

10-28-1936

# Methodism Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow

R. T. Jaynes

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Jaynes, R. T., "Methodism Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow" (1936). *Historical Society Addresses*. Paper 34.  
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# METHODISM YESTERDAY TODAY AND TOMORROW

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R. T. JAYNES



AN ADDRESS DELIVERED  
TO THE  
HISTORICAL SOCIETIES  
OF THE  
UPPER SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE  
AND THE  
SOUTH CAROLINA CONFERENCE  
OF THE  
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, SOUTH  
AT UNION, SOUTH CAROLINA, OCTOBER 28, 1936  
AND  
AT CHARLESTON, NOVEMBER 11, 1936

## METHODISM YESTERDAY, TODAY, AND TOMORROW

Words are living things. It behooves us to be careful how we use them.

The history of Methodism is a big subject. It is too big to be fully treated in the time allowed for a popular lecture. Volumes have been written, more will be written; and yet the subject will not be exhausted. Hence the best we can do is to observe a few of the sign-posts along the road that Methodism has traveled, and take note of them as guide-posts for our present and future course.

It appears from the records of the Historical Society that since its organization in 1856, sixty "lectures" or "sermons" have been delivered. Last year the lecture was the first to be delivered by a lawyer. The sample afforded by the speaker from the coastal plains must have been acceptable, as the idea prevailed of drafting a disciple of Blackstone from the foot-hills of the Piedmont. At any rate, the two extremes of territory have met on a common level. Preachers must enjoy the novelty of being "lectured" by a lawyer, else they would not repeat the experiment. After all, it is well to see ourselves as others see us. And may not this be taken as a symbol of the universality of Methodism? There is no nook nor corner of South Carolina from the mountains to the sea in which Methodism is not a potent influence for good, for righteousness, for Christian living. So it is also in every part of America, and throughout the world, Methodism has been owned and blessed of God, and given great power in carrying out the mission of Christianity to establish the Kingdom of God in the earth.

The world had nothing like it before Methodism came into being. And to whom so much has been given, of them much is required. The very thought is appalling! Truly the weight of responsibility is too great to be borne by

an arm of flesh. It can only be done today and in the future as it was done by the early pioneers who went forth to preach the Gospel in the American wilderness. They endured incredible hardships, and overcame humanly unsurmountable difficulties, because they had the presence, the spirit and the power of Jesus to sustain them in their work. They had their days of visitation; we of this generation have ours. Amid all the changing conditions of these modern times, there must be continued emphasis upon experience, holy living, and active service. Methodism in its origin, "had no controversy except with sin and Satan."

John Wesley once said: "Give me a hundred men who fear nothing but sin and desire nothing but God and I will shake the world, and I care not a straw whether they be clergymen or laymen; such alone will overthrow the Kingdom of Satan and build up the Kingdom of God." God gave Wesley in his day and since, not only hundreds but thousands of consecrated men and women to carry on the battle against sin and Satan.

## THE CHURCH

In the first Epistle of Paul to Timothy, giving directions for discharge of his office as an evangelist at Ephesus, Paul spoke of the house of God, "which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." The house of God is spoken of in allusion to the ancient tabernacle which was God's house, and in which the symbol of the Divine Majesty dwelt. So the Christian church is God's house; and every believer is a habitation of God through the Spirit. The Church of the living God is the assembly in which God lives and works; each member of which is a living stone; and all of whom, properly united among themselves, grow up into a holy temple of the Lord.

The apostolic Church was a voluntary company, or society. Its rules of Government were few and simple. The

apostolic Church grew and "multiplied." So has Methodism grown from a few to an army of millions; yet its doctrinal unity remains unchanged. Mr. Wesley selected these apostolic rules of moral conduct and formed a code by the observance of which the members were required to live. He prepared a form of Discipline containing the Articles of Religion, the General Rules, a Ritual for ordination and other services of the Church. The Christmas Conference at Baltimore in 1784 adopted the Discipline as their ecclesiastical constitution, and thus the Methodists in America became a *regularly and fully organized Christian Church*.

In 1739, the first Methodist Society was organized in London by Mr. Wesley. It began with a small number and soon swelled into hundreds. A great revival began to spread over the British realm. It was a work of great depth and duration. For this work God raised up three men, the equals of whom, had probably never been seen in the world at one time since the Apostolic days: John Wesley, the scholar, leader and organizer; George Whitefield, the fervid preacher, and Charles Wesley, the poet and hymn writer. To these three men, and those whom they gathered to their standard, did the Lord commit the precious work of awaking the British kingdom to a sense of God and duty, and by them he wrought a reformation which stands alone as a spiritual revival enduring for ages.

The organization of the "Methodist Episcopal Church," in America, with Coke and Asbury as its first Bishops, constituted it a valid Christian Church. During the thirty-two years of his Episcopate, Francis Asbury, the pioneer Bishop, set the governmental machinery to running smoothly in the General, Annual, District, Quarterly and Church Conferences. They are all organized on the same plan and governed by the same laws. Their doctrinal unity remains the same. Among all the many branches of Methodism in the world today there is substantial unity, and this unity is the great trunk from which these branches have sprung.

Froude, an English historian of the last century, giving account of his visit to South Africa, wrote: "I saw in Natal, a colossal fig-tree. It had a central stem, but I knew not where the center was, for the branches bent to the ground, and struck root there; and at each joint a fresh trunk shot up erect, and threw out new branches in turn which again arched and planted themselves, till the single tree had become a forest; and overhead was spread a vast dome of leaves and fruit, which was supported on innumerable columns, like the roof of some vast Cathedral." He applied this to the British Empire and her far-flung colonies; but may we not just as aptly apply it to Methodism? There is the great parent stem, and the remotest branches are the natural growth from this stem. These secondary growths are enormous, and are so many that they compose a forest. The branches have taken root in every soil till they extend to every land; whether in the frozen north or underneath the blazing sun of the tropics, every stem, branch and leaf has a common life and draws its strength and vigor from the parent trunk.

### THE BUILDERS

In a letter to the Corinthians, Paul writes—"For we are laborers together with God; ye are God's husbandry, *ye are* God's building."

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a *wise master-builder*, I have laid the foundation and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereon."

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." We note that Paul here speaks of himself as a *wise master-builder*. He speaks thus not to gratify his own pride, but to magnify divine grace. It was honorable to be a *master-builder* in the edifice of God; but it added to his character to be a *wise* one. It was Paul

who *laid the foundation* of a church among the Corinthians. He had begotten them through the Gospel during the two years of his labors among and with them, and he writes these letters to give necessary instruction and confirm them in the faith.

It has been said that on May 24, 1738, through his preface to Paul's Epistle to the Romans, Martin Luther, the great German Reformer, across more than two centuries, spoke to John Wesley, the great Englishman. Indeed may we not go even further than that and say that across a far greater span of time and race, Paul, the great Christian Jew, spoke to the heart of John Wesley, an English Clergyman, whose apostolic mission was to be but little less than his own?

Wesley's experience in that Aldersgate Street meeting house strangely resembles Paul's on the Damascus road. "Ye shall know them by their fruits," and judged by this standard John Wesley was indeed a *wise master-builder*. When he said "the world is my parish," he meant that very thing. These were not empty words. He became a flaming evangel of truth, proclaiming a glorious Christian experience of salvation through faith alone, and the love of God for fallen man. He gave himself wholly to this great task, preaching 42,400 sermons and traveling 250,000 miles. Historians agree that his ministry transformed the face of England, saved it from the horrors of Revolution, and opened up a new world-era of brotherhood.

Methodism is what it is today largely as a result of that dynamic experience. Wesley, Aldersgate, Methodism; these will always stand together in the annals of the Christian Church. Two hundred years have passed since Charleston in common with Savannah and Frederica knew the Oxford Methodists. In 1781, John Wesley wrote:

"On Monday, May the First, our little society began in London. But it may be observed, the first rise of Methodism, so called, was in November, 1729, when four of us

met together at Oxford; the second was at Savannah, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at my house; the last was at London, on this day, when forty or fifty of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer."

These three words, "On this day," refer to the first of the Weekly meetings organized (1739) after that noteworthy evening in the prayer meeting on Aldersgate Street when Wesley felt his "heart strangely warmed."

### HISTORIANS APPRAISE JOHN WESLEY

"I consider him as the most influential mind of the last century, the man who will have produced the greatest results centuries hence," said Southey, Poet Laureate of England, who wrote a "Life of John Wesley," (1820.)

"No man has risen in the Methodist Society equal to their founder, John Wesley," said Dean Stanley.

"A greater poet may arise than Homer or Milton, a greater theologian than Calvin, a greater philosopher than Bacon, a greater dramatist than any of ancient or modern fame, *a greater revivalist of the Church than John Wesley—Never.*" said Dr. Dobbins, of the Church of England.

"As Mount Everest lifts its tall head not only above every peak of the Himalayas, but above the tallest peak of every other mountain in the wide world, so John Wesley, as a revivalist and reformer, towers not only above the other great men of Methodism, but above the greatest in all other Churches of Christendom," said Dr. J. O. A. Clark.

Upon the occasion of the reopening of his home, at City Road, in North London, in 1934, and the unveiling of a painting of John Wesley, the late Dr. Cadman, of New York, was the principal speaker. He described Wesley as "the greatest Englishman of the eighteenth century and one



of the greatest of all times, and the greatest Protestant who ever lived." (By way of parenthesis we quote the tribute of Bishop Kern to this great preacher whose ministry touched both continents and whose influence was worldwide. Says he: "When S. Parkes Cadman died, one of the most comprehensive and penetrating minds in America was stilled. How great is the outreach of one Christian personality.)

Green, the English historian, says of Wesley and the Revival: "He embodied in himself not this or that side of the great movement, but the very movement itself."

Historians agree that Wesley did more for England than did Pitt in the cabinet or Clive in the field.

As always, so in Wesley's case, the new vision of Christ brought with it a new thought of humanity, and service for others. In proportion as his faith became fixed, and his spiritual triumphs complete, did the main outline of his message become clear and definite, from the day he preached his first open-air sermon in April, 1739, until February 23, 1791, when he preached his last. The reason is simple. It was not made up of speculations or theorizings, but of those fundamental and eternal moral and spiritual truths which, however, we may state them, in their real essence remain unchanged from age to age, and which are the truths by which men must live, if, in the highest sense, they live at all.

He knew himself, his powers and his limitations. He was true to himself, and hence he could not be false to any man. His was a self-mastery which made his work effective. He was calm amid criticism and bitter opposition from any and every source. When attacked by Whitefield, he refused to reply, saying: "You may read Whitefield against Wesley, but you will never read Wesley against Whitefield."

He was indeed a prophet of divine realities. His sermons were made vivid and living by a personality a-thrill with

a great experience of salvation. He preached an average of 800 sermons annually for fifty years—a marvelous record and prodigious accomplishment.

### FRANCIS ASBURY

The man who stands next to John Wesley as a founder and builder is Francis Asbury. These two names are immortal in Methodism and will remain transcendent in its history. They have become the symbols of that holiness and self-sacrifice which have made Methodism such an effective religious force in the world. Truth and providence embody themselves in human life, and thus are borne across the tracts of time and space. Such instruments God has raised up all along the ages. The admission of the human element is agreeable to the divine origin and authority of the Church. Its truths abide, its principles change not, for they are of God; but the bringing of them to bear upon the world, for its salvation, according to times and circumstances, is of human devising, under the promise of gracious guidance.

The ministry of Wesley was confined to England, Scotland and Ireland, where the population was dense. Thus wherever he preached, vast crowds thronged to hear him. At times there were ten, twenty, and even thirty thousand listening in rapt attention to his sermons. But not so in America. In those pioneer days the sparsely settled communities were scattered along the Atlantic Coast from Maine to Georgia, and from Canada to Ohio and Tennessee. It was well nigh a trackless wilderness. Hence the Trail of the Circuit Rider was blazed on horseback. The horse afforded the intinerant many advantages. He could read and study on a horse. Well do I remember, as a boy, seeing J. Walter Dickson riding the old Rock Spring's Circuit in Oconee County, giving his horse the loose rein, holding an umbrella in one hand, an open Bible in the

other, and reading as he rode. He became a leader in the Conference and was Pastor of Trinity Church in Charleston on August 31, 1886, when a severe earthquake caused a loss of life and property comparable only to the great fire of 1838 which destroyed a large section of the city, including four Methodist churches. At the time of his death in 1898 he was serving as Presiding Elder of Columbia District.

So did Asbury read and study on a horse. We can imagine that Silver Fox and Little Jane heard so much Greek and Hebrew on the journeys between settlements that they, like their master, became familiar with the Greek and Hebrew tongues. Bishop Hughes represents Bishop Asbury as saying: "I rode many horses and I fell in love with all of them. They became the alters at which I prayed, and the pulpits from which I preached, and often the beds on which I slept. I lived on horse-back. \* \* \* I could read and study on a horse. \* \* \* I could trust them all. Frequently when night fell and I could not see the rocky or muddy road, I gave my horse his head, and the loose rein, and he moved unerringly to the next settlement."

"I think that if Mr. Wesley put Oxford into the blood of our Church, I put the frontier into the same arteries so that the two streams were joined and have flowed together in harmony all those years. \* \* \*

"My first American sermon was on the text: 'I determined to know nothing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.' I clung to that text all the rest of my life. Oftentimes I think that my work was most difficult. But I am glad that I never turned back from its hardships. I went on and on, and on! Even the Revolution could not stop me, though in its midst I wrote once and prayed oftener, 'Lord, stand by me.'

"My Christ was the Christ of the American road. Jesus lifted its sign-posts and I followed his directions. I heard His call. I was His traveler, and I went on, and on, and on."

It is remarkable how he reached every settlement in this vast territory. Even the mountains could not turn him back. His journal shows that in 1800 and in 1802 he came across the mountains from Tennessee and arrived at "ancient father John Douthit's," Greenville County, and Samuel Burdine's, in Pendleton County, South Carolina. At both these places he preached and at the latter he and Whatcoat administered the Lord's supper on November 18, 1800. An unusual entry reads: "Sister Burdine professes to have known the Lord twenty years; in her you see meekness, gentleness, patience, pure love—and cleanliness."

The Burdine home was near the present site of Antioch church, in Pickens County, which doubtless owes its origin to these visits of Asbury and Whatcoat.

(At Union, October 28.)

In 1812, on a tour of the Carolinas, he came to Union County, where (1791) the first Circuit had been formed with 120 members, Benjamin Tarrant the Pastor and Reubin Ellis, Presiding Elder. How fitting that this Conference should be held on this historic and sacred ground where Methodism has been owned and blessed of God for 145 years. May the spirit of these early pioneers abide with us as an inspiration to emulate their zeal, their devotion and their self-sacrificing labors.

(At Asbury Memorial Church, Charleston, November 11.)

How fitting that the 151st session of the Conference should be held in this building, which has been erected as a memorial of him. It did not grow out of the ground. It did not just happen. Somebody saw visions and dreamed dreams. Somebody slept on the lee-side of a hill, and in the cold of the morning warmed his hands on the side of his Gospel steed. But as the hands of Moses were stayed up by Aaron, so did the membership sustain their Pastor.

But lest you might think of yourselves more highly than you should, please remember that Asbury church, in Anderson county, near Fort Hill, the home of John C. Calhoun

(now Clemson College) in September of last year celebrated its centennial; while you are only 55 years young.

Brother Taylor, a country cousin might come to town.

The distinctive achievement of Francis Asbury is the Methodist church in America. This is his sufficient title to distinction. His forty years of consecrated leadership, toil and self-sacrifice is its glorious benediction.

He burned with itinerant zeal. He organized a body of gospel rangers, going far and wide, preaching as they went. He was the first of the preachers in America to form and regularly travel a circuit. His plan was as he termed it, "a circulation of preachers." "Circulation" was his watchword. And he proceeded to circulate.

While he was not a great preacher like Wesley and Whitefield, yet he displayed great skill in handling his subject. He was simple, direct, evangelical. Above all he was in earnest. His voice was musical, his appearance reverend and commanding. His life coalesced with his gospel, and therein was his power. This it was that made him so great amongst men.

Two hundred and seventy thousand miles he traveled, mostly on horseback, preached 16,500 sermons, ordained 4,000 preachers, and presided over 224 Annual Conferences, 29 being sessions of the South Carolina Conference.

## THE TRAIL OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER

The itinerant feature of Methodism became so prominent in the early days, that the preachers were often referred to as "land-strollers;" and their faithfulness in keeping engagements for services, regardless of weather, passed into the American proverb—"There is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers."

In those difficult but heroic days, the manner in which the Methodist circuit rider followed the trail of the pioneer settlers, over the mountains and into the very heart of the

great American wilderness, and on to the Pacific, is one of the most thrilling stories of religious adventure on record. Wherever the settler's cabin was to be found, there was heard the voice of these consecrated servants, and there was the beginning of a Methodist circuit. These men of heroic mold blazed the way; and when they called for recruits, their plea to the Conferences whence they came was that none be sent who were "afraid to die."

The Circuit Rider's trail across the continent is secure in the pages of human history, and his fervent evangelism will abide for the inspiration of future generations. His saddlebags have been laid aside, and find their place among the precious relics of the past. His horses have been superceded by motor-cars, which his successors of the present day must make use of as chariots in which, under the banner of the Cross they ride on to the conquest of the world in the name of Jesus. To no class of men is American civilization more indebted than to the itinerant Methodist preachers.

I repeat and emphasize this statement. I know that you have your hours of trial. At times of apparent defeat you feel like saying, "What's the use?" until with Asbury, you have prayed, "Lord, stand by me!" yet you should take courage from this historic fact. From the colonial days—from the days of Webb, and Pilmoor, and Barbara Heck, to this good hour, the pages of history attest the fact—to no class of men is American civilization more indebted than to the itinerant Methodist preachers.

Methodism has weathered many storms and conflicts, within as well as without. American Methodism has fought out its differences, both in the council chamber and on the field of battle that ran red with blood of brothers. There were spiritual and intellectual giants taking part in that high debate at the General Conference of 1844, whose very souls were tried as by fire. But the real problem which confronts the church today is not a vindication of either

side in that Controversy. The fixing of blame cannot be the prelude to a restored fraternity. During the sixty years of fraternal exchanges, we have been traveling slowly but surely toward that union of heart and mind which must precede organic union. The reasons for separation were sufficient for that day; but the time has come for Methodism to speak with a united voice. We should no longer build alter against alter. We have a common foe, and in the light of our present needs, we should go forward not in separate regiments, but under a united command. We have received a glorious heritage from the hands of the fathers. As the heirs of those who have gone before, we cannot be true to them, if we are satisfied with less than the spiritual conquests which our great *resources* and *opportunities* now make possible. Our potential powers are greater than ever before, and the need of the world is an imperative challenge. How shall we meet that challenge?

### EVANGELICAL TRUTH THE REMEDY

There is confusion on every hand. Nations, as well as individuals, are perplexed. The remedy for evils of our day is the same remedy that proved effectual during the Wesleyan Revival in England. From the days of the Apostles down to this time, there have been no victories won, no spiritual successes obtained, except by the faithful preaching of evangelical truth.

When the Wesleyan Revival began in England, Christianity seemed to lie as one dead. There was darkness everywhere, a darkness so dense that it might be felt; but four great reforms resulted—reforms which have blessed mankind. Witness the movement to abolish slavery, prison reform, the Sunday School and the Foreign Missionary enterprise. Wesley and his itinerants declared they had nothing new to proclaim. It was the old time religion, the religion of the Primitive church; as old as the Reformation, as old as Christianity.

For the confusion of the present time the same remedy is required. We must go back to first principles; for no other set of principles are of any value or use in bringing a confused world to order. The primary purpose of Gospel preaching is to make Christians, and Christians will put the spirit Christ into politics, government, economics and the social order.

Regeneration is the need of a sinful world, and the re-adjustment so much desired will follow. The emphasis must be placed upon the converting grace of God. The church has an adequate Christ to present. Such preaching will reach the hearts of men and women with a touch of tender love, and bring them to Christ.

The great social and reform movements on behalf of humanity, since the Apostolic days, have sprung out of the Christian faith. And while there have been faults and failures to be corrected, none have pointed them out with more frankness than churchmen themselves. Efforts to relieve human needs are good; but the spiritual needs of mankind are far greater and more urgent. Neither preachers nor laymen should make more of the "Social Gospel" than of the "Saving Gospel." Only God-controlled individuals can create a God-controlled society. The social solvent for the ills of this distressed world, is the Christian church with her adequate Christ and his Gospel. This will abolish war and establish peace. It requires higher courage to love your enemy, than to shoot him.

This Armistice day is the eighteenth since the end of the greatest war of all time. America entered that war believing that it was a "war to end war," and to make the world safe for Democracy. But so soon we see dictators making war. We hear of war and rumors of war. We now know that war is no cure for war. Only a redeemed world will be a world at peace.

Methodism must continue to proclaim the omnipotence of righteousness, to a confused world. It is the strongest force



in the world. The things of the spirit are mightier than the sword. The conversions of Wesley and Asbury, followed by their consecrated life service, become more decisive than battles and more determinative of human history than political revolutions.

### TOLERANCE AND COOPERATION

An impartial liberty of conscience is the natural right of all men. The greatest contribution of America to the theory and practice of government was, and is, *religious freedom*. No citizen is to be proscribed, unless he profess or renounce this or that religious opinion. We must keep America safe for religious differences. We must recognize that faithful Catholics, faithful Jews and faithful Protestants of all denominations, make good American citizens. All prejudice must be rooted out, and attitudes of appreciation, and habits of cooperation developed. This is no time for men's emotion to be stirred by bigotry. All creeds and faiths made their contribution to the American system. As we have seen, Methodism, whose Circuit Riders braved the hazards of the wilderness in their zeal to minister to the frontiersmen, made a contribution of vital importance. That it was "a distinct aid" to the founding fathers in establishing a young Republic, was recognized by Congress in 1919, when by joint resolution permission was given for the erection of an Equestrian Statue of Francis Asbury in the city of Washington.

### BI-CENTENNIAL OF METHODISM

In 1938-9 the Bi-Centennial of Methodism will be observed. The 12,000,000 sons and daughters of Wesley throughout the world are already thinking and planning for proper observance of the 200th anniversary of his conversion and the formation of the first society of a few members. It will be made the occasion of rekindling Revival fires on the alter.

At the time of the Centennial celebration of 1838-9 there were 1,171,000 Methodists. No other denomination in the history of the Christian church has grown so rapidly. The rise and progress of Methodism has been the marvel of church historians. Surely it has met the real needs of human life, individual and social; else it would long since have been weighed in the balance and found wanting. Every institution is subjected to the acid test of being useful. The early Methodists recovered the lost sense of the presence and power of God and had the courage to pioneer.

### ORGANIC UNION

In the midst of the confusion and complexity of our modern times there is need for the unification of the militant forces of Methodism for a unified presentation of its message to a distressed world.

In Britain, where Methodism was born, its once divided forces have been reunited under a common command, and together they are marching to the spiritual conquest of the Empire. In America, let us make the union of our hearts and minds the question of the hour, while waiting patiently for that near tomorrow, when there will be one Methodism for mankind. Then will be fulfilled the dream of its founder, when about a month before his death, he wrote to a friend—"Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men that the Methodists are one people in all the world and that it is their determination to continue so."

### AT THE CROSS-ROADS

It is sometimes said that the Methodist Church is at the cross-roads. Shall it turn to the right or to the left—or march straight forward? How shall it meet the surging tide of materialism, the new paganism, the breaking down of the Lord's Day, the multiplied forces of sin and wickedness in our modern world? Our answer is that the chal-

lenge will be met in the future as it has been in the past, by the faithful preaching of evangelical truth and the converting grace of God. No turning to the right nor to the left, but straight forward, true to its genius and history, will continue to be the only policy for the Methodist church.

To Methodists the power of God over evil is a living force, and while Methodism thus lives and believes she can say of the Christian Church, of which she is a vital part:

“Unshaken as eternal hills,  
Immovable she stands,  
A mountain that shall fill the earth,  
A house not made with hands.”

### WESLEY AND MODERN RELIGION

In the light of what we have seen of the rise and progress of Methodism, the question naturally arises as to how far and in what way does John Wesley influence the religion of these modern times. The main outlines come readily to view. In 1756, he said his aim was “to promote, so far as I am able, vital, practical religion; and by the grace of God to beget, preserve and increase the life of God in the souls of men.” To him the ministry is a ministry sent of God, but set apart by the Church; and the sacraments are means of grace. For our modern times he is a prophet calling man to repentance. He believed that the bias of human nature can be changed only by the grace of God plus discipline and education.

We may well turn to him who stood at the threshold of our modern world bringing with him old-world conceptions of Christianity and merging them with the intuitions of our newer time. His spiritual descendants have become a great Church, because like him, they undertake to do great things. The lesson of his life for the Church to-day is: Expect great things of God; attempt great things for God.

## APPENDIX

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### A RADIO ADDRESS AT WFBC, GREENVILLE, SOUTH CAROLINA, DECEMBER 6, 1936, IN THE SERIES SPONSORED BY THE SOUTH CAROLINA ECONOMIC COUNCIL METHODISM

Methodism had an humble origin. John Wesley wrote that the first rise of Methodism, so called, was in November, 1729, when four of them met together at Oxford; the second was at Savannah, Georgia, in April, 1736, when twenty or thirty persons met at his house; and the third was at London on May 1, 1739, when forty or fifty "of us agreed to meet together every Wednesday evening, in order to a free conversation, begun and ended with singing and prayer." This was the first of the weekly meetings organized after that noteworthy meeting on May 24, 1738, when Wesley felt his "heart strangely warmed."

Salvation through faith, and the Love of God for Fallen man, ran like a thread through all his preaching for more than fifty years.

In 1740 lay preachers were called into the field. He felt that the Church was made for man, and not man for the Church. Still he had no idea of founding a new church organization. This came about later as a natural development, necessity demanding it.

Methodist societies were organized throughout England under his supervision, and soon there began a revival of great depth and duration. For over fifty years he was one of the most tireless workers the world has ever known. His Journal furnishes a record of toil and achievement that has but few parallels in human history. To John Wesley belongs the distinction of being the founder of Methodism on two continents.

Such instruments God has raised up all along the ages. The admission of the human element is agreeable to the divine origin and authority of the Church. The circuit of John Wesley's power and influence is to the ends of our history. His spirit leads us on.

At his home at City Road, London, on March 2, 1791, full of years and of honors, he left the scene of his earthly labors, sustained by the simple faith of the Christian religion, and passed on in the hope of a glorious immortality. In his last conscious moments, he said: "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath" and "The best of all is, God is with us." Thus it was that the honored founder of Methodism quietly fell asleep, and passed from mortal view; but his spirit still lives, and will live, to inspire the Church militant until time shall be no more.

### FRANCIS ASBURY

The man who stands next to John Wesley as a founder and builder is Francis Asbury. These two names are immortal in Methodism and will remain transcendent in its history. One appertains to the Old World, and one to the New. They have become the symbols of that holiness and self-sacrifice which has made Methodism such an effective religious force in the world.

On October 27, 1771, Francis Asbury arrived at Philadelphia, and from that date the history of American Methodism really begins. His plan was "a circulation of preachers." He organized a body of Gospel rangers, going far and wide, preaching as they went. This was the origin of the itinerant system in America which is the distinguishing feature of the Methodist church to this day. He never returned to England. How he loved America is attested by the fact that when the war for American Independence broke, he alone remained; while the other English preachers of all denominations returned to England. When it

was suggested that he too should return, he gave a prompt answer that whatever others might choose to do, he was determined "to remain with the flock in America."

During the war the whole work of oversight by the vote of his American brethren was put under his care, and he enjoyed the same power over legislation as that enjoyed by Mr. Wesley in England. He was already a Bishop *De Facto*.

After the treaty of peace he became a naturalized American citizen. Immediately Mr. Wesley saw the necessity for a separate organization of the churches in America, befitting the spirit of the young Republic. Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury were the first Bishops; but Dr. Coke soon returned to England after the Christmas Conference (1784) at Baltimore; and barring a few short visits thereafter, the whole oversight of the Church was committed to Bishop Asbury. During 32 years he set the machinery of the Church to running smoothly. He traveled 270,000 miles, mostly on horseback, preached 16,500 sermons, ordained 4,000 preachers, presided over 224 Annual Conferences, 29 being sessions of the South Carolina Conference. Prodigious accomplishment!

He became one of the best-known as well as the best-loved men in America. In every village from Savannah to Boston; on every plantation; in the remotest western settlements his name was a household word. People of every rank and station attended on his ministry.

As a memorial of him an equestrian statue was erected in Washington, D. C., in 1919, pursuant to an Act of Congress which recited that his journeyings "from 1771 to 1816, greatly promoted the interests of patriotism, education, morality and religion and were a distinct aid to the American Republic."

## THE TRAIL OF THE CIRCUIT RIDER

The itinerant feature of Methodism became so prominent in the early days, that the preachers were often referred to as "land-strollers;" and their faithfulness in keeping engagements for services, regardless of weather, passed into the American proverb—"There is nothing out today but crows and Methodist preachers."

In those difficult but heroic days the manner in which the Methodist circuit rider followed the trail of the pioneer settlers over the mountains and into the very heart of the great American wilderness and on to the Pacific is one of the most thrilling stories of religious adventure on record. Wherever the settler's cabin was to be found, there was heard the voice of those consecrated servants, and there was the beginning of a Methodist circuit. These men of heroic mold blazed the way; and when they called for recruits, their plea to the Conferences whence they came was that none be sent who were "afraid to die."

From the colonial days to this good hour, the pages of history attest the fact that to no class of men is American civilization more indebted than to the itinerant Methodist preachers.

The great social and reform movements since the Apostolic days have sprung out of the Christian faith. The social solvent for the ills of this distressed world today is the Christian Church with her adequate Christ and His Gospel.

The things of the Spirit are mightier than the sword. The conversions of Wesley and Asbury followed by their consecrated life service, became more decisive than battles and more determinative of human history than political revolutions.

Historians agree that the Wesleyan revival did more for England than statesmen in the cabinet or generals in the field. When the Revival began Christianity seemed to lie

as one dead. There was darkness everywhere, a darkness so dense that it might be felt; but four great reforms resulted, reforms which have blessed mankind.

In 1938-9 the Bi-Centennial of Methodism will be celebrated. It will be made the occasion of rekindling revival fires on the altar by the 12,000,000 sons and daughters of Wesley throughout the world. The time has come for Methodism to speak with a united voice. We are in the world and of the world. The radio and other modern inventions have placed us there whether we wish to be or not. Literally what we say and what we do, we say and do before "all Israel and before the sun."

As the heirs of those who have gone before, we cannot be true to them, if we are satisfied with less than the spiritual conquests which our great resources and opportunities now make possible. Our potential powers are greater than ever before, and the need of the world is an imperative challenge.

Methodism must continue to proclaim the omnipotence of righteousness to a confused world. While Methodism thus lives and believes she can say of the Christian Church, of which she is a vital part:

"Unshaken as eternal hills,  
Immovable she stands,  
A mountain that shall fill the earth,  
A house not made with hands."