THE MARCH OF METHODISM

FROM EPWORTH AROUND THE GLOBE

JAMES McGEE

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OUTLINES OF THE HISTORY, DOCTRINE, AND POLITY OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

BY JAMES McGEE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY

BISHOP JAMES N. FITZGERALD, LL.D.

President of the Epworth League

"Like a mighty army Moves the Church of God;
Brothers, we are treading Where the saints have trod;
We are not divided, All one body we,
One in hope and doctrine, One in charity"

NEW YORK: HUNT & EATON
CINCINNATI: CRANSTON & CURTS
1893

Electrotyped, printed, and bound by
HUNT & EATON,
150 Fifth Avenue, New York.

INTRODUCTION.

EVERY person, and particularly every Christian, should seek to become informed in regard to the Church. The first step in acquiring such information is the study of one's own branch of the Church; for the mastering of a single creed will lead to an understanding of many creeds. So the acquisition of full knowledge of the doctrines, polity, and history of Methodism implies the acquisition of wide knowledge of the doctrines, polity, and history of other branches of the Christian Church.

For a century and a half Methodism has stood before the world. She has gladly and boldly proclaimed her doctrines and polity. Her history has been written with great particularity, and now fills many volumes, which are being read and studied by those who have leisure and taste for such exercise. But, valuable as this voluminous history is, there has been an urgent demand for another—a book from which the busiest man may gain accurate information concerning the rise and progress of Methodism. One of the calls of the age is for *condensation*. Comparatively few are able to make

satisfactory response. "Boiling down" is a tedious and difficult work. Nevertheless the writer of this little volume, Mr. James McGee, an honored layman, has been moved to undertake it. Proof of the skill and success with which he has performed it may be seen in nearly every line that he has written. Writer and reader may well be congratulated.

The unique manner in which the author brings us to the beginning of the "March" is worthy of special notice. By joining link to link he runs a chain from the time of Christ to the time of Wesley, and thence to our own time. He shows almost at a glance all of the developments of Methodism, even the latest—the Epworth League.

From Epworth Rectory to Epworth League the march of Methodism has been victorious and grand. The conflicts have been many and severe, but the conquests have been glorious. The story as now recited will be an inspiration to multitudes who are longing to live holy lives, and to influence their fellows to "flee from the wrath to come."

The members of the Holy Club little dreamed of the results that were to flow from the assembling of themselves together. Organization into classes, societies and Conferences seemed imperative; general rules became necessary; statement of doctrine was required; lay preaching, itinerancy, and episcopacy were emergent; an alliance was demanded between Church and school;

so one reached forth from Kingswood, and the other from Horse Fair. Thus their hands were clasped, and from Bristol they have marched together to the four quarters of the globe.

From this book the one who has "a spare moment only now and then" may gather that which will serve him well whenever inquiry may be made concerning any essential feature of the subject. Henceforth it will be reasonable to expect every young Methodist, and especially every Epworth Leaguer, to be familiar with at least the outlines of Methodist history, and to be able to trace its connection with the centuries that preceded it. And when *all* the centuries shall have passed may it be seen that the volume which is now introduced has enlightened multitudes of readers, and been the means of turning many to righteousness.

J. N. FitzGerald.

September 20, 1892.

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THE MARCH OF METHODISM.

I.

HISTORICAL SETTING.

1. **Preliminary.**—When our Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, was about to leave this world and ascend to the Father he gave this parting command to his disciples: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark xvi, 15); and it is added, "they went forth, and preached everywhere" (Mark xvi, 20). The day of Pentecost found the disciples at Jerusalem numbering about one hundred and twenty (Acts i, 15), and on that memorable occasion "there were added unto them about three thousand souls;" "and the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts ii, 41, 47). "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women" (Acts v, 14). The holy lives and earnest preaching of these early disciples brought upon them cruel persecution. Stephen was stoned to death and became the first martyr of the followers of Jesus (Acts vii, 57–60). Saul of Tarsus, who stood by and consented to the death of Stephen, was soon found leading in the attempt to destroy the infant Church. "He made havoc of the church, entering into

every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts viii, 3). Thus persecuted they were scattered, but "they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts viii, 4). The sudden and miraculous conversion of Saul (afterward known as Paul, see Acts ix) brought temporary relief to the little band. "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified; and walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied" (Acts ix, 31). The followers of Jesus now became known as "Christians," having been first called by this name at Antioch (Acts xi, 26). With increase of numbers and of separate congregations it soon became necessary to give attention to organization, methods of work, and formulated creeds.

2. Primitive Organization.—There is no record in the New Testament that our Lord Jesus Christ left any specific instructions as to church government. That the authority of the apostles was recognized during their lifetime may be inferred from Acts xv, 22–29. The growth of the Church soon made necessary the appointment of other officers; thus were ordained deacons and elders or bishops. "That the order of deacons is so seldom expressly named is, perhaps, owing to the circumstance that the title of presbyter, or elder, is sometimes used as a general appellation for church officers, including the inferior order of deacons, as it sometimes did the higher office of the apostles. . . . The only bishops mentioned in the New Testament were simple presbyters." (Jacob, *Ecclesiastical Polity of the New Testament.*)

3. Primitive Methods.—From the second chapter of Acts, verses 41, 47, we get a glimpse of the simplicity of the early Christian life. Meeting from house to house, holding *agapæ*, or love feasts, partaking frequently of "the Lord's Supper," praying and giving—these were the methods which were blessed of the Lord in daily additions to the Church. Justin, writing about the middle of the second century, confirms the New Testament record. He says: "On the day which is called Sunday there is an assembly in the same place of all who live in cities or in country districts; the records of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read as long as we have time. . . . The president verbally instructs and exhorts us to the imitation of these excellent things; then we altogether rise and offer up our prayers; . . . when we have concluded our prayer bread is brought and wine and water; and the president in like manner offers up prayers and thanksgivings with all his strength, and the people give their assent by saying 'Amen;' and there is a distribution and partaking by everyone of the eucharistic elements, and to those who are not present they are sent by the hands of the deacons; and such as are in prosperous circumstances, and wish to do so, give what they will, each according to his choice; and what is collected is placed in the hands of the president, who assists the orphans and widows and such as through sickness, or any other cause, are in want; and to those who are in bonds, and to strangers from afar, and, in a word, to all who are in need, he is a protector." (G. P. Fisher, *The Beginnings of Christianity.*)

4. Primitive Creed.—There was a single overmas-

tering theme in the minds of the early evangelists; they preached "Jesus, and the resurrection" (Acts xvii, 18). "The first express confession of faith is the testimony of Peter, that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. The next is the trinitarian baptismal formula. Out of this gradually grew the so-called Apostles' Creed, which is also trinitarian in structure, but gives the confession of Christ the central and largest place. Though not traceable in its present shape above the fourth century, and found in the second and third in different longer or shorter forms, it is in substance altogether apostolic, and exhibits an incomparable summary of the leading facts in the revelation of the triune God from the creation of the world to the resurrection of the body." (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church.*)

5. Persecution.—For three hundred years the Church was persecuted, but flourished amid sword and flame. There are ten several persecutions noted by historians covering the period from the reign of Nero to that of Diocletian. "The human imagination was, indeed, almost exhausted in inventing a variety of tortures. Some were impaled alive; some had their limbs broken, and in that condition were left to expire; some were roasted by slow fires; and some suspended by their feet with their heads downward, and, a fire being placed under them, were suffocated by the smoke. The few who were not capitally punished had their limbs and their features mutilated." (See McClintock and Strong's *Encyclopædia*, article "Persecutions of Christians.")

6. Decline of True Religion.—The Edict of Tol-

eration issued by Constantine the Great in 313 put an end to persecution, but paved the way for the practical union of Church and State. Two great ecclesiastical bodies were gradually developed—the Eastern, with its patriarch at Constantinople; the Western, with its pope at Rome, both claiming apostolic succession for their bishops, and both countenancing gross errors in doctrine and usage. Rome, as the most powerful city in the world, sought for mastery in the Church as in temporal affairs. The bishops of the different parts of the empire yielded to the bishop of Rome, who was not slow to usurp power. "The Western bishops favored this encroachment of the Roman pastors, either from jealousy of the Eastern bishops or because they preferred submitting to the supremacy of a pope rather than to the domination of a temporal power. On the other hand, the theological sects that distracted the East strove, each for itself, to interest Rome in its favor; they looked for victory in the support of the principal Church of the West. Rome carefully registered these applications and intercessions, and smiled to see all nations voluntarily throwing themselves into her arms. She neglected no opportunity of increasing and extending her power. The praises and flattery, the exaggerated compliments and consultations of other Churches, became in her eyes and in her hands the titles and documents of her authority." (D'Aubigné, *History of the Reformation.*) The Eastern Church was weakened by the advance of Mohammedanism, but the Roman Church was united and became dominant in the West. With increase of wealth and temporal power came decline in religious life, and the Dark Ages ensued.

7. Protest, Persecution, Reformation.—The lapse of the Roman Church into worldliness and error called forth earnest protests from many in whom the true spirit of Christianity still existed; of these the Waldenses, Albigenses, and Hussites were noble examples. Fierce persecutions followed. Martin Luther, born in 1483, was the chosen instrument in the hands of God for inaugurating a revival of true religion, which resulted in the formation of a Protestant Church, first in Germany and subsequently in England—a body of believers protesting against the errors and worldliness of Rome and insisting on a vital piety, which found its expression in the Bible statement, "The just shall live by faith."

8. Christianity in England.—The Roman Church obtained but limited power in England up to the end of the sixth century, when, under Pope Gregory I, Augustine was sent to convert those not already adherents of Christianity. "Gregory had noted the white bodies, the fair faces, the golden hair of some youths who stood bound in the market-place of Rome. 'From what country do these slaves come?' he asked the traders who brought them. 'They are English, Angles,' the slave-dealers answered. The deacon's pity veiled itself in poetic humor. 'Not Angles, but Angels,' he said, 'with faces so Angel-like! From what country come they?' 'They come,' said the merchant, 'from Deira.' 'De ira,' was the untranslatable reply; 'aye, plucked from God's ire and called to Christ's mercy! And what is the name of their king?' 'Ælla,' they told him; and Gregory seized on the words as of good omen. 'Alleluia shall be sung in Ælla's

land!' he cried, and passed on, musing how the angel faces should be brought to sing it. . . . After cautious negotiations with the rulers of Gaul he sent a Roman abbot, Augustine, at the head of a band of monks, to preach the Gospel to the English people. . . . The band of monks entered Canterbury bearing before them a silver cross with a picture of Christ, and singing in concert the litany of their Church. 'Turn from this city, Lord,' they sang, 'thine anger and wrath, and turn it from thy holy house, for we have sinned.' And then in strange contrast came the jubilant cry of the older Hebrew worship, the cry which Gregory had wrested in prophetic earnestness from the name of the Yorkshire king in the Roman market-place, 'Alleluia!'" (Green, *Short History of the English People.*) In the latter part of the seventh century the Roman and British Christians were united in one body under Theodore, whom the pope had sent over in 668 to be primate of England. Then began a series of struggles between the civil and religious power for supremacy. King John came to the throne in 1199. In 1205 he was drawn into a controversy with Pope Innocent III regarding the appointment of an archbishop to the see of Canterbury. Stubbornly refusing, at first, to yield to the demands of the pope, he, nevertheless, in 1213 made abject submission to the Roman see, and England from that time up to the accession of Henry VIII, in 1509, was under the domination of Rome. Subsequently, under different pretexts, Parliament largely abridged the power of the pope, and finally, in 1534, declared Henry "on earth supreme head of the Church of England." Thus was the way prepared for Protestantism. Under

Queen Mary, in 1553, there was a Catholic reaction and much persecution, but at her death, in 1558, Elizabeth became queen, and Protestantism again became the established religion. "From the time of Henry VIII to the time of Charles I the Church had been looked upon primarily as an instrument for securing by moral and religious influences the social and political ends of the state. Under the commonwealth the state, in its turn, was regarded primarily as an instrument for securing through its political and social influences the moral and religious ends of the Church." (*Green.*) The restoration under Charles II, while confirming the State Church as Protestant, nevertheless brought severe punishment and suffering for the "Nonconformists" to the state religion. The wars and intrigues during the subsequent reigns down to the time of George II gave but little opportunity for the growth and development of a pure Church. "There was a revolt against religion and against churches in both the extremes of English society." But we are now to observe the advent of a new reformation, "which changed after a time the whole tone of English society."

II.

PROVIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

1. Demanded by the Times.—The conflict between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism on the one hand, and between the Church and the State on the other, had reached a climax in a state religion which though nominally Protestant was shorn of all spiritual power. "Never has century risen on Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne, and which reached its misty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn." Acts of Parliament had deprived Dissenters of preferment and restricted their right to worship and to teach. Infidelity was rife. The court was corrupt. Public morals were at a low ebb. The Sabbath was profaned. The clergy were ignorant. The Church of England was full of dissension and intolerance. As to the teachings of the pulpit the historian declares: "The vicarious atonement of Christ, the necessity to salvation of a new birth, of faith, of the constant and sustaining action of the divine Spirit upon the believer's soul, are doctrines which in the eyes of the modern evangelical constitute at once the most vital and the most influential portions of Christianity; but they are doctrines which, during the greater part of the eighteenth century, were seldom heard from a Church of England pulpit." (Lecky,

England in the Eighteenth Century.) "Of the prominent statesmen of the time the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives. Drunkenness and foul talk were thought no discredit. Purity and fidelity to the marriage vow were sneered out of fashion. At the other end of the social scale lay the masses of the poor. They were ignorant and brutal to a degree which it is hard to conceive, for the increase of population which followed on the growth of towns and the development of commerce had been met by no effort for their religious or educational improvement. Schools there were none, save the grammar schools of Edward and Elizabeth, and some newly established 'circulating schools' in Wales, for religious education. The rural peasantry, who were fast being reduced to pauperism by the abuse of the poor laws, were left without much moral or religious training of any sort. Within the town things were worse. The criminal class gathered boldness and numbers in the face of ruthless laws which only testified to the terror of society, laws which made it a capital crime to cut down a cherry tree and which strung up twenty young thieves of a morning in front of Newgate, while the introduction of gin gave a new impetus to drunkenness. In the streets of London, at one time, ginshops invited every passer-by to get drunk for a penny or dead drunk for twopence." (*Green.*)

2. The Movement Begun.—It was at this time of spiritual darkness and dismay that Methodism came to shed abroad the pure light of the Gospel, to revive primitive Christianity, to bring hope and comfort to

the despairing, and infuse new life and courage into the hearts of the faithful. "England remained at heart religious. In the middle class the old Puritan spirit lived on unchanged."

3. The Holy Club.—It was at Oxford, in 1729, that Methodism had its birth. It had no other significance at first than that of the earnest purpose of several students to devote themselves to lives of piety and usefulness. To secure these results they gave themselves up to the study of the Scriptures and to prayer. They partook of the Lord's Supper weekly and fasted twice a week. They visited the sick in their homes and engaged in instructing the prisoners once or twice a week. These faithful labors secured for the little band the sneers of their companions. They were styled "Holy Club," "Bible Bigots," and "Sacramentarians." Soon was added, because of their methodical habits, the epithet "Methodists," which, though given in derision, was finally accepted as a worthy name for a great branch of the Christian Church. The names of the first members of the "Holy Club" are cherished with reverence. They are "Mr. John Wesley, who was Fellow of Lincoln College; his brother Charles, student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, commoner of Christ Church, the son of an Irish gentleman; and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College." Later on their numbers increased, and in 1735 there was added to them Mr. George Whitefield, "the prince of preachers—a glorious emblem of the apocalyptic angel flying through the midst of heaven with the good tidings of great joy unto all people." (Tyerman, *Life and Times of John Wesley.*)

4. Epworth Rectory.—Dear to the heart of all

loyal Methodists is the name "Epworth." It was a happy thought which gave to our Hymnal and our League the name of the rectory made sacred by the consecrated labors of Samuel Wesley; the home made dear by the wise and loving administration of Susannah Wesley; the birthplace of John and Charles; the center from which radiated those blessed influences which molded their lives and conferred lasting benefits on the Church and the world. "In the old parish in Epworth, in Lincolnshire, England, lived the earnest, eccentric, and scholarly father, and the gifted, wise, and consecrated mother of the illustrious John and Charles Wesley. The story of Samuel Wesley's ministry at Epworth, extending over a period of thirty-nine years—from 1696 to 1735—is alive with interest. The people whom he served were, for the most part, poor, ignorant, coarse, and cruel. Those were days of political strife, when missiles and firebrands were used as arguments. The godly rector, unflinching in his devotion to conviction, paid the price of his fidelity. In poverty most oppressive, in conflicts most bitter, in labors most abundant, did the old rectory of Epworth hold and train the remarkable family from which were to come forth two of the most widely known and most successful workers in the Church of God—the one a preacher and bishop, the other a writer of sacred hymns. By sermon and song they two went forth to make known to the world the exceeding glory and the saving power of the Lord Jesus, to defend by Scripture the great doctrines of redemption, and by persuasive song to win the hearts of men from sin to righteousness, from self to Christ. However grand the work and its results we must not forget

that the beginnings and the most valuable preparations were at Epworth, where Samuel Wesley studied and prayed and served, and where Susannah Wesley trained her children, counseled her husband, instructed their parishioners, and walked with God. Before Oxford was Epworth. Before Bristol and City Road Chapel was Epworth." (Bishop J. H. Vincent, *Introduction to Epworth Hymnal.*) As we have seen, the life at the rectory was one of toil and privation. Nineteen children were born to these godly parents, "most of whom lived to be educated, and ten came to man and woman's estate. Her son John mentions the calm serenity with which his mother transacted business, wrote letters, and conversed, surrounded by her thirteen children." (Clarke, *Wesley Family.*) We catch glimpses of the methods employed in the Epworth Rectory in a letter written from thence by Mrs. Wesley to her son, July 24, 1732: "According to your desire I have collected the principal rules I observed in educating my family. The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth. . . . When turned a year old they were taught to fear the rod and cry softly. . . . As soon as they were grown pretty strong they were confined to three meals a day. . . . . They were never suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family. . . . At seven the maid washed them, and, beginning with the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight, at which time she left them in their several rooms awake. . . . Our children were taught, as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer. . . . They were early made to distinguish

the Sabbaths from other days. . . . They were soon taught to be still at family prayers. . . . They were made to understand they might have nothing they cried for. . . . There were several by-laws observed among us: 1. Whoever was charged with a fault, of which they were guilty, if they would ingenuously confess it, and promise to amend, should not be beaten. 2. No sinful action, as lying, etc., should ever pass unpunished. 3. No child should be ever chided or beat twice for the same fault. 4. Every act of obedience should be commended and frequently rewarded. 5. Every act of obedience, though the performance was not well, should be kindly accepted, and the child with sweetness directed how to do better. 6. None suffered to invade the property of another in the smallest matter. 7. Promises be strictly observed. . . a gift once bestowed be not resumed, unless it were conditional, and the condition not performed. 8. No girl be taught to work till she can read very well, and then she be kept to her work with the same application, and for the same time that she was held to in reading." The education of the children began when they were five years old, and was superintended chiefly by Mrs. Wesley. She never lost sight of her children when they left the home, and they were accustomed to consult her on all matters of interest. "Into all situations she followed them with her prayers and counsels; and her sons, even when at the university, found the utility of her wise and parental instruction. They proposed to her all their doubts and consulted her in all difficulties." (*Clarke.*)

5. The Wesley Family.—*John Wesley*, the grandfather of John and Charles, was vicar of Winterbourn,

Whitechurch, Dorsetshire, and was much persecuted because of his opposition to the required uniformity to the state Church. The Act of Uniformity passed in the reign of Charles II, in 1662, led to his dismissal from Whitechurch. He said that he could not take the necessary oath because it "would be juggling with God, with the king, and with conscience." "He was often disturbed, several times apprehended, and four times imprisoned." John Wesley left two sons, Matthew and Samuel, the latter the father of John and Charles.

Samuel Wesley was born at Whitechurch, in the year 1666. His early education was among the Dissenters. At the age of about sixteen, as the result of some reading and debate, he formed a resolution to renounce the Dissenters and attach himself to the Established Church. He therefore set out on foot to Oxford, and entered himself at Exeter College. He entered as a servitor and helped to support himself with his pen during the next five years, graduating in 1688. In 1689 he married Susannah, daughter of Dr. Samuel Annesley, an eminent Nonconformist divine. In 1696 he was appointed to the living of Epworth in Lincolnshire, where he died in 1735. He was a prolific writer of both prose and poetry.

Susannah Wesley was not less remarkable than her husband. She was a woman of strong intellectual powers, and was at the same time a model housekeeper. Learning, skill, tact, and patience were all brought to bear in rearing a large family and preparing them for usefulness in life. She was as pious as learned. "If," she exclaims in one of her evening meditations, "if

comparatively to despise and undervalue all the world contains which is esteemed great, fair, or good; if earnestly and constantly to desire Thee, thy favor, thy acceptance, thyself, rather than any or all things thou hast created, be to love thee, I do love thee." (Moore, *Life of Wesley.*)

6. Three Great Leaders.—The Methodist movement was providentially furnished at its very beginning with an organizer, a poet, and an orator. John Wesley was able to move great masses of people with his solemn and earnest preaching, but it was to his talent to organize and conserve that the Methodist Church owed its form and permanence. Charles Wesley added to a talent for preaching the gift of writing sacred song, and has bequeathed to the Church a legacy of unsurpassed hymnology. Whitefield outranked both as an orator, and wherever he went drew together great crowds of eager listeners who were charmed by his eloquence. These three men stand out conspicuously as the great figures in the religious awakening which so soon assumed vast proportions.

7. John Wesley was born at Epworth on the 17th of June, 1703, old style. Two events which occurred in his early years seemed to influence him in his after life —one, the fire at the rectory; and the other, the strange noises which were heard there. The rectory was burned when he was in his sixth year. John was providentially rescued from the blazing building, and he was early impressed with the sense of a special mission in the world. His mother, too, was impelled to consecrate him specially to God. She writes, "I do intend to be more particularly careful of the soul of this

child that thou hast so mercifully provided for." When ten and a half years old John left home and entered the Charter House School at London. He entered as "the poor child of an impoverished parish priest, and had to endure wrongs and insults neither few nor small." When he left he had attained a high reputation for scholarship, but it is also said that he had lost the religion which had marked his character from the days of his infancy. It was while he was at the Charter House that there were heard at the rectory those mysterious noises which baffled all attempts at discovering their origin. Like similar disturbances in later years they gave rise to a multitude of theories as to their cause. John took great pains to learn the minute particulars of these disturbances. "We have little doubt that the Epworth noises deepened and most powerfully increased Wesley's convictions of the existence of an unseen world; and in this way exercised an important influence on the whole of his future life." (*Tyerman.*) Wesley has been criticised for his credulity in this and other matters. Stevens (*History of Methodism*) says: "When it is remembered that Wesley's age was one of general skepticism among thinkers, we cannot be surprised if he revolted, in his great work, to the opposite extreme, and the error was certainly on the best side. Credulity might injure his work, but skepticism would have ruined it, or rather would have rendered it impossible." At the age of sixteen years he was admitted to Christ Church College, Oxford. Here, as at the Charter House, he maintained a high reputation for scholarship. His religion, however, was still only of a formal character. It was in 1725 that the thought of

taking holy orders was pressed upon him. His father counseled delay. His mother writes: "I approve the disposition of your mind, and think the sooner you are a deacon the better." Soon his father joined with his mother in urging him to seek holy orders without delay. He now began in earnest to seek to lead a new life. He read devotional books and sought light on many difficult questions. Finally he was ordained deacon by Dr. Potter, Bishop of Oxford, in September, 1725. In March, 1726, he was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, his connection with which lasted for more than a quarter of a century. "Sometime Fellow of Lincoln College" is the designation by which he describes himself in the title-page of his works. His father, owing to increasing years, sought a curate to aid him in his work at Epworth and Wroote. John was urged to accept the position, which he did, and from the summer of 1727 to the autumn of 1729 was engaged in parochial work, having been ordained priest in 1728. Although "he took some pains with this people," and his father speaks of "the dear love they bore him," yet he does not appear to have been in his element. In the autumn of 1729 he was urged to return to Lincoln College, which he did, and resumed his office of Greek lecturer. On his return he found that his brother Charles and a few others had joined together for spiritual and intellectual improvement; they soon recognized in John a natural leader, and "accordingly, in John Wesley's rooms at Lincoln College, which tradition points out as the first-floor rooms on the south or right-hand side of the first quadrangle, shaded by the famous Lincoln vine, and opposite the clock tower,

in November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford began to spend some evenings together in reading chiefly the Greek Testament." (Overton, *John Wesley.*) [For the names of these four, see page 15.] The Holy Club continued to receive accessions. Whitefield joined them in 1735. Meanwhile, the father, approaching his end, had entreated John to become his successor at Epworth. The appeal touched the son's heart, but he was persistent in the thought that other work demanded his attention. Samuel Wesley died April 25, 1735. In the autumn of the same year John and Charles, together with Ingham and Delamotte, embarked for Georgia to go as missionaries to the American aborigines. On the same vessel were twenty-six German Moravians, with their bishop, David Netschman. From these simple-minded and deeply pious Christians the Wesleys learned many valuable lessons. A perilous storm arising, John Wesley observed that the Moravians gave no evidence of fear, while the English passengers were crying with alarm. He found that he was himself a subject of fear, and endeavored to lay the lesson to heart. The mission to Georgia was not a success. Rules and ceremonies and the rites of the Church were enforced, but saving faith was not taught. John became involved in some disputes with the authorities, and February, 1738, found him and Charles again in England. He writes bitter things against himself in his diary, declaring that "My whole heart is altogether corrupt and abominable, and consequently my whole life, seeing it cannot be that an evil tree should bring forth good fruit." "He had reached all other conditions of the Christian life; the faith to appropriate to himself

the promises and consolations of the Gospel was still lacking. . . . But the light was dawning, and the morning was at hand. The Moravians were again to meet him in London." (Stevens, *History of Methodism.*)

8. Charles Wesley, the eighteenth child and youngest son of Samuel and Susannah Wesley, was born at Epworth, December 18, 1707, old style. At five years of age he entered his mother's school; at eight he was enrolled at Westminster school. In 1721 he had made such progress in his studies that he was admitted as king's scholar of St. Peter's College, Westminster. In 1726 he was elected to Christ Church College, Oxford. At the age of twenty-one he became tutor in the college. To him was first applied the epithet "Methodist" because of the strict and studious lives led by himself and associates. In 1735, previous to his departure for Georgia, he was ordained deacon by Bishop Potter, and priest the next Sabbath after by Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London. "He had much warmth of affection and tenderness of sympathy; so that his friendship was felt to be of inestimable value." His views were ascetic. He was a diligent and enthusiastic student of the Bible. His aim was to turn men from sin. Of the Methodist movement which was now at hand he was to be one of the most zealous apostles and the poet-theologian of the great revival.

9. George Whitefield.—The early life of Whitefield is full of interest. His father kept the Bell Inn in the city of Gloucester, where George was born December 16, 1714, old style. When George was two years old his father died. "About the tenth year of my age," George writes in his autobiography, "it

pleased God to permit my mother to marry a second time. It proved what the world would call an unhappy match as for temporals, but God overruled it for good." At twelve years of age he was placed at school. At fifteen, "my mother's circumstances being much on the decline, and being tractable that way, I from time to time began to assist her occasionally in the public-house, till at length I put on my blue apron and my snuffers, washed mops, cleaned rooms, and, in a word, became professed and common drawer for nigh a year and a half." In his eighteenth year, through the intercession of friends, he was enabled to enter Pembroke College, Oxford, as a servitor. Here he spent four years, from 1732 to 1736. These were remarkable years in the development of his religious character and in the preparation for his life work. In his autobiography he charges himself with many gross sins, even in his early youth. He nevertheless seemed at times to have earnest desires for a better life. At college there was the same conflict between his lower and better nature. He set about to reform himself by attention to external duties. Again he would relapse. He spent whole nights upon his bed groaning under the weight of his sins. Having noticed and admired the lives of the "Methodists" at Christ Church College he found means of communicating with Charles Wesley, who, besides much good advice, gave him a book entitled *The Life of God in the Soul of Man.* This revealed to him that "true religion was a union of the soul with God, and Christ formed within us;" and he thus learned of the necessity of a new birth. Again, however, he resorted to external duties as the means of securing the

peace of soul he so much desired. At the season of Lent, in 1735, he gave himself up to such abstinence and painful exercise that he was taken with a fit of sickness which lasted about seven weeks. He now records, "After having undergone innumerable buffetings of Satan, and many months of inexpressible trials by day and night under the spirit of bondage, God was pleased at length to remove the heavy load, to enable me to lay hold on his dear Son by a living faith, and, by giving me the spirit of adoption, to seal me, as I humbly hope, even to the day of everlasting redemption." This was about seven weeks after Easter, and it is the point from which he dates his conversion. He now became a leading spirit among the "Methodists." It was not until three years later that John and Charles Wesley entered into the same happy experience. Whitefield was admitted to holy orders June 20, 1736, and writes, "When the bishop laid his hand upon me I gave myself up to be a martyr for Him who hung upon the cross for me." His first sermon gave evidence of the great power he was soon to exercise upon great masses of people in the preaching of the word. He writes, "As I proceeded I perceived the fire kindled, till at last, though so young, and amidst a crowd who knew me in my childish days, I trust I was enabled to speak with some degree of gospel authority."

The lives of these three great leaders are now merged in the movement providentially committed to them, the course of which we are to follow.

III.

LAYING FOUNDATIONS.

1. Assurance of Faith.—But little progress toward definite results was attained until the three great leaders had entered into that religious experience which gave them courage to preach boldly the Gospel of Christ as "the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Whitefield writes of his conversion, which occurred in 1735, when he was twenty years of age, "I know the place; it may perhaps be superstition, but whenever I go to Oxford I cannot help running to the spot where Jesus Christ first revealed himself to me and gave me the new birth. . . . O what a ray of divine life did then break in upon my soul!" Soon after his ordination we find him preaching on the necessity of the new birth from the text, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." The Wesleys returned from Georgia in February of 1738, and soon met with Peter Böhler, the Moravian, who had been ordained for the work of the ministry by Count Zinzendorf. Böhler's teachings convinced them "that true faith in Christ was inseparably attended by (1) dominion over sin, and (2) constant peace arising from a sense of forgiveness." Charles Wesley found this peace of soul on Whitsunday, May 21, 1738. He was entertained during a period of sickness at the house of a pious mechanic by the name of Bray. Here it was that he was led into the

way of faith. He says, "I felt a violent opposition and reluctance to believe; yet still the Spirit of God strove with my own and the evil spirit, till, by degrees, he chased away the darkness of my unbelief. I now found myself at peace with God, and rejoiced in hope of loving Christ." John Wesley, after much doubt and misgiving, experienced this great blessing on May 24, and writes, "I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death, and I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart." Eighteen days after he preached his celebrated sermon from the text, "By grace are ye saved through faith," and showed that such a faith results in salvation (1) from the guilt of all past sin; (2) from servile fear; (3) from the power of sin.

2. Societies Formed.—"Religious Societies" had existed for about fifty years in many places throughout the kingdom. They met to pray, sing psalms, read the Scriptures, and to reprove, exhort, and edify one another. With these Societies Whitefield and the Wesleys were accustomed to meet and to read and expound the Scriptures. In London, May, 1738, a Moravian Society was formed in Fetter Lane under the direction of Peter Böhler, to which the Wesleys were attached. This was at first a place of great spiritual profit, but in 1740 the Methodists were obliged to withdraw by reason of false doctrines which had been introduced. The origin of the Methodist Societies is thus given by Wesley: "In the latter end of the year 1739 eight or

ten persons came to me in London who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. . . . I appointed a day when they might all come together, which, from thenceforward, they did every Thursday in the evening. . . . This was the rise of the United Society, first in London and then in other places." Again he writes: "The first evening about twelve persons came; the next, thirty or forty. When they were increased to about a hundred I took down their names and places of abode, intending as often as it was convenient to call upon them at their houses. Thus without any previous plan began the Methodist Society in England—a company of people associated together to help each other to work out their own salvation." In February, 1739, Whitefield began outdoor preaching in Kingswood, Bristol, a mining center inhabited by a lawless and brutal class of people. Here was started a school, the responsibility for which soon rested on John Wesley. Still later Wesley took possession of a piece of ground in the Horse Fair, Bristol, where was erected the first Methodist chapel. In November of the same year he preached to five thousand people at a place called the Foundry, near Moorfields, London. Subsequently ground was purchased and a place of worship erected which was the first Methodist meeting house in London. It accommodated about fifteen hundred people, was without pews, and all the benches were alike for rich and poor. The men and women sat apart. The band room was behind the chapel; here the classes met; here in the winter the five o'clock morning service was conducted; and here were held, at two o'clock, on Wednesdays and Fridays,

weekly meetings for prayer. The north end of the room was used for a school, and at the south end was the "Book Room" for the sale of Wesley's publications.

3. Peculiar Institutions.—It will be of interest now to note some of the peculiar institutions which were early adopted by the Methodist Societies, and most of which have been retained to the present day. First of all should be noted the "*General Rules of the United Societies,*" which were first printed in 1743. The Society is defined to be "no other than a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation." These rules, prepared for the early Methodist Societies, continue to be the standard of Methodist life and conduct, and are as follows:

"There is only one condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies—'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.' But wherever this is really fixed in the soul it will be shown by its fruits.

"It is therefore expected of all who continue therein that they shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"First: By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind, especially that which is most generally practiced; such as,

"The taking of the name of God in vain.

"The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work therein or by buying or selling.

"Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors, or drinking them, unless in cases of extreme necessity.

"Slaveholding; buying or selling slaves.

"Fighting, quarreling, brawling, brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing; the using many words in buying or selling.

"The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty.

"The giving or taking things on usury—that is, unlawful interest.

"Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly speaking evil of magistrates or of ministers.

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

"Doing what we know is not for the glory of God, as:

"The putting on of gold and costly apparel.

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

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

"Softness and needless self-indulgence.

"Laying up treasure upon earth.

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

"It is expected of all who continue in these Societies that they shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"Second: By doing good; by being in every kind merciful after their power; as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as possible, to all men:

"To their bodies of the ability which God giveth, by

giving food to the hungry, by clothing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison:

"To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that 'we are not to do good unless *our hearts be free to it.*'

"By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith or groaning so to be; employing them preferably to others; buying one of another; helping each other in business; and so much the more because the world will love its own and them *only.*

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

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

"It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies that they shall continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

"Third: By attending upon all the ordinances of God; such are,

"The public worship of God;

"The ministry of the word, either read or expounded;

"The Supper of the Lord;

"Family and private prayer;

"Searching the Scriptures;

"Fasting or abstinence.

"These are the General Rules of our Societies; all

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

The Societies were divided into *Classes* and *Bands* The *Class* consisted at first of about twelve members with a leader, and had in view the double object of receiving the contributions of the members and providing for their spiritual instruction. The *Band* (since done away with) consisted of a smaller and more select number, having closer and more confidential relations to each other.

The *Love Feast*, which Wesley found among the Moravians, was an adaptation of the "Agapæ" of the primitive Church. "They met," says Wesley, "that they might 'eat bread' together as the ancient Christians did, 'with gladness and singleness of heart.' Our food is only a little plain cake and water, but we seldom return from them without being fed, not only with the 'meat which perisheth,' but with 'that which endureth to everlasting life.'"

The *Watchnight* service, established at Bristol in 1740, was intended to draw away the Kingswood colliers from the scenes of midnight dissipation at the ale houses. At first held monthly, it came finally to be

held only on the last night of the year. Preaching, prayer, and song filled the hours till the new year was ushered in.

Itinerant preachers soon became a necessity. Societies increased more rapidly than preachers; thence arose the "itinerancy." "The pastoral service, which would otherwise have been confined to a single parish, was extended by this plan to scores of towns and villages, and, by the cooperation of the class meeting, was rendered almost as efficient as it would have been were it local. It contributed, perhaps more than any other cause, to maintain a sentiment of unity among the members of the Societies. It gave a pilgrim, a militant character to its preachers. It made them one of the most self-sacrificing, laborious, practical, and successful bodies of men which has appeared in the great field of modern Christian labor." (*Stevens.*)

Lay Preaching was an innovation which both the Wesleys at first opposed. The valuable services rendered by John Cennick, Thomas Maxfield, and other lay helpers, coupled with the judicious advice of Susannah Wesley, finally led John Wesley to the conclusion: "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth to him good." The system once adopted, John Wesley would not part with it, though frequently importuned to do so. It is safe to add that Methodism could never have won its great triumph without the aid of lay preachers.

The Conference. This institution, which has become so permanent a feature in the economy of Methodism, had its origin in 1744. John Wesley invited several clergymen and lay assistants to meet him in London, and to give him "their advice respecting the

best method of carrying on the work of God." In response to this call the first Methodist Conference assembled at the Foundry, London, on Monday, the 25th of June, 1744, and consisted of John and Charles Wesley, four other clergymen of the Church of England, and four lay preachers. The Conference lasted until Friday. Three topics were discussed: 1. What to teach; 2. How to teach; 3. How to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice. "They little thought that they were constructing a platform which would survive their times, and originating a long series of Annual Conferences which would become one of the most important institutions in the world—a central power, conveying benefits to every quarter of the globe, and serving as a model for framing other similar institutions both at home and abroad. The doctrines agreed upon are still the staple doctrines of the Methodist communities and the elements of Methodist discipline may be found in the minutes of this, the first Methodist Conference." (*Tyerman.*)

IV.

PROGRESS OF THE WORK.

1. **The Mission to the Masses.**—Methodism was organized for aggressive work. "The world is my parish," was Wesley's motto. From 1739, which was finally accepted as the date of the origin of Methodism, and which Wesley inserted as such in the General Rules, all its plans and institutions were governed by the purpose of waging aggressive warfare on the kingdom of Satan. One of the most effective means of reaching the masses was open-air preaching. This was not only contrary to the rules of the Established Church, but was bitterly opposed by many who were otherwise friendly to the Methodist movement. As we have already seen, Whitefield was the first to engage in this work. Finding the churches closed to him, "on Saturday, February 17, 1739, he crossed the Rubicon, and virtually led the incipient Methodism across it by the extraordinary irregularity of preaching in the open air." This occurred at Kingswood, where he repeated his labors, and soon his congregations increased to ten and even twenty thousand. In June the Archbishop of Canterbury forbade the clergy to permit the Wesleys to preach in their churches. John Wesley soon followed the example of Whitefield, and began preaching to large audiences out of doors. Charles Wesley had been appointed curate of St. Mary's, Islington, London,

but his faithful ministry had speedily procured his dismissal. He likewise joined in the innovation, and preached to ten thousand people at Moorfield, London. The whole country was stirred; societies increased; everywhere there was a cry for the pure word of God; bitter persecutions followed; opposition came from the clergy of the Established Church, from magistrates, and from the mob; the Methodists were stoned, beaten, arrested, and not infrequently had to flee for their lives. Helpers, however, were not wanting. Many came from the lower ranks of society, but not a few from the nobility. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, frequented the Moravian Societies in London, and after the separation of Wesley from them cooperated with the Methodists. She appointed Whitefield her chaplain, and encouraged Wesley in the employment of a lay ministry. The scenes at these open-air services were thrilling. The vilest reprobates were convicted of sin; many trembled and agonized in prayer; shouts and sobs were heard everywhere in the vast audiences, and the power of God was manifest in the conversion of multitudes of souls. John Wesley preached from his father's tombstone at Epworth to large gatherings of the people. "God bowed their hearts," he says, "and on every side, as with one accord, they lifted up their voices and wept; several dropped down as dead."

2. America Stirred.—Whitefield had visited Georgia in 1738. He returned to America, landing at Philadelphia, November, 1739. The people flocked to hear his eloquent appeals. He preached in the churches and in the open air. Christians of all denominations attended his services. He passed on to New York,

thence overland to Georgia, preaching on his route sometimes to ten thousand people. Coming north again he arrived in Newport, September, 1740. His sermons on the way to Boston gave him such a reputation that he was met by the governor and a deputation of clergy and citizens, who escorted him into the city. Twenty thousand people came to hear his farewell discourse on the Common. On the 16th of January, 1741, he again embarked at Charleston for England. "He had stirred the consciences of tens of thousands from Maine to Georgia, and doubtless, by these and his subsequent travels, did much to prepare the soil for that harvest of Methodism which in our day has 'shaken like Lebanon' along all his course." (*Stevens.*)

3. The Stream Parted.—Whitefield, during his absence in America, had imbibed Calvinistic views. Wesley, though strongly Arminian, had not made these doctrines a test of membership in the Societies. On his return Whitefield began to preach "the decrees." John Cennick, employed by Wesley as a teacher at Kingswood, followed Whitefield's example. The result was strife in the Society. The time had come for Wesley openly to declare his opinions. He avowed himself an Arminian. He preached a powerful sermon in Bristol on "free grace." Cennick and his followers were declared to be no longer members of the Band Society. Whitefield and the Wesleys were estranged. Happily, however, through the efforts of Lady Huntingdon they were reconciled, and henceforward, though they worked in different channels, they still labored harmoniously for the common end of saving souls. Whitefield attached himself to the service of Lady

Huntingdon, who contributed large sums in establishing chapels in various parts of the kingdom, which became part of "Lady Huntingdon's Connection." She presided over the Conferences and stationed the preachers. "Honor, heroism, and magnanimity were always conspicuous in her remarkable career, and for intrepidity in the cause of God and success in winning souls to Christ Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, stands unequaled among women." (*Tyerman.*) Her churches are now mostly independent.

4. In Labors Abundant.—We have already observed the work of the first Conference in 1744. That was a year of great trial. Reports were circulated that the Methodists were in collusion with the Scottish Pretender. Charles Wesley was indicted before the magistrates in Yorkshire for praying God to "call home his banished ones," which, it was insisted, meant the House of the Stuarts. Mobs raged everywhere, and the Methodists were assailed in their assemblies and homes. Many were impressed for the army. Thomas Beard, who had suffered much in the regiment, was sent to the hospital at Newcastle, where he died, and became the first martyr of Methodism. The influence of Methodism had now been felt all over England, Scotland, and Wales. Wesley and his itinerants were continually pressing the work into new sections of the country. Even the army in Flanders was made the scene of Methodistic labors. Places of worship were established in different camps, and hundreds of converts died in triumph. The successes were great, the sacrifices correspondingly severe; homes invaded, property destroyed, lives jeopardized —these were some of the penalties paid for adherence to

truth and duty. The labors of John and Charles Wesley in Ireland brought fruitage to the Church of God in the conversion of many notable men, among whom was Adam Clarke, who subsequently enriched Christian literature with his *Commentary on the Sacred Scriptures.* Here, too, were encountered opposition and persecution, especially from the Romanists. Thomas Walsh, who in his early life had been a faithful adherent of the Catholic Church, was in his eighteenth year converted through the instrumentality of Protestant friends, and subsequently joined the Methodist Society. Entering the ranks of the lay ministry he became a mighty power for good among his own people. The Roman priests instigated mobs against him. On one occasion it was proposed to put him in a well, but his dignified bearing won the admiration of the crowd, and he was released. In later years Wesley writes: "The scandal of the cross has ceased, and all the kingdom, rich and poor, papists and Protestants, behave with courtesy, nay, good will." "He rejoiced at last over a larger Society in Dublin than anywhere else in the United Kingdom, except London." "So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

5. The Work Consolidated.—The Conferences continued to be held, and soon came to be the unifying influence among the Societies. At these sessions the great fundamental doctrines of Christian life and practice were discussed. Faith, justification, assurance, and sanctification were explained and enforced. Wesley began to issue a "Christian Library," and to write and disseminate tracts against drunkenness, Sabbath-breaking, and other sins of the times. A bond of sym-

pathy between the members of the different Societies was fostered by a system of quarterly tickets given to each member, which furnished an opportunity not only for the recognition of the faithful members wherever they might be, but enabled those in charge in a quiet and inoffensive way to drop the disorderly. Marvelous had been the effects of the reformation upon the lives of the people. Scoffers were silenced. Blasphemers became meek and docile Christians. Whole communities were changed from habits of drinking, swearing, and fighting to peaceful observance of God's laws and reverence of his holy day. But not only were their lives changed; they learned to die in triumph. One says, "My body is indeed weak and in pain, but my soul is all joy and praise." The last words of another were, "Death stares me in the face, but I fear him not." Hannah Richardson, who was followed to her grave by the whole of the Bristol Society, the procession being pelted in the streets with dirt and stones, said: "I have no fear, no doubt, no trouble, heaven is open! I see Jesus Christ with all his angels and saints in white. I see what I cannot utter or express." Commenting on the seventh Conference, which was held March 8, 1750, Stevens (*History of Methodism*) says: "A little more than ten years had passed since the recognized epoch of Methodism. The results thus far were certainly remarkable. A scarcely paralleled religious interest had been spread and sustained throughout the United Kingdom and along the Atlantic coast of America. The Churches of both countries had been extensively reawakened. The great fact of a lay ministry had been accomplished. It had presented before the

world the greatest pulpit orator of the age, if not of any age; also one of the greatest religious legislators of history, a hymnist whose supremacy had been but doubtfully disputed by a single rival, and the most signal example of female agency in religious affairs which Christian history records. The lowest abysses of the English population among colliers and miners had been reached by the Gospel. Calvinistic Methodism was restoring the decayed nonconformity of England. Wesleyan Methodism, though adhering to the Establishment, had taken an organic and permanent form; it had its Annual Conferences, Quarterly Conferences, class meetings, and band meetings; its watch-night and love feasts; its traveling preachers, local preachers, exhorters, leaders, trustees, and stewards. It had districted England, Wales, and Ireland into circuits for systematic ministerial labors. Its chapels and preachers' houses or parsonages were multiplying over the country. It had a rich psalmody and a well-defined theology, which transcended the prevalent creed in both spirituality and liberality. It had begun its present scheme of popular religious literature, had provided the first of a series of academic institutions, and was contemplating a plan of ministerial education which has been effectively accomplished."

6. Important Conferences.—The Conference of 1767 was the first at which a complete list of the circuits and membership was given. There are recorded 41 circuits and 25,911 members. This enumeration included England, Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. In this year, on Saturday, August 8, at Newcastle, Wesley took the first missionary collection. This was

to aid the Indian schools in America. In the same year the first Methodist place of worship in America was opened in the sail loft in New York. Alluding to the Conference of this year Wesley says, "Love and harmony reigned from the beginning to the end." Among those present were Whitefield, the leader of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connection, and Howell Harris, chief of the Calvinistic Methodists in Wales. A scheme was proposed by Wesley to raise money to free the chapels, now numbering about one hundred, from an aggregate debt of about £11,000. Wesley concludes his Minutes of this Conference with this injunction: "Let us all be men of one business. We live only for this, to save our own souls and them that hear us." Very soon, however, the harmony which prevailed at this Conference was to be disturbed by the renewal of doctrinal controversy. In order to prevent alienation between the Calvinistic and Arminian wings of the Methodist Societies efforts had been made to avoid the discussion of the questions on which they differed. Wesley now became convinced that he had conceded too much to the Calvinistic views. As early as 1744 a minute had been made declaring, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." The Conference of 1770 reiterated this statement in a minute defending the Arminian view of good works. On the publication of this minute a most intense and bitter discussion ensued, which lasted for six years. It was in this crisis, when the pens of good but misguided men were heaping abuse upon the Wesleys, that John Fletcher, of Madeley, produced his celebrated *Checks to Antinomianism*, which discussed the great questions of the

freedom of the will, prescience, and fatalism, and of which Stevens (*History of Methodism*) declares, "It may be probably affirmed that no man, previously undetermined in his opinions on the Calvinistic controversy, can read them through without closing them an Arminian." The year 1784 was made memorable by timely provision for the preservation of the Societies, both in England and America, and has been called "the grand climacteric year of Methodism." John Wesley was now in his eighty-first year. During eighteen days of the preceding year his life had been despaired of. June 28, 1784, he writes: "To-day I entered on my eighty-second year, and found myself just as strong to labor, and as fit for any exercise of body or mind, as I was forty years ago. We can only say, 'The Lord reigneth!' While we live let us live to him." He had relaxed nothing of his usual habits of traveling, preaching, and writing. He complained bitterly because in some places the five o'clock morning preaching had been given up. He declares they have "lost their first love," and says, "Let all the preachers, that are still alive to God, join together as one man, fast and pray, lift up their voice as a trumpet, be instant, in season, out of season, to convince them that are fallen; and exhort them instantly to repent and do the first works; this in particular—rising in the morning, without which neither their souls nor their bodies can long remain in health." We find that Sunday schools had been established in some of the Societies, and Wesley writes, "Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?" It is claimed that Miss Cooke, a Methodist young lady, was the first to suggest

to Robert Raikes the idea of instituting a Sunday school in Gloucester, which he commenced about 1783. Wesley's increasing years, and the fears which had been entertained in regard to his health, led many of his ministers to desire and urge upon him some better provision for securing the property to the Societies. There were now reported in the United Kingdom three hundred and fifty-nine chapels, which had nearly all been deeded in trust for the sole use of such persons as might be appointed at the yearly "Conference of the people called Methodists." It was the term "Conference" which presented the difficulty. To prevent misunderstanding and secure beyond doubt the use of the properties to the Conference appointees, on February 28, 1784, Mr. Wesley executed a "deed of declaration" explaining the term "Conference of the people called Methodists," and determining how the succession and identity thereof is to be continued. This deed, which was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery, is recognized in the trust deeds of all the chapels of the Wesleyan Church, and hence invests a hundred Methodist preachers with the power of determining who shall be the officiating ministers in all the chapels of the denomination. In this deed Wesley named the hundred preachers who were declared to constitute the legal Conference, with power to perpetuate their number forever. As there were one hundred and ninety-two preachers who were recognized as in connection with the Conference, many of those who were omitted from the legal one hundred were much dissatisfied. The Conference of 1784 assembled at Leeds on July 27,

and the whole subject was warmly discussed. Wise counsels finally prevailed. A few disaffected preachers withdrew, but Wesley writes, "Our Conference concluded in much love, to the great disappointment of all." English Methodism was now placed on a firm basis. In this same year the needs of American Methodism were also met. Societies had rapidly increased, but they were without the sacraments. Appeals were made to Wesley to send over ordained men to baptize, and administer the communion. This we shall see later on that he did. Thus was laid the foundation of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Writing to the brethren in America in defense of his course Wesley says: "If anyone will point out a more rational and scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken." The Conference of 1790 was the last that Wesley attended. Marvelous had been the increase in the working force of Methodism, and wonderful the change which had been wrought in the minds of the people toward its leaders. In the United Kingdom there were now 115 circuits and 294 itinerant preachers, with 71,568 members of the Society. Including the various fields which had been occupied in America, Nova Scotia, West Indies, and elsewhere, there was an aggregate of 240 circuits, 541 itinerant preachers, and a membership of 134,549. Wesley, now in his eighty-seventh year, makes this entry in his Journal, January 1: "I am now an old man, decayed from head to foot; my eyes are dim; my right hand shakes much. However, blessed be God, I do not slack my labor; I can preach and write still."

In proof of his indefatigable labors, he starts from London in February for a journey to the north. Everywhere he preaches to crowded houses. He visits the sick, meets the classes, and on Sundays frequently preaches three times. In March he prepares an itinerary reaching to May. On June 28 he writes: "This day I enter into my eighty-eighth year. For above eighty-six years I found none of the infirmities of old age; my eyes did not wax dim, neither was my natural strength abated; but, last August, I found almost a sudden change. My eyes were so dim that no glasses would help me. My strength likewise now quite forsook me, and probably will not return in this world. But I feel no pain from head to foot; only it seems nature is exhausted, and, humanly speaking, will sink more, till 'the weary springs of life stand still at last.'" The forty-seventh Conference began its session on the 27th of July, at Bristol. Its transactions were not important, but at its close Wesley took his last leave of his assembled preachers. One who was present says: "He appeared very feeble; his eyesight had failed so much that he could not see to give out the hymns; yet his voice was strong, his spirit remarkably lively, and the powers of his mind, and his love toward his fellow-creatures, were as bright and as ardent as ever. Seldom in history has an individual life been more complete in its results than was that of Wesley at this moment. His power could now, in any necessity, reach almost any part of the three kingdoms by the systematic apparatus of Methodism. His orders given to his 'assistants' who were dispersed through the land could be conveyed by them to his three hundred preachers, who were

continually hastening, like couriers, over the long circuits; by these they could be impressed on about twelve hundred local preachers, who, with the itinerants, could convey them to about four thousand stewards and class leaders, and these, by the private, but established, means of the Societies, could bring them directly to the more than seventy thousand members." (*Stevens.*)

V.

FAITHFUL UNTO DEATH.

1. Susannah Wesley.—"The mother of the Wesleys was the mother of Methodism." (*Southey.*) Summing up the character of this noble woman, Adam Clarke says: "As a wife she was affectionate and obedient, having a sacred respect for authority wherever lodged. As a mistress of a large family her management was exquisite in all its parts, and its success beyond comparison or former example. As a Christian she was modest, humble, and pious. Her religion was as rational as it was scriptural and profound. In forming her creed she dug deep and laid her foundation upon a rock; and the storms and adversities of life never shook it. Her faith carried her through life, and it was unimpaired in death." Such a life was fitly ended with a calm and peaceful death. She entered into rest Friday, July 23, 1742. John Wesley records: "A little before she lost her speech she made her last request: 'Children, as soon as I am released sing a psalm of praise to God.' From three to four the silver cord was loosing and the wheel breaking at the cistern; and then without any struggle, or sigh, or groan, the soul was set at liberty." Her tombstone has this verse:

"In sure and certain hope to rise,
And claim her mansion in the skies,
A Christian here her flesh laid down,
The cross exchanging for a crown."

2. George Whitefield.—The labors of this flaming evangelist were ended Sabbath morning, September 30, 1770. He had made his seventh voyage to America. From September 17 to 20 he preached daily in Boston. Though suffering with asthma and much distressed he proceeded to Exeter, N. H, where, on the 29th, he delivered a discourse for two hours in the open air. He then set off for Newburyport, where he arrived in the evening. He hastened to retire. The people were anxious to have his words of benediction. Taking a candle he paused on the stairs to address them, and spoke till the candle burned out in the socket. About two o'clock he awoke oppressed with the asthma. He sat in his bed some time, praying that God would bless his preaching, his Bethesda school, the Tabernacle congregation, and all connections on the other side of the water. He began panting for breath. A physician was called, but gave no relief. At six o'clock he "fetched one gasp, stretched out his feet, and breathed no more." Sketching his life and character, John Wesley notes his activity, tender friendship, frankness, courage, and intrepidity, combined with steadiness in whatever work he undertook. He concludes: "Have we read or heard of any person since the apostles who testified the grace of God through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriad of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we heard or read of any who has been a blessed instrument in the hand of God of bringing so many sinners from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God?" Whitefield was interred at New-

buryport, October 2. All the bells were tolled. Many thousands attended the funeral." After the services the immense crowd departed weeping through the streets, as in mournful groups they wended their way to their respective homes.

3. **Charles Wesley.**—It was permitted to this eminent servant of God to reach his eightieth year. In the early part of his life his labors had been no less abundant than those of his brother. Accustomed to facing mobs and enduring their cruel attacks, he not infrequently held his ground "till his clothes were torn to tatters, and the blood ran down his face in streams." After 1756 he ceased the active itinerant life and confined his labors chiefly to London and Bristol. In 1780 he attended at Bristol his last Conference. He passed to his reward March 29, 1788. Just before his death he called his wife to his bedside and dictated his last poetical utterance:

> "In age and feebleness extreme,
> Who shall a sinful worm redeem?
> Jesus, my only hope thou art,
> Strength of my failing flesh and heart:
> O could I catch a smile from thee,
> And drop into eternity!"

4. **John Fletcher.**—We have noticed the valuable service rendered by this holy man of God in connection with the Calvinistic controversy. A brief reference, however, should be made to his life and death. "In his life the primitive excellence of apostolical Christianity was emulated and illustrated; and if any man since the apostolic time has deserved the title of saint it is Fletcher." Born in Switzerland in 1729, he subse-

quently removed to England. He joined the "Methodists" about 1755, and in 1757 took orders in the Church of England. He declined the living of Dunham because there was "too much money and too little labor," and accepted Madeley with half the income because it presented a better field of usefulness. Here for twenty-five years he gave his whole being to the promotion of the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow-men. He denied himself that he might feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. He married in 1781 a lady who survived him many years, and whose name is endeared to the hearts of all lovers of the divine Master whom she devotedly served. In 1773 John Wesley writes to Fletcher expressing his fears that in the event of his (Wesley's) death the work might come to an end. He gives his views as to the qualifications necessary for his successor, and says, "Thou art the man." "Come while I am alive and capable of labor." To this appeal Fletcher pleaded his love of retirement and that he needed "a fuller persuasion that the time is quite come." God had willed, however, that he should not live to be Wesley's successor. In the early part of August, 1785, he was taken with a severe cold. On Sunday, August 7, he preached his last sermon and then hurried away to bed, where he immediately fainted. One week from that day his wife records: "On Sunday night, August 14, his precious soul entered into the joy of his Lord, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. I was scarce a minute at a time from him, night or day, during his illness, and I can truly say:

"No cloud did arise to darken the skies,
Or hide for one moment his Lord from his eyes."

5. **Mary Fletcher.**—The wife of John Fletcher survived him about thirty years, emulating his example in all good words and deeds. "Her home at Madeley was a sanctuary to the poor, to devout women, and to the itinerant evangelists." On the 9th of December, 1814, being then in her seventy-sixth year, she quietly passed away. "I am drawing near to glory." "He lifts his hands and shows that I am graven there." "The Lord bless both thee and me," she said to a Christian friend, and died.

6. **Selina, Countess of Huntingdon.**—This distinguished lady ended her labors at eighty-four years of age, June 17, 1791. She had bestowed a half million of dollars on her chapels, schools, and other benevolent work. "She closed the most remarkable career which is recorded of her sex in the modern Church by a death which was crowned with the serenity and hope that befitted a life so devout and beneficent." Almost her last words were, "My work is done; I have nothing to do but to go to my Father."

7. **John Wesley.**—We have followed Wesley up to the forty-seventh Conference in 1790. The last sermons published were especially directed against laying up riches in this world. He says: "Of the three rules which are laid down on this head, in the sermon on the 'Mammon of Unrighteousness,' you may find many that observe the first rule, namely, *Gain all you can.* You may find a few that observe the second, *Save all you can.* But how many have you found that observe the third rule, *Give all you can?* O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who

gain and *save* all they can, but do not *give* all they can!" In February of 1791 we find him writing of plans for future journeys. Wednesday, February 23, he arose at 4 A. M. and set out to Leatherhead, eighteen miles from London, where he preached his last sermon. On February 24 he wrote his last letter to Wilberforce, who had brought to Parliament the question of the abolition of slavery, in which occurs that famous sentence: "Go on, in the name of God, and in the power of his might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it." He was now gradually becoming weaker. Monday, February 28, his friends became anxious and alarmed. Joseph Bradford dispatched notes to the preachers, saying, "Mr. Wesley is very ill; pray! pray! pray!" Tuesday, March 1, after a restless night, he began singing,

> 'All glory to God in the sky,
> And peace upon earth be restored."

Again he breaks out:

> "I'll praise my Maker while I've breath,
> And when my voice is lost in death,
> Praise shall employ my nobler powers;
> My days of praise shall ne'er be past,
> While life, and thought, and being last,
> Or immortality endures."

He gave directions for his burial, bade farewell to each one present, and then after another pause, and while lifting his arm in grateful triumph, he emphatically reiterated, "The best of all is, God is with us." The end came at 10 o'clock A. M., Wednesday, March 2, 1791. Eleven persons altogether were present. "Fare-

well!" said Wesley, and without a struggle or sigh was gone. His friends, standing about his corpse, sang:

"Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo! the Saviour stands above;
Shows the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out the crown of love."

Thus ended a life of toil seldom if ever equaled. It is estimated that during the fifty years of his itinerant ministry he traveled a quarter of a million of miles and preached more than forty thousand sermons. His literary labors are not less remarkable. "A catalogue of his publications, printed about 1756, contains no less than one hundred and eighty-one articles in prose and verse, English and Latin, on grammar, logic, medicine, music, poetry, theology, and philosophy. Two thirds of these publications were for sale at less than one shilling each, and more than one fourth at a penny. They were thus brought within reach of the poorest of his people." Summing up his character, Stevens (*History of Methodism*) says: "There can be little hesitancy in placing John Wesley in the first rank of those historical men whose greatness in the legislature, the cabinet, the field, philanthropy, or any sphere of active life is attributable to their practical sagacity, energy, and success. In these three respects what man in history transcends him?" Tyerman (*Life of Wesley*) says: "Taking him altogether, Wesley is a man *sui generis*. He stands alone; he has had no successor; no one like him went before; no contemporary was a co-equal. There was a wholeness about the man such as is rarely seen. His physique, his genius, his wit, his

penetration, his judgment, his memory, his beneficence, his religion, his diligence, his conversation, his courteousness, his manners, and his dress made him as perfect as we ever expect man to be on this side heaven." Lord Macaulay pays this tribute: "He was a man whose eloquence and logical acuteness might have rendered him eminent in literature; whose genius for government was not inferior to that of Richelieu; and who devoted all his powers, in defiance of obloquy and derision, to what he sincerely considered the highest good of his species."

VI.

NEW MEN AND NEW MEASURES.

1. The Transition Period.—The period of Wesley's death was one which in itself was calculated to fill the minds of many with anxious fears for the stability of Methodism. America had passed through and France was in the midst of the throes of revolution. Everywhere the people were in commotion. Infidelity was rife. Religious and political pamphlets were distributed broadcast. The Methodist Societies were not without elements of discord. The relation to the national Church, the demand for the sacraments, the struggle for larger powers on the part of the laity were questions not only commanding attention, but causing division of sentiment and engendering strife. At the forty-eighth Conference, held at Manchester in July, 1791, a letter was read which Wesley had left with Joseph Bradford as his last words to the legal Conference of one hundred which he had provided for. He said: "I beseech you by the mercies of God that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit. . . . Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end."

The Conference pledged itself to follow strictly the plan left by Wesley. This pledge, however, was too vague to secure harmony of sentiment or action. In 1795 a "Plan of Pacification" was adopted which had a tranquillizing effect. After some further discussion, resulting in the formation of the "Methodist New Connexion," in 1797 there was a further adjustment of the Plan of Pacification, and the polity of the connection was established and harmony restored. The authority of the Conference was recognized, provision was made for the administration of the sacraments, while satisfactory concessions were made to the Societies.

The heroic period of Methodism demanded and produced men and women not only of pure and self-sacrificing lives, but of eminent talents and commanding influence.

2. Adam Clarke, who entered the ministry in 1782, continued his labors almost without interruption up to 1815. Crowds attended his preaching. Amid incessant labors he found time to give to the Church his monumental work, the *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, which engaged his attention for nearly forty years.

3. Richard Watson, ordained in 1800, was zealous in labors for the missionary cause. He took especial interest in the missions to the slaves in the West Indies. He was distinguished as an author, producing, among other works, a *Life of Wesley* and *Theological Institutes*, which is still a standard text-book.

4. Jabez Bunting, born in 1779, was licensed to preach at nineteen years of age. For eighteen years he was one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Missionary Society; was four times president of the Conference;

and was president of the Wesleyan Theological Institution from its foundation in 1834 until his death. His organizing and administrative talents were wisely employed in giving form to Methodism.

The roll-call of worthies would not be complete without reference to a host of men and women in humbler spheres whose lives adorned and whose labors promoted the cause of Christ among the people called Methodists.

5. Samuel Hick, the "Village Blacksmith," converted in early life, became a zealous defender of the Methodists, and subsequently was licensed as a local preacher. "For nearly half a century crowds flocked to his artless but powerful ministrations."

6. William Carvosso, born in 1750, in Cornwall, was in early life "borne down by the prevailing sins of the age, cock-fighting, wrestling, card-playing, and Sabbath-breaking." Converted through the instrumentality of Methodist preaching, he gave himself up unreservedly to the service of God. All Cornwall felt his influence. He had charge of three classes; he went about from circuit to circuit, aiding in revivals and establishing churches. He died in his eighty-fifth year, singing with his expiring breath, "Praise God, from whom all blessings flow."

A host of pious women might be mentioned who were abundant in self-sacrificing labors.

7. Ann Cutler consecrated herself to a single life, in order that she might be more useful in works of mercy and devotion. She was most effective in prayer, melting with her fervent pleading the most hardened audiences.

8. Dinah Evans, made familiar by George Eliot's story of *Adam Bede*, is described as "one of the most

pure-minded and holy women that ever adorned the Church of Christ on earth." She visited prisons, almshouses, and vile dens of infamy to carry the glad tidings of the Gospel to the inmates. She preached to thousands during her life, and it is said that "sermons were heard from her deathbed more eloquent than ever fell from her lips on Royston Green."

The holy lives and faithful labors of these devoted men and women produced fruitage in the conversion of many thousands. The opening of the nineteenth century found the Societies in the midst of revivals at home and pushing forward with missionary zeal the work in other lands. Let us look at the results in the New World.

VII.

TRIUMPHS IN THE NEW WORLD.

1. The Beginnings.—The visits of Whitefield to America had given new life to religious zeal, which had perceptibly waned after the great awakening under Jonathan Edwards. Doubtless there were many among the immigrants from England and Ireland who had been converted under Methodist preaching. We are to wait, however, for the year 1766 for seed to germinate which had been sown in the Old World. The devastation of the Palatinate on the Rhine under Louis XIV, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, drove thousands of Protestants to the English lines. Many came to America. About fifty families settled in the County of Limerick, Ireland. Methodism found them there, and many were converted. In the spring of 1760 a scene of much interest is described. A group of emigrants is about to embark for America. Many are there to witness the departure. Among those who are to leave for the New World is a Methodist local preacher and class leader, who speaks words of comfort and cheer from the side of the vessel. This was Philip Embury. On the same ship came Barbara Heck. These two were destined in the most remarkable way to be the pioneers of Methodism in America. Six years must pass before the work begins. Embury perhaps made some effort to conduct worship, but did not succeed.

It was Barbara Heck who aroused him again to duty. Finding a company at their usual occupation of card-playing, she hastily seized the cards and, throwing them into the fire, rebuked the party; then going to Embury's house she said to him, with earnestness, "Philip, you must preach to us, or we shall all go to hell" "She, it seems, agreed to get the congregation, and, as nearly as can be ascertained, in October, 1766, he preached the first sermon in his house in what was then called Barracks Street, afterward Augustus Street, now City Hall Place." (Rev. S. A. Seaman, *Annals of New York Methodism.*) Larger accommodations were soon needed, and a large upper room was hired in the same street, about ten doors from the barracks. Numbers and interest continued to increase. Thomas Webb, a local preacher, who was a retired British officer, and now barrack-master at Albany, hearing of Embury's work, visited the Society and attracted many by his eloquent preaching. Early in 1767 the Society removed to the "Rigging Loft." This was, in what is now William Street, between John and Fulton. It was sixty feet long by eighteen feet wide, and furnished with desk and benches. In 1768 we find them buying ground for a church building. The names of the donors are still preserved. It was situated on what is now John Street, between William and Nassau. Philip Embury, who had labored on it himself as a carpenter, preached the first sermon in it on October 30, 1768. The preaching of Embury and Webb drew together large numbers of eager listeners, and we find Boardman, whom Wesley had sent over with Pilmoor from the Conference of 1769, writing: "About a third

part of those who attend get in, the rest are glad to hear without. There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before." The church was said to accommodate about seven hundred. About this same period a beginning had been made in Frederick County, Md., by Robert Strawbridge, who had come over from Ireland. He preached in his own house and subsequently built a log meeting house.

"It was a rude structure, twenty-two feet square, and though long occupied was never finished, but remained without windows, door, or floor. The logs were sawed on one side for a doorway, and holes were made on the other three sides for windows." This little Society, consisting at first of about fifteen persons, exerted a great influence for good. Strawbridge itinerated in several States and founded many Societies. He was very poor, and his family often suffered, but he labored on in faith. Under the labors of Strawbridge, Richard Owen was converted and became the first native Methodist local preacher. Though very poor he too traveled extensively and prepared the way for other laborers. William Watters, the first native itinerant, labored for many years with great zeal. Thus did the seed sown by Wesley and his itinerants in the Old World begin to produce its fruit in the New World, as, overcoming all obstacles, the Methodists pushed their conquests in every direction.

2. Calls for Help.—In the Minutes of the Conference held at Leeds in 1769 Mr. Wesley said: "We have a pressing call from our brethren of New York to come over and help them. Who is willing to go?" Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor responded.

They arrived in Philadelphia in October, and were received by Captain Webb. Robert Williams, a local preacher, also came over at about the same time, but died after very successful labors in 1775. He is said to have been the first itinerant preacher in America who published a book. The appointments for America first appear in the English Minutes for 1770, with the names of Joseph Pilmoor, Richard Boardman, Robert Williams, and John King. St. George's Church, Philadelphia, was conveyed to the Methodist Society in 1770, having originally been built as a German Reformed Church. In this church Pilmoor was preaching when there arrived from England and listened to his preaching one who was destined to be the chief shepherd of the flock for many years. In response to a further call at the Conference of 1771 Francis Asbury had embarked for America. He was then twenty-six years of age. He had been converted at fourteen, and gave his spare time to theological studies. At seventeen he began to hold public meetings, and at eighteen to preach, and was about twenty-one when he started out as an itinerant. His labors in America began soon after his arrival. His fervent zeal and effective preaching soon gave him prominence among his brethren. Reaching New York he began to push out into the surrounding country. Boardman and Pilmoor had confined their labors largely to Philadelphia and New York. Under the influence of Asbury the work began to extend. In 1772 he received his appointment from Wesley as superintendent of the American Societies. Going southward he preached almost daily and found the cause everywhere spreading. In 1773 he was at Baltimore.

"The first Methodist chapel in Baltimore, of that Strawberry Alley, was on Fell's Point, where the hospitable Irishman, Captain Patten, had been the first citizen to open his house for the preaching of Asbury, thereby adding another instance to the extraordinary services of his countrymen in the early history of the denomination. It was built of brick, forty-one feet and six inches in length and thirty feet in width, with a foundation of twenty inches. It was built mainly through the untiring efforts of Asbury, who laid the foundation stone, and was the first to offer the Gospel to the people from its pulpit." (*Stevens.*) Captain Webb visited England in 1772 and pleaded for more helpers for America. George Shadford and Thomas Rankin were sent. Rankin, being Asbury's senior in the itinerancy and a man of executive force, was appointed as superintendent and was cordially received as such by Asbury. The first American Methodist Conference began its session in Philadelphia on Wednesday the 14th and closed on Friday the 16th of July, 1773. Its members were Thomas Rankin, Richard Boardman, Joseph Pilmoor, Francis Asbury, Richard Wright, George Shadford, Thomas Webb, John King, Abraham Whitworth, and Joseph Yearby, ten in all, being the same number as at Wesley's first Conference in England. The membership reported was 1,160, of which 180 were in New York, 180 in Philadelphia, 200 in New Jersey, 500 in Maryland, and 100 in Virginia. Besides these there were many not enrolled in the classes who considered themselves members of the Societies. A tendency to settle down in the cities was observed, and Rankin and Asbury insisted on an adherence to the itinerant plan. It

was agreed to recognize the authority of Mr. Wesley, and to be governed by the doctrine and discipline of the Methodists, as contained in the Minutes. It was further decided that the preachers were to avoid administering the sacraments, an exception being made in the case of Strawbridge, who was permitted to administer the ordinances under the particular direction of the assistant. The Conference of 1774 showed an increase in membership of 913. There were now 10 circuits, 17 preachers, and 2,073 members.

3. A Period of Perplexity.—The troubles between the colonies and the mother country were now assuming such form as made it necessary for the people to range themselves on one side or the other. The Revolution was impending. Under the strain most of the preachers who had come over from England returned to the mother country. Rankin left in 1778. Shadford, who was the last to leave, sought an interview with Asbury and asked what conclusion he had reached. "I do not see my way clear to go to England," responded Asbury. "My work is here done; I cannot stay," said Shadford. Thus they parted, and Asbury was left alone to superintend the work. Meanwhile the work was progressing, though amid great difficulties. The names of Philip Gatch, Benjamin Abbott, Freeborn Garrettson, and Jesse Lee now begin to appear in the annals of Methodism, and all to be famous as ardent evangelists of the Gospel. A great revival broke out in Virginia. Thousands were moved by the Spirit of God, and many were added to the Societies. Persecutions were frequent. The Methodist preachers were suspected of being loyalists. Asbury, notwithstanding

his lot had been cast with the colonists, was obliged temporarily to desist from preaching. Hartley, an itinerant, being imprisoned, preached through the window of his jail. Garrettson was attacked on the highway and struck to the ground with a bludgeon. Gatch was tarred and came near losing his life. During the war period the labors of Benjamin Abbott were followed by wonderful results. He was a man of great simplicity, deep piety, and of magnetic influence. Everywhere the people were moved not alone to tears, but to repentance. Physical effects frequently followed his preaching. Scores fell like dead men to the earth. "He was generally addressed as 'Father Abbott;' many delighted to call him their 'spiritual father;' and not rarely were public assemblies melted into tears by the sight of robust men, hardy but reclaimed sinners, rushing into his arms and weeping with filial gratitude upon his neck." The sacramental question continued to agitate the Societies. The advance was principally southward. Philadelphia and New York being in possession of the British, the Societies in that region were much depleted. After a threatening division of opinion between the Northern and Southern Societies on the administration of the sacraments, Asbury was again recognized as general superintendent in 1781. A letter from Wesley, dated October 3, 1783, was read at the Conference in May, 1784, urging them to stand by the Methodist doctrine and discipline and "not to receive any who make any difficulty of receiving Francis Asbury as the general assistant." The membership now amounted to about fifteen thousand, but only about sixteen hundred were north of Mason and Dixon's line. Asbury's allowance

was fixed at twenty-four pounds per annum, with his traveling expenses. Local preachers were to emancipate their slaves in States where the laws would admit, and "traveling preachers who now or hereafter shall be possessed of slaves, and shall refuse to manumit them where the laws permit, shall be employed no more."

4. The Methodist Episcopal Church.—The time had arrived when, in the providence of God, American Methodism was to take an organic form. For many years Wesley had been convinced that bishops and presbyters were of one order, and that as a presbyter he had as much right to ordain as to administer the sacraments. Charles Wesley was much opposed to ordaining the preachers, declaring that to ordain was to separate from the Church of England. The needs of the scattered Societies in America were pressed upon Wesley. After mature consideration he proceeded on the 2d of September, 1784, to ordain Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey as presbyters, and at the same time ordained Thomas Coke as superintendent of the Methodist Societies in America, authorizing him to set apart Francis Asbury likewise for the same office. They arrived in New York on November 3, 1784. After consultation with Asbury it was agreed that a General Conference should be held in Baltimore in December. Messengers were dispatched to summon the ministers, and on the 24th day of December the Conference, which has since become known as the Christmas Conference, began its session in Lovely Lane Chapel. A letter was read from Wesley setting forth his views, and, following his counsel, it was agreed to form a Methodist Episcopal

Church, in which the liturgy, as presented by Wesley, should be read and the sacraments be administered by a superintendent, elders, and deacons, who should be ordained as prescribed in Mr. Wesley's prayer book. Coke, assisted by his elders, Whatcoat and Vasey, ordained Asbury on successive days as deacon, elder, and superintendent. In the Minutes of the Conference of 1787 the title bishop was employed for the first time. The alteration was opposed by some of the preachers, but a majority agreed to let it remain.* (It may here be noted that the General Conference of 1884 ordered a rubric to be inserted at the beginning of the ritual for the consecration of bishops, declaring that it is not an ordination to a higher order in the ministry above that of elders, but a fitting consecration for the duties of superintendency in the Church.)

5. Articles of Religion, rules prescribing the duties of superintendents, elders, and deacons, were adopted. The allowance or salary of preachers and their wives was defined. A plan of relief was devised for superannuated preachers, their widows and orphans. The subject of slavery was again considered and measures taken for its extirpation. The Christmas Conference adjourned, after a session of ten days, in great peace and unanimity. The Church now numbered about eighty ministers and fifteen thousand members. The sacraments, which had heretofore been received, with only occasional deviations, from the hands of the clergy of the Church of England, were now regularly administered in the chapels of the Methodist Societies. Rev. Samuel A. Seaman, in the *Annals of New York*

* See *The Governing Conference in Methodism*, Neely.

Methodism, calls attention to two items in an old record of John Street Church, under date of January 8, 1785:

2 prayer books for preaching-house..... £0 13*s.* 0*d.*
For the altar-piece..... 16 16 1

This is supposed to be referred to by Dr. Coke, who writes: "We expected that this Society [John Street] would have made the greatest opposition to our plan, but on the contrary they have been most forward to promote it. They have already put up a reading-desk and railed in a communion table." We find also that "chapel" or "preaching-house" gives place to "church," this item being in the old record:

Paid for recording election roll of the trustees of the church, £0 6*s.* 0*d.*

6. **Distinguished Pioneers.**—We must go forward to the year 1792 to find the action which made complete the system of Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The local or Annual Conferences, then sometimes designated as District Conferences, continued to be held without any provision for a General Conference or governing body. This provision was made in 1792. Meanwhile let us take note of some of the men who were conspicuous in pressing forward the work.

7. **Thomas Coke** was, by appointment of Wesley, the first bishop of the Church. He was born in Brecon, Wales, September 9, 1747. He was educated at Oxford University. While in the exercise of the ministry of the Established Church he became acquainted with the Methodists, and was so earnest in his labors as to excite

much opposition from his fellow-churchmen. He united with Mr. Wesley, and soon became recognized as a preacher of great talent, preaching to immense congregations on the commons and fields of London. In 1782 he held the first Irish Conference, and, as we have seen, at Wesley's urgent request he came to America in 1784 to organize American Methodism. His subsequent career was one of abundant labors and sacrifices for the cause of Christ. He was filled with the missionary spirit. He crossed the Atlantic eighteen times. He spent a large fortune in the service of his Master. He was a voluminous writer. He organized the Negro missions of the West Indies. Finally, when about seventy years of age, he undertook at his own expense a mission to the East Indies, and died on the voyage in 1814, and was buried at sea. "His stature was small, his voice feminine, but his soul was as vast as ever dwelt in a human frame." His colleague, Asbury, said of him, "A minister of Christ, in zeal, in labors, and in services, the greatest man of the last century."

8. **Francis Asbury**, the colleague of Coke, was, by reason of more direct and continuous service, really the pioneer bishop of American Methodism. His labors in organizing and extending the Church are without parallel. "Within the compass of every year the borderers of Canada and the planters of Mississippi looked for the coming of this primitive bishop, and were not disappointed. His travels averaged six thousand miles a year, often through pathless forests and untraveled wildernesses. He rivaled Melanchthon and Luther in boldness. He combined the enthusiasm of Xavier with the far-reach-

ing foresight and keen discrimination of Wesley."* "It has been estimated that in his American ministry he preached about 16,500 sermons, that he presided in no less than 224 Annual Conferences, and ordained more than 4,000 preachers." He reached Richmond, Va., March 24, 1816, and preached there his last sermon. He was carried to and from the pulpit and sat while preaching. "On Sunday, 31, he expired, raising both his hands, when unable to speak, in affirmative reply to an inquiry respecting his trust and comfort in Christ."

9. Jesse Lee was born in Virginia, 1758, and was converted in 1773. In 1776 he experienced a state of grace which he called "perfect love." "At length I could say I have nothing but the love of Christ in my heart." In 1780 he was drafted into the militia, but refused to bear arms. For some months, however, he suffered many hardships, but preached the Gospel with great effect wherever opportunity offered. Released from the army, he continued to preach in Virginia and North Carolina. In 1789 he began his labors in New England, which continued for eleven years, and which resulted in establishing Methodism there, though bitterly opposed by many classes. He writes in his journal, "I love to break up new ground and hunt the souls in New England, though it is hard work; but when Christ is with me hard things are made easy and rough ways made smooth." In 1807 he published the first *History of Methodism in America.* From 1807 to 1816 he served at various times as chaplain to the House of Representatives and the Senate. He traveled much with Asbury, who had early thought of him for the episcopal office, to which

*McClintock & Strong's *Encyclopædia.*

on one occasion he lacked but one vote of an election. He is described as a man of excellent judgment, possessing uncommon colloquial powers and a fascinating address. He died September 12, 1816, in much joy, sending assurance to his distant family that he was "dying in the Lord."

10. **Freeborn Garrettson** was born in Maryland, 1752; was converted and began to preach in 1775; was ordained in 1784, and continued to labor up to 1827. He traveled extensively, extending Methodism into the northern part of New York and into Connecticut, Vermont, and Nova Scotia. "In his semicentennial sermon he says that he traversed the mountains and valleys, frequently on foot, with his knapsack on his back, guided by Indian paths in the wilderness; that he had often to wade through morasses half-leg deep in mud and water, frequently satisfying his hunger with a piece of bread and pork from his knapsack, quenching his thirst from a brook, and resting his weary limbs on the leaves of the trees." His death occurred in New York city, in 1827, in the seventy-sixth year of his age and the fifty-second of his itinerant ministry.

11. **Ezekiel Cooper** was born in Maryland, 1763, and was converted when quite young under the preaching of Garrettson. He entered the ministry in 1785, and was a companion and fellow-laborer with Jesse Lee in New England. In 1800 he was elected by the General Conference Agent and Editor of Methodist Books. "He gave to the 'Book Concern' that impulse and organization which has rendered it the largest publishing establishment in the New World." (*Stevens.*) "He became one of the most able pulpit orators of his day. At

times an irresistible pathos accompanied his preaching, and, in the forest worship, audiences of ten thousand would be so enchanted by his discourse that the most profound attention, interest, and solemnity prevailed." He ended his ministry in great joy on February 21, 1847, in the eighty-fourth year of his age.

12. **Important Legislation.**—The practice of consulting all the Annual Conferences before consummating legislation was fraught with so much difficulty that an attempt was made to form a council which should prepare matters to be laid before the Annual Conferences, no act to be binding until approved by the council, which was to consist of the bishops and the presiding elders. Such a council was held in 1789 and 1790, but was abandoned because its acts had no binding force. To remedy the difficulty, the Annual Conferences agreed to call a General Conference, to be held in 1792 at Baltimore. Bishop Coke had left America in 1791 on hearing of Wesley's death; he returned just in time to attend the General Conference, which began its session November 1, 1792. Provision was now made for the regular assembling, every fourth year, of the General Conference. The office of presiding elder was recognized, and an Annual Conference ordered to be held for each presiding elder's district, the limits of which were to be determined by the bishops. A large portion of the time, however, was taken up in discussing a proposition of James O'Kelly to abridge the power of the bishops in making the appointments. "The arguments, for and against, were weighty, and handled in a masterly manner." The proposition did not prevail. O'Kelly and a few others sent a letter to the Conference with-

drawing from the connection. Asbury records: "The Conference ended in peace; my mind was kept in peace, and my soul enjoyed rest in the stronghold." The numbers reported at this Conference are 266 preachers and 65,980 members. The secession was followed with a bitter controversy and a loss of about seven thousand members.

13. **The Field and the Men.**—The latter part of the eighteenth and the early part of the nineteenth century was indeed a heroic period in the history of American Methodism. The extent of the field will be comprehended by noting the seven Annual Conferences which the General Conference of 1804 defined. They were the New England, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Virginia, South Carolina, and Western. The territory covered was from Canada to Georgia, from the Atlantic to Ohio. In 1800 there were reported 287 traveling preachers and 64,894 members and probationers. In 1812 there were 688 preachers and 195,357 members, and the Church was growing at the rate of about 10,000 members annually. Yellow fever was prevalent in several seasons from 1793 to 1798. Many prominent laborers succumbed to it.

14. **John Dickins**, who had been received as a traveling preacher in 1777, and who was very useful during the Revolutionary period, was stricken down by the fever in 1798. He had planned with Asbury in 1780 the first Methodist Seminary (situated at Abingdon, eighteen miles north of Baltimore), which became known as "Cokesbury College," and which was destroyed by fire in 1795. He was also the first book agent, loaning from his private funds $600 to

commence the business, the outcome of which may now be seen in the two publishing houses in New York and Cincinnati, with a capital of over $3,000,000 and doing business to the extent of nearly $2,000,000 per annum. On his deathbed he declared, "Divine wisdom cannot err." "I can rejoice in His will, whether for life or death."

15. About the year 1800 camp meetings were much in vogue. Lee writes of them: "Every discourse and every exhortation given during the meeting was attended by displays of divine power. Almost every hour and every minute was employed in the worship of God." The simplicity and self-denial of the preachers at this time is well pictured by an English minister who visited this country in 1802. He says: "I was greatly surprised to meet in the preachers assembled in New York such examples of simplicity and labor and self-denial. Some of them had come five or six hundred miles to attend the Conference. They had little appearance of clerical costume; many of them had not a single article of black cloth; their good bishops set them the example, neither of whom was dressed in black; but the want of this was abundantly compensated by a truly primitive zeal in the cause of their divine Master."

16. The South was the witness of the labors of men like George Dougharty. "By application and perseverance he took a stand in the front rank of the South Carolina band of pioneers, marshaling the armies of the sacramental host from the seashore to the Blue Ridge." In 1801 he was attacked by a mob in Charleston and dragged from the church to the pump, where

he would probably have perished but for the interference of a woman. As the result of the treatment he was attacked with consumption, from which he died in 1807.

17. **Billy Hibbard** was a familiar name in Methodism in the Northern States. Entering the ministry in 1798, he toiled on amid many privations for forty-six years. He was an eccentric but very able man. He was noted not only for great piety, but for wit and humor. He disclaimed in Conference the name of William, and being told by the bishop that Billy was a little boy's name, he replied that he was a very little boy when his father gave it to him. In a season of suffering he said, "I am now tasting of my Master's fare, and, O, what an honor that I may suffer a little with my Master!" When he was near death he said, "My mind is calm as a summer eve."

18. **Peter Cartwright** appears in the Annual Conference first in 1804, when he is ordained deacon by Bishop Asbury and elder by Bishop McKendree; and thenceforward, until, in 1874, in his eighty-eighth year, he passed away in peace, he was a prominent figure in the Methodism of the West. He was eight years in the Western Conference, as many in the Genesee, four in the Kentucky, and forty-eight in the Illinois Conference. As a pioneer in Kentucky, Ohio, and Illinois his services were of inestimable value. In the control of rough and wicked men he had superior power. On one occasion, when he had vanquished a mob, and in doing so had felled a man to the ground, he said, "I feel a clear conscience, for under the circumstances we have done right." He then preached from "The gates of hell shall not pre-

vail." So great was the effect of the preaching that "not less than three hundred fell like dead men in battle, and mourners were strewed all over the camp-ground." "Rough and hardy as the oak; overflowing with geniality and humor; a tireless worker and traveler; a sagacious counselor, giving often in the strangest disguises of wit and humor the shrewdest suggestions of wisdom; an unfailing friend, an incomparable companion, a faithful patriot, and an earnest Methodist, Peter Cartwright was one of the most noted, most interesting, most inexplicable men of the West and of Methodism." (*Stevens.*)

19. Henry B. Bascom. "Born in Pennsylvania in 1796, removed to Kentucky, and thence to Ohio in 1812, and the same year became a class leader and exhorter. The next year he joined the Conference, and began the itinerant career which soon rendered his fame national as one of the most noted pulpit orators of the New World." In 1823 he was elected chaplain to Congress; in 1827 he was called to the presidency of Madison College, Pennsylvania, and subsequently held many positions of importance in connection with Church institutions. He was a delegate to the General Conference of 1844, when the Church was divided, and joined in the organization of the Church, South, of which he was made a bishop in 1849. He died September 8, 1850, "worn out with toil."

VIII.

THE NEW CENTURY.

1. 1800–1812, Delegated General Conference.—In 1800 Richard Whatcoat was elected bishop by four votes over Jesse Lee. The Conference was noted by a great revival which took place during its session. In 1804 the pastoral term was limited to two consecutive years on any one charge; previously there had been no limit to the episcopal prerogative in making appointments, and some had been three years in one appointment. The title of "Quarterly Meeting Conference" was given to the quarterly assembly of the official members of the circuits. The "Book Concern" was ordered to be removed from Philadelphia to New York. In 1808 William McKendree was elected bishop. The Conference was agitated by the discussion of the question of making the General Conference a delegated body, a memorial in favor of which had been presented to the Annual Conferences by the New York Conference. A plan for a delegated General Conference was finally adopted on the basis of one member for each five of the traveling ministers. Full power was given to the Conference to make rules and regulations for the proper conduct of the Church, except as provided in what are popularly known as the "Restrictive Rules." (See page 92.) The ratio of representation has several times been altered, and is now one ministerial delegate

for every forty-five members of each Annual Conference; but no Conference shall be denied the right of one ministerial delegate. On May 1, 1812, the first delegated General Conference assembled in the "old John Street Church," New York. There were ninety delegates present. The Church now numbered 190,000 members, 2,000 local and 700 traveling preachers.

2. 1812–1832, Important Secessions.—In 1816 Enoch George and Robert R. Roberts were elected bishops. In this year the African Methodist Episcopal Church was formed under the leadership of Richard Allen, who with others seceded from their white brethren in Philadelphia and elected Allen bishop. In 1820 the Missionary Society, which had been formed in New York in 1819, was officially recognized by the General Conference. Another secession of colored members took place in New York in 1819, and the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church was formed. A proposition for the election of presiding elders by the Annual Conferences on the nomination of the bishops, instead of their appointment by the bishops, was before the General Conferences of 1816, 1820, and 1824, and was the occasion of much excitement. On account of a resolution passed in its favor by the Conference of 1820 Joshua Soule, who had been elected bishop, declined ordination, and resigned the office on the ground that the provision was a violation of the restrictive rules. The General Conference of 1828 finally rescinded the action. At the General Conference of 1824 Joshua Soule was again elected bishop, and Elijah Hedding was also elected. In 1826 the publication of *The Christian Advocate* was commenced. At the General Conference of 1828 permission

was given to the Canada Conference to form a separate and distinct Church, which was accomplished in October of that year. The action on the presiding elder question, together with much discussion on the subject of the rights of the laity, led to a secession of a number of ministers and members, and finally to the formation in 1830 of the "Methodist Protestant Church." This body did away with episcopacy and introduced lay representation. The General Conference of 1832 elected James O. Andrew and John Emory bishops.

3. 1832–1844, The Great Division.—In 1836 Beverly Waugh, Thomas A Morris, and Wilbur Fisk were elected bishops. Dr. Fisk declined the office in order to remain at the Wesleyan University, of which he was president. The Liberia Conference was organized. In 1843 the American Wesleyan Church was organized chiefly on antislavery grounds. The General Conference of 1844 was one of the most memorable in the history of the Church. Edmund S. Janes and Leonidas L. Hamline were elected bishops. The subject of slavery had been agitating the Church. The Baltimore Conference had suspended one of its members on the charge of refusing to manumit slaves received by marriage. Bishop Andrew had married a lady through whom he became a slaveholder. The General Conference passed a resolution declaring it to be the sense of the Conference that the bishop "desist from the exercise of his office so long as this impediment remains." The delegates from the South presented a declaration that in their judgment the action of the General Conference made it impossible for the ministry to be successful in the South. A committee was appointed

with a view, if possible, of adjusting matters amicably. The committee near the end of the session reported a plan subsequently known as the "Plan of Separation," to be operative "should the Annual Conferences in the slaveholding States find it necessary to unite in a distinct ecclesiastical connection." The bishops were to lay the proper part of the report before the Annual Conferences. This action was very differently construed by those entertaining diverse views on the subject. Many believed that the whole report was dependent upon the action of the Annual Conferences, while others contended that the plan was operative at once. The Conferences failed to ratify the change of the restrictive rules so as to permit of a division of the Church property, and the General Conference of 1848 declared the plan null and void. Meanwhile the members of the Southern Conferences, acting under the view that the plan was at once operative, proceeded to elect delegates to a convention to meet on the 1st of May, 1845, in the city of Louisville. The convention consisted of delegates from fourteen Annual Conferences, and was presided over by Bishops Soule and Andrew. "The Methodist Episcopal Church, South," was organized. A General Conference was called for May 1, 1846, which elected additional bishops, and has since met quadrennially. A suit was instituted in the United States Courts for a division of property, and was finally decided in favor of the Church, South. This secession resulted in a loss of about half a million members and property to the extent of $375,000.

4. 1844–1872, Lay Delegation. — The General Conference of 1852 elected as bishops Levi Scott, Mat-

thew Simpson, Osmon C. Baker, and Edward R. Ames. Bishop Hamline, on account of ill health, tendered his resignation, which the Conference reluctantly accepted, and he became a superannuated member of the Ohio Conference. In 1856 the election of a missionary bishop was authorized, limiting his jurisdiction to the field for which he might be appointed, and in 1858 Francis Burns was elected by the Liberia Conference and ordained for that field, and was the first colored bishop of the Church. The General Conference of 1860 was again occupied with the question of slavery. The chapter in the Discipline on this subject was so altered as to declare very strongly against it. This year witnessed another secession in the formation of the "Free Methodist Church." It grew out of the expulsion of ministers and members because of alleged acts of insubordination. They professed, however, only a desire to restore the simplicity of Wesleyan Methodism in doctrine and practice. The Emancipation Proclamation of Abraham Lincoln, which on January 1, 1863, set free nearly four million slaves, found the nation engaged in a struggle for existence. Into the Union armies went thousands of the young men of the Church. The General Conference of 1864 appointed a committee to assure President Lincoln of their purpose to heartily support the government. In his response the President said: "Nobly sustained as the government has been by all the Churches, I could utter nothing which might in the least appear invidious against any. Yet, without this, it may fairly be said that the Methodist Episcopal Church, not less devoted than the best, is by its great numbers the most important of all. It is no fault

in others that the Methodist Episcopal Church sends more soldiers to the field, more nurses to the hospital, and more prayers to heaven than any. God bless the Methodist Church! God bless all the Churches! Blessed be God, who, in this our great trial, giveth us the Churches." To provide for those in the South who desired to remain with the Methodist Episcopal Church the Conference authorized the formation there of Annual Conferences. At this Conference Davis W. Clark, Edward Thompson, and Calvin Kingsley were elected bishops. The limit of the pastoral term, which had been two years since 1804, was extended to three years. The year 1865 witnessed the close of the war, and in 1866 the Church was called to the celebration of the centenary of American Methodism. Special services were held. Large amounts of money were contributed for the payment of church debts and the erection and endowment of institutions of learning. It is estimated that these gifts amounted to ten million dollars. Bishop Burns, missionary bishop for Liberia, having died in 1863, the General Conference of 1864 authorized the Liberia Conference to elect a successor to him, and the Conference at its session in 1866 elected Rev. John Wright Roberts, and he was ordained in New York city in June of the same year. The General Conference of 1868 passed a resolution expressing a willingness to admit lay delegates when the Church should approve. A plan was submitted to the churches and the Annual Conferences, and, having been approved, the General Conference of 1872 admitted the lay delegates who had been elected. Eight additional bishops were elected, namely, Thomas Bowman, Wil-

liam L. Harris, Randolph S. Foster, Isaac W. Wiley, Stephen M. Merrill, Edward G. Andrews, Gilbert Haven, and Jesse T. Peck. At this Conference incipient steps were taken toward fraternal relations with the Methodist Episcopal Church, South.

5. 1872–1884, Centennial of the Methodist Episcopal Church.—The year 1874 witnessed the organization of the "Colored Methodist Episcopal Church of America" under the patronage of the Church, South. At the General Conference of 1876 fraternal messengers were received from the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and a joint committee on fraternity was provided for. A committee was appointed with authority to prepare a new Hymnal. The Conference of 1880 elected as bishops Henry W. Warren, Cyrus D. Foss, John F. Hurst, and Erastus O. Haven. The venerable Bishop Scott, ordained in 1852, was returned on the list as "non-effective," and appropriate resolutions adopted. The relation of women to the Church was expressed in the following action: it was ordered that "the pronouns *he*, *his*, and *him*, when used in the Discipline with reference to stewards, class leaders, and Sunday school superintendents, shall not be so construed as to exclude women from such offices." The ruling of Bishop Andrews in the two following cases was approved. At the New England Conference: "In my judgment the law of the Church does not authorize the ordination of women; I therefore am not at liberty to submit to the vote of the Conference the vote to elect women to orders." At the New York Conference: "The Discipline of the Church does not provide for, nor contemplate, the licensing of women as local

preachers, and therefore the action of said Conference (Poughkeepsie District Conference) and of its president was without authority of law." Preliminary action was taken in reference to celebrating the approaching centenary of the denomination.

The General Conference of 1884 met in the centennial year of the Methodist Episcopal Church. The proper method of recognizing this important event was the subject of earnest consideration. A special committee was appointed. The plan which had been formulated by representatives from the different branches of Methodism for holding a Conference in Baltimore in December was approved. It was recommended that the "chief object of the connectional offering should be the cause of education." The committee closed their report with these observations: "Finally, reviewing the closing century, we are filled with amazement and devout thanksgiving. For a church polity so effective, for doctrines so scriptural, for a ritual so precious, for leaders so heroic, for experience so vital, for a success so unexampled, we give God thanks. That in our rejoicings we may be preserved from all ecclesiastical pride and vainglory, let us take to heart the earnest recommendation of our chief pastors, 'That the year 1884 be one of special consecration, that we may humble ourselves before God and fervently plead for that precious baptism of the Holy Spirit without which nothing good or great can be accomplished.'" At this Conference William X. Ninde, John M. Walden, Willard F. Mallalieu, and Charles H. Fowler were elected bishops. A missionary bishop for Africa was authorized and Rev. William Taylor elected. The publication of a

hymnal for Sunday schools, revivals, and social worship was ordered. The *Epworth Hymnal* is the outcome. The report of the Committee on Temperance, which was adopted, concludes with these words: "We proclaim as our motto voluntary total abstinence from all intoxicants as the true ground of personal temperance, and complete legal prohibition of the traffic in alcoholic drinks as the duty of civil government." The following resolution concerning the Freedmen's Aid Society was adopted: "*Resolved*, That as a General Conference we render thanks to God for the success that has attended the work of the Church in the Southern States by which it has come to be permanently planted in every State in that section, so that we are now, in the matter of occupation as well as administration, a national Church;" and the following from the Committee on the State of the Church was also adopted: "*Resolved*, That this General Conference declares the policy of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be that no member of any society within the Church shall be excluded from public worship in any and every edifice of the denomination, and no student shall be excluded from instruction in any and every school under the supervision of the Church because of race, color, or previous condition of servitude." The Centennial Conference of American Methodism assembled in the Mount Vernon Methodist Episcopal Church, Baltimore, Md., Wednesday morning, December 10. The occasion was one of great interest and profit. The different branches of Methodism were represented by delegates. The topics considered covered the rise, progress, methods, and success of Methodism in the United States and

Canada. The causes of success and possible dangers were discussed. Education, missions, and Sunday schools were ably represented, and the missions of Methodism to the extremes of society emphasized. "Extremes of society!" exclaims Dr. J. W. Hamilton, "there are none, if we have men tall enough to stand in one and reach up into another. And this the Wesleys and their preachers after them did do. It was no common enthusiast who could wring gold from the close-fisted Franklin and admiration from the fastidious Horace Walpole, or who could look down from the top of a green knoll at Kingswood on twenty thousand colliers from the Bristol coalpits, and see as he preached the tears making white channels down their blackened cheeks. What, then, is the mission of Methodism to the extremes of society now? And what will it be in the century which now begins? Just what it was when this first century began. Let the spirit of the fathers seize their sons:

> "'Come, Holy Ghost, for thee we call;
> Spirit of burning come.'"

A paper was presented by Rev. J. H. Vincent, D.D., having reference to forming young people's societies, to be known as "Oxford Leagues." This subject was referred to a special committee, who reported in favor thereof and declared the objects to be: 1. The more careful and devout study of the Holy Scriptures; 2. The cultivation of a nobler and purer personal Christian character; 3. The study of the Christian classics for literary culture; 4. The devising of methods for doing good to others.

This recommendation met with the approval of the

Church, and a number of leagues were organized. The Young People's Methodist Alliance had already been started in 1883. Subsequently other young people's societies were formed, and at a conference of representatives of the various organizations, held in Cleveland, May, 1889, these societies were all merged into a new society to be known as the "Epworth League." Its plans and wonderful growth will be noticed later.

6. 1884–1892, Problems of To-day.—The General Conference of 1888 took action upon several important subjects. At its opening it was confronted with a new issue. Several women had been returned as delegates. Protests against their admission were handed to the bishops. The Conference finally sustained these protests and decided "that, under the constitution and laws of the Church as they now are, women are not eligible as lay delegates in the General Conference." Subsequently the Conference decided to submit the question of their admission to the churches and Annual Conferences, to be voted upon by them. The limit of the pastoral term was extended to five years and that of presiding elders to six years. A missionary bishop for India and Malaysia was authorized, and Rev. James M. Thoburn was elected. The work of deaconesses was recognized, their duties defined, and provision made for authorizing proper persons to perform such work. Self-supporting missions were the subject of a number of memorials. It was decided "that missionaries employed and churches organized on the self-supporting plan shall be entitled to the same rights and be amenable to the Discipline of the Church the same as missionaries and churches in other fields." The name of the

Liberia Conference was changed to Africa Conference, to include the whole of Africa. Our missions in Japan were authorized, under proper conditions, to unite with other branches of Methodism in one body. Provision was made for submitting to the Annual Conferences the question of equal ministerial and lay representation in the General Conference. Resolutions were adopted authorizing the centennial celebration of the "Book Concern" in 1889. Five additional bishops were elected: John H. Vincent, James N. FitzGerald, Isaac W. Joyce, John P. Newman, and Daniel A. Goodsell.

The General Conference of 1892 again had before it the vexed questions of equal ministerial and lay representation and of admitting women to represent the laity, neither proposition as presented by the Conference of 1888 to the Annual Conferences having received the necessary vote to secure its adoption. Both questions were again submitted to the vote of the Annual Conferences, and also the question of changing the basis of ministerial representation so as to be "not more than one for every forty-five nor less than one for every ninety." The question of admitting women was submitted in the peculiar form of the proposition to amend the second restrictive rule by adding the words "and said delegates must be male members," so "that if the amendment does not receive the votes of three fourths of the members of the Annual Conferences and two thirds of the General Conference the second restrictive rule shall be so construed that the words 'lay delegates' may include men and women." It will be observed that this proposition throws upon those opposed to the admission of women the onus of

securing the necessary vote to insert "must be male members;" while they contend that that necessity should have been laid upon those favoring their admission by a change that would declare that women as well as men are eligible as lay representatives. The proposition has caused much discussion, and is even thought by some to be unconstitutional, because it apparently gives to the Annual Conferences the right to interpret the Discipline, which only the General Conference can do. It will also be borne in mind that though this question is also submitted to the vote of the churches it is only the vote of the Conferences that can determine the change. The proposition to equalize the ministerial and lay representation was submitted with the recommendation of two thirds of the General Conference, and the action will be complete if approved by the Annual Conferences, while the submission of the questions of altering the ratio of representation and of admitting women is without recommendation, and will require the vote of the next General Conference to complete the action.

The General Conference of 1888 having taken the initiative in forming a national organization to preserve the Christian Sabbath, and subsequently the "American Sabbath Union" having been formed, it was resolved, "that we heartily indorse its work, and recommend it as worthy of the earnest cooperation of individuals and churches throughout our connection." The "City Evangelization Union," formed in Pittsburg, March, 1892, was recognized as one of the aggressive agencies of the Church, having for its aim to bring into helpful relations the local organizations within the bounds of

the Annual Conferences. Resolutions were adopted approving the establishment of the "American University" at Washington and accepting the patronage of the same, and the Church was called on to secure an endowment of ten millions of dollars. A resolution was adopted condemning certain features of the Act of Congress of May 5, 1892, excluding Chinese laborers, and calling on Congress "to remove these objectionable features, and thus secure to Chinese persons resident among us the rights to which they are entitled alike by justice and humanity." The following preambles and resolutions in regard to outrages on our colored members in the South were adopted:

"*Whereas*, There are about two hundred and fifty thousand colored members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, a large proportion of whom reside in the South; and, *whereas*, many of these members, in common with others of their race, are the victims of violence, mob law, lynching, and other outrages against humanity; and, *whereas*, there is constantly practiced against these people an unjust discrimination in the laws for separate coaches on railroads recently passed by several State Legislatures; and, *whereas*, some of our white ministers, laboring to promote the education and elevation of the colored people, have also been subjected to outrage, and in some instances have been obliged to abandon their philanthropic work; and, *whereas*, the means of redress for these outrages and of safety against them are notoriously inadequate for the protection of our brethren thus wrongfully treated; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That this General Conference, representing over two million two hundred and fifty thou-

sand communicants and some ten million adherents of the Methodist Episcopal Church who are citizens of the United States, hereby utters its emphatic protest against this unjust and outrageous treatment of an important portion of the membership of the Church and of the citizenship of the nation.

"2. That we call upon the general government to use all its legitimate authority and its influence to put an end to the injustice and wrong herein mentioned, and to secure protection and equality before the law to these citizens of this republic.

"3. That we also call upon the members of Congress and of the several State Legislatures, and upon the executors of law and the administrators of justice in the several States, to see that these outrages cease and that just laws be enacted, and that these laws be impartially enforced.

"4. That we respectfully request the religious and secular press in the entire country to unite with us in denouncing the wrongs and cruelties herein set forth and in efforts to secure equality and justice in the enactment and enforcement of humane and righteous laws."

Action was taken in reference to a third Ecumenical Methodist Conference, to be held in 1901, and authority given to appoint eighteen representatives of the Methodist Episcopal Church on the Executive Commission. Resolutions were passed commending the Columbian Exposition, but demanding that "the gates of the Exposition shall not be opened on Sunday." The report on the Epworth League refers to its remarkable growth in three years to eight thousand chapters and

a membership of four hundred thousand young people. A constitution was adopted, a board of control was provided for, and an editor of the *Epworth Herald* elected. The report of the Commission on the Constitution of the Church was indefinitely postponed, and a paper presented by Dr. Goucher was adopted, as follows:

"The section on the General Conference in the Discipline of 1808, as adopted by the General Conference of 1808, has the nature and force of a constitution.

"That section, together with such modifications as have been adopted since that time in accordance with the provisions for amendment in that section, is the present constitution, and is now included in paragraphs 55 to 64, inclusive, in the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church of 1888, excepting:

"1. The change of the provisions for the calling of an extra session of the General Conference from a unanimous to a two-thirds vote of the Annual Conferences; and,

"2. That which is known as the plan of lay delegation, as recommended by the General Conference of 1868, and passed by the General Conference of 1872."

For a better understanding of this action the sections of the Discipline referred to are here given:

"SECTION 55. The General Conference shall be composed of ministerial and lay delegates. The ministerial delegates shall consist of one delegate for every forty-five members of each Annual Conference, to be appointed either by seniority or choice, at the discretion of such Annual Conference, yet so that such representatives shall have traveled at least four full calendar years from the time that they were received on trial by

an Annual Conference, and are in full connection at the time of holding the Conference.*

"SEC. 56. The lay delegates shall consist of two laymen for each Annual Conference, except such Conferences as have but one ministerial delegate, which Conferences shall each be entitled to one lay delegate.

"SEC. 57. The lay delegate shall be chosen by an Electoral Conference of laymen, which shall assemble for the purpose on the third day of the session of the Annual Conference, at the place of its meeting, at its session immediately preceding that of the General Conference.

"SEC. 58. The Electoral Conference shall be composed of one layman from each circuit or station within the bounds of the Annual Conference, such laymen to be chosen by the last Quarterly Conference preceding the time of the assembling of such Electoral Conference; and on assembling the Electoral Conference shall organize by electing a chairman and secretary of its own number; *provided*, that no layman shall be chosen a delegate either to the Electoral Conference or to the General Conference who shall be under twenty-five years of age, or who shall not have been a member of the Church in full connection for the five consecutive years preceding the elections.†

* A transferred preacher shall not be counted twice in the same year in the basis of the election of delegates to the General Conference, nor vote for delegates to the General Conference in any Annual Conference where he is not counted as a part of the basis of representation, nor vote twice the same year on any constitutional question.

† The secretaries of the several Annual and Electoral Conferences shall send to the secretary of the last General Conference a certified copy of the election of delegates and reserves to the next General

"SEC. 59. The General Conference shall meet on the first day of May, in the year of our Lord 1812, in the city of New York, and thenceforward on the first day of May once in four years perpetually, in such place or places as shall be fixed on by the General Conference from time to time; but the general superintendents, or a majority of them, by and with the advice of two thirds of all the Annual Conferences, shall have power to call an extra session of the General Conference at any time, to be constituted in the usual way. But if there shall be no general superintendent, then two thirds of all the Annual Conferences shall have power to call such extra session.

"SEC. 60. At all times when the General Conference is met it shall take two thirds of the whole number of ministerial and lay delegates to form a quorum for transacting business.

"SEC. 61. The ministerial and lay delegates shall deliberate and vote together as one body; but they shall vote separately whenever such separate vote shall be demanded by one third of either order; and in such cases the concurrent vote of both orders shall be necessary to complete an action.

"SEC. 62. One of the general superintendents shall preside in the General Conference; but in case no general superintendent be present the General Conference shall choose a president *pro tempore.*

"SEC. 63. The General Conference shall have full power to make rules and regulations for our Church under

Conference, in the order of their election, as soon after the election as practicable, so that a roll of members and reserves may be prepared for the opening of the next General Conference.

the following limitations and restrictions, namely: 1. The General Conference shall not revoke, alter, nor change our Articles of Religion nor establish any new standards or rules of doctrine contrary to our present existing and established standards of doctrine. 2. The General Conference shall not allow of more than one ministerial representative for every fourteen members of an Annual Conference; nor of a less number than one for every forty-five; nor of more than two lay delegates for an Annual Conference; *provided*, nevertheless, that when there shall be in any Annual Conference a fraction of two thirds the number which shall be fixed for the ratio of representation, such Annual Conference shall be entitled to an additional delegate for such fraction; and *provided*, also, that no Conference shall be denied the privilege of one ministerial and one lay delegate. 3. The General Conference shall not change nor alter any part or rule of our government so as to do away episcopacy, nor destroy the plan of our itinerant general superintendency; but may appoint a missionary bishop or superintendent for any of our foreign missions, limiting his jurisdiction to the same respectively. 4. The General Conference shall not revoke nor change the General Rules of the united societies. 5. The General Conference shall not do away the privilege of our ministers or preachers of trial by a committee, and of an appeal; neither shall they do away the privileges of our members of trial before the society or by a committee, and of an appeal. 6. The General Conference shall not appropriate the produce of the Book Concern nor of the Chartered Fund to any purpose other than for the benefit of traveling, supernumerary, superannuated,

and worn-out preachers, their wives, widows, and chidren.

"SEC. 64. *Provided*, nevertheless, that upon the concurrent recommendation of three fourths of all the members of the several Conferences who shall be present and vote on such recommendation, then a majority of two thirds of the General Conference succeeding shall suffice to alter any of the above restrictions, excepting the first article; and also, whenever such alteration or alterations shall have been first recommended by two thirds of the General Conference, so soon as three fourths of the members of all the Annual Conferences shall have concurred as aforesaid, such alteration or alterations shall take effect."

The following action was taken in reference to a proposed amendment to the Constitution of the United States:

"*Whereas*, There has been introduced into the Fifty-second Congress, in both the Senate and the House of Representatives of the national government, and referred to the Judiciary Committee in both Houses, the following proposed form of a Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, accompanied by numerous petitions for its passage from all parts of the Union, namely: 'No State shall pass any law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, or use its property or credit, or any money raised by taxation, or authorize either to be used, for the purpose of founding, maintaining, or aiding, by appropriation, payment for services, expenses, or otherwise, any Church, religious denomination, or religious society, or any institution, society, or under-

taking which is wholly or in part under sectarian or ecclesiastical control.'

"*Whereas*, Twenty-one State constitutions already contain provisions against the violation of religious freedom and the sectarian appropriation of public moneys, and only a national provision can set the question at rest;

"*Whereas*, We believe that the American common school system ought to be sacredly guarded from sectarian encroachments, that religious controversies ought to be eliminated from political questions, and that the separation of Church and State ought to be perpetual for the safety of both our civil and religious liberties; therefore,

"*Resolved*, That this General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church appeals to the Fifty-second Congress to pass and submit to the several States for their action the proposed form of the Sixteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States as a peaceful measure of safety that will prevent impending perils."

Action looking to organic union with other Methodist bodies was taken as follows:

"*Whereas*, The recent Ecumenical Conference at Washington, D. C., earnestly recommended the various Methodist bodies of the United States to take all possible steps to further organic union; and, *whereas*, our bishops in their quadrennial address to this General Conference also urged the consideration of the same great subject; and, *whereas*, memorials from various sections of our Church presented to this Conference reveal a widespread desire for the union of all branches

of our American Methodism; and, *whereas*, this General Conference desires to further, so far as possible, fraternity and union with all our brethren; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That the bishops be and are hereby requested to appoint a commission consisting of three bishops, three ministers, and three laymen, which shall have power to confer with similar commissions from other Methodist bodies upon the desirability and feasibility of fraternal cooperation and of organic union, and report to the General Conference of 1896.

"2. That the bishops be and are hereby requested to invite the General Conferences of other Methodist bodies to appoint similar commissions to confer with the commission of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

No bishops were elected at this General Conference.

The interest in this Conference was greatly increased by large public meetings on behalf of various benevolent and evangelistic agencies of the Church. The subject of temperance had very earnest consideration. A permanent committee of fifteen was appointed to aid in the formation of Temperance Leagues in all the Churches for practical effort in suppressing the liquor traffic. We quote a portion of a report as adopted:

"We reiterate the language of the Episcopal Address of 1888: 'The liquor traffic is so pernicious in all its bearings, so inimical to the interests of honest trade, so repugnant to the moral sense, so injurious to the peace and order of society, so hurtful to the home, to the Church, and to the body politic, and so utterly antagonistic to all that is precious in life, that the only proper attitude toward it for Christians is that of relentless hostility. It can never be legalized without sin.'"

LIST OF THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

NAME.	ORDAINED.	REMARKS.
Thomas Coke	1784	Died May 3, 1814, aged 67.
Francis Asbury	1784	" March 31, 1816, aged 71.
Richard Whatcoat	1800	" July 5, 1806, aged 71.
William McKendree	1808	" March 5, 1835, aged 78.
Enoch George	1816	" August 23, 1828, aged 60.
Robert R. Roberts	1816	" March 28, 1844, aged 65.
Joshua Soule	1824	Joined M. E. Church, South, 1846; died March 6, 1867, aged 76.
Elijah Hedding	1824	Died April 9, 1852, aged 72.
James O. Andrew	1832	Joined M. E, Church, South, 1846; died March 1, 1871, aged 77.
John Emory	1832	Died December 16, 1835, aged 47.
Beverly Waugh	1836	" Feb. 9, 1858, aged 69.
Thomas A. Morris	1836	" Sept. 2, 1874, aged 80.
Leonidas L. Hamline	1844	Resigned 1852; died March 22, 1865, aged 68.
Edmund S. Janes	1844	Died Sept. 18, 1876, aged 69.
Levi Scott	1852	" July 13, 1882, aged 80.
Matthew Simpson	1852	" June 18, 1884, aged 73.
Osmon C. Baker	1852	" Dec. 20, 1871, aged 59.
Edward R. Ames	1852	" April 25, 1879, aged 73.
Francis Burns*	1858	" April 18, 1863, aged 54.
Davis W. Clark	1864	" May 23, 1871, aged 59.
Edward Thomson	1864	" March 22, 1870, aged 60.
Calvin Kingsley	1864	" April 6, 1870, aged 62.
John W. Roberts*	1866	" Jan. 30, 1875, aged 63.
Thomas Bowman	1872	
William L. Harris	1872	Died Sept. 2, 1887, aged 70.
Randolph S. Foster	1872	
Isaac W. Wiley	1872	Died Nov. 22, 1884, aged 60.
Stephen M. Merrill	1872	
Edward G. Andrews	1872	
Gilbert Haven	1872	Died Jan. 3, 1880, aged 59.
Jesse T. Peck	1872	" May 17, 1883, aged 72.
Henry W. Warren	1880	
Cyrus D. Foss	1880	
John F. Hurst	1880	
Erastus O. Haven	1880	Died Aug. 2, 1881, aged 61.
William X. Ninde	1884	
John M. Walden	1884	
Willard F. Mallalieu	1884	
Charles H. Fowler	1884	
William Taylor*	1884	
John H. Vincent	1888	
James N. FitzGerald	1888	
Isaac W. Joyce	1888	
John P. Newman	1888	
Daniel A. Goodsell	1888	
James M. Thoburn*	1888	

* Missionary Bishop.

GROWTH OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Year.	Traveling Preachers.	Local Preachers.	Members and Probationers.
1773	10	.....	1,160
1774	17	.....	2,073
1775	19	.....	3,148
1776	24	.....	4,921
1777	36	.....	6,968
1778	29	.....	6,095
1779	49	.....	8,577
1780	42	.... .	8,504
1781	54	.....	10,539
1782	57	.....	11,785
1783	82	.....	13,740
1784	83	.....	14,988
1788	166	.....	37,354
1792	266	.....	65,980
1796	293	.....	56,664
1800	287	.....	64,894
1804	400	.....	113,134
1808	540	.....	151,995
1812	688	.....	195,357
1816	695	.....	214,235
1820	904	.....	259,890
1824	1,272	.....	328,523
1828	1,642	.....	421,156
1832	2,200	.....	548,593
1836	2,981	.....	650,678
1840	2,263	4,935	580,098
1844	4,621	8,087	*1,171,356
1848	3,841	5,191	639,066
1852	4,513	5,767	728,700
1856	5,877	6,718	800,327
1860	6,987	8,188	990.447
1864	6,821	8,205	928,320
1868	8,481	9,899	1,255,115
1872	10,242	11,964	1,458,441
1876	10,923	12,881	1,580,559
1880	12,096	12,555	1,742,922
1884	11,349	12,026	1,769,534
1888	12,802	13,436	2,093,935
1892	.....	.....	2,292,614

* Subsequent decrease occasioned by withdrawal of Southern members.

IX.

WORLD-WIDE CONQUESTS.

1. First Ecumenical Conference.—The thought of gathering the hosts of Methodism in Ecumenical Conference was first suggested in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at its session in Baltimore in 1876. A committee was appointed, correspondence was opened with the various Methodist bodies, and as the result the "first Ecumenical Methodist Conference" was held in City Road Wesleyan Chapel, London, in September, 1881. Twenty-six separate bodies were represented by four hundred delegates. The occasion was one of great interest. We give a few extracts from the press as indicative of the impression made upon the English people:

"The greatest religious reformation of modern times is unquestionably that wrought by the Methodist denomination. A century and a half ago religious fervor in England, and we might almost say religion itself, had well-nigh died out. If we wish to know what Wesleyanism has done for England—we might say for the world—the Methodist Ecumenical Conference now being held in London will answer that it has wrought the greatest of all religious reformations, and has won millions of souls to the kingdom of Christ."—*The Christian Union.*

"The Methodist Ecumenical Conference has well

deserved its name. The gathering of delegates has been in the widest sense representative. Not only have ministers and laymen come from all the principal countries in the world, but they have also come from such less familiar places as Yokohama, Foo-Chow, Liberia, and Naini Tal. Dark and tawny skinned delegates have been present in considerable numbers and have taken an active part in the proceedings. The Methodist story is only one further illustration of the truth that enthusiasm is one of the conquering forces of the world."—*The Daily News* (*London*).

"Wesleyanism is a plant of vigorous growth. Transplanted to a foreign soil it adapts itself to new conditions and takes on new characters without losing its specific identity. The strength of Wesleyanism is seen in the fact that it has survived the shock which would have destroyed a weaker system. The glory of Wesleyanism is seen in the fact that there is no longer a schism. The separate function and mission of each of these bodies is acknowledged by all the others, and the various Methodist sections now take friendly counsel with each other for the promotion of the common good."—*The Manchester Examiner.*

The topics discussed, the character of the papers read, and the deep interest which was taken in all the proceedings gave evidence that Methodism had not lost either its fervor or its aggressive spirit.

2. Second Ecumenical Conference.—Such was the happy result of the first Ecumenical Conference of Methodism that provision was made for holding another similar gathering in the United States. Accordingly the "second Ecumenical Methodist Conference" con-

vened in the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church, Washington, D. C., on Wednesday, October 7, 1891, at 10:30 A. M. Five hundred delegates represented the various Methodist bodies. Again were the triumphs of Methodism made manifest by the evidences of increase in numbers and zeal. Two topics were kept prominent. These were the consolidation of the forces of Methodism and the purpose to reach the great masses of the cities, which has found expression in the "Forward Movement." The discussion on the topic "Christian Cooperation" was perhaps the occasion of more interest than any other. Bishop R. S. Foster, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, speaking on this topic, said:

"When I go before God, when I consult my conscience, when I think of the influence that arises from our separation, and when I think of the influence that might arise from our union, I can find no reason why at least we should not so far be eye to eye as to come together like brothers well beloved and shake each other by the hand and look each other in the eye, and talk to each other out of the heart, and pray together before God that he will soon send upon us wisdom, so that in some way the deplored separation might be healed and that, united together, we might take possession, as we are able to do, of the North and of the South of this great land."

These and similar remarks by others were enthusiastically received. It is noteworthy that our colored brethren were the first to move in the matter of consolidation. The "Forward Movement" was ably represented by Rev. Hugh Price Hughes and Rev. T. B. Stephenson,

of London, as also by the wife of the former and the daughter of the latter, who are zealous workers in this effort to reach the unchurched masses of the cities. Large audiences were stirred by the thrilling accounts of their labors and successes, and similar movements are hoped for in this country under the leadership of the societies which constitute the "City Evangelization Union." The missionary work of Methodism was thus represented in an address by Rev. W. J. Townsend, of the "Methodist New Connexion," England:

"The work of Methodism in the heathen world to-day comprises, in the East, missions in China, Japan, India, Ceylon, and the hermit nation of Corea; in the West, the West Indies, the American Indians, South America, Honduras, and the Bahamas; and, between these, South and Central Africa. In China six Methodist communities are engaged and one is just entering, spreading up to the great wall on the north, down to Canton and Hong Kong in the south, and to Hankow in the interior, comprising 213 stations, 118 foreign missionaries, 597 native helpers, 6,626 members, 5,035 scholars. In Japan four Methodist missions are established, and sustain 50 stations, 58 foreign missionaries, 182 native helpers, 4,547 members, 4,875 scholars. In Corea one denomination recently entered has five missionaries laboring there. In India two Methodist bodies are at work, which have secured 189 stations, 182 foreign missionaries, 2,606 native helpers, 10,065 members, 63,568 scholars. In Ceylon one Methodist church is carrying out operations, which has 81 stations, 17 missionaries, 1,585 native helpers, 4,537 members, 20,785 scholars. In Africa seven Methodist societies have entered, which

have 121 stations, 52 missionaries, 2,319 native helpers, 24,094 members, 14,492 scholars. Among the North American Indians two Methodist denominations are working, with 128 stations, 61 foreign missionaries, 129 native helpers, 8,127 members, 2,946 scholars. In the West Indies there are two Methodist bodies, of which returns only from one are to hand, comprising 10 stations, 9 foreign missionaries, 53 native helpers, 3,403 members, 2,172 scholars. In South America one society is at work, which has 67 stations, 33 foreign missionaries, 182 native helpers, 1,165 members, 2,466 scholars. In Honduras and the Bahamas there is one society, which has 13 stations, 17 foreign missionaries, 694 native helpers, 5,360 members, 5,243 scholars. These numbers present totals of 872 stations, 547 foreign missionaries, 8,347 native ministers and helpers, 67,924 members, 123,580 scholars in day or Sunday schools."

At the Council of 1881 the forces of Methodism were estimated at 32,652 traveling preachers, 89,292 local preachers, 5,000,000 members, and an attendance on the ministry of the Church estimated at 19,000,000. The growth in the decade will be seen by the following figures reported to the Council of 1891:

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION.

	Traveling Preachers.	Local Preachers.	Churches.	Other Preaching Places.	Members.	Sunday Schools.	Teachers.	Scholars.	Adherents.
Europe	4,488	39,748	15,584	3,503	915,896	14,405	243,748	1,781,612	4,212,601
Asia	602	356	326	34	35,314	282	1,944	47,430	118,968
Africa	365	2,140	571	1,264	77,234	450	2,669	28,267	295,376
America	39,042	51,578	57,465	....	5,382,375	62,323	593,246	4,579,539	19,784,293
Australasia and Polynesia	786	5,375	3,250	2,138	93,140	3,828	19,785	197,314	488,133
Total	45,283	99,203	77,196	6,939	6,503,959	81,288	861,392	6,634,162	24,899,421

We may here conveniently take a survey of the general field. We have followed Wesleyan Methodism in *Great Britain* to the death of Wesley in 1791. In taking note of the subsequent progress we are obliged to chronicle divisions which might have been avoided by more charitable and less arbitrary dealing with some of the ministers. In 1797 the "Methodist New Connexion" was formed as the result of the expulsion by the Conference of Alexander Kilham, growing out of discussions in regard to lay representation and the administration of the sacraments. In 1810 William Clowes and others were expelled for promoting camp meetings. The "Primitive Methodist Church" was the outcome. In 1815 the "Bible Christian Society" was formed as the result of the expulsion of William O'Brien for what was deemed irregular work. In 1828 the "Wesleyan Protestant Church" was formed; in 1836 the "Wesleyan Methodist Association." By far, however, the most painful and disastrous dissension was that of 1849, when the society known as the "Wesleyan Reformers" was organized. This was again the result of expulsions because of a heated controversy over the supposed dictation of the old ministers. It cost the Church many years of toil to regain the ground lost at this time. In 1857 a union was effected between the Wesleyan Methodist Association and the Wesleyan Reformers under the name of the "United Methodist Free Churches." A few of the Wesleyan Reformers are still known as the "Wesleyan Reform Union." Though divided in organization these bodies are all "Methodistic" in doctrine. An important event in the Wesleyan body was the formation in 1877 of a lay Con-

ference to act in conjunction with the legal Conference of one hundred ministers; certain subjects are reserved for the ministerial Conference and others (chiefly of a financial character) for the mixed Conference. We make some extracts from an essay read by Rev. D. J. Waller, D.D., of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, at the second Ecumenical Council on "The Present Status of Methodism in the Eastern Section:"

"In England the Established Church has the highest status in regard to numbers, wealth, and social position. The Methodist Churches hold a status next to the Established Church. There are 14,475 chapels, 4,028 ministers, 39,599 local preachers, 784,738 members, and probably not fewer than 3,000,000 adherents. The Wesleyan Methodists have accommodations for 2,156,209 sittings—about four times the number of church members returned. Estimating the other Methodist communities in the same proportion, the number of sittings in their places of worship is considerably over 3,000,000. It is a fact worth noting that the number of Sunday scholars in the Methodist Sunday schools is about the same as those in the day schools in the Church of England. The Wesleyans have taken a larger share than any other branch of the Methodist family in providing day schools. They have 840 schools with nearly 200,000 scholars. There is a considerable number of Methodist middle-class schools and high schools in which a superior education is given. Of the Leys School at Cambridge, of which Dr. Moulton is principal, it is said that it has solved the problem as to the possibility of reconciling Methodist training with the breadth and freedom of English public school life. Kingswood and Woodhouse

Grove Schools, established for the 'sons of the prophets,' have also contributed in a remarkable degree to extend the influence of Methodism. Many in the front ranks of the professional, literary, and political walks of life are indebted to these schools. There is one other educational work which must be mentioned, for it has extended Methodist influence far beyond the community with which it is specially identified. I refer to the establishment of children's homes and orphanages. This Christlike service is associated with the name of Dr. Stephenson, President of the British Wesleyan Conference, and the institution with its several branches stands as a monument of his life's work. The Master's broadest seal has been put upon missionary work. Foreign missions show by far the largest increase during the past ten years in the number of ministers, of lay agents, of church members, and of children in the Sunday and day schools. The *South African* Conference has been formed since the last Ecumenical Conference. In 1881 the number of church members for South Africa was 18,645; the number at present, including 10,515 on trial, is 47,221. The *West Indian missions* have been formed into two Conferences, and, including the Bahamas, the numbers have increased from 47,411 to 59,454. In *Scotland* the ground was occupied by the Presbyterian churches. The numerical success of Methodism has been inconsiderable, but, on the other hand, the indirect effect of the spirit and teaching of Methodism has been very great and beneficial. In *Ireland* the increase in the number of church members is only 5.8 per cent, but during the decade there has been a decrease in the population of nine

per cent. But the fruit of Irish Methodism is to be found in many lands, and especially in the United States. From the time when Philip Embury landed in New York there has been a constant stream of immigration from Ireland to the lands on this side the Atlantic. Ireland has enriched the Methodism of the world. *French Methodism* alone shows a decrease, but the circumstances have been exceptional and the difficulties enormous. In France, however, the tide has turned, and this year there is an increase, including those on trial, of about one hundred and fifty. They have entered upon an evangelistic missionary career which is full of promise."

The Methodist Episcopal Church is represented on the Continent of Europe by missions of which the following is a summary:

Countries.	Members and Probationers.	Sunday School Scholars.
Germany	10,580	11,751
Switzerland	6,292	14,127
Sweden	16,392	16,682
Norway	5,104	5,244
Denmark	2,499	3,068
Bulgaria	171	232
Italy	1,070	583

The work in *Australia* was begun by the formation of a class on the 6th of March, 1812. One of the class leaders was a young Irishman who had been sentenced to transportation, but who by the labors of faithful Methodists had been converted in his cell. In zealous labors he vindicated the genuineness of his conversion. Samuel Leigh was sent out from England by the Home Missionary Society in 1815. Walter Laury was sent to his aid in 1818. "In 1820 a mission was projected

among the natives of Australia and Polynesia. Laury wrote home for missionaries. 'From us,' he said, 'in a few years I expect to see them rally forth to those islands which spot the sea on every side of us—the Friendly Isles, the Fijis, New Hebrides, New Caledonia, New Zealand, New Georgia; and then to the north again, very contiguous to us, are the islands of New Guinea, New Ireland, Celebes, Timor, Borneo, Gilolo, and a great cluster of thickly inhabited missionary fields; but we want more missionaries.' Ever since his predictions have been rapidly becoming history."

Referring to the Australasian Wesleyan Methodist Church, Rev. D. J. Waller in his essay said there has been in ten years an increase of thirty-four per cent in ministers, of twenty per cent in church members, and of twenty-one per cent in Sunday scholars. These returns include the South Sea missions, and they are greatly affected by the troubles and persecution in Tonga. In 1884, prior to the secession, the statistics for Tonga showed, members, 7,336, and attendants on public worship, 18,500. The figures in 1890 were, members, 875, and attendants, 2,241. The dark days, it is believed, are now over, and a large increase is anticipated. It is reported that at the request of King George the Rev. James Egan Moulton has returned to Tonga, and that in opening the Tonga Parliament the king remarked: "On no account let there again arise dissension among the churches." Rev. William Morley, speaking of the secession in Tonga, said: "These seven thousand people are Methodists still. They call themselves the 'Free Church of Tonga,' but they believe the same Methodist doctrine and sing the same

hymns. They keep up their class meetings and their Conferences, and we trust again to see one Methodist Church there."

Coming back nearer to home we take note of Methodism in *Canada*. As early as 1780 a Methodist local preacher named Tuffy preached in Quebec. In 1784, at the "Christmas Conference," Freeborn Garrettson and James O. Cromwell volunteered their services and were appointed by Dr. Coke to Nova Scotia. In 1791 William Losee was regularly appointed by the New York Conference to Kingston, and from this year is dated the epoch of Methodism in Canada. "Those were days of glorious revivals, of divine visitation, of powerful conversions, of heroic endurance, and of glorious success. A nobler, braver, or more sacrificing class of men are not to be found to-day than were the rank and file of the first Methodist preachers that came to Canada."

In 1831 the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada was formed by union with the British Conference. The Methodist Episcopal Church maintained a separate existence. Subsequently the New Connexion Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist, and the Bible Christian Churches were introduced by immigration from Great Britain. It has been the good fortune of our Canadian brethren under the divine impulse which prompts to unity to give the most complete exhibition of the practicability of the consolidation of Methodistic forces which has yet been given to the Church.

In 1874 a union was formed between the "Wesleyan" and the "New Connexion" bodies, taking the name of the "Methodist Church of Canada." It was

in 1883, however, that the basis was agreed upon for the union of all the branches of Canadian Methodism, and the "Methodist Church" commenced its work on the first day of June, 1884. The doctrinal basis is the same as that of universal Methodism. There is a quadrennial General Conference, composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay delegates. The laity are also represented in the Annual Conferences; one or more general itinerant superintendents are elected for a period of eight years; the Annual Conferences choose their own presidents; the appointments are made by a committee composed of the superintendents of districts and one ministerial representative elected by the mixed district meeting. The united Church is very prosperous. It is numerically the largest Protestant Church in the Dominion of Canada. Missionary and educational work are amply provided for; there are fourteen higher educational institutions; there is invested in two publishing departments $275,000, with an annual business of $400,000; there are 3,000 Sunday schools with 29,000 teachers and 232,000 scholars.

3. The Methodist Episcopal Church, South.—Rev. Bishop C. B. Galloway, D.D., of this body, speaking for Methodism in the South at the second Ecumenical Council, said: "In the South every sixth soul is a Methodist—the largest relative Methodist population in the United States. In the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, alone we have 2,218,561 members. I mention with grateful pleasure the healthy growth of Methodism in our cities. During this century, from 1790 to 1890, the urban population of the United States increased from 3.35 per cent to 29.12 per cent. With

very few exceptions our Methodism has not only kept pace with but exceeded the increase of the urban population. But while our growth has been gratifying in the cities our advance has been majestic in the rural districts. There we have won our greatest triumphs—there may be found our crown of glory. In relation to intemperance our last General Conference adopted with enthusiasm a report which contained these words: 'We are opposed to all forms of license of this iniquity, whether the same be "high" or "low." It cannot be put so "high" that the prayers of God's people for its suppression will not rise above it, nor so "low," though it makes its bed in hell, that the shrieks of the souls lost through its accursed agency will not descend beneath it.' Already over one half of the total area of the South is under prohibition in the form of local option. Southern Methodism has made a history in the cause of missions among the Negroes that never can be forgotten. In 1861 we had over two hundred thousand colored members. Our interest in them has not abated; our responsibility has not ended. We are committed as strongly to their elevation to-day as ever, and Providence is opening effectual doors for us to enter. There has been expended over half a million dollars in church extension work in the past eleven years, building, as we did last year, one new church for every nineteen hours in the three hundred and sixty-five days. We are carrying the Gospel to Japan, China, Brazil, Mexico, and the Indians. There is an educational revival among us. We are building and endowing schools as never before. Our contributions to literature have not been many or massive. We

have been too busy doing the work of evangelists to write books; yet we have done something, and our contributions are daily increasing. We have given some honored names to Methodist literature, whose works have permanent value. One fact is noticeable, if not ominous, among us—a growing relative decrease in the number of local preachers. In Southern Methodism we have 6,336 local preachers and 5,050 itinerant preachers—an increase of only 498 local preachers in the decade, while the itinerant ministers increased 1,036. It may be that wiser and special effort should be directed to the lay agencies and activities of our Methodism. Reliance solely upon the pastors will reverse the history of a century. I believe our cause is to continue. So long as we remain a witnessing people we will be a people,

> 'Our flag on every height unfurled,
> And morning drum beat round the world.'"

Speaking on "The Present Status of Methodism in the Western Section," Bishop Fowler, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, said: "Standing here this hour we cannot but turn our faces toward yonder neighboring city, so beautiful, so full of Christian homes and happiness, fit companion for this city—this the most beautiful city on the globe. And we cannot avoid contrasting that hour of one hundred and seven years ago with the present hour. What a picture greets us out of that day! It can be shown on a small canvas. One Conference, 83 preachers, and only 14,988 members in America. About forty of the Conference were young men or boys. They had boundless energy, burning

hearts, blazing tongues, luminous faces, and were led by great leaders. Then there was but one Methodist denomination and only one Annual Conference. To-day there are sixteen denominations of Methodists. The one Conference has multiplied into about three hundred and the 83 traveling preachers into about 34,555, besides 30,000 local preachers. The 14,988 members have multiplied into about 5,166,976, with 5,000,000 Sunday school children and a following of over 20,000,000 souls in the republic. Methodism crossed the brook into this century leaning on a solitary staff. She will cross over out of the century with more than two bands besides flocks and herds and camels and asses; for she has about 56,335 churches and about 15,000 parsonages, with church property worth more than $200,000,000."

METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES.

Denominations.	Ministers.	Communicants.
Methodist Episcopal	14,792	2,283,154
Methodist Episcopal, South	5,050	1,213,511
African Methodist Episcopal	3,807	462,395
African Methodist Episcopal Zion	3,050	420,223
United Brothers	1,455	199,709
Colored Methodist Episcopal	1,800	174,024
Methodist Protestant	1,441	148,416
Evangelical Association	1,227	150,234
United Brethren (Old Con.)	623	50,582
American Wesleyans	300	20,000
Congregational Methodists	100	4,000
Free Methodists	700	22,861
Independent Methodists	30	5,000
Primitive Methodists	65	5,517
Union American Methodist Episcopal Colored	115	3,935
Union African Methodist Protestant	.....	3,415
Total	34,555	5,166,976

X.

ELEMENTS OF POWER.

"Is it not a truth that Methodism is the greatest fact in the history of the Church?" Thus queries Rev. L. Tyerman in his introduction to his *Life of John Wesley*, and, reviewing its wonderful progress, remarks: "Here we have an immensely ramified Church organization, everywhere preaching the same momentous doctrines and aiming at the same great purpose. A day never passes without numbers of its converts being admitted into heaven, and without many a poor wayward wanderer being brought by it into the fold of Christ on earth."

Let us, then, in a spirit not of boasting, but of humble gratitude, inquire what are the elements of power which have given to Methodism its remarkable success, so that the generations following, catching the same spirit, may push forward its conquests

> "Till earth's remotest nations
> Have learned Messiah's name."

1. Spirit and Aim.—At the beginning of these outlines we endeavored to trace the characteristics of the primitive Church. We shall now seek to show, at the risk of some repetition, that the spirit and aim of Methodism are in accord with the early Christian life and practice.

1. The primitive Church was a *fervent Church.* "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost;" "Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." Methodism has been noted for its fervency, and this has been the outcome, not of mere passing emotion, but of an earnest zeal for the Master's cause; and let it be understood that there is room still for fervent song and prayer. Other denominations have been eager to acquire this spirit; let us see to it that it does not die out in our congregations.

2. The primitive Church was a *revival Church;* it made use of revival methods; it employed evangelists; it exhorted; it preached to the hearts and consciences of men, so that men were constrained to inquire, "What shall we do to be saved?" The Methodist Church was the child of a revival, and she has perpetuated in her life the spirit which gave her birth. "Methodism is Christianity in earnest," said Chalmers, and an earnest Church can only live in the atmosphere of revival.

3. The primitive Church was a *working Church.* Read through the twelfth chapter of First Corinthians, and see the apostle's idea of individual work. Methodism is organized on the basis of a working Church. From her traveling bishops down through presiding elders, itinerant ministers, local preachers, exhorters, class leaders, trustees, stewards, Sunday school superintendents, and teachers, with multiplied agencies for each individual member, there is found work for all who will do it, justifying the statement that "they are all at it and always at it."

4. The primitive Church was a *nurturing Church.* Christ's injunction to Peter was to feed the sheep and the lambs, and the apostle enjoined the elders to "feed

the flock of God." Methodism has utilized agencies, such as the "class meeting" and the "love feast," peculiarly adapted to nurture the young Christian and to promote the growth of all her members. Especial provision has been made for classes for baptized children, intended to "instruct them in the nature, design, and obligations of baptism, and the truths of religion necessary to make them wise unto salvation." For both young and old the class meeting and love feast have been schools of Christian experience, begetting closer fellowship, encouraging, guiding, and helping to lives of consecration in the Master's service.

5. The primitive Church was an *aggressive Church.* The apostle's missionary tours were planned with a view to carrying the Gospel to the very centers of idolatry. Methodism has always kept her pickets well to the front, and wherever men have found a new field for toil the itinerant has found a new place to preach. "Methodism must be aggressive or perish; it was made for war, not peace; for motion, not rest; for advance, not retreat. The moment we become satisfied with holding our own we begin to die." (Porter, *History of Methodism.*)

2. Doctrine.—Always holding with tenacity, in common with other orthodox denominations, the great fundamental truths of revelation, Methodism has, nevertheless, sought chiefly to emphasize and spread these three grand announcements of the Gospel, so eminently adapted to the wants of sinful humanity:

1. A Free Salvation.—"God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Free as against the dogma that "the rest of mankind God was pleased, according to the unsearchable counsel of his own will whereby he extendeth or withholdeth mercy as he pleaseth, for the glory of his sovereign power over his creatures, to pass by, and to ordain them to dishonor and wrath for their sin to the praise of his glorious justice." (*Westminster Confession of Faith.*)

Free as against the heresy that money or good works are in any way the price to be paid for it. So free

> "Its streams the whole creation reach,
> So plenteous is the store;
> Enough for all, enough for each,
> Enough for evermore."—*C. Wesley.*

2. An Assured Salvation.—*Assured* as against the delusive sentiment that we may not know for ourselves that we are the heirs of salvation. The apostle John declares, and Methodism emphasizes, "We know that we have passed from death unto life."

Assured by the added witness of the Holy Spirit with ours. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

> "His Spirit answers to the blood,
> And tells me I am born of God."—*C. Wesley.*

3. A Full Salvation.—*Full* in that it is adequate for the chief of sinners. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief." Thus declared the apostle Paul, and it has been the mission of Methodism to carry this cheering truth to many of

the outcast of earth and give them courage to trust for salvation.

Full in that it is adequate not only for the chief of sinners, but for all and every sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."

> "Faithful, if we our sins confess,
> To cleanse from all unrighteousness."—*C. Wesley.*

Bishop J. H. Vincent has thus epitomized the doctrines of the Methodist Episcopal Church:

THE TEN DOCTRINES OF GRACE.—1. I believe that all men are sinners.

2. I believe that God the Father loves all men and hates all sin.

3. I believe that Jesus Christ died for all men to make possible their salvation from sin, and to make sure the salvation of all who believe in him.

4. I believe that the Holy Spirit is given to all men to enlighten and to incline them to repent of their sins and to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

5. I believe that all who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ receive the forgiveness of sin. [This is Justification.]

6. I believe that all who receive the forgiveness of sin are at the same time made new creatures in Christ Jesus. [This is Regeneration.]

7. I believe that all who are made new creatures in Christ Jesus are accepted as the children of God. [This is Adoption.]

8. I believe that all who are accepted as the children of God may receive the inward assurance of the Holy Spirit to that fact. [This is the Witness of the Spirit.]

9. I believe that all who truly desire and seek it may love God with all their heart and soul, mind and strength, and their neighbors as themselves. [This is Entire Sanctification.]

10. I believe that all who persevere to the end, and only those, shall be saved in heaven forever. [This is the true Final Perseverance.]

3. Organization.—1. *The Episcopacy.*—The Methodist Episcopal Church makes no arrogant claims for her bishops. At first known as "Superintendents," they have always been, as the title implies, the overseers of the flock. They are charged (under certain limitation) with the appointment of the ministers to their places of labor. They are required to travel at large in the Connection. They preside over the Conferences. Their lives have been pure, their labors abundant, and more than one of their number has fallen as the result of his toils.

2. *The Itinerancy.*—Except in certain cases of missionary and educational work the bishops may not appoint a minister to the same work more than five years in ten. A traveling ministry is essentially of the primitive type. It is the boast of Methodism that every church has a minister and every minister a church. This system has proved of incalculable value in keeping an advance guard well out on the front.

3. *Local Preachers.*—The Methodist Episcopal Church has in her service about sixteen thousand local preachers. These are pious and devoted men who, still following their several vocations, have been deemed worthy to preach the Gospel. Their services were of incalculable value in the early period of the Church in this country,

when other denominations found it difficult to supply the needed workmen. Their ranks have contained many distinguished laborers, and, as we have already seen, the names of Philip Embury, Thomas Webb, and Robert Strawbridge are entitled to honor as pioneers in the field which has since yielded such grand harvests.

4. *Conferences.*—These are four in number: Quarterly, District, Annual, and General. The latter has full power, under certain limitations, to legislate for the whole Church. The Quarterly Conference, representing the separate stations or circuits, and District Conferences composed of a number of contiguous stations, are presided over by the "presiding elders," who supervise the work in their respective districts and report its condition to the Annual Conference, which is composed of all the traveling preachers in its bounds. This Conference has no legislative powers, but is charged with the oversight of its members and the work within its limits. In making the appointments the bishop is counseled by the presiding elders, who sit with him as an advisory board, or cabinet. An elaborate judicial system is provided, by which the right of appeal is secured to preachers and people.

4. Peculiar Institutions.—1. The *class meeting* has been very much misunderstood. It is in no sense a "confessional." It is a subdivision of the Church under the care of a "leader," whose duty it is to meet with and counsel its members. "The primary object of distributing the members of the Church into classes is to secure the subpastoral oversight made necessary by our itinerant economy." The "class meeting" is prominent where Methodism is the strongest.

2. The *love feast* is the reproduction of the *Agapæ* of the primitive Church. By partaking together of the simple elements of bread and water an opportunity is afforded to testify of that love which makes all Christians one in Christ.

In both of these meetings much importance is attached to the relation of Christian experience, which, indeed, Methodism has always insisted upon as not only a privilege, but a duty. In these meetings, as in the meetings for prayer, the voices of pious women are often heard, nor can the Church afford that these shall be silent, whose pleading tones have so often reached and reclaimed the wanderer.

XI.

AGGRESSIVE AGENCIES.

1. Missionary Society.—The first foreign missionary organization in the United States was the "American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions," established in 1810. This was followed in 1814 by the Baptist Missionary Union. The Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church came next in order in 1819. John Stewart, an inebriate colored man, had been converted in 1816 under the preaching of Marcus Lindsay, in Marietta, O. He became a missionary to the Indians. His successes, and the needs of this and other work, stirred the hearts of many in the Church. On April 5, 1819, a meeting was held in the Forsyth Street Church, New York city, at which time the Missionary Society was organized. Bishop William McKendree was made president, Bishop Enoch George first vice-president, Bishop Robert R. Roberts second vice-president, and Rev. Nathan Bangs, New York Conference, third vice-president. The constitution then adopted has since been amended several times to meet the changing conditions of the work. Rev. Nathan Bangs, D.D., was appointed resident corresponding secretary by the General Conference of 1836. "More than any other he deserves to be considered the father of the missionary work of the Methodist Episcopal Church." He continued to hold this office until 1841,

when he resigned to enter upon the presidency of Wesleyan University. He was succeeded by Rev. Charles Pitman, with Rev. William Capers, D.D., and Rev. E. R. Ames, as assistants. Dr. Pitman died March, 1820, and was succeeded by Rev. John P. Durbin, D.D., who continued in office until 1872, and was retained as honorary corresponding secretary until his death in 1876. The Annual Report of 1876 says of him: "No name as yet identified with our history as a society is so memorable as that of Durbin, and justly so; for the inspiration of his soul and the peculiarly methodical character of his mind are stamped indelibly upon its every part." The office has since been filled by Rev. William L. Harris (subsequently elected bishop), Rev. Joseph M. Trimble, Rev. Robert L. Dashiell, Rev. Thomas M. Eddy, Rev. John M. Reid (later honorary secretary), and Rev. Charles H. Fowler, since elected bishop. The present (1892) corresponding secretaries are C. C. McCabe, D.D., J. O. Peck, D.D., and A. B. Leonard, D.D.

The initial work of the Society was domestic missions. It was not until 1832 that Melville B. Cox was sent to Liberia as the first foreign missionary of the Society. He arrived in Monrovia, March 7, 1833, and lived only until July 21. Before leaving America he had requested that if he should die his epitaph might be, "Let a thousand fall before Africa be given up." Under the care of Bishop Taylor, missionary bishop for Africa, and following his plan of self-supporting missions, the work in this field, which was the first entered upon, has been extended into the very heart of the country, and is giving promise of great success. We have given on page 111 the work of the Society on the

Continent of Europe, and now add the additional foreign fields:

Countries.	Members and Probationers.	Sunday School Scholars.
Africa	3,194	2,691
South America	2,232	2,587
Foo-Chow	5,367	3,315
Central China	502	675
North China	2,022	1,177
West China	55	100
North India	25,023	32,133
South India	1,325	7,663
Bengal	2,284	3,229
Malaysia	135	150
Japan	3,705	4,155
Mexico	2,665	1,797
Corea	73	76
Total	48,662	59,748
Add missions Continent Europe	42,654	51,617
Total Foreign Missions	91,316	111,365
Add Domestic Missions	289,395	279,342
Grand Total	380,711	390,707

The receipts of the Society for 1820, the first year of its existence, were $823.04. In 1891 they were $1,251,027.67. To this sum should be added the receipts of the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, $263,660.69; Woman's Home Missionary Society, $126,717.56; Bishop Taylor's Missions, $36,961.44; making a grand total of $1,678,396.96.

The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society was organized in 1869 and was formally recognized by the General Conference in 1872. The Woman's Home Missionary Society was organized in 1880, and was recognized by the General Conference of 1884. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society "has had the honor of being the initial in many prominent movements, and was the first to establish woman's medical work in Asia, which has grown to such vast propor-

tions. It built the first hospital and dispensary for women in China, India, and Corea, and sent the first woman physician to these fields. It now has under its care nine hospitals and dispensaries, and some forty thousand women are treated annually by Methodist physicians."

The Woman's Home Missionary Society has invested in its forty-five model and industrial homes and school buildings, deaconesses, and city mission homes, more than $225,000. It has expended in its work, up to the present time, about $925,000. Allied to the missionary work is the "deaconess" work, which was recognized by the General Conference of 1888. The first deaconess home in the Methodist Episcopal Church of America was established in June, 1887, in Chicago. There are now twenty-six homes and seven hospitals in connection with the order, aggregating in value $150,000. The homes are training schools for women preparing for missionary work.

2. The Sunday School Union was organized in 1827. It was reorganized and recognized by the General Conference of 1840. In 1844 the Conference appointed "an editor especially and solely for the Sunday school department." Rev. Daniel P. Kidder was the first editor and corresponding secretary. He was succeeded in 1856 by Rev. Daniel Wise, D.D., who, in 1868, was followed by Rev. J. H. Vincent, D.D., who was elected bishop in 1888, and was succeeded by Rev. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D., the present incumbent. The Society seeks to aid in establishing Sunday schools at home and abroad, and to furnish them with the necessary requisites for carrying on the work. It also endeavors,

through the agency of institutes, to prepare teachers for their work, and to elevate the standard of teaching in the Sunday schools. There are connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church 27,493 Sunday schools, 303,581 officers and teachers, and 2,326,866 scholars. The income of the Society is about $25,000 per annum, and is far short of the demands made upon it. Nearly three thousand schools are aided each year by the Union.

3. The Tract Society.—In 1833, in the city of New York, The Bible, Sunday School, and Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church was formed. In 1836 the General Conference recommended the dissolution of our Bible Society, and directed the efforts of the Church toward the American Bible Society. When, in 1844, the General Conference appointed an editor for Sunday school books, the editing of tracts was made a part of his work. In 1852 the "Tract Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church" was formed, and Dr. Abel Stevens was elected its corresponding secretary. The subsequent secretaries have been: 1854, Rev. Jesse T. Peck, D.D.; 1856, Rev. James Floy, D.D.; 1860, Rev. Daniel Wise, D.D.; 1872, Rev. J. H. Vincent, D.D.; 1888, Rev. J. L. Hurlbut, D.D., who is the present incumbent. The Society has for its aim the dissemination of religious literature in the form of tracts and papers. Immigrants coming to our shores are reached by tracts in their own language. Distribution is made to prisons, poorhouses, hospitals, soldiers' barracks, and vessels in port. A beautiful weekly paper, called *Good Tidings*, has a circulation of about forty-three thousand among the colored people of the South.

4. **The Board of Education** was organized in 1868. It proposes to foster by all possible agencies the general educational interests of the Church, and to aid young men and women who are preparing to enter its ministry or to engage in its missionary work. Its receipts in 1891 were about $63,000. It aided 1,102 students connected with 104 schools. Its secretaries: Rev. E. O. Haven, D.D., was elected corresponding secretary in 1872, and was succeeded in turn by Dr. Daniel P. Kidder, Dr. Daniel A. Goodsell, and Dr. Charles H. Payne. We give a summary of the educational institutions connected with the Methodist Episcopal Church:

Class of Institution.	Number of Schools.	Value of Grounds and Buildings.	Total Endowment.	Students.		
				Male.	Female.	Grand Total.
Theological Institutions	17	$664,636	$1,557,476	863	....	863
Colleges and Universities	54	9,979,450	10,230,433	11,317	6,850	21,903
Classical Seminaries	54	2,220,466	547,108	5,102	4,608	10,524
Female Colleges and Seminaries	9	1,140,000	187,000	....	1,284	1,284
Foreign Mission Schools	73	602,431	78,776	2,206	2,507	5,885
Total	207	$14,606,983	$12,600,793	19,488	15,249	40,469
Less Schools duplicated in Theological list	12	76,636	14,476	443	....	443
Net total	195	$14,530,347	$12,586,317	10,459	15,249	40,026

5. **The Board of Church Extension** (at first called the Church Extension Society) was organized in 1864, and began work in the autumn of 1865. The Board was organized by the General Conference of 1872. As its name implies, this Society is engaged in the work of planting new churches on our frontiers and in aiding feeble churches throughout the connection. The demands upon the Board have been very great,

and its work has had a very rapid extension. There are two funds, the "general" and the "loan" fund.

Up to November 1, 1891, the general fund aggregated $2,828,771.86. Of the personal gifts, $119,500 were directed by the donors—$250 for each—to the procurement of churches on the frontier. Up to November 1, 1891, 477 churches had been erected in this way, the aggregate value of which was nearly a million dollars—an average of over $2,000 each.

Up to November 1, 1891, a permanent capital has been brought into the loan fund amounting to $752,-418.08, and churches borrowing out of this fund have returned of the principal $748,608.48, so that churches were aided by loans to the aggregate of $1,501,026.57. The total amount received on both these funds for church extension, from the beginning to November 1, 1891, is $4,329,798.43, and the number of churches aided, including a few parsonage properties, was, up to November 1, 1891, 7,937—more than one third of the entire number owned by the denomination.

The chief executive officers of this Society have been Dr. Munroe, Dr. Alpha J. Kynett, and Dr. William A. Spencer.

6. **The Freedmen's Aid and Southern Education Society** was organized in 1866 as the "Freedmen's Aid Society," and confined its work, at first, to the freedmen alone. The General Conference of 1888 gave it the name which it now bears, and its work is declared to be "for the mental and moral elevation of freedmen and others in the South, who have special claims upon the people of America, for help in the work of Christian education." The Society celebrated its

Quarter Centennial Jubilee during 1891. Its report to the General Conference of 1892 shows that it has under its control forty-two schools. Of these twenty-two are among colored people: one being theological, ten collegiate, and eleven academic in grade, Among the white people there are three of collegiate and seventeen of academic grade. The number of students of all schools is 9,495. The total expenditures for twenty-five years have been over $3,000,000. The real estate controlled by the Society amounts to $1,800,000.

The strength of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Southern States at the present time is shown by the following figures:

	Members.	Churches.	Valuation	Parsonages.	Valuation.
Among whites.....	269,372	3,062	$8,959,222	750	$1,199,702
Among colored.....	234,036	2,692	3,062,782	643	323,382
Total.....	503,408	5,754	$12,022,004	1,393	$1,523,084

Its chief executive officers have been in turn Dr. R. S. Rust, Dr. J. C. Hartzell, and Dr. John W. Hamilton.

7. The Book Concern.—Mr. Wesley very early gave attention to the publication of tracts and books. In this country the Conference of 1789 appointed John Dickins book steward. The work, then commenced with a debt, has now assumed vast proportions. The Book Committee reported to the General Conference of 1892 an aggregate capital for the two houses at New York and Cincinnati of $3,130,956.09. The sales for the four years were $7,328,896.90, and the profits $1,121,506.34. Out of the profits there was ordered to be paid to the Annual Conferences dividends of $455,000 for the Superannuated Preachers' fund.

Some idea of the extent of the publications of the Book Concerns may be gathered from the average circulation of Sunday school periodicals published by them:

Sunday School Journal	186,420
Sunday School Classmate	223,700
Sunday School Advocate	360,320
Picture Lesson Paper	384,600
Berean Beginner's Quarterly	298.250
Berean Intermediate Quarterly	1,462,500
Berean Senior Quarterly	228,250
Good Tidings	43,385

The total number of pages of Sunday school periodical literature issued during the year 1891 was 440,678,164. The present book agents at New York are Rev. Sandford Hunt, D.D., and Rev. Homer Eaton, D.D.

8. Epworth League.—We have left to be noticed last the society which is destined to be one of the most effective agencies for good in the Methodist Episcopal Church. The hope of the Church is in its young people. The Sunday school is the recruiting force of Methodism. Something has been needed to help to gather its young converts and prepare them for active work. The bishops, in their address to the General Conference of 1892, emphasize this; they say: "There had long been a real chasm between the adult Church and the Sunday School, which has not been adequately provided for. The young manhood and womanhood of the Church, so important a factor, seemed to lack a place and opportunity for the best use and development of their powers." Young people's societies have always been more or less prominent in the work of the Church, and in individual cases have been fruitful of good, not

only as the center of revival influence, but in holding together young converts and training them for usefulness in the Church. Some attempt had been made to bring our young people into a unity of plan and effort. Five societies had sprung into existence having similar ends in view, but employing somewhat different methods. These were the Young People's Methodist Alliance, the Oxford League, the Young People's Christian League, the Methodist Young People's Union, and the Young People's Methodist Alliance of the North Ohio Conference. Representatives of all these societies met in council, at Cleveland, O., on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 14 and 15, 1889. The desire for union was manifest. After an exhaustive discussion of the merits of the different plans it was unanimously resolved to merge all the societies into a new organization, to be known as the "Epworth League." The working plan of the League is comprehended in what is known as the "Epworth Wheel." It provides for six departments of work, each under the charge of a committee. The chairmen of these committees, with the president, constitute the cabinet for the management of the League. The departments are : 1. Spiritual Work. 2. Mercy and Help. 3. Literary Work. 4. Social Life. 5. Correspondence. 6. Finance. The plan having been reported back to the various societies represented at Cleveland, it was cordially received, and the process of forming "Chapters" began. The growth has been marvelous. Within four years from its organization it numbered nearly 9,000 chapters and 500,000 members. Its organ, *The Epworth Herald*, has a circulation of over 60,000. The League was ably represented at the Gen-

eral Conference of 1892, and was officially recognized by it, and a constitution for its government adopted. The constitution provides for a "Board of Control," consisting of fifteen members, appointed by the bishops, one of whom shall be a bishop, who shall be president of the Epworth League and the Board of Control. The officers consist of the president, four vice-presidents—at least two of whom shall be laymen—a general secretary, and a treasurer, who shall constitute the general League Cabinet, of which the editor of *The Epworth Herald* shall be a member *ex-officio*. The editor of *The Epworth Herald* is elected by the General Conference, and the general secretary by the Board of Control. The president of the Chapter must be a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and approved by the Quarterly Conference, of which he then becomes a member. The editor of *The Epworth Herald* is Joseph F. Berry, D.D. At the date of writing this the general secretary has not been chosen. When the election takes place the League will be fully organized. The strength of the League, however, will not be in numbers or in organization; it will be in the consecration of its members to its important work. We quote again from the address of the bishops: "Wisely managed, it cannot fail to become a most efficient agency. A new army has entered the field full of the warm, fresh blood of youth; not only has it become well organized and firmly established in the United States, but it has taken root in other lands in which our Church has been planted, and also in the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, and in the Methodist Church of Canada. Blessings on the Epworth League!"

CONCLUSION.

The limit of these pages has not permitted us to take note of many incidents and scenes which have been peculiar to the march of Methodism. Individual cases of the conversion of the depraved and hardened have been frequent. The names might have been given of many who from being a terror to the community in which they lived came to be peaceful citizens and loving laborers for their fellow-men. Great revivals which have spread over communities, bringing not only reformation in morals, but change in the very organization of society, have had only occasional mention. Space has not been found even to catalogue the names of men who, like Jackson and Beaumont, in England, and Summerfield, Maffit, Simpson, Bascom, Durbin, and Guard, in America, have thrilled great audiences with their eloquence, or melted them to tears with their pleadings. The administrative talent of a host of men, such as Bunting, Stephenson, and Rigg, in England, and Hedding, Janes, and others, in America, must go unchronicled in these pages. The contributions to education and literature of great numbers of men eminent for their talents has had to be passed over. Movements such as that inaugurated by Bishop Vincent, at Chautauqua, and now extending over the land, can only be suggested. We have made no record of the self-sacrificing lives of men and women who have given time

and money to the service of the Church, and thus made possible missions to the degraded, hospitals to the sick, and schools of learning for those preparing for the work of life. We have not been permitted to take even a survey of the labors of our later chief pastors, the bishops of the flock, who have not been less zealous than Wesley and Asbury, and some of whom have died as the direct result of their indefatigable toil. The closing scene of the General Conference of 1884 will not soon be forgotten by those who were privileged to be present. Bishop Harris, presiding, announced, and the Conference sang, the hymn beginning

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

Bishop Wiley offered the closing prayer. Bishop Simpson made the closing address. Touching were the utterances and tender were all hearts. Before the next meeting of the General Conference all three of those bishops had passed away. Let us heed the admonition of Bishop Simpson in those closing words: "May we go forward from this time, dear brethren, to try to do more vigorous work than we have ever done. May we have the spirit of deep consecration. May we look for a more powerful outpouring of the Holy Spirit. May we look for revivals all over our country until multiplied thousands shall be converted to God."

Let us catch the inspiration of that noble layman, General Clinton B. Fisk, now gone to his reward, who, in the Centennial Conference of 1884, said: "American Methodism, with its flying troops, always on the skirmish line, makes hot the hand-to-hand conflict with the forces of evil always in battle array, and to our feeble

sense a phalanx never to be broken. Our Methodism must eagerly take the front and lead on to victory." "Forward" rings along the line, and

> "With lifted sword and waving crest
> Our Captain leads to conquering."

"ONWARD, THEN, YE PEOPLE!
JOIN OUR HAPPY THRONG,
BLEND WITH OURS YOUR VOICES
IN THE TRIUMPH-SONG;
GLORY, LAUD, AND HONOR
UNTO CHRIST THE KING,
THIS THROUGH COUNTLESS AGES
MEN AND ANGELS SING."

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