

and mother." And I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that we be in no wise divided among ourselves. Is thy heart right, as my heart is with thine? I ask no farther question. If it be, give me thy hand. For opinions, or terms, let us not destroy the work of God. Dost thou love and serve God? It is enough. I give thee the right hand of fellowship. If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies; let us strive together for the faith of the Gospel; walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called; with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; remembering, there is one body, and one Spirit, even as we are called with one hope of our calling; "one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

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### A SHORT

### HISTORY OF METHODISM.

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1. It is not easy to reckon up the various accounts which have been given of the people called Methodists; very many of them as far remote from truth as that given by the good gentleman in Ireland: "*Methodists!* Ay, they are the people who place all religion in *wearing long beards.*"

2. Abundance of the mistakes which are current concerning them have undoubtedly sprung from this: Men lump together, under this general name, many who have no manner of connexion with each other; and then whatever any of these speaks or does is of course imputed to all.

3. The following short account may prevent persons of a calm and candid disposition from doing this; although men of a warm or prejudiced spirit will do just as they did before. But let it be observed, this is not designed for a defence of the Methodists, (so called,) or any part of them. It is a bare relation of a series of naked facts, which alone may remove abundance of misunderstandings.

4. In November, 1729, four young gentlemen of Oxford,—Mr. John Wesley, Fellow of Lincoln College; Mr. Charles Wesley, Student of Christ Church; Mr. Morgan, Commoner of Christ Church; and Mr. Kirkham, of Merton College,—began to spend some evenings in a week together, in reading, chiefly, the Greek Testament. The next year two or three of Mr. John Wesley's pupils desired the liberty of meeting with them; and afterwards one of Mr. Charles Wesley's pupils. It was in 1732, that Mr. Ingham, of Queen's College, and Mr. Broughton, of Exeter, were added to their number. To these, in April, was joined Mr. Clayton, of Brazen-nose, with two or three of his pupils. About the same time Mr. James Hervey was permitted to meet with them; and in 1735, Mr. Whitefield.

5. The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ Church to say, "Here is a new set of Methodists sprung up;" alluding to some ancient Physicians who were so called. The name was new and quaint; so it took immediately, and the Methodists were known all over the University.

6. They were all zealous members of the Church of England; not only tenacious of all her doctrines, so far as they knew them, but of all her discipline, to the minutest circumstance. They were likewise zealous observers of all the University Statutes, and that for conscience' sake. But they observed neither these nor anything else any further than they conceived it was bound upon them by their one book, the Bible; it being their one desire and design to be downright Bible-Christians; taking the Bible, as interpreted by the primitive Church and our own, for their whole and sole rule.

7. The one charge then advanced against them was, that they were "righteous overmuch;" that they were abundantly too scrupulous, and too strict, carrying things to great extremes: In particular, that they laid too much stress upon the Rubrics and Canons of the Church; that they insisted too much on observing the Statutes of the University; and that they took the Scriptures in too strict and literal a sense; so that if they were right, few indeed would be saved.

8. In October, 1735, Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and Mr. Ingham, left England, with a design to go and preach to the Indians in Georgia: But the rest of the gentlemen continued to meet, till one and another was ordained and left the

University. By which means, in about two years' time, scarce any of them were left.

9. In February, 1738, Mr. Whitefield went over to Georgia with a design to assist Mr. John Wesley ; but Mr. Wesley just then returned to England. Soon after he had a meeting with Messrs. Ingham, Stonehouse, Hall, Hutchings, Kinchin, and a few other Clergymen, who all appeared to be of one heart, as well as of one judgment, resolved to be Bible-Christians at all events; and, wherever they were, to preach with all their might plain, old, Bible Christianity.

10. They were hitherto perfectly regular in all things, and zealously attached to the Church of England. Meantime, they began to be convinced, that "by grace we are saved through faith;" that justification by faith was the doctrine of the Church, as well as of the Bible. As soon as they believed, they spake; salvation by faith being now their standing topic. Indeed this implied three things: (1.) That men are all, by nature, "dead in sin," and, consequently, "children of wrath." (2.) That they are "justified by faith alone." (3.) That faith produces inward and outward holiness: And these points they insisted on day and night. In a short time they became popular Preachers. The congregations were large wherever they preached. The former name was then revived; and all these gentlemen, with their followers, were entitled Methodists.

11. In March, 1741, Mr. Whitefield, being returned to England, entirely separated from Mr. Wesley and his friends, because he did not hold the decrees. Here was the first breach, which warm men persuaded Mr. Whitefield to make merely for a difference of opinion. Those, indeed, who believed universal redemption had no desire at all to separate; but those who held particular redemption would not hear of any accomodation, being determined to have no fellowship with men that "were in so dangerous errors." So there were now two sorts of Methodists, so called; those for particular, and those for general, redemption.

12. Not many years passed, before William Cudworth and James Relly separated from Mr. Whitefield. These were properly Antinomians; absolute, avowed enemies to the law of God, which they never preached or professed to preach, but termed all legalists who did. With them, "preaching the law" was an abomination. They had "nothing to do" with the law. They would "preach Christ," as they called it, but without one

word either of holiness or good works. Yet these were still denominated Methodists, although differing from Mr. Whitefield, both in judgment and practice, abundantly more than Mr. Whitefield did from Mr. Wesley.

13. In the mean time, Mr. Venn and Mr. Romaine began to be spoken of; and not long after Mr. Madan and Mr. Berridge, with a few other Clergymen, who, although they had no connexion with each other, yet preaching salvation by faith, and endeavouring to live accordingly, to be Bible-Christians, were soon included in the general name of Methodists. And so indeed were all others who preached salvation by faith, and appeared more serious than their neighbours. Some of these were quite regular in their manner of preaching; some were quite irregular; (though not by choice; but necessity was laid upon them; they must preach irregularly, or not at all;) and others were between both, regular in most, though not in all, particulars.

14. In 1762, George Bell, and a few other persons, began to speak great words. In the latter end of the year, they foretold that the world would be at an end on the 28th of February. Mr. Wesley, with whom they were then connected, withstood them both in public and private. This they would not endure; so, in January and February, 1763, they separated from him. Soon after, Mr. Maxfield, one of Mr. Wesley's Preachers, and several of the people, left Mr. Wesley; but still Mr. Maxfield and his adherents go under the general name of Methodists.

15. At present, those who remain with Mr. Wesley are mostly Church-of-England men.\* They love her Articles, her Homilies, her Liturgy, her discipline, and unwillingly vary from it in any instance. Meantime, all who preach among them declare, "We are all by nature children of wrath:" But "by grace we are saved through faith;" saved both from the guilt and from the power of sin. They endeavour to live according to what they preach, to be plain Bible-Christians. And they meet together, at convenient times, to encourage one another therein. They tenderly love many that are Calvinists,

\* I have not been able to ascertain the precise time at which this tract was written. It notices the separation of Maxfield in 1763; and the second edition of it bears the date of 1765. It appears therefore to have been first published sometime about 1764; and was probably intended to screen Mr. Wesley and his friends from the reproach attached to the conduct of those who separated from him.—EDIT.

though they do not love their opinions. Yea, they love the Antinomians themselves; but it is with a love of compassion only: For they hate their doctrines with a perfect hatred; they abhor them as they do hell-fire; being convinced nothing can so effectually destroy all faith, all holiness, and all good works.

16. With regard to these, Mr. Rely and his adherents, it would not be strange if they should grow into reputation. For they will never shock the world, either by the harshness of their doctrine, or the singularity of their behaviour. But let those who determine both to preach and to live the Gospel expect that men will say "all manner of evil of them." "The servant is not above his Master, nor the disciple above his Lord. If, then, they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more them of his household?" It is their duty, indeed, "as much as lieth in them, to live peaceably with all men." But when they labour after peace, the world will "make themselves ready for battle." It is their constant endeavour to "please all men, for their good, to edification." But yet they know it cannot be done: They remember the word of the Apostle, "If I yet please men, I am not the servant of Christ." They go on, therefore, "through honour and dishonour, through evil report and good report;" desiring only, that their Master may say in that day, "Servants of God, well done!"

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## ADVICE

TO THE

## PEOPLE CALLED METHODISTS.

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*Disce, docendus adhuc quæ censeat amicus.*—HOR.\*

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It may be needful to specify whom I mean by this ambiguous term; since it would be lost labour to speak to Methodists, so called, without first describing those to whom I speak.

\* Thus translated by Francis:—

"To the instruction of a humble friend,  
Who would himself be better taught, attend."—EDIT.