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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

Volume XXXIII

March 1962

EDITORIAL

WITH this issue of the *Proceedings*, a new chapter begins in the history of the Society. The death of Wesley Swift marks the end of a period of that history which, in spite of the great names of earlier years, was unsurpassed by anything that preceded it. The unexpectedness of his passing has imposed a burden upon us for which we were quite unprepared. We relied on the master so much that we have served no apprenticeship.

We have asked others to pay, in their own way, their tributes to our late editor; though our own debt to him is beyond words to tell. His encouragement always braced us to further endeavours, and when manuscripts were submitted to him for scrutiny no error escaped his eagle eye. What Xenophon wrote of his master, Socrates, might well be written of Wesley Swift: "He gave to all men freely of the treasures of his life."

It was with a deep sense of personal loss that the Executive of the Society held an emergency meeting at the Book-Room on 13th February, but under the chairmanship of our Treasurer we made such provision for the work of the Society as we could until the Annual Meeting in July. In their wisdom the Executive asked the Manuscript Journal Secretary to become the new editor of the *Proceedings*, and Mr. John A. Vickers of Canterbury to attend to the Manuscript Journal, both appointments being subject to confirmation at the Annual Meeting.

The change of editorship will not occasion any violent alteration in the policy or the format of this journal. We stand in a noble succession of devout and meticulous Wesley scholars, and our best tribute to their work and memory will be to build on the foundations they so well and truly laid. Simply to do that is a task big enough to demand the best that we can give, and for which we ask the support and prayers of all our members.

WESLEY F. SWIFT

THE majority of our readers in Great Britain, and many overseas also, will have heard of the passing of our esteemed editor, the Rev. Wesley F. Swift. He died suddenly on 26th December 1961, while visiting the home of his brother. Besides being a loss to the cause of Methodist historical scholarship in general, and to our Society in particular, his departure is a source of personal grief to many, and especially to those associated with him in the production of this quarterly journal. We feel sure that the tributes printed below will be endorsed by all who knew him.

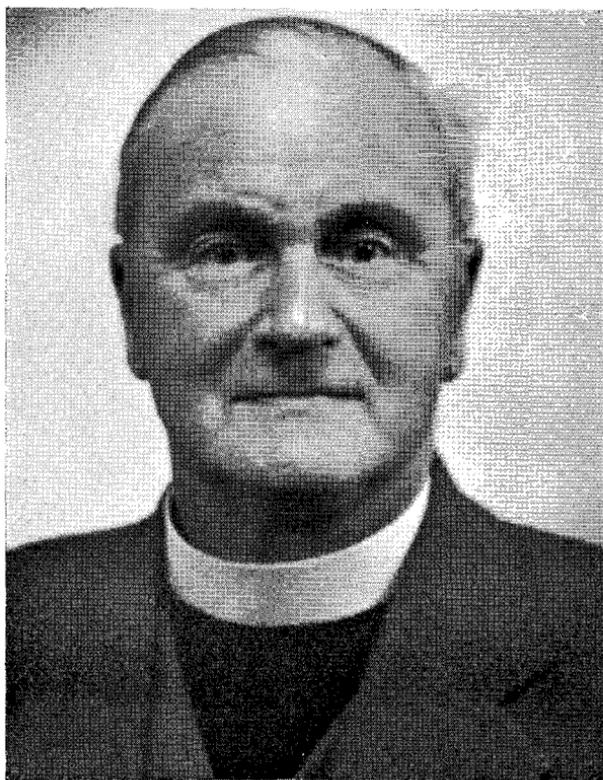
“The busy world was hushed” in a literal sense by the snow which lay deep around on the day of our friend’s funeral—Wednesday, 3rd January 1962. The service, held in our Oaklands Gate chapel, Northwood, Middlesex, was conducted by the Rev. Wilfrid H. Jones, assisted by the Rev. P. Napier Milne (superintendent of the Harrow circuit). The address was given by the Rev. A. Raymond George, who also read the committal prayers in Ruislip crematorium.

THE REV. DR. FRANK BAKER writes:

Wesley Frank Swift was born at Reading, Berkshire, on 17th November 1900. After education at the Oxford Central and Oxford High School for Boys, and a few years in business, in 1921 he was accepted as a candidate for the Wesleyan Methodist ministry. Before being sent for training at Richmond College, he was stationed for a year in the Mid-Norfolk Mission. Leaving Richmond in 1925, he spent the following eight years in Scotland—in the North of Scotland Mission until his ordination in 1928, and then in Edinburgh and Glasgow. He joined the Wesley Historical Society in order to gain help with his probationer’s studies, and was greatly encouraged in his awakening historical interests by the Rev. F. F. Bretherton, who was then the Society’s secretary.

While still a probationer, he contributed a number of historical articles to the *Banffshire Journal*, published collectively in 1927 as *The Romance of Banffshire Methodism*. In that same year he began his long and valuable series of articles for our Society, the majority of which in those early years dealt with Scottish Methodism. He wrote of Methodism in Keith (1927), in Elgin and Aberdeen (1928), in Edinburgh (1929), in Dunbar, Haddington and Dalkeith (1930), and on Methodism in Scotland as a whole in 1931. Long after the close of his ministry in Scotland his attention kept turning northwards, and when he was invited to deliver the Wesley Historical Society lecture at the Newcastle upon Tyne Conference of 1947 his subject was *Methodism in Scotland: the first hundred years*—probably his most valuable piece of historical writing, and easily the best on the subject.

Travelling south of the border in 1933, he spent the remainder of a faithful and successful ministry in English circuits—Grimsby



THE REVEREND WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Editor of the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*
from 1948 to 1961.

Connexional Archivist, 1961.

(1933-6), Northwich (1936-44), Sale (1944-9), Leeds (Chapel Allerton) (1949-56) and Lytham St. Annes (1956-61). Wherever he went he both showed and awakened interest in the local history of Methodism, and offered some expert guidance in this field in his article on "How to write a local history of Methodism" which appeared in these *Proceedings* in 1954.

His maturing mind early came to grips with other aspects of Methodism. His interest in the legal problems of trustees and ministers eventually led in 1946 to his best-seller, *The Ministers' and Laymen's Handbook*. Related to this, and no less useful in its way, is his more recent *Duties of Stewards and Trustees* (1960).

His future interest in liturgiology was also adumbrated in those early years, as in 1931 he wrote on "Wesley and Scottish Methodism" with special reference to the administration of the Sacraments. This interest later found expression not only in a high sense of the ministerial vocation, in membership of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, and in active participation on Conference committees dealing with the liturgical aspects of our worship, but also in some valuable studies including "Methodism and the Book of Common Prayer" (*Proceedings*, 1949) and "The Sunday Service of the Methodists" (*Proceedings*, 1953).

It was in recognition of his wide-ranging historical interests that in 1946 he was appointed assistant editor, and in 1948 editor, of these *Proceedings*. Under his editorship of volumes xxvii to xxxii the *Proceedings* (in my opinion) have reached their highest level. In addition, he has written an important chapter for the forthcoming new History of British Methodism, and has served as British editor for the projected *Dictionary of World Methodism*.

For many years Wesley Swift was associated with the World Methodist Council, and he greatly appreciated the friendships made with overseas Methodists when he served as a representative at the World Methodist Conference at Oxford in 1951. Upon my own removal to the United States he took over my responsibilities as secretary of the British section of the International Methodist Historical Society, and at the World Methodist Conference in Oslo last year it was my joy to nominate him as my successor as joint secretary of this organization at world level. That Conference was saddened for me, as for others, because at the last minute he was prevented from attending. Here, as in other spheres, he will be greatly missed. Saddest of all for Methodism is his removal from the important task of establishing the new Archives Repository and Research Centre at the Book-Room, the fruition of many years' planning, for which the Conference had appointed him the first full-time archivist.

However, words of hope and courage come down the years from those after whom Wesley Swift was named:

"God buries His workmen, but carries on His work."

"The best of all is, God is with us."

THE REV. W. L. DOUGHTY writes :

At the Conference of 1935 I was appointed to what was then the Grimsby and Cleethorpes circuit, and there for the first time I met Wesley Swift, who was one of my eight colleagues. Since then we have kept in touch with each other. In 1936 he departed to a former circuit of mine in Northwich, to take charge of the same section of the circuit. There he remained for eight years, and many were the testimonies to the effectiveness of his ministry. In 1938 I moved to Aberdeen, the head of the North of Scotland Mission, and found that his memory was cherished along the coast of the Moray Firth, where, ten years earlier, he had completed the last three years of his probation.

He was an excellent and loyal colleague, and I much regretted that we had only one year together. Our mutual interest in the Wesley Historical Society strengthened the links of our friendship. With what ability and literary skill he served the Society is well known to every member, and his sudden passing has come as a grief to us all.

Wesley Swift was a fine type of Methodist minister—an excellent preacher and devoted pastor, beloved by his people wherever he travelled. He was also a fine administrator—thoroughly conversant with Methodist law and usage, and always keeping abreast of the changes.

We miss him more than words can express, and our hearts go out in deep sympathy to those who miss him most : his wife and daughter, his mother and members of his family, including his brother Rowland, our Registrar.

We were a sorrowing little company who gathered on 3rd January to pay our respects to the memory of one who had won our admiration, gratitude and affection ; who was once a “ comrade of our way ”. So,

“ We thank Thee, Lord, for he has won
To cloudless day.”

THE REV. A. RAYMOND GEORGE writes :

Wesley Swift had many interests. Throughout his ministerial career he was always, apart from the last few months, a circuit minister. He never neglected this primary work, and he was held in deep affection. He was a born administrator ; he greatly enjoyed being for a while Synod Secretary and once Conference Arrangements Committee Secretary. He was convener of the Lectionary Committee, and deeply interested in worship. Yet, perhaps his deepest interest was Methodist history, and when at the last Conference it became possible to meet a long-felt need and appoint a connexional archivist, he was chosen amid universal acclaim, and in a few months of his tenure of this office he laid sure foundations. He was working also on Wesley's Oxford diaries.

When in 1949 he took over the editorship of these *Proceedings* from Francis Fletcher Bretherton, it was soon clear that the mantle of his predecessor had fallen on him. He introduced editorials and book reviews, and encouraged the printer to make typographical changes, but the spirit was the same. He was an ideal editor, not only in the precision which he brought to such tasks as proof-reading, but in the standard which he set by his own contributions. His elucidation of the tangled history of the *Sunday Service* was as fascinating as a detective story, and forms an indispensable contribution to the study of Methodist worship.

He was always meticulous, but never pedantic; yet those who knew him only from his more technical writings had a delightful surprise when on meeting him they found him to be a friendly, cheerful, brotherly man. He was always eager to discuss connexional affairs, and he would comment on them with no malice, but with a lively sense of humour. That he was able to do so much work on such a variety of tasks, and to hold together in one harmonious personality traits of character not always found in combination, was due no doubt primarily to the depth of his devotion to Christ. It was rooted also in the fact that he enjoyed the life of a happy and hospitable home.

THE REV. A. KINGSLEY LLOYD writes :

The Editor has very kindly invited me to write a brief personal tribute to a friend of many years' standing. Wesley Swift was a most devoted and single-minded worker in the field of Methodist history, but many of those who shared with him in this work also knew him as a most loyal and affectionate friend. For myself, I think of him as a friend from college days rather than as editor of the *Proceedings*, since I have little competence to comment on his specialized work as an historian of Methodism. Perhaps this is not altogether a disadvantage, since nothing is further from one's memory of Swift than the "dry-as-dust" bibliophile or antiquarian. He was essentially one whom Dr. Johnson would have described as a "clubbable" man—always eager to discuss the latest news of old friends and to make new friends. His generosity in time and trouble for others who shared his enthusiasms was boundless: indeed, he would have been the first to acknowledge that friendship was one of the greatest sources of inspiration to him in all the many labours he undertook. As one thinks of his development from college days, it is clear that first in his happy home life and then in the fellowship with others he found his greatest happiness and fulfilment; he loved to share everything that made life of meaning and value to him. His sudden and totally unexpected death was a great shock to all who knew and loved him, but his last Christmas on earth was full of happiness in joyful celebration of the Nativity both in the church and in his home. With Richard Baxter we can say:

"As for my friends, they are not lost . . ."

HANOVERIAN GOVERNMENT AND METHODIST PERSECUTION

METHODIST historians unanimously recognize the sheer volume of persecution endured by the early Methodists. J. Wesley Bready describes Methodism as being "cradled and reared in an atmosphere of insolence, contempt and abuse",¹ and, more recently, A. M. Lyles has pointed out that, even before 1739, the opposition to Methodism had already reached "gigantic proportions".²

If the question is asked, "Why did Methodism survive such terrible persecution?", our answer would be couched in terms of the will of God and the strengthening power of the Holy Spirit. However, under the providence of God, there was a political circumstance which possibly saved Methodism from being strangled in infancy.

This remarkable circumstance lies in the fact that the Hanoverian Government was unwilling to subject Methodism to official and systematic suppression. Despite the fact that "at its height, the persecution was spread over the greatest part of the British Isles",³ it was never prosecuted on a national scale as a matter of government policy. Had such a policy of official suppression been followed, the story of Methodism might well have been different.

The circumstances favourable to official persecution

The nature of the Government's attitude towards Methodism has largely been taken for granted, as if some measure of toleration for the Methodists was no more than they might reasonably expect. However, neither the recent history of their own country nor the contemporary scene abroad provided grounds for such confident optimism.

In England the seventeenth century had not been a happy one for religious minority groups. The second half of the century had produced a series of parliamentary Acts designed to curb the freedom of nonconformists.⁴ After the Restoration, the return of the monarchy ushered in a grim period for Protestants which continued until the "Bloodless Revolution" of 1688. With the accession of William and Mary, the nonconformists and the Roman Catholics were still subjected to restrictions on religious grounds.⁵

The contemporary situation in which the Methodists found themselves was little more encouraging. Several of the Acts of Parliament designed to deal with nonconformity were still in force, and, despite Wesley's claims of loyalty to Anglicanism, might well have provided a basis for governmental action against the Methodists. The coming

¹ J. Wesley Bready: *England before and after Wesley*, p. 177.

² A. M. Lyles: *Methodism mocked*, p. 15. The writer is mainly concerned with the literary persecution which the Methodists endured.

³ Leslie F. Church: *More about the Early Methodist People*, p. 58.

⁴ The Act of Uniformity (1662), the Corporation Act (1661), the Five Mile Act (1664), the Conventicle Acts (1664 and 1670).

⁵ Although nonconformists received some help from the Toleration Act (1689).

of the Revival was greeted by the opposing machinery necessary for a national persecution. "No one," writes Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, "set out on a great adventure with more determined foes to overcome than John Wesley. Against him were the Mob, the Clergy, the Aristocracy and the Press."⁶ Most sections of the community would seem to have been willing to take part in crushing the Methodists had the Government been prepared to implement such a policy.

The governments of other nations seemed not to be averse from the use of strong measures against minority groups. In Wesley's lifetime France had seen renewed persecution of the Huguenots, bringing to a climax Louis XIV's disastrous policy of suppression which sent 300,000 Huguenot refugees to seek safety in other countries. Thousands of Protestants were expelled from Salzburg, and in the Palatinate the Protestants were bitterly persecuted.⁷ In Spain the Inquisition was to continue its grim work until its abolition in the nineteenth century, and in Russia Peter the Great openly expressed his decision to suppress the Jews, the Jesuits and the "Old Believers".

In England there was no lack of support for the idea that the repressive measures taken by other nations against their minority groups should be applied to the Methodists. Many writers attempted to show that Methodism was an illegal movement and that it was a proper object of governmental concern. Walpole's Annual Indemnity Act which was passed in 1727 to relieve the pressure upon the Dissenters was no *carte blanche* offering universal toleration. Two groups in particular were specifically excluded from the indemnity—the Quakers and the Roman Catholics. The attempts of Methodism's opponents to place the Methodists firmly in one or other of these camps were clearly designed to demonstrate the illegality of the movement.⁸ It was stressed that the Methodists were not eligible for relief under the Toleration Act,⁹ and that their use of field-preaching was a direct and provocative contravention of that Act.¹⁰

The opponents of Methodism also declared that it was politically dangerous. A writer in *Lloyd's Evening Post* for 28th February 1762 declared that Methodism was "the most destructive and dangerous system to Government and Society that ever was established". It is little wonder that so many hostile voices cried for full-scale war against the Methodists. In 1744, at the Brecon Assizes, it was stated that the Methodists were endangering "the peace of our sovereign Lord the King", and that "unless their proceedings are timely suppressed, they may endanger the peace of the kingdom in general".

⁶ Maldwyn L. Edwards: *John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century*, p. 199.

⁷ This persecution was carried through despite the fact that the Protestants comprised a majority of the population.

⁸ e.g. J. Bate: *Quakero-Methodism* (1739); Z. Gray: *The Quaker and Methodist compared* (1740); Anon.: *The Jesuit detected* (1769); G. Lavington: *The Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists compar'd* (1749). Many writers accused the Methodists of allegiance to both sects at once!

⁹ See John Wesley's *Journal*, viii, pp. 76, 100: editor's notes on entries for 26th June and 1st October 1790.

¹⁰ See Anon.: *The case of the Methodist briefly stated* (1744).

Perhaps it was wishful thinking that made the Rev. Dr. St. John Brown's gullible congregation believe his statement that, apart from those at Cork and Bandon, all the Methodists in Ireland had been "rooted out by order of the Government".¹¹

Thus it may be seen that historical precedent, contemporary antagonism at home and repressive examples abroad all precluded the idea that the Government would take no widespread measures to suppress the Methodists. Such a policy might well have commanded a large measure of support within the country; it could have been prosecuted legally with little bending of the laws of the land, and already many influential voices were calling for such government intervention. Why then was there no systematic, government-sponsored suppression of the Methodists?

The circumstances unfavourable to official persecution

The answer to this question is to be found in the combination of several significant factors. Firstly, it must be admitted that, despite the repressive measures apparent in religious policies at home and abroad, there was a changing attitude towards religious toleration. Early in the history of seventeenth-century England, there had been a few signs that religious toleration was being considered as a possible policy. Cromwell attempted to practise it, with certain limitations, in his domestic policy, and he dedicated himself to the cause of toleration for Protestants in Catholic countries abroad.

In Europe, with the dawn of the eighteenth century, the idea of religious toleration gained ground. We find Frederick William I of Prussia and Peter the Great at least paying lip-service to the idea of religious toleration, although, as we have seen, their theories were far in advance of their practice. Religious toleration was demanded in Poland, and even in France there was an ill-fated attempt by the regent Dubois to grant toleration to the Jansenists.

In the New World, whence many people had fled to find the religious toleration denied them in England, 1732 witnessed the founding of Oglethorpe's Georgia, where non-Catholic groups worshipped in equality. The American War of Independence was followed by a wave of enthusiasm for the idea of religious toleration in many of the states.

In England, the cause of toleration was even further advanced than it was in the remainder of Europe, largely due to the influence of John Locke, the "great oracle" of Whig philosophy.¹² Although Voltaire's statement that "an Englishman goes to heaven by the road he pleases" was perhaps a little over-optimistic,¹³ yet the breeze of toleration was blowing through the land, albeit fitfully and uncertainly.

In practice, however, this spirit of toleration was due more to the political situation than to the triumph of philosophical ideas. With

¹¹ See John Wesley's *Journal*, 2nd June 1749.

¹² H. A. L. Fisher's description.

¹³ See H. A. L. Fisher: *A History of Europe* (one-volume edn.), pp. 701-2.

the exception of the control of Roman Catholicism and its attendant threat of Jacobitism, the political interest in religious conformity was not as strong in Hanoverian England as it was in other parts of Europe. In Prussia and Russia toleration was granted as a political expedient to make the Church an arm of the State, and deviations from the religious norm thus became of political importance. In these nations, as in others, strong rulers viewed religious toleration as a political tool to be used as they saw fit.

In England the situation was different. The absolute power of the monarchy had been gradually decreased since the 1689 Bill of Rights. The dependence of the first Hanoverian kings upon Walpole made the Prime Minister's religious policy more important than that of the monarch.¹⁴ Walpole realized that religious persecution had failed to give uniformity, and after, the seventeenth century's religious turmoil, stability and *laissez-faire* had become the order of the day. He sought to keep political and religious peace by the same means.

The attitude of Walpole was spread throughout the Church of England by the appointment of Whigs to important ecclesiastical positions.¹⁵ The Whig bishops danced to the tune played by their political patrons. Their appointments had been based upon political expediency, and they knew that their future promotion and progress depended on the same principle. This fact helped to remove the possibility of a distinct and separate policy of suppressing the Methodists being officially put forward by the Church of England. This may sound strange when we consider the important part played in anti-Methodist measures by the local clergy, yet nevertheless it is true.

Moreover, the prevailing views within the Church did not provide the soil in which religious persecution grows. As G. R. Cragg puts it, "The increasing authority of reason made repressive zeal seem as 'enthusiastic' as the fanaticism of the sectaries."¹⁶ In the days of the Commonwealth and Restoration, the policy of repression, both on the part of the Puritans¹⁷ and the Roman Catholics, had been prompted by vital religious convictions. In contemporary France, with its tradition of clerical politicians such as Richlieu and Mazarin, the religious and political power of the Church (especially of the Jesuits) had been an important factor in governmental suppression of minority groups. No such religious impetus to political suppression was provided by the Hanoverian Church of England. The bishops themselves were divided in their attitude towards the Methodists. Men like Gibson viewed them with cautious reserve, whilst others, like Warburton and Butler, were outspoken in their condemnation.

¹⁴ George III's attempt to revive the power of the monarchy made little difference to this aspect of government policy. He is reputed to have said: "I tell you whilst I sit on the English throne no man shall be persecuted for conscience' sake." (Quoted by John Wesley in "Thoughts on Liberty", *Works*, xi, p. 40.)

¹⁵ A policy which was intensified after the '15 Rebellion.

¹⁶ G. R. Cragg: *The Church and the Age of Reason*, p. 79.

¹⁷ Hugh Martin admits that this was a "blot upon their name" (*Puritanism and Richard Baxter*, p. 119).

Similarly, as far as the nation as a whole was concerned, the religious zeal which might have given the necessary drive to a religious persecution was lacking. Walpole and his immediate successors with their ambition and corruption were fitting leaders for Hanoverian England. The nation partook wholeheartedly of the "distinguishing mark" of the age, which Bishop Secker described as "an open and professed disregard of religion". Behind the persecutions of an earlier age there lay a conviction on the part of the persecutors that they were defending an important religious principle. However, if one probes the motives behind the attacks on the Methodists, one generally finds not affronted zeal for pure religion, but a degrading assortment of selfish motives ranging from hurt pride and lost trade to a simple desire for amusement.¹⁹ Such sordid motives might be sufficient fuel for the fires of local disapproval, but they could not sustain the white heat of enthusiasm necessary for a protracted, nation-wide persecution.

A further hindrance to a nation-wide persecution lay in the nature of the English scene at the beginning of the eighteenth century. J. H. Plumb describes England in 1714 as "a land of hamlets and villages".¹⁵ The bad communications between these settlements hindered the progress of people, commerce and ideas. Likewise it hindered the influence of the central government.²⁰ Indeed, the nation "required of Parliament no vast programmes but was content with a small annual output of petty legislation."²¹ Thus the national life had a "local" flavour about it. It was the local magistrate, rather than Parliament, who represented law and order. It was the local parson, rather than the bishop, who, in any case, was likely to be absent from his diocese, who dictated matters of Church policy. It followed that the reaction to Methodism, as to most other matters, partook of this "local" flavour and was much more dependent upon local circumstances than upon national policies.

So it is true to say that the Government's "toleration" of the Methodists depended much more upon the political than upon the religious aspect of the Revival. Cases of Methodists being tried for heresy are hard to find, but there is no lack of charges against Methodists involving disturbing the peace and suspected treason.²² J. H. Plumb has said that "Methodism was easily the most highly co-ordinated body of opinion in the country, the most fervent, the most dynamic.

¹⁸ Dr. Church (op. cit., p. 64) sums up the attitude of the masses in the following words: "Here was a new sport. They did not trouble about the niceties of ecclesiastical procedure, nor legal issues, they were abysmally ignorant of those things, and most else."

¹⁹ J. H. Plumb: *England in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 11.

²⁰ It is significant that, after the '15 Rebellion, General Wade had to drive military roads through part of the Highlands to facilitate the movement of his troops.

²¹ H. A. L. Fisher, op. cit., p. 704.

²² Within the same month of 1744, John and Charles Wesley were called to give an account of their political loyalties. Charles was actually accused of treason. (Charles Wesley's *Journal*, 15th March 1744; John Wesley's *Journal*, 20th March 1744.)

Had it been bent on revolution in Church or State nothing could have stopped it."²³ The Government was aware of this danger, and must surely have been uneasy about the Methodists.

The '45 Rebellion probably brought matters to a head, as religious bigotry and political fear reached a climax. The fact that John Wesley found it necessary to address a letter to the King affirming the loyalty of himself and the Methodists suggests that the anxiety of the Government had increased.²⁴ Perhaps at that time there was a possibility that the Methodists might have been suppressed by order of the Government.

However, when it became apparent that the Methodists were not a Jacobite "fifth column" within the nation, they became less politically suspect. With the fading of suspicion the chances of official suppression on a national scale also faded. It is quite true that widespread persecution and disapproval continued, but, from that time onwards, it became clear that the Methodists had no need to fear government action against them.

D. DUNN WILSON.

²³ J. H. Plumb, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-4.

²⁴ John Wesley's *Journal*, 5th March 1744.

To celebrate the 200th anniversary of the coming of Methodism to the Lincolnshire town of Caistor, Eileen H. Mumby has produced an excellent local history, *Methodism in Caistor*, with a foreword and epilogue by the Rev. Michael D. Burch. In this neatly-cyclostyled production of 37 foolscap pages all branches of Methodism are dealt with, and a fascinating story is told how the Methodists grappled with the problems of popular education in their day schools and evening classes. The author is to be congratulated on her careful piece of historical writing. Copies may be obtained from Mr. Louis King, South Street, Caistor, Lincoln (no price quoted).

Another carefully cyclostyled production is the *Journal of the Cornish Methodist Historical Association*, whose fourth issue reflects something of the vigour of that local branch of the Wesley Historical Society. Pilgrimages to places of historical interest, a Methodist Exhibition, the Association's Library at Truro School, a Methodist Youth Department project for "inters"—all these activities illustrate the sort of thing a lively local branch can tackle. The journal also publishes an article entitled "Wesley Rock", which is a useful investigation into the sites of Wesley's preaching near Penzance or Stithians. In all, this 24-page journal is packed with information which would appeal to many beyond the confines of Cornish Methodism.

We have received a report from the secretary of the Australian Methodist Historical Society (Sydney), the Rev. S. G. Claughton, that the Society is well supported by New South Wales Methodism, especially through circuit membership. There is a growing historical sense within their Conference and the Church generally, which portends well for the future.

ERRATUM

Vol. xxxiii, page 50, line 17. For "1882" read "1802"

TWO WESLEY LETTERS

THE following letters, which apparently have not hitherto been published, are preserved in the Library at Lambeth Palace, London, among papers connected with Archbishop Secker (File 16).

I

During the eighteen months after his conversion, Wesley entered into an extensive correspondence with his elder brother; most of his letters are printed in the *Standard Letters*, vol. i. They deal in particular with John's newly-found faith and its practical manifestation—the doctrine of assurance and the witness of the Spirit. Wesley presses his brother to accept the evidence of changed lives as proof of the activity of God in the revival. The present letter concludes the series, and must have been the last which Samuel received from his brother before his sudden death on 6th November 1739.

The following letter should therefore be read against the background of the previous correspondence and as an answer to Samuel Wesley's letter of 3rd September 1739 (printed in Stevenson's *Wesley Family*, pp. 249 f.). Samuel had excused his delay in writing by saying that "It has pleased God to visit me with sickness", but was able to add at the close of the letter that he was "on the mending hand, in spite of foul weather". He criticized John's distinction between discipline and doctrine, because "surely Episcopacy is a matter of doctrine too". But in any case, he added, "you know there is no fear of being cast out of our synagogue for any tenets whatsoever." However, John's loyalty to Whitefield is such that, if the latter were to get himself excommunicated, "you would still stick to him as your dear brother; and so, though the Church would not excommunicate you, you would excommunicate the Church."

Samuel was still unconvinced by his brother's charges against Bishop Bull. "At present," he commented, "I am inclined to think that being blamed with him is glory." On the matter of ecstasies, he asserted that their divine inspiration was not self-evident:

Your followers fall into agonies. I confess it . . . They say it is God's doing. I own they say so. Dear brother, where is your ocular demonstration? Where, indeed, is the rational proof? Their living well afterwards may be a probable and sufficient argument that they believe themselves, but it goes no farther. I must ask a few more questions. Did these agitations ever begin during the use of any collects of the Church, or during the preaching of any sermon that had been preached within consecrated walls without that effect, or during the inculcating of any other doctrine besides that of your new birth? Are the main body of these agents or patients good sort of people beforehand, or loose and immoral?

It was to these questions that John Wesley addressed himself in his final letter to his elder brother.

JOHN WESLEY TO SAMUEL WESLEY, JUN.

Dear Brother,

For teaching Erroneous Doctrine, I grant there is no fear anyone should now be persecuted. For the World will love it's [sic] own; & will tolerate every thing—but the Gospel of Christ.

In a few days my Brother & I are to go to Oxford, to do exercise for our Degrees. Then, if God enables me, I will prove my Charge agst Bp. Bull, either in my Latin Sermon, or Supposition Speech.

You ask four Questions concerning those who have been taken ill here. I answer 1. Some have been so affected in the Church, while I was preaching *within Consecrated Walls*. 2. Most of these were cut to ye heart, while I was inculcating ye General Doctrine, that Xt died to save Sinners. 3. Many of them were Gross Sinners, Whore-mongers, Drunkards, Common-Swearers, till that Hour, but not afterwards. And many of them were People of Unblemished Characters, & as touching ye Outward Law of God blameless.

I still think it a full Proof, that this was God's work, "That in that Hour they felt the Love of God shed abroad in their Heart, & they were filled with Inward Righteousness, & Peace, & Joy Unspeakable & full of Glory: And that the Reality of this Inward Change appeared by their Holiness in all manner of Conversation."

O my Brother, who hath bewitched you, that for fear of I know not what Distant Consequences, you cannot rejoice at, nor so much as acknowledge, the Great Power of God? How is it, that you can't praise God, for saving so many Souls from Death & covering such a Multitude of Sins, unless he will begin this Work, within "Consecrated Walls"? Why shd he not fill Heaven & Earth? You cannot, indeed you cannot, confine the Most High within Temples made with Hands. I do not despise them, any more than you. But I rejoice to find, that God is everywhere. I love the Rites and Ceremonies of the Church. But I see, wellpleased, That our Great Lord can work without them. And howsoever & wheresoever a Sinner is converted from the Error of his Ways, nay & by whomsoever, I thereat rejoice, yea & will rejoice!

I rejoice that our God is mighty to save! And I know that notwithstanding the Inveterate (Humanly Speaking, unconquerable) Prejudices wch both my Sister and you have to me, He is able to make us of One Heart & of one Mind. What would you think of our New Faith (as you term it) if God shd send Two or Three that believe in his Name (I lightly touch upon it, because the thing is not yet clear to me) & the Prayer of Faith shou'd save the Sick, & your Health be restor'd from that Hour?

May the God of our Fathers rest with you & yours. I am,

Dear Brother,

Your ever affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

Oct. 27. 1739.
Bristol.

[Address sheet missing]

Wesley's reference, in his second paragraph, to his forthcoming visit to Oxford confirms that he (and apparently his brother Charles

too) was planning to take a higher degree. At this point I am indebted to Dr. V. H. H. Green for amplification of the details given in his recent *The Young Mr. Wesley*. Fellows of Lincoln were required by statute to proceed to the B.D. as soon as possible; since Wesley had failed to do this, he was transferred in 1736 to a fellowship which was exempt from this obligation. Nevertheless, we know that as late as June 1741 he was inquiring about the exercises necessary for the B.D. degree. This letter seems to indicate that he had begun to consider the matter and to take preliminary steps in it in 1739. The exercise necessary for the B.D. included two disputations *pro forma* in the theological school, once as respondent and once as opponent.¹ The person admitted B.D. was required to give a Latin sermon (*concio ad clericum*) within the University within a year of his admission; the Supposition Speech (whatever that may have been) to which Wesley refers was presumably an alternative part of the required exercise.

Wesley's visit to Oxford on this occasion is described only briefly in the *Journal* (ii, p. 319 f.). He arrived on the evening of the 12th November, and left, with his brother, for Tiverton on the 15th, having received news of Samuel's death. It was this, no doubt, which caused him to postpone, and subsequently to abandon, his intention of proceeding to the B.D.

The sermons of George Bull, Bishop of St. David's, 1705-10, were published posthumously in 1713. In a letter dated 13th December 1738 (quoted in Whitehead's *Life of Wesley*), Samuel Wesley had asserted: "Your misapplication of the witness of the Spirit is so thoroughly cleared by Bishop Bull, that I shall not hold a candle to the sun." To this John had replied: "I think Bishop Bull's sermon on the Witness of the Spirit (against the Witness of the Spirit it should rather be entitled) is full of gross perversions of Scripture and manifest contradictions both to Scripture and experience."²

On 24th June 1741, Wesley wrote a Latin sermon, "True Christianity Defended", intended as his University sermon, in which he dealt with Bishop Bull's doctrine of Justification. This was never preached, being replaced by the famous sermon on "The Almost Christian"; but it was eventually published in an English version, as Sermon CXXXIV.³

In his closing paragraph, moved by the news of Samuel's indisposition, John Wesley seems to be toying with the possibility of a revival of spiritual healing in the Church. Despite his lifelong interest in "physick", he does not seem to have pursued this any further. In his long letter to Dr. Conyers Middleton, in January 1749, he seems to limit the power of curing the sick by miraculous means to the Church of the first three centuries.⁴ In commenting on James v.

¹ Clark: *Register of the University*, i, p. 133.

² *Letters*, i, p. 279.

³ *Works* (3rd edn.), vii, pp. 452 ff.; *Journal*, ii, pp. 470, 478 n.

⁴ *Letters*, ii, p. 351.

14 in the *Notes upon the New Testament*, published in 1754, he says that the gift of healing "remained in the Church long after the other miraculous gifts were withdrawn. Indeed, it seems to have been designed to remain always . . . This was the whole process of physic in the Christian Church till it was lost through unbelief."

II

JOHN WESLEY TO HENRY RIMIUS

Bristol

March 20, 1755

Sir,

I procured the inclosed (the Account which Mr. Knolton gave me viva voce) to be transcribed for you before I left London. But a multitude of other things coming upon me, occasion'd my forgetting to send it you.

Wishing all Health of Soul & Body I remain,

Sir,

Your Servant for Christ's sake,

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. Rimius, next door to Oxenden Chappel, In Coventry Court, Haymarket.

Another letter to Rimius, dated 24th October 1755, and also preserved at Lambeth Palace, is printed in the *Standard Letters*. It deals with the publication of Moravian hymns in England, and Rimius is described in the accompanying note as "evidently a German pastor in London".⁵

It is not clear whether any of the other miscellaneous papers in the file containing the letter printed above is the enclosure to which Wesley refers. Most of the contents are concerned with Bishop Lavington's notorious attacks on Methodism, and Rimius may have been questioning the truth of some of his "facts". In his *Journal* under the date 22nd May 1753 Wesley records reading Rimius's *Candid Narrative of the Rise and Progress of the Herrnhuters*, an attack on the Moravians with which, at this time, Wesley found himself in agreement. Other references to Rimius are given in a footnote in the *Standard Journal*, ad loc.⁶

JOHN A. VICKERS.

⁵ *Letters*, iii, p. 148 f.

⁶ *Journal*, iv, p. 68.

The 1961 issue of *Bathafarn*, the Journal of the Historical Society of the Methodist Church in Wales, contains two articles in English. The editor, Mr. A. H. Williams, M.A., writes at length on "The Leaders of English and Welsh Methodism, 1738-91", and, reprinted from *The Library World* for August 1960, is an article by the Rev. Eric Edwards: "John Wesley and Methodist Literature". As a frontispiece to this issue there is printed a facsimile of a preaching plan for the Denbigh and Llanrwst Welsh circuit, September 1828 to March 1829. . . . *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815-1875* by P. H. J. H. Gosden (Manchester University Press, pp. x. 262, 32s. 6d.) is a mine of information on the subject. Whilst it deals with Methodism hardly at all, it will provide background material for those who seek to understand the age in which Methodism itself did much to help the people who form the subject matter of this book.

BOOK NOTICES

Anglican-Methodist Relations—some Institutional Factors, edited by W. S. F. Pickering. (Darton, Longman & Todd, pp. 188, 18s.)

This book comprises eight "papers presented to the Study Commission on Institutionalism, Commission on Faith and Order, World Council of Churches". Dr. Pickering himself deals with statistics of the present position of Anglicans and the Methodists, Dr. Angus Buchanan with "Methodism and the Evangelical Revival". The Rev. Rupert E. Davies writes on "The Nature of Modern Methodism", and Dr. J. H. S. Kent on Episcopacy. Dr. G. F. A. Best makes an appraisal of Establishment, and the Rev. M. J. Jackson and Mr. Peter H. Mann summarize the results of a door-to-door canvass on the relations between Methodism and the Church of England. The last two essays deal with Anglican-Methodist relationships in the fields of Christian Citizenship (Rev. J. P. K. Byrnes) and Education (Mr. John M. Gibbs).

In this welter of facts and opinions, most outstanding is the essay by Dr. Kent; and without suggesting that the rest of the book should be taken lightly, we have no hesitation in saying that this chapter should be read and pondered by all interested in the Anglican-Methodist Conversations. After all, what is this "episcopacy" that we are invited to take into our system? Is it the institution associated (in England, at least) with establishment, disengagement from which gave non-established Churches the right to be called "free"? Or is it a principle—*episcopé*—which Methodism has never been without from the days of John Wesley? Dr. Kent's exposition of *episcopé* in both Methodism and the Church of England is worthy of careful consideration. He also gives us a new angle on the relationships between the Methodists and the early Anglican evangelicals. It is not sufficient to say that the latter were "Wesleyans who stayed in the Church".

It is a pity that Dr. Kent (of all people) should style our *Proceedings* as "The Wesley Historical Society Journal"; nor would we be quite so emphatic as Dr. Pickering in asserting that Methodist Union was "a triumph of Wesleyan Methodism over all other forms of Government".

We hope that these essays will be studied by Methodists and Anglicans alike.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

The Annual Lecture in connexion with the Stoke on Trent Conference, 1962, will be delivered in Hamil Road chapel, Burslem, on Wednesday, 4th July, by the Rev. Arthur D. Cummings, whose subject will be "Portrait in Pottery". A fuller announcement, with particulars regarding the Tea and Annual Meeting, will be made in our June issue.

We are pleased to know that the response to the invitation to those interested in forming a West Yorkshire branch of the Wesley Historical Society has been successful enough to merit the calling of an inaugural meeting. We understand that this will be held at 3 p.m. on Saturday, 2nd June, at Wesley College, Headingley, Leeds. The Rev. A. Raymond George will speak on the Wesleyana which is housed at the college, and after tea, for which a small charge will be made, there will be a business session to appoint officers and arrange future meetings. We wish for this venture the success which has attended our East Anglian and Cornish branches. Will those intending to be present please notify the Rev. W. Stanley Rose, 18, Welburn Avenue, Leeds, 16 (Tel. 52428).

NOTES AND QUERIES

1066. "SO EASILY ARE BISHOPS MADE".

A well-known squib of Charles Wesley's runs:

So easily are bishops made,
By man or woman's whim;
Wesley his hand on Coke hath laid,
But who laid hands on him?

I have recently come across a reference to what is described as a sixteenth-century lampoon:

Barlow on Parker his hands he laid,
But who laid hands on him?

Parker is, of course, Archbishop Parker, installed 17th December 1559; but his consecration was authorized by Queen Elizabeth I, who commissioned four men to perform the ceremony, one of whom was Barlow, of whose consecration as bishop there is no record.

The question is: which skit is the earlier? Did Wesley plagiarize an older skit with which he was familiar (he was quite capable of doing so), or has someone foisted an imitation of Wesley's skit on an earlier age? In other words, is the Barlow skit actually a sixteenth-century production, or has some later writer plagiarized Wesley? Does any member know this version of the skit, and can he quote a contemporary or early reference?

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

1067. AN UNPUBLISHED WESLEY LETTER.

I have discovered the following Wesley letter in the vestry of our chapel at Lynton, Devon. So far as I know, it has not been published before.

JOHN WESLEY TO PENELOPE NEWMAN

London

Feb. 1. 1775.

My Dear Sister,

We bring much [uneasiness] on our own souls, by our littleness of Faith and Patience. I hope to see something of that work of God with my own eyes. With his help, I purpose to be at Stroud (coming from Bristol) on Monday, March the 13th [at?] about noon, Tuesday the 14th. at Tewks[bury.] I must then hasten on to Worcester, & to Birmingham, in order to be in Ireland as soon as I can.

What have we to do, but to give up ourselves without reserve, soul & body, into the hands of Him that loves us? Are we not assured, that He will do all things well? I commit you to His care, & am,

My Dear Penny,

Your Affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

Superscription:

To Miss P. Newman / in Cheltenham / Gloucestershire [sic].

Miss Penelope Newman was a lady to whom Wesley wrote frequently, and many such letters are published in the Standard edition. This letter adds little or nothing to our historical knowledge, and therefore no comment is needed. But its publication here adds one more to the many hitherto-unpublished letters which our Society has been privileged to print.

LESLIE W. HAYES.

1068. METHODIST YOUTH DEPARTMENT PROJECT ON LOCAL METHODIST HISTORY.

An "Inters" Conference was held at Truro School in August 1961 during which a "project" on Methodism in the county was undertaken. The conference lasted a week, and began with background talks by the leaders. Some eighty young people (115-145) were then divided into ten groups, and each group was allotted a portion of the county, and, so far as possible, a single subject; e.g. early Methodism at St. Ives, Free Methodism around Camelford, etc. At a later stage each group received a visit from someone who had a particular historical or local knowledge of the theme or place. On the following day the groups journeyed to their particular localities to do some "field work", and they were able to study the actual sites on which they had been briefed.

During the remainder of the Conference each group prepared a scrapbook based upon all that they had heard and seen. These books are made up of drawings, rubbings, short accounts of each place visited, photographs, maps, transcripts from memorials, etc. The success of the project owed much to the leadership of Miss E. A. H. Tressider and Miss M. Jackson, of the Methodist Youth Department, as well as to the children's own willingness to make use of the books specially brought together to help them, and to the interest which led one group, of its own initiative, to visit the County Museum in search of background information.

THOMAS SHAW.

1069. THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN SERVICE BOOK.

Mr. J. A. Baldwin of the Gillingham and Rainham Local History Group has sent me a copy of the first edition of the Bible Christian Book of Services, so that I am now able to compare it with the revised edition referred to in my article in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 1.

The changes which the later book displays are not numerous, but some of them, one feels, are not without theological significance. In the baptismal office, for instance, the sentence "we now receive into His fold this child that is offered to Him" is altered to "we recognise as belonging to His fold this child, offered to Him . . .". Thus the rite by which a child is received into the fold of God became a recognition of what is a status already established. A similar dilution of the significance of the sacrament is reflected in an emendation of one of the prayers. The original prayer was "that while we baptise he may receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost"; but the revised prayer avoids the suggestion that the gift of the Spirit was in any way exclusively associated with the act of baptism, and merely prays "that he may receive the Holy Ghost".

Again, in the burial service, the words of the earlier edition "prepare them by Thy grace for a place in that world . . ." are altered to "that they may be found prepared by Thy grace . . .". Perhaps the former just suggested the possibility of prayers for the dead!

Other alterations are of minor importance:

1. In the service for THE CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER, the rubric relating to the partaking of the elements is amplified by the words "or the Communion may be taken in silence, since many persons so prefer". This probably reflects what was already an established custom.

2. In the service for THE RECOGNITION OF NEW MEMBERS, after "signify their approval", the words "by standing or lifting up the right hand" are added.

3. In the MARRIAGE service, the words "obey and serve him" are put in brackets, and "and thereto I plight my troth" are deleted.

4. In the service for THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD, Psalm xc is added in the revised edition, and the substance of two prayers combined into one, so that where the original read the traditional "in sure and certain hope of the Resurrection to eternal life . . .", the revised edition read "surely expecting the coming of the Day in which all that are in the graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth: they that have done good unto the Resurrection of life, they that have done evil unto the Resurrection of condemnation."

JOHN C. BOWMER.

1070. EAST ANGLIAN BRANCH.

By a stroke of good fortune, the autumn meeting, held on Saturday, 7th October, at the Chapel Field Road church, Norwich, coincided with the visit to the District of the President of the Conference (the Rev. Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards), who readily consented to lecture on "The Wesley Family". The Rev. John J. Perry was in the chair, and after welcoming the President, whose reputation as an authority on the Wesleys was, he said, second to none, he expressed the hope that one outcome of the meeting (the attendance exceeded 100) would be an increase in the branch's membership. The figure was then 70, but only those should join who had a definite interest in Methodist history.

As regards the lecture, even for those well versed in the subject (thanks, in some cases, to the lecturer's own books!), the members of the Wesley household seemed to be revived, so skilfully were they delineated by the master-hand; whilst to those unacquainted with the Epworth family apart from the two eminent brothers the inimitable portrayal of character and relationships came as a revelation. In the course of his entrancing survey, Dr. Edwards said that though the Brontës had caused the Haworth parsonage to become a famous literary shrine, the Epworth rectory was truly the cradle of the world-wide Methodist movement and Church.

Though brothers John and Charles were Methodism's most notable figures, their outstanding labours bore indelible marks of the influence of father Samuel and mother Susanna, and also of the other members of that closely-knit and talented family. The speaker also stressed the fact that though most of the Wesleys suffered hardship in one form or another, they all died triumphantly, in holy peace and joy.

During the tea which followed, it was announced that the next meeting would be held on Saturday, 28th April 1962, at Museum Street, Ipswich, to be addressed by the branch's founder and first secretary, Mr. John A. Vickers, of Kent College, Canterbury, whose subject would be "Thomas Coke and the Evolution of Methodism". Mr. Vickers, it was pointed out, had been designated the Wesley Historical Society lecturer for 1964.

W. A. GREEN.

1071. SCOTT'S LANE CHAPEL.

I have been approached by a lady who has found a silver chalice, engraved "Scott's Lane Chapel" (with no further indication of its whereabouts). She wishes to restore the chalice to the chapel, and has asked for my help.

My own inquiries, together with those of the late Rev. Wesley F. Swift, the Editor of the *Proceedings*, and Mr. Leslie Gutteridge, have failed to locate the chapel. Can any reader help? (I warned my inquirer that the chapel in question was not necessarily Methodist.) FRANK H. CUMBERS.

1072. THE CITY ROAD ARCHIVES.

As soon as possible after the sad passing of our friend Wesley Swift, I advised the President of Conference and also the Secretary (Dr. Eric W. Baker) of the situation, and asked if another archivist could be appointed immediately. (This would have involved, of course, the President "declaring an emergency", and calling a man from circuit.) I advised Dr. Baker that my own duties as Book Steward were so continually growing that I could not undertake to keep the Archives open or to answer the many inquiries which come to City Road. The President and Dr. Baker had in mind the fact noted in the last sentence when they told me that no archivist could be appointed until 1st September.

I very greatly regret the position by which the Archives Centre is CLOSED until September 1st. The situation, as it will be seen, is not of my making, and I am sorry for this hindrance to research.

FRANK H. CUMBERS.

1073. FORMATION OF A LOCAL BRANCH AT NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

The Rev. John C. Bowmer, 15, Gordon Square, Whitley Bay, Northumberland, would like to hear from members living in North-Eastern England, or westwards to Carlisle, who would be interested in the formation of a local branch of the Wesley Historical Society. If the response is encouraging, a preliminary meeting will be called, probably in Newcastle upon Tyne, some time during the coming summer. EDITOR.

1074. METHODISM AND THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND.

The note (Notes and Queries No. 1060) by our late Editor in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 86, has a more modern parallel.

During the War of 1939-45 two distinguished Methodist supernumerary ministers lived on the Firth of Clyde. George M. Kerr resided at Cove, Dunbartonshire (opposite Gourrock), and Charles F. Hunter at Blairmore, on the shore of Loch Long. The minister of the parish church (Church of Scotland) went to serve as a chaplain to the Forces, and the church was in consequence left without a resident minister. Similarly, the session clerk (roughly corresponding to the Methodist society steward) was called up; and for some years two Methodist ministers looked after the affairs of the little Scots kirk—C. F. Hunter sailing across to conduct the services each Sabbath, and George Kerr, being "on the spot", acting as session clerk. This arrangement, related to me by George Kerr himself, must surely be unique in both Methodism and Presbyterianism.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

1075. STRANGE NOMENCLATURE.

Although the term "probationers" (Notes and Queries No. 1061) for local preachers "on trial" was never in general usage, it is to be found on several early nineteenth-century plans. The following are instances of Primitive Methodist plans using the term:

- (a) Aylsham branch of North Walsham circuit, July-October 1834.
- (b) Brandon (Suffolk) circuit, August-October 1843.
- (c) Upwell circuit, October 1847-January 1848.

The Lincoln UMFC plan for November 1898-January 1899 styles ministers and local preachers as "Ambassadors for Christ". Is there any other evidence of the usage of this or similar terms to describe our ministers and local preachers?

ARNOLD WHIPP.