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# The Wesleys and the Canon

## An Unperceived Openness

James H. Charlesworth\*

The best scholars on the origins of Methodism have published numerous books and articles on the Wesleys and their appreciation of the Bible.<sup>1</sup> Obviously, Methodism began under the direction of an Oxford scholar who knew the Bible and its languages. The presupposition of most recent authors is that John Wesley's concept of scripture was limited to only 39 "Old Testament"<sup>2</sup> books and 27 "New Testament" documents.<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of this paper is focused on the Wesleys—Samuel, John, and Charles—and their perception of the importance of some "extra-canonical" scriptures. I shall try to demonstrate that the Wesleys had an appreciation of what we now call the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Also, most publications discuss only one of the Wesleys, usually John;<sup>4</sup> I shall indicate by looking at Samuel, John, and Charles Wesley that John and Charles inherited from their father an appreciation of a canon that did not exclude other ancient Jewish writings as inferior and devoid of inspiration. The contrast with Luther and other Reformers is impressive.

Only at a gathering of international experts on the Wesleys would it be conceivable to suggest that Samuel Wesley knew about and appreciated one of the documents in the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, that John Wesley contemplated that a document bearing the name of Enoch existed in the first century A.D., and that Charles Wesley was directly influenced by documents in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Those would be quite startling claims to make.

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<sup>1</sup>I would like to dedicate this study to three Methodists and Wesley scholars whom I admire, namely Frank Baker, S T Kimbrough, Jr., and Thomas A. Langford. I am indebted to Harriet Leonard and John Wesley Morrison for helping me locate bibliographical sources.

<sup>2</sup>I am not using this common term to disparage those who do not recognize the second half of the Christian Bible. It does not seem appropriate for the purposes of the present paper to refer to "the Hebrew Bible."

<sup>3</sup>This implication underlines, for example, S. J. Rogal's "Old Testament Prophecy in Charles Wesley's Paraphrase of Scripture," *Christian Scholar's Review* 13 (1984) 205–16.

<sup>4</sup>J. N. Oswalt's article, for example, refers to "Wesley," and assumes that everyone will know that John Wesley is meant. See Oswalt, "Wesley's Use of the Old Testament in his Doctrinal Teachings," *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 12 (1977) pp. 39–53; henceforth cited as *WTJ*. Oswalt deals only with the 39 books in the Hebrew Bible. This comment does not mean to disparage his important study; see also Oswalt's "John Wesley and the Old Testament Concept of the Holy Spirit," *Religion in Life* 48 (1979) 283–92. Oswalt demonstrates that Wesley affirmed he was "hardly sure of anything but what I learn from the Bible" (*WTJ* 12 [1977] 40), but it is not clear that Wesley meant only 39 books. It is also enlightening to observe that Oswalt can report that Wesley, in his *Sermons*, did not refer to 8 of the 39 (p. 44).

And it is precisely these arguments that I wish to introduce to Wesley experts at this time.

These words reflect my admission of not being an expert on Wesley. I come to them from two perspectives. My father and grandfather were Methodist ministers; one was awarded a D.D. and the other, my father, earned a Ph.D. in philosophical theology from Drew University. In the home and virtually everywhere we went I heard about the Wesleys, with frequent well-placed insights from my mother regarding that amazing woman, Susanna Wesley. I find it disappointing that *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (second, revised edition) can refer to Charles Wesley as the “eighteenth child of Samuel and brother of John, Wesley.”<sup>5</sup> Did not Susanna have some contribution to make?<sup>6</sup> Since her name was derived from one of the most popular of books in the Old Testament Apocrypha, it is at least conceivable at the outset that the apocryphal books may have been read in the Wesley’s home. As the Susanna of old was wise and courageous, so was the mother of John and Charles.

But, this background scarcely provides reason for the invitation to speak to the august scholars who assemble here in Princeton for the international meeting of the Charles Wesley Society. The invitation was surely because I have seen something in the Wesley corpus that is of great interest to me as one who lives in the world that produced Jesus of Nazareth, and one who spent thirteen years preparing the first full English edition of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha<sup>7</sup> and the last six years preparing the first critical edition of texts, translations, and introductions to the so-called sectarian documents among the Dead Sea Scrolls. I know that the 65 Pseudepigrapha and the 223 Dead Sea Scrolls<sup>8</sup> were considered “inspired” and full of divine revelation by many early Jews and Christians. I find it conceivable that this would not have been surprising to the Wesleys.

It would be a bit absurd to suggest that the Dead Sea Scrolls were known to the Wesleys. They were unknown to the modern world, which includes the time of the Wesleys, until the first cave was discovered in late 1946. But, it is not impossible that the Wesleys could have known about some of them. They did not; but a document related to the Dead Sea Scrolls did show up in the Cairo Geniza, and Archbishop Timotheus I, Patriarch of Seleucia, in a letter dated to circa 800, reported that manuscripts were found in the Judean desert, in caves, and near Jericho. It is conceivable, and most experts with whom I have discussed the issue

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<sup>5</sup>F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, 2d. revised edition (Oxford, 1983, 1984, 1985), p. 1466.

<sup>6</sup>The reference to John Wesley does include the mention of his mother. See *ibid.*, p. 1467.

<sup>7</sup>James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, 2 vols. (Garden City, New York, 1983, 1985); henceforth cited as *OTP*.

<sup>8</sup>Counting only the documents already entered into our computers, and not including the 3500 fragments. See, Charlesworth, ed., *Graphic Concordance to the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Tübingen and Louisville, 1991). This comment is now dated. It dates from 1991. Today we may talk about 600 Dead Sea Scrolls.

agree,<sup>9</sup> that the Patriarch was referring to the discovery of manuscripts related to the works we call the Dead Sea Scrolls. This hypothesis helps explain why a tenth- and an eleventh-century manuscript of the *Cairo Damascus Document*<sup>10</sup> was found in the Cairo Geniza. The Qumran fragments of this text have recently been published. If “Dead Sea Scrolls” were known in Christian and Jewish circles in the tenth and eleventh century, it is not impossible that the Wesleys and their contemporaries could have known them. The possible is far from the probable in this case; but our excursion helps couch the issues related to the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.

The books collected together in *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* circulated independently. Some were well known in post-Reformation circles. *Pseudo-Phocylides*, for example, was first printed in 1495 in Venice, became very popular, and was used in many schools as the text to read in Greek classes. The century before the Wesleys saw numerous editions, translations, and commentaries on this pseudepigraphon. In the pre-critical phase of biblical research it was held that it was authentic, and as P. van der Horst states, “one was delighted that a real heathen had presented a testimony to truths that in essentials were identical with biblical doctrines.”<sup>11</sup> The *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* was known in many learned centers. In 1242 the Bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste, translated this pseudepigraphon from Greek into Latin. The Latin version was printed sometime around 1515. The *editio princeps* of the Greek text was published in 1698 at Oxford by J. E. Grabe, who introduced the widely held position today that the author was a Jew but the text now contains Christian interpolations.<sup>12</sup>

The Old Testament Apocrypha are the books in the Septuagint but not in the Hebrew Bible. In 382 Pope Damasus commissioned Jerome to translate the Bible into Latin; the resulting Vulgate was based on the Greek Bible, and Jerome was the one who called the extra documents “the apocrypha,” or hidden writings. Perhaps he had in mind the reference in one of the Apocrypha, now placed in the

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<sup>9</sup>One of the best presentations of this and related issues is G. R. Driver, *The Judaean Scrolls: The Problem and a Solution* (Oxford, 1965) pp. 8–13. I do not recommend Driver’s dating of the Dead Sea Scrolls and his historical reconstructions; they have been severely criticized by leading specialists in the field of Early Judaism.

<sup>10</sup>The apocryphal compositions may not be familiar to many reading this article; they are therefore placed in italics. See the contributions by J. M. Baumgarten, D. Schwartz, and M. T. Davis in Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Damascus Document, War Scroll, and Related Documents* (The Princeton Theological Seminary Dead Sea Scrolls Project 2; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck] and Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995) and J. M. Baumgarten with J. T. Milik, *Qumran Cave 4* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 18; Oxford: Clarendon, 1996).

<sup>11</sup>P. van der Horst in *OTP* 2, p. 572. Also, see van der Horst’s definitive work, *The Sentences of Pseudo-Phocylides: With Introduction and Commentary* (Leiden, 1978). In 1606 J. Scaliger demonstrated that the poem had not been written by Phocylides; hence, the Wesleys would probably not have thought that it derives from the sixth century B.C. Ionic poet of Miletus. Perhaps additional research will clarify such issues.

<sup>12</sup>J. E. Grabe, ed., *Spicilegium SS. Patrum ut et Haeticorum, seculi post Christum natum*, 3 vols. (Oxford, 1698); for the T12P see 1:129–44.

Pseudepigrapha because it is not in some early uncials of the Septuagint. The author of *4 Ezra* describes how Ezra dictates to five amanuenses 95 books. Of these 24 were to be published, but 70 were to be handed only to the wise. And the Most High said to Ezra: *priora quae scripsisti in palam pone, et legant digni et indigni; Nouissimos autem LXX conservabis, ut tradas eos sapientibus de populo tuo . . .*<sup>13</sup> While Jerome considered the Apocrypha ecclesiastical—that is only partly suitable for use in the church—and uninspired, though not spurious,<sup>14</sup> the author of *4 Ezra* evaluated them more highly than the books to be made public, stressing that, “*In his enim est uena intellectus et sapientiae fons et scientiae flumen*” (*4 Ezra* 14:47).<sup>15</sup>

Although this book, *4 Ezra*, is now considered part of the Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, in the eighteenth century it was part of the Apocrypha of the Authorized Version and called *2 Esdras*. Hence, it was obviously known to the Wesleys in both English and Greek. The English translation used by the Wesleys was the Authorized Version or King James Version of 1611. It contains an English translation of the following Apocrypha:

*1 Esdras*  
*2 Esdras*  
*Tobit*  
*Judith*  
*Additions to Esther*  
*Wisdom of Solomon*  
*Ecclesiasticus or the Wisdom of Sirach*  
*Baruch*  
*the Letter of Jeremiah*  
*Susanna*  
*The Prayer of Azariah and the Song of the Three Men*  
*Bel and the Dragon*  
*The Prayer of Manasseh*  
*1 Maccabees*  
*2 Maccabees*

Of these fifteen documents all are considered part of the Apocrypha today, except for *2 Esdras* (which is *4 Ezra*) and the *Prayer of Manasseh*; both of which are placed within the Pseudepigrapha. As F. H. A. Scrivener pointed out in 1884<sup>16</sup> and B. Metzger stressed in 1957,<sup>17</sup> the translators of the King James Version of the Apocrypha showed disinterest in, even disdain for, these sacred books. The

<sup>13</sup>The Latin is from R. L. Bensly, ed., *The Fourth Book of Ezra*, with an introduction by M. R. James (Cambridge, 1895) p. 72.

<sup>14</sup>See the comment by E. J. Goodspeed, *The Story of the Apocrypha* (Chicago, 1939) pp. 2–3.

<sup>15</sup>For an English translation of *4 Ezra*, see *OTP* I.

<sup>16</sup>F. H. A. Scrivener, *The Authorized Edition of the English Bible (1611)* (Cambridge, 1988) pp. 140ff.

<sup>17</sup>B. M. Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha* (New York, 1957) pp. 238–40.

*editio princeps* of the "Authorized Version," for example, misnumbered the beginning of 4 Ezra (= 2 Esdras) as "CHAP II.," then on the next page at the top noted it was "Chap. viij.," and misnamed the apocryphon as "*I. Esdras.*" on the top margin to 4 Ezra 4:21–48.<sup>18</sup> These errors reflect carelessness and disrespect for the "Old Testament Apocrypha."

The original 1611 Bible did, however, contain numerous references to the Apocrypha among the few marginalia of the canonical books.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the Geneva Bible of 1560 placed the apocryphal *Prayer of Manasseh* between 2 Chronicles and Ezra; and it was this Bible, as the readers of this periodical know, was so influential on Shakespeare, Bunyan, the Pilgrims, and Cromwell's group.

As we access the possible influence of the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha upon the Wesleys we must remember two important aspects of eighteenth century culture in the West. First, the Apocrypha was influencing not only theologians but also artists and Shakespeare along with other British authors. The Apocrypha was declared canonical at the Council of Trent in 1546, despite its deutero-canonical status in previous Roman Catholic works. The Church of England presented the Apocrypha with ambivalence; for example, the 1562 Thirty-nine Articles of Religion is frustratingly contradictory. The Westminster Confession of Faith, which derives from decisions made in 1647, pronounced the Apocrypha devoid of divine inspiration, not part of the canon, and of no authority in the Church (chap. 1, sec. 3).<sup>20</sup> Despite sermons against the Apocrypha by the sagacious John Lightfoot, the lectionary of the Anglican Prayer Book excerpted readings from the Apocrypha. The Apocrypha suffered from the polemics that separated Protestants and Roman Catholics.

Second, the two centuries in which the study of the Pseudepigrapha has been central are the eighteenth and the twentieth. The first collection was published in the early seventeenth century by J. A. Fabricius and titled *Codex pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti: Collectus, castigatus, testimoniisque, censuris et animadversionibus illustratus*.<sup>21</sup> As a scholar at Oxford John Wesley and others in his group may well have known these volumes. It should also be remembered that the pseudepigraphical books influenced western artists, especially in the illustrated Bibles (but this area has never been fully researched).

With these preliminary comments we can now more carefully assess to what extent the Wesleys knew and appreciated what we call the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Obviously, the Wesleys were students of the

<sup>18</sup>See the convenient facsimile edition: *The Holy Bible: An Exact Reprint in Roman Type, Page for Page of the Authorized Version Published in the Year 1611*, with an introduction by W. Pollard (Oxford, 1985).

<sup>19</sup>I am indebted to B. M. Metzger for pointing this fact out to me. See his *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, p. 188.

<sup>20</sup>For the appropriate section and an insightful discussion, see Metzger, *An Introduction to the Apocrypha*, p. 192.

<sup>21</sup>2 vols. (Hamburg, 1722 [2nd ed.]).

Bible. Samuel Wesley's treatise of 599 pages on Job was published after his death. John wrote 3,682 pages on the Old and New Testament. Charles edited an edition of it and composed hymns which were a mosaic of biblical lore. They held the Bible in the highest esteem and were branded "Bible moths" by their adversaries.

In 1755 John Wesley published his work on the New Testament, and between 1765 and 1766 issued three volumes on the Old Testament. John Wesley did not merely abridge others' work, he artfully blended "the best of other scholars' work into the stream of his own theological perspectives."<sup>22</sup> Wesley advised that one should set aside time, "every morning and evening," for reading scripture and mediating upon it;<sup>23</sup> he followed his own advice. While many of John Wesley's biblical notes are dated by subsequent historical, theological, and Christological studies, one immediately feels, while reading them, that he lived out his belief:

The Scripture . . . of the *Old and New Testament*, is a most solid and precious system of Divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste, prefer to all writings of men, however wise, or learned, or holy.<sup>24</sup>

John Wesley was referring only to the 66 books in the Old and New Testaments; one may, nevertheless, ponder whether he used the image "the fountain of heavenly wisdom" because of 4 Ezra's "sapientiae fons" (4 Ezra 14:47).

These preliminary observations provide the perspective requisite for three explorations: Samuel Wesley's knowledge and appreciation of the Jewish and Christian apocryphal writings; John Wesley's reference for the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha; and Charles Wesley's dependence upon some apocryphal books.

### Samuel Wesley (1662–1735)

Samuel Wesley published many pamphlets. A most important publication is virtually inaccessible; the few Wesleyan specialists who know about it refer to "its extreme scarceness."<sup>25</sup> In 1866 it was deemed "extremely scarce,"<sup>26</sup> and Frank Baker's "Bibliography" shows only five known copies.<sup>27</sup> It is not preserved in the historical archives at Drew nor in Speer Library in Princeton. It can

<sup>22</sup>G. R. Schoenhals, ed., *Wesley's Notes on the Bible* (Grand Rapids, 1987) p. 7.

<sup>23</sup>John Wesley, *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*, p. 20.

<sup>24</sup>J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (New York, n.d. [London, 1755]) p. 55 [italics his]. The quotation appears also, with edited punctuation, in Wesley, *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*, p. 403.

<sup>25</sup>T. Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley* (London, 1841) 2:499.

<sup>26</sup>L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, M.A., Rector of Epworth* (London, 1866) p. 382.

<sup>27</sup>I am deeply grateful to Frank Baker for this information, shared with me in a letter dated Aug. 12, 1991.

be found in the United States on microfilm at Duke University, but only in the Frank Baker Collection.<sup>28</sup> Thanks to the advice of Frank Baker I have been able to find this publication reprinted in an appendix to T. Jackson's *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.*<sup>29</sup> I refer to Samuel Wesley's *Advice to a Young Clergyman* which was published posthumously in London in 1735 under the editorship of John Wesley, who lists this work among his own publications for 1735.<sup>30</sup>

Evidencing knowledge of Greek, Latin, and even Hebrew, and referring wisely to Chrysostom, Polycarp, Ignatius, Plutarch, Origen, and of course to the New Testament, especially Paul and the Gospel of John, Samuel Wesley approves of the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. He warns that these books must not "be neglected," because they are "of great and venerable antiquity" (p. 513). He even offers the opinion that Paul and Jesus may well have "alluded or referred to" the *Wisdom of Solomon*, *1 Maccabees*, *2 Maccabees*, and possibly other apocryphal works. Besides this remarkable admission is his sage exhortation that the Apocrypha contains "moral and religious sentences and observations" that are "very useful and instructive" (p. 513). Such apocryphal documents, if "prudently interspersed on occasion, would give a venerable turn and aspect to any sermon, and have a good effect, as has been often experienced, on the audience" (p. 513). Such advice is sorely needed today, especially with the excitement generated by the Dead Sea Scrolls and other Jewish extracanonical works; and it is obvious, from these admissions alone, that Samuel Wesley quoted the Apocrypha and some of the Pseudepigrapha in his sermons.

Clergymen and laity alike today are fascinated by the study of Jesus' time. Samuel Wesley knew that the primary source for the two centuries before Jesus' birth are *1* and *2 Maccabees*: "The historical parts are necessary for the connexion of sacred history with profane, and of the Old Testament with the New; as has been admirably shown to us county Clergymen . . ." (p. 513). Not only the historical dimension but also the prophetic aspect of the Apocrypha is heralded, and in cutting rhetoric: "And the prophetic part seems in some places surprisingly clear and noble; even in Tobit, if his dog, and his sparrows, and his devil had been left out, or sunk together, as I have often wished, in the river Euphrates" (p. 513). Here the Wesleys part with the advice of some Reformers, even if Samuel Wesley probably was not obliquely referring to Martin Luther's wish to hurl *4 Ezra* over the Elbe.

<sup>28</sup>F. Baker informs us that *Advice to a Young Clergyman* can be found in Canada in the OTV and in Great Britain in Didsbury College, Westbury-on-Tyne, Lambeth Palace Library, London, UK, MA.

<sup>29</sup>T. Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, M.A.*; see 2:500–34. I am grateful, and indebted, to Frank Baker and also Harriet Leonard, both of whom rushed me independently xerox copies of this work.

<sup>30</sup>*Letters*, 26.7–8. I am grateful to F. Baker for this information.

Samuel Wesley exhorts the young clergyman not to neglect reading “the earliest Apocryphal pieces in the first Christian ages,” because they “contain much of the Jewish notions, customs, genius, and learning; particularly that ancient forgery of some Judaizing Christian (as I doubt were one or two of the Esdrases, [he is referring to a book now in the Apocrypha and one in the Pseudepigrapha]) which is still in our peoples’ hands” (pp. 513–14). It is at this point in his writing that Samuel Wesley evidences knowledge of and indeed approval of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, one of the most important documents in the Pseudepigrapha. His advice is clear and opinionated; the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* should be read, but it is only a “pretended” (that is pseudepigraphical) work that has “some vile doctrine in it” (p. 514). Samuel Wesley could have known this work from J. A. Fabricius’ *Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti*, which appeared in the 1720s.<sup>31</sup>

At this point in his work Samuel Wesley reveals astounding knowledge of the New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. He commends as perhaps “worth reading” (but admits he has not read) the *Historia Jesu Infantis*, which is probably *The Latin Gospel of the Infancy*.<sup>32</sup> He refers to the “persecuting Emperors” and perhaps this aside within parentheses explains the preceding wish to be able to read the *Gospel of Judas* and the *Acta Pilati*. The *Gospel of Judas* has not yet been recovered. Samuel Wesley may have known about the existence of a *Iudae euangelium* because of the reference to it by Irenaeus and Epiphanius.<sup>33</sup> The latter refers to a Greek document titled *euangelion tou louda*. The *Acts of Pilate* could have been known to Samuel Wesley because of a comment in Justin Martyr<sup>34</sup> and perhaps another in Tertullian;<sup>35</sup> but the extant apocryphal *Acts of Pilate*, which is sometimes called the *Gospel of Nicodemus*, is clearly referred to by Epiphanius around A.D. 375.<sup>36</sup> Samuel Wesley knows about the *Epistle to the Laodiceans*; but accords it “little worth” (p. 514).

Samuel Wesley’s concept of inspiration fortunately is not limited to a closed canon. One can hear God’s voice in works other than the 39 canonical works in the Old Testament. For example, he refers to “the blessed Ignatius’ Epistles,” which can “never be enough read, or praised, or valued, next to the inspired writings; (though he sometimes owns he was himself inspired;). . .” (p. 514). Samuel

<sup>31</sup>See Fabricius, “Testamentum [the Greek is correctly plural] XII. Patriarcharum,” in *Codex Pseudepigraphus Veteris Testamenti* (Hamburg, 1722 [2d. ed.] pp. 519–748. I doubt that Samuel Wesley worked from Le Jay’s *Polyglotte de Paris* of 1645 or from Walton’s *London Polyglotta* of 1657.

<sup>32</sup>It could also be *The Birth of Mary* (once called the *Protoevangelium of James*. See Charlesworth, et al., eds., *The New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha: A Guide to Publications, with Excursuses on Apocalypses* (American Theological Library Association Bibliography Series 17, Metuchen, N.J., London, 1987).

<sup>33</sup>Irenaeus, *adv. haer.* 1.28.9; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 38.1.5.

<sup>34</sup>*First Apology*, chaps. 35 and 48.

<sup>35</sup>*Apologeticus*, chaps. 5 and 21.

<sup>36</sup>*Haer.* 50.1.

Wesley reports that Ignatius considered writings sometimes “inspired,” praises him highly, and thus seems to admit that his epistles, as well as the canon, contain God’s word.

The nineteenth and twentieth centuries have witnessed the discovery, publication, and study of thousands of documents known to the early Jews and early Christians. Most of these are easily available to each of us. The same cannot be said of Samuel Wesley and his contemporaries. Samuel Wesley’s indefatigableness and erudition is astounding.<sup>37</sup> His appreciation of Early Judaism contrasts sharply with Martin Luther’s anti-Semitic pronouncements;<sup>38</sup> for example, regarding catechizing he praised “the ancient Jews and first Christians” for being “so firmly grounded in their religion . . .” (p. 529).

All these comments by the Rector of Epworth were poured into a “letter” for a Mr. Hoole, namely Nathaniel Hoole,<sup>39</sup> before his ordination, and before he became Samuel Wesley’s Curate at Epworth. It is a lengthy and erudite letter reminiscent of Paul’s epistles. It took Wesley “some weeks’ pains in first writing, and more in transcribing them . . .” (p. 533). In the process Wesley recast and pondered over his thoughts.<sup>40</sup> With appropriate humility he commended the work to be preserved, and these words were directly first to Rev. Hoole and then to his son, John Wesley. The Rector never intended them to be published; he instructed his son, John, “you must return” to me the work intended for Hoole, “I having no copy; and pray let none but yourself see them.”<sup>41</sup> The document is an invaluable source for understanding not only Samuel Wesley’s character but also the home in which John and Charles were nurtured.

Samuel Wesley’s endorsement of the documents in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha are to be comprehended within the context of the *Advice to a Young Clergyman*. Stress is obviously, but not consistently, placed on the canon:

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<sup>37</sup>Samuel Wesley advises the young clergyman not to neglect “the heathen moralists,” and goes on to reveal impressive knowledge and appreciation of Plato and other classical Greek as well as Latin authors.

<sup>38</sup>For a judicious assessment of these, see H. J. Hillerbrand, “Martin Luther and the Jews,” in *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Shared Ground Among Jews and Christians: A Series of *Explorations* 1; New York, 1990) pp. 127–50.

<sup>39</sup>He was the younger brother of Rev. Joseph Hoole (1688?–1745), Vicar of Haxey (1712–1736), Rector of St. Ann’s in Manchester (1736–1745), and a very good friend of the Wesleys. Nathaniel Hoole entered Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge University, in May 27, 1722, at the age of 21. He was ordained a deacon at Lincoln on September 23, 1722, and then became Curate at Epworth. The 1721/1722 parish register transcripts of Epworth were signed “Nat. Hoole, Curat[us].” The same appears in 1722/1723. But in 1723/1724 the erstwhile Curate signed his name “Nat. Hoole, Minister.” Nathaniel Hoole’s life is not researched and remains little known; perhaps it is lost forever in the opaqueness of history. Perhaps his ministry ended; in 1737 he was a schoolmaster at Wanstead, Essex. I am most grateful to F. Baker for this important information; he refers to Venn’s *Alumni Cantabrigienses*, the transcripts in the Diocesan Registry, Lincoln, and Musgravels *Obituary*.

<sup>40</sup>I wonder why he makes no mention of Josephus, the great historian of Jesus’ time, and Fabricius.

<sup>41</sup>Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 2:499.

But the main subject of a Clergyman's studies ought undoubtedly to be the holy Bible, which I look upon to be so far from being exhausted, even as to critical learning, so necessary to understand it, that I much question whether it ever will be so; because it contains an unfathomable mine of heavenly treasure, capable so richly to recompense and overbalance all our pains and labour.<sup>42</sup>

Samuel Wesley, and for that matter his two famous sons, never contemplated that the Christian canon was open so that other sacred and inspired writings from Early Judaism could be added to it. They did, however, recognize that God's word was found primarily in the Bible but also in other writings.

The celebration of the importance of some books in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha needs to be contextualized. Samuel Wesley urged the reading of the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs* but admitted that there is "some vile doctrine in it."<sup>43</sup> On the facing page he saluted the thoughts of Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato, claiming that most of their "doctrines and notions" are "agreeable enough to be revealed religion and the Christian faith."<sup>44</sup> Obviously, the author of *Dissertationes in librum Jobi*<sup>45</sup> wanted the clergy to be well read and authoritative. There can be no doubt whatsoever that he knew, read, and appreciated the documents now collected together in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. He taught his children to appreciate them, and as we shall see both John and Charles followed his advice.

### John Wesley (1703–1791)

Samuel Wesley's commendation of books in the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament and even the New Testament was surely known to John Wesley, since he edited his father's document, wrote a preface to it, and saw that it was published posthumously. Its usefulness, especially today in light of the unparalleled interest in the Jewish "sacred" writings contemporaneous with Jesus and in the early non-canonical literature, may be derived from Samuel Wesley's words to his son, John Wesley: the documents "may not be unuseful to you."<sup>46</sup>

In the preface to Samuel Wesley's *Advice to a Young Clergyman*, John Wesley referred to himself "as the person with whom the original copy remained." It would be important to find the copy and see if there are enlightening marginalia and other notations by Samuel or John Wesley.

John Wesley publishes the so-called letter with the conviction that "it might be of service to many more." He even admits the possibility that in his own duty to

<sup>42</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:510.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:514.

<sup>44</sup>*Ibid.*, 2:515.

<sup>45</sup>S. Wesley, *Dissertationes in librum Jobi* (London, 1736).

<sup>46</sup>Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 2:499.

God in "gathering the poor sheep that are scattered abroad," he may face the possibility of "pouring out his blood for them."<sup>47</sup>

It is evident that John and Charles Wesley were influenced by their father's "letter." He, of course, was the one who introduced them to the classics and theology, and was their first teacher.

John Wesley's knowledge of his father's *Advice to a Young Clergyman* does not adequately explain some of his own references to the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. He published some interesting comments on Jewish apocryphal books not mentioned by his father.

The most important Jewish apocryphal document from the time of Jesus is most likely so-called *I Enoch*,<sup>48</sup> that is *Ethiopic Enoch*, which is actually five or more books attributed to Enoch and written intermittently by Palestinian Jews during the period from about 250 B.C. to approximately the destruction of the Temple by Titus' troops in A.D. 70.

The library of Enoch books, or *I Enoch*, was not unknown in the West and in England during the time of the Wesleys. It had been known to many early Christian scholars, and was revered as inspired and perhaps even canonical by the author of *Barnabas*, and such luminaries as Irenaeus<sup>49</sup> Tertullian,<sup>50</sup> Clement of Alexandria,<sup>51</sup> and to some of Origen's contemporaries (but not to him).<sup>52</sup> The work disappeared about the eighth century. The Greek of the Chronographer Syncellus was published in 1658 by Scaliger.<sup>53</sup> In 1722 Fabricius republished Scaliger's edition of Syncellus' Greek.<sup>54</sup> Hence, in 1755 when John Wesley published his *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* he could have known about such Greek editions of the *Book of Enoch*.

<sup>47</sup>John Wesley in Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 2:500.

<sup>48</sup>A distinguished specialist of the Pseudepigrapha is R. H. Charles. He offered the opinion that the "Book of Enoch is for the history of theological development the most important pseudepigraph of the first two centuries B.C. Some of its authors—and there were many—belonged to the true succession of the prophets . . ." R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch or I Enoch* (Oxford, 1912) p. x.

<sup>49</sup>Irenaeus, 4.30; see Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, 1:168.

<sup>50</sup>Tertullian, *De idololatria* chapters 4, 15; *De cultu foeminarum* 2.10; *de cultu foeminarum* 1.2; see Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, 1:168–71. Like Samuel Wesley Tertullian was focused on the Bible as the source of inspiration, but unlike Samuel Wesley he despised the Jewish apocryphal writings, except for the *Sibylline Oracles* and so-called *I Enoch*. He considered the latter to be authentic, ancient, and scriptural: "this scripture of Enoch speaks about our Lord" (*De cultu fem* 3.3). See the judicious comments by J. Daniélou in *The Origins of Latin Christianity*, trans. D. Smith and J. A. Baker (London, Philadelphia, 1977) p. 162.

<sup>51</sup>See the Greek and Latin in Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, 1:171–73.

<sup>52</sup>See Fabricius, *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, 1:173–75. Origen judged the *Book of Enoch en tais ekklesiais ou panu pheretai os theia*; but he admits that some Christians accept it *os hagian to biblion*. See the discussion in Laurence, *The Book of Enoch*, pp. xiv–xv.

<sup>53</sup>See now the edition by M. Black, *Apocalypsis Henochi Graece* (Pseudepigrapha Veteris Testamenti Graece 3; Leiden, 1970).

<sup>54</sup>Fabricius, "Enochi Prophetiae," *Codex Pseudepigraphus*, 1:160–223.

The passage of interest to him, namely the quotation found in Jude, however, was not found in these publications. There was reason to doubt that a book of Enoch containing the passage quoted by Jude existed.

This doubt was removed in the century of the Wesleys. Ludolf, in his *Commentarius ad Histor. Ethiopicam*, reports how he searched in vain for copies of the *Book of Enoch*. He reports how he spared “neque sumptibus neque laboribus.”<sup>55</sup> Subsequently, no scholar searched for a lost book of Enoch. In 1773 the distinguished European traveler Bruce brought back from Abyssinia three copies of the *Book of Enoch*. He placed one in the Bibliothèque nationale in Paris, one perhaps eventually in the British Museum (Library) in London, and one in the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The *Book of Enoch* was translated for the first time by R. Laurence. His English translation appeared in 1833 and his Ethiopic edition in 1838.<sup>56</sup> The full title of his first work is as follows: *The Book of Enoch the Prophet: An Apocryphal Production Supposed for Ages to Have Been Lost; But Discovered at the Close of the Last Century in Abyssinia; now First Translated from an Ethiopic MS in the Bodleian Library.*<sup>57</sup>

In a period when there was reason to doubt the existence of a book in which Jude's quotation was located it is impressive to observe John Wesley's comment regarding Jude, verses 14 and 15:

And of these also, Enoch, the seventh from Adam, prophesied, saying, Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his holy ones, To execute judgment upon all, and to convict all the ungodly of all their ungodly deeds, which they have impiously committed, and of all the grievous things which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.<sup>58</sup>

Wesley unfortunately makes no comment about the intriguing aorist *prophēteusen*, so we have no clue whether he considered Jude was referring to a so-called extra-canonical book as inspired and prophetic.<sup>59</sup> He does make a noteworthy comment about the existence of a book now lost to his contemporaries: “St. Jude might have know this either from some ancient book, or tradition, or immediate revelation.” The “Late Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford” would be pleased to learn that the quotation by Jude is now not only found in

<sup>55</sup>Ludolf, *Commentarius ad Histor. Ethiopicam*, p. 347; n. V, I am dependent upon R. Laurence, *The Book of Enoch* (Oxford, 1833) p. v.

<sup>56</sup>Laurence, *Libri Enoch Versio Aethiopica* (Oxford, 1838).

<sup>57</sup>Oxford, 1833.

<sup>58</sup>J. Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament* (New York, n.d. [London, 1755]) p. 648.

<sup>59</sup>See Bo Reicke's insight: “Yet it is clear that Jude regarded this writing as inspired. In fact, due to its presumed antiquity, First Enoch is placed on an even higher level than the Old Testament prophets. For it is said to contain prophecies of the patriarch Enoch dating from the antediluvian age.” Bo Reicke, *The Epistles of James, Peter, and Jude* (Anchor Bible 37; New York, 1964), pp. 209–10. Contrast Bo Reicke's perspicacity with the comment of P. A. Cedar, “Jude is not referring to it [the book of Enoch] as Scripture, but rather as a common source with which his Jewish readers would be very familiar. *James, 1, 2 Peter, Jude*” (The Communicator's Commentary 11; Waco, Texas, 1984) p. 257.

more than a dozen Ethiopic manuscripts of *I Enoch* but also on a leather fragment from a copy of the *Book of Enoch* preserved in Aramaic of the time of Herod the Great.<sup>60</sup> John Wesley was correct; the quotation in Jude is from an “ancient book.”<sup>61</sup>

In verse nine Jude may refer to another Jewish apocryphal book. The modern debate has centered on whether he was referring to the *Testament of Moses*. What I have tried to stress is that the passage is not present in the only extant and mutilated manuscript of this pseudepigraphon, and that we ought to admit that Jude may well be referring to a work unknown to us or to some fluid oral tradition.<sup>62</sup> John Wesley’s comments seem on target: “It does not appear whether St. Jude learned this by any revelation, or from ancient tradition. It suffices, that these things were not only true, but acknowledged as such by them to whom he wrote . . . .”<sup>63</sup>

John Wesley also knew that the reference to “Jannes and Jambres” in 2 Timothy 3:8 referred to the chief Egyptian magician. Wesley does not suggest that “Jannes and Jambres” may have been an ancient Jewish document; he merely states that “Several ancient writers” speak about them.<sup>64</sup> There is today no reason to suggest that the author of 2 Timothy knew the extant pseudepigraphon called *Jannes and Jambres*. The reference is not specific, and as Wesley noted, the tradition was well known and part of Jewish culture and lore. Today we know the names of these magicians who opposed Moses even though they are not given in Exodus 7:11. They are named in the *Cairo Damascus Document*, Pliny’s *Natural History* 30.2.11, Apuleius’ *Apology* 90, and the *Acts of Pilate* 5:1. John Wesley thus rightly concluded that 2 Timothy does not refer to a document but to a tradition.

John Wesley’s appreciation of the Old Testament Apocrypha is reflected in his translation of a poem by Scheffler:

Du bist die Weisheit selbst die ewiglich regieret,  
Der tiefeste Verstand, der alles gluecklich fuehret.<sup>65</sup>

John Wesley translated these poetic lines freely:

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<sup>60</sup>For a photograph, see Charlesworth, *Jesus Within Judaism* (Anchor Bible Reference Library 1; New York, 1988) illustration 3.

<sup>61</sup>If John Wesley knew the *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, he probably should have noted that the *Book of Enoch* is mentioned numerous times in it. That he did not do so is clear; but that does not prove he had not read this pseudepigraphon.

<sup>62</sup>Charlesworth, *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha and the New Testament* (Society for New Testament Studies Monograph Series 54; Cambridge, 1985) pp. 75–77.

<sup>63</sup>Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, pp. 647–48.

<sup>64</sup>Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, p. 553.

<sup>65</sup>From Scheffler, *Du unvergleiches Gut*; I am indebted to H. Bett for this reference and insight regarding John Wesley’s use of the Apocrypha. See Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism* (London, 1912) p. 93.

High throned on heaven's eternal hill,  
 In number, weight, and measure still  
 Thou sweetly orderest all that is;  
 And yet Thou deign'st to come to me,  
 And guide my steps, that I, with Thee  
 Enthroned, may reign in endless bliss.<sup>66</sup>

Inserted into the translation and clearly not implied by the German are two lines taken from the *Wisdom of Solomon*:

“. . . but thou hast ordered all things in measure, and number, and weight” (*Wisdom 11:20; editio princeps*).

The reference to *metrō kai arithmō kai stathmō* and then *panta* indicates direct borrow by John Wesley from the *Wisdom of Solomon*; that he transposes the order of “measure, number, weight” to “number, weight, and measure” may indicate that he is not working from the Greek but from memory. He then adds an idea from earlier in this apocryphal work:

Wisdom reacheth from one ende to another mightily:  
 and sweetly doeth she order all things.  
 (*Wisdom 8:1; editio princeps*)

John Wesley's mind moves in interesting ways; Wisdom is not mentioned in his rendering, but she is explicit in the German poem and the English translation of the Greek text (but not in this verse, although she is the *nomen regens* and stated explicitly in verses 24 and 28). Also, the comment that she “sweetly orderest all that is” derives from the *Wisdom of Solomon*: “*kai dioikei ta panta chrēstōs*.”

In praising John Wesley and his perception of the vast amount of Jewish documents extant during the time of Jesus and the authors of the New Testament writings, we must not portray him as a specialist of Early Judaism or expert on the Jewish apocryphal works. He incorrectly attempts to correct Jude, “There were only five of the fathers between Adam and Enoch; 1 Chron i.1.”<sup>67</sup> Jude was correct in stating that Enoch was “the seventh from Adam.” The succession is perfect since the number seven is symbolic of perfection; the line is as follows: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Qenan, Mahalalel, Yered, and Enoch.<sup>68</sup> From Enoch to Noah is three, completing the first sacred ten: Enoch, Methuselah, Lemek, Noah.

This rapid review is certainly not exhaustive; it is only prolegomenous of the ways John Wesley was sensitive to the vast number of Jewish traditions and books that helped shape Jesus, his immediate followers, and the authors of the New Testament documents. He rightly showed the ways to attempt to see the sacred writings in the New Testament within their nascent milieu, and how to

<sup>66</sup>Taken from Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, p. 92.

<sup>67</sup>Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, p. 648.

<sup>68</sup>For a reliable discussion see J. C. VanderKam, *Enoch and the Growth of an Apocalyptic Tradition* (Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 16; Washington, D.C., 1984).

experience the living power of God and the Holy Spirit by reading scripture devotionally.

Wesley was also ahead of his time regarding sensitivity to Jews and Judaism. The anti-Semitism so prevalent in many of the Reformers, especially Luther, are noticeably absent. He is even ahead of most Methodist bishops, superintendents, and itinerant ministers today in his bold stance regarding the possibility of developing a coherent theology of two covenants.

John Wesley could easily have disparaged the Jews. They had been expelled from England in 1290. As one who considered the world his parish, he could have followed Luther's injunction "to set fire to their synagogues or schools and to bury and cover with dirt whatever will not burn . . . in honor of our Lord and of Christendom."<sup>69</sup> He could have been influenced by Erasmus and confess: "If it is Christian to hate the Jews, then we are all good Christians."<sup>70</sup> Or, he could have been swayed by a word attributed to "the Almighty Lord" by the author of *4 Ezra* (= *2 Esdras*): "Seeing yee haue forsaken mee, I will forsake you also: when yee desire me to be gracious vnto you, I shall haue no mercy vpon you" (*4 Ezra* 1:25; *editio princeps* of KJV). He did not do so; in fact he comprehended that God had not forsaken his chosen people, the Jews.

As is well known, Paul in *Romans* 11:1 asks, "Hath God rejected his people?" He immediately answers his question: "God forbid." To this verse Wesley adds the note: "*Hath God rejected his, whole people*—All Israel! In no wise. Now there is a remnant who believe, ver. 5. And hereafter all Israel will be saved, ver. 26."<sup>71</sup> The full implications of Paul's words in light of other passages in *Romans*, and of Wesley's statement within his theology are not clear; one possibility is that Wesley, unwilling to conceive that God has forsaken his covenant with Israel, opens the door for revelation and speculation regarding two covenants, one with faithful Israel and one with believing non-Israelites, so long as both are grounded on divine grace and the uniqueness of Jesus the Christ is not compromised.<sup>72</sup> This possibility seems enhanced by the recognition that scripture functions sacramentally for John Wesley,<sup>73</sup> and that he held "a universal vision," quoting with equal authority from both testaments.<sup>74</sup> Wesley was a careful and critical a biblical

<sup>69</sup>Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies*; see D. A. Rausch, *A Legacy of Hatred* (Chicago, 1984) p. 29.

<sup>70</sup>See Rausch, *A Legacy of Hatred*, p. 30, who is dependent on E. H. Flannery's *The Anguish of the Jews* (New York, 1965) p. 151.

<sup>71</sup>Wesley, *Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament*, p. 393.

<sup>72</sup>In making these controversial comments I admit being more faithful to God's love revealed especially in the life and teachings of Jesus than to John Wesley's overt concern that Jews are to be saved through Christ. That is to say, Wesley's words on Paul are avenues for more openness to God's continuing revelation.

<sup>73</sup>See the brilliant thoughts by L. Shelton, "John Wesley's Approach to Scripture in Historical Perspective," *WTJ* 16 (1981), pp. 23–50.

<sup>74</sup>See the judicious comments by D. S. Ferguson, "John Wesley on Scripture: The Hermeneutics of Pietism," *Methodist History* 22 (1984), 234–45; especially see p. 239, and by T. L. Smith, "John Wesley and the Wholeness of Scripture," *Interpretation* 39 (1985), 246–62; especially see pp. 251–52.

scholar, but he must be seen as a seventeenth-century person who on the one hand felt the winds of biblical criticism stirring from the pens of Richard Simon and Jean Astruc,<sup>75</sup> and poured his energies into preaching and administering the unwieldy Methodist society.<sup>76</sup>

John Wesley had stressed that the Old Testament is important and elevated the Torah to a position of virtual parity with the gospel, raising the criticism of evangelicals who label Wesley's biblical exegesis and hermeneutic "illogical" and disparage his "Sinaitic stance."<sup>77</sup> The search within Wesley's thought for seeds that may blossom into a more enlightened dialogue between Christians and Jews may also be found in Wesley's pleas for freedom of thought within Christianity, and in his predisposition to defend such aberrant thinkers as Montanus and Pelagius.<sup>78</sup>

In his sermon titled "Catholic Spirit" of 1750 John Wesley does not mention the Jews.<sup>79</sup> It assumes that Christianity is—or should be—the religion of the world. He does, however, urge tolerance for factions within Christianity. This plea for tolerance is understandable in light of the sufferings and threats he had to endure from other Christians, and if Methodists today would apply this spirit to other religions in our pluralistic society the relations among Christians and Jews would obviously be improved.<sup>80</sup>

Today John Wesley's brilliance can only be labeled perspicacious. It is heartening to see his appreciation of Jewish literature, Jews, and Judaism heralded by leading Methodist scholars, many of whom are ordained ministers, like Peder Borgen of Trondheim, Robert Hammerton-Kelly of Stanford, S T Kimbrough of New Jersey, Robert Osborn of Duke University, D. Moody Smith of Duke Divinity School, and Grover Zinn of Oberlin.<sup>81</sup>

In addition to the fresh data discussed above, it is imperative now to draw attention to John Wesley's use of the Jewish apocryphal literature as revealed in

<sup>75</sup>See H. Kingdon, "John Wesley: Bible Scholar Extraordinaire," *The Asbury Seminarian* 40 (1985) 39–54.

<sup>76</sup>For a glimpse of the debilitating tasks assumed by John Wesley see F. Baker, "John Wesley, Biblical Commentator, 11 BJRULM 71 (1989) 110–20. As Bishop Ole E. Borgen reminds us when we may slip into thinking Wesley a "professor of Bible": "For John Wesley the people called Methodists were raised up for one purpose: To spread scriptural holiness over the land." Borgen, "NO ENDS WITHOUT THE MEANS: John Wesley's Sacramental and Spiritual Revival," in *Context: Festschrift til Peder Borgen*, ed. P. W. Bockman and R. E. Kristiansen (Relieff 24; Trondheim, 1987) pp. 35–44; the quotation is on p. 35.

<sup>77</sup>See the harsh comments of W. H. Mullen, "John Wesley's Method of Biblical Interpretation," *Religion in Life* 47 (1978) 99–108; see especially pp. 100–101.

<sup>78</sup>See the comments by A. C. Outler, *WTJ* 20 (1985) 8–9.

<sup>79</sup>See vol. 2, pp. 79–96, in the series titled *The Works of John Wesley*.

<sup>80</sup>I am indebted to conversations with Frank Baker and to letters from him for these reflections.

<sup>81</sup>See their chapters in *Jews and Christians: Exploring the Past, Present, and Future*, ed. James H. Charlesworth (Shared Ground Among Jews and Christians: A Series of Explorations 1; New York, 1990), *Jesus' Jewishness: Exploring the Place of Jesus in Early Judaism*, ed. Charlesworth (Shared Ground Among Jews and Christians 2; New York, 1991), *Fear* (Shared Ground Among Jews and Christians 3); Hammerton-Kelly has contributed to *The Messiah*, ed. Charlesworth (Augsburg Fortress Press).

the already published twelve volumes of *The Works of John Wesley* now under the editorial direction of Richard Heitzenrater.<sup>82</sup>

In his sermons John Wesley shows influence from two of the books in the Apocrypha, namely *Tobit* and *Susanna*. As mentioned in the previous discussion of Samuel Wesley it is obvious that he learned appreciation of *Tobit* from his father. Perhaps his mother's name prompted him to appreciate *Susanna*. Obviously, the main reason for using these documents was the content of the scripture on the fringes of the canonical 66 books.

In his letters John Wesley quotes from an apocryphal book. In his letter of June 28, 1781, to Hannah Ball, the founder of a Methodist Sunday School, he states, "Is it not a true saying (though in an Apocryphal writer) that "a friend is made for adversity"? John Wesley was referring to the *Wisdom of the Son of Sirach* (or *Ecclesiasticus*) 12:8, "A friend (*ho philos*) cannot be known in prosperity, and an enemy cannot be hidden in adversity (*en kakois*; according to the *editio princeps* of the KJV). It is informative that John Wesley does not cite the text accurately, indicating that he is not working from a book that happened to be open before him, but had memorized portions of the Apocrypha.

In his *Journal* John Wesley refers to the Apocrypha twice. In the first passage (1:103) he refers to a sermon by his father: "On the death of Mr. William Morgan of Christ Church," Samuel Wesley used a subtitle which was taken from the Apocrypha. It is "We fools counted his life madness." Morgan's death was considered by some Christians to have been caused by excesses in Methodism. Samuel Wesley, and his son also, referred back to the *Wisdom of Solomon* 5:3-4.(according to the *editio princeps* of the KJV):

This was he whom wee had sometimes in derision, and a  
prouerbe of reproch.

We foolles accounted his life madness, and his end to be with-  
out honour.

Samuel Wesley, followed by his son John, quoted the verse exactly: "*hoi aphrones ton bion autou elogisametha manian . . .*" It is indicative of the importance accorded the apocryphal books, in contrast to the prevailing attitude of the Church of England, that the excerpt from the Apocrypha is placarded in a revered place, the subtitle of a funeral service of an associate. John Wesley probably knew this section of *Sirach* by heart, because he must have known the completion of the thought. The next verse is as follows:

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<sup>82</sup>I am indebted to Frank Baker for his assistance with the following presentation. The volumes in the new edition of the Wesley corpus contain indexes, and some of these alert the attentive reader to links with the apocryphal books that have been observed. The list is by no means definitive, and it does not include the so-called Old Testament Pseudepigrapha.

How is hee numbered among the children of God,  
and his lot is among the Saints?<sup>83</sup>

The excerpt is most apposite; William Morgan is thus acknowledged to have been unappreciated in life,<sup>84</sup> but in death he is numbered (*katelogisthē*) among the children of God (*en huiois theou*) and the saints (*en hagiois*).

A famous passage in the Apocrypha<sup>85</sup> appears approvingly in John Wesley's *Journal* (7:212). On October 30, 1786, John Wesley thinks about how Dr. John Whitehead, who also served as a Methodist preacher, had cured him from a "flux" and cramp that had stricken him at 4:00 A.M., and in the process writes, "Of such a one I would boldly say, with the son of Sirach, 'Honour the physician, for God hath appointed him.'" The passage, rightly mentioned as from *Sirach*, is as follows (from the *editio princeps* of the KJV):

Honour a Phisitian with the honour due vnto him, for the vses  
which you [note not ye] may haue of him: for the Lord hath  
created him (*Sirach* 38:1).

John Wesley may have even memorized the Greek text, because he places an article before "physician," and renders (or translates) *kyrios* as "God," and *ektise* as "appointed." The Greek is *Tima iatron pros tas chreias timais autou, kai gar auton ektise Kyrios*. Once again we are impressed with John Wesley's industrious, brilliance, and erudition. John Wesley most likely had memorized large portions of a sacred writing, perhaps in Greek as well as in English, that some Methodist ministers, and even some professors, have never read, and may not have heard about. The citations above are by no means exhaustive, and John Vickers draws my attention to numerous

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<sup>83</sup>The punctuation here is interesting; later editions of the KJV have an exclamation point. John Wesley would have preferred the latter. Was he working from, or remembering, the Greek?

<sup>84</sup>It is also impressive that Samuel Wesley defends William Morgan against alleged Methodist excesses. The father of John and Charles was openly critical of early Methodism, for example, disparaging John Wesley's fondness of extempore prayer, and his claim to have not been a "Christian" before May 24, 1738, when he had a life-transforming religious experience. I am indebted to Frank Baker for correspondence on this point.

<sup>85</sup>Dr. James Cleland, Dean of Duke Chapel and Professor of Preaching in Duke Divinity School, fondly and frequently cited it. I remember well the discussions shared with Cleland on *Sirach* 38, which he relished citing before his colleagues in the Duke Medical School. A twinkle appeared in his eye when he recounted quoting *Sirach* 38:15,

He who sins before his Maker,  
may he fall into the care of a physician. (RSV)

Cleland's fondness for the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha is evident in his preface to the *OTP* and in his sermon on the *Prayer of Manasseh*.

other places in Wesley's *Letters*, *Journal*, and *Diaries*.<sup>86</sup> It is imperative to stress A. C. Outler's insight that John Wesley, a man who is seen as *homo unius libri*, demonstrated that the "Apocrypha may be used for edification."<sup>87</sup>

### Charles Wesley (1707–1788)

Charles Wesley was shifted into the shadow of attention because of his older brother's extrovert character, and excellent skills in organization and preaching; but, he was a genius.<sup>88</sup> His poems and hymns, which are usually used as if they were anonymous, are intermittently inspired by the penetrating brilliance of the Jewish apocryphal authors, who remain to us if not pseudonymous at least anonymous. In many non-Methodist circles Charles Wesley is better known than John Wesley, and his compositions are better known to more Methodists than his brother's. Of course the reason is the continuing popularity of his hymns, which are sung worldwide in Christian services.

<sup>86</sup>John Vickers sent me the following data:

<i>Wisdom</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Letters</i>
1:12	1:252; 2:127	1:369, 398, 472
3:4	2:241, 266	2:323
5:4	1:124, 133	1:297, 336
5:5	1:124	1:336
5:12		1:311
9:1	2:21	
9:4	2:21	
9:15		1:361; 2:481
<i>1 Maccabees</i>	<i>Journal</i>	
2:62	1:215	
<i>Sirach</i>	<i>Journal</i>	<i>Letters</i>
19:1	1:155	
21:2		2:457
22:22	2:190	
38:25		2:590
<i>Susanna</i>		<i>Letters</i>
46		2:610

The data in this chart have been arranged to illustrate John Wesley's favorite passages in the Apocrypha. His favorite book is *Wisdom*, and he is most fond of 1:12, 3:4, and 5:4–5. I am most grateful to John Vickers for this information; there is obviously more to be done on John Wesley's use of the Apocrypha. In no way did his use of the apocryphal works compare to his full dependence on the canonical scripture, but I would resist the prevalent opinion (shared with me during the preparing of this paper) that the Apocrypha was of no more than marginal importance to John Wesley.

<sup>87</sup>Outler's full sentence is as follows: "The Apocrypha may be used for edification, though not for sermon texts" (p. 13). Outler was describing John Wesley's position; and I see evidence to modify the sentence by deleting what comes after the comma. See Outler, "The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in John Wesley," *WTJ* 20 (1985) 7–18.

<sup>88</sup>See the attempt to bring Charles Wesley out of the shadows by J. R. Tyson; it is titled *Charles Wesley: A Reader* (New York, Oxford, 1989). D. Creamer rightly salutes Charles Wesley as a "genius," D. Creamer, *Methodist Hymnology: Comprehending Notices of the Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (New York, 1848) p. 208.

Charles Wesley can cite John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, if imperfectly, in a "Letter of the Atlantic Crossing."<sup>89</sup> It is conceivable that he may have cited obliquely (or incorrectly) some passages in the Jewish apocryphal works. This assumption would be bolstered by the recognition that Charles Wesley, like Alexander Pope, was inspired by the "Neoclassicism" of eighteenth-century English culture.<sup>90</sup> The search for possible apocryphal allusions in Charles's hymns will be belabored by the fact that in one line of a well-known hymn J. W. Waterhouse found more than a dozen biblical echoes,<sup>91</sup> by the recognition that he was not a biblical literalist like the Quaker George Fox but often allegorized and internalized the text on which he was working,<sup>92</sup> by the frustrations confronted in realizing his hymns were edited and various numerologies have been used, and by the recognition that virtually nothing has been written on the subject.<sup>93</sup> For example, J. R. Tyson in "Sources of Wesley's Poetic Diction" in *Charles Wesley: A Reader*<sup>94</sup> fails to discuss the formative influence of the Jewish apocryphal works on Charles Wesley. He was by no means, as Tyson judges, *homo unius libri*.

Charles Wesley's attachment to the Church of England could have caused him to have disdain for the Apocrypha; but as we shall see this is not the case. Unlike some Reformers, he was attracted to apocalypticism and the Revelation of John, basing many sermons on it.<sup>95</sup> The search for influences from the Apocrypha in Charles Wesley's hymns will not be disappointing because he was less well read than John, and his older brother was certainly not an indefatigable scholar like Samuel Wesley. Charles Wesley's most famous apocryphal author was apparently the *Wisdom of Solomon*. We will observe that Charles Wesley, like John Wesley, worked either on the Authorized Version of the Apocrypha or on the Greek text.

Charles Wesley's "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," which George John Stevenson called "Charles Wesley's incomparable hymn,"<sup>96</sup> is influenced by the *Wisdom of*

<sup>89</sup>Tyson, ed., *Charles Wesley: A Reader*, p. 63, see note 6 on p. 90. He, of course, cites Milton elsewhere.

<sup>90</sup>Tyson points out that Charles Wesley struggled to "weave the classical into the colloquial." Tyson, *Charles Wesley*, p. 32.

<sup>91</sup>J. W. Waterhouse, *The Bible in Charles Wesley's Hymns* (London, 1957) pp. 5-9.

<sup>92</sup>This point is clarified by Kimbrough in "Charles Wesley and Biblical Interpretation," in *Charles Wesley: Poet and Theologian*, ed. S T Kimbrough, Jr. (Nashville: Kingswood/Abingdon, 1992) 106-36.

<sup>93</sup>As far as I can ascertain no article has been written on the Wesleys and the Jewish apocryphal books. The anonymous "The Methodist Hymn-Book and the Apocrypha," published in the now defunct *The International Journal of Apocrypha* (April 1907) 19-20, is an expanded extract from the "list of allusions to the Apocrypha" published in *The Methodist Hymn Book*. The list and note should be helpful to continue the searches represented by this paper.

<sup>94</sup>Tyson, *Charles Wesley*, pp. 29-35 plus notes on pp. 54-56.

<sup>95</sup>See Tyson, *Charles Wesley*, pp. 487-90.

<sup>96</sup>G. J. Stevenson provides an impressive discussion of this hymn, but he never mentions the influence of the Apocrypha on Charles Wesley. Stevenson, *The Methodist Hymn Book: Illustrated with Biography, History, Incident, and Anecdote* (London, 1894) pp. 121-28; the quotation is on p. 122.

Solomon, and is duly noted so in *The United Methodist Hymnal: Book of United Methodist Worship* (Nashville, 1989). The first verse is as follows:

JESU, Lover of my Soul,  
 Let me to Thy Bosom fly,  
 While the nearer Waters roll,  
 While the Tempest still is high:  
 Hide me, O my Saviour hide,  
 Till the Storm of Life is past:  
 Safe into the Haven guide;  
 O receive my Soul at last.<sup>97</sup>

In composing this hymn Charles Wesley was influenced by the *Wisdom of Solomon* 11:26 (now cited according to the *editio princeps* of the KJV),

But thou sparest all for they are thine, O Lord, thou  
 louer of soules (*despota philopsuche*).

When Charles Wesley composed “Jesus, Lover of My Soul” in 1740, he was inspired by the *Wisdom of Solomon* and couched the opening of the first verse under its influence.<sup>98</sup> As with his poetically based exegetical approach to the Old Testament,<sup>99</sup> he christologizes the Apocrypha; *Yhwh* is replaced with “Jesus.”<sup>100</sup>

The same chapter of the *Wisdom of Solomon* was remembered by Charles Wesley, and it influenced him when he composed these famous lines:<sup>101</sup>

O may I love like thee;  
 In all thy footsteps tread;  
 Thou hatest all iniquity,  
 But nothing thou has made.<sup>102</sup>

The key words are taken from the *Wisdom of Solomon* 11:24,<sup>103</sup>

<sup>97</sup>*Hymns and Sacred Poems* (London, 1740) p. 67; see *The United Methodist Hymnal* (1989) No. 479.

<sup>98</sup>This fact is noted by J. Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (New York, 1891) p. 590.

<sup>99</sup>See S T Kimbrough, Jr., “Charles Wesley as a Biblical Interpreter,” *Methodist History* 26 (1988) 139–53; see esp. pp. 144–47.

<sup>100</sup>Charles Wesley’s brother Samuel wisely warned against christologizing pre-Christian Jewish texts:

Has David *Christ to come* foreshow’d?  
 Can Christians then aspire  
 To mend the harmony that flow’d  
 From his prophetic lyre?

For the full poem, which warns against anachronistic methodology, see Kimbrough’s “Charles Wesley and Biblical Interpretation.”

<sup>101</sup>The opening lines are “Equip me for the war”; I can find no reference to this hymn in Julian’s *Dictionary of Hymnology*.

<sup>102</sup>This hymn is not found in the modern collections; see, however, the *Hymnal of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York, 1878) No. 586; henceforth cited as *ME Hymnal* (1878).

<sup>103</sup>As Bett stated, *Wisdom* 11:24 “is behind the stanza” of this hymn. See Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism*, p. 93.

For thou louest (*agapas*) all the things that are,  
and abhorrest<sup>104</sup> (*bdelussē*) nothing which thou hast made  
(*kai ouden . . . hōn epoīēsas*) . . . (*editio princeps*)

Another hymn by Charles Wesley that is influenced by the Apocrypha is the following:<sup>105</sup>

The promised land, from Pisgah's top,  
I now exult to see:  
My hope is full, O glorious hope!  
Of immortality.<sup>106</sup>

The final lines are derived from the *Wisdom of Solomon* 3:1–4,

Bvt the soules of the righteous are in the hand of God, and there shall no torment touch them. . . . For though they bee punished in the sight of men : yet is their hope full of immortalitie (*he elpis autōn athanasias plērēs*), (according to the *editio princeps* of the KJV). As H. Bett stated in 1912, the *Wisdom of Solomon*, one of “the books of the Apocrypha—the finest of them all—has considerably influenced the hymns” of Charles Wesley.<sup>107</sup>

It is startling to learn that the editors of *The Methodist Hymn-Book* at the turn of the century<sup>108</sup> found no less than 59 allusions in Charles Wesley's hymns to the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. Ten of these are to the pseudepigraphical *Fourth Book of Ezra*, and five (or half) of them are to chapter two, which Charles Wesley could not have known is actually a Christian prologue added to this Jewish pseudepigraphon in the late second century.

Some of Charles Wesley's hymns allegedly alluding to chapter two of the *Fourth Book of Ezra* (= *2 Esdras*) may have been located.<sup>109</sup> I shall endeavor to discover if the allusion is conceivable, possible, probable, or certain.

A Christian prefaced to a Jewish apocalypse, namely *4 Ezra*, a vividly pictorial scenario in which he describes Jesus as “shepherd,<sup>110</sup> “my Sauour,” “a young

<sup>104</sup>The Greek verb *bdelussomai* means “to abhor” or “to hate,” “to detest.”

<sup>105</sup>The opening line is “O Joyful sound of gospel grace!” The hymn is not discussed in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*.

<sup>106</sup>This hymn is not found in the modern collections; see, however, *ME Hymnal* (1878), No. 515.

<sup>107</sup>H. Bett, *The Hymns of Methodism* (London, 1912) p. 92. I am indebted to Bett for his insights on pp. 92 and 93.

<sup>108</sup>The exact date is not given by the anonymous author of the article already cited from *The International Journal of Apocrypha*; it appeared in 1907. It has proved so far impossible to locate the hymnbook and to examine the alleged allusions mentioned in the article. With the help of J. Telford's *The Methodist Hymn-Book Illustrated* (London, 1906, 1909) it was possible to find some of the possible references to Charles Wesley's hymns. Perhaps I have traced some allusions to hymns in the *ME Hymnal* (1878). The following preliminary notes are the best I can now do, despite the assistance of the reference librarians in Speer Library and the availability of over 10,000 hymnbooks.

<sup>109</sup>The difficulties included having no bibliographical reference to the hymnbook being cited, locating three Methodist hymnbooks published in England just prior to the article and each had different numbers for hymns but none was reliable, accessing references to hymns and to *4 Ezra* which were uncritical when a possible link was conceivably found.

<sup>110</sup>I shall be citing the text according to the *editio princeps* of the KJV.

man of a high stature,” and “the sonne of God.” Jesus calls “a great people,” who “could not be numbered” standing “vpon the mount Sion.” Jesus clothes them “in white” and awards them “with crownes.”

Memorable and clear is the description of those who “hauv fulfilled the Law of the Lord” and “stood so siffely for the Name of the Lord”; they meet the “Sauour,” the “yong person” who “crowneth them, and giueth them palmes in their handes.”

This description provided imagery for Charles Wesley when he composed the concluding verse of “Come, let us join our friends above”:<sup>111</sup>

Our spirits, too, shall quickly join,  
Like theirs with glory crowned,  
And shout to see our Captain’s sign,  
To hear his trumpet sound.  
O that we now might grasp our Guide!  
O that the word were given!  
Come, Lord of hosts, the waves divide,  
And land us all in heaven!

Charles Wesley shifts pseudo-Ezra’s image of “the end of the world” (2:34) to postmortem existence. He adds the imagery of “our Captain,” the “trumpet sound,” and “our Guide.” It is probable, if not certain, that Charles Wesley was influenced by chapter 2:34–48 in composing this hymn.

The following hymn by Charles Wesley is conceivably written under the inspiration of the imagery in the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, chapter 2:

Hark! a voice divides the sky!  
Happy are the faithful dead,  
In the Lord who sweetly die,  
They from all their toils are freed.  
Them the Spirit hath declared  
Blest, unutterably blest,  
Jesus is their great reward,  
Jesus is their endless rest.<sup>112</sup>

The imagery seems inspired by the picture of the *Fourth Book of Ezra* 2, and this chapter may provide the casting of the final words; note 2:34, “Looke for your shepheard, hee shall giue you euerlasting rest; for he is nigh at hand, that shall come in the end of the world.” Again, Charles Wesley has recast the eschatology of the *Fourth Book of Ezra* to a postresurrection event.

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<sup>111</sup>The hymn receives the number 1033 in the *ME Hymnal* (1878). It first appeared in *Funeral Hymns*, 2nd series (1759), No. 1, stanza 5.

<sup>112</sup>Hymn number 1001 in the *ME Hymnal* (1878). It first appeared in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (Bristol: Farley, 1742) p. 130, stanza 1.

The following hymn by Charles Wesley is definitely influenced by the imagery of the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, chapter two:

Lift your eyes of faith and see  
 Saints and angels joined in one,  
 What a countless company  
 Stand before yon dazzling throne!  
 Each before his Saviour stands,  
 All in milk-white robes arrayed,  
 Palms they carry in their hands,  
 Crowns of glory on their head.  
 Saints begin the endless song,  
 Cry aloud in heavenly lays,  
 Glory doth to God belong,  
 God the glorious Saviour praise . . . .

The subsequent line is inspired by the Revelation of John as it refers to the "bleeding Lamb" who is "enthroned on high." The main imagery is directly from the apocalypse called the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, and now collected with other apocalypses in the *Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*.<sup>113</sup> Taken straight out of this pseudepigraphical apocalypse are the following words: "a countless company" ("a great people, whom I could not number" 2:42, cf. v. 38), "Saviour" (2:36), "all in whitest robes arrayed" ("those of thine that are clothed in white" 2:40. Especially arresting are the "Palms they carry in their hands, /Crowns of glory on their head." This is from 2:46, "What yong person is it that crowneth them, and giueth them palmes in their handes?" Charles Wesley's exhortation, "Saints begin the endless song" corresponds to 2:42, "and they all praised the Lord with songs." No question should remain that Charles Wesley composed hymns under the inspiration of the pseudepigraphical *Fourth Book of Ezra*.<sup>114</sup>

Hymns most likely composed by Charles Wesley and edited by John Wesley in 1780 were inspired by images in the Apocrypha,<sup>115</sup> notably (in order of frequency) *Tobit*, *1 Baruch* (perhaps),<sup>116</sup> and the *Wisdom of Solomon*. His description of Jerusalem's walls being built "of jasper and gold" (in Hymn 71) is dependent on *Tobit* 13:16, which describes that Jerusalem's "walles and towres, and battlements" shall be built "with pure golde." His "Wisdom to silver we prefer, /And gold is dross compared to her" (Hymn 14) is straight out of the *Wisdom of*

<sup>113</sup>See *OTP* vol. 1. The hymn here cited first appeared in *Hymns on the Lord's Supper* (Bristol: Farley, 1745) No. 105, pp. 89–90.

<sup>114</sup>It is possible that Hymn 805 in stanza three (*Hymnal*) was influenced by the *Fourth Book of Ezra*, chapter two.

<sup>115</sup>See Hildebrandt, and Beckerlegge, eds., *A Collection of Hymns*, p. 38. The hymns quoted in the paragraph to which this note is attached are taken from the volume noted; quotations from the Authorized Version (It is called "KJV" elsewhere.) are from the *editio princeps*.

<sup>116</sup>I have my doubts that Hymn 185, verse one, is inspired by Baruch 3:29–30. See Hildebrandt, Beckerlegge, eds., *A Collection of Hymns*, p. 312.

*Solomon* 7:9, “. . . all gold in respect of her is as a little sand, and silver shall be counted as clay before her.”

Perhaps many more links between Charles Wesley's compositions and the Jewish apocryphal works will be found in his published works and in the previously unpublished hymns and poems.<sup>117</sup> Perhaps we may even find, as we have with Samuel Wesley, many more allusions to the memorable stories and well conceived ideas, symbols, and expressions in the Jewish works known in the eighteenth century and now collected in the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.<sup>118</sup>

### Conclusion

Samuel Wesley obviously appreciated the Jewish apocryphal works, especially those collected today into the Old Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha. We should remember his suggestion that these ought not to be forgotten, were of venerable antiquity, and some of them influenced Jesus perhaps and Paul certainly.<sup>119</sup> He passed this perspective of the canon on to both John and Charles Wesley. He did not follow the trend to disparage the Jewish apocryphal works; he called the Apocrypha “Deuterocanonical.”<sup>120</sup> It is not clear which of the books in the Apocrypha were of most interest to him; but he does mention the *Wisdom of Solomon* and *1 and 2 Maccabees* first and contends that they were “alluded or referred to” by Paul and perhaps also by Jesus.

For John Wesley the most revered apocryphal document may have been the *Wisdom of Solomon*, followed by *Sirach*. The *Wisdom of Solomon* and the *Fourth Book of Ezra*<sup>121</sup> seem to be the most attractive apocryphal books to Charles Wesley.

In 1709 the third edition of the two-volumed *The Clergyman's Vade Mecum* appeared. Although an editor incorrectly claimed that Samuel Wesley had written this work,<sup>122</sup> it is obvious that *Advice to a Young Clergyman* is a Methodist *vade mecum*.

<sup>117</sup>See S T Kimbrough, Jr., *Methodist History* 26 (1988) 139. See *The Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley*, 3 vols., edited by S T Kimbrough, Jr., and Oliver A. Beckerlegge (Nashville: Kingswood/Abingdon, 1988, 1990, 1992).

<sup>118</sup>As Kimbrough points out, Charles Wesley was not influenced by one of the major developments in the eighteenth century, namely the introduction of rabbinic interpretation and Jewish parallels to scripture. The latter was introduced into England by John Lightfoot (1602–1675). I am grateful to Kimbrough for sharing with me his article “Charles Wesley and Biblical Interpretation.”

<sup>119</sup>See the summary of Samuel Wesley's letter by Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley* (London, 1866) p. 384.

<sup>120</sup>S. Wesley, *Advice to a Young Clergyman*; see Jackson, *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, 2:513.

<sup>121</sup>This document was considered part of the Apocrypha by the compilers of the Authorized Version and part of the Pseudepigrapha by Fabricius. Today it is placed within the Pseudepigrapha.

<sup>122</sup>See the note on p. 382 in Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. Samuel Wesley*.

There is a precedent, and an authoritatively revered one, for the appreciation of the Jewish apocryphal works that characterizes the curricula and research at many Methodist seminaries, especially Duke and Emory. It is no exaggeration to conclude that as paradigmatically important as the Old and New Testaments are for understanding Jesus and his earliest followers, equally important are the Jewish apocryphal documents which date from his and their time. They alone clarify the way the Old Testament and related sacred traditions were being interpreted and shaping orthopraxis.

The Wesleys, especially Samuel Wesley, would undoubtedly have been pleased with the way such documents help clarify Jesus' life, his message, and his time. Each would have been astounded—astounded perhaps more than the omnivorously minded Samuel Wesley would have been pleased—with the astronomical data now to be digested in order to reconstruct the chaotic and creative world of Jesus' time.<sup>123</sup>

No publication has been devoted to the Wesleys' use of the Jewish apocryphal documents, although the best scholars readily admit the appreciation of the Apocrypha by John and Charles Wesley. In contrast to the disdain some of their religious (though not scholarly) contemporaries showed to the Apocrypha, the Wesleys resisted the concept of a closed canon of God's word and lived out an enlightened biblical openness. I wonder what Charles Wesley would have done with *The Odes of Solomon*, the earliest Christian hymnbook, if it had been already discovered by his time. Many of his favorite titles and phrases are found in it.

It is certain that Samuel, John, and Charles Wesley appreciated and often knew by heart some passages in the Jewish apocryphal documents.<sup>124</sup> *Lampra kai amarantos estin hē sophia, . . .*<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>123</sup>There are 13 documents in the Apocrypha, 65 in the Pseudepigrapha, and over 230 sectarian writings presently among the Dead Sea Scrolls. To these collections we need to add the Samaritan papyri, the Bar Kokhba letters, the Babata legal documents, the letters from the numerous ravines and caves in the Judaeian desert, the Jewish magical papyri, and—of course—Philo and Josephus. In addition there are over 100 documents now considered under the category the New Testament Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha.

<sup>124</sup>Sadly, it is necessary to report that still most Methodists and Methodist organizations do not follow the founders of Methodism in appreciating the Jewish apocryphal documents. In this manner they emulate the adversaries of the first Methodists and of the first Christians (who like Jude considered I Enoch full of prophecy).

<sup>125</sup>*Wisdom of Solomon* 6:12, "Wisdom is glorious, and never fadeth away: . . ."