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

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# Proceedings

OF THE

# Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

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Volume XXXIV

March 1963

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## EDITORIAL

THE commencement of another volume provides us with an opportunity to greet our readers, for our Society is essentially a confraternity of unseen friends, with the *Proceedings* as the only tangible link between us all.

This year of Grace, 1963, has dawned with the People called Methodists very much in the news. One could not write this Editorial without some reference to the Report, just published, of the Conversations between the Methodists and the Church of England. As we are a society whose interests are primarily in history, it could be said that the Report is not our direct concern, and (what is probably more to the point) that even less is it our duty to comment upon it at this stage. At the same time, one has to acknowledge that it was our own particular history—viz. the relationship of Wesley and the early Methodists to the Church of England—that led to these Conversations taking place in the first instance. Certainly we believe that no true judgement can be passed upon them without some knowledge of that history, and we would like to think that some of the articles which have appeared in these pages—e.g. those on ordination—were more widely read in our Church. History surely has a word for the present.

\* \* \*

Two hundred years ago there passed from the Methodist scene that turbulent priest—one of the most colourful figures of the Revival—William Grimshaw. It is fitting that this event should be celebrated by an article in this volume. The facts of Grimshaw's life are easily accessible, so our contributor rightly seeks to assess the unique position of Grimshaw as a Methodist clergyman.

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From time to time we hope to include a paragraph entitled "Notes from the Librarian". Apart from financial resources, which are all too meagre, the Library is in good shape, widely used and ably cared for.

## WILLIAM GRIMSHAW

[In spite of John Wesley's entry in his *Journal* for April 1762, it is now generally acknowledged that William Grimshaw died on 7th April 1763, so that the bicentenary of his death falls this year.—EDITOR.]

WITH the publication last month of the recommendations of the "Anglican-Methodist Conversations", this is a timely theme. As one of the "Anglican Fathers" of Methodism, William Grimshaw affords a study in the transition of a body of Christians from an internal society, an *ecclesiola in ecclesia*, to a communion that "claims and cherishes its place in the Holy Catholic Church which is the Body of Christ". If it be true that the old British Empire was acquired in fits of absent-mindedness, it is certainly true that the Methodist movement grew in its abandon, then woke up to find itself in possession of a spiritual empire, a church in its own right. The "mad parson of Haworth" was one of the intrepid explorers and settlers, and made no mean contribution to the building of another dominion of the Lord's commonwealth.

It would be as well to summarize his life once again, for the general reader. Lancashire-born, and educated at Blackburn and Hesketh Grammar Schools, he passed through Milton's *alma mater* at Christ's College, Cambridge, and was influenced by the "prevalent impiety" there. He spent all his ministry in Yorkshire, first at Todmorden ("a chapelry in the parish of Rochdale") and then at Haworth ("a chapel-of-ease in the parish of Bradford"). The grimness of the latter place is well attested by the daughters of Parson Brontë a century later, though Grimshaw's experience radiates a warmer evangelical light over the bracing landscape.

The death of his first wife seems to have really turned his mind to the seriousness of his calling, along with his reading of Puritan divines, and he organized his pastoral life on methodical lines before ever he met the Wesleys. On first hearing of the work of John Wesley he eagerly greeted him from afar, and offered himself wholeheartedly to the movement as an "assistant". In a letter dated 1747 he detailed his message, and method of visitation, then confessed his concern at his own excursions into other parishes "with a Nicodemical fear, and to the great offence of the clergy"; but with great trepidation he still sallied forth. His letter continued:

I desire to do nothing, but in perfect harmony and concert with you, and therefore beg you will be entirely free and open and communicative with me. I bless God I can discover no other at present, but a very perfect agreement between your sentiments, principles etc. of religion, and of my own; and therefore desire you will (as I do to you) from time to time, lay before me such rules, places, proposals etc. as you conceive most conducive to the welfare of the Church, the private benefit of her members, and in the whole, to the glory of the Lord.

Of his forceful and fervent ways and "market" language anecdotes abound, and students of Brontëana find traces of the traditions

in the tales that were made in the parsonage. He was the blessing and the scourge of the countryside; the Black Bull inn would empty on the Sabbath if his coming was whispered, especially during the long psalm before the sermon; both fear and love were in the hearts of these very rough people. There were marvellous effects of his ministry: a dozen people grew into as many hundreds, and one memorable communion service he conducted with George Whitefield called for thirty-five bottles of wine! Grimshaw's influence ended once and for all the baneful influence of the notorious Haworth Races, and effected a widespread Sabbath observance. Only Wesley could outmatch his astonishing travels. "Preaching is health, food and physic to me."

His association with the Wesleys, Whitefield, Romaine and Venn, and his special friendship with his colleague John Nelson of Birstall, enriched his ministry immeasurably, and he rejoiced in giving his best hospitality to all the preachers while he himself slept in the barn. John Pawson testifies to his extraordinary humility before them—"I have seen him sit with all possible attention to the very weakest of them"—and exclaimed Grimshaw to one of them: "Your sermon is worth of hundred of mine!"

We learn from the minute book of the Keighley society that from his own pocket he reimbursed the first preachers until circuit stewardship was established. Incumbent of Haworth and first superintendent of the great Haworth Round, this dual character could not be shaken from his fundamental allegiance. If the Methodists would leave the Church then he would leave them; though he also said that if authority inhibited his preaching he would pack his bags and join them. John Pawson, again, refers quite naturally to "Mr. Grimshaw's Circuit" and "Mr. Grimshaw's Preachers". His extending work cried out for more and yet more preachers. "Are there such plenty helpers in Cornwall? Send us one or two of them without further entreaty," he begged of Wesley. He had to face the usual objectors, both in print and in mobs led by other incumbents; indeed practically all his printed work consisted of apologetic and testimony. His death at fifty-five was brought on by an infectious fever caught while following his visitation during an epidemic, and it was directed in his will that a Methodist preacher should preach the funeral sermon from his favourite text: "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

He feared for his succession, and therefore built the first chapel in Haworth for the "purer part of the Church of England" in case his successor should not welcome Methodist preaching and fellowship. An outstanding debt on the place he endeavoured to raise by acquiring shares in a state lottery, after conversation on the matter with John Nelson, but soon came to the conclusion that the Lord was not with him in that method. He need not have feared for the succession, in the event; indeed, the chapel, and the society cause generally, languished till 1791. The parson it was who first called the

meeting-house a "chapel", and his significant place in the story of our property can be gauged by the fact that the Wesleys associated him with themselves in the legal settlement of the places. By the deeds of Bolton and other places, he was to have power to appoint ministers and preachers, after the two brothers. Not until the death of John did the right pass to the Conference; by outliving them both he possibly made the rupture inevitable by acts that spoke louder than any words that might be selected and quoted.

It is interesting to speculate on what would have happened if the "perpetual curate" of Haworth had been the last of the triumvirate. Should we have been an order of preachers within the Anglican communion—a primitive Church Army? Or would nonconformity have been strengthened by more splinters? (It was one of his own preachers, Will Hartley, who founded the first Baptist chapel in Haworth six years before the building of the Methodist house.) We believe God disposed otherwise; let, for example, the Church of South India speak to that. It is even more interesting to speculate (and more fruitless) on what would have happened if Grimshaw had been merely typical of the parsons of his day, and if most incumbents had superintended lay preaching rounds and parish classes and societies. He apparently did not find it incongruous to ride his sermons on horseback to all who would hear him—and some who would not! One wonders how much of the opposition was due not only to unworthy motives tied up with the establishment but also to nothing bigger and more human than inter-parish jealousies. This strange Calvinist father of Yorkshire Methodism needed no episcopal authority for his itinerancy, though the blessing of Ebor was not withheld from him.

These are merely nostalgic reflections on Church history, but the wind still blows where it lists on Haworth Moors. Whenever men mission, the Spirit sometimes shows impatience with traditional forms. Lest we forget, William Grimshaw is a reminder. His passion for souls, his theology of mission that arose out of a seemingly impossible blend of Calvinist and Arminian sympathies, his benevolence to all men of Christ, made a personality that marks him as one of the men of the "Conversations", for his conversation was truly in heaven.

RALPH LOWERY.

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The November 1962 Bulletin of the East Anglian branch once again nearly fills four pages of foolscap in close typescript, and gives a very full account of the Rev. J. J. Perry's address on Wesley Pottery at the autumn meeting of the branch, reported in our last issue. It is gratifying to note that there is now an exchange of bulletins between the four branches. Thus they help one another.

When shall we have branches in Birmingham, Manchester, and, of course, Bristol? These historic Methodist centres are probably just waiting for some member of our Society who has sufficient energy and "drive" to call an inaugural meeting!

## THOMAS BIRCH FREEMAN, ANN GOULSTONE AND THE "FLY-SHEETS"

PRIMARY sources for the life of the pioneer West African missionary Thomas Birch Freeman include his *Journals*, published (1844) and unpublished, his unpublished *Reminiscences* (written 1860-1, revised 1884), and his official correspondence, now preserved in the archives of the Methodist Missionary Society.<sup>1</sup> These archives also possess a collection of exercise books containing about three thousand pages of manifold copies of letters written by Freeman between May 1848 and April 1857, with a gap between June 1849 and June 1850.

One of these letters is of interest, not only to the biographer of Freeman, but also to the historian of British Methodism, as showing the private reaction to the painful "Fly-sheets" controversy of an informed but personally uninvolved observer. It is addressed to Miss Ann Goulstone, of Bedminster, and was written from Cape Coast on 19th June 1849, more than eleven years after Freeman's first arrival on the Gold Coast, and nearly eight years after the death of his second wife, Lucinda, née Cowan. The background of the letter, both in Freeman's relationship with Miss Goulstone and in the wider setting of his dealings with the secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, may be briefly indicated.

On 25th November 1844, the fourth anniversary of his marriage to Lucinda, Freeman visited Bedminster in the course of his second furlough, which proved also to be his last. He wrote in his journal:

Saw my dearest Lucy's Bosom Friend Annie Goulstone. Oh what feelings did this interview awaken! Lord sustain me.

Freeman's account of further meetings with Miss Goulstone in January, April and May 1845 shows clearly that he intended her to become his wife. On 6th May he describes her as "my future companion thro' this vale of tears". He returned, unmarried, to the field in the following month.

By February 1847 arrangements for a third furlough were being discussed,<sup>2</sup> but Freeman's return to England was delayed, not only by the pressure of normal work, but by journeys with Governor Winniett to Dahomey, in March-April 1847, and to Kumasi, in September-October 1848. By that time a crisis had arisen in the financial affairs of the District. The Missionary Committee's anxiety about Freeman's rate of expenditure had led it to take the

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also Freeman's novel, *Missionary Enterprise no Fiction* (1871), which is based on his own experiences; and, for a voluminous account of his suspension and later dismissal as Chief Civil Commandant of the Eastern District of the Gold Coast, see Governor Andrews's despatches of 31st August 1860 and 9th October 1861, now at the Public Records Office.

<sup>2</sup> Allen to Secretaries and Allen to Beecham, 20th February 1847. (All references, unless otherwise specified, are to documents in the Archives of the Methodist Missionary Society.)

extreme step of declining to honour three of his bills, to a total value of £670. Freeman's resignation as Chairman of the Gold Coast District was accepted; it was arranged that he should wind up the accounts for 1848 and then return home, his place being taken by a senior colleague, William Allen.<sup>8</sup>

These arrangements were never put into effect, and Freeman remained in office for another eight years. On 24th January 1849 a public meeting of merchants was held at Cape Coast on Freeman's invitation, to examine the District accounts for the years 1845 to 1848. Its report confirmed that there was an accumulated debt of £2,250, but placed the onus of responsibility for it on the Missionary Committee in London, suggesting that it should have either provided an additional grant or else given "*positive* instructions" to reduce the number of stations. At the same time Freeman submitted a detailed plan for the remodelling of the District, which the Committee accepted with some modification.

By March 1849 he is able to write to Miss Goulstone<sup>4</sup> with characteristic optimism of the "improved aspect of this District"; but since Allen and another colleague are on furlough, Freeman himself must remain until the "end of this year". In June he writes:

I sometimes, now that the temporary excitement has passed away, wonder how it was that we allowed ourselves to be disturbed by the circumstance as much as we really were.

His remarks quoted below, later in the same letter, about English Methodism in general, and "our official Fathers" in particular, were not therefore written hastily at the height of the controversy, but several months after it had subsided.

The reason why Freeman's engagement to Miss Goulstone did not end in marriage remains uncertain. His letter of June 1849 shows that he was still expecting to see her "in a few months", and that he considered the engagement unbroken. In August, however, commenting in an official letter on his colleague Wharton's marriage to Miss Grant, a young woman of mixed descent, he writes from Cape Coast:

I have long urged upon the Brethren the vital importance of their making suitable marriages in this country if they desire to labor long in this District and give it the advantage of their experience . . . ,

and on 30th September he informs the Committee that

. . . it is my intention . . . to take the same step as Mr Wharton has done, and make this country my home.

It is through a letter from Charles Hillard to the Committee, dated 14th December 1849, that we learn that

. . . on Saturday [sic] the 8th Inst. Mr Freeman was married to Miss Morgan, who was one of our first members in this part of the world [i.e. Cape Coast] and who has been for the last three years a consistent and useful Class Leader.

<sup>8</sup> Secretaries to Allen, 2nd November 1848; Hoole to Allen, 22nd November 1848.

<sup>4</sup> 2nd March 1849 (manifold copy).

A search at Somerset House has failed to reveal evidence of Miss Goulstone's marriage about this time, or of her death. The problem of Freeman's sudden change of matrimonial intention has thus still to be solved.

His letter of 19th June 1849 contains the fullest expression of his reaction to the troubles which were disrupting Methodism at that time. The first few pages discuss his health, the recent financial difficulties, Wharton's engagement, and the work of the mission. After writing a paragraph of a more intimate nature, Freeman continues:

A word respecting the *Fly Sheets* to which you allude in your last; —I suppose it must be admitted that much that they contain is sober truth; but I cannot admire the spirit in which they seem to be written. I think that the Brethren connected with them ought, instead of taking their present Course, to try and act in a Body, privately upon the parties of whom they complain; and if such a plan should not succeed, make their complaints a Conference question, giving the adverse party due notice of their intentions. I cannot but apprehend, on the part of many of our official Fathers, from some unhappy cause, a serious declension of spirituality of mind. On this head, I am greatly grieved with circumstances which have passed under my own Notice. Listen—what can you think of the fact that for Two whole years no letter containing spiritual encouragement, advice and counsel was addressed from Centenary Hall to any part of this District?<sup>5</sup> I do not say this unkindly. I look upon it rather as resulting from the spiritually paralyzing effects of office unassociated with certain duties and circumstances which seem almost imperatively necessary to sustain, under such official requirements, the life of God in the soul. I know *this* from my own experience in my position in this country. The fact that I am the Pastor of the church in Cape Coast; that I have to preach, and have had to do so for many consecutive years—say, at least, Two Sermons a week, to the same congregation, the members of which are observant of my own growth in personal piety, from the “things new and old” which I have had to bring out of the Spiritual Treasury; and sundry other circumstances of this description, have always had a powerful bearing on the state of my heart, and constrained me to cling to the Cross of Christ.

My Dearest will consider these remarks referring to the *Fly Sheets* . . . as strictly private. I expect to hear of a very stormy Conference this year; but should this be the Case, I hope much good will result; and that our gracious God will over-rule all things for the well-being of the Connexion.

Another letter, written more than four years later to a former colleague, throws some light on the paradox of the last sentence quoted, and on Freeman's ecclesiology.

I cannot help thinking [Freeman writes, in a passage heavy with millennarian anticipations] that the recent agitation in our Hoine Circuits

<sup>5</sup> A striking echo of this sentence is found in a letter of John Milum, Freeman's successor and first biographer, to the Committee, dated 7th February 1881: “If reference be made to your letter-book you will . . . find that not a single letter of an encouraging nature has been sent to me from the Mission House since I left England.”



has been permitted in great mercy to lead all classes of our vast community to look to their "*Foundations*" and shake themselves loose from the world and from all earthly things . . .<sup>6</sup>

PAUL ELLINGWORTH.

<sup>6</sup> Freeman to Hart, 5th August 1853 (manifold copy). Freeman's assessment of the Oxford Movement, earlier in the same letter, is consistent with this: "I am quite prepared to see the rent of which you speak take place in the Established Church and the sooner it takes place the better. It needs a violent storm to clear and purify its heavily charged and oppressive atmosphere."

From the Secretary of the Society of Cirplanologists we have received the Lent 1963 Bulletin, together with the first supplement to the Register of Circuit Plans. The supplement is a lengthy one—"much larger than seemed likely last September", says the Secretary. This is partly due to the inclusion of the first instalment of plans deposited at the Archives and Research Centre in City Road.

The Bulletin is once again a document of considerable interest to students of Methodist history. The editor reports that Dr. Frank Baker has given details of a collection of plans for 1825 which is now at Drew University in the United States. This collection consists of a copy of a plan from every Wesleyan circuit (with very few missing) in England, Scotland and Wales. The editor of *Cirplan* says: "A similar collection for 1861 was noted in a footnote to the Register, but we have no details concerning it." We are happy to say that this 1861 collection is safely housed in the City Road Archives, and will be the subject of a report in a future issue of *Cirplan*.

The discovery of this 1861 collection led us at the Archives to ask every circuit in British Methodism to send us a copy of their plan for the first quarter of 1963, so that for future historians a complete set of 1963 plans can be set alongside those for 1861. At the time of writing, the response from circuits is by no means complete. Members of our Society would do us a service by ensuring that their own circuit is not defaulting in this matter. Do let us have a copy of *your* plan.

We would again commend *Cirplan* to all our members. The annual subscription to the Society of Cirplanologists is 2s. 6d., and should be sent to the treasurer, Mr. Arnold Whipp, at 29, Mather Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester.

In his *Catalogue of Wesleyana* (1921) the Rev. J. Alfred Sharp wrote: "The only known volume of sermons by the Rev. Alexander Kilham is in manuscript and is owned by Mr. T. P. Ridley (Gateshead), a descendant of Kilham." It is a pleasure to record that this precious volume has been presented to our Society and is now deposited in the Library. We would hereby express our thanks to Mr. Ridley for this historical treasure and assure him of our utmost care for it. The book is a thick volume of approximately 350 pages entirely covered with small writing—the arduous task of some historian to decipher!—and is a valuable Library accession.

Mr. Ridley's grandfather, the Rev. Thomas White Ridley, President of the Methodist New Connexion Conference in 1862, married a niece of Alexander Kilham. In addition to the manuscript volume, Mr. Ridley has also donated to us a fine engraving of Kilham and a rare edition of his *Life*. A bust of Kilham Mr. Ridley still retains in his own possession.

## SIX WESLEY LETTERS

THE following unpublished letters of John Wesley—all belonging to the closing years of his life—appeared in *Methodist History*, October 1962, and are reproduced here by kind permission of the editor, Dr. Elmer T. Clark. (A notice regarding the contents of this first number of *Methodist History* appeared in our December 1962 *Proceedings* (xxxiii, p. 180), and a similar notice of the second number will be found on page 21.)

### I

JOHN WESLEY TO ALEXANDER SUTER

Cork,

May 4, 1789 [?].

My Dear Brother,

Immediately add to the Outward an Inward Remedy, namely the Diet Drink "for Scorbutic Sores" which is in the Primitive Physic. I judge your Disorder is a degree of the King's Evil. You do well to take it in time.

But you say nothing of poor Lawrence Kane. Is he come to his senses again? Tell him I expected better things from Him! I really thought he was a patient man. That putting out the lights in the room was a terrible Emblem!

I am, My dear Aleck,

Your affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To Mr. Suter at the Preaching House in Plymouth Dock.

The figures in the date-line of this letter are difficult to decipher, but we have transcribed them as 1789 as this is the year which most exactly corresponds with the movements of both Alexander Suter and John Wesley; furthermore these figures are inherently possible in Wesley's script. On 4th May 1789 Suter was stationed in the London circuit and Wesley was in Cork. *Methodist History* transcribes "1784", but this is highly improbable, as on 4th May that year both Wesley and Suter were in Scotland—Wesley at Stonehaven and Suter in the Aberdeen circuit.

For Lawrence Kane see *Standard Journal*, vii, p. 268 and *Standard Letters*, viii, p. 137. In May 1789 he was the assistant ("superintendent" in modern parlance) at Plymouth.

### II

JOHN WESLEY TO ALEXANDER SUTER

Bristol

Sept. 16, 1785.

My dear Brother,

I doubt we can do Sister Ramsey little good till she is of another spirit. If any one had said a word about it at the Conference, your plea would have been allowed. But possibly it is not too late now: for we are not yet run aground.

To you I may speak in confidence. He is a good man and a remarkably sensible man. But he is in no wise fit for an Assistant. I have

made trial of him in time past. Read over the Duty of an Assistant in the Minutes; and then do your best.

I wrote before that the Thirty Pounds Legacy is good for nothing. Give the Executor or Heir good words and take whatever he will give you. I shall soon be returning to London. If the Work of God prospers you will want nothing. Whoever will return in a loving Spirit, let them return.

I am

Your affectionate Friend and Brother

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. Suter at the Preachinghouse in White . . .

The place-name in the superscription is evidently Whitehaven, where Alexander Suter was stationed in September 1785.

### III

#### JOHN WESLEY TO WILLIAM HOLMES

London

Jan. 13, 1787

Dear Billy,

You do well to exclude all disorderly walkers: We shall be far better without them than with them.

I am afraid the loss of Sally Baker will not easily be supplied at Monmouth unless her Sister or one of Mr. John's Daughters would rise up and take her place.

Build nowhere, till you find a very convenient situation and this should be a matter of solemn prayer. I am glad to hear my dear S. Skinner has not quite forgotten me. My kind love to her and Sister Lewis. See that Brother Baldwin and you strengthen each other's hands in God.

I am

Dear Billy,

[signature missing]

To Mr. Will Holmes at the Preachinghouse in Cardiff, South Wales.

William Holmes was at this date the assistant ("superintendent") of the Glamorganshire circuit.

### IV

#### JOHN WESLEY TO WILLIAM HOLMES

London Feb'y 10th, 1790

My dear Brother,

I say to you as to every other Preacher, "If thou mayest be free, use it rather." But I have no right to use an constraint, only I must remind you, that if I live to another Conference, I must inform all our Brethren that we cannot provide for any more Preachers wives: so that whatever Preachers marry for the time to come must themselves provide for them.

I am

Your Affectionate Brother

J. WESLEY.

Mr. W. Holmes.

The foregoing letter appears to have been written by another person, but it is signed by Wesley in a very shaky hand. William Holmes was by this time stationed in the Redruth circuit.

The recipients of the last two of our six letters are at present unknown.

## V

JOHN WESLEY TO ?

Aberdeen

May 25th, 1790.

My Dear Brother,

On Midsummer Day (if I am here so long) you may after having asked advice of five sensible and faithful men [?] and those [or "three"] women, of whom you have had sufficient experience (for now we cannot be too wary in matters of such importance) and after you have deliberated with yourselves two hours in a bright starlight night (if the moon shines may it glisten upon the sea, it may be so much the better) You may perhaps mention to . . . [probably "do favour"] what your Wife's name was to

Your affectionate Friend &amp; Brother

J. WESLEY.

## VI

JOHN WESLEY TO ?

London

Jan 15. 1791.

My Dear Brother,

Mr. Langan wrote to me, desiring me to send another preacher into the Circuit, if I send a single one. This I could not do, but I sent Bro. Answorth, such an one as I had. If the Circuit cannot or will not maintain [?] his Child, send me word, & I will take him away. But then I will send no other [or "another"].

I am

Your affectionate Friend &amp; Brother

J. WESLEY.

"Bro. Answorth" may be "Hainsworth": there was a William Hainsworth stationed in the Colne circuit at the Conference of 1790.

The autograph copies of these letters are in the Archives at Lake Junaluska, and "Verifax" copies may be seen in the City Road Archives in London. JOHN C. BOWMER.

Newhall Methodist church, near Burton-on-Trent, celebrates its centenary this year. There is evidence, however, that the society is much older, having existed since about 1800. The history of this cause, from its beginnings to the centenary celebrations, has been written by the present minister, the Rev. Ernest C. Willis, 205, High Street, Newhall, Burton-on-Trent, Staffs, from whom the brochure can be had for 2s. 6d.

We acknowledge, with many thanks, receipt of the Winter number (1963) of *The Amateur Historian*. . . . Copies of the *Baptist Quarterly* for October 1962 and January 1963 are also to hand. This "quarterly" incorporates the *Transactions of the Baptist Historical Society*. We welcome this exchange of the journals of kindred historical societies.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF HELL FOR JOHN WESLEY

EVER since Methodism first appeared in the eighteenth century, repeated charges have been made against Wesley and his followers on the ground that they were obsessed with "hell-fire" preaching. In early satires, Methodist preachers were depicted exaggerating the pangs of Hell to frighten men into goodness. Nathaniel Snip threatens his hearers "with everlasting Brimstone and Fire"; the Saint in *Methodism Triumphant* gloatingly reminds his congregation that "There is no GAOL-DELIVERY from Hell".

This early criticism has echoed down the years. Southey states that "Wesley instructed his preachers that they should throw men into strong terror and fear", and he supports his assertion by quoting some of Wesley's words about Hell.<sup>1</sup> John Richard Green maintained that Methodist preaching produced "a new dread of hell",<sup>2</sup> and even such a balanced historian as Dr. J. H. Plumb sees fit to add a special footnote about Wesley's hell-fire preaching.<sup>3</sup>

Despite such criticism, Wesley himself dismissed as "groundless" Fleury's charge that Methodists "denounce hell and damnation to all that reject their pretences".<sup>4</sup> Much more recently, A. M. Lyles, in his discussion of the literary attacks upon Methodism, has said that "Wesley himself did not rely on the terrors of hell for his effectiveness as a preacher".<sup>5</sup>

Clearly there is a clash of opinions here. What is the truth of the matter? Was Wesley obsessed by the idea of Hell? What was his teaching about it? These questions demand an answer.

The charge has been made that Wesley was obsessed by the idea of Hell; but if reference is made to the index at the end of any of Wesley's major works, the reader is immediately impressed by the scarcity of references to Hell. In Wesley's *Standard Sermons* only four direct references to Hell are recorded; in his *Journal* not a single reference to Hell is indexed, and even his *Letters* cannot afford more than eleven references. Whereas it is undeniable that an accurate picture of the importance of Hell for Wesley cannot be deduced purely from such numerical evidence, these figures—fewer than twenty references in almost 8,000 printed pages!<sup>6</sup>—are startling enough to cast serious doubts upon the idea that Wesley was obsessed by the subject of Hell.

This first impression is endorsed by the fact that the only sermon

<sup>1</sup> R. Southey: *The Life of Wesley* (1893), pp. 510-11.

<sup>2</sup> J. R. Green: *Short History of the English People* (1894), p. 737.

<sup>3</sup> J. H. Plumb: *England in the Eighteenth Century* (1950), p. 95.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters*, v, p. 245.

<sup>5</sup> A. M. Lyles: *Methodism Mocked* (1960), p. 76.

<sup>6</sup> The fact that the editors have missed some references to Hell does not substantially alter this picture.

dealing with Hell which appears in the *Standard Sermons*<sup>7</sup> is inserted "partly because of the unique occasion of its delivery,<sup>8</sup> partly because *there was no other sermon in the original forty-four on the subject*".<sup>9</sup> Even in this sermon, which might reasonably be expected to include extensive teaching about Hell, Hell is mentioned by name only three times, and most of the last part of the discourse is concerned with the great conflagration that will consume the world rather than with the fires of Hell.

Such evidence as this shows that, far from being obsessed with the subject of Hell, Wesley seldom makes specific reference to it.<sup>10</sup>

This paucity of material is rendered doubly tantalizing by the fact that many of the references which are to be found do not throw very much light on Wesley's conception of Hell. There are a number of instances in which the reference to Hell is either figurative or proverbial.<sup>11</sup> What is more, when Wesley does write at length about Hell, his words are merely direct quotations from scripture. Thus one of his most famous passages on this subject in the sermon on "The Great Assize" is entirely composed of a number of texts, given more or less without comment.<sup>12</sup>

When one turns to Wesley's *Notes upon the New Testament*, where one might expect to find his comments on the significant passages of scripture, it soon becomes apparent that many of the references to Hell are passed by without comment.<sup>13</sup> It appears therefore that in the majority of cases Wesley is content merely to quote scripture when he refers to Hell, and that he prefers to allow the words of scripture to speak for themselves. This conclusion is endorsed by Colin Williams when he says: "Wesley's picture of hell is a literal transcription of the New Testament language . . ."<sup>14</sup>

Does this sparseness of evidence mean that Wesley did not believe in Hell or that he regarded it as unimportant?

There is no doubt that Wesley regarded Hell with the utmost seriousness. So firmly did he believe in its existence that when William Law suggested that "Hell and damnation are nothing but the various operations of self", Wesley replied with a lengthy quotation from the Bishop of Cork, to the effect that Hell is a real place and that "we learn from Scripture that in hell the wicked will be subject to extreme torture" of body and soul.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "The Great Assize". Significantly Wesley's sermon on Hell (LXXIII) is not included.

<sup>8</sup> It was preached at the Assize service in St. Paul's church, Bedford, in 1771.

<sup>9</sup> *Sermons* (Standard Edition), ii, p. 398. (Italics mine.)

<sup>10</sup> Although it is not directly within the scope of this article, it is interesting to note that the theme of Hell is much more prominent in Charles Wesley's hymns than in his brother's writings.

<sup>11</sup> e.g. Sermon on "The Almost Christian" (II. 9).

<sup>12</sup> "The Great Assize" (III. 1)—Matt. xxv. 46; Job viii. 13; 2 Thess. i. 9; Rev. xx. 10, xiv. 11; Isaiah lxvi. 24.

<sup>13</sup> Matt. v. 29, x. 28, xi. 23, xviii. 9, xxiii. 15, 35; Mark ix. 43.

<sup>14</sup> C. Williams: *John Wesley's Theology Today* (1960), p. 199.

<sup>15</sup> *Letters*, iii, p. 368. Wesley was prepared to admit that a man could have "a present hell in the breast" (Sermon on "The New Birth" (III. 3)).

Wesley believed that the torments of Hell are real torments, and he warned unrepentant sinners of their danger, saying: "You will drop into the pit together, into the nethermost hell! You will all lie together in the lake of fire; 'the lake of fire burning with brimstone'." Wesley had no doubt that the punishments of Hell are eternal, and he quoted scripture at length to prove it,<sup>16</sup> concluding: "Thus much cannot be denied, that these texts speak as if there were really such a place as hell, as if there were real fire there, and as if it would remain for ever."<sup>17</sup>

It has been suggested that Wesley exaggerated the terrors of Hell in order to frighten his hearers into salvation. However, an examination of the facts shows that this suggestion is untrue.

Wesley himself declares that he is not afraid of Hell,<sup>18</sup> but this is not because he regards Hell as being too pleasant to fear. He is appalled at the suggestion that scripture may have exaggerated the terrors of Hell to frighten people into goodness. He believes that such an idea strikes at the inspiration of the scriptures and the integrity of God Himself. "No hell," exclaims Wesley, "no heaven, no revelation!"<sup>19</sup> Hell is worthy of man's fear, and Wesley is amazed to find a condemned prisoner who openly admits that he is going "to hell to be sure" and yet does not fear the prospect.<sup>20</sup> Hell, for Wesley, is a terrible and terrifying fact, and it is possible that it is his appreciation of its terrors which makes him speak of it so little.

Far from making Wesley use Hell as a tool of fear, his vivid conception of such a terrible place seems to have made him react in the opposite way. He doubts, first of all, whether the fear of Hell can drive men to salvation. In the 1746 *Minutes* he asks the question "What inconvenience is there in speaking much of the wrath of God and little of the love of God?" The answer is given: "It generally hardens them that believe not and discourages them that do." He returns to this theme in his sermon on Dives and Lazarus, and he insists that the fear of Hell is unlikely to make men good, even if that fear is conveyed by a visitant from Hades itself.<sup>21</sup>

Wesley reacts to the idea of Hell in two particular ways. Firstly, he takes no morbid delight in seeing men damned, and shows extreme caution in designating any of his opponents as "hell-bound". In a letter to "John Smith", he says: "I entirely agree that hell was designed only for stubborn, impenitent sinners, and consequently that it would be absurd to 'threaten damnation to any merely for differing from me in speculations'."<sup>22</sup>

Secondly, this conviction produced in Wesley an urgent desire to save men from such a terrible fate. He is even prepared to flout ecclesiastical authority to save just one man. To "John Smith" he writes: "Wherever I see one or a thousand men running into hell

<sup>16</sup> Heb. x. 26-31; 2 Peter ii. 4-9; Dan. xii. 2; Rom. ii. 5, 8-9; Matt. xxiv. 41, etc.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, v, p. 16.

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, iii, p. 370.

<sup>17</sup> *Letters*, iii, p. 370.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, vii, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> Sermon on "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (III).

<sup>22</sup> *Letters*, ii, p. 133.

... I will stop them if I can ... were I to let any soul drop into the pit whom I might have saved from everlasting burnings, I am not satisfied God would accept my plea, 'Lord, he was not of my parish'."<sup>23</sup>

Anything which might lead people to such a terrible fate must be exposed and resisted. It was for this reason that Wesley attacked false doctrine. He opposed Calvinism, not because he believed "that every one who lives and dies a Calvinist is damned", but simply because he is "persuaded that opinion has led many thousands to hell".<sup>24</sup>

To this extent, and only in this sense, is fear a driving force in Wesley's preaching. His references to Hell are not prompted by any morbid delight in the terror they evoke, but by his conviction that "every sinner ... is under the sentence of hell-fire",<sup>25</sup> and he longs to warn them.

Despite the difficulty of discovering Wesley's conception of Hell, when the sparse material is uncovered the picture that emerges is surprisingly clear. In his *Notes upon the New Testament*, Wesley differentiates between the three biblical conceptions of Hell, and shows that he believes that the three conceptions signify different functions.

The peculiar reference to "Tartarus" in 2 Peter ii. 4 is described by Wesley as signifying "a place of unknown misery" into which the fallen angels are "delivered ... like condemned criminals to safe custody as if bound with the strongest chains in a dungeon of darkness, to be reserved unto the judgement of the great day".<sup>26</sup>

Hades, according to Wesley, is "the invisible world. In the intermediate state, the body abides in death, the soul in Hades."<sup>27</sup> Wesley expands his teaching about Hades in his sermon on "The Rich Man and Lazarus", which parable he regards as "with all its circumstances ... exactly true". He says that there is "not the least foundation in the oracles of God" for the idea that the soul of a good man goes directly to Heaven after death. This he deduces from the fact that our Lord said to Mary, after the resurrection, "'Touch me not for I am not yet ascended to my Father' in heaven. But he has been in paradise, according to his promise to the penitent thief."<sup>28</sup>

It appears, suggests Wesley, that Hades has one region for the souls of the wicked, in which Dives found himself, and another region for the spirits of the good (Paradise), where Lazarus lay in Abraham's bosom. It was to this place that Christ descended, and not into Hell.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Letters*, ii, p. 137.

<sup>24</sup> Sermon on "The Way to the Kingdom" (II. 4).

<sup>25</sup> *Notes upon the New Testament*, loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Sermon on "The Rich Man and Lazarus" (I. 3).

<sup>27</sup> *Notes*, Luke xxiii. 43. Wesley interprets Acts ii. 27 to mean: "Thou wilt not leave my soul in its separate estate, nor suffer my body to be corrupted."

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, vi, p. 224.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, Rev. i. 18.



Wesley acknowledges the historical basis of Hell in Gehenna as the Valley of Hinnom, and he describes it in words that might well have come from a modern commentary. He appears to regard it merely as "a fit emblem of Hell".<sup>80</sup> He believes that Hell, as distinct from Hades, is concerned only with the final punishment of sinners after the Last Judgement. Those who are condemned to Hell "will gnaw their tongues for anguish and pain; they will curse God and look upward. There the dogs of hell—pride, malice, revenge, rage, horror, despair—continually devour them."<sup>81</sup>

Thus the fact that Wesley seldom mentions Hell does not mean that he is in the least vague about its nature. Indeed, it might be argued that he differentiates between the various biblical conceptions of Hell more clearly than does the Bible itself!

The editor of the *Standard Sermons* rightly indicates the weaknesses of Wesley's exposition of Hell—weaknesses which might have been removed had Wesley's agile mind received the benefit of recent research in the apocalyptic writings. However, it must be said on behalf of Wesley that, within the scope of his knowledge, he succeeded in producing a remarkably balanced picture of Hell. He showed great restraint in his preaching of "hell-fire", probably because his appreciation of the theological implications of the idea of Hell was so acute.

Wesley was able to preach Judgement without continually equating it with the torments of Hell. It may well be that modern Methodism, having discarded hell-fire, is in danger of discarding the biblical concept of Judgement. If this be so, Methodism may still learn much from her founder.

D. DUNN WILSON.

<sup>80</sup> *Notes upon the New Testament*, Matt. v. 22.

<sup>81</sup> Sermon on "The Great Assize" (III. 1).

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From our kindred society the Methodist Historical Society of Victoria, Australia, comes the February 1963 issue of *Heritage*. This number is devoted to an account of the lecture delivered at the Victoria and Tasmania Conference in October 1962. The lecturer was the Rev. E. H. O. Nye, and his subject "A Prince of Preachers: the Rev. Professor Arthur E. Albiston, M.A., B.D.". Professor Albiston (1866-1961) was a scholarly and beloved figure in Australian Methodism.

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*Wesley's Chapel Magazine* is reprinting some of the articles of our contributor the Rev. George Lawton which have from time to time appeared in the *Proceedings*. The issue for January 1963 concludes the article on "The Slang and Colloquial Expressions in Wesley's Letters". We are interested to note that relics of our founder are still being handed to the Chapel for safe keeping and display. Among the latest of these is Wesley's umbrella. Also in this issue, the Rev. T. L. Barlow Westerdale revives memories of the Chapel sixty years ago.

# THE JOURNAL OF WILLIAM SEWARD

6th September to 15th October 1740

**W**ILLIAM SEWARD (1702-40) of Badsey, Worcestershire, met Charles Wesley and was converted by him in 1738. He was connected with the Treasury at South Sea House,<sup>1</sup> and for ten years before he became a Methodist had been engaged in voluntary work for charity schools in London.<sup>2</sup> In January 1739 he joined George Whitefield in his preaching tours in Wales and the West of England. Whitefield had already made one visit to Georgia, and had come back to England to be ordained priest and to make arrangements for the Orphan House which, at Charles Wesley's suggestion, he was building at Savannah. The Trustees for Georgia presented him to the living of Savannah and granted land for the Orphan House, and Whitefield then began to collect money to pay for the building. He had been allowed to preach a charity sermon in the abbey church at Bath, but was refused permission to preach in many churches, and so began, at Kingswood, the series of open-air meetings which he continued for the rest of his life.

Whitefield and Seward visited two of Seward's brothers at Evesham and Badsey, and were well received by both;<sup>3</sup> Benjamin became a Methodist, but Henry was later to condemn the Methodists for converting his brothers. A little later Seward wrote to another brother, Thomas, an Anglican clergyman, who had obviously objected to William's activities; the letter makes it clear that Seward still adhered to the doctrines of regeneration and of justification by faith alone. In it he also tells his brother that he has settled his affairs and is about to leave for Georgia.<sup>4</sup>

In August 1739 Seward embarked with Whitefield, and in America joined in his tours. Whitefield spent little time at Savannah, where work on the Orphan House had already begun, and now proposed to build, in Pennsylvania, a school for negroes and a settlement for English people who were obliged to leave England because of their faith. In April 1740 Seward paid for five thousand acres of land for the school and the settlement,<sup>5</sup> and was then sent to England to raise funds. He expected to stay in England for about three months, and to spend his time between London, Bristol and Gloucester.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1740, p. 571.

<sup>2</sup> Tyerman: *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield* (2nd edn., 1890), i, p. 113.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, quoting Whitefield's *Journal*. (April 1739.)

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 251-2.

<sup>5</sup> "Agreed with Mr. Allen [Chief Justice of Pennsylvania], for Five Thousand Acres of Land on the Forks of Delaware, at 2200*l.* Sterling; the Conveyance to be made to Mr. *Whitefield*, and after that assigned to me, as Security for my advancing the Money." (William Seward: *Journal of a voyage from Savannah to Philadelphia, and from Philadelphia to England, MDCCXL* (London, 1740), p. 10—entry for 22nd April 1740.)

<sup>6</sup> In a letter written while at sea to Mr. Blackwell, a banker, Seward says: "I am sent over by Brother Whitefield . . . to make collections for a negro school in the province of Pennsylvania, where we have bought 5,000 acres of very good

Two of Seward's journals cover his visit to America. He refers to the first in the preface to the second (that published in July 1740):

I had no Thoughts of coming to England when I left Savannah, so that my former JOURNAL which I was enabled to keep from the Time I went abroad . . . is now in Georgia, and may hereafter be publish'd.

The printed journal was written from 2nd April 1740, when he left Savannah with Whitefield, until his arrival in London on 19th June. There is a third and, as far as is known, unpublished journal in Chetham's Library, Manchester. It begins on 6th September, when all the business in London must have been completed, and when Seward embarked on a tour of the Bristol, Gloucester and South Wales areas, and continues until 15th October. It is a small book of 214 pages whose original cover has vanished, but which bears on the fly-leaf the signature "Sam'l Mason" and the note Volume 3<sup>d</sup>". The book belonged to James Crossley of Manchester, and was sold at Sotheby's after his death in 1885. It was acquired by Chetham's Library soon after.<sup>7</sup>

The first entry in the journal is on Saturday, 6th September:

Came to Mr. Prices of Watford near Caerfilly where Br Harris Discoursed on a Mountain in Welch . . .

Seward travelled, sometimes with Howell Harris and sometimes with other friends, through Cardiff, Newport, Caerleon, Monmouth, Gloucester, Stroud, Bristol, Bath, Malmesbury, Gloucester again, Hereford, and into Wales. He preached and expounded every day, in chapels, in private houses, and in the open, reporting on Whitefield's work in America (at Cardiff, for example, he read extracts from the *New England Journal*), collecting money for the negro school and the refuge in Pennsylvania, and receiving promises of help from those who were prepared to go back to America with him. In some places the travellers were well received, although friends of his family could not understand his work, but in others they were assaulted. On 9th September they were attacked at Newport and again at Caerleon; and in Caerleon Seward was so badly hurt that he lost the sight of one eye for a time. But he refused to give up; he could not see to ride, but someone led his horse. Two days later he was stoned again at Monmouth.<sup>8</sup>

Seward's devotion to Whitefield and Whitefield's doctrines and causes is clear throughout the journal. Charles Wesley had already

land for that purpose . . . The land, by my desire, is conveyed to Brother Whitefield, but mortgaged to me for £2,200, the purchase-money . . . and, as I must raise money to answer the bills of exchange I have drawn for the sum aforesaid, I desire you, if you can conveniently, to sell for me £1,650 old South Sea annuities, and £585.4.5 South Sea stock . . ." (Quoted by Tyerman, op. cit., i, pp. 378-9).

<sup>7</sup> 15.6 × 9.6 cm.; two fly leaves at the beginning and one at the end and 107 other leaves, paged 1-214; rebound in quarter leather in 1931. The manuscript was part of Lot 3005 in the sale of James Crossley's library (Sotheby, Wilkinson & Hodge, 11th June 1885 and eight following days).

<sup>8</sup> See *Proceedings*, xvii, p. 187.

found the published journal embarrassing; he wrote to Whitefield on 1st September 1740:

... well-meaning Mr. Seward has caused the world to triumph in our supposed dissensions, by his unseasonable journal. Your zealous, indiscreet friends, instead of concealing any little difference between us, have told it in Gath . . .<sup>9</sup>

The third journal makes it clear that the differences had assumed large proportions for Seward. He condemns Moravians, Quakers and Presbyterians, Tillotson and the author of the *Whole Duty of Man*, and has doubts about the Baptists and Independents. His attack on the preferment-loving clergy of the Church of England is illustrated from the case of his brother Thomas; that on the apparently good layman from the case of his brother Henry. It was inevitable that there should be a break with the Wesleys, and the quarrel came when Seward returned to Bristol on 22nd September. On the 23rd he offered to expound in the New Room in the Horse-fair:

... but Br [Charles] Wesley desired me not to Expound—Blessed be God it was given me to be Resigned & humble . . .

On the 24th Seward writes:

Went to some old acq<sup>ce</sup> who I hope are acquainted w<sup>th</sup> Jesus X<sup>t</sup> & had much Savoury Discourse with them—w<sup>ch</sup> the L<sup>d</sup> made a Meaus of opening my Eyes to see that Satan has deceived Br Wesley by turning himself into an Angel of Light—they both Rejected my Journal—w<sup>ch</sup> bore an explicit Testimony to y<sup>e</sup> Doc<sup>t</sup>: of Election—& Mr. C. Wesley slighted all the great things w<sup>ch</sup> my Dear Jesus hath lately done by my weak hands—

being Engaged to dine w<sup>th</sup> Br Wesley I had no Rest in my Spirit 'till I had told him all my Convictions ab<sup>t</sup> him & ask<sup>d</sup> if I might Expound in y<sup>e</sup> School House but that being Refused—I told him I must declare for a publick Separation [sic] & that seeing he was my Spiritual Father It was with much Sorrow & heaviness of Heart I spoke it but that I could have no longer fellowship with him—for being called a Brother & I believing him a Minister of Satan I was Commanded with Such a one not to Eat—came home in much tribulation . . .

Friends tried to reconcile Seward with Charles Wesley the next day, but failed. Seward left Bristol a few days later and went to Bath, Malmesbury, Cirencester and Gloucester. From Gloucester he wrote to Whitefield to give him a full report of his activities and to suggest that he should stay longer in England than had been planned.<sup>10</sup> Then, by way of Hereford, he went into Wales, and visited Trevecka several times. On 15th October he reached Hay in Breconshire, and here wrote the last entry in his journal:

... had a most Affectionate parting with Br Harris & agreed to meet ag<sup>n</sup> at Abergavenny by the will of God—came to the Hay & attempted to Discourse a little distance from the Town but after singing & prayer & discoursing a few Minutes the Min<sup>r</sup> of the parish & sev<sup>ll</sup> Justices of ye

<sup>9</sup> Quoted by Tyerman, op. cit., i, p. 412.

<sup>10</sup> Journal, 6th October 1740; cf. *Proceedings*, vi, p. 137.

Peace with many other Clergymen came & demand [ed] my silence & Stirrd up the people ag<sup>st</sup> us.

A few days later Seward died after being stoned by one of the mob at Hay. Whitefield was obliged to abandon his scheme for the negro school and the refuge, and to concentrate on raising money to keep the Orphan House at Savannah in being.

Seward's enthusiasm for the Methodist movement and his willingness to devote his energies and his money to it are in no doubt. But he does not seem to have been a preacher of outstanding quality: Charles Wesley's comment on his address to the colliers at Kingswood was "Mr. Seward spoke a few words to them which did not convince me of his call to preach."<sup>11</sup>

Criticism of his journals was also strong. Charles Wesley's comments have already been quoted. The manuscript of the journal here described was shown by Seward to Howell Harris; Seward's acceptance of the criticism gives a fair impression of the man:

... left Gloster ab<sup>t</sup> 4 o Clock, B<sup>r</sup> Harris returning for Wales before we parted he read my Journal said it was Strong Meat & Simple & advised its publication—ye Chief fault he seems to find is its great plainness [sic] & Simplicity—I am Sensible of this fault and am desirous to mend it & to submit it to ye Correction of my friends those who are Sincere will overlook its defects—those who are not 'tis Impossible to please—& my trust is that the Cause of our Dear L<sup>d</sup> will not Suffer thro' the weakness of the Instrum<sup>t</sup> if my L<sup>d</sup> & Master is honoured I am Content & become a fool for His Sake.<sup>12</sup>

HILDA LOFTHOUSE.

[The preceding article by Miss Hilda Lofthouse, M.A., Librarian of Chetham's Library, Manchester, has come to us through the good offices of Professor E. Gordon Rupp, to whom we express our thanks. References to William Seward, "the first Methodist martyr", are not lacking in the annals of early Methodism (nor in the previous volumes of these *Proceedings*), but these notes from the third and hitherto unpublished volume of Seward's journal add considerably, though hardly happily, to our knowledge of the relationship between him and the Wesleys in the few weeks preceding his untimely death.—EDITOR.]

<sup>11</sup> Charles Wesley's *Journal*, 23rd September 1740, quoted in Curnock's edition of John Wesley's *Journal*, ii, p. 395 n.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal*, 15th September 1740.

Rita F. Snowden's realistic imagination and easy style have combined to produce an introduction to the story of Susanna Wesley which ought to be widely circulated among the many (far too many!) in our churches who know not what Methodism the world over owes to this remarkable woman. The booklet, 44 pages, is entitled *Such a Woman*, and is published by the Epworth Press at 3s. 6d.

Those of our members whose native gifts evoke their interest in the musical strain in the Wesley family will welcome the publication of organ pieces by Charles (1757-1834), Samuel (1766-1837) and Samuel Sebastian (1810-76) in the *Tallis to Wesley* series of Hinrichsen Edition Ltd. The pieces are given in their original two-stave form, most clearly printed, and preceded by useful biographical, historical and analytical notes.

## BOOK NOTICES

*John Wesley: A Theological Biography*, by Martin Schmidt. Vol. 1, translated by Norman P. Goldhawk. (Epworth Press, pp. 320, 308.)

This book, when it first appeared in German in 1953, was reviewed in these *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 139-40, by the present writer. (There had also been a note on the earlier work of this author in *Proceedings*, xxvii, p. 142.) There seems no reason to revise the judgement then expressed that its publication was "a landmark in Wesley studies", for it used many German sources not previously used, and approached its subject from a somewhat new angle. We therefore welcome the work in an English translation, capably made by the Rev. Norman P. Goldhawk, who has corrected some minor errors, such as the confusion, which still exists in some minds, between Stanton and Stanton Harcourt, and added a bibliography and an index. He has also added references to recent literature, including the most important recent work on this subject—Dr. V. H. H. Green's *The Young Mr. Wesley*. These books complement each other, Dr. Green concentrating more on the English influences and Dr. Schmidt on the German. Moreover Dr. Green is more the historian, and Dr. Schmidt the theologian, as the new sub-title suggests. The suggestion on page 204 that Wesley had probably taken over the title "Ordinary" from Zinzendorf needs some correction in the light of *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 190-2. We greatly hope that the publication and then the translation of the second volume, carrying the narrative beyond 1738, will not be long delayed.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

*Spotlight on John Wesley*, collected and edited by Reginald Kissack. (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, pp. 120, 7s. 6d.)

The author begins his preface with the question "Another book on John Wesley?" He justifies his adding to their number by giving us (as he says) "not of the *best* of Wesley, but of the essential Wesley"—and well does he succeed. Not everyone would make the same selection, of course, and Mr. Kissack anticipates that many followers of Wesley will be irritated by the omission of their favourite passages. But the line has to be drawn somewhere, and any dissatisfied reader should sit down and see if he can do any better. This excellent anthology is not arranged on the "daily passage" principle; rather, it seeks to give a typical Wesley word for the main doctrines of the Christian faith. Part I is Biographical, and Part II "Pastoralia". For those who yet need an introduction to John Wesley this anthology of his own words is admirable.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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The second issue of *Methodist History* (published by the Association of Methodist Historical Societies, Lake Junaluska, U.S.A.) consists of four articles. "A Visit to Poland" is by Bishop Paul N. Garber. "The Methodist Episcopal Church in Kentucky", by John O. Gross, and "The Life of Matthew Simpson", by Dr. Horace Greeley Smith, deal with Methodism in the United States. But of interest to all students of Wesley is an article by Frederick E. Maser entitled "The Early Biographers of John Wesley", covering the period from the death of Wesley to the publication of Tyerman's three volumes. One could hope that the same writer, who is one of our members, might in a later article give us an account of the main Wesley biographies from Tyerman to the present day—an exacting though worthwhile task! We once again commend this "quarterly" to the members of our Society.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

## 1097. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST LETTER TO HIS BROTHER SAMUEL: A POSTSCRIPT.

Mr. John A. Vickers and I seem both to have hit on this letter at Lambeth (*Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 100) at the same time; and there are one or two points that might perhaps be added to complete the story.

The first deals with the question of how Samuel received his information about Methodist "excesses". There is no doubt that he received it from Elizabeth Hutton (the mother of James Hutton), who, as Adam Clarke has recorded,<sup>1</sup> described some of the meetings in London.

In the second place, it may well be that Samuel's strong language, accusing John of being ready to "excommunicate the Church", was prompted by John's equally strong language when he wrote to his brother in January 1739:

I fear you *dissent* from the fundamental Articles of the Church of England. I know Bishop Bull does. I doubt you do not hold justification by faith alone. If not, neither do you hold what our Articles teach concerning the extent and guilt of original sin; neither do you feel yourself a lost sinner; and if we begin not here, we are building on the sand.<sup>2</sup>

These must have been hard words to take from a younger brother!

As Mr. Vickers points out, John did not forget his promise to deal faithfully with Bishop Bull. He was not called upon to preach the Latin sermon for more than eighteen months, but when we find him preparing it on 22nd June 1741 and the following days—"Writ plan of Latin sermon"<sup>3</sup>—he spends a lot of time in the college library reading Bishop Bull, especially on the 24th, much of which day he spent in reading and transcribing parts of Bull's *Harmonia Apostolica*; on that day too he preached a sermon in Latin and in English on Isaiah i. 21: "How is the faithful city become a harlot!". Tyerman has shewn<sup>4</sup> that this was in all probability the sermon he intended to preach on 25th July of that year, but was dissuaded—Nehemiah Curnock assumes, by Lady Huntingdon.<sup>5</sup>

A word perhaps might be said about "my Sister" in the last paragraph of John's letter. This is of course his sister-in-law, Samuel's wife Ursula, who was as critical of John as was her husband: cf. the references to her in John's letter of 7th July 1738, e.g.

Yes, my sister, I must tell you in the spirit of love, and before God, who searcheth the heart, you do want it [*sc.* a chapter in Law's *Serious Call*]; you want it exceedingly. I know no one soul that wants to read and consider deeply so much the chapter of Universal Love and that of Intercession. The character of Susurrus there is your own. I should be false to God and you did I not tell you so. Oh may it be so no longer; but may you love your neighbour as yourself, both in word and tongue, and in deed and truth!<sup>6</sup>

Susurrus is the character in Law of whom he says:

No one more constant at the service of the Church, or whose heart is more affected by it . . . [But] He had a mighty inclination to hear and

<sup>1</sup> Adam Clarke: *Memoirs of the Wesley Family*, pp. 397 ff.

<sup>2</sup> *Letters*, i, p. 279.

<sup>3</sup> *Journal*, ii, pp. 469 ff.

<sup>4</sup> Tyerman: *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, i, p. 362.

<sup>5</sup> *Journal*, ii, p. 478.

<sup>6</sup> *Letters*, i, p. 252.

discover all the defects and infirmities of all about him . . . He is always letting you know how tender he is of the reputation of his neighbour; how loth to say that which he is forced to say; and how gladly he would conceal it, if it could be concealed . . .<sup>7</sup>

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

1098. WILLIAM SINGLETON.

Mr. Chapman's interesting note (*Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 149 f.) about William Singleton and the Nottingham Adult School draws attention to a highly colourful character. The story has been taken further by F. Hugh Doncaster (*Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, xlvi (1958), pp. 280 ff.). Like no less a Kilhamite than Alexander Kilham's widow, the great Hannah Kilham, Singleton joined the Society of Friends, and was, in fact, a member of the same meeting as Hannah Kilham in Sheffield. He taught, until disagreements over the punishment scale forced him out, at the Quaker School at Ackworth, and later founded his own school.

In 1820-21 Singleton paid a visit to West Africa, under the auspices of the Committee for African Instruction, but at his own expense. He reported on what he saw in Sierra Leone, and aided some of Hannah Kilham's schemes for education in Africa. But relationships with his meeting, several times stretched to breaking-point, were finally ruptured in 1823—an event which he celebrated with a pamphlet, "the profits (if any) to be devoted to the cause of Africa". Some other pamphlets by him, published at Nottingham or Sheffield, are listed in Joseph Smith's *Descriptive Catalogue of Friends' Books*, ii, p. 577. Singleton's African visit is worth attention: he created a minor stir, and W. A. B. Johnson and others mention his investigations.

What of his later career? We may judge that he was not reconciled to the Friends, since his name does not occur in the index of the *Annual Monitor* (cf. J. J. Green, *Quaker Records*). Did he go back to Methodism?

A. F. WALLS (University of Nigeria).

1099. WAS JOHN WESLEY IMPRISONED AT BRADFORD-ON-AVON?

I got a lovely calendar for 1963 with pictures of "Bridges in England". One of them (for the month of February) is a picture of Bradford-on-Avon in Wiltshire, and the letterpress says: "This 14th century bridge has nine arches and a small oratory whose roof was added in the 18th century. John Wesley was imprisoned there for a night in 1757."

I have not been able to find any reference to John Wesley's imprisonment, in the *Standard Journal* or *Letters* or in the *Proceedings*. Has any reader information on the matter?

R. LEE COLE.

1100. LETTERS FROM YORK GAOL, 1844.

Among recent accessions to our Library MSS. are two letters written to the Rev. Nehemiah Curnock (1810-69), the father of the historian of the same name, which show him engaged in a ministry in the tradition of the Wesleys and Silas Told. The first letter is from a prisoner in the "condemned cell" at York, expressing his thanks for Curnock's spiritual ministrations. The other letter is similar, having been written by two prisoners from the same cell. The letters have been donated by Mrs. R. M. Bush, a daughter and granddaughter of the two Nehemiah Curnocks.

THOMAS SHAW.

<sup>7</sup> William Law: *A Serious Call to a Devout Life* (Everyman Edition), pp. 308-9.



## 24 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### 1101. ARTICLES OF METHODIST HISTORICAL INTEREST.

Since the last list was published in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 23, the following articles of Methodist historical interest have appeared.

In the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* :

JANUARY 1961—"John Newton and the Ministry", by Harry Parkin, B.D., M.Th.; "Wesley's concept of his own Ecclesiastical Position", by Reginald Kissack, M.A., B.D.

APRIL 1961—"William Law", by Eric W. Baker, M.A., D.D., Ph.D.; "John Finney, Forgotten Preacher", by D. Dunn Wilson, M.A.

JULY 1962—"Wesley's Puritan Ancestry", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.; "Nonconformity in the Age of Wesley", by Norman P. Goldhawk, M.A.

In *The Choir* :

FEBRUARY 1961—"Sacred Melody", by J. Alan Kay, M.A., Ph.D.

AUGUST 1961—"Sacred Melody", by Maurice Frost. Both this and the former article deal extensively with tunes and tune-books published by John Wesley.

FEBRUARY 1962—"Charles Wesley changes his mind", by J. Alan Kay, M.A., Ph.D.; "John Beaumont", by F. B. Westbrook, B.A., Mus.D.; "Samuel Sebastian Wesley", by Frederick Vanson. EDITOR.

### 1102. EAYRS ESSAY PRIZES.

The subjects of the essays, and the prize-winners, for the past two years, are as follows :

26. 1960-61. "The Development of the World Methodist Movement."

First prize—Rev. Jeffrey W. Harris, B.D.

Second prize—Rev. Philip Hodgson, M.A.

27. 1961-62. "Methodism and the Anti-Slavery Movement in Great Britain."

First prize—Rev. Peter Howard, M.A.

Second prize—Rev. Norman J. Goreham, B.A. EDITOR.

### 1103. THE EPWORTH OLD RECTORY.

Epworth Rectory will once again this summer be the mecca of many Methodist pilgrims. It may therefore be helpful to those of our members from all parts of the globe who shall visit this Lincolnshire village if we outline the facilities offered by the warden and his staff. For casual visitors, the Rectory is open on weekdays from 10 a.m. to noon and from 2 to 4 p.m.; at other times only by previous arrangement. Larger groups are requested to write beforehand. There is a refectory attached to the Rectory, and meals can be arranged for individual requirements, provided a few days' notice is given. It takes about an hour to look round the Old Rectory, and as the rooms are small, large parties must be split up into groups, each with its own guide. It has been found necessary to ask for a minimum charge of one shilling per person for this service. Methodist pilgrims will not need to be reminded that other places of interest in the village are the parish church and the Wesley Memorial church. The warden of the Old Rectory (the Rev. W. Le Cato Edwards) will gladly supply any further information. EDITOR.