

PROCEEDINGS

VI.

CONCERNING THEIR OWN HOUSEHOLD.

VII.

CONCERNING PARTICULAR EXPERIENCES WITH RESPECT TO THEIR OWN SOULS.

We whose names are here under written, being Members and Ministers of the Church of England do agree to meet together as a Society under the above mentioned Rules and Regulations, for the transacting of business, as related in the Accounts of the nature of it, with no other design than to promote the Honour of God, and the success of the Gospel, in the Work of the Ministry.

(The above is copied from an unsigned draft. The paper is not dated, and no indication of the authorship is given. The fact that it is found among papers of Rev. John Fletcher makes it natural to connect it with him, but it may belong to a somewhat later period. In any case the influence of Wesley's Conferences and Rules of Society is evident. It is an interesting sidelight on the Evangelical revival.)

THE RE-PRINTING OF WESLEY'S PUBLICATIONS.

Wesley's first publication was issued in 1733. During the rest of his lifetime he published some four hundred works. The majority of these were original, but a good number were only abridged by Wesley, or recommended in a preface by him. These books and pamphlets were amongst the best-sellers of the century. Some of them ran through an amazing number of editions during Wesley's lifetime, and continued to be printed well into the 19th century, and occasionally into the 20th. During the hundred years following Wesley's first publication, over two thousand editions of his various works were issued. In the following article, however, very few 19th century reprints are included, and those after 1850 are all omitted.

The details of Wesley's amazing publishing record are rather difficult to assess at their true value, but very impressive. Of the "Nativity Hymns" (Green 84) 42 editions are known, and of the "Rules" (Green 43) 37, while at least five more must once have existed. The palm for repeated publication, however, goes

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to Charles Wesley's sermon "Awake, thou that sleepest" (Green 33), of which 37 editions are known, and of which there must have been at the very least another ten.

Possibly this vagueness as to the actual number of editions may sound puzzling. It must be realised that the printed numbering of the various editions of Wesley's works is not always a reliable guide. Often there are three or more "Third" editions, followed by as many "Fourth" editions. Three "Twenty-seventh" editions are known of "Awake, thou that sleepest," and as many as five "Eighth" editions of Green 17!

Sometimes editions were duplicated in different towns, so that there might be "First," "Second," and "Third" editions for each of the three chief publishing centres, London, Bristol and Dublin. Thus, although the last edition published might be numbered "Third," actually nine editions would have been issued. Usually, of course, the actual situation is rather more complicated than this. Other factors enter in, so that it would not be a valid deduction to say that there must have been at least 81 editions of Charles Wesley's sermon because three "Twenty-seventh" editions are recorded. Undoubtedly there were many *hundreds* of editions of which all trace has been lost, but whose existence cannot be conclusively proved. Many also await discovery in some of our libraries, or on old book stalls, as witness recent articles in *Proceedings*.

There is so much confusion in the numbering of the various editions that we shall never know the *exact* number. *Minimum* figures, however, can be arrived at. The following table has been compiled after careful study of the editions described (often insufficiently) in Green's *Wesley Bibliography*, the *Catalogue of Wesleyana*, and various W.H.S. articles, as well as other minor sources.

First edition consisting of	First editions Mr Green	Total editions recorded	Editions deduced
1-25 pages	190	802	67
26-100 pages	121	528	37
over 100 pages	112	444	33
	423	1774	137

The grand total of undoubted editions is thus 1911, and there can be no reasonable doubt in the minds of those who have studied Wesley's publications that the actual number was well in excess of 2000. It is quite probable that the *known* editions will yet reach that number.

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Perhaps a word should be said about the "Editions deduced." That these 137 actually existed is almost demonstrable, though in view of the warning issued earlier, not absolutely so. In the case of the second *Journal* extract (Green 18), for instance, the editions so far recorded are the "First," "Second," "Third," "Fifth," and an unnumbered edition of 1797. It is practically certain that a "Fourth" must have once existed, although it has not yet been recorded, and may never be. If the "Fifth" edition were subsequent to 1797, of course, the argument would fall through, as the 1797 edition would be counted as the fourth, though not so numbered; but the "Fifth" edition is dated 1775. Similarly if there were two "Third" or "Fifth" editions it might be suggested that one of them should really have been numbered "Fourth," and the argument would be weakened. As it is, however, the existence of the lost "Fourth" edition can hardly be doubted. This is so of the rest of the 137 "Editions deduced," though obviously one cannot go into the pros and cons of each case. In some cases these deductions are supported by the mention of, say, an otherwise unknown "4th ed." in a contemporary book catalogue.

One surprising feature of the above table is the comparatively uniform rate at which small, medium and large publications were reprinted. One would naturally expect that the small and cheap pamphlets would pass through more editions than the more bulky and expensive works. Yet the total number of editions of the larger works is practically four times the number of original publications, a ratio only slightly smaller than that of the medium and small publications. It should be borne in mind, of course, that the pamphlets were naturally more perishable than bound books, and that in the case of the "Words" many separate editions cannot be distinguished; thus the actual number of editions of small works must be well in excess of the numbers quoted. Even so, the figures help to correct the impression that Wesley was a publisher almost exclusively of cheap and small pamphlets. He also kept up a steady supply of more bulky literature. In fact many of the works classed as "Over 100 pages" were in reality very large. The "Notes on the Old Testament" filled three quarto volumes, a total of 2613 pages, while the "Christian Library" occupied 50 volumes (16,000 pages), and the collected "Works" of 1771-4 32 volumes. If the actual *volumes* were to be counted in as separate publications, a further 182 would have to be added to the total of large works.

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Of these large publications eleven passed through more than ten editions, and five saw over twenty. The latter consist of three hymn-books (Green 30, 165 and 396), the *Christian's Pattern* (Green 26), and *Primitive Physick* (Green 101).

Eleven medium-sized works reached ten editions, but only one passed the twenty mark,—“Awake, thou that sleepest.” “Redemption Hymns” (Green 105) reached at least nineteen, and probably more.

As far as the smaller pamphlets are concerned, thirty were issued ten or more times, and eight of them over twenty times. The latter were two sermons (Green 8 and 28), two small collections of hymns (Green 84 and 90), the *Rules* (Green 43), *A Collection of Prayers for Families* (Green 74), *The Nature and Design of Christianity* (Green 17), which was an extract from William Law's writings, and *The Character of a Methodist* (Green 34). As has been suggested, some of the small “Words” must also have run into many editions, but details have not been preserved.

Generally speaking, the publications in most constant demand were the hymns, with sermons running a close second. With one or two exceptions, the more controversial works and the defences of Methodism against various attacks were not often reprinted. Neither did the majority of the educational publications see more than one or two editions. The same is true of Wesley's pamphlets on political and social questions, with the exception of *Thoughts on Slavery* (Green 298), which saw seven editions, and the *Calm Address to our American Colonies* (Green 305), which created quite a *furor* at the time, and was issued at the very least eight times. Referring to the “Calm Address” in a letter to Rankin, dated October 20, 1775, Wesley said, “I suppose above forty thousand of them have been printed in three weeks, and still the demand for them is as great as ever.”

As might be expected, the annual *Minutes* appear never to have been reprinted in separate form. The only Minutes of any kind published by Wesley to be reprinted in the 18th century were the last *Large Minutes* (Green 404). Of this volume Green says “Several editions were issued after his death, but since 1835 it has not been reprinted separately”; he gives no details, however. The *Catalogue of Wesleyana* notes an edition dated 1802. The *Minutes* of the 1791 Conference, however, which had to discuss the situation created by Wesley's death, saw two editions in that same year.

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A note to Green 166 says that "The several numbers of the *Journal* were not often reprinted separately." Fuller knowledge of the various editions shows, however, that one (Green 203) was reprinted five times, while the first six *Journal* extracts all ran to four or five editions each. The next eleven averaged three each, including one (Green 318) which was apparently never reprinted separately, while the last three extracts were issued only twice each.

When one considers the widespread dissemination of Methodist literature that these facts imply, and realises that in many poor homes the total library consisted of one or two Methodist pamphlets and a copy of *Primitive Physick*, it is not surprising that an awakening of England spread through the lower classes to the upper classes; nor is it surprising that the Methodist people are still what Wesley called them, "a reading people."

FRANK BAKER.

WESLEY'S PRINTERS AND BOOKSELLERS.

I. INTRODUCTION.

It is obvious to anyone who has studied Wesley's amazing publishing record that much of his time (and patience!) was taken up with printers and booksellers. As far as possible he used Methodist labour, although it was often unsatisfactory. He frequently complained about William Pine's slipshod printing; for instance, when preparing Young's *Night Thoughts* for publication, he wrote to Charles Wesley, December 17, 1768, "I shall run the hazard of printing it at Bristol." Nor, in many cases, were the Methodists who were supposed to superintend the printing, or to correct the proofs, much better. Especially was this true of the well-known preacher and hymn-writer, Thomas Olivers, so that on August 15, 1789, Wesley wrote to Dr. Bradshaw:

"I cannot, dare not, will not suffer Thomas Olivers to murder the *Arminian Magazine* any longer. The errata are intolerable and innumerable. They shall be so no more." Olivers was relieved of his duties, and James Creighton was appointed "corrector of the press." Apparently booksellers also