

# 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: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.

---

Volume XLIV

September 1983

---

## WESLEY'S PROPERTY DEED FOR BATH

JOHN WESLEY opened his chapel in New King Street, Bath, on 11th March 1779. The building pleased him, so that he recommended it as a model to be copied by others when the seating accommodation was for four hundred or fewer. Heavy debt, however, necessitated a deed for the settlement of the property which was distinctly unusual—perhaps unique—within his societies.

Clearly the regulations of the Conference on the financial side had been disregarded. For years the burden of property debts had been a recurring theme at Wesley's annual Conferences.<sup>1</sup> In face of a connexional debt of £11,383 in 1765, it was resolved that no further building should take place until two-thirds of the cost had been raised, and no grant made from central funds until the total was reduced to £3,000. A note of desperation was sounded in 1770, when, faced with connexional building debts of £6,958, it was resolved that no new building should take place for a year, and that improvements to existing premises should only be carried out when the society concerned could defray the whole expense "without lessening its contribution" to the connexional fund. In 1775 it was agreed that no building should be undertaken without Conference permission. In 1777 Bath was one of the four societies to be given permission to build.

The cost of the scheme is not known today; but clearly the financial situation had got riotously out of hand. The Deed of Settlement names the debt as "upwards of £1,100", which, for a society of some 150 members,<sup>2</sup> was crippling. No wealthy persons had been members of the community which met in Wesley's former preaching-house in poverty-stricken Avon Street.<sup>3</sup> Whatever the explanation of the new chapel's financial plight, Wesley appears to have come to the rescue. The Deed for the Settlement of the Property,<sup>4</sup> dated

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Conference*, 1765-80.

<sup>2</sup> *Methodist Recorder* Winter Number, 1893, p. 76.

<sup>3</sup> *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 654.

<sup>4</sup> Enrolled deed in the Public Record Office, Ref. C54 : 6591 (21 Geo. III i. 19).

23rd November 1780, indicates the course adopted to meet the emergency. In essence the scheme was that eleven people should each provide £100, that they should each receive an annual interest payment of 5 per cent if funds allowed, and that they should be appointed trustees of the property. Thus trusteeship was financially conditioned. Only those who provided the £100 would become trustees. When a trustee died, his legal representatives were to receive the sum due from the trust, and within a year a successor was to be appointed. If the new trustee could not provide the £100, then the existing trustees were responsible for seeing that the sum was found.

The eleven trustees are named and described in the following form:

The Reverend John Westley, clerk, Master of Arts of the City Road, London,  
 The Reverend Thomas Coke, Clerk, Doctor of the Civil Law, late of Jesus College, Oxford,  
 Michael Hemmings the Elder of the City of Bath in the County of Somerset, Carpenter,  
 Benjamin Milgrove of Bath aforesaid, Musician,  
 Moses Potter of Bath aforesaid, Poulterer,  
 William fry of the City of Bristol, Gentleman,  
 William Green of the same City, Gentleman,  
 William Wait of Norton Malreward in the County of Somerset aforesaid, Gentleman,  
 John Goodwin of Stroud in the County of Gloucester, Gentleman,  
 Thomas Simpson of the Parish of St. George in the said County of Gloucester, Gentleman,  
 William Mandrill of Bath aforesaid, Milliner.

The list calls for comment. Wesley's name at the head not only secures his legal rights in all matters concerning the property, but doubtless betokens his personal concern. The spelling of the surname is surprising, and his address has its interest. No longer is he styled, as in some earlier trust deeds, as "late of Lincoln College, Oxford". Dr. Coke's name probably reflects Wesley's personal approach on behalf of Bath, and the Doctor's readiness, in just over four years from the time of their first meeting, to use his financial resources in the Methodist cause. Three other names reflect close association with Wesley. William Green, twine-spinner of Redcliffe in Bristol, was an original trustee of the New Room, and it was usual for Wesley to accept hospitality in his home whenever he visited the city;<sup>5</sup> William Wait, well-to-do and generous, was also a member at the New Room, and Wesley's journals provide evidence of their close personal association;<sup>6</sup> Thomas Simpson was headmaster at Kingswood School. The two remaining names, other than the four Bath representatives, may suggest that it was not easy to find

<sup>5</sup> Wesley's diaries, 1783-91 (see *Journal*, vi, pp. 438, 450, 482; vii, pp. 16, 209; viii, p. 92. Green is also named in the Deed of Declaration, 1784 (*Journal*, viii, p. 337).

<sup>6</sup> See *Journal*, iv, p. 417n.; viii, pp. 47, 47n.; *Wesley's Veterans*, vi, p. 101 (John Valton); *Methodist Magazine*, 1803, p. 130.

eleven people able and willing to provide a single sum of £100. The one was John Goodwin of Stroud, described as "gentleman". He was Wesley's "assistant" in the Gloucester circuit, and had been stationed in the Bristol circuit when the Bath chapel was being erected. One of his letters notes that he had been busy collecting money for the new chapel, which, he supposed, might be "the second in the kingdom".<sup>7</sup> Whether his inclusion indicates that he had considerable private means or whether it was a gracious recognition of his past service in raising money are open questions. His travels for the next quarter of a century were almost exclusively in the northern part of the country, from which he could never play an active part in the local affairs of the chapel at Bath. The remaining name, "William Fry, Gent. of Bristol",<sup>8</sup> is surprising in another way. It would seem that he was not a member of Wesley's society. His name is not on the New Room roll. Contemporary directories name him as a "gentleman", living in Guinea Street, Redcliffe. On Michaelmas Day 1779, Wesley's second Bristol chapel was opened in Guinea Street. It may be inferred that William Fry, though not a member of the Methodist society, had shown sympathetic interest. His readiness to provide £100 for the Bath chapel was not spurned!

The remaining four trustees all lived in Bath. Their financial standing is not impressive. Michael Hemmings, variously described as joiner, carpenter, and builder, was a member of Wesley's Bath society even before the Avon Street chapel was built in 1758,<sup>9</sup> and had been the class leader in the 1760s, when, at the end of the decade, membership had declined to a mere dozen.<sup>10</sup> He appears to have been the dominating figure locally in connexion with the building project at New King Street. The deed names him, with Moses Potter, as erecting the chapel. He lived in Avon Street, which Wesley described as "among the sinners",<sup>11</sup> and strangely, for such a neighbourhood, possessed an organ, which he loaned to the New King Street chapel. Thus he helped to make history in Wesley's movement: it was the first organ in the connexion. Eventually he made it a gift.<sup>12</sup> But his dominating, demanding attitude in relation to it made the organ a doubtful asset and helped to create contemporary prejudice against organs in Wesley's chapels. His financial standing was slender. He had to borrow much of the £100 which gave him his place as a trustee, and years later he was in difficulty because he was unable to repay the loan.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Proceedings*, vii, p. 173.

<sup>8</sup> *Bristol Directories*, 1779-80. (City Archives.)

<sup>9</sup> Stephen Tuck: *Wesleyan Methodism in Frome* (1837 edn.), p. 42. List of 19 of the 35 members of the Bath society, 1757.

<sup>11</sup> *Journal*, vi, p. 141.

<sup>12</sup> J. T. Lightwood: *The Snetzler Organ in the New Room* (Epworth Press, 1931), pp. 15-16.

<sup>13</sup> See Deed of Collateral Security—Hemmings and Rutter, 1785 (held by the Avon Education Authority, Bristol, as successors to Bath Education Authority, to whom the deed passed when the New King Street site was sold to the latter in the 1950s). The writer acknowledges the courtesy of the Avon Authority in allowing him to make a copy of the Hemmings-Rutter deed.

Moses Potter, named with Hemmings as building the chapel, was a poulterer. His will, dated 1807, shows him leaving no large estate. William Mandrill, described as milliner, is named as the last in the list of eleven trustees. Nothing is known of his financial standing, or whether his place at the end indicates that he was the last man Wesley and his associates had been able to persuade to take part in a somewhat precarious enterprise. Whereas Hemmings, Potter and Milgrove are named as sharing responsibility from the time the site was secured, William Mandrill's name does not appear in the deed otherwise than as No. 11 in a list of eleven.

The remaining local name, that of Benjamin Milgrove,<sup>14</sup> has its distinctive interest. He had a toy shop in Bond Street, Bath, and for some years was organist or precentor at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel in the Vineyards. He composed a number of hymn-tunes, four of which are in the 1933 *Methodist Hymn-Book*. His name raises numerous questions. Was he actually a member of Wesley's New King Street society? If so, why did he dispose of his £100 "share" in the property in 1787? Did he leave his post at the Countess of Huntingdon's chapel to become organist at New King Street, thus to become the first organist in the connexion? Most important, in the financial emergency at the New King Street chapel, was he able to find the £100 with ease? His early withdrawal raises doubts.

Thus, the rapidly-growing society in Bath was given its continued opportunity for development. Connexionally, Conference in 1780 reaffirmed that no building should take place until two-thirds of the cost had been raised.

For the routine operation of the trust, the direction was that the eleven trustees should meet once a year

and chuse out of their number one to be Treasurer or Receiver of the Rents and profits of the said premises, who shall from time to time upon Request Render to the others of them a just and true account in writing of all Monies received by him which Monies so to be received shall be appropriated in the first place for payment and discharge of the yearly ground charge of fourteen pounds and ten shillings, and in the next place towards payment . . . of the interest of the said sum of eleven hundred pounds . . . and afterwards in payment of the principal sum of eleven hundred pounds.<sup>15</sup>

After the principal had been fully repaid, "the future profits" were to be applied as the majority of the eleven trustees, or their successors, "should appoint". It may be noted that only a trustee could be appointed as treasurer of the trust, and that the application of balances in hand after the debt had been paid needed to be approved

<sup>14</sup> J. T. Lightwood: *The Music of the Methodist Hymn-Book* (Epworth Press, 1935), p. 60.

<sup>15</sup> Quotations from the 1780 Deed of Settlement are taken from the Hemmings-Rutter deed (see note <sup>13</sup>). Mr. John Vickers has kindly verified them with the enrolled deed at the Public Record Office. There are slight variations, but the only one of importance concerns the use of the word "proprietor".

by at least six of the eleven. A badly-attended meeting at which only four local trustees were present could not make binding major financial decisions. It was assumed that the "profits" would be sufficient to pay the 5 per cent interest due to the trustees on outstanding amounts owed to them. This was not always the case.<sup>16</sup>

The financial obligation of each individual trustee necessitated unusual arrangements for the maintenance of the trust. The familiar pattern of later times, whereby large-scale renewal took place only when the numbers had fallen to a mere handful, could not be operated when individual financial obligations were involved. When a trustee died, the surviving trustees, or any six of them, were to appoint a successor within twelve months, so that the number of eleven could be maintained "for ever". The successor must be "a fit person", but what constituted fitness was not stated. Six trustees could make the judgement. Membership of the Methodist society was not directed. If the new trustee could not meet the financial liability, the surviving trustees "should advance and pay the same, in equal and ratable proportions" to the administrators of the deceased's estate. The local society had no responsibility for meeting the capital debt.

It would not appear that legal provision was made for a surviving trustee to withdraw from the trust and secure repayment of any capital sum still owing to him. But the minutes of the early trustees' meetings indicate that not all were content to wait for death before their capital was released. Those minutes, extant in the early years of this century, are no longer available,<sup>17</sup> but the then trustees' secretary at New King Street, Mr. G. B. Caple, inspected them, and wrote that "sometimes" a £100 share was disposed of at a discount—in one case for £90. The "shares" were a somewhat uncertain investment. After five years the "profits" of the enterprise had not been sufficient even to pay the full amount of interest due. Repayment of capital was delayed indefinitely. Wesley commented upon it in a letter to Adam Clarke as late as January 1790.<sup>18</sup> Presumably it was accepted that a trustee could withdraw when he had found a "fit person" to reimburse him and accept appointment as his successor with the approval of existing trustees. Presumably also it would require a legal document to confirm the position, as needed for each new appointment after the death of a trustee.

Another complication could arise if a trustee needed reimbursement of capital but did not wish to withdraw from office as a trustee. This happened in 1785 in the case already mentioned by footnote to this article. An indenture dated 20th August of that year legalizes the trusteeship of Michael Hemmings and at the same time provides financial guarantees for Thomas Rutter, to whom he owed £91 7s. Apparently, when the chapel was being erected, Hemmings had borrowed £300 from Miss Hester Farley of Bristol to make urgent payments for work completed. By 1785 the sum of £91 7s. had

<sup>16</sup> The Hemmings-Rutter deed refers to "interest in arrear".

<sup>17</sup> See *Proceedings*, xlii, p. 155.

<sup>18</sup> *Letters*, viii, p. 198.

not been repaid. Meanwhile Miss Farley had married, and her husband, the Thomas Rutter referred to, had become entitled to the money due from Hemmings. Rutter now demanded repayment or some adequate security for the loan. Hemmings, unable to make the repayment, suggested that his loan of £100 to the chapel should be security for his debt. Rutter accepted the suggestion on condition that a Deed of Collateral Security should be drawn up, and interest moneys, as they were paid from chapel funds, advanced to him. Also, the deed was to state that all the financial interest held by Hemmings in the chapel property passed to Rutter. He was hard in his demands. He wanted security of £100 for the debt of £91 7s., and Hemmings was also charged with the legal fee due in the name of Rutter himself. Furthermore, the deed itself can have left few loopholes as far as Rutter's rights were concerned. It illustrated fully what Wesley called "the villainous tautology of lawyers". The writings comprised more than 4,000 words. The important parts of the 1780 Deed for the Settlement of the Property were sometimes quoted more than once. The transaction must have been costly for Hemmings. One wonders why the trustees did not come to his aid. Perhaps they felt that his financial affairs were sometimes excessive ventures of faith, and preferred not to be involved. Hemmings, however, characteristically refused to be daunted. The deed gave him the right to repay Rutter the debt in full should he ever be able to do so. Meanwhile he retained his position as a trustee, and the trustees held his copy of the Deed of Collateral Security.

A further complication is suggested by Mr. Caple after examination of the trust minutes for the 1780s. His note reads:

In searching for materials for a history of Methodism in Bath, I have found, amongst other things, manuscript books containing the complete accounts of the King Street Chapel Trust, from the opening of the chapel by John Wesley . . . It appears that the earlier trustees, in Wesley's time, called themselves "proprietors" of the chapel, and each one held a £100 share in it. At the death of one the share and interest in the "profits and emoluments" of the said chapel had to be transferred by a legal deed to a new trustee. . . . The proprietors were accustomed to hold an annual dinner at the Christopher Inn in High Street, to settle the accounts; and the cost, amounting sometimes to £3 or £4, was debited to the Trust Account. This was in Wesley's time; and although he was one of the proprietors and drew his £5 interest or dividend year by year, I find he was never present to share these festivities at the Christopher. Are there any other cases known of a chapel held on such a trust?<sup>19</sup>

The answer to Mr. Caple's final question may be considered at the end of this article. Meanwhile, comment may be made on the meeting-place used by the trustees and on the use of the word "proprietors".

The licensee of the Christopher Inn was a widow, Mrs. Hadden, whose late husband had become a valued member of Wesley's Bath

<sup>19</sup> *Proceedings*, i, p. 127.

society after an experience of conversion. At that time the Methodist community in Bath was at its lowest ebb, and it is likely that three new members were a major influence in turning the tide. Mr. Hadden was one of the three.<sup>20</sup> His death at a comparatively early age was a severe blow to the growing society, but his wife continued the witness. The inn was conducted on strict principles. It was never opened on Sunday, and her servants were freed from all duties to attend church.<sup>21</sup> Wesley sometimes stayed at the Christopher Inn on his visits to Bath (after Mrs. Hadden had re-married and become Mrs. Grange), and Mrs. Hadden's son, Edward Hadden,<sup>22</sup> became one of New King Street's prominent members. The inn at which the trustees held their meetings was a well-conducted establishment!

The use of the word "proprietors" raises important questions. Mr. Caple, in an address given at King Street in 1904,<sup>23</sup> again stated that the trustees were referred to *repeatedly* as the "proprietors" of the chapel, entitled to share in the "income, profits, emoluments and advantages thereof". Certainly the trustees are described as "proprietors" in Hemmings's Deed of Collateral Security. Nevertheless, as Mr. Caple suggests, the idea of proprietorship is so unusual that one may look to its background and ask how far the Deed of Settlement to which Wesley put his signature supports it.

Two facts encouraged the use of the word by the trustees. The first was their own peculiar financial relationship to the property. All delay in repaying the £1,100 provided by the trustees indeed encouraged the impression of proprietorship. But the second factor was Bath's own peculiar ecclesiastical development, for the place had become, in a distinctive sense, the home of proprietary chapels. The Countess of Huntingdon's new chapel in the Vineyards had strong association with private ownership. But the majority of Bath's proprietary chapels were Anglican; for when the established Church failed to respond to the needs of the population in the rapidly-expanding parish of Walcot, individuals themselves took action. They built new churches, engaged clergy to read Morning and Evening Prayer and administer Holy Communion, and derived an income from pew rents. After the clergyman had been paid and other expenses met, the "profits" of the enterprise went to the proprietors. The ministers of these chapels had to be licensed by the bishop, and the full rights of the incumbent of the parish were recognized. But the owners of the proprietary chapels had no thought of handing them over to the bishop or any other ecclesiastical authority or of surrendering their proprietary rights. The first was erected by the architect John Wood the elder and a small group of friends. It

<sup>20</sup> *Letters*, v, p. 153. Wesley mentions "Mr. Hodsal", but no one of such a name can be traced, and it would seem to be a confusion with Hadden. See "Memoir of Mr. Hadden", by Miss B[ishop], *Arminian Magazine*, 1787, p. 75 f.

<sup>21, 22</sup> *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1825, p. 140 (Memoir of Edward Hadden).

<sup>23</sup> *Methodist Recorder*, 15th November 1904 (article on John Wesley and Bath, by Darby Stafford).

stood at the south-west corner of Queen Square, and was opened on Christmas Day 1734. By the 1760s the chapel was providing its proprietors with a good financial return. Eventually there were seven such chapels in Bath. The most famous—the Octagon in Milsom Street—was opened in 1767. One of its proprietors was the clergyman who officiated there. Margaret Chapel further up Lansdowne hill was opened in 1773, and one of its three proprietors was a clergyman. Ecclesiastical amenity was being met. Attached to it was positive financial interest. This pronounced proprietary aspect was locally well-known,<sup>24</sup> and the use of the word “proprietors” by the New King Street trustees must be seen in this familiar but unusual local context. It may be added that the New King Street chapel was erected within a stone’s throw of the proprietary chapel built by John Wood and his associates.

But that the thought of proprietorship was alien to Wesley’s mind is indicated in his suggestion that by small regular weekly payments members should gradually liquidate the debt.<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, the contents of the 1780 Deed of Settlement make any use of the word “proprietor” *ultra vires*. That deed, which Mr. Caple investigated (noting that Wesley began making his signature in the wrong place and that Dr. Coke made a blot), disappeared after the premises were destroyed by an incendiary bomb in 1942, but is recited so fully in Hemmings’s Deed of Collateral Security that its main contents are clear. Nevertheless, Hemmings’s deed is misleading in its reference to “proprietors”. The enrolled deed for 1780 at the Public Record Office reveals that this word was never used in the original Deed of Settlement. Its presence in Hemmings’s deed is an intrusion.<sup>26</sup>

All the safeguards against personal proprietorship which were in the pattern deed presented by Wesley to the 1763 Conference are in the King Street deed of 1780. Appointment of preachers, doctrinal standards and use of buildings were rigidly regulated. Only the preachers Mr. Wesley should appoint, during his lifetime, were “to have the Use and Enjoyment of the said Chappel to preach and expound God’s Holy Word”. After his death the right would pass to any committee he might appoint, and failing that, to the “Yearly Conference of the Methodists to be held in London, Bristol, or Leeds”. Nevertheless, if the Conference “should be dissolved or should totally and absolutely renounce their connection with the Church of England”, then . . . the major part of the trustees should nominate and appoint preachers. In that event there was a doctrinal restriction: the preachers appointed should not “hold or preach any other Doctrines than those contained in the said Mr. Wesley’s Notes upon the New Testament and four Volumes of Sermons . . .”. A further check on the powers of the trustees concerned collections. Mr. Wesley and his Assistant in the Bath circuit were empowered to make collections at the doors of the chapel, “or otherwise”, as

<sup>24</sup> See thesis by the Rev. W. J. Jenkins, “The Proprietary Chapels of Bath”. (Typescript at Bath Reference Library.)

<sup>25</sup> *Letters*, viii, p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> See footnote 15.

often as they thought proper, and to "dispose of the monies collected" without obstruction from the trustees or "rendering to them any account of the application or disposition thereof".

Should the society be no longer able to maintain the premises, or should it be by law hindered from using them as a place of Methodist worship, the trustees had a defined responsibility. By a majority vote they could let or sell the premises. Should there be any surplus proceeds, after "the principal sum of eleven hundred pounds and interest thereon" had been paid, their disposal should be to "such charitable and pious uses and purposes" as they saw fit. At the end they would not be proprietors. The "profits" of the enterprise would not be theirs.

The form of the Deed of Settlement as "An Indenture in Four Parts", powerfully reinforces all the arguments against "proprietorship" already stated. In the first part, Benjamin Milgrove is named as "seised of the fee and inheritance of the plots of Ground and of the Chappel, etc." This was by an Indenture of Lease and Release dated 26th and 27th August 1779. There was a ground rent of £14 10s. per annum. But he held the property "IN TRUST for the sole use of Michael Hemmings and Moses Potter, their heirs, etc." The words "In trust", I am told, indicate that Hemmings and Potter were primarily concerned. Milgrove fulfilled a legal requisite of the time. In the second part, Hemmings and Potter appear as having erected the chapel and other buildings, and "expended thereon or incurred Debts to the amount of Eleven hundred pounds and upwards". In the third part, the agreement that the eleven hundred pounds should be provided by the eleven persons named, in equal proportions of £100, is recorded, and Hemmings and Potter jointly acknowledged receipt of £100 from each of the other nine. The nine included, of course, Milgrove of the first part. Hemmings and Potter had been the real leaders locally. To a layman in legal matters the fourth part of the deed provides the great surprise, and effectively repudiates any claim to proprietorship any of the eleven may have made. At this point Wesley's three itinerant preachers then appointed to the Bristol circuit (in which Bath was then included) were introduced. The three—John Pawson, Thomas Rankin, and Thomas Tennant—are named as paying ten shillings in money to Milgrove, Hemmings and Potter. In consideration of this, Milgrove, Hemmings and Potter did "severally grant, bargain and sell and confirm" unto the three preachers all the legal rights they had held. The eleven were appointed trustees, and the inclusion of the three itinerants precluded any claim to proprietorship on the part of any of the eleven. Provision was made for successors to Pawson, Rankin and Tennant:

When any two of them shall die, the survivor shall execute and deliver by Deed an Appointment of two persons such as the other Trustees for the time being or any six of them shall approve.

The word "other" would style the three preachers themselves as trustees and not proprietors.

Two final questions may be asked. When was the debt of £1,100 finally extinguished? Was the deed unique in Wesley's connexion?

No material survives locally to answer the first question. In 1797 Samuel Bradburn, then the superintendent of the Bath circuit which had been formed, wrote in the society account-book: "Thank God for the Society being out of debt."<sup>27</sup> That comment, it would seem, applied to the society itself, and had no reference to the trust.

The second question, raised by Mr. Caple over eighty years ago when he wrote the note quoted earlier in this article, has never been answered in these *Proceedings*. Maybe it can never be answered. However, the case of the Plymouth chapel, opened shortly after that in New King Street, does suggest a parallel.

In both cases there was a heavy debt. Superficially the Plymouth situation was even worse than that at Bath. A membership of thirty faced a debt of £1,400. Wesley preached there four times in August 1780, and refers to it as "a large house". Once again, it was erected chiefly through the exertions of a carpenter. The great difference was that the carpenter, named Redstone, had as his associate Nehemiah Jane, a quartermaster of Plymouth Dock. Through the efforts of Jane, and the adoption of a scheme suggested by Wesley, "the most pressing of the debts were soon paid".<sup>28</sup> Ten years later, Wesley was able to write that the debt there had been cleared.

The contrast between Plymouth and Bath is recorded in the letter written by Wesley to Adam Clarke on 28th January 1790, to which reference has already been made. It reads:

Many years ago I put the Society at Bath in a way wherein, if they had persevered, they would now have owed nothing. They were at Plymouth but thirty in number, and their debt was fourteen hundred pounds. I advised them, Let every member subscribe monthly what he can; and an hundred at the Dock promised to do the same. "I," said one, "will give a crown a month"; "I," said another, "half a crown." Many subscribed a shilling, sixpence, or threepence a month. And now the debt is paid. I began such a subscription in Bath; as I have done in many places with success. But they left it off in two or three weeks. . . .<sup>29</sup>

Unfortunately no deeds are known today which throw light on the Plymouth settlement in 1780. The site was comparatively small, despite Wesley's reference to "a large house". It was in Lower Street, in an area now owned by Plymouth Corporation. One deed only for the 1780s relative to the area concerned is known, and that is for a private house.<sup>30</sup> Thus the somewhat similar situation at

<sup>27</sup> New King Street society account-book, 1797. (Bath City Archives.)

<sup>28</sup> See *Journal*, vi, p. 291 f., but note that in footnote <sup>8</sup> (p. 291) "Ker Street" is named in error. This was the site of the Plymouth Dock (Devonport) chapel. The newly-erected chapel in Plymouth was situated in Lower Street, an alley near the present Bretonside.

<sup>29</sup> *Letters*, viii, p. 198.

<sup>30</sup> A letter from the Devon Record Office (Plymouth), dated 4th February 1981, states that the chapel is "not shown on any contemporary maps, and it falls too early to be mentioned in Directories. . . . it was commenced in 1779 chiefly by

Plymouth in the year of the Bath deed throws no light on Mr. Caple's query as to whether that deed was unique within Methodism. That Wesley's people have used buildings owned privately, and have paid a rent for them, or occupied them without charge, is evidenced by chapel schedules almost, if not quite, to the present day. But of proprietary chapels in any full sense, or any deed similar to that of Bath, it would seem we must be content to comment that not even Dr. E. Benson Perkins, in his *Methodist Preaching-Houses and the Law*,<sup>81</sup> appeared to know of the Bath deed, and indeed he makes no reference to any like it elsewhere.

E. RALPH BATES.

[The Rev. E. Ralph Bates is a Methodist supernumerary minister who has resided in Bath for the past twenty years, and has made contributions to these *Proceedings* relevant to the history of Methodism in that city.]

the exertions of Redstone, a carpenter, and Nehemiah Jane, a quartermen in the Dockyard"; and a letter from the Devon Record Office (Exeter), dated 9th February 1981, states that no record is to be found in the "Meeting House" licence books with regard to the Lower Street chapel—but these records are not complete.

<sup>81</sup> The Wesley Historical Society Lectures, No. 18 (1952).

---

## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Wolverhampton Conference, 1984

(Fiftieth anniversary of the first Wesley Historical Society Lecture, given in Bishop Street Chapel, Leicester, 25th July 1934, by the Rev. Dr. Henry Bett)

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

**Beckminster Methodist Church, Wolverhampton**

**On Monday, 2nd July, at 7-30 p.m.**

BY

**The Rev. FRANK BAKER, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.**

(Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, U.S.A.).

*Subject*: "JOHN WESLEY AND AMERICA".

The chair will be taken by MR. S. C. REDHEAD, LL.B.

---

**The Annual Meeting** of the Society will be held on the same premises at **6 p.m.**

Mr. and Mrs. Rowland C. Swift kindly invite members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom at **5 p.m.** It is desirable that all those who intend to be present at the Tea should send their names to Mr. S. C. Redhead, 4, Westfield Grove, Finchfield, Wolverhampton, WV3 8EX, not later than 30th June.

To reach Beckminster by car from Wolverhampton town centre, leave the ring road by the A449 Kidderminster road, take the off-side lane, and turn right at the white-tiled Midland Counties Dairy building into Lea Road. At the island at the far end of Lea Road, turn right into Birches Barn Road, and the church will be seen on the left. Park on the near side in front of the church or by the wall lower down Birches Barn Road. Parking is not permitted in the roads at the side of the church.

For travel by bus, walk up to Queen Square, and on the right-hand (south) side take a No. 312 "Warstones via Penn Fields" bus. Alight at Penn Fields stop (far end of Lea Road), walk forward to island, turn right.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

THE holding of the 1983 Conference in Middlesbrough gave the Wesley Historical Society the opportunity to meet in the Yarm Octagon, described by John Wesley in 1764 as "by far the most elegant in England", and the second oldest chapel in continuous use. This was on Monday, 27th June, when members and friends who attended were entertained to an excellent tea, kindly provided by Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Swift, who unfortunately were unable themselves to be present. Thanks to them and to the Yarm ladies who had prepared and served the tea were expressed by the Rev. William Leary.

### Business Meeting

The President of the Society, the Rev. A. Raymond George, took the chair, and after the opening devotions there followed, as is our custom, the reading of the names of members who had died during the year, nineteen in number, to whose memory several of those present paid individual tribute. The meeting stood while Mr. George offered a prayer of remembrance and thanksgiving.

There was a satisfactory financial report, a summary of which is given on the opposite page. All the officers were thanked and re-appointed.

The Exhibitions Secretary, the Rev. William Leary, commended the Exhibition at the Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough, in which were some original paintings by Richard G. Douglas, formerly a minister of the South Africa Conference, of incidents in the life of John Wesley.

The Rev. K. B. Garlick as Librarian reported that the Library was now well catalogued, many extra items had been acquired (including a Wesley letter kindly presented by the Rev. Thomas Shaw), and repair work done.

Mr. Shaw himself had sent in his report as Local Branches Secretary, pointing out that it was often the local journal that held a scattered membership together.

Tribute to Mr. and Mrs. John A. Vickers was paid by the Rev. Peter Howard (Conferences Secretary) for the most successful Westhill Conference. He stated that he was preparing for a conference at Easter 1985. York was favoured as a possible venue.

No one who was there will soon forget the most imaginative and beautiful flower festival based on incidents in Wesley's life which had been devised and mounted by local members at Yarm. Outstanding were the displays relating to the Rectory Fire and to the Wesley Hymns, but there were many more which also caught the eye.

### The Annual Lecture

In introducing the lecturer, Mr. Geoffrey E. Milburn of Sunderland, the chairman, Mrs. Margaret Batty, referred to his associations with Yarm and the North-East and his researches into the Methodist history of the area. Mr. Milburn took as his subject "Piety, Profit and Paternalism: Methodists in Business". The extent to which Methodists engaged in business enterprises, often very effectively, surprised many of the attentive audience. The lecturer concentrated on the area between Hull and Newcastle upon Tyne, and looked at evidence stretching from Wesley's day to the early twentieth century. Mr. Milburn had stated in his introduction that his aim was to show how Methodism influenced the group of businessmen with whom he was concerned, and how they in their turn influenced Methodism, and this aim was carried out as an admirable connecting strand of emphasis throughout the whole lecture. E. DOROTHY GRAHAM.

THE following is a summary of the accounts presented at the Annual Meeting.

### WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

#### Financial Statement, 1st January to 31st December 1982

EXPENDITURE.	£	p.	INCOME.	£	p.
<i>Proceedings</i> and Printing	1,205	51	Subscriptions in advance br't forward from previous year—		
Secretarial, Editorial and Registrar's Expenses ...	393	67	Ordinary Members ...	769	32
Lecturer's Honorarium, etc.	42	44	Life Members ...	527	50
Subscriptions to voluntary societies ...	5	0	Received during year	1,753	17
Contribution to W.M.H.S. Newsletters ...	66	34		3,049	99
Printing new edition of <i>How to write a Local History of Methodism</i> ...	95	0	Less Unexpired Subscriptions (see Balance Sheet) ...	1,718	99
Library—				1,331	0
Re-binding and Acquisitions	82	45	<i>Proceedings</i> (back nos.) sold	104	5
Indexing, Cataloguing, Removal Expenses, etc.	342	16	Advertisements ...	7	0
Excess of Income over Expenditure ...	103	75	Irish Branch ...	90	0
			War Stock Dividend ...	3	84
			Conference Lecture Collect'n	19	15
			Library—Sale of Books ...	300	0
			Publications sold ...	75	71
			Bank Interest ...	405	57
				£2,336	32
	£2,336	32			

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1982

LIABILITIES.	£	p.	ASSETS.	£	p.
Unexpired Subscriptions—			Cash in hand—Treasurer ...	330	95
Ordinary Members ...	980	99	Registrar ...	3	63
Life Members (110) (say)	738	0	War Stock (at cost) ...	225	0
			(Market Value £60)		
Accumulated Funds b/fwd.	1,718	99	Trustee Savings Bank ...	881	68
	2,466	32	Midland Bank Deposit A/c	12	
			National Savings Bank ...	2,847	68
			Library, Publications Stocks, Filing Cabinet, etc. unvalued		
Add Excess of Income over Expenditure ...	4,185	31		£4,289	6
	103	75			
	£4,289	6			

(Signed)

ROWLAND C. SWIFT, *Treasurer.*

27th June 1983.

#### AUDITOR'S CERTIFICATE

I have examined the Income and Expenditure Account and the Balance Sheet with the books and records of the Society. No account has been taken of subscriptions in arrears at 31st December 1982, whether or not recovered since, but any previous arrears received in the year are included in Subscription Income. Subject to the foregoing, the Balance Sheet and Accounts show, in my opinion, a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31st December 1982, and of the excess of Income over Expenditure for the year ended on that date.

(Signed)

A. C. SARGENT, B.A., F.C.A.,  
Chartered Accountant, *Auditor.*Sproull & Co.,  
31-33, College Road,  
Harrow, Middlesex.

## BOOK NOTICES

*Baptists in the Twentieth Century*, edited by K. W. Clements. (Baptist Historical Society (1983): £4 95p.)

*The English Baptists of the Seventeenth Century*, by B. R. White. (Baptist Historical Society (1983): £4 95p.)

Baptists are well served by an active and flourishing historical society. The first of these two volumes comprises papers delivered at the Society's Summer School of 1982, and is a fascinating collection. It is surprising to what extent Victorian Baptists took their distinctives for granted. As Dr. L. G. Champion confesses (p. 8): "During my five years in Bristol College I cannot recall any courses on Baptist history or beliefs." Thus the ecclesiastical and secularizing trends of the twentieth century compelled Baptists perhaps more than any others into some very hard thinking and painful adjustments. Or should we say *some* Baptists?—for many preferred withdrawal, defiance, the adoption of an uncompromising, anti-ecumenical stance, sectarian rather than denominational. The contributors face these dilemmas fairly and squarely: Dr. Champion in his Personal Reflections, David Watts in a local study of Glasgow Baptists, Michael Walker in his study on Baptist worship (very forthright on charismatics and the church growth movement), Principal West in his paper on the Baptist contribution to the Faith and Order Conferences, David Bebbington on the political scene since 1914, Roger Hayden on J. H. Shakespeare—a controversial figure whose ecumenical vision outran the denominational consensus, Clyde Binfield on Baptist church architecture, and, most telling of all, Keith Clements on British Baptists and the German Church struggle.

Clements does not mince words; that most loudly trumpeted Baptist principle, religious liberty, proved itself, thanks to the numerical insignificance of the German Baptists and the British misunderstandings of the German Church scene, "too naïve for both the brutal power and the subtleties of the totalitarian state which could manipulate that ideology for its own ends" (p. 106). Barth was right: under a dictatorship, confession alone preserves the life and witness of the Church; "liberty" becomes an irrelevance. It is Clements, moreover, who reminds us that Dr. E. A. Payne, who dominated the Baptist scene in the third quarter of the century, took concerning the German Baptists a position which perplexed even his closest friends; he was later to do the same apropos the Independent Baptists of the Soviet Union. But that is another story, as is twentieth-century Baptist missionary endeavour, which, possibly because the Baptist Missionary Society is independent of the Baptist Union, receives little attention in these pages. All the essays contributed to this symposium are, however, in their different ways both stimulating and courageous, and deserve to be read in wider circles than those for which they were immediately written.

Dr. Barrie White's book is the first in a projected series which will replace Underwood (1947) and Payne (1959) as the standard history of the English Baptists. Much of Principal White's research has already been contributed to the *Baptist Quarterly*: it is lucid, painstaking and thorough, both on the General and Particular wings of Baptist development, and sets a high standard for the volumes which are to follow in the series. It is particularly strong on Baptist historians, Confessions, and personalities. If there must be adverse comment on this fine volume (whose binding, incidentally, is not as good as that of *Baptists in the Twentieth Century*), it is merely because Dr. White seems to have traced the Baptist story only

in those areas where believers were numerous enough to have founded Associations and to have left behind Association records. There were Baptists in Lancashire, Cheshire and Yorkshire, even before 1688, and they deserve a mention, if only in footnote or appendix. Perhaps the succeeding volume will recognize the northern shires.

IAN SELLERS.

*The Great Debate: Calvinism, Arminianism and Salvation*, by Alan P. F. Sell. (H. E. Walter, Worthing (1982): n.p.)

As Dr. Sell candidly admits, the Calvinist-Arminian debate today, so far as it exists at all, is "but peripheral to the main concerns of contemporary theology". This is a remarkable historical development, for the substance of the debate, in varying forms, has been a prominent and recurring feature of Christian theology since the earliest times. It was argued with great theological and pastoral sophistication in seventeenth-century Puritanism. It was the most conspicuous theological conflict in the eighteenth-century English Revival both within the revivalists' own ranks and in the eyes of its enemies. Arguments about faith and works came into it; so did John Wesley's highly controversial insistence on Christian perfection. Nor was this simply a concern of theologians: early Methodist biography often reveals the inward torment induced by belief in predestination. Yet the subsequent decline of the Calvinist tradition has made it difficult for modern scholars to recapture the intellectual and existential intensity of these issues.

Dr. Sell's book can therefore be welcomed as a useful guide to a complex subject. He limits himself mostly to Britain and to theological exposition from Calvin onwards. As he recognizes, a full historical explanation of the debate would require reference to many non-theological factors also. And indeed there remains much to explain about the shifting fortunes and varied forms of what we crudely label "Calvinism" and "Arminianism" (the founders' names are often taken in vain). For example, English Arminianism seems to have developed largely in independence of the Dutch variety developed by Arminius himself; and theological developments in both countries certainly had much to do with politics. The Calvinism of the Revival probably owed less to a living theological tradition than to the dictates of contemporary religious experience. John Wesley's Arminianism (rather untypical of the Revival as a whole in England) seems to derive from the prevailing mood of his Anglican background, yet it avoided the shift towards Unitarianism evident elsewhere. But contemporary evangelical Calvinists commonly moved towards a kind of "practical Arminianism" in their passion for souls. In the end, the Revival probably produced the paradox of first reviving a form of Calvinism and then undermining it.

Dr. Sell does throw some light on these matters, but he is more concerned to expound the strictly theological issues. In doing so he introduces many largely forgotten writers, as well as some more familiar ones. Methodist historians should find this (together with his full references) a useful source for explaining the tradition—very learned and intricate at times—on which the simpler evangelical debates were partly based. Dr. Sell's own sympathies are on the whole with Calvinism, but he is far from uncritical of it, and he is not unfair to Arminians. Such an approach is, amongst other things, a corrective to John Wesley's rather simplistic presentation of the issues. I sense that Dr. Sell is concerned with his theme as something more than a piece of past history. Here is what used to be regarded as a central issue in the whole mystery of God's dealings with

men. If the traditional theology often seems intricate, abstract, even remote from biblical language, it was also often based on profoundly moving and deeply-felt religious experiences leading to reflection on the nature of God and man. Did the theology collapse under the weight of its own difficulties and the force of secular thought or because the experience behind it faded away? Or does it require a fresh formulation in other terms?

HENRY D. RACK.

*Friedrich Wunderlich, ein Brückenbauer Gottes*, by Karl Heinz Voigt. (Stuttgart: Christliches Verlagshaus (1982), pp. 265, DM.25.)

This enjoyable book, written in limpid German by a Methodist pastor at Bremen who is doing much for the scholarly treatment of the history of Methodism in Central Europe, is worth reading by any Methodist with a smattering of the language. It tells the story of a German Methodist bishop who, at the time of publication, was still in active retirement at the age of 86. It is a story in many ways reminiscent of Wesley's *Journal*—a story of ceaseless work and travel (though Wunderlich, even before he joined the ecumenical jet-set, honoured Wesley by scudding around in a Porsche rather than on horseback!), and yet one which reveals very little of what "made the man tick", the nature of his piety, or where he stood theologically.

Wunderlich, descended from a Methodist family which originally possessed a small country property in Thuringia, began as a full-time Sunday-school organizer (no mealy-mouthed talk about "Junior Church" here!) in a church which had once had a verse in its Sunday-school hymn-book denouncing civil slavery and the tyranny of nobles and priests. The early chapters of the book paint a vivid picture of the appalling illiberalism of Saxon society in which there were no prospects for members of sects; in some ways the DDR is more generous than the Orthodox Saxony of Wunderlich's youth. And even when the state churches understood that they were in the toils with Hitler's government, Karl Barth could look askance at the Methodists on the grounds that they were not properly rooted in Reformed Confessions (perhaps he should have directed his criticisms across the Channel: Pastor Voigt does not appreciate how far the English scholars he praises for reviving interest in the Reformers have pushed us back in the direction of Catholic forms). And free-church status meant five years' military service for Wunderlich in the second World War, when the established clergy were exempt. The most remarkable thing about the war service was its end; Wunderlich listened illicitly to Churchill's broadcast announcing the defeat of the Axis powers, dismissed his unit, and set off for Dresden by bicycle. Here he found, by an appalling act of Allied barbarism (perpetrated it is said at the behest of the Russians), the whole city destroyed, and his mother and sister among the dead. But the war-destruction, in a wider sense, provided Wunderlich with his life's work, breathlessly narrated here—bridge-building: bridge-building between his own Christian community and the church outside Germany; bridge-building within his own community, as the assimilation of German-language to English-language Methodism in America brought the union of different German-language Methodisms in Europe behind it; bridge-building between the Methodists of the DDR and Cuba, between the world of the economic miracle and the "Third World"; pressure for peace for motives other than the dictates of the East German government. This part of the story, impersonal as it is, has a double interest: it vividly illustrates the way churches, properly determined to avoid isolation, have

created an international merry-go-round which is not worth what it costs, and produces another isolation by separating the professionals who sustain it from the rest; and for Methodists it shows the advantage to small religious communities of the federal structure of American Methodism (always repudiated here) and the bracing sense it gives of belonging to a world-wide communion. The advocates, so vociferous among us, of reconstituting a national communion ought to give thanks that in Germany at least other counsels prevailed. In short—a good book, and food for thought.

W. R. WARD.

*The Works of John Wesley*, Vol. 26—*Letters, II. 1740-1755*, edited by Frank Baker. (Clarendon Press: Oxford University Press, pp. xx. 684, £35.)

The second volume of the *Letters of John Wesley* maintains the high standard set by Volume I, which was reviewed by the Rev. Thomas Shaw in *Proceedings*, xlii, p. 150 f. Covering the period 1740 to 1755, it contains 270 letters written by John Wesley and 145 received by him—the inclusion of the latter being an invaluable addition, as much of Wesley's correspondence was written in reply to incoming letters hitherto unpublished or inaccessible. So it is good that, by virtue of this new edition, both sides of the correspondence can be studied.

The period itself was a formative one for Methodism. Foundations were laid upon which the connexion was later built. In this volume we read of Wesley's relationship with the Moravians, the Moravian archives revealing correspondence with James Hutton, Johann Töltzschig, Philip Henry Mülther, and the Moravian Church itself. There are also letters to and from George Whitefield and Howell Harris, who developed their own brand of Methodism outside the Wesleyan fold; from the early itinerants John Bennet, John Cennick, Joseph Cowley, John Downes, Christopher Hopper and John Nelson (to name but a few); from famous figures such as Ebenezer Blackwell, Philip Doddridge, the Erskines (James and Ralph), William Grimshaw, James Hervey, Lady Huntingdon, Benjamin Ingham, and, most voluminous of all the letters, from "John Smith". (We notice that Dr. Baker does not ascribe absolute certainty to the generally-accepted guess that "John Smith" was none other than Thomas Secker, bishop of Oxford.)

As in Volume I, it is Wesley's own personal life that is laid bare, especially in the numerous letters which passed between himself and his brother Charles, between the *dramatis personæ* in the Grace Murray episode, and later in his correspondence with his wife. Yet in all this we look in vain for light on what is perhaps the most tantalizing unanswered question in the whole of Wesley's life—Where was he married? Still we do not know! Again as in the first volume, much new information is given about places, people and events as they are referred to in the letters, making this book indispensable for any student of early Methodism. These footnotes must be the fruit of hours of diligent research and careful garnering of detailed information, so that to Dr. Baker and his team we must be eternally grateful. Other information includes particulars about postmark, source, name and address of recipient, together with any variations in the text.

This is, then, from beginning to end, an authoritative and scholarly edition of Wesley's correspondence which no serious student of early Methodism can afford to neglect. As Mr. Shaw remarked in his review of Volume I, if it is too expensive for an individual to buy, let it be confidently recommended to every reference library.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

*Within the Rock of Ages: The Life and Work of Augustus Montague Toplady*, by George Lawton. (James Clarke & Co., Cambridge (1983): pp. 249, £12 95p.)

Present-day Methodists remember Toplady for two things: first, thankfully, for writing hymns like "Rock of Ages" and "Object of my first desire"; second, far less enthusiastically, for a bitter quarrel with John Wesley which lasted until Toplady's death. There is obviously more to Toplady than this, and we are grateful to Dr. Lawton for filling in the portrait. To Toplady, John Wesley was the arch-villain of the story, and other traditional Methodist heroes—Fletcher, Olivers, Sellon—were his "subalterns", "retainers", and so on. The admirer of such men had better be sure that he has the stomach for Toplady's insults. Tyerman, as Dr. Lawton shows, could hardly bear to read Toplady.

This book shows that Toplady objected originally not to Wesley's Arminianism, but to what he saw as Wesley's treason to the Church of England—boasting his conformity to the Establishment but in fact going about undermining it. Toplady's zeal for Calvinist doctrine did not, as he made clear, extend to Presbyterian church polity; he regarded the Church of England as best of all churches. His objection to Wesley is not unlike that of a nineteenth-century Anglo-Catholic like Pusey; it would sound better from Toplady had he not tried, in his first curacy, to move to a London pulpit—already in the eighteenth century an attraction for a man with a theological axe to grind. For his final two-year ministry he went to the (Anglican) Orange Street Chapel in London; yet, as Dr. Lawton remarks, several thousand miles a year on horseback was the very medicine this sickly hater of itinerancy needed!

Dr. Lawton, well known as the author of *John Wesley's English*, shows his philological expertise again in the Appendix to this work. His literary analysis of Toplady's hymns is also valuable. But his disclaimer, "It does not fall within the scope of our study to pronounce upon the deep theological issues involved" (p. 115), is not good enough for a study of a man who was a theologian to his finger-tips. No one questions Toplady's massive learning, but scholarship also involves judgement, and Toplady's theological judgement remains controversial. To describe the first four Christian centuries as "unanimous believers of the doctrines now termed Calvinistic" is ridiculous; Augustine's doctrine of predestination was a novelty. Toplady, like too many more, assumed that whenever Paul, Ignatius and others mentioned predestination, he had the full Augustinian scheme in mind. Wesley put himself in the wrong with his tract of 1770 that so embittered Toplady, but a study of Toplady's *Doctrine of Absolute Predestination Stated and Asserted* almost excuses him. Dr. Lawton calls the *Doctrine* "moderate in tone", but (following Zanchius) it makes "the love of God" and "the hatred of God" of equal force in "the sovereignty of the divine will". Toplady's book was a bad adaptation of a bad original. Dr. Lawton wonders why this continental Calvinist so gripped Toplady; may it be because Zanchius was disputing with other Protestants (Lutherans), and so was useful to one who regarded it as his mission to restore his Church's theology to what he took to be her pristine Calvinism? Yet this hater of Wesley included no fewer than 190 Wesley hymns in the *Orange Street Hymnal*,<sup>1</sup> among them about forty (e.g. MHB 110, 278, 426, 924) which did not appear in Wesleyan hymn-books until the 1876 Supplement!

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxvii, pp. 93 ff.—EDITOR.

The most attractive parts of this book are the glimpses of Toplady's pastoral ministry in Somerset and Devon, diligently performed as far as health allowed, and his expressions of the positive side of his belief in God's grace.  
F. STUART CLARKE.

*Memories of a Labour Leader* (the autobiography of John Wilson, J.P., M.P.), with a New Introduction by John Burnett. (Caliban Books (1980): pp. [xv.] 320, £12.)

John Wilson's autobiography was first published in 1910, and has now been reprinted as a facsimile edition. On the one hand this is the story of a Durham pit-boy who in his later years attained to one honour after another. From 1890 he was MP for Mid-Durham, and at the 1906 General Election was returned unopposed. Alderman, chairman of the county council, and Justice of the Peace, he took the greatest pride toward the end of his days in helping to establish the Aged Miners' Homes. All this had been achieved by the lad who, parentless and penniless, at the age of 12 went into the pit, at first as a "putter", and then as a hewer. This is a moving account of sacrifice and selfless achievement. On the other hand it is the story of the religious pilgrimage of the man who was "saved" by the love of God and the love of a good woman. Chapter XXV is headed simply "Conversion", and chapter XXVI "How I became a Preacher".

This was not John Wilson's first venture into print. In 1907 he had completed a *History of the Durham Miners' Association, 1870-1904*. The *Holborn Review* considered him sufficiently important to devote 19 pages of its October 1910 issue to a review of his autobiography. The original printing of the book contained an Introduction by the Dean of Durham and an appreciation by the Bishop of Durham. There was evident pride in the *PM Holborn Review*, however, that the life of an esteemed layman of the Primitive Methodist Church was being described: "He is as good a P.M. as M.P."  
STEPHEN G. HATCHER.

### Branch Publications

MENTION was made on page 22 of the last issue of the *Proceedings* of recent publications by some of our Society's local branches. The following notes add various details, together with other notices.

The handsomely-produced and illustrated account of the Breton nobleman *Armand de Kerpezdron* and his work amongst French prisoners during the Napoleonic Wars, by John Waller of the East Midlands, costs 75p. from Rev. S. Y. Richardson, 22, Garton Road, Loughborough, LE11 2DY. Mrs. E. V. Chapman's paper on *Robert Aitken*, read to the Manx Methodist Historical Society, can be obtained, price 50p., from the Society at Borodail, Kirkmichael, Isle of Man, or from Mrs. Chapman, Ing Royde, Birdcage Lane, Halifax, HX3 0JE. Aitken (1799-1873) was a strange mixture of evangelical and catholic—an Anglican priest who offered for the Wesleyan ministry. *Methodist Union: An Historical Survey*, a lecture delivered to the North-East branch by Dr. John C. Bowmer, is obtainable price 35p. plus postage from Mr. G. E. Milburn, 8, Ashbrooke Mount, Sunderland, SR2 7SD. The Plymouth and Exeter branch has issued a modestly-produced but very readable account of two Methodist architects with Devon connexions: Alexander Lauder of Barnstaple (1836-1921), by Audrey Lloyd, and John Wills of Salcombe and Derby (1845-1906), by David Barton. Copies (no price stated) are available from Mr. Roger F. S. Thorne, 11, Station Road, Topsham, Exeter, EX3 0DS.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

1374. DR. GEORGE BOOTH, J.P.

As many readers will know, the tunes editions of the *Primitive Methodist Hymnal* of 1889, of its *Supplement* of 1912, and of the *Primitive Methodist Sunday School Hymnal* of 1901, were edited by George Booth, M.D., of Chesterfield. At the PM Conference of June 1901, held in Sheffield, Dr. Booth was presented with an illuminated address, in a full-leather casing, in recognition of his outstanding services to the Connexion as musical editor, especially of the Sunday School book published that year. The document was signed on behalf of the Conference by the Rev. H. B. Kendall (President) and the Rev. John Welford (Secretary).

Strange as it may seem, I myself recently acquired this beautifully-executed address, still in very good condition, at a secondhand book shop in Norwich. Apart from the knowledge that Booth was a medical man and a magistrate, and was resident in Chesterfield, I have not been able to find out anything about him, and I should therefore be grateful for any details of his life and work. In the *Methodist Recorder* of 7th November 1974, the late Dr. F. B. Westbrook wrote an article on the 1889 *Hymnal*, but made no mention of its musical editor.

WILFRID A. GREEN

(60, Brian Avenue, Norwich).

1375. THE PM MUSICAL EDITOR.

In response to Mr. Green's inquiry, Miss Phyllis Lane of Bolsover, near Chesterfield, kindly undertook considerable local research, and to her and to the staff of the Chesterfield Reference Library and the editor of the *Derbyshire Times* at Matlock we accord our most grateful thanks.

George Booth was born at Hasland (Derbyshire) on 12th July 1840, the son of the Rev. George Booth, "a poor Primitive Methodist minister", who died in 1854 at the age of 49. Left in straitened circumstances, his mother kept a small school to enable her to pay Grammar School fees for her son and for him to be apprenticed to a Chesterfield pharmacist. He went on to study medicine in Sheffield and London, finally obtaining the degree of M.D. in 1897. In Chesterfield he was active in the fields of education and hospital administration, in addition to serving as a magistrate and town councillor. He was Mayor of Chesterfield in 1887. At Holywell Cross PM chapel he was Sunday-school superintendent for fifty years. He was a composer of hymn-tunes, and a competent player on violin and 'cello.

When he died, on 18th February 1926, the *Derbyshire Times* devoted 26 in. of its column space to his obituary, with more than twice that depth the following week on the occasion of his funeral in Holywell Cross chapel, at which the address was given by Professor A. L. Humphries of Hartley College, Manchester.

ALFRED A. TABBERER.

**"Down Lambeth way"**

THE examination of Wesley's diary entry for 2nd September 1739 (*Journal* ii, p. 267) reveals another error in Curnock's interpretation of the shorthand, besides the name of Sir Isaac Shard, to which I referred in *Proceedings*, xlv, p. 15. Dr. Richard P. Heitzenrater has since written to point out that the extension of Wesley's abbreviation "ig t r" to *igitur* is a mistake, and that it should be understood, as in other places in the diary, as "eg t r", according to Byrom's shorthand rules—letters which probably mean "edifying good talk (religious)". This explanation does no damage to my suggestion that Shard could have been responsible for Wesley's visit to a society at Lambeth, in his parish of St. Mary's. Indeed, it makes it more likely.

LESLIE G. FARMER.