

JOHN WESLEY

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649746972

John Wesley by Elbert Hubbard

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

ELBERT HUBBARD

JOHN WESLEY

MY horse was very lame, and my head did ache exceedingly. Now what occurred I here avow is truth—let each man account for it as he will. Suddenly I thought, “Cannot God heal man or beast as He will?” Immediately my weariness and headache ceased; and my horse was no longer lame.

—WESLEY'S JOURNAL

GREAT REFORMERS



NCE in a speech on "The Increase of Population," Edmund Burke intimated his sympathy with Malthus, and among other interesting data made note that Susanna Wesley was the twenty-fourth child of her parents. Burke, however, neglected to state how many sisters and brothers Susanna had who were younger than herself,

and also what would have been the result on church history had the parents of Susanna named their twenty-third child Omega.

John Wesley was the fifteenth child in a family of nineteen. And yet the mother did her own work, thus eliminating the servant girl problem, and found time to preach better sermons to larger congregations than did her husband. Four of Susanna's children became famous—John, Charles, Samuel and Martha.

John rebuked and challenged the stug, self-satisfied and formal religion of the time; had every church door locked against him; sympathized with the American Colonies in their struggle for freedom; and founded a denomination, which to-day is second only in wealth and numbers to one alone.

John Wesley left no children after the flesh, but his

GREAT REFORMERS—Wesley

influence has colored the entire fabric of Christianity. There is no denomination but that has been benefited and bettered by his beautiful spirit.

Charles Wesley was the greatest producer of hymns the world has ever seen, having written over six thousand songs, and re-written most of the Bible in lyric form. He was "the brother of John Wesley," and delighted all his life in being so called. No one ever called John Wesley the brother of Charles. John had a will like a rope of silk—it slackened but never broke. He was resourceful, purposeful, courageous, direct, healthy, handsome, wise, witty, happy; and he rode on horseback, blazing the way for many from darkness into light. Charles followed.

Three of the children of Charles Wesley became great musicians, and one of them was the best organist of his time in England.

The third noted brother in this remarkable family was Samuel, who was thirteen years older than John and exercised his prerogative to pooh-pooh him all his life. Samuel was an educated high churchman, a Latin scholar, and a poet of quality. Samuel always had his dignity with him. He wrote and published essays, epics, and histories of nobodies; but of all his writings, the only thing from his pen that is now read and enjoyed is a letter of remonstrance to his mother because he hears that she has joined "Jack's congregation of Methodists and is a renegade from the true

GREAT REFORMERS—Wesley

religion." Needless to say the "true religion" to Samuel was the religion in which he believed—all others were false. Samuel being an educated churchman did not know that all religions are true to the people who believe in them.

The fourth Wesley of note was Martha, who looked so much like her brother John, that occasionally, in merry mood, she dressed herself in his cassock and surplice, and suddenly appearing before the family deceived them all until she spoke. Martha was the only girl in the brood who was heir to her mother's mind. Had she lived in this age she would have made for herself a career. A contemporary says, "She could preach like a man," a remark, I suppose, meant to be complimentary. In one respect she excelled any of the Wesleys—she had a sense of humor that never forsook her. John usually was able to laugh; Charles smiled at rare intervals; and Samuel never. As it was, Martha married and was swallowed by the conventions, for the times subdue us, and society takes individuality captive and binds it hand and foot with green withes.

But the times did not subdue John Wesley—he was the original circuit-rider, and his steed was a Pegasus that took the fences of orthodoxy at a bound, often to the great consternation and grief of theological squatters. He was regarded as peculiar, eccentric, strange, extravagant, just as any man ever has been and would

GREAT REFORMERS—Wesley

be to-day who attempted to pattern his life after that of the Christ. Perhaps it is needless to say that the followers of John Wesley do not much resemble him, indeed not more so than they resemble Jesus of Nazareth. John Wesley and Jesus had very much in common. But should a man of the John Wesley pattern appear, say in one of the fashionable Methodist churches of Chicago, the organist would drown him out on request of the pastor; and the janitor with three fingers under his elbow, would lead him to the door while the congregation sang "Pull for the Shore."



ULIA WEDGWOOD, daughter of Josiah and Sarah Wedgwood, and sister to the mother of Darwin, wrote a life of John Wesley. In this book Miss Wedgwood says, "The followers of a leader are always totally different from the leader." The difference between a leader and a follower is this: a leader leads and a follower follows.

The shepherd is a man, but sheep are sheep.
As a rule followers follow as far as the path is good,
but at the first bog they balk. Betrayers, doubters and

G R E A T R E F O R M E R S — Wesley

those who deny with an oath, are always recruited from the ranks of the followers. In a sermon John Wesley once said, "To adopt and live a life of simplicity and service for mankind is difficult; but to follow the love of luxury, making a clutch for place, pelf and power, labeling Paganism Christianity, and imagining you are a follower of Christ, this is easy. Yet all through life we see that the reward is paid for the difficult task. And now I summon you to a life of difficulty, not merely for the sake of the reward, but because the life of service is the righteous life—the right life—the life that leads to increased life and increased light."



A MOST remarkable woman was Susanna Wesley. The way she wound her mind into the minds of her sons, John and Charles, was as beautiful as it was extraordinary. Very few parents ever really get acquainted with their offspring. Parents who fail to keep their promises with their children and who prevaricate to them, have children that are secretive and sly. But often no one person is to

G R E A T R E F O R M E R S—Wesley

blame, for children do not necessarily have any spiritual or mental relationship to their parents—their minds are not attuned to the same key—they are not on the same wire.

Indeed, even with the great Susanna Wesley, there was a close and confiding intimacy only with two of her brood. John Wesley has written, "I cannot remember ever having kept back a doubt from my mother—she was the one heart to whom I went in absolute confidence, from my babyhood until the day of her death."

The Epworth Parsonage where John Wesley was born was both a house and a school. Probably the mother centered her life on John and Charles because they responded to her love in a way the others did not. In the year 1709, the parsonage burned, with a very close call for little John who was asleep in one of the upper chambers. The home being destroyed the family was farmed out among the neighbors until the house could be rebuilt. John was sent to the home of a neighboring clergyman, ten miles away. After a week we find him writing to his mother asking her if she has lost a little boy, because if so he is the boy—a most gentle way of reminding her that she had not written to him. At this time he was but six years old, yet we see his ability to write a letter. This peculiar letter is the earliest in a long correspondence between mother and son. Mrs. Wesley preserved these letters,