

# Townley, James (1774-1833) (DNB00)

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**TOWNLEY, JAMES** (1774–1833), Wesleyan divine, son of Thomas Townley, a Manchester tradesman, was born at that town on 11 May 1774, and educated by the Rev. David Simpson [q. v.] of Macclesfield. He became a member of the Wesleyan methodist body in 1790, and a minister in 1796. In 1822 he received the degree of D.D. from the college of Princeton, New Jersey, in recognition of his literary work. From 1827 to 1832 he acted as general secretary of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and in 1829 was elected president of the Wesleyan conference, and presided at the Dublin and Leeds conferences. While in Manchester he was a member of a philological society founded by Dr. Adam Clarke. He died at Ramsgate on 12 Dec. 1833. He was twice married—to Mary Marsden and Dinah Ball, both of London—and had seven children by his first wife. A portrait by John Jackson, R.A., was engraved in 1829.

Townley, a good preacher and an accomplished linguist, wrote:

1. 'Biblical Anecdotes,' 1813, 12mo.
2. 'Illustrations of Biblical Literature, exhibiting the History and Fate of the Sacred Writings from the Earliest Times to the Present Century,' 1821, 3 vols. 8vo.
3. 'Essays on various Subjects of Ecclesiastical History and Antiquity,' 1824, 8vo.
4. 'The Reasons of the Laws of Moses, from the "More Nevochim" of Maimonides, with Notes, Dissertations, and a Life of the Author,' 1827, 8vo.
5. 'An Introduction to the Literary History of the Bible,' 1828, 8vo.

Among his contributions to the 'Methodist Magazine,' besides those included in his volume of 'Essays,' are (1) 'On the Character of Popery,' 1826; (2) 'Claims of the Church of Rome Examined,' 1827; (3) 'Ancient and Foreign Missions,' four articles, 1834.

[Minutes of Methodist Conference 1834, Wesleyan Methodist Mag. 1834, p. 78; Everett's Wesleyan Takings, i. 344; Osborn's Wesleyan Bibliography; information kindly supplied by Rev. R. Green of Didsbury College, and by Mr. F. M. Jackson.]

C. W. S.

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