

**PARKER, HENRY PERLEE, 1795-1873.**  
**Henry Perlee Parker Portrait: Providential**  
**Deliverance of John Wesley from Fire, 1709 February 9**

Emory University  
Pitts Theology Library  
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**Descriptive Summary**

**Creator:** Parker, Henry Perlee, 1795-1873.  
**Title:** Henry Perlee Parker Portrait: Providential Deliverance of John Wesley from Fire, 1709 February 9  
**Call Number:** Manuscript Collection No. 123  
**Extent:** 1 framed item (31 cm. x 23 cm)  
**Abstract:** Contains one lithograph and one painting by Henry Perlee Parker.  
**Language:** Materials entirely in English.

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**Administrative Information**

**Restrictions on Access**

Unrestricted access.

**Terms Governing Use and Reproduction**

All requests subject to limitations noted in departmental policies on reproduction.

**Source**

Gift, Dr. and Mrs. Noah D. Meadows, Jr., M.D.

**Citation**

[after identification of item(s)], Henry Perlee Parker Portrait: Providential Deliverance of John Wesley from Fire, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

**Processing**

Processed by Jackie W. Ammerman, April 1993.

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## Collection Description

### Biographical Note

On February 9, 1709, the parsonage at Epworth, with its thatched roof, caught fire for a second time, this time being damaged beyond repair. Samuel Wesley and his wife quickly moved all of the children out of the house. Stanley Ayling reports: "When the roll was being called of the children assembled in the garden as their old rectory went up in flames, it had been discovered that one was missing. It was five-year-old John, who had slept through the first general panic. Bent on rescue, his father found the stairs impassable for smoke and flame, whereupon we are told he `knelt down in the blazing hall and commended the soul of his child to God'. A ladder was being fetched when, espied by others in a first-floor window, the child was brought down through it by means of one man standing on the shoulders of another. In this fortunate rescue of her Jacky there seems no very solid grounds for Mrs. Wesley coming to see evidence of special divine intervention. However, so she did, resolving to be `more particularly careful of the soul of this child, which God had so mercifully provided for'. And Wesley himself in future years frequently recalled his providential escape: was he not indeed `a brand plucked out of the burning'?"

**Biographical Source:** John Wesley, 1979, page 20.

The rescue from fire became the subject for a Henry Perlee Parker (1795-1873) painting. Parker was the artist son of Robert Parker of Plymouth Dock. Trained by his father in marine and mechanical drawing, Parker left his occupation in 1815 to set up as a portrait-painter in Three Towns. Meeting little success, he migrated north in 1816 to Newcastle where he finally made his mark with a picture of `Newcastle Eccentrics,' representing a group of well-known characters identified with the street life of the town.

Parker did not limit himself to portraits, but often painted historical and marine subjects, excelling particularly in smugglers. He became known as `Smuggler Parker'. His paintings were remarkable for their selling powers, due largely to his fortunate choice of subjects such as the representation of the fire at Epworth. Parker presented the work to the Wesleyan conference in 1840, to be placed in Centenary Hall, London. (Information about Parker was gleaned from the *National Dictionary of Biography*).

### Scope and Content Note

The hand colored lithograph measures 31 cm. x 23 cm. It was by Ensign and Thayer produced, of Buffalo, New York, probably around 1850. Framed in a wooden antique-gold frame.

The painting and a lithographic reproduction were presented as a gift to Emory University by Dr. and Mrs. Noah D. Meadows, Jr., M.D. The painting now hangs at the entrance to the Dean's suite in Bishops Hall, Emory University. The lithograph hangs in the Portrait Gallery of the archives of the Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

