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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor : REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT

Volume XXVII

1949-50

EDITORIAL

THE *Proceedings* of our Society have never before opened with an "Editorial", but there are certain features of this issue which will already have impressed themselves upon the notice of our members, and which require some explanation. In brief, this new volume commences under the auspices of a new editor and a new printer.

Little need be said about the technical production of the *Proceedings*. We hope that the improvements in the type and the general lay-out will commend themselves to every reader. In these matters we are much indebted to the personal supervision of one of our members, Mr. Alfred A. Taberer, of Chester, who has also given us the welcome assurance that publication will in future be prompt and regular.

Of the changes in editorship we naturally find it more difficult to write. Although there is an editorial council, in actual practice the work has devolved mainly upon one man, and since 1936 (after twenty-six years as assistant editor) that one man has been the present President of our Society, the Rev. F. F. Bretherton, B.A. His work for the *Proceedings*, as for the Society in general, has been tireless and without stint. Through all these years it has been the main preoccupation of his waking hours, and, we fear, sometimes of his dreams.

Now, at Mr. Bretherton's own request, the editorial responsibility passes to another. But "F.F.B.", as his younger brethren affectionately delight to call him, will still devote his ample leisure to the Society, and with our gratitude for all his past work we mingle our satisfaction that the pages of the *Proceedings* will continue to be enriched by frequent contributions from his pen.

Editorial policy, for the most part, will remain unchanged. The example of our predecessors will ever be before us, and it will be our constant aim to make these pages interesting and helpful alike to the specialist, the student, and the ordinary reader. This is no easy task, but we rely with confidence upon the help and friendship of all our members.

TWO WESLEY LETTERS TO THE COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON

THE Standard Edition of Wesley's *Letters* contains several addressed to the Countess of Huntingdon. By the kind consideration of Professor Victor Murray, of Cheshunt College, Cambridge, we are permitted to print two further letters which have been preserved at Cheshunt College but never published.

Cheshunt derives from a College established at Trevecca by Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, and opened by her on her birthday, 24th August 1768. This College was entirely supported by the Countess for twenty-three years. By 1781, students from Trevecca were labouring in well-nigh every county in England. The College was removed in 1792 to Cheshunt, and to Cambridge in 1905, the foundation stone of the present building being laid in 1913. The students referred to in the second letter no doubt came from the original College at Trevecca.

The year 1771 marked a critical stage in the association of Wesley and the Countess, through the strain and tension of the Calvinistic controversy. One of the new letters belongs to the earlier period, and the second to the later.

The 1764 letter reveals the frankness, not inconsistent with sincere respect, with which Wesley addressed his titled friend. Later in this year he wrote to the Countess suggesting that it might be in the purpose of God that she should be a leader in securing the unity of clergymen active in the evangelical revival.¹ Later, when Joseph Benson left his post at Trevecca on doctrinal grounds, Wesley wrote to him:

I am glad you had the courage to speak your mind on so critical an occasion. At all hazards do so still, only with all possible tenderness and respect. She is much devoted to God and has a thousand valuable and amiable qualities.²

In 1768 Wesley was appointed chaplain to the Countess. In 1769 a noteworthy instance of co-operation took place when Wesley told Lady Huntingdon, in reference to the "Room" at Bath: "I am willing your preachers should have as full and free use of it as our own."³ Charles Wesley preached in her chapel at Bath.

It is interesting to note that in 1769 Wesley again charges the Countess with a lack of the catholic spirit.⁴ But despite this frankness he tells Benson in 1770 that he was convinced that he had not done his duty "with regard to that valuable woman". At the end of 1770, after writing a searching letter to the Countess, he said: "I am assured I spoke the truth in love", and that he was exercising an office of true esteem.

¹ *Letters*, iv, p. 239.

² *ibid.*, v, p. 202.

³ *ibid.*, v, p. 154 (quoted in a letter to Mary Bishop).

⁴ *ibid.*, v, p. 162 (in a letter to Mary Bishop).

In 1771, correspondence between Wesley, Fletcher, and Benson, reveals that trouble was arising. Wesley wrote a long, reasoned, and affectionate letter in June of that year, which contained the words: "To be short: such as I am, I love you well. You have one of the first places in my esteem and affection." In August 1771, when the great controversy was at its height, Wesley signed himself in a letter to the Countess: "Your Ladyship's truly affectionate but much injured servant".⁵ An entry in Wesley's *Journal*, 4th December 1771, discloses a deteriorating situation:

Hence we hastened to Dover, where the house was quickly filled with serious, well-behaved people. Here I found L[ady] H[untingdon]'s preachers had gleaned up most of those whom we had discarded. They call them "My Lady's society," and have my free leave to do them all the good they can.

A letter to Benson in March 1773 reveals trouble with Lady Huntingdon's students at West Bromwich: "In all probability they will sow the seeds of discord and make a breach in our rising societies." A happier note is struck in a kindly and gracious letter sent by Wesley to the Countess after her Orphan House at Bethesda, ten miles from Savannah, was burnt down in June 1773. A further adverse judgement on the students is expressed by Wesley in a letter to Mrs. Wood, 22nd October 1773: "I am afraid Lady Huntingdon's preachers will do little good wherever they go. They are wholly swallowed up in that detestable doctrine of Predestination and can talk of nothing else." In 1774 a letter from Wesley to Fletcher indicates dissatisfaction with a "young man who acted by her instructions". The identity of the lady concerned is obvious.

These references will, I hope, reveal something of the background of the new letters.

The Countess was deeply moved by the story of Wesley's death, which took place not long before her own. A writer who describes her emotion says: "the misunderstandings of twenty years melted away: she broke down in a flood of tears. . . . They all understand each other now."

F. F. BRETHERTON.

I

My Lady,

Shall I tell your Ladyship just what is in my mind, without any disguise or reserve? I believe it will be best so to do. And I think your Ladyship can bear it.

"When Lady H. (says my Brother) invites me to Brighthampton, will you bear me company"? In answer'd, "Yes": Being under no Apprehension of his claiming my Promise suddenly. And indeed I was perfectly indifferent about it, being in no want of Employment. It was therefore little Concern to me, that Mr. Whitefield, Madan, Romaine, Berridge, Haweis were sent for over and over, & as much notice taken of my brother and me, as of a

⁵ *Letters*, v, p. 275.

couple of Postillions. It only confirmed me in the Judgment I had formed for many Years, I am too rough a Preacher for tender Ears. "No, that is not it: but you preach Perfection." What! Without why or wherefore? Among the unawaken'd? Among Babes in Christ? No. To these I say not a word about it. I have two or three grains of Common Sense. If I do not know how to suit my Discourse to my Audience at these years, I ought never to preach more.

But I am grieved for your Ladyship. This is no mark of Catholic Spirit, but of great narrowness of Spirit. I do not say this, because I have any Desire to preach at Brighthelmstone. I cou'd not now, if your Ladyship desired it. For I am engaged every week, till I go to Bristol, in my way either to Ireland or Scotland. But this I wish even *your* Perfection, the Establishment of your Soul in Love!

I am,

My Lady,

Your Ladyship's Affectionate and
Obedient Servant

JOHN WESLEY

London

8th Janu. 1764

II

My Dear Lady,

I am so entirely satisfied with your Ladyship's favour of the eighth instant, that I cannot refrain from writing a line by the very first opportunity, to return you my sincere thanks. Your Ladyship observes extremely well, that all human Creatures have a right to think for themselves: And I have no right to blame another, for not being of the same Judgment with me. And I am persuaded, your Ladyship is not sensible, of the manner wherein many of the Students have treated me. But let that pass: If your Ladyship will be so good as to give them a Caution on that head, I know it will not be in vain. Wishing your Ladyship the continuance & increase of every Blessing which our Lord has purchased for us, I remain, My Dear Lady,

Your Ladyship's obliged and Ever affectionate Servant

JOHN WESLEY

- Bristol

Sept. 15. 1776.

On the cover of the first letter is the address:

To

The Right Honourable
The Countess of Huntingdon
At Brighthempston
Sussex.

On the cover of the second letter is the address:

To

The Right Honourable
The Countess of Huntingdon
near
Brecon

1^s = 11d

p. Glo'ster

JOHN WESLEY AS TRANSLATOR

HAVING preached recently on Matthew xxviii. 17: “. . . but some doubted”, the present writer had his attention drawn to the fact that Wesley’s *Notes on the New Testament* give (to the complete destruction of the sermon!) the translation “but some had doubted”.

The point is of some exegetic importance, as the former rendering (both A.V. and R.V.) means that the doubt of the disciples persisted despite the appearance of the Risen Lord, whereas the latter makes the doubt antecedent to the appearance and so disposes very neatly of an obvious difficulty. But for the investigation of Wesley’s integrity as a translator of the Bible the point is of the highest importance. What led him to adopt this undoubtedly incorrect rendering? That the English pluperfect is often required by the Greek aorist is of course a commonplace, but here the partitive οἱ δὲ requires *προσεκύνησαν* and *ἐδίστασαν* to bear the same time-signification. Thus the justification is not grammatical, and as far as the present writer is aware there is no textual variant that offers any support.

Wesley’s aim in this matter was to produce a translation differing from the A.V. only when a more correct translation, or a sounder variant text, was available to him.¹ Dr. Harrison’s excellent article on “The Greek Text of Wesley’s Translation of the New Testament”² demonstrates that in accepting textual changes he followed Bengel, as he did in other matters. But he did not always follow his mentor. For example, where Bengel rightly drops the latter half of 1 Corinthians vi. 20 (as in R.V.), Wesley retains, apparently because he did not want to surrender an edifying passage, even if not strictly original. Dr. Harrison’s judgement is, “As a practical man writing for unlettered people chiefly, he simply accepted Bengel’s results unless the change made no difference to the sense or seemed to detract from the value of the translation.” “Value” here is to be understood as “edificatory value”.

Such then were Wesley’s motives and usual method. In this present instance, however, we seem to have stumbled on an entirely opposite procedure, actuated nevertheless by the same motive. Wesley imported a change of translation which he knew full well was neither a better translation of the original nor the translation of a sounder original text, simply because he thought it improved his version’s “value”.

To do this he forsakes both the A.V. and Bengel to follow Doddridge in his Notes in the *Family Expositor*. Bengel indeed is so honest that he envisages the doubt as possibly being finally dis-

¹ Preface to the *Notes on the New Testament*, para. 4.

² *Proceedings*, ix, pp. 105-13.

pelled only by Pentecost: "His vero dubitationem, si qua remansit, ademit pentecoste". Heylin and Guyse, Wesley's other guides for his *Notes*, are wordy but at this point blameless. Doddridge alone is guilty of suggesting a manipulation of the text, but even he prints the text correctly and only in his paraphrase does he introduce the pluperfect. Moreover, Doddridge draws attention to the change and produces some kind of justification: "And all the difficulty is removed if we allow a *small change in the tense*, and take the *rendering of the Prussian Testament*, 'Even they who before had doubted'; or which is much the same, 'Though some had doubted'." He might have added (for what either is worth) Ostervald's French Version (1724 and 1744), which was presumably the one with which Wesley was familiar, though his own French Bible is missing. It reads: "ils l'adorèrent même ceux qui avaient douté". The other versions with which he was familiar were uncompromising—Vulgate: "quidam autem dubitaverunt"; and Luther: "etliche aber zweifelten".

Wesley adopts Doddridge's suggestion in his translation for the *Notes* and retains it in his revised version for *The New Testament, with an Analysis of the several Books and Chapters* (1790). What is so extraordinary is that he does not comment on the change or draw attention to what he has done; and it would seem impossible to clear Wesley of the charge of choosing a translation which he knew to be faulty, simply because it disposed of a difficulty and so had "edificatory" value. The incident is of more credit to Wesley as pastor of his flock than as one who knew the canons of scholarly rectitude.

The importance of this incident lies, however, not in the fact that we have caught our Homer nodding, but in the light which it throws on Wesley's real attitude to the authority of the Bible. Wesley was behind no man in maintaining in theory the doctrine of Verbal Inspiration,⁴ but in practice, as the present writer has had occasion to observe elsewhere,⁵ he corrected the teaching of certain passages by reference to his own experiential apprehension of the truth. Here, however, is a truly startling instance of a treatment of the text itself which almost justifies the use of the term "cavalier". The fact is that in his attitude to the authorities of religion, as in so much else, Wesley was one of the first signs of a new age. Modern Biblical scholarship would not have been a serious difficulty to him, once he was assured of its sincerity of purpose. And it, in turn, would have reminded him that, for the scholar as for the saint, the text is sacred; it must be taken as it stands, not modified—even in the interests of "edification".

STANLEY B. FROST.

³ *Family Expositor*, ii, p. 621 (6th ed., Edinburgh, 1772).

⁴ Preface to the *Notes on the New Testament*, paras. 10-12.

⁵ *Die Autoritätslehre in den Werken John Wesleys*, p. 92 (Munich, 1938).

THOMAS MAXFIELD'S FIRST SERMON

ONE of the most well-known stories in Methodist history is that of John Wesley's mother restraining him from silencing the "first Methodist lay preacher", Thomas Maxfield. It occurs in almost every history of Methodism, being assigned various dates between 1739 and 1742 more or less confidently according to the prudence of the writer or his faith in his predecessors in this same field of speculation. For in this matter most writers have been content to play a game of "follow-my-leader", and have not secured their material from original sources. This present article—certainly not the last word on the subject!—aims at reaching a little more certainty about the date of this important event. The investigation was prompted by the work of the Rev. James S. Wilder, who has recently been awarded the Ph.D. degree at the University of Edinburgh for a thesis on "The Early Methodist Lay Preachers and their contribution to the eighteenth century revival in England". Mr. Wilder claims that while Maxfield was not the first lay preacher employed by Wesley, he was indeed the first *Methodist* lay preacher, in so far as he was the first of Wesley's "sons in the gospel", while his precursors John Cennick and Joseph Humphreys were not so completely under Wesley's wing. Cennick was preaching in Bristol (with Wesley's approval) in June 1739, while Humphreys had preached his first sermon a year earlier, and coming to Wesley with Whitefield's recommendation, commenced preaching at the Foundery on 1st September 1740. The significance of the Maxfield incident appears to be that it was the inauguration of a new race of lay preachers, responsible to Wesley alone—*Methodist* lay preachers, in fact. Hence it is of some importance to determine as accurately as possible the date of this epochal event.

There appears to be no contemporary account of the Foundery incident—though we dare not for that reason, of course, dismiss it as mythical. So far as we can discover, the first reference to it appears in Coke and Moore's *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, published in 1792 (pp. 219-20), from which it was copied into Moore's enlarged life of Wesley (vol. i, pp. 505-6). The story seems to have been related to one of the joint authors by Wesley himself, and not to be based on any documentary evidence. We give here the full account, both for its intrinsic interest as the original version, and for the clues it affords towards the dating of the incident:

With this view [i.e. "to confirm them . . . either by reading to them, or by prayer, or by exhortation"] he [Wesley] had formerly appointed Mr. Cennick to reside at Kingswood. But the want of an assistant of this kind was particularly felt in London. The Society in that city had recently and deeply experienced the mischievous

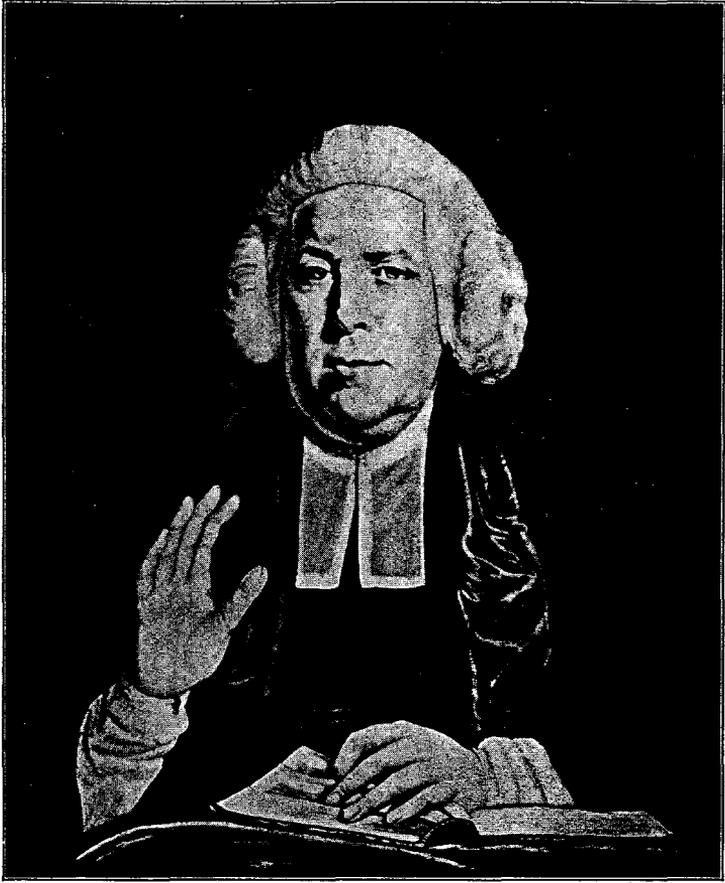
effects of that instruction, which is not according to the oracles of God. And therefore, when he was about to leave London for a season, he appointed one whom he judged to be strong in faith, and of an exemplary conversation, to meet the Society at the usual times, to pray with them, and give them such advice as might be needful. This was Mr. Maxfield, of whose remarkable conversion at Bristol, we have before spoken. This young man, being fervent in spirit, and *mighty in the Scriptures*, greatly profited the people. They crowded to hear him: and by the increase of their number, as well as by their earnest and deep attention, they insensibly led him to go further than he at first designed. He began to *preach*: and the Lord so blessed the word, that many were not only deeply awakened and brought to repentance, but were also made happy in a consciousness of pardon. The Scripture-marks of true conversion, inward peace and power to walk in all holiness, evinced the work to be of God.

Some however were offended at this *irregularity*, as it was termed. A complaint was made in form to Mr. Wesley, and he hastened to London in order to put a stop to it. His mother then lived in his house, adjoining to the Foundery. When he arrived, she perceived that his countenance was expressive of dissatisfaction, and inquired the cause. "Thomas Maxfield," said he abruptly, "has turned Preacher, I find." She looked attentively at him, and replied, "John, you know what my sentiments have been. You cannot suspect me of favouring readily any thing of this kind. But take care what you do with respect to that young man, for he is as surely called of God to preach, as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching: and hear him also yourself." He did so. His prejudice bowed before the force of truth: and he could only say, "It is the Lord: let him do what seemeth him good."

In other places also, the same assistance was afforded. It appears indeed from what he has said at various times, that he only *submitted with reluctance to it*. His high-church principles stood in his way. But such effects were produced, that he frequently found himself in the predicament of Peter, who being questioned in a matter somewhat similar, could only relate the fact, and say, "What was I, that I could withstand God?"

There is one other contemporary document which can be placed beside the above account. This is a letter from the Countess of Huntingdon to John Wesley, referring apparently to the same period, from which it appears that she was mainly responsible for Maxfield's attempts to preach. An extract from this was given in the rival to Coke and Moore's biography of Wesley, that by Dr. John Whitehead. Whitehead gives no date for the letter, though he includes it under the year 1741:

I never mentioned to you, that I have seen Maxfield. He is one of the greatest instances of God's peculiar favour, that I know.—He has raised from the stones, one to sit among the princes of his people.—He is my astonishment.—How is God's power shewn in weakness. You can have no idea, what an attachment I have to him. He is highly favoured of the Lord. The first time I made him expound, expecting little from him, I sat over against him, and thought, what a power of God must be with him, to make me give



Rev. THOMAS MAXFIELD

from the rare mezzotint by Richard Houston after Thomas Beach.

(Actual size of engraving, 10" × 14")

any attention to him. But before he had gone over one fifth part, any one that had seen me, would have thought I had been made of wood or stone, so quite immoveable I both felt and looked. His power in prayer is very extraordinary.—To deal plainly, I could either talk or write for an hour about him.—The society goes on well here.—Live assured of the most faithful and sincere friendship of your unworthy sister in Christ Jesus.¹

This is quoted in A. C. H. Seymour's *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* (i, pp. 32-3), as "written the latter end of the year 1739, or beginning of 1740"—almost certainly on the assumption that this was the date of Maxfield's first sermon, and not from a perusal of the original letter. Seymour's work, however, is notoriously untrustworthy, and does not give us any thoroughly reliable guidance as to when the Countess joined forces with Methodism. It is there stated (i, pp. 32-6) that both she and the Earl were members of the Fetter Lane Society, and that she played a leading part in the secession to the Foundery in July 1740. No original documents are quoted, however, and the facts are confused—for instance, the author links up the trouble over Shaw, who was expelled from Fetter Lane in June 1739,² with the secession of July 1740. Independent confirmation of the Countess's membership at Fetter Lane is very difficult to obtain, and James Hutton—who ought to have known if anyone did—wrote to Spangenberg in November 1740 in terms which suggest that he had just met her for the first time.³ In fact, when we free our minds from the incident related by Seymour, which has left its mark on many standard authorities, we find it surprisingly difficult to find any trace of the Countess's connexion with the Wesleys before 1741, when she begins to appear in John Wesley's diary—though there had been opportunity for her name to occur earlier. Similarly with Whitefield. Although the Huntingdons seem to have shown some interest in Bishop Benson's ordination of him in 1739 (Benson having been the Earl's tutor), not until 1742 can Tyerman claim any real contact. The early relationship of the Earl and Countess of Huntingdon with Methodism is a subject which may yet be illuminated by evidence from unpublished letters, but meantime it seems wise to accept Whitehead's implied dating of her letter about Maxfield as 1741. It would also seem wiser to accept that letter as relating to the Foundery Society after July 1740, if not in 1741, when we are quite certain that she was in friendly contact with the Wesleys.

Wesley himself does not help us very much as to when he first employed Maxfield as a preacher. In his *Journal* under the date 23rd March 1763 he wrote:

1. Mr. Maxfield was justified while I was praying with him in Baldwin Street, Bristol. [On 21st May 1739, though Maxfield had

¹ Whitehead's *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, ii, pp. 139-40.

² Wesley's *Journal*, ii, p. 222.

³ Benham's *Memoirs of James Hutton*, pp. 67-9.

apparently had his first serious impressions under Whitefield's preaching on 17th February 1739.]

2. Not long after he was employed by me as a preacher in London.

The *Minutes* of the 1766 Conference (followed by the "Large Minutes") are similarly vague. After describing the rise of the United Societies, and the appointment of the first Stewards, Wesley went on:

After a time, a young man came, T. Maxfield, and said he desired to help me as a son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards, and a third, Thomas Westell.—These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct.⁴

Here again, while Maxfield's priority among *Methodist* lay preachers is claimed, the terms are too general to assign a clear-cut date to his acceptance. After Maxfield left the Methodists in 1763 he pointed out that he had been converted under Whitefield's ministry, by whom he was passed on to Wesley just prior to Whitefield's return to America. To this printed claim Wesley replied:

Mr. Whitefield's going abroad, which is here referred to, was in the year 1741. Did he then deliver *you* into my hands? Was you not in my hands before? Had you not then, for above a year, been a member of the society under my care? Nay, was you not, at the very time, one of *my* Preachers? Did you not *then* serve me as a son in the Gospel? Did you not eat my bread, and lodge in my house?⁵

While Maxfield's residence at the Foundry as a preacher in 1741 is here implied, unfortunately the evidence is thrown out of court by the fact that Wesley's memory was playing him tricks. As a matter of fact this visit of Whitefield's to America was not made in 1741, but from August 1739 until March 1741.⁶

We are driven from reminiscences to a careful examination of contemporary evidence, especially in so far as it fits the story as related by Coke and Moore, assuming the substantial accuracy of their account.

There are certain outside limits within which the incident must obviously have taken place. In view of Maxfield's conversion in the spring of 1739 (whether we accept Wesley's or Maxfield's version—or both) this is the earliest possible year. Moreover it could only have been very late in that year, since Wesley preached his first sermon in the ruins of the Foundry on 11th November 1739.

⁴ *Minutes* (1862 ed., vol. i, pp. 60, 640-1). Little is known of Richards and Westell in these early years. Richards was travelling with Charles Wesley in June 1740, but apparently not preaching. Westell was a Methodist in 1739, but again there is no evidence of his preaching then.

⁵ Wesley's *Works*, xi, p. 480.

⁶ Wesley had similarly erred in making contradictory statements about the place of Maxfield's conversion, which he gave variously as Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street, Bristol.

Similarly 1742 is the very latest date possible, since on 23rd July of that year Susanna Wesley died at the Foundry. Among the various authorities, the Rev. Richard Green, writing in the *New History of Methodism* (i, p. 292) gives the date as "the end of 1739", while Mr. Gerald le Grys Norgate in the *Dictionary of National Biography* (article on "Maxfield") describes it as "in 1742". Most writers, however, have played for safety by speaking of "some time" in 1740 or 1741, with a strong leaning towards early 1740.

We believe that the year 1739 can be firmly ruled out, since the Foundry Society was still in its infancy, while the Maxfield story calls for a society which has been fairly well established, and then torn by factions. This clue, however, does not help us much in pin-pointing the incident, since during almost the whole of 1740 and 1741 such a statement would be true, the "stillness" heresy in particular causing much anxiety, and resulting in the split with the Fetter Lane Society in July 1740. On general grounds the period following this split would seem the most likely. The early history of the Foundry Society is still very much of a mystery, and Wesley's diary is missing from 10th November 1739 until 13th April 1740, by which time it had certainly got well under way. Although Wesley used the Foundry premises for meetings before they were fully reconstructed, it seems very unlikely that the place was inhabited until the early months of 1740. A misunderstanding has arisen on this point⁷ through a wrongly-quoted letter of Susanna Wesley's, which implies that she was already living at the Foundry in December 1739. In actual fact, however, the original letter (preserved at the Methodist Book Room) is dated "Thurs: Dec: 27 739", and there is no mention of the Foundry, which has apparently entered the story as a misreading of "Thurs(day)".⁸ Just when she came to live at the Foundry is still uncertain, though a letter written on 16th April 1740 by Charles Wesley to his sister-in-law Mrs. Samuel Wesley—itself headed "The Foundry on Windmill-hill near Moorfields London"—states "My Mother, blessed be God, is settled to her Satisfaction, in Lodgings we have fitted up for her in Our House; yt is, My Brother's—& mine."⁹

In order still further to limit the possible dates it will be well to outline what can be discovered of Maxfield's movements during the period. In May 1739 he was at Bristol, his religious experience developing so rapidly that in August he could be put in charge of a "band" there.¹⁰ It seems likely, though not absolutely certain,

⁷ e.g. in Simon's *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, p. 12.

⁸ Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley Family*, p. 219, heads the letter "Foundry, London, December 27th, 1739", and Eliza Clarke's *Susanna Wesley* gives it as "Foundry, December 27th, 1739". As a matter of fact, Mrs. Wesley speaks of "those with whom I lodge". Cf. Wesley's *Journal*, ii, pp. 267d, 313d for her lodgings in September and November.

⁹ From a photostat of the original in the Emory University Library, Georgia.

¹⁰ Wesley's *Journal*, ii, p. 252d.

that he remained in the Bristol area until March 1740, when he left with Charles Wesley for London.¹¹ In April 1740 he was in London, being admitted into the inner circles of Methodism there, such as the women's lovefeast at Fetter Lane, proving that he was becoming a trusted leader.¹² He remained with Charles Wesley in the London area until 18th June, when they returned to Bristol. Here he seems to have stayed (though this again is not absolutely certain) until 24th December, when he returned with Charles Wesley to London.¹³ The tale is taken up by John Wesley, who slept with Maxfield at the Foundery on 26th March 1741,¹⁴ and on 21st April wrote to Charles, "I am not clear that Brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane; nor can I as yet do without him."¹⁵ Maxfield seems to have continued in London, John Wesley writing to him from Bristol in June, and being with him in August.¹⁶ He was certainly preaching at the Foundery in October 1741, as is revealed by the contemporary evidence of a pamphlet published (apparently by Charles Wesley) in 1750, though written in November 1741. It is entitled *A Short Account of God's Dealings with Mr. Thomas Hogg. Written by Himself, in a Letter to his Minister*. Hogg thus describes his conversion, at the Foundery:

I think it was last Tuesday was three weeks I heard Mr. Maxfield. His discourse was from Rom. vi. . . . His reasonings, I think, were so strong, that no man could gainsay them. The texts of scripture which he brought in confirmation were many. I received his saying, and was quickened by the spirit of God unto a lively hope, believing I should in his time, enter into that blessed state, and so be happy for ever more.

This summary of Maxfield's activities leaves the likely date for his being left in charge of the work at the Foundery as either April to June 1740, or January 1741 onwards, with July to December 1740 as a faint possibility.

We shall now find it a profitable exercise to examine John Wesley's *Journal*, with the diary where available, for occasions when he returned speedily and unexpectedly to London, hurrying first to the Foundery, to be met by his mother. It will probably be wisest to record all his returns within the limits of possibility, even if some of them appear on other grounds to be very unlikely:

¹¹ Charles Wesley's *Journal*, i, pp. 201-4, compared with unpublished letters.

¹² *op. cit.*, i, pp. 209, 212.

¹³ *op. cit.*, i, p. 264.

¹⁴ *Journal*, ii, p. 438.

¹⁵ Wesley's *Letters*, i, p. 353. It is not quite certain that "expound" can be equated with "preach", though we believe it can. Compare the passage from Wesley's *Journal* for 22nd January 1741 quoted below, where the two certainly mean the same. "Exhorting", however, to which Maxfield had been called in the first instance, was a very different matter, and is revealed as such in the term used for embryo preachers both in Wesley's day and our own, "exhorters".

¹⁶ *Journal*, ii, pp. 463d, 485d.

1739—19th December. Wesley returned in response to "several displeasing accounts of the state of things in London", but the trouble described in the *Journal* seems to have nothing to do with Maxfield, who in any case was almost certainly still in Bristol, while the Foundery Society had not yet had time to develop much.

1740—5th February. A leisurely return, with the specific intention of interviewing a convicted highwayman. Again Maxfield is almost certainly in Bristol.

22nd April. A speedy return because of trouble at Fetter Lane, though there is no sign of Maxfield being concerned. Earlier in the month Maxfield had been an opponent of the "still brethren" at Fetter Lane.¹⁷

5th June. A leisurely return, to find the "stillness" teaching still causing trouble at London. No mention of Maxfield in diary.

9th September. Wesley returned swiftly from Bristol, but there is no mention of Maxfield or Mrs. Wesley in his diary, which reads "3.30 at home, tea, on business; conversed to Bro. Humphreys, etc."¹⁸

22nd November. Wesley returned swiftly from Bristol, from which he had been released by the return of Charles Wesley from Wales. There is no sign of urgency, however, and his diary reads "3.30 at home, read letters, tea, conversed."

1741—21st January. The *Journal* reads: "Mon. 19. [at Bristol] I found, from several accounts, it was absolutely necessary for me to be at London. I therefore desired the society to meet in the evening; and having settled things in the best manner I could, on Tuesday set out, and on Wednesday evening met our brethren at the Foundery." He had been away since 12th December 1740. The diary for Wednesday the 21st reads "2 rode; 6 at the Foundery, with my mother; within, supper; 8 the bands, conversed, prayer; 10".

26th March. "Finding all things now, both at Kingswood and Bristol, far more settled than I expected, I complied with my brother's request, and setting out on Wednesday the 25th, the next day came to London." The reason for Charles's summoning his brother was that the return of George Whitefield had precipitated the Calvinist controversy. Charles's urgent letter of 16th March (preserved in the Colman collection) does not mention Maxfield, though it is just possible that an earlier letter might have done. Wesley's diary reads: "1.30 rode; 4 at the Foundery, bro. C[harles] and Hall, within, tea; 6 Matt. xiv. 27; supper, society; 9.15 in bed with Bro. Maxfield, conversed; 10."

27th May. "Having settled all the business on which I came", says Wesley, he returned from Bristol—in leisurely manner.

16th June. He returned from a visit into the Midlands, staying in London only a day before leaving for Oxford. His purpose in

¹⁷ Wesley's *Journal*, viii, pp. 161-8. Charles Wesley's *Journal*, i, pp. 210, 212.

¹⁸ Humphreys' first sermon at the Foundery had been preached on 1st September, according to his autobiography, but he had already been a lay preacher for two years. He had started a Society at Deptford in August 1739, which the Wesleys had taken over.

this short visit is left obscure both by *Journal* and diary. On 10th June, three days after setting out from London, he wrote to Maxfield, but this would hardly have given time for complaints to have reached Wesley about him, nor is either he or Mrs. Wesley mentioned in the diary for 16th June.

27th June. A brief visit from Oxford, with no indication of urgency, but apparently in order to conduct week-end services.

10th July. A similar return for the week-end from Oxford.

26th July. Another return from Oxford, after preaching at St. Mary's, the previous day.

23rd December. Wesley had been in the Bristol area for nearly three months, much of the time ill. Unfortunately the diary is missing. The *Journal*, however, gives no indication of urgency. Wesley took coach on the Monday, arriving on the Wednesday—rather slow going. There were larger congregations, from whom he excluded several, as he had done at Bristol earlier in the month. There is no indication that Maxfield's preaching was responsible for the increased numbers, which may have been due to Wesley's long-awaited home-coming.

1742—23rd March. Wesley returned from Bristol in leisurely manner.

19th July. He returned from Bristol apparently because of his mother's illness.

From the evidence of Wesley's own records, the occasion of his speedy return to silence Maxfield seems most likely to have been either 21st January 1741 or 26th March 1741, with the balance of probability perhaps in favour of the former date. In either case Thomas Maxfield was not in sole charge of the London work, Charles Wesley being on hand, though travelling about the area, while Maxfield would be more stationary, concentrating on the Foundry Society. This seems quite a natural procedure, which can be compared with a phrase in a letter from Charles to John Wesley in October 1742, in which he asks that either Maxfield or Richards shall be sent to Newcastle, "London requiring 2, but Bristol I cd. look after alone for a month".¹⁹ Some confirmation of the 21st January date in 1741 may be found in the fact that the morning after John's return and interview with his mother he had an early morning conference with Charles before taking the 6 a.m. service, recording in his *Journal*:

Thur. 22.—I began expounding [not "preaching", be it noted] where my brother had left off, viz. at the fourth chapter of the first Epistle of St. John. He had not preached the morning before; nor intended to do it any more.

Charles's behaviour may just possibly be construed as pique over John's acceptance of Maxfield. It is more likely to have been due to his infection by the "stillness" teaching, however—in which case there would be all the more need for some dependable layman to look after things in John's absence. Charles's letters to John

¹⁹ Unpublished letter at the Methodist Book Room.

during this period support such a view. In this case Maxfield might easily have begun preaching while Charles himself was comparatively silent, and on Charles's coming to his senses he might object to the continuation of Maxfield's labours, accepted by his brother on 26th March 1741. This would lend real point to John's letter a month later—"I am not clear that Brother Maxfield should not expound at Greyhound Lane; nor can I as yet do without him."

The dates suggested by the various strands of evidence may be summarized thus:

Commencement of Foundery Society	After Dec. 1739
Mrs. Wesley living in Foundery	After (March?) 1740
Maxfield in London	March—June, 1740 Dec. 1740—Oct. on, 1741 (?? July—Dec. 1740)
Troubles in London (i.e. Foundery) Society	After July 1740
Countess of Huntingdon familiar with Methodism	? After late 1740
Maxfield certainly preaching	Before Oct. 1741 ? Before April 1741
Mrs. Wesley's death	Before July 1742
The most likely of Wesley's returns	(? 19th Dec. 1739) (? 22nd April 1740) 21st Jan. 1741 26th March 1741 (? 16th June 1741)

The balance of the evidence certainly suggests that Maxfield was not left in charge of the Foundery Society until some time after the break with Fetter Lane in July 1740, and that he was an accepted preacher by the summer of 1741. It is difficult to be absolutely certain about the exact period. There are two main possibilities: (1) that he began preaching from the Foundery pulpit some time in late December 1740 or January 1741, leading to Wesley's hasty return from Bristol on 21st January 1741; or (2) that he took charge of the Foundery on John Wesley's departure for Bristol, 17th February 1741, Charles Wesley having commenced to preach again on the 12th, but still being a little unreliable; in this case Wesley's return on 26th March, and his bedroom conference with Maxfield, would mark the beginning of the new order. Until more evidence is available, however, neither date can be regarded as proven, though one or other of them is most probable.

FRANK BAKER.

[Biographical notes on Thomas Maxfield, together with a portrait of "Rev. Thomas Maxfield with his wife and family", will be found in *Proceedings*, xxi, p. 161, and notes on some of his publications in x, p. 116. Who was the first Methodist lay preacher—Maxfield, Humphreys, Cennick, or Thomas Westell? For notes on this question see *Proceedings*, xvii, pp. 144-5; xix, p. 165; xxi, p. 162-3.—EDITOR.]

A BAPTISMAL ENTRY BY JOHN WESLEY

A CORRESPONDENT has kindly sent us the portion of an old register which is reproduced on the opposite page. We have no information as to the place of the baptism, but the following facts give ground for thinking that it was in the Deptford area.

In *Sayings and Portraits of John Wesley* the Rev. John Telford says:

Wesley, whilst on a visit to Deptford in his eighty-second year, was prevailed upon by his friend Josiah Dornford to have his portrait taken. By his will Mr. Dornford left this painting to his executor, Mr. Jonah Freeman. It was afterwards taken to Australia, and for many years was in the possession of Mrs. Cummings, of New South Wales, who in 1906 presented it to the British Wesleyan Conference. It is now at the Book Room. The name of the artist is unknown; but it greatly resembles the portrait by Horsley, now hanging at Richmond College.

The pedigree of this picture has been questioned, but there is abundant evidence that Wesley had a friend named Josiah Dornford in Deptford. He is mentioned many times in the *Journal*. Wesley recalls attendance at a "Christian wedding" on 14th December 1759. The bridegroom was Josiah Dornford and the bride Eleanor Layton.¹ The Rev. W. Romaine officiated; the Rev. John Wesley gave away the bride; the Rev. Charles Wesley, the Rev. Thomas Jones of Southwark, and the Rev. Thomas Maxfield were present. These facts establish the close connexion of the parties with the evangelical leaders.

The name "Dornford" does not occur in the *Journal* until many years after this marriage. In 1783 a long series of references begins, revealing Wesley as a frequent visitor at Mr. Dornford's house. In January 1785 Wesley baptized Josiah Dornford, presumably grandson of the bridegroom of 1759. In October 1788 he baptized Mary Dornford, presumably a granddaughter of the same.

In December 1789 Wesley called on Mr. Dornford, and "found he kept his bed, being ill of a stubborn ague; but it came no more". Six weeks later he writes, "I buried Mrs. Dornford (a good woman), and preached her funeral sermon."

In an informative article in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1911, pp. 621-4 (based upon a volume in the Prest collection in the library of the Methodist Publishing House, entitled *A Memoir of the Life and Death of Mrs. Eleanor Dornford*, by her husband), Mr. Arthur Wallington states that Mr. Dornford was a London merchant and that he and his wife became active and prominent members of the Methodist society at Deptford. Mrs. Dornford left

¹ In spelling the name thus I follow the note in the *Standard Journal*, but Mr. Wallington's article, to which I am about to refer, spells "Leyton" as in the baptismal register.

132/ 21.

1787 Fe^{br} 21. Eleanor Clayton Dorsetford, Daughter of
James & Mary Dorsetford, born Jan^y 29. 1787
baptized W^m Fe^{br} 21 by John Wesley H. J. S.

Feb. 21. Sarah Ayres D^{ch} of John and Mary
born Jan^y 13 - H. J. S.

23 Martha Griffiths D^{ch} of John and Clementina

Born Feb. 4

Feb. 25. George Bayly, George's Son, Jan 7 1781.

Feb. 25. William Christopher, Thomas's D^{ch} both Fe^{br}: 14
Feb. 25. John James Smith, John's Abessca (Poor) Fe^{br}: 14

Jan: 18

several children, one being named Josiah after his father. This son, and a younger one, both died in the West Indies. Mr. Wallington does not mention the name of this younger son, or the date of his death. It seems probable that the father mentioned in the register was either this unnamed son or another son of whom we have no record.

Certainly there seems to be an adequate reason for connecting the baptism now under consideration with the family of Wesley's friend; the name bestowed upon the baby is very suggestive.

From Mr. Wallington's article we learn that some time after his first wife's death, Mr. Dornford married Ellen Thomason, "of City Road", whom the *Dictionary of National Biography* describes as the chief lady friend of Simeon. A son of this lady by a former marriage went as a youth with Dr. Coke to the West Indies, acting as French interpreter. Mr. Dornford's son by the second marriage was named Joseph. He succeeded Keble in the tutorship of Oriel College, Oxford. The collocation of the names Simeon and Keble is intriguing.

The Rev. Frank Baker has kindly given me the following notes.

In *Wesley's Veterans*, i, p. 98, in the account of Sampson Staniforth, Mr. Dornford appears as a kindly sick visitor. In the *Wesley Banner*, 1850, p. 333, he is mentioned as being present at the death of Mrs. Hall, Wesley's sister Martha. Charles Wesley, writing to his wife on 7th June 1764 says:

Tuesday, June 6. Rode with B. Butcher and Collinson to Shoreham. By the way we breakfasted at Greenwich with B. Dornford: once a Witness of his own perfection but now very tame and sober-minded. A serious dissenter and his wife joined us in singing and prayer.

John Wesley wrote from Bristol on 1st August 1786 to Josiah Dornford, Esq., in Philpot Lane. Mr. Baker thinks this may be Josiah Dornford, jun., who had graduated B.A. at Oxford in 1785, and would be more appropriate in the context: "If He sees, and when He sees best, He will put more talents into your hands."

Mr. Baker has no doubt that the baptism record is in the handwriting of John Wesley, and thinks that H T: S: will be the initials of the incumbent. There is another H T: S:, and also cases of C T: S:, so that T: S: is apparently all that we should read. Mr. Baker cannot feel sure what the "H" stands for; the "C" he thinks may stand for "christened". One would like to think that T: S: stood for Thomas Scott, who was certainly in London at the time, joint chaplain of the Lock Hospital and Lecturer at St. Mildred's, Bread Street. The Indexes to the *Standard Journal* and *Letters* do not reveal a likely "T.S."

F. F. BRETHERTON.

[We hazard the guess that "C" and "H" may indicate the place of baptism, "C" standing for "Church" and "H" for home. The latter would therefore be equivalent to our modern "privately baptized".—EDITOR.]

BOOK NOTICES

The Eucharistic Hymns of John and Charles Wesley, by J. Ernest Rattenbury. (Epworth Press, pp. x. 254, 15s.)

Dr. Rattenbury, worthy successor of George Osborn and J. S. Simon to whom he pays just tribute, completes in this important volume the survey begun in his Fernley-Hartley Lecture on *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns*. He is at once expositor and advocate. If any uncertainty remains of either the substance or the truth of what the Wesleys believed and taught about the Eucharist, his latest work should go far to remove it. *The Hymns on the Lord's Supper* with the preface from Dr. Brevint, published in 1745 and in nine subsequent editions in Wesley's lifetime, is reprinted here in its entirety for convenience of reference and for devotional study. In three additional Notes Dr. Rattenbury ably presents the Protestant view (as against Dr. Kirk's recent manifesto in *The Apostolic Ministry*) that the Church comes before its particular hierarchical constitution.

Dr. Rattenbury writes with authority in many related fields. The Methodist historian will find here new material for a properly balanced understanding both of John Wesley's fundamental beliefs and of the whole nature of the revival. Many readers, needing help for their prayers, will be grateful for the way in which Dr. Rattenbury brings out the devotional value of Brevint's meditations, both in their own form and when transmuted in the crucible of Charles Wesley's fervour. And while hymnology to Dr. Rattenbury is here as always subordinated to theology, students of the Methodist hymns will note with interest his comments on such points as John's true part in and responsibility for this book; on the "hymns of the mixed chalice", and on the possible debt of "Rock of Ages" to certain of Charles Wesley's verses. Two hymns, "Lamb of God, whose dying love" and "Arise, my soul, arise, Shake off thy guilty fears", Dr. Rattenbury singles out as of very special devotional value: the latter is indeed, he declares, a summary of his lifelong gospel.

But Dr. Rattenbury is also, of course, a controversialist, and in this aspect his book is constructive, up to the moment, and notably eirenic. It matters much today, not to Methodist historians only but to Christians of all communions, that in the 18th-century revival sacramental devotion was reborn no less than that which we have called evangelical. The facts here recounted are not really in dispute; but Methodists and non-Methodists alike have been slow to grasp their true significance. Dr. Rattenbury is perfectly just to 19th-century Methodist apologists—notably Rigg and Stevenson—when he shows how, in reacting against contemporary Anglo-Catholic misuse of these hymns, they shut their eyes to one side of the truth, thereby doing less than justice to the other; since both

sides, Word and Sacrament, arise from and rest in the same Atoning Sacrifice.

It is, of course, upon *sacrifice* and upon *priesthood* that the long fruitless discussion has centred: words which many Christians still needlessly fear and dislike. In the second Part of his book Dr. Rattenbury, arguing from what John Wesley actually did believe instead of from what some think he ought to have believed, shows how utterly evangelical both words really are. *Sacrifice*—not only commemorated but shared in the offering of ourselves; *priesthood*—not of an independent Order but of the whole Church acting through its ministers; *Body of Christ* at the same time sacramental in the Bread and mystical in the Church: on all these pivotal words light is shed, not by finely-spun argument so much as by genuine evangelical insight. Perhaps the most illuminating part of the discussion is on the priesthood of all believers, by which too often in the past Methodists have intended the priesthood of none. Here Dr. Rattenbury finds powerful support from Dom Gregory Dix's great work on *The Shape of the Liturgy*, in which pre-Nicene views of the oblation of the whole Church are seen to be in close accord with those of the Wesleys.

All this has a direct and important bearing upon present needs. A more complete and therefore truer understanding of the real Methodist witness, which is essentially that of the primitive Church, may well point the way to new understandings between Christians too long divided at the one place where all should be drawn together. It is a good augury that Dr. Rattenbury is able to call to his support the witness of other contemporary Methodist workers in the fields both of theology and sacramental practice. His own work will help to restore a long-neglected emphasis and to remove some unnecessary fears. Exhaustive, scholarly and unbiased, yet warm with intense devotional feeling, it is the work of a theologian, liturgiologist and churchman, and above all, of a great evangelist.

A. S. GREGORY.

A Herald of the Evangelical Revival, by Eric W. Baker. (Epworth Press, pp. x. 203, 12s. 6d.)

About William Law, by Arthur W. Hopkinson. (S.P.C.K., pp. xii. 131, 8s. 6d.)

William Law: A Study in Literary Craftsmanship, by Henri Talon. (Rockliff Publishing Corporation, pp. viii. 106, 8s. 6d.)

Of the making of books "about William Law" there seems just now to be no end. Mr. Brazier Green's Fernley-Hartley Lecture in 1945 stimulated interest in this long-neglected field, and last year's reprint of Stephen Hobhouse's *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law* deepened that interest. And now come three further books in rapid succession, by a Methodist, an Anglican High Churchman,

and a French *littérateur*, each with its own special emphasis on some aspect of William Law's life and character.

Christopher Walton, Law's eccentric and most voluminous biographer, laid down certain qualifications as being essential to any who would "describe Law's character justly and universally". Amongst other things, a would-be biographer of Law should be "an individual of searching, exact and philosophic turn, of at least forty years of age, and to have been brought up, as to religious communion, amongst the Methodists". Dr. Eric Baker is the only one of our three present authors who fulfils *all* these quoted qualifications. As a Methodist, therefore, it is natural and almost inevitable that his book should be concerned exclusively with the relationships between Law and Wesley.

After an invaluable historical survey, the book falls into three almost equal parts: Wesley's indebtedness to Law; his disagreement with Law; and Law's influence upon Methodist beginnings. The breach between the two men began with the correspondence of 1738 and steadily widened through the years. This was perhaps unavoidable, for the course of their lives was very different: Law became the recluse of Kingscliffe and Wesley the inspired evangelist with the world as his parish. Moreover, they were temperamentally different, and most of all, as Dr. Baker stresses, Wesley's evangelical conversion expresses his reaction against Law, for it was an experience Law never shared. Wesley owed much to Law for his conception of Christian Perfection, both in its theory and in its outworking, but in his rejection of mysticism and in his doctrine of the Atonement Wesley was utterly at variance with his one-time mentor. Dr. Baker's chapter on "The Fundamental Doctrinal Issue" is perhaps the most important of the book.

Although it is true that as late as 1768 Wesley was still republishing parts of Law's writings, and as late as 1787 was recommending his correspondents to read Law's *Works* and *Sermons*, yet it is manifest that Law's personal influence upon Wesley had reached its climax before 1738. Dr. Baker would not subscribe to some of the extravagant estimates of Law's influence upon Wesley and the beginnings of Methodism, remembering as he does the comparable influence of Thomas à Kempis and Jeremy Taylor with Law on Wesley's early thought, but he is scrupulously fair in his appraisal. He finds Law's chief influence in "the ethical emphasis which characterized the movement", and, for the rest, the traces of Law's influence in Methodism are few and incidental.

This is a scholarly book, carefully documented and very readable. No later explorer in this field will be able to ignore it. Its value is enhanced by the inclusion of four facsimile reproductions, including one of the title-page of the first edition of *Christian Perfection*, and two of pages from Christopher Walton's *Notes and Materials*. One of these latter shows a literary curiosity, the first page of a footnote which extended to 294 pages! It is strange that the publishers

have not noted these facsimiles in the Table of Contents or the Index. Their modesty is unnecessary, for the literary and technical excellence of the book is a credit to author and publishers alike.

Many of Mr. Arthur Hopkinson's readers owe him an incalculable debt for *Pastor's Progress*, now unhappily out of print, but *About William Law* is a very different kind of book. As a High Churchman, Mr. Hopkinson is more interested in Bishop Hoadly and the Bangorian Letters than he is with John Wesley and the 1756 Letter. But this is by no means his only concern. Law was a many-sided man, a theologian and a moralist as well as a mystic and a controversialist, and all these aspects are here carefully described, and annotated from the nine volumes of Law's *Works*. In so doing Mr. Hopkinson has laid us under obligation, for we discover Law to be a much greater man than we had suspected from the Wesley controversy, an episode in which Law "showed himself at his worst as a controversialist, at his best as a theologian".

Mr. Hopkinson describes his book as a "running commentary" on Law's *Works*, but a commentary presupposes a knowledge of the text it elucidates. The author is an enthusiast for Law, but we doubt if his enthusiasm is sufficiently infectious to make his readers clamour for a new edition of the *Collected Works*. It will, however, send many back to *Christian Perfection* and the *Serious Call* with a new understanding of Law himself and of his claim to fame, and for that we are grateful.

Our appreciation of the useful section "Sources of Information" in the Epilogue is tempered by the absence of an Index, an inexcusable omission in such a book as this and for which the Foreword by the Dean of Winchester is insufficient compensation.

The little book by Maître Talon, of Dijon University, is in effect a commentary on Aldous Huxley's description of Law as "a master of English prose". It is written with a reverent and sympathetic understanding of the spiritual issues with which Law as a writer dealt; indeed, it is the author's hope that his study of the artistic merits of Law's writings should be the means of a better understanding of their spirit, and we are sure he will not be disappointed.

The book is concerned with three aspects of Law's style: Law as a logician and wit, exemplified in the controversial writings; his art of persuasion, seen in *Christian Perfection* and the *Serious Call*; and the later mystical writings, in which "the style acquires a musical quality and tenderness hardly noticeable in the previous works".

M. Talon has given us a book which is at once so comprehensive and admirably compressed that it is well able to stand on its own feet without assistance from the other books on Law which we have noticed. The "biographical sketch", for example, is a model of what a "potted biography" ought to be. But if this volume is read

in conjunction with (and preferably after) the other two, it will adequately round off our conception and appreciation of a man whose greatness, after long years of neglect, is at last coming to be recognized.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

A Charge to Keep: An Introduction to the People called Methodists, by Frank Baker. (Epworth Press, pp. 232, 8s. 6d.)

Wrestling Jacob, by Marjorie Bowen. (Thinkers' Library, No. 131. C. A. Watts & Co., pp. 261, 3s. 6d.)

Our Registrar has rendered a most useful service to Methodism by writing such a concise account of it; this is just the book to give to anyone who wants to know more about our Church; indeed it should be widely recommended to the Methodist people themselves. Three well-balanced chapters describe the origin, development and world-wide expansion of Methodism. Then comes an account of the fundamentals of our faith, our activities, and our organization. There are some interesting diagrams, and a most useful list of dates. Not every scholar can compress his material so gracefully and produce so readable a volume.

About one or two details some doubts arise. Should "Tiverton Grammar School" (p. 6) be "Blundell's School, Tiverton"? Böhler and Müller, one suspects, should be thus spelt. "Birstall" is printed in old *Minutes* as "Birstal": is there also a case for "Birstale" (p. 132)? Ordinations are held during the period of, and by the resolution of, the Representative, not the Ministerial, Session of the Conference (p. 194). The annual collection for Kingswood was not "what we now call the Education Fund" (p. 209); we call it "the Methodist Ministers' Children's Fund". The references to the *Book of Offices* (p. 123), while making mention of the fact that a few churches use Morning Prayer, omit the far more important fact that many churches, probably the majority, use the liturgical form of the Communion Service.

But these are mostly small and in some cases perhaps doubtful points, of little moment in comparison with the solid merits of the book. It meets a need that has long been felt, and we hope that many Methodists will take this opportunity to be "introduced" to new features of their own rich heritage.

Most preachers will be familiar with the story of the attendant at a picture gallery, who, irritated at the criticisms of some of the world's masterpieces, finally exclaimed, "Excuse me, sir, it's not the pictures that are on trial." Nor is John Wesley on trial in *Wrestling Jacob*. First published in 1937, it is now issued in an abridged form in the Thinkers' Library, and the publishers tell us that it is the only biography "treating of this remarkable man from the objective point of view." "Objective" here can only mean

that the writer judges Wesley, as no doubt many people do, from the standpoint of a vague humanism. Wesley, it is implied, might have been a great and good man—if only he had abandoned his faith, and adopted the views here outlined (p. 132). It is interesting that even to such an observer much of his greatness is still apparent. But a certain sympathy is absolutely necessary for a biographer of Wesley; this book is not an intentional caricature, nor are its "facts" inaccurate, but the portrait, though not without some features of interest, bears little resemblance, in our opinion, to the original. Its appearance in this series is a challenge to Methodists to produce something equally cheap and handy for the bookstalls.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

In these days when there is much talk of Christian unity, it is more than ever necessary that Christians of all denominations should be better informed about each other's history and distinctive witness. For this purpose *England's Churches: their Rise and Witness*, by H. A. L. Jefferson (Rockliff Publishing Corporation, pp. xvi. 163, 10s. 6d.), is a most useful and instructive book. Each of the great English religious denominations is treated adequately and sympathetically, as we should expect from an author who, though now an Anglican, has arrived at that haven by a devious route.

We have read the chapter on "The Methodist Church: the Answer of the Heart" with special care and interest. It is an admirable account, suitably compressed into sixteen pages, of the work of the Wesleys and its permanent results, and it should materially help to expound Methodism and its history to members of other communions who will read this book. Each chapter has its own appropriate illustration; it is a pity that the choice for Methodism is a modern and inferior representation of John Wesley preaching on his father's tomb in Epworth churchyard. One look at the picture makes it abundantly clear that the anonymous artist had never been to Epworth.

We do not find the productions of this publishing house cheap, even by modern standards, but their excellent appearance makes them a delight to read and to handle.

The Religious Education Press have issued three booklets in the "English Christianity" series, with the general intention of portraying for the younger generation the men who brought Christianity to this country and later spread its influence and established its power. The third of these booklets, *How Christianity spread in England*, by Ronald W. Thomson (pp. 68, 2s. 6d.), contains chapters devoted to "The Saint with the Burning Heart" (John Wesley) and "Three Torch Bearers" (Charles Wesley, Nelson, and Whitefield). The biographical sketches are of necessity brief, but the salient facts are well brought out and are presented in a way calculated to interest young readers. The series deserves commendation and would prove useful to leaders of junior classes. It is a pity that the illustrative drawings are so crude.

NOTES AND QUERIES

876. LONDON ELECTRICAL DISPENSARY.

I have seen an interesting book entitled *The Royal Kalendar or Complete and Correct Annual Register for England, Scotland, Ireland and America for the year 1798 etc.* This contains a list of officers of the "London Electrical Dispensary, Instituted 1793", that is, two years after John Wesley's death. Conspicuous among the Vice-Presidents is Thomas Coke. His degree, LL.D., is specified, but other "Doctors" in the list have the title as a prefix to their names, so presumably they were medical men.

At least two of John Wesley's references in the *Journal* to the electrical treatment of sickness and disease are very critical of what he obviously believed to be the refusal of the medical profession to acknowledge its efficacy, on economic grounds! (20th January 1753 and 9th November 1756.) Does the above Almanac announcement indicate a change in the attitude of the doctors by the end of the century? What was their view at that time? Coke, at any rate, seems to have been a disciple of Wesley in the matter, and no doubt they would both see in modern medical practice the vindication of their advocacy of "electrification".

We need, I think, to maintain a clear distinction between this and the antics inspired by Mesmer in France at the same period (vide Dumas, *The Queen's Necklace*).

H. VERNON BRIGGS.

It is good to hear of Thomas Coke's support of a venture which was after Wesley's own heart, for John Wesley was a pioneer in electrotherapy, publishing the second book on the subject in the English language, in addition to anticipating the London Electrical Dispensary by 37 years. Yet the battle was far from won, and electrotherapy formed no part of medical training and was seldom mentioned in medical books and journals until quite recently. Dr. W. J. Turrell, the President of The Duchenne Society for the Advancement of Electrotherapy, was bemoaning this fact, even in 1938, in a little-known pamphlet entitled *John Wesley: Physician and Electrotherapist* (pub. Basil Blackwell, Oxford). (A letter from the author in my copy says "I have written it under the cloak of a little-known phase of Wesley's activities to draw the attention of the public to the deplorable neglect of any teaching of electrotherapy or any research thereon.")

Wesley's vindication is now at last to be found, however, in a host of clinics where short-wave therapy and the like is standard treatment, confirming his claim that electricity is "the noblest Medicine yet known in the World".

FRANK BAKER.

Dr. Duncan Coomer has noted the following extract from Canon Charles Smyth's recent book, *The Genius of the Church of England*, p. 51n: "On the importance of the Disestablishment issue in the 19th century . . . it may well be that the three most providential accidents (if I may so describe them) in the history of our National Church in the 19th century were the fact that William Wilberforce was a Tory, that William Ewart Gladstone was a High Churchman, and that the policy of Methodism up to 1849 was dictated by Jabez Bunting."