

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_whs_01.php

Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

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

Volume XXXIX

June 1974

ORDINATION IN WESLEYAN METHODISM, 1791-1850

MUCH has been written in recent years about John Wesley's ordinations, so it is not necessary here to reiterate facts and generally-accepted theories. The most succinct account we know of in English is an article by the Rev. A. Raymond George, entitled "Ordination in Methodism", in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* for 1951. The Rev. H. Edward Lacy, in volume xxxiii, pp. 118-21¹ of these *Proceedings*, listed all the ordinations which are known to have been performed by Wesley, whilst in volume xxxvi, pp. 36-40, 111-14, 159, the present writer listed all known ordinations from 1791 to 1836. With these as background material, the following comments are offered.

In 1792 the Conference ruled that no ordinations must take place without its consent; in 1793, by 86 votes to 48,² it ruled that the distinction between ordained and unordained preachers must cease. It is difficult to estimate the strength of this "distinction", but, be that as it may, several preachers who had been ordained by Wesley were themselves ordaining others without the knowledge of Conference, and this in itself gave them a potential class-distinction;³ but the Conference did all it could to emphasize the parity of preachers—that was why the Lichfield Plan of 1794 received such scant treatment.

It is worth noting that Alexander Kilham regretted the abandonment of ordination. He advocated "a primitive, rational ordination", not to "ape the Church of England and have bishops, priests and deacons", nor to "differ from all other churches and have no ordination", but to have the preachers "set apart . . . by the imposition of the hands of the Presbytery . . .".⁴

¹ See also my note in *Proceedings*, xxxiv, p. 99.

² *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 221.

³ See *Letter to the Conference from the Stewards of Leeds*.

⁴ Kilham's "Martin Luther" tract.

Having therefore dropped ordination by the laying-on of hands (except, of course, for men going overseas), the preachers were faced with the necessity of justifying their ministerial status. This they did along two lines, viz. (a) by showing that Reception into Full Connexion was "virtual ordination", and (b) by arguing that the imposition of hands was not integral to ordination. Consider these.

(a) *That Reception into Full Connexion was virtual ordination*

According to George Smith's *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, Joseph Benson argued at the first Conference after Wesley's death that admission into Full Connexion was "true scriptural ordination". He also says that this was confirmed by the Conference of 1794. Atmore reports that the Conference of 1793 resolved that

being received into Full Connexion and appointed by them to administer the ordinances should be considered a sufficient ordination without the imposition of hands.⁵

If these reports are authentic—there is no reference to them in the *Minutes*—they provide the earliest reference to this "virtual ordination" idea.

The difficulty is that "reception into Full Connexion" and "the administration of the ordinances" were in some cases—generally of men going overseas—separate ceremonies. Men going abroad were ordained to administer the sacraments; later, on completion of their probation, they were received into Full Connexion. Nothing is said about those who, having been ordained while on probation, did not proceed to Full Connexion.

So the theory of "virtual ordination" got under way. By 1807 William Vipond could say of Reception into Full Connexion "which we consider tantamount to ordination, yea, as containing the very essence of it".⁶ By the time the *Wesleyan Tracts for the Times* were written (1842), virtual ordination was accepted as the traditional view. This was after Conference had adopted the laying-on of hands, but they were at pains to point out that there was no deficiency in previous ordinations without the laying-on of hands. It was alleged that the service of Reception into Full Connexion bore no resemblance to ordination—to which George Osborn replied that a large proportion of the service was taken from the Anglican ordinal for the "Ordering of Priests".⁷ He concluded rather naively by saying that it was through a spirit of "modesty and forbearance" and a desire not to provoke controversy that Reception into Full Connexion had not been designated "Ordination".

A more authoritative statement of the Wesleyan position appeared in the *Methodist Magazine* for 1825,⁸ in an article probably written by Richard Watson. He begins by pointing out that it is their

⁵ G. Smith: *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, ii, p. 101; *Methodist Magazine*, 1845, p. 220.

W. Vipond: *The Doctrines, etc. of the Methodists*, p. 54.

⁷ *Wesleyan Tracts for the Times*, No. 5, p. 19.

⁸ p. 467.

ordination that gives Dissenting ministers—and those of the Church of Scotland—their authority to administer the sacraments, and that this is true for Methodist ministers also. By ordination he means

the separation of men from secular concerns, upon profession of a call from God and the Holy Ghost and after a good report from the Churches, by the recognition of men already in the ministry.

There is no mention of the laying-on of hands. Watson then records the different methods adopted by Episcopalians, Presbyterians and Dissenters, and states that the Methodist practice “more nearly assimilates to the Presbyterian form than any other”. Episcopalians, in denying the validity of non-episcopal ordination, forget that some of their predecessors “denied the necessity of re-ordaining those ministers that had previously received Presbyterian ordination”. Watson ends by saying that Methodist ministers have full scripture authority “to discharge all the functions of ministers of Christ to the Societies and to the world”—virtual ordination conferred full ministerial status.

(b) *That the imposition of hands was not essential*

The second point the Wesleyans had to establish was that the laying-on of hands was incidental—not integral—to ordination. They stated this rather than argued it, although James Dixon invoked Cranmer to prove that appointment to office was sufficient consecration.⁹

One of the first to attempt to justify the ban on the laying-on of hands was Joseph Benson. He thought the Anglicans were prone to dwell upon circumstantial rather than essentials. To him, the laying-on of hands was “not essential to the ordination or appointment of Pastors to watch over the flock of Christ”.¹⁰ Jonathan Crowther gives some indication of how Methodists were thinking in 1810. In his *Methodist Manual* (p. 179) he says:

As to ordination itself, the Methodist Preachers have at least all the *essential* parts . . . Our ordination is not deficient in any point except in the point of laying-on of hands. And though this was practised by the Apostles, yet it is not to be declared to be necessary, nor is it enjoined for general observation.

Crowther doubted whether the laying-on of hands was connected solely with ordination to the ministry. Certainly it was occasionally used for this ceremony, but he doubted whether it was always used. On the other hand, he noted that hands were laid on persons other than ministers on occasions other than ordination. He therefore concluded that whilst the *absolute necessity* of laying-on can be disputed, none can dispute the propriety of it, and at any time the Conference wished they could adopt it.

⁹ J. Dixon: *Methodism, its Origin, etc.* . . . , pp. 112, 114. Dixon does not locate his Cranmerian sources beyond saying that they are to be found in the Parker Society edition, ii, p. 117.

¹⁰ J. Benson: *A Farther Defence*, p. 70.

Benson, too, said that there was no conclusive evidence to show that all who were appointed to the pastoral office in the New Testament were ordained by the laying-on of hands, and he went on to say that what is essential to ordination is the setting apart by faithful men of persons properly qualified and called. True succession is one in doctrine and holiness. Nearly half a century afterwards, the greatest exponent of the Wesleyan doctrine of the pastoral office, Alfred Barrett, said the same thing.¹¹

From the historian's point of view, however, the most significant thing about the abandonment of the laying-on of hands by the Wesleyans was that it ended any thought of a tactual succession from Wesley, not only in 1791, but also in 1836 when the laying-on of hands was formally adopted by the Wesleyan Conference and when, through Henry Moore, it would have been possible to revive such a succession from Wesley. Dr. John Walsh thinks that the failure to follow up Wesley's ordinations was due to three main causes: first, the prevailing egalitarianism of the preachers; second, fear of "rocking the boat" in a time of crisis; and third, because hardly anyone seemed to want it.¹² But in 1836 the scene was very different, and to this we now turn.

A proposal to include the laying-on of hands in the ordination service had been before the Wesleyan Conference in 1818, 1822,¹³ 1824, and 1828, and each time it had been decisively rejected. In 1836, however, it had an easy passage, there being only two dissentients.¹⁴ Why this remarkable change of attitude? This question can perhaps be answered by an examination of the arguments which were put forward in favour of the step. First, it was said that the act was of divine authority and of New Testament origin; second, that it was of great antiquity and observed by the universal church; third, that missionaries had always been ordained that way, so it was highly desirable that all ministers should be treated alike. Mr. Roberts of Ceylon told the Conference that missionaries were ordained by the laying-on of hands so that they could administer the sacraments immediately on arrival in their station. He added that it also gave them legal protection in the discharge of their duties, and that ministers of other denominations recognized the validity of their ordination.

Sundry other motives were advanced for the new departure. One speaker thought it a desirable asset for preachers sent to Scotland, where there was a decided prejudice against ministers who had not received the laying-on of hands. James Dixon reminded the Conference that it was a method greatly favoured by Wesley. Other speakers laid stress on the opinion that "the time was ripe"—but what precisely they meant by that was not always clear.

¹¹ A. Barrett: *Catholic and Evangelical Principles*, p. 113.

¹² Rupert E. Davies and E. Gordon Rupp (eds.): *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, i, p. 281.

¹³ For details, see *Memoir of the Rev. J. Entwisle*, p. 315.

¹⁴ Dixon, however (op. cit., p. 116), says it was "without a dissentient voice".

It is generally thought that the laying-on of hands was adopted largely (as Dr. John Kent has expressed it) "on an anxiety to assert the reality of the Wesleyan ministry against the criticism of such Anglo-Catholic leaders as Pusey himself".¹⁵ More probably, however, it was in reply to attacks made on the ministry by the Warrenite agitators—for the following reasons. In the first place, the Wesleyans were slow to awaken to the challenge of the Oxford Movement. In 1835 a writer in the *Methodist Magazine* was regarded as a scaremonger for expressing alarm; and Jackson's celebrated reply to Pusey's attack did not appear until six years after the introduction of the laying-on of hands. By 1842 members of the Wesleyan Conference were strongly asserting their claims against those of the Tractarians, but we doubt whether the current was running so swiftly in 1836. The only clue we can find to associate that Conference with the Oxford Movement is a passage from Jabez Bunting's speech when he said "an attack had been made on their ministerial character and they were right in boldly but humbly asserting its scriptural authority".¹⁶ Yet this remark could apply to the Warrenite controversy; and in other speeches that year there is a noticeable absence of any reference to the Tractarians. In fact Bunting's remark about "ministerial character" is more apposite to the Warrenites than to the Tractarians, for the latter did not attack ministerial character but the validity of Wesleyan orders.

So the introduction of the laying-on of hands can be regarded as the climax of the long series of efforts on the part of the Wesleyan hierarchy to assert the doctrine of the pastoral office in the face of *internal* opposition. It is significant that Bunting's previous attempt to introduce it had been in the year following the Leeds Organ affair.

Now we must return to the question of the succession from Wesley and the celebrated letter addressed to the Conference in 1837 by Henry Moore. He wrote:

I am the only person now alive that Mr. Wesley committed that power to, and I know that he committed it for the purpose that it should become a common thing whenever it should be judged by the Conference best to adopt it.¹⁷

The Rev. Bernard L. Semmens, author of *The Conferences after Wesley*, has very kindly pointed out to me that Henry Moore was not the only person alive in 1837 who had been ordained by Wesley. Also living at the time were Matthew Lumb and James Bogie, both ordained in 1788, Lumb for the West Indies and Bogie for Scotland. So this raises some interesting questions: Why, for example, was Henry Moore not aware of these ordinations? or again, If others, including Lumb and Bogie, knew of them, why did they remain

¹⁵ John H. S. Kent: *The Age of Disunity*, p. 23.

¹⁶ *The Watchman*, 1836, p. 252.

¹⁷ See my *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, p. 161; also *Life of Henry Moore*, p. 326.

silent? Several answers come to mind. Henry Moore may not have known of them, or he may have forgotten about them. Forty years had gone by, for thirty-six of which there had been no imposition of hands at ordination (except for men going overseas). If Moore had had only Wesley's *Journal* to guide him, the chances are that he would *not* have known, for Wesley merely says that he "ordained six", and the ceremony took place at the early hour of 4 a.m. or thereabouts.¹⁸ Yet, it was Conference-time, and Moore was a member of the Legal Hundred, so it is hard to believe that the news of the ordinations would not get around.

A deeper question remains: Why did the Conference, when reminded of Moore's position, refuse to take advantage of it? In the absence of any known reply to Moore's letter, we can only suggest that the Wesleyan hierarchy did not want a succession from Wesley via Henry Moore or anyone else. They were for making a fresh start in the matter of tactual succession, for they felt that it was the only way to avoid the invidious distinction between those who could claim a succession from Wesley and those who could not.¹⁹ This suggestion receives confirmation in *Wesleyan Tracts for the Times*, No. 5 (1842):

We have never laid claim to even Presbyterian orders received by successive transmission from Mr. Wesley: a series of ordinations *by imposition of hands* having never been essential to the church in our view of it.

Here again they were taking their stand on traditional principles—that the laying-on of hands was not essential to ordination, and that Wesleyan ministers were in the valid succession of "doctrine and holiness". In so far as "the ministry appoints the ministry", this was the succession which really mattered; but to establish it there was no need of the hands of Henry Moore or of anyone else ordained by Wesley. Again to quote James Dixon:

If it be contended that a succession, in the sense of a transmission of orders is necessary to constitute a valid ministry, we reply that we have never been without this power, because we have always had in the ministry men who had in themselves been ordained by Mr. Wesley and who had in their turn ordained others.²⁰

One final comment: Mr. Raymond George concludes his article in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* (referred to in our opening paragraph) by saying ". . . we assert that Methodism is a Church: and being a Church, both can and does ordain", previously quoting Dr. Frederick Platt as having said that

the power of ordination resides in the living church in fellowship with its living Head and is not dependent on any historical succession, episcopal or presbyterial . . .

¹⁸ *Journal*, vii, p. 421.

¹⁹ It seems to have been overlooked that taking part in the ordinations of 1836 was Dr. Wilbur Fisk of the American Episcopal Church, who carried with him a succession from Wesley via Dr. Coke and the American ordinations. (See *The Watchman*, 1836, p. 253.)

²⁰ Dixon, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

This may be a good modern argument, but it is not the way Wesley and his successors saw it. Wesley's ordinations were singularly hole-and-corner affairs, performed without the knowledge or consent of any church or society. He ordained because he believed he had the authority so to do, and his followers ordained for the same reason. They believed that Methodism could ordain its own ministers because it possessed men with authority to do it—men who had been themselves ordained by others in the ministry before them. Says Alfred Barrett: "The first Methodist ministers ordained their successors and they the generation after, and so the institution goes on."²¹

On this question of succession, we close with the words of Thomas Jackson, written at the time of the centenary of Wesleyan Methodism:

There is . . . an "Apostolic Succession" . . . in which every minister should be careful to stand, or he will be found an intruder into the sacred office, whom the Lord will at last punish and disown. The true "Apostolical Succession" is a succession to a ministry which is characterised by Apostolical truth, by Apostolical zeal and faithfulness, by Apostolical efficiency and power, by Apostolical labour and self-denial, and by Apostolical success. In this succession we believe that our fathers stood and we ourselves are in it as far as we are actuated by the same spirit and tread in their steps . . .²²

In these days when succession often looms large in our discussions, it is good to know how the "Fathers and Brethren" of the half-century after Wesley's death thought and acted in their efforts to fashion a "Methodist ministry".

JOHN C. BOWMER.

²¹ See also a letter from Wesley to *The London Chronicle* on "a succession of pastors and teachers" (*Letters*, iv, p. 137).

²² T. Jackson: *Wesleyan Methodism a Revival of Apostolic Christianity*, p. 35.

Conference this year meets in Bristol—a city second only to London for Methodist history, where the ghosts of John and Charles Wesley, Whitefield, Benson, Bradburn, Moore and countless others still hover over the Horsefair, Portland Place, Charles Street (to mention only a few sacred spots) . . . and yet the Conference *Handbook* devotes less than a page of print to this rich heritage! Dr. Maldwyn Edwards writes briefly on the New Room, and there is an indirect reference to Charles Wesley's residence in Bristol as part of a caption to a picture of the Chairman of the District. From our point of view this is very disappointing—a lost opportunity. Perhaps the editors feel that it has all been said before and, anyway, who wants to dwell on the past?—it is the present that counts! We hope this is not the explanation, for we believe, as an Historical Society, that the better we understand the past the more adequately can we live in the present and more confidently face the future. Bristol could tell us (as perhaps no other city could) what Methodism is all about!

Disestablishment and Liberation, by William H. Mackintosh (Epworth Press, pp. xxiv, 344, £6 50p.), is a study of the movement for religious equality during the Industrial Revolution in the nineteenth century.

THE WESLEYAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION

Hoxton : A Further Study

AS early as 1745, John Wesley the Oxford Fellow laid himself under obligation to the finest traditions of Dissenting academies by inquiring of Philip Doddridge about the best books for his growing preachers. Whenever opportunity arose of meeting them, he dealt with the characteristic combination of theology, logic and preaching, so that the old Orphan House at Newcastle upon Tyne was described by one historian, Luke Tyerman, as the "theological institution of his Preachers".¹

As an article in the last number points out,² it was not until 1834 that the Wesleyan body produced a final scheme of training, in spite of the powerful advocacy meanwhile of Dr. Adam Clarke and Mr. Joseph Butterworth, M.P. It would be easy to underestimate the influence of the rapidly-expanding young Missionary Society in the matter; the need for men to have training to be really useful on the "foreign field" played a larger part in the inception of such a venture than is explicitly recorded.

The first financial encouragement for the cause was a legacy from an Irish Methodist, so the *Proposals* were launched and vigorously debated, which then meant a landslide of printed and placarded matter which uncovered strata after strata of Methodist thought and feeling. The Warrenite explosion came about, it is now seen, because the opponents merely seized upon the *Proposals* as the "casus belli", or rather the "palladium" of the hated establishment that had to be captured. The controversy widened into main constitutional issues, and indeed into litigation, as the *Proposals* were implemented. The launching of Hoxton had the indirect result of producing the judgement of Lord Chancellor Lyndhurst—a milestone in our history. This, in effect, left Conference master in its own connexional house rather than affirming a superintendent to be master in his own circuit house, as Samuel Warren, Doctor of Laws, strove to be in Manchester.

The initial point we make, therefore, is that these first students were very much on trial and on their mettle, having been selected from the List of Reserve for favoured institutional life in a place bearing "no distant resemblance to a series of gloomy pigeon holes"; the venture had cost too much for them to be otherwise, and they knew that inevitable comparisons would be made with contemporaries who, in accordance with the old procedure, were sent immediately into the work. Will senior and well-tried ministers be "really

¹ L. Tyerman: *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A.*, i, p. 543.

² "The Wesleyan Theological Institution: Hoxton and Abney House, 1834-42" (article by the Rev. Kenneth B. Garlick), *Proceedings*, xxxix, pp. 104-12.

over-topped and overshadowed by a Hoxton breed of 'Admirable Crichtons'?" was one pertinent question.³

The objections to the *Proposals* could well be summed up from the scandalous paper war in this way:

The *Proposals* are completely unnecessary. Methodism has done wonderfully well, and God has blessed us without college-training. This will produce an undesirable type of minister, effeminate and fastidious, and there is here a secret plot to assimilate Methodism to the Established Church and to get rid of local preachers. It will all tend to be unhealthy for the Methodist body, and will make an imprudent call upon the generosity of our hard-pressed people.⁴

We conveniently divide our background subject, therefore, into three parts: (i) the teaching; (ii) student life; (iii) the Methodist contribution.

(i)

It is a pleasant thought to Methodists that in the institution where Calvin had been preached, Arminius prevailed in the fervent voice of good John Hannah. The proposed scheme of instruction was thorough and ambitious enough, and reveals, as might be expected, affinities with the Dissenting foundations, and thereby contained much "grammar school" stuff. The original staff of Governor, Theological Tutor and Classical Tutor were to be responsible for

- (1) English Grammar, Composition, and Elocution; Geography and History; elementary instruction in the Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, and in Logic and in Philosophy of the Mind.
- (2) Theology in all its branches.
- (3) Biblical Criticism and Interpretation; Ancient and Ecclesiastical History.
- (4) Homiletical work.
- (5) Classical and Sacred Languages.

³ *The Wesleyan Theological Institution an Unauthorized Imposition etc.*—a letter addressed to Local Preachers, reprinted from J. R. Stephens's *Methodist Magazine*, 1834, p. 5.

⁴ These and other objections are urged by—among a host of booklets and pamphlets—

Samuel Warren, LL.D.: *Remarks on the Wesleyan Theological Institution for the Education of the Junior Preachers together with the substance of a Speech delivered in the London Conference of 1834.*

An Address to Members and Friends of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Societies, relative to the Theological Institution. By a Wesleyan Methodist Local Preacher (1834).

A Small Sermon to Great Preachers. Humbly submitted to the perusal and Practice of the Wesleyan Methodist Preachers, and all the organians, liturgians, academicians, and collegians, of the Wesleyan Methodist Society. By a Wesleyan Methodist (1834).

An Affectionate Address . . . from the Manchester and Liverpool Wesleyan Association (1834).

James Everett ("A Disciple of the Old School"): *The Disputants etc.* (1835).

A particularly personal point was raised by the last-named work (p. 72 f.): "We may be permitted to glance at the number of Preachers' sons, who, after having been educated at Kingswood School, have entered the Established Church—a much greater number than those who are now in the itinerant work!"

We find that the teaching methods were compendious rather than selective. We have had to come to fairly modern times before we approximate to the "pointer-out of method" for which Adam Clarke had originally pleaded.⁵ So John Hannah was comprehensive in his range, and fervent in the delivery of his lectures, as befitted one who had been Methodist preacher long before he was theologian. Shortly after his removal from Hoxton to the new "Didsbury", Thomas Jackson was appointed to the new "Richmond". Jackson had undertaken immense labours to fill up his lack of learning, throughout his ministry, and in his memoirs he gives a full summary of his curriculum, following the lines familiar at Hoxton.

The verbal inspiration of the Scriptures was assumed, and the foundation of all study was made in a close examination of the Trinitarian conception of God, together with a history of its development. Then was made the leap to the doctrine of Man and his fall and depravity; this prepared the way for the link between the two in the doctrine of redemption and reconciliation through Incarnation. Man's experience through such benefits was next dealt with, special reference being made to the teaching of Wesley. The eschatological themes formed a fitting crown to doctrinal Christianity.

Passing to practical matters, there began a course on the "Institutions" of Christianity, in the order of Sabbath, Ministry, and Church. The "Duties" of Christianity comprehended what we should call Christian Ethics, with the interesting special place being given to the negro slave trade. Under this general heading of Theology there was next treated Natural and Moral Philosophy, the whole course being crowned with a consideration of Revelation and Inspiration, with an odd supplement on Angelology. Pastoral Theology was then dealt with at length. Jackson admitted that lectures on Church History were less copious than other subjects, the "thousand years of uncertainty" apparently being completely ignored.

It is interesting to note an exclamation of John Hannah's, uttered toward the end of his life:

Give me a plough-boy with a mind like John Hunt, one of my first students, and I would prefer him, ten thousand times over, to an educated and accomplished weakling.

Far from the danger of a mass-produced ministry, feared by many, we find plenty of evidence of the "principle of individuation" that a practical doctrine of the Holy Spirit insists upon.

The vituperated Institution goes on well. The dear lads are studying hard, learning good things, and evidently improving in piety. Thank God, the bulk of our people love good, wholesome and enlightened preaching too well, to be kept long in mistake on this subject. In the Institution, God is with us, and we fear nothing.⁶

⁵ In a letter published in the "1806 Plan".

⁶ MS. letter of George Cubitt to "Sister Mortimer", dated 14th March 1835. (Methodist Archives, London.)

Thomas Jackson should also be remembered for his re-discovery of the Puritan divine John Goodwin, and for his formidable debates with any minister of the Calvinistic persuasion. An impetus was given to the exploration, through mind and heart, of the "grand depositum" of the Methodist faith. The first titles set for prize essays—"The Doctrine of Entire Sanctification" and "The Witness of the Holy Spirit"—were almost a forthright statement of teaching policy, meant for those who persisted in criticism of the Institution.

(ii)

There were some justifiable fears about the founding of such an institution, evident to any with experience of corporate life and its dangers. As early as 1806 we have a most perceptive comment by a "Friend to the Connexion":

When a number of young men have been associated together in a family, their natural vivacity has been kindled in a flame of levity; and though their public profession, their former experiences, and the habits of the house, have restrained open immorality, yet I have had but too good reason to believe, that through these familiar associations, they have lost more in piety, than they have gained in knowledge. . . . By constant residence together, they get to be little critics on one another, and on everybody else. All devotional acts, both family and public, are the subject of minor criticism; and thus the spirit of piety evaporates in the fermentation of brainless witticisms.⁷

There is a diatribe of over 150 pages, by the disaffected William Offord, which breathes the very spirit of a harsh narrowly-evangelical standpoint. Though written actually of the first Richmond students, it can be taken as representative of that generation—and of any? This man was horrified to espy that the inmates were

as frolicsome in their gambols, when wheeling each other in their barrows and jumping over a cat-gallows, and in the performance of other physical feats and amusements, in the Institution grounds, as are the sprightly youths and tandum drivers at Eaton [sic] There has sometimes, it is true, after a Sunday evening's service, by a student, been the *semblance* of good among some few *females* [!]⁸

One cannot resist the comment that there is apparently a succession in things other than matters of high ecclesiology.

The first group of students were asked to provide a frank written report and impression of life at Hoxton. They

all agree in blessing God for their opportunities of spiritual advancement, as well as acknowledging the direct tendency of the Institution to give them just and humbling views of themselves, to suppress the risings

⁷ *Observations on the Importance of Adopting a Plan of Instruction, for those Preachers admitted on Trial, in the Methodist Connexion.* Submitted to the consideration of the preachers at their ensuing District Meetings; printed by order of the Conference, 1806. This "Friend to the Connexion" was Joseph Butterworth, Methodist M.P. and relative of Dr. Adam Clarke (whose letter was originally published in this Plan). Butterworth subsequently became a treasurer to the Missionary Society and one of the founders of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

⁸ *Wesleyan Persecution, etc.* (Richmond, 1846), pp. 41, 43.

of self-sufficiency and conceit, to create an ardent thirst for sanctified knowledge, and to inspire the humble but firm resolution to devote themselves, and whatever mental vigour and information they may acquire, to the great purposes of the Christian ministry.⁹

That this was more than a formal report is borne out by the fact that some of them were great diarists. Their spiritual struggles were faithfully recorded, and one is reminded strongly of Bunyan's *Grace Abounding*, which was a refreshing change from the spirit of levity prophesied by the opponents of ministerial training. A most gracious revival of corporate holiness (true New Testament sainthood) was experienced in the first years, after an address to the students by the Rev. John M'Lean. Day after day the students were roused more fully, passionate prayers were heard from every study, and class-meetings reached their full glory. To the abiding consequences of the first student-life, let the Fiji Islands and many another field bear witness:

Those were glorious days in the old Institution House. Men got blessed there who have carried blessing to many since. Hearts were hallowed there which have brought the same power of purifying into many a church and many a home since. John Hunt's heart was open to receive this great blessing . . . "I now find daily, what for years I have thought impossible—to live without condemnation. Thank God, all is peace, and calmness, and love."¹⁰

The fire of that charismatic movement lived on, fanned more fiercely by the Centenary celebrations of 1839, and passed, according to William Arthur, "from study to study". Incalculable blessing has been brought about in the evangelical world by his spiritual classic; on his own testimony *The Tongue of Fire* was born in that "series of gloomy pigeon holes". One immediate practical result was an outburst of voluntary generosity from the students towards the Centenary Fund, in gifts averaging eight guineas each—surely a prodigious sum in those days. It is also interesting to note that among the list of subscribers to the original Theological Institution were the names of many of the brethren, who had never had the opportunity of such training and were obviously keen to ensure that the next generation would benefit.

(iii)

That there was a Methodist contribution to education generally has been well-enough attested, whilst at the same time there was an acknowledgement of debt to the rich traditions of the Dissenting academies. We need only recall the fascinating pedigree of Hoxton. It was rented economically from the London Missionary Society, who had inherited it from the Societas Evangelica (producing Robert Morrison of China), and yet again before that it was a Congregational academy managed by the Coward Trust. The original use of the

⁹ Theological Institution Report, 1834.

¹⁰ G. Stringer Rowe: *Life of John Hunt*, p. 46 f. Special mention has to be made of the Rev. N. Allen Birtwhistle's *In His Armour: The Life of John Hunt of Fiji* (Cargate Press, 1954).

place was by the Academy of Dr. Joshua Oldfield, who is believed to have moved it from Coventry in 1663—the very dawn of Non-conformity. Such a succession is a fitting symbol of the fact that we reaped where others had laboured.

Traditions there certainly were: many great Independent divines and “creditable scientists” were products of Hoxton, beside Robert Morrison and many early adventurers of the LMS. One likes to think that such traditions, especially of a missionary tone, were passed on through fortuitous encounters with old Hoxton men, that there was a golden succession embracing Morrison, and David Hill of Richmond, and even that old Hoxton had its “rolling-off” ceremony for the apostles to China, India, South Seas, and Madagascar.

There exists an interesting record of life in the Hoxton academy, 1820-3,¹¹ and apart from an account of the significantly different mode of admission, the story could be just as true of any Methodist institution, in the staffing, curriculum, student life, and even the innocent pranks that disgusted country visitors! Nevertheless, a distinctive Methodist contribution there was, some aspects of which we may go on to indicate.

The first “differentium”—the actual foundation of the Institution itself—arises from the very nature of the Methodist organism. Like the Missionary Society before it, the Institution was a connexional creation, was regarded as an integral part of the communion, and still is. That is partly why the trouble was widespread: the issue was taken up ardently either as an expression of the connexional spirit or as a disruption of connexional solidarity.

Much heartburning was caused by the fact that our Dissenting friends did not then understand this connexional discipline. Through press and literature they positively strove to sunder societies from what they sincerely conceived to be a tyrannical Conference, even to the point of appearing on secession platforms.

In such a foundation, it can safely be claimed, the Methodists were pioneers. In the Established Church, apart from the contributions of the ancient universities, much was beginning to depend upon the initiative of the bishop in his own diocese: candidature for holy orders in many places seems to have resolved itself into a few minutes' conversation with the bishop. In the long-drawn-out situation after the 1662 ejections, private enterprise was the need in educational affairs, especially in theological tuition, and it is generally acknowledged that even the great academies were, in a sense, one-man projects rather than a communal creation. The power of such bodies as the Coward Trust grew, of course, and the private enterprise element lapsed gradually into the background, as tutors were urged by ministerial associations to take up such work, but it remains

¹¹ “Life at Hoxton College, 1820-23”, being part of the autobiography of Alexander Stewart, written for his children. (*Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, xv, p. 75.)

true that it was not until 1845 that a "central organization" was urged by a Congregational Union committee.

Even so, the individualist tradition died hard, and the difference was very much there in 1834, as between a Conference-ruled body and a Congregationally-ruled federation.

The ethos of so many of these Academies was personal rather than institutional and there was much variety of standard from one to another.¹²

It was inherent in the very nature of Methodism that such a creation should come about, as Samuel Warren found out on his appeal to the highest court in the land—hence the famous Lyndhurst judgement.

It can be claimed too that a second distinguishing mark arises inevitably from the first—namely, the status of the students themselves. They were already accepted preachers recruited from the ranks of the local preachers, with the gifts, graces, call and fruits, accepted by Conference for the itinerant work. Whether they were sent into the immediate work or into the Institution depended upon the exigencies of that work. Others, pre-eminently the Baptists, had their lay preachers, but in other institutions it appears that the local executive or Principal had great powers of discretion.

Alexander Stewart, in his recollections of life at Hoxton, says that he made his application to the local committee, stating his "experience", religious views, denominational sentiments, scholastic knowledge, and book-list, and was requested to appear before the committee for the purpose of engaging in prayer and preaching. "This was an ordeal from which my heart revolted at the time, and certain parts of which I have never seen in a more favourable light."¹³ Leaving a rejected candidate sobbing in the dark waiting-room, he came before the committee, the president of which asked him in a very unceremonious way to engage in prayer. This over, he was then asked to deliver an address, after which he withdrew, and on re-entering the room was congratulated by the president on being elected by the committee.

Allowing for the jaundiced point of view and the gentle melancholy pervading the account given by "Mark Rutherford",¹⁴ it still seems that the ministry appeared in the light of a possible occupation for the sons of godly people, dispensed at the hands of the leading figure of the establishment—the treasurer in the case of Hoxton. It was given as matter for satisfaction and advertisement in the report of these foundations that a certain number of their students had been "called and placed".

In the Methodist venture the students were products of the "body", were tested by that communion and accepted, and simply

¹² S. G. Harries: "The Status of Doddridge's Academy" (*ibid.*, xvii, p. 19 f.).

¹³ *op. cit.*

¹⁴ *Autobiography*, chapter 2. William Hale White (1831-1913) entered the Countess of Huntingdon's college at Cheshunt about the middle of the century, and was expelled for unorthodoxy.

spent their time on the List of Reserve in fruitful training; and this jurisdiction of the Conference over the youngest candidate and freshman was watched most jealously by both well-wishers and ill-wishers of the scheme.

A third distinctive mark is worth noting—the appointment of a “governor”. His responsibility was to be a spiritual director, with a class-leader’s oversight of the students’ personal piety, and his tutorial task was to lecture them in things pastoral and constitutional. The Institution from the beginning was regarded as a Methodist society with a seasoned leader, not as an academic unit only. This governorship seems to have been regarded in other quarters as the most distinctive part of the scheme.

John Hunt entered Hoxton in its second year. In the middle of his course he had occasion to write to Dr. Bunting, and he spoke of the rare spiritual influence of Governor Joseph Entwisle. It is interesting to read of the estimate of the cultured young Benjamin Hellier, from a Richmond student’s point of view, of the gifts required for an office he himself was destined to grace in the future Headingley:

[He] should be a man of no ordinary qualifications. His piety ought to be eminent, because he will inevitably determine by his own character and conduct what the standard of religious attainment shall be in the Institution. . . . A House Governor cannot do everything; but if he is everything he ought to be, the good he may do is incalculable . . . this is a great work indeed, and calls for great and uncommon qualifications.¹⁶

The very name Theological “Institution”, as against College, Seminary, or Academy (names suspect to the Methodist “levellers”), suggested a distinction; it marked the beginnings of specialization in the fading reign of the “Queen of Sciences” in the old universities.

“*This is a Theological Institution,*” was the caustic reply of Samuel Jackson of Richmond to the unlucky brethren who tried to excuse their laggard work by pleading the amount of time required to meet Mr. Farrar and his classics.¹⁶ Actually this governorship died hard, if in name only, or rather perhaps it passed away into the notion that every tutor was a class-leader of souls. It is interesting to note that it was in the Hartley Primitive Methodist College, almost to the time of Methodist Union in 1932, that the tradition was preserved of appointing a well-trying senior minister to the principalship rather than a specialist scholar.

We proceed to the end of the story—not a happy ending to the opponents. The Warrenites stormed out of the old body, later lost their Moses when he decided to end his days after the legal reverse as an Anglican clergyman, and were ultimately assimilated among

¹⁶ *Benjamin Hellier: his Life and Teaching*, edited by his children (1889), p. 34 f.

¹⁶ S. Wray: *W. O. Simpson, Methodist Minister and Missionary* (1886), p. 53.

the United Methodist Free Churches. Another interesting right-about turn was completed when the large library of James Everett, who had refused entry into Independent Hoxton when a young man and had fought hard against the Methodist Hoxton, was acquired by and installed in the first UMFC college, later Victoria Park, Manchester.

RALPH LOWERY.

[The Rev. Ralph Lowery, B.D. is Superintendent Minister of the Blackpool North circuit.]

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Bristol Conference, 1974,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

Westbury-on-Trym Methodist Church,

On Monday, 1st July, at 7-30 p.m.,

BY

The Rev. FRANCIS B. WESTBROOK, B.A., Mus.D.

(The Williams School of Church Music).

Subject :

"SOME EARLY METHODIST TUNE-BOOKS".

The chair will be taken by MR. DEREK W. BURRELL, M.A. (Truro School).

The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at the same church at **5-30 p.m.**

Mr. and Mrs. Rowland C. Swift kindly invite members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom at **4-30 p.m.** It is desirable that all those who intend to be present at the Tea should send their names to Mr. Peter Smith, 81, Park Grove, Henleaze, Bristol, BS9 4NY (Tel. 621148), not later than Friday, 28th June.

To reach Westbury-on-Trym from the Conference Hall, motorists should proceed along Park Street and Whiteladies Road, across the Downs (keeping right, and then left at the triangle). On reaching Westbury, take the right fork into Westbury Hill, where the church is to be found at the bottom of the hill on the right-hand side. The journey should take from ten to fifteen minutes. Buses 84, 1, 18, 87 and 88 all go to Westbury: alight at the top of Westbury Hill.

The Rise of Methodism in the Vale of Aylesbury, 1772-1791, by the Rev. E. Ralph Bates (pp. iv. 77) is an excellent piece of research into a period which is notoriously difficult to investigate. This valuable insight into early Methodism in Mid-Bucks was written to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the opening of Methodist witness in the Vale. Copies, price 20p. plus 12p. postage, may be obtained from the author at 3, Hansford Close, Combe Down, Bath, Somerset, BA2 5LW.

Extracts from the diary of Jeremiah Gilbert (1789-1852) have been compiled by Mrs. J. Eyre (pp. 12). Copies may be obtained from the Rev. John H. Barker, 102, Saltergate, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S40 1NE.

JOHN WESLEY'S "SUNDAY SERVICE" AND ITS AMERICAN REVISIONS

CERTAIN aspects of John Wesley's revision of the Book of Common Prayer for American Methodism have not been closely looked into. When he "prepared a Liturgy", as he described his abridgement of the Prayer Book—naming it the *Sunday Service*—he issued a volume which has been studied more in breadth than in depth. Indeed, unless one has before him the exact text of the unrevised Book of Common Prayer, and can compare that, word for word, with what Wesley left of it, one cannot know exactly what he did. Most important it is to realize that the strokes of Wesley's pen in "killing" material he did not want the printer to reproduce, were *positive* strokes, not simply a casual elision of material for the sake of abridgement. We often find in Wesley's omissions a powerful "argument from silence", paradoxical as that sounds, but the silence does not speak unless one knows exactly what Wesley's omissions were. No one can obtain the answer who has only the revised text as Wesley had it printed. A close look at both the unrevised and the revised publications is needed to make clear what Wesley's positive strokes were. And even when we note his changes we do not always know why he made them.

For instance, in the Exhortation to Thankful Prayer after Baptism, the priest is—or was—to say: "Seeing now dearly beloved brethren that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's Church . . .". Wesley left it: "Seeing now dearly beloved brethren that this child is grafted into the body of Christ's Church . . .". One finds no sign in the revised text that John Wesley by a positive stroke saw to it that the word "regenerate" did not appear here, nor is there any sign in his Thanksgiving Prayer after Baptism in this same office, that Wesley again struck out baptismal regeneration. The Prayer Book's formal prayer "yields hearty thanks . . . that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant by the Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child . . .". Wesley made it: "that it hath pleased thee to receive this child for thine own child by adoption." No one reading the Wesley abridgement by itself gets any idea that Wesley made a direct move here to take out the whole idea of baptismal regeneration.

All sorts of other meaningful omissions might be noted in Wesley's abridgement. Some of these we believe we interpret properly; some we do not know how to explain. Why in the General Confession in the Communion Office did he strike out the words "the burthen of them is intolerable"? ("The Remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burthen of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us . . .") One person's guess regarding Wesley's omission here is no doubt as good as another's, but I would hazard the suggestion that Wesley thought that no Christian who was ready to communicate ought to

have an "intolerable burden" of sins and wickedness upon him. But who knows why he struck this?

Another action of Wesley which may be noted here was his omission in the Proper Preface for Christmas (before the Ter-Sanctus) of the words "was made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary his Mother and that without spot of sin". Wesley left it "was made very man and that without spot of sin to make us clean from all sin". We judge that he did not like the crassness of the "of her substance".

Wesley to be sure made far more important and noticeable omissions when he left out the sponsors in baptism, the wedding ring in marriage, and the committal in burial. In omitting these he was in line with the objections of the Puritans, as they made clear when they omitted sponsors, ring and committal from their *Directory* with which they supplanted the Prayer Book under Cromwell. Wesley gave scant reason for his omissions here, simply stating in his preface to the *Sunday Service* that "some sentences in the offices of baptism and the burial of the dead are omitted". No further explanation as to what or why.

Time forbids our going into detail regarding the import of these omissions, but it is important to note that in American Methodism, long after Wesley's death, both the Methodist Episcopal Church and the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, reinstated in their respective Rituals, sponsors; the ring and the committal in the three separate offices. But in making these reinsertions—in 1864 and 1870—the two big Episcopal Methodisms did not turn back to the original Prayer Book, but followed the revision of that book in these offices as done by the Protestant Episcopal Church in America. That Church had been organized in 1789, five years after the Methodist Episcopal Church had come into being. Its bishops were ordained, after lengthy negotiation, by Church of England Archbishops, thus putting the "Episcopalians", as we usually term them, in the mooted "Apostolic Succession". Liturgically that Church has greatly influenced other Protestant Churches in America, including the Methodist, which in turn has influenced the Episcopalians by its evangelistic activities.

Now to note further what American Methodists did with the *Sunday Service* once they had it in their hands. The book as revised by Wesley and sent over for formal use by the American Methodists, was brought to America in loose-leaf, unbound sheets by Dr. Coke and his attending presbyters who had been newly ordained by Wesley. The *Sunday Service* was shipped in loose-leaf sheets to avoid payment of the heavier duty which rested then—and rests now—upon bound books when imported. Present-day Methodists sometimes smile knowingly when they hear of Wesley's loose-leaf ploy to avoid paying the heavier duty, but the process was then, and is now, quite an acceptable method of proceeding.

When this writer was Book Editor of the American Methodist

Church some years ago he recalls cabling Dr. Frank Cumbers, the exceedingly able Book Steward in charge of the Epworth Press: "Quote price 2,000 sheets Sangster's Perfection." Dr. Cumbers knew that meant we wanted to know the cost of two thousand printed copies, unbound, of Dr. Sangster's book, *The Path to Perfection*. We did import the book in sheets from Epworth, had them bound in our Publishing House in America, and put them out under the Abingdon imprint. John Wesley took advantage in his day of this same process, and so "the Liturgy", as the American Methodists first called it, came across in unbound sheets—which loose sheets incidentally gave the American Methodists a chance, as we shall see, to do some revising of their own.

In the beginning the *Sunday Service* was formally adopted at the Christmas Conference when the Methodist Episcopal Church was organized. Especially were its provisions for ordination esteemed to be of great moment. The *Minutes* of that Conference declared: "We will form ourselves into an Episcopal Church under the direction of Superintendents, Elders, Deacons and Helpers, according to the Forms of Ordination annexed to our Liturgy and the Form of Discipline set forth in these Minutes". From that day to this, all ordinations in American Methodism have been "according to" those same forms.

But after the Christmas Conference adjourned, things began to happen to the "Liturgy". John Dickins, who was destined five years later to found "The Methodist Book Concern" (now the United Methodist Publishing House) took the unbound copies with him to Philadelphia, where he had them bound with the *Minutes* of the Christmas Conference. The final binding and publication of the *Sunday Service* was done during January 1785, and presumably under Thomas Coke's surveillance, for Coke was in Philadelphia from 8th to 19th January of that year. Indeed, John Wesley wrote in 1789 that "Dr. Coke made some changes in the book [he was referring to the *Sunday Service*] without my knowledge". Wesley added: "In religion I am for as few innovations as possible. I love the old wine best . . . I prefer *which* before *who* art in heaven".

Wesley never explained what Coke's changes were, or when made, nor whether they first appeared to him in the 1786 edition printed in London at the press of Frys and Couchman. A copy of the 1786 *Sunday Service* was preserved in the old Book-Room in London, but I have personally never located a copy of the 1786 edition in America. The extant 1784 books are now exceedingly rare, and each of these is carefully preserved today.

The 1786 edition of the *Sunday Service* has usually been considered by Methodist historians to have been the last issue of the book, but to my astonishment I have recently found in the library of the School of Theology at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia, an edition of the *Sunday Service* whose title-page has "Fourth Edition, 1792". It was in that very year that the first *Book of Discipline* of the Methodist

Episcopal Church appeared, and in that book the "occasional offices" of the *Sunday Service* were published as the Ritual of the Church. In that year also the *Sunday Service* has always been said to have been "discarded".

There are some unusual features with regard to the different editions and even the different copies of the books which have come down to us. In preparing to publish *The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism* (1926), I found some variant readings in the copies of the 1784 *Sunday Service* to which I then had access. Some copies of the 1784 book had the "signation" (marking the cross on the forehead of the child at baptism) whilst other copies of the 1784 book lacked this. Also some copies had the "manual acts" in the Prayer of Consecration in the Communion Office ("here the priest is to take the plate of bread into his hand", etc.), whilst other apparently identical books did not. The two 1784 books matched page for page in every other respect, and I could not possibly understand why there were these minor differences between them. The 1784 *Sunday Service* at Drew University, with William Watters's name on its flyleaf, has the signation and also the manual acts where the "patten" is to be taken in hand by the "Elder". The 1784 books of Bishop Collins Denny and one in the Library of Congress in Washington and two in the Emory University library lack the signing with the cross, and have no side rubrics about taking the "patten" in hand while reading the Prayer of Consecration. Yet Robert Emory, historian of the Methodist *Book of Discipline*, says that Wesley did send over the signation in Baptism and also the rubric calling for the manual acts. I finally had to publish my *Rites and Ritual* with a frank acknowledgement that I could not explain these diverse printings in what otherwise was the same edition of the same book and from the same press. Not until years later did I find out why. The loose sheets did it!

One day Dr. James R. Joy, long the editor of the New York *Christian Advocate* and a Methodist antiquarian of note, came into my office and said: "Behold, I show you a mystery!" He had found in the New York Public Library a copy of the 1784 *Sunday Service* which had in it two almost identical pages with the same page-number in the upper corner of each, but one of these carried the signation, whilst the other—same numbered page—did not. Someone simply filed the two identically-numbered pages together where they belonged in the book. This is one of the few "printer's mistakes" that we can be thankful for, since it unlocked the secret of the unexplained variations. Apparently our American forebears didn't like that Romish business of signing with the cross, and also did not like the manual acts. However, it is to be noted that the manual acts were put back into the Prayer of Consecration in the 1792 book and 1792 *Discipline*, and have remained there ever since. But in 1785 someone printed new pages to be inserted in place of the pages that carried the signation and the manual acts. Coke may have had a hand in this, though as a rather high churchman it does not comport

with our usual view of him. John Dickins and the anti-liturgical Methodist "Society" fathers on this side probably were responsible for this substitution of pages.

The *Sunday Service* was bound, in at least one volume I have seen, with a collection of hymns, not the *Minutes*; and in one of the copies of the *Sunday Service* now in the Emory library, Atlanta, the pages carrying Wesley's abridgement of the Articles of Religion end with the page carrying Article XVIII. The pages that should follow this and do follow this page in other copies of the *Sunday Service*, and show the other Articles of Religion, are omitted in this volume, and the *Minutes* follow at once. The unbound pages as Wesley sent them evidently lent themselves to all sorts of combinations.

When the *Sunday Service* was dropped in 1792 (I am sticking to that date!) its occasional offices—Communion, two Baptismal offices, Matrimony, Burial of the Dead, and the three forms for Ordination—were, as we have said, put into the *Discipline* and called "the Ritual". Quite a few changes were at that time made, especially in the Baptismal offices and in that for the Solemnization of Matrimony. The three forms for Ordination (never termed the Ordinal in American Methodism) were kept almost as Wesley had them, and are so kept today, except that "Superintendent" became "Bishop", to Wesley's great and highly-advertised displeasure. It ought to be noted, however, that Wesley never objected to the *power* of his superintendent-bishop, and as all history makes clear, the never-ending "Episcopal Controversy" in America has never been over the *name*, but over the *power* of the bishop to station the preachers.

The *Sunday Service* itself never "caught on" in American Methodism. The truth is, it never really got started. Jesse Lee, one of the stalwarts of the time, said that one "could pray better with his eyes shut than with his eyes open". Another commented that the saddlebags were not large enough to carry around in them a stock of prayer books. The truth is that no more incongruous effort ever presents itself than that of expecting American Methodism, bursting with energy and with newly-found freedom, to be tied down to a book of prayer forms. "Liberty" was the catchword in both church and state for the next seventy-five years, especially among Methodists. So they did not "read the Litany on every Wednesday and Friday", as John Wesley had advised. They did "pray extempore" on other days as he had likewise advised, and in fact extemporized nearly all the time, feeling as free in worship as they were free in action. Indeed, it was traditional in American Methodism until within comparatively recent years to express antipathy to "formalism".

Meanwhile in place of the discarded *Sunday Service* they created for themselves a new kind of book, not of prayer-forms but of ordered life and activity, which they termed not inaptly *The Discipline*. So the ark of the covenant for the new church turned out to be not one of ordered worship, but one of ordered life and activity. Christian activism, not worship, was to be its marked expression, though of course worship itself was a large part of their activity.

The one great omission which Wesley made in the *Sunday Service*, and one that has not been sufficiently noticed, was the office for Confirmation. He struck this whole office from the book, and made no explanation for so doing. His act here can be used to support those who insist that he did not mean to found a new church in the New World. Had he expected his American societies to become a church, why did he not give them a form for the admission of members to it? He did provide them with a means for perpetuating a ministry, which ministry he himself started with his ordination of Whatcoat, Vasey and Coke. Did he, as many hold, never really envisage a church, but only a "connexion" of societies? Or was he afraid to allow the superintendent of such societies the right to confirm into church-membership as English episcopacy could? At any rate, the Methodist Episcopal Church when it came into being—and its subsequent branch churches—had no office for the reception of members until after the middle of the nineteenth century. When the churches on this side did draw up their respective forms for the reception of members, they did so by again drawing heavily upon the Prayer Book of the Protestant Episcopal Church and its office of Confirmation.

As to Wesley's intent with regard to an American organization, let it be remembered that he never told the American Methodists exactly what they were to do. How could he, in view of all the circumstances? There was no United States in 1784, and no one knew that there would be a mighty *E Pluribus Unum* out of the sovereign separate states each enjoying its own freedom. It is doubtful that Wesley himself, imbued as he was with the eighteenth-century mind, ever envisaged such a novel and complete separation of church and state as the American nation was to inaugurate. Massachusetts then had a state church, and so had Connecticut—albeit congregational, not episcopal—and kept these for many years. How did Wesley know but that there might well be a state church to come about in the new land and that his Methodists might have a hand in creating it? Or as other Church of England people were to do, Methodists might unite with them and form what became the Protestant Episcopal Church. What he really was concerned about and meant his people to have, were the sacraments. He gave as the reason for all his acts, that he "might feed these poor sheep in the wilderness". Providing the ordinances, not an organization, was his chief interest. Neither he nor any man knew what might happen, and the slowness of communication would prevent him from supervising in any effective way what might be done. Furthermore, he had his hands full in managing matters at home. So he would send to his American followers a ministry and ways to perpetuate it, a prayer book to guide their devotions, and no directions as to what they were to do, telling them simply to "stand fast in the liberty in which God had so strangely made them free". This last I have always thought, expressed a bit of wonder on Wesley's part that Cornwallis had let himself get boxed in so decisively at Yorktown!

At any rate, when Wesley heard that his American followers had become a church, he expressed no objection whatever, but rather began to build upon it. And had it been pointed out that he had given the Americans no Confirmation, no churchly office at all between Baptism and the Lord's Supper, he might probably have replied: "Let them see to it, as they are now a church." Or he might have fallen back on the pristine and patristic idea that Baptism itself is the proper and only gateway to the Church. And he would of course know that anyone who was admitted to a Methodist society in the first place would already have undergone a more rigorous examination than Confirmation ever provided.

The Ritual as it came into the Methodist Episcopal Church from the *Sunday Service* had for a long time only the eight forms we have mentioned. In time there came the office for the Reception of Members, now frankly termed a Confirmation service, though the pastor and not a bishop does the confirming. Later came forms for the laying of cornerstones, dedication of church buildings and the like. All are subject to revision by the General Conference, and there have been through the years repeated revisions, not always to good advantage. The Baptismal offices have been chewed over again and again, and today bear little resemblance to the ones Wesley sent. Matrimony, however, has been greatly improved, thanks again to the Protestant Episcopal prayer-book, which did away with much of the mediæval awkwardness once in this office. The Burial service has had many more readings and prayers inserted, and this enlargement has proved helpful. Forms for Ordination have not been changed except in an occasional phrase, and the office for Holy Communion is almost as Cranmer wrote it. Wesley changed it only by abridging the long exhortations, and we have changed it hardly at all.

I recall once when meeting with the Commission on Unity of the Protestant Episcopal Church to talk about working out intercommunion, we found our Episcopal compeers astonished to learn that we Methodists had kept the Church of England's office for the solemnization of the Lord's Supper, whilst they had followed the Scottish Liturgy in the service they have. "Is it possible," one of these brethren asked, "that you have kept the Church of England's office as it has always been?" "Yes," I took pleasure in replying, "it is a case where the illegitimate daughter is more like the Queen, her mother, than is the Princess of the blood royal!"

What future changes may be made in these forms no one of course may prophesy. The General Conference of the United Methodist Church (to which the Conference in Britain elects four fully-empowered representatives), whilst it may and often does change the language of the Ritual, is constitutionally forbidden to make any change in the doctrine of the Church. Thus the language of the Ritual may not be altered if such alteration would involve a change in doctrine. Should a General Conference order any revision that might be alleged to do so, there would be an appeal to the Judicial Council of

the Church for determination of the matter. To date no such appeal has ever been made, as ritualistic revisions have in the main been formulated in the interest of better liturgical expression, rather than striking at beliefs which may underlie such expression. There are always those who, like Wesley, "love the old wine best"; there are also those who, we sometimes think, like to change merely for the sake of changing. But wisdom, let us hope, will be justified of all her children, assuming—with admitted uncertainty—that she has a majority of such in any Methodist conference!

NOLAN B. HARMON.

[Nolan B. Harmon, D.D., LL.D. is one of the senior bishops of the United Methodist Church of America, author of *The Rites and Ritual of Episcopal Methodism*, and Visiting Professor of Practical Theology at the Candler School of Theology, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. He is also editor of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of World Methodism*.

We are honoured to have this article by so distinguished a scholar as Bishop Harmon, to whom we tender our thanks. Readers who are interested in the *Sunday Service* could also turn to an earlier study by my predecessor as editor, the late Rev. Wesley F. Swift, in *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 12 ff.—EDITOR.]

AN UNPUBLISHED WESLEY LETTER

THE following Wesley letter, hitherto unpublished, has recently been acquired by the Methodist Archives and Research Centre, London:

JOHN WESLEY TO JOSEPH TAYLOR

Bristol
Aug. 21, 1790

Dear Joseph,

Let the organ stand as long as is convenient. Provided first, that it be played upon no more. Secondly, that there be no more chanting in our chappel if ever they expect or desire to see me in it. Indeed, it is probable that they will not long be troubled with,

Your affectionate Friend and Brother,

J. WESLEY.

A note on the back of the letter, not in Wesley's handwriting, says: "The letter was addressed to Mr. Joseph Taylor at the Preaching House, Derby. Mr Taylor is now living in Derby, July 12th, 1825."

JOHN C. BOWMER.

Methodist Archives and Research Centre, City Road, London, E.C.1

The Centre will be closed to students and visitors from 1st September to 31st December 1974. Only the most urgent postal inquiries will be dealt with, and students engaged on urgent research work will be asked to come when the Archivist is in attendance. We regret any inconvenience this will cause, but extensive work on cataloguing is to be put in hand.

DIARY OF A BIRMINGHAM METHODIST

(Continued from page 103)

TURNING now from preachers and questions of theology or administration to other aspects of life, we find that Julius Hardy was not so concerned with his own spiritual progress that he ignored his duty in conformity with the Rules of the Society (whether consciously or not) to try to instruct others for whom he felt to some degree responsible. He held family prayers; in November 1789 he refers to "catechising a few children on the Lord's Day . . . for some months past"; and the following January he begins to hold an evening meeting in his own house once a week, for some of his workmen "to hear some edifying portion read, an hymn sung, and prayers". The "edifying portion" was usually taken from one or other of the works of Richard Baxter, and John Undrell took the prayers. But the experiment was not very successful, and it came to an end within three months.

This John Undrell was a local preacher (having for a time been an itinerant) who, together with John Gardner (another local preacher and friend of Hardy's), had got into money difficulties early in 1789, and had been declared bankrupt, though not convicted of any criminal negligence in their affairs. Both would be known to John Wesley, who had been entertained in Undrell's home when visiting Birmingham in earlier years.¹ Hardy felt it incumbent upon him to help in any way that he could; so, as Wesley came to Birmingham just at this time, 21st March 1789, he made an appeal to him:

Thinking it my duty, I wrote a note today to Mr. Wesley, expressive of the lamentable situation of Mr. Jno. Undrell and his family . . . begging him to adopt some method for their relief; and his answer thereto gave me much satisfaction: "he would do what lay in his power, in the case."

Two days later:

. . . the few lines I sent Mr. Wesley on Saturday I believe occasioned Mr. Jones to call upon me to-day. We had a good deal of conversation respecting Mr. Jno. Undrell's past conduct . . .

But John Wesley, advised by Mr. Jones, was not satisfied at this time, or later, that John Undrell deserved any help from *him*. Julius Hardy, however, continued to be concerned, and found him temporary employment in his own business as a traveller. In this he proved both dilatory and ineffectual, and on 31st May the diary records:

If it was to do over again, I would not employ him on this errand. What he will do now he is returned he does not know, nor is he so concerned about, as I could wish to see him.

Nevertheless, some months later he was still in Hardy's employ, and the personal friendship continued.

¹ John Wesley's Diary (noted in *Journal*, vi, p. 400) has the following entry for Monday, 24th March 1783: ". . . 8.15 [a.m.] at John Undr[ell's], tea, conversed, prayer; . . ." And again on 24th March the following year we read: ". . . 1 [p.m.] at brother Und[rell's]; 1.30 dinner, conversed, prayer; . . ." Undrell travelled as an itinerant from 1770 to 1777—see Wesley's *Letters*, vi, pp. 109, 171.

John Gardner, a deeply sensitive man,² took his troubles much more seriously. Bankrupts were apt to be looked at askance by respectable people, and the best help Hardy could give him was sympathy and moral support.

July 14th . . . During the course of this week, going past Mr. Gardner's warehouse he called me in, and informed me of his intended Recession from the Methodists, from some of whom he represents himself to have received very unkind treatment. Altho' I saw no prospect of changing his mind, yet I endeavoured by conciliating expressions to regain his regard for the people at large; and persuaded him to consider a little more ere he put his resolution finally in practice. Accordingly on . . . the 19th, he did attend at Coleshill meeting in the evening together with Mrs. Gardner and their two daughters. . . . A long shower of rain continuing for some time to prevent the congregation going out, bye and bye comes Mrs. Jones into my seat, and went forward to Mrs. G., very kindly enquired after her health and sat talking with her may be ten minutes, very sociably. I was glad to observe this instance of good nature so openly manifested to a family under an eclipse.

Apparently Gardner did not leave the Methodists, since the following year he was entertaining Charles Atmore and others in his home, as already recounted.³

Mention has been made of Hardy's attempt to hold a weekly meeting for some of his workpeople. Though his business affairs and relations with his work-staff in general, however interesting from the angle of social history, are outside the scope of this article, one episode may perhaps be included. On 1st September 1789, his twenty-sixth birthday, he gave a dinner to the whole of his staff: eighteen men, three boys, two apprentices and four women, all listed by name, and finally "a little boy and James Stansfield, my aged and infirm tho' I trust sincere and upright clark, or book-keeper". The dinner was held in an eating-house in Litchfield Street, and was a lengthy affair. He continues:

Dinner being over by about half past three, I was glad to be gone, and took a walk until nearly six, when returning I found several of them dancing, a diversion I could neither like myself, nor feel an inclination to permit others to practise whilst I was present. This was partly known beforehand, but that not causing them to leave off, I ordered Mr. Stansfield to intimate indirectly my dislike thereof, and so an end was put to it whilst I staid, which was until may be half past eight o'clock, when I took my leave of them and was glad to be gone; not that their company was disagreeable in the extreme, yet not at all entertaining or useful to me, the more so as by this time two or three of the men had got rather concerned in liquor: to find fault with whom, it would not have been acceptable to me then, or probably would it have done the parties any good. For it's properly, though coarsely said, "When the Drink is in, the Wit is out."

This would have been the orthodox Methodist attitude towards drunkenness and licentious behaviour, and the spending of precious

² As evidenced by a diary kept by him as a young man, still existing in MS.

³ *Proceedings*, xxxix, p. 102.

time on unprofitable pursuits; but Hardy could be stricter even than his own minister on another occasion.

April 23rd 1789. Government has thought fit to dedicate this day for the purpose of Thanksgiving to Almighty God for the restoration of the King's mental faculties and re-establishment of his bodily health . . . Great numbers attended Mr. Ryland's chapel, where there was service only in the forenoon . . . In the evening at Cherry Street the meeting house was pretty well filled. Some of the sentiments advanced by . . . Mr. Jer. Brittle were very disgusting to me. His laboured encomiums on his Majesty as *God's Anointed*, in going to Paul's Cathedral with his Parliament and other great men, did not meet my approbation. The wasting of so much money in this way I judge highly improper . . . Beside, if we consider it in a religious point of view, the mode is very exceptionable—'tis not a scriptural way of *right rejoicing*.

Christmas at that time was in no way an occasion for rejoicing in any secular sense:

Dec. 22nd. Mr. Benson has been earnestly endeavouring, the last two times he preached, to guard us against an improper way of spending Xmas, as many term it. His text this evening was the 2nd chap. of 1st epistle of Peter, 11th and 12th verses: from whence he might naturally take occasion to give that exhortation I have just hinted at.

Dec. 25th. In the morning and at night there was service at two out of the three Methodist meeting houses, but none either forenoon or afternoon, altho' both Mr. Benson and, I think, Mr. Smith, was in town: which I rather wondered at.

Another time, levity on the part of a minister upset him:

May 20th 1789. After meeting was over at Deritend, I spent the evening with Mr. Gardner. I had been there but little time before Mr. Cooper came in . . . His relating several Love-stories, and amongst the rest Mr. Baxter's refusing even to go ask any woman's consent, and how that his wife (that afterwards was) asked his—this, with some more objectionable, gave me some concern; he might, to be sure, think no harm, but may be it would have been better left alone, especially as both Mr. Gardner's daughters were present, who I thought were rather indecently gratified, as expressed by their excessive laughter. To their own masters however they either stand or fall; and therefore I have no right to pass judgment on their conduct.

Soon after this, Julius Hardy began to take steps towards acquiring such a right, in regard to the older daughter Nancy; and by the end of the following year the marriage was arranged.

Dec. 10th 1790. In consequence of my inviting her last night, Miss N. Gardner again drank tea at my house this afternoon . . . during which time I did, I trust in the fear of God, make her a proposal of marriage; being fully convinced, as far as I could judge from conversation, that we should live happily together, and especially, finding her to be deeply sensible of the weight of Eternal things, more so than I had ever observed before. . . . May the Lord our God give us his blessing. The first entry for 1791 is a brief record of the wedding, with an unexpected but characteristic corollary:

January [no date]. At Ashton, near this town, Anne Gardner and

myself were married by Dr. Spencer. There accompanied us on that occasion John Hinchcliffe and Elizabeth Gardner—nobody else. I trust we shall live together in the fear of the Lord, and then, whatever arises . . . [The sentence remained unfinished.] Upon the ceremony being ended, I gave unto the ruddy Parson⁴ a note protesting against that expression "with my body I thee worship".

* * *

With this marriage, the character of the diary—as mentioned earlier—changed entirely. Three entries only for 1791 record his marriage, the death of John Wesley, and an eye-witness account of the Priestley Riots. Business and family affairs and—increasingly—foreign news take up most of 1792. The early months of 1793 bring disaster to local trade, with consequent bankruptcies and even suicides. Hardy was hard hit in his own business, having to dismiss half his workpeople and resort to part-time working; and the final entry is a sad one:

June 1st. My neighbour, Mr. Whitehouse, the schoolmaster, applied to me asking the loan of half a guinea, for a little while. I was sorry to deny him, but really the state of things is such at present as not to warrant a departure from the strictest rules of prudence.

Little is known of Julius Hardy after this time. He remained attached to the Methodist society; and in 1807 was able to render some "signal service" on account of which the Guardians of the Poor of Birmingham presented him with an inscribed silver cup. He died in 1816, leaving a widow and one son, Thomas Hardy, who in due course entered the Wesleyan Methodist ministry. He proved a more assiduous diarist than his father, and by thriftily using up the blank pages at the end of Julius Hardy's book ensured its preservation.

A. MARION BANKS.

⁴ Dr. Spencer was a well-known local magistrate as well as an ordained clergyman, and, presumably, a gentleman of notably healthy complexion!

We are delighted to hear of the formation of the **Shropshire** branch of our Society. The first meeting was held at Minsterley on Saturday, 30th March, when the Rev. B. Anthony Dent spoke of the origins of Methodism in the area. About thirty people attended, and the following officers were appointed: President, Rev. Brian S. O'Gorman; Secretary, Rev. J. Christopher Ledgard, Chaplains' Office, RAF Shawbury, Shrewsbury, SY4 4DZ; Treasurer, Miss Doris Pugh; Programme Secretary, Mrs. Edith Stock.

We gratefully acknowledge the following periodicals, which have come to hand since the publication of the list in our last issue.

The Baptist Quarterly, April 1974.

The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society, May 1974.

The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, March 1974.

Methodist History, January 1974.

Cirplan, Lent 1974.

BOOK NOTICES

Hand to the Plough, by H. Cecil Pawson. (Denholm House Press, 75p.)

This is a splendidly-told story of a remarkable life. Professor Cecil Pawson has had a distinguished scholastic career, with practical consequences for good. To Methodists, however, he is universally known and loved, not only for his outstanding service to the Church, but because as local preacher and class-leader he has dedicated himself completely to the glory of God and the service of his fellows. There are great numbers who have come into the Christian life because of his advocacy in word and life. Together with his remarkable wife he has touched uncounted lives for good. Still he is conscious of her nearness to him in a larger life, and still with undiminished enthusiasm he gives himself to Christian discipleship. All this is perfectly congruous with his ancestry, stretching back to the first days of our Methodist story. It seems virtually certain that his line stems from a nephew of John Pawson, who was a veritable giant among Methodist preachers in the latter days of John Wesley. His own father, the Rev. D. Ledger Pawson, exercised a most fruitful ministry. To the end he was a devoted shepherd of souls and a passionate evangelist. As Cecil Pawson daily, and gratefully, acknowledges, he has entered into a goodly heritage. And through that inheritance all of us, in measure, have been enriched. This is a book to treasure.

MALDWYN EDWARDS.

John Wesley: A Theological Biography, by Martin Schmidt. Vol. II, John Wesley's Life Mission—Part 2, Translated by Denis Inman. (Epworth Press, pp. 320, £4.)

This volume completes the authoritative work on John Wesley by the Lutheran scholar Dr. Martin Schmidt, now at Heidelberg. The first German volume was reviewed in these *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 139-40, and its English translation in xxxiv, p. 21. The second German volume, published at Zürich in 1966, has in the English translation been split into two parts, the first of which was reviewed in *Proceedings*, xxxviii, pp. 156-7. We now have the second part of the second volume. Throughout the second volume Dr. Schmidt abandons the chronological method of the first volume, and deals with certain topics. In this part of it we have John Wesley as preacher, as theological writer, as pastor, and as educationalist, with a concluding chapter, "John Wesley: Take him for all in all". Denis Inman has taken over the work of translation from Norman Goldhawk, and shows the same felicity and the same care in tracing the English originals of the passages which Dr. Schmidt translated into German. He has also made occasional useful additions to the notes, chiefly by way of adding the names of recent publications. One wonders what German phrase lies behind the statement that Wesley "cast his beady eye" (p. 115) on costly apparel! There is a useful bibliography.

This second part of the second volume confirms the impression made by the first part—that Dr. Schmidt's distinctive contribution lay in the first volume, where his unrivalled knowledge of German pietism again and again illuminated the background of John Wesley's thought. Possibly the use of topical rather than the chronological method deprives the volume of a sense of movement. In some of the chapters Dr. Schmidt seems to do little more than pick up one work of Wesley's after another and summarize it. The topics, moreover, do not exhaust what might be said. There is little, for instance, in either part of the volume about Wesley's

sacramental practice. Sometimes important topics are dragged in under other headings. Thus, for instance, the subject of the ordination of Coke—important alike for the history of ordination and for that of Methodism in America—is brought in as a mere prelude to Coke's funeral oration on Wesley: nor is the account of the matter at all clear or well-annotated or related to the discussion on page 147 of the previous part. There are one or two misprints, such as "Congers" for "Conyers" on page 110.

Yet, take them for all in all, these volumes are a most notable achievement. The notes are a mine of information about relevant English and German literature; and the references to German literature, though naturally less frequent than those in the first volume, are very valuable—for few, if any, English writers would have the knowledge to supply them. German readers will be most grateful for the original edition of this work, which as an introduction to Wesley has no parallel in their language, and readers of the English translation will be no less grateful. As their subtitle indicates, these volumes contain a combination of biography and theology, and their place in the literature on Wesley is assured.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

Spirit Baptism and Spiritual Gifts in Early Methodism, by William R. Davies (pp. 14, 7p.). Obtainable from the author at 32, Barley Road, Thelwall, Warrington, Lancs, WA4 2EZ.

Dr. Davies argues, in this closely-written pamphlet, that Wesley's Methodism was a precursor of the present-day Charismatic Movement. This he maintains despite his recognition that the early Methodist recipients of the gifts "did not recognise them consciously as charismata", and his quotations from Wesley and Fletcher to the effect that the New Testament charismata were probably temporary gifts (a view which Wesley modified, he suggests, in his comment on Montanism—*Journal*, iii, p. 490). Dr. Davies lists the charismata, and points to evidence in the lives of Wesley and his preachers of the presence of these New Testament "gifts". How valid this illustrative material is will be differently assessed by different readers. The problem of the dating of Wesley's conversion is looked at from a new angle here. We are told that Dr. Leslie Davison suggested 1725 as the date of the conversion and 1738 as the date of his "baptism in the Spirit", but that Charles Clarke sees 1738 as a conversion date and 1st January 1739 as the date of his Spirit baptism. Perhaps this date in the *Journal*, and the entry for 16th June, which refers back to it, should not be overlooked in the continuing discussion. THOMAS SHAW.

We acknowledge, with many thanks, the following handbooks and brochures which have been sent to us recently.

Girvan (Ayrshire) 150th anniversary (pp. 12): copies, price 15p. post free, from the Rev. David G. V. Twiddy, Epworth, 23, Golf Course, Girvan, Ayrshire.

Ashington Central Hall golden jubilee (pp. 32): copies, price 25p., from the Rev. Thomas J. Furley, Pinehurst, Wansbeck Road, Ashington, Northumberland.

Camden Town 150th anniversary (pp. 20): copies, price 20p., from the Rev. John O. Mountford, 28, Beacon Hill, London, N.7 9LY.

Town End, Chapel-en-le-Frith, centenary (pp. 12): copies, price 35p., from Mr. G. S. Helps, 5, Hordens Park Road, Chapel-en-le-Frith, Stockport, Cheshire, SK12 6SY.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1254. DISTRICT ARCHIVES: A PROGRESS REPORT.

It may (we hope!) be taken as axiomatic that members of this Society are interested in anything to do with the preservation of society and circuit records as the essential raw material of local historical research. That being so, they may like to know how the campaign to rescue our surviving records from loss or destruction is progressing.

The post of District Archivist was created by the 1970 Conference on a recommendation from the Connexional Archives Committee. Although some Districts were slower to act than others, all have now made an appointment, and last September it seemed a good time to inquire about the progress made in the first three years. Replies received to the questionnaire sent out to DAs show a predictably wide variety—from the District in which virtually all past records have been listed and deposited in the expert care of the county or municipal record office (as laid down in Standing Order 258(4)) to those in which even the preliminary listing has scarcely begun and the official policy of depositing our records seems as sinister as a proposal to raffle the ark of the covenant!

Among the duplicated memos prepared by the Connexional Archivist for DAs and those who are helping them is one on what we have called "the on-going task". Once the initial rescue operation is completed, there is still a great deal that an enterprising and enthusiastic DA can do and encourage, and in many cases these are exactly the kind of activities in which branches and individual members of the Wesley Historical Society have been engaged for many years. But one that is likely to be increasingly common is the use of tape-recording techniques in the service of what has become known as "oral history". Any member interested or experienced in this field is invited to get into touch with the Connexional Archivist or with the present writer.

An unofficial but promising development has been the growing number of *circuit* archivists appointed. These make it possible for the DA to tackle the "on-going task" and to foster local interest. In two Districts, meetings of circuit archivists have been held; in one case (Southampton) the attendance of staff from local record offices in the District has fostered much mutual goodwill and confidence which will make for even closer co-operation in future.

Some DAs are lone enthusiasts achieving heroic results with little or no active support. This seems a pity, in the light of the evidence that interest in and enthusiasm for "our musty old records" *does* exist and is waiting to be harnessed. The Connexional Archivist will gladly supply the name and address of *your* DA (it should be printed in the Synod directory). And if you are living where there is a local branch of our Society, we hope you will see that it is fully engaged in the campaign.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

1255. WORLD METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY CONFERENCE,

BRISTOL, 1973.

Just over fifty Methodists from both sides of the Atlantic, including representatives from several European countries, met for four days last July at Wesley College, Bristol. A very full programme of lectures had been arranged on the theme of "Methodism in its Cultural and Evangelical Setting", and the contributions were, with very few exceptions, of a very high standard. The contributions of some of the younger generation

of Methodist historians and the presence of academic historians as well as amateurs were among the more promising omens for the future of Methodist historical scholarship.

Thanks to the devoted expertise of Mr. and Mrs. G. E. Jones and Mr. Roger Thorue, a complete recording of the week's sessions was made, and a copy of this has been lodged at the Archives and Research Centre. Plans are also well in hand for the publication of all major lectures.

By no means the least valuable and stimulating aspect of the conference was the opportunity it afforded for scholars from different parts of the Methodist world to meet and establish relationships which, we feel sure, will prove fruitful in the future. We were especially glad to welcome representatives of Continental Methodism, among whom was a young pastor from the German Democratic Republic. It made some of us realize afresh how little, partly because of its close links with the American Church, we in England know of European Methodism.

There were many memorable moments, some of them amusing or moving, during the week. The interest and enthusiasm kindled led a number of us to say, in the words of the advertisement: "Why don't we do this more often?"! Parochialism was certainly "out", and we look forward to similar meetings in the future.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

1256. "LEADERS' SEATS" IN METHODIST CHAPELS.

Further to Note 1248 (*Proceedings*, xxxix, p. 90), the following quotation has been communicated to me by Mr. Richard Moody of Selby, from William Farley's *Notes on the Origins and History of Selby*. The reference is to the first chapel in Millgate, Selby.

Immediately under the clock on the centre of the gallery front were painted the words, "Thou, God, seest me". This was in accordance with a practice adopted by Mr. Wesley in all his chapels of placing before the congregation selected and impressive passages of Scripture. The order of the services in the original Millgate Chapel included and exhibited a feature which at the present day, would be considered peculiar and strange. The lower part of the Chapel from N. to S. was divided by a stout handrail, on one side of which were seated the female members of the congregation, and on the other the male; but perhaps one of the most interesting of their arrangements in connection with public worship was the honourable position in the Chapel assigned to the Class Leaders, Local Preachers and office bearers in the chapel. These representative men occupied a form or bench on the floor of the chapel across the base of the pulpit, having the whole congregation both in the gallery and below on their front. Everyman in the group was a man of tried character and repute in respect both of his piety and his aptitude to teach.

JOHN C. C. PROBERT.

1257. PM COMMEMORATIVE PLATES.

The 1907 Primitive Methodist plate is well known; but does anyone know anything about one produced in 1910? It too is a commemorative issue, similar in design to that of 1907, but with significant differences. It is dated June 1910, and in addition to engravings of Bourne and Clowes there are those of James Bourne and James Steel. There is also a picture of Hugh Bourne's tomb at Englesea Brook and Clowes's tomb in Hull. The reverse side carries the caption "Made by Daulton & Co for A. E. Humphries, Wesley Place, Tunstall". Is this plate rare, and what would be its market value?

WILLIAM LEARY (Brantwood,
St. Edward's Drive, Sudbrooke, Lincoln).