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# Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

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Volume XXXIII

March 1961

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## THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN SERVICE BOOK

THROUGH the kindness of the Rev. Brian J. N. Galliers, I am now able to fill the gap in my previous study of "Some non-Wesleyan Service Books".<sup>1</sup> The book I have before me is entitled *Book of Services for the use of the Bible Christian Church*, New Edition, dated 12th February 1903. Another copy of this edition is in the Didsbury College Library.

The words "New Edition" suggest that there was a previous compilation, and this is confirmed by the preface. It states that the book before us "in some respects differs from any of its kind previously in existence", and "the alterations introduced in the New Edition embody the consensus of opinion expressed by those whose duty it was to prepare it". Of this earlier edition, however, no copy has so far come my way.

The preface to the book under review states that it was prepared by "Order of Conference", because it was felt that "there are certain special and solemn occasions in our Church life which ought not to be left entirely to the discretion of the ministers or other presiding brethren". It was hoped that the book would be used as a guide and not slavishly followed, so that a certain degree of variety would be secured without running the risk that the decorum and solemnity befitting such occasions should be violated. It is acknowledged that both Dr. Conder's marriage service and the United Methodist Free Church Book of Services had been laid under obligation. There are nine Orders of Service in the book:

- Baptism of Infants.
- Baptism of Adults.
- The Lord's Supper.
- The Recognition of New Members.
- Covenant Service.
- Public Reception of Ministers.
- Order of Public Worship.
- Form of Marriage.
- Burial of the Dead.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 145 ff.

## 2 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

**THE BAPTISM OF INFANTS** begins with an exhortation reminding the parents that they "virtually engage to bring [the child] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord", and that the Church must be "prepared to receive him". A scripture passage is read, and the minister baptizes the child (no method specified) "in obedience to the command of our Lord . . .". Hereby the child is recognized as "belonging to His fold", and it is prayed that he may receive the Holy Ghost, without which all else is vain; that he may be born again from above; and that he may become a faithful and devoted follower of Christ unto his life's end". The service ends with the Aaronic blessing.

**THE BAPTISM OF ADULTS.** A preliminary rubric reminds candidates for membership that "persons who may not have been previously baptised shall, on their admission to the society, be expected to present themselves for the ordinance of Baptism". The service begins with scripture passages, then the candidate is asked if he truly repents of his sins, and resolves to follow Christ. The method of baptism is by sprinkling. More scripture passages conclude the service.

**A FORM FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.** The opening rubric states that where possible the Lord's Supper should be celebrated on the first Sunday of every month, or at least once a quarter. The service begins with scripture sentences, then a hymn is sung and prayer offered, either extempore or after a set form with the congregation "all devoutly kneeling". Two more passages are read, one from John xv. and the other the narrative of institution from 1 Corinthians xi.

The exhortation emphasizes our Lord's gracious invitation and the disciple's affirmation of allegiance in accepting that invitation. This is followed by a paragraph which closely follows the wording of the Book of Common Prayer, "Ye that do truly and earnestly repent . . .". The elements are then delivered to the assisting ministers or "elders" (note this word in a Methodist service-book!), who in turn distribute them to their fellow-communicants. As the bread is being delivered to the assistants the presiding minister says: "Take this bread as an emblem of the body of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, which was broken for you", with similar words at the delivery of the wine. While the elements are being distributed to the people in the pews, select passages of scripture are provided for reading. A final prayer and the benediction complete the service. The main emphasis of the service is upon discipleship, as the post-communion words of the minister say "By partaking of this holy ordinance, we have all professed ourselves to be disciples of our Lord Jesus Christ."

**THE RECOGNITION OF NEW MEMBERS.** The service consists of suitable passages of scripture, hymns, and an address by the minister. The sacrament can be administered if desirable. Members signify their compliance with the conditions of membership either by standing or by lifting the right hand, and they are received into membership

with the right hand of fellowship and the presentation of a quarterly ticket.

**THE SERVICE FOR THE PUBLIC RECEPTION OF MINISTERS INTO FULL CONNEXION.** After hymns, exhortation and prayer, the brethren are called upon one by one to give a brief account of their conversion, their call to the ministry, and their present state of Christian experience. Questions are asked relating to the beliefs of the candidate, and if they are answered satisfactorily, the "congregation is asked by a show of hands to ratify the decision of the Conference to receive the brethren into Full Connexion". A copy of the Holy Bible and of the Hymn-Book is then presented to each brother. After further hymns and a charge by the ex-President, the service concludes with the benediction. There is no reference to the Lord's Supper.

**THE COVENANT SERVICE.** This follows the customary Methodist pattern, consisting of hymns, exhortation and prayers. There is no direction for the Lord's Supper to be administered.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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The Cornish Methodist Historical Association goes from strength to strength. Their second Bulletin (October 1960) contains articles on "Meeting House Licences at Cornish Quarter Sessions", "Methodism and the Cornish Calendar", and "Cornish Chapels which may have followed the City Road style". This last article is a "follow-up" of Mr. Shaw's recent article in *Proceedings*. The Association has also issued its first "Occasional Publication", entitled "Methodism and the Cornish Miner", by T. R. Harris (pp. 22, 2s. 6d.), an excellent study of an interesting subject. The publications of the Association are of interest and value to our members who live outside Cornwall, and any will be welcomed into membership who send 2s. 6d. to the Secretary, the Rev. B. P. Evans, The Manse, Bissoe Road, Carnon Downs, Truro. . . . A commendable piece of research is contained in *Sesquicentenary Story*, which records 150 years of Methodism in Meanwood, Leeds, by Arthur Hopwood and Stanley Rose (pp. 36, 2s. 3d. post free from the Rev. W. Stanley Rose, 18, Welburn Avenue, Leeds, 16). This is a model local history, well written, adequately illustrated, and excellently produced. . . . A similar though shorter brochure comes from Ipswich, where the Museum Street church has been celebrating its centenary. The church has been given a "new look" for the occasion, and illustrations depict the transformation. The booklet (pp. 16) can be obtained for 2s. 9d. post free from Mr. Wilfrid D. Warren, 40, Bristol Road, Ipswich, Suffolk. . . . The Sunday-school at Burraton, Cornwall, celebrated its centenary last year, and its history has been published in a brochure (pp. 16) obtainable from Mr. W. C. Hobbs, Brantford, Burraton, Saltash, Cornwall, at 1s. 3d. post free. . . . The Sunday-school at St. Paul's, Shaw, in Lancashire, has celebrated its 150th anniversary. The occasion has been used to publish the history of both church and school in a souvenir handbook (pp. 43), well-produced and illustrated, written by Mr. Harold Booth. Copies can be obtained at 2s. 3d. post free from the Rev. Harold Thompson, The Manse, Chamber Road, Shaw, Oldham, Lancs.

## WHICH WHITCHURCH?

SINCE there are at least twelve places in England called Whitchurch, four of them less than sixty miles from London, it is not surprising that the compiler of the Index to the Standard Edition of John Wesley's *Journal* has mistakenly identified the one visited by Wesley in September 1742. "Whitchurch (Hants.), visited, iii. 47" is the reference, and here is the relevant entry in the *Journal*:

Sun. 26.—In the evening I rode to Marshfield. The next evening I reached Whitchurch. Tues. 28.—In the morning I preached at Great Marlow . . . A little before twelve I came to Windsor.

A little reflection and calculation will show that the Hampshire Whitchurch can hardly be the one referred to. No difficulty arises over the entries of Sunday and Monday, except perhaps the reference to Marshfield, which seems to indicate that he intended travelling east, or north-east, rather than south-east. Evidently he anticipated a fairly long journey on Monday by going out eleven miles from Bristol on Sunday evening. Had he been going to Whitchurch, Hants, he would surely have ridden via Bath, not Marshfield, which meant turning south at Chippenham to Devizes. Whitchurch was nearly fifty-five miles from Marshfield, and the journey, allowing for two breaks, would not have taken more than twelve hours.

The difficulty is over Tuesday morning. It was about forty miles to Marlow from Whitchurch by way of Kingsclere, Aldermaston, and Reading, and another eleven or twelve to Windsor, where he arrived, after preaching at Marlow, "a little before twelve". It meant, at the very least, a fifty-mile ride before noon, possibly two breaks for meals, say half an hour at Reading, and half an hour at Marlow, and an hour's preaching service. That would have taken nearly eleven hours, with an early start soon after one at the latest: not impossible, but most improbable.

Whitchurch (Middlesex), adjoining Edgware, eleven miles north-west of London, and between thirty and forty miles from Marlow, is obviously out of the question. Whitchurch (Bucks) is also most unlikely; it was over ninety miles from Marshfield via Marlborough, Wantage, and Aylesbury, and allowing for only two stops of an hour each would have meant about nineteen hours. As Marlow was on the direct road from Wantage, it seems unlikely, when he was within twenty miles at Wallingford, that he would turn off and go thirty miles in a northerly direction, and then, leaving next morning not later than four, come back through Aylesbury on a journey of almost another thirty miles.

There can be little doubt, if any, that Whitchurch (Oxon) is the place referred to in the *Journal*. It was less than seventy miles from Marshfield, and twenty-two from Marlow. His route on Monday would almost certainly have been to Wantage via Chippenham, Marlborough, and Lambourn. When he left Wantage, instead of taking the direct road to Marlow through Wallingford and Henley, he turned off to the right near Harwell, on the Reading road; the reason being fairly evident. Four miles along that road was Blewbury, where there was a little Methodist society. Doubtless he had planned to visit it on his way to Marlow. If he left Marshfield at half-past four he would have reached Blewbury about five in the evening, reckoning a stop of an hour, perhaps at Marlborough, and another at Wantage. A stay of two hours with the friends there would still have enabled him to get to Whitchurch, about ten miles, before nine. Next morning, if he left at half-past four, he could have got to Marlow by half-past eight, and after half an hour for breakfast and an hour for his preaching service would reach Windsor, eleven miles away, just before twelve. GEORGE GIFFORD.

## “INDEPENDENT” METHODIST SOCIETIES

### A Checklist

IT may surprise many to know that in this country there remain quite a large number of unattached “Methodist” causes, with histories as diverse as the Reform agitation of 1849 and “quarter-age” squabbles of very recent years. By far the greater number of these causes firmly adhere to what they consider to be the “Methodist”, or the “Wesleyan”, way of faith and spiritual discipline.

Apart from the two groups united in circuits, they remain quite isolated, not only from one another, but also from both the Wesleyan Reform Union and the Independent Methodists, not to mention the Methodist Church itself. They are congregational without being Congregationalist, and Methodist without being connexional.

The initial difficulty with such a checklist was deciding just what was, and what was not, a “Methodist” society. The final judgement was of necessity a purely subjective one, but the following principles have been set and followed :

(a) It should be included if once an integral part of one of the Methodist Churches, and still considering itself in an historical and doctrinal relationship to Methodism.

(b) It should be included if the cause was a direct result of a division within a Methodist Church at either connexional or local level, and the separated society remains apart from any other denomination or linked fellowship of Churches.

Let it be confessed immediately that there are churches that might consider themselves within these categories that have not been included. This more especially applies to groups and congregations with a Methodist background, sometimes meeting in former Methodist buildings, that have become part of the Holiness movement. For the most part these groups hold tenaciously to what they consider to be sound Wesleyan doctrine and principles, and would indeed claim to be truly Methodist. They have not been included for the reason that the Holiness bodies have now reached numerical strength to warrant “confessional” standing in their own right. Likewise a number of churches with a Methodist link of real strength have been omitted because they have united with the Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches (more commonly simply abbreviated to FIEC), and in spite of the Fellowship’s claim that it is not a denomination, but a Fellowship of like-minded Churches for mutual help and encouragement, it would seem to carry many of the vehicles of the denominational programme.

Over forty entirely independent churches are listed below. The difficulties of tracing the exact location and precise Methodist relationship of these societies, without well-established aids such as Conference or Assembly Minutes, Church Handbooks or Magazines, have been enormous. They have no unifying means whatsoever, and although many are affiliated with local Free Church Councils, the

writer knows of no single written source from which such churches may be traced. It would appear that far more exist within the principles followed than are enumerated here; indeed, the total may be well-nigh double the number listed. The list must therefore remain a provisional one until exact data from every part of the country are forthcoming.

The *Official List of Certified Places of Worship . . . showing those Registered for Marriages*<sup>1</sup> has been a valuable guide in this piece of research. Not only individual churches, but also their declaration of denomination or group, is contained therein. The *Official List* can take one only so far in this field, however, for it naturally enough does not include the many small places of worship that have not availed themselves of any of the provisions of the Marriage Act. The adage "You cannot believe everything that you see in print" is applicable even to this ultra-official publication, for several churches designated in its columns as "Methodist Church" in denominational loyalty are not in fact connexional churches at all, but within some category of our checklist. One may safely apply the rule concerning the *List* that all Methodist churches declare themselves as such, but that not all so declaring themselves are connexional Methodist churches. This difficulty is of no minor importance, for the statement of Mr. David Renton (Joint Under-Secretary, Home Office) to a House of Commons standing committee on 31st May 1960, in regard to certain exemptions for religious bodies under the new Charities Bill, that "The position is nothing like so simple as one might think. The Methodists for example are divided into about two dozen sections"<sup>2</sup> is clearly based on conclusions incorrectly but at the same time understandably drawn from the loose manner in which churches within "Methodist" denominations describe themselves in the Home Office Registers and Lists. There are no fewer than eleven different titles at present in common use among churches within the Wesleyan Reform Union, and although the Independent Methodists seem to be more at unity on this matter, four titles seem to be in fairly common use among their societies. Add to this chaos the official denominational titles, and the Calvinistic Methodists (seemingly the name still preferred by many of the Welsh Presbyterians), and the "two dozen sections" are readily, if falsely, created.

This is not the place to dwell on the causes of division which brought these isolated societies into being, for where exact information has been obtained the facts, if admittedly offered only from one side of the dispute in question, must speak for themselves. The titles within the column headed "Designation" are either as they are declared on the Official Lists and/or on the respective Certificates of Public Worship, or are the names in most common use, and employed on letter-headings and notice-boards. WILLIAM PARKES.

<sup>1</sup> HMSO, 1954. An annual Addenda is also published, but the writer has been unable to obtain a more recent edition than 1956.

<sup>2</sup> As reported in the *Guardian*, 1st June 1960. The statement brought forth only one letter of refutation, and no comments appeared in the Church press.

**Provisional Checklist of non-Union Methodist Causes**

<i>Building and Location</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>BEDFORDSHIRE</b>		
Mission Hall, Wilshamstead	Free Methodist	Independent WR society
<b>BERKSHIRE</b>		
Washwater Chapel, Enborn	Independent Methodist	Secession from local Wesleyan society, date unknown
<b>CAMBRIDGESHIRE</b>		
Free Church Mission Hall, Rampton	Wesleyan and Baptist	Free church union. Small village
<b>CHESHIRE</b>		
Primitive Methodist Church, room in Potter's Yard, Broadheath, Altrincham	Primitive Methodist—Continuing	Secession at Methodist Union, 1932. Not related to Hull group.
<b>CORNWALL</b>		
Mission Hall, St. John's Road, Helston	Independent Methodist	No information
Free Wesleyan Chapel, Common Moor, St. Cleer	Wesleyan Reform	Independent WR society
Free Wesleyan Chapel, Harrowbridge, St. Neot	Wesleyan Reform	Independent WR society
<b>DERBYSHIRE</b>		
Methodist Church, Lowgates, Staveley	Methodist	The former Staveley UMFC society (Chesterfield circuit) (did not enter 1907 Union).
<b>GLOUCESTERSHIRE</b>		
Easter Compton	Bristol Sixth (Independent) Circuit	Formerly the Bristol, Littleton and Patchway (later Bristol Sixth) circuit, UMFC. Entered the 1907 Union, but later withdrew on grounds of "evangelical zeal".
Littleton (no services held at present)		
Patchway Common		
Piling (Awkley)		
Aust		
<b>HAMPSHIRE</b>		
Methodist Church Hall, Catherington	Independent Methodist	No information. Two small villages in an area where there is little Methodism.
Methodist Chapel, North Lane, Clanfield	Independent Methodist	
Gospel Methodist Temperance Hall, West Wellow	Gospel Methodist	Secession from local Wesleyans. Desire for strong evangelistic abstinence society.
<b>ISLE OF WIGHT</b>		
Beulah Chapel, Sea View, Ryde	Free Wesleyan Methodist	Independent WR society
<b>KENT</b>		
Mission Hall, Wootton, Barham	Independent Methodist	No information
<b>LANCASHIRE</b>		
Methodist Free Church, Buckley Street, Warrington	Methodist Free Church	Independent WR society
<b>LINCOLNSHIRE</b>		
Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Brant Broughton	Wesleyan Reform	Independent WR society
Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Cumberworth	Wesleyan Reform	Independent WR society



## 8 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<i>Building and Location</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>NORTHUMBERLAND</b>		
Prudhoe Street Mission Hall (and Denton Road branch), Newcastle upon Tyne	Christian	Independent City Mission. Methodism in foundation, doctrine, and spirit.
Broomhill Christian Mission, Broomhill, Morpeth	Free Methodist	Secession from Broomhill Wesleyan society over the administration of a branch Sunday-school. Exact date not known.
<b>NOTTINGHAMSHIRE</b>		
Independent Primitive Meth- odist Chapel, Aslockton	Independent Primitive Methodist	Missioned in 1816-17 by Ben- ton and Wedgwood. PM society created. Withdrew over quarterage dispute and joined Independent Meth- odists. No longer on IMC stations. Very early Certi- ficate of Worship, No. 387.
NOTE—At Sutton nearby there is a society using the same title as the above, but still appearing in IMC <i>Minutes</i> . This society is of much later date.		
<b>OXFORDSHIRE</b>		
Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Piddington	Wesleyan Re- form Methodist	Independent WR society
<b>STAFFORDSHIRE</b>		
Independent Methodist Church, Pensnett, Brierley Hill	Independent Methodist	Originally Shut End PM (Brierley Hill circuit), form- ed 1832. Seceded in 1894, erecting new chapel same year. Quarterage dispute was the source of division.
<b>WARWICKSHIRE</b>		
Methodist Free Church, Durbar Avenue, Coventry	Methodist Free Church	No information
NOTE—There are four Wesleyan Reform Union churches in the Coventry area. So far as I can discover, this cause has never been linked with them.		
Free Methodist Church, Heath End Road, Nuneaton	Wesleyan Re- form Methodist	Independent WR society
NOTE—Two Wesleyan Reform Union churches exist at present in the area. This cause is not listed in the <i>Minutes</i> , however, and the WRU societies declare themselves as "Wesleyan Reform Church" by way of title.		
<b>WORCESTERSHIRE</b>		
Mission Hall, Price Street, Dudley	Methodist Church	Secession from Dixon's Green Wesleyan society in 1888. Evangelical doctrine and activity was the chief cause.
Wesley Bible Institute, Darby End, Netherton, Dudley	Independent Wesleyan	Secession from Darby End Wesleyan society in 1914, time and place of class meetings being the cause of dispute.

<i>Building and Location</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Notes</i>
<b>WORCESTERSHIRE—continued</b>		
Overend Mission, Cradley	Independent Methodist	No information
<b>YORKSHIRE</b>		
Redbourne Street, Hull	} Primitive Methodist Continuing Church. Hull Circuit	These four causes are the result of a movement which sought to keep the Primitive Methodists out of the 1932 Union. In 1924 the "Primitive Methodist Defence League" was organized, and two Hull laymen, W. R. Brabbs and Thomas Lightfoot, were prominent in its activities. Pamphlets were widely distributed. The present societies were created after the League's efforts had failed, and all the buildings in use have been erected or purchased since 1932.
Holmpton		
Driffield		
Patrington		
Ebenezer Church, Bowling Back Lane, Bradford	Bible Christian —Unattached	Although no clear evidence has been obtained, this cause might well be in succession to the BC work in Bradford towards the end of the last century. O. A. Beckerlegge ("The Northern Bible Christians", <i>Proceedings</i> , xxxi, p. 39 f.) does not date the discontinuance of these causes (two in number).
NOTE—The General Register Office <i>Official List</i> includes a further Bradford church with the designation "Bible Christian—Unattached", with a building in Albert Street. This cause, however, also bears the title "Apostolic Church of God", and it would seem that although its origin may well have been BC, it is today within the Pentecostal movement.		
New Wesleyan School Chapel, Clayton Heights, Bradford	Wesleyan— Unattached	No information
Methodist Church, Moorside, Drighlington	Independent Methodist	Formerly the Moorside (also known as Adwalton) society of the Batley (Zion) circuit. Originally UMFC, Birstall and Batley circuit. It became independent in 1947, quarterage and "lack of oversight" being the stated factors.
Methodist Free Church, Hightown, Liversidge	Methodist	Independent WR society
Methodist Free Church, Wooldale, Lane Bottom, Holmfirth	Free Methodist	Originally the WR secession from the Wooldale Wesleyan society. United with the Holmfirth WR circuit on its creation, and with the circuit entered the UMFC. The society withdrew from

10 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

<i>Building and Location</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Notes</i>
YORKSHIRE— <i>continued</i>		
Gildersome Street Ebenezer, Gildersome, near Leeds	Independent Methodist	the circuit c. 1870 because it considered it was being granted too small a place in the circuit's affairs. For a period it was "in fellowship" with the WRU, although it never appeared as a society on this body's list of stations, being listed separately from the fully connexional churches.
Bethel Chapel, Shelf	Free Methodist	Society originally Gildersome Street UMFC, Birstall circuit. Withdrew (date unknown, but before 1907) over a quarterage and "lack of oversight" dispute. A single-church station originally established as WR. In turn the society (together with a mission for a period) entered the UMFC, the UMC, and the Methodist Church. For many years before its final disappearance from the stations in 1942 it had been under the care of the Chairman of the District, or before 1932 the nearest UM superintendent.
WALES		
Methodist Free Mission Hall, Porth, Rhondda	Free Methodist	Secession from local Wesleyan society, date unknown
United Free Gospel Mission Hall, Trealaw, Rhondda	Free Gospel	"Independent" IM society. IMC principles of "Free Church, Free Gospel, Free Ministry" strongly held.
IRELAND		
Free Methodist Church, Oldpark, Belfast, and Mission place at Bally- robert		This Belfast cause originated as a church extension work of the Canadian Holiness Mission Church. When this body united with the Free Methodist Church in 1959 the society became part of the East Ontario Conference of the FMC. A forward movement is planned for an early advance of Free Methodism in Ireland. Though this is not, strictly speaking, an independent society, it deserves inclusion for purposes of completeness and interest. For further information on this evangelical and ultra-conservative Methodist body, see <i>A New History of Methodism</i> , ii, pp. 131-4. The present world membership is some 100,000, more than half of which is within the overseas Conferences.

## FIVE WESLEY LETTERS

THE Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, some time ago acquired the late Bishop Frederick T. Leete's collection of Wesleyana, which included eighty-one original letters of John Wesley. Five of these letters had not been published until Mrs. John H. Warnick, the Methodist Historical Society's librarian at Southern Methodist University, transcribed and printed them in the Perkins School of Theology *Journal*, Winter Number, 1960. Mrs. Warnick's kindness has placed in my hands not only the magazine referred to, but also photostats of the letters.

Mrs. Warnick's transcripts are in places lacking in complete accuracy. The letters are all products of Wesley's old age, and the handwriting is not always easy to decipher; but the transcripts below are to the best of my belief correct, though one or two words still completely baffle me.

### I

#### JOHN WESLEY TO FRANCIS ASBURY

Norwich

Octo. 31. 1784

My Dear Brother,

Some weeks before you receive this, I hope you will see Dr. Coke (with his associates) & find him a man after your own heart, seeking neither Profit, Pleasure nor Honour: But simply, to save the Souls for whom Christ has died, & to promote his Kingdom upon earth. You are aware of the danger on either hand: And I scarce know which is the greater? One or the other, so far as it takes place will overturn Methodism from the foundation: Either our travelling Preachers turning Independents, & gathering Congregations each for himself: Or procuring Ordination in a *regular* way, & accepting Parochial Cures. If you can find means of guarding against both evils the work of God will prosper more than ever.

I suppose the Doctor & you have now considered at large, what Method will be most effectual, to fix the work on such a stable foundation, as will not easily be overturn'd. If that good man, Mr. Ogden, cou'd be prevailed on, to join with you heart and hand, it might be of admirable service to the Cause of God, & such a threefold [cord?—omitted] wou'd not soon be broken. But herein you must proceed with the utmost caution: Go on slowly, step by step, lest you sh'd put it into the power of any one to hurt you: Let not him that believeth make haste! I know not but he will do you most good, at a little distance. You will soon be able to judge whether this wou'd not also be the case, with regard to Mr. J—— [illegible]. Admit none into the *closest union* with you, but those whose heart is *altogether* as your heart.

When you have once settled your plan with respect to the Provinces, you will easily form a regular connexion with our Society in Antigua on the one hand, & with those in Nova Scotia & Newfoundland on the other. John Hilton's is a very harmless performance. It will soon die & be forgotten. I don't believe Anthony Benezet ever recommended it. I shall be glad to see the Papers w<sup>ch</sup> you speak of. Probably they have a place in the Magazine.

Those who hoped for a division among the Methodists here, are totally

disappointed. As to your having a Bishop from England in every Province, it will be long enough before that plan is brought into execution. Meanwhile, use y<sup>e</sup> means you have: Only with much circumspection & much Prayer! I am

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother

J WESLEY

To / M<sup>r</sup> Francis Asbury / at M<sup>r</sup> Spragg's / in / New York.

This is obviously the most important of the five letters, though it adds little to our knowledge of the circumstances and problems of those times. It is a pity that no reference to it appeared in the recent *Journal and Letters of Francis Asbury*.

Coke and Whatcoat sailed from Bristol on 18th September 1784, and their first meeting with Asbury took place in Maryland on 14th November. Wesley's letter would not reach Asbury until some time in the new year, when he was once more on his travels, but by this time the famous Christmas Conference had been held in Baltimore and the problems Wesley mentions had been discussed. MR. OGDEN was the Rev. Uzel Ogden, the first Anglican bishop of his native state of New Jersey, and he was a source of much encouragement to the leaders of early American Methodism. ANTHONY BENEZET was an "honest Quaker" who emigrated to America, taught in a school in Philadelphia, wrote books on education, and finally espoused the anti-slavery movement. Curnock suggests that his writings on this subject led Wesley to the same enthusiasm.<sup>1</sup> The reference to JOHN HILTON puzzles me: the John Hilton who caused dissension in Bristol had withdrawn from the itinerancy seven years earlier, but Wesley's reference is in the present tense. Was there another John Hilton?

Wesley's comment on "a Bishop . . . in every province" is intriguing. Is he referring to Anglican or Methodist bishops? If the latter, this must be his only use of the word in relation to Methodism.

## II

Peard Dickenson<sup>2</sup> was ordained a priest in the Church of England in 1783. He had joined the Methodist society at Bristol in 1775, and there first made Wesley's acquaintance. After his ordination, Dickenson became curate to the Rev. Vincent Perronet at Shoreham; and when that venerable saint died in 1785 the parishioners petitioned the patrons, asking that Dickenson should be appointed to the vacant living. Their request was not granted, however, and after filling the vacancy for a few months he went as curate to Radcliffe-on-Trent in Nottinghamshire. His time there was short, for in July 1786 Wesley asked him "to come into the Connection" where "there will be a large sphere of usefulness for you, in the

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, v, p. 446.

<sup>2</sup> His name is sometimes spelt "Dickinson", as on the title-page of his own autobiography, *Memoirs of the Life of the Rev. Peard Dickinson*, but this was not published until after his death, edited by Joseph Benson. Wesley's letter clearly gives "Dickenson", as also does the inscription near his grave in the burial-ground at Wesley's Chapel.

London Circuit, and I shall sometimes send you, on journeys to other parts of the Connection . . .".<sup>3</sup> And so in August 1786 Peard Dickenson began his work as one of Wesley's London assistants, employed in preaching, visiting, holding prayer meetings, lovefeasts, band-meetings, and the like. He was best known as one of the "readers" at City Road chapel.<sup>4</sup> He assisted Wesley in the ordination of Henry Moore, and was one of Wesley's executors; and his name remained on the "stations" under the London circuit until his death in 1802.

## JOHN WESLEY TO PEARD DICKENSON

London

Jan. 15 1785

My Dear Brother,

I think the best model that ever was for y<sup>e</sup> Language of a Christian Preacher is the first Epistle of St John. I know no tolerable Commentator on y<sup>e</sup> Old Testament. What is valuable in Poole & Henry you have in y<sup>e</sup> Notes.

Dodwell's Letters may be very usefull: So may D<sup>r</sup> Doddridge's Lectures. Leland's view is excellent in it's kind: So is Grotius. That "Theory of Religion", I do not know. Hammond's Catechism, Wake & Clark I think scarce worth reading. Every thing of Worthington is good. Erasmus' Catechism I do not know, neither Stevenson. Welchman's, Wheatley's & Ab<sup>p</sup> Synge's tracts are the best in their kind. Howe's Living Temple, Jones, Clemens Romanus & Patrick's Advice are excellent. That attempt to explain I doubt is a weak attempt. Herbert, Vida, Buchanan & Johnson are excellent in their several kinds. Austin's Meditations (not His) are devout. The Exposition Pietatis I have not seen. The Gentleman instructed is a well-wrote Book. Hopkins is a strong & a pious Writer. I do not know Kuster or y<sup>e</sup> Ellipses Graecae. Oakley's Introduction is counted good. Clerc's Works are middling. The Antiq. Hebraicae I have not seen. Seneca's Tragedies & Ovid's Metamorphosis are worth reading once. So are Valleius Paterculus, & y<sup>e</sup> Excerpta ex Ovidio, Virgilio, Horatio, Juvenali, Persio. Their *whole* works are not worth reading. Neither are Seneca's. Terence is worth studying. It is the finest Latin in the world. That tract of Erasmus I have not read. Ausonius is little worth. Epictetus & More's Enchiridion are excellent Books: Tully's Offices deserve an attentive Reading. I have not seen y<sup>e</sup> Poly— [two words illegible] Dialectus, or y<sup>e</sup> Scriptorum Graeci. Sallust writes Latin next to Terence. Duncan, Watts & Sanderson are y<sup>e</sup> best next Aldrich. Aristotle is an admirable Writer. Callinus is not a bad one. Scapula's Lexicon is not to be compared to Hederic's. Sch——'s I know not. Nor Schickard. All Leusden's publications are good. He was an excellent Scholar.

But you need not half these Books. A few well digested are better than ten thousand. It w<sup>d</sup> be worth your while, to consider the Course of Female Study, in the Arminian Magazine.

Peace be with all your Spirits! I am

Your Affectionate Brother

J WESLEY

To / The Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Dickenson / To be left at M<sup>rs</sup> George's / in / Sevenoaks

<sup>3</sup> Dickenson's *Memoir*, pp. 52, 54.

<sup>4</sup> For the City Road "Readers", see *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 178 ff.

Peard Dickenson was educated at Oxford, first at St. Edmund Hall and later at Hertford College. During his residence at Oxford, "I had purchased a collection of valuable books, which has since been gradually increased from year to year, till it has arrived at a considerable amount."<sup>5</sup> The books mentioned in Wesley's letter were probably part of this collection. No one was better qualified than Wesley to advise him on his reading, for most of the books listed had been read by Wesley during his own Oxford days, and appear in the Oxford Diaries which I am at present transcribing. The crisp, brief sentences with which the letter ends show Wesley at his best as a true mentor.

### III

The recipient of the third letter, the Rev. Brian Bury Collins, was at the time a deacon in the Church of England. He had been dismissed from his curacy, and was now assisting the Rev. John Berdridge at Everton. He was ordained priest in October 1781, and thereafter gave assistance to Wesley and to the Countess of Huntingdon. Several of Wesley's letters to Collins appear in the *Standard Letters*, whilst a selection of his own correspondence was printed in instalments in *Proceedings*, volume ix.

#### JOHN WESLEY TO BRIAN BURY COLLINS

Lewisham  
Janu. 27. 1780

Dear Sir,

There is no Counsel or Strength against the Lord. And He does all things well. If therefore it pleases Him to lay you aside for a season (as He did *me*, from November to March) our part is to say, "It is the Lord: Let him do what seemeth him good." Nevertheless you should undoubtedly use every probable means of recovering your Health & Strength. And therefore, (if you have not done it already) you should write to D<sup>r</sup> Wilson without delay & give him as particular an account as you can, of all y<sup>r</sup> present Symptoms.

When you was in town last, you certainly did right, in lodging where you did. It was a Providential Call, I cannot doubt, but you had a message from God to that Family. And it might be more pleasing to *you* (as well as to *me*) always to lodge in a Private House. But I do not consider this, what is most pleasing to me, but what conduces most to advance the Work of God? And this consideration determines *me*, to be as much with my Fellow labourers as possible. And so I verily think should *you*. Do not creep into a quiet corner. I love as well as you do Tacitus *sylvas inter reptare salubris*<sup>6</sup> [to stroll silently among the health-giving woods—ED.]. But it is not my calling. I am to save souls: And as many as I possibly can. Therefore I plunge into y<sup>e</sup> midst of populous Cities. Therefore

Aliena negotia centum  
Per caput & circum saliant latus<sup>7</sup>

[a hundred concerns of others dance through my head and all about me—ED.]. Altho to this day I have as much Taste as ever for

<sup>5</sup> Dickenson's *Memoir*, p. 27.

<sup>6</sup> Horace: *Epistles*, Bk. 1, Ep. 4, line 4.

<sup>7</sup> Horace: *Satires*, Bk. 2, Sat. 6, lines 33-4.

Secretum iter & fallentis semita vitae<sup>8</sup>

[a secluded journey along the pathway of a life unnoticed—ED.].

But we have only one thing to do! To run w<sup>th</sup> patience y<sup>e</sup> race set before us, looking unto Jesus.

I am, Dear Sir,  
Ever yours

J WESLEY

To / The Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Collins / At Everton, near / Biggleswade

The letter affords little opportunity for comment, save to attract attention to Wesley's amazing facility for drawing at will, and apparently from memory, from his own intimate knowledge of the classics. We see here yet another illustration of the thoroughness with which Wesley had pursued his classical studies at Oxford, and maintained them through the rest of his busy life.

#### IV

JOHN WESLEY TO JOHN WATSON, JUNR.

Near London

Nov. 30. 1782

My Dear Brother

I am glad to hear you are better. Probably in a little time, you may be able to act as a travelling Preacher. It was not at all proper, that you sh<sup>d</sup> stay longer at Arbroth. You cou<sup>d</sup> be of little use there. But perhaps you might be able to do that easy work: To supply Dunkeld & Perth. Then John Ogilvie may have opportunity of going North, wch will be best for Him also. If you can undertake this, the sooner, the better. And write word of it, to Mr. Thompson at Dundee. I am

Your Affectionate Brother

J WESLEY

The superscription to this letter is missing, and there are no external means of identifying its recipient. However, Dr. Frank Baker (who saw the transcript before I did) has deduced from internal evidence that the letter was sent to JOHN WATSON, JUNR. I entirely agree with his conclusion. Watson was at this time ill, and not on a station in the year 1782-3.<sup>9</sup> JOHN OGILVIE was the second preacher in the Dundee circuit.

#### V

JOHN WESLEY TO JOHN ELLISON

London

Nov. 4. 1783

Dear Jack,

As you desired it, I wrote to Lord North immediately: but I doubted, whether it wou<sup>d</sup> avail. Time was, when he wanted & was glad of my Assistance: but now he does not want it. So I do not expect to hear from him any more: it is well, I can do without him. It is well we have One Friend that will never fail us! Let us trust in Him, & we shall never be confounded.

I am

Your Affectionate Unkle [sic]

J WESLEY

To / M<sup>r</sup> John Ellison / At the Custom House in / Bristol

<sup>8</sup> Horace: *Epistles*, Bk. 1, Ep. 18, line 103.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Proceedings*, xvi, p. 130 and *Letters*, vii, p. 176.



John Ellison was the son of Wesley's elder sister Susanna, and therefore Wesley's nephew. The avuncular letter would appear to have a prosaic theme. Wesley was not averse from "pulling strings" on behalf of his relatives and friends; for example, a letter to William Pitt, then Prime Minister, in 1784 asks a favour for Lieutenant Webb, and mentions previous favours shown to Webb by Lord North, and by Pitt himself to John Ellison.<sup>10</sup>

In November 1783, when this letter was written, Lord North was nearly at the end of his brief Coalition with Charles James Fox. North's political career was almost over, which may explain why nothing came of Wesley's appeal to him on Ellison's behalf. Ellison was employed in the Customs and Excise at Bristol, and no doubt Wesley was hoping to obtain promotion for him, though this can only be conjecture.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

<sup>10</sup> *Letters*, vii, p. 234.

The Society of Cirplanologists have published their *Register of Methodist Circuit Plans, 1777-1860* (pp. 24, 2s. 10d. post paid from Mr. A. Whipp, 29, Mather Avenue, Whitefield, Manchester). It comprises a catalogue of about 2,000 plans within the period named, with their dates and information of special interest, and, not least in importance, the present location of each plan. All the plans listed (with a very few exceptions) are originals; the great majority are Wesleyan, with Primitive Methodist plans a good second. The other Methodist denominations are represented only scantily.

The *Register* represents a great deal of hard work, and some splendid co-operation by a great many people. It does not claim to be complete; there must still be hundreds of old plans in private possession or in chapel vestries which are not listed here, and any additional information of this kind will be published in a supplementary catalogue. A list is needed, too, of facsimile plans which have been reproduced in local histories, centenary brochures, and similar publications. There is an immense field here waiting to be dug over. Meanwhile, the Society of Cirplanologists have laid all students under debt: their publication will be most useful to all research workers, and we gladly recognize the enthusiasm and enterprise which lie behind this most worthy production.

*Free Methodism in Cornwall*, by Oliver A. Beckerlegge (pp. 26) is the second "Occasional Publication" of the Cornish Methodist Historical Association (for a notice of the first, see page 3). This booklet does not profess to be a complete history of the various Free Methodist bodies (including the "Teetotal Methodists") which sprang up in the Duchy, but it is both interesting and informative in itself, and whets the appetite for more. Dr. Beckerlegge will not expect everybody to share or approve his own well-known radical views, which find expression in a judicious use of exclamation-marks, or in the use of such a phrase as "... surely Free Churchmen could bury without a liturgy!!"; but some of us find Dr. Beckerlegge most entertaining and lovable when he is most provocative. His booklet deserves a wide sale; and we commend the zeal of our Cornish brethren, who seem to have mastered the art of producing attractive cyclostyled material at a reasonable price. This booklet has as a cover illustration an ink-photo reproduction of the Redruth United Methodist Free Church, which, like the chapel it depicts, is a work of art.

## METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOLS IN NOTTINGHAM

**M**ETHODISM may be justly proud of having taken a leading part in the formation and development of the Sunday-school movement in Nottingham.

Only three years after Robert Raikes had established his school in Gloucester there can be traced the first stages of a similar attempt in Nottingham. The *Nottingham Journal* for 26th June 1784 contains a paragraph suggesting the formation of a society of youths to meet on Sunday mornings and afternoons for religious instruction. The writer expressed the opinion that such a plan would "be greatly instrumental to their imbibing the love of virtue, as well as a distaste and abhorrence of vice; and many of the rising generation might, perhaps, be rescued from a prison or gibbet". The paragraph concluded with a reference to the disorderly conduct of the youths of Nottingham and an expression of opinion that no town was more in need of religious work of the type suggested. The proposal appears to have gained public support and approval, as an advertisement appeared in the *Nottingham Journal* of 12th October 1784 requesting the mayor to convene a meeting to consider "in what manner a Sunday school for the children of the poor might be established in Nottingham". To this advertisement was appended the signatures of the clergymen of the three parishes of the town, and the ministers of the dissenting congregations with the notable exception of a Methodist minister, which in view of later developments is somewhat surprising. As a result, the mayor presided over a meeting on 21st October, when it was unanimously resolved to establish a Sunday-school. Another meeting followed within a few days, when a committee was appointed to put the plan into effect. This committee framed the following rules for the conduct of the school:

1. That no child shall be received or continued, unless he or she come to school with clean linen, washed hands and face, and hair combed.
2. That none be admitted under eight years old, or above fourteen.
3. That each scholar must attend at half-past eight in the morning, and at one in the afternoon, and be conducted by the master or mistress to church, and return to school.
4. That such child as does not regularly attend, without sufficient excuse, will lose the benefit of this charity.
5. That subscribers shall be allowed to recommend scholars according to the amount of the subscription.
6. That proper persons shall be appointed to solicit and collect subscriptions throughout the whole town, as soon as the plan has been more maturely considered.<sup>1</sup>

It would seem likely that strong opposition was aroused against the decision requiring the children to attend church, as only two months later, on 22nd December 1784, a further meeting was held at which it was resolved:

<sup>1</sup> *Nottingham Journal*, 30th October 1784.

Only boys from the age of eight to eleven to be admitted.

The parents of children with those ages, who wish to have them instructed, are desired to attend at the vestry of the parish in which they reside, on Monday next, at 12 o'clock.

Those persons (schoolmasters or others) who wish to engage as masters, are requested to send in their names, places of abode, and convenience for teaching, to the vestries at the same time.

Parents must expect no other advantage from this institution, but the instruction of their children.

Another meeting will be held at the Town Hall, on Thursday next, at 11 o'clock, at which gentlemen are requested to be present.

N.B.—Each child may attend his customary place of worship.<sup>2</sup>

A large room in the Exchange Hall is generally accepted as having been the first schoolroom, but there is evidence that a group of schools existed, some being conducted in private houses, stockings' shops and similar places in various parts of the town.<sup>3</sup> The schools were supported by public subscription, the majority of the teachers being paid at the rate of a penny a week for each scholar. The teachers were superintended and assisted by voluntary workers from the churches and chapels in the town. The children received instruction in reading and writing, and were conducted to church or chapel for religious teaching.<sup>4</sup>

Sunday-schools were again mentioned in the *Nottingham Journal* of 9th December 1786 in a paragraph which today is not without interest :

The amazing Increase in all Parts of the Kingdom of these modern Seminaries Sunday Schools within these few Months, cannot fail to inspire the fallible Mind with the most pleasing Sensations. To see the Multitude of poor unhappy Children, who without this Assistance would probably be excluded from every species of virtuous Education, trained up in a religious Observance of that Day, which is regarded by too many as a Day of Amusement, gives great Reason to hope for a Reformation of Manners in the lower Ranks of Mankind, and to that Means, a Prevention of Part of those Crimes, which have been so often held up as a Disgrace to the Age and Country in which they are committed.

It is generally accepted that the school conducted in the Exchange room was largely staffed by Methodists and gradually became to be regarded as a Methodist school. That may well have been the case, but there is documentary evidence of the existence of a distinct and separate Methodist Sunday-school in 1788 :

On Sunday, the 25th ult., there was a public examination of the children belonging to the Sunday Schools of the Rev. Mr. Wesley's chapel, in this town. The children performed with great propriety and exactness, to the great astonishment of a very crowded audience. In the evening, there was a sermon preached for the benefit of the charity, by

<sup>2</sup> *Nottingham Journal*, 24th December 1784.

<sup>3</sup> *History of the Sunday School Union*, by W. B. Carter.

<sup>4</sup> *Centenary History of Wesley School*, by J. W. Wakerley.

the Rev. Mr. Thomas Hanby, from . . . The collection amounted to £9. 1. 11½d.<sup>5</sup>

It can thus be claimed that Nottingham Methodists were engaged in Sunday-school work as a denomination at least eleven years before any other nonconformist body in the town. The Baptists and Independents did not begin Sunday-schools until 1799.

There is in existence a leaflet, published in 1793, entitled *Miscellaneous Poems and Hymns. Published for the Benefit of the Methodist Sunday School in Nottingham*, the preface of which indicates that the school had used "two large rooms in the Exchange for the purpose of teaching in" since Christmas 1792. This document also states that during the year the school had increased in numbers from 170 to about 500 children. In addition, there are given some details relating to the conduct of this early Methodist school which are worthy of reproduction in full:

No children are admitted in this School but such as are more than 5 years of age, and are by poverty deprived of the means of learning in the week day.

The children are taught to read, write and cast accompts, and the principles of Christianity: from the improvement in the learning as well as morals of many of them, there is every reason to say—The blessing of God attends the labours of the teachers.

The children who read only are divided into 10 classes (the boys and girls separate) each class under the care of two teachers.\*

Those who write are taught in a separate room, the number at present is about 60, over which there are four teachers.

The times of attendance are from half past 8 o'clock to twelve, and from half past one to four.

The names of the children are enrolled at the time of their admission into a book provided for the purpose and are called over both morning and evening, that those may be discovered who absent themselves, which if they do three times successively without some lawful excuse, they are put out of school.

If any scholar be convicted of swearing, lying, Sabbath breaking, or any other capital misdemeanor, his punishment is to wear the Cap of Reproach, and to sit on the Stool of Disgrace for a certain time; if the fault be very notorious, he must wear a badge with the nature of his crime written upon it, be led through the several classes of children, and exposed to public view—If he continues refractory, for the third offence he is excluded.

\* All the teachers except four, teach gratuitously.

This leaflet seems to establish that by 1792 either the Sunday-school conducted in the Exchange had become a purely Methodist organization, or that the original undenominational school was held in another room in the same building.

Further information about this early school is scanty, and one is

<sup>5</sup> *Nottingham Journal*, 7th February 1788.

grateful for the few references contained in *Memoirs of Joseph Pearson*. In this volume Pearson is quoted as having written :

"This year [1795]," he observes, "I became a teacher in the Sunday School belonging to the Methodists, held in the Exchange large room. The number of children was about 500. I was placed over a class of girls. At that time they had four paid teachers, lest, the gratuitous system should fail."<sup>6</sup>

Apparently the school had grown to such an extent that a branch had been established, for in 1796 Pearson was appointed to be "the Superintendent of a school of two hundred boys. And, as the rooms which they occupied had become too small a large room was taken over a mill."<sup>7</sup> In connexion with this boys' school Pearson commenced a system for providing clothing for those in need, and says :

On Saturday, eight or ten boys, who were entitled to shoes and stockings etc., called on me, on Sion Hill [where he then dwelt]. I led them through the town, and got their wants supplied, which gave me much pleasure. Sixty nine boys, in the course of a few weeks, were relieved by these means, and fourteen pounds, eighteen shillings, and four pence, expended.<sup>8</sup>

ROWLAND C. SWIFT.

(To be continued)

<sup>6</sup> *Memoirs of Joseph Pearson*, by Henry Fish.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*

*John Wesley : Spiritual Witness*, by Paul Lambourne Higgins (T. S. Denison & Company, Inc., Minneapolis, pp. 134, \$3.00), is yet another biography of Wesley, but with a "slant". The first and last chapters follow the orthodox pattern, describing his antecedents, family, boyhood, old age and death. The intermediate nine chapters are occupied with an analysis of various aspects of his work, as Oxford don, unsuccessful missionary, itinerant preacher, psychic investigator, and religious thinker, to name but some. There is much to be said for an approach of this kind, especially within the compass of a single book. It cannot be affirmed that Dr. Higgins adds anything to our knowledge of Wesley; indeed, if his bibliography approximates to completeness he could hardly be expected to do, for many modern sources are neglected, including our own *Proceedings*. But, unlike some biographers, the author has read the *original* sources, and there is little of importance about his subject which is not touched upon in these pages, and all in a most interesting and readable fashion. Not every book about Wesley from the New World can be commended as highly as this, for to those to whom the facts about Wesley's life are reasonably unfamiliar it will serve as a useful and stimulating introduction. Dr. Higgins has had the advantage of visiting England and exploring the "Wesley landmarks" for himself, which makes his book free from the geographical errors which are so common to American writers. . . . From the Epworth Press there comes *Nathaniel Gilbert : Lawyer and Evangelist*, by Edgar W. Thompson (pp. 32, 2s.). It is a pity that this little book (such excellent value for money) has "missed the bus" for the bicentenary last year of the establishment by Nathaniel Gilbert of the first Methodist society overseas, but it is not too late to do justice to that great and good man, and none is more fitted to do it than Mr. Thompson. With its attractive cover, this splendid biography, the result of much careful research, should command a wide sale.

## BOOK NOTICES

*History of Methodism in Ireland, 1860-1960*, by R. Lee Cole. (Irish Methodist Publishing Company, pp. xiv. 203, 21s.)

The Rev. C. H. Crookshank, in three standard volumes, brought the history of Irish Methodism down to the year 1859. A fourth volume, covering the century between then and now, has just been written by the Rev. R. Lee Cole. Among Mr. Cole's qualifications for such a task, two are outstanding: (a) a wide and intimate knowledge of the documentary sources; and (b) a personal share, unusually large, in moulding the events about which he writes. His Fellowship in Methodist History bears witness to the former qualification. His long life of service as a circuit minister and a Conference official substantiates the latter.

Mr. Crookshank wrote *in extenso*, devoting a chapter to each year. In the circumstances of present-day publishing, Mr. Cole has to compress his work within a single volume, and to keep it at a marketable price. So he has given a chapter to each decade, and has sought to high-light the significant events. The union of the Primitive Wesleyans and the Wesleyan Methodists to form one Church; the rise of the connexional schools and colleges, and of the city missions; the expansion in the North and the contraction in the South; the Irish contribution to overseas service; the open-air preaching and colportage; the increasing sense of stewardship in general, and the desire to influence for good the public life of the time—these are just a few of the subjects brought under survey. Dr. W. L. Northridge says in a Foreword that no important event has been omitted. That is not a presumptuous claim. No doubt the danger persists lest the most priceless things in the Church's life may slip through any historian's fingers. The routine of circuit work, in which people who rarely make headline news are brought into contact with the living God, is not always easy to collect, let alone to set down in the full splendour of its occurrence. Mr. Cole is well aware of this danger, and has tried constantly to guard against it. Yet he is far from overlooking mere matters of organization and constitutional development, where he is very much at home.

But every respectable review, it seems, must include one or two adverse comments. The book was evidently prepared for the press rather hurriedly. The proof-reading leaves something to be desired; and in matters of factual detail there are mistakes which, even if inevitable in a work of such dimensions, some meticulous friend ought to have pointed out before any "copy" was sent to the printer. For another criticism, I think Mr. Cole has overcrowded his stage, and many of his players have merely "walk-on" parts. Of course the probable explanation is to his credit: hundreds of Irish Methodists are proud to be called his friends, and he is too generous in his judgement of their significance. The style of narrative is conversational, and therefore a little discursive. There are scarcely any footnotes—a fact for which the general reader will be grateful, and at which the research student may repine. But there is a very full bibliography, which owes much to the Rev. R. H. Gallagher.

Let me end with a real tribute to Mr. Cole's achievement. He had no preparatory historians of his subject, to whom he could turn for guidance. Instead he had to assemble and arrange his material largely on his own initiative. The result is notable, not merely as a pioneer adventure, but also as an authoritative account, which is likely to remain unrivalled for many years to come. If anyone wishes to know what Irish Methodism has

been doing in the last hundred years, this is the only volume that answers the question adequately. I hope it will be widely bought and read.

R. ERNEST KER.

*English Religious Dissent*, by Erik Routley. (Cambridge University Press, pp. viii. 214, 18s. 6d.)

*Sunday: Christian and Social Significance*, by William Hodgkins. (Independent Press, pp. ix. 238, 21s.)

The present reviewer finds Dr. Routley's book irritating. For one thing, one has an objection (amounting almost to an obsession) to Methodism being "lumped" almost indiscriminately with historic Dissent. Even Dr. Routley is apologetic about the prominence given to Methodism in his book: he admits that there is no "clear historical justification" for this; his only excuse (a poor one) is that Methodism is "a powerful member of the Free Church Federal Council". Further, though very few individual sentences about Methodism can be "faulted", the over-all impression is of a distorted, almost unrecognizable, picture of Methodism. It is clear that Dr. Routley, like so many Dissenters, does not know quite what to make of us. We are neither Anglican nor Dissent, and Dr. Routley's attempt to bring us within the dissenting camp fails like a damp squib. In any case, apart from a few references to the Wesleys, only eleven pages are devoted to what the author calls "the leading member of the Free Church Federal Council", which seems a little out of proportion. There is one major blunder: Wesley did not from 1760 approve "the setting-apart of lay evangelists who had the right to administer the sacraments within their societies"; Dr. Routley has misunderstood the facts. And we question whether it was our interest in social reform which "brought Methodism firmly down on the side of Dissent rather than on that of the Church of England". There is much else in the book, of course, which is both valuable and interesting, in relation to nonconformist history. Of modern Methodists, Drs. Vincent Taylor, R. Newton Flew, and Gordon Rupp are mentioned as those who have made a notable contribution to scholarship. The illustrations (including Hone's portrait of John Wesley and a picture of East Grinstead Methodist church—described as "A Modern Dissenting Church"! ) and the typography are excellent.

Mr. Hodgkins's book on the significance of Sunday is welcome and overdue. Beginning with the Old Testament, the author traces the emergence of Sunday in the apostolic age, and proceeds to describe the laws and customs relating to Sunday observance through the various periods—Reformation, Puritan, eighteenth century, Victorian—right up to the present day. The Methodists come out of this careful examination of Sunday habits quite well. The author quotes with approval Wesley's exhortation to the Methodists not to "make any wake or feast, neither go to any on Sunday, but bear a public testimony against them", and in general Methodists seem to have set a good example to their fellows in their observance of Sunday. An Appendix contains a large amount of useful information about present-day Sunday habits, the result of careful surveys at Horwich (Lancs), Witham (Essex), and Oldham. These surveys show that nonconformists are better church-attenders and more sabbatarian in their habits than Anglicans, but just as careless in the matter of returning questionnaires! This is a valuable book, which, although outside our normal sphere, we commend without hesitation to all who are interested in this important aspect of our personal and communal life.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1052. CENNICK/WESLEY LETTERS IN MORAVIAN CUSTODY.

In 1929-30 I copied a series of letters between John Cennick and John Wesley regarding the Dublin chapel in Skinners' Alley. They were then in the archives of the Moravian Church, Dublin, and I was helped by the late archivist, Mr. Charles Keating. They were afterwards printed *in extenso* in *Proceedings*, xvii, pp. 36-50.

When the Moravian church had to close down in Dublin three years ago, I offered to purchase this little bundle, but was not given the opportunity. I was anxious about the disposal of these interesting letters, and I think it is well that readers should be told that this series of correspondence is now in the Library of the headquarters of the Moravian Church, 5-7, Muswell Hill, London, N.10. It is good that it has not been lost to view.

R. LEE COLE.

### 1053. ARTICLES OF METHODIST HISTORICAL INTEREST.

Since the last list was published in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 200, the following articles of Methodist historical interest have appeared in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*:

APRIL 1959—"The History of Holy Communion in Methodism", by John C. Bowmer, M.A., B.D.

JULY 1959—The entire issue was devoted to papers given at the Oxford Institute under the general heading of "Biblical Theology and Methodist Doctrine".

OCTOBER 1959—"John Wesley, Superintendent", by Edgar W. Thompson, M.A. An examination of Wesley's use of the term "superintendent".

OCTOBER 1959—"Some Echoes of Charles Wesley's Hymns in his Journal", by J. Dale, M.A.

JANUARY 1960—In an issue largely devoted to the bicentenary of Methodism overseas: "Two Hundred Years of Methodism Overseas", by Cyril J. Davey; and "The Origins of Methodism in the West Indies", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.

JANUARY 1960—"John Wesley's Letters to his Brother", by William F. Lofthouse, M.A., D.D. (concluded in April 1960).

APRIL 1960—"Count Zinzendorf", by A. S. Lewis, M.A. A brief biographical essay.

JULY 1960—"John Wesley's Doctrine of Free Will", by Granville C. Henry.

JULY 1960—"John Wesley's Churchmanship", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D. (concluded in October 1960).

OCTOBER 1960—"The Influence of Arminius on John Wesley", by Alfred H. Pask, M.A., Ph.D.

OCTOBER 1960—"John Fletcher, Methodist Clergyman", by Frank Baker, B.A., B.D., Ph.D.

JANUARY 1961—"Wesley's Concept of his own Ecclesiastical Position", by Reginald Kissack, M.A., B.D.

EDITOR.

### 1054. DID JOHN WESLEY PLAY BACKGAMMON?

This question was asked in *Proceedings* twenty-five years ago (xix, p. 174), and it was never answered. The query arose from a phrase in a Wesley letter: "A blot is no blot till it is hit!", and the annotator of the



letter remarked that in the game of backgammon "a blot is an exposed piece, standing alone on a point and liable to be taken up by an opponent, who in so doing scores a hit." The answer can now be given, and it is "yes". In Wesley's first Oxford Diary (1725-7) there is ample evidence that during his Oxford days Wesley found cards and other games a frequent means of amusement and relaxation. Backgammon was one of the games he played, e.g. 22nd October 1725: "Played an hour at backgammon".

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

#### 1055. EAYRS ESSAY PRIZES.

The subjects of the essays, and the prize-winners, for the past two years, are as follows:

24. 1958-9. "Early Methodist Philanthropy in the Eighteenth Century."

First prize not awarded this year.

Second prize—Rev. Albert B. Lawson, B.D., M.Litt.

25. 1959-60. "Susanna Wesley."

First prize—Rev. John A. Newton, B.A., Ph.D.

Second prize—Rev. Albert B. Lawson, B.D., M.Litt.

EDITOR.

#### 1056. COLLOQUIALISMS IN WESLEY'S "JOURNAL".

Grateful thanks to the Rev. George Lawton for his most interesting essays on Wesley's colloquialisms. These few observations on the instalment in *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 178-85, may be of interest.

"Grounds", page 179. This word, in this sense, is still occasionally used in Ulster.

"Clay", page 184. Wesley's use was no mistake. In recent years building-trade journals have noted that clay is one of the finest building materials, being not only strong, durable and damp-free, but having also an extremely low degree of heat-transference. But its use in modern construction would be much too costly. In earlier days in Ireland, when other building materials had to be carried over long distances by horse transport, clay was used—even to the beginning of the twentieth century. Houses built of clay have stood, comfortable, for over a hundred years. The expression "marble, vulgarly called clay" is Wesley's *surprised* reference to the quality of clay as a building material.

"Per head", page 184. In this case the word "each" could have been taken to refer to "coach". The phrase "per head" could not be so misconstrued.

"True Blues" (page 185) is still in use as part of several proper names, for example the Loyal Orange Lodge, known as "Colonel Verner's True Blues".

JAMES A. GRAHAM.

The current issue of the *Journal* of the Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society records the recent death of the Rev. Tom Beynon, one of their oldest and most distinguished members. Mr. Beynon had devoted a lifetime of research into the writings of Howell Harris, culminating in his recent volumes, *Howell Harris: Reformer and Soldier*, and *Howell Harris's Visits to London*. The loss which our kindred Society has sustained is ours also. . . . In the passing of the Rev. George Gifford we ourselves have lost a member whose work deserves a mention here. For some time he had been painstakingly employed in the unexciting task of working through Wesley's published Diaries and Sermon Register, and his lists of corrections were to be incorporated in the forthcoming ninth volume. His passing leaves us greatly impoverished.