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# JOHN WESLEY'S PLACE IN HISTORY

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*Woodrow Wilson*



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# John Wesley's Place in History

By  
**WOODROW WILSON**  
President of the United States



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## JOHN WESLEY'S PLACE IN HISTORY

**J**OHN WESLEY lived and wrought while the Georges reigned. He was born but a year after Anne became queen, a year before the battle of Blenheim was fought; while England was still caught in the toils of the wars into which her great constitutional revolution had drawn her; when Marlborough was in the field, and the armies afoot which were to make the ancient realm free to go her own way without dictation from any prince in Europe. But when he came to manhood, and to the days in which his work was to begin, all things had fallen quiet again. Wars were over

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and the pipes of peace breathed soothing strains. The day of change had passed and gone, and bluff Sir Robert Walpole ruled the land, holding it quiet, aloof from excitement, to the steady humdrum course of business, in which questions of the treasury and of the routine of administration were talked about, not questions of constitutional right or any matter of deep conviction. The first of the dull Georges had come suitably into the play at the center of the slow plot, bringing with him the vulgar airs of the provincial court of obscure Hanover, and views that put statesmanship out of the question.

The real eighteenth century had set in, whose annals even its own historians have pronounced to be tedious, unheroic, without noble or moving

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plot, though they would fain make what they can of the story. They have found it dull because it lacked dramatic unity. Its wars were fought for mere political advantage—because politicians had intrigued and thrones fallen vacant; for the adjustment of the balance of power or the aggrandizement of dynasties; and represented neither the growth of empires nor the progress of political ideals. All religion, they say, had cooled and philanthropy had not been born. The thinkers of the day had as little elevation of thought as the statesmen, the preachers as little ardor as the atheistical wits, whose unbelief they scarcely troubled themselves to challenge. The poor were unspeakably degraded and the rich had flung morals to the winds. There was no ad-

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venture of mind or conscience that seemed worth risking a fall for.

But the historians who paint this somber picture look too little upon individuals, upon details, upon the life that plays outside the field of politics and of philosophical thinking. They are in search of policies, movements, great and serious combinations of men, events that alter the course of history, or letters that cry a challenge to the spirits. Forget statecraft, forego seeking the materials for systematic narrative, and look upon the eighteenth century as you would look upon your own day, as a period of human life whose details are its real substance, and you will find enough and to spare of human interest. The literary annals of a time, when Swift and Addison and Berkeley and Butler

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and Pope and Gray and Defoe and Richardson and Fielding and Smollett and Sterne and Samuel Johnson and Goldsmith and Burke and Hume and Gibbon and Cowper and Burns wrote, and in which Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and Keats were born, cannot be called barren or without spiritual significance.

No doubt the wits of Queen Anne's time courted a muse too prim, too precise, too much without passion to seem to us worthy to stand with the great spirit of letters that speaks in the noble poetry with which the next century was ushered in; but there was here a very sweet relief from the ungoverned passions of the Restoration, the licentious force of men who knew the restraints neither of purity nor of taste; and he must need strong

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spices in his food who finds Swift insipid. No doubt Fielding is coarse, and Richardson prolix and sentimental, Sterne prurient and without true tonic for the mind, but the world which these men uncovered will always stand real and vivid before our eyes. It is a crowded and lively stage with living persons upon it; the eighteenth century can never seem a time vague and distant after we have read those pages of intimate revelation. No doubt Dr. Johnson failed to speak any vital philosophy of life and uttered only common sense, and the talk at the Turk's Head Tavern ran upon preserving the English Constitution rather than upon improving it; but it is noteworthy that Mr. Goldsmith, who was of that company, was born of the same century that produced Lau-

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rence Sterne, and that "She Stoops to Conquer" and the "Vicar of Wakefield," with their sweet savor of purity and modesty and grace, no less than "Tristram Shandy" and "Tom Jones," with their pungent odor, blossomed in the unweeded garden of that careless age. Burns sang with clear throat and an unschooled rapture at the North, and the bards were born who were to bring the next age in with strains that rule our spirits still.

A deep pulse beat in that uneventful century. All things were making ready for a great change. When the century began it was the morrow of a great struggle, from whose passionate endeavors men rested with a certain lassitude, with a great weariness and longing for peace. The travail of the civil wars had not ended with the

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mastery of Cromwell, the Restoration of Charles, and the ousting of James; it had ended only with the constitutional revolution which followed 1688, and with the triumphs of the Prince of Orange. It had been compounded of every element that can excite or subdue the spirits of men. Questions of politics had sprung out of questions of religion, and men had found their souls staked upon the issue. The wits of the Restoration tried to laugh the ardor off, but it burned persistent until its work was done and the liberties of England spread to every field of thought or action.

No wonder the days of Queen Anne seemed dull and thoughtless after such an age; and yet no wonder there was a sharp reaction. No wonder questions of religion were avoided,

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minor questions of reform postponed. No wonder Sir Robert sought to cool the body politic and calm men's minds for business. But other forces were gathering head as hot as those which had but just subsided. This long age of apparent reaction was in fact an age of preparation also; was not merely the morrow of one revolution, but was also the eve of another, more tremendous still, which was to shake the whole fabric of society. England had no direct part in bringing the French Revolution on, but she drank with the rest of the wine of the age which produced it, and before it came had had her own rude awakening in the revolt of her American colonies.

Great industrial changes were in progress, too. This century, so dull to the political historian, was the cen-

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tury in which the world of our own day was born, the century of that industrial revolution which made political ambition thenceforth an instrument of material achievement, of commerce and manufacture. These were the days in which canals began to be built in England, to open her inland markets to the world and shorten and multiply her routes of trade; when the spinning jenny was invented and the steam engine and the spinning machine and the weaver's mule; when cities which had slept since the middle ages waked of a sudden to new life and new cities sprang up where only hamlets had been. Peasants crowded into the towns for work; the countrysides saw their life upset, unsettled; idlers thronged the highways and the marts, their old

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life at the plow or in the village given up, no settled new life found; there were not police enough to check or hinder vagrancy, and sturdy beggars were all too ready to turn their hands to crime and riot. The old order was breaking up, and men did not readily find their places in the new.

The new age found its philosophy in Adam Smith's "Wealth of Nations," the philosophy of self-interest, and men thought too constantly upon these things to think deeply on any others. An industrial age, an age of industrial beginnings, offers new adventures to the mind, and men turn their energies into the channels of material power. It is no time for speculations concerning another world; the immediate task is to fill this world with wealth and fortune and all the enginery

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of material success. It is no time to regard men as living souls; they must be thought of rather as tools, as workmen, as producers of wealth, the builders of industry, and the captains of soldiers of fortune. Men must talk of fiscal problems, of the laws of commerce, of the raw materials and the processes of manufacture, of the facilitation of exchange. Politics centers in the budget, and the freedom men think of is rather the freedom of the market than the freedom of the hustings or of the voting booth.

And yet there are here great energies let loose which have not wrought their full effect upon the minds of men in the mere doing of their daily tasks or the mere planning of their fortunes. Men must think and long as well as toil; the wider the world upon which

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they spend themselves the wider the sweep of their thoughts, the restless, unceasing excursions of their hope. The mind of England did not lie quiet through those unquiet days. All things were making and to be made, new thoughts of life as well as new ways of living. Masters and laborers alike were sharing in the new birth of society. And in the midst of these scenes, this shifting of the forces of the world, this passing of old things and birth of new, stood John Wesley, the child, the contemporary, the spiritual protagonist of the eighteenth century. Born before Blenheim had been fought, he lived until the fires of the French Revolution were ablaze. He was as much the child of his age as Bolingbroke was, or Robert Burns. We ought long ago to have perceived

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that no century yields a single type. There are countrysides the land over which know nothing of London town. The Vicar of Wakefield rules his parish as no rollicking, free-thinking fellow can who sups with Laurence Sterne. Sir Roger de Coverley is as truly a gentleman of his age as Squire Western. Quiet homes breed their own sons. The Scots country at the North has its own free race of poets and thinkers, men, some of them, as stern as puritans in the midst of the loose age. Many a quiet village church in England hears preaching which has no likeness at all to the cool rationalistic discourse of vicars and curates whom the spiritual blight of the age has touched, and witnesses in its vicarage a life as simple, as grave, as elevated above the vain pursuits of the world

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as any household of puritan days had seen. England was steadied in that day, as always, by her great pervasive middle class, whose affections did not veer amidst the heady gusts even of that time of change, when the world was in transformation; whose life held to the same standards, whose thoughts traveled old accustomed ways. The indifference of the church did not destroy their religion. They did not lose their prepossessions for the orderly manners and morals that kept life pure.

It was no anomaly, therefore, that the son of Samuel and Susanna Wesley should come from the Epworth rectory to preach forth righteousness and judgment to come to the men of the eighteenth century. Epworth, in quiet Lincolnshire, was typical English land and lay remote from the follies and

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fashions of the age. There was sober thinking and plain living—there where low monotonous levels ran flat to the spreading Humber and the coasts of the sea. The children of that vicarage, swarming a little host about its hearth, were bred in love and fear, love of rectitude and fear of sin, their imagination filled with the ancient sanctions of the religion of the prophets and the martyrs, their lives drilled to right action and the studious service of God. Some things in the intercourse and discipline of that household strike us with a sort of awe, some with repulsion. Those children lived too much in the presence of things unseen; the inflexible consciences of the parents who ruled them brought them under a rigid discipline which disturbed their spirits as much as it enlightened them.

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But, though gaiety and lightness of heart were there shut out, love was not, nor sweetness. No one can read Susanna Wesley's rules for the instruction and development of her children without seeing the tender heart of the true woman, whose children were the light of her eyes. This mother was a true counsellor and her children resorted to her as to a sort of providence, feeling safe when she approved. For the stronger spirits among them the regime of that household was a keen and wholesome tonic.

And John Wesley was certainly one of the stronger spirits. He came out of the hands of his mother with the temper of a piece of fine steel. All that was executive and fit for mastery in the discipline of belief seemed to come to perfection in him. He dealt

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with the spirits of other men with the unerring capacity of a man of affairs—a sort of spiritual statesman, a politician of God, speaking the policy of a kingdom unseen, but real and destined to prevail over all kingdoms else.

He did not deem himself a reformer; he deemed himself merely a minister and servant of the church and the faith in which he had been bred, and meant that no man should avoid him upon his errand though it were necessary to search the by-ways and beat the hedges to find those whom he sought. He did not spring to his mission like a man who had seen a vision and conceived the plan of his life beforehand, whole, and with its goal marked upon it as upon a map. He learned what it was to be

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from day to day, as other men do. He did not halt or hesitate, not because his vision went forward to the end, but because his will was sound, unfailing, sure of its immediate purpose. His "Journal" is as notable a record of common sense and sound practical judgment as Benjamin Franklin's "Autobiography" or the letters of Washington. It is his clear knowledge of his duty and mission from day to day that is remarkable, and the efficiency with which he moved from purpose to purpose. It was a very simple thing that he did, taking it in its main outlines and conceptions. Conceiving religion vitally, as it had been conceived in his own home, he preached it with a vigor, an explicitness, a directness of phrase and particularity of application which

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shocked the sober decorum of his fellow ministers of the church so much that he was more and more shut out from their pulpits. He got no church of his own; probably no single parish would have satisfied his ardor had a living been found for him. He would not sit still. The conviction of the truth was upon him; he was a messenger of God, and if he could not preach in the churches, where it seemed to him the duty of every man who loved the order and dignity of divine service to stand if he would deliver the word of God, he must, as God's man of affairs, stand in the fields as Mr. Whitefield did and proclaim it to all who could come within the sound of his voice.

And so he made the whole kingdom his parish, took horse like a courier

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and carried his news along every highway. Slowly, with no premeditated plan, going now here, now there, as some call of counsel or opportunity directed him, he moved as if from stage to stage of a journey; and as he went did his errand as if instinctively. No stranger at an inn, no traveler met upon the road left him without hearing of his business. Those he could not come to a natural parley with he waylaid. The language of his "Journal" is sometimes almost that of the highwayman. "At Gerard's Cross," he says, "I plainly declared to those whom God gave into my hands the faith as it is in Jesus: as I did the next day to a young man I overtook on the road." The sober passion of the task grew upon him as it unfolded itself under his hand from month to month,

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from year to year. He was more and more upon the highways; his journeys lengthened, carried him into regions where preachers had never gone before, to the collieries, to the tin mines, to the fishing villages of the coast, and made him familiar with every countryside of the kingdom, his slight and sturdy figure and shrewd, kind face known everywhere. It was not long before he was in the saddle from year's end to year's end, always going forward as if upon an enterprise, but never hurried, always ready to stop and talk upon the one thing that absorbed him, making conversation and discourse his business, seizing upon a handful of listeners no less eagerly than upon a multitude.

The news got carried abroad as he traveled that he was coming, and he

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was expected with a sort of excitement. Some feared him. His kind had never been known in England since the wandering friars of the middle ages fell quiet and were gone. And no friar had ever spoken as this man spoke. He was not like Mr. Whitefield; his errand seemed hardly the same. Mr. Whitefield swayed men with a power known time out of mind, the power of the consummate orator whose words possess the mind and rule the spirit while he speaks. There was no magic of oratory in Mr. Wesley's tone or presence. There was something more singular, more intimate, more searching. He commanded so quietly, wore so subtle an air of gentle majesty, attached men to himself so like a party leader, whose coming draws together a com-

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pany of partisans, and whose going leaves an organized band of adherents, that cautious men were uneasy and suspicious concerning him. He seemed a sort of revolutionist, left no community as he found it, set men by the ears. It was hard to believe that he had no covert errand, that he meant nothing more than to preach the peaceable riches of Christ. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted; to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the blind; to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord"—this had been the text from which he preached his first sermon by the highway, standing upon a little emi-

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nence just outside the town of Bristol. It described his mission—but not to his enemies. The churches had been shut against him, not because he preached, but because he preached with so disturbing a force and directness, as if he had come to take the peace of the church away and stir men to a great spiritual revolution; and uneasy questionings arose about him. Why was he so busy? Why did he confer so often with an intimate group of friends, as if upon some deep plan, appoint rendezvous with them, and seem to know always which way he must turn next, and when? Why was he so restless, so indomitably eager to make the next move in his mysterious journey? Why did he push on through any weather and look to his mount like a trooper on campaign?

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Did he mean to upset the country? Men had seen the government of England disturbed before that by fanatics who talked only of religion and of judgment to come. The Puritan and the Roundhead had been men of this kind, and the Scottish Covenanters. Was it not possible that John Wesley was the emissary of a party or of some pretender, or even of the sinister Church of Rome?

He lived such calumnies down. No mobs dogged his steps after men had once come to know him and perceived the real quality he was of. Indeed, from the very first men had surrendered their suspicions upon sight of him. It was impossible, it would seem, not to trust him when once you had looked into his calm gray eyes. He was so friendly, so simple, so open, so ready

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to meet your challenge with temperate and reasonable reply, that it was impossible to deem him subtle, politic, covert, a man to preach one thing and plan another. There was something, too, in his speech and in the way he bore himself which discovered the heart of every man he dealt with. Men would raise their hands to strike him in the mob and, having caught the look in his still eye, bring them down to stroke his hair. Something issued forth from him which penetrated and subdued them—some suggestion of purity, some intimation of love, some sign of innocence and nobility—some power at once of rebuke and attraction which he must have caught from his Master. And so there came a day when prejudice stood abashed before him, and men everywhere hailed his coming as

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the coming of a friend and pastor. He became not only the best known man in the kingdom—that of course, because he went everywhere—but also the best loved and the most welcome.

And yet the first judgment of him had not been wholly wrong. A sort of revolution followed him, after all. It was not merely that he came and went so constantly and moved every countryside with his preaching. Something remained after he was gone: the touch of the statesman men had at first taken him to be. He was a minister of the Church of England. He loved her practices and had not willingly broken with them. It had been with the keenest reluctance that he consented to preach in the fields, outside the sacred precincts of a church,

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“having been all my life,” as he said, “so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.” He never broke with the communion he loved. But his work in the wide parish of a whole kingdom could not be done alone, and not many men bred to the orders of the church could be found to assist him; he was forced by sheer drift of circumstances to establish a sort of lay society, a sort of salvation army, to till the fields he had plowed. He was a born leader of men. The conferences he held with the friends he loved and trusted were councils of campaign, and did hold long plans in view, as his enemies suspected. They have a high and honorable place in the history of

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the statesmanship of salvation. It was a chief part of Wesley's singular power that everything he touched took shape as if with a sort of institutional life. He was not so great a preacher as Whitefield or so moving a poet as his brother Charles; men counseled him who were more expert and profound theologians than he and more subtle reasoners upon the processes of salvation. But in him all things seemed combined; no one power seemed more excellent than another, and every power expressed itself in action under the certain operation of his planning will. He almost unwittingly left a church behind him.

It is this statesmanship in the man that gives him precedence in the annals of his day. Men's spirits were not dead; they are never dead;

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but they sometimes stand confused, daunted, or amazed as they did amidst the shifting scenes of the eighteenth century, and wait to be commanded. This man commanded them, and kept his command over them, not only by the way he held the eye of the whole nation in his incessant tireless journeys, his presence everywhere, his winning power of address, but also by setting up deputies, classes, societies, where he himself could not be, with their places of meeting, their organizations and efficient way of action. He was as practical and attentive to details as a master of industry, and as keen to keep hold of the business he had set afoot. It was a happy gibe that dubbed the men of his way *Methodists*. It was the method of his evangelization that gave it permanence

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and historical significance. He would in any case have been a notable figure, a moving force in the history of his age. His mere preaching, his striking personality, his mere presence everywhere in the story of the time, his mere vagrancy and indomitable charm, would have drawn every historian to speak of him and make much of his picturesque part in the motley drama of the century; but as it is they have been constrained to put him among statesmen as well as in their catalogues of saints and missionaries.

History is inexorable with men who isolate themselves. They are suffered oftentimes to find a place in literature, but never in the story of events or in any serious reckoning of cause and effect. They may be interesting, but they are not important. The mere

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revolutionist looks small enough when his day is passed; the mere agitator struts but a little while and without applause amidst the scenes and events which men remember. It is the men who make as well as destroy who really serve their race, and it is noteworthy how action predominated in Wesley from the first. The little coterie at Oxford, to which we look back as to the first associates in the movement which John Wesley dominated, were as fervent in their prayers, in their musings upon the Scripture, in their visits to the poor and outcast, before John Wesley joined them as afterward. Their zeal had its roots in the divine pity which must lie at the heart of every evangelistic movement—pity for those to whom the gospel is not preached, whom no light of

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Christian guidance had reached, the men in the jails and in the purlieus of the towns whom the church does not seek or touch; but he gave them leadership and the spirit of achievement. His genius for action touched everything he was associated with; every enterprise took from him an impulse of efficiency.

Unquestionably this man altered and in his day governed the spiritual history of England and the English-speaking race on both sides of the sea; and we ask what was ready at his hand, what did he bring into being of the things he seemed to create? The originative power of the individual in affairs must always remain a mystery, a theme more full of questions than of answers. What would the eighteenth century in England have

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produced of spiritual betterment without John Wesley? What did he give it which it could not have got without him? These are questions which no man can answer. But one thing is plain: Wesley did not create life, he only summoned it to consciousness. The eighteenth century was not dead; it was not even asleep; it was only confused, unorganized, without authoritative leadership in matters of faith and doctrine, uncertain of its direction.

Wesley's own Journal affords us an authentic picture of the time, mixed, as always, of good and bad. He fared well or ill upon his journeys as England was itself made up. The self-government of England in that day was a thing uncentered and unsystematic in a degree it is nowadays

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difficult for us to imagine. The country gentlemen, who were magistrates, ruled as they pleased in the countryside, whether in matters of justice or administration, without dictation or suggestion from London; and yet ruled rather as representatives than as masters. They were neighbors the year around to the people they ruled; their interests were not divorced from the interests of the rest. Local pride and a public spirit traditional amongst them held them generally to a just and upright course. But the process of justice with them was a process of opinion as much as of law. It was an inquest of the neighborhood, and each neighborhood dealt with visitors and vagrants as it would. There was everywhere the free touch of individuality. The roads were not policed; the towns were not

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patrolled—good men and bad had almost equal leave to live as they pleased. If things went wrong the nearest magistrate must be looked up at his home or stopped in his carriage as he passed along the highway and asked to pass judgment as chief neighbor and arbiter of the place. And so Mr. Wesley dealt with individuals—it was the English way. His safety lay in the love and admiration he won or in the sense of fair play to which his frank and open methods appealed; his peril, in the passions of the crowds or of the individuals who pressed about him full of hatred and evil thoughts.

The noteworthy thing was how many good men he found along these highways where Tom Jones had traveled, how many were glad to listen to him

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and rejoiced at the message he brought, how many were just and thoughtful and compassionate, and waited for the gospel with an open heart. This man, as I have said, was no engaging orator, whom it would have been a pleasure to hear upon any theme. He spoke very searching words, sharper than any two-edged sword, cutting the conscience to the quick. It was no pastime to hear him. It was the more singular, therefore, the more significant, the more pitiful, how eagerly he was sought out, as if by men who knew their sore need and would fain hear some word of help, though it were a word also of stern rebuke and of fearful portent to those who went astray. The spiritual hunger of men was manifest, their need of the church, their instinct to be

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saved. The time was ready and cried out for a spiritual revival.

The church was dead and Wesley awakened it; the poor were neglected and Wesley sought them out; the gospel was shrunken into formulas and Wesley flung it fresh upon the air once more in the speech of common men; the air was stagnant and fetid; he cleared and purified it by speaking always and everywhere the word of God; and men's spirits responded, leaped at the message, and were made wholesome as they comprehended it. It was a voice for which they had waited, though they knew it not. It would not have been heard had it come untimely. It was the voice of the century's longing heard in the mouth of this one man more perfectly, more potently, than in the

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mouth of any other—and this man a master of other men, a leader who left his hearers wiser than he found them in the practical means of salvation.

And so everything that made for the regeneration of the times seemed to link itself with Methodism. The great impulse of humane feeling which marked the closing years of the century seemed in no small measure to spring from it: the reform of prisons, the agitation for the abolition of slavery, the establishment of missionary societies and Bible societies, the introduction into life, and even into law, of pity for the poor, compassion for those who must suffer. The noble philanthropies and reforms which brighten the annals of the nineteenth century had their spiritual birth in

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the eighteenth. Wesley had carried Christianity to the masses of the people, had renewed the mission of Christ himself, and all things began to take color from what he had done. Men to whom Methodism meant nothing, yet, in fact, followed this man to whom Methodism owed its establishment.

No doubt he played no small part in saving England from the madness which fell upon France ere the century ended. The English poor bore no such intolerable burdens as the poor of France had to endure. There was no such insensate preservation of old abuses in England as maddened the unhappy country across the Channel. But society was in sharp transition in England; one industrial age was giving place to another, and the

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poor particularly were sadly at a loss to find their places in the new. Work was hard to get, and the new work of pent-up towns was harder to understand and to do than the old familiar work in the field or in the village shops. There were sharper contrasts now than before between rich and poor, and the rich were no longer always settled neighbors in some countryside, but often upstart merchants in the towns, innovating manufacturers who seemed bent upon making society over to suit their own interests. It might have gone hard with order and government in a nation so upset, transformed, distracted, had not the hopeful lessons of religion been taught broadcast and the people made to feel that once more pity and salvation had sought them out.

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There is a deep fascination in this mystery of what one man may do to change the face of his age. John Wesley, we have had reason to say, planned no reform, premeditated no revivification of society; his was simply the work of an efficient conviction. How far he was himself a product of the century which he revived it were a futile piece of metaphysic to inquire. That even his convictions were born of his age may go without saying: they are born in us also by a study of his age, and no century listens to a voice out of another—least of all out of a century yet to come. What is important for us is the method and cause of John Wesley's success. His method was as simple as the object he had in view. He wanted to get at men, and he went directly to them,

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not so much like a priest as like a fellow man standing in a like need with themselves. And the cause of his success? Genius, no doubt, and the gifts of a leader of men, but also something less singular, though perhaps not less individual—a clear conviction of revealed truth and of its power to save. Neither men nor society can be saved by opinions; nothing has power to prevail but the conviction which commands, not the mind merely, but the will and the whole spirit as well. It is this, and this only, that makes one spirit the master of others, and no man need fear to use his conviction in any age. It will not fail of its power. Its magic has no sorcery of words, no trick of personal magnetism. It concentrates personality as if into a single element

## WESLEY'S PLACE IN HISTORY

of sheer force, and transforms conduct into a life.

John Wesley's place in history is the place of the evangelist who is also a master of affairs. The evangelization of the world will always be the road to fame and power, but only to those who take it seeking, not these things, but the kingdom of God; and if the evangelist be what John Wesley was, a man poised in spirit, deeply conversant with the natures of his fellow-men, studious of the truth, sober to think, prompt and yet not rash to act, apt to speak without excitement and yet with a keen power of conviction, he can do for another age what John Wesley did for the eighteenth century. His age was singular in its need, as he was singular in his gifts and power.

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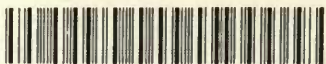
The eighteenth century cried out for deliverance and light, and God had prepared this man to show again the might and the blessing of his salvation.

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