

EARLY TRUSTEES AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THEIR CLAIMS

(Continued)

When Mr. Wesley died the New Chapel trust premises consisted of a larger Chapel, a Morning Chapel, vestries, a Burial ground and four dwelling houses. One of the houses was occupied by Mr. Wesley in London till his death, another in the Chapel yard was held rent free by a person who had the management of the sale of books published by Mr. Wesley, another of the houses was occupied also rent free by a sexton and doorkeeper of the Chapels and the fourth house was let at a rent.

The costs of those erections had been in part raised by previous subscriptions from the members of the Society and congregation and the remainder was defrayed by way of a loan to the trustees secured by the joint and several bonds of some of the trustees and of money by way of annuity granted by the trustees and secured in a similar manner. There was a considerable debt incurred by these means by the trustees and due from them on account of the trust premises at Mr. Wesley's death and the annual charges upon the trust funds at that period were as follows :

For annuities and interest of money borrowed	£354	2	6
Rent	96	15	8
Servants	34	4	0
Sundries	30	0	0
Coals and Candles	22	0	0
Taxes	20	10	0
Oils	16	0	0
	£573	12	2

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To meet this annual charge of £573.12.2 the income derived from the trust funds was as follows :

Pew Rents	£360	0	0
House Rent	42	0	0
Burial Fees	80	0	0
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	£482	0	0
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so that there was an annual deficiency of over £90. Moreover it was to be noted that the charges upon the trust property were certain and recurrent, but the income estimated above was uncertain and was likely to be reduced by any change of plan or proceeding from that to which the society and congregation had been used in Mr. Wesley's time. There was also some debt on the current account and the premises were not insured, and to secure the trustees a further charge of £50 per annum would have to be found for insurance.

During his lifetime Mr. Wesley paid nothing for rent either for the house he himself occupied, or for the house occupied by his agent for his books and publications. But from the sale of his books an annual profit of upwards of £1000 a year was derived, the whole of which, as all other property of Mr. Wesley, was devoted to charity and a considerable part of it to the assistance and advancement of this Trust. Mr. Wesley besides set on foot and raised a large annual and regular subscription. The advantages derived to the Trust by Mr. Wesley's means were therefore very much more than a compensation for the rent of the houses he occupied and these advantages were partly derived by means of this occupation. But upon the death of Mr. Wesley, although his literary property had become more valuable it had passed into other hands and was applied to other purposes and the Trust no longer derived any benefit from it. No consideration existed therefore to induce the trustees to allow these houses to remain unproductive.

Seven of the trustees had died in Mr. Wesley's lifetime and by his death the number of trustees, originally 25, was reduced to 17. The survivors were not bound to an election of new trustees until the number should be reduced to 15, but they considered they were entitled to proceed to such an election earlier and they thought it expedient to do so in the situation of the Trust, considering the existing debt and the

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responsibilities imposed upon them which they were anxious to divide with a greater number of opulent and responsible men.

On the 14th of March, 1792, the first meeting which had ever been convened of the trustees was held for the purpose of considering the propriety of nominating eight new trustees and of proceeding to such nomination. All the surviving trustees were present except one and by a majority of the trustees it was resolved to bring the number up to the original 25 and 8 new trustees were elected by ballot. A week later another general meeting was held at which seven of the eight newly elected trustees assented to the elections. A week later still another meeting was held and a trustee chosen to fill the vacancy. At this meeting two deeds for vesting the property in the old and new trustees were then produced and executed by the 8 new trustees and by 12 of the old trustees. The remaining 5 old trustees objected to these proceedings and refused to execute the deeds upon the ground that the trustees could not lawfully proceed to the election of new trustees until reduced in number to 15. This question was submitted to Counsel who were of the opinion that the trustees might and ought to proceed to elect new trustees. Other meetings were held subsequently but the five dissentient trustees adhered to their opposition.

At a meeting held on the 7th of May, 1792, it was unanimously resolved by the trustees then present that it appeared to them that the incumbrances and outgoings exceeded the revenues by £90 and upwards, that the Trust premises ought to yield sufficient to defray the annual charges, and that it was the duty of the trustees as far as was in their power to cause them to do so, that there was then due to the City of London a year and a half's rent amounting to £145 3.6 and there was then wanting £50 to insure the chapel and houses and there was not then money in the treasurer's hands, as he asserted, more than sufficient to discharge the arrears of interest and annuities then due. A committee of seven was therefore appointed to consider how the then arrears of debt and expenses could be satisfied and by what means the Trust premises might be made productive enough to answer the annual incumbrances and outgoings.

On the 14th of May, 1792, another meeting of the trustees was held and the treasurer, being one of the five dissentient

trustees and refusing to concur with the majority in the measures they had taken and were taking, was then removed and a new treasurer appointed. The committee made their report to this meeting and recommended as the only means to render the trust funds adequate for the future that the House, Coach House and Stables formerly occupied by Mr. Wesley should now be let at a rent, that the house and warehouse occupied by Mr. Whitfield, the bookseller, should also be let at a rent and that in order to provide for the arrears the occupants of these houses after Mr. Wesley's death should be required to pay rent from the time of his death, but that no claim should be made on the executors of Mr. Wesley for the occupation of his lifetime, it not being thought that such a claim could justly be set up. This report was approved and the measures recommended were resolved on.

All these measures of the majority of the Trustees were very actively opposed by the five dissentient trustees and by Mr. Rogers, one of the preachers appointed by Mr. Wesley's will. The latter gentleman got possession of the title deeds and removed them and took upon himself to appoint a treasurer and a collector who were not trustees, and in opposition to the trustees, and to issue pew tickets and receive the pew rents, and in this he was aided by Shropshire, the sexton and doorkeeper. He also endeavoured by addresses from the pulpit to interest the congregation in the disputes which had arisen and either from misconception or a wilful perversion of the truth he made representations of the conduct of the trustees which the facts did not warrant. The trustees put the harsher construction upon Mr. Rogers's conduct and after calling upon him for his defence and holding several meetings they eventually resolved that "Mr. Rogers be removed from his office of Preacher of this Chapel and that he no longer preach therein."

CHARLES POLLARD.

(To be Continued).

THE WESLEYS AND JAMES ERSKINE (LORD GRANGE)

In the year 1925 the Historical Manuscripts Commission published its Report on the Laing Manuscripts preserved in

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Edinburgh University. These Manuscripts had been collected over a number of years by David Laing, LL.D., who for a lengthened period was keeper of the Library of the Writers to the Signet in Edinburgh. He was one of the most assiduous and distinguished antiquaries of his day. He was born in 1793 and died in 1878. He collected all sorts of papers and and gathered an immense quantity of autographs and letters of notabilities in every line of culture. After his death the manuscripts, which were in a chaotic state, were handed by his Trustees to the University Library. Rev. Henry Paton, M.A., set to work on them, classified, edited, annotated and indexed them, so that they are now accessible to readers in the University Library.

In Vol. 133 of the Reports, page 348, letters are quoted from John and Charles Wesley to James Erskine, Lord Grange. They are as follows:—

JOHN WESLEY TO THE HON. JAMES ERSKINE

1745, July 6, St. Ives.

“I have some scruple as to answering that passage in the *Craftsman*, because I am afraid if I were to begin answering reflections of that kind (especially such as advance no new matter of any sort) I shou'd scarce ever make an end. In one view indeed it may appear worth while to take notice of a mere trifle if it be a providential opportunity of opening the eyes of some whom otherwise we cou'd not well reach. If I shou'd have a leisure-hour tomorrow or the day following I think on this ground I wou'd write a few lines.”

1 page.

Reference (II. 124)

(Note ; The reference to *The Craftsman* is explained in the *Standard Letters*, Vol. II Page 38. This Journal in June 1745 had severely criticised the Mcthodists and Wesley replied in his usual courteous manner).

CHARLES WESLEY TO THE SAME.

1745. Aug 1, Bristol.

“Many here salute you in the love of Jesus Christ, particularly the brethren met in Conference who are much disappointed by your not coming. We should be glad if you would favour us with any questions which you shall think

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necessary to be considered. Our Lord is with us. O that He may continue with us till He has made us meet for our inheritance above! Remember us in all your prayers that we may be led into all truth & holiness. I pray God for Christ sake give you the fulness of His Spirit that you may know the things which are freely given you of God. P.S.—I hope you will not forget your friends at Downing Street and at Lambeth.”

1 Page

Reference (II, 125)

In the second volume of the *Standard Letters* there is a considerable note regarding James Erskine, and it is not necessary here to cover the same ground. This information may be supplemented by the article in the *Dictionary of National Biography*.

Erskine's life was an amazing one, and his relations with and treatment of his unfortunate wife are almost incredible. How he came to be attracted to the Wesleys is something of an enigma. He was closely connected with the Jacobite movement at various times, and was continually under suspicion. He was born in 1679 and died in 1754.

In the Laing Manuscripts there are also certain references to George Whitefield; two letters to him from John Fraill of Edinburgh are mentioned but not cited.

There is a letter dated July 22, 1741, from Rev. Alexander Malcolm to Professor Charles Mackie soliciting an honorary D.D. degree for Rev. Mr. Chauncey of Boston. The chief recommendation of Mr. Chauncey is that, he is “an example and patron of good sense, vertue, and true religion, in opposition to a spirit of enthusiasm which Whitefield has kindled in this country to the great prejudice of religion . . . Hooper is another of the few that oppose this prevailing madness.” Page 328.

There is also a letter from Arthur Robertson to Thomas Crawford, of Cartsburn, dated 1742, Aug. 13, from Glasgow, asking Crawford to persuade George Whitefield to come and preach in Greenock (Page 329). There is a further letter from Robertson to Crawford dated 1742, Sept 1, Glasgow, in which the writer says “I this morning heard Mr. George Whitefield preach at the back of the kirk in Gorbells to my and many others great satisfaction. Mr. Whitefield forgot a headnapkin or nightcap at your house, please send it by post.”

R. LEE COLE.

THE WESLEYS AND THE SONG OF THE THREE CHILDREN

Rev. W. B. Hoult's article on "The Rev. Samuel Wesley and the Spalding Gentlemen's Society" (*Proc.* xxiii : 145-153) gives some interesting information about the Wesley family, though surely the letter on p. 152 should precede that from Samuel Wesley junior, as it is obviously from the pen of Samuel Wesley senior. On p. 145 Mr. Hoult says :

There is a manuscript poem on *The Song of the Three Children* by Samuel Wesley in the possession of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society.

This statement sheds new light on a rather complicated and obscure literary question, on which contradictory pronouncements have been made.

The song of praise put into the mouths of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego by the apocryphal writer was apparently a great favourite with the Wesley family. Mr. Curnock notes in Wesley's *Journal* (i : 359) for Whitsunday, 1737,

In the evening, after prayers, he read *The Song of the Three Children*—A book of the Apocrypha which from early Oxford days was a special favourite of his. He used to read it in the church and at the rectory during his visits to Stanton.

Although most of the evidence for this statement is buried in Wesley's still unpublished Oxford diaries, one example of it may be seen in the facsimile from his diary for 1726 on p. 57 of Vol. i. of the *Standard Journal*, which contains the entry "r(ead). Song of 3 child(ren)." Mr. Curnock has been led into the not unnatural mistake of ascribing to the few verses in the Apocrypha the popularity which should really be accorded to a very little-known poetical expansion. This was published by Samuel Wesley in 1724, although hardly any of the standard Bibliographical works have any reference to this poem, which was apparently anonymously issued. The *British Museum Catalogue* gives neither author nor publisher, their copy being listed simply as

A Paraphrase on the Song of Three Children. In irregular stanzas. London, 1724, fol.

Watts' *Bibliotheca Britannica*, however, contains the entry, The song of Three Children, paraphrased by M. de la Pla, and published by S. Wesley (Jun.) Lond. 1724. Anon.

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Writing in the *Dictionary of National Biography* on Samuel Wesley, junior, Rev. Alexander Gordon says that "a previous anonymous publication, *The Song of the Three Children*, 1724, is by Wesley . . .". An interesting fact which tends to reaffirm this belief in the younger Wesley's authorship, as well as editorship, is the fact that in 1724 he had a fall and broke his leg, whilst the preface to the poem states:

The following Poem, was written as a Thanksgiving to God, after a Recovery from Sickness.

Yet a broken leg can hardly be described as sickness, and the preface continues in a way that suggests an editor or publisher rather than an author. Critically examining the claim that "true Religion is almost inconsistent with true Poetry" in the style of an *Athenian Gazette* article it concludes:

But I detain the Reader from a stronger Proof, than any can be given in Prose, that Sacred Subjects are proper for Poetry.

The "M. de la Pla" mentioned by Watts as the author does not appear in the *D.N.B.*, and the proof of his authorship would be very thin indeed were it not for the evidence afforded by John Wesley. So firm a favourite was the *Song* with him that when in 1744 he compiled his *Collection of Moral and Sacred Poems* he gave this poem in its entirety, preface and all (vol. ii: pp. 101-134.) The title page there reads

The Song of the Three Children. Paraphrased by Mark Le-Pla, late Vicar of Finchingfield in Essex.

Here is something tangible, although even yet the author is shrouded in obscurity. It can hardly be, however, that if the poem were by either of the Samuel Wesleys John Wesley would not know it, or that knowing it he would conceal the fact. He must be speaking on the basis of firsthand information when he thus confidently ascribes the authorship to Le Pla. Any doubt that "Mark Le Pla" might be a *nom-de-plume* is removed by some brief entries in *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, by John and J. A. Venn, from which we can build up a sketchy portrait of the author.

Mark Le Pla was born at Thorney, Cambridge, about 1650, his father being a country gentleman of the same name. After going to the nearby Ely Grammar School, he was admitted on March 26th, 1668, as a "pensioner" at Jesus College, Cambridge. (A "pensioner" was the second of the three ranks in which students were matriculated.) The next

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details given of him are rather obscure: "Incorporated as M.A. 1675 from Sedan. Ordained deacon and priest (London) Dec. 21, 1679 (M.A.)" The records then continue that he was the Vicar of Finchingfield, Essex, from 1676 (i.e. three years before he was ordained priest—is this a mistake?) until his death in 1715. From 1686 until his death he was also Vicar of Stambourne, Essex. He had a son Marcas born to him at Finchingfield, who, after attending Eton College, went on to King's College, Cambridge, in 1701, where he became a Fellow—apparently before he graduated B.A.! Marcas became the curate of Chelmsford, and an usher of the Grammar School there. In 1711 he died of small-pox.

The fact that Mark Le Pla died in 1715 makes it quite possible that it was Samuel Wesley senior who published the *The Song of the Three Children*, and not Samuel Wesley junior, as suggested by Watts' *Bibliotheca Britannica* and confirmed by Rev. Alexander Gordon in the *D.N.B.* At the time of Le Pla's death young Wesley was but a stripling, whereas his father had been a contemporary of Le Pla's, though no evidence seems available as to how they came into touch with one another. The Preface to the poem, given by John Wesley in his reprint, is certainly reminiscent of the style of Samuel Wesley senior.

We had at first surmised that the ms. *Song of the Three Children* in possession of the Spalding Society might be a press-copy of this same poem, and that its handwriting would decide the question as to whether the father or son were responsible for publishing it. The honorary Curator, Mr. G. W. Bailey, F.R.S.A., has been most kind in answering our queries in careful detail. The Spalding poem turns out to be an entirely independent composition, however, so that there is still no absolute certainty as to who published Le Pla's poem. Mr. Bailey has kindly furnished a copy of the Spalding poem, which is almost certainly by Samuel Wesley, junior, though not in his hand, and is hitherto unpublished. We hope to give it, together with some particulars of the other poetical publications of Samuel Wesley, junior, in a future issue of the *Proceedings*. This poetical exercise on the *Song of the Three Children* serves to underline the hold which the *Song* (i.e. Le Pla's version, we believe) had on him.

The influence of this poem on the Wesley brothers may be further demonstrated in the case of John, and at least suspected in that of Charles. Many lines in the poem are reminiscent of Wesley hymns, though a cursory comparison has not brought forth any striking example of undoubted borrowing. John, however, most certainly quotes the *Song* both in his *Journal* for March, 1740 (vol. ii. p. 338), and, with a slight difference, in his sermon numbered 63 (*Works* vi. 282), as has been pointed out by Mr. C. L. Ford (*Proc.* v. 112). The lines quoted appear at the end of the sixteenth stanza, where the poet calls on the dews to praise God:

"Bless God, who deigns his Influence to infuse,
Secret, refreshing, as the silent Dews."

The description of the poem as a "paraphrase" is rather misleading. It is rather a collection of poems, each poem taking as its basis one of the phrases in verses 35-66 of *The Song of the Three Holy Children*, where the various powers of heaven and earth are called upon to praise God. There are 44 such stanzas, or rather separate poems. Genuine poetic inspiration is to be found in them, and one can understand Wesley's admiration of the *Song*, which would be almost incomprehensible had his devotion been to the rather scrappy original. Two examples of Le Pla's treatment of his original may here be given. Not only do they show real poetic imagination, but his genuine love of nature, in an age when the majority both of people and poets could appreciate nature only as it was trimmed and ornamented by the arts of man. The Vicar of Finchingfield seems in his ordinary contacts with nature to have exercised keen observation, as well as allowing himself the more common moralising that one would expect from a devout country parson. The following poem (No. 20 in the *Song*) is on the text "O ye . . . snow, bless ye the Lord.!" This is his "paraphrase" of those words:

Light congeal'd in feather'd Show'rs,
Of Innocence the Emblem bright,
Mantling Trees, and Fields, and Tow'rs,
Dazling with a Waste of White ;
Flakes, that, thick-pouring from the low-hung Cloud,
At once both Ornament and Safety yield,
From piercing Cold, whose gather'd Fleeces shroud
The tender verdant Offspring of the Field ;
Bless God, who shields his Saints from ev'ry Harm,
At whose Command Fire shall not Heat, and Snow itself shall Warm."

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The second poem (No. 26) is on "Clouds":

Clouds, soft Furls of folded Air,
Beauteous Tap'stry of the Skies,
Ever-fleeting Landskips, fair
With infinite Varieties;

Ye pensile Lakes, that arm our Floods with Rage,
God's Magazines, when purpos'd War to wage,
Whether to cause the Plowman's Hopes to fail,
He pours unkindly Rain incessant down,
Or else, from frozen Stores of moulded Hail,
Destroy the Herbage with a Show'r of Stone;
Praise him, who when of Old the Heav'ns he bow'd,
Chose for his pompous Car an awful Cloud,
Who, when delighted to appear
The Object more of Love, than Fear,
Assum'd a gentler Cloud, and milder Ray,
To lead his Israel through the Desart Way,
Or o'er the Mercy-Seat his Glory bright display."

Perhaps, with our experience of the Romantic Period of English Literature, we should not call this great poetry. Yet it is most certainly up to the general standard of the time, and in some respects better than the majority of contemporary poems. Samuel Wesley merits our thanks for preserving *The Song of the Three Children* from oblivion by its anonymous publication nearly ten years after its author had died. That this was certainly John Wesley's opinion can be seen from his own undoubtedly appreciative use of it.

FRANK BAKER.

TWO DISCUSSIONS

A MATTER OF PHRASEOLOGY.

The question raised in Query 811 on the expressions "on" or "in" a Circuit has provoked some interesting correspondence, though it cannot be said that the explanation for the difference in usage has been discovered. Perhaps the most interesting suggestion is that of the Rev. W. A. Goss, M.A., who asks whether the use of "on" by Primitive Methodists, still frequently maintained by them after their union with fellow-Methodists in 1932, may relate to their one-time use of the word "Station" rather than "Circuit." Did they carry over the preposition "on" when they took to speaking of "Circuits" instead of "Stations"? There is some evidence, however, which seems to suggest that "on" may have been the original usage, and that it is the Wesleyans who have made the change. Mr. Bretherton has formed the opinion that "on" is rather favoured in Irish Methodism. The point is interesting, even if not very vital, and any further information will be welcomed.

A. G. UTTON.

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I can add to what Mr. Utton says above the information that in a recent issue of the *Irish Christian Advocate* I have noticed not merely "on" a Circuit, but "on" a District.

I have a *History of Wesleyan Methodism on the Armagh Circuit*, by Surgeon-Major Lynn M.D., 1887.

In *Memoirs of the Life, Ministry and Writings of the Rev. Adam Clarke*, by William Jones, M.A., 1838, we are told of a period when the Doctor was stationed "on" the Hinde Street Circuit.

The Rev. W. E. Farndale thinks that "on" a Circuit had perhaps some reference to the itinerant minister's travel over extensive ground, just as judges on Assize work are still said to be "on circuit." F.F.B.

An examination of official documents for the past century or more suggests that until quite modern times the Primitive Methodist usage was "in" and that during more recent times "on" has been characteristic rather of speech and the Press than of Conference and Synodical language.

In the Conference Minutes of 1836 the usage is consistently "in" and occurs frequently. The same remark is true of the Consolidated Minutes (now called Standing Orders) of 1849, only in this summary of laws the word station is used rather than circuit, a change that does not much affect the preposition.

If we go further back, we find the Minutes of 1823 directing that a removing travelling preacher shall arrive "in" his circuit by July 18.

The suggestion that "on" may have arisen from movements over larger areas complicates the matter still further because Primitive Methodists favoured small circuits, while Wesleyan policy has always been in favour of wider boundaries.

At the time of Union, and mainly so since, the Primitive Methodists have said "on," and indeed I doubt if they would have become aware of the difference had not their new colleagues twitted them about it.

THOMAS GRAHAM.

This is suggestive, but it may be recalled that in the days of the most extensive travelling Wesley spoke of travelling preachers being "in" the Round.

The discussion of this point may seem a trivial matter, but such little points are sometimes significant. Mr. Goss suggests that something of the constitutional view-point of the different sections of Methodism may be discerned in the former United Methodist use of Circuit Meeting instead of the Wesleyan term Quarterly Meeting or Circuit Quarterly Meeting, and in the fact that the gathering which Wesleyans call the Local Preachers' Meeting is often called by former United Methodists the Preachers' Meeting.

The Rev. G. H. Flemington notices Mr. Utton's statement in the original query to the effect that the writer of *A Bible Christian Pioneer* conforms to Wesleyan usage. He points out that a detailed examination of the article shows that the diarist was by no means consistent. For instance he refers to one Circuit "on" which were three and sometimes four preachers.

F.F.B.

NOTE ON ARTICLE ON "SOURCES OF WESLEY'S
REVISION OF THE PRAYER BOOK IN 1784-8."

In my article arguing that an attempt to discover the inspiration of Wesley's revision was needed, I wrote "Dr. Bett says that Wesley's revisions were such as an Evangelical dissenter would make to-day. Dr. Rattenbury says that some of Wesley's revisions were found in the proposed Prayer Book thrown out of the Commons in 1928 because of its alleged Romanising tendencies. (Bett: *The Spirit of Methodism*, pp. 67-8; Rattenbury: *The Conversion of the Wesleys*, pp. 215-6)." Dr. Rattenbury writes objecting that this quotation of his words set out in antithesis to Dr. Bett's statement fails to convey what he meant. He says. "I quite agree with Dr. Bett's statement, but disagree with the use he makes of it in his argument. I do not think that Wesley's revision in any way Romanised—in point of fact I was thinking of his alteration of the Psalter. My argument is a 'reductio ad absurdum.' I mean it would be as absurd to accuse Wesley of Romanism because he made corrections of a type made in a book rejected on account of its Romanising tendencies by the House of Commons of the 20th century, as to argue that Wesley was a Dissenter because a twentieth century Dissenter would approve of his alteration in the American Prayer book of the 18th."

I am glad to have this correction, for I must confess quite frankly that I did read his paragraph as meaning that there were some revisions made by Wesley of at least High Church character. I am not much good at formal logic, but I still suspect that this small part of Dr. Rattenbury's argument depends upon the proof of the presence of some Romanising tendencies in Wesley's revision, similar to those of the late rejected revision. I had failed to detect these, and it is only fair to Dr. Rattenbury to say that he did not mean that there were any Romanising tendencies in Wesley's revision,

Dr. Rattenbury continues, "I should also like to suggest that the real reasons for his abridgment were not so much literary as practical,

1. Wesley wanted to get as much of his Prayer Book as he could into use in his new Church in America,

2. To do so he had to respect American prejudices. They were two-fold.

- (a) Anti-Anglicanism after the Revolution.

- (b) Those that arose in a country dominated by Puritan religion and tradition. Wesley did his best to respect both prejudices whenever sacrifice of principles was not involved. Calamy may well have been one of the books which influenced him, but I think it is certain it would be a secondary influence.

3. Wesley's own passion for abridgement must not be forgotten. The *Christian Library* and his editorship of the hymns of Charles illustrates this. He used nothing more vigorously than the blue pencil. Let any read e.g. his abridged *Pilgrim's Progress*, and the *Shorter Catechism* for evidence."

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With regard to 1. and 2., I agree that Wesley was not the kind of Dissenter who would abolish the Liturgy. He wanted his American followers to have the Liturgy. But did their prejudices, or his own convictions, dictate the revision? I have presented evidence showing the numerous and even minute parallels between Wesley's revision and that advocated by the Presbyterians in 1661, and recorded in Calamy's book. I have shown that Wesley read this book in 1754, and was evidently greatly influenced by it in the formative years which followed. Where is there any similar evidence that he had familiarized himself in the same detailed way with the attitude of the American Puritan prejudices to Anglican-Episcopalian form of church government?

Finally, if American prejudices were the supreme influence in 1784, we would expect Wesley to give the English Methodists a more Anglican, and less Puritan revision. Here I can use in the argument a reply to a question from Rev. W. A. Goss, M.A., who asks, "whether Wesley's revision for American Methodists and his Sunday Service of the Methodists for use in this country were identical in their emendations of the B.C.P." I have compared the American book of 1786, with the English books of that year, and of 1788. The English edition omits from the preface the sentence in the American edition, recommending it to the Societies in America. Throughout there is the necessary alteration of references to the rulers of the different countries. Otherwise the editions appear identical. Now if American prejudices were the governing influence in 1784, is it not surprising that Wesley did not make the 1786 English Service conform to the presumably different prejudices of English Methodists? As there is no such difference, is it not more likely that Wesley's own convictions, which from 1754 would be travelling in close harmony with his mixed societies, particularly under the influence of Calamy, were responsible for his significant revision of the Prayer Book?

With regard to Dr. Rattenbury's third point, it seems clear to me that we cannot account for Wesley's revision by what Dr. Rattenbury calls "Wesley's passion for abridgement." In his letter of June 20, 1789, to Walter Churchey, Wesley said, "I took particular care throughout to alter nothing merely for altering' sake." (*Letters*, VIII, p. 144-5) Censorship works according to certain principles; Wesley's abridgement in so important a matter would not be governed by the passion for cutting things down. This attempted explanation might possibly cover some omissions, but would leave as an inexplicable mystery the fact that both omissions and alterations met the objections of the Presbyterians of 1661.

I am glad of this opportunity of acknowledging great indebtedness to Dr. Rattenbury for his invaluable writings on Methodism, and of confessing to a considerable identity with his views. In this lesser matter, I agree that it is not satisfactory to call Wesley a Dissenter. He was a real son of the Church of England and a great lover of its liturgy. We can say that in 1755 he thought it "both absurd and sinful, to declare such an assent and consent as is required, to any merely human composition." We can also say that judged by the standards of the Restoration Settlement, Wesley's revision of the

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Prayer-book was an act of Dissent. In 1662 it would have meant ejection from the Church of England. The Churchman in Wesley caused him to issue the Prayer-book for America and England, and the Dissenter in him dictated its revisions. And I can still hold to my conviction in respect to those revisions, that Calamy's influence was of first importance.

FREDERICK HUNTER.

Personally, I would never apply the word "Dissenter" to Wesley, not because in certain ways the term could not be justified, but because on account of its historical annotations it is highly and always misleading.

My point is that the causes of the abridgement in 1784 were practical and literary, and would not have influenced him in 1662. What he would have done then no man knows.

Mr. Hunter's case about the influence of Calamy on Wesley is instructive and interesting, and it is most probable that the book he read in 1754 influenced his abridgement in 1784, but I still think that Mr. Hunter over-emphasises its influence, and under-rates the facts I set down. John Wesley was eclectic and practical. He found good things in all sorts of places, and showed no prejudices against them even when as in mystical writings for instance, he disliked their sources. But above all he was practical. He wanted to get as much of the Liturgy as he could into the American mind.

No evidence is needed to show that the American Puritans were puritan! If evidence is needed to support my view of American anti-Anglican bias after a violent Revolution in which all things English were treated with suspicion and hostility, it can be found in any careful reading of the lines of Coke and Asbury, and of the literature relating thereto.

The significance of Wesley's abridgement mania has never been thoroughly studied. It has more importance than many have seen. I wish Mr. Hunter would work at it, and thus render a service to the Methodists which no one is more capable of rendering.

J. ERNEST RATTENBURY.

SUBSCRIPTIONS—IMPORTANT NOTICE.

As from January 1st all Subscriptions should be paid to Rev. F. Baker, B.A., B.D., 86 Eden Bank, Stubbins, Ramsbottom, Manchester, instead of to the General Secretary. Mr. Baker will attend to the dispatch of the quarterly *Proceedings*.

I was appointed General Secretary by the Annual Meeting of the W.H.S. held in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, July

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1919. My duties included the collection of subscriptions, the registration of members and the dispatch of the *Proceedings*. I have now reached an age at which it is wise that I should arrange for this department of the secretarial work to be handed over to another while there is the opportunity of doing so without the pressure of an emergency. Our last Annual Meeting agreed to this, and we may rest assured that Mr. Baker's persevering care for accurate detail will be very valuable to the Society.

The membership list I am passing on is very sound. It has been regularly revised and bears no "dead wood," though several members are "in abeyance" for the duration. I take the opportunity of thanking the members for the regularity with which so many of them have discharged their obligations. This work has brought me a great deal of interesting correspondence, helping me to maintain the personal touch in a manner which I have appreciated very much. It is with real regret that I hand over the subscription list to Mr. Baker, and I ask for him the same kindly response I have enjoyed myself.

The Annual Meeting confirmed me in the office of General Secretary, and I hope friends, old and new, will continue to write to me. I shall be pleased to answer questions so far as I can, and arrangements for the Annual Meeting and Lecture will be in my hands. The reserve of back numbers, apart from those stored by the printer, is in my care.

F.F.B.

CORRIGENDA.

On the front page of the cover of our last issue (number 7 of vol. XXIII) June should be changed to September.

The letter on page 152 of the same issue is attributed to Samuel Wesley junior by an oversight: actually it was by his father.