Charles Wesley: A Biography by Gary Best

Recently I recommended a biography of John Wesley entitled Strangely Warmed by Garth Lean. Today I want to recommend the definitive biography of Charles Wesley his brother entitled Charles Wesley: A Biography by Gary Best.

Charles has been called "the forgotten Wesley" because his brother John has gotten most of the attention for the 18th century rise of Methodism in England and America. After reading this biography you will have a much greater understanding of the major role Charles played in the rise of Methodism.

For starters he wrote around 9,000 hymns, which contain basically the theology of the Methodist movement. He founded the Oxford Holy Club, for years traveled to establish societies, preached to thousands in the open air, and constantly supported his brother John even when they disagreed.

The author is Headmaster of Kingwood School in Bath, England and has produced the first comprehensive biography of Charles Wesley in the last century and a half. He gives a thorough discussion of the personal lives of both John and Charles Wesley. I came away from reading this book with a much greater appreciation for Charles and his contributions.

An unexpected pleasure came to me in discovering the tremendous contribution George Whitefield made to the 18th century revival in England. George preached to as many as 20,000 people at one time in the open air. John and Charles Wesley also preached to thousands of people in the open air over a period of many years.

Charles suffered from ill health most of his life, but this did not deter him from continuing his ministry.

I am now planning to write a devotional book based on the hymn/texts of Charles Wesley.

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