplete that did not give this wonderful and most remarkable woman a prominent place in it. It has been said of her: "She had the magic gift of harnessing the mysterious energy that she found in her nursery, and using it to propel a thousand messengers to every hamlet of her land, to light the slums of every city with shining light and make a hundred thousand lives that had seemed cold and lifeless glow with the warmth of a new life." (1)

Another has said of her: "Such a woman, take her for all in all, I have not heard of, I have not read of, nor with her equal have I been acquainted." (2)

Did Solomon have visions of her when he described the perfect woman? Prov. 31:10-31. Here was pre-

(1) The Story of Methodism by Drs. Luccock & Hutchinson. By permission.

(2) Quoted in the Story of Methodism by Dr. Hyde and Heroines of Methodism.

pared and hallowed ground in which the Holy Spirit might take deep root, and manifest Himself in most gracious and lasting results. We close these statements from the history of Susanna Wesley with a quotation from Dr. Clark. Speaking of the Wesley family, he said: "Such a family I have never read of, or known: not since the days of Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph and Mary of Nazareth, has there ever been a family to which the human race has been more indebted."

Lady Huntington

One of the most blessed things about our holy religion, the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ, is that it touches every phase of human character and reaches every condition of human life:

"Wide as the reach of Satan's rage
Doth thy salvation flow;
'Tis not confined to sex or age,
The lofty or the low."—(Isaac Watts.)

Benjamin Ingham, one of the early Methodist preachers, was God's instrument for leading Lady Margaret Hastings into the light of God's love. After that glad event Lady Margaret Hastings has been quoted as having said to her sister-in-law, the Countess of Huntington, a peeress of the proud realm of Great Britain: "Since I have known and believed in the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, I have been as happy as an angel." (3) Lady Huntington with wealth and position, surrounded by the best people at the Court of England, and associating with people of travel and culture, and having every worldly good was not at peace. There was a great soul hunger that God alone could satisfy. Associating with her cultured and refined

(3) Heroines of Methodism. By permission.

and sober-minded sister-in-law, Lady Margaret Hastings, Lady Huntington perceived that Lady Margaret had a peace and joy to which she herself was a stranger. She sought that peace, and the peace of God which passeth all understanding filled her soul, and made her life glad and beautiful. It was but natural that Lady Huntington should turn to Mr. Wesley, Mr. Whitefield and Mr. Ingham for help in the work that she undertook to do for her Lord and Savior. Lady Huntington appointed George Whitefield her chaplain, and opened her stately mansion for the ministrations of the gospel; and we find the impassioned preacher as faithful in the portrayal of sin, and in his appeals to the guilty conscience in the splendors of Park Lane, and to an audience in which sat Chesterfield and Bolingbroke as he had been in the streets of London or in the forests of Georgia; and among the ladies who, forsaking the ranks of folly and fashion, became through his instrumentality shining lights in a dark age, we find such names as Ladies Frances Gardiner, and Mary Hamilton, Lady Gertrude Hotham, the Countess of Delitey, Lady Chesterfield and Lady Fannie Shirley. (3)

It is passing strange to us that the name Methodist should ever have had opprobrium attached to it. Not only was that true but the Methodists were despised by many and often persecuted by the ungodly. Six young men were expelled from Oxford University because they decided for themselves to sing, to pray, to read and expound the scriptures in private homes. When Lady Huntington heard of this, she decided to establish a college where young men might study for the ministry. The college was established at Trevecka, South Walts. Mr. Fletcher was its first President, and the Rev. Joseph Benson its head master. Great revivals of

(3) Heroines of Methodism. By permission.

religion, far and near followed the labors of teachers and students from this school.

When Lady Huntington learned that some Methodist people, rich in faith, but poor in worldly goods, had met to worship in an upper room, she sold her jewels and with the proceeds built them a chapel. Would the Board of Church Extension of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, ever have to make another appeal to a halting and unbelieving Church, if the Methodist women, filled with the Spirit, were to sell their jewels and lay the proceeds at the feet of a crucified Savior? It has been said that Lady Huntington dotted the soil of England with her chapels. But for the Spirit's power upon her, Lady Huntington never would have undertaken, nor could she have ever accomplished her monumental work. She has been quoted as having said a short while before her death: "The Lord hath been present with my spirit this morning in a remarkable manner. What He means to convey to my soul I know not, it may be my approaching departure. My soul is filled with glory; I am as in the element of heaven itself." A short while before she breathed her last, she whispered with a smile: "I shall go to my Father tonight." (3) Our people die well.

Barbara Heck

Barbara Heck with her husband, Paul Heck, and Philip Embury, were instrumental in founding the first Methodist Church in the United States. The Heck family finally went to Canada; perhaps to be among loyalists. There they established the first Methodist Church in Canada. To Barbara Heck belongs the honor of establishing the Methodist Church in these two great countries which were to shape the destinies

(3) Heroines of Methodism. By permission.

of the West. Time would fail me to tell of Mrs. Fletcher, Mrs. Coke, Mrs. Rogers, Hester Ann Roe, Lady Maxwell, Grace Murray and the long line of noble and consecrated women who have lived since their day, to the present time. Though I must not fail to mention, as briefly as I may, two who lived almost in our generation, who wrought nobly and died great:

Mrs. Lucy Webb Hayes

Lucy Webb Hayes was the wife of Rutherford B. Hayes, President of the United States. This unobtrusive woman has left a record of moral courage that must ever live in all noble souls as an example worthy of imitation. It was she who, as the wife of the President of our great country, "dared to break international diplomatic custom and banish wine from the executive mansion at Washington." She had come to the kingdom for such a time as that, and she did not fail her Lord.

Miss Frances E. Willard

In the words of another: "When Frances E. Willard became President of the W. C. T. U. she began that marvelous career which led her not only across this great continent but over seas where on the founding of the world's W. C. T. U. she was chosen its President and remained in that office until her death in 1898."

"Miss Willard went to Evanston as a young girl from the prairies of Wisconsin, secured her education and then filled three places as an educator in Methodist institutions of high grade. Later she led her church, her country and the world to a new and lofty standard in which home, though denied her, hovered constantly before her, as the prize and perfection of the future, involving the lifting of women to a plane of political equality with men and a single standard of morality

for both sexes." . . . "In the Capitol at Washington, in the Hall of Statuary stands the solitary statue of this noble woman who was during her whole career," as Dr. Charles J. Little expressed it, "A conscience aglow with divine light." (4) The statue was presented by the State of Illinois February 17, 1905, Miss Willard being, in the language of the Act of the Legislature, "Illinois' most illustrious deceased citizen, the uncrowned queen of purity and temperance." (4)

Methodism and Temperance

Methodism from the time that she got her bearings and fixed her standard, has been a temperance church. It was but natural that the spiritually minded Miss Willard should develop rapidly in such a spiritual atmosphere. It is not strange that our sister churches should catch the gleam and let their own lights shine for God, and home and native land, as the Methodists led the vanguard in the great cause of temperance. This is not vanity or conceit, but history, our enemies themselves being judges.

Secretary Debar, in addressing the Convention of the National Wholesale Liquor Dealers Association in 1914, said: "What Church is it that is seeking to override, intimidate and browbeat men in public life with a view to political supremacy in this country? It is only necessary to read the list of these preachers who are active in the present propaganda for legislative prohibition to realize that it is the Methodist Church which is obsessed with the ambition to gain control of our Government. This is the fanatical, aggressive, and sometimes unscrupulous force which is leading the movement for political supremacy under the guise of temperance reform." (4)

(4) The New York Christian Advocate. By permission.

While we repudiate the charges of wrong motives, the Methodist Church accepts as great compliments and high praise the statements of the work that she has done and is doing in the great cause of temperance and prohibition. Bonfort's Wine and Spirit Circular of October 25, 1914, declared, "We must realize that the entire Methodist Church is a solidified, active, aggressive and obedient unit in this warfare on our trade." (4)

"The Woman's Christian Temperance Union was the child of Methodist zeal and its leader, Frances Willard, was a Methodist and the anti-Saloon League suggested by Dr. Alfred J. Kynett, a Methodist, has had at least two Methodist Bishops for its presidents during much of its existence, and a Methodist National superintendent to head its fighting forces." (4) So we see that the temperance movement has been but characteristic of Methodist zeal, and we may safely say that no group in the nation has rendered better service to the country than the Methodists.

Will the Eighteenth Amendment be repealed? Never! But there is danger of its being nullified in some sections by our sloth and neglect. There is yet much work to be done by all of the churches in creating a sentiment in favor of temperance and prohibition, and in this Methodism will continue to lead.

Methodism and Missions

When John Wesley said: "The world is my parish," was it a veiled prophecy that the church, which under God he was able to establish, was to lay its first foundations in missionary work? We can at least see that if she is to grow in proportion to her prestige, her equipment, her spiritual life and power, the Spirit of Mis-

(4) The New York Christian Advocate. By permission.

sions which is the Spirit of Jesus, must be one of her chief assets. The Wesleys, taught of the Spirit, had the foresight to see this, when they went to the colliers and other neglected classes at home with the message that Jesus died for all mankind. That same Spirit of Missions moved them when they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to the then trackless forests of America.

In response to the Macedonian vision, Saint Paul crossed the Aegean Sea from Asia to Europe and planted the seeds of the Kingdom at Philippi. Saint Paul's work in Europe, Dr. Stalker said: "In its issues far out-rivalled the expedition of Alexander the Great when he carried the arms and civilization of Greece into the heart of Asia or that of Caesar when he landed on the shores of Britain or even of the voyage of Columbus when he discovered a new world." The truth which Saint Paul preached at Philippi spread over Europe in its Christianizing and civilizing influences. Then it reached out to America as the Wesleys and their co-workers, Asbury, Coke, Whitefield, Peter Cartwright, Freeborn, Garretson, Jesse Lee, Wm. McKendree and hosts of other noble spirits wrought for the best things possible to the New World. It would be necessary to follow the works of each individual in order to tell with what gracious results each one labored. Their works do follow them, and in some instances are recorded in other histories. Eighteen years before Mississippi was admitted into the Union, and soon after the "Louisiana Purchase" Methodist preachers were working in the territory of both States. Drs. Luccock and Hutchinson, and Dr. Hyde in their Stories of Methodism quote Jesse Walker as having said: "I have come in the name of Christ to take Saint Louis, and by the grace of God I will do it." And before the end of the year he had a church building and a membership of sixty "and a free school for poor children." "The story of his descent up-

on Saint Louis might well epitomize the entrance of the Methodist preacher into thousands of frontier settlements in the middle and far West." (1)

The circuit rider has been the advance agent of Christianity and civilization in America. As the story goes: A Methodist preacher "in a remote section of Mississippi one day saw fresh wagon tracks, and overtook a settler just unloading his goods and placing his family on a new homestead. After learning who 'his visitor' was, the settler exclaimed: 'Another Methodist preacher! I left Virginia for Georgia to get clear of them. Then they got my wife and daughter, and I came here, and here is one before I get my wagon unloaded!' 'Here is one before I get my wagon unloaded' might have been spoken in hundreds and thousands of localities from the Ohio to the Pacific. Methodism was neither omnipotent nor omniscient but it came rather close to being omnipresent." (1)

The first Protestant sermon ever preached on the Pacific coast was preached by Jason Lee, a Methodist preacher. And how the great Northwest was saved to the United States by Jason Lee and other Methodist missionaries, is, I trust familiar history. In 1847, the Methodists formed the first Protestant organization in California. In passing let us note that William Capers, born in South Carolina, and who studied in the South Carolina College, was for a time missionary to the Indians in Georgia, and was the first missionary to the Negroes in this country. He afterward became one of the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South. But the Methodist Church has never been contented to do home missionary work alone. But like a giant moving from continent to continent she has touched the territory of the world, and planted her base in every land upon which the sun shines. The spirit of

(1) The Story of Methodism by Drs. Lucecock & Hutchinson. By permission.

foreign missions, has lighted the Methodist Church throughout.

Did the Holy Spirit move Saint Paul to go to Philippi? Yes, so all of us believe. Did the Holy Spirit moving upon the hearts and consciences of the early Methodists prompt them to come to America? We believe that He did. Then why should not the Methodists then and now, reach across the centuries and shaking hands with Saint Paul in one glad acclaim shout: "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." Eph. 4:5.

Methodism and Government

One reason for the phenomenal growth of the Methodist Church in America next to her spiritual life is that she touched the people in all of their interests and grew with their growth. Present day Methodists may take notice to their profit. In the words of Abel Stevens, "The Methodist Church as the chief religious embodiment of the common people has felt that its destiny is identical with that of the country." The Methodist Episcopal Church was organized in 1784; and it was the first religious body to recognize the new government. Washington was inaugurated as the first President of the United States on April 30, 1789, in New York City. The General Conference met in the same city in May, and on the 29th of the month Bishops Coke and Asbury in the name of the Conference, still in session, called upon Washington and read to him the address of the Conference. "The alacrity of the Methodists somewhat perturbed the other churches," a contemporary Methodist preacher tells us.

"The address and the answer in a few days were inserted in the public prints and some of the ministers and members of the other churches appeared dissatisfied that the Methodists should take the lead. It

was not only in promptness but in attitude that the Methodists took the lead, for in their address they expressed their full confidence in the wisdom and integrity of Washington for the preservation of those civil and religious liberties which have been transmitted to us by the providence of God and the glorious Revolution, and they acknowledged God as the source of every blessing, and particularly of the most excellent Constitution of these States, which is at present the admiration of the world and may in future become its great exemplar for imitation. The address was signed in behalf of the Methodist Episcopal Church by Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury." (4)

President Washington replied as follows: "To the Bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Gentlemen: I return to you individually, and (through you) to your Society collectively in the United States my thanks for the demonstration of affection, and expression of joy offered in their behalf, on my late appointment. It shall be my endeavor to manifest by overt acts, the purity of my inclinations for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desire to contribute whatever may be in my power towards the civil and religious liberties of the American people. In pursuing this line of conduct I hope by the assistance of divine providence, not altogether to disappoint the confidence which you have been pleased to repose in me. It always affords me satisfaction when I find a concurrence in sentiment and practice between all conscientious men in acknowledgements of homage to the great Governor of the Universe and in professions of support to a just and civil government. After mentioning that I trust the people of every denomination who demean themselves as good citizens will have occasion to be

(4) The New York Christian Advocate. By permission.

convinced that I shall always strive to prove a faithful and impartial patron of genuine vital religion, I must assure you in particular that I take in the kindest part the promise you make of presenting your prayers at the Throne of Grace for me, and that I likewise implore the divine benediction on yourselves and your religious community. G. Washington." (4) .

In his address at the unveiling of the Francis Asbury Monument in Washington, D. C., October 15, 1924, Calvin Coolidge said: "The Government of a country never gets ahead of the religion of a country." "Asbury is entitled to rank as one of the builders of our nation." And on another occasion in response to an address of Bishop Berry, President Coolidge said: "May I extend to you and that vast body of communicants and adherents represented by you my profound appreciation of their good wishes and of their support of our government and its Chief Executive. May we all be endowed with the Spirit of our Creator and with His wisdom to meet the duties which he has set for us to perform." (4)

Thus we see that from Washington to Coolidge, the power and spirit of the Methodist Church have been felt in the White House and throughout the nation.

Methodism and Education

Here we pause and ask, what shall we say in so limited a time, when so much might be said? It would take volumes to cover in any adequate way this great subject. At Lincoln College, Oxford University, in 1729, John Wesley gathered around him a group of his fellow students. His brother Charles, William Morgan, Robert Kirkham, James Clayton, Benjamin Ingham, John Gambold, James Hervey, Thomas Broughton, Charles Kinchin and John Whitelamb. They met

(4) The New York Christian Advocate. By permission.

to study the Bible. They were called "Men of One Book." They were derided as "Bible Moths." They met together frequently, prayed together and planned their works of mercy as they sought to know the mind of the Lord and to do His will. Their methodical service and work won for them the nickname of "Methodists which stuck to Wesley and his followers and was finally accepted by them as a badge of honor. It is now the family name of more than thirty millions of church members throughout the world." (4)

It is not known whether Perronet or Fletcher was the first to call the followers of Wesley "the Methodist Church." Methodism was born of God in a prayer meeting held in a great university, and from the beginning she has had amongst her adherents some of the most spiritually minded and scholarly men and women of the world. Taught by the Holy Spirit, Mr. Wesley foresaw that the work which he and his followers were doing could not abide without intellectual training. So, with characteristic foresight and decision, he proceeded at once to plan that the impregnable Gospel truths for which Methodism stood were fortified by education and culture. Thus were schools and colleges founded as soon as Methodism was planted in any community, and this has been the history of the Methodist Church from the beginning. Truly it may be said that she was amongst the founders of religious education. Methodism, born in a great university! Was it the design of a gracious heavenly Father that evangelism and high culture should go hand in hand to win the world for Christ? Let us see to it that they shall never be separated by our neglect, sloth or indifference. If Methodism has been seeking to unite in her young people "the two greater ornaments of human beings, deep learning and genuine piety," we thank

(4) The New York Christian Advocate. By permission.

God for Methodism, we thank Him for the privilege of being numbered with her great hosts. We think of her present greatness and of her possible greater future; then in faith, hope and love with one great song of praise we would press the battle of truth and culture to the gates. And thinking of Christian education, righteousness, truth, love, as taught by the Holy Spirit, with the Psalmist we may exultantly shout: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle." Psalm 24:7-8.

To the everlasting praise of Methodism be it said that she was the first to free woman from the thralldom of ignorance and to offer her a liberal education. The Wesleyan Female College now the Wesleyan College at Macon, Georgia, is the oldest female college in the world.

Mr. Wesley was quick to see the value of good literature; hence he wrote many books and urged his preachers to carry good books and papers to the people. He encouraged also the establishment of publishing houses. That interest has also developed with the growth of the church till today our Northern sister in the Methodist Book Concern, has "the largest religious publishing house in Protestantism," (1) and our own great plant at Nashville, Tennessee, the greatest religious publishing house in the South, with her helpers at Richmond, Dallas and San Francisco, is furnishing first class reading matter to our people. "The first British Bible Society that existed was projected by George Cussons, and organized by a small number of his Methodist companions. Both the London and Church Missionary Societies were started and organized by Methodists. The first Tract Society was formed

(1) The Story of Methodism by Drs. Luccock & Hutchinson. By permission.

by John Wesley and Thomas Coke in 1782," according to McClintock & Strong's Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclopaedia.

Your patience forbids that I should try to tell the work of the Methodist Church in orphanages, Sunday schools, Epworth Leagues and Church Extension. But as intelligent Methodists do you not know already? However, one word about Sunday schools in passing. In his History of the English People, John Richard Green, writing of the great moral reforms wrought in England by the Methodist revival, says that "It was not till the Wesleyan impulse had done its work that this philanthropic impulse began. The Sunday schools established by Mr. Raikes, of Gloucester, at the close of the century were the beginnings of popular education."

(5) If Mr. Green intended to say that it was the Wesleyan revival that inspired Robert Raikes to commence Sunday school work in England, that was a compliment to Wesleyanism. But Dr. A. B. Hyde in his Story of Methodism, page 265, says: "The first trace of Sunday schools is found in Wycombe, where in 1769 Hannah Ball, a Methodist girl, opened one for the training of children in Scripture. Twelve years later Sophia Cook (who later married Bradham, 'the Demosthenes of Methodism') was conversing at Gloucester with Robert Raikes, publisher of the Gloucester Journal, 'What can we do for them?' asked he, pointing to a group of street Arabs—children, poor, neglected and depraved.

'Let us teach them to read and take them to church.' said she. No time was lost. Soon Robert Raikes and Sophia Cook were leading to church the van of the Sunday School Army, a ragged train, well jerrered by the gazing crowd, but a vision dear to overhanging angels."

(6) The Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclo-

(5) Green's History of the English People.

(6) The Story of Methodism by Dr. A. B. Hyde.

paedia, McClintock & Strong, states practically the same things with the additional statement that Sophia Cook, another Methodist, first suggested to Robert Raikes the idea of the Sunday school.

Methodism has been alive to every interest of her people and to humanity at large. To the man of vision she is a great Church, at the beginning of her strength, reaching up to her immortal youth and ready to move with the Divine movement in Heaven's plan for the conversion of the world. To a critic who stated that Methodism was "on the rocks" Dr. S. Parkes Cadman replied: "If so she has been there long enough to begin to sing: How Firm a Foundation."

The Methodist Church and Her Sister Churches

We know that the Methodist Church is not the only Church, and we are glad that it is so. We always extend to our sister Churches Christian greetings, the right hand of fellowship, bidding them God speed, and praying Heaven's richest blessings upon them. What the Methodist Church has been to her sister churches in a spiritual way no human mathematics can calculate. Think for a moment of the many who have gone from the ranks of the Methodist Church to swell the ranks of other Churches, carrying with them Methodist zeal, and spiritual life and power. We rejoice at the thought that the leaven is doing its great work. Let our sister Churches rejoice at the success of Methodism; for "the success of Methodism was the success of the most active and salutary movement known to Protestant Christianity." (6). What would the world have been today without the Methodist Church?

If the Centenary started by the Methodists was instrumental in inspiring a similar work in our sister Churches, what must have been the spiritual stimulus

(6) The Story of Methodism by Dr. A. B. Hyde.

that through the years, has gone from the Methodist Church touching and moving other Churches to greater spiritual life and power, and consequent higher standards of Christian living and service? In many instances, our sister Churches, even the Protestant Episcopal and Roman Catholic, have adopted our evangelistic methods. We rejoice at the thought of any help that the Holy Spirit has moved the Methodists to be to them.

Who can measure the results of that Sunday in London when young Charles Spurgeon was driven by a snow storm into that humble Methodist chapel, and heard from a Methodist preacher the sermon that changed his whole life? But for that snowy day and that humble Methodist preacher's holding up a living Christ to dying men, in all probability the world would have missed one of the greatest preachers of the nineteenth century, and the Baptist Church one of her leading lights.

It has been said that William Booth, a Methodist preacher, gave up a settled pulpit for a base drum and immortality. Eternity alone can reveal what the Salvation Army has done for the inhabitants of the slums of the great cities of the earth. Had William Booth and his consecrated helpers not shown the world that it could be done, who would have undertaken to evangelize the lost and neglected of the slums? Would Water Street Mission and similar evangelizing agencies have ever been heard of? Shall we continue to listen for the Divine urge and follow the gleam? Had we but time to dwell on what the disciples were before Pentecost—often weaklings, and sometimes cowards, and what they were after Pentecost, strong with Divine strength, and with a courage that defied death itself—we might better see what the Methodist Church will become without the Holy Spirit, and get visions of what

she is to become if she be filled with the Spirit. God grant that the strength of Methodism may never become the cause of her weakness! As we think of her great wealth and numbers, may we ever remember "It is not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord."

Hear Mr. Wesley's description of a Methodist:

"A Methodist is one who has the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him: one who loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. He rejoices evermore, prays without ceasing, and in everything gives thanks. His heart is full of love to all mankind, and is purified from envy, malice, wrath and every unkind affection. His own desire, and the one design of his life, is not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him. He keeps all of God's commandments, from the least to the greatest. He follows not the customs of the world; for vice does not lose its nature through its becoming fashionable. He fares not sumptuously every day. He cannot lay up treasure upon the earth; nor can he adorn himself with gold or costly apparel. He cannot join in any diversion that has the least tendency to vice. He cannot speak evil of his neighbor any more than he can tell a lie. He cannot utter unkind or evil words. No corrupt communication ever comes out of his mouth. He does good unto all men: unto neighbors, strangers, friends, and enemies. These are the principles and practices of our sect. These are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do Methodists desire to be distinguished from other men." (7)

Were Mr. Wesley to return to earth today, I wonder how many of us he would recognize as Methodists. Perhaps he would say to most of us: "Honor that name or change it." By giving Mr. Wesley's description of

(7) Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclopaedia, Vol. X, page 937.

a Methodist, the Methodists do not mean to standardize religion, though the Bible gives unmistakable marks of a Christian, and the Bible is the ultimate appeal.

May Methodist people and preachers cease to think of ease and self glory in appointments, remembering that the road to greatness is by the way of service. Can you imagine Wesley, Asbury and Coke ever thinking of appointments, except where the service was hardest, and where humanity's need was greatest? We think of Wesley's self-denial, his hardships, his sufferings, his unflinchingly facing the mobs who sought his life, and we wonder if his cousin Arthur, Duke of Wellington, ever displayed as much courage and heroism. Mr. Wesley was great in proportion to what he planned and what he accomplished. In all of the world's history his equals are few.

After Wesley had preached his last sermon at Oxford University, and the authorities there turned him out, "They little thought they were getting rid of the most illustrious man that Oxford ever produced." (The Story of Methodism by A. B. Hyde.) When Wesley was knocking at the doors of the Anglican Church, not for favor or benefit, but that he might carry blessing and help, she, blind to the things that would have made for her success and peace, said "No." She did not know that she was turning from her doors one of the greatest men that ever blessed the world. Blinded by her egotism, her selfishness and sins, she did not see that she needed just the things that Wesley would have brought to her. Quoting from Dr. Hyde's Story of Methodism, page 21, Bishop Burnet said: "I see ruin hanging over the Church. I must give vent to my sad thoughts, to the subject of my many secret mournings." Dr. Watts spoke "of the general decay of vital religion." Another said: "Almost all vital religion is lost out of the world." Another tells us: "All that is

restrictively Christian is banished and despised." And just before the rise of Methodism, Secker, Archbishop of Canterbury, wrote: "Christianity is ridiculed with very little reserve, and the teachers of it, with none at all." And Archbishop Leighton said: "The Church had come to be a fair carcass." And William Morley Punshon quotes Isaac Taylor as saying: "The Anglican Church was a system under which men had lapsed into heathenism." John Richard Green speaking of the results of the Methodist revival, said: "Its action upon the Church broke the lethargy of the clergy; and the "evangelical" movement made the fox-hunting parson and absentee rector at last impossible. In Walpole's days the English clergy were the idlest and most lifeless in the world." "In our own day," that is, in Mr. Green's day, he said, "no body of religious ministers surpasses them in piety, in philanthropic energy or in popular regard." Mr. Green says further: "The Methodists themselves were the least result of the Methodist revival. In the nation at large appeared a new moral enthusiasm, whose power was seen in the disappearance of the profligacy which had infected the upper classes and the foulness which had infested literature ever since the Restoration. A yet nobler result 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 poor."

Some one has said that when Mr. Wesley died he left behind him "a good library of books, a well-worn clergyman's gown, a much-abused reputation, and the Methodist Church." Next to the truth which our Savior lived and then taught, and the life which that truth made in Saint Paul has the world ever received a richer or greater legacy than the Methodist Church? Study history

and see. John Wesley preaching the cardinal doctrine of the Bible, helped to make a new England in Europe, as well as a new world west of the Atlantic Ocean. Did he not pioneer the greatest religious awakening of modern times or of any time next to that which the world saw when Jesus walked beside blue wave Galilee? Charles Wesley has been called "the prince of sacred lyrists in our English language." (8) The religion of the Methodists has ever been a joyous religion. How they sang! How they confessed! How they praised! No hymn writer, perhaps, since the days of David, ever put as much Bible truth in his songs, as did Charles Wesley. Was it the singing of Charles Wesley's hymns, filled with the spirit of truth that made the Methodist people so joyous and strong? Methodism has but one road to follow and that has always been upward and onward. She does not know what it is to call a retreat or to lose a strategic position. May the Lord forbid that she ever should!

Watchman what of the night? I see no night! The morning cometh! In all reforms for righteousness, in all that stands for faithfulness and clean living, the Methodists have usually been in the lead, and thus in the thickest of the fight.

We pause and ask what will Methodism do with her wonderful achievements in power, prestige, increasing numbers and accumulated property? If she be wise and true to herself she will use all of these to project greater enterprises under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. She with others will be seeking to lead souls to Christ, and will see to it that the conditions under which those converted souls are to live will be changed also.

The effort of this century will doubtless be to make the whole social order Christian. The adversary of

(8) Dr. A. B. Hyde in the Story of Methodism.

souls seeing this trying to divide the Church into isms and schisms. But if Mr. Wesley could save Protestantism in Ireland, surely Methodism with her sister Churches, taught by the Holy Spirit, can save Bible Christianity to the world. We do not know what God will write in the new era now upon us. But if the Christian people be true to Him, may we not expect in the future, as in the past, that we too shall hear what Heaven will say to the Churches and through them to the nations of the earth!

At the last great consummation the Methodist people will be there with their trophies that have gone into the salvation of a redeemed world. And with all people from the East and the West, from the North and the South, will join the triumphal song: "All hail the power of Jesus Name.

I have gleaned from many sources, and have tried to give the proper credits for direct quotations. If I have failed to give proper credits for the thoughts suggested I wish to apologize. I have used direct quotations from the following: The Story of Methodism by Drs. Luccock and Hutchinson, and published by the Methodist Book Concern, New York; The Story of Methodism by Dr. A. B. Hyde; The Centennial Number of the Christian Advocate, New York; The Heroines of Methodism by Mrs. and Miss Martin and published by Barbee and Smith, Southern Methodist Publishing House; Green's History of the English People published by Funk & Wagnalls Co., New York; and from McClintock and Strong's Biblical, Theological and Ecclesiastical Cyclopaedia.

There has been so much written about Methodism that we can scarcely claim to write anything new, except the rapid progress of Methodism today.