

the words 'If Sally wants the sinews of war give me a hint' (VII, 270). This comes from Cicero.

The following proverbs reveal him as the Governor-General of Methodism. His punctiliousness comes out in 'delays are dangerous' (VIII, 129, elsewhere, 'I hate delay'). His determination is shown in such expressions as 'kill, or cure' (VI, 54) and 'the turbulent spirits must either bend or break' (IV, 203 and elsewhere). His patience and tenderness are shown in such advice as 'soft and fair goes far' (VII, 305), his opportunism in such sayings as 'it must be now or never' (VIII, 273). Presumptuous Local Preachers must 'have their wings clipped' (VII, 88. This short letter contains three proverbs). One of his itinerants, with mulish obstinacy, 'would neither lead nor drive' (VII, 323). He tries to get action from the Clergy—but 'they are a rope of sand' (V, 144). He urges the strenuous life in the words 'do not kill him with kindness' (VI, 152). The old man creeps on 'having already one foot in the grave' (VIII, 209). The constant paradox of his life, a virile humanitarianism and an other-worldly detachment beneath God's good will, find expression in the proverbs 'leave no stone unturned' (V, 73) and 'what must be, must be' (V, 85). A complete picture of the man working out his mission, leaps before the mind from the epistolary mosaic of proverbs.

(To be continued)

GEORGE LAWTON.

JOHN WESLEY AND A QUAKER MYSTIC

In the archives of Friends House, Euston Road, London, are treasured many documents of interest to students of the eighteenth century. One or two are of real importance for the light they throw on John Wesley and on Methodist history. An example is the copy of the correspondence between Wesley and Richard Freeman, a rather unbalanced Quaker of Yeovil.¹ The document is endorsed "Copies of Queries sent by R. Freeman of Yeovil to John Wesley, with the Answers, 1779. Literatim & Verbatim".

¹ Our thanks are due to the authorities and staff of the Reference Library, Friends House, for their kindness in allowing us to transcribe and publish this document, and especially to Mr. John Nickalls, the librarian.

PROCEEDINGS

Although only copies, there can be little doubt of the genuineness of the letters, preserved not by a follower but by a critic of Wesley, Morris Birkbeck (1734-1816) Quaker bibliographer. Birkbeck has added to the value of the correspondence by his own remarks about Wesley's attitude to Quakerism, though we feel that his prejudices led him astray. Even so, it is of interest to know the impression left upon the mind of an intelligent contemporary Quaker, writing in 1792, just after Wesley's death.

The letters are introduced by the following note :

Copy of Questions sent to the late John Wesley by Richard Freeman, a Young Man belonging to Friends; afflicted with a disorder supposed to be nervous, which affected his Understanding. Not long after sending the following L(ette)r and Queries (proof sufficient of Insanity) he took to his Bed, which he could not be prevailed with to quit, though not apparently Bedridden.

"Cop(ie)d from the Original rough d(ra)ft from whence the L(ette)r written to J.W. was taken by the Author"—

Freeman's strange letter then follows, the original spelling being preserved.

Friend John Westley,

Having for a considerable time past been greatly Puzled and Perplexed in Mind concerning the first Matter of Evil or what that was which Changed that Onse bright Morning-Star or Son of the Morning into such an hat(e)full and detestable Spirit of Palpable Darkness now Called the Devil or Prince of the botomless Pitt—having, I say been Greatly Puzled and Perplexed about that most wonderfull and astonishing Event &c., &c.

I shall therefore take it kind if thee wilt Send me thy Judgment or Sentiments upon the following Questions—

1st. What was the first Matter of Evil or what was that which cast Prince Lucifer from the Hiest Heaven down to the Neathermost Hell.

2d. Whether the Host of Men would have been Called into being Provided Lucifer had kept his first Estate in the Light.

3d. How or after what manner was it that the Triune or threefold God was born to this World a son of Man in Order to Save the fallen Host of Men from Eternal Death & Hell.

4th What is God himself.

5. What is the Inhabit(at)ion of God.

6. What is that Ineffeble Light in which God dwells.

7. Is that Light near or far off or both.

8. What is that Heaven in which God dwells with the Angels of Light, & Souls of Holy Men.

9. Is that Heaven near at hand or far off or both.

10. What meant the Apostle Paul when speaking of God he thus exprest himself "He is not far from Every one of us for in Him we Live & Move & have Our Being."

11. Did not God create Adam & his Host in order to Suply the Place of fallen Lucifer & his Host.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

12th. Was not this Plannetry System like the Kingdom & Seat of Prince Lucifer the Devil while He kept his first Estate in the Light.

13th. Do not the Spirit Serch all things yea the deep things of God.

14th. Did not the Devil fall Soon after his Creation.

15. Did not the Creation of this Visible World soon follow thereupon.

16. For what reason did God-Allmighty from Eternity forbear to create Angels until about eight or nine thousand years ago.

17. Wether God will create any thing more after the Time of this Visibie World of Stars & Eliments.

18. Is there any Corporeal thing by which the Huge Space of Eternity is bounded or insircled round about.

19. What is the Soul of Man how comes it into the body in What part of the body does it reside & how does it go out of the body again in the hour of Death.

20. & Lastly out of What shall the Bodies of the Gloryfied saints be composed in which they shall inhabit Heaven.

Upon which questions if thee please to Send thy Judgment or Sentiments thee wilt much Oblidge One who wishes Salvation not to thee only but Likewise to all the Hosts of Adam. Amen.
Halaluliah. R. Freeman.

The influence of Jacob Behmen is certainly to be seen here, and Wesley's instinctive reaction would surely be to throw the letter away as the work of a crazy visionary upon whom words of reason would be wasted.² Yet John Wesley was one of the most courteous of correspondents, suffering fools, if not gladly, yet at least patiently. With so much speculative ground to be covered, he might well have sent a brief note of acknowledgement, including a sentence disavowing any inside information upon such mysteries. But no. Each query was answered separately, albeit in few words. Altogether apart from the interest of the subject matter, such as Wesley's views on Satan, the soul, and the resurrection of the body, his reply is valuable as a revelation of Wesley's courtesy, though a note of acerbity creeps into his answer to the sixteenth question. Birbeck heads the document "Copy of J. Wesley's Answer, taken from the Original dated":

London

Aug. 6. 1779

1. Undoubtedly it was Pride & Selfwill w(hi)ch cast

² The following year he published his "Thoughts upon Jacob Behmen" in the *Arminion Magazine*, speaking of his writings as "high, obscure, unintelligible jargon." (See Works, ix.509-514).

PROCEEDINGS.

Lucifer down from Heaven.

2. I believe God wou'd have created Men, tho' Angels had never sinned.

3. Neither Man nor Angel can explain, How the Word was made Flesh.

4. God is Love incomprehensible.

5. He inhabits Eternity.

6. In that light w(hi)ch no man can either see or explain.

7. That Light is everywhere.

8. What ye third Heaven is, we shall know by & by.

9. God has not told us, where this is.

10. It is literally true, yt in Him we live & move & have our being.

11. I believe, He did not.

12. I do not know.

13. The Spirit of God does search all things.

14. I cannot tell.

15. I cannot say, yes or no.

16. I do not know. I was not his Counsellor.

17. I believe, he did not.

18. I suppose not.

19. The Soul is a spirit made after ye Image of God. How it comes into, or goes out of the Body, we know not. Perhaps it more eminently resides in ye Brain.

20. In the Resurrection the mortal Body shall be clothed upon, with an House w(hi)ch is from Heaven. Just so much (as) God has revealed we know: more than this we cannot know.
J. Wesley.

To
Richard Freeman
At Kingston Turnpike Gate
In Yeovil
Somersetshire.

Morris Birbeck read ulterior motives into the surprising detail of Wesley's reply, adding a long note about Freeman and about Wesley's attitude to the Quakers :

This Richd. Freeman, who wrote a Lr with a string of strange Queries to John Wesley; & which John answered—(his Master, W. Pitman, of Yeovil inform'd me [4 mo? or June?] 24th, 1792 was a moral man, but full of strange Whimsies; would sit in a Corner hours together, instead of attending to his work; talking very incoherently sometimes, though at other times reasonably enough; sometimes he would lay all night on the Boards, instead of the Bed,—or write, or walk about,—read Jacob Behmen & such like; being full of Mystics or mysterious nonsense; he was a Taylor by Trade:—died at his Master's House, about 10 years ago; 2 or 3 years after he had sent these Quer(ie)s.

Those who knew not John Wesley—that however well he might set out he became, & continued to the end of his career, a mere sect-master—It may seem strange that he should deign

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

to notice such crude Nonsense, from so contemptible an Object, as he doubtless deem'd him; but, from my own knowledge of J. W. as well as from the Answers here given, some of which exhibit an air of triumph, weak & silly, for a Man of his prowess & Pretensions,—his hatred of the Quakers was the motive; this poor man was a Quaker so called—of a People whom he envied & uniformly traduced, because the most respectable, truly religious & valuable part of his Converts frequently left him & joined to them, (as he has been known *weakly* to acknowledge): an unworthy motive—but he carried his resentment so far as falsely to stigmatize their Principles & Doctrines, in his Preachings & writings, & at length forbad the attendance of their Meetings, which he at one time recommended in preference to all other besides his own, poor Man: they so frequently became convinced of Friends Principles & of the Truth; this it is & will be with Men who are [exalting?] themselves, & People to themselves, rather than Christ,—this also is a species of Priest-craft.

That some Methodists became Friends is certainly true—though the process also worked in reverse. Wesley's commendation of Quaker meetings, eventually turning to condemnation, is also confirmed in part by occasional phrases in his published writings. But surely it is hardly fair to maintain that "hatred of the Quakers" was the motive for Wesley's detailed answer to Richard Freeman.

Frank Baker.

NEW BOOKS

THE ORGANISATION OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, by Nolan B. Harmon (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, pp. 280, \$2.75).

Many of our ex-Wesleyan readers will remember Simon's *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline* with gratitude. Here is an American counterpart, a volume in appearance as attractive as the *Summary* was forbidding.

But unlike the summary, this book is intended for reading as well as for reference. The whole Constitution of the American Methodist Church is set forth and explained in a manner so clear and so readable that one longs to see a similar exposition of our own Standing Orders. Mr. Harmon, who is Book Editor of the American Methodist Church, has given his Church an admirable and indispensable analysis of Methodist polity. No part of the internal life and working of the Methodist Church has been left without explanation, and the most cursory glance at the Index indicates the breadth of