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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor : REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT

Volume XXIX

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“ THE GLORY OF THE METHODISTS ”

An Unpublished Wesley Letter

CERTAIN themes recur constantly in John Wesley's correspondence. The emphasis upon the necessity for seeking Christian perfection is one. Another is early rising, combined with early morning preaching services.

Early morning services were dictated at first by the difficulty of getting a congregation of working people at any other time, especially for mid-week visits of Methodist leaders such as Wesley himself. Gradually the retiring and rising habits of the English people changed, however, and with them the ability of Methodism to command an early morning congregation—though I remember that my trial sermon as a candidate for the Primitive Methodist ministry was preached at 7 a.m.! Although vestiges of the practice have survived even to the present century, by the opening decades of the nineteenth century early morning preaching was fast dying out. Even in Wesley's own day there was not the enthusiasm for the practice which he desired. The Conference of 1768 considered at some length the question:

“ In many places the work of God seems to stand still. What can be done to revive and enlarge it? ”

One of the remedies suggested was this:

“ Let the preaching at five in the morning be constantly kept up, wherever you can have twenty hearers. This is the glory of the Methodists. Whenever this is dropped, they will dwindle away into nothing. Rising early is equally good for soul and body. It helps the nerves better than a thousand medicines; and, in particular, preserves the sight, and prevents lowness of spirits, more than can well be imagined. ”

Having thus made his public proclamation, Wesley continued to enforce the matter in private letters. Writing to Adam Clarke on 3rd January 1787 about a recent revival, he said: “ I hope those who were then awakened are not all fallen asleep again. Preaching in the morning is one excellent means of keeping their souls awake. ” The same emphasis in more characteristic language reminiscent of

the 1768 *Minutes* comes in a letter of 25th October 1789 to John Grace, the preacher at Londonderry (familiarily known as "the walking Bible"): "You do well to be exact in morning preaching: that is the glory of the Methodists. Whenever the morning preaching is given up the glory is departed from us."

That this is not an isolated instance is confirmed by a letter written by Wesley to another preacher five years earlier, and now first available for publication through the kindness of Mr. G. Percival Harris, LL.B. The recipient was Thomas Longley, a travelling preacher who had been accepted in 1780 and was at this time stationed as the "Assistant" or superintendent of the Derby Circuit. The letter was addressed:

To/ Mr. Longley
At the Preachinghouse
. . . ter¹

The letter reads thus:

Manchester
April 11, 1784

Dear Tommy,

You have reason to be thankful that the Society does not decrease in number. And the members of it will not decrease in grace, if you strongly and explicitly exhort them, 'to go on to perfection'; especially if you encourage them, both by Precept & example, To rise early in the morning. The Morning Preaching is the Glory of the Methodists. Whenever that ceases, the Glory is departed from them. I am

Your affectionate Friend & Brother

J. WESLEY.

FRANK BAKER.

¹ Wesley would normally have addressed Longley at Derby. It is just possible that the address was "Burton", though there does not seem to have been a chapel there at this date. The most likely explanation is that Longley was staying for a time at Leicester, which was in the Derby circuit until 1776, and with which there may well have been some interchange. The only other known letter of John Wesley to Longley had been written earlier in the same connexional year, on 5th November 1783. It was addressed: "To Mr. Longley, At Mr. M. Dobinson's, In Derby."

Two recent books on Scotland, though not directly bearing upon Methodist history, are valuable for "background" material, and are complementary to each other. The religious life of Scotland, especially in the post-Reformation period, is as interesting as that of nonconformity in England, and the variety and nature of its splits and offshoots (such as the United Association Synod and the New Light Anti-Burghers) even more confusing. The story has often been told, but there is room for C. Stewart Black's new presentation in concise and readable form in *The Scottish Church* (William McLellan, pp. 276, 10s. 6d.). . . . Less familiar ground is covered in *The Domestic Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*, by Marjorie Plant (Edinburgh University Press, pp. xii. 319, 25s.). It fully justifies its claim to be "a fully documented description of the domestic life of all ranks of Scottish society", and is worthy to stand alongside Graham's classic study of *The Social Life of Scotland in the Eighteenth Century*.

JOHN WESLEY IN HIS LETTERS

[On 15th July 1943 the Wesley Historical Society Lecture at the Birmingham Conference was delivered in the Handsworth College chapel by the Rev. Dr. Wilbert F. Howard. His subject was "John Wesley in his Letters". Alone amongst our Lectures this has never been published in any form whatever. It was Dr. Howard's wish that the lecture should be considerably expanded before publication, and in his leisure moments he worked on the MS. with the exact and painstaking care which characterized all his literary labours. Alas! his untimely death last year found the MS. far from complete—a collection of literary fragments. The article which follows is, as nearly as we can tell, the Lecture as delivered in 1943. We are grateful to Mrs. Howard and her son, Mr. Maurice Howard, for their generous permission to print it here. It will revive many memories of a member of our Society who was as distinguished in the field of Methodist history as he was in so many other spheres of life.—EDITOR.]

THE eighteenth century is generally regarded as the great age of letter-writing, though the earlier part of the nineteenth might enter into successful rivalry. We have only to think of Wesley's contemporaries, from the savage wit of Swift to the tender playfulness of Cowper, of Horace Walpole's brilliant artistry and Chesterfield's polished elegance, to acknowledge the right of letters to a high title in the history of English prose. Perhaps the most famous letter in our language is that proud and crushing disclaimer in which Samuel Johnson put Lord Chesterfield in his place and with one stroke of the pen killed patronage as a power in English literature.

John Wesley was no elegant trifler, nor were his letters at any time an outlet for the spleen of baulked ambition, or a self-conscious description of the passing show. In one of the earliest of those which have survived, written when he was only twenty-three, he tells his elder brother: "Leisure and I have taken leave of one another".¹ Yet amidst all the tireless activities of the long years he found time to keep in close touch with a host of correspondents. Within six months of his evangelical conversion he ends a letter with the excuse: "I have four- or five-and-thirty other letters to write, so can say no more."² We cannot expect that letters written under these conditions will take high rank in literary history. But it may fairly be questioned whether any correspondent since Cicero has revealed himself more completely in his letters. They have not indeed the fascination of the *Journal* with its narrative of his ocean perils, his trials in America, his travels through every part of the British Isles, his visits to Germany and Holland, his encounters with mobs, with its comments on curious sights and its record of strange incidents—above all, with the story it tells of the pilgrimage of the soul. But there is a sense in which the true Wesley is to be discovered in these unstudied letters which flowed from his pen for nearly seventy years. The *Journal* was based upon private diaries, and in the Standard Edition there are many transcripts from those

¹ *Letters*, i, p. 34.

² *ibid.*, i, p. 267.

jottings written originally in cipher and meant for no other eye. But the published *Journal* was revised and intended for the public to read. In the *Letters* we have for the most part conversation with his absent friends. He who reads through the eight volumes of these *Letters* in their chronological order can trace the development of a mind, whilst observing the continuity and consistency of a character.

The strong ties of home and family are felt in many a letter. His reverence for his mother and his reliance on her keen intellect and sure judgement, his filial piety towards his aged father, his warm affection for his unhappy sisters, and the frank exchange of opinions with his two brothers, are there for all to read. In the Oxford years there came the friendship of John and Charles with the ladies of the Stanton circle, Betty and Sally Kirkham and the two sisters, Ann Granville and Mrs. Pendarves. The correspondence between "Cyrus", "Aspasia" and "Varanese" is interesting not only from the romance that came to nought but quite as much because we here first find Wesley the spiritual director of devout women, a calling which he followed to the end of his life, as his many letters to Hannah Ball, Ann Boulton, Jane Bisson, Mary Bishop, Mary Bosanquet, Hester Ann Roe and others reveal. For the exciting adventures of his life in Georgia we must turn to his private diaries and to the *Journal* rather than to the *Letters*, but on his return to England and the great awakening that came to the two brothers in Whit-week 1738, we find a wealth of information in the letters that belong to the early years of the Evangelical Revival. Here we may read of the sad estrangements which sundered the Wesleys from the Moravians to whom they owed so much, of the paralysing heresies which struck down one after another of their former comrades of Oxford days or in the membership of the Fetter Lane Society. We can trace here better than anywhere else the inner story of the division between the Methodists and the followers of Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon. It is Wesley's keen insight into the ethical bearing of the questions at issue, and the disheartening spectacle of whole societies laid waste by the doctrinal and moral heresies of some of his preachers, that impress the reader of these poignant letters. We can watch his struggle to avoid controversy with those whose character and work he admires, his dislike of polemics, his courtesy to his brethren in Christ. But it is clear that when the Methodists are slandered in the press by ill-informed or malignant accusers he is always ready to draw the sword and never wields it in vain. Lavington, bishop of Exeter, was dealt with faithfully for his anonymous and offensive tract, *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compar'd*. That half-educated swashbuckler, William Warburton, bishop of Gloucester, was taken in hand with a tightness of reasoning to which he was unaccustomed and with a courtesy to which he was not entitled, for an offensive libel on Wesley's character and history. A visitation charge by a very different man, Edmund Gibson, the aged bishop of London, called forth an earnest protest by John Wesley, and there is good reason to believe that it made a deep impression on the bishop. These elaborate

letters of public controversy, and many more of the same kind, are worthy of study for the light they throw on Wesley's clear, logical mind, his orderly progress from point to point in argument, and not least for the pith and pungency of his vigorous English style.

He belonged to the age of reason, and like the men of his own century Wesley was in the true sense of the word a rationalist. He reasoned his religion out. He was never satisfied with loose statements, faulty definitions, or pious sentimentality. The mystical strain in his temperament delighted in his brother's hymns, but in a letter to Charles he asks him to omit one or two on the ground that they are "*namby-pambical*".³ The charge that John was credulous and that he had a strain of superstition in his nature is due to his interest in ghosts and his belief in witchcraft. His letters show how eager he was to obtain first-hand and reliable evidence about psychical phenomena, and his refusal to dismiss black magic was based quite logically on the view then held by orthodox Christians about the inspiration of Scripture. His letters show what value he attached to that strange compendium of empirical cures published under the appropriate title *Primitive Physick*. When, however, Dr. William Hawes, physician to the London Dispensary, published in *Lloyd's Evening Post* an "Examination" of this work, denouncing it as that of a dangerous quack, Wesley, with characteristically dry humour, replied to "Mr. Hawes, Apothecary and Critic":

Dear Sir,

My bookseller informs me that since your remarks on *the Primitive Physick, or a Natural and Easy Method of Curing most Disorders*, there has been a greater demand for it than ever. If, therefore, you would please to publish a few farther remarks, you would confer a farther favour upon

Your humble servant.⁴

Let it be remembered none the less, that John Wesley was one of the first to recognize the value of electrical treatment and to make use of the new "electric machine", as he calls it in several letters, for the benefit of the poor.

Much of his correspondence is carried on with his preachers, whom he chaffed, rebuked, encouraged, or guided, according to their varied temperaments and the need of the hour. Some whom he had trusted as sons grievously disappointed him by their ingratitude and even treachery. Others, "tired with the greatness of their way", fell out of the course, but a nobler band of helpers never followed a leader as the great number of "the Early Methodist Preachers" did through evil and through good report. They owed an immeasurable debt to the man who called them and trained them, and gathered them together from time to time in conference, who visited them in their wide circuits and kept up their faith and courage by his ceaseless letters. He taught them how to study, how to write and how to speak. Faults of voice and of style were

³ *ibid.*, iv, p. 166.

⁴ *ibid.*, vi, p. 225.

corrected. Legal advice was freely and effectively given when magistrates went beyond the law, and if his personal intervention was required they knew that he was always equal to the occasion. Though he was a finished scholar according to the standard expected of an Oxford don, they knew that he was no mere academic pedant. He urged the necessity of constant reading, but was suspicious of the bookworm. Above all, he urged his preachers to speak with simplicity and directness, yet without any impropriety of language.

His friendships with women were many, and these have given us some of the most precious examples of his thoughts on personal religion. He respected the intelligence of these correspondents, and discussed with them the books that would help them in the search for a richer interior religion, while at the same time probing with penetrating questions their state of grace.

It might be thought that his preoccupation with the care of all the churches would leave Wesley no time for an interest in the larger movements of the world both at home and abroad. His letters show with what keen interest he watched current events. Economic and political questions always roused his attention, especially when they affected the well-being of the common people. His letters about the Slave Trade to Granville Sharp, to Clarkson and to Wilberforce are well known; so are those written to public men or to the press about the dispute with the American colonists. His letter to the Earl of Shelburne against the drilling of the militia on Sunday is a model of dignified persuasion. That to William Pitt must have made the young Prime Minister open his eyes as he was recommended to prevent the evasion of some taxes and to make the destruction of the people's corn by distilling spirits a felony. Almost equally exciting is the correspondence carried on in the *Bristol Gazette*⁵ to prove that the addition of hops, "that poisonous weed", to the "decoction of barley", destroys the quality of ale and is injurious to the drinker. The vested interest of the hop-growers is denounced with a fervour that forestalls the United Kingdom Alliance at the height of its power.

What about the man himself? What is the secret of his amazing achievement in reading and writing so much while travelling over such wide tracts of country, and controlling the complex affairs of all the societies in the Connexion? A partial answer is given in a letter written to his mother from Oxford when he was but twenty-four: "I am full of business; but have found a way to write without taking any time from that. 'Tis but rising an hour sooner in a morning and going into company an hour later in the evening; both which may be done without any inconvenience."⁶ But a deeper explanation is found in some words written when he was seventy-four: "Though I am always in haste, I am never in a hurry; because I never undertake any more work than I can go through with perfect calmness of spirit."⁷ We know from his letters as well as from the *Journal* that he was by no means robust, and had

⁵ *ibid.*, viii, pp. 165 ff.

⁶ *ibid.*, i, p. 43.

⁷ *ibid.*, vi, p. 292.

several severe illnesses when death stared him in the face. But there was a wonderful fund of vitality upon which he was able to draw, and in later life he seemed to renew his youth. So we find him writing to his sister Patty: "I find more health at sixty-eight than I did at twenty-eight. I have far less pain, less sickness at stomach, and fewer bodily infirmities."⁸ Nine years later he writes: "I can face the north wind at seventy-seven better than I could at seven-and-twenty."⁹ Still more remarkable is the statement in a letter written when he was eighty-three: "In general my health has been better for these last ten years than it ever was for ten years together since I was born. Ever since that good fever which I had in the North of Ireland [eleven years before], I have had, as it were, a new constitution. All my pains and aches have forsaken me, and I am a stranger even to weariness of any kind."¹⁰ At eighty-six he writes, after a time of declining strength: "I still find (blessed be God!) a gradual increase of strength, and my sight is rather better than worse."¹¹ The hardy old veteran crossed to Ireland in the following June, but found the strain too great for his years. "In my last voyage the sea affected me more than ever it did before in my life; so that I perceive my voyages draw to an end."¹² But there was to be one more valiant battle-cry. At eighty-seven he was incensed to find that the preachers were complaining that the circuits were too wide and the travelling too arduous. This roused him to write: "If we do not take care we shall all degenerate into milksops. Soldiers of Christ, arise!"¹³

Now let us retrace our steps to study a little more closely some of these features of Wesley's character as they are brought out in his letters.

The most remarkable in the early years are those to his mother, in which he shows his interest in current events—Jack Shepherd's escape from Newgate, or riots in Poland between Protestant and Jesuit students, a good ghost story originating with the bishop of Raphoe. With that remarkable woman he discusses the books he is reading and consults her upon his theological problems. A little later we read the correspondence with the ladies of the Stanton circle. Here for the first and only time in his life we find Wesley writing in a stilted style that is quite foreign to his direct and downright temperament. It would be interesting to speculate how far John was impressed by the superior social experience of Mrs. Pendarves who moved in court circles, and how far he was warily avoiding too close an intimacy. At that time this attractive young widow displayed an earnest interest in spiritual religion, and her correspondent amidst all his courtly phrases played his part diligently as her spiritual director. Perhaps this excessive concern for her eternal welfare began to pall on her, for the correspondence came to an end.

Free from the affectations of this correspondence, John Wesley

⁸ *ibid.*, v, p. 261.

⁹ *ibid.*, vii, p. 68.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, vii, p. 357.

¹¹ *ibid.*, viii, p. 115.

¹² *ibid.*, viii, p. 146.

¹³ *ibid.*, viii, p. 206.

soon broke out into a style of writing which was simple, direct, sincere. He could be terse, and he was always frank. Indeed, the perfect candour displayed in Wesley's letters is not only one of his most characteristic qualities; it is also a clue to not a few of his troubles. With his own family, with his closest friends, later on with his unhappy wife, with his sons in the Gospel, with the many excellent ladies to whom he was spiritual director, he always wrote just what he meant. No man ever wasted less time in getting to the root of a matter. He did not flinch from exposing a fault, and he could himself accept a rebuke with humility and without pain. Not many a Fellow of a College at the age of twenty-eight would have received so meekly an elder brother's complaint of his singularity of manner. He certainly defends himself on some counts, but acknowledges that he is not easy and unaffected enough in his carriage, adding that until he has more breeding or more prudence "I shall extremely thank anyone who will teach me to help it".¹⁴ Indeed he appreciated his brother Samuel's directness of approach. Two letters about this time begin on the same note. "Neither you nor I have any time to spare; so I must be as short as I can."¹⁵ "I had rather dispute, if I must dispute, with you than with any man living, because it may be done with so little expense of time or words."¹⁶ Throughout life he took an objective view of things. Unfortunately he did not see that others might wince at his honest expression of opinion. With all his affection for his sisters and for his wife, this bluntness of censure in some of his letters and the abruptness of expression seem to mark a want of sympathetic insight. In his letters to old friends and former guides this frankness must sometimes have set up acute irritation. He owed much to William Law, whose *Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life* marked an important stage in his spiritual growth. But when his eyes were opened to some grave defects in Law's mysticism he must needs write him a letter which not unnaturally called down on his head a dignified rebuke. In later life when Wesley was almost an autocrat over the Methodist societies it was not easy for his friends to show quite the same frankness. But like all truly great men Wesley respected those who stood up to him manfully. To Ebenezer Blackwell, the wealthy banker in whose home at Lewisham he often stayed when literary labours demanded a short retreat, he wrote:

You have never yet spoken to me with more freedom than was agreeable to me. Your freedom is the best proof of your friendship. There are not many that will deal freely with me; nor indeed are there many from whom I would desire it, lest it should hurt themselves without profiting me. But I do desire it of *you*; and do not doubt it will profit me, as it has done in time past.¹⁷

Later still, Joseph Benson, the shy and shrinking scholar, one of his best preachers, imagined himself to be in Wesley's bad books, and wrote a letter in which he aired his grievance. Promptly came the reply:

¹⁴ *ibid.*, i, pp. 114 f.

¹⁶ *ibid.*, i, p. 181.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, i, p. 180.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, iv, p. 58.

Dear Joseph,

You must not expect that I should answer particularly a letter of a sheet long. I have only time to take notice briefly of two or three of the mistakes it contains. 1. I have been told a hundred times, "You love those that flatter you, and hate all that deal plainly with you". . . . But nothing under heaven can be more false. What man did I ever love like T. Walsh? What woman do I now regard like Miss Bosanquet? And what human creatures have dealt so plainly and honestly with me? What preacher now deals so plainly with me as John Fenwick? and whom do I love and trust more?¹⁸

Wesley's candour naturally leads on to the place which controversy played in his life. More than most men he disliked the warfare of words, partly because of the spiritual danger it carries with it, partly because experience had taught him how seldom it convinces the opponent. To Lady Maxwell he wrote: "It is abundantly easier to lose ourselves in that rough field than to find truth."¹⁹ When he was writing to Joseph Benson about that intolerant Calvinist, the Countess of Huntingdon, he says: "'Child,' said my Father when I was young, 'you think to carry everything by dint of argument. But you will find by-and-by how very little is ever done in the world by clear reason'. Very little indeed!"²⁰ Yet by nature and training in logic John Wesley was well equipped for debate. His keen analytical judgement, his ready wit, his trenchant style, his apt quotation and pointed illustration, made him a formidable antagonist. These gifts were used with good effect in his shrewd replies to pamphlets in which the Methodists were slandered, or in his public criticism of what he regarded as dangerous and subversive teaching. Like the Apostle of Love, Wesley knew the deadly effect of false doctrine. Hence his breach with the Moravians when they introduced the fatal heresy of quietism; hence his separation from the Calvinists and his denunciation of those who taught antinomianism. He knew too well how easy it was to press one aspect of the Christian message so far that truth could be perverted into falsehood. Thus he writes: "The true Gospel touches the very edge both of Calvinism and of Antinomianism; so that nothing but the mighty power of God can prevent our sliding into the one or the other."²¹

There were limits, however, beyond which he would not go in the correction of error. Contention with fellow-labourers about points of doctrine was abhorrent to him. Listen to this letter written to Howell Harris, the pioneer of the revival in Wales. After showing that they agree in the description of perfection, and that there is no human merit save in the blood of the Lamb, Wesley exclaims:

Brother, is thy heart with mine as my heart is with thy heart? If it be, give me thy hand . . . So long as I am continued in the work, let us rise up together against the evil-doer. Let us not weaken, but (if it be our Lord's will) strengthen one another's hands in God. My brother, my soul is gone forth to meet thee; let us fall upon one

¹⁸ *ibid.*, v, pp. 164 f.; cf. vi, pp. 361, 383 f.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, v, p. 304.

²⁰ *ibid.*, v, pp. 202 f.

²¹ *ibid.*, iv, p. 208.

another's neck. The good Lord blot out all that is past, and let there henceforth be peace between me and thee.²²

If that is how Wesley wrote to an opponent, this is how he wrote to one of his own preachers:

My dear Brother,

In public speaking speak not one word against opinions of any kind. We are not to fight against notions but sins. Least of all should I advise you once to open your lips against *Predestination*. It would do more mischief than you are aware of. Keep to our one point of present inward salvation by faith, by the divine evidence of sins forgiven.²³

So many years later he could write to Brother Coates: "I advise you, if you are willing to labour with us, preach no doctrine contrary to ours. I have preached twenty years in some of Mr. Whitefield's Societies; yet to this day I never contradicted him among his own people. I did not think it honest, neither necessary at all."²⁴ When he was nearly seventy Wesley wrote to a lady correspondent:

Many years ago, when my son (as he styled himself for several years) Mr. Whitefield declared war against me, several asked, and that over and over, "When wilt thou answer Mr. Whitefield's book?" I answered, "Never. You have heard the cry, Whitefield against Wesley; but you shall never hear, Wesley against Whitefield". I have been ever since a follower after peace.²⁵

In the same letter he tells how when Rowland Hill attacked him violently in book after book he kept silence, until a friend warned him that he could no longer be silent and innocent.

I was convinced. I did not dare to be silent any longer, and I have accordingly answered the questions he proposed to me, and removed those objections, which otherwise would have turned the lame out of the way. I wish I may have done it with the inimitable sweetness and gentleness that Mr. Fletcher has done. His letters (as vilely as they have been misrepresented) breathe the very spirit of the gospel. You might read them to learn how to return good for evil, to bless them that curse you. O beware that no bitter spirits infuse bitterness into *you*.²⁶

One of the strangest episodes in Wesley's life is the fierce storm of obloquy that broke upon his head shortly after the death of George Whitefield. The Calvinistic venom of Toplady was such that he published a tract bringing the vilest charges against Wesley under the title "An Old Fox Tarred and Feathered". Wesley ignored it. When one of his preachers wrote to him about it he replied: "My dear Brother,—Mr. Augustus Toplady I know well. But I do not fight with chimney-sweepers. He is too dirty a fighter for me to meddle with. I should only foul my fingers. I read his title page, and troubled myself no farther."²⁷

We have already seen that Wesley left the grave theological dispute with the Calvinists to the saintly John Fletcher, whose *Checks to Antinomianism* were of the utmost value when moral disorders were spreading in the societies. Wesley wrote to him: "Certainly

²² *ibid.*, ii, pp. 8 f.

²³ *ibid.*, iii, p. 110.

²⁴ *ibid.*, iv, p. 158.

²⁵ *ibid.*, v, p. 339.

²⁶ *ibid.*, v, p. 340.

²⁷ *ibid.*, v, p. 192.

it is possible to reconcile meekness, yea and kindness with the utmost plainness of speech. But this will infallibly be termed bitterness by those who do not receive it in love. Their returning us hatred for good will is the cross we are called to bear."²⁸

So much for this chapter in the history of the ethics of controversy. There is, however, another aspect of the subject which deserves a passing word. When writing to Fletcher in appreciation of the last of his tracts, he closes with the words: "But one thing seems to have escaped you still. What are the charms of Calvinism? How is it that so many fall in love with her?"²⁹ This is not irony. Wesley knew that in meeting an error refutation is not enough. The conviction and conversion of those who are in bondage to the error is the end in view.³⁰ Mr. George Sampson³¹ may be right in saying "That John ever understood what we may call the higher Calvinism may be doubted." None the less in his instinctive dislike of what we may call the lower Calvinism he acknowledged that behind this there lay some power that could not safely be ignored.

Two of Wesley's controversial letters deserve special study for their bearing upon his attitude to the religious background of his time. His reply to Conyers Middleton's famous *Free Enquiry* shows both the limitations of eighteenth-century orthodoxy and the timeless religious sense surmounting those temporal confines. The reply to Bishop Warburton's polemical tract *The Doctrine of Grace* is not only a personal vindication but quite as much a justification of the claim that the presence of the living God is attested by the activity of the Holy Spirit in the conversion and transformation of human character.

The most revealing of Wesley's letters are those in which he lays bare his soul in all the moods of sorrow and joy, his warm affection, his fearless candour, his despondency and his unconquerable hope, his secret misgivings and his serene faith. WILBERT F. HOWARD.

²⁸ *ibid.*, v, p. 281.

²⁹ *ibid.*, vi, p. 146; cf. pp. 152 f.

³⁰ The story is told that when Joseph Chamberlain in his Tariff Reform crusade was followed round the country by two of his most redoubtable antagonists, he contrasted their methods in these words: "Lloyd George always goes for my weakest points: Asquith attacks my strongest arguments."

³¹ *The Century of Divine Songs* (Warton Lecture on English Poetry before the British Academy), p. 13.

John B. Dyson's *Methodism in the Isle of Wight*, published in 1865, refers to the work of John and Charles Pinhorn, who were converted in the early years of the nineteenth century and became local preachers. We have a query from Pilot Officer M. A. Pinhorn, who is anxious to discover any connexion between his family, which has a strong Methodist ancestry, and the Isle of Wight Pinhorns. Any information should be sent to P/O Pinhorn, R.A.F., Kenley, Surrey.—EDITOR.

ERRATA—VOL. XXVIII.

Page 166, line 16. For "1914" read "1814".

Page iii (Index). Under Rev. W. Lamplough Doughty, B.A., B.D., add: "Trials of a Methodist Preacher in Inverness in 1808-9, 110."

“ THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS ”

ILLUSTRATIONS: (1) Title-page (facsimile size) of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United-States of America*, 1786 edition; (2) Facsimile of a part of the original and duplicate pages from the Ministration of the Baptism of Infants, from the copy of the 1784 edition in the Library of the Methodist Historical Society of New York; (3) Facsimile (in the text) of “ A Prayer for the Rulers ”, from Morning Prayer in *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United-States of America*, 1786 edition.

THE recent revival of interest in liturgical matters has given new prominence to the importance of John Wesley's *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*. Its significance was frequently mentioned at the Oxford Ecumenical Conference in 1951, and it is clear that “ Mr. Wesley's Abridgement ” is receiving close attention on both sides of the Atlantic.

Every worker in this liturgical field is indebted to Dr. Nolan B. Harmon for *The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism*, published in 1926. This book, with its scholarly commentary on those parts of the *Sunday Service* which find their modern counterpart in the *Doctrines and Discipline* (popularly known as “ the Ritual ”) of the American Methodist Church, and its valuable comparisons in tabular form between the original *Sunday Service* and successive versions of the “ Ritual ” in the various branches of American Methodism, is indispensable. Articles by John C. Bowmer on “ Wesley's Revision of the Communion Office ” in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* in July 1951, and by Frederick Hunter on “ Sources of Wesley's Revision of the Prayer Book in 1784-8 ” in *Proceedings*, xxiii, pp. 123-33, 173-4, should also be studied in connexion with what is set down here.

The *Sunday Service* presents many problems to the bibliographer and the historian as well as to the theologian and the liturgist. Some of these problems are outside our present scope, but this study will attempt (a) to clarify the various editions published before 1800; (b) to examine the variants of the first edition of 1784; (c) to compare the three editions of 1786; and (d) to draw attention to some curious features of the editions of 1788 and 1790.

I. The Early Editions of the “ Sunday Service ”

Richard Green, in his invaluable *Wesley Bibliography* (1st ed., 1896), found difficulty in listing the early editions. His information was amended and supplemented in *Proceedings*, iii, p. 130, and again in the second edition of his *Bibliography* in 1906, but even then he did not achieve complete accuracy, and considerable confusion has resulted ever since. Here is a revised list of editions, with the evidence which I possess:

I. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS IN NORTH AMERICA. WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. London: Printed in the Year

T H E
SUNDAY SERVICE

O F T H E
M E T H O D I S T S

I N
T H E U N I T E D - S T A T E S O F A M E R I C A ,

With other OCCASIONAL SERVICES.



L O N D O N :
Printed by FRY'S and COUGHMAN, Worship-Street,
Upper-Moorfields, 1786.

TITLE-PAGE OF
The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United-States of America
Second Edition, 1786.

*Then the Minister shall take the Child into his Hands,
and say to the Friends of the Child,
Name this Child.*

*And then, naming it after them, he shall dip it in the
Water, or sprinkle it therewith, saying,*

N. I baptize thee, In the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Then the Minister shall say,

WE receive this Child into the Congregation
of Christ's flock, and sign him
with the sign of the Cross; in token
that hereafter he shall not be ashamed
to confess the faith of Christ crucified,
and manfully to fight under his ban-
ner against sin, the world and the devil; and to
continue Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto
his life's end. *Amen.*

*• Here the
Minister shall
make a Cross
upon the Child's
Forehead.*

Then shall the Minister say,

SEeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that *this
Child is grafted into the body of Christ's Church,*

(ORIGINAL)

*Then the Minister shall take the Child into his Hands,
and say to the Friends of the Child,
Name this Child.*

*And then, naming it after them, he shall dip it in the
Water, or sprinkle it therewith, saying,*

N. I baptize thee, in the Name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.
Amen.

Then shall the Minister say,

SEeing now, dearly beloved brethren; that *this
Child is grafted into the body of Christ's
Church,* let us give thanks unto Almighty God for
these benefits, and with one accord make our
prayers unto him, that *this Child* may lead the rest
of *his life* according to this beginning.

(DUPLICATE)

FACSIMILE FROM THE ORIGINAL AND DUPLICATE PAGES OF THE MINISTRATION
OF BAPTISM OF INFANTS, from the "freak" copy of *The Sunday Service of the
Methodists in North America*, 1784 edition, in the Library of the Methodist
Historical Society of New York.

(Photostat by courtesy of the Rev. Dr. James R. Joy)

MDCCLXXXIV. (Facsimile of title-page in *Proceedings*, xxvii, p. 32, from the original at Drew University.)

2. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. London: Printed by Frys and Couchman, Worship-Street, Upper-Moorfields, 1786. (Copy in Didsbury College Library; photostat of title-page in my possession and reproduced in this article.)

3. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS IN HIS MAJESTY'S DOMINIONS. WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. London: Printed by Frys and Couchman, Worship-Street, Upper-Moorfields, 1786. (Copy owned by the Rev. John J. Perry; photostat of title-page in my possession.)

4. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS. WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. London: Printed by Frys and Couchman, Worship-Street, Upper-Moorfields, 1786. (Copy at the Union Theological Seminary, New York; transcript of title-page in my possession.)

5. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS; WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. London: Printed in the year 1788. (Copy in the Library of Emory University, Georgia; another copy, which I have examined, in the possession of the Rev. Dr. Frank Baker.)

6. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA. WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. The Fourth Edition. London: Printed in the year MDCCXC. (Copy in the Library of Emory University; photostat of title-page in my possession.)

7. THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS; WITH OTHER OCCASIONAL SERVICES. The Fourth Edition. London: Printed in the year 1792. (Copy in my possession.)

A comparison with Green's *Bibliography* (2nd ed., appendix pages vii-viii) will show two differences. First, Green's (2) *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in the United States of America*, 1784, seems not to exist; indeed, Green says: "So given by Osborn: I have not seen it."; second, my (2) above is not in Green, and he cannot have known of it.

II. The Variants of the First Edition of 1784

The 1784 edition is of special importance as reflecting Wesley's liturgical and ecclesiastical views at that time. All the known copies of this edition (twenty-three in all) are in America and Canada, and historians in this country have frequently and erroneously assumed that it was textually identical with the later editions to which they had access here. I have had the co-operation of librarians and others who have examined their copies of the first edition, and my conclusions are based on their information.

It will be remembered that the first copies of the *Sunday Service* were taken to America by Thomas Coke in loose sheets (to avoid the duty on bound books)¹ when he sailed from Bristol on 18th September 1784, a fortnight after his "ordination" as "superintendent". We do not know when Wesley's revision of the Prayer Book was made, or where the *Sunday Service* was printed. The one certain fact is that the Preface was written at Bristol on 9th September.

Now there are some copies of the first edition which have no

¹ This statement is frequently made by American historians, but I do not know the primary source.

Preface; others which have a Preface with nineteen lines of text in small type; and others with a Preface in larger type which occupies twenty-three lines. In every case it appears that the Preface was not a part of the original printed sheets, but was printed later (perhaps in America) and bound in with the rest of the book; this is supported by the fact that in some copies the chain lines (the watermark) run vertically in the Preface and horizontally in the book. The two varieties of Preface have unimportant verbal differences and they are not identical in their punctuation and use of capitals; and the "nineteen lines" variant has an interesting misprint: "Septemben" for "September". I take this to be the later of the two variants, as the wording agrees exactly with that found in subsequent editions. There are further differences in combination with these varieties of Preface. All the known copies of 1784 are bound with *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day* (which Wesley prepared specially for the use of the American Methodists), though the pagination is separate; some copies also include the "Minutes of the Christmas Conference" (printed in Philadelphia by Charles Cist); and others again have inserted on three pages before the title-page the commendatory letter which Wesley addressed on 10th September 1784 "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North-America".

These variations are interesting and perhaps important, but the main difference between the various copies of the 1784 edition is their inclusion or omission of the "manual acts" in the Administration of the Lord's Supper, and the "signing with the cross" in the Public Baptism of Infants. All the known copies of the first edition are textually identical except in these two matters of major importance: some copies have them and others have not. It had been assumed that these variations represented two separate editions, both of 1784, but fresh light has been shed upon the problem by the fortunate discovery by Dr. James R. Joy, five summers ago, of a "freak" copy of the *Sunday Service* in the Library of the Methodist Historical Society of New York. In this "freak" copy certain pages are duplicated: pages 135-6 in the Administration of the Lord's Supper and pages 141-4 in the Public Baptism of Infants. It is not unusual even in these days for an imperfect copy of a book to find its way into the bookshop because of a mistake in the collating of the sections at the binders. A section may be inadvertently omitted or it may be duplicated. The "freak" copy of the *Sunday Service*, however, is not in this category; the duplicated pages, though identical in numeration, are different in text.

The Prayer of Consecration, on page 136 of what we will call version "A", is set with the rubrics of the "manual acts" indented; in version "B" the rubrics are omitted and the prayer is set to the full width throughout. The extra space is occupied by five lines which are brought over from their place at the bottom of the preceding page in "A". The punctuation of the prayer differs in three places, and the words "Supper", "Blood", and "Cup" have lower-case initials in version "B".

Similarly, pages 141-4 are duplicated in the Ministration of Baptism of Infants. Version "A" contains (as in the Book of Common Prayer) the Reception of the child, which includes the rubric "Here the Minister shall make a Cross upon the Child's Forehead". The Reception is not found in version "B", and the space thus gained is compensated for by a re-arrangement of pages 141-4.

Here then is a copy of the *Sunday Service* which in its duplicated pages both includes and omits the "manual acts" and the "signation", and we should be grateful to the printer's binder who in 1784, when gathering the sheets for binding, produced this "freak" by inserting the new pages without slitting out the originals.² But which is the original and which the duplicate? Neither Dr. Joy nor I can detect any typographical differences between the two versions, and the probability of identical "founts" of type being used at that time both in America and England makes it impossible to say where the duplicate pages were printed. Both Dr. Joy and Dr. Harmon, however, have examined the volume with the greatest care and are quite certain that version "A", containing the "manual acts" and the "signation", represents the original *Sunday Service* as it left Wesley's hands, and that "B" is a later insertion. They regard the evidence of the "make-up" of the volume as conclusive, and such evidence as my photostats afford confirms their judgement.

It is clear, then, that important alterations in the Administration of the Lord's Supper and the Public Baptism of Infants were made soon after the *Sunday Service* reached America, and that copies of both varieties have survived. Who was responsible for these alterations? Dr. Nolan B. Harmon blames the American Methodists for part, at least; writing in the American quarterly *Religion in Life* in 1949, he states:

They went to work on it [i.e. the Baptismal Office] from the first moment they got hold of it in 1784. They said that it "squinted at baptismal regeneration" and they didn't like it. Especially did they try to suppress Wesley's sending over a rubric calling for the making of the sign of the cross on the forehead of the newly baptized.

Dr. Joy, on the other hand, fixes the responsibility squarely on the shoulders of Dr. Coke. He has no doubt at all that it was to these omissions that Wesley referred when he wrote to Walter Churchey in 1789:

Dr. Coke made two or three little alterations in the Prayer-Book without my knowledge. I took particular care throughout to alter nothing merely for altering' sake. In religion I am for as few innovations as possible.³

For myself, I think the evidence is insufficient, and that the matter must be left in suspense.

To recapitulate: it is now proved that the original *Sunday Service* when it left Wesley's hands in September 1784 contained both the

² There is another "freak" copy, in the New York Public Library, which retains the "manual acts" but omits the "signation".

³ *Letters*, viii, p. 144. Wesley had written to Churchey on 27th September 1788: "I will send two of the Prayer-Books by the first opportunity."

"manual acts" and the "signing with the cross". Within a few weeks or months these had been expunged—at whose instigation we cannot say—and revised pages had been inserted in the remaining unbound copies. Obviously there must have been some liturgical or doctrinal significance in these omissions (and others in the 1786 edition which will be discussed later), but this must be left to the theologians to work out for themselves. The triumph of the iconoclasts was short-lived, however, for in 1786 the entire book was re-set and printed in London, and though the "signation" has never been restored in any Methodist baptismal office, the "manual acts" were restored to the Prayer of Consecration in this new edition. The historian of American Methodism, Dr. Abel Stevens, says that the printing of the new edition was done "under Wesley's eye".⁴ If that phrase is intended to mean that Wesley personally supervised the work, then it is difficult to explain certain curious features of the three editions of 1786, to which we now turn.

III. The three Editions of 1786

For the 1784 edition I have had to rely on Dr. Harmon's careful transcript of its text and upon a number of photostats, but for the 1786 edition I have been able to examine at leisure a copy of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in His Majesty's Dominions*, in the possession of the Rev. John J. Perry, and *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United-States of America*, in the Library of Didsbury College, Bristol. It has therefore been possible to compare them with each other and with the 1784 edition.

The 1786 editions were printed by Frys and Couchmans, and were the only ones to bear a printer's imprint. The type has been completely re-set as compared with 1784: a different set of "drop-initials", for example, is sufficient to prove this, and the pagination is altered. So far as I can tell, the two books are identical with each other, apart from the necessary changes in the Prayers for the King and the Royal Family in Morning and Evening Prayer, the Litany, and the Holy Communion, and in the heading of Article XXIII.⁵ There is one small exception: at the foot of page 144 of the U.S.A. edition the printer's "signature" figure "3" appears; in the Dominions edition the signature is a double dagger (‡). Nevertheless, a "battered" h on this page in both volumes indicates that the type is the same. I am puzzled to know the reason for this alteration in the printer's signature: it would not be worth a second thought but for the fact that this page is the very page on which the baptismal formula appears, and which, in the 1784 edition, would have included the "signing with the cross". Has there been some further tampering—perhaps at the very last moment—with the Baptismal Office at this point? Here, I fear, is another mystery.

In both books the *Sunday Service* occupies 312 pages, but in the later part of the books there are differences to be noted. Let us take

⁴ *A Compendious History of American Methodism*, p. 171.

⁵ "Of the Rulers of the United-States of America", and "Of the Rulers of the British Dominions in America".

the U.S.A. edition first. Pages 313 to 321 are occupied by the Articles of Religion. Then follow, pages 322 to 355: "The General Minutes of the Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, forming the Constitution of the said Church". This in turn is followed by *A Collection of Psalms and Hymns for the Lord's Day*. The paging of the *Psalms and Hymns* is independent of the rest of the book, but by a fortunate chance the spine of the Didsbury copy has broken away and it is possible to see that page 340 of the "General Minutes" was printed side by side with the title-page of the *Psalms and Hymns* (in the same way as pages 6 and 19 of this issue of the *Proceedings*), thus proving that though the pagination is independent the two books form a printed unity.

The Dominions edition is different. The Articles of Religion occupy one page less—pages 313 to 320—and, unlike the U.S.A.

A Prayer for the Rulers.

O Lord, our heavenly Father, high and mighty, the Ruler of all that govern, who dost from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; Most heartily we beseech thee with thy favour to behold the Rulers of these United-States, the CONGRESS, the GENERAL ASSEMBLIES, the GOVERNORS, and the COUNCILS of STATE; and so replenish them with the grace of thy Holy Spirit, that they may always incline to thy will, and walk in thy way: Endue them plenteously with heavenly gifts, grant them in health and wealth long to live; strengthen them that they may vanquish and overcome all the enemies of their country; and finally, after this life, they may attain everlasting joy and felicity; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

FACSIMILE OF "A PRAYER FOR THE RULERS", from Morning Prayer in the 1786 edition of *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in The United-States of America*.

edition, end with the word "Finis". They are immediately followed by the *Collection of Psalms and Hymns*. The printer's signature "O" appears at the foot of page 313, and "O 2" on page 315, but none thereafter. In the U.S.A. volume, however, the signatures are continued until "O 6" is reached on page 323, which is the second page of the "General Minutes". What this signifies I must leave to the experts. I cannot tell for certain if the *Psalms and Hymns* were printed separately, but I suspect they were. It would appear, therefore, that though the two editions are fundamentally the same book, they represent two independent printing operations. The third of the 1786 editions (No. 4 above) is identical in text with the other two, and presumably was intended for use in this country.

It is when we compare these 1786 editions with the 1784 edition, however, that we discover some startling changes—all of them occurring in the Ministration of Baptism of Infants. It is true that

the "manual acts" have been restored to the Holy Communion, but the "signing with the cross" has disappeared from the Baptismal Office. The other changes may best be presented in parallel columns:

1784	1786
Exhortation.	Unaltered.
First prayer: "Almighty and everlasting God, who . . . by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin . . ."	"Almighty and everlasting God, who . . . by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water for this holy Sacrament . . ."
Second prayer, "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration"	Prayer entirely omitted.
The Gospel.	The Gospel.
Prayer for the Spirit.	Omitted.
Four petitions for grace.	Four petitions for grace unaltered.
Prayer for the sanctification of the water. ". . . sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin . . ."	The prayer is retained, but the phrase "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin" is omitted.
The Rubric of the Baptismal Rite: ". . . he shall dip it in the Water, or sprinkle it therewith . . ."	". . . he shall dip it in the Water, or pour Water upon it, or sprinkle it therewith . . ."
The Reception into the Church, with the Signation.	Omitted.
Exhortation to thanksgiving and prayer, Lord's Prayer, and thanksgiving prayer.	Unaltered.

It will readily be seen that the omitted second prayer and the alterations in two other prayers all concern the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, which so annoyed the early American Methodists. If the hands of Coke and Asbury are to be seen anywhere in the alterations to the *Sunday Service*, it is surely here—and yet we are assured by Dr. Stevens that the 1786 editions were prepared "under Wesley's eye". Either Wesley's views on baptismal regeneration underwent a change, or he trimmed his sails to the American wind, or the edition was revised and seen through the press by Thomas Coke without Wesley's knowledge. American historians cannot all be wrong when with unanimity they fasten on the Baptismal Office as being the chief bone of liturgical contention in 1784, but how the alterations were effected and by whom it is hard to say. Whatever the answer may be, in the doctrinal field the theologian will find food for thought in this ruthless treatment of the Baptismal Office.

One alteration remains to be considered: the Rubric of the Baptismal Rite. This again is the theologian's province; I can only point him to the facts. The reader should compare the rubrics in

the parallel columns above with the rubric as it appears in the Book of Common Prayer, which was Wesley's primary source.

And then naming it after them (if they shall certify him that the child shall well endure it) he shall dip it in the water discreetly and warily, saying, N. I baptize thee . . . But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to pour Water upon it, saying the foresaid words.

In the 1784 edition Wesley retained immersion (“dip it in the water”), ignored the permitted alternative of affusion (“pour water upon it”), and in its place made a suggestion of his own—“sprinkle it therewith”. In the 1786 editions, however, immersion, affusion, and sprinkling, are given as choices of equal merit and validity. It is more than likely that by the end of the eighteenth century affusion, despite the Prayer Book rubric, had displaced immersion as the normal method of baptism in the Church of England, and even sprinkling may have come into vogue as a result of the laxity of the times.⁶ Perhaps Wesley was simply authorizing in Methodism what had become a common though irregular Anglican practice, or, on the other hand, he may have wished to relate the rite of baptism to the “sprinkling” passages in Scripture.⁷ However that may be, it is practically certain that this is the first reference in any baptismal rite to the use of sprinkling as a valid mode of baptism, and the 1786 rubric remained unaltered in every succeeding edition.

IV. The Editions of 1788, 1790 and 1792

These need not detain us long. The 1788 edition was evidently intended for use on both sides of the Atlantic. Some copies have the Royal Prayers, and others “A Prayer for the Rulers”. Curiously enough, the titles are omitted from these and the other prayers printed on page 15 in Morning Prayer. Unlike the other editions, it has the *Psalms and Hymns* paged continuously with the *Sunday Service*—pp. 322 + 104 + 4 unnumbered contents pages = 430 pages. The edition presents no other features of interest.

The 1790 edition was the fourth and last edition to be printed in England for America, and in 1792 it was superseded by the American *Discipline*, which incorporated the “Liturgy”.⁸ It follows the familiar pattern of the editions for the United States, but in one respect it has a strong claim to be regarded as a liturgical curiosity. In both Morning and Evening Prayer “A Prayer for the King” follows the Third Collect, though “A Prayer for the Royal Family” is omitted. In the Holy Communion the “Prayer for the King” follows the Commandments, but in the Prayer for the Church Militant the familiar petition reads:

⁶ Darwell Stone, in *Holy Baptism*, p. 135, states that “while, failing immersion, it is greatly to be desired that the water be poured and not sprinkled, all Western theologians agree that if water is made to flow upon the head of the baptized person the baptism is valid”.

⁷ I owe this interesting suggestion to the Rev. A. Raymond George.

⁸ H. N. McTyeire in *A History of Methodism* states that in 1866 the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, ordered the *Sunday Service* to be reprinted “for any congregation that may choose to use it”. The reprint was made from the 1786 edition, but there was no great demand for it.

We beseech Thee also to save and defend all Christian Kings, Princes and Governors; and especially Thy Servants the rulers of these United States.

When I read this in Green's *Bibliography* it seemed so fantastic that I thought it must be an error on Green's part. However, I am assured by those who have examined copies of the 1790 edition in America that it is indeed a fact that in this book, specially prepared for the United States, American Methodists were asked to pray in one and the same service for both King George III and the Congress of the United States, and this within a few years of the War of American Independence! How this blunder came to be perpetrated it is impossible to say; it would be interesting to know what the American Methodists thought about it.

The 1792 edition, *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*, like the edition of 1788, has no country specified on the title-page, but it was obviously intended for use in England and the Dominions. The Preface is undated and the recommendation "to our Societies in America" has disappeared, as also in the English edition of 1788. The "manual acts" are retained, and the prayers for the King and for the Royal Family are found in all the appropriate places. Article XXIII is headed "Of the Rulers of the British Dominions", instead of "Of the Rulers of the British Dominions in America" as in the "His Majesty's Dominions" edition of 1786. The book is bound with the 1791 edition of the *Psalms and Hymns*, and is the edition of "our venerable Father's Abridgement" which was authorized for use by Article 10 of the Plan of Pacification of 1795.

To what extent was the *Sunday Service* used in England before the Plan of Pacification? No doubt a careful study of the older "local histories" and the biographies of the early preachers would throw some light on the matter, and some of our members may care to conduct an investigation.⁹ In America it was never popular, partly because it "squinted at baptismal regeneration" and partly because its use was unsuited to the pioneering conditions of the early days, and it was laid aside after eight short years. It has, however, left a permanent mark upon the life and structure of American Methodism: through the *Sunday Service* Wesley gave to America its threefold ministry of bishops, elders and deacons, and for that reason alone, if for no other, its historical importance is considerable.

It remains for me to express my sincere thanks to Dr. James R. Joy, of New York, for supplying me at the outset of my investigation with a list of the "location" of the known copies of the first edition of the *Sunday Service* (to which I have been able to add), thus saving me endless trouble; and to a host of correspondents in America and Canada for their willingness to answer my questions and supply me with photostats. Without their help across three thousand miles of ocean my task would have proved impossible.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

⁹ See, for example, J. U. Walker's *History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax*, p. 167.

METHODIST FOUNDERS OF OTHER CHURCHES

THEY little know of Methodism who only Methodism know! It is interesting to study the story of the considerable number of the early Methodist preachers (the adjective is deliberately chosen), who, possibly chafing under the strict discipline of John Wesley, departed from Methodism and established independent churches. In Sheffield, four of the leading Congregational churches were so founded, and this is typical of a wider movement. There is also the record of the Scotland Street Methodist church, Sheffield, which by a tortuous route at length came into the main Methodist stream. Thomas Bryant, whose body lies buried under the pulpit of the Scotland Street church, had been ordained by a Greek bishop who visited England in 1760, and considered himself entitled to wear a preaching-gown. This and other "trifles" noticed by John Wesley proved an occasion of offence to some of the members of society, and on 5th July 1764 Wesley wrote to say: "I am fully convinced that T. Bryant's staying another year in Sheffield Circuit, would neither be good for him, nor for the people." Bryant rebelled against this proposal, and his friends built for him the church in Scotland Street. When in 1796 Alexander Kilham left the Methodist Conference he was welcomed to preach in Thomas Bryant's church, and in the following year he succeeded Bryant as pastor of the church, which became the mother church of the Methodist New Connexion.

Another rebel against Wesley's rule was Alexander McNab, who was born in the parish of Killin, Perthshire, in 1745. At the age of fourteen he resolved to see the world, and contrary to the advice and remonstrances of his parents he went to sea. In 1763 he returned to Edinburgh, fully intending to continue a sailor's life. In October of that year he first heard the Methodists, became a constant hearer, and soon became a member of society. He now met with considerable opposition from his friends, who did all in their power to dissuade him from being righteous overmuch. But none of these things moved him, and he determined to devote himself to the service of God. It was not long before he was appointed a class leader, and in June 1766 he was unexpectedly called to speak in public. Though he went with fear and trembling, he found freedom in speech.

In August the Conference was held at Leeds, and he was there recommended and received as an itinerant preacher. His first appointment was Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he served for two months and was then removed to Bedfordshire. Here he was tempted to give up the work, but some fruit of his labours encouraged him to go on. He spent three years in Ireland, and in 1777 the Conference appointed him to his own country. Here he was called upon to bear a severe trial. The Edinburgh chapel, which had been built only twelve years, was in a "ruinous condition", and McNab was obliged to become bound for the cost of repairs. He soon found him-

self debtor for £500. In order to pay this sum he was permitted to travel through the societies in Scotland to request the assistance of the brethren, by which means the debt was cleared.

He continued to labour faithfully and with much acceptance until 1779, when an unhappy dispute took place between him and John Wesley respecting an Irish clergyman, the Rev. Edward Smyth, who had left the Church of Ireland and was at that time in Bath, to which circuit McNab had been appointed in 1778. Smyth had been a successful preacher in Ireland, and Wesley, in view of this, desired him to preach in the Methodist chapel on the Sunday evenings of his stay in Bath. To this action McNab was strongly opposed. He claimed that he was representing the cause of the preachers, who were appointed, he declared, not by Wesley but by their Conference. Wesley's view of his powers is obvious from the following letter discovered in Tasmania a few years ago, and not hitherto published:

JOHN WESLEY TO ALEXANDER McNAB

Robertsbridge

October 19, 1779.

Open your eyes, my Brother! Let not evil communications corrupt good manners. For a while they have beguiled you from your simplicity. But the God whom you serve will soon restore it. The Twelve Rules of a Helper are *the original constitution*, so to speak, of itinerant Methodism. The last of these, you may remember, begins with *Above all*, illustrating the most essential to our very existing as a community.¹ What is the purport of it? Every travelling preacher is to preach when and where I appoint. I appoint you to preach at Bath every third week this year, on Sunday morning and afternoon, on Monday and Friday evenings with the mornings. If you do not choose to do it, what does this imply? Only that you do not choose to be any longer in connection with

Your affectionate brother,

J. WESLEY.

Wesley's attitude is made even more clear from an entry in his *Journal* for 23rd November 1779, when he visited the preachers in Bath, read the "Rules", and informed McNab that he could not receive him as one of his preachers until he was of another mind. The story had a happy ending. Wesley and McNab were reconciled, and at the Conference of 1780 McNab was restored to a place among the preachers of Methodism.²

After travelling two years longer, however, Alexander McNab became the pastor of a small Independent church at Lee Croft in Sheffield, the forerunner of the Albert Terrace Tabernacle. Here he died, greatly esteemed, in 1797.

FRANK G. STAFFORD.

¹ The twelfth "Rule of a Helper" ends in the 1772 edition: "Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for His glory." During the controversy, however, Wesley quoted the Rule as: "Above all, you are to preach when and where I appoint."

² The whole story may be read in Tyerman's *Life and Times of John Wesley*, iii, pp. 303-13.

BOOK NOTICES

The Georgian Buildings of Bath, from 1700 to 1830, by Walter Ison. (Faber & Faber, pp. 211 & 136 plates. 52s. 6d.)

The Georgian Buildings of Bristol, by Walter Ison. (Faber & Faber, pp. 248 & 64 plates. 50s.)

These two finely-produced and beautifully-illustrated books have been acclaimed by experts as works of outstanding importance, likely to hold their place as authorities for a long time to come. They may be fittingly mentioned here because they depict, by detailed description and photographs, the look of two cities which are prominent in the story of Methodism in the West. "Bristol's wealth of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century buildings, in extent and variety," says Mr. Ison, "is not surpassed by that of any other English city save London, while Bath alone has a more consistently splendid array of street architecture of the period." Many of the buildings depicted in these books were built during the years when Wesley was visiting the two cities; they furnished the background scenery for many episodes in his outdoor ministry. Methodist chapels do not often receive favourable mention in books like these, but Mr. Ison picks out Walcot Chapel, Bath, and Wesley's New Room in Bristol for detailed description, together with Lady Huntingdon's Chapel in Bath (now Trinity Presbyterian Church), which Whitefield opened and in which Horace Walpole heard Wesley preach.

An interesting suggestion is made about the builder of the New Room, about which more may be said elsewhere. Mr. Ison calls attention to the charm of the panelled woodwork of the gallery fronts and of the two-decker pulpit. His judgement that "the tactfully restored interior makes an immediate and lasting impression of refined simplicity" is a deserved tribute to the work of the late Sir George Oatley as well as to the good taste of the "experienced builders" whom Wesley called in to rebuild the Room in 1748.

EDGAR T. SELBY.

Cambridge and the Evangelical Succession, by Marcus L. Loane. (Lutterworth Press, pp. 276, 12s. 6d.)

This book, which is a companion to the author's *Oxford and the Evangelical Succession*, might have been entitled "More Leaders of the Anglican Evangelical Movement", but Canon Loane rightly recognizes a spiritual "succession" in the lives of his subjects. Grimshaw of Haworth, Berridge of Everton, Henry Venn, Charles Simeon and Henry Martyn. By tracing the succession back to Berridge and Grimshaw, Wesley is (quite successfully) by-passed, and shown to be not a progenitor but a great-uncle of the Anglican Evangelicals. From their point of view Wesley was the black sheep of the family on account both of his irregularities and his Arminianism. But they loved him still. Nevertheless Grimshaw and Berridge were, in their way, equally irregular, and the latter came to terms with Arminianism. "Man's Salvation," he said, "is all of God, while Man's Destruction is of himself." In the controversy Simeon himself "felt that Truth lay not in this extreme nor that extreme, nor yet in the middle; it lay in both extremes, and he would oscillate from one to the other." An interesting sidelight on Simeon's first meeting with Wesley (*Wesley's Journal*, vii, p. 39) is quoted from Moule's biography of Simeon.

Henry Venn was successful in restraining young Simeon from adopting such Wesleyan irregularities as field preaching, but can that

really be accounted to his credit? And is it really accurate to speak of Wesley's conduct in relation to the Church of England, of which he was a devoted son, in terms of "his break-away footsteps"?

The book is well indexed, although the indexer has conferred posthumously upon Howell Harris the orders which he was never able to obtain from the bishops in his lifetime.

THOMAS SHAW.

The Protestant Dissenting Deputies, by Bernard Lord Manning, edited by Ormerod Greenwood. (Cambridge University Press, pp. xii. 498, 50s.)

The Rule of Democracy. Volume Six of *A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, by Elie Halévy. (Ernest Benn, pp. viii. 686, in two volumes, 21s. each.)

A new book by Bernard Manning, published posthumously, is an event, and we turned to *The Protestant Dissenting Deputies* with eager anticipation. Alas! it contains none of the wit and sparkle of, say, *Essays in Orthodox Dissent*. Two-thirds of the book is Manning's own unedited work, and yet there is hardly an authentic "Manningism" in it. Perhaps the author's heart was not in his monumental task, but he has succeeded in giving us a book of great historical importance. Few people know anything about its subject, for the Deputies only become "news" at the time of the accession of a Sovereign, when they exercise their right (first granted by Queen Anne) of approach to the Throne. It was, in fact, under their friendly "umbrella" that the Free Church deputation presented a Loyal Address to Queen Elizabeth II last year. The Deputies are a body of twenty-one laymen representing the "Three Denominations" who have worked since 1732 to protect the civil rights of Protestant Dissenters, and their voluminous Minutes form the basis of this book. It is evident that their activities have covered a wide field and are responsible for much of the religious equality we enjoy today, but it would be difficult to discover here that the Wesleyan "Committee of Privileges" had any large share in this work. Truth to tell, these pages make it clear that the Deputies have not always been over-fond of Methodists, who were sometimes inclined to steal their thunder, possibly (and rightly) not regarding themselves as Dissenters anyway. However, this is an interesting and valuable case-book to which future writers in this field will often have recourse, and it sheds new light on the struggles through two hundred years between Church, Government and Dissent. The account of what we may call "the secret history of the Lord Wharton Bibles" particularly intrigued us. The adroitness of the Anglicans in gaining complete control of a strictly Nonconformist Trust produced a struggle which lasted from 1771 to 1898; and this case affords an excellent example of the tenacity and perseverance with which the Deputies constantly fought for the rights of Dissenters.

The Rule of Democracy completes the reprint of M. Halévy's famous *History* in seven handsome volumes. The last two volumes carry the story into our own time—1905-1914—and there are few references to Methodism. The whole series, however, is an important publishing achievement, and though M. Halévy's account of the struggles of Methodism in the period are occasionally misleading and his omissions rather strange (he does not mention the "Fly Sheets"), his work has already stood the test of time; and, as we said four years ago in these pages, "it quite literally puts Methodism in its proper place".

WESLEY F. SWIFT.