

John Wesley

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was born in 1703, and was educated at Oxford, becoming an eminent tutor in Lincoln College. With his brother and a few others, he formed a society for mutual edification in theological exercises, and they rigidly occupied themselves in religious duties, in fasting and prayer, and visiting prisons and relieving the suffering. At the solicitation of General Oglethorpe, Wesley accompanied him to Georgia with a view of converting Indians. He finally returned to England to engage in missionary labors, but his design was not to withdraw from the established Church of England, but to create a revival among the neglected classes by preaching salvation through simple faith in Christ. However, the churches being shut against him, he held open-air services, obtaining so many converts that the organization became necessary, and spacious churches were built. Until his death in 1791, he was indefatigable in his self-imposed work, which he carried through England, Scotland, and Ireland, traveling nearly 300,000 miles, and preached over 40,000 sermons, besides being a voluminous writer.