

# 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. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

---

---

Volume XXXIII

June 1962

---

---

### A LETTER OF GEORGE WHITEFIELD

IT is well known that John Wesley's most notable and vituperative antagonist was George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter, the author of *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd*—a vile publication that called forth, after the fashion of the day, a series of replies, and answers to the replies, and so on. It is also fairly well known that this notorious pamphlet was Lavington's revenge for a practical joke of which he was the victim.

Soon after his appointment as bishop in 1747, a practical joker, knowing Lavington's opposition to the Methodists, wrote out a pretended extract from his Charge to his clergy, in which he makes the bishop express evangelical—Methodist—convictions, calling on the clergy to "rise up with me against moral preaching", and to "preach Christ and Him crucified". The bulk of this fabrication is published in J. S. Simon's *John Wesley and the Advance of Methodism*;<sup>1</sup> but the false Charge actually concluded with a veiled approval of the Methodists:

There are some who are gone out from us, refusing to be under Political Government, and therefore no friends to the Hierarchy—of whom [sic] yet it must be said, that their preaching is right and good in the main, though the persons are immethodical in their practice.<sup>2</sup>

This was no doubt intended to be no more than a joke for the amusement of the bloods of Exeter; but unfortunately a printer got hold of it, saw that the joke would be widely appreciated, and printed and circulated it. A copy reached Charles Wesley, then in Ireland, and Charles was in ecstasies: he thought it "worthy to be written in letters of gold".<sup>3</sup>

Lavington, whose actual Charge was hostile to the Methodists, was furious, and accused Whitefield and the Wesleys as being responsible for the "false Charge". The manuscript at Lambeth, from among Bishop Lavington's papers, has the note at the end, in

<sup>1</sup> p. 122. There are unimportant verbal differences between the version there printed and the original MS. Presumably Simon quoted from the printed version.

<sup>2</sup> MS. at Lambeth Palace Library. I am indebted to the Librarian for permission to use this material.

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wesley's *Journal*, ii, p. 31.

Lavington's own hand: "N.B. All above absolutely false. G.Ex." The bishop's accusations reached the ears of the Countess of Huntingdon, who demanded and ultimately received an apology, which Selina published in the leading journals.<sup>4</sup> But it reached Whitefield as well, then in Scotland, and he wrote to an unnamed correspondent in touch with the bishop, asking him to assure Lavington of his (Whitefield's) innocence of any complicity in the distasteful joke. This letter likewise is among the Lavington papers at Lambeth (Packet 16/18):

GEORGE WHITEFIELD TO ?

Glasgow, October 5th  
1748.

Very Dear Sr,

I received yours this morning—Tho' I am engaged this Evening, yet I think it my duty to send you an immediate answer—You might well inform & *almost assure* my Lord of Exeter that I knew nothing of the printing of His Lordship's *pretended Charge*, or of the Pamphlet occasioned by it—When the former was sent to me in Manuscript from London to Bristol as His Lordship's production, I immediately said it could not be His—When I found it printed, I spoke to the *Officious Printer, who did it out of his own head*, & blamed Him very much. When I saw the pamphlet I was still more offended, repeatedly in several Companies urged the *injustice* as well as the imprudence of it, & said it would produce what it did, I mean a Declaration from His Lordship that He was no Methodist—I am sorry His Lordship had such an Occasion given Him to declare His aversion to what is called *Methodism*; and tho' I think His Lordship in His Declaration has been somewhat severe concerning *some of the Methodist Leaders*, yet I cannot blame His Lordship for saying that He thought "some of them were worse than Ignorant & Misguided", supposing His Lordship had had *sufficient proof* that they either caused to be printed, or wrote against when printed a Charge w<sup>ch</sup> His Lordship had never Owned or Published—If you think proper, Dear Sr, you may let His Lordship see the contents of this—I will only add that I wish a way could be found out whereby His Lordship & any other of the Right Reverend the Bishops, might converse with *some* of us—Many mistakes might thereby be rectified, & perhaps His Lordship's sentiments in some degree altered—If this cannot be effected, (I speak only for myself), I am content to wait till we all appear before the Great Shepherd & Bishop of Souls—In the mean while I heartily pray that His Lordship may be blessed with all spiritual blessings, & wishing you the like mercies, I subscribe myself, very Dear Sr,

Your affec: Obliged hum: Ser<sup>vt</sup>,

G. WHITEFIELD.

Lavington was not placated, in spite of Whitefield's repeated "His Lordships" (twelve of them in one short letter: Whitefield was assuredly not the man to engage in controversy with the episcopal buffoon!). In spite of his retraction to Lady Huntingdon, he still accused the Methodists of being responsible for the diffusion and printing of the "false Charge"; so that nearly four years after the original affair, John Wesley is found writing to him, rebutting the charge detail by detail (*Letters*, iii, pp. 90-1).

<sup>4</sup> Simon, op. cit., pp. 122-3.

## WESLEY F. SWIFT

### A Further Tribute

MR. HERBERT W. WHITE writes :

It was fitting that the tributes to Wesley Swift in the last number of the *Proceedings* should have been written by those whose names are household words in Methodism. May I as one of the younger members of the Society add a tribute on behalf of my own generation.

I first met Wesley Swift when in 1951 he paid a visit to his old college at Richmond. He was engaged in research on the *Sunday Service of the Methodists*, and it was characteristic of him that he should find time to look up one of the students who had made his first attempt to write on Methodist history in the College magazine. When he had completed his research in the College library he relaxed for a while, sharing the warmth of his personality in our tea club.

From that time onwards he has always taken an interest in any pieces of historical research which I have tried to do. Inquiries always elicited prompt replies; encouragement, advice and sound constructive criticism were always readily given.

A few days before he died he found time to spend a couple of hours with me in his office at Epworth House. He had read some manuscripts of mine which had been intended as newspaper articles, but in the course of the conversation we had he encouraged me to undertake a wider study. The subject was one dear to his heart, and as a result I am now engaged in a study of the influence of the Book of Common Prayer on Methodist history and worship. When the work is done, and what proves to be a story of considerable interest is complete, I shall greatly miss the help and counsel of Wesley Swift, who would have been so ready to read the manuscript and to offer help from the wealth of his knowledge and encouragement from the warmth of his heart.

---

*The Methodist Conference Handbook 1962* devotes generous space to historical matters. As it will be the first time that Conference has met at Stoke-on-Trent since Methodist Union, an account of the beginnings and growth of Methodism in that district is welcome. No contributor could complain of lack of material; and within the limits imposed by the size of such a handbook, each writer has done well. Leonard Brown writes on "Methodism in the Potteries—origin and growth", and elucidates that somewhat surprising remark in John Wesley's *Journal*, "I reached Burslem, where we had the first society in the country". The origins of Primitive Methodism are worthily recorded. There are also short articles dealing with the towns which make up the Potteries, with the University of Keele, and with notable Methodist centres of today. William J. Roberts writes on "Methodism in Chester" and on "English Methodism in North Wales". Ralph C. Noble gives an account of "Methodism in Cheshire". We are pleased to see that this year's Conference handbook gives a worthy notice of our Society's Lecture and lecturer. Altogether, it is a handbook which itself makes history in its own series.

## THE "ILLUSTRIOUS VULGAR" IN JOHN WESLEY'S SERMONS

(Continued from page 62)

### III. Familiar Standard English

Most of the terms brought together in this section have a familiar conversational tone. Some readers may be surprised to find them in the published sermons of a Fellow of Oxford. Yet nearly all these terms have good dictionary status, which is itself a surprise to some. Wesley's homiletic style is not the take-it-or-leave-it variety. His sermons are far from the impersonal, conventionalized essay type. All the same, his vigorous conversational vocabulary is to a large extent within the limits of standard English. The study of these terms and expressions, of which our selection is but a sample of a great store, is just as important as the study of his slang and colloquial expressions for an appreciation of the terseness, strength and colour of his style. The selected terms are loosely grouped to indicate aspects of human life, of religion, and of literary idiom.

#### (a) *Familiar terms relating to people.*

"Blockheads" (vii, p. 459). The people so described were university men. Some of them were clergy. "Voluntary blockheads" are drones—men ignorant at the fount of learning through sheer laziness. Wesley's bluntness is colossal. It offended current notions of good taste, even if, in some cases, its truthfulness was indisputable. Elsewhere (vii, p. 414) we find Wesley reporting the word as used in contemptuous common speech. (L. and W.)

"Death-heads" (v, p. 287). Wesley here reports the world's easy-going extrovert judgement upon Christian seriousness. "A death's head upon a mopstick", Grose tells us, was a vulgar figure of speech meaning "to look as pleasant as the pains of death". The context of the Wesley passage under consideration is full of similar allusions to humanity. Wesley often displays something of the brusqueness of Jonathan Swift. (S.o.)

"Dolt" (vii, p. 302). Few eighteenth-century preachers would risk calling their hearers "dolt, fool, madman", but Wesley does not seem to hesitate. Of course, he might have claimed the precedent of Shakespeare's "Asses, fools, dolts" in *Troilus and Cressida*. The word "dolt" is, true enough, standard English. The *Dictionary of the Canting Crew* may be in error, as Partridge thinks, in classing "dolt-head" as colloquial. We ourselves should not be in error in thinking that such terms nearly always had a tone which was considered unsuitable to the pulpit. (S.o.)

"Herd" (vi, p. 351). Wesley's hatred of Calvinism was equalled only by his loathing of antinomianism, and so, when he writes of "the whole herd of Antinomians", we easily detect the note of disparagement. Yet this usage of the term is quite correct, although it strikes an offensive note to those who are unused to such a blunt, familiar pulpit style. (S.o.)

"Jade, lazy" (vii, p. 250). The vivid echo of life at Epworth here recorded contains several homely phrases, including this one, which is italicized: "be gone for a lazy jade". How much terser is this than some fashionable pulpit circumlocution! Wesley was himself most courteous to women. The fact that he records this reprobatory expression, which, one feels, for all his bluntness he would never himself have used of any woman, strengthens his indictment of the conduct he is censuring. (S.o.)

"Loose women" (vi, p. 166). The timid would-be philanthropist utters his fears regarding the risks of trying to help prostitutes, the course which Wesley is advocating, in the words "by taking up loose women I should expose myself to temptation." The expression "loose women" borders on the colloquial, although it is less offensive than "woman of the town", which is to be found in the *Letters and Journal*. The words "take up" have in this connexion a suspicion of a blush about them, which Wesley, with the objectivity of the true reporter, does not squirm at reproducing. (S.o.)

"Lubbers, lordly" (vii, p. 413). Certain slang usages apart, the word "lubber" is good old English, and in Wesley's day had not yet become archaic. But it was contemptuous. To suggest that wealthy Americans are only one remove from the obese Chinese mandarin is surely a strange piece of exaggerated sarcasm. The term "lubberland" meaning "paradise of ease" was in common use, proverbially and otherwise, round about the middle of the eighteenth century. The adjective "lubberly" is to be found in the *Journal*, iv, p. 310. (W.)

"Squalling" (vii, p. 93). The general verdict upon this word would be that it is slang, and the urge to place it in that category is strong. But there is no authority for doing so. "Squall", the verb, was used of children's crying as far back as Pope's time. Still, the term "squalling" has a grating sound which ill befits it for pulpit use. The *O.E.D.* gives this Wesley reference as an example. It is one of the earliest literary instances extant of the familiar use in relation to the crying of children, and it may well be the only instance to be found in contemporary sermonic literature. (S.o.)

"Touched" (v, p. 468). Another example of the fact that all is not slang that sounds like slang. To be "touched in the head" derives from the use of the term for "tainted" or "affected". Wesley is saying that even those who believe religious enthusiasm to be a kind of madness have to agree that it affects only the head. Still, the fact that several eighteenth-century writers place the word "touched" (= crazy) in inverted commas suggests a colloquial usage, and it is so classed by Farmer and Henley. (W.)

(b) *Familiar terms applied to religion.*

A discussion of the jargon (no offence!) of the Revival, i.e. of the semi-technical terminology which circulated in the several "connexions", is not here in place. The terms here dealt with are, with one

exception, everyday speech, but speech which Wesley uses, or else condemns, in some distinctive way in his literary work.

"Cross" (vi, p. 300 and frequently). The term had become almost a colloquialism for any kind of annoyance, but in evangelical circles it expressed the notion of trials seen in a religious light. Wesley used the term scores of times, for the most part thoughtfully. He inveighs against its glib use (cf. Sermons, vii, p. 13), but on occasion he falls into familiar usage, as in Sermons, vii, p. 74. (*L., J. and W.*)

"Dear" (vii, p. 294). Wesley mentions the word here only to condemn its popular use upon the lips of religious people. Anything which smacked of mystical sweetness and lusciousness he thoroughly disliked. Charles occasionally came under his lash in this connexion. John states that he never used this word "dear" in his preaching, and we may add that it is seldom used in his writings. The whole drift of this essay indicates that he prefers the tang of the colloquial to the syrup of the sentimental. When he does use the word "dear", as in Sermons, vi, p. 432, it is with a tinge of sarcasm, or with tone of irony. (*W.*)

"Effusion" (vii, p. 30). Wesley's instance of the term with a figurative sense is an early example of such usage. The word came to have a contemptuous tone when used of human utterance, especially when applied to extempore prayer. Here it is used of psalm-singing, and of course is free from any such stigma. At the same time it may be noticed as an example of Wesley's flair for picking upon words which in time develop a slangy or colloquial tone. (*S.o.*)

"Fig leaves" (v, pp. 102, 443). It is explicable that one versed in scripture should liken human pretences in the sight of God to fig leaves. The former reference, certainly, is based on Genesis iii. At the same time, the expression would gain in point from slangy and colloquial associations. To "fig-out" and "in full fig", for instance, both carry the suggestion of a kind of "top show". In *Works*, x, p. 209, we find an allusion to a subtle but shallow presentation of the doctrine of election in this way, and Wesley leaves us in no doubt that that doctrine is, in his view, not worth a fig. (*W.*)

"Flesh and blood" (vi, p. 309). When not used of human relationship, this phrase nearly always conveys the notion of frailty or weakness, as in our own usage in such expressions as "it is more than flesh and blood can stand". Wesley here employs one of his favourite parentheses—"as one speaks". This does not indicate quotation, but reflects his dialogue method: he was good at putting words into people's mouths, and into the mouths of his lay-figures. However, the phrase is common idiom, although we could hardly say that it was used idiomatically in the phrase "soul of flesh and blood". But how forcefully, by this idiomatic paradox, does he hit off the weakness of the flesh-and-blood men. The soul is the never-dying element of personality, and not a thing of flesh and blood; to have a flesh-and-blood soul is thus to have no soul at all in the Christian sense. (*S.o.*)

"Home, called" (vi, p. 329). When Wesley speaks of dying as "going home", as he often does, he is echoing the scripture. But the expression "called home" is nearer to colloquial speech. "Gone home" is downright colloquial. When Wesley wished to convey the notion of death in the emphatic sense of meeting one's fate, or gaining one's reward, he frequently referred to "the call", or said that the person was "called". In the passage given it is Luther's death which is alluded to, and it is interesting to notice that only five lines later we find the conventional phrase "whereof Luther died". (S.o.)

"Lowness of spirits" (vi, p. 501, etc.). Wesley had little patience with this "unmeaning phrase", as he calls it. In another sermon (vi, p. 431) he says that he has never been low-spirited. The phrase was customarily used very loosely. The *S.O.E.D.* dates it, as meaning "dejected", from 1753. But this very usage is to be found in the *Journal* (ii, p. 241) as early as 1739. The state of dejection or unhappiness which is there mentioned is due, we read, to ignorance of God. That was his state once, he tells us on the very page where he claims never to have been low-spirited! (J. and W.)

"Rant", "ranting", "ranter" (vi, p. 126; v, p. 149; vi, p. 106). Many people think of these terms as self-evident slang. In fact, they all have good status in the dictionaries. Nevertheless, in common speech they were often anything but dignified. The *O.E.D.* uses this Wesley instance of "ranting" as a participial adjective, but although it is correct in such a phrase as "wild, ranting Antinomians", it is more than merely derogatory. "Ranter" as a (proper) nickname was rare in the middle period of the eighteenth century. Its application, later on, to the Primitive Methodists is given in the great dictionaries as standard English. (L.)

"World, the other" (v, p. 226, etc.) In each place where this expression occurs it is linked with some such remark as "as we usually term it". In this particular reference italics are used. In several sermons (e.g. vii, p. 142) we find the homely parallel phrase "better world", and elsewhere (e.g. vii, p. 507) "better life". It comes as a surprise to those who are familiar with Wesley's vocabulary to find the date 1884 given in the *S.O.E.D.* for the phrase "other world". Should it not be dated at least one hundred years earlier? It reads in Wesley like an everyday expression. (S.o.)

(c) *Familiar terms having some literary interest.*

"Gape" (vii, p. 390). A robust and colourful monosyllable. Note that here it is a substantive, and that it relates not to a person, but to the sudden emergence of a yawning chasm in the earth. This instance of an impersonal usage is earlier than those offered in most dictionaries. (S.o.)

"Go down" (vii, p. 470). Partridge ranks this, as a synonym for "palatable" or "mentally acceptable", as colloquial from about the middle of the nineteenth century. When Wesley states that plausible perverters of Christian truth can so serve up their doctrines as

to make them "go down the more easily" he makes his point in the absolutely unambiguous language of the street. (S.o.)

"Hanged, I'll be" (vii, p. 434). The modern reader may be astonished to find such an expletive in a Wesley sermon even if he is not surprised that it is reported as used by an aristocratic lady. It may have been slang in the eighteenth century. Partridge gives it, without date, as familiar standard English. It may be open to question whether there is not more of John Wesley than of Mrs. Hill in the dialogue. But, whether or not, it is indicative of Wesley's pulpit taste. (S.o.)

"Ho!", etc. (vi, p. 303). Wesley's sermons contain hundreds of exclamatory passages in the style of dramatized speech. Only the shorter expressions concern us at this point. The formal, drolling homilist shivers at such gallery tricks as "Awake!", "Consider!", "Ho!", "Stop!", and "What!". Wesley feels that there is a place for startling men into the awareness of the dangers of spiritual drowsiness. (S.o.—but similar expressions occur in all Wesley's works.)

"Murder" (vii, p. 75). Wesley frequently told people not to "murder themselves". This instance is outstandingly blunt. To tell people who feel tired that they are murdering themselves by taking more rest than hitherto may or may not be medically sound, but there is no doubt that it is slangy from the literary point of view. (L., J. and W.)

"Penny-a-piece" (vii, p. 9). It would have done just as well if he had written "at a penny each", but his "penny-a-piece" is a degree more familiar, and suits the tone of this sermon, in which occur numerous things of a similar kind. (S.o.)

"Picture of" (vii, pp. 146, 405, etc.). The expression occurs five times in this volume of sermons. Two of these instances have affinities with popular speech, recalling the proverbial "speech is the picture of the mind". A colloquial use akin to the expression "picture of health" occurs in the *Journal*. In the references given here the expression veers towards the colloquial. (J.)

"Plain English" (vi, p. 214). When a man says that he is resorting to "plain English" we usually expect something disagreeable to follow. On the only two occasions when Wesley apologizes for his bluntness in using "plain English" he does so to express an unpalatable truth. The antiquity of these truths he establishes by Latin quotation, but lest the point be masked thereby, he turns it into the vulgar tongue. (W.)

"Short, the" (vi, p. 204). The word "short" meaning "in a nutshell" has survived only in dialect. It may have been standard English in Wesley's day. The *S.O.E.D.* gives an unidentified Wesley passage as an instance—it may well be this very instance, although the phrase "the short of the matter is this" occurs also in *Works*, xi, p. 398 and elsewhere. (L., J. and W.)

"*Spectaculum Deo Dignum*" (vi, p. 236). Wesley quotes the Latin original of a phrase which, when used ironically as "a sight for the gods", was colloquial. In another sermon (vii, p. 499) we

find the English phrase, but not given as a quotation. Here it seems to have slipped out as a cliché, for it was a very rare thing indeed for Wesley to say that anything human is worthy to be seen of God. (*J.*)

"Storm, take by" (vi, p. 444). The vigour of the expression is obvious, and Wesley could have justified its use by reference to Matthew xi. 12. But "to take by storm" had not, in the eighteenth century, freed itself from military associations. In the following century it became newspaper slang. Perhaps Wesley's parenthetical "as it were" indicates that he was aware that the phrase was gravitating towards popular figurative usage. (*J.*)

"Table, kept a" (vii, p. 413). A perfectly idiomatic use, but Wesley charges it with irony. This "keep" is not far removed from that in such expressions as "keeping up appearances". The thought of the hollowness beneath much of the outward show of life is very much in Wesley's mind throughout this sermon. (*S.o.*)

#### IV. Wesley's style in perspective

It is needful to see the aspect of style with which this essay is concerned in perspective, and to observe its limits. For example, it must be kept in mind that there is hardly an item of dialect in all these sermons. Whether or not Wesley dropped into dialect in his preaching (and the probability is that he did so but rarely), he certainly wrote his sermons for a nation-wide public.

Again, the omission from the sermons of some colloquialisms which he was fond of using in his *Letters* and in the *Journal* suggests that he had his standards, or at least his likes and dislikes, regarding what was appropriate in a plain homiletic style. It may seem to some critics that he was inconsistent in upholding propriety and pureness as elements in style whilst admitting as much homely speech as he did. The fact is that such expressions as the following are excluded: "bawled out", "Blacks" (negroes), "blessed", "bluster", "break his head", "browbeat", "coxcorn", "cui bono", "face me down", "father upon", "flowers" (i.e. flowery—often vulgar—language), "fly in pieces", "friend" (ironical), "heap", "lick-spittle", "pretty", "spinning out", "stuff and nonsense", "swad-dler", and so on.

Wesley avowed a plain style—but it was not so plain as to exclude classical, topical, scientific and literary references, and some foreign phrases. Wesley is a difficult man to classify. The "illustrious vulgar" element, though extensive, is only one element. It is remarkably intermixed with biblical language, with the technical terminology of Christian theology, with some of the resounding language of Augustan literature, and with the vocabulary of the university don. Indeed, the sermons contain features, in the realm of vocabulary especially, which are hard to reconcile with his advice to others regarding homiletic style, and also with his own claims. The Oxford scholar, although very often reading and writing as he ran, could not contain himself within the limits of so-called "plain English".

GEORGE LAWTON.

## JOHN WESLEY'S ORDINATIONS

SINCE Dr. Frank Baker listed Wesley's ordinations in *Proceedings*, xxiv, pp. 76 ff., a few more facts have come to light. This article, whilst dependent to a large degree on Dr. Baker's contribution, seeks to incorporate all the recent findings in this sphere. I am also indebted to the late Rev. Wesley F. Swift, who in a letter sent a list of ordination certificates he had discovered at the Book-Room.

Most of Wesley's ordinations took place at approximately 5 a.m. The Diary entry reads: "4. prayed. ordained." The exceptions which we know are J. Barber's ordination to Deacon, which was some time after 10-30 a.m., and to Elder, which took place at 3-30 a.m. J. Cownley's to Deacon was in the evening; and the ordinations of Rankin and Moore took place at 9 a.m. on the 25th February 1789 and 8-30 a.m. on the 27th February.

The ordinations of Whatcoat and Vasey took place at Mr. Castleman's, 6, Dighton Street, King's Square, Bristol. (See *Proceedings*, ix, p. 147.)

Wesley did not always record his ordinations, as for instance that of Atmore. There may therefore have been others which may one day come to light.

H. EDWARD LACY.

| Name                         | Place     | Deacon  | Elder          | Standard Journal    |
|------------------------------|-----------|---|----------------|---------------------|
| R. Whatcoat                  | Bristol   | 1st Sept. 1784                                      | 2nd Sept. 1784 | Vol. vii, p. 15     |
| T. Vasey                     | "         | "   | "              | "                   |
| T. Coke                      | Bristol   | Superintendent [sic]<br>2nd Sept. 1784 (see note 1) |                | Vol. vii, p. 151    |
| J. Pawson                    | London    | 1st Aug. 1785                                       | 2nd Aug. 1785  | Vol. vii, p. 101    |
| T. Hanby                     | "         | "   | "              | "                   |
| J. Taylor                    | "         | "   | "              | "                   |
| R. Johnson                   | Edinburgh | (See note 2)  | 27th May 1786  |                     |
| Mr. Ha . . .<br>(See note 3) | "         |   | "              |                     |
| J. Keighley                  | Bristol   | 28th July 1786                                      | 29th July 1786 | Vol. vii, pp. 192-3 |
| W. Warrener                  | "         | "   | "              | "                   |
| W. Hammett                   | "         | "   | "              | "                   |

## NOTES

1—Wesley presumably used his own forms of ordination service for Deacons, Elders and Superintendents, which were based on those in the Anglican Ordinal for Deacons, Presbyters and Bishops respectively. To that extent his ordination of Coke is similar to the consecration of a bishop.

2—R. Johnson was ordained Deacon by Coke, 24th October 1785. (*Proceedings*, xxiv, 79. Primary source?)

3—"Mr. Ha . . ." is an unidentified preacher. He is unlikely to be either Hanby or Hammett.

4—This is information which has not appeared before in the *Proceedings*. It was supplied by the Rev. Wesley F. Swift.

5—Mather was also ordained Superintendent. The evidence for this and a full treatment of it is given by the Rev. A. Raymond George in the *London Quarterly Review*, April 1951, p. 163.

6—Rankin was a supernumerary in London at the time of his ordination. (*Proceedings*, ix, p. 153.)

7—An assumption was made by Dr. Frank Baker (*Proceedings*, xxiv, p. 80) that Wesley used the word Presbyter instead of Elder in the ordination certificates of Moore and Rankin (so making a deliberate change) to indicate that they were for the English work. This assumption would now appear to be incorrect. In the certificate of R. Johnson also the word Presbyter occurs. It is true that Johnson's certificate is not in Wesley's own handwriting, but it is nevertheless signed by Wesley himself.

| Other authorities   | Destination  | Certificate<br>(D=Deacon; E=Elder)   |
|---|--------------|--|
| <i>Proceedings</i> , ix, p. 145 f.  | America      | D ?<br>E Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , x, pp. 65-6                                |
| "   | "            | D ?<br>E See <i>Proceedings</i> , xxxii, p. 63                                 |
|   | America      | At the Mission House, London.<br>Facsimile, <i>Journal</i> , vii, p. 16        |
|   | Scotland     | D ?<br>E ?   |
|   | "            | D ?<br>E ?   |
|   | "            | D ?<br>E ?   |
| Letter of Pawson to Atmore,<br><i>Proceedings</i> , xii, p. 107                                     | Scotland     | D ?<br>E At the Book-Room, London.   |
| Letter of Pawson to Atmore,<br><i>Proceedings</i> , xii, p. 107; also<br><i>ibid.</i> , xxiv, p. 79 | "            | D ?<br>E ?   |
|   | Scotland     | D ?<br>E ?   |
|   | Antigua      | D ?<br>E At the New Room, Bristol.<br>Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , xviii, p. 112 |
|   | Newfoundland | D ?<br>E ?   |

| Name                      | Place      | Deacon            | Elder          | Standard Journal   |
|---------------------------|------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| C. Atmore                 | Bristol    | No known evidence | 29th July 1786 |  |
| J. Clarke                 | "          |                   | "              |  |
| D. McAllum                | Manchester | 3rd Aug. 1787     | 4th Aug. 1787  | Vol. vii, p. 307<br>(No names given: "ordained four".)             |
| A. Suter                  | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| J. Wray                   | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| J. Harper                 | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| J. Barber                 | Glasgow    | 18th May 1788     | 19th May 1788  |  |
| J. Cownley                | Newcastle  | 3rd June 1788     | 4th June 1788  | Vol. vii, p. 395   |
| R. Gamble                 | London     | 3rd Aug. 1788     | 5th Aug. 1788  | Vol. vii, pp. 421-2<br>(Again no names are given: "ordained six".) |
| T. Owens                  | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| M. Lumb                   | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| J. Bogie                  | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| W. M'Cornock              | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| B. Pearce                 | "          | "                 | "              |  |
| A. Mather<br>(See note 5) | London     | 6th Aug. 1788     | 7th Aug. 1788  |  |
| H. Moore                  | London     | 25th Feb. 1789    | 27th Feb. 1789 | Vol. vii, pp. 471-2  |
| T. Rankin<br>(See note 6) | "          | "                 | "              | "  |

| Other authorities   | Destination  | Certificate<br>(D = Deacon; E = Elder)  |
|---|--|---|
| Tyerman, iii, p. 441.<br>Atmore's Diary.<br><i>Proceedings</i> , xxiv, pp. 79-80<br><i>W.M. Magazine</i> , 1845, p. 106 | Scotland   | D ?<br>E Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , x, p. 158   |
|   | Nova Scotia  | D ?<br>E ?  |
| See <i>Proceedings</i> , ix, p. 150<br>See <i>ibid.</i> , xxiv, p. 80<br>for proof of identity.                         | Scotland   | D ? (See note 4)<br>E Original at the Book-Room.<br>Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , xxiv, p. 47            |
|   | "  | D ? (See note 4)<br>E Original at the Book-Room.  |
|   | Nova Scotia  | D ?<br>E ?  |
|   | St. Eustatius,<br>West Indies  | D ?<br>E Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , xv, p. 34<br>Original, Wafford College, USA                       |
|   | Scotland   | D ?<br>E ?  |
|   | Scotland   | D ?<br>E ?  |
| See <i>Proceedings</i> , xxiv, pp. 78<br>and 103, for an attempt to<br>name the six.                                    | West Indies  | D Original at the Book-Room.<br>(See note 4)<br>E Original at the Book-Room.                          |
|   | "  | D Original at the Book-Room.<br>E ?   |
|   | "  | D Original at Centenary, York.<br>E Original at the Book-Room.<br>Copy, Eayrs, p. 280.                |
|   | Scotland   | D ?<br>E Copy, <i>Proceedings</i> , xvii, p. 121.<br>Original at Richmond College.                    |
|   | West Indies?<br>(See <i>Proceedings</i> , ix, p. 52,<br>also <i>Minutes</i> , i<br>(1812), p. 216) | D ?<br>E ?  |
|   |  | D ?<br>E ?  |
|   | England  | D ?<br>E ?  |
|   | England  | D ?<br>Facsimile, <i>Journal</i> , vii, p. 505.<br>(See note 7)<br>E Original at Wesley Coll., Leeds. |
|   | "  | D ? (See note 7)<br>E Original at the Book-Room.  |

## WESLEY'S CHRISTOLOGY

[The following article, commissioned by our late editor, will be appreciated by the more theologically-minded among our readers.—EDITOR.]

IT is rumoured that one result of this doctoral dissertation<sup>1</sup> submitted to the University of Basle has been to make Karl Barth read Wesley with great avidity. This is readily understandable, and one can only hope that Methodists at home and abroad may follow his example. The choice of the theme is significant; with the exception of David Lerch's book (*Heil und Heiligung bei John Wesley*, Zürich, 1941), to which proper attention and tribute is paid, one can think of no single important treatment of Wesley's Christology in our current century. The prejudice still lingers that there is no proper and original theology in Wesley, though Colin Williams's recent work [reviewed in *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 168-9—EDITOR] should be sufficient answer to this; and his Christology presents the additional difficulty that it is, as Dr. Deschner admits from the outset, "not, for the most part, unique; it is part of an ecumenical stream of Christological tradition". Moreover, as a glance at the scanty and scattered material shows, it is essentially a matter of "the presupposed Christ". But without this presupposition the phenomenon of Wesley the preacher and evangelist cannot be understood. The task is, therefore, "to show that Wesley's Christology really is the presupposition, not the appendix, to his theology"; and the author states his "conviction that an explicit examination of Wesley's great presupposition can lead to clarification and even correction of preaching in the present-day Wesleyan tradition".

In systematizing the material and making the implicit explicit "the Christological fragments are approached with an explicit question—with a system of co-ordinates, so to speak—and are tested for conformity to or divergence from this organizing principle. The scheme chosen is one of generalized Protestant orthodoxy, more or less common to the Lutheran, Reformed, and Anglican Christological traditions." By this route we arrive at "the characteristic emphases and tensions of Wesleyan Christology". Consequently the book follows the traditional pattern of the Person, States and Work of Christ, and more specifically the prophetic, kingly and priestly work. "Wesley is not merely content here to affirm his agreement with classical doctrine. He needs and uses the doctrine of the three offices, and indeed for his leading theological interests. When he wishes to talk about the work of Christ, this is his habitual formula."

This method has its obvious limitations—the limitations of "generalized Protestant orthodoxy" itself. Dr. Deschner himself says at a crucial point (the doctrine of Holy Communion): "at this touchstone of the Lutheran-Reformed controversy, Wesley will not give solid satisfaction to either side." The scholastic categories of seventeenth-century confessionalism, still prominent at least in contemporary German debate, can at times conceal as much as reveal the grandeur of what George Croft Cell (curiously absent from this book) called "the Luther-Calvin-Wesley faith". And, on the other hand, it may be too sweeping a claim for this "Reformed" reading of Wesley when we are told that at Aldersgate "the theology of his student days, of his teaching days and the Holy Club at Oxford . . . was cut off its old tree and grafted on to a new one".

<sup>1</sup> *Wesley's Christology: An Interpretation*, by John Deschner. (Southern Methodist University Press, Dallas, Texas, \$4.50.)

But there is also virtue in limitation. This is evident from Dr. Deschner's deliberate concentration on Wesley's *Notes upon the New Testament* as his primary source: "because the character of this book is peculiarly suited to illumine Wesley's presuppositions . . . because Wesley is a thoroughgoing Biblicist and appeals to the Bible for support and correction" and because "an authoritative limiting principle lies at hand in the notion of the 'standard Wesley'." Let this reviewer frankly confess that, having spent some years studying and teaching the *Notes*, he is now left with the conviction that he does not know them at all as he ought to know; and that is the measure of Dr. Deschner's achievement. For one's future studies an index of scriptural passages would appear highly desirable, and maybe we can hope for that in the next edition. There is also a need for expanding the all-too-brief statements on Wesley's exegetical principles ("the heart of revelation is scripture, but Wesley's energetic biblicism is tempered by a certain common-sense hermeneutics", etc.).

In the "Comment" at the end of each chapter and in the "Summary Conclusion" of the book the findings are concisely summarized. One would have to quote these passages in full to do justice to them, and in any case they ought to be read and judged from the text itself rather than from the review. The author states plainly at the end that "Wesley has been read, as far as possible, according to his *intention*"; this means that more than once when "Wesley offers no explicit answer to this question, there are elements which can be developed into an answer, consistent with his intention", and that in this undertaking the characteristic counter-check must recur: "Is the above . . . an illegitimate expression of Wesley's own principles?" We are thus at several points inevitably and avowedly taken beyond Wesley. For instance: "Does it do violence to Wesley to say that Christ's subordination is a safeguard against thinking that Christ is some universal principle of revelation or eternal law?" This, one would suspect at least from the formulation, if not the orientation, is reading Wesley through Barthian spectacles; so is the identification of the law with Christ's risen humanity ("Christ's fate is the law's fate"), the desire for "taking the law more seriously than Wesley does", and the charge against Wesley of "radically underemphasizing a final satisfaction of God's positive justice". Wesley's failure to take positive account of the active obedience of Christ in his doctrine of sanctification is significantly corrected by reference to "the Anselmic tradition, represented in Protestant orthodoxy", so that "a powerful safeguard is at hand against that separating of God's attributes of mercy and justice which threatens Wesley's theology at more than one point."

Here the "two-sidedness" of Wesley comes into view: his moralistic side versus the evangelical. Dr. Deschner rightly contends that "this evangelical side rules the intention of his theology", and that in the light of it Wesley's writings are to be read "as manifestations of a theological conversion", "The direction of Wesley's development is not from grace to works, but just the reverse, from works to a transforming, sanctifying grace, and in that he contradicts his age." But precisely because of this the corrective of the defects in his doctrine of sanctification—"his most significant departure . . . from the cross to holiness"—must come from another quarter; not merely from the active obedience of Christ enabling the believer to fulfil the law, but from the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. "The great unifying theme is not, after all [!], the law and its fulfilment; it is rather the merit of Christ." And it is only through the Holy Spirit that this merit is "distributed"—only through the third Person of the

Blessed Trinity that our participation in Christ's active and passive righteousness is made possible. Dr. Deschner charges that "Wesley never developed this doctrine's hint", and that consequently "Wesley did not provide his societies with a doctrine of the church". Surely a glance at Charles Wesley would refute the charge; it would show the whole wealth of the positive meaning of "in Christ", the centrality of the high-priestly office of the Christus Intercessor, and the on-going, unfinished work of the Spirit which is the indispensable other side to the "once-for-all of Christ's obedience". "If ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law"—that note is missing. Of course Charles Wesley admittedly is not the subject of the book, but even in John the "relative priority of the priestly work" might have emerged still more clearly if the book had followed the natural and original Wesleyan order, moving from the priestly to the prophetic and kingly offices: Wesley "can be read in a decidedly more evangelical light if the priestly office becomes the starting point for understanding the others". Then the casual treatment of the sacrament and the omission of all references to the problem of the eucharistic sacrifice would have been avoided and the place of the Epistle to the Hebrews with the ascension "as the ground of our being in Christ" could not have remained in doubt.

However, it would be quite ungracious and ungrateful to end on a critical note. It is only because Dr. Deschner has given us so much that we feel tempted, in true Wesleyan fashion, "and humbly ask for more". One day we must have the Pneumatology of John and Charles in a new systematic presentation. That we have the Christology now is a tremendous step forward in the recovery of our theological heritage and a solid reason for thankfulness.

FRANZ HILDEBRANDT.

---

## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Stoke-on-Trent Conference, 1962,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

**Hamil Road Methodist Church, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent,**

**On Wednesday, 4th July, at 7-30 p.m.,**

BY THE

**Rev. ARTHUR D. CUMMINGS.**

*Subject: "PORTRAIT IN POTTERY."*

The chair will be taken by MR. ALLEN DINSDALE, M.Sc.

---

**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 Hamil Road 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. G. T. Hodgson, 17, Woodland Avenue, High Lane, Burslem, Stoke-on-Trent (Tel. Stoke-on-Trent 88251) not later than Monday, 2nd July.

Hamil Road church is about one mile from the Conference Hall. On leaving the Hall turn left, continue to the traffic lights and some 200 yards beyond, as far as the bus stop adjoining the Trustee Savings Bank. All buses from here stop at Hamil Road church (fare 2½d.).

## THE WILL OF ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY (1752-1818)

THE name of Robert Carr Brackenbury, squire of Raithby Hall, Lincolnshire, friend and companion of John Wesley, magistrate, philanthropist, poet, and above all Methodist preacher, is well known to Methodist historians, mainly because of his great work in the Channel Islands, in Dorset and in his native Lincolnshire. Equally well known is the fact that, because of his almost fanatical modesty, he expressed the wish before he died that nothing should be written about him after his death. The result was that his widow appears to have destroyed any material that would have proved useful to future biographers and historians. Little is known of Brackenbury's life, especially before his meeting with John Wesley in 1776. Many writers have referred to Brackenbury in works on Wesley and Methodism, but no one, as far as I can discover, has examined his will, which is preserved in the Lincolnshire Archives Office.

The will was proved in the Consistory Court of Lincoln on 14th December 1818 by Sarah Brackenbury (formerly Sarah Holland of Loughborough), the testator's widow and executrix. She testified that the whole of his personal estate at the time of his death did not amount to £9,000. The will had been made on 16th May 1816, "republished" on 14th October 1816, and a codicil was added on 6th July 1818. Brackenbury died on 11th August in the same year.

The preamble to the will, very different from the usual ones of this date, gives some indication of the type of man Brackenbury was. It is here quoted in full:

First I give my Soul into the Hands of God the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost, blessed for evermore, who has created, redeemed and in some small measure sanctified it for an Habitation for the glorious and ineffable Trinity for ever, humbly trusting in the alone Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ for the Pardon of my innumerable offences, and for my present and everlasting salvation.

And my body I commit to the Earth in Hopes of a Resurrection therefrom when the Lord cometh, and of its being reunited to my Soul in Order to their mutual and consummate Felicity in Eternal Life.

Brackenbury's first bequest was to his wife, who was to have all his property in the Isle of Portland, Loughborough and Charnwood Forest. She was also to have his rights in a contract, not completed at the time of his making his will, between himself and Messrs. Benjamin Codd, senior and junior, concerning a freehold estate in Aubrey Gap and Pinfold Gate in Loughborough, "late the property of the Earl of Moira's Trustees". When Brackenbury "republished" his will on 14th October 1816, it was to add a note to the effect that this estate had now been conveyed to him.

The Manor and Advowson of Aswardby, Langton and Sausthorpe (all near to Raithby), Brackenbury left to his fourth brother, Richard, from whom many of the present members of the Brackenbury family descend, was, like Robert, a Methodist. Before his

conversion, on several occasions, Captain Richard sent drummers and fifers to disturb his brother's congregations. He was later converted, due to Robert's influence, and was for many years a class leader and local preacher. He died in 1844, aged 85.<sup>1</sup> In addition to the Aswardby estate, Richard received other properties in Ingoldmells, Burgh le Marsh, Halton Holgate and Hundleby.

His estate at Donington on Bain (where Mrs. Brackenbury later erected a school) Brackenbury left to his second brother, Edward Brackenbury, after the death of his wife. Mrs. Brackenbury, and later Edward, were to pay out of the estate an annuity of £200 to Robert's sister, Grace Marshall, and after her decease to her children. Grace Brackenbury (born at Panton Hall, 1755) had married, c. 1773, at Spilsby, Thomas Longstaff, without the consent of her guardians, and Robert had had her estates put into chancery. She married secondly William Marshall, and died at Grimsby in 1826.

A very interesting story concerning Edward Brackenbury is to be found in George Smith's *History of Methodism*. It throws light not only on Edward's opinion of Methodism, but also upon an event in the life of Alexander Kilham, who was for some time Robert Carr Brackenbury's companion and assistant. On one occasion Brackenbury went abroad, leaving Kilham at Raithby. One of the preachers appointed at the Conference for the Grimsby circuit did not accept his appointment, and another was ill, and Kilham offered to assist. Preaching at Skendleby, he was interrupted by the Rev. Edward Brackenbury, incumbent of the parish. After an hour-long debate, Kilham had the better of Brackenbury, who determined, with other local people, to stop Methodists preaching in the district. He wrote to Kilham, telling him of this, and saying that if he had not been living at his brother's house he would have been sent to Lincoln castle. (Edward, like Robert, was a Justice of the Peace.) The only course open to the Methodists was taken, and at the quarter-sessions Kilham appeared and claimed a licence to preach. Edward, who was on the bench, urged refusal of his request, but was told that the magistrates could not refuse a licence to any man willing to take the oaths recommended by the Toleration Act. Thus foiled, Brackenbury asked Kilham if he was a churchman or a dissenter, to which question Kilham, after trying to evade the issue, replied that he was a dissenter. He received his licence and continued his preaching. Smith (quoting Groombridge's *Life of Kilham*) suggests that because of this Kilham regarded himself as a real dissenter, "wholly alienated from, and opposed to, the National Church Establishment". If this is correct, Robert Carr Brackenbury is apparently not the only member of his family to have had some influence on the history of Methodism!

Whatever the Reverend Edward's opinions of Methodism, they do not seem to have influenced his brother when making his will. Edward, however, did not live long enough to enjoy the estates at

<sup>1</sup> See *Methodist Magazine*, 1844, pp. 491, 583.

Donington after Mrs. Brackenbury's death, for he died, without issue, in 1828. He married Mary Joyce, eighth daughter of William Massingberd, of Gunby Hall, Lincs.

Before he married Sarah Holland, Brackenbury settled on her a yearly sum of £200 out of part of his real estate, "in lieu of all Dower to which she would be entitled after my Death out of my real estate". In order to make more ample provision for her after his death, she was to receive all his "Advowsons, Right and Rights of Presentation, Manors, Farms, Lands and Real Estate" in Lincolnshire (except those otherwise bequeathed).

After Sarah's death the Lusby portion of the estates was to pass to Robert's third brother, William. William was born at Panton in 1757, and married firstly Mrs. Killingbeck of Clayton, Yorks, and secondly Catherine, daughter of the Rev. Francis Wilson of Saleby, Lincs. According to Burke's *Landed Gentry* he died without issue in 1811, but this is obviously incorrect, as he was alive when this will was made in 1816. William was also to receive, after Sarah's death, estates in Hareby, Hagworthingham and Mavis Enderby.

"The Manor, Capital Messuage or Mansion House" at Raithby, with its estate, Robert left to Sarah for the duration of her life, and afterwards to his fifth brother, Langley Brackenbury, and his heirs. Nothing is known, at present, of Langley; he is not mentioned in Burke's *Landed Gentry*, but it is certain that he was baptized at Panton in 1759. He probably died before 1848, as Mrs. Brackenbury died in 1847, and the estate was sold to the Rawnsley family in the following year. The "Mansion House" at Raithby is of course the present Hall, which Brackenbury was building when Wesley visited Raithby in 1779.

Many of Brackenbury's bequests were to become null and void :  
 . . . if there shall be any Child or Children living at the time of my Decease begotten by me on the Body of my said wife or if at the Time of my Death my said wife shall be ensient and the Child or Children with which she may be then ensient be born alive . . .

Though Brackenbury was in his early sixties when this was written, his wife was considerably younger. He died, however, without issue.

This proviso is followed by what is perhaps for the Methodist historian the most interesting part of the will—Brackenbury's wishes regarding the chapel he had built near Raithby Hall. He wrote :

And it is my Will and Mind and I do hereby direct that my said Brother Langley Brackenbury (in case he shall not continue the Building now used as a Methodist Chapel near my Capital Messuage in Raithby aforesaid for such and the like purpose, or if some other Chapel or Building that may be erected and built in some other convenient place in the village of Raithby for the Use of the Methodists by my said Wife in Lieu of the present one shall not be used and continued by my said Brother Langley for such and the like purpose after he or his heirs shall come into possession of the said Estate of Raithby) shall and he and they are hereby required to erect or otherwise provide at his and their own expence a sufficiently capacious and suitable Building to be used as

a Chapel for the People called Methodists and for the Congregation usually assembling with them for the Purpose of divine Worship in some other convenient Part of the Village of Raithby provided that a Society of Methodists shall remain there. And I request that such Building shall be legally settled upon proper Trustees in the usual manner and their successors for ever for the Purposes aforesaid.

A new chapel has never been built at Raithby, and "the People called Methodists" worship in Brackenbury's chapel still.

He also made various money bequests. To his sister Charlotte Baddeley, the youngest of his parents' nine children, he left £100, and £100 to "Mr. George Smith, Itinerant Methodist Preacher, now stationed at Pickering in Yorkshire". Smith accompanied Brackenbury when he returned from Portland to Raithby in 1794, "having spent the last two years with him as a member of his family".<sup>2</sup> To Thomas Randolph Roberts, son of Thomas Roberts, of New King Street, Bath, he left £50. In a letter to Mr. Ward, of Freshford, Wilts, dated 14th August 1812, Brackenbury writes:

. . . on leaving Bath we took with us Master Randolph Roberts, who is still our guest, and a youth of great promise, having lately determined for the Church. We have also a nephew of Mrs. Brackenbury's, who is an agreeable companion to Randolph.<sup>3</sup>

He left £500 to the British and Foreign Bible Society, £1,000 to "a certain fund established amongst the people called Methodists for propagating the Gospel by Means of Missionaries, usually called the 'Methodist Mission Fund'", and £1,000 to "The Methodist Legalised Fund". His wife was to have all his "money, securities for money, plate, linene, china, books, goods, cattle, chattels . . ."

The final request was "that my body be interred in the chancel of Raithby aforesaid as near my former dear wife (who lies there interred) as may be". Wesley had a very high opinion of the first Mrs. Brackenbury (see his letter to Brackenbury dated 12th August 1781).<sup>4</sup> Her foot slipped as she was entering her carriage, causing severe injuries from which she died after several months of illness, aged 21. She was buried in Raithby Church on 3rd March 1782.

Sarah Brackenbury was made sole executrix of her husband's will, and it was witnessed by John Keeling, Titus Bourn and William Day. The Rev. John Keeling lived at Raithby Hall for three years, during the last illness of Brackenbury, "as a son in the Gospel, and a member of the family".<sup>5</sup>

In the codicil the Raithby estate was charged with the payment of £500, which Brackenbury had borrowed from Miss Hicks, of Lockington, Leicestershire, "to accommodate" his brother Langley. It was witnessed by Keeling, Day and Thomas Rought.

This, then, is the will of a wealthy member of the Lincolnshire gentry in the early nineteenth century; but it is also something more: it is the will of the wealthiest of the early preachers of Methodism.

<sup>2</sup> Mrs. Richard Smith: *Raithby Hall*.

TERENCE R. LEACH.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, vii, p. 79.

<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Richard Smith, *op. cit.*

## BOOK NOTICES

*John Wesley's English*, by George Lawton. (George Allen & Unwin, pp. 320, 30s.)

*Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, by Frank Baker. (Epworth Press, pp. 413 and 4 plates, 63s.)

Within the charmed circle of Methodism there has been no question of the all-pervasive influence, through two centuries, of John and Charles Wesley; not least of the subtle influence of their words upon our common speech. Such terms as "circuit", "class-meeting", "superintendent"—sounding strangely upon the ears of those outside—were household words to us, and Charles Wesley's iambs were mixed with our nursery rhymes. But we have been less aware of the exterior influence of these brothers upon English letters, and only of recent years has there been a tardy acknowledgement, by the literary establishment, of that influence and of the massive achievement of John in prose and Charles in verse. It is the purpose of these two books before us to present the Wesleys, in this respect, more fully than they have been so presented before; and on behalf of the Wesley Historical Society we feel moved to express our appreciation of the prodigious labours of these two scholars involved in this achievement.

We will consider first *John Wesley's English*—a concise and vigorous prose which has long been our envy. Readers of this journal will already have become familiar with the pioneering work of the Rev. George Lawton in this field, through the preliminary studies which lie scattered over back numbers for some fifteen years past. Mr. Lawton sets himself first to a close study of vocabulary. He presents the surprising range and diversity of words which Wesley used—the homely speech of his mother's tongue, the fruits of an Oxford scholar's wide reading, the absorption of the conventional periphrases of evangelical speech, and the remarkable enrichment of his language by travel and by his mixing with all sorts and conditions of men. Mr. Lawton's research also discloses the indebtedness of the *Oxford English Dictionary* to John Wesley for the first recorded use of an astonishing variety of words. He then proceeds to examine Wesley's use of rhetorical figures of speech, proverbial and aphoristic sayings, scriptural idiom and the common vernacular. All this bespeaks an absorbing interest in his subject—great enough to sustain the vast labours involved in sifting through his net the voluminous writings which lay before him.

Mr. Lawton finally addresses himself to the more difficult task of assessing Wesley's worth as a prose-writer, and of laying bare the art concealed beneath the apparent artlessness. Here, one feels, the test must ultimately be upon the ear. For instance, he quotes Wesley's phrase "bright, refulgent day" as nearly tautological, and asks why, in any case, if the meaning was "bright, shining day", Wesley chose the less idiomatic word "refulgent" (p. 107). The answer must surely be that Wesley had a sensitive ear for words. The rhythms and nuances of prose are different from those of poetry, but not the less essential. Good prose has an inevitable rightness of sound, and in that art Wesley ranks among the masters.

The book has a useful index and bibliography, and is highly to be commended. More careful proof-reading could have avoided a number of slips or printer's errors, and have improved the punctuation of some sentences.

It might have avoided the ascription of the hymn "O happy day that fixed my choice" to Charles Wesley.

The metaphor "Drawing the saw of controversy" seems capable of a simpler explanation than that given on page 138. Was it not a two-handed saw that was envisaged? And may not controversy be aptly likened to the tedious thrust and counter-thrust of two men opposed to each other as they saw? "I left him the field" (p. 31) seems to have no relevance here to field-preaching. The context would more obviously suggest the meaning of "leaving his rival in possession of the field of battle". His treatment of the title "superintendent" (p. 30) seems inadequate; and were not words such as "helper", "class" and "band" Wesley's translations of German terms in use at Herrnhut in 1738?

The second book before us, *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley*, is one of meticulous scholarship. There is an indefinable delight in handling a book of this quality, tinged with a proper sense of awe. Here is the text, with "ample provision of scholarly apparatus" (a modest claim), of 330 of Charles Wesley's compositions. This might seem a small offering when we are reminded that Wesley published 4,600 poems, had 3,000 published posthumously, and left a legacy of more than 1,300 others, never published. (One hundred of the latter now appear for the first time.)

The scope of the offering, however, is disclosed in the title *Representative verse*. Dr. Baker emphasizes that this collection is not the *best* of Charles Wesley—that it even includes some of the worst; but it provides examples of "the hundred stanzaic patterns which he employed", and is divided almost equally into hymns, sacred poems and miscellaneous poems, of deliberate intent, that each side of Charles Wesley's art should be adequately displayed. The text is that of the first published edition, where it exists; and each of the hymns is collated with the principal later editions. It thus becomes the standard reference book for the text and history of the verse it includes.

If, in his eagerness to plunge into the poems, the reader leaps over the fifty-page introduction, it is to be hoped that he will shortly return to it. A diligent reading of this (in itself an education in the art of literary criticism) will open up new vistas of insight into the poems, many of which are also prefaced by useful historical notes.

This collection confirms the opinion that our *Methodist Hymn-Book* has skimmed off the most part of the cream of Charles Wesley. In the bulk of what remains of an estimated 180,000 lines, one may mark the craftsmanship which persists, and marvel at the poet's versatility in handling the same themes and conforming the same language to the demands of the various metres employed, but one will miss the peculiar distinction of those incomparable hymns which place Charles Wesley among the immortals.

It must inevitably be so. Some of the occasional pieces here published for the first time present Wesley as a satirist, in the tradition of his day; others, as a Tory pamphleteer in verse. If these do not now engage our sympathies, they are no less representative of the man, whose verse contains his authentic autobiography.

The book concludes with a list (running to 17 pages) of principal sources, an elaborate index to all Wesley's metres (both indispensable to future studies), and a general index.

LESLIE W. HAYES.

*Nonconformity in Exeter, 1650-1875*, by Allan Brockett. (Manchester University Press, pp. 252, 30s.)

This book is a well-written and scholarly account of Exeter nonconformity which makes a useful contribution to the written history of Exeter, and which could well serve as a model for similar studies elsewhere. The fortunes of the ejected ministers of 1662 are well described, and so is the ultimate descent into Unitarianism of many of the congregations they founded in their non-conforming days. A portrait by Opie of the Reverend Micajah Towgood (1700-92), Wesley's contemporary at James's Meeting, Exeter, adorns the volume.

It may be questioned whether the two chapters on "Whitefield and Wesley" and "Wesleyan Methodism and the Bible Christians" really have any place in a study of nonconformity, but even if this be allowed we confess to some disappointment in reading them on account of the less detailed treatment that Methodism receives when compared with that given to the "Three Denominations" which are, rightly, the author's main concern. In Exeter, in 1851, some 2,060 persons attended a Methodist service on the Sunday of the Ecclesiastical Census, whilst some 2,700 attended the dissenting churches—a rough indication of the strength of the denominations, yet the Methodists of the period 1800-75 are dealt with in eight pages, whilst the dissenters of the same period are given over sixty pages.

Passing over the dust-cover description of Methodism as one of "the main sects", the reference to the Methodist "meeting" at Stoke Canon (p. 194), though a slip of the pen, underlines the fact that the scenery on the author's canvas is Presbyterian and not Methodist. William Oke was not an Exeter man, but a Cornishman from St. Tudy. THOMAS SHAW.

*In the steps of John Wesley*, by Frederick C. Gill. (Lutterworth Press, pp. 240, 21s.)

It is impossible in the space available to do justice to this admirably written and fascinating book. The author's fervent admiration for John Wesley is apparent throughout, and he carries ours with him as, in thought, we follow where he leads. We begin our journey, of course, at Epworth, and thence to Oxford and neighbourhood. After the American interlude we visit London, with its many Wesley associations, and there is an attractive account of the City Road chapel. Thereafter we follow Wesley in his amazing journeys, extending from Cornwall and southern England, through the midland and eastern counties, to the far north of Scotland, and our itinerary includes Wales and Ireland.

We discover in how great a number of places that Wesley visited there are memorials to him, such as tablets or plaques on trees under which he preached, walls on or by which he stood, churches in which he was permitted to preach, and houses where he was entertained, and it is good to notice that most of these places and objects are regarded locally with reverence and pride. As in thought we visit these places, directed by the author, we realize that John Wesley still lives.

By no means the least valuable feature of the book is the 65 excellent illustrations of many of the places and objects described in the body of the work. This is a volume which has no rival, and we heartily congratulate its author. No lover of John Wesley, and certainly no member of the Wesley Historical Society, should miss it. At current book prices it is excellent value for money.

W. L. DOUGHTY.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

## 1076. INFORMATION WANTED ABOUT JOHN DICKINS.

The year 1964 will mark the 175th anniversary of the founding of the Methodist Publishing House of America. The founder and first book steward was John Dickins (born 24th August 1747; died 27th September 1798). He was born in England, and is said to have attended Eton College; he was a minister in America for several years. Beyond these facts, little is known of him. To assist in the preparation of a history of their Publishing House, our brethren in America would be grateful if anyone with any knowledge of Dickins would communicate with the editor of *Together*—Leland D. Case, 77, West Washington Street, Room 1005, Chicago, 2, Ill., U.S.A. EDITOR.

## 1077. THE "SECOND BLESSING".

The Rev. T. D. Meadley, principal of Cliff College, Calver, Sheffield, would be glad if anyone could give him any information about the history of the use of the term "second blessing" before the time of John Wesley, or of any similar teaching in the previous history of the Church. EDITOR.

## 1078. EARLY METHODIST CIRCUIT PLANS.

The Society of Cirplanologists hopes to publish early in 1963 a supplement to its "Register of Circuit Plans, 1777-1860", and I should be grateful for details of any further early plans which may have come to light since the Register was published last year. I am especially interested in plans of the smaller branches of Methodism; very few indeed of these seem to have survived. I have details of almost one hundred plans hitherto not recorded, including some early Wesleyan Association plans at Baillie Street, Rochdale, but more would be welcome! Particulars should be sent to me at 19A, Fairfield Avenue, Droylsden, Manchester. E. A. ROSE.

## 1079. LOCAL HISTORIES OF METHODISM.

I am compiling a list of Methodist local histories from the present Manchester and Salford District, embracing Manchester proper, Salford, Stockport, Macclesfield, Buxton, Glossop, New Mills, Ashton-under-Lyne, Stalybridge, Middleton and Eccles. I should appreciate it if readers who have local histories from this area would send me titles and usual bibliographical details. (Address as for the preceding note.) E. A. ROSE.

## 1080. RODDA, RICHARD AND/OR MARTIN.

Will any member having any material, manuscript or printed, or knowing the whereabouts of any, concerning either of these early preachers, please communicate with Mr. John Pearce, Gwendroc, Truro, Cornwall. EDITOR.

## 1081. METHODISM AND THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

I can personally vouch for another contact between the Church of Scotland and the local Methodist church. In 1952, when I was minister at Girvan in Ayrshire, I was invited to attend the induction of a new minister of St. Andrew's Church of Scotland. Before the ceremony took place in the church, a Presbytery was constituted in the vestry, and I was officially co-opted as a member of the Presbytery for that meeting only. I wonder if any of my brethren over the border have had a similar experience.

JOHN C. BOWMER.