

# John Wesley - Part 2

by J.C. Ryle

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*J.C. Ryle's sermon on John Wesley highlights his profound impact on Christianity, emphasizing salvation by faith, the importance of Scripture, and the necessity of love in the Christian life.*

**Scripture:** Mark 9:39, Romans 4:5, Ephesians 2:8

**Topics:** "Evangelism", "Faith"

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## Description

J.C. Ryle reflects on the profound impact of John Wesley, the father of Methodism, emphasizing his remarkable ability to communicate the gospel with clarity and passion even into his old age. Ryle highlights Wesley's commitment to plain truth for ordinary people, his disdain for complex theological jargon, and his focus on the necessity of salvation through faith. He shares Wesley's twelve rules for evangelistic work, showcasing Wesley's wisdom and practical approach to ministry. Ryle urges readers to recognize Wesley's significant contributions to Christianity, despite any criticisms of his theology, and to appreciate his role as a bold advocate for the gospel in a challenging era. Ultimately, Ryle calls for gratitude towards Wesley's legacy as a powerful instrument of God's work in England.

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## Transcript

ENGLAND a hundred years ago received such deep impressions from John Wesley, that I should not feel I did him justice if I did not give my readers a few select specimens of his writings. Before we turn away from the father of Methodism, let us try to get some distinct idea of his style of thought and his mode of expressing himself. Let us see how his mind worked.

The man who could leave his mark so indelibly on his fellow-countrymen as John Wesley did, we must all feel could have been no ordinary man. The man who could keep his hold on assemblies till he was between eighty and ninety years old, and produce effects second only to those produced by Whitefield, must evidently have possessed peculiar gifts. Two or three extracts from his sermons and other writings will probably be thought interesting and instructive by most Christian readers.

The materials for forming a judgement in this matter are happily abundant, and easily accessible. A volume of fifty-seven sermons lies before me at this moment, prepared for publication by Wesley's own hands, and first published in 1771. It is a volume that deserves far more attention than it generally receives in the present day. The doctrine of some of the discourses, I must honestly confess, is sometimes very defective. Nevertheless, the volume contains many noble passages; and there are not a few pages in it which, for clearness, terseness, pointedness, vigour, and pure Saxon phraseology, are

perfect models of good style.

Wesley's preface to his volume of sermons is of itself very remarkable. I will begin by giving a few extracts from it. He says,-- "I design plain truth for plain people. Therefore, of set purpose, I abstain from all nice and philosophical speculations; from all perplexed and intricate reasonings; and, as far as possible, from even the show of learning, unless in sometimes citing the original Scriptures. I labour to avoid all words which are not easy to be understood--all which are not used in common life; and in particular those technical terms that so frequently occur in Bodies of divinity--those modes of speaking which men of reading are intimately acquainted with, but which to common people are an unknown tongue. Yet I am not assured that I do not sometimes slide into them unawares; it is so extremely natural to imagine that a word which is familiar to ourselves is so to all the world.

"Nay, my design is, in some sense, to forget all that ever I have read in my life. I mean to speak in the general, as if I had never read one author, ancient or modern, always excepting the inspired. I am persuaded that, on the one hand, this may be a means of enabling me more clearly to express the sentiments of my heart, while I simply follow the chain of my own thoughts without entangling myself with those of other men; and that, on the other, I shall come with fewer weights upon my mind, with less of prejudice and prepossession, either to search for myself or to deliver to others the naked truth of the gospel.

"To candid, reasonable men I am not afraid to lay open what have been the inmost thoughts of my heart. I have thought, 'I am a creature of a day, passing through life as an arrow through the air. I am a spirit come from God, and returning to God, just hovering over the great gulf, till a few moments hence I am no more seen! I drop into an unchangeable eternity! I want to know one thing,--the way to heaven--how to land safe on that happy shore. God himself has condescended to teach the way; for this very end he came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. Oh, give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be a man of one book. Here, then, I am free from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In his presence I open, I read his book; for this end--to find the ways to heaven. Is there a doubt concerning the meaning of what I read?--does anything appear dark and intricate?--I lift up my heart to the Father of lights: Lord, is it not thy word, "If any man lack wisdom, let him ask of God:" thou givest liberally, and upbraidest not. Thou hast said, if any be willing to do thy will he shall know. I am willing to do; let me know thy will. I then search after and consider parallel passages of Scripture, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. I meditate thereon with all the earnestness and attention of which my mind is capable. If any doubt still remains, I consult those who are experienced in the ways of God; and then the writings whereby, being dead, they yet speak. And what I thus learnt that I teach.'

"But some may say, I have mistaken the way myself although I have undertaken to teach it to others. It is probable that many will think this, and it is very possible that I have. But I trust, whereinsoever I have mistaken, my mind is open to conviction. I sincerely desire to be better informed. I say to God and man, 'What I know not teach thou me.'

"Are you persuaded you see more clearly than me? It is not unlikely that you may. Then treat me as you would desire to be treated yourself upon a change of circumstances. Point me out a better way than I have yet known. Show me it is so by plain proof of Scripture. And if I linger in the path I have been accustomed to tread, and therefore I am unwilling to leave it, labour with me a little; take me by the hand and lead me as I am able to bear. But be not discouraged if I entreat you not to beat me down in order to quicken my

pace: I can go but feebly and slowly at best: then I should not be able to go at all. May I not request you, further, not to give me hard name; in order to bring me into the right way. Suppose I was ever so much in the wrong, I doubt this would not set me right. Rather it would make me run so much the further from you, and so get more and more out of the way.

"Nay! perhaps if you are angry, so shall I be too; and then there will be small hopes of finding the truth. If once anger arises, its smoke will so dim the eyes of my soul that I shall be able to see nothing clearly. For God's sake, if it be possible to avoid it, let us not provoke one another to wrath. Let us not kindle in each other this fire of hell; much less blow it up into a flame. If we could discern truth by that dreadful light, would it not be loss rather than gain? For how far is love, even with many wrong opinions, to be preferred before truth itself without love! We may die without the knowledge of many truths, and yet be carried into Abraham's bosom. But if we die without love, what will knowledge avail? Just as much as it avails the devil and his angels!"

The next specimen of John Wesley's mind shall be an extract from a sermon preached by him at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, on June 18, 1738, from the words, "By grace ye are saved through faith" (Ephes. ii. 8). It concludes with the following passages,

"At this time more especially will we speak, that by grace ye are saved through faith, because never was the maintaining this doctrine more seasonable than it is at this day. Nothing but this can effectually prevent the increase of the Romish delusion among us. It is endless to attack one by one all the errors of that Church. But salvation by faith strikes at the root, and all fall at once when this is established. It was this doctrine; which our Church justly calls the strong rock and foundation of the Christian religion, that first drove Popery out of these kingdoms, and it is this alone can keep it out. Nothing but this can give a check to that immorality which hath overspread the land as a flood. Can you empty the great deep drop by drop? Then you may reform us by dissuasion from particular vices. But let the righteousness which is of God by faith be brought in, and so shall its proud waves be stayed. Nothing but this can stop the mouths of those who glory in their shame, and openly 'deny the Lord that bought them.' They can talk as sublimely of the law as he that bath it written by God in his heart. To hear them speak on this head might incline one to think they were not far from the kingdom of God. But take them out of the law into the gospel; begin with the righteousness of faith, with Christ the end of the law to every one that believes; and those who but now appeared almost if not altogether Christians, stand confessed the sons of perdition, as far from life and salvation (God be merciful unto them) as the depth of hell from the height of heaven.

"For this cause the adversary so rages whenever salvation by faith is declared to the world. For this reason did he stir up earth and hell to destroy those who preached it. And for the same reason, knowing that faith alone could overturn the foundation of his kingdom, did he call forth all his forces, and employ all his arts of lies and calumny, to affright that champion of the Lord of hosts, Martin Luther, from reviving it. Nor can we wonder thereat; for as that man of God observes, How would it enrage a proud, strong man, armed, to be stopped and set at nought by a little child coming against him with a reed in his hand? Especially when he knew that little child would surely overthrow him and tread him under foot. Even so, Lord Jesus! thus hath thy strength been even made perfect in weakness! Go forth then, thou little child that believest in him, and his right hand shall teach thee terrible things. Though thou art helpless and weak as an infant of days, the strong man shall not be able to stand before thee. Thou shalt prevail over him, and subdue him, and overthrow him, and trample him under thy feet. Thou shalt march on with the great Captain of thy salvation, conquering and to conquer, until all thine enemies are destroyed, and death is swallowed up in victory."

The next specimen that I will give of John Wesley's preaching is the conclusion of his sermon on justification by faith. It ends with the following striking paragraph. The text is Romans iv. 5:-- "Thou ungodly one who hearest or readest these words, thou vile, helpless, miserable sinner, I charge thee before God, the judge of all, go straight unto Jesus with all thy ungodliness. Take heed thou destroy not thine own soul by pleading thy righteousness more or less. Go as altogether ungodly, guilty, lost, destroyed, deserving and dropping into hell; and thus shalt thou find favour in his sight, and know that he justifieth the ungodly. As such thou shalt be brought unto the blood of sprinkling, as an undone, helpless, damned sinner. Thus look unto Jesus! There is the Lamb of God, who taketh away thy sins! Plead thou no works, no righteousness of thine own! no humility, contrition, sincerity. In no wise. That were, in very deed, to deny the Lord that bought thee. No! Plead thou singly the blood of the covenant, the ransom paid for thy proud, stubborn, sinful soul. Who art thou that now seest and feelest both thine inward and outward ungodliness? Thou art the man! I want thee for my Lord. I challenge thee for a child of God by faith. The Lord hath need of thee. Thou who feelest thou art just fit for hell art just fit to advance his glory, the glory of free grace, justifying the ungodly, and him that worketh not. Oh, come quickly! Believe in the Lord Jesus; and thou, even thou, art reconciled to God."

The last example of John Wesley's preaching that I will bring before the reader, is a portion of a sermon preached by him at St. Mary's, Oxford, before the University, in 1744. The text is Acts iv. 31, and the title of the sermon is "Scriptural Christianity." After asking the question, "Where does Scriptural Christianity exist?" he proceeds to address his hearers in the following manner.--These hearers, we must remember, were the University of Oxford, Heads of Houses, Professors, Fellows, Tutors, and other residents:-

"I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, if ye do account me a madman or a fool yet as a fool bear with me. It is utterly needful that some one should use great plainness of speech towards you. It is more especially needful at this time; for who knoweth but it may be the last. Who knoweth how soon the righteous Judge may say: 'I will no more be entreated for this people. Though Noah, Daniel, and Job were in this land, they should but deliver their own souls.' And who will use this plainness if I do not? Therefore I, even I, will speak. And I adjure you, by the living God, that ye steel not your hearts against receiving a blessing at my hands. Do not say in your hearts, 'non persuadebis etiamsi persuaseris or, in other words, 'Lord, thou shalt not send by whom thou wilt send. Let me rather perish in my blood than be saved by this man.'

"Brethren, I am persuaded better things of you, though I thus speak. Let me ask you then, in tender love, and in the spirit of meekness, is this city of Oxford a Christian city? Is Christianity, Scriptural Christianity, found here? Are we, as a community of men, so filled with the Holy Ghost as to enjoy in our hearts, and show forth in our lives, the genuine fruits of the Spirit? Are all the magistrates, all heads and governors of colleges and halls, and their respective societies (not to speak of inhabitants of the town), of one heart and one soul? Is the love of God shed abroad in our hearts? Are our tempers the same that were in Him? Are our lives agreeable thereto? Are we holy, as He who hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation?

"In the fear, and in the presence of the great God before whom both you and I shall shortly appear, I pray you that are in authority over us (whom I reverence for your office' sake), to consider not after the manner of dissemblers with God, Are you filled with the Holy Ghost? Are you lively portraiture of him whom ye are appointed to represent among men? I have said, ye are gods, ye magistrates and rulers; ye are by office so nearly allied to the God of heaven. In your several stations and degrees ye are to show forth to us the Lord our Governor. Are all the thoughts of your hearts, all your tempers and desires, suitable to your high calling? Are all your words like unto those which come out of the mouth of God? Is there in all your actions

dignity and love, a greatness which words cannot express, which can flow only from a heart full of God, and yet consistent with the character of man that is a worm, and the son of man that is a worm?

"Ye venerable men, who are more especially called to form the tender minds of youth, to dispel therein the shades of ignorance and error, and train them up to be heirs unto salvation, are you filled with the Holy Ghost, and with those fruits of the Spirit which your important office so indispensably requires? Is your heart whole with God, and full of love and zeal to set up his kingdom on earth? Do you continually remind those under your care that the one rational end of all our studies is to know, love, and serve the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent? Do you inculcate upon them day by day that love alone never faileth. and that without love all learning is but splendid ignorance, pompous folly, vexation of spirit? Has all you teach an actual tendency to the love of God, and of all mankind for his sake? Have you an eye to this end, in whatever you prescribe, touching the kind, manner, and measure of their studies, desiring and labouring that wherever the lot of these young soldiers of Christ is cast, they may be so many burning and shining lights, adorning the gospel of Christ in all things? And, permit me to ask, do you put forth all your strength in the vast work you have undertaken? Do you labour herein with all your might, exerting every faculty of your souls, using every talent which God hath lent you, and that to the uttermost of your power?

"Let it not be said that I speak here as if all under your care were intended to be clergymen. Not so; I only speak as if they were all intended to be Christians. But what example is set them by us who enjoy the beneficence of our forefathers, by fellows, students, scholars, more especially those who are of some rank and eminence? Do ye, brethren, abound in the fruits of the Spirit, in lowliness of mind, in self-denial and mortification, in tenderness and composure of spirit, in patience, meekness, sobriety, temperance, and in unwearied, restless endeavours to do good unto all men, to relieve their outward wants and to bring their souls to the true knowledge and love of God? Is this the general character of Fellows of colleges? I fear it is not. Rather, have not pride and haughtiness of spirit, impatience and peevishness, sloth and indolency, gluttony and sensuality, and even a proverbial uselessness, been objected to us, perhaps not always by our enemies nor wholly without ground? Oh! that God would roll away this reproach from us, that the very memory of it might perish for ever!

"Many of us are men immediately consecrated to God, called to minister in holy things. Are we, then, patterns to the rest, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity? Is there written on our foreheads and on our hearts, Holiness to the Lord? From what motive did we enter upon the office?

"Was it indeed with a single eye to serve God, trusting that we were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon us this ministration for the promotion of his glory, and the edifying of his people? And have we clearly determined, by God's grace, to give ourselves wholly to this office? Do we forsake and set aside, as much as in us lies, all worldly cares and studies? Do we apply ourselves wholly to this one thing, and draw all our cares and studies this way? Are we apt to teach? Are we taught of God, that we may be able to teach others also? Do we know God? Do we know Jesus Christ? Hath God revealed his Son in us? And hath he made us able ministers of the new covenant? Where, then, are the seals of our apostleship? Who that were dead in trespasses and sins, have been quickened by our word? Have we a burning zeal to save souls from death, so that for their sakes we often forget even to eat our bread? Do we speak plainly, by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience? Are we dead to the world, and the things of the world, laying up all our treasure in heaven? Do we lord it over God's heritage, or are we the least, the servants of all? When we bear the reproach of Christ does it sit heavy on us, or do we rejoice therein? When we are smitten on the one cheek, do we resent it? Are we impatient of affronts? or do we turn the other cheek also, not resisting evil, but overcoming evil with good? Have we a bitter zeal,

inciting us to strive sharply and passionately with them that are out of the way? or, is our zeal the flame of love, so as to direct all our words with sweetness, lowliness, and meekness of wisdom?

"Once more, what shall we say concerning the youth of this place?--Have you either the form or the power of Christian godliness? Are you humble, teachable, advisable; or stubborn, self-willed, heady, and high-minded? Are you obedient to your superiors as to parents, or do you despise those to whom ye owe the tenderest reverence? Are you diligent in your every business, pursuing your studies with all your strength? Do you redeem the time, crowding as much work into every day as it can contain? Rather are ye not conscious to yourselves that you waste away day after day, either in reading what has no tendency to Christianity, or in gambling, or in--you know not what? Are you better managers of your fortune than of your time? Do you, out of principle, take care to owe no man anything? Do you remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, to spend it in the more immediate worship of God! When you are in his house, do you consider God is there? Do you behave as seeing him that is invisible? Do you know how to possess your bodies in sanctification and honour? Are not drunkenness and uncleanness found among you? Yea, are there not a multitude of you who glory in their shame? Do not many of you take the name of God in vain, perhaps habitually, without either remorse or fear? Yea, are there not a multitude among you that are forsworn? I fear a swiftly-increasing multitude? Be not surprised, brethren. Before God and this congregation I own myself to have been of this number, solemnly swearing to observe all those customs which I then knew nothing of, and those statutes which I did not so much as read over, either then or for some years after. What is perjury if this is not? But if it be, oh, what a weight of sin, yea, sin of no common dye, lieth upon us! And doth not the Most High regard it?

"May it not be one of the consequences of this that so many of you are a generation of triflers, triflers with God, with one another, and with your own souls? For how few of you spend, from one week to another, a single hour in private prayer? How few of you have any thought of God in the general tenor of your conversation? Who of you is in any degree acquainted with the work of his Spirit, his supernatural work in the souls of men? Can you hear, unless now and then in a church, any talk of the Holy Spirit? Would you not take it for granted, if one began such a conversation, that it was either hypocrisy or enthusiasm? In the name of the Lord God Almighty, I ask what religion are you of? Even the talk of Christianity, ye cannot, will not bear. Oh, my brethren, what a Christian city is this! It is time for thee, Lord, to lay to thine hand.

"For, indeed, what probability--what possibility rather, speaking after the manner of men--is there that Christianity, Scriptural Christianity, should be again the religion of this place, and that all orders of men among us should speak and live as men filled with the Holy Spirit? By whom should this Christianity be restored? By those of you that are in authority? Are you convinced, then, that this is Scriptural Christianity? Are you desirous it should be restored? Do you count your fortune, liberty, life, not dear unto yourselves so you may be instrumental in restoring of it? But suppose you have the desire, who hath any power proportioned to effect? Perhaps some of you have made a few vain attempts, but with how small success! Shall Christianity, then, be restored by young, unknown, inconsiderable men? I know not whether ye yourselves would suffer it. Would not some of you cry out, 'Young man, in so doing thou reproachest us!' But there is no danger of your being put to the proof; so hath iniquity overspread us like a flood. Whom then shall God send? The famine, the pestilence (God's last messengers to a guilty land), or the sword? the armies of Romish aliens to reform us into our first love? Nay, rather let us fall into thy hand, O Lord; and let us not fall into the hand of man.

"Lord, save, or we perish! Take us out of the mire, that we sink not! Oh, help us against these enemies, for vain is the help of man. Unto thee all things are possible. According to the greatness of thy power,

preserve thou those that are appointed to die, and preserve us in the manner that seemeth to thee good; not as we will, but as thou wilt."

The reader will probably agree with me that this is a remarkable sermon, and one of a class that is not frequently heard in University pulpits. What was thought of it in 1744 by the Vice-chancellor, the Heads of Houses, and the Fellows and Tutors of Colleges, we have little means of knowing. In his journal, Wesley only remarks: "I preached this day for the last time, I suppose, at St. Mary's. Be it so. I am now clear of the blood of these men. I have fully delivered my own soul. The beadle came to me afterwards, and told me, 'that the Vice-chancellor had sent him for my notes.' I sent them without delay, not without admiring the wise providence of God. Perhaps few men of note would have given a sermon of mine the reading, if I had put it in their hands. But by this reason it came to be read, probably more than once, by every man of eminence in the University." Many, perhaps, will agree with me that, if Oxford had heard more of such plain preaching during the last one hundred and twenty year; it would have been well for the Church of England.

Turning away from Wesley's preaching, I will now give a specimen of his mind of a very different description. I will give the twelve rules which he laid down for the guidance of his helpers in evangelistic work in the Methodist communion. They serve to illustrate, I think, in a very striking manner, the great shrewdness and good sense of the man, and are also good examples of his terse, pithy style of composition.

He says to his helpers:-

"1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed for a moment; never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

"2. Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

"3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women, particularly with young women in private.

"4. Take no step towards marriage without first acquainting me with your design.

"5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on everything: you know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

"6. Speak evil of no one; else your words especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast till you come to the person concerned.

"7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

"8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

"9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; not of fetching wood (if time permit), or of drawing water; not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbour's.

"10. Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time; and, in general, do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but for conscience sake.

"11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always not to those who want you, but to those who want you most

"12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such, it is your part to employ your time in the manner which we direct, partly in preaching and visiting the flock from house to house; partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory."

Comment on these rules is needless. They speak for themselves. Though originally drawn up with a special view to the wants of the Methodist helpers, they contain wisdom for all bodies of Christians. Happy would it be for all the churches of Christ, if all the ministers of the gospel would carry out the spirit of these rules, and remember their wise suggestions far more than they do.

Let us next take an illustration of the manner in which he used to advise his preachers individually. To one who was in danger of becoming a noisy, clamorous preacher, he writes:-

"Scream no more at peril of your soul. God now warns you by me, whom he has set over you. Speak as earnestly as you can, but do not scream. Speak with all your heart, but with a moderate voice. It was said of our Lord, 'He shall not cry.' The word means properly, he shall not scream. Herein be a follower of me, as I am of Christ. I often speak loud, often vehemently; but I never scream; I never strain myself; I dare not; I know it would be a sin against God and my own soul."

To one who neglected the duty of private reading and regular study, he wrote as follows:-

"Hence your talent in preaching does not increase; it is just the same as it was seven years ago. It is lively, but not deep; there is little variety; there is no compass of thought. Reading only can supply this, with daily meditation and daily prayer. You wrong yourself greatly by omitting this; you never can be a deep preacher without it, any more than a thorough Christian. Oh begin! Fix some part of every day for private exercises. You may acquire the taste which you have not; what is tedious at first will afterwards be pleasant. Whether you like it or not, read and pray daily. It is for your life! There is no other way; else you will be a trifler all your days, and a pretty superficial preacher. Do justice to your own soul; give it time and means to grow: do not starve yourself any longer."

The last specimen of John Wesley's mind that I will ~ is an extract from a letter which he wrote to the Bishop of Lincoln, by way of public protest, on account of the disgraceful persecution which some intolerant magistrates carried on against the Lincolnshire Methodists. It is an interesting letter, not only on account of the holy boldness of its style, but also on account of the age of the writer. He says:--

"My Lord, I am a dying man, having already one foot in the grave. Humanly speaking, I cannot long creep upon the earth, being now nearer ninety than eighty years of age. But I cannot die in peace before I have discharged this office of Christian love to your Lordship. I write without ceremony, as neither hoping nor fearing anything from your Lordship or from any man living. And I ask, in the name and in the presence of Him, to whom both you and I are shortly to give an account, why do you trouble those that are quiet in the land, those that fear God and work righteousness? Does your Lordship know what the Methodists are--that many thousands of them are zealous members of the Church of England, and strongly attached, not only to His Majesty, but to his present ministry? Why should your Lordship, setting religion out of the question, throw away such a body of respectable friends? Is it for their religious sentiments? Alas, my

Lord, is this a time to persecute any man for conscience sake? I beseech you, my Lord, do as you would be done to. You are a man of sense; you are a man of learning; nay, I verily believe (what is of infinitely more value), you are a man of piety. Then think, and let think. I pray God to bless you with the choicest of his blessings."

With this letter I conclude my illustrations of John Wesley's mind and its working. It would be easy to add to the extracts I have given from the large stock of materials which are still within reach of all who choose to look for them. But there is such a thing as overloading a subject, and injuring it by over-quotation. I believe I have said enough to supply my readers with the means of forming a judgement of John Wesley's mental calibre.

Has any one been accustomed to regard the father of Methodism as a mere fanatic, as a man of moderate abilities and superficial education, as a successful popular preacher and; leader of an ignorant sect, but nothing more? I ask such an one to examine carefully the specimens I have given of Wesley's mind, and to reconsider his opinion. Whether men like Methodist doctrine or not, I think they must honestly concede that the old Fellow of Lincoln was a scholar and a sensible man. The world, which always sneers at evangelical religion, may please itself by saying that the men who shook England a hundred years ago were weak-minded, hot-headed enthusiasts, and unlearned and ignorant men. The Jews said the same of the apostles in early days. But the world cannot get over facts. The founder of Methodism was a man of no mean reputation in Oxford, and his writings show him to have been a well-read, logical-minded, and intelligent man. Let the children of this world deny this if they can.

Finally, has any one been accustomed to regard Wesley with dislike on account of his Arminian opinions? Is any one in the habit of turning away from his name with prejudice, and refusing to believe that such an imperfect preacher of the gospel could do any good? I ask such an one to remould his opinion, to take a more kindly view of the old soldier of the cross, and to give him the honour he deserves.

What though John Wesley did not use all the weapons of truth which our great Captain has provided? What though he often said things which you and I feel we could not say, and left unsaid things which we feel ought to be said? Still, notwithstanding this, he was a bold fighter on Christ's side, a fearless warrior against sin, the world, and the devil, and an unflinching adherent of the Lord Jesus Christ in a very dark day. He honoured the Bible. He cried down sin. He made much of Christ's blood. He exalted holiness. He taught the absolute need of repentance, faith, and conversion. Surely these things ought not to be forgotten. Surely there is a deep lesson in those words of our Master, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part" (Mark ix. 39, 40).

Then let us thank God for what John Wesley was, and not keep poring over his deficiencies, and only talking of what he was not. Whether we like it or not, John Wesley was a mighty instrument in God's hand for good; and, next to George Whitefield, was the first and foremost evangelist of England a hundred years ago.

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