

SIMEON AND WESLEY

This account of a meeting between the young Charles Simeon and the aged John Wesley appears as a footnote in the Preface to Volume 1 of Simeon's *Horae Homileticae* (expository outlines on the whole Bible).

"A young Minister, about three or four years after he was ordained, had an opportunity of conversing familiarly with the great and venerable leader of the Arminians in this kingdom; and, wishing to improve the occasion to the uttermost, he addressed him nearly in the following words: 'Sir, I understand that you are called an Arminian; and I have been sometimes called a Calvinist; and therefore I suppose we are to draw daggers. But before I consent to begin the combat, with your permission I will ask you a few questions, not from impertinent curiosity, but for real instruction.' Permission being very readily and kindly granted, the young Minister proceeded to ask, 'Pray, Sir, do you feel yourself a depraved creature, so depraved, that you would never have thought of turning unto God, if God had not first put it into your heart?' - 'Yes,' says the veteran, 'I do indeed.' - 'And do you utterly despair of recommending yourself to God by any thing you can do; and look for salvation solely through the blood and righteousness of Christ?' - 'Yes, solely through Christ.' - 'But, Sir, supposing you were first saved by Christ, are you not somehow or other to save yourself afterwards by your own works?' - 'No, I must be saved by Christ from first to last.' - 'Allowing then that you were first turned by the grace of God, are you not in some way or other to keep yourself by your own power?' - 'No.' - 'What then, are you to be upheld every hour and every moment by God, as much as an infant in its mother's arms?' - 'Yes; altogether.' - 'And is all your hope in the grace and mercy of God to preserve you unto his heavenly kingdom?' - 'Yes; I have no hope, but in him.' - 'Then, Sir, with your leave, I will put up my dagger again; for this is all my Calvinism; this is my election, my justification by faith, my final perseverance: it is, in substance, all that I hold, and as I hold it: and therefore, if you please, instead of searching out terms and phrases to be a ground of contention between us, we will cordially unite in those things wherein we agree.'

"The Arminian leader was so pleased with the conversation, that he made particular mention of it in his journals; and notwithstanding there never afterwards was any connexion between the parties, he retained an unfeigned regard for his young enquirer to the hour of his death."

The meeting with Simeon is referenced in John Wesley's Journal under 20th December 1784.