

# Theology on the Web.org.uk

*Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible*

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

**PayPal**

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

---

A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_whs\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_whs_01.php)

# Proceedings

OF THE

# Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

---

---

Volume XXXII

June 1960

---

---

## BAPTISM IN THE WRITINGS OF JOHN WESLEY

JOHN WESLEY'S writings have proved to be a happy hunting-ground for many Methodist historians and theologians; and it is therefore the more surprising that so little has been written about Wesley's doctrine and practice of baptism. Some might suggest that any exposition of Wesley's doctrine of baptism is unnecessary: did he not set out his views at some length in a *Treatise* which he published in 1756? However, the fact that some Methodists (who would quite happily agree to the doctrines set forth in the Forty-four Sermons) can read that *Treatise* and to a greater or lesser extent discount its contents points to the need for further study on this subject. This study is the more relevant in the light of our present-day concern over the theology and practice of this sacrament within Methodism.

The basis of our study must in fact be the *Treatise on Baptism*, published in 1756.<sup>1</sup> The following preliminary comments on this *Treatise* are apposite: (i) The sacramental doctrine contained in it is "high", and there are in fact times when one wonders how Wesley reconciled it with what he wrote elsewhere (e.g. in the Sermons). But it is possible to go a very long way with such a reconciliation. (ii) The work is not original. In 1700, John's father, Samuel, had published a work called *The Pious Communicant Rightly Prepar'd; or, a Discourse Concerning the Blessed Sacrament . . . To which is added, A Short Discourse of [sic] Baptism*. In this appendix on baptism, Samuel Wesley deals exhaustively with various aspects of the subject, and discusses what baptism is; what benefits come from it; its obligations; who are the subjects of it; and, lastly, various objections which may have been raised. When this *Discourse* is compared with the 1756 *Treatise*, it is seen that John Wesley follows in the main his father's outline, and uses many of his father's

<sup>1</sup> *Works* (1829-31 edn.), x, pp. 188 ff.

sentences and phrases. This is of course consistent with his practice of adapting and abridging other Christian authors as need arose; but it is well to bear in mind this fact that the *Treatise* is not an original work. (iii) It may therefore be asked why John Wesley published such a statement on baptism. The cynic might suggest that Wesley had come to accept the necessity of the new birth in such a way that he no longer had time for this sacrament; and that when called upon to make public his views on baptism, he followed what his father had written, so as to avoid further trouble by publicly departing from the doctrine of the Church of England. But this suggestion cannot stand. The *Treatise* was published for circulation amongst the Methodist people, and Wesley would hardly have published publicly views which he was known not to hold and teach privately. We must therefore take seriously the pronouncements of the *Treatise*; and since they were published some eighteen-and-a-half years after Aldersgate Street, must believe that they were consistent in Wesley's mind with that experience of the new birth which he had known for himself and was urging on others. (iv) From time to time important alterations to and omissions from what Samuel Wesley had written appear in the *Treatise*. In view of the large measure of agreement at other points, these differences may well be significant, and give us deeper insight into Wesley's mind.

Of vital importance for a real understanding of John Wesley's views on baptism is his teaching on the origin of the sacrament. It may be seen in part in the baptism of John the Baptist, whose baptism looked forward to the coming of Christ,<sup>2</sup> and "signified" the baptism of the Holy Spirit.<sup>3</sup> It is worth noting that in his comments on the baptism of John, Wesley reveals his knowledge of many of the details of Jewish proselyte baptism.<sup>4</sup> But probably the most important element in John's baptism is that Christ himself submitted to it, and an excellent note shows that this is the example to Christians in all ages to submit themselves to the "institutions" of Christianity, so that they may appropriate the gifts of God.<sup>5</sup> Christian baptism is of course instituted by Christ.<sup>6</sup>

But the core of the argument on the origin of baptism is to be found in the Old Testament, in the Jewish rite of circumcision. Wesley sees the Bible as a whole, and the Old and New Covenants as closely connected in the will of God. He sees that under the old covenant there was an "initiatory" rite (circumcision), which led on to the rite of "continuing" within the covenant people (the Passover); and so, under the new dispensation, baptism has taken the place of circumcision. He says: "When the old seal of circumcision was taken off, this of baptism was added in its room."<sup>7</sup> Consequently, on the analogy of the Passover, only those who have been baptized

<sup>2</sup> *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*, on John i. 26.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, on Matt. iii. 6.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, *passim*, on Matt. iii., John i.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, on Matt. iii. 16.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, on Matt. xxviii. 19, Mark xvi. 16.

<sup>7</sup> *Works*, x, pp. 194-5; cf. *Notes on N.T.*, on Matt. xxvi. 26.

may partake of the Lord's Supper.<sup>8</sup> Both circumcision and the Passover involved the shedding of blood: the sacraments of the new covenant do not, since "the blood of Christ being shed, all bloody ordinances are abolished".<sup>9</sup> It may be added that the connexion between baptism and circumcision is important for Wesley, as it is a justification (perhaps *the* justification) for infant baptism.

We may now pass to discuss the benefits of baptism. Why should men submit to baptism? What advantages will it bring them? The *Treatise* gives five:<sup>10</sup> (i) "The washing away the guilt of original sin, by the application of the merits of Christ's death."<sup>11</sup> (ii) Entrance into covenant with God.<sup>12</sup> (iii) Entrance into the Church, we being "consequently made members of Christ, its Head".<sup>13</sup> (iv) We are made children of God, who were "by nature children of wrath".<sup>14</sup> (v) We are made heirs of the kingdom of heaven: as baptism (supposing we "repent, believe, and obey the gospel") admits us "into the Church here, so into glory hereafter".<sup>15</sup>

There are four other benefits of baptism which are to be found elsewhere in Wesley's writings, and which are worthy of addition to this list: (vi) Sharing in the death of Christ.<sup>16</sup> (vii) The way to the Lord's Table.<sup>17</sup> (It is interesting that Wesley makes no mention at this point of confirmation, which, so far as may be gathered from his writings, plays very little part in his thought.) (viii) The gift of the Holy Spirit.<sup>18</sup> (ix) Physical healing.<sup>19</sup>

This is not the place for lengthy theological exposition, but the alteration which John Wesley makes to his father's *Discourse* must be stated here. The adjective "damning" is omitted as a description of our guilt in the discussion on original sin,<sup>20</sup> doubtless because John believed that "not one child of Adam finally loses" by the guilt which comes to him through Adam's sin, "unless by his own choice".<sup>21</sup> Speaking of the third benefit, Samuel Wesley had described our union with Christ as (among other things) "sacramental"; and though John uses the other adjectives in the sentence, he omits this.<sup>22</sup> There must have been a reason for the omission of so important a Christian word, and we can only suggest that he wished to refuse to underline any statement which might lead his readers to think that, *in essence*, admission to the body of Christ is a sacramental act. He preferred to use only the adjectives "spiritual, vital", perhaps because of his experience that men have been joined to the people of God quite apart from the sacraments. It may also be that this point has some bearing upon the form of the various editions of the *Sunday Service* referred

<sup>8</sup> *Explanatory Notes on the Old Testament*, on Exodus xii. 48.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, on Gen. xvii. 10.

<sup>10</sup> Samuel Wesley's *Discourse* contained four, but his fourth included the two that John has diligently listed as fourth and fifth.

<sup>11</sup> *Works*, x, p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, x, p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, x, pp. 191-2.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, x, p. 192.

<sup>15</sup> *Notes on N.T.*, on Rom. vi. 3-4; cf. on Matt. xi. 11; and *Poetical Works*, ii, p. 246.

<sup>16</sup> *Notes on O.T.*, on Exodus xii. 48; cf. *Journal*, ii, p. 360.

<sup>17</sup> *Notes on N.T.*, on Acts ii. 38, 1 Cor. xii. 13; cf. *Letters*, i, pp. 313, 317.

<sup>18</sup> *Journal*, i, pp. 166-7.

<sup>19</sup> *Works*, x, p. 190; cf. *Discourse*, Section VI.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, ix, p. 332.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, x, p. 191; cf. *Discourse*, Section VIII.

to below. Lastly, Samuel Wesley has said of the fourth benefit of baptism: "We say not that Regeneration is always *completed* in this Sacrament, but that it is *begun* in it".<sup>25</sup> Though John does not include these words, he does say that "a principle of grace is infused" in the sacrament,<sup>24</sup> which words had also been used by his father; so that it may be taken that this omission is covered.

One might think it strange that the sixth, seventh and eighth benefits were not listed by Wesley in what could be thought to be a comprehensive *Treatise*. The answer to this may lie in the principle behind the omission of the word "sacramental" above. Certainly (vi) and (viii) would be possible without a person's being baptized, but the problem of (vii) would remain, for his reading of the Bible would persuade Wesley that baptism must precede participation in the Lord's Supper. The answer to this problem is not clear; and perhaps it should not have been posed, since it may never have entered Wesley's mind.

In 1953, the *Proceedings* of our Society contained an article by the Rev. Wesley F. Swift, in which he listed and discussed the eighteenth-century editions of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*.<sup>26</sup> Some important differences are shown up when the 1786 editions are compared with the original edition of 1784. In the order for the Baptism of Infants, several omissions were made, all being connected with the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Mr. Swift laid down the possible causes for the change: "Either Wesley's views on baptismal regeneration underwent a change; or he trimmed his sails to the American wind, or the edition was revised and seen through the press by Thomas Coke without Wesley's knowledge;"<sup>26</sup> but as an historian, Mr. Swift is unable to decide which was the actual cause. It may be that Wesley's omission of the word "sacramental" in the third benefit of baptism can shed some light on this problem. Wesley was in fact willing to subscribe to the view of regeneration being "begun" in baptism; yet seems to have made this omission in order to safeguard against a wrong emphasis being placed on the sacrament. Thus, though the omissions concerning baptismal regeneration were made from the 1786 *Sunday Service* editions, they could well have been made with his knowledge, yet without necessarily implying any change of mind on his part.

The ninth benefit, that of physical healing, is interesting, and should be compared with a similar statement of recovery of physical health after the reception of Holy Communion.<sup>27</sup> It is true that in neither case does Wesley actually say that the physical health came as a result of the administration of the sacrament, yet the connexion in his *Journal* points to a certain link in his mind.

BRIAN J. N. GALLIERS.

(To be continued)

<sup>25</sup> *Discourse*, Section IX.

<sup>26</sup> *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 12 ff.; but see also article by J. Hamby Barton in *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 97 ff.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, xxix, p. 18.

<sup>24</sup> *Works*, x, p. 192.

<sup>27</sup> *Journal*, i, p. 132.

## A MISCELLANY OF UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

FROM time to time, as readers of this magazine will know, unpublished letters of John and Charles Wesley come to light. Indeed, since the publication of the *Standard Letters* in 1931 over one hundred and fifty such letters have appeared for the first time in the *Proceedings*, and many more have been transcribed but as yet have not been printed. Two of these are included in this miscellany.

But there is also a vast amount of unpublished correspondence of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, letters written by prominent people in the evangelical revival and early Methodism (and some not so prominent) which, if they could be made available, would no doubt shed light on many of the problems of our history. For example, the great treasure-house of the "Trevecka letters" of Howell Harris, so painstakingly transcribed and periodically published by our friends of the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society, is well known to students. Many such letters are stored at Wesley's Chapel, London, and they have been catalogued by the Rev. W. L. Doughty. The strong-rooms of the Epworth Press are stacked with parcels of material, access to which must inevitably be denied to students until the long-delayed appointment of a Methodist archivist. And there is much else besides.

A small but important part of this material consists of letters written by the various members of the Wesley family to each other. For instance, Dr. Frank Baker has supplied me with a list of more than one hundred such letters written to John and Charles Wesley during their Oxford days by their relatives. Much of this correspondence has already been printed, and can be found tucked away in the writings of such historians as Tyerman, Adam Clarke, G. J. Stevenson and Henry Moore; but some of it exists only in the original manuscripts. Three such unpublished letters we extract for this article. Two of them were written to John Wesley, and one to Susanna Wesley; and all three are part of the "Colman Collection", donated to the Methodist Church in 1937.

### I

The first letter, from Henry Sherman to John Wesley, presents many points of interest. Henry Sherman, Student (i.e. Fellow) of Christ Church, was one of John Wesley's tutors, succeeding George Wigan in that capacity. His name frequently appears in John Wesley's Oxford Diaries (e.g. "Breakfast with Mr. Sherman"), which I am in the process of deciphering, and it stands at the head of the list of Wesley's Oxford friends which is printed in the *Journal*, i, p. 77. From a reference in the Diary in January 1733 there is reason to think that he may by that time have married, resigned his Studentship, and taken a country living.

## HENRY SHERMAN TO JOHN WESLEY

Xt Ch. Jany. 20. 1727-8.

Dear Sir,

I have taken what pains I can with our Dean to excuse yr Brother's absence from the College all this time, but I would now advise him to come as soon as he conveniently can, tho' I believe I have secur'd the point with the Dean to be as favourable with him as he can, but the reason why I would have him come the sooner is because he has been recommended to Dr. Stratford who intends to give some money to some of ye young People of the College. I was ask'd by one here to recommend some young students above a quarter of a year agoe, and I mention'd no body but yr Bror. Jack, who I have since heard is like to succeed, and I dare say will be one, but the Dr. will expect he should be resident, at least the sooner he comes it will be more sure for him to be one of the number, all the others being here, as far as I can learn, therefore I will leave you and him and yr Father to judge whether, I am not in the right to advise him to come as soon as he can conveniently. I have no reason, in this my advise but to consult his good & welfare. I believe the money that will be given will be 4 or 5 lb. The Dr. will go to London I believe before it be long. I am very sorry to hear that you have been out of order. I believe the Gentlemen of yr College wd be glad to see you too in Oxford, and I have lately heard say that it would be much to yr advantage to be here, for they say Mr. Totnam wants very much an opportunity of resigning his Pupils to you. My humble service attends yr Father & Brother.

I am Dear Sir, Your faithfull Servt and affectionate friend,

H. SHERMAN.

Pray let me hear from you I have accordingly sent you a frank. Mr. Manton has three pounds of yr Bror's, of this last quarteridge, & I have 7 sh.

The letter is addressed: "To The Rev'nd Mr John Wesley at the Rev'nd Mr. Wesley's Rector of Wroot at Wroot in Lincolnshire near Bawtrey in Yorkshire. by way of London." It has been endorsed in Wesley's handwriting "Mr Sherman my Tutor 1728".

It is obvious from the letter that at the time of its writing Charles Wesley (Sherman, in a moment of aberration, writes "yr Bror. Jack") was absent from Oxford and had been for some time. Ten days after Sherman's letter was written, however, Charles was back in Oxford, presumably from London, and writing to his brother about the condition in which he had left their sister Hetty.<sup>1</sup> Whether his return was expedited by the prospect of some improvement in his financial affairs, or was just a coincidence, we cannot say; ten days seems too short a time for the news to have travelled from Oxford to London via Epworth.

Dr. William Stratford was a Canon of Christ Church, and a tutor of Edward Harley, the son of the Earl of Oxford. Probably as a contemporary high churchman Dr. Stratford would have held Samuel Wesley, jun. in esteem, and therefore would probably have been ready

<sup>1</sup> See extract from letter dated 20th January 1728 in Frank Baker's *Charles Wesley as revealed by his Letters*, p. 8.

to patronize Charles.<sup>2</sup> He had some acquaintance with young Lord Dupplin, who was at Christ Church, and whose name frequently appears in the Oxford Diaries. John Tottenham ("Mr. Totnam"), also met with in the Oxford Diaries, was a Balliol man who was elected to a Somerset Fellowship at Lincoln College on 10th January 1717. He resigned on 25th May 1730 on becoming vicar of Cheddar and Canon of Wells.

John Wesley, when he received this letter, was acting as his father's curate at Wroot. Unfortunately, that part of his Diary which covers the period of this letter is missing (the gap lasts from 20th February 1727 to 29th April 1729), but we know from other sources that from late February 1727 to November 1729 he was mostly in Lincolnshire. Sherman's appeal to him to return to Oxford "much to yr advantage" therefore fell on deaf ears. It eventually required a peremptory message from Dr. Morley, the rector of Lincoln College, to recall him to the duties which his position as Fellow involved.

## II

The second letter is, quite frankly, a puzzle. I am unable to identify the writer, and at the most can only make a guess.

N G TO JOHN WESLEY

Salop. Mar. 8th 1726-7.

Dear Sir,

I am now situated in the midst of my friends & relations, who express a good deal of tenderness, and affection in all their actions towards me. I have likewise all the Diversions that a rural Life can afford at my command. And to compleat my happiness (was going to say) a Bevy of young Ladies at the next door who have youth, beauty, wit, & innocence sufficient to make conversation both edifying & delightfull. And as they have always lived and delighted in a private retired Life they have not that crowd of Admirers wch Women of their Accomplishments are usually pestered with. So yt I may enjoy their company wth & as often as I please without interruption. Is there any real happiness in this? No! I am convinced there is little or no solid pleasure or satisfaction in the enjoyment of the creatures of this world; And am therefore resolv'd, to seek it in the enjoyment of Him with whom there is fullness of Joy; and at Whose right hand there is pleasure evermore.

The Questions I formerly ask'd were not relating to any Thing Athenais said or did. If they had, I can see where the Danger in answering them could possibly lye, considering whom you trusted. Many circumstances of this nature hath happened since our first Acquaintance, and as I never suspected Design, I frankly, and without equivocation, satisfied you directly. How widely different hath your Behaviour been towards me in this respect! I should by no means have reported any thing past had not you urged me to it. You'l oblige me in the most signal Instance if you never mention it or the name of Athenais again, or make her acquainted with our past Correspondence.

<sup>2</sup> For this suggestion and the other information in this paragraph I am indebted to the Rev. Dr. V. H. H. Green, Senior Tutor and Chaplain at Lincoln College. Dr. Green has in preparation a book on John Wesley at Oxford, for which purpose he has been working independently on the Oxford Diaries.

I shall in a fortnight's time remove my Quarters; as soon as I am settled you may depend upon hearing from

Yr humble Sert

N: G:

Service to all Friends. Adieu.

There is no superscription, but the letter has been endorsed by John Wesley:

NG. March 8. 1727 †  
to 1734

The letter is important because of its twofold reference to "Athenais". In the first Oxford Diary there are three entries which read "wrote to Ath" (20th, 24th, and 27th January 1726). Whether these entries represent three separate letters, or one letter written at three separate times, it is impossible to say. There can surely be no doubt that the "Ath" of the Diary is identical with "Athenais" in the letter under consideration. It is obvious that "N.G." disapproved of "Athenais" (which is probably a pen-name like "Varanese" and "Aspasia"), and the fact that there is no record in the Diary of any further letters would seem to indicate that Wesley had considerable respect for the opinions of "N.G.", and the correspondence ceased. If any reader can help to identify "Athenais" I shall be glad to know.

So far as I am aware, only two of Wesley's friends at this period could be described as "N.G.". One was Ann Granville, sister of Mrs. Pendarves, but I do not recall any instance of her being addressed as "Nancy". In any case, the handwriting of this letter does not seem to resemble that of Ann Granville. The other friend was Ann Griffiths, daughter of the vicar of Broadway and sister of Wesley's friend and pupil John ("Robin") Griffiths. She was born in 1708, and was therefore in her nineteenth year when this letter was written. "Wrote to Nancy" is a frequent entry in the first Oxford Diary, and in one place she is referred to as M [iss] N.G. The importance which Wesley attached both to the letter and to its writer is evidenced by the cross which he appended to his endorsement made many years later. I should unhesitatingly name Ann Griffiths as the writer of this letter were it not for the fact that the handwriting seems too mature for a girl of eighteen, certainly by comparison with that of Ann Granville. It must remain an open question.

### III

The story of John Whitelamb, the writer of our third letter, is readily available elsewhere,<sup>3</sup> and need not be told again in detail here. It will be recalled that Whitelamb, a charity-school boy at Wroot, near Epworth, was taken into the household of Samuel Wesley, and for four years was his amanuensis. After a period at the University of Oxford he became Samuel's curate at Wroot, and shortly afterwards married Mary Wesley. Their married life was lamentably

<sup>3</sup> It can be read, e.g. in Tyerman's *Oxford Methodists*, pp. 374-86, or in Maldwyn Edwards's *Family Circle*, pp. 142-4.

short—less than a year—but Whitelamb remained at Wroot for more than thirty years, until his death in 1769.

The letter printed here is far too long to reproduce in full. It consists of one large, single sheet, closely written on both sides, and was evidently handed in person to its recipient. The writing, spelling and composition are surprisingly cultured, which is a tribute to the standard of education imparted at the little charity school at Wroot, and to the pains which Samuel Wesley took with his protégé.

JOHN WHITELAMB TO MRS. SUSANNA WESLEY

Madam,

When I've fairly represented my case to you in these Lines, then take what Measures you please in Relation to what you have determined concerning me.

Having by God's Grace strong & early Inclinations to Religion in my younger days, & being exceedingly enamour'd with a Devout & Holy Life, & all those who could make Religion their Business and Delight, it was no wonder I conceiv'd so great a love for this Family from my first acquaintance, who I found had a real sence of those things, & tho I had never any thoughts of altering my station where I liv'd resign'd & content, yet when Providence & Mr Wesley call'd me, I was extreemly glad to live in so Pious a Family.

You know Mad<sup>m</sup> that my joy to be admitted here at first was so great, that I made no Proposals, nor stood on any conditions at all, & what Promises Mr. Wesley, or you were pleas'd to make me, were entirely of your own mind. What has been wanting in the Performance of them I wou'd willingly impute to your want of power. How hardly soever another Person, who was but indifferent to the Family might have born the Breach of them.

But to let that pass, I think the consideration of what Disadvantages I have labour'd under may in some Measure mitigate, tho' not excuse the Miscarriages I have been guilty of. . . .

The constant struggling with my Master's Temper, which they only can have a just Notion of, who have been shut up with whole Days in his study, tho' I deny not but his Passions were often very just; for having been used to a Way of Life, where my Hand & Thoughts were commonly differently employ'd (for that business requir'd not much attention) inclin'd me to be too often absent & make Mistakes. His Satyrical Wit, especially in company, was the more Painful to me, as I have the Misfortune to have the quickest sence of those things. If this woud have been almost intolerable to another, much more to me who was conscious that I serv'd him from a Principle of Generosity & Love, & might have expected to be treated rather like a Friend than one of the meanest of servants.

The Poor & wretched condition I was reduc'd to for want of Cloaths, so much worse than what I had been us'd to, & the Universal Contempt it expos'd me to, & the Grief of my poor Mother on that account, was a cross that I had so well reconcil'd myself to, that witness of all the Family, I never show'd the least concern or reluctance at it; & notwithstanding my silent Tears & private mourning for my wretched state, yet I never ceas'd heartily to pray for the Prosperity & health of the Family. . . .

But the Greatest of all is this. One of my Principal Views in coming

hither was that I might learn. But all my time before last Lent was in that respect entirely lost, my Master learn'd me nothing, & I was so exceedingly Dispirited by my Circumstances, that had I had any Time from our Business or Books, I cou'd Learn Nothing myself; you know Madam, how little the writing of that strange Critical Learning, half of which I can't understand, signifies to the Learning of Languages, & I'm sure I could in one month of Thrashing if I'd had Books, learnt more, than I did all that Time.

Whitelamb then goes on to refute the imputation of pride, and the charge of being deficient in gratitude and honour. The letter continues:

These Madam have been a Few of my Grievances, by which I design not, as I said, to excuse, but to mitigate my Faults. I know you expect I shou'd be sorry for 'em & repent; you may be assur'd I am. . . .

As to you Paying me, what is due, this May Day, I wou'd not put you to any Straight on that account; I entirely quit you of any such obligation, as being not at all engag'd by any promise; I shall at the time, resume my Flail, with what content & Resignation I can, lying the Blame wholly on my own Misconduct, & never thinking hardly of, but continuing to Love & Admire the Family, & never ceasing my Prayers & Good Wishes for them. However for the small time I have to stay, I shall very much endeavour to regulate my Manners, so as to retrieve my bad character, & to convince you of my Penitence, before I leave you, & that, not with any servile respect to any worldly interest, but I hope from a Principle of Duty to God.

These things submitting to your Candour, & hoping you will excuse my Presumption, I shall endeavour to be Dutifull.

JOHN WHITE-LAMB.

The letter has been endorsed by John Wesley thus:

"1730. J<sup>o</sup> Whitelamb to my mother. answer to hers."

The letter would be easier to annotate if we knew the contents of Susanna Wesley's letter to which it was the answer. Whitelamb's reply contains the element of pathos; but "poor starveling Johnny", as they called him, was evidently a man of spirit, not to be easily crushed. His position in the Wesley household was obviously beset with difficulties on both sides, but he was neither afraid to expose his master's faults nor willing to be unduly beholden to his mistress. Here is a glimpse into the Epworth rectory which, although it sheds no light on early Methodism, is nevertheless not unwelcome.

Tyerman dates Whitelamb's entry to Lincoln College, Oxford, as taking place in 1728 or 1729. The letter proves conclusively that Whitelamb was still working for Samuel Wesley in the spring of 1730. Indeed, John Wesley notes in one of his Oxford Diaries, "John Whitelamb entered, Apr. 10, 1731".

#### IV

Our next letter I discovered in an early volume of our Manuscript Journal of fifty years ago. The contributor did not state the whereabouts of the original, but there is no reason to doubt the authenticity of the transcript. So far as I know, it has not been printed before.

## JOHN WESLEY TO JOHN RYLEY

Coalbrook Row, Dec. 22. 1788.

My dear Brother,

What you say is true. There is a grievous neglect. But how shall we remedy it? I will tell you how. Set *your own* shoulders to the work. I will give you a Ticket and put you into what office you please. Then you may do essential service to

Yr Affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. Jno. Ryley, in Tabernacle Row.

The identity of John Ryley remains obscure. Wesley's later diaries note visits to a Mr. Riley (variously described as Riley, Jo [hn] Riley, and brother Riley) in London.<sup>4</sup> Almost certainly this was the same man. He had evidently earned Wesley's confidence, and it would be interesting if we could discover more about his status in London Methodism. Perhaps some member can throw light on this.

## V

For a transcript of the fifth letter I am indebted to Mr. Leslie Gutteridge, of Epworth Secondhand Books, where the original passed through his hands some time ago.

## JOHN WESLEY TO HANNAH BALL

Near Norwich, Oct. 27. 1784.

My Dear Sister,

Simon Day sincerely fears God. Therefore I do not think him incurable, and the way I advise you to take is this. Tell Mr. Hodgson I desire him to carry to S. Day the "Plain Account of Christian Perfection" and beg him to read it calmly over. Afterwards let him deliver his thoughts upon it and answer his objections. It will be an hour or two well bestowed. I am in hopes it will have a good effect. Some time since I wrote and desired he would not go any more to the Dissenting Meeting, seeing if the Preachers go there, the people undoubtedly will. It is *your* part and Mary's to go straight forward, whoever praises or blames. I am, my dear Sister,

Your affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

To Miss Ball, in High Wycombe.

Wesley's friendship and correspondence with Hannah Ball, and the pride of place she occupies in the work of founding Sunday-schools, are well known.<sup>5</sup> Simon Day was at this time the second preacher in the Oxfordshire circuit. A few months earlier he had received what was probably the second shortest letter Wesley ever wrote. It consisted of six words.<sup>6</sup> Simon Day "dates" from 1780, though he had previously travelled a few months in 1766-7. He died in 1832, so Wesley was right in thinking him not incurable, either theologically or physically.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

<sup>4</sup> *Journal*, vi, p. 473; vii, p. 343; viii, p. 112.

<sup>5</sup> See Index to *Journal and Letters*.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, vii, p. 219. The shortest letter is believed to be the one printed in *Proceedings*, xxviii, p. 116, consisting of three words, "All is well".

## JOHN WESLEY, HYMNOLOGIST

*(Continued from page 108)*

THE third aspect of Wesley's work as an editor is his handling of his German translations. The German Protestant movement on whose literature he drew had been marked by the production of an enormous number of hymns. "It is easy to understand what a mass of mediocre and tawdry material would be found in such an assembly, and it is the more striking that John Wesley, who must have made acquaintance with a large amount of this work, should have selected for translation the cream of German religious verse."<sup>23</sup> Wesley showed a regard for congregational needs (as well as skill in avoiding German elaborations) by reducing the average number of stanzas in the hymns from twelve to eight. Only "High on His everlasting throne" shows the translation longer than the original. He showed too his adherence to the traditionally simple English hymn form by drastically changing the metres. The Germans used a great variety of metres (some very artificial) and many combinations of masculine and feminine rhyme, as well as mixtures of very long and very short lines. Wesley dispensed with all this and limited himself to regular forms. The characteristics of his editing noted previously reappear.<sup>24</sup> Any padding, meaningless epithets and cant phrases in the original are avoided, and so are the sensuous metaphors so common in certain forms of pietistic poetry. Specifically Moravian theological emphases (e.g. about Satan) vanish likewise. Wesley is once again faithful to his standards.

When one turns to deal with Wesley as a hymn-writer one is immediately faced with questions of canon. It was the custom of John and Charles to publish work together without any attempt to distinguish the work of one from the other, and indeed Samuel Bradburn stated that they had a compact not to do so.<sup>25</sup> As far as the German translations are concerned, there is fairly conclusive evidence that they were by John.<sup>26</sup> There may perhaps be some who quibble at the present writer's declared intention to treat most of these translations as original work, but this decision is surely justifiable. Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology* assigns thirty-two German translations to Wesley. Sixteen are described as free or very free, and of these there are major omissions from thirteen. In addition, there are major omissions from seven other translations. It seems reasonable to treat at least the sixteen that are described as free translations as original work.

<sup>23</sup> H. A. L. Jefferson: *Hymns in Christian Worship*, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> J. T. Hatfield: *John Wesley's Translations of German Hymns*, pp. 182-4. The present writer's lack of German compels him to accept someone else's opinion on this (and most other matters mentioned in this paragraph) uncritically; but the fact that Hatfield's observations about Wesley's editing of English hymns are similar to his own gives him confidence.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted by Henry Bett (among others) in *The Hymns of Methodism* (1945 edn.), p. 21.

<sup>26</sup> See Hatfield, op. cit., p. 179.

The authorship of the hymns that are not translations is far more difficult to determine. Bett has, of course, made an attempt to do so by following up prosodic clues, but doubt must remain whether such clues can yield conclusive proof, although if the features Bett describes as typical of John Wesley occur in large numbers in a particular hymn the presumptive case for his authorship must be strong. There are, though, hymns whose content make it certain that John could never have written them whatever their prosodic features. Three hymns, however, are indisputably his: "Son of Thy Sire's eternal love", "Eternal spotless Lamb of God", and "Father of all! whose powerful voice". The present writer would also be prepared to accept as Wesley's most, if not all, of those listed by Bett in his edition of 1913 (though he has his doubts about several of those added in subsequent editions). As, however, there is not space to include a detailed discussion of the authorship of each hymn, and as Bett's conclusions were not acted on by the committee preparing the 1933 *Methodist Hymn-Book*, it is proposed to base the points this paper will make on those hymns whose authorship is undisputed.

John Wesley's hymns are the products of craft rather than poetic inspiration, and almost invariably they live up to the first four at any rate of his claims for the poetry of the 1780 *Collection* (see M.H.B., p. vi). At every point they evidence a careful, precise, academic mind. Like those of Isaac Watts, they frequently begin and end with almost the same stanza—one thinks, for example, of "O God, of good the unfathomed sea!", "Thee will I love, my strength, my tower", "Now I have found the ground wherein" and "Come, Holy Ghost, all-quickening fire, Come, and in me delight to rest". There is a tendency too towards parallel expressions, generally the result of a reiteration of the previous sentiment in a slightly varied form.

Who, who, my Saviour, this hath done?  
 Who could Thy sacred body wound?  
 No guilt Thy spotless heart hath known;  
 No guile hath in Thy lips been found.<sup>27</sup>

Octosyllabic lines (a frequent measure) are often divided after the fourth syllable, thus giving a sense of poise and balance, and nouns (and less frequently verbs) often occur in triads:

Thine, Lord, we are, and ours Thou art;  
 In us be all Thy goodness showed.  
 Renew, enlarge, and fill our heart  
 With peace, and joy, and heaven, and God.<sup>28</sup>

This balance is present also in the content. First, there is a balance of the doctrinal and the ethical, theory and practice. In "I thirst, Thou wounded Lamb of God", which is a hymn on the goodness of God, Wesley expresses joyful amazement at the cleansing grace of Christ's blood, but he realizes, at the same time, that this grace makes

<sup>27</sup> Stanza 2 of "Extended on a cursèd tree".

<sup>28</sup> Second half of stanza 2 of "Eternal spotless Lamb of God" (in 1933 M.H.B. stanza 4 of "Father of all! whose powerful voice").

demands on man, that man must show his state of grace in his life, and so he concludes with a dedication to service :

To Thee our hearts and hands we give :  
Thine may we die, Thine may we live !

The doctrine of salvation is being combined with the ethic of service. The second balance is between the intellect and the emotions. It comes out largely in Wesley's sense of form. One could, for example, give the ground plan of "Now I have found the ground wherein": stanza 1, an assertion of the ground of the writer's faith—the everlasting mercy of God as revealed in "the wounds of Jesus"; stanza 2, the extent and availability of that mercy; stanza 3, its cleansing power; stanza 4, the gifts it can bestow; stanza 5, its steadfastness; stanza 6, a reiteration of the ground of faith. This hymn, with its movement from a general statement through an exposition of various aspects of that statement back to the original starting-point, is obviously carefully constructed, and though Wesley is here dealing with something that had caused a tremendous emotional impact on his life, he is maintaining a strict control over his subject-matter. He feels deeply; but the depth of his emotions comes through the restraint rather than through the lack of it. The third balance is that between the scriptural and the contemporary.<sup>29</sup> This scriptural background gives the hymns—especially to a people well-versed in the Bible and holding it as Holy Writ—a tremendous authority and, through the use of allusions, compressed power. This is scripture used to produce a strictly contemporary effect: scripture in touch with everyday lives.

This balance, this careful poise both in content and expression, is not in any way inconsistent with the simplicity which was a declared aim of Wesley's style. Indeed it is characteristic of the nicety which was so prominent a part of his nature. Nor is this a poise only achieved by the stifling of all life (though it would be foolish to pretend that Wesley never became stiff and lifeless. For stiltedness this stanza from "Jesu, Thy blood and righteousness" would be hard to beat :

If Pride, Desire, Wrath stirr'd anew,  
Swift to my sure Resort I flew :  
"See there my Lord upon the Tree !"  
Hell heard : instant my soul was free.)

In his best hymns, however, religious inspiration combines with poetic craft to produce a moving majesty and a compressed power. These hymns have in them a deep organ-tone that is reminiscent of Milton and of some of Herbert.<sup>30</sup> Their majesty comes in part from Wesley's careful craftsmanship and the incorporation in his very nature of the rhythms and imagery of the Authorized Version; but it comes also from a deeper source. It comes from his belief in the majesty

<sup>29</sup> Examples of Wesley's extensive use of scripture in his hymns can be found, e.g. in Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, chapter 6; R. N. Flew, *The Hymns of Charles Wesley*, passim; and G. H. Findlay, *Christ's Standard Bearer*, passim.

<sup>30</sup> e.g. stanzas 9 and 10 of "The British Church". Both Milton and Herbert were favourite poets of Wesley.

of the God he was adoring and the wonder of the message he was proclaiming. John Wesley's hymns do not soar like those of Charles, but then they never become florid or bombastic. At their best their simplicity, neatness and balance gives them a stark grandeur and a condensed power; and one feels the force of their religious inspiration.

Despite the high quality of the majority of Wesley's hymns, few, even of the best of them, are used today. It is impossible to say with certainty why this is, but three possibilities readily suggest themselves. First of all, modern man does not like to think of himself as a "worthless worm"<sup>31</sup> or a "bubble on the wave",<sup>32</sup> still less does he like lustily to proclaim himself as one; yet this is the sort of thing Wesley's hymns not infrequently demand of him. Secondly—and this point links with the first in that both stem from the fact that the suburban churchgoer tends to shy away from extremes—there is sometimes a touch of the melodramatic in the hymns, as, for example, in the use of rhetorical reiteration in "Extended on a cursèd tree". Thirdly, probably the most influential factor, many people, because of the composition of the present hymn-books, have little or no chance of meeting Wesley hymns. One may deplore this, but there is no immediate remedy; new hymn-books are not compiled every day.

John Wesley's true place in English hymnody is not generally realized. The importance of his translations of 1737 in pioneering the change that the Methodist revival wrought in the English hymnody cannot be denied; nor can the consistency of his standards as an editor. Because he saw that his brother's better-known and more copious verse conformed to those standards, his influence on hymnody is greater than his own output would have secured. But if John owes some of his influence to Charles's poetic genius, it is also true that Charles owes some of his reputation to his brother's blue pencil. Inevitably, this study has been concerned more with Wesley's successes than his failures; it is inevitable because any champion of an underdog must press his case. There has been some attempt, though, to point to his limitations. The contention of this paper is not that John Wesley is the best, or even the most important, hymnologist who ever lived, but that he is good enough and important enough to merit more than a couple of sentences in general terms as an introduction to the work of his brother Charles.

B. C. DRURY.

<sup>31</sup> Stanza 2, line 1, of "Regardless now of things below".

<sup>32</sup> Stanza 4, line 4, of "Shall I, for fear of feeble man".

---

The March issue of the *Journal* of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales contains seven "missing" Trevecka letters, transcribed by Dr. Frank Baker from various collections at the Epworth Press, to add to the immense store already printed. An announcement also appears of an exhibition of items connected with the history of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism, to be held in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, at the time of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Wales.

## A VARIETY OF THEMES IN AN UNPUBLISHED WESLEY LETTER

**U**NPUBLISHED John Wesley letters continue to appear, and one of the most interesting that has come to my notice recently is the following to Richard Rodda.

JOHN WESLEY TO RICHARD RODDA

London. Janu. 24. 1782.

Dear Richard,

Nancy Bolton has done more Good in Witney, than all the other Women in ye Society put together. Not one of them is to be compared to her either for Grace or Understanding. Give her all the Employment she can undertake. I know few such Jewels in ye three Kingdoms. You have done exceeding well in changing the Men-leaders. It will much tend to enliven the people. You woud do wisely to give Hannah Ball & her Sister as much Employment as they can possibly attend to. There [are] exceeding few in Wycombe that are like-minded, nor indeed in all the Circuit.

I do not take any thought so long before-hand, concerning stationing ye Preachers. Sufficient for the day is the care thereof. Mr. Atlay tell's me, He has no sets of ye two last Years' Magazine. I am, with Love to S. Rodda, Dear Richard,

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother,

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. Rd. Rodda,  
At Mrs. Haws'  
in High Wycombe.

What wonderful women we meet through Wesley's letters! Nancy Bolton of Witney, it will be remembered, was one of his most regular correspondents, and one who was a thorn in Mrs. Wesley's flesh. There appear to be still a good number of Wesley letters to her unpublished, probably in a collection in private hands. Perhaps there is a reference to these or a similar batch in the letter of James Everett of 30th March 1849, transcribed from the collection of Dr. Beckerlegge:

If the *Bolton letters* are in the hands of either Messrs. Jackson or Marriott, it will be difficult to get them from them. Yet, as men of sense, they ought to know that possession does not always confer title, which their christianity, should either possess them, ought to dictate the propriety of restoring them to their proper owners.

And then there was Hannah Ball of High Wycombe, who commenced a Sunday-school there in 1769, long before Robert Raikes popularized the movement at Gloucester. There seems something almost symbolic in Wesley's commendation of Rodda for "changing the Men-leaders". Presumably the magnificent women class-leaders needed no changing! Incidentally we meet in this letter Hannah Ball's sister, of whom one would like to know more.

Two important points arise from the letter. Wesley avows that he does not try to think out stationing problems as far ahead as six

months before the time for moving. There are probably several "morals" here, but I will not attempt to apply them. And then he quotes Matthew vi. 34, or apparently misquotes it. Yet "care" is so much more appropriate than "evil". Dr. Richard Cameron, who sent me the photostat of this letter (the letter itself he has presented to the Boston University School of Theology), points out that "this is the one place in the New Testament where the Greek *kakia* can mean trouble or care", though he also notes that Wesley's own normal translation was "evil".

The other point is about the circulation of the *Arminian Magazine*. There is very little accurate information to be gained about the actual number printed, but Wesley's Book Steward is the authority here for stating that the sets of the *Arminian Magazine* for 1780 and 1781 were sold out—though there may have been some odd parts available. The purist might like to make another point of Wesley's incorrect use of "two last years". It is surprising, indeed, how much "meat" there can be in one of Wesley's pithy letters.

FRANK BAKER.

---



---

## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Liverpool Conference, 1960,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

Princes Avenue Methodist Church, Liverpool, 8,

On Wednesday, 6th July, at 7 p.m.,

BY THE

Rev. GEORGE LAWTON, M.A.

*Subject:* "SHROPSHIRE SAINT: A STUDY IN THE MINISTRY AND SPIRITUALITY OF FLETCHER OF MADELEY."

The chair will be taken by BISHOP FERDINAND SIGG, of Zurich.

---

**The Annual Meeting** of the Society will be held at the same Church at 5-30 p.m.

Mrs. Herbert Ibberson kindly invites members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom of Princes Avenue church at 4-30 p.m. It is essential that all those who desire to accept this invitation should send their names to the Rev. Cyril Cornah, 3, Rutland Avenue, Liverpool, 17 (Tel. Sefton Park 2621) not later than Monday, 4th July.

Princes Avenue church is fairly near the Conference Hall. Buses numbered 72, 73, 73A, 73B, 73C, 80, 80A, 80C, 80D, 80E and 87 all pass the church, and may be boarded opposite Lewis's in the city centre or outside the Conference Hall. Those travelling by car should leave the Conference Hall along Myrtle Street, turn right at the Children's Hospital, go along Catharine Street, and cross the traffic lights to Princes Road, which leads into Princes Avenue. The church is on the left of the Boulevard.

## WESLEY'S "JOURNAL" AND "DIARY" Conflicting Entries for 7th and 8th April 1787

### I. Text of "Diary" and "Journal"

(The reference figures in brackets are mine, and serve to indicate where the *Journal* and the *Diary* correspond.)

<i>Diary</i>	<i>Journal</i>
SATURDAY 7	Sun. 8 (being Easter Day)—I preached
4 Prayed, Mag	[3] in Bethesda [1], Mr. Smyth's new chapel. It was very neat but not gay;
7.30 tea, conversed	and, I believe, will hold about as many
9 the leaders, Mag, coach	people as West Street chapel. Mr. Smyth
11 Bethesda [1] prayers [2]	read prayers [2], and gave out the hymns,
Lu xxiv 34 [3]	which were sung by fifteen or twenty fine
communion [4]	singers; the rest of the congregation list-
2.30 conversed, dinner,	ened with much attention, and as much
prayer	devotion, as they would have done to an
4 prayed, tea	opera. But is this Christian worship?
5.30 Rom viii. 33 [5]	Or, ought it ever to be suffered in a Chris-
love-feast [6] supper,	tian Church? It was thought we had be-
prayer	tween seven and eight hundred communi-
10	cants [4]; and indeed the power of God
SUNDAY 8	was in the midst of them. Our own room
4 Mag	in the evening was well filled with people
8 tea, conversed, prayer,	[5] and with the presence of God. After-
Mag	wards we had a love-feast [6] which I
2 dinner, conversed,	suppose might have continued till mid-
prayed, Mag., prayed	night if all had spoken that were ready to
5 coach	speak.
6 Gravel W [alk], supper,	
conversed, on business	
9.45	

### II. Notes

- (1) There is no entry in the *Journal* for Saturday, 7th.
- (2) The entry in the *Diary* for Sunday, 8th April is not Sunday routine at all; the "on business" entry is typical of Saturday evening.
- (3) The entry in the *Diary* for Saturday is Sunday routine, and corresponds almost exactly with what Wesley says in the *Journal* he was doing on Sunday, 8th. The text which the *Diary* mentions is an Easter Day verse.
- (4) The obvious conclusion is that the *Journal* is right and the *Diary* has got the days reversed.

### III. Reflections

- (1) Is the *Diary* as infallible as one might expect?
- (2) How did Wesley write up his *Diary*, that this reversal of days has happened? Did he write it up day by day? Obviously not in this case, as he could not have written up the Sunday events on the Saturday night.
- (3) The above assumes that the *Diary* is printed correctly. A printer's or editor's error cannot be entirely ruled out. This can only be verified by reference to the original.
- (4) Further detailed comparison of *Diary* and *Journal* might yield interesting results.

(5) A note from Dr. Frank Baker, which must have been written about 1947, says: "It is interesting to see that in the first edition of the *Journal* for this period the entry is "Easter Day, April 7, I preached in Bethesda . . .". Whether this again is a printer's error for "8" (as corrected in the *Standard Journal*) or whether it is Wesley's own mistake on the basis of a confusion in the *Diary*, the original manuscripts alone can show.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

I cannot speak with authority about the 1787 *Diary*, but my present work on the unpublished Oxford Diaries does enable me to answer Mr. Bowmer's second question. There is no doubt that in his Oxford days Wesley did not always write up his diary every day. At times he got into a hopeless muddle about dates and days, and I have had some difficulty in sorting them out correctly. Evidence of the failure of his memory can be seen in the facsimile of the first page of the Oxford Diaries in *Journal*, i, p. 14, and footnote 2. Even such an important event as his first meeting with Varanese had failed to imprint the date upon his mind. Monday would have been 12th April (not 10th), and Friday the 16th (not 14th). In fact, Wesley first met Varanese on 20th April (see *Journal*, i, p. 16, footnote).

It is highly probable that by the time Wesley reached the age of eighty-four his memory was even more unreliable than it had been sixty years earlier, though whether he then habitually wrote his diary on the same day as the events described therein it is impossible to say. Mr. Bowmer's notes make it appear unlikely.

EDITOR.

---

*A Lively People*, the story of Methodism in Paulton, Somerset (pp. 175, 6s. 6d. post paid from the Secretary, Central Methodist Church, Paulton, Bristol) is almost unique in post-war local histories. We thought we should never again see a full-sized cloth-bound local history, and this book is indeed a return to the spacious days of long ago, the era of cheap printing and binding which has gone for ever. For, truth to tell, this book has been handsomely subsidized by a generous friend, and the author is to be congratulated both on his good fortune and on the intrinsic quality of the book he has written. For Mr. D. A. Warfield, himself a member of the Paulton society, this has obviously been a labour of love, and he has spared no pains to make his record complete. Methodism came to Paulton as long ago as 1746, so Mr. Warfield has not been short of material, and he has received expert advice and assistance from various members of our Society. There are twenty-three pages of illustrations on art paper, and the volume is fully bound with a 3-colour dust jacket. In one sense the story of Methodism in Paulton is much like the story of Methodism in countless such villages, but this book makes it seem different. Its technical production is a delight to see and handle. The skill of printer and binder has been lavished upon this volume, and until another generous benefactor appears we shall not see its like again. We hope it will have the wide sale it richly deserves.

---

The Rev. William E. Morris has written *The History of Methodism in Shrewsbury and District* (pp. 65, 5s. post paid from the author at 77, The Mount, Shrewsbury) in anticipation of the bicentenary in 1961 of Wesley's first visit to Shrewsbury. This booklet is in the best traditions of diligent research, interesting narration, and excellent production.

## UNCLE AND NEPHEW

Samuel Wesley, junr.'s comments on John

HERE and there in the *Proceedings* contributors have treated of Samuel Wesley the musician (1766-1837), Charles Wesley's younger son, and reference has been made to the religious instability of his earlier years and to John Wesley's concern for his spiritual welfare.<sup>1</sup> A glimpse of Samuel in later life is afforded by marginal notes written by him on the pages of a copy of Southey's two-volume *Life of Wesley* (second edition). The volumes, in the possession of the Rev. Wesley W. Evans, are each autographed on the title-page "S. Wesley 1829"—when Samuel was aged sixty-three.<sup>2</sup> Apparently they had been obtained "uncut", giving ample marginal writing-space, and it is unfortunate that a later owner has had them guillotine-trimmed, so that parts of the written comment have been lost.

The first note is a touchingly personal one. The writer, describing the death of Samuel Wesley the rector of Epworth, says "he passed away so peacefully and insensibly, that his children continued over him a considerable time in doubt whether or not the spirit was departed." All this Samuel underlined, and in the margin wrote, in a shaky hand not unlike the later writing of John Wesley himself: "It was the same with my Father".

The next comment has reference to the personal appearance of George Whitefield. Southey has written regarding Whitefield's "squint": "this peculiarity rather rendered the expression of his countenance more memorable, than any degree lessened the effect of its uncommon sweetness." Samuel uncompromisingly remarked: "I cannot believe this: a squint must ever be a deformity."

Concerning the Latin dialogue between John Wesley and Zinzendorf<sup>3</sup> (printed in full as an appendix to Southey's first volume), Samuel writes: "The classical reader will speedily perceive the contrast between the clumsy Latin of the German, and the neat [word cut off] phrase of the elegant Oxonian."

After quoting in full Wesley's "Rules of a Helper", Southey says: "Thus did Wesley, *who had set so bad an example of obedience* [these words underlined by Samuel], exact it from his own followers as rigidly as the founder of a monastic order." The MS. comment reads: "But his was not a wanton but a conscientious disobedience, similar to that of the three children who walked unhurt in the furnace seven times heated."

We should naturally expect Samuel Wesley the organist to take a lively interest in any account of his uncle's attitude to music in the

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxi, pp. 42-4.

<sup>2</sup> There is evidence that Samuel Wesley was acquainted with Southey's work at an earlier date, however. See *Proceedings*, v, pp. 212-13.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, ii, pp. 488-90.

service of worship. After quoting John Wesley on "the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ", Southey inserts a footnote: "Yet Wesley has noticed, that he once found at church an uncommon blessing, when he least of all expected it; namely, 'while the organist was playing a voluntary.'" By the side of this footnote Samuel has written "N.B.", and at the end of it has added "—played by Jackson, at Exeter, in the Cathedral" (where his own son, Samuel Sebastian, was afterwards organist). This Jackson, be it noted, was the composer of the much-maligned *Te Deum in F*, and also of a little-used hymn-tune, *Exeter* (No. 982 in the 1933 *Methodist Hymn-Book*).

In a later chapter Samuel shows himself critical of Methodist "enthusiasm" by reinforcing Southey's statement, apropos the lack of widespread response to Methodist preaching in Scotland, that "the new-birth of the Methodists, their instantaneous conversions, their assurance, their satisfaction, and their perfection, were justly regarded as extravagances by the Scotch as well as by the English clergy." To this Samuel has added: "And very properly so.—Long headed people like the Scotch could not be so imposed upon."

We look with interest for his comments on John Wesley's matrimonial experiences, and we are not disappointed. Southey makes only a passing reference to the affair of Grace Murray, and in fact does not mention by name the principal actors in the drama. Samuel has made haste to supply the deficiency, and has written in the margin: "The name of the young woman was Grace Murray—a very captivating subject; but Charles Wesley got her married to another man with all speed: so that she was not overburthened with delicate love.—John never . . . [remainder cut off]". His most devastating comment, reserved for Mrs. John Wesley, reflects also his own chequered relations with the opposite sex. Against the name Vizelle [sic] he has placed a †, and has written at the foot of the page: "† who proved a Devil Incarnate.—Such Ladies there are—I know"!

These and other observations, together with frequent underlinings of the text, give evidence that Southey's work was read with close attention; and we are left to lament the thoughtless action of the binder who cut into the MS. and so impaired an interesting literary relic.

ALFRED A. TABERER.

---

The first issue of the *Journal of the Cornish Methodist Historical Association* is a most ambitious cyclostyled magazine of twenty-two pages, and the editor, the Rev. Thomas Shaw, is to be warmly congratulated. In addition to a programme of summer pilgrimages, the magazine contains important articles on "The Preservation of Methodist Records", by Richard A. J. Potts, and "The Charities Act, 1960", by Baynard P. Evans. There are also two pages of a cumulative list of local histories of Methodism in Cornwall. The Association has got off to a fine start, and already our Society has gained some new members by the interest which has been stimulated. We should like to see still more county or area associations.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## Further Amendments to the Constitution

AT the recent meeting of the Executive of the Society the proposed amendments to the Constitution (see *Proceedings*, xxxii, p. 114) were discussed, and it was felt that still further amendments might be necessary. The Executive was quite convinced that the fee for Life Membership should be increased to £10 10s. (\$26), but was almost evenly divided over a suggestion that Annual Membership should be increased to 10s. (\$1.75). If indeed this latter amendment were accepted by the Annual Meeting, it would of course necessitate a further alteration in the five-yearly subscription, perhaps to £2 15s. (\$7). The Registrar pointed out that it would be a great help if the various categories of membership were given in dollars as well as in sterling, particularly in view of the fact that something more than the official rate of exchange is necessary in order to avoid losses in collection.

It was also felt that the heading "IX. Library" should be expanded thus:

The Society shall maintain a Library for the use of its members, to be administered by the Librarian in accordance with the Rules approved by the Annual Meeting of the Society. Those who wish to support this valuable institution are invited to become "Friends of the W.H.S. Library" by an annual subscription of not less than £1 1s. (\$3). Readers tickets are obtainable by non-members at the discretion of the Librarian; these cost 5s. (\$1), and are valid until 31st December in the year of purchase.

In order to prevent the abuse of associate membership by those merely wishing to use the Library, it might be desirable (a) to increase the associate membership subscription to 5s., or (b) withdraw from associate membership the privilege of using the Library, unless (c) some other alternative were suggested.

Members who intend coming to the Annual Meeting are asked to think over these matters in advance, and any who are unable to attend but who feel strongly upon them are invited to get into touch with the Secretary beforehand, outlining their point of view and any relevant suggestions.

FRANK BAKER.

The March 1960 issue of the *Epworth Witness* is of the usual high quality. The Rev. W. Le Cato Edwards contributes an article of general interest, and there are pictures of a table now installed in the entrance hall of the Old Rectory, given in memory of the wife of Bishop Ivan Lee Holt; and of the plaque which, also placed in the entrance hall, briefly records the history of the Rectory and the circumstances of its purchase and dedication in June 1957 as the property of the World Methodist Council. Other illustrations depict a Wesley letter on loan to the Rectory, and an accompanying article gives information about the letter which was not available when it was first published in the *Standard Letters*. "Friends of the Old Rectory" are enrolled at £1 per annum (or 5s. for associate membership), and application should be made to Mr. Edwards at the Epworth Old Rectory. Membership includes the regular mailing of the *Epworth Witness*.

## ERRATUM

Vol. xxxii, page 120, line 30. For "1784" read "1874"

## BOOK NOTICES

*George Whitefield's Journals.* (Banner of Truth Trust, pp. 595, 15s.)

*Evangelical Conversion in Great Britain, 1696-1845,* by F. W. B. Bullock. (Budd & Gillatt, St. Leonards on Sea, pp. xii. 287, 35s.)

In our last issue we reviewed a volume of Whitefield's sermons published by the Banner of Truth Trust. The same organization has now given us the complete text of Whitefield's *Journals*, in a handy one-volume edition, at a price (obviously subsidized) within the range of every pocket. The *Journals* were originally published in nine separate instalments between 1738 and 1747. All these were republished in one volume, "revised, corrected, and abridged", by Whitefield in 1756. Not until 1905 were they again republished, this time in the original unabridged form. Then in 1938 there was discovered, in the Library of Princeton Theological Seminary, where it had lain forgotten and unpublished, the manuscript of a further Journal covering a few months in 1744 and 1745. It was immediately transcribed and printed in an American magazine, and in this new edition of the *Journals* is made available for the first time to English readers.

This new edition reverts to Whitefield's original text for all the *Journals*, the sentences which were deleted in the abridged edition being printed in brackets. The reader is therefore able to compare the spontaneity of Whitefield's youthful thoughts with the maturer reflections of the grown man. Whitefield's *Journals* have never in this country achieved the popularity of those of Wesley; indeed, they have not been so readily accessible. They make, however, an equally fascinating narrative, of great importance to the understanding of one side of the evangelical revival. This handy volume, well printed and illustrated, should do much to revive interest in a man whose least claim to fame is that he was the "silver-tongued orator" of the Methodist movement.

Canon Bullock has given us a book which can only be described as "remarkable", not least because no Methodist has ever thought of writing it. It is an "historical and psychological enquiry" into the conversion experiences of thirty people within the period indicated in the title. Of the thirty, nine were Methodists (including John and Charles Wesley; and Hugh Bourne); and of the rest a dozen or so were either influenced by Methodism, or came into intimate association with it after their conversion. There is food for thought here! The last quarter of the book is occupied with the psychology of conversion, its relation to doctrinal belief, its validity and its value. It will be seen, therefore, that within less than three hundred pages there is much to interest the historian, the psychologist, and the theologian. We imagine, however, that Methodists (to whom it should sell like hot cakes) will value the book chiefly for its high devotional quality. It is impossible to read the experiences recorded here, so wide in their variety and told largely in the language of the persons concerned, without being drawn very near to the throne of grace. Experience and history are intertwined, for it may confidently be asserted that no assortment of thirty people (which includes such names as the Wesleys, Thomas Chalmers, John Newton and William Wilberforce) has had a greater influence upon the religious life of this country. Methodism should be proud of her share in this great work of grace, humbled by her present ineffectiveness, and recalled to her first and chief mission—"you have nothing to do but to save souls".

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

## 1042. AN ERROR IN WESLEY'S "JOURNAL".

The editor of the *Standard Journal* appends the following footnote to the entry for 5th October 1760 (iv, p. 415):

On March 6th, 1760, Wesley wrote a remarkable letter to Nicholas Gilbert respecting the action of Paul Greenwood, John Murlin, and Thomas Mitchell, who had given the sacrament at Norwich . . . and then quotes the letter.

This letter, however, is one of Charles Wesley's and not of John's, as Tyerman acknowledges (see Jackson's *Life of Charles Wesley*, ii, p. 183). The editor of the *Standard Journal* quotes it as John's.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

## 1043. THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNAL.

I hope to start the Manuscript Journal on its rounds again some time during September. Meanwhile, I shall be glad to hear from any members who would like to contribute to it, or who would like information about it. They should write to me at 15, Gordon Square, Whitley Bay, Northumberland.

JOHN C. BOWMER (MS. Journal Secretary).

## 1044. FORMATION OF A CORNISH BRANCH.

With the holding of a preliminary meeting of a few members of the Society and a general meeting of those interested in its formation, the "Cornish Methodist Historical Association: a Branch of the Wesley Historical Society" has come into being with a membership of forty-seven and a further list of sixteen who are inquiring about membership. Of the total membership, twenty-two are already members of the Wesley Historical Society or are seeking membership therein.

The officers of the branch are—President: Rev. Wilfred Wade; Vice-President: Mr. F. L. Harris, M.A.; Chairman: Rev. Dr. O. A. Beckerlegge, M.A.; Treasurer: Mr. R. A. J. Potts; Secretaries: Revs. Thomas Shaw and Baynard P. Evans. In addition to furthering the general purposes of the parent Society, the Cornish branch is arranging a programme of summer pilgrimages and winter lectures. A *Journal* is to be established. The branch membership is 2s. 6d. per annum.

At the first general meeting an address on "John Wesley in West Cornwall (illustrated by colour slides) was given by Mr. John Pearce, who made an original contribution to the study of Methodist origins in Cornwall. The speaker emphasized that "Mr. Wesley" has been remembered in the close-knit community of Penwith down to modern times, not as a figure from a book but as a person they dimly remembered.

The six weekly newspapers of the county gave valuable space to an account of the new branch, and one editorial commented that it was strange that such an association had not been formed before in what is so eminently a Methodist county.

THOMAS SHAW.

## 1045. AN EXCEPTIONAL GIFT TO OUR LIBRARY.

Our Treasurer, Mr. Sydney Walton, has been instrumental in securing a most handsome gift for our Library. The donor is Mr. R. E. Ford, of Bedford, and his gift consists of sixteen tracts and pamphlets by John Wesley, some of them first editions, and each specially bound in tooled leather. Such a gift deserves special recognition, and we are most grateful to Mr. Ford. The books will be available for examination at the Library, but members will realize that they are too valuable to be allowed out on loan by post.

EDITOR.