

A CHAPTER FROM THE LIFE OF REV.  
JOHN WESLEY.

Itinerant but Restful; or "All the World is  
My Parish."

"To distant lands the apostles need not  
roam,  
Darkness, alas! and heathens are at  
home!"

"Who hath praise enough? Nay, who  
hath any?  
None can express thy works but he that  
knows them."

"Glorious accounts of my son John. He  
is doing wonderful work for God in New-  
castle. Oh, it is marvellous—indeed it is!"

The speaker was Wesley's mother; tall,  
comely, and winsome even in her old age.  
She was sitting with a relative in the  
drawing room of her son's house, New  
City Road Chapel, London. Outside the  
room door stood a handsome clock, still  
preserved; just within the room a spacious  
bookcase occupied almost the whole side  
of the apartment. It was filled with choice  
volumes, the special favourites of John  
Wesley.

"It is, let me see, three years since I  
have made my home here," said Susannah  
Wesley. "I came here in 1739, and I thank  
God that John's doctrine, though several  
oppose it, is the teaching I heard from my  
dear husband's lips. My eldest son died  
that year, and angry indeed was he with  
me because I had gone to hear John preach  
in the open air."

"But Mr. Wesley himself did not always  
believe in open-air preaching," remarked  
her friend.

"No; he believed that souls could not  
be saved except in a church. But prejud-  
iced as he may be, John Wesley will al-  
ways surrender his prejudices when he  
sees them to be wrong."

"Have you heard from him lately?"  
asked her friend.

"Yes. I had a letter this morning, by a  
special messenger, who told me himself  
much that made my heart rejoice and feel  
proud too."

"No wonder! it is indeed honourable to  
be the mother of such a man as John Wes-  
ley. They may love him elsewhere, but  
nowhere can they love him as we Metho-  
dists in London do."

"He knows it, he knows it," replied Mrs.  
Wesley. "But would ye like to hear what  
he says?"

"I had rather you told me about him,"  
answered her friend.

"I will pleasure you willingly. You  
know that soon after I came to him here,  
he began to reflect upon the awful state of  
England. He wrote to James Henry about  
the matter, and, said he, 'I look upon all  
the world as my parish.' Yet he said again  
and again that he was loth to strike a blow  
that he could not follow up. But see how  
wonderfully God has led him step by step.  
He went into Leicestershire to visit his  
dying friend, Miss Cowper. Thence he  
went to Bristol, and on the 28th of last  
May he journeyed to Newcastle. Lady  
Huntingdon had begged that the colliers of  
the North might share the blessing so  
wonderfully given by John's preaching to  
the colliers of Bristol."

"To me it is very remarkable that a man  
so learned and elegant as Mr. Wesley  
should be able to preach so that colliers  
can understand him. Why, my little chil-  
dren can follow, and remember his ser-  
mons."

"Therein is his talent; but very few can  
be so plain as he can. When he reached  
Newcastle at seven o'clock on the Sunday  
morning, he and John Taylor, his travel-  
ling companion, went to the poorest part  
of the town and began to sing a hymn.  
Three or four people came out to see what  
the noise meant, and before the service  
had ended nearly fifteen hundred people  
were assembled to hear the Word of God."

"What was his text?"

"He was wounded for our transgres-  
sions, He was bruised for our iniquities:  
the chastisement of our peace was upon  
Him; and by His stripes we are healed."

"Just like him; one of his favourite  
texts."

"True; and he spoke with such wonder-  
ful unction, that the people stood gaping  
at him thunderstruck. He said, 'If you  
want to know who I am, my name is John  
Wesley. By God's help, at five o'clock this  
evening, I design to preach here again.' At  
five o'clock the hill was covered from top  
to bottom with people, all eager to hear the  
Word of God."

"So it was at each place on his journey  
until he returned to our old home at Ep-  
worth. Forty years long his father labour-  
ed in the gospel there, and saw but little  
fruit; still I know that he did not live in  
vain."

"He would not have done so had he only  
trained John Wesley; but no doubt your  
husband prepared the way for his son."

"It was seven years since John had visit-  
ed Epworth. He supposed now that few  
would care to know him again, for fear of  
the odium that the reception of the new  
doctrines involves. But he found friends,  
and spent a happy evening with them. The  
next day being Sunday, the church was  
thronged by people who had come hoping  
to hear him preach. But the drunken cur-  
ate (who is not a little indebted to our  
family) not only refused John the pulpit,  
but preached against the son of his bene-  
factor."

"Shame upon him!" said the other;  
"and yet, poor man, it's no wonder. It is  
natural for an unconverted man to hate  
the gospel."

"At six o'clock in the evening such a  
throng came into the churchyard as had  
never been seen in our quiet little town  
before. Standing upon his father's tomb-  
stone, John preached the gospel to them.  
Glory to God for such a son! But the op-  
position was not stayed. In a neighboring  
town a waggon load of his new converts  
were carried off to the justice's."

"What evil have they done?" asked the  
magistrate.

"Oh! said an old man, 'please, your  
worship, they pretend to be better than  
other people, and they pray from morning  
to night.'

"But have they done nothing else?" in-  
quired the judge.

"Yes, sir," replied the speaker; "but  
please, your worship, they've converted  
my wife. Till she went among them, she  
had such a tongue! Now she is quiet as a

lamb!"

"Cart them all back! cart them all  
back!" said the magistrate, "and let them  
convert all the old scolds in the town."

"Thank God for that escape from perse-  
cution then," remarked her friend. "I re-  
member once my husband was in great  
distress. While walking with Mr. Wesley  
he told him about his griefs. 'I cannot see  
my way through them all,' he said. 'Oh,  
what a dark future!' Mr. Wesley made no  
answer, but stopped, and pointing to a field  
near, he asked, 'Do you see that cow?'"

"The cow?" said my husband, "looking  
over the wall."

"Yes."

"I see her."

"Now, friend, why does that cow look  
over the wall?"

"I do not know."

"Because she can't look through it."

"My husband got to look above his trou-  
bles; and what a happy life he lived after  
that lesson!"

"John tells me about one man who was  
in great distress of mind."

"Are you a sinner," John asked. "Sinner  
enough," the man replied, with a deep  
groan. Now he is rejoicing in a sense of  
sins forgiven."

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A few weeks after this conversation,  
John Wesley returned from the North, just  
in time to see his revered mother die.

"Children, as soon as I am released,  
sing a psalm of praise to God," were her  
last words; and they did as she requested.

The three months following her death,  
Wesley spent between London and Bristol.  
Afterwards he went down again to New-  
castle.

In June, 1743, he was at Wednesbury,  
when he encountered his worst danger  
from a mob. He was writing quietly in his  
house, when a raging mob gathered round  
the door, shouting wildly, "Bring out the  
minister! We want the minister!"

"They want my life," said Wesley.  
"Bring their leader in to see me."

They did so, and in a few moments  
Wesley's gentle speech disarmed the angry  
savage.

"Bring one or two of the worst men in  
also," said Wesley. They were in like  
manner subdued.

Taking a chair with him, Wesley now  
went out to face the mob.

"What do you want with me?" he  
asked.

"Come to the magistrate," they yelled.

"With all my heart," said Wesley. "But,  
friends, remember that you must stand be-  
fore another judge, and give an account  
of the deeds done in the body. Oh, my  
friends, flee from the wrath to come!"

"The gentleman is honest enough,"  
cried a voice in the crowd. "We will shed  
our blood in his defence."

"Let no blood be shed for me," said  
Wesley. "I will go to the magistrate."

Through the darkness and the rain the  
rioters dragged him to the magistrate's  
house, more than a mile distant.

"What has he done?" asked the magis-  
trate's son.

"Why, an't please you, these Methodists  
sing psalms all day; ay, and make folks  
rise at five o'clock in the morning!"

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