

**ANTI-METHODIST PUBLICATIONS
ISSUED DURING THE EIGHTEENTH
CENTURY: A
CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED
AND ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

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Anti-Methodist Publications Issued During the Eighteenth Century: A Chronologically Arranged and Annotated Bibliography by Richard Green

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RICHARD GREEN

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ANTI-METHODIST
PUBLICATIONS
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CENTURY.

A CHRONOLOGICALLY ARRANGED AND ANNOTATED

BIBLIOGRAPHY

OF ALL KNOWN BOOKS AND PAMPHLETS WRITTEN IN OPPOSITION
TO THE METHODIST REVIVAL DURING THE LIFE OF WESLEY;
TOGETHER WITH AN ACCOUNT OF REPLIES TO THEM,
AND OF SOME OTHER PUBLICATIONS.

A CONTRIBUTION TO METHODIST HISTORY.

BY

REV. RICHARD GREEN.

Author of *The Life of John Wesley*; *The Mission of Methodism* (The
Fernley Lecture for 1890); *The Works of John and Charles
Wesley: A Bibliography*; etc.



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PREFACE.

ONLY one publication has hitherto been issued dealing exclusively with anti-Methodist literature. It was printed in Philadelphia, by John Penington, and bore the following title,—*Catalogue of Works in Refutation of Methodism, from its origin in 1729, to the present time; Of those by Methodist Authors on Lay Representation, Methodist Episcopacy, etc., etc., and of the Political Pamphlets relating to Wesley's 'Calm Address to our American Colonies.'* Compiled by H. C. Decanver.* 1846. Imp. 8vo., pp. 54.

Decanver named 485 publications in his *Catalogue*. Of these at least 150 were published in this century, and are therefore outside the scope of the present work. Several others were not in any sense hostile to Methodism, some being Wesley's own tracts. So that of the whole there remain about 270 which were from the pens of opponents of Methodism, and were also issued during Wesley's life, or within the limits of the 18th century; to which period the entries in the following pages are, with a very few, apparently desirable, exceptions, confined. Whenever I have been unable to examine any of the publications mentioned by Decanver, and could gain only such information as he affords, I have affixed the letter "D" to the entry.

Tyerman was the first of Wesley's biographers to refer in detail to anti-Methodist writings. This is a distinctive feature of his *Life of John Wesley*, and of his *Life of George Whitefield*. In both these works he gives extracts from a large number of hostile publications, or characterizes them. I have freely availed myself of his labours.

With a view fully to illustrate the hostility of the press, I have included some publications which, though not directly antagonistic, show by implication the nature and virulence of the anti-Methodist spirit that prevailed at the time. Many of the works mentioned in the following pages were the occasion of much

* "The compiler was a Protestant Episcopalian; 'Decanver' is his *nom de plume*; he has given his real name in the original manuscript, which, with the printed catalogue and 143 of the most curious of these works, he deposited in the library of the Theological Seminary of the Protestant Episcopal Church in New York city. Whatever may have been his design, he has done a valuable service to Methodism, and enriched the library of that institution with the best collection of such documents in the United States, perhaps the best in the world."—Preface to Dr. Stevens' *History of Methodism*.

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controversy ; and, as far as was necessary to elucidate this, and for completeness' sake, I have included references to works on both sides of the discussion.

Although I have endeavoured to present a complete account of the many pamphlets, books and other writings issued in disparagement of Methodism within the period named ; yet I cannot presume that all which were published are here noted. Perhaps it would be vain ever to expect to obtain a complete list ; for, though they once were flaunted before the eyes of the public, many are now probably either wholly destroyed,—a fate that a large number of them richly deserved,—or are hidden away in holes and corners, from which it is impossible, if it were desirable, to dislodge them. If a justification be demanded for the fresh notoriety here given to this class of literature, I find that justification in the possibility of hereby rendering service to the students of Methodist history, of shedding light upon the state of English society in the eighteenth century, and of illustrating the difficulties amidst which the early Methodist evangelists had to labour.

These hostile publications may be variously classified. Some are honest objections to Wesley's teaching, and are written in a becoming spirit. These, unhappily, form only a small portion of the whole. Others are violent assaults on what was crudely and indefinitely denominated "Methodist Enthusiasm." This term seems to have been used to represent any degree of departure from the ordinary beaten tracks in church life. Any increase in zeal, or in fervour of devotion, any marked carefulness in living, was derided as enthusiasm, and enthusiasm was little less than a crime. The application of this term to the Methodists generally referred, however, to their professed participation in the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit. To seek to be "led by the Spirit," in our day acknowledged to be the common heritage of believers, was then regarded as foolish fanaticism. This was not to be wondered at in an age when spiritual religion was at so low an ebb. In addition to these there were ribald, profane and filthy publications, which were a disgrace to the press and a foul offence to public morality, revealing a deplorable corruption in the taste and moral sentiments of the age. There is further to be added a mass of wild, unrestrained writing, which, if not actually wicked, did neither credit to its authors, nor service to any good cause. It is painful to note how large an amount of the controversial writing from the Calvinistic side partook of this character. But Methodism was not opposed by the rude and unscrupulous only ; for both good and able men, either failing to appreciate the aims of the Methodists, or not approving their methods, and in some instances sincerely doubting the accuracy of their teaching, were found among their antagonists.

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Wesley had just occasion to complain of the spirit in which he and his companions were assailed. In his *Father Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*, he says, "Brethren, if ye have bitter zeal in your hearts, your wisdom descendeth not from above. The wisdom that is from above is pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy or pity. Does this spirit appear in one single tract of all those which have been published against us? Is there one writer that has reproved us in love? Has not every one who has wrote at all (I do not remember so much as one exception) treated us as incorrigible? Brethren, how is this? Why do ye labour to teach us an evil lesson against yourselves? O may God never suffer others to deal with you as ye have dealt with us."—*Works*, viii. 11.*

Samples of the misrepresentation and abuse Wesley complains of are easy to select: let this one suffice:—"Imposture and fanaticism still hang upon the skirts of religion. Weak minds were seduced by the delusions of a superstition, styled Methodism, raised upon the affectation of superior sanctity, and pretensions to divine illumination. Many thousands were infected with this enthusiasm by the endeavours of a few obscure preachers, such as Whitefield, and the two Wesleys, who found means to lay the whole kingdom under contribution." Smollett, *Hist. of England*, xv. 121, 122. Well might Wesley exclaim—"poor Dr. Smollett! thus to transmit to all succeeding generations a whole heap of notorious falsehoods!"—*Works*, iv. 148.

Soon after Wesley's death controversy sprang up within the circle of the Methodist Societies. The literature relating to that controversy, and to the divisions of Methodism which followed, I have, with the exceptions above referred to, purposely omitted.

In addition to my own collection of hostile publications, I have had the opportunity of examining a considerable number contained in the Didsbury College library, and the large accumulation of my friend, R. Thursfield Smith, Esq., J.P., of Whitchurch, Salop, to whom I am indebted for much valuable aid in the preparation of the following pages. I acknowledge my indebtedness also to F. M. Jackson, Esq., of Bowdon, and to the Rev. H. J. Foster, for their kind and helpful service.

Edgbaston, Birmingham.

R. GREEN.

* All references to Wesley's *Works*, unless otherwise stated, are to the Third Edition, 8vo., 1829.

ANTI-METHODIST PUBLICATIONS.

1732.

1. FOGG'S WEEKLY JOURNAL.— Probably the first attack made upon the Methodists in the public press was an anonymous letter in *Fogg's Weekly Journal*, of December 9, 1732, in which the writer holds up to ridicule the little Oxford Society called Methodists, comparing them to the Pietists of Saxony and the Essenes among the Jews. Besides erroneous statements concerning their teaching, he gives exaggerated and inaccurate accounts of their practices, e.g., "They avoid every object that may affect them with any pleasant and grateful sensation . . . neglect and voluntarily afflict their bodies . . . keep Wednesdays and Fridays, and let blood once a fortnight . . . in short practise everything contrary to the judgment of other persons."

One good effect of this letter was the calling forth an anonymous pamphlet in defence of the Methodists, entitled, *The Oxford Methodists: Being an Account of Some Young Gentlemen in that City, in derision so-called; setting forth their Rise and Designs. With some occasional Remarks on a Letter inserted in Fogg's Journal of December 9th, 1732, relating to them. In a Letter from a Gentleman near Oxford, to his Friend at London. The Second Edition, With very great alterations and improvements. To which is prefix'd A Short Epistle to the Reverend Mr. Whitefield, A. B., of Pembroke College, Oxon.* Signed A. B., and dated November 28, 1737. London: Printed for J. Roberts, at the Oxford Arms, in Warwick-Lane; and A. Dodd, without Temple Bar. 1738. Price Six-pence. 8vo., pp. iv. 29. Third Edition 1738. The first edition was published February, 1733.

The author of the pamphlet, after having made himself thoroughly acquainted with the character of the young Methodists and the nature of their work, gives a clear, interesting, and in some respects minute account of their proceedings. It seems not improbable that he had made the acquaintance of Wesley himself, for he not only produces many of the rules of the little Society, but also gives considerable extracts from letters addressed by Samuel Wesley to his son John.

Tyerman speaks of this as "the first defence of Methodism ever published." An abridgment of it and of the letter to which it was a reply may be found in *Life and Times of John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists.* By Rev. L. Tyerman. 3 vols. 8vo. London: Hodder & Stoughton. 1870. Several editions. See vol. i. 85-8.

1738.

2. SILVESTER.—A SERMON ON REGENERATION; preached before the University of Oxford, at St. Mary's, on February 26, 1738. By the Rev. Tipping Silvester, M.A., Fellow of Pembroke College, Oxford; and Lecturer of St. Bartholomew the Great, London. Recommended to the Religious Societies. 1738. 8vo., pp. 28.

The chief contention in the sermon is, that infants are born again in baptism. It was intended as an antidote to the Methodist doctrine, and was probably aimed at Whitefield. Wesley does not appear to have preached in St. Bartholomew's Church until the end of the year.

3. BEDFORD.—THE DOCTRINE OF ASSURANCE: or the Case of a Weak and Doubting Conscience. A Sermon preached at St. Lawrence, Jewry, in the City of London, on Sunday, August 13, 1738. With an Appendix answering the Objections from Texts of Scripture. By Arthur Bedford, M.A., Chaplain to His Royal Highness Frederick, Prince of Wales, and to the Haberdashers' Hospital at Hoxton, near the said city. Published at the Request of several of the Auditors. The Second Edition. London: Printed by Charles Ackers, in St. John's Street, for John Clarke, at the Golden Ball in Duck Lane. 1739. (Price sixpence.) 8vo., pp. 39. First edition published in 1738.

This Sermon was designed to controvert Wesley's doctrine "that true faith in Christ is inseparably attended by an assurance of the forgiveness of sins." It is argued that, to profess to have received such an assurance savours of spiritual pride, and cannot but produce bad results. It is "a grand enthusiasm"; "instead of bringing a man nearer heaven, it sets him further from it, for the whole tenor of the Gospel is to teach us humility and lowliness of mind"—*The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield, B.A., of Pembroke College, Oxford.* By Rev. L. Tyerman. 1876. 2 vols. 8vo. London: Hodder and Stoughton. p. 151. Tyerman says these were the first sermons published against the doctrines of Methodism, and that both of them were extremely temperate when compared with others which followed. "In the afternoon I went to the Rev. Mr. Bedford, to tell him between him and me alone, of the injury he had done both to God and his brother, by preaching and printing that very weak sermon on assurance, which was an *ignoratio elenchi* from beginning to end, seeing the assurance we preach is of quite another kind from that he writes against. We speak of an assurance of our present pardon; not, as he does, of our final perseverance."—*Wesley's Journal*, October 6, 1738. Wesley afterwards wrote of Mr. Arthur Bedford as "a person greatly esteemed, fifty or sixty years ago, for piety as well as learning."—*ibid.*, Mar. 18, 1781.

4. WARNE.—ARMINIANISM THE BACK DOOR TO POPENY; Humbly offered to the consideration of the Archbishops and Bishops, with the rest of the English Clergy; and the Students in both Universities. (1 Sam. ii. 11; Jude 3.)