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Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

Editor : REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Volume XXXI

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THE INTERPRETATION OF JABEZ BUNTING

(Jabez Bunting : born 13th May 1779 ; died 16th June 1858)

IN the centenary year of Jabez Bunting's death it seems worth while to consider what he has suffered at the hands of historians. The bitterest controversy surrounded him in his life, and has never quite ceased since he died. This article makes no claim to be an exhaustive review of the literature of the subject, but only to indicate tentatively the main lines which interpreters of Bunting have followed.

One cannot really decide how wide a public was reached by Wesleyan studies of Bunting in the nineteenth century. Almost in his own lifetime he had occupied the central place in the third and final volume of Dr. George Smith's *History of Wesleyan Methodism*. Smith had known Bunting personally, and had written in his defence during the Fly Sheets controversy. But by 1861, when he finished his task, Smith felt free to be more critical, and his general conclusion, that the apparent failure of Bunting's career had its roots in personality, not policy, established one of the major themes of the interpretation of Jabez.

But Smith's work seems to have had very little influence on the later Free Church summaries of Wesleyan nineteenth-century history. This was probably because Smith wrote before the introduction of a lay, representative session into the Wesleyan Conference: he was both free and willing to defend the ministerial Conference, and his book accurately represented the mind of the majority in mid-Victorian Wesleyan Methodism. Smith had no doubt that the policy followed by Bunting was right. He could speak "from a lay standpoint and . . . with perfect independence", and he set out the conservative case without qualification:

God has laid on the ministers of Christ spiritual responsibilities which require the possession of the highest spiritual power in His Church. This is a first principle in Wesleyan Methodism, and we trust it will always be maintained. The Christian Church is a spiritual kingdom, of

which Christ is the Supreme Head. He hath appointed "as it hath pleased Him", persons to stations of trust and responsibility in subordination to Himself. The separated ministry, according to the uniform teaching of the New Testament, is the first in responsibility, and, of course, should be so in authority. The supreme administrative and executive power in the Church must centre either in the minister or in the laity. To speak of its being equally divided between the two, is vain and misleading. In seasons of tranquillity and peace, it has almost always been practically exercised conjointly by ministers and officers; but in times of excitement and strife, the ultimate court of appeal must be composed either of the ministry, or of the laity. There can be no effective co-ordinate authority between these two classes, when the laity outnumber the ministry by a hundred to one; nor is there a vestige of authority for such co-ordinate jurisdiction, *in spiritual matters*, in the New Testament.¹

Smith meant every word of this, and judged Bunting accordingly; Bunting was right in his aims but wrong in his methods of securing them (especially at the time of the setting up of the Theological Institution).

The Dissenters naturally disapproved of such ideas about the Church and Ministry, and had cordially supported the Wesleyan Reformers in 1849. But a tradition of hostility towards Wesleyanism ran back further than this: an excellent example may be found in the *History of the Dissenters from 1688 to 1808*, a classical source-book published by David Bogue and James Bennett in four volumes in 1812. The authors said of Wesleyanism, c. 1800:

. . . great praise is still due to their persevering efforts to call sinners to repentance. But the want of competent knowledge in the great body of their preachers has nourished errors and enthusiasm among the people, and too fully justified the heavy censure which has been passed on this communion, as containing a greater sum of ignorance of the Scriptures than was ever found in any body of Protestants since the Reformation.²

This passage is also interesting because the fact that this was the common opinion among Dissenters at the time was one of the underlying causes of Bunting's determined drive for the Theological Institution. This hostile attitude might also be found in H. S. Skeats's *History of the Free Churches*, which was originally published about 1867, after the issue of Dr. Smith's trilogy. This popular history book was reprinted at the close of the century with an additional chapter by Edward Miall, the political prophet of disestablishment, and the *London Quarterly Review* had some sharp criticisms to make of the weakness of the section on John Wesley. Miall made no attempt to modify Skeats's original comments on the Fly Sheets controversy either in the light of Smith or of any later Wesleyan writer. Skeats said:

In 1849 another secession took place, originating in the arbitrary proceedings of the Conference. For some time previous to this a few persons had expressed their dissatisfaction with the government of the

¹ George Smith: *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, iii, pp. 506-7.

² *op. cit.*, iv, p. 392.

society, which was then principally lodged in the hands of one successfully ambitious man—the Rev. Dr. J. Bunting;

and the expelled ministers of 1849 were said to have declined when challenged by the Conference, “to be parties to a proceeding which savoured more of the Inquisition and the Star Chamber than of any modern or Christian court”.³ This was in the style of the more intemperate Reformers, but there was nothing borrowed about the hostility. No attempt was made to put a case for the Conference; instead, their conduct was described in the same sort of language as Sylvester Horne, another Free Church historian, was to use in 1903 —“the arbitrary rule of a clerical body”.

It is the more significant that the friendliest of the Free Church historians in the nineteenth century did use George Smith's *History* as his principal source for the Wesleyan part of his narrative. This was John Stoughton, whose *Religion in England, 1800-1850* was published in 1884. Stoughton did not assume that the Wesleyan Reformers, as honorary Congregationalists, were always right; instead, he pointed out how difficult it was for an outsider to understand Wesleyan law; especially, he added, Wesleyan “common law”. This hesitation prompted him, unlike other Dissenting writers on the subject, to offer some explanation for the actions of the Conference of 1849. Methodism, he said, constituted

a sort of family, for the existence of which more than usual confidence is necessary. Questions, it is said, may be asked in a household which are not admissible elsewhere. . . . How far such a policy was wise is a question which will probably be viewed differently now by many Methodists from what it was then.⁴

Stoughton quoted, as an explanation of the final disaster, Smith's argument that the new rules of 1835 came too late, and should have been introduced after the secession of the Leeds Protestant Methodists. But it was very significant that Stoughton deliberately omitted any set description of Jabez Bunting, but eulogized his ministerial son, William Maclardie Bunting. Stoughton's calmer view of the Wesleyan Connexion was partly the result of his having grown up among the Norwich Wesleyans; he has a charming chapter about them in his autobiography.

But Stoughton's book never vied in popularity with Skeats's, or for that matter Sylvester Horne's, and the popular historian is perhaps he who matters most, because he creates or invests with the sanctity of print the mythology about the past in terms of which people act; it was not a negligible fact in later Methodist history that an increasing number of Wesleyans came to draw their ideas about Bunting's period from Congregational sources. An equally important illustration of the influence of non-Wesleyan accounts of Wesleyan history can be found in the Church of England. The Bampton Lectures of 1871 were given by the Principal of Lichfield

³ op. cit. (1868 edn.), p. 622.

⁴ op. cit., ii, p. 316.

College, George Herbert Curteis. He took as his subject *Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England*, and the book was sufficiently popular to have reached its sixth edition by 1885. Curteis summed up nineteenth-century history as a chain of secessions, and, perhaps influenced by Pusey's sharp but shallow description of Wesleyanism as a "degenerating heresy", added that the last of such secessions had not yet been seen.

Interior decomposition has set in. And its destructive agency knows no limit, until every atom shall stand apart and separate from its fellow,—until in short Congregational Independency is reached, or even Unitarianism, where every individual claims his own personal freedom to the uttermost.⁵

Curteis attributed this to the "neglect and disobedience" with which Methodists had treated John Wesley's injunction not to separate from the Church of England. An examination of Curteis's sources reveals no direct quotation from any Wesleyan book on Wesleyan nineteenth-century history. Abel Stevens's not very remarkable *History* is used for the lifetime of John Wesley; in any case the English editions of Stevens available to me all stop at the centenary celebrations. On the other hand, Curteis quoted Skeats as an authority throughout the Lectures, and it was with a quotation from this non-Wesleyan writer that he supported his argument that it was when John Wesley, after his experience in Aldersgate Street, accepted this "foreign notion about the 'new birth'" that "the unhappy present decadence of the Wesleyan revival into a mere additional form of English Dissent becomes not only accounted for, but natural and logical".⁶ Thus the failure to communicate to the outside world the nature either of the Wesleyan Connexion or of Bunting's policy—and Curteis made no mention of Bunting—meant that Anglicanism in the later nineteenth century could be quite ignorant of the meaning of recent church history.

Smith wrote, as we have seen, before the great decision was taken in 1876-7 to admit lay representatives into part of the Wesleyan Conference. *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism* was not published until 1898. Towards the end of the *Side Lights* Gregory, not uncharacteristically, suggested that no answer had ever been given to the question, What was Dr. Bunting's policy? In fact, he had answered this very question ten years before at some length in a catechetical *Handbook* to which reference will be made later, but this did not prevent him swinging on in his best style: "Scattered and unconsolidated intimations and fragmentary, disjected materials for an answer may be picked up on the tide-left beach of controversial chronicle; but these *disjecta membra* have not been *pieced together* in a recognisable, a realisable, and vital unity".⁷ In reality, between 1877 and 1898 a group of Wesleyan writers, whom we might for convenience call the Evolutionary School, and among

⁵ op. cit., pp. 381-2.

⁶ G. H. Curteis: *Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England*, p. 362.

⁷ op. cit., p. 495.

whom Gregory might properly be included, had attempted to put a more positive case for Bunting. In their work the emphasis was shifted from Bunting's personality to his policy, and an important underlying motive was the need to show, if possible, that the introduction of laymen into the Conference did not involve any drastic breach with John Wesley's ideas of Methodism. Thus J. S. Simon, in an article in the *London Quarterly Review* for October 1893, expressly denied that "the agitators of 1835 had the misfortune to live before their time, that they have been justified by subsequent events, and that the Conference has since conceded all the reforms for which its antagonists contended".⁸ It was Bunting, and not his opponents, the Evolutionary School maintained, who worked in harmony with the forces of his age. But the influence of this group was small. When Sylvester Horne wrote his *Popular History of the Free Churches* in 1903, he still stated that Bunting's weakness was a "fatal insensibility to the significance of the greatest movement of his time alike in State and Church",⁹ by which Horne meant the growth of the democratic spirit; and the late Albert Peel made no attempt to alter anything that Horne had said when he re-issued the book with an additional chapter in 1926. One reason for the comparative failure of the Evolutionists was the publication of *Side Lights*.

Much of this material came out in 1887. Public (but unofficial) speculation about the possibilities of Methodist reunion had caused a brief exchange of books. An able New Connexion minister, Dr. J. C. Ward, had defended Alexander Kilham against J. H. Rigg in *Liberal Methodism Vindicated*, and J. S. Simon had backed up Rigg and, incidentally, George Smith, in a reply called *Wesleyan Methodism Defended*. At this time the long-awaited final section of the standard biography of Jabez Bunting also appeared, to be greeted in the *London Quarterly Review* by a long, anonymous, and important article, called "The Middle Age of Methodism and its Greatest Man". This certainly expressed the views of J. H. Rigg. Between 1887 and 1893 J. S. Simon wrote a series of articles in the *London Quarterly Review* which were never, I think, reprinted as a book, on the history of Wesleyan Methodism between 1827 and 1835; these were mainly narrative, but reflected the same general desire to find connecting links with the past and to justify change by showing, as wise reformers commonly do, that their most daring innovations are but a return to the traditions of the fathers. In 1888 Benjamin Gregory brought out his official *Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and of Wesleyan Methodist Polity and History*, such as "might be put into the hands of our intelligent young people and the conductors of more advanced classes for religious instruction"—an odd compilation, in catechetical form and Gregory's own inimitable prose. Much later, when in 1908 Dr. Rigg wrote a brief biography entitled *Jabez Bunting, a great Methodist Leader*, he used much

⁸ op. cit., p. 50.

⁹ op. cit., p. 294.

of the *London Quarterly Review* material, followed this same general attitude, and made no attempt to grapple with the *Side Lights*. And finally, if one turns to the pages on Jabez Bunting contributed to the *New History of Methodism* by J. R. and A. E. Gregory, the interpretation of Bunting ran along the same familiar lines.

Despite Benjamin Gregory's certainty that the question about Jabez Bunting's policy was not even put, much less settled, in the standard biography (cf. *Side Lights*, p. 495), a fundamental passage for this picture of Jabez Bunting occurs there :

It was his policy . . . to promote simultaneous improvements in all directions. Let the entrance to the ministry be still diligently guarded ; let all the ancient usages of mutual inquiry and supervision, of itinerancy, and of sustentation, be sacredly preserved ; let the standard of literary, theological, and religious attainment be made higher and more uniform ; in short, let the ministry be such as should command, without controversy or reluctance, the recognition and confidence of the people. But at the same time respect *their* rights ; secure their services in every department not assigned by the New Testament exclusively to the minister or to the pastorate ; relieve the clergy from a burden which was greater than they could bear, and from wretched suspicions, ill-natured insinuations, and bitter calumnies ; and pour the light of noon-day upon the smouldering fires of faction, so putting them out for ever. These two lines of action, so far from being diverse, were the two component parts of one complete and comprehensive system ; and, as each was steadily and prudently pursued, it promoted and secured the other.¹⁰

Of course, everything turned on the question as to whether Bunting did respect the rights of the laity, not least at Leeds, and the word "prudently" would have made others pause, but here at any rate was a positive approach.

In the *Handbook* already mentioned, Benjamin Gregory showed, not for the last time, the ambivalence of his attitude to Jabez Bunting. He first developed, at rather greater length than George Smith, the difficulties caused by Bunting's powerful personality. Then he switched to the question : "What were the main characteristics of Dr. Bunting's policy ?" His answer reads as though it might have been framed very largely in terms of the paragraph just quoted, and which he summed up in the sentence : "The two poles of Dr. Bunting's policy were Pastoral Rights and Responsibilities on the one hand, and Popular Rights and Responsibilities on the other."¹¹ He expanded the second point in a way which seems strange to those accustomed to the late Elie Halévy's picture of Bunting as a kind of ecclesiastical Metternich :

. . . by his simultaneous development of the prerogatives and powers of the people he was the champion, the protector, and the evolver of the popular element in our polity. . . . The culminating legislation of 1876 was, to most minds, the logical deduction from, and the natural sequence

¹⁰ T. P. Bunting : *The Life of Jabez Bunting*, pp. 331-2.

¹¹ B. Gregory : *Handbook of Scriptural Church Principles and Wesleyan Methodist Polity and History*, p. 237.

of, the adjustments and amplifications which were the handiwork of his constructive genius.¹²

One cannot resist quoting the next question in the catechism: "Is there any great name in English history of which you are reminded by the genius and career of Jabez Bunting?" The answers were William Pitt, and "the greatest of American statesmen, Alexander Hamilton".¹³ In the *Side Lights* Gregory deserted English history and added Pericles for good measure.

So much by way of assertion; for supporting argument one may turn to Dr. J. H. Rigg's *Comparative View of Church Organisations Primitive and Protestant, with a Supplement on Methodist Secessions and Methodist Union*—almost a seventeenth-century title. Rigg said that from 1797 there was a steady growth of lay power and influence, in connexion especially with the District Committees, the Connexional Committees of Management, and the Annual Committees of Review, "this development having been chiefly guided and worked out under the master hand of Dr. Bunting, who until feebleness of age began to touch him was the great and truly liberal and progressive leader in Connexional legislation".¹⁴ Rigg pointed out that the system of mixed committees favoured by Bunting (and greatly strengthened by him in 1835) led naturally to a stage, about 1820, when these committees began to hold meetings preparatory to the Conference. By 1840 these meetings were being reported in the Methodist press, and officials used them to give an account of their stewardship; inevitably, these gatherings, the Committees of Review, influenced the Conference. Moreover, the laymen were *not* all the nominees of Bunting: the rules of 1835, for example, said that the fifteen laymen who were on the Committee of the Contingent Fund should be chosen by the circuit stewards of the districts most contiguous to the place where the Conference was being held. The extension of this principle of representation was a slow process, but that such a process took place was undeniable, and it was possible to say, as Benjamin Gregory said in his *Handbook*, that the Representative Session "seemed to most minds the logical development of the Committees of Review, of which the representative element was the lay element, and which exercised such a powerful and salutary effect on Methodism".¹⁵ In the *New History of Methodism* it was boldly claimed that the constitution of Wesleyan Methodism, like that of the United Kingdom, has "slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent".¹⁶

The advantages of the position taken by the Evolutionary School were obvious. On the grounds indicated above it was possible to argue that the admission of laymen to the Wesleyan Conference was not the victory of the Reformers over the defenders of "clerical absolutism", and over Jabez Bunting in particular, but the logical outcome of his policy, which would have taken place without a single

¹² *ibid.*, p. 238.

¹⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 242.

¹³ *ibid.*, p. 239.

¹⁶ *op. cit.*, i, p. 402.

¹⁴ *op. cit.*, p. 257.

agitator or secession. And this point of view was reinforced by J. S. Simon in the *London Quarterly Review* for 1893, in an article in which he analysed the demands of the opposition in 1835. He pointed out that most of the leaders of the movement were nervous of any kind of central governing body, however elective and representative its make-up. What they wanted, like the Leeds Protestant Methodists, was a system of circuit independency, the circuits existing in a federation so loosely held together that no kind of pressure could be brought to bear on a single circuit by the will of a majority of the other circuits. Looked at from this point of view, the case for Bunting's attitude became much stronger. If the primary issue was not lay representation, Bunting could not be accused of primarily denying the right of the laity to any share in the government of the Church. Instead, he could be seen as the great defender of the right of Wesleyanism to remain a Connexion, of the very principle which seemed to his contemporaries the explanation of the amazing success of the movement. At the same time, Simon's article, which hardly mentioned Bunting himself, shifted the emphasis away from the defence of the pastoral office to the defence of the Church itself. And this point could be made even more effectively about the Fly Sheets, which had no interest in lay representation at all, and very little in the pastoral office, but interpreted Wesleyan politics purely in terms of the replacement of one ministerial cabinet by another, of Jabez Bunting by James Everett.

JOHN H. S. KENT.

(To be continued)

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference, 1958,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

St. Margaret's Methodist Church, Whitley Bay,

On Wednesday, 9th July, at 7-30 p.m.,

BY THE

Rev. A. WESLEY HILL, B.A., M.B., B.Ch.

Subject: "JOHN WESLEY AMONG THE PHYSICIANS."

The chair will be taken by MR. FRANK O. BRETHERTON (Sunderland).

The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at the same church at 6 p.m.

The Rev. Dr. and Mrs. R. F. Wearmouth kindly invite any members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom of St. Margaret's church at 5 p.m. It is essential that all those who desire to accept this invitation should send their names to the Rev. Robert A. Kirtley, 15, Gordon Square, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, by Saturday, 5th July, at the latest.

There is a frequent service of electric trains from Newcastle (Central) station to Cullercoats or Whitley Bay, both of which are conveniently near St. Margaret's. Suitable trains in time for tea are 4-5, 4-15, 4-27 and 4-35 p.m. from Newcastle. The journey takes about 25 minutes.

“THE SUNDAY SERVICE OF THE METHODISTS”

A Study of Nineteenth-century Liturgy

(Continued from page 118)

IV. The Order for the Administration of the Lord's Supper

OUR examination of the changes which were made in the Communion Office in the nineteenth-century editions of the *Sunday Service* presupposes a knowledge of the changes which Wesley himself had made in 1784 in his revision of the Book of Common Prayer. We have no space to detail them here, and the reader is referred to the relevant chapter in Dr. Nolan B. Harmon's *Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism*, where the service from the two books is printed in parallel columns, or to the Rev. John C. Bowmer's concise summary in *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, pp. 207-11. For our present purpose it is sufficient to state that the major changes were: (a) the use in the rubrics of the term “Elder” instead of “Priest”; (b) the omission of the first prayer for the King; (c) the omission of the Nicene Creed; (d) the omission of the phrase “the burden of them is intolerable” from the Confession; (e) the Absolution is supplicatory rather than declaratory, i.e. the pronoun “you” is changed to “us” throughout; and (f) the Prayer of Thanksgiving is omitted after the Communion.

Every edition of the *Sunday Service* from 1792 to 1846 inclusive (and also the only edition of the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments* published within that period, in 1839) follows in detail Wesley's revision of the Book of Common Prayer, except in two particulars. First, the 1842 edition adds a Doxology to the first Lord's Prayer; and, second, whilst some editions follow the Prayer Book in the use of “Jesu” in the petition in the Gloria: “O Lord, the only-begotten Son Jesu Christ”, the majority of the editions use “Jesus”.

We come now to the post-1846 editions, and our journey becomes more tortuous. (For convenience, the two books will be indicated as SSM and OAS; see the list of editions in *Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 112-13.)

In 1848 (OAS) the celebrant is styled “Minister” throughout the service; in 1849 (SSM) he is “Elder” up to but not including the Offertory Sentences, from which point he becomes “Minister”. From 1852 to 1857 (OAS) “Minister” is used throughout, but 1857 (SSM) has “Elder” throughout. 1858 (OAS) has “Minister”; 1859 (SSM) has “Elder” and “Minister”; whilst from 1860 to 1910 the use throughout of “Minister” is consistent, with the sole exception of 1878 (SSM), which reverts to “Elder” and “Minister”. Here is a tangle of usage indeed, which I cannot attempt to unravel.

In all editions from 1848 to 1863 the celebrant stands and the people kneel for the first Lord's Prayer (which has no Doxology) and the Collect for Purity; but from 1864 onwards the Doxology is introduced, and both celebrant and people kneel. The 1878 (SSM) edition is again an exception, reverting to the former practice.

The missing first prayer for the Queen is introduced in 1864, but is lacking in 1873 (SSM) and 1878 (SSM). The Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and Sermon, are omitted in 1848 (OAS), re-introduced in 1849 (SSM), omitted again in 1852 (both books), 1856, and 1857 (OAS), but brought back in 1857 (SSM). They are omitted again in 1858 (OAS), re-introduced in 1859 (SSM), and then disappear completely, except in 1873 and 1878 (both SSM).

The Nicene Creed was first introduced in 1864 (OAS), and with the exception of 1873 (SSM) it retains its place in all subsequent editions. The rubric prescribing the Manual Acts is printed in every edition of both books up to 1863 (OAS), but from 1864 (OAS) onwards it is found no more, except in 1873 and 1878 (both SSM). The same dates apply to the provision for a second consecration of the elements. The second Lord's Prayer (after the Communion) disappeared from 1848 to 1856, re-appeared in 1857 (SSM, but not in OAS), and then went out for ever.

These are the main differences between the various editions. There are a few smaller variations, such as the indiscriminate use of "Jesu" and "Jesus" in the Gloria; and the occasional though not consistent instruction to the congregation to kneel for the Prayer for the Church Militant, in the editions from 1864 onwards. But if the reader has successfully followed us through this maze of dates, certain facts will have become clear. First, the decisive nature of the official revision of 1864. This revision introduced for the first time the first prayer for the Queen as in the Book of Common Prayer, and, more important, inserted the Nicene Creed and added the Doxology to the first Lord's Prayer. It confirmed the omission, begun in 1860, of the Collect, Epistle, Gospel, and Sermon. It abolished the rubric prescribing the Manual Acts, and also the provision for a second consecration. In all these respects the 1864 revision stands as a milestone in Methodist liturgical history. Second, we must note the eccentric position occupied by the 1873 and 1878 editions of the *Sunday Service*, in that they temporarily and inexplicably revert to pre-1864 usage in many important details. Third, in all this welter of confusion there is no obvious reason for the changes which were made and unmade in successive editions of both the *Sunday Service* and the *Order of Administration* before 1864.

V. The Ministration of Baptism to Infants

By way of introduction, Wesley's revision of the Baptismal Office in 1784 and his further revision in the second edition of 1786 call for brief comment. The differences between these editions, and between them and the Book of Common Prayer, were detailed in an

article which I wrote in *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 13-19. In that article I was able conclusively to demonstrate that, contrary to the supposition of some writers on this subject,¹ Wesley's 1784 edition did retain (a) the signing with the cross; (b) the phrase in the first prayer and the prayer for the sanctification of the water: "didst sanctify [this] water to the mystical washing away of sin"; and (c) the second prayer with its phrase "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration". But in the 1786 edition all these features were swept away, never to return. Indeed, the second prayer and also the Prayer for the Spirit were entirely omitted.

This then is the pattern in the definitive edition of 1792, and it remained unaltered in all editions up to and including 1842.² But in 1846 a major though unofficial revision of the service took place. The changes may best be presented in parallel columns:

1792-1842	1846
The Exhortation.	Unaltered.
First prayer: "Almighty and everlasting God, who of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark . . . and by the Baptism of thy well-beloved Son Jesus Christ in the river Jordan, didst sanctify water for this holy Sacrament . . ."	Transposed to a later part of the service.
The Gospel.	Unaltered.
The four petitions for grace.	Transposed to a later part of the service.
	The Exhortation (as in the Book of Common Prayer, except that "this charitable work of ours" is changed to "this godly work . . .")
	Prayer for the Spirit (restored from the Book of Common Prayer and the 1784 edition).
	The first prayer of 1792 (see first column above).
	Second prayer ("Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need . . .") restored from the Book of Common Prayer and the 1784 edition).
Prayer for the sanctification of the water (but without the phrase "sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sin").	Prayer for the sanctification of the water (as in the first column opposite).

¹ For example, Frederick Hunter in *Proceedings*, xxiii, p. 126; Kenneth Grayston in *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, July 1944, p. 217; E. H. Sugden: *Wesley's Standard Sermons*, i, pp. 280-1, also quoted by W. F. Flemington: *The New Testament Doctrine of Baptism*, p. 140.

² Except in one particular in the sixth edition of 1817; see *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 115.

	The four petitions for grace (transposed from their position in the first column).
The Baptism, and Reception into the Church.	The Baptism (but Reception into the Church omitted).
The Lord's Prayer.	Omitted.
Prayer of Thanksgiving.	Omitted.
Rubric permitting "Prayer extempore".	Rubric permitting the Minister to "address a brief exhortation to Parents, and the young people then present, and shall conclude with prayer".

It will be seen that though the structure of Wesley's 1786 baptismal service was largely rejected in 1846, there was on the other hand a closer approximation to the usage of the Book of Common Prayer and therefore to Wesley's original 1784 service. But those parts of the 1784 service which the American Methodists had said "squinted at regeneration", i.e. the references to the "mystical washing away of sin", were not restored, nor was the signing with the cross.³ But Wesley's second prayer of 1784, omitted in 1786, was reinstated, though without the offending words "that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration". In their place the 1846 edition introduced another form of words, so innocuous as to be almost meaningless. The theological significance, if any, of this change (and a further change of the same kind) may be better appreciated if we print the two versions side by side.

WESLEY (1784)

1846

Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need, . . . we call upon thee for this Infant; that he, coming to thy holy Baptism, *may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration.* Receive him, O Lord, as thou hast promised . . . *that this Infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing . . .* and may come to the eternal kingdom . . .

may receive the inward and spiritual grace which is thereby signified.

This emendation persisted in every edition of the *Sunday Service* and the *Order of Administration* from 1846 until the final edition in 1910. But in the 1864 revision a further emendation took place, this time in the second phrase italicized above :

³ There is reason to believe that the custom of signing with the cross in baptism, like the use of the manual acts, never died out in Methodism. William M. Bunting (son of Jabez), for example, kept up the practice (*Memorials of William M. Bunting*, p. 51), despite his father's pronounced objections (Gregory: *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, p. 219).

WESLEY (1784)

1864

... that this Infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom . . .

that this Infant, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, may come to the eternal kingdom . . .

This emendation was continued in every succeeding edition of both books, with the exception of 1873 and 1878 (both SSM), which reverted to Wesley's usage. As the *Order of Administration* of these two years continued the revised phrase, we must note again the exceptional character of the 1873 and 1878 *Sunday Service*.⁴

VI. The Ministration of Baptism to such as are of Riper Years

The only significant changes in this service which Wesley made from the Book of Common Prayer in his 1784 *Sunday Service* were: (a) the omission of the opening and concluding rubrics; (b) the designation of the officiant as "Minister" instead of "Priest"; (c) the omission of the Exhortation on the Gospel, the Exhortation to the god-parents, the Exhortation to the newly-baptized, and the second Thanksgiving Prayer; (d) the omission of the reception into the Church and the signing with the cross; and (e) the omission, in the Invitation to thanksgiving and prayer, of the words "regenerate and" from the phrase "these persons are regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church". There is also an important omission from the (first) Thanksgiving Prayer: from the petition "Give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that being now born again . . ." Wesley deleted the word "now". He retained the two references to water as sanctifying "to the mystical washing away of sin", but deleted them from the 1786 edition.

The 1792 edition made only a few alterations in the service as Wesley left it: (a) immediately before the Baptism a rubric is inserted: "The Congregation may here sing a Hymn suitable to the Occasion"; (b) the baptismal rubric adds the words "or sprinkle him therewith" to the instruction "shall dip him in the water, or pour water upon him"; (c) in the Invitation to Thanksgiving the words "are grafted into the body of Christ's Church" become "are admitted into the visible body of Christ's Church"; (d) the alternative Thanksgiving Prayer from the Book of Common Prayer is substituted for the first prayer as used by Wesley; but the phrase "it hath pleased thee to regenerate these persons with thy Holy Spirit, to receive them for thine own children by adoption, and to incorporate them into thy holy Church" is amended to read simply "it hath pleased thee to admit these persons into thy holy Church".

This service as amended in 1792 remained unaltered until 1846. In the *Sunday Service* of that year two small alterations took place:

⁴ There is an interesting reference to the 1864 revision in Benjamin Gregory's *Autobiographical Recollections*, p. 417. In a letter in 1862 he wrote: "In the Book of Offices' revision I was much interested, especially on the exclusion of a Puseyite prayer which the committee in London had inserted. I gained my point."

(a) a concluding rubric was added giving permission to the minister to close the service with "an extemporary prayer"; (b) in the second prayer a change was made in the first phrase which is italicized on page 136, where it appears in the section on Infant Baptism. The words "that they . . . may receive remission of their sins by spiritual regeneration" were amended to read "that they . . . may receive remission of their sins, and the grace of regeneration". This rendering thereafter remained constant throughout every succeeding edition of both books.

In 1864, however, a further change was made in this same prayer, this time affecting the second italicized phrase on page 136. The words "that these persons may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing" were changed to read simply ". . . may enjoy thy everlasting benediction". The editions which followed remained faithful to this rendering, with the curious exceptions, once again, of the *Sunday Service* in 1873 and 1878.

VII. Reflections on the two Baptismal Offices

Our study of the baptismal offices prompts certain reflections. First, it is clear that the controversy which centred in the doctrine of "baptismal regeneration" was not laid to rest when Wesley expunged from the 1786 edition the "doubtful" phrases which had appeared in the 1784 edition. Other phrases remained which were equally suspect, and the Methodist theological climate in the early nineteenth century did not favour their retention. There is abundant evidence to prove that during the years which saw the rise of the Oxford Movement our fathers were greatly concerned about its ultimate effects, and in particular were constantly led to examine afresh the theological implications of the baptismal offices. At the Conference of 1836, for example, Jabez Bunting declared that "nothing in the world could induce me to use" that form, i.e. the baptismal service, though it is not clear whether he was referring to the Prayer Book or the *Sunday Service*. In the following year a discussion on the Pastoral Address revealed a wide divergence of views, whilst in 1840 William Atherton declared that "the Prayer Book form is full of heresy". In 1844 a preacher averred that he "believed in baptismal regeneration, and that Mr. Wesley did too", and was promptly rebuked by Jabez Bunting for his pains.⁵ These examples are taken at random from one book, but they are typical of many others which appear in contemporary literature.

We are not surprised, therefore, to discover the alterations which were made in the baptismal offices in 1846 and later years. What does occasion some surprise, however, is the lack of consistency in the emendations as between the service for infants and the service for adults. The changes may be conveniently summarized as follows:

⁵ Gregory: *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, pp. 219, 245, 296, 358.

1784-1842 (both services): “that he . . . may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration”.

1846 (Infants): “that he . . . may receive the inward and spiritual grace which is thereby signified”.

1846 (Riper Years): “that they . . . may receive remission of their sins, and spiritual regeneration”.

1784-1863 (both services): “that this Infant may enjoy the everlasting benediction of thy heavenly washing, and may come . . .”

1864 (Infants): “that this Infant, through the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, may come . . .”

1864 (Riper Years): “that these persons may enjoy thy everlasting benediction, and may come . . .”

It is also interesting to notice that the alteration to the first phrase was made in 1846, whilst the change in the second phrase was delayed until 1864.

My theological qualifications are insufficient to permit me adequately to comment on the significance of the changes which were made in the baptismal offices: I have stated those changes *in extenso* for future reference, and in the hope that our professional theologians and liturgists may be able to expound them to us with authority. At the very least, I feel sure that they will be found to have some bearing on any future revision of the baptismal services for a new *Book of Offices*.

VIII. The Official Revision of 1882

Enough has been written to indicate the chaotic liturgical situation which existed after 1864. It was theoretically possible for the members of any given congregation to possess a dozen different Methodist service-books, all of which differed from each other to some extent, great or small, in the text of the sacramental services, to say nothing of the Book of Common Prayer itself. Yet, curiously enough, the much-needed reform did not spring from the situation we have described, but for an entirely different reason and from an unexpected quarter. Many of the great reforms of Methodism have had a humble origin, and the 1882 revision was no exception to the rule. The most inarticulate back-bencher in our local church courts can take heart from the fact that this major revision began as a Memorial to Conference from the London (Islington) circuit, asking that “a revised and safe Liturgy should be prepared and used instead of the Book of Common Prayer”.⁶ By “Liturgy” the resolution meant, of course, Morning Prayer, but in the Conference debate on this memorial speakers referred to the Absolution, which only the priest was empowered to read, to the form of consecration which differed in the ordination of priests and deacons, and “in the order for the visitation of the sick the priest pronounced absolution distinctly”.⁷ Perhaps the strangest feature of the long discussion in Conference was that by neither word nor implication did any speaker suggest that such a book as the *Sunday Service* existed! (The

⁶ *Methodist Recorder*, 1874, p. 488.

⁷ *ibid.*, 1874, p. 488.

Morning Prayer was, of course, not printed in the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments*.) The Prayer Book was the sole target of criticism.

The Conference of 1874 therefore appointed a committee "to consider the subject of revising the Liturgy and Book of Offices, especially with a view to the removal of all expressions which are susceptible of a sense contrary to the principles of our evangelical Protestantism",⁸ and so began a process which took eight years to reach its culmination. The writer of the leading article in the *Methodist Recorder* was inclined to regard the matter as of little consequence :

As this service [i.e. Morning Prayer] is used only in London and in a few of the principal provincial centres, the question possesses but a limited interest.⁹

But finding the wider theme congenial to his pen, he warmed to his task :

They [the London (Islington) circuit] are scandalised at seeing side by side with the Bible and Hymn-book in a Methodist pulpit the Book of Common Prayer, which they regard as the seed-plot of all the Romanising errors which now distract and menace the Church of England. They want Methodism to have a Liturgy of her own ; and, not being satisfied in several respects with the abridgement drawn up by John Wesley, their aim is to secure a separate and original service-book which shall supersede the Church Prayer-book in those congregations where the latter is at present used.¹⁰

"Principles of evangelical Protestantism": "the Book of Common Prayer the seed-plot of Romanising errors"—here was the basis of the task of revision which was remitted to an influential committee. Their interim suggestions were twice submitted to the pastoral sessions of the District Synods ; but when their final report came before the Conference of 1881 it must have seemed, except in one important particular, a case of "much ado about nothing". The changes in Morning Prayer, and the Forms for the Solemnization of Matrimony and the Burial of the Dead were few and unimportant ;¹¹ whilst in the Administration of the Lord's Supper the only alterations were the inclusion of the Exhortation before the Invitation, a rubric requiring the congregation to stand for the Comfortable Words, and a slight emendation of the rubric introducing the Words of Delivery. But the baptismal offices were another matter : the work of the committee represented a reconstruction rather than a revision ; and after a lengthy discussion, with weighty protagonists on both sides

⁸ *Minutes of Conference*, 1874 (vol. xix, 1877), p. 456.

⁹ *Methodist Recorder*, 1874, p. 490.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 1874, p. 490.

¹¹ In the burial service an alternative Psalm was provided, the Committal was inserted, and the Lord's Prayer and an additional prayer were added. In the marriage service the only alteration was the substitution in the first post-marriage prayer of "Zacharias and Elisabeth" for "Isaac and Rebecca" as examples of those who "lived faithfully together" !

of the argument, it was decided to remit this part of the book to a new committee for report in the following year.

The debate in the Conference of 1882 was as lively as that in the previous year, and as the new committee had done little to improve upon the labours of their predecessors, it covered much the same ground. The main battle-ground was the opening Exhortation with its reference to regeneration in the quotation from John iii. 5; but despite the powerful pleas of Dr. George Osborn, Dr. W. B. Pope, and others, it was decided to replace the offending Exhortation by an entirely new composition.¹² The other major changes were the transposition of the four petitions for grace (commencing “O merciful God, grant that the old Adam . . .”) to a new place *after* the Baptism as another expression of the denial of baptismal grace, and the introduction of various references to the parents in the service for infants. Thus amended, the baptismal offices were accepted by the Conference by a majority of two to one, a vote which, like the debate itself, showed a striking lack of unanimity on the theological issues involved. To the resolution the Conference added a significant rider:

It was resolved that in thus adopting a revised Form of the Baptismal Service, the Conference does not prohibit the use of any Forms which have hitherto been approved by the Conference.¹³

Such alternative “approved” Forms would presumably be the 1792 *Sunday Service*, the 1864 revision, and the Book of Common Prayer. At the previous Conference a similar liberty had been given in respect of the Order for Morning Prayer.

And so the great 1882 revision reached a not altogether triumphant conclusion in the publication of *The Book of Public Prayers and Services*, and its shorter version, the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments and other Services* (not to be confused with its namesake of an earlier date). Our formularies had been purged of “Romanising errors”, and the *Methodist Recorder*, though greeting the new book with a cheer, made the best of both worlds:

The new Prayer and Service-book is distinctively Methodist, delivered from all apparent dependence on the Church of England for doctrinal teaching. Yet the changes are so few as to cause little inconvenience to Churchmen coming to the Wesleyan Chapel.¹⁴

The revised service-book was no doubt a great success; in one circuit in Hull alone an entire edition of the shorter version was absorbed for the use of its congregations¹⁵—a Book Steward’s dream! Yet the saving clause of liberty remained, and there can be little doubt that many ministers and congregations took advantage of it and continued to use the *Sunday Service*, which is perhaps one

¹² A brief account of the revision is given in J. Robinson Gregory: *A History of Methodism*, ii, pp. 54-7; but the liturgical student should not fail to read the verbatim reports of the Conference debates in the *Methodist Recorder* for 1881 and 1882.

¹³ *Minutes of Conference*, 1882, p. 223.

¹⁴ *Methodist Recorder*, 7th November 1884, p. 824.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, 1884, p. 824.

reason why it went through at least three more editions after 1882.

IX. To what extent was the "Sunday Service" used?

This is a question to which no authoritative answer can be given. On the one hand there is the indisputable fact that the *Sunday Service* continued to be published until 1910, this last edition being one of 1,000 copies. The thirty editions published between 1792 and 1910 (to say nothing of the frequent editions of the "shorter" book, the *Order of Administration of the Sacraments*) must have been sold to somebody, somewhere! On the other hand, the balance of the available evidence favours the assumption that the Book of Common Prayer was more generally used than the *Sunday Service*. I briefly examined this problem in an article on *Methodism and the Book of Common Prayer* in *Proceedings*, xxiii, pp. 38-9, and adduced some of the evidence. A few more scraps, for what they are worth, may be of interest here. First, Samuel Bradburn in 1792:

I found this [i.e. the *Sunday Service*] in use at Snowsfield and Wapping Preaching-Houses, when I was appointed for London in the year 1786. I used it a few times till Mr. Wesley came to Town. I then said many things against continuing to do so, and he gave me leave to do as I pleased; I accordingly laid it aside. My reason for this was, not that I believed it wrong to use it, or that anything in it was injured by Mr. Wesley; but because he and his curates continued to use the old one [the Prayer Book]. I saw no propriety in this conduct, and therefore bore my testimony against it. But many people who called themselves strict Church-folks, had other reasons for not using it. When they saw that all the Saints' Days, the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, several of the Articles of Religion, and many of the Psalms, were left out, they rejected it with disdain, and it is not used yet but in a very few towns in England.¹⁶

Now for Thomas Jackson, writing for the centenary of Wesleyan Methodism in 1839:

The incomparable Liturgy of the established Church is regularly used in many of the Wesleyan chapels in England, and in all the Mission chapels in the West Indies. Translations of it have been made by Wesleyan Missionaries into various languages, for the use of their congregations, especially in the East. It is also used for the administration of the Lord's Supper, both at home and abroad.¹⁷

An anonymous writer in 1841 gives a glimpse into the situation in one of the great provincial centres of Methodism:

In Leeds we have hitherto been compelled to dispense with the Liturgy. Why, I humbly ask, not allow its introduction into one, say, for example, Brunswick Chapel? Would not the respectability, reputation and size of our Congregation be thereby greatly increased? Have not many of its former esteemed worshippers embraced other communions simply because of *their* adoption and use of the National Liturgy.¹⁸

¹⁶ Samuel Bradburn: *The Question, Are the Methodists Dissenters? Fairly Examined* (1841 edn.), p. 15.

¹⁷ Thomas Jackson: *The Centenary of Wesleyan Methodism*, p. 280.

¹⁸ *Objections to the Introduction of the Liturgy of the Established Church into Wesleyan Methodist Chapels, considered and refuted*, by "An Occasional Hearer" (Leeds, 1841), p. 17.

A writer to the *Methodist Recorder* in 1874 referred to the *Sunday Service* as "a work which is well known to have died a natural death",¹⁹ whilst the Rev. William Arthur told the Conference in 1881 that "he had been asked hundreds of times by Churchmen and by people who might become Methodists, where he could show them their Book of Offices, and he was obliged to point them to the Church of England Prayer-book."²⁰ On the other hand, the reviewer in the *London Quarterly Review* of the 1882 revision, *Book of Public Prayers and Services*, wrote that the *Sunday Service* had been used for Morning Prayer in a "few" chapels in England, "more perhaps in the country than in London". But for sacramental services and the occasional offices "it has long been superseded by successive editions of the Conference Book of Offices [i.e. the *Order of Administration* begun in 1839]".²¹

The mystery remains! Thirty editions of the *Sunday Service* have left hardly a mark on the history of Methodist worship, save to maintain an additional link to that which already existed between the Book of Common Prayer and the liturgical practices of our own day. Perhaps its influence was greater than we know.

X. Conclusion

Three small points remain to be mentioned. First, there are in existence revisions of the sacramental services which were made and printed for use in some local church or circuit, for instance, at Rochdale. To trace and examine all these local versions is a task for which I have so far had neither time nor inclination. Second, I have made no reference to the formularies—where they existed—in the non-Wesleyan sections of Methodism. They differ from the *Sunday Service* in that they are not in the main stream of development from the Book of Common Prayer, and for that sole reason I have ignored them. Third, work remains to be done on the many translations of the Book of Common Prayer and/or the *Sunday Service* in several languages for use on our mission stations. That task is one which I gladly leave for others whose linguistic competence is greater than mine.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

¹⁹ *Methodist Recorder*, 21st August 1874.

²⁰ *ibid.*, 1881, p. 581.

²¹ *London Quarterly Review*, 1884, p. 42.

The Rev. Thomas Shaw has become a master of the art of overcoming prohibitive printing costs by producing attractive booklets with cyclostyled typescript inserted with printed illustrations into a printed cover. His latest, and so far the most ambitious, venture of this kind is *Methodism in Illogan, 1743-1948* (pp. 48, 2s. 6d., or 3s. post paid from the author at 9, Fore Street, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall). It is almost superfluous to say that within the covers of this quarto-sized booklet Mr. Shaw has packed every available scrap of information about Methodism in all its branches in this Cornish village. We hope this admirable production by an expert on Cornish Methodism will have a wide sale.

BOOK NOTICES

John Wesley, by S. Reed Brett. (A. & C. Black, pp. 96, 6s. 6d.)

This is a good little book! Within clearly-defined limits it achieves its purpose. It forms one of a series of "short biographies of men and women whose lives should be an inspiration to readers of all ages"—so John Wesley is an obvious subject. The style is most lucid, and, to young readers especially, the book would make an ideal introduction to the life and work of the founder of Methodism. Much, of course, needs to be added to make the picture complete, but it would be peevish to complain of omissions within a compass of less than a hundred pages. The author has done well to get so much into so little, and it is happily free from serious inaccuracies. The author refers to the Methodist "Meeting House"—a term which Wesley purposely avoided, preferring "preaching house"—but there are studies of Wesley much more ambitious than this one where the same mistake is made!

JOHN C. BOWMER.

Wesley's Prayers and Praises, edited by J. Alan Kay. (Epworth Press, pp. xviii. 194, 15s.)

The Wesleys—Evangelists and Musicians, by Thomas Armstrong. (Chapter 12 of Part Two of *Organ and Choral Aspects and Prospects*—Hinrichsen, pp. 181, 15s.)

Lovers of Charles Wesley's hymns have long wished for a volume containing some of the best examples from his inspired pen which do not appear in our present *Methodist Hymn-Book*. Such a compilation Dr. Kay has now given us, writing beneath his title "A selection of little-known hymns by Charles Wesley, to which have been added a few by his brother, the whole being arranged mainly for private devotion". The latter phrase provides the key to the plan upon which the volume has been arranged. It is not a hymn-book for use in public worship, but a collection of verses in which the author is shown to have touched on almost every aspect of the individual Christian's experience and related it to the eternal majesty, universal love, and unchanging purpose of God.

The hymns are grouped into four main sections—Praise and Adoration, The Christian Experience, The Life of the Church, and The Daily Round; and these sections themselves have many divisions and subdivisions. The first hymn is one which, though excluded from the *Methodist Hymn-Book* in 1933, has since found a place in the 1950 *School Hymn-Book of the Methodist Church*: "Young men and maidens, raise Your tuneful voices high", and older readers will recognize some hymns which were included in the collections of the various branches of Methodism before 1932; but a great part of the material used is found only in the *Poetical Works*, now long out of print, and the compiler will have earned the gratitude of many for uncovering so much hidden treasure.

Archaisms in the hymns have been amended, but original readings and sources are given in an admirably meticulous and comprehensive index.

Messrs. Hinrichsen, in their 10th Music Book, 1958, have presented the text of a number of lectures given at the International Congress of Organists held in London in 1957. In his contribution on the Wesleys, Dr. Armstrong is, as we should expect, mainly concerned with Charles Wesley's two sons (Charles and Samuel) and his grandson (Samuel Sebastian), though he points out musical interest and ability in the older generations. There are two errors of fact: the rector of Epworth is given the name of *John Wesley* instead of Samuel, and the date of Charles Wesley's birth is once more quoted as 1708 instead of 1707.

ALFRED A. TABERER.

NOTES AND QUERIES

998. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST LETTER.

Wesley's biographers, with almost complete unanimity, have assumed that his famous letter to William Wilberforce written from Balham on 24th February 1791 (*Letters*, viii, p. 265), with its stirring appeal to "Go on, in the name of God", was the last letter he ever wrote. Simon, Vulliamy, Curnock, Green, Tyerman, and Telford (to name but a few) all make this dogmatic statement without comment. There is little doubt, however, that they are all in error.

Wesley spent the night of Thursday, 24th February, at the house of his old friend Mr. Wolff at Balham, on his way back to London from Leatherhead. (See Elizabeth Ritchie's *Account* in *Journal*, viii, p. 134; and footnote 2, an extract from the *Experience and Labours of James Rogers*.) During that evening at Balham Wesley's letter to Wilberforce was written. James Rogers (who accompanied Wesley on this last journey) takes up the tale:

On the Friday morning [i.e. the 25th], after retiring half an hour, he desired me to read to him part of the account, just then published, on the sufferings of the poor negroes in the West Indies; and before breakfast, to write a letter to a friend in Cork, which was the last he ever dictated; and it was with the utmost difficulty he signed his name; nor did this eminent writer ever after that use the pen. (*Experience and Labours of James Rogers*, p. 46; *Journal*, viii, p. 135, footnote 1.)

This letter to "a friend in Cork", therefore, was Wesley's last letter, and the recipient could not have been Wilberforce, for Dr. Frank Baker has kindly supplied the information that at that time Wilberforce was staying at Holwood, in Kent (*Life of William Wilberforce*, by his sons, i, p. 288).

The original of Wesley's letter to Wilberforce was sold by auction in London in 1931, and now forms part of the Bishop Ezra S. Tipple Collection at Drew University, U.S.A. The Librarian of the Rose Memorial Library at Drew University assures me that the "whole of the letter is in Wesley's hand, and is indeed very shakily written and quite difficult to read". Unfortunately, there is no address on the single folded sheet, but the fact that the letter of the 25th to "a friend in Cork" was dictated to James Rogers and only signed by Wesley "with the utmost difficulty" makes it clear that the "friend in Cork" and not William Wilberforce was the recipient of Wesley's last letter.

Who then was the "friend in Cork"? Dr. Frank Baker hazards the guess that he may have been George Howe, one of the three stewards whom Wesley appointed in 1785, but the evidence is extremely thin. Perhaps we shall never know, unless by some happy chance the letter, like so many others, emerges from obscurity. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

999. INFORMATION REQUIRED ABOUT CAPTAIN THOMAS WEBB.

I am making a study of the life of Captain Thomas Webb, who was so closely associated with Portland chapel, Bristol, which contains a memorial window depicting Webb in his military uniform, complete with eye-patch. I have recently discovered some hitherto-unknown letters which deal in the main with efforts to secure Webb's exchange whilst he was a prisoner of the American forces in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. I am gradually building up the picture of Captain Webb's American career; but about his early life, and his life after his return to England and Bristol, I would gladly

welcome information from English members. If any readers can supply information about Captain Webb, or can direct me to any manuscript material, would they please write to me at the School of Mines and Technology, Rapid City, South Dakota, U.S.A. MARVIN E. HARVEY.

1000. A THOUSAND "NOTES AND QUERIES".

This is a landmark in the history of the *Proceedings*, and it has taken 239 issues of our magazine to reach it! "Notes and Queries" have been a constant feature in our pages since volume I, part 1, and through this medium many back-benchers who had neither the material for, nor the desire to write, a full-length article, have made valuable contributions to our accumulated store of knowledge.

In the early years there were more Queries than Notes (in the first issue of the *Proceedings*, for instance, all but one of the twenty-two items printed were Queries), and the first, fittingly enough, came from the pen of Richard Green, the first President of our Society. In those days the items printed were in the main extracted from the Manuscript Journal which circulated amongst the "working members" of the Society, the files of which are still in the Editor's possession, but as the years went by the section became a useful repository for other contributions which were too brief to merit a special heading of their own.

The subjects covered by "Notes and Queries" in our thirty-one volumes have been so numerous and varied that it would be impossible either to list them or even to classify them here. A cursory inspection of their contents, however, is sufficient to indicate that they represent not the least valuable part of the work which our members have done through sixty years.

Our thousandth "N & Q" prompts two suggestions. First, though the Manuscript Journal is in being again, it circulates at snail-like speed. The Rev. John C. Bowmer, 14, Maureen Terrace, Seaham, Co. Durham, who guides its affairs, would welcome an acceleration of its progress, and would be glad to hear from other members willing to make brief contributions to its pages, some of which may eventually find their way into "Notes and Queries". Second, the Editor is always pleased to consider direct contributions to this section of our magazine, for its potential usefulness is as great as ever. On to the 2000! EDITOR.

1001. METHODISM ON THE CONTINENT.

In "Notes and Queries" No. 991 (*Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 122) the Rev. George Lockett says that Methodism in Sweden is "one of the rare examples of work on the Continent having its origin in England rather than in the United States". Mr. Lockett's statement errs considerably. It is certain, for instance, that Methodism in Portugal (where I am at present working) originated from England. The same is true of Spain. I have by me a brief account of the work of Methodism in Majorca (in a Spanish Christian Endeavour magazine of October 1957) in which it is said that in 1835 Dr. William H. Rule "felt called of the Lord to introduce the Evangel into the interior of the Iberian Peninsula. His labour was *fecunda* in distinct ways. In 1840, by order of Queen Cristina, all the workers were expelled from the country." It is also a fact that the work in France and Italy originated from Great Britain. I agree with Mr. Lockett that there is room for a history of Methodism on the Continent. I am just beginning to work on one small chapter of this history, in that I have begun research into the history of Methodism in Portugal. I should welcome any information that fellow-members could give me. ALBERT ASPEY.

1002. WAS WESLEY CONSISTENT?

With regard to Mr. Thompson's Note (No. 986), the area of inconsistency alleged (in Mr. Raymond George's article, *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 27, particularly note at foot of page 30) is considerably greater than Mr. Thompson suggests; but I am very grateful for the weight of Mr. Thompson's authority in thus limiting the extent of the alleged inconsistency.

Mr. Thompson writes: "The inconsistency with which Wesley is charged in consecrating Coke and ordaining others is an inconsistency with the office and obligation which he accepted in being ordained as a priest in the Church of England. When Bishop Potter laid hands on him Wesley solemnly pledged himself 'to give diligence always to administer . . . the Discipline of Christ, as this Church and Realm hath received the same'."

Wesley's position, however, had a peculiarity unknown today. Today, before a man is ordained deacon in the Church of England he must affirm his Assent and Consent to the Prayer Book and its contents (he must also do so at Induction). In Wesley's day this was not so, and he never did it. The Act of Uniformity of 1662, section VI, states: "Every Person who shall hereafter be presented or collated or put into any Ecclesiastical Benefice or Promotion within this Realm of England and Places aforesaid [i.e. Dominion of Wales and the Town of Berwick upon Tweed] shall . . . within two Months . . . declare his unfeigned Assent and Consent to the use of all Things therein contained [i.e. in the Book of Common Prayer] and prescribed according to the Form before appointed [i.e. 'I A.B. do here declare my unfeigned Assent and Consent to all and everything contained and prescribed in and by the Book intitled The Book of Common Prayer . . .']". Under sections VIII-XII, Fellows of Colleges had to declare they would not bear arms against the King and would "conform to the liturgy of the Church of England", whilst under section XVII Governors and Heads of Colleges or Halls had to subscribe the thirty-nine Articles and "declare unfeigned Assent and Consent unto" the Book of Common Prayer in the presence of Fellows and Tutors.

Thus the law in Wesley's day did not require that he should declare his unfeigned Assent and Consent. He was never presented to any Ecclesiastical Benefice in this Realm of England, Dominion of Wales or Town of Berwick upon Tweed. As a Fellow of Lincoln he was not required to do so. He undoubtedly subscribed the Articles, but he was under no obligation to make the declaration contained in section IV of the Act of Uniformity, 1662. He says "I should not dare to declare my assent and consent to that book in the terms prescribed" (*Letters*, iii, p. 353).

I must admit to being puzzled by the entry in his Diary for 1st May 1737, "subscribed the Prayers", but that this does not mean "publicly declared my Assent and Consent to the BCP" (as suggested in *Journal*, i, p. 353) is evident from one of the charges brought against him (*Journal*, i, p. 389), from the letter sent by the minority of the Grand Jurors to the Trustees (*Journal*, i, p. 394), and by Wesley's own admission (*Journal*, i, p. 393).

So then Wesley had promised to "administer the Discipline of Christ . . . as this Church . . . hath received the same", but he had not declared his Assent and Consent to the Prayer Book and its contents. Is there any difference? Wesley would undoubtedly have said so (consider how he seizes on the word "godly" when discussing another ordination promise regarding obedience to the admonitions of a bishop—*Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, para. 83). Wesley would certainly argue that in

the "Discipline of Christ" "1. Presbyters were different from the Bishops *in gradu* or *in degree* but yet 2. They were equal to them *in Ordine* or *in Order*". (King—see my article on page 65 of this volume of *Proceedings*.) What, then, the Discipline of Christ did not include, "this Church" could not receive and Wesley had not promised to keep. Thus Wesley had not given his assent to that theory of three orders contained in the Prayer Book but only to the Discipline of Christ, which Discipline he administered as he understood it on 2nd September 1784.

It may seem to us strange that a clergyman of the Church of England should hold views different from the Book of Common Prayer. But that it happens today and that it happened in the eighteenth century is undeniable—the only difference is that in the eighteenth century it was legal and not inconsistent, provided the person was not an incumbent.

VICTOR E. VINE.

1003. ARTICLES OF METHODIST HISTORICAL INTEREST.

The following articles of Methodist historical importance have appeared in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* since the last list was printed in *Proceedings*, xxx, p. 96:

JULY 1956—"Episcopacy in the Methodist Church in America", by Lynn Harold Hough, D.D., Litt.D.

JULY 1956—"Episcopacy: John Wesley's View", by Edgar W. Thompson, M.A.

JULY 1956—"Madeley in the Eighteenth Century", by George Lawton.

OCTOBER 1956—"Methodism and Education", by George R. Osborn, M.A.
A brief summary of Methodist educational policy.

OCTOBER 1956—"John Fletcher's Incumbency at Madeley", by George Lawton. Some notes on the church, vicarage, living, and parish records.

JANUARY 1957—"Methodism in Relation to the Protestant World", by E. Gordon Rupp, M.A., D.D. An address given at the World Methodist Conference, Lake Junaluska.

JANUARY 1957—"James Hervey, Methodist Prose Poet", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D. A study of the author of the famous *Meditations upon the Tombs*.

APRIL 1957—"Nicholas Lewis Zinzendorf", by Edward Langton, D.D.
A short biographical sketch of "the Count who became a Bishop".

JULY 1957—"Methodism and the Means of Grace", by Ronald V. Spivey, M.A., D.D. A brief account of Methodist worship.

OCTOBER 1957—The greater part of this issue was devoted to articles in commemoration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Wesley.

JANUARY 1958—"The Erskines and the Methodists", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D. A valuable essay on Wesley's correspondence with the brothers Erskine and the Scottish "Associate Presbytery".

APRIL 1958—"Jabez Bunting, D.D.", by W. L. Doughty, B.A., B.D. A brief centenary appraisal of Methodism's most controversial figure.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Dr. Wallace Guy Smeltzer, in his *Methodism on the Headwaters of the Ohio* (The Parthenon Press, Nashville, Tenn., \$3.50) has traced the history of the Pittsburgh Conference, which was founded in 1825, though there was a circuit in those parts as far back as 1784. We do not usually review local histories from other parts of the world, but we are glad to make an exception by mentioning so detailed a work which treats so important an area.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.