

THE CHARACTER OF A METHODIST

by John Wesley

"Not as though I had already attained."

TO THE READER [Preface]

1. **SINCE** the name first came abroad into the world, many have been at a loss to know what a Methodist is; what are the principles and the practice of those who are commonly called by that name; and what the distinguishing marks of this sect, "which is everywhere spoken against."

The Methodist movement began in England in the late 1730s. The official church in England was the Church of England. John and Charles Wesley were ordained in this church (as had been their father Samuel), but in their Methodist work found themselves doing things differently than the mainstream church. The two most controversial things John Wesley did were (a) Preaching outside, and (b) traveling and preaching all over the country.

In those days, everyone thought that God's work had to be done in a properly consecrated building (an official church building). Instead of waiting for the people who needed Jesus to show up at church, Wesley took Jesus to them. He commonly preached his first sermon at 5 am in the morning – to people on their way to work. He thought the message of Jesus was so important that he was willing to bend the rules to help people hear it.

The official church also regulated where pastors did their work. A preacher was supposed to preach only in the church to which he was appointed, unless invited by the person holding the appointment. Wesley went everywhere. He did not invade other people's churches, but preached outdoors, in houses, and in rented buildings.

All this was considered high irregular, even dangerous. These are key reasons why people – usually those in positions of authority – spoke against the Methodists.

What activities can you imagine doing today that might bring people to Jesus – but be disapproved by people in power?

2. And it being generally believed, that I was able to give the clearest account of these things, (as having been one of the first to whom that name was given, and the person by whom the rest were supposed to be directed), I have been called upon, in all manner of ways, and with the utmost earnestness, so to do. I yield as last to the continued importunity both of friends and enemies; and do now give the clearest account I can, in the presence of the Lord and Judge of heaven and earth, of the principles and practice whereby those who are called Methodists are distinguished from other men.

In plain English, Wesley is setting out to explain the distinctives of Methodists – what makes them different from other Christians. Here's a brief note on

terminology. In mainstream usage Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, and Hinduism are all *religions*. Methodists, Baptists, Pentecostals, Catholics, etc., are *denominations* of Christianity.

3. I say those who are called Methodists; for, let it be well observed, that this is not a name which they take to themselves, but one fixed upon them by way of reproach, without their approbation or consent. It was first given to three or four young men at Oxford, by a student of Christ Church; either in allusion to the ancient sect of Physicians so called, from their teaching, that almost all diseases might be cured by a specific method of diet and exercise, or from their observing a more regular method of study and behaviour than was usual with those of their age and station.

Wesley begins explaining how the name came about. When the movement first started, Wesley and his friends were students at Oxford University. They wanted to know God more and to obey him faithfully. They put much effort into what they did and were very Methodical about it. In fact they were so methodical that people started using it as an insult: "You're just a bunch of Methodists!" Wesley took the insult and claimed it as his own. By the way one of the other insults people used was "Bible Moths." If you've ever seen how moths flutter endlessly around a light, you know what they had in mind, having seen how Wesley and his friends devoted themselves to reading, studying, and obeying the bible. *Notice this: the Methodist movement was started by college students. Can young people do a similar thing today? How would you receive it if they did? If people were to offer insults to Methodists today, what do you think they'd choose? What are our practices that currently stand out?*

4. I should rejoice (so little ambitious am I to be at the head of any sect or party) if the very name might never be mentioned more, but be buried in eternal oblivion. But if that cannot be, at least let those who will use it, know the meaning of the word they use. Let us not always be fighting in the dark. Come, and let us look one another in the face. And perhaps some of you who hate what I am called, may love what I Can by the grace of God; or rather, what "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus."

For Wesley, names (like "Methodist") were mostly irrelevant. *How much do names of groups matter today? Why?*

THE CHARACTER OF A METHODIST

1. **THE** distinguishing marks of a Methodist are not his opinions of any sort. His assenting to this or that scheme of religion, his embracing any particular set of notions, his espousing the judgment of one man or of another, are all quite wide of the point. Whosoever, therefore, imagines that a Methodist is a man of such or such an opinion, is grossly ignorant of the whole affair; he mistakes the truth totally. We believe, indeed, that "all Scripture is given by the inspiration of God;" and herein we are distinguished from Jews, Turks, and Infidels. We believe the written word of God to be the only and sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice; and herein we are fundamentally distinguished from those of the Romish Church. We believe Christ to be the eternal, supreme God; and herein we are distinguished from the Socinians and Arians. But as to all opinions which do not strike at the root of Christianity, we think and let

think. So that whatsoever they are, whether right or wrong they are no distinguishing marks of a Methodist.

Wesley's usual style when trying to demonstrate the nature of something (in this case, a Methodist), began with an examination what it wasn't. In this paragraph Wesley claims that as far as beliefs go, Methodism is mainstream Christianity. Along with other Christian denominations we share basic beliefs about Jesus, God, sin, salvation, etc.

When you compare Methodists with, say, Baptists, Pentecostals, or Episcopalians, most of what they believe they believe in common. Methodists differ from the Catholic church – and this difference is common to other Protestant churches (Baptists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, etc., are all considered Protestant churches) – in a reliance on the bible as the “sufficient rule both of Christian faith and practice.” (Note: In the 18th century they called the Catholic church, the “Romish” church sometimes.) Two questions to discuss: *What beliefs “strike at the root of Christianity?” What beliefs have you observed that you have in common with friends from other churches? Have you noticed in peculiarly Methodist ways of talking? Which movements or groups in our world today should we be contrasting ourselves with?*

2. Neither are words or phrases of any sort. We do not place our religion, or any part of it, in being attached to any peculiar mode of speaking, any quaint or uncommon set of expressions. The most obvious, easy, common words, wherein our meaning can be conveyed, we prefer before others, both on ordinary occasions, and when we speak of the things of God. We never, therefore, willingly or designedly, deviate from the most usual way of speaking; unless when we express scripture truths in scripture words, which, we presume, no Christian will condemn. Neither do we affect to use any particular expressions of Scripture more frequently than others, unless they are such as are more frequently used by the inspired writers themselves. So that it is as gross an error, to place the marks of a Methodist in his words, as in opinions of any sort.

This was truer in Wesley's day than today. All groups that continue for any length of time develop peculiar vocabularies and ways of speaking. Wesley's objective was to – as he said elsewhere - “speak plain truth for plain people.” Though high educated, he sought to speak in a way that his audiences could understand. He didn't baby them or coddle them, but he started where they were. The one characteristic that distinguished them was that since all their thinking was immersed in scripture, biblical phrases and concepts are sprinkled throughout. *What are Christian teachers and preachers doing today to speak in a way that ordinary people can understand? What could they do better?*

3. Nor do we desire to be distinguished by actions, customs, or usages, of an indifferent nature. Our religion does not lie in doing what God has not enjoined, or abstaining from what he hath not forbidden. It does not lie in the form of our apparel, in the posture of our body, or the covering of our heads; nor yet in abstaining from marriage, or from meats and drinks, which are all good if received with thanksgiving. Therefore, neither will any man, who knows whereof he affirms, fix the mark of a Methodist here,--in any actions or customs purely indifferent, undetermined by the word of God.

Wesley adds this section because of the number of Christian groups throughout the ages who have defined themselves this way. Methodists are not people who

wear a particular kind of clothing, make particular hand motions, or practice strict dietary customs. American Methodists have moved from Wesley's position and officially taught that abstinence from alcohol is the best choice. While Wesley preached against drunkenness (both because of the scriptural teaching to that effect and because he'd seen the ruin brought to many individuals and families), complete abstinence was not an issue in 18th century England.

*Questions: Can you pick out any outward customs that distinguish Methodists from other groups? Are there any practice that you think **ought** to differentiate us?*

4. Nor, lastly, is he distinguished by laying the whole stress of religion on any single part of it. If you say, "Yes, he is; for he thinks 'we are saved by faith alone:'" I answer, You do not understand the terms. By salvation he means holiness of heart and life. And this he affirms to spring from true faith alone. Can even a nominal Christian deny it? Is this placing a part of religion for the whole? "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law." We do not place the whole of religion (as too many do, God knoweth) either in doing no harm, or in doing good, or in using the ordinances of God. No, not in all of them together; wherein we know by experience a man may labour many years, and at the end have no religion at all, no more than he had at the beginning. Much less in any one of these; or, it may be, in a scrap of one of them: Like her who fancies herself a virtuous woman, only because she is not a prostitute; or him who dreams he is an honest man, merely because he does not rob or steal. May the Lord God of my fathers preserve me from such a poor, starved religion as this! Were this the mark of a Methodist, I would sooner choose to be a sincere Jew, Turk, or Pagan.

Being a Methodist is more than merely being a nice person – one who does good things and avoids doing bad things. Our objective is to adhere to the whole of Christian teaching. Perhaps you've experienced some churches that major on a single issue: the Second Coming of Jesus; fighting the devil; Civil Rights; not dancing; speaking in tongues; fixing the government, etc. *Question: What are some things you've seen in churches that seem off balance? Why is balance important? Can a quest for balance ever lead us astray? What might you do to bring balance?*

5. "What then is the mark? Who is a Methodist, according to your own account?" I answer: A Methodist is one who has "the love of God shed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghost given unto him;" one who "loves the Lord his God with all his heart, and with all his soul, and with all his mind, and with all his strength." God is the joy of his heart, and the desire of his soul; which is constantly crying out, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee! My God and my all! Thou art the strength of my heart, and my portion forever!"

Wesley's first characteristic of a Methodist here is somewhat unhelpful. While it does a good job of describing a characteristic of the Methodists – a living relationship with God through the Holy Spirit – this characteristic is not peculiar to Methodists. Wesley knows this. He's trying to describe Methodists as ordinary Christians. When this tract was written, Methodism was not a church, but what we today would call a "parachurch organization" (like the American Bible Society, Campus Crusade, etc.). This point then, distinguishes the Methodist not from other Christians, but from *nominal* Christians. A nominal Christian is one who checks the "Christian" box on the survey form, may go to church on occasion, but

there is little or nothing in the way of an ongoing relationship with God. In fact, in Wesley's day, many preachers thought it was odd – bordering on the heretical – to think an ordinary Christian would have a relationship with God.

Wesley, to the contrary, taught that it was the privilege of every Christian. This is why when we take our young people through Confirmation we're not out merely to give them something akin to a diploma. It's not just about acquiring knowledge, it's entering a relationship with God and learning how to talk about that relationship and grow in it. *Question: What are the main things that help you know God better? What are you doing to develop your relationship with God? As a leader in the church, what can you do to (a) help people come into a relationship with Christ, and (b) begin to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth?*

6. He is therefore happy in God, yea, always happy, as having in him "a well of water springing up into everlasting life," and overflowing his soul with peace and joy. "Perfect love" having now "cast out fear," he "rejoices evermore." He "rejoices in the Lord always," even "in God his Saviour;" and in the Father, "through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom he hath now received the atonement." "Having" found "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of his sins," he cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks back on the horrible pit out of which he is delivered; when he sees "all his transgressions blotted out as a cloud, and his iniquities as a thick cloud." He cannot but rejoice, whenever he looks on the state wherein he now is; "being justified freely, and having peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." For "he that believeth, hath the witness" of this "in himself;" being now the son of God by faith. "Because he is a son, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart, crying, Abba, Father!" And "the Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit, that he is a child of God." He rejoiceth also, whenever he looks forward, "in hope of the glory that shall be revealed;" yea, this his joy is full, and all his bones cry out, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten me again to a living hope--of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for me!"

Methodists are aware of where they've come from – a life of sin – and the vast improvement their life in Christ is over their old ways. A Methodist life is a life of praise and thanksgiving to God, a life of gratitude. *Question: What changes has faith in Jesus made in your life? What changes have you seen in the lives of people you've worked with in ministry? What would a person "happy in God" look like in our setting?*

7. And he who hath this hope, thus "full of immortality, in everything giveth thanks;" as knowing that this (whatsoever it is) "is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning him ." From him, therefore, he cheerfully receives all, saying, "Good is the will of the Lord;" and whether the Lord giveth or taketh away, equally "blessing the name of the Lord." For he hath "learned, in whatsoever state he is, therewith to be content." He knoweth "both how to be abased and how to abound. everywhere and in all things he is instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and suffer need." Whether in ease or pain, whether in sickness or health, whether in life or death, he giveth thanks from the ground of his heart to Him who orders it for good; knowing that as "every good gift cometh from above," so none but good can come from the Father of Lights, into whose hand he has wholly committed his body and soul, as into the hands of a faithful Creator. He is therefore "careful" (anxiously or uneasily) "for nothing" as having "cast all his care on Him that careth for him," and "in all things" resting on him, after "making his

request known to him with thanksgiving."

Methodists not only believe in God, but trust him. We count God as our security. He trust him to see us through. *Question: What kinds of things do you worry about? How can you share your worries and fears with the Lord? How can your fellow Christians be a help to you when you're troubled? How can you help others put their trust in the Lord?*

8. For indeed he "prays without ceasing." It is given him "always to pray, and not to faint." Not that he is always in the house of prayer; though he neglects no opportunity of being there. Neither is he always on his knees, although he often is, or on his face, before the Lord his God. Nor yet is he always crying aloud to God, or calling upon him in words: For many times "the Spirit maketh intercession for him with groans that cannot be uttered." But at all times the language of his heart is this: "Thou brightness of the eternal glory, unto thee is my heart, though without a voice, and my silence speaketh unto thee." And this is true prayer, and this alone. But his heart is ever lifted up to God, at all times and in all places. In this he is never hindered, much less interrupted, by any person or thing. In retirement or company, in leisure, business, or conversation, his heart is ever with the Lord. Whether he lie down or rise up, God is in all his thoughts; he walks with God continually, having the loving eye of his mind still fixed upon him, and everywhere "seeing Him that is invisible."

Methodists are characterized by prayer. Their "prayer without ceasing) includes both crying out to God and listening to God. *Question: How is your prayer life? Do you regularly lift up your needs and the needs of others? Do you spend time silent before God, listening to him?*

9. And while he thus always exercises his love to God, by praying without ceasing, rejoicing evermore, and in everything giving thanks, this commandment is written in his heart, "That he who loveth God, love his brother also." And he accordingly loves his neighbor as himself; he loves every man as his own soul. His heart is full of love to all mankind, to every child of "the Father of the spirits of all flesh." That a man is not personally known to him, is no bar to his love; no, nor that he is known to be such as he approves not, that he repays hatred for his good-will. For he "loves his enemies;" yea, and the enemies of God, "the evil and the unthankful." And if it be not in his power to "do good to them that hate him," yet he ceases not to pray for them, though they continue to spurn his love, and still "despitefully use him and persecute him."

Methodists are defined not merely by what goes on inside them, but by how they relate to the people around them. Methodists love not only their fellow Christians, not only people who are nice to them, but also people who act as their enemies. *Question: How's your love life? Are you able to love the people around you? What does it look like when you love each other in a Christian way? What impact do loving relationships within a church have on the ministry of the church?*

10. For he is "pure in heart." The love of God has purified his heart from all revengeful passions, from envy, malice, and wrath, from every unkind temper or malign affection. It hath cleansed him from pride and haughtiness of spirit, whereof alone cometh contention. And he hath now "put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering:" so that he "forbears and forgives, if he had a quarrel against any; even as God in Christ hath forgiven him." And indeed all possible ground for contention, on his part, is utterly cut off. For none can take from him what he desires; seeing he "loves not the world, nor" any of "the things of the world ;"

being now "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to him;" being dead to all that is in the world, both to "the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life." For "all his desire is unto God, and to the remembrance of his name."

Real Christianity, according to Wesley, affects our character. *Question: Considering the character qualities in this paragraph, how are you doing? Why is character important in ministry? What other character qualities would you include?*

11. Agreeable to this his one desire, is the one design of his life, namely, "not to do his own will, but the will of Him that sent him." His one intention at all times and in all things is, not to please himself, but Him whom his soul loveth. He has a single eye. And because "his eye is single, his whole body is full of light." Indeed, where the loving eye of the soul is continually fixed upon God, there can be no darkness at all, "but the whole is light; as when the bright shining of a candle doth enlighten the house." God then reigns alone. All that is in the soul is holiness to the Lord. There is not a motion in his heart, but is according to his will. Every thought that arises points to Him, and is in obedience to the law of Christ.

At one point in our communion liturgy, we talk about God freeing us for "joyful obedience." Convinced of God's love for us and returning that love to him, Methodists trust God enough to take his agenda – God's ideas of what we ought to be doing – as our own. *Question: How does your agenda compare with Gods? Do you want to take up God's agenda? If you're going to take up God's agenda (in trusting, joyful obedience), what is your next step in that direction? What can you do to lead others in taking up God's agenda?*

12. And the tree is known by its fruits. For as he loves God, so he keeps his commandments; not only some, or most of them, but all, from the least to the greatest. He is not content to "keep the whole law, and offend in one point;" but has, in all points, "a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man." Whatever God has forbidden, he avoids; whatever God hath enjoined, he doeth; and that whether it be little or great, hard or easy, joyous or grievous to the flesh. He "runs the way of God's commandments," now he hath set his heart at liberty. It is his glory so to do; it is his daily crown of rejoicing, "to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven;" knowing it is the highest privilege of "the angels of God, of those that excel in strength, to fulfill his commandments, and hearken to the voice of his word."

Methodists count God's commandments as their guide for life. *Question: How do God's commands (expectations) compare with those offered by our society? What conflicts do you sense between them? Which commandments do you find the easiest to obey? Why do you think these are the easiest for you?*

13. All the commandments of God he accordingly keeps, and that with all his might. For his obedience is in proportion to his love, the source from whence it flows. And therefore, loving God with all his heart, he serves him with all his strength. He continually presents his soul and body a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God; entirely and without reserve devoting himself, all he has, and all he is, to his glory. All the talents he has received, he constantly employs according to his Master's will; every power and faculty of his soul, every member of his body. Once he "yielded" them "unto sin" and the devil, "as instruments of unrighteousness;" but now, "being alive from the dead, he yields" them all "as instruments of righteousness unto God."

Jesus makes the connection between loving God and obeying him explicit in John 14:21 & 23. We don't obey God to earn his favor. We don't obey God because we're afraid we'll be in trouble if we don't. The Methodist obeys God out of love for God. This loving obedience to God is a complete devotion to God.

Question: Are you fully devoted to God? If so, what does it look like in your life?

What reasons might a church person give for not being fully devoted to God?

What can you do to lead them into greater love?

14. By consequence, whatsoever he doeth, it is all to the glory of God. In all his employments of every kind, he not only aims at this, (which is implied in having a single eye,) but actually attains it. His business and refreshments, as well as his prayers, all serve this great end. Whether he sit in his house or walk by the way, whether he lie down or rise up, he is promoting, in all he speaks or does, the one business of his life; whether he put on his apparel, or labour, or eat and drink, or divert himself from too wasting labour, it all tends to advance the glory of God, by peace and good-will among men. His one invariable rule is this, "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

In the church, as in any other institution, there are many things we do simply because they need to be done. Wesley is suggesting that Methodists pay attention to what they do and do nothing mindlessly. In all that we do we have an eye to the glory of God.

Question: What does it mean to "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus?" How is this different from merely working in a church or ministry setting?

15. Nor do the customs of the world at all hinder his "running the race that is set before him." He knows that vice does not lose its nature, though it becomes ever so fashionable: and remembers, that "every man is to give an account of himself to God." He cannot, therefore, "follow" even "a multitude to do evil." He cannot "fare sumptuously every day," or "make provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof." He cannot "lay up treasures upon earth," any more than he can take fire into his bosom. He cannot "adorn himself," on any pretense, "with gold or costly apparel." He cannot join in or countenance any diversion which has the least tendency to vice of any kind. He cannot "speak evil" of his neighbour, any more than he can lie either for God or man. He cannot utter an unkind word of any one; for love keeps the door of his lips. He cannot speak "idle words;" "no corrupt communication" ever "comes out of his mouth," as is all that "which is" not "good to the use of edifying," not "fit to minister grace to the hearers." But "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are areas justly "of good report," he thinks, and speaks, and acts, "adorning the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ in all things."

If Wesley's account is accurate, there seems to have been some perceptible difference between the Methodist lifestyle and the lifestyle dominant in 18th century English culture. Because of a different value system, Methodists lived their lives in a different way than their neighbors. *Question: Is there any difference today between the way United Methodists live their lives and the ways dominant in our culture? In what areas do we need to learn to be different? What Gospel values will most impact our way of living? How will we lead in churches that have often succumbed to modern pictures of success?*

16. Lastly. As he has time, he "does good unto all men;" unto neighbours and strangers, friends and enemies: And that in every possible kind; not only to their bodies, by "feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting those that are sick or in prison;" but much more does he labour to do good to their souls, as of the ability which God giveth; to awaken those that sleep in death; to

bring those who are awakened to the atoning blood, that, "being justified by faith, they may have peace with God;" and to provoke those who have peace with God to abound more in love and in good works. And he is willing to "spend and be spent herein," even "to be offered up on the sacrifice and service of their faith," so they may "all come unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Supposedly there was a poll done several years ago, indicating that 90% of pastors thought the purpose of the church was to be outward focused, impacting the world for Christ, while 90% of laity thought the purpose was to be inward focused, taking care of members. *Question: Do you think this poll picture fits your experience of congregational life to any degree? If so, what might we do about it? What would Wesley have to say about it? What kinds of arguments might he use?*

17. These are the principles and practices of our sect; these are the marks of a true Methodist. By these alone do those who are in derision so called, desire to be distinguished from other men. If any man say, "Why, these are only the common fundamental principles of Christianity!" thou hast said; so I mean; this is the very truth; I know they are no other; and I would to God both thou and all men knew, that I, and all who follow my judgment, do vehemently refuse to be distinguished from other men, by any but the common principles of Christianity,--the plain, old Christianity that I teach, renouncing and detesting all other marks of distinction. And whosoever is what I preach, (let him be called what he will, for names change not the nature of things,) he is a Christian, not in name only, but in heart and in life. He is inwardly and outwardly conformed to the will of God, as revealed in the written word. He thinks, speaks, and lives, according to the method laid down in the revelation of Jesus Christ. His soul is renewed after the image of God, in righteousness and in all true holiness. And having the mind that was in Christ, he so walks as Christ also walked.

Wesley's objective was *not* to begin a new denomination. He remained a priest in the Church of England until his death. He took the Methodist movement to be a "back to basics" movement, getting back to simple, original Christianity. For him, it was being a follower of Jesus, seeking to live like Jesus, that mattered. From the time of Wesley until the present, Methodism has rejected the idea that there is One True Church. We recognize that what we believe and practice is mostly the same as what other Christian churches believe and practice. *What are some present-day consequences of believing there isn't "One True Church?" How is our life as a church affected by the belief that we and other churches are on the "same team?"*

18. By these marks, by these fruits of a living faith, do we labor to distinguish ourselves from the unbelieving world, from all those whose minds or lives are not according to the Gospel of Christ. But from real Christians, of whatsoever denomination they be, we earnestly desire not to be distinguished at all, not from any who sincerely follow after what they know they have not yet attained. No: "Whosoever doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, 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, endeavoring 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."

While Lutheran and Reformed theologies tend to find their home in Galatians and Romans, Wesley seems to find his in Ephesians. Is there any particular section of Scripture in which contemporary United Methodism finds its home? Having read *The Character of a Methodist*, what do you think we most need to learn from Wesley now?

From the Thomas Jackson edition of *The Works of John Wesley*, 1872.