The religious educational work of John Wesley

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THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATIONAL WORK OF JOHN WESLEY

Submitted by

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INTRODUCTION
The purpose of this thesis is a descriptive study of the religious educational work of John Wesley. The writer will endeavor to show the permanent values in Wesley's work from an historical point of view. In his own day, John Wesley was a pioneer in popular education, stimulating the intellectual life of the English people, and conducting educational enterprises continuously for a period of fifty years. In order to understand the fundamental principles underlying his religious educational work, it is necessary that a study of his own life be made.

The thesis will be divided into four chapters. The first chapter will deal with Wesley's early life: the environmental influences of his home, his education, the mission to Georgia, and his conversion experience. John Wesley, even as a boy, showed unusual brilliancy, and the influences of his boyhood days in the Epworth parish were lasting ones. Mrs. Wesley, whose rigid discipline and systematic training in personal and religious habits greatly influenced his early life, likewise gave him a dominant principle which was to carry over into his religious educational work. The education which Wesley received in Charterhouse School
and Oxford University was significant, for he was not only to obtain the highest qualifications of his day, but he gained an insight into human experiences. The beginnings of his religious experience are to be found here, and his unrest drove him to undertake the mission to Georgia, which was to be of such marked influence in its disastrous results. His spiritual awakening took place on May 24, 1738, and it changed his whole outlook on life.

The second chapter will endeavor to show the way in which Wesley used his spiritual genius to quicken the nation, and leading up to the great Wesleyan revival. This was the most far-reaching movement of the eighteenth century; its contribution to the English people has no parallel in the realm of politics, or of science. It was the re-birth of religious experience; the evolution of a social gospel; and the elevation of the educational standard of the nation. Wesley's own personality is at once the symbol and the cause of this movement.

The third chapter will be devoted to a description of the ideals of this enterprise. Historically, there are two general theories of the religious educational policy of Wesley. One is that children can be
brought to salvation by training and conversion, and the other is that they can be brought to salvation by baptism and training. His purpose in religious education is to bring up the children in an understanding of the Christian ideals, and to instil true religion in them.

In order to discover what were the underlying principles of Wesley's religious educational work, it is necessary to analyze the endeavors which he made to spread his education. The final chapter will be devoted to the religious educational work in the various Methodist Societies, in the homes, the Sunday and other schools, which he conducted, and in which his principles were fully worked out. The key to all his labors was to be found in his undying passion to lead sinners to become inwardly and outwardly, true Christians, and to start them on the way to righteous and holy living. Throughout this study, it must be borne in mind, that his spirit was always sincere, earnest, pietistic, and unflinching, and that the chief element in it was his unbounded enthusiasm to re-create the conscience of England.

In the preparation of this thesis, all available sources have been consulted. The writer has read carefully both primary and secondary material. The former
include the Journal, his Letters, and his poetical contributions, sermons, and lessons for children. The secondary sources consulted have been the standard church histories, biographies of Wesley, the Methodist Conference minutes, periodicals, and reports of the schools. In some cases, the religious educational methods seem trite and inconsistent to the reader, and yet this thesis is not an attempt at an elaborate treatment, or at a critical analysis. It is merely an attempt at describing the historical facts in the light of John Wesley's own day, and his efforts in such a great task.
CHAPTER ONE

THE LIFE OF JOHN WESLEY
John Wesley was born on the seventeenth of June, 1703, at the rectory of Epworth, in the county of Lincoln, England. Bartholemew Wesley, the great grandfather of John, had been thrust out from his Dorsetshire rectory, just before the general ejection under the Act Uniformity of 1662. His son, John, had been imprisoned in 1661, the year before his father's ejection, for not using the Book of Common Prayer. He had been deprived of his living and forbidden to settle down, even at his own home in Weymouth. Under the Five Mile Act he was often disturbed, several times arrested, and four times imprisoned. He died, while still a comparatively young man.

Samuel Wesley, the father of John, had all the essential virtues of his stock. their passion for scholarship, their courage, their independent will; but he was of a hardier temper than his father. His independence of will took a somewhat surprising development. ¹

He decided to enter the ministry, in spite of the intolerance of his age. He was rector of the Epworth parish from the year 1696 until his death in 1735. His great work was a commentary on the book of Job, on which he had labored for ten years.


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BIRTH AND PARENTAGE

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Susannah Wesley, the mother of John was a daughter of Dr. Annesley, who was himself an ejected divine, and a man of ripe learning and good family. The daughter of such a father had a natural bias for scholarship; she knew Greek, Latin, French, while yet in her teens, was saturated with theology, reasoned herself into Socinianism, and out of it, and, generally, had a taste for abstruse knowledge. 1

When she was nineteen, she married Samuel Wesley, and became the mother of nineteen children. She trained her children in the great truths of the Christian faith.

This brave, wise, high-bred woman, with the brain of a theologian behind her gentle eyes, and the tastes of a scholar in her blood, had great ideals for her children. They should be gentlefolk, scholars, Christians. 2 The Wesley household was richly endowed in the matter of will so the first step in each child's education was to bring that force under government. It was a standing and imperative rule that no child was to have anything it cried for, and the moral effect on the child's mind of the discovery that one infallible way of not getting a desirable thing was to cry for it must have been surprising.

Mrs. Wesley carried her principle of method into the practice of religion. The whole of the Wesley family were taught the Lord's prayer as soon as they could speak, and repeated it every morning and every

1. Fitchett, W.H., Wesley and His Century, p.15.
2. Ibid., pp. 20-21.
night. The daily lesson of each child was rich with passages of Scripture and hymns. Prayer was woven into the fabric of everyday life.

HOME FORCES AND CHILDHOOD
There was a weekly interview for each child, during which Susannah talked with the child. John had his interview each Thursday. It is probable that the rigors of his introspective life, and his severity of self-analysis, which helped him in his later life, may be definitely traced to the weekly interviews with his mother.

John, like all the other members of his family, was indebted for his elementary education to his mother. In his later sermons on the education of children, he always urged that the parents follow the practices to which he had been accustomed. The children of the household spent six hours at school, and loud talking, playing, and running into the yard, garden, or street without permission, were rigorously forbidden.

From early childhood John was remarkable for his sober and studious disposition, and seemed to feel himself answerable to his reason and his conscience for everything he did. He would do nothing without first reflecting on its fitness and propriety.¹

The family of the Epworth parsonage was not always happy, and it was darkened by several tragedies.

¹ Tyerman, L. The Life and Times of the Reverend John Wesley, p.18.
Of the nineteen children, nine died in infancy; and of the seven clever, quick-witted girls, five of them made unhappy marriages. Before John was three years old his father was thrust into gaol for debt; and before he was six the parsonage was destroyed by fire. Wesley was rescued through the window just before the roof fell in with a fearful crash. This experience in particular seems to have made a deep and lasting impression on him, and the figure of the fire of sin was frequently to be found in his sermons.

When Wesley was eight years of age, his father admitted him to the communion table; and at the age of ten he received baptism. It is a remarkable and significant fact that his conduct through life was consistent with these initial religious decisions.

In 1714, Samuel Wesley succeeded in securing for John a nomination to the Charterhouse School from the Duke of Buckingham, while he was only ten and a half years old. In the sober and well-ordered household of Epworth he had grown into a grave, silent, patient boy. From this he stepped into the competitive life and tumult of the great public school. The change was great. The Charterhouse of that day was a school with a high degree of scholarship. The training of the
age was Spartan in character, but John felt a sincere liking for his school. In his *Journal*, he has reflected his memory of his boyhood and his affection for Charterhouse is very real. A boy who had been trained in the severe life of the Epworth parsonage could easily bear the hardships of the Charterhouse School. He even obeyed his father's command that he should run three times around the garden every morning.

As the poor child of the parish priest, Wesley was forced, in entering the school to fight strenuously for recognition. During six difficult years, he gained, through the harsh life to which he was subjected, an education broader and deeper than that found in books. It was a training in character development.

In 1720, Wesley was elected to Christ Church, Oxford, as a commoner on a Charterhouse scholarship of forty pounds a year, and remained there until after his 

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Westminster Magazine, wrote of him:

He appeared the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the first classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiment.

Such was the life that Wesley spent in Oxford during the first five years. He had a successful reputation for scholarship, while his moral and religious character was not very marked. He took his Bachelor's degree in 1724. Within this period, he had constantly struggled against financial difficulty, and was not unfrequently in debt, while his health was far from vigorous.

In 1725, he was elected a Fellow of Lincoln, the most scholarly college in Oxford. His brother, Samuel, had a good position in Westminster school, and was making powerful friends.

A FELLOW OF LINCOLN
1725

His younger brother, Charles, had obtained a scholarship at Christ College. John had the ordinary merits and weaknesses of the average college man.

He had mental faculties which worked with the exactitude of a machine. He excelled in logic, and was apt to resolve everything, even his own religious experience, into terms of logic. He had a certain confident primness of manner, shone in argument and found delight in it. His literary style showed already the char-

acteristics which brought him fame in later years. It was clear, terse, direct, and marked by a stern scorn of ornament and of mere verbal pyrotechnics. Wesley delighted in short words set in short sentences. His very brevity, indeed his habit of taking the most direct road to his meaning, and of clothing his thoughts in the fewest possible syllables, had many of his effects of wit.\(^1\)

In his leisure, the youthful Fellow planned great things for the future. He budgetted his time thoroughly: so many hours for classics, logic, ethics, Hebrew, and Arabic. Saturday was devoted to oratory and poetry. He even made several attempts at verse-writing, which brought forth rather severe comments from his mother. He was still in debt, a fact which caused his family great anxiety.

The year 1725 was a decisive one for Wesley. There is no evidence to show that Wesley's intention on going to Oxford was to train for the ministry in the Established Church. He did not pretend to be religious, except on rare occasions. It was not until the beginning of 1725, when he had been at college more than four years, that he expressed a wish to become a minister of Christ. This decision was properly submitted to his parents, and both of them gave their best advice.

His father wrote him that his motive for entering the ministry must not be "as Eli's son, to eat a piece of bread,"
\(^1\) but that the glory of God and the good of men should be his first consideration. In entering the ministry he should have a thorough knowledge of the Holy Scriptures in their original languages. But he was in no haste to enter into the orders, and his parents would have ample time for further advice.

His mother wrote to him on February 23, 1725 as follows:

Dear Jacky,- The alternation of your temper has occasioned me much speculation. I, who am apt to be sanguine, hope it may proceed from the operations of God's Holy Spirit, that by taking away your relish of sensual enjoyments, He may prepare and dispose your mind for a more serious and close application to things of a more sublime and spiritual nature. If it be so, happy are you if you cherish those dispositions, and now, in good earnest, resolve to make religion the business of your life; for, after all, that is the one thing that, strictly speaking, is necessary, and all things else are comparatively little to the purposes of life. I heartily wish you would now enter upon a serious examination of yourself, that you may know whether you have a reasonable hope of salvation; that is, whether you are in a state of faith and repentance or not, which you know are the conditions of the gospel covenant on your part. If you are, the satisfaction of knowing it would abundantly reward your pains; if not, you will find a more reasonable occasion for tears that can be met with in a tragedy.\(^2\)

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2. Ibid., p. 32.
Meanwhile however, Wesley having decided his career with diligence and thoroughness, he began to study divinity. His own record of this period of his life is:

When I was about twenty two, my father pressed me to enter into holy orders. At the same time the providence of God directing me to Kempis's Christian Pattern I began to see that true religion was seated in the heart and that God's law extended to all our thoughts as well as words and actions. I was, however, angry at Kempis for being too strict; though I read him only in Dean Stanhope's translation. Yet I had frequently much sensible comfort in reading him, such as I was an utter stranger to before. Meeting likewise with a religious friend, whom I never had till now, I began to alter the whole form of my conversation, and to set in earnest upon a new life. I set apart an hour or two a day for religious retirement. I communicated every week. I watched against all sin, whether in word or deed. I began to aim at, and to pray for, inward holiness. So that now, doing so much and living so good a life, I doubted not that I was a good Christian.¹

It is exceedingly interesting to note Wesley's long, continuous record of the events and exercises of his daily life.

Both in the work of Kempis, and Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, which he read at the same time, the thing which impressed Wesley was the emphasis upon the fact that true religion was the religion of the

heart. A wave of deeper feeling was beginning to sweep through the channels of Wesley's religious development. "It was not until thirteen years after this, that he received the consciousness of being saved through faith in Christ; but from this time, his whole aim was to serve God and his fellowmen, and to get safe to heaven. No man could be more sincere, earnest, devout, diligent, and so self-denying; and yet, during this lengthened period, he lived and labored in a mist."¹

As for Wesley, an unrelenting thoroughness marked at every stage his temper in religion. He would have no uncertainties, no easy and soft illusions. Religion was a divine gift, and as a human experience was somewhat definite. He possessed it or he did not possess it... He tried it by challenge of life; of its power to color and shape life. He spent the next thirteen years in that process; trying his creed with infinite courage, with transparent sincerity and often with toil and suffering, by the rough acid of life, till at last he reached that conception of Christ and His Gospel which lifted his spirit up to such dazzling heights of gladness and power.²

The work of William Law, Christian Perfection, likewise had a marked effect upon Wesley at this period and strengthened his growing conviction in the inner character of true religious experience.

Wesley was ordained deacon in September, 1725. His difficulties had been overcome, and he had prepared

² Fitchett, W.H., Wesley and His Century, p. 68.
himself conscientiously for the ministry. He preached his first sermon at South Leigh, a small village near Witney. He spent the summer of 1726 at Epworth, helping his father, and at the same time pursuing his studies further.

In September, 1726, Wesley returned to Oxford, to resume his studies. His literary ability was widely recognized, and his skill in logic was remarkable. In November, just two months after his return from Epworth, he was elected Greek lecturer, and moderator of the classes. He took his degree of Master of Arts in 1727. In August of the same year, he became his father's curate at Epworth and Wroote until November, 1729, when he was recalled to Oxford.

He had had two years of actual preaching, and his qualifications for success as a minister were exceedingly high, and yet his influence was slight. He speaks of it:

I preached much, but saw no fruit of my labor. Indeed, it could not be that I should, for I neither laid the foundation of repentance nor of believing the Gospel, taking it for granted that all to whom I preached were believers, and that many of them needed no repentance.1

He had returned to Oxford to fulfill his functions as a Fellow, and he remained there from November 22, 1729, until he embarked for Georgia on October 14, 1735.

Charles Wesley entered Christ College in 1726, just before John left there for Lincoln. At first he was not adapted to a studious life, but, like his brother, the life of study, and the approach of the duties and responsibilities of an active life, soon sobered him to the point of a decision. In the spring of 1729, he wrote John that he had been able to rescue a young man from evil companions, and lead him to a higher life. This young man was Robert Morgan, and he, with one or two other friends, associated themselves with Charles. Their binding interest was a religious desire to lead a stricter and well-ordered life. These friends, because of their habits and their way of living, soon were given the nickname of "Methodists," and before the close of that year, it had become their usual designation.

When John returned to Oxford in the fall of 1729, he became the recognized leader of this little group. They met regularly, frequently in his rooms in Lincoln. At first these meetings were held only on Sunday, but later they were held twice a week, and finally every evening. Their purpose was not exclusively religious. During the week they read the classics and the Greek testament. Their chief motive, however, was religious. They held discussions of their duties,
ans they developed a definite scheme of self-examination.

In 1730, John Wesley, with this group of young men, had formed a plan for the systematic ministration to the prisoners in the gaols, and the sick and poor in the city. They gathered together poor children from the villages, and divided them into classes to teach them the Catechism. They endeavored to save money in order that they might relieve worthy persons imprisoned for small debts.

Every morning and evening they spent an hour in private prayer. They fasted twice a week and took Holy Communion every Sunday. They tried to observe all the religious festivals, John, with his brother Charles, several times visited William Law, whose books had so influenced him some years before, and at his advice, he began to study the Theologia Germanica, and other writings of the mystics.

In 1731, during Wesley's short visit to Epworth, the Oxford Methodists were scattered. In the spring of 1732, their numbers were increased by the leadership of several of Wesley's pupils. This little group of men were cultivating their religious life, but they were not evangelists. They made few converts. They were intent on saving their own souls, and although they did some social work, it was for the purpose of
their salvation. "I resolved to have only such acquaintances as would help me on my way to heaven," says Wesley. It took him a long time to learn the real spirit of Christianity.

Wesley spent several years in Oxford in the capacity of Fellow, and they were probably the happiest years of his life. The surroundings were fascinating, and he could thoroughly enjoy the beauty of the town, the reverend traditions of piety and learning, and the companionship of a few congenial friends. His times was divided between active ministrations for others, and quiet study for himself.

In 1734, His aged father at Epworth felt that his health was declining and wrote to John, asking him to return to Epworth and continue his good work there. Wesley debated the matter for some time, and finally refused. The offer did not seem to be to his own advantage. John was too much of a logician to allow his feelings to dictate a move that would not be especially advantageous to him. Samuel died on April 25, 1735. Both John and Charles were with him at the end, and Charles wrote to his brother Samuel:

He often laid his hand upon my head and said, 'be steady, The Christian faith will survive in this kingdom, though I shall see it not.' To John he said, 'The inward
witness, son; the inward witness! That is the strongest proof of Christianity.¹

Samuel Wesley left his family with inadequate provision. John's fellowship was scarcely enough to support himself. The burden of the rest of the family fell on the mother's shoulders. Before his father's death he had finished his book, and John went to London to present one copy of the Commentary on the book of Job to the queen.

In the summer of 1735, General James Oglethorpe was in London. Under his leadership, a new colony had been successfully planted in Georgia, and he had returned to England to secure help for the development of the new work, especially among the Indians, to give them more opportunities for independence and to better their living conditions. His appeal met with the approval of the new Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the first English missionary society. Oglethorpe had with him an Indian chief, whose presence was a factor in the approval given his appeal. He wanted a young man, as a missionary to the Indians, and Chaplain to the English community at Savannah.

When Wesley was in London in the summer of

¹ Fitchett, W.H. Wesley and His Century, p.91.
1735, Doctor Burton of Corpus Christi College, who was well acquainted with the Oxford Methodists, introduced him to Oglethorpe. Wesley was a minister, as well as a good scholar, and he was well supplied with religious zeal, logic, and good judgment. At first he refused the offer, because of his widowed mother, but when he consulted her, she answered:

Had I twenty sons I should rejoice that they were all so employed, though I should never see them more.¹

He consulted with his brother Samuel, with William Law, and with his friends at Oxford, before he finally accepted the offer to go out as a missionary to the Indians, under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. His salary was to be fifty pounds annually. His brother Charles joined him at the last moment, accepting a position as Oglethorpe's secretary.

On September 18, 1735, Wesley made his decision. He was thirty two years of age, and many of his friends mourned his departure as their personal loss. Wesley gave his real reason for going in a letter, written on October 10, 1735:

My chief motive is the hope of saving

my own soul. I hope to learn the true sense of the Gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathen. They have no comments to construe away the text; no vain philosophy to corrupt it; no luxurious, sensual, covetous, ambitious expounders to soften its unpleasing truths. They have no party, no interest to serve, and are therefore fit to receive the Gospel in its simplicity. They are as little children—humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God.\footnote{Wesley, John, \textit{The Works of Wesley}, Vol.VII, p.35.}

John Wesley embarked for Georgia, a missionary to America. It might be more true to say that he went in search of religion. The voyage lasted from October 13, 1735, to February 5, 1736. On board the ship the little group of missionaries consisted of John Wesley, his brother Charles, General Oglethorpe, Benjamin Ingham, and Charles Delamotte, members of the Holy Club. Two others had joined at the last moment, Westley Hall and Matthew Salmon, both of them receiving their ordination just before the embarkation.

At Oxford, Wesley had trained himself strictly in his apportionment of time. The voyage proved a leisurely one. Wesley soon realized the fact, and began to organize the little band. They turned the ship into a monastery. Each person was assigned a special task to perform. They arose at four in the morning, either for meditation, spiritual exercises, studying the Greek

\begin{center}
\textbf{DAILY LIFE ON SHIPBOARD}
\end{center}
testament, or private prayers, until ten o'clock at night, when they retired.

On the ship there were a company of Moravians, going out with their bishop, David Mitchmann, to join a number of settlers in Georgia. Their religious experience and their piety, interested Wesley, and he was deeply impressed with their calmness during the terror and confusion which reigned during a terrific thunderstorm, which broke one evening during their evening song. Wesley describes it in his Journal:

I asked one of them afterwards, "Was you not afraid?" He answered, 'I thank God, no.' I asked, 'But were not your women and children afraid?' He replied mildly, 'No, our women and children are not afraid to die.' From them I went to their crying, trembling neighbors, and pointed out to them the difference in their hour of trial between him that feareth God and him that feareth Him not.

Soon after he landed in Georgia he met the Moravian elder, August Gottlieb Spangenberg. Wesley asked him for advice for his new work. To his surprise, Spangenberg said:

'My brother, I must first ask you two questions. Have you the witness within yourself? Does the spirit of God bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God?' and he added, as Wesley hesitated, 'Do you know Jesus Christ?' But John Wesley could only say, 'I know he is the Saviour of the world.' 'Friend, but do you know that he has saved you?' Again Spangenberg asked him. Then Wesley

replied, 'I hope he died to save me.'
Spangenberg asked him, 'Do you know yourself?' 'I do,' Wesley replied; but he
added to his own account, 'I fear they were vain words.'

Wesley's chief purpose was to be a missionary among the Indians, but the governor of the colony,
General Oglethorpe, desired him to dwell with the
English settlement. He had interviewed the Indian chiefs,
and they had told him that they
were engaged in fighting, but
as soon as they had finished, they would listen to him.

Wesley commenced his ministry solely on the
ecclesiastical plane. He had both early and forenoon
services every day. In the morning he used the Litany,
and he administered communion every Sunday and Holy Day.
There were three services on Sunday, and besides these,
he read prayers in Italian at nine, in French at one,
and taught the children the catechism at two. He learned Spanish in order to help some Spanish Jews in his
parish. He organized a little society for religious
conversation, and selected a small group like the one
he had had at Oxford, the "Holy Club," or the "Methodist Society." He gathered children from the neighborhood,
and he and Delamotte taught them. Some of the scholars were
from poor homes, and were compelled to come to school

without shoes, and Wesley himself often went barefoot, in order that they might not be subjected to the scorn of the more well-to-do children.

Wesley's ministry was a failure. "It was empty of true spiritual force. It failed to make men better. It bred strife."

He was a rigid high churchman, and he was personally unpopular. Charles was discouraged by the difficulty of the situation, and threw up his position. He and his friend Ingham returned to England on July 17, 1736, after a disagreement with Oglethorpe. John also disagreed with the governor, but the breach was finally healed, and he clung resolutely to his post.

Shortly after Wesley had landed in Georgia he met Miss Hopkey, the niece of the chief Magistrate, Mr. Causton. She was a regular attendant at his services, and their friendship soon ripened into love. Wesley left the decision to the Moravian elders, but their advice was adverse, and Wesley abided by their decision, saying that "The will of the Lord be done." The young lady, unwilling to allow her love affair to be settled in such a manner, immediately accepted the proposal of another suitor, and married him, after an engagement of five days. Five months after her marriage, Wesley refused her admission to the Lord's supper. The matter

1. Fitchett, W.H. *Wesley and His Century*, p.103.
was debated in court for over four months, and it became impossible for Wesley to remain in America. He took the advice of his friends, and decided to return to England.

Was this mission to Georgia a failure? When Whitefield visited the colony in 1738, he wrote:

Mr. Wesley's name is very precious among the people here. He had laid a foundation that neither men nor angels will ever be able to shake. Oh, that I may follow him as he has followed Christ.1

Wesley set sail for England on December 22, 1737, and the voyage home gave him ample time for self-examination. He realized that the thing that was wrong was his own indecision and lack of confidence in the gospel which he was trying to preach. The things which he had tried to do could never have been accomplished in two short years, and he had gained a self-realization, and an acquaintance with the church which gave him a clearer conception of the plan of salvation. He had learned three languages, had had the great privilege of having preached to all the English settlers, and had attempted the evangelization of the negroes and the Indians, and the religious education of the children. The way had been prepared for the future work in Georgia. Thus Wesley's mission to Georgia

was not a total defeat, but, in spite of the unhappy outlook, it was a triumph in his life.

Wesley spent one month in his homeward journey from America, and three more in Germany, in close association with the Moravians, and the ideals of their organization. The remaining eight months he spent in preaching in various parts of England. The greatest occurrence during this year of 1738, was his conversion.

Let us examine his religious state previous to this experience. He was almost a Christian. He tried rigorously to refrain from everything that the Gospel of Christ prohibited. He labored for the benefit of many people, and he suffered. He instructed the ignorant, comforted the afflicted, rebuked the wicked, strengthened the wavering, and regained the faithful.

He used all the means of grace, and all opportunities for religious services: prayer, communion each week, and daily private devotion. He did all this sincerely, since it was the will of God. In his words and actions, he was truthful and dutiful. His chief motive was to please God and honor Him. He had practiced this regularly for many years, and yet all this time he was only "almost a Christian."

He believed that the word of God was revealed
in the Scriptures in a very literal sense. He believed that the Holy Spirit had the power of changing the hearts of men. He believed deeply in spiritual things. He had many remarkable answers to prayer. He had a deep conviction of God, and of the things of God, and he firmly believed in Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world.¹ All this time he was beating the air, seeking righteousness for his own salvation, instead of submitting himself wholly to the righteousness of Christ which is by faith. He was constantly fighting against sin.

How was he converted? When Wesley reached London on the third of February, he met Peter Böhler, a young Moravian graduate of Jena, who had just been sent by Zinzendorf, as missionary to Carolina. On the way he had stopped to visit the brethren in England. Wesley was glad to meet another member of the church, and spent many hours in conference with him. They went to Oxford together. Wesley listened to his teaching as eagerly as a child. "My brother, my brother," said Böhler, "that philosophy of yours must be purged away." But Wesley was first and last a logician, and he asked himself, "How can I preach to others who have not faith myself?" Böhler's advice was direct and practical, "Preach faith till you have it," he said, "and then because you have it

you will preach faith." And on March 6th, Wesley began to preach accordingly. Wesley was convinced that Böhler's teaching as to faith and its fruits was scriptural. He looked through the spiritual process of conversion which was recorded in the New Testament, and discovered that nearly every case was instantaneous. To meet his doubt, Böhler brought several living witnesses, who had been given special experiences by God, and they testified before Wesley.

Wesley continued to seek this grace, although he felt the uselessness of the task. He was particularly distressed from May 21 to May 24. Early that morning, at five o'clock, he opened his Bible at these words: There are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature."(II Peter 1:4). Just before he went out he opened it again at these words: Thou art not far from the kingdom of God." In the afternoon he was asked to go out to the Cathedral of St. Paul. The anthem was, "Out of the depths have I called unto thee, O Lord; hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou, Lord, will be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with Thee; there-
before thou shalt be feared, O Israel, trust in the Lord; for with the Lord, there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his sins."

In the evening, he went to a society meeting in Aldersgate Street, where someone read Luther's Preface to the Epistle to the Romans. In this, Luther teaches the meaning of faith, and also that faith alone justifies. One possesses faith, and the heart is "cheered, elevated, excited, and transported with sweet affections toward God." The man who is receiving the Holy Ghost is "renewed and spiritual," and he is impelled to fulfill the law by "the vital energy in himself." Wesley at first was unwilling, but as he listened to the reading he was amazed at the changed feeling within him.

About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in his heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, in Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death. I began to pray with all my might for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested, 'This cannot be faith; for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the captain of our salvation; but that, as to the transports

of joy that usually attend the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them according to the counsels of his will.1

After Wesley left the little room in Aldersgate Street, he was "much buffeted with temptations; but cried out and they fled away. They returned again and again."2 He found that he must still wage the daily fight with the forces of evil. But he says:

Here is found the difference between this and my former state. I was striving, yea, fighting with all my might under the law, as well as under grace; but then I was sometimes, if not often, conquered: now I was always conqueror.3

Here was the essence of the struggle, and here also was the victory.

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2. Ibid, p. 476.
CHAPTER TWO

THE OUTSTANDING INFLUENCE OF JOHN WESLEY
"No single man for centuries has moved the world as Wesley has moved it; since Luther, no man."¹

The features of Christian thought and the moral conditions in the England of Wesley's age, the eighteenth century, must be briefly noted.

It was an age of compromise: of compromises in politics, in philosophy, in theology; and compromises were fatal to enthusiasm. There were two great waves of feeling that had recently swept over England. The Puritan wave culminated and broke in the Civil War and Puritanism found its triumph in the Restoration.

The majority of the English people were then, as they always have been, decent and virtuous, but they were not religious. The test of excellence, for the eighteenth century, in religion as well as in politics, art, and literature, was reason, moderation, and good sense. Throughout the country, men and women needed the light and comfort of Jesus Christ for their lives, their struggles and duties, their sins and sorrows. With few exceptions, they were ignorant of the sources of spiritual light and power.

There were some bright spots on the dark

¹. Rigg, James H., The Living Wesley, p.1.
landscape. Great Christian thinkers like Bishop Berkeley and Bishop Butler were saints in that age. William Law was counted among the theologians. Wesley, like a new planet, "swam into the ken of devout watchers." To the basis of faith and the motives for conduct supplied by the great thinkers above, Wesley added those supplied by an experience of God in Christ by the Holy Spirit.

Wesley was called and prepared by God for a great task - the spiritual revolution and substantial improvement of the nation as a whole.

The major emphasis of Wesley in his revival may be understood from a study of three factors. In that transforming experience, his evangelical conversion, he said that he felt his heart "strangely warmed." As we shall see, fire was his favorite RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE term in which to express his religious experience. It is a familiar characterization. "There are twelve of you," said Wesley to the Methodists of Carlisle, "and all professing to have your hearts on fire with the love of God. If you are faithful, you are enough to set this city on fire." ¹ For more than fifty years John Wesley worked and prayed for this true fire, which was to kindle the life of God in the spirit of man, and he taught others to pray for it. One of

¹ Eayrs, Wesley, Christian Philosopher, Church Founder, p.101
the earliest hymns of Charles reflects this same experience, and throughout his life and work Wesley himself was always able to express the significance of the element of fire in the poems which he wrote, or which he selected from those which Charles wrote.  

Wesley interpreted his practical religious experience in this way: that everyone needs divine spiritual quickening and energy; that everyone can achieve Christian completeness; that everyone may be conscious of receiving it; and that everyone should testify of it in fellowship and service. He grouped his followers into bands, classes, societies, and conferences. He submitted his "experience," and required them to submit theirs.

Wesley believed that the Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius, "a strange heathen," would, with the Old Testament saints, enter the kingdom of God. He wrote in 1790:

"I have no authority from the Word of God to sentence all the heathen world and Mohammedan world to damnation. It is far better to leave them to Him that made them, and who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh....I believe the merciful God regards the lives and temper of men far more than their ideas."

In his noble sermon on The General Deliverance, he writes: "Rest not until you enjoy the privilege of humanity, the

knowledge and love of God. To Wesley, the essential Christian experience was the same always, everywhere, and to all; it was possible to all.

Another element of the religious experience which appealed to Wesley was the emotional. He helped to restore emotion to its proper place and function in religion. He recognized that religious feeling is "the distinguishing part of human nature, and he used it. Many people in that age feared and despised that which seemed not much needed, and had little value - moral enthusiasm. Wesley hated false emotion; he forbade excitement, loud shouting, senseless repetition, and other emotional displays in religious gatherings. In some cases he realized that such things were the indication of the divine presence, but he did not desire them. He certainly never required them as the evidence of the genuineness of the Christian experience. During the thirty years of his later work they were seldom seen.¹

It should be recognized that one of his contributions to thought and habit was the reclamation of the word "enthusiasm." He used it in its highest sense.² The worth of emotion and enthusiasm was to be revealed in conduct, and ethical fruitfulness was the test. If

² Wesley, Standard Sermons, II, p. 84.
the emotions are aroused by God, the Spirit, and are used by Him, the result will be goodness or godliness. If the indwelling spirit in human personality is the spirit of Jesus, the resulting conduct and character will resemble his. Religion is not vested in the various Protestant creeds or Catholic dogma, nor in the rites of the church, but in the individual's experience of the saving power of the Christian gospel.

Wesleyanism was an avowed movement away from the intellectual to the non-intellectual classes. It was openly a poor man's approach; a peasant's movement. The major belief was in the essential integrity and worth of the laboring men of England, and it was preached to the poorest in the nation. Wesleyanism, historically, was not a theology but a social movement, and when it ceases to be such it may just as correctly call itself by any other name, for it is no longer fundamentally Methodist.

Wesley's interest in the relief of the poor began while he was at college in Oxford. One of the most rigidly observed, if not required, rules of the Holy Club was that its members should give away in relief of the poor all that remained after providing their
own necessities. Wesley later wrote:

One of them had eight and gave away forty shillings. The next year, receiving sixty pounds, he still lived on twenty eight and gave away thirty two. The third year he received ninety pounds and gave away thirty two. The fourth year he received one hundred and twenty pounds; still he lived as before on twenty eight, and gave to the poor all the rest.1

This "one" was Wesley himself; and the rule here laid down he observed to the end of his life, never spending more than twenty eight pounds for himself.

Wesley's personal work in connection with the poor and sick was exceedingly noteworthy. He took up collections, visited those who were in prison, and generally aided in giving them as much relief as possible. This was only a part of his services for the poor. Early in the history of the Methodist movement, he began to utilize the societies for the relief of those in need. The Journal shows that as early as November, 1740, he began systematic relief work, and it was not long before it was an integral part of the new movement, and gradually spread until it became a most important part.

As a result of his efforts to help the sick, Wesley started a medical dispensary, the first in London, after which the Finsbury Dispensary, started twenty years later, was modeled. He had found the expense of

home ministration exceedingly expensive, and hospital treatment, while it decreased the expense, did not seem to alleviate the suffering. He finally decided to put to practical use his knowledge of medicine, and try to make his dispensary a real help to the people. He had an apothecary and a surgeon for assistants, and they were able to take care of many cases that otherwise would have received no medical attention whatsoever.

In the course of his work, Wesley found many who were not, strictly speaking, so poor that they needed alms, but who were frequently in need of ready money. Some of these people were in business where a small loan would have been of great assistance. There was no place to which they might appeal, except the pawnbroker, and it meant complete ruin to place themselves at his mercy. In 1746, Wesley started a loan fund, and went from one end of London to the other, exhorting those who had plenty to assist the poor and needy in this way. This loan fund, or "lending stock," continued for a number of years, and was instrumental in doing much good among those whom it served, and in giving a certain amount of inspiration to those who participated by giving their services and their money to the cause.

Wesley's opposition to human slavery was life-
long and bitter. The African slave trade was a respectable business at that time. The first slave ship which sailed from England in 1562 to engage in this trade, was named "Jesus." For many years, English monarchs encouraged the trade, and bishops and clergy approved it. Even Methodism's greatest preacher, "the prince of pulpit orators," George Whitefield, condoned it. He not only approved of slavery, but became a slave-owner, and at the time of his death he possessed seventy five slaves in connection with his Orphan House plantations in Georgia.

It is not known how early in Wesley's career he began his open hostility to slavery. His indirect influence against it began to be exerted as early as 1758 when a Mr. Gilbert of Antigua, Speaker of the House of Assembly, visited England in 1758 and 1759, and two of the four slaves accompanying him were converted in London under Wesley's preaching. The converts laid the foundations of the Wesleyan missions, which did much to prepare the slaves of the West Indies for emancipation.

Wesley's most powerful contribution to the antislavery movement was his Thoughts on Slavery. This was an octavo pamphlet of fifty three pages, issued in 1774. It was sent out in every direction through the Methodist
preachers, and was widely scattered by them both in Europe and in America. The work met with speedy and vindictive opposition in England, both from the slave merchants and the slaveholders. But Wesley continued in the work. The pamphlet was soon republished in America, by Anthony Benezet of Philadelphia, who, thirteen years later in 1787, became one the founders of the Society for the Suppression of Slavery.

The hostility to slavery expressed in this pamphlet was manifested by Wesley to the end. The last letter he wrote, four days before his death, was addressed to Wilburforce, who had brought before parliament the question which Wesley was one of the first to advocate - the abolition of slavery. The struggle lasted for forty six years, and terminated in the Emancipation Act, which took effect on August 1, 1834. Wesley died four years after the fight began; Wilburforce just as the victory was assured, for he died while the resolutions, preparatory to the bill, were being passed in the House of Commons.

The little Methodist Society was a new unit, from which all sorts of influences, social and educational as well as religious, radiated in many villages. Many of the Labour leaders of the nineteenth century began their public activities as Methodist local preachers. But the contribution of these men, even in Labour organizations, has
often been a conservative influence insofar as they stood by Christian morality and were opposed to extreme revolutionary action.

"Not many educated men become Methodists, but most Methodists become educated men." Historians are convinced that England escaped a revolution like France, because England had Wesley, while France had Rousseau and Voltaire.

The educational policy of the new movement was an essential part of the ideals of the founder. It was the only way to bring the people whom he wished to save out of the ignorance and poverty in which he found them, and to restore their self-respect and their ability to become active members of society.

For some time Wesley had been much concerned over the number of children who ran wild through the streets because their parents could not afford to send them to school. Those who did have the advantage of a schooling, learned to read and write, to be sure, but they also learned so much vice, that it had been better to leave them in ignorance. Wesley determined to have them taught in his own house, "that they might have an opportunity of learning to read, and write, and cast accounts (if no more) without being under almost a

2. Booth, E.P., Class Lectures, Boston University School of Religious Education, 1930.
necessity of learning heathenism at the same time."l

Rigid rules were laid down in the school, and it was not long before Wesley saw a really remarkable change in the children who came under his care. Education became a necessity and an ideal of his whole train of thought.

Life is more than speculation; morality is greater than literature. To save a drunkard from vice, to make a harlot chaste, a wife-beater gentle, a thief honest; to cleanse a city slum, to dry a widow's tears, to shelter a child's helplessness, this is not merely a better contribution to the world's life than to write the most ingenious philosophical treatise, or to teach words to march in rhyme through the stanzas of a great poem. It represents a loftier order of forces. l

Wesley, as we have seen, spent thirteen sad, blundering years in solving the problem of religious experience for himself. But having solved it, the whole of his life instantly gained a swiftness of movement and certainty of goal which it would be difficult to match in religious history. Henceforward he regarded the life of an adult Christian as beginning with an inward experience of God, and not at baptism, or by formal admission into relationship with a church.

The religion of Wesley is a religion for the people. The religion appeals to each individual, not to a crowd. He was a preacher who could tell the secrets

of the human heart. It is a religion which can be practiced in the home, the market, and the street. But it is also a religion of the deepest communion with God, and manifested by a practical note in a loving service to humanity. It is nothing less than loving God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves.

Wesley created a church. He did not do it consciously or deliberately. It was not founded on the basis of any theoretical church dogmas. The result was that the Methodist societies and organizations were a free growth. Wesley was continually dealing with life, with living men and women, rather than with organizations. When he returned from Georgia, he preached without the permission of the English church authorities. He held no position and had no duties as a clergyman in the diocese of London.

In November, 1738, he preached at Tyburn, to a great crowd gathered at a large execution there. This was the first time that Wesley had preached in the open air, in England, although he had done it frequently in Georgia. Such services in England were an irregularity. He gave stern messages, and it was not long before the churches began to close their doors against him. In the latter half of this same year, we find frequent
mention in Wesley's *Journal* that, "They will bear me there no longer," or "Here I preached for the last time."

On April 2, 1739, Wesley took up the open air ministry of the irregular evangelist. It was the beginning of his remarkable ministry in Bristol. His success there was marked; small classes were established, each with a leader, for Christian fellowship and testimony; and the office of the local preacher and the tenets of Methodist finance were begun. He writes:

I submitted to be more vile, and proclaimed in the highways the glad tidings of salvation. I could scarcely reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching, having been all my life (till very lately), 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.¹

In Bristol as well as in London the churches were closed against him, one by one. But after this he made an *itinerary* all over the British Isles, and continued his irregular method of preaching. He obeyed his conviction, the guidance of the Holy Spirit, in spite of visible authority.

Besides breaking into the parishes of the appointed clergy, using their pulpits if permitted, and conducting open air preaching services without ecclesiastical authority, Wesley constituted a new church

fellowship. These he called the "Methodist Societies." As these societies grew numerous in London, Bristol, and Newcastle-on-tyne, their unity was maintained under Rules for their members. Provision was made by Wesley for Christian worship, teaching, discipline, and finance. He still regarded them as supplementary to the Church of England. They continued to attend their parish churches. But the example of Wesley and the ideals and principles of Methodism soon became the ruling passion of their lives.

The first Methodist Conference met in the year 1744. The conference was held at the Foundery, London. It began on Monday, June 25, and continued for five days. It consisted of just ten men, including the two Wesley's themselves. The conference was preceded by a love feast to which the whole of the London society came. Sacrament was administered to between two and three thousand people. The conference itself opened with a sermon by Charles Wesley. Three things were discussed: 1.) What to teach; 2.) How to teach; 3.) How to regulate doctrine, discipline, and practice.

They resolved to defend the doctrine of the Church of England both by preaching and by living. They were to obey their bishops in all things indifferent, and to obey their rules as far as their consciences
would permit. Their chief concern should not be the building of a church, but the saving of souls. They agreed to unite the Methodists into four classes: the united societies, the bands, the selected societies, and the penitents. The preachers should practice strictly the spiritual disciplines, be faithful in preaching and teaching, and especially were they to give the children suitable instruction. They were to be responsible for the improvement of their members in their moral and ethical conduct and living. Wesley's aim was to unite the whole group of Methodists into one body, of which the Society in London might be considered the head.

The growing needs of Wesley's work as church founder led him to appoint church workers. Some of them were preachers; others were local preachers. They continued their trade, and preached locally. Some of them gave part of their time as itinerants in the evangelistic work. These workers were not under churchly authority except that of Wesley and the Methodist Conference which appointed them. Their qualifications consisted of an experiential knowledge of God.

Beginning in London in 1744, Wesley annually called a Conference. He was the President for more than forty years of these gatherings. The purpose of the
Conference was the definition of doctrine, the discovery of methods of church work, the appointment or dismissal of preachers, and the administration of the church finance.

The Conference, indeed, as a bit of ecclesiastical machinery, is perhaps the most original contribution that Methodism has made to church history.\(^1\)

The Conference grew up as the centre of authority for Methodism. Wesley showed himself to the helpers as absolute in the Conference. It was his creation, the reflex of his will, and he was the servant of the plan. For thirty years before his death Wesley stood as lonely as "an Alpine peak." Everything centered in him and depended upon him; and his helpers were his spiritual children.

Wesley had ideals that went beyond the ordinary vision of man. He went on steadily toward his goal. He was indescribably unselfish from the time of his conversion to his death. Everything was subservient to the religious ideal. His punctuality and exactness were remarkable, and he was able to do an enormous amount of work. He was always busy, and yet he maintained remarkable composure. He wrote to all who sought his advice, and probably had a greater correspondence than

\[\text{THE PERSONALITY OF JOHN WESLEY}\]

\[^1\] Fitchett, W.H., Wesley and His Century, p.354.
any man of his age. Every minute, both day and night, he had appointed work to do. His industry was almost without parallel. In many things he was gentle and easily persuaded; in his earnestness for saving time, he was inexorable. During the fifty years of itinerant ministry, he travelled a quarter of a million miles, and preached more than forty thousand sermons. He rose with the lark, and travelled with the sun, and preached throughout three kingdoms, fulfilling his own statement, that "The world is my parish." It is remarkable that he was able also to write, to preach, and to educate his societies, Sunday schools, and higher religious education for the preachers and younger generation of his day.

Alexander Knox, who knew him well, says of him:

My acquaintance with him has done more to teach me what heaven upon earth is implied in the maturity of Christian piety than I have elsewhere seen, or heard, or read.\

He did not understand children. His Kingswood experiment shows that. But he did love them, and instilled this love into all his helpers. Wesley also did not understand women, and yet there was no other man in England who had so many friendships with the women whom he met in his travels.

1. Fitchett, W.H. Wesley and His Century, p.447.
Wesley's limitations were bred through the virtues of his life. His whole life was governed by puritanic, relentless method. He applied it to his body, which made it possible for him to undergo physical hardships that were the envy of his helpers. This same method governed all his personal habits, and hence made him relentless towards those who did not share his same convictions.

When Wesley died, on Wednesday, March 2, 1791, he left a re-born church, and a spiritual, religious experience throughout the whole of England. He was a living, spiritual genius for the world to follow.
CHAPTER THREE

THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN
In 1744, the First Methodist Conference was called. One of the results of this conference was the fact that the preachers were ordered to meet the children in a separate society and give them religious education. In 1766, another Conference devolved upon the ministers the duty of the religious education of children. The ministers could not refuse to open schools and spend one hour twice a week with the children in their churches, since this was as much a part of their duty as was the preaching.

Wesley himself published literature on religious education, for the use of the preachers in instructing their children: 1.) Token for Children; 2.) Prayers for Children; 3.) Instructions for Children; 4.) Lessons for Children. The itinerant preachers carried these with them. Their major emphasis was upon a strong consciousness of sin, especially on the historical doctrine of salvation. Besides these, there were A Treatise on Baptism, and sermons: "On the Education of Children;" "On Family Religion;" "On Obedience to Parents;" and "A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children," a tract which appeared in the Arminian Magazine in 1783. Wesley constantly reminded his preachers, and the parents of the
children to exhort them to be spiritually minded and to love righteousness. Finally he established schools to teach the children on Sunday and special boarding schools for religious education for Christian living and leadership.

By these instructions of Wesley, religious education received its major emphasis since Luther. No consideration of eighteenth century English history will be historically valid which does not have the Wesleyan revival as its center.

Wesley believed that the whole human race needed a restoration to the natural and normal image of God. Every individual must repent in order to be re-born. Thus salvation from sin is the main purpose of life for both adults and children. This change takes place through the redemptive work of Christ and justification by faith. The new life will be a growing in to holiness and love of God and mankind, and will be perpetuated by the grace of God.

Wesley believed that even children can have a genuinely religious life. He found several instances which suggested the piety of children at a very early age. He records in his Journal:

Such a child........is scarce heard of in a century. Through much hail, rain, and
wind we got to Mr. Baddiley's, at Hayfield, about five in the afternoon. His favorite daughter died some hours before we came, such a child as is scarce heard of in a century. All the family informed me of many remarkable circumstances which else would have seemed incredible. She spake exceeding plain; yet very seldom; and then only a few words. She was scarce ever seen to laugh, or to utter a light or trifling word. She could not bear that anyone did, nor anyone who behaved in a light or unserious manner. If any such offered to kiss or touch her, she would turn away, and say, 'I don't like you.' If her brother or sister spoke angrily to each other, or behaved triflingly, she either sharply reproved (when that seemed needful) or tenderly entreated them to give over. If she had spoke too sharply to any, she would humble herself to them, and not rest until they had forgiven her. After her health declined she was particularly pleased with hearing that hymn sung, 'Abba, Father, hear my cry!' On Monday, April 7, without a struggle, she fell asleep, having lived two years and six months.1

Wesley recorded another example of piety in a four-year old boy, thus:

I inquired concerning Richard Hutchinson, of whom I had heard many speak. His mother informed me: "It was about August last, being then above four years old, that he began to talk much of God, and to ask abundance of questions concerning Him. From that time he never played nor laughed, but was as serious as one of threescore. He constantly reproved any that cursed or swore, or spoke indecently in his hearing, and frequently mourned over his brother who was two or three years older, saying, 'I fear my brother will go to Hell, for he does not love God.' About Christmas I cut off his hair, on which he said, 'You cut off my hair because you are afraid that I shall have the small-pox; but I am not afraid; I am not afraid to die, for I love God.' About

three weeks ago he sent for all the society whom he knew, saying he must take his leave of them; which he did, speaking to them, one by one, in the most tender and affectionate manner. Four days after he fell ill of small-pox, and was light-hearted almost as soon as he was taken; but all his incoherent sentences were either exhortations, or pieces of hymns, or prayer. The worse he was the more earnest he was to die, saying, 'I must go; No, this is not my home; I will go to heaven.' On the tenth day of his illness he raised himself up and said: 'Let me go; let me go to my Father; I will go home. Now I will go to my Father.' After which he laid down and died.

Wesley liked to find religious experiences; he believed in those he got. He took for granted, and never commented. The reason why he believed was that he accepted the truth of the grace of God, and thought it possible even with the young children, that their consciousness of religion might be quickened by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Wesley's theory was consistent with his beliefs. The first step was salvation by baptism and training. In his Treatise on Baptism he gave several reasons in support of his main arguments for admission to infant baptism. Jesus never refused to bless the children that their parents brought to him, although his disciples were lacking in spiritual understanding. Baptism was the means of

entrance into the covenant with God and the power of cleansing from original sin. If Jesus gave the children the right to come to him, then the church cannot refuse them admission to baptism. The adults may enter the spiritual household; the children should enjoy the same privilege.

Children should be devoted to God, and should be partakers of all the privileges which Scriptures admit, and they should grow up under all possible obligations to duty. Baptism gives a re-birth, it justifies, and grants to the infants all the Christian privileges. Above all, however, it is the fulfillment of a sacred duty on the part of the parents that they thus sanctify their children.

Since man has lost his original perfection, baptism is a means of restoring him to favor, and this holds true for children as well as for adults. Children are easily inclined toward evil, and the rite of baptism, means for Wesley that "herein a principle of grace is infused" into them. Their training should be adequate in order that their spiritual natures might be healed.

By all means, Scripture, reason, and experience, jointly testify, that inasmuch as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instruction can be, we should take all pains and care, to counteract this corruption, as early as possible.

2. Ibid, Vol. 6, p. 15.
Baptism begins the change in human nature, but it does not follow that those who are baptized are always holy. The ceremony must be followed by strict discipline and careful instruction. This is the first step in religion. They should constantly "grow in grace in the same proportion as they grow in years."¹ The idea is to overcome the principle of nature by the principle of grace. The end of education is to cure the diseases of human nature.

The bias of nature is set the wrong way; education is designed to set it right. This, by the grace of God, is to turn the bias from self-will, pride, anger, revenge, and the love of the world, to resignation, lowliness, meekness, and the love of God.²

It is the parents' task to send their children to schools where they will thus be trained.

In Wesley's brief tract on Serious Thoughts Concerning Godfathers and Godmothers, he expressed the anxiety over the fact that many parents were neglecting their task. He advises them to select for the training of their children, only those who were truly religious, and were willing to bring understanding and knowledge to their task. "What a foundation of holiness and happiness may be laid, even to your late posterity!"³ Wesley was exceedingly thorough-going, because he believed so thoroughly in his task.

2. Ibid.  
Oh never be weary of this labor of love; and your labor will not always be in vain. But the grace of God is sufficient for you; you can do all things through Christ that strengthens you. Labor on; never tire: lay line upon line, till patience has its perfect work. ... Fight... with all your might; for the love of God; for the love of your children; for the love of your own soul.

Wesley's theory of infant baptism was to regenerate the life, but training was necessary to cure the diseases of human nature. He emphasized this fact particularly in his sermon On the Education Of Children, in Kingswood school and also in other places, where he used the same sermon. Wesley encouraged the experience of conversion in the meetings. His Journal shows this tendency to cultivate in children a realization of their sinful nature, and a desire for repentance and a renewal of faith.

But when I came up I heard one of the boys at prayer in an adjoining room. I listened awhile, and was exceedingly struck with many of his expressions. When he ceased I went in, and found two others with him. Just then three more came in. I went to pray. The Lord seemed to rest upon them all, and pierced their hearts with deep conviction. The next morning I spent some time with all the children, and then desired those who were resolved to save their souls to come upstairs with me. I went up and nine of the children followed me, who said they were determined to "flee from

the wrath to come.' I exhorted them never to rest till they found peace with God; and then sung and prayed. The power of God came down in so wonderful a manner that my voice was drowned out by their cries. When I concluded, one of them broke out into prayer in a manner that quite astonished me; and during the rest of the day a peculiar spirit of seriousness rested on all the children.

After spending some time in the school on Friday, I desired those I had spoken to the day before to follow me; which they did, and once more, I pressed each of them severally not to rest until he had a clear sense of the pardoning love of God. I then prayed out of His Spirit as the day before; so that in a few minutes, my voice could not be heard amidst their cries and groans.

In the evening I explained to all the children the nature of the Lord's Supper. I then met twelve of them apart, and spoke to them particularly. When I asked one of them, 'Simon Lloyd, what do you want to make you happy?' after a little pause he answered 'God.' We went to prayer. Presently a cry arose from one and another, till it ran through all, vehemently calling upon God, and refusing to be comforted without the knowledge and love of God....

In the evening all the maids and many of the boys, not having been used to so long and violent speaking, were worn out as to bodily strength, and so hoarse that they were scarcely able to speak; but they were strong in their spirit, full of love and of joy, and of peace in believing.

Sunday the 30th: Eight of the children, and three maids, received the Lord's Supper for the first time. And hitherto they are all rejoicing in God and walking worthy of the Gospel.

All these facts are to show his strenuous efforts to bring the children into a consciousness of sin, and how repeated his work was.

In 1771 Wesley went to Kingswood school. He

found things different than he had left them the year before:

Sept. 6, Fri. (1771) I spent an hour among our children at Kingswood. It is strange! How long shall we be constrained to weave Penelope's web? What is become of the wonderful work of grace which God wrought in them last September? It is gone! It is lost! It is vanished away! There is scarce any trace of it remaining! Then we must begin again; and in due time we shall reap, if we faint not.1

Wesley points out that the aims of the revival method and religious education are the same. This theory is the need of conversion under all circumstances, and it is universally true of both adults and children. He believed that religious education and conversion supplement each other. It may be noted in his sermon On Family Religion:

The wickedness of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents.... Is there not a generation arisen, even within this period, yea, and from pious parents, that know not the Lord? That have neither his love in their hearts nor his fear before their eyes? How many of them already 'despise their fathers and mock at the counsels of their mothers!' How many are utter strangers to real religion, and have abandoned themselves to all manner of wickedness! Now, although this may sometimes be the case, even children educated in a pious manner, yet this case is very rare: I have met with some, but not many instances of it. The wickedness of the children is generally owing to the fault or neglect of their parents. For it is a general, through not universal rule, though it admits of some exceptions. "Train up a child in the way he shall go, and when he is old he will not depart from it."2

Religious education should lead to an experience of regeneration, and thus directly to a life of holiness:

Children are to be trained to serve the Lord; but they cannot serve Him without the experience of regeneration and justification. Therefore, to train children up in the way they should go means to lead them ultimately into the experience of salvation in much the same way that an adult is led into it. The neglect of parents is not simply failure to give their children a few lessons in religion. It is more serious than this. It is failure to induce in them the ordered stages of the experience of real religion as set forth in his theology. Training must be a converting process.

Wesley's sermon On The Education of Children is evidently built up in harmony with the principle: "train a child in the way wherein he should go." This meant to heal them of their original sins: pride, atheism, love of the world, self-will. True religion will cure these diseases. The knowledge of God will cure pride and atheism, along with repentance and faith; obedience to God's will and love of God will cure the love of the world and self-will. To cure the diseases of nature is to train the individual in religion.

Wesley's tract, A Thought on the Manner of Educating Children, also emphasizes these two points. He defended the type of Christian education which the child-

Children were receiving at the Kingswood school, and the schools conducted by Miss Bosanquet, and Miss Owen.

Unless religion is described as consisting in the holy tempers, in the love of God and our neighbor, in humility, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, contentedness in every condition; to sum it all up, in the image of God, in the mind that was in Christ.\(^1\)

It is necessary to instil true religion into the minds of the children as early as possible. The end of religious education was regeneration, a cure for the corruption of nature.

The bias of nature is set all wrong; education is designed to set it right.\(^2\)

The importance of religious education is:

Conquering the will of children betimes

\(\ldots\ldots\ldots\) When this is thoroughly done then a child is capable of being governed by reason of its parent till its own understanding comes to maturity.\(^3\)

The method of revival will be used as a supplement to quicken the process of nurture. In many respects, Wesley favored his mother's strict disciplines, and applied her rules explicitly to the cure of children's natural diseases.

Wesley's theory that children should be trained through different steps in their religious experience is evident. In the home, the parents should watch

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2. Ibid, p.337.
diligently to lead them to a personal religion, and to insure salvation. The purpose of religious education is to instil in children true religion, holiness, the love of God and mankind, and to train them in the image of God.

He made everything subordinate to this growth in religion. In his writings on the training of children, he described the neglect of "family religion, the grand desideratum among the Methodists." If children are not helped properly to attain this true religion, the revival will be of no use. Therefore he urged the parents to train their children in the way they should go, and he ordered his preachers to go from house to house exhorting the parents to conduct family worship, He encouraged them to train children as a part of their duty.

Wesley was guided by the same purpose when he advised parents to choose the right schools for their children:

To decide which school to send them to, it is necessary........to settle a previous question of the purpose of higher education. It is to extend their training for heaven as well as for this life. That school, then, is the only proper one whose masters take this to be the goal of education and will zealously keep it before the child-
for heaven. He should teach the Gospel in Greek and in Latin, to build up a knowledge and a love of God.

Wesley put the purpose in the charity schools where he taught that the emphasis should be on religious education. They learned to read, write, and cast accounts, but more, they were to know God, and Jesus Christ whom He hath sent.\(^1\)

Wesley was also interested in the Sunday School movement. This was one of his particular contributions to Methodism. He saw in them their potentiality for making Christians.

So many children in one parish are restrained from open sin, and taught a little good manners, at least, as well as read the Bible. I find these schools springing up whenever I go. Perhaps God may have a deeper end therein than men are aware of. Who knows but some of these schools may become nurseries for Christians?\(^2\)

This conviction led him to set up a new school for the higher religious education of Methodist boys. It was the Kingswood School. His aim was to make it the model school of his age. The outstanding features were to be "sound religious training and perfect control of the children."\(^3\)

From all this, we see that the chief motive of Wesley's work, in the societies, and in the home, was to instil in the children true religion, and to make them Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

\(^3\) The History of the Kingswood School, p.13.
CHAPTER FOUR

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE METHODIST SOCIETIES
Wesley advised his preachers to cooperate with the parents in the training of their children. He reminded them that they were to teach the children twice a week apart from their regular preaching. The faithful shepherds were those who were busy in the cur- ing of their parish.

To 'seek and save that which is lost;' to bring souls from Satan to God; to instruct the ignorant; to reclaim the wicked; to convince the gainsayer; to direct their feet into the way of peace, and then keep them therein; to follow them step by step, lest they turn out of the way, and advise them in their doubt and temptation; to lift up them that fall; to refresh them that are faint; and to comfort the weak-hearted; to administer various helps, as the variety of occasions require, according to their several necessities - these are parts of our office; all this we undertake at the peril of our own soul.1

In 1744 the first conference met at the Found- ery, in which one of the major emphases was religious education.

Wesley outlined three points of a teaching min- istry for children. First, he wanted his preachers to guide the family worship. According the minutes of the Conference of 1765, Wesley directed the preachers to read before his congregation that part of Mr. Philip Henry's Life which contained his method of family worship.

He had a set order of service in both morning and evening family prayer; a short prayer was offered at the opening, a Psalm was sung, and a reading of the Scripture was explained. After this, the children were asked what they had heard, and the parents should remember what they wished to emphasize for future memory. Then a longer prayer followed, and the worship concluded with a benediction or the doxology. The children would ask for their parents' blessing before they separated. On Thursday evenings a special time was spent on the catechism, and on Saturday evenings they were called upon to recite what they had learned throughout the week. This shows plainly that the children were the center of the educational effort.

In the second place, the preachers should teach the children in their homes. One important question which Wesley asked in the Conference, before the new preacher was admitted as a member was:

Will you diligently and earnestly instruct the children, and visit from house to house?

Every preacher should prepare a project of how to visit the different homes, in order to instruct both young and old, using the text of Instructions for children. They were not to be divided into groups, but the teaching was to be individual, according to the separate needs. The

chief objective was to strengthen the faithful and to win them back to an acceptance of Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

Before you leave them, engage the head of each family, to call his family every Sunday, before they go to bed, and hear what they can rehearse, and so continue until they have learned all the Instruction perfectly. And afterwards take care that they do not forget what they have learned. The sum is: Go into every house in course, and teach all therein, young and old; they belong to us, to be Christian inwardly and outwardly.

In the third place, the preachers should organize societies of religious education in the larger society, in order that they might have regular meetings. In the Conference of 1744, there were very definite provisions for children. The question as to what might be done with the children was answered in this way:

Let the preachers try, by meeting them together and giving them suitable exhortations. At each meeting, we may first set them a lesson in the Instructions or Token for Children. 2.) Hear them repeat it. 3.) Explain it to them in an easy, familiar manner. 4.) Often ask, 'What have I been saying?' And strive to fasten it on their hearts.

In the Conference of 1768, Wesley emphasized the fact that the preachers should teach the children twice a week whether they liked it or not.

Wesley expected that when his preachers entered

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2. Ibid, p.223, quoting the Minutes, I,12.
the ministry, they were to give their service in the teaching of children. He instructed the preachers in his Address to the Clergy that they should cultivate their special gifts of grace, of personality, of intellect. They should have "all the courtesy of a gentleman, joined with the correctness of a scholar."\(^1\) Wesley was heartily out of sympathy with the current belief that anyone, who had no special ability or profession, could be a minister.

A blockhead can never do well enough for a parson.\(\ldots\)Oh, how can those who themselves know nothing aright, impart knowledge to others? how to instruct them in all the variety of duty to God, to their neighbor, and themselves? How will they guide them through all the mazes of error, through all the entanglements of sin and temptation? How will they apprise them of the devices of Satan, and guide them against all the wisdom of the world?\(^2\)

Wesley laid down rules ordering the ministers to devote their mornings to study. He also prescribed courses of study, which the preachers were compelled to follow. These included the classics. If they were not interested in reading them, Wesley suggested that they go back to their original trades. Although Wesley's ideals seemed rigid, he wanted his preachers to be fitted for the sacred work of the ministry.

Wesley favored his mother's religious education—

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al methods in the home. He often referred to her ways of teaching children. There were two ways in which to train children: by discipline, and by teaching. In discipline, one should correct the bias of nature by curing the diseases of nature. There are two ways: one is positive, the other negative. The growth of evil should not be stimulated.

Not to increase any of these diseases (as generally parents constantly do) and next, to use every possible means of healing them.¹

This combined task should be begun as early as possible.

Scripture, reason, and experience jointly testify that inasmuch as the corruption of nature is earlier than our instruction can be, we should take all pains and care to counteract this corruption as early as possible.²

The disease of self-will should be checked as soon as it appears. It is important for religious education, since true religion is to submit our own will to the will of God. The only way we can teach children to submit their will to God in their later life is to subdue their wills while they are young.

The will of parent is to a little child in the place of the will of God. Therefore studiously teach them to submit to this while they are children, that they may be ready to submit their will, when they are men. But in order to carry

this point, you will need incredible firmness and resolution.¹

Whenever parents see their children unkind to others, or harm anything which has life, they should teach them to

Extend, in its measure, the rule of doing as they would be done by, to every animal whatsoever. Ye that are truly kind parents, in the morning, in the evening, and all the day beside, press upon all your children 'to walk in love as Christ also loved us, and gave himself for us;' to mind that one point, 'God is love; and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.'²

Although we realize that Wesley recommended the use of severe discipline to break the will of children as early as possible, yet he often stated that this disciplinary work be carried on by "advice, persuasion, and reproof."

And even then you should take the utmost care to avoid the very appearance of passion. Whatever is done should be done with mildness; nay, indeed, with kindness too. Otherwise your own spirit will suffer loss; and the child will reap little advantage.³

Wesley loved children, and only advocated severe training, in order that they might be saved from the diseases of nature, and reclaimed for a Christian life.

To describe human nature as deeply fallen, as far removed from both virtue and wisdom, does

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not argue that we despise it. We know by Scripture, as well as by sad experience, that men are unspeakably foolish and wicked. And such the Son of God knew them to be when he laid down his life for them. But this did not hinder him from loving them no more than it does any of the children of God.¹

Although it may be difficult for the children to understand why their parents use such severe discipline to break their wills, it is the most advisable thing to do, since the older the child becomes, the harder it is to accomplish. Wesley suggested that it be done before the child is two years old.

To Wesley and his mother, whose methods he followed, this does not seem cruel. It is a benefit to the children rather than a punishment of any kind. The disease of love of the world is as important to subdue as is self-will. It should be taught before the child is intellectually old that the pleasures which delight the eye are vain things of the world; they should learn to appreciate things of plainness and modesty. They should be taught to know, to love, and to serve God, and they should not be allowed to adorn their persons with "gewgaw" in order that they might appear pretty to the outward eye.

This is not an easy task, unless the members of the household unite in its accomplishment. The

grandmothers are not to take part in the management of the children.

Never take the part of the children against the parent; never blame her before them. If you don't strengthen her authority as you ought to do, at least do not weaken it; but if you have either sense or piety left, help her on in the work of real kindness... In four score years I have not met with one woman who knew how to manage grandchildren. My own mother, who governed her children so well, could never govern one grandchild.

Give up your will to hers. But with regard to the management of your children, steadily keep the reins in your own hands.  

Servants were to be instructed never to give good things to the children without the consent of the mother. It were better, to "Lose a good servant than to spoil a good child."  

The disease of pride, also, should be checked as early as possible. Commonly, parents like to praise their children, or encourage others to do so before them. It will be worthwhile to teach them something of religious value, instead.

To strike at the roots of pride, teach your children as soon as you possibly can that they are fallen spirits; that they are fallen short of that glorious image of God, wherein they were first created; that they are now, as they were at once, incorruptible pictures of the good, the Holy Father of spirits, but more ignorant, more wicked, and more foolish than they can possibly believe. Show them that, in pride, passion, and revenge, they are now like the devil. And that in foolishness and grovelling appetites, they are like the beasts of the field.  

This teaching, of course, harmonizes with Wesley's conviction that the doctrine of original sin and salvation through Jesus Christ alone, is the only proper doctrine to instil into the mind of the child.

The disease of atheism is different from the others. It is the fault of parents who do not mention the name of God to their children, although they find time to talk of other things. It is not easy for children to conceive of the idea of God, and the parents must impress upon their minds the fact that God is omnipotent and omnipresent.

Self-will, love of the world, pride, and atheism are the hereditary diseases of human nature; and they should be the first things to be checked in the religious education of children. Besides these, there are such diseases as anger, falsehood, injustice, and unmercifulness. Wesley has discussed each of them separately, and the remedy for them. The wise parent will teach them that God has knowledge of what they do, and that he will repay them according to their actions to others. The business of salvation is a serious one, and both young and old stand in definite need of it. By discipline and instruction, Wesley hopes to be able to take care of the souls of the children who come directly under his care.
Wesley believed that the tasks of discipline and instruction supplement each other in religion education. In his sermon On Family Religion he suggests his method of teaching, and in his sermon On the Education of Children, he describes the manner of discipline. In this sermon he outline the principle in one sentence: You should particularly endeavor to instruct your children, early, plainly, frequently, and patiently." I He develops these under separate heads.

"I struct them early:" As soon as they learn to walk, they are capable of being taught. They should have a good start, in order that their souls might be started on the road of righteousness.

I know no cause why a parent should not just then begin to speak of the best things of God, as well as of trifling or bad things. 2

"Speak to them plainly:" In the modern sense, this implies the use of language suitable to children, in order that they may be able to understand what is being said. Therefore:

Use such words as little children may understand, just as they use themselves. Carefully observe the few ideas they have already, and endeavor to graft what you say upon them. 3

In speaking about God, one should especially attempt to

2. Ibid.
3. Id.
language in terms of the child's own experience. To interest children in the love of God, it is necessary to show them the manifestations of that love in the things of nature. From that it is easy to move to the person behind nature, and to a belief in His love.

He loves you: loves you to do you good. He loves to make you happy. Should you not then love Him? You love me, because I love you and do you good. But it is God that makes me love you. Therefore you should love Him. And I will teach you how to love Him.¹

Constant repetition about God is necessary for this knowledge if of first importance. The soul should be fed as often as the body.

If you find this a tiresome task, there is certainly someway in which you do not love Him, who is your Father and their Father.²

It is urgent to teach them about God. When they are born into this world, they are surrounded by the idols of this world - rivals to the true religion. These idols stimulate them to a love of the world and worldly pleasures, and the only thing that affords real pleasure is a dependence upon God. Therefore, teach them frequently.

And, if teaching is to bring better results, teach them patiently. Teach them with perseverance, earnestness, and diligence. Children are not born

². Ibid, p.305.
equally bright, and the parents and teachers must be patient to those who are dull and slower to learn.

I remember to have heard my father asking my mother, 'How could you have the patience to tell that blockhead the same thing twenty times over?' She answered, 'Why, if I had told him but nineteen times, I should have lost all my labor.' What patience, indeed, what love, and what knowledge is requisite for this!

And even so, the labor may sometimes be lost. The matter must be laid before God, and he alone will reap the harvest.

If the teaching is for the love of God, and your children, work with Him.

It is God who worketh in us, both to will and to do, of his pleasure....He honors men, to be in his sense, 'workers together with him.' By this means the reward is ours, while the glory redounds to Him."2

Wesley prepared several tracts to guide the parents, teachers, and preachers, in teaching religion to the children. Among the text-books, two of them are important for home use: The Instructions for Children and the Lessons for Children. Each of them had a summary which contained his principal method of teaching. This sheds a light on Wesley's way of instilling religion into children. The Preface to the Instructions reads:

To all Parents and School masters:

1. I have laid before you in the following

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2. Ibid, p. 309.
tract the true principles of the Christian education of children. These should, in all reason, be instilled into them as soon as ever they can distinguish good from evil. If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, then it is certainly the very first thing they should learn. And why may they not be taught the knowledge of God and the knowledge of letters at the same time?

2. A great part of what follows is translated from the French; only it is here cast into another form, and divided into sentences, that it may be the more easily understood either by the teachers or the learners. And although the great truths herein contained are more immediately addressed to children, yet are they worthy the deepest consideration both of the oldest and wisest men.

3. Let them be deeply engraven in your own hearts, and you will spare no pains in teaching them to others. Above all, let them not read or say one line without understanding and minding what they say. Try them over and over; stop them short, almost in every sentence; and ask them, 'What was it you said last? Read it again; what do you mean by that?' So that, if it be possible, they pass by nothing, till it has taken some hold upon them. By this means, they will learn to think as they learn to read. They will grow wiser and better every day. And you will have the comfort of observing that by the same step they advance in the knowledge of these poor elements they will also grow in grace, and in the knowledge of God, and of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Wesley's Instructions for Children were chiefly to be used in the home. He especially ordered preachers to see that every Methodist Society was well supplied with it, and that every home owned a copy. He believed that it was one of the best tracts for children because it contained what children should be taught, and he had "never seen anything comparable to them, either for depth

of sense, or plainness of language." It is divided into six sections, and there are fifty eight lessons in it. There are twelve lessons in the first section on God, the creation and the fall of man, the redemption of man, the means of grace, and hell and heaven. The second section deals more specifically with the nature of God and of the soul of man, and with an explanation of the teaching function of the catechism on their topics. The third sections teaches how desires might be regulated. This section teaches the necessity of yielding self-will to the will of God, and the things that are most pleasing to Him. He gives examples of how to teach children to pray, and a set form of prayer as a guide. The fourth section deals with the regulation of the intellect. Since the fall, atheism has become the lot of man, and only through the soul can God open the eyes to the things of God and knowledge of them. It sets up regulations regarding our beliefs, with a summary of the Apostles' Creed as the most acceptable. The fifth section is a description of the regulation of joy. Man's joy is to rest, not in this world, but in the things of God and obedience to Him. The last section deals with the regulation of our daily practices so that man will lead a truly Christian life. This section includes the Ten Commandments, and the two commandments of Jesus.
Finally, he closes with an exhortation to parents to follow his teachings:

Happy are those who despising the rules of the diabolical and antiChristian world, train up the precious souls of their children wholly by the rules of Jesus Christ.¹

The Lessons for Children contains the following Preface:

To All Parents and Schoolmasters:

1. I have endeavored in the following lessons to select the plainest and the most useful portions of Scripture; such as a Christian may the most easily understand, and such as it most concerns him to know. These are set down in the same order, and (generally) the same words, wherein they are delivered by the Spirit of God. Where an expression is less easy to be understood, I have subjoined a word or two by way of explication; but taking care not to detain you from your great work, with Comments longer than the Text.

2. I cannot but earnest you, to take good heed, how you teach these deep things of God. Beware of that common, but accursed way of making children parrots, instead of Christians. Labor that, as far as is possible, they may understand every single sentence which they read. Therefore do not make haste. Regard not how much, but how well, to how good purpose, they read. Turn each sentence every way, propose it in every light, and question them continually on every point; if by any means, they may not only read, but inwardly digest the words of eternal light.

3. Meantime you will not fail, with all diligence to commend both yourselves and your little ones to Him, without whom you well know neither is he that planteth anything, nor he that watereth. You are sensible, He alone giveth the increase. May He both minister bread for your own food, and multiply the seed sown, and increase the fruits of your righteousness.²

¹ Wesley, John, Instructions for Children, p.171.
² Wesley, John, Lessons for Children, pp.3-4.
Wesley prepared these lessons to guide the people in teaching the most useful portions of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. Practically every book is represented except Ruth, the Songs of Solomon, Lamentations, and the Minor Prophets.

The Token for Children is another text-book which Wesley recommended to be used in teaching children. The Conference of 1744 advised the preachers to use this book along with the Instructions.

Above all the educational factors which were important, Wesley placed the teaching of children to pray. He mentioned it continually as a part of their religious education. The children should be brought up to use this means of grace, and they should be taught to pray publicly as well as privately. Wesley felt that the failure of the Kingswood School was partly due to a failure to pray on the part of the pupils:

It is chiefly to their total neglect of private prayer. Without this, all the other means which they employed would profit them nothing.1

Those who teach them to pray, however, must use a certain amount of discrimination. It is necessary that they become believers before prayer will be a vital force in their lives, but as soon as they do believe then they should be encouraged to pray.

The Preface to his prayer-book reads:

My dear Child: A lover of your soul has here drawn up a few prayers, in order to assist you in that great duty. Be sure that you do not omit, at least morning and evening, to present yourself upon your knees before God. You have mercies to pray for, and blessings to praise God for. But take care that you do not mock God, drawing near with your lips, while your heart is far from him. God sees you, knows your thoughts; therefore, see that you not only speak with your lips, but pray with your heart. And that you may make it your endeavor to do what God has shown you ought; because God says, 'The prayers of the wicked are an abomination unto the Lord.' Ask then, of God for the blessings you want, in the name, and for the sake of Jesus Christ; and God will hear and answer you, and do more for you than you can either ask or think.¹

These prayers are to be used for the needs of children, and to stimulate them to higher aspiration. The style is biblical, and many are borrowed directly from the Scriptures, especially from the Psalms. The prayer for Monday evening is a general confession, adopted from the Common Prayer. Wesley desired that they revere God through their prayers, and in this way they will gain a deeper understanding of God. Some of the prayers were prepared for use in the time of temptation and struggle against sin and the social elements are provided in such prayers as those for relations and friends which are to found in the book.

In 1790 Wesley published his *Hymns for Children*,

a collection of forty four hymns, selected from Charles 
Wesley's Hymns for Children and Others of Riper Years. 
Again Wesley states his aim in the Preface:

There are two ways of writing or speaking to 
children, one is, to let ourselves down to 
them; the other, to lift them up to us. Doc-
tor Watts has written in the former way, and 
has succeeded admirably well, speaking to 
children as children, and leaving them as he 
found them. The following hymns are written 
on the other plan: they contain strong and 
manly sense, yet expressed in such plain and 
easy language as even children may understand. 
But when they do understand them, they will 
be children no longer, only in years and in 
stature.1

In the Instructions, and the Lessons, we find that Wes-
ley desired to teach the children thoroughly, not only 
to think aright, but to grow into the likeness of God 
through their active life and experience. This collect-
ion of hymns was the last publication of Wesley, and 
shows his continued solicitude for children throughout 
his life.

When John Wesley was a student at Oxford, he 
and his friends had organized the Holy Club, and their 
major interest was always educational. They used their 
Sundays as a time for the instruction of the children 

SUNDAY-SCHOOL 
MOVEMENT

in their neighborhood. The seed, 
which was sown at that time, has 
produced fruit in many countries, 
and has become a great blessing for the whole of human-

The origin of this movement dates back to Wesley's mission to Georgia in 1735. He used to teach the children of Savannah on Sundays. Later, Wesley visited Count Zinzendorf at Herrnhut and learned more satisfactory methods of this kind of teaching, by separating the children from the adults, and limiting each class to not more than ten pupils. These classes were taught religion. Each class had its own teacher.

Sunday school instruction became a duty of every preacher. This was set down in the Conference of 1748, and given more definite formulation in the Conference of 1766.

1. Every preacher take an exact catalogue of those in the Society, from one end of town to the other. 2. Go to each house, and give, with suitable exhortation and direction, the Instructions for Children. 3. Be sure to deal gently with them, and take off all discouragements as effectually as you can. See that the children get these by heart. Advise the grown persons to see that they understand them.1

Wesley then goes into minute detail regarding the specific way in which his instructions are to be carried out and the exhortation ends with the statement which has been quoted before:

The sum is: Go into every house, and teach everyone therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly.2

1. Wesley, Minutes of the Conference of 1766, 1, pp.63-69. 2. Ibid.
Wesley had been in the habit of meeting the children in various places for thirty years before the Gloucester Sunday school movement. He gave them direct religious training:

Sunday, 11, (April, 1756) I met about a hundred children, who are catechized publicly about twice a week. Thomas Walsh began this some months ago; and the fruit of it appears already. What a pity that all our preachers in every place have not the zeal and wisdom to follow his example. 1

In 1778, Wesley was editing the Arminian Magazine, the earliest periodical in the Protestant world. It was exceedingly popular from the time of the publication of the first volume. In 1785, Wesley printed an account of Robert Raikes' school, and it was written in letter form, from Raikes himself. An incident was related at the beginning of Raikes's Sunday school at Gloucester. A Methodist lady, Miss Cooke (later Mrs. Samuel Bradburn) was the first to suggest to Raikes the idea of instituting a Sunday school at Gloucester. This article appeared in the Magazine for January, 1785, under the title "An Account of the Sunday Charity schools, lately begun in various parts of England." Wesley was one of the first to have conceived the idea of such a movement, and he was careful to plant the idea wherever he went. Wherever he came into direct contact with the

societies, he was sure to pay especial attention to the work which was being done for the children, and his Journal is full of incidents which prove this. In 1788 a letter written to Duncan Wright, gives a marked expression of this interest:

Dear Duncan: You send me a comfortable account of the work of God in your circuit. I cannot doubt but the blessing redounds to you all for the sake of the poor children. I verily think, these Sunday schools are one of the noblest specimens of charity which have set foot in England since the time of William the Conqueror.

It is seen from Wesley's Journal and his correspondence, that he evidently considered the two schools at Bolton and New castle, as the most outstanding. In the Arminian Magazine for September, 1788, we find the description of the school at Bolton:

In the Methodist Sunday school at Bolton le Moors there are about eight hundred scholars, forty masters and nearly as many assistants of one kind or other. All that are employed in this school (whatever their offices are) offer their services willingly, without any pecuniary fee or reward. Every man stands close to his station, and enters into the spirit of his work, with the intention to do all the good in his power to the children under his care. The masters love the children, and delight to instruct them; the children love their masters, and cheerfully receive instruction. It is about two years since they first began the school in our large convenient chapel; and the great good attending the organization, appears more and more daily: not only in Bolton, but in the adjacent places from whence the children come constantly to

the school, and others who live in the
country several miles off.
Many of the poor children about Bolton
have been greatly neglected in their edu-
cation, and were almost a proverb for wick-
edness, especially Sabbath breaking; which
crime is often the forerunner of the worst
of evils.
But we see at present the prospect of a
glorious reformation. Among many who attend
at our place there is already a great change
in their manners, morals, and learning. They
are taught to read and write by persons who
are very well qualified for the work. Many
of the children can read well in the Bible,
and write a tolerable hand; so that they are
qualified for any common business. Their
natural rusticity is also greatly worn off,
and their behavior is modest and decent.
about one hundred are taught to sing the
praises of God; in which they have made great
proficiency, to the admiration of those who
hear them.
But what is the best of all the rest, the
principles of religion are instilled in their
minds. The masters endeavor to impress them
with the fear of the Lord; and by that to
make all vice and wickedness hateful to them;
and urge them to obedience by the precepts and
motives of the Gospel. Each class is spoken
to separately each Sunday, on the nature of
religion, and are taught their duty of God their
neighbor and themselves, when the instructions
are enforced by serious counsels and solemn
prayers.1

For fifty years Wesley spent his time in working
out his ideals for religious education, and in planting
and fostering the great Sunday school movement.
The purpose and the teachings of Wesley's ed-
ucational principles have already been stated. The
theories were put into practice however, and a study of
two of the schools will demonstrate their working out.

The Foundery school was an elementary day school. The aim of this school was to have strict control over the pupils during the school hours, and the curriculum which was provided was chiefly religious instruction, and subjects of general knowledge. The pupils were in school from six to twelve, and from one to five. They were not allowed to speak except to their masters. They were not allowed to play. They were obliged to attend chapel services, every morning. If any pupil was absent for two days in the week, or failed to obey the rules he was expelled. There were two steward appointed to take charge of the administrative duties of the school, and also guard the spiritual welfare of the children. Twice a week these stewards met the children, to pray with them and exhort them. There were conferences with the parents once a week, in order to secure their cooperation.

For some reason Wesley did not favor the continuance of this school. He was not in favor of schools in large towns, because of the influence of the surroundings upon the children. The children were too prone to fall into bad companionship. Then there was the perennial problem of the securing of proper teachers for the school. And finally, there
was the problem of curriculum. It was poorly arranged, with too little arithmetic, geography, and history, although Greek and Latin were thoroughly taught. The materials for reading were not carefully selected, and the pupils' knowledge of English was poor. Wesley was too thorough in his methods to allow the school to continue and it was closed before 1772.

The Kingswood school was founded in the midst of the coal mines near Bristol, in 1740. It was primarily intended for the children of the colliers, but several of the Methodists in other places sent their children there for instruction. The school was favorably located, in Wesley's estimation. It was far away from the crowded city and the roadways. It was situated on a small hill, but lack of proper water-supply, forced the Conference later to move the school to a more favorable site. This, however, was not done until 1852.

Wesley planned that this school should profit by the defects which had been patent in the Foundery school. With this in mind, Wesley set out to give the children a thorough intellectual education, coupled with a true religious education. He gave his own personal guidance in the selection of the curriculum, and in the administration of the school.
John Wesley opened this new school on June 24th, 1748, and preached his opening sermon upon the text: "Train up a Child." Charles had written the hymn which was used.¹

The object of the school was to train the children in every branch of useful knowledge. The curriculum was made up of reading, writing, arithmetic, English, French, Latin, Greek, Hebrew, history, geography, chronology, rhetoric, logic, ethics, geometry, algebra, physics and music, and later natural philosophy and metaphysics were added. The following books were used for instruction:

- Instructions for Children
- Lessons for Children
- The Manners of the Ancient Christians (extracted from Fleury)
- Cave's Primitive Christianity
- Pilgrim's Progress.
- The Life of Mr. De Renty
- The Life of Mr. Haliburton
- Law's Christian Perfection and Serious Call
- Corderii Colloquia Selecta
- Historia Selectae
- Castellio's a Kempis
- Cornelius Nepos
- Select Dialogues of Erasmus
- Moral and Sacred Poems
- Genesis
- The Gospels
- The Epistles of St. John.²

In 1749 Wesley supplied the school with a grammar, and edited and revised the books which the children were to read. He was exceedingly careful in his selection of the secular books that they would be suited for religious purposes.

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1. Cf. Wesley, Charles, Hymns for Children and Others of Riper Years, pp.35-36, "Come, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."
Wesley's purpose in founding the school was definitely benevolent and lofty, but his rules were severe, stern, and relentless. They were a reflection of his own rearing, and show the same methodic tendencies which characterized all of his work. Every minute of the day was budgetted for the child from the time that he arose at four, both winter and summer, until he went to bed at eight, "the youngest first." The diet was carefully ordered, and there was no variation in the menu. It is small wonder that Wesley complained of the fact that his rules were constantly broken, and that many children were dismissed because of failure to obey such a strict regime.

Wesley refused to allow the children to go home, since there they would come under alien influences, and when they returned they would find it harder to obey the rules of the school. He was very strict in his entrance requirements, and in the ages and number of boys whom he allowed to enter. In 1744 the Conference decreed that boys between the ages of six and ten alone should be admitted. Later this was changed to six and twelve. Only fifty children could be accommodated. This would allow each boy to have the proper amount of attention from those in authority.

Wesley's standard for his teachers was high. He mentions twice that he was searching for teachers throughout "the three kingdoms." They must be men, not only intellectually qualified, but highly devoted to God, and excellent examples for the children they were to teach. If they were unsuited for their post, Wesley felt no compunction in discharging and hiring others to fill their places.

For a few months at least the school worked to Wesley's satisfaction. But it needed constant re-viving. In August, after the school opened, several of the boys were converted, and in October the housekeeper wrote to him:

The spirit of this family is a resemblance of the household above. They are given up to God, and pursue but one great end. If any is afraid this school will eclipse others, or that it will train up soldiers to proclaim open war against the god of this world, I believe it is not a groundless fear. If God continues to bless us, from this obscure spot, there will arise ambassadors for the King of kings.1

The school also trained preachers in their religious life.

At Kingswood collected together seventeen of his preachers whom he divided into two classes, for the purpose of reading lectures to them every day during Lent, as he had formerly done to his pupils at Oxford..... We learn that Wesley's object was 1.) To

teach theology; 2.) the science of reasoning; 3.) The art of elocution. 1

Even with such careful supervision, trouble soon arose. First the quarreling was among the servants, then among the masters. From this it naturally spread to the pupils themselves, until the school was reduced in number at the end of three years. But Wesley continued his training, and his writing and editing of text-books undismayed by the various periods of spiritual depression through which the school passed.

Wesley devoted his time and his heart to religious education; no matter in which direction his efforts turned, his aim was always the same. In his conferences he persistently challenged his preachers to see the importance of educating the children as citizens of the kingdom of God. The welfare of the school should be their vital interest. In the societies, he urged the need of schools, and the pressing need for the religious education of the children. His whole religious life was spent in an effort to carry on successfully the nurture of the children, in order that from their ranks might come men and women who would carry on the work of the Master.

CONCLUSION
There are few people who come from homes like the Wesley household. The dignity of Wesley's mother, her puritanical character, her insistent and orderly discipline were forces in the habit of religion which later was to be the contribution of her son. This discipline produced a meditative gravity and piety, and an almost uncomfortable seriousness. It was a discipline that dealt out hours and duties as a chemist might count out the elements in a certain formula, and it produced an inevitable compound.

Wesley's youthful religion, gained at home, hardly survived the rough shocks of life at Charterhouse and at Oxford. He had to fight hard for his spiritual awakening. At Oxford there were forces in his reading which made their contribution, and which definitely placed his footsteps in the path of a religious life. It sent him into a period of decision, from which he worked his way out with his usual thoroughness and method.

But this was not the completion of the process. The years in Georgia were essential for his own salvation, and the period of struggle and indecision on his return from Georgia culminated in the experience in Aldersgate, when he "felt his heart strangely warmed."
Wesley's significance as an educator is naturally to be evaluated in its historical setting. His deep-seated purpose and ideal was to bring all children into true religious education: "knowledge and vital piety, learning and holiness combined." To this end all of his educational efforts were bent.

The methods may have been crude and at times unsatisfactory, yet no one else had done the same thing in the history of English people. But the ideal was of the highest and as such carried its own significance. By traveling over the country and preaching a gospel of repentance, personal faith, and better living, John Wesley made a deep emotional appeal, and soon gained a strong hold on the poorer and more ignorant classes of people. The Wesleyan Movement had lifted up the irreligious mass of people toward a positive religious, spiritual minded ideal.

Forbidden to preach to the high church, he founded a church of re-birth, and personal religious experience with God, known as the Wesleyan. Creating a conference for administration and co-operation with his preachers of the church, he challenged them to build a higher, deeper, and more firm foundation for religious education. The preachers became promoters for the strictest religious education, to instil true religion to the children in the homes, organizing Sunday Schools for both adults
and children in the societies, and establishing schools for higher religious education to train for leadership.

His spirit was very earnest. His methods were thorough and consistent. The faculty was carefully selected both for renown and Christian character. The pupils were severely disciplined and instructed in their earliest years that they might grow up as they should be. It was his ideal that the children might experience religious conversion and become true Christians. Moreover he provided opportunities for children to partake of revival activity and we find many evidences throughout the schools that he labored hard with his whole heart and mind. Many a time he emphasized religious education in his sermons and he exhorted the preachers and the parents to spend time teaching their children religious knowledge as well as being personal examples. He devoted time for active service in supervizing the contents of curriculum writing test-books for parents and preachers to use. He lent his personal interest to teaching the children in the Sunday Schools and Kingswood School.

Wesley found God in his own life, and, filled with his presence, he set forth to bring that same presence into the lives and hearts of all people. His particular task was to bring it to the childhood of England. He was above all the prophet of religious education.

His spiritual genius, his unbounded strength which
is seen in his religious educational work is the thing which gives hope and courage to the writer of this thesis, not merely in the historical research, but in an ideal of inspiration and aspiration toward which to strive.
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