

Readers' Queries

THE REV. THOMAS BAYES, F.R.S.—Can any reader mention a source of biographical information about this man, whose celebrated and much-discussed contribution to the theory of probability was communicated posthumously to the Royal Society by Dr. Richard Price in 1763?

G. J. L.

[From *Notes and Queries* 180 (1941), March 29, p. 225.]

Replies

THE REV. THOMAS BAYES, F.R.S. (clxxx. 225)—Most of the biographical dictionaries ignore this eminent person, but a brief account of him occurs in the 'Imperial Dictionary of Universal Biography', three volumes, Glasgow, William Mackenzie (1865). The notice is as follows:

BAYES, Thomas, a presbyterian minister, for some time assistant to his father, Joshua Bayes, but afterwards settled as pastor of a congregation in Tunbridge Wells, where he died, April 17th, 1761. He was F.R.S. and distinguished as a mathematician. He took part in the controversy on fluxions against Bishop Berkeley, by publishing an anonymous pamphlet, entitled "An Introduction to the Doctrine of Fluxions, and Defence of the Mathematicians against the Author of the Analyst," London 1736, 8vo. He is the author of two mathematical papers in the *Philosophical Transactions*. An anonymous tract by him, under the title of "Divine Benevolence," in reply to one on Divine Rectitude, by John Balguy, likewise anonymous, attracted much attention.

It is signed T. F., but these initials are not identified in the list of contributors. It is possible that further information may be found about him in the records of the Presbyterian Church, or in histories of Tunbridge Wells.

Your correspondent is probably aware that the two papers published in the *Philosophical Transactions* of the Royal Society of 1763 have recently been re-published in facsimile by the Graduate School of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Washington, with commentaries by Edward C. Molina and W. Edwards Deming (*vide Nature*, vol. cxlvii, March 29, 1941, Supplement, p. iv).

A simple notice of death, "The Rev. Mr Bayes of Tunbridge Wells", is given in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. xxxi., p. 188, and the date there given is April 7 not April 17.

A. J. H.

Wigan.

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