

A N
E X T R A C T
O F T H E
L I F E
O F

Monfieur D E R E N T Y,

A late N O B L E M A N of *France*.

Published by J O H N W E S L E Y, M. A.
Fellow of *Lincoln College, Oxford*.

*In J E S U S C H R I S T neither Circumcifion availeth any
thing, nor Uncircumcifion, but Faith which worketh
by Love.* Gal. v. 6.

*Seeft Thou, how Faith wrought together with his Works,
and by Works was Faith made perfect?* Ja. ii. 22.

L O N D O N :

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[Price Stitch'd Four-pence.]

WESLEY'S NOTES ON THE NEW TESTAMENT.

Description of preparatory notebook in the library of Trinity
Theological College, Auckland, New Zealand.

BY THE REV. DR. C. H. LAWS.

There is among the treasures of Trinity College library a remarkable little book, which contains part of John Wesley's collection of preparatory matter for his *Notes on the New Testament*. It has been carefully examined by Dr. Sharp and the Rev. John Telford, B.A., both of whom regard it as a unique and most valuable possession. I understand that a facsimile of the first page is to appear in the new edition of Wesley's letters shortly to be published.¹ The following facts may be of interest.

1. The book is small, being $6\frac{1}{2}$ by 4 inches in size. It contains 104 pages and is in an excellent state of preservation. The entries are in the unmistakable handwriting of John Wesley.
 2. The Notes contained in the book cover
 - Luke from ch. xv, v. 4
 - John (all)
 - Acts to ch. ix, v. 15
 - Romans ch. ii, v. 14 to end (but see later for character of these notes)
 - I and II Corinthians (all)
-

1. Since Dr. Laws wrote the above, the Standard Edition of the Letters has appeared.

In the fifth volume, at p. 256, is given a facsimile as mentioned. The Editor of the Letters says the book came from the Rev. William Baumber, who had it from Mr. Hill Fisher. "His father, the Rev. T. R. Fisher, a well known Wesleyan minister in England, went to New Zealand in 1856." There is a slight variation between this statement and that given by Dr. Laws.

F.F.B.

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It will be seen that these are practically consecutive, and it thus looks as though our book might be one of a series. Is it known that other similar notebooks are in existence? Mr. Telford reminds me that in *Wesleyana*, p. 16, a volume is noted "containing sermons, notes on St. Matthew, Introduction to Notes on the New Testament, and copies of poems," all in John Wesley's writing. Dr. Simon wrote an article on this in the *W.H.S. Proceedings*, Vol. IX. Information as to whether the notes on St. Matthew mentioned above are preparatory to the published "Notes" would be welcome.

3. The notes in our book on Luke, John and Acts follow Bengel's "Gnomon" fairly closely, though abbreviating a good deal. There are, however, a few interesting original comments, as for instance, where on the words "Father Abraham," (Luke xvi, 24) Wesley says "here is one plain precedent in Scripture of praying to departed saints! Will any man in his senses be fond of following it." And on the use of magic by Simon (Acts viii, 9) he notes, "So there was *once* such a thing as witchcraft; in Asia at least, if not in Europe or America."
4. When, however, we come to the notes on Romans and I and II Corinthians very important differences are noticeable.
 - (a) These notes are only very occasionally made use of in the published "Notes on the New Testament."
 - (b) Bengel is not used, but is occasionally referred to, and on Romans xvi, 14, where Wesley discusses in brief a variation of text, he refers to the text followed in the edition of Bengel dated 1753.
 - (c) There is now no continuous comment verse by verse. Except in one chapter, only one verse per chapter is noted on, and many chapters are entirely omitted. Take Romans. Here there are comments only on chapters ii, 14; iii, 25; ix, 17; xi, 2; xii, 19; xiii, 1; xvi, 13, 14.
 - (d) Wesley makes errors in stating the chapters. Thus xvi, 19 is given as under ch. xi; and xiii, 1 is given as in ch. xii.
 - (e) The character of the notes greatly changes. In the case of Luke, John and Acts they are chiefly short

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explanatory comments. But in the Epistles we get much Greek, comments on the meaning of Greek words and the construction of sentences (all very brief, of course), and references to authorities. This change of character is very striking.

- (f) The brevity of the notes on the Epistles is seen from the following statement of pages taken up by each book :

Luke (from ch. xv)	16 pages
John (all)	56
Acts (to ch. ix)	20½
Romans	3
I Corinthians	5½
II Corinthians	2½

5. At the head of the notes on "Romans" (the first epistle in our book) the name "Dr. Robertson" appears in Wesley's handwriting. As no other name appears later it would seem probable that this indicates the source from which Wesley derived the notes on the three epistles. Who was this Dr. Robertson? Referring to the Standard Edition of the *Journal* the possibilities seem to be :—

- (a) William Robertson (1721-93), pulpit orator and historian. (See *Journal* note Vol. vi. p. 325).
- (b) John Robertson, M.D., of Pilcomb, who annotated Ramsey's *Principles of Religion*, and to whom Wesley wrote a long letter criticising that book. (See *Journal* vol. iv, p. 99, and W.H.S. *Proceedings*, vol. v, p. 15).

Of these two the latter would seem to be the more probable, but there is no proof, nor do we know that he wrote on the Epistles.

6. The book came into our possession as a gift from the family of the late Rev. T. Hill Fisher. Mr. Fisher was a minister of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in England from 1837 to 1843, when on account of a throat affliction he retired and entered into business. He left England for New Zealand in 1856, settled in Christchurch, and died in 1890. His mother (née Miss Ann Hill) was very intimate with Dr. Adam Clarke and apparently the book came into the possession of the family as a gift from him. It would interest us if anyone could furnish information as to Dr. Clarke's friendship with Miss Hill.

WHY THE 18TH CENTURY DREADED METHODIST ENTHUSIASM

It is well known that the chief criticism that the contemporaries of Wesley made of the Evangelical Revival was that it was tainted by "enthusiasm." Horace Walpole directs the charge even against Wesley himself. He heard him preach at Bath in 1766, and said in a familiar passage "Wondrous clever, but as evidently an actor as Garrick. He spoke his sermon, but so fast, and with so little accent, that I am sure he has often uttered it, for it was like a lesson. There were parts and eloquence in it; but, towards the end, he exalted his voice, and acted very ugly enthusiasm, decried learning," etc. Enthusiasm is generally used in a good sense to-day, but it had a very undesirable significance then. Richard Green says of it in his introduction to *Anti-Methodist Publications*, "This term seems to have been used to represent any degree of departure from the ordinary beaten tracks of church life. Any increase in zeal, or in fervour of devotion, any marked carefulness of living, was derided as enthusiasm, and enthusiasm was little less than crime. The application of this term to the Methodists generally referred, however, to their professed participation in the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. To seek to be 'led by the Spirit,' in our day acknowledged to be the common heritage of believers, was then regarded as foolish fanaticism." He goes on to say that this was not to be wondered at in a period when spiritual religion was at so low an ebb. There is, however, more to be said on the subject than that. Even the titles of some of these attacks on the Methodists are enlightening. The best known is Bishop Lavington's *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*. Another interesting title is "*A Fine Picture of Enthusiasm*" chiefly drawn by Dr. John Scott, formerly Rector of St. Giles's in the Fields. Wherein the danger of the Passions leading in Religion is strongly described." Theophilus Evans, Vicar of St. David's in Brecon, in his *History of Modern Enthusiasm* from the Reformation to the present times, by his very violence and his references to 16th and 17th century history, helps us to understand why bishops and vicars were afraid of enthusiasm.

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Less than a hundred years had passed away since the great outbreak of "Enthusiasm" that accompanied the Civil War in England. The apparent uniformity of English religious life had been broken up into sects and schisms. Thomas Edwards the Presbyterian, in his attack on these errors, heresies and blasphemies called *Gangraena*, reckoned about 176 of them but reduced the total to 16 varieties. It was not merely the Brownist and the Anabaptists, but Muggletonians and Fifth Monarchy Men, Ranters and Seekers alarmed the staid Puritans and still more the Royalist Anglicans. At the Restoration the sectaries were not only ridiculed they were driven underground or suppressed. The dread of them and dislike of their excesses remained, however, as a permanent feeling in the English mind, and the violent extravagances of the Popish Plot show how easily the hatred for the extremist could be roused, whether the extremist were Papist or Puritan. This was to appear again in a dangerous manner in the Lord George Gordon riots in London in 1780. The country wanted peace and moderation and hoped to find it under the Hanoverian Kings. Sir Robert Walpole was the ideal minister to direct public affairs under George I and George II. He was the very embodiment of that common-sense that wanted as little "enthusiasm" as possible. It was not merely the dread of religious excitement that was so strong; it was remembered that formerly the sects had been the chief agents of the Revolution. Political and social revolutionaries were nursed in the cradle of religious enthusiasm. As men looked back at the days of the Commonwealth, they made little distinction between the Levellers and other "saints" and enthusiasts. As Dryden put it in *Absalom and Achanitopel*

A numerous Host of dreaming saints succeed ;
Of the true old enthusiastic breed :
'Gainst form and order they their power employ,
Nothing to build and all things to destroy.

We can see, therefore, how great was the prejudice against enthusiasm and what suspicion and dislike the open-air preaching and secret band-meetings of the Methodists were likely to arouse.

Then again there had been a more recent outbreak of "Enthusiasm" caused by the appearance of the French prophets in London. The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 led to the rising of the Camisards in the Cevennes. This was savagely repressed and was followed by manifestations of prophetism. From June, 1688, there were said to have arisen 500

or more prophets within a year. Some of them came to England and made many converts, for sympathy with the persecuted Protestants of France was very strong in London. Dr. Umphrey Lee says that they lost much of their popularity when they failed to raise a dead man in Bunhill Fields in 1708, but one of their supporters was committed to Bridewell as late as 1737 "and in 1738 Charles Wesley slept with a follower of the prophets, who, while they were undressing 'fell into violent agitations and gobbled like a turkey-cock.' Charles Wesley exorcised him but passed a restless night 'with Satan so near.'"¹ Southey in his *Life of Wesley* has a great deal to say about the French Prophets, saying that they formed a sect in England and as soon as the Methodists began to attract notice they sought to make converts among them. It was, however, only a temporary phenomenon and we have no very clear account of it. Their "Enthusiasm" consisted in the belief that they were directly inspired and their ecstatic speech, their fits and bodily contortions were similar to phenomena seen among other excitable religionists. Wesley never speaks of them with approval in his few references to them. The Fetter Lane Society definitely rejected a French prophetess who appeared there.² The last reference John Wesley makes to them is in a letter to the *London Magazine* in 1760 when he gives a blunt "No" to the inquiry, "Do you not commend the French prophets?" Southey declared that their prophecy degenerated into mere acting, but Wesley would never go quite as far as that. He was, however, sufficiently aware of the excesses that enthusiasm could produce to be very careful when he was confronted by claims to Divine inspiration. He understood his own times well enough to know the reasons for the fear of enthusiasm. Perhaps some of our Methodist historians have not altogether appreciated the Eighteenth Century point of view.

A. W. HARRISON.

NOTE.—This subject has recently formed the subject of an interesting University Thesis by Umphrey Lee whose name is familiar as the author of *The Lord's Horseman*. His book *The Historical Background of Early Methodist Enthusiasm* was reviewed in the Methodist Recorder some months ago. G. P. Gooch's *English Democratic Ideas in the 17th Century* is a good historical introduction to this subject, but it has a vast literature.

1. *Journal of Charles Wesley*, Vol. i, p. 138

2. By a strange confusion this woman is identified with the mystic Antoinette Bourignon in the Index of the new edition of *The Letters of John Wesley*.

A FRENCH MARQUIS AND THE CLASS MEETING.

It is an odd fact that a seventeenth-century French nobleman, who was a devout Catholic, should have perhaps a better right than anyone else to be considered the real originator of the Class Meeting of Methodism.

Gaston Jean Baptiste de Renty, the only son of Charles, Baron de Renty, and his wife Elisabeth de Pastoureau, was born in 1611, at Beny, in Lower Normandy. He was educated by the Jesuits at Caen, and at the Collège de Navarre and the College of the Nobles in Paris. He was a considerable mathematician, and wrote on the science. His first religious impressions were the result of his reading *The Imitation of Christ* in his school days. Later on he wished to become a Carthusian but his parents dissuaded him, and he married at their earnest desire. In 1638 he abandoned the Court, and devoted himself to religious and charitable work. Some few years later he founded in Paris a society of ladies for what was practically the perpetual adoration of the Holy Sacrament, a fact that is interesting because this was one of the earliest movements in the direction of this cult, now so widespread in Catholicism. He died in Paris, in 1649, and is buried behind the high altar of the Church of Citri, in the neighbourhood of Toissons.

Wesley must have been familiar with the life and work of de Renty from a very early period. In 1699, four years before he was born, his father published "A Letter Concerning the Religious Societies." Amongst much else that Samuel Wesley urged in defence and in advocacy of the Societies, he contended that they were in no sense novelties, since the Marquis de Renty had formed such societies as early as 1640. As de Renty and his work were known to the rector, we may be sure that they would be talked about in the household at Epworth.

Then when John Wesley was in Georgia, he carefully read a biography of de Renty. This would be "The Holy Life of Monsieur de Renty, a late Nobleman of France, and sometime Councillor to King Lewis the Thirteenth. Written in French by John Baptist S. Jure, and faithfully translated into English by E. S. Gent." The book appeared in 1658, and is a rather clumsy literal version of the French. In the very valuable and very interesting Diaries which John Wesley kept while in America, and which Mr. Curnock so brilliantly deciphered, there are several references to the perusal of this volume. Wesley read it on his adventurous voyage to Frederica in May, 1736. On Thursday, March 20, there is the entry: "Began De Renty," and on several succeeding days the book is mentioned. More than once the shaky handwriting in the Diary for these days betrays the motion of the boat in which Wesley was sitting as he wrote!

Two years and a half after this, on Christmas Eve, in 1738, John Wesley left America on board the "Samuel." He must have begun almost at once to make an abbreviated version of the biography which he had read in 1736, for on Thursday, January 6, he records in his Journal: "I ended the 'Abridgement of M. de Renty's Life.'" The abridgement did not get published at once. It was not until 1741 that it appeared as "An Extract of the Life of of M. de Renty, a late Nobleman of France." It was a duodecimo of sixty-seven pages, and sold at fourpence. The book must have been widely read, for there were six editions in Wesley's life-time. Like almost everything that Wesley did, it was quoted against him. That very disreputable critic, Lavington, accused him in the "Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared" of "recommending Popish Books," and mentioned amongst them "the Life of M. de Renty, of which Mr. Wesley has published an extract."

Wesley thought very highly of de Renty, and refers to him again and again. In the "Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion," addressing himself for the moment to Romanists, he wrote: "O that you would follow that burning and shining light of your own Church, the Marquis de Renty!" In the "Life of Fletcher" he declared that until he knew that saintly man, he "despaired of finding any inhabitant of Great Britain that could stand in any degree of comparison with Gregory Lopez or Monsieur de Renty."

Certainly there have been few men, in any age or in any Church, of more exemplary holiness than Gaston de Renty.

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Like Wesley, he was remarkable for self-control and self possession, equable in temper, sparing in speech, and extraordinarily diligent in the service of God. His life seems to have been singularly uneventful, as far as external circumstances are concerned. It is curious to notice how many of his practices were copied by Wesley. He visited the prisoners once a week, as Wesley did at Oxford. He was careful, while on his journeys, if he saw anything offensive written on the walls, to deface it, and Wesley always carried a bit of sponge in his pocket for the same purpose. He lived in the most economical way, and devoted much of his wealth and his time to the relief of the poor, as Wesley at Oxford, when he had £30 a year, lived on £28, and gave £2 to the poor, and four years later, when he had an income of £120, still lived on £28 and gave £92 to the poor. He had several poor people to dine with him day by day, as Wesley had at the Foundry about 1745-50, "a comfortable earnest" in Wesley's own words, "of our eating bread together in our Father's Kingdom." He did much towards the relief of the English prisoners, captured apparently, during Buckingham's expedition to Rochelle, as Wesley did, more than a century later, for the French prisoners taken in the Seven Years' War. He learned something of the medical art, that he might help the sick poor, as Wesley studied medical books, gathered prescriptions, established a dispensary, and published "Primitive Physic," for the same purpose.

But the most striking parallel of all is that de Renty established religious societies at Caen, Toulouse, Paris, and other places (within the Roman Catholic Church, of course), which were almost exact prototypes of the Class Meeting in Methodism. They were little gatherings of devout people who met weekly, and, besides arranging for the relief of the poor, engaged in united prayer, read books of devotion in their assemblies, and discoursed together of their religious experience. Thus de Renty's Societies were in some respects more closely parallel to the Society Classes of Methodism than either the "Religious Societies" of London or the "Collegia Pietatis" of Pietism in Germany. Wesley was familiar with de Renty's Societies long before he began his own great work, and we may fairly claim this French Marquis of the seventeenth century as the real founder of the Class Meeting in Methodism.

HENRY BETT.

EXTRACTS FROM THE JOURNAL OF THOMAS EDMAN.

By the courtesy of Mr. W. Edman, of Louth, I have had loaned to me the manuscript journal of Thomas Edman, and I have his kind permission to make extracts from it for publication in the *Proceedings*.

Thomas Edman was a Lincolnshire man, being born at Minting near Bardney. He entered the ministry in 1795, and travelled until his death in 1819. He died at Trusthorpe on Sunday, December 19, after having preached and administered the Lord's Supper with his accustomed fervour and devotion. He was buried in Gautby Churchyard, near his native village.

His Journal covers the years 1795-1800, during which time he travelled in the Gainsborough, Grimsby, Spalding, Norwich and Northampton Circuits.

It will be seen from the following extracts that the Diary does not contain much of value to the students of Methodism. Its chief interest is as a "journal intime" of a rank and file Methodist preacher of 130 or 140 years ago.

H. G. GODWIN.

July 14th 1794. Yesterday I lost my manuscript book between Spalding and Deeping. Lord grant that it may do nobody any harm. Last Sunday I stood up in the open air at Pinchbeck and spoke to a few attentive people and here at Deeping last night but not out of doors here. Bless the Lord my soul is at peace. On Wednesday evening I spake to the Crowlanders and they behaved as well or better than one could expect. I hope some good may be done and last night at Spalding. There I find they that love their sins don't love my manner of talking. Bless the Lord I am moderately well in body and comfortable in mind. Praise the Lord.

Thursday 23rd. Tattershall Ferry. On Monday I came from Boston to Horncastle and received the quarterage for my labour this quarter. Bless the Lord I feel my soul in some degree comfortable and I am moderately well in body, though I am rather feverish and subject to a boaking.

Monday August 3rd. Raithby. My mind is at peace but what I am to do for fresh subjects I cannot tell. O Lord have

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- mercy upon me and give me something to say in Thy Name when I am reared before a congregation for Christ's sake.
- Monday, August 10th. Thimbleby. Yesterday there was a letter came from Conference informing me to prepare to travel but it was not known where I am to travel. Lord grant that wherever my lot is cast I may be useful and that my life and conduct may be as becometh the gospel. I feel a degree of resignation but a sense of my inability sometimes lays with weight upon my mind. I seem to have only one talent and cannot get any fresh subjects. O Lord if thou hast called me to the work qualify me for the same.
- August 16th. Minting. Yesterday I received a letter informing me that I am to travel in Gainsboro' with Mr. King, Brice, and I think Mr. Smith, all of whom I am acquainted with. O Lord qualify me for the work both with gifts and grace.
- Tuesday August 18, Lincoln. This morning I left my parents to come into the Circuit in sorrow. I felt my mind solemn upon the occasion tho' resigned and in peace.
- Tuesday 24th. Gainsboro'. I have much reason to praise the Lord for His goodness towards me. Oh that I may be humbly and abundantly thankful for the peace I enjoy.
- Friday 28th. Ferriby. This morning I have been bathing in the Humber and found it to be more pleasant than I expected. Bless the Lord my soul is in peace. But how impure is my heart. Lord wash me and make me clean for Christ's sake.
- Tuesday, Sept. 8th. West Halton. The Sunday before last I hurt my inside with speaking and I was weakly last week, particularly on the Sunday morning. But thanks be to God I was better after having spoken three times.
- Thursday Sept. 24th. Burton. Last night after I had done preaching and was giving the people their Tickets when I spoke to the Mrs. of the house she seemed in an uncomfortable frame. I asked several questions what was the cause. So at the last it came out. She did not like my preaching. It was rather trying but I am afraid it hurt the people more than it did me. Lord enable me to bear such rubs with patience.
- Tuesday Oct. 20th. Gainsboro'. What poor work did I make in the pulpit last night, how was I dissatisfied therewith. I cannot tell how the people would like (it). And what I am to do I cannot tell for I seem as tho' I cannot get nothing fresh! Oh, Lord if thou hast called me to the work of the ministry qualify me for the same.

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- Thursday, 22nd. Ferriby Thanks be to God He enabled me last night to speak in his Name with a degree of freedom at Winterton and I hope the people were blessed. To-day as I was coming hither my mare tumbled down with me and I fell from her and throu' the mercy of God was not hurt. As the Psalmist observes 'a horse is a vain thing for safety.'
- Saturday, 24th, Elsham. How do I feel my mind exercised about how I am to get something to say to-night, and my mare will not lay down in the stable nor eat her meat heartily. So that I am in an uncomfortable situation. O Lord undertake for me.
- Tuesday Oct. 27th. My poor mare is in a sore way. She does not lie nor eat to do any good and she has gotton such a cold. O Lord give me patience and some fresh subjects if it be thy adoreable will.
- Tuesday, Nov. 3rd. Elsham. Last night I had to speak before one of our preachers that was put out of connection for bad conduct, who is turned Calvinist & I am afraid a railer. Thro' mercy I was enabled to get on as well as I could expect tho' I had not spoken from the subject for several months. Oh! be with me and bless me in my labours thou God of Eternal Glory.
- Monday Nov. 9th. Barrow. Bless the Lord my soul is in peace. Oh, what a mercy! But my inside is rather sore with speaking & I get cold sometimes I cannot tell how
- Friday 14th. Flixboro'. I have been poorlier & weaklier these last two or three days than ever I have been since I came into the Circuit. I feel weak in my inside as I did in the spring of the year and I am rather feverish. Yesterday I rather gave way to that temptation that my mind was hurt with before. I can't say that I feel condemned tho' I believe I should have felt perhaps more union with the Lord if I had used more denial tho' I don't think it was sinful. Bless the Lord my soul is in some measure of peace! O that I may be wiser and watchfuler and holier for the time to come.
- Monday Nov. 16th. Brigg. Bless the Lord I am I hope better this morning than I have been of late, tho' last night we had a very stoving meeting. The place was so full of people that the candles were very near going out.
- Tues. Nov. 17th. To-day I have left my Circuit and comed into Grimsby's. Bless the Lord it doth not much matter to me where I am so my soul is but in peace. The cause is for the

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- Rev. Mr Vasey that travels in this Circuit to go round Gainsborough's. As I was coming to-day I was told that poor old Mr Carlile is dead. I hope that he will shine as the stars for ever and ever.
- Friday 20th. Laceby. I have now reason to believe that Mr Carlile is not dead and that it was a false report. I should not wonder but I have now gotten among criticks. O Lord proportion strength according to my day & suffer me not to fear the face of man that shall die.
- Tuesday 24th. Wold Newton. Last night almost as soon as I had begun to speak one of the forms broke down with the people. I was rather tempted to laugh. O Lord when shall I be wholly delivered from levity?
- Monday 30th. Walesby. There will always be something to try us. Somebody has cutten a deal of the long hair off my Horse Tail. They have not misfigured him sadly but I had rather it had not been cut off. I do suppose they did it for the hair. Lord give me patience.
- Monday Dec. 7th. Great Grimsby. I came here yesterday and spake twice to two fine congregations indeed with a degree of freedom. But last night having some talk with Mr. Hall he told me how the Preachers are criticised upon at times, together with a sense of my own ignorance and inability for such an high and heavenly calling lays with weight upon my mind so that I cannot tell how I am (to) get on. O Lord undertake my cause.
- Wednesday 16th. Louth. I have in some measure gone on my way comfortably since I left Grimsby. To-day I was afraid that I was near telling an untruth. But when I consider it well, I hope I did not. Lord grant that I may always be upon my guard.
- Sat. Dec. 18th. Gayton. Hitherto has the Lord helped me Praise be his Name! I feel my soul in peace. But when I look into the future it mostly brings distress upon my mind because I cannot see into fresh subjects. O Lord give me them when I want them and suffer me not to be set fast.
- Sat. Dec. 26th. Marshchapel. Bless the Lord I have gotten Christmas Day over and came on as well or better than I could expect.
- Friday Jan 1st 1796. Laceby. As I was speaking at Grimsby last Monday night I made a great blunder by bringing an improper passage to prove what I was asserting. But I made a worse next morning in my conduct thro' heedlessness. I

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hope it was no crime, but I was sadly ashamed tho' not condemned. O Lord have mercy and give me grace. Oh ! that I may be wholly devoted to Thee.

Thursday Jan. 6th. Benniworth. Last Monday was our Quarter day at Louth. The Love (feast) was a solemn good time indeed. The Watchnight was a wonderful time. Nine or ten were under deep convictions and I believe about eight found a degree of peace. Praise the Lord, I got a fresh subject last night and got on with it as well as I could expect. O Lord suffer me not to be set fast.

Wednesday 13th. South Kelso. Bless the Lord I found a degree of liberty last night at Uzzleby but this morning I felt very uncomfortable on account of my foolishness and also on account of my horse. His legs swelled because he did not lay down. So I let (him) be out of doors last night. I fear he has a bad cold and I shall have much trouble with him. O Lord give me patience. To-day as I was coming here one of our friends called me to pray with a poor afflicted woman. The Lord was with us of a deed and of a truth.

Thursday Jan. 14th. North Kelso. We had a good meeting last night at S.K. Souls cried out for liberty but were not set at liberty. As I was coming to-day I was so called by one of our friends' wife. She called me all the creeping Culimitely devils she could lay her tongue and said we got her husband's money. I told her I had gotten none of her money nor wanted none of it. She said I was a liar. When I came to consider that it is possible her husband had given something to the Quarterage, out of which my pay comes I had as leave I had not said so. O Lord pardon all my foolishness and ignorancies for Christ's sake and keep me from all things that are contrary to thy will.

Wed. Feb. 3rd. Cunnisholme. Last Sunday when I got to Louth my Father was comed for me to go home with him. A sum of money which I had put in a private place but not lockt up could not be found and they feared that the servant girl had got it. That did not prepare my mind much for preaching but thro' mercy I preached twice and went home with him on Monday morning and found all the money I had left, but there is some reason to fear that the poor lass had had it and so put it back again but we ought not to judge. If it had been gone it would have hurt my father and me being most of the spare money we both had. There were eight guineas of mine and fifty of his. I came into my Circuit yesterday and felt thankful.

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- Mon. Feb. 8th. Grimsby. I am rather poorly in body but worse in mind. I am so exercised how I am to get something to say to-night. I can see no light into any fresh subject and my old ones are so much alike I do not know what I am to do. O Lord assist me or I must otherways be set fast.
- Friday 12th, Bonby. Yesterday when I got to Keelby Mr Vasey met me there to change Circuits. So I came last night to Ferriby.
- Monday 29th. Barrow. Hitherto has the Lord helped me and my soul is in peace respecting my own state but I feel exercised because I cannot get nothing new to say. I am obliged to tell the old tale over over and over again. O Lord enlarge my abilities if it be thy adorable Will for Christ's sake
- March 10th. Burton. Yesterday was a National Fast. I spake in the morning at Whitton and last night at Alkboro' but I did not offer to meddle with anything of a political nature. I aimed at the heart and at the root of sin.
- Wed. March 30th. Norton. To-day I believe I am 31 years old and praise the Lord I am moderately well tho' my body is weak. And my soul is in peace.
- Wed. 6th. Messingham. Yesterday as I was coming here one of our friends gave me a drink of strong Bear (sic), I suppose I drunk something more than half a pint. I believe it hurt my body and on that account my mind too. I felt my head very stupid with it, my mind would have been more composed if I had not drunk it. May God enable me for the time to come to use much denial.
- June 12th. Barrow. To-day as I was coming hither a delicate fair one met me upon the road and told me she wanted to speak to me. The poor creature looked as if she was fit to drop into the earth and said it was a matter of great importance. With much reluctance she got it out; her affections were placed upon me. So I told her she must place them on some other object. She hoped I would not expose her and wished to get over it as well as she could. I exhorted her to get an interest in Christ. She made no pretence to religion. She said she had heard preaching but never was profitted thereby and where she had seen me I cannot tell I suppose in the chapel. But I don't see I can find who she is without exposing her tho' she told me her name, but I don't know whether I can remember it or not. O Lord have mercy upon me and give me grace that I may be enabled always to behave to all as becomes the Gospel.

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- June 13th. Barrow. Last night as soon as I got into the pulpit I saw the young creature that met me upon the road and her face almost like a fire coal. I was somewhat affected at the sight knowing it was on my account. She hung down her head and seemed to be in a very dissatisfied state. I made enquiry but I could not find out who she is.
- Tuesday June 14th. Elsham. This morning Mr. Young of Barrow came to me to Barton and told me there was a strange noise in Barrow about me and the young woman that stopped me upon the road on Sunday. I told him I did not wonder at it. [A long entry deals with his defence against a vile slander that had been circulated about him. Ed]. I desire to praise the Lord that my soul has not been hurt by it hitherto. I pray God it may not. Oh what a precious thing is a good conscience.
- Saturday June 18th. Ferriby. Last night at Goxhill we had I think the best meeting we ever had when I was there. Before I began I told the congregation what passed between me and the woman upon the road and I hope it had a good effect. I daresay some of our own people came with aching hearts but I trust they went away rejoicing.
- Thursday June 30th. Burton. On Tuesday I was enabled to speak from a fresh subject. O Lord make me thankful. To-day when I came from Coleby a young woman came over the house close with me to shew me into the road. We stood talking together a few minutes before we parted. I have had some strange fears lest anybody should make a talk about the same for I believe it is reported that we are sweethearts. O my God give me wisdom and grace.
- Wed. July 13th. Nettleham. Hitherto has the Lord helped me. Last night when we went to the meeting there were scarce anybody comed. So I went upon the Green and I suppose we got as many more as tho' we had been in the house. They behaved well and I felt my mind composed and had no cause to regret standing in the open-air. Bless the Lord my soul is in peace.
- Tuesday July 26th. Messingham. To-day I left for Gainsboro'. I do suppose that I have done there now. I have gotton this year over as well as I could expect, but I have been sadly worn out a long time. I have nothing but the old, old, old over and over and over again for some time. But the people has borne with me as well or better than I could expect. O Lord make me thankful and deal with me as

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seemeth good in thy sight.

Friday Aug. 5th. East Halton. On Sunday I expect a letter to let me know where my lot is cast. Oh, give me perfect resignation to thy Will.

Monday Aug. 8th. I expected a letter from Conference yesterday but I did not get one. I expect one this evening. O Lord give me resignation so that wherever my lot is cast I may go with chearfulness.

Friday August 12th. Minting. On Monday I received my letter and I am appointed for Grimsby which is a matter of thankfulness on account of not being sent far from home.

Monday August 15th. Minting. Yesterday I spake against our garden and in the afternoon to a large number of my neighbours and relations and again in the evening to a tolerable congregation. And I find I offended the poor parson very much. He had previous knowledge of my coming and he preached two railing sermons. I should have gone upon the Green at the town, but he came to my father to desire him not for me to go there. So I was willing to oblige him but still he is offended. O Lord give thy blessing to what I delivered in thy Name. Bless thy Name my soul is in some degree of peace but I used some awful language last night. I was ready to fear least it should almost be too severe. I have frequently used the same expressions before. O Lord give me wisdom as well as grace.

Wednesday Aug. 17th. Benniworth. I have once more left my parents & comed into my Circuit. A sense of my ignorance & inability for the work lays with some degree of weight upon my mind. O Lord undertake my cause. Bless the Lord my soul is in some degree of peace & my body in tolerable health. My father has given me £80 the same sum that he has given to my brother & sister and I put it on Monday into Lincoln Bank. Oh that I may be thankful unto the Lord for temporal and spiritual blessings. Lord grant it for Christ's sake.

A LINK WITH JOHN WESLEY.

The cover of the last issue of the *Proceedings* records the death of the Rev. Alexander Gordon, M.A., formerly minister of the First Presbyterian (Unitarian) Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast. He was the author of the article "John Wesley" in the

Dictionary of National Biography, a subject on which he was eminently qualified to write.

In a letter to me dated November 8, 1929, he wrote :—

“ That historic Bible, with the silver rivet still remaining in it, is unhappily missing [*Journal*, 8 June 1789; *Procs.*, XVII, 60]. I have lately searched for it in vain, but I hope it is not lost, though absent from the place in which it should be.

I am very glad to see you have established an Irish Branch. May it flourish!

I suppose I am now, at the age of 88½, one of the very few who can say that a single life intervenes between them and Mr. Wesley. My grandfather and namesake was admitted to the Society at Wolverhampton, as a young fellow, by Mr. Wesley himself, and when the old gentleman gave me his blessing, and laid his hand on my head, he used to say, ‘ This hand has touched the hand of Mr. Wesley.’ My father began life as an assistant to Henry Moore at Wesley Chapel. So my early days were full of first-hand memories both of Mr. Wesley and Mr. Charles, as we always called the younger brother.”

It is pleasant to record this personal note as to Mr. Gordon, who was one of the oldest members of the W.H.S., and who has permanently enriched the literature relating to Wesley.

D. B. BRADSHAW.

THOMAS COKE AND THE ORIGINS OF WELSH WESLEYAN METHODISM.

The purpose of this article is two-fold ; on the one hand, it is an attempt to consider the question of the origins of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism ; and on the other, to throw new light on the part played by Thomas Coke in its formation.

Previous accounts of the founding of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism, without exception, amount to this : two Wesleyan local preachers, Richard Harrison of Northop and Evan Roberts of Denbigh, had been preaching in Welsh in the counties of Flint and Denbigh before 1800, but it was the success which attended the efforts of Edward Jones, of Bathafarn Farm, near Ruthin, who formed a Society at Ruthin in January 1800, that directly led to the creation of the Welsh Mission by Dr. Thomas

Coke at the Conference in the following August. It is here suggested, however, that undue emphasis has been laid upon the work of Edward Jones; that Evan Roberts deserves at least as much credit as he, and possibly Richard Harrison as well; and that Dr. Coke would have established Welsh Wesleyan-Methodism in 1800 if Edward Jones had never lived at all.

Welsh Wesleyan-Methodism dates its official existence from August 6th, 1800, but just as there were Reformers before the Reformation, so there were Welsh Wesleyans before that date. A few words are necessary upon the work of these pioneers before Coke's work can be seen in proper perspective. Hence for convenience this article may be arranged under two headings:

- I. The Pioneers of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism.
- II. The Founding of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism.

I.

It is essential to a proper understanding of the work of the pioneers of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism to realise that for many years before John Wesley's death, that part of Wales in which they laboured formed part of the Chester circuit. As early as 1750, Holywell in Flintshire, formed part of "John Bennet's Round,"¹ while the Rev. F. F. Bretherton has shown² that a society existed at Mold in 1762. In this latter connection, it is significant that John Wesley made only three visits to North Wales when he had no other destination in view, and all three visits were made to Mold.³ A society might have been formed at Wrexham before 1763; it is reasonably certain that one existed in 1766, for it is recorded of Mrs. Mary Franceys, who died in January 1826, aged 89, that she "had been a steady pious member of the Methodist society" at Wrexham for sixty years.⁴

Another society met at Caergwrle, a small village 5 miles north of Wrexham, and yet another at Rackery, a farm near Gresford. It is extremely probable that the former was an offshoot of the latter, and that both were formed by Richard Williams, of Rackery. Richard Williams' family occupies a prominent position in the annals of early Methodism on the Borders. Space forbids a discussion of this work, but the author

1. J. Everett, *Wesleyan Methodism in Manchester and its Vicinity*, vol. i, p. 133.

2. *Early Methodism in and around Chester*, p. 36. I am deeply indebted for much information on this topic to this work.

3. May 2, 1759; March 25, 1760; April 3, 1761. *Journal*, iv, 311; 373; 447.

4. *Wes. Meth. Mag.* 1826. p. 215.

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of *Early Methodism in and around Chester* states that he was leader of the Rackery society for over half a century. This suggests that this society existed as early as 1766, for Williams died in 1816. The date of origin of the Caergwrle society is lost in obscurity, but preaching was held there before 1787, for J. Janion writes⁵ that John Gardner, his brother-in-law, frequently preached at Wrexham and Caergwrle before leaving Chester for Birmingham in that year; and we know that a society existed in 1790, for the names of its members are extant for that year.

From the above, it is clear that at least four Wesleyan societies had been formed in Denbighshire and Flintshire before 1766. In the light of this, not to mention other societies to be dealt with later, the statement made in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for December 1828, and endorsed in *W.H.S. Proc.* vii. 138, that the society formed at Pentrellifior, near Tregynon, in May 1778, was the first permanent Wesleyan society in North Wales, cannot stand.

Many of the preachers on the Chester circuit, both lay and itinerant, continued to visit these societies, and to preach in the border counties, at regular intervals until 1800. Without enlarging upon the matter, there is proof that Richard Seed, John Oliver, Robert Roberts, James Ridal, George Morley, Samuel Bardsley, Francis Wrigley, Richard Condy, John Booth, Thomas Hutton, and George Walker (a local preacher)—all these at one time or another paid visits to North Wales. While Samuel Bradburn, whose father had eloped with a gardener's daughter from Wrexham, preached his first sermon in that town on February 7, 1773.

It is clear from the above that the border counties of Flint and Denbigh received Wesleyan preaching during a considerable part of Wesley's life-time. It is true that this preaching was in English, and the four societies which are definitely known to have been formed were probably in the main, if not entirely, English in character. But all this was a useful preparation; it could at least be said that Wesley had a few names, even in Calvinistic Gwynedd. It is important to notice that all four societies were very near the Border; the farthest distant was only six miles from England. It will be shown that whenever the Chester Preachers penetrated further inland, they were not so successful—the Welsh language was a stern barrier. Yet even here there was another kind of preparation going on, more valuable than that already

5. *Some Account of the Introduction of Methodism into the City, and some parts of the County, of Chester*, pp. 42-44.

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described, for two reasons: it was conducted in the Welsh language, and it contributed to the founding of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism in 1800. Its importance will be realised more clearly by grouping it around the work of three men: Richard Harrison, Northop; Evan Roberts, Denbigh; and Edward Jones, Bathafarn.

RICHARD HARRISON. Born on October 1, 1743, Richard Harrison was brought up in the parish of Llanferres, near Mold. He was convinced of sin in 1766, after listening to a sermon by Parson Greenwood, then stationed at Chester. He thereupon became a member of the society which met at the Octagon Chapel, Chester. On March 4, 1770, however, a society was formed at Bryn-gwyn, near Caerwys, and Harrison joined in the following week. On December 9, 1773, John Oliver introduced Wesleyan preaching into Northop, and formed a society there. It is not known at what date Harrison left Llanferres for Northop, where he pursued his trade as a weaver, but it is clear that it was before August, 1774, for in that year Oliver left the Chester circuit, and he had already appointed him leader of the Northop society. This society met at his house, and consisted at first of four members. By 1788 it had increased to six, in 1790 its numbers were ten, and in 1799 it numbered nine.

Although he had been a member of a Wesleyan society since 1766, and had begun to preach in 1773, Richard Harrison did not receive an assurance of the remission of his sins until April 1774. On the 11th of that month, he heard John Wesley preach at Chester. He longed to partake of the Sacrament which followed the sermon, but hesitated to do so, since he had not that assurance which he regarded as an indispensable antecedent to such a sacred ordinance. He opened his heart to Wesley, who told him to partake of the Sacrament in faith. He did so, and from that time felt a new man.

Harrison was at no time of his life in a comfortable pecuniary position. He lived at a time when the days of the cottage weaver were numbered, and in the evening of his life he depended upon the generosity of his Wesleyan friends at Chester and in Wales. In spite of this, he traversed Denbigh and Flint, even parts of Cheshire, to proclaim the gospel of universal redemption. He was a most acceptable preacher, a good singer, and an excellent exhorter. There are many examples of the persecution he endured, and when Evan Roberts formed a society at Denbigh, he readily gave assistance. Still later, when Edward Jones formed a society at Ruthin, the patriarch of Northop again gave a helping hand. The service which he gave to the Welsh Missionaries in

1800 was invaluable. Not only did he help them by his preaching, at a time when neither Owen Davies nor John Hughes was fluent in Welsh ; but by his knowledge of the country, and the experience which he had gained by preaching in it for over thirty years, he was able to advise them in their arduous task.

(To be continued).

THE STANDARD EDITION OF
WESLEY'S LETTERS
EDITED BY THE REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

It is a matter of profound and lasting satisfaction that this noble edition, so long expected, has now been given to the world.

Dr. Harrison wrote in the *Methodist Recorder* :

Mr. Telford has crowned his fine studies of the Wesleys and Methodist history with a magnificent piece of work. What loving enthusiasm, what patient and laborious precision, are represented by these volumes, can only be appreciated fully by those who know the lifelong devotion of our able and singularly modest Connexional Editor to the Wesley name and the Wesley tradition. . . . Here we have every Wesley letter that is known, arranged in chronological order, with adequate notes to inform us about persons and incidents that are referred to in the correspondence. Occasionally a reply creeps in, in smaller type. The only omission that a student regrets is the absence of any notes as to the first publication of each letter, or the source from which they were drawn. Sometimes the information is given, but it would have been a great help if every new letter had been asterisked, and those that were in the *Works* and other collections noted.

Serious students will no doubt delight in annotating their own copies on the lines indicated by Dr. Harrison, and collating the *Standard Letters* and *Standard Journals*

Mr. Telford acknowledges the great help he has obtained from the *Proceedings*, wherein so many Wesley Letters have appeared for the first time, in many cases with valuable notes.

Tribute is paid to Rev. R. Green, the chief promoter of the W.H.S., at its inception. He set himself to gather together Wesley's letters from every possible source, and by 1906 had secured 1600. It is a pleasure to quote the gracious words in which Mr. Telford acknowledges his debt to the W.H.S.

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We are under deep obligation to the officers of that Society, who have freely put all their resources at our disposal; and to individual members, among whom the late Rev. Marmaduke Riggall was a constant and most helpful correspondent.

To the Rev. Thomas E. Brigden, our debt is very great. He has supplied notes which light up the Oxford and Georgia letters, and has put his unrivalled knowledge of Wesley's life and times at our service. Mr. Wallington did much to gather material from many sources.

The Preface concludes by saying :

In such a work as this errors are almost unavoidable, and the editor will be grateful for any corrections or additional information that may be sent to him for later use.

Mr. Telford has received very favourably a suggestion that such items, together with any notes or queries that may arise, should be published in our *Proceedings*. They will be thoroughly germane to our purpose and will enable us to continue to help in his great enterprise.

F.F.B.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING.

The Annual Meeting of the Wesley Historical Society was held as usual during the sessions of the Conference. The Rev. John Telford, B.A., presided, and there was an encouraging attendance of members. The Secretary reported the strength of the Society to be 349, including libraries and exchanges with kindred Societies. The officers of the Society, as printed on the cover of the *Proceedings*, were thanked and re-appointed.

The Rev. W. Corrigan presented an encouraging report of the Irish Branch, which has a membership of 101.

It was reported that the newly established New Zealand branch of the Society had held a successful annual meeting at Dunedin, in February. Upwards of fifty members are enrolled in it.

Mr. Telford was congratulated upon the new edition of *Wesley's Letters*, an enterprise which the Society has helped in many ways.

The Rev. R. S. Armsby, B.A., was heartily thanked for having prepared the Index for Volume XVII of the *Proceedings*.

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During the year the Society has published a General Index to the first sixteen volumes of the *Proceedings*, compiled by Mr. Leslie T. Daw, M.A., who was heartily thanked for this very useful piece of work. In conjunction with Mr. A. Wallington, Mr. Daw has also contributed an index to the illustrations in the first seventeen volumes. The value of completed sets of the *Proceedings* is greatly enhanced by these indexes.

The audited Statement of Accounts, presented by the Treasurer, was considered very satisfactory.

As might be expected, the bearing of Methodist Union on the work of the Society was discussed, and it was hoped that a large accession of interest might be secured. The suggestion was thrown out that in connection with the great meetings in London which will usher in the Union an exhibition might be arranged of items, literary and otherwise, connected with Wesley and his great work.

There are various Methodist Historical Societies in different parts of the world; with some of these the W.H.S. is in touch, and it was thought that attempts might be made to develop this side of the work. The Secretary will be pleased if any members can furnish particulars of such. Also should these notes come under the eyes of any concerned a letter to the Secretary would be welcomed.

It was decided to print a new prospectus of the Society. Any member able to use copies for recruiting purposes is requested to apply to the Secretary.

To facilitate the collection of subscriptions it was agreed that the payment of £1 down should cover the obligation of honorary members for five years, the annual rate being 5/-. Members are specially requested to note this new regulation. It is hoped that many will appreciate it.

The Secretary reported that he had been informed that a movement is on foot to preserve the historic Chapel at Osmotherley in the Northallerton Circuit. In one of our early issues most interesting extracts were given from the Society book treasured there.

Rev. J. C. Adlard spoke of the desirability of preserving what remains of the old "Wesley" tree at Winchelsea, about which many particulars were given in recent numbers of the *Proceedings*.

Altogether the Annual Meeting was of unusual interest, and members would do well to look out for the next meeting, which will be held in Manchester at the time of the Conference of 1932. Due notice will appear in the Methodist Press. F.F.B.