

THE
PRESBYTERIAN QUARTERLY
AND
PRINCETON REVIEW.

NEW SERIES, No. 4.—OCTOBER, 1872.

ART. I.—THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

By Rev. HENRY NEILL, D. D.

The revelation of the Righteousness of God is assigned in Rom. i. 16, 17, as the reason of the Gospel's power. The apostle's statement is, "The Gospel is the power of God unto salvation; for, *therein is the righteousness of God revealed.*"

Is IT possible to estimate too highly the importance of the meaning attached to a phrase, whose contents are asserted by an inspired writer to hold such a relation to the soul that when properly apprehended they become its salvation?

And in any attempt to draw those contents forth, and to formulate them, would not a degree of caution be commendable, which, if it should appear in the exposition of terms less liable to misconstruction, would be regarded as extreme? As the "righteousness of God," wherever its substance was accepted, was to bring safety and holiness to the mind, it is not precipitate at even this early stage of the search after its signification, to aver that the expression can not refer to the justice of God in the ordinary sense of those words. For the revelation of the justice of God to a sinning soul is anything but salvation. It is condemnation. It is perdition. So Saul of Tarsus found it when first he saw it in the commandment; and when he saw it there he died, as have millions since. Nor does any Protestant expositor of the Scriptures favor this idea. Nor can it be introduced into

the system, cannot stay such a tide. As with the Universalism of a century ago, the deterioration will be so decided, as to strip it of the character of a Christian faith. Annihilation solves none of our doubts, and does not relieve our heavy hearts.

ART. V.—JOHN WESLEY: HIS CHARACTER AND
OPINIONS.*

BY E. H. GILLETT, D.D., Prof. in University of New York.

The life of Wesley has been made familiar to the world by numerous biographies, written for the most part by his friends or admirers. But that they have by no means exhausted the subject, or done full justice to the documentary materials which illustrate it, is evident from the publication of these three large octavos of Mr. Tyerman. To those materials he has done fair, if not always ample, justice, and in spite of the voluminous character of his work he has made it from first to last eminently readable to those who wish to investigate the Life and Times of Wesley.

There are few men whose lives would justify, nearly a century after they had passed from the stage, the production of so extended a biography as this. But the importance of Wesley's place in modern church history has been vindicated steadily and triumphantly by the continued spread and prosperity of the denomination which he founded. If the genius of Sir Christopher Wren was fitly commemorated by the lines sculptured beneath the cathedral dome with which his name is associated, we may say with greater emphasis, and with far more significance of John Wesley, "*Si queris monumentum circumspice.*" In England, with its thousands of Methodist chapels; in this country with a Methodist church membership of nearly a million and a half; in all European countries, to a greater or less extent, and in pagan lands, where self-denying missionary labor is required, the founder of Methodism has

* The Life and Times of Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists. By the Rev. L. Tyerman, Author of "The Times of Rev. S. Wesley. 3 vols. 8vo. Harper & Brothers.

his best memorial, the living workers in the cause of Christian evangelization, who have imbibed his spirit, and reverence his name as second only to that of the inspired apostles.

It is not necessary, even if we had space for it, to present even an outline of Wesley's remarkable career. His strict Episcopal training, his early high-church sympathies, his zeal for good works, and an asceticism worthy of a reformer of monastic orders, or, as Macaulay would say, of the founder of a new order, his "pietism" at Oxford; his missionary ardor which took him across the Atlantic long enough to satisfy him that his calling lay elsewhere; his connection with Whitfield; his intineracy, first of necessity and then of choice, which continued almost uninterrupted for half a century; his organization of societies; his tireless activity in supervising them; his writings and publications; his controversies with opponents as dissimilar as Bishop Lavington, the Moravians, and Augustus Toplady; his triumphant success in planting Methodism both in England and America;—all these need only to be mentioned to bring up before us the leading features of a career unparalleled in these last centuries for its unwearied energy and its extensive results.

It is natural that loyal Methodists should be jealous of any stain upon their founder's fame. Yet Wesley was a man with great excellences, indeed, but not without some foibles and failings far from estimable or heroic. On some points he manifested a clear, good sense in advice, which his admirers have not always followed. He had the merit of going direct to his object, and discerning clearly the most effective methods of attaining the ends he had in view. He had a native shrewdness and a practical acquaintance with certain phases of human nature, which made him an admirable organizer; yet the very energy of purpose to which he owed so much of his success, often made him contemn the counsel of friends, and sometimes what we might almost term the dictates of common-sense.

Mr. Tyerman has furnished the materials from which, by a studied selection, two exceedingly diverse and apparently incongruous portraits of Wesley might be drawn. One would

exhibit him as all that his friends could wish, the other would almost justify the caricatures of Bishop Lavington and the reproaches of Toplady. And yet we cannot believe that his biographer is justly liable to the reproach of raking up slanders or accusations. He tells, indeed, but with evident reluctance, the story of Wesley's relations to Grace Murray, whom he wished to marry, and reluctantly surrendered to another lover. There is very little in the story that is heroic, and every admirer of Wesley would wish that it could have been left out. Mr. Tyerman has dealt with it as gently as possible, omitting matters over which Bishop Lavington would have made himself and his readers merry.

Wesley's high-churchmanship was originally of a most uncompromising, not to say bigoted, stamp. It was hereditary, and his training confirmed it. When he was a boy, only seven years old, high-church bigots went frantic in the triumph of Sacheverel. As a student at Oxford he was confirmed in his antipathies to dissenters. When he went as a missionary to Georgia, he was a full-blown ritualist, (i. 94, 95), and it is not strange that some of his plain-thinking and plain-spoken parishioners regarded him as a scarcely disguised papist. He carried matters to a ritualistic extreme. His course was marked by "pitiable folly" (i. 206). He excluded "dissenters" from the communion (i. 147). Returning to England he illustrated Horace's line:—

"Cœlum non animum mutant qui trans mare currunt."

He would have shuddered to preach unless within consecrated walls. To withdraw from the Church of England, and lose all the benefits of Apostolic Succession, would have seemed to him little short of downright apostacy.

The experience of the last fifty years of his life came in continuous conflict with his high-churchism, and greatly modified it. His extraordinary course led to his exclusion from the churches. If he preached at all, he must imitate Whitfield's example, and take to the fields. Rambling from place to place he became habituated to all sorts of preaching accommodations. The street, the grove, the churchyard, barns and sheds, answered his purpose. Nothing now could

tie him down to one spot. "The whole world," he said, "is my parish."

But another inroad was to be made upon his high-churchism by the necessity of providing for his converts. He would not have them withdraw from the communion of the Episcopal Church, but he could not leave them to "mitred infidels," as sheep to be fed. Hence the necessity of lay preachers, who, with their people, were to attend "church" during one part of the day, and have the curse of frigid morality or heretical doctrine taken off by Methodist preaching, praying and singing during another. The lay preachers were not permitted to dispense the sacraments, but Wesley insisted on their right to preach. His high-churchism was between the upper and the nether millstone, but it was not crushed yet. He professed himself ready to re-baptize dissenters if they sought it at his hands. He called Episcopal clergymen *ministers*, Anabaptist and Presbyterian *teachers*. Such was what his biographer calls his "pitiable folly," "deserving to be despised."

After itinerating for six years, Wesley still clung to the "figment" of Apostolical Succession (i. 496). He spoke of the "threefold order of ministers." He expressed his solemn belief in their divine authority, and an "outward priesthood," offering "an outward sacrifice."

But light was dawning. In 1745 the Conference went so far as to conclude that Presbyterianism was a development of Independency, and Episcopacy of Presbyterianism (i. 499.) In 1746 Wesley fell in with Lord King's "Inquiry into the Constitution, etc., of the Primitive Church" (i. 508.) In spite of what he calls "the vehement prejudice of my education," he was forced to admit that bishops and Presbyters were essentially of one order.

Wesley himself might have been more ready to yield to the demand of his religious societies and his preachers for the privilege of the sacraments, but his brother Charles, "with all the bigotry of the high-churchmanship of the present day," (ii. 261), seemed to think and speak and act as though "salvation out of the Church of England was impos-

sible." In 1755 the Conference, after a three days' debate, decided that "whether lawful or not, it was not expedient for the Methodists to separate from the Established Church." The next year Wesley shocked one of his Methodist admirers, who asked him "to go to the meeting," by saying, "I never go to a meeting" (ii. 240.)

Just about that time Stillingfleet's "Irenicon" fell into his hands (ii. 244.) He had hitherto "zealously espoused" the belief that the Episcopal form of church government was *prescribed* by Scripture. Now, he declared himself "heartily ashamed" of that opinion. Even yet, however, he held fast to the doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration, republishing in 1756 (ii. 264) his father's high-church views of 1700, and doubtless still believing, in regard to himself, that "until he was about the age of ten, he had not sinned away the 'washing of the Holy Ghost' which he had received in baptism" (i. 19.)

In 1758, to repel the pressure brought to bear upon him by his preachers and societies, (ii. 319) Wesley published his "Reasons against a Separation from the Church of England." Admitting that the *lawfulness* of separation was a point that might fairly be debated, he pronounced it decisively *not expedient*. He would have it a sacred rule for all the preachers to respect "the clergy," and "to frequent no dissenting meeting-house," especially as sometimes they would hear "predestinarians, whose doctrines were not wholesome food, but deadly poison." Charles Wesley, more sagacious than his brother, as well as more bigoted, saw "dissent" already imminent among the Methodists, but anxious for "our children," declared "they shall not be trepanned into a meeting-house if I can help it." (ii. 384.)

The spread of Methodism in this country forced Wesley reluctantly to make provision for the administration of the sacraments, beyond what he considered necessary in England. But he yielded only so far as was absolutely necessary. His biographer seems to think that Dr. Coke, insisting on being ordained by him as superintendent, and going forth as his plenipotentiary, secured more than Wesley intended

to confer. We have no doubt of it. When his "ordained" preachers from Scotland came back into England, he made them haul down their colors, addressing them with plain *Mr.* and not *Rev.* When he found that in this country, Coke and Asbury, suspected of being somewhat ambitious, had developed into bishops, he remonstrated with the latter in a most unequivocal tone. "In one point I am a little afraid both the doctor and you differ from me. I study to be little; you study to be great. I creep; you strut along. I found a school; you a college! nay, and call it after your own names. . . . One instance of this, your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent, call me a bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake, put an end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better." (iii. 438.)

This was in 1784. In all his correspondence for more than half a century, there is scarcely a letter of Wesley's that indicates such intense feeling, such hearty disgust. He at least never dreamed that he had been hoodwinked into making bishops. But he was already (1784) more than fourscore years of age, and an ocean rolled between him and the men who traced their Episcopacy to a private interview with him. In England, however, almost with his last breath, he said to one of his itinerants, "You cannot be too zealous for the poor Church of England. . . . By all means go to church as often as you can, and exhort all the Methodists so to do. They that are enemies to the church are enemies to *me*. I am a friend to it, and ever was. By our reading prayers we prevent our people contracting an hatred for forms of prayer; which would naturally be the case if we always prayed extempore." Again, "when the Methodists leave the Church of England, God will leave them." (iii. 490.)

Wesley never got beyond this. One of his preachers, who knew him well, says "he was deeply prejudiced against Presbyterians, and as much in favor of Episcopal government."

(iii. 443.) He sacrificed his prejudices only to irresistible conviction and plain necessity, to the very last clinging to the shreds of his early high-churchism, and shuddering to think that any of his preachers should presume so far to separate from the Church of England as to assume, independently of that church, the style of bishops. The history of Wesley's high-church notions and the tenacity with which he held them, helps us greatly in the study of his character.

Wesley's Arminianism, like his high-churchmanship, was hereditary, and he clung to it with equal tenacity and more consistency. He adopted substantially his mother's, and in this case, we may presume, his father's views, although in a letter to him while at school, she wrote: "It is an unhappiness almost peculiar to our family, that your father and I seldom think alike" (i. 32). But this strong-minded mother, too independent to lean on her husband, told Wesley that "the doctrine of predestination, as maintained by rigid Calvinists, is very shocking, and ought to be abhorred" (i. 40), and added, "whom, in his eternal prescience, God saw would make right use of their powers, and accept of offered mercy, he did predestinate and adopt for his children." Beyond this standard of maternal theology Wesley never made any advance. Holding fast to this he broke with Whitfield, and was willing to leave to the hazard of the lot the publication of views which defined the antagonistic position he felt called upon to assume.

It is unnecessary to pass in review his controversies with Calvinists, his collision with Harvey and Toplady, his separate Arminian publications, or the views set forth and maintained in his *Arminian Magazine*. There might be some wavering on minor points, but "Calvinism" was always the red flag that roused his pugnacity. He was suspicious of it in his preachers, and regarded it as a sufficient ground for dismissing and disowning them (ii. 129). On one occasion it was found, on investigation, that Robert Swindells was "inclined to Calvinism, but teachable; David Tratham was a confirmed predestinarian." It was held that the predesti-

narian preachers had "done great hurt to the societies," (ii. 167), and hence it was agreed in conference that "none of them should preach any more in our societies." Controversy was not to be welcomed, "but there will always be men whose mouths it is necessary to stop; Antinomians and Calvinists in particular" (iii. 152). In 1776 the Conference pronounced the opinion "that Calvinism had been the grand hindrance of the work of God," (iii. 228); and it is not a little amusing to read that the preachers were requested "not to imitate the Calvinist preachers in screaming, etc.," but "to advise the Methodists not to hear them, to pray constantly and earnestly that God would stop the plague." No wonder that Toplady republished this in his *Gospel Magazine*, without note or comment. It needed none.

Wesley was fully alive as to the importance of dealing with Calvinism in a cautious manner. He would not always denounce it, but in his prescriptions to preachers he adjusts the proportion in which it should be berated with something like a mathematical precision. In a letter to one of his preachers he says :

"DEAR TOMMY,

"As to preaching, you ought not to preach against that unscriptural, blasphemous, mischievous doctrine constantly. . . I have done this too seldom; scarce once in fifty sermons. I ought to do it once in fifteen or so (iii. 284)."

This was written in the full maturity of Wesley's life; and at the age of more than three-score and ten it is manifest that his virulent dislike of Calvinism had not in the least abated. He says, for instance :

"Calvinism is not the gospel; nay, it is further from it than many of the sermons I hear at the church. These are very frequently unevangelical, but they are not anti-evangelical. Few of the Methodists are now in danger of imbibing error from the church ministers; but they are in equal danger of imbibing the grand error, Calvinism, from some of the dissenting ministers" (iii. 278).

Again, he says :

"They have defended their dear decrees with arguments worthy of Bedlam, and with language worthy of Billingsgate" (ii. 281).

It was found in process of time that there was no security

against hearing Calvinistic preaching, even in the English Church. As long as its pulpits were occupied only with Charles Wesley's "mitred infidels" and their sympathizers, little was said of refusing to hear them. But at length it was discovered, according to Dr. Coke, "that nearly all the converted clergymen in the kingdom were Calvinists" (iii. 478). On this ground it was urged that Methodist services in large towns might be held in church hours. This was the more plausible as the Conference had already recommended, that while it was expedient that all Methodists, bred in the church, should attend upon its services as often as possible, yet that "if the minister began either to preach the absolute decrees, or to rail at and ridicule Christian perfection, they should quietly go out of church" (iii. 363). Wesley revolved this matter "over and over," and concluded by cautioning his friends not to be critical, "not to make a man an offender for a word; no, not for a few sentences, which any who believe the decrees may drop without design." Finally he leaves the matter to be determined by the hearer's own conscience. "If it does not hurt you, hear them; if it does, refrain."

Such was the compromise between affection for "the church," and abhorrence of Calvinistic doctrine. Hateful as this was, it is but justice to Wesley to say that there was something more hateful, "for," he says, "I take a Socinian to be far worse than even a predestinarian" (iii. 506).

In dealing with Scotch Presbyterians, Wesley is somewhat more on his guard against strong expressions, than in other cases. It is a singular fact that he confesses repeatedly that it was difficult to accomplish anything north of the Tweed. His congregations were attentive. They listened well, but they were not moved. They knew everything already. It was hard work to make Methodist societies flourish on that hard soil, and in some cases they would not flourish at all. Wesley was sorely tried in attempting to establish and manage them. His authority and respect in England were of little avail when weighed in the scale by Scotch Presbyterians. Even his admirers made some abatement of his claims.

A very fair contemporary estimate of Wesley, so far as we

can judge, is that of Lady Glenarchy, who welcomed him to Scotland, and listened at her own house to the conference between him and Dr. Webster on doctrinal points. They agreed, she said, on all but decrees, predestination and perseverance. "I must, according to the light I now have, agree with Dr. Webster. Nevertheless I hope Mr. Wesley is a child of God. He has been an instrument of saving souls; as such I honor him and will countenance his preachers. I have heard him preach thrice, and should have been better pleased had he preached more of Christ and less of himself" (iii. 64). She, however, dismissed his preachers from her chapel. Her soul was "hurt by hearing them."

It is to Wesley's credit, that with such strong prejudices as he evinced against Calvinism, he cherished so much of the spirit of Christian union. A theological education, in the strict sense of the words, he never had. He picked up new views, or submitted to modifications of his old ones, as he went along, holding himself ever ready to learn, but his Arminianism was too deeply rooted to be shaken, and his whole career was characterized by that hereditary antipathy to Calvinism, which brought him into frequent controversy with, and confirmed that original alienation of feeling which he felt and expressed toward, the English dissenters.

It is not surprising that Wesley was not always consistent with himself in his doctrinal ideas. He came in contact, at an early period of his active ministry, with the Moravians, and admired their purity and fell in love with their opinions. But fuller acquaintance with them in Germany, as well as London, opened his eyes to their Antinomianism, their madness and enthusiasm. In 1743 he defined faith as "a conviction that Christ has loved *me*, and given himself for *me*" (i. 433). In 1747 the Conference endorsed this as the definition of justifying faith, (i. 552), implying that the assurance of forgiveness was an essential part of such faith; yet a month later new light had dawned upon him, and he writes, "the assertion that justifying faith is a sense of pardon, is contrary to reason; it is flatly absurd. For how can a sense of our having received pardon be the condition of our re-

ceiving it?" It might be asked, "But does not our church give this account of justifying faith?" Wesley replies, "I am sure she does of saving or Christian faith; I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and the testimony; all men may err, but the word of the Lord shall stand forever" (i. 552).

In 1748 Wesley wrote, "A Letter to a Person lately joined with the People called Quakers." In this he objected to Quakerism as differing from Christianity, among other things, "because it allows women to be preachers" (ii. 30). In a few years, the "extraordinary dispensation" of God's Providence, "termed Methodism," allowed, in his view, for *extraordinary* calls. "Therefore," he says, (iii. 112), "I do not wonder if several things occur therein which do not fall under the ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul's ordinary rule was, 'I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation.' Yet, in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions." Wesley was prepared now to "allow women to be preachers," when the call was *extraordinary*. Thus his consistency was saved by "an extraordinary dispensation of Providence termed Methodism," and Miss Bosanquet was allowed to preach.

At one time (1752) Wesley suspected his brother Charles of agreeing with Mr. Whitfield, "touching perseverance at least, if not predestination too." He writes to him, "perhaps the occasion (of the report) was, that both you and I have often granted an absolute, unconditional election of some, together with a conditional election of all, men. I did incline to this scheme for many years, but of late I have doubted it more and more: first, because all the texts which I used to think supported it, I now think prove, either more or less, either absolute reprobation and election, or neither: secondly, because I find this opinion serves all the ill purposes of absolute predestination, particularly that of supporting infallible perseverance" (ii. 144).

On another occasion (1769) he writes (iii. 45): "Sometime since I was inclined to think that none, who had once enjoyed and then lost the pure love of God, must ever look to enjoy

it again, till they were just stepping into eternity. But experience has taught us better things." So in regard to his doctrine of perfection, experience was his teacher. He accepted no "absolute or infallible perfection." "This," he said, "I never contended for. Sinless perfection I do not contend for, seeing it is not scriptural" (ii. 465). The perfection he held was "only another name for holiness," and "does certainly admit of degrees." "I build, he says," "on no authority, ancient or modern, but the Scripture. . . Neither the doctrine in question, nor any other, is anything to me, unless it be the doctrine of Christ and his apostles. . . I search for truth, plain Bible truth, without any regard to the praise or dispraise of men. If you will assist me in this search, more especially by showing me where I have mistaken my way, it will be gratefully acknowledged."

With such views, Wesley waited for light. He had been disposed to regard sanctification as a progressive work. But among his converts, a few at first, and afterwards scores and even hundreds, claimed to have reached perfection at once. Wesley examined them and was favorably impressed. Though he had never had an experience like theirs, and never to the last professed to have attained it, he could not question their sincerity. He only cautioned them against indiscreetly publishing it, or boasting of it. His preachers, however, were to insist upon the doctrine of perfection, in the sense doubtless in which Wesley originally held it. But ere long those who had attained perfection began to lose it. Even Miss Bosanquet was of this number. Wesley in 1770 confesses that among those who professed to have received the blessing, hardly one in thirty retained it. "Many hundreds in London," says he, "were made partakers of it within sixteen or eighteen months, but I doubt whether twenty of them are now as holy and happy as they were" (iii. 59).

Lessons like this could only tend to emphasize Wesley's profession of "being not so tenacious of my opinions now as I was twenty or thirty years ago" (ii. 232). "With regard to Christian perfection," he says, "whoever will give me more light, will do me a singular favor." He adds: "I have no

particular fondness for the term. It seldom occurs either in my preaching or writings."

On other points he was ready to be instructed from the most unpromising sources. "I had," he says (1762) "a striking proof that God can teach by whom he will teach. A man full of words, but not of understanding, convinced me of what I could never see before, that *anima est ex-traduce*, that all the souls of his posterity, as well as their bodies, were in our first parent," (ii. 445). It may seem singular that one who could use language like this, should assume, as Wesley did in 1758, to issue a volume with the title "A Preservative against Unsettled Notions in Religion," (ii. 319). Archdeacon Rutherford, in 1763, charged Wesley with maintaining contradictions; the latter, at a subsequent date, frankly replied, (ii. 490) "If all my sentiments were compared together, from the year 1725 to 1768, there would be truth in the charge; for during the latter part of this period, I have relinquished several of my former sentiments. During these last thirty years, I may also have varied in some of my sentiments and expressions without observing it." Still he thought that his "real contradictions" for thirty years had been few. They may have been few, and they did not materially affect the great points insisted on in his sermons, but they indicate first, his inadequate theological training originally, and the commendable spirit which he showed in accepting new light from whatever quarter it might come. He did not deserve Warburton's savage thrust: "If he knows no more of theology than of morals, he is the meanest pedant of the age," (ii. 490).

There was, however, one element of his mind which predisposed him to accept what many would have scrutinized only to reject. This was credulity in accepting the supernatural in the common experience of life. We need not dilate upon the strange phenomena, which others, beside the Wesley family, might ascribe to supernatural interposition, that in his youth so unaccountably disturbed the peace of his father's household. They doubtless tended to confirm his belief in the intrusion of spirits into the visible and material sphere. His unwavering faith in ghosts and apparitions doubtless

dates from this period. In his twentieth year (i. 22), he wrote in the gravest possible manner, an account of a lad in Ireland, who ever and anon made an involuntary pilgrimage through the aerial regions, and feasted with the demi-gods *in nubibus*. He mentions at the same time an apparition near Oxford, (i. 23) subsequently found to be contemporaneous with the death of the spectator's mother. Soon after he returned from Georgia, he began to come in contact with evil spirits, or those affected by them. The parents of a lunatic, who for five years had been in the habit of beating and tearing himself, putting his hands into the fire, and thrusting pins into his flesh, besought his intercessions and found relief. (i. 232.) Like instances of the power of prayer followed. A few years later we find him publicly defending his views, that demoniacs still existed, that miracles were not confined to the early centuries, (i. 531,) and that casting lots was in some cases admissible. In 1775 he visited Whiston Cliff, a huge ridge of rock that had been rent asunder by a sudden convulsion. Endeavoring to account for the phenomenon, he concluded that it was not produced by "any merely natural cause, fire, water, or air, but by God himself" (ii. 213), who arose to shake terribly the earth, and who purposely chose such a place, where the annual concourse of the nobility and gentry was so great, in order that they might be impressed. Certainly his own personal experience had been of a remarkable kind, but assuredly something more than a merely remarkable experience would be required to warrant any ordinary Christian to say, as Wesley did, "I have been preternaturally restored more than ten times" (ii. 361).

Wesley's belief in the near presence of departed spirits, might be considered hereditary. He says (iii. 41): "I have heard my mother say, 'I have frequently been as fully assured that my father's spirit was with me, as if I had seen him with my eyes.' I have myself many times found, on a sudden, so lively an apprehension of a deceased friend, that I have sometimes turned about to look. . . In dreams I have had exceeding lively conversations with them, and I doubt not but they were then very near." In another connection

he remarks (iii. 158): "They no doubt clearly discern all our words and actions, if not all our thoughts too. . . But we have in general only a faint and indistinct perception of their presence except in some peculiar instances, when it may answer some gracious ends of Divine Providence. . . But I suppose this is not a common blessing. I have known but few instances of it. To keep up constant and close communion with God is the most likely means to obtain this also."

At a later date (1774), on the occasion of a marvellous escape, when his horses ran away with him, he says (iii. 169), "I am persuaded that both evil and good angels had a large share in this transaction; how large we do not know now, but we shall know hereafter." Of course with such views as these, it is not surprising that he should "have no doubt of the substance both of Glanvil's and Cotton Mather's narratives." "Do not you think the disturbances in my father's house were a Cock Lane story?" (iii. 171.) It shows how deeply these convictions were rooted in his mind, that in his Magazine he introduced, in nine numbers, extracts from Baxter's "Certainty of the World of Spirits, fully evinced by unquestionable Histories of Apparitions and Witchcrafts" (iii. 407).

His faith in Satanic influence was surely broad enough. At a time when the heat of persecution had died away, and he was left personally unmolested, he had trouble with his horses. On this he remarks, (1787), "the old murderer is restrained from hurting me; but it seems he has power over my horses" (iii. 494). His biographer quite pertinently remarks: "Perhaps Wesley blamed the devil when he ought to have blamed his own long journeys." In the middle of one of his discourses "a vehement noise arose, none could tell why, and shot like lightning through the congregation." The utmost confusion followed. Wesley remarks (iii. 531), "It was the strangest incident of the kind I ever remember, and I believe none can account for it, without supposing some preternatural influence. Satan fought lest his kingdom should be delivered up."

In the case of Margaret Barlow, (iii. 535), Wesley was

fairly taken in. This prophetess finally subsided, as Mr. Tyerman seem to think, among the Shakers, but not till the great bubble of her vaticinations of the day of doom had collapsed. Previous to this she came to Wesley. "I asked her," he says, "abundance of questions. I was soon convinced that she was not only sincere, but deep in grace. I was convinced, likewise, that she had frequent intercourse with a spirit that appeared to her in the form of an angel." Wesley gravely narrates some of her prophecies, which she declared—and he took her word for it—had been remarkably fulfilled.

The answers to prayer, which he notes, may be regarded in a somewhat different light, but many of them were so remarkable as to seem like special interruptions of the natural order of the world, and furnishing grounds for an implicit faith, which, by the help of prayer, might dispense with the ordinary precautions of human foresight. Enveloped in a fog which obscured his way, he resorted to prayer, and the vapors instantly vanished.* His supplications for persons in distress, some of them evidently regarded as demoniacs, have been referred to, and were so extraordinary as to lead to a demand for his special intercession. On one of his journeys, in 1746 (i. 518), his companion was too ill to proceed further. He was thoroughly tired himself, and his head ached more than it had for months. His horse, also, was so lame that it could scarcely walk. "I then thought," he says, "cannot God heal man or beast, by any means, or without any? Immediately my weariness and head-ache ceased, and my horse's lameness in the same instant, nor did he halt any more that day or the next." Wesley adds, that he states the naked fact, and leaves every man to account for it as he sees good. The next case is more equivocal. After the use of tea for twenty-seven years, Wesley bravely resolved to do without it. For three days he had a constant head-ache, combined with drowsiness, but on the third day his memory failed almost entirely. "In the evening," he says, "I sought

* Tyerman omits this, though using and giving full credit to the pamphlet in which it is stated.

my remedy in prayer ; and next morning my head-ache was gone, and my memory as strong as ever " (i. 522).

In 1750 Wesley's passage from Dublin to Bristol was stormy and dangerous. "The sea ran mountains high," and the ship, without goods or ballast, rolled fearfully. He and his companion, Christopher Hopper, began to pray. The wind was hushed, the sea fell, the clouds dispersed, and the danger was at an end " (ii. 85).

At Osmotherly he visited a scoffer at all religion, "who was either raving mad, or possessed of the devil." The person (a woman) told him that the devil had appeared and talked to her for some time, the day before, and had leaped upon and grievously tormented her ever since. Wesley says, "We prayed with her. Her agonies ceased. She fell asleep and awoke in the morning calm and easy" (ii. 140).

All the faith that Napoleon had in his "destiny," Wesley had in God's special providence over him. His work and his success he knew were not the fruit of his own designs or sagacity. His societies, even as to their outward form, were "not man's building." Methodism was an "extraordinary dispensation of Providence." As the chief agent, or, we might say, the chief prophet of that dispensation, it is not surprising that Wesley should expect and note special interpositions in his own behalf. We have passed a few of them under review, because without them the opinions and character of Wesley could not be rightly judged. He lived for the most part in what might be called a supernatural atmosphere. The universe to him, was full of spiritual agencies. Answers to prayer that read to many as almost miraculous, appeared to him almost as matters of course. It is easy to perceive the confidence with which all this experience would naturally inspire one who was favorably predisposed to it. Wesley was always trustful, always hopeful, and in the darkest hours never bated jot of heart or hope.

Wesley could scarcely be called domineering, and he never failed in self-respect, and very rarely trespassed on the rules of gentlemanly conduct or intercourse. If he often assumed somewhat of a dictatorial tone, the circumstances in which he

was placed must be considered. Few men could have occupied the same position and not been tempted to assume a higher tone of authority than what was habitual to him. We can attach little importance to the reply he made (i. 20), when asked why in his intercourse at school, he chose the companionship of those younger than himself, rather than his equals or his seniors. "Better to rule in hell than reign in heaven," may have indeed expressed a youthful ambition that if nurtured would have developed in despotic aspiration, but ere long higher, and we believe holier, motives subjected it to stern restraint. While in Georgia, he compelled many of his parishioners to regard him as an overbearing ritualist, but we ascribe his course rather to a misdirected zeal for what he accounted important, than to any disposition to lord it over God's heritage. His biographer pronounces (i. 159) his conduct "arrogant, foolish, offensive, intolerant," and so doubtless it was, but his high-churchism was then at the zenith, and he had no ecclesiastical superior in the colony.

But in calling laymen to preach, Wesley had under him men who were in a sense his creatures. As preachers, he made and could unmake them. He was their superior in nearly all respects. He knew it, and was forced by his relation to them to lay down rules for their observance. Thus he assumed, but without needless offense, the position almost of a Pope. They were not to marry without his consent (i. 445). They were to publish nothing that had not first been submitted to his approval (ii. 539). In requiring them to renounce Calvinism; to surrender their longings for ordination or a separation from the church; to conform in their preaching to the doctrines of his sermons or his commentaries, he was only insisting on what he had a right to demand of those who were expected to be, and had given reason to expect that they would be, his assistants. Sometimes they felt the yoke galling, but Wesley rarely employed unnecessary severity, and for the most part he was cheerfully served. True, he would tolerate no insubordination. The rules, he insisted, must be observed. Those who would not comply with them could no longer be recognized by him. It was ex-

communication without the name, and the terror of it awed turbulent spirits. In the case of an able and faithful preacher, by the name of McNab, Wesley's biographer finds fault with him. McNab held that he was appointed to his post by the Conference. Wesley held that the power of appointment rested solely with himself. McNab would not admit this, and Wesley "at once, by his own *ipse dixit*, expelled him from his connexion." Mr. Tyerman characterizes this, which perhaps was "technically right," as "an almost popish assumption of autocratic authority" (iii. 309.)

John Pawson was one of the ablest and best of Wesley's preachers. He had been sent to Scotland, and there with Wesley's approval had discharged the duties of an ordained minister. Returning to England, he was stripped by Wesley of his title of *Reverend*, and sank back to his old level. With all the loyal love possible for his chief, he was indignant at this treatment—"deposed from office by a single man, and that without any crime committed, great or small, real or pretended." No wonder he should say, "even the Pope himself never acted such a part as this. What an astonishing degree of power does our aged father and friend exercise!" (iii. 498).

It was indeed the power of a Pope, but far more than this, a power which Hildebrand might have envied. It was the power of long established and widely recognized supremacy, the power, if not of absolutely superior sagacity, at least of large experience and patriarchal respect. In other hands, it might have been dangerous. Wesley used it, we believe, conscientiously, and not to gratify any merely despotic taste. He was, indeed, a Pope, and sometimes inspired terror, but he does not seem to have eagerly assumed power beyond what the exigencies of his system required. If blame is to be bestowed, it should rest far more upon the system than upon the man. Indeed the system itself, till almost the end of his life, was scarcely disguised monarchism.

Wesley was peculiarly unfortunate in his marriage relations. While in Georgia he became acquainted with Miss Hopkey, and was disposed to marry her (i. 147). She appears to have been, on the whole, an estimable, intelligent and worthy

young woman, and Wesley might have done well to heed the maxim about going further and faring worse. But, submitting his conscience to the Moravian veto, he sacrificed his affections to his sense of duty, and so exasperated the friends of the young lady, by his conduct subsequently in refusing her the communion, that in the issue he was forced, as secretly as possible, to leave the colony. A few years later he fell in with Grace Murray (ii. 45, 46), and admiring her capacity for usefulness, and other estimable qualities, he found his affection for her reciprocated, and engaged to marry her. His friends remonstrated against the connection as unworthy of him, and calculated to prejudice the cause which he had so much at heart. While he wavered, sometimes resolved to marry her, and sometimes half disposed to surrender her to a rival,—one of his own preachers,—the latter, more enterprising, supplanted him in her affections. Wesley's pamphlet on the subject, recently published, of which Mr. Tyerman has made use, is a curious document, and is not, on the whole, much to Wesley's credit (i. 433).

Wesley's third attempt at marriage was more successful, but resulted disastrously to himself. He yoked himself with a Xanthippe, and was left to repent at leisure of a step which consistency would have forbade (ii. 111–115). He had, in a special treatise on the subject, recommended celibacy to his preachers (i. 432), and stood committed to the duty of setting them an example. But when the temptation came upon him he explained away the difficulties imposed by the publication of his treatise, and endeavored publicly to vindicate what many regarded, with too much reason, as his inconsistency. He denied this inconsistency, however (ii. 551). One of his preachers, years afterwards, declared that only once was he ever tempted to commit murder, and that was on one occasion when he saw Wesley's wife abusing him and attempting to drag him by the hair of his head.

His uncomfortable domestic relations were a sore trial to Wesley, and how far he was responsible for them is not altogether clear. They helped doubtless to save him from the temptation to which his brother Charles yielded, of narrow-

ing the sphere of itinerary effort. He had nothing that could be called a home. His warmest friends doubtless would call his marriage a blunder, although it was made in the end subservient to the promotion of his great design.

But, if a blunder, it was not his only one. For many years his Kingswood School threatened to prove a failure. He had put it into wrong hands. He had established rules for it that seemed to assume that the impulses of youth were as pliable as wax in the moulder's hand (ii. 10). Play was excluded. Religious exercises and fasting were enjoined, and other measures were adopted which seemed to indicate a miserable lack of that sagacity which Wesley's experience should have taught him. Mr. Tyerman might have reserved for this measure the remark he makes on Wesley's marriage: "We much wonder that Mr. Wesley should have appeared so little acquainted with himself and with human nature" (ii. 102).

In choosing Mrs. Ryan for the house-keeper of his orphan house at Newcastle, (ii. 286), and especially in his correspondence with her, in which he details his wife's weakness and jealousies, in letters some of which the latter discovered, Wesley committed new blunders. Full as obnoxious to criticism was his application to the Greek bishop, Erasmus, of questionable antecedents, to ordain some of his preachers (ii. 486), whom the English bishops unceremoniously rejected. The results of the measure gave evidence of its folly. Many of his best friends took no more favorable view of his course in constituting the Conference to which he would bequeath his own power and authority. On repeated occasions he did things which were scarcely worthy of a wise man, and did little credit to his own consistency or sound judgment.

But there was much to offset all this. Wesley was an indefatigable worker. He never seemed to know what weariness was. From London to Bristol, to Newcastle, to Cornwall, to Scotland, to Ireland, and back again to a Conference at Bristol or Leeds, his locomotion was almost incessant, interrupted only by the necessity of sleep, or by preaching, often three times a day, and sometimes more, as he hurried from place to place. Early rising, active exercise and constant

occupation became so habitual, that they were a second nature. To these, with good reason, he ascribed that physical vigor which he enjoyed, with few exceptions, to the age of more than four-score years. His prolonged life rendered him an object of popular veneration, and while it detracted nothing from his vigor, added to his authority. His *ipse dixit* settled the conclusions of a Conference. His word was reason enough for the enforcement of his rules.

But, while resolutely unyielding to any demand that would interfere with the success of his great project, he was active and energetic in all possible and practicable measures for counteracting social and moral evils of every kind. So far as money was concerned, he was utterly unselfish. He knew not what it was to hoard. His pamphlets and books brought him at times large profits, but he gave away in charity all that was not absolutely necessary for his personal use. He organized measures for the relief of the poor. He contrived means to secure them employment. He visited the sick and needy in their miserable homes, and the wretched prisoners in their cells, and encouraged others to do so likewise. He paid great attention to education, and to the training of his preachers, laying down rules and directions for them sometimes tediously minute. He anticipated tract societies of the next century by the publications which he not only issued, but contrived to have circulated. His multifarious activity was specially conspicuous, in his perusal of the old divines and his selections from their writings, which he gave, volume after volume, and year after year, to the press. In the sphere of politics his name became famous, although we cannot think enviably so. He endorsed Dr. Johnson's assault upon the rights of the American colonists by publishing an abridgment of his views with his own endorsement. He did not hesitate to address himself to men in power, not always with a success answering to his wishes, but with the evident purpose of promoting the cause of morals and the common welfare. Indeed, it would be tedious simply to catalogue the list of philanthropic causes and projects which during his active life for more than half a century secured his attention and sympathy.

And, furthermore, he was fearless. Enthusiasm, except such as grew out of an earnest and practical belief of the doctrines of revelation, he most emphatically disavowed, and we do not call in question the correctness of his assertion any more than its sincerity. But his whole soul was devoted to the practical revival of religion in England, and the continued success of his efforts gave him the assurance, in which he never wavered, that God was with him. That assurance forbade timidity. During the earlier period of his itineracy he had to meet difficulties, dangers, and reproach often of the most malignant and desperate kind. His audiences were frequently little better than street mobs. English clergymen treated him as a poacher on their domain, and English justices considered it their business to administer injustice, so far as he or his preachers were concerned. But all this failed to move him. He never quailed before power. He was never awed by dignities. He claimed the right of a free-born Englishman, and if he found it necessary, he was ready to appeal to legal justice or arraign iniquity framed by statute. He might be hooted at, pelted with mud or rotten eggs, beaten, slandered, unjustly arrested, turned from his lodgings, reviled and abused by all the arts of malice, but he still held on his way, prepared to die or go to prison, but never disposed to compromise his purpose or his sense of duty.

And, with what many will account his imperfect theology, he still grasped clearly and strongly those vital truths of practical religion which have so often proved the wisdom and power of God to salvation.* The native depravity of the heart, the need of regeneration, justification by faith, the all

* Mr. Tyerman has nothing to say of Wesley's Hopkinsianism. But by what other term can we characterize his views when, while tracing all pain in the world to sin, and asserting that had there been no sin, there would have been no pain, he is compelled to harmonize this with the following that may be considered an offset:

“Yea, mankind have gained by the fall a capacity, first of being more holy and happy on earth, and secondly, of being more happy in heaven than otherwise they could have been. For if man had not fallen, there must have been a blank in our faith and in our love.”—See *Methodist Quarterly*, 1861.

sufficient atonement of Christ—these, combined with his emphatic declarations concerning sanctification and a holiness to be evidenced by active Christian charity—were the staple of discourses that arrested the attention of the heedless and struck conviction to the hearts of the hardened. In selecting his preachers, he gave the preference to men who could expound these truths from the depths of their own experience, men who could speak to their fellows, often with more power than he could himself. Preaching to soldiers on one occasion, and observing how little they seemed to be impressed, he noted the fact as a reason why a converted soldier might speak more hopefully to soldiers, and holding in his own hands the entire control of his preachers, he availed himself of it with a sagacity and good sense not equally conspicuous in other spheres.

And, in the providence of God, the way had been prepared for the great movement at the head of which he placed himself, with little forethought as to what should be the issue. He followed at first where others, like Howel Harris in Wales, and Whitfield as a field preacher, had prepared the way. The lessons of their example and experience, the marked revivals in Wales, in Scotland, and New England, helped to shape his course and policy. Religious societies were already in existence in various quarters, furnishing a model in some respects for those which he might organize. The religious life of Dissent, as well as of the Establishment, was well nigh paralyzed, and he found the broad field of English ignorance and depravity left almost exclusively in his hands, to be dealt with after his own method. The task before him was vast, appalling, but not, to him, disheartening. He threw himself into it, in the full conviction that God called him to undertake it. He did what Xavier, or Loyola, might have done in like circumstances, and with a kindred spirit. The impulses that had effloresced in his early ritualism, now shaped themselves to practical results. In all his societies there was no movement on which his eye was not fixed, no defection that he was not prompt to correct. And thus it was, that surrounded by his own chosen workers, made harmonious by the supremacy of his will as well as their common sympathies, and spared to

live and labor out a half century of unabated and vigorous toil, during which his supervision approached as nearly as anything human can to omnipresence and omniscience, he fell at last only when his work was done, and the ecclesiastical system which he, governed by circumstances, had devised, was complete and self-operating, and so constituted as to work out by the necessities of self-perpetuation the results which its author designed.

Such, though imperfectly portrayed, was one of the most remarkable men of these last centuries, with some faults and weaknesses, but with merits that overshadow them. He occupied a position which had been prepared for him in the providence of God, and to which he was remarkably adapted. He saw what needed to be done, and he knew well enough what he might hope to do, and he did it with his might. He was for an unusually prolonged period singularly free from the ordinarily physical infirmities of humanity, and was enabled to prosecute his aims with something like mechanical precision, and with a constancy and persistence only possible where the will finds no obstruction in physical obstacles or debilities. His success was not that of the orator, although in direct address and clear statement he was peculiarly effective, and his style is as unencumbered and transparent as it is earnest. But it was as the organizer of what he had achieved that he made himself memorable. He shaped the material that was thrown upon his hands, and he did it so effectually as to render it his noblest and most lasting monument. Measuring him by his intellect, by his knowledge, by his sagacity, by his force of speech or commanding presence—by any one or all of these—we cannot call him great any more than we can call him stainless; but he had other elements of greatness, and when we place his statue on the providentially prepared pedestal of the circumstances in which his wonderful activity was exerted, we are constrained to say that there are few in the whole historic gallery of the past that are more conspicuous, and still fewer are so worthy of their position.

In taking leave of Mr. Tyerman's volumes we cannot with-

hold the grateful recognition of the service he has performed in making us better acquainted with the character and career of one whose name belongs not to a single denomination alone, but to the whole Christian world. He has accomplished his task—that called for patient and careful investigation,—faithfully and with evident impartiality. It is rarely that we are constrained to call in question his judgments, and for his theological prejudices, it is easy to make due allowance. His bibliography of what pertains to the history of Methodism till the date of Wesley's death, is a valuable feature of his work. For the general reader this renders it somewhat heavy, and the narrative might have been put in a more attractive shape if the bibliography had been remitted to an appendix, and the author had not tied himself down to a detail in the form of annals. The review, year by year, of conference debates and itinerant labors, becomes at length somewhat monotonous, and the reader feels like one who travels over a broad plain when substantially the same landscape is forever reappearing. But this is offset by the admiration excited in the survey of a most incessant activity, and a most remarkable success, and the reader who patiently follows the author to the close of his volumes feels that he has been privileged to study deliberately one of the most wonderful careers of modern times.