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RALEIGH CHRISTIAN ADVOCATE.

EDITORIAL.

The Home-Maker's Reward.

A throng of women who had served the Lord

Wanted before heaven's gate for their reward.

Each shining soul had her fair record brought

For glorious service for the Master wrought.

One gentle one, whose life was full and long,

Whose great pen had slain a giant wrong.

With starving children this one's life was spent;

To nameless outcasts hope that presence lent.

For dwarfed and stunted souls those labored well,

And let love's blessings in the prison cell.

For poor humanity, sin-cursed and lost,

They gave their lives, and counted not the cost.

They were bright and beautiful to see!

Earth's fame had crowned them ere their souls were free.

Behold here was who lone and trembling stood

Among this throng of women great and good.

To whom the recording angel, speaking said,

"What dost thou here among the blessed dead?

Seeing no record? Hast thou nothing done

Where these their crowns of glory won?"

To whom she, weeping, said: "Let me return

To that dear earth, for which I surely yearn;

The hearts that loved me all my service got;

Not any service for the Lord I wrought.

Life was too short for me; when Death had come,

He had made on earth a happy home."

"Aye! sayest thou so, thou well-beloved and blest!

Daughter of heaven, go in among the rest.

The hearts that loved thee thou shalt have again;

Some may return, but thou shalt lose thy pain.

For thou shalt breathe in heaven thy native air,

And in its glorious mansions, great and fair,

To these familiar all its joys shall come;

Heaven's vision thou hast left—a happy home."

—Frances Elkin Allison, in the Interior.

VICTOR HUGO AS A PREACHER.

THOMAS DOGGETT, D. D.

It is not surprising that ministers should find much in Victor Hugo's writings to illustrate their sermons and give emphasis to the essential truths of Christianity. Nor is it surprising that some, who minister to congregations in which are large numbers who are familiar with modern literature, should frequently take some of these great moral and intellectual productions as furnishing subject matter for the vivid enforcement of vital and eternal verities. The wonder is that it is not often done. The Bible is not behind of when the living characters of a Chaucer or a novelist are used to throw an intense light upon the sacred page. The facts of history and the incidents of common life, which the daily press presents, are drawn upon as a matter of course to illustrate the Psalms and Prophets and Gospels and Epistles, and no objection is made and why not the works of one whom God has endowed with more than common insight into life and character, and with more than an ordinary power to set forth what human life and character should be? As we find "sermons in

stones," why not in the great works of fiction?

I do not know a single one of the eternal truths of the Christian religion, on which Victor Hugo has not cast some light, either by elaborate treatment of a character or by a line or a single word.

He pleasantly tells us of his first reading of the Bible, how as he and his brothers were playing in an attic, they saw on the top of a shelf an "inaccessible book." They managed, however, to take it down "and opened it on their knees." Then they read, and "from the very first word it appeared to us so sweet, that forgetting our play we gave ourselves up to reading. We read all the morning of Joseph and Ruth and the Good Samaritan, and were more and more charmed. In the evening we read it again; we were like children who have in their hands a bird of the skies, who laugh and wonder and stroke its plumes." Thirty years after, as he saw his two daughters poring over that book, he said, "From this book one is learning to read, another to think." Again he says: "In this Holy Book there is a salvation so profound that a God was needed to dictate it." "Days," he speaks of, "when the Bible dazzled the world." Though he writes as a poet, he always writes as a believer, and is ever showing his reverence and love for the inspired Word. In more than twenty of his works he makes reference to the "august text, where hearts reading with fervor drink in truth, beauty, righteousness."

With him life is no playground, it is a place of combat between good and evil. It is the duty of all to side with virtue against vice, for all are free. Duty is a divine word. "Duty is a God that will have no atheist."

God alone is the sure oracle; faith that takes him at his word is the torch that never goes out, and always guides right. Hope comes with faith. "Hope, child, to-morrow, and then to-morrow still. Believe in the future and hope. Every time the sun rises, let us be there to pray, as God is there to bless." We know his mercy; he is the God of Calvary.

What God wants is love. "To adore, that is at once to love and to admire. As God is infinitely above man, how shall this infinite distance be overcome?" One day, the poet says, a phantom met him and offered to bridge over this separating abyss. "What is thy name?" He replies, "My name is Prayer." "To bring by thought the infinitely low in contact with the infinitely high, that is prayer." The sheep comes when her lamb calls her; I called the Lord, and the Lord came.

"If men seek pleasure only, they find joys without happiness, sorrows without consolation. Happiness leaves in my soul regret, but impure pleasure, thou leavest remorse."

Nothing better has been said of immortality than "without it nature would be a mournful and cowardly impostor. Life would not be worthy of God who gives it, nor of man who receives it." At the tomb of Balzac he said: "I will not cease repeating it—no, it is not night, it is light; it is not the end, it is the beginning; it is not nothingness, it is eternity." At the foot of the coffin of a young girl he said: "Emily has gone to seek supreme serenity above. She has gone—youth to eternity, beauty to the ideal, hope to certitude, love to the infinite, the pearl to the ocean, the spirit to God."

They who have fed on Victor Hugo have no relish for the moral anatomy and the irreligious realism of most of the novelists of our day. Victor Hugo preaches; would that there were more such preachers!

THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT.

Let me speak to the great hosts of the rank and file of our membership. Is it not true that many live on and on in the Church on a plane below their privilege? Are there not many who fail of the rich assurance of faith that comes from the witness of the Spirit? They plod on, hoping for a better experience, hungry in heart, yet never actually having a satisfactory experience—many who would be glad to have the deep certainty of God's witnessing Spirit. This doctrine and experience form the purpose for which Methodism was called into being. We are in the world to teach and illustrate a knowable religion. The world was full, in the days of Wesley, with Old Testament believers, who had only a hope of a hope. God wanted a Church with a knowable experience. So he

called John Wesley to teach a conscious salvation. The great doctrine of Methodism is the doctrine of the witness of the Spirit. This is that supernatural fire that strangely warmed John Wesley's heart. This is that inborn sense, down deep in consciousness, deeper than logic, more certain than reasoning, that we are accepted of God, whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." Have you this witness? Brother, ask yourself; sister, ask yourself, "Have I this all-satisfying witness?" I am on trial for my soul. My case is being made up. The jury will soon go out. Its verdict is final. I must know beyond a doubt what their verdict will be. It will either set me free to walk with open face and glad heart about the city of God, with the good and great of all ages forever, or it will assign me to that lone land where mercy and hope never come. I cannot trust my own judgment; am little, ignorant, and often easily deceived, much prejudiced; I may be wrong; I may have an infallible testimony. This I may have in the witness of the Holy Spirit? You may have. Pray mightily that this may come to you and be the rich endowment of power for the whole Church.

This is the supreme gift. Jesus said: "It is expedient for you that I go away." What could make it expedient for the infant Church to have Jesus leave them? He had been all things unto them. He had been to them the peasant of Nazareth, Prophet of God, Son of God, and God over all, blessed for evermore. Yet it was expedient for them to have him go away. For Jesus says, "If I go not away, the Holy Ghost will not come unto you." The Spirit is the promise of the Father. Let every Methodist, man, woman and child, pray for the personal witness of the Spirit and for the baptism of the Holy Spirit upon the whole Church. This will secure the power of the church and the supreme and acceptable Twentieth Century Thank Offering. Give yourself, then you will gladly give whatever God wants. Put your hand between the King's hands, and he will secure the rest.—Bishop Fowler.

JOHN WESLEY.

BY AUGUSTINE BIRRELL.

John Wesley, born as he was in 1703, and dying as he did in 1791, covers as nearly as mortal man may, the whole of the eighteenth century, of which he was one of the most typical and certainly the most strenuous figure. He began his published journal on October 14, 1735, and its last entry is under date Sunday, October 25, 1790, when in the morning he explained to a numerous congregation in Spitalfields Church "The Whole Army of God," and in the afternoon enforced to a still larger audience in St. Paul's, Shadwell, the great truth, "One thing is needful," the last words of the Journal being "I hope many even then resolved to choose the better part."

Between these two Octobers there lies the most amazing record of human exertion ever penned or endured. I do not know whether I am likely to have among my readers any one who has ever contested an English or Scotch county in a parliamentary election since household suffrage. If I have, that tired soul will know how severe is the strain of its three weeks, and how impossible it seemed at the end of the first week that you should be able to keep it going for another fortnight, and how when the last night arrived you felt that had the strife been accidentally prolonged another seven days you must have perished by the wayside. Well, John Wesley contested the three kingdoms in the cause of Christ during a campaign which lasted forty years. He did it for the most part on horseback. He paid more turnpikes than any man who ever bestrode a beast. Eight thousand miles was his annual record for many a long year, during each of which he seldom preached less frequently than five thousand times. Had he but preserved his scores at all the inns where he lodged, they would have made by themselves a history of prices. And throughout it all he never knew what depression of spirits meant—though he had much to try him, suits in chancery and a jealous wife.

In the course of this unparalleled contest Wesley visited again and again the most out-of-the-way districts—the remotest corners of England—places which to-day lie far removed even from the searcher after the picturesque. In 1899, when the map of England looks like a gridiron of railways, none but the sturdiest of pedestrians, the most determined of cyclists can retrace the steps of Wesley and his horse

and stand by the rocks and the natural amphitheatres in Cornwall and Northumberland, in Lancashire and Berkshire, where he preached his gospel to the heathen. Exertion so prolonged, enthusiasm so sustained, argues a remarkable man, while the organization he created, the system he founded, the view of life he promulgated, is still a great fact among us. No other name than Wesley's lies embalmed as his does. Yet he is not a popular figure. Our standard historians have dismissed him curtly. The fact is, Wesley puts your ordinary historian out of conceit with himself. How much easier to weave into your pages the gossip of Horace Walpole, to enliven it with a heartless jest of George Selwyn's, to make it blush with sad stories of the extravagance of Fox, to embroider it with the rhetoric of Burke, to humanize it with the talk of Johnson, to discuss the rise and fall of administrations, the growth and decay of the constitution, than to follow John Wesley into the streets of Bristol, or on to the bleak moors near Burslem, when he met, face to face in all their violence, all the r ignorance, and all their generosity the living men, women, and children who made up the nation.

It was perhaps also to be admitted that to found great organizations is to build your tomb—a splendid tomb, it may be, a veritable sarcophagus, but none the less a tomb. John Wesley's chapels lie a little heavily on John Wesley. Even so do the glories of Rome make us forgetful of the grave in Syria.

It has been said that Wesley's character lacks charm, that mighty antiseptic. It is not easy to define charm, which is not a catalogue of qualities, but a mixture. Let no one deny charm to Wesley who has not read his journal. Southey's life is a dull, almost a stupid, book, which happily there is no need to read. Read the journal, which is a book full of plots and plays and novels, which quivers with life and is crammed full of character.

John Wesley came of a stock which had been harassed and put about by our unhappy religious difficulties. Politics, business, and religion are the three things Englishmen are said to worry themselves about. The Wesleys early took up with religion. John Wesley's great-grandfather and grandfather were both ejected from their livings in 1662, and the grandfather was so bullied and oppressed by the Five Mile Act that he early gave up the Ghost. Whereupon his remains were refused what is called Christian burial, though a holier and more primitive man never drew breath. This poor, persecuted spirit left two sons according to the flesh, Matthew and Samuel; and Samuel it was who in his turn became the father of John and Charles Wesley.

The mother of the Wesleys was a remarkable woman, though cast in a mould not much to our mind nowadays. She had nineteen children, and greatly prided herself on having taught them, one after another, by frequent chastisements to, what do you think? to cry softly. She had theories of education and strength of will, and of arm, too, to carry them out. She knew Latin and Greek, and though a stern, forbidding, almost an unfeeling parent, she was successful in winning and retaining not only the respect but the affection of such of her huge family as lived to grow up. But out of the nineteen, thirteen early succumbed. Infant mortality was one of the great facts of the eighteenth century whose Rachels had to learn to cry softly over their dead babes. The mother of the Wesleys thought more of her children's souls than of their bodies.

John Wesley received a sound classical education at Charterhouse and Christ Church; and remained all his life very much the scholar and gentleman. No company was too good for John Wesley, and nobody knew better than he did that had he cared to carry his powerful intelligence, his flawless constitution, and his infinite capacity for taking pains into any of the markets of the world, he must have earned for himself place, fame, and fortune.

Wesley's motive never eludes us. In his early manhood, after being greatly affected by Jeremy Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying" and the "Imitation of Christ," and by Law's "Serious Call" and "Christian Perfection," he met "a serious man," who said to him, "Sir, you wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve Him alone. You must, therefore, find companions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." He was very confident, this serious man, and Wesley never forgot his message, "You must find com-

panions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion." These words forever sounded in Wesley's ears, determining his theology, which rejected the stern individualism of Calvin, and fashioning his whole polity, his famous class-meetings and generally gregarious methods.

Wesley's humor is of the species donish, and his modes and methods quietly persistent.

"On Thursday, the 20th of May (1742), I set out. The next afternoon I stopped a little at Newport-Pagnell, and then rode on till I overtook a serious man with whom I immediately fell into conversation. He presently gave me to know what his opinions were, therefore I said nothing to contradict them. But that did not content him. He was quite uneasy to know 'whether I held the doctrines of the decrees as he did,' but I told him over and over 'We had better keep to practical things lest we should be angry at one another.' And so we did for two miles till he caught me unawares and dragged me into the dispute before I knew where I was. He then grew warmer and warmer; told me I was rotten at heart and supposed I was one of John Wesley's followers. I told him 'No, I am John Wesley myself.' Upon which *Improvisum aspris Veluti qui sentibus anguem Presset*, he would have gladly run away outright. But, being better mounted of the two, I kept close to his side, and endeavored to show him his heart till we came into the street of Northampton."

What a picture have we here of a fine May morning in 1742, the unhappy Calvinist trying to shake off the Arminian Wesley! But he cannot do it! *John Wesley is the better mounted of the two*, and so they scamper together into Northampton.

Wesley was full of compassion, of a compassion wholly free from hysterics and like exaltative. In public affairs, his was the composed zeal of a Howard. His efforts to penetrate the dark places were long in vain. He says, in his dry way: "They won't let me go to Bedlam because they say I make the inmates mad, or into Newgate, because I make them wicked. The reader of the journal will be at no loss to see what these sapient magistrates meant. Wesley was a terribly exciting preacher, quiet though his manner was. He pushed matters home without flinching. He made people cry out and fall down, nor did it surprise him that they should. You will find some strange biographies in the journal. Consider that of John Lancaster for a moment. He was a young fellow who fell into bad company, stole some velvet, and was sentenced to death, and lay for a while in Newgate awaiting his hour. A good Methodist woman, Sarah Peters, obtained permission to visit him, though the fever was raging in the prison at the time. Lancaster had no difficulty in collecting six or seven other prisoners, all like himself waiting to be strangled, and Sarah Peters prayed with them and sang hymns, the clergy of the diocese being otherwise occupied. When the eve of their execution arrived the poor creatures begged that Sarah Peters might be allowed to remain with them, to continue her exhortations, but this could not be. In her absence, however, they contrived to console one another, for that devilish device of a later age, solitary confinement, was then unknown. When the bellman came round at midnight to tell them, "Remember you are to die today," they cried out, "Welcome news! Welcome news!" How they met their deaths you can read for yourselves in the journal, which concludes the narrative with a true eighteenth century touch. "John Lancaster's body was carried away by a company hired by the surgeons, but a crew of sailors pursued them, took it from them by force and delivered it to his mother, by which means it was decently interred in the presence of many who praised God on his behalf."

If you want to get into the last century, to feel its pulse throb beneath your finger, be content sometime to leave the letters of Horace Walpole unturned, resist the drowsy temptation to waste your time over the learned triflers who sleep in the seventeen volumes of Nichols; nay even deny yourself your annual reading of Boswell or your biennial retreat with Sterne, and ride up and down the country with the greatest force of the eighteenth century in England.

No man lived nearer the centre than John Wesley. Neither Clive nor Pitt, neither Mansfield nor Johnson. You cannot cut him out of our national life. No single figure influenced so many minds, no single voice touched so many hearts.