

Primary Sources for John Wesley's Preaching Texts

- Diary** Wesley began keeping a manuscript diary in 1725, while a student at Oxford. He continued the practice until days before his death. The diary volumes contained abbreviated notes on his activities (a facsimile page can be found in *Works*, 18:311 and Curnock, 1:119). These notes eventually included the texts on which Wesley preached. Unfortunately, this important source is incomplete. There are small lacunae during his years in Oxford and Georgia. More significantly, notebooks for the period between August 1741 and December 1782 were either destroyed or have been lost. Curnock's edition of *Wesley's Journal* included the first published transcript of surviving diaries. The definitive published transcript is the *Works* edition. Readers can locate the text citations in either edition by date.
- Journal** In addition to his diaries, Wesley wrote manuscript journal narratives for personal record and to share with friends during his years in Georgia. In 1740 he began publishing extracts from these manuscripts, and continued to issue installments of this published *Journal* through his life, drawing on his diaries and other notes. The *Journal* became Wesley's official record (and defense) of the Methodist revival. While it identifies far fewer of his sermon texts than the diary, it is our main source for years where the diary is missing and there is no sermon register. While readers can find the sermon texts cited or quoted in the *Journal* in Wesley's original extracts, in nineteenth-century editions by George Benson and Thomas Jackson, or in Curnock's more complete edition released at the turn of the century, the *Works* edition of the *Journal* is now complete and the most reliable source.
- JWES** Richard P. Heitzenrater, 'John Wesley's Early Sermons', *WHS* 37 (1970): 110–28. This definitive list of the texts, titles, and dates of John Wesley's preaching between September 1725 and September 1735 was compiled from annotations on surviving early manuscript sermons, information in Wesley's Oxford diaries, and other sources.
- Letters** Wesley's surviving 'journal letters' provide details on his preaching texts to supplement or confirm citations in the diaries and *Journal*. For letters through 1773, the *Works* edition is the definitive reference; for the few in later years, one should consult Telford.
- SR1** Sermon Register 1. One of Wesley's surviving notebooks contains a manuscript register of his preaching texts between 1747 and 1761 (facsimile copies of two sample pages can be found in Curnock, 4:225 & 8:229). Wesley kept this record to help avoid preaching the same sermon on repeat visits to a locale. The register is organized alphabetically by place, with texts listed under each place. Dates are also given, though the register typically assigns the same date to all texts used in a location during a single visit (thus, ten or more texts might be assigned the same date, even though they clearly were used over three to four days; there is often no way to allot them more precisely over the visit). The entries in SR1 are in the hand of a scribe for the first decade, with Wesley taking over about 1757. The notebook is held in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/ 503 (Colman Collection, Boxes 1–3, Item #20), The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester. Curnock includes a deciphering of SR1 in his edition of *Journal* (8:169–252). In preparing this compilation of Wesley's preaching texts, Wanda Willard Smith returned to the original manuscript, adding more detail and often correcting Curnock's rendering.

- SR2 Sermon Register 2. A second manuscript register of Wesley's sermon texts has survived, which covers the years 1787–88. This register is again organized alphabetically, by place name. It gives texts preached at each site, added incrementally over the two years. It does not assign specific dates to the texts, but most are grouped to indicate the year in which they fit. In conjunction with the *Journal* and diary, most dates can be determined. SR2 is also held in the Methodist Archive and Research Centre, accession number MA 1977/157 (JW III.9), The John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester. Curnock makes no mention of SR2. This compilation of Wesley's preaching texts is the first to draw upon SR2.
- Sermons Wesley's early manuscript sermons often include annotations about the places and times of their oral delivery. A few of his sermons published separately as pamphlets also indicate the setting of their original presentation. Introductions to the individual sermons in the *Works* edition summarize this information.

Referenced Editions of Wesley Writings

- Curnock *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* 8 vols. Edited by Nehemiah Curnock. London: Epworth, 1909–16.
- Telford *The Letters of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* 8 vols. Edited by John Telford. London: Epworth, 1931.
- Works* *The Bicentennial Edition of the Works of John Wesley.* Editor in Chief, Frank Baker. Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1984ff. (Volumes 7, 11, 25, and 26 appeared originally as the *Oxford Edition of The Works of John Wesley.* Oxford: Clarendon, 1975–83).

Sources for Other First-Hand Accounts of Wesley's Preaching

[with short title identified for those cited more than once]

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- [Bristol Steward Diary.] Anonymous MS diary of person working as book steward in Bristol, 1752–54. Frank Baker Collection of Wesleyana and British Methodism, Box SF9. Rubenstein Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Duke University, Durham, NC. Transcript: http://www.divinity.duke.edu/sites/default/files/documents/cswt/Bristol_Steward_Diary [cited as Bristol Steward Diary]
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