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# Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

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

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## WESLEY AND SOCIAL CARE

THE problems of the twentieth century are the problems of affluence. The most serious social problem of the nineteenth century was that of poverty. Beatrice Webb, in her book *My Apprenticeship*, speaks of the concern felt by middle-class people over this—a concern which amounted to a new consciousness of sin among men of intellect and property. She says :

The consciousness of sin was a collective class consciousness ; a growing uneasiness, amounting to conviction, that the industrial organisation, which had yielded rent, interest and profits on a stupendous scale, had failed to provide a decent livelihood and tolerable conditions for the majority of the inhabitants of Great Britain.

This mood of self-reproach was combined with a fear of the poor and of an uprising similar to that which had disrupted France, and of which the Chartist movement was a vivid reminder. Philanthropy became a means of avoiding disaster. Much of this urge was undoubtedly subconscious ; Victorian benevolence was not studied hypocrisy. When Lord Brougham demanded a select committee of the House of Lords to examine the widespread poverty in the North-East in 1842, he did so because he was sorry for the operatives dying in the streets, and not because of any policy of pacifying the distressed. Nevertheless, the Victorian lady and gentleman did much good through fear of what might be the consequence if their good works were left undone. However, Sir John Simon (1816-1904), the celebrated Medical Officer for the City of London, in his book on *Sanitary Institutions*, directs his readers to study the consequences of the Methodist Revival if they would understand how " man learnt to feel new solicitudes for man ".

If fear was one powerful element in developing the collective sense of sin to which reference has been made, religion was another. Speaking of the Wesleys, Sir John Simon says : " Their aim was to make religious converts ; but, little by little, the circumstances widened

the aim . . .".<sup>1</sup> For the Wesleys Christianity was a comprehensive faith, which could not be contained within chapel walls. John Wesley said: "Christianity is essentially a social religion; and to turn it into a solitary one is indeed to destroy it."<sup>2</sup> This conviction issued not only in open-air preaching and evangelical endeavour, but also in general social concern, and in particular an interest in the poor and the under-privileged.

While a student John Wesley visited the gaols of Oxford. Early in his ministry he opened a school for colliers' children at Kingswood. His northern headquarters was the Orphan House in Newcastle. Keenly interested in medicine, he published *Primitive Physick* in 1747, and this book went into twenty-three editions before 1791. He opened a dispensary at the Foundery, his original London preaching-house off City Road, where five hundred poor people were given medicine in five months.

I was in pain for many of the poor that were sick; there was so great expense, and so little profit . . . I saw the poor people pining away, and several families ruined, and that without remedy . . . At length I thought of a kind of desperate expedient. "I will prepare and give them physic myself."<sup>3</sup>

This he did for twenty-six or twenty-seven years. So successful was City Road that Wesley opened a further dispensary in Bristol.

Preaching before the University in St. Mary's, Oxford, on 25th July 1741, Wesley said:

If any man ask, "Who is my neighbour?" we reply, Every man in the world; every child of His who is the Father of the spirits of all flesh.<sup>4</sup>

Here is "the equalitarian assumption" which a modern writer has said is "bred into every phase" of the Wesleyan movement.<sup>5</sup> Wesley would not allow the rich to plead ignorance of the problems of the poor; he stressed their responsibility for any social estrangement which existed between the classes.

One great reason why the rich, in general, have so little sympathy with the poor, is, because they so seldom visit them . . . Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know; they keep out of the way of knowing it; and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart.<sup>6</sup>

He believed that those "who are rich in this world", who had more than the conveniences of life, were peculiarly called of God to this blessed work, and were pointed out to it by His gracious providence. The rich also had more of that valuable asset "time", and could allot some part of every day to this labour of love.<sup>7</sup>

In his *Plain Account of the People called Methodists* Wesley

<sup>1</sup> Sir J. Simon: *English Sanitary Institutions* (1897), pp. 131-2.

<sup>2</sup> Sermon XIX on "Our Lord's Sermon on the Mount—IV".

<sup>3</sup> Letter to the Rev. Vincent Perronet (*Letters*, ii, p. 307).

<sup>4</sup> Sermon II on "The Almost Christian".

<sup>5</sup> W. J. Warner: *The Wesleyan Movement in the Industrial Revolution* (1930), p. 280.

<sup>6</sup> *Works*, vii, pp. 119, 126.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, vii, p. 123.

describes how, when he laid the case at large before the whole society, many offered to become visitors, and he said :

I chose six-and-forty of them, whom I judged to be of the most tender and loving spirit; divided the town into twenty-three parts, and desired two of them to visit the sick in each division.

In this way Wesley developed visiting both as a pastoral agency and as a technique of social care. Professor Asa Briggs, the historian, has said : "Wesley preached with spectacular success to the poor . . . but was his practical social service not also a 'converting ordinance'?"<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly it was, but it was also a "pilot scheme", for Wesley demonstrated the value of the trained voluntary visitor drawn from the wealthier strata of society. This pattern was adopted by Thomas Chalmers in Scotland and by the Evangelicals and Unitarians in England. By 1835 it was estimated that two thousand voluntary visitors were visiting forty thousand families.<sup>9</sup>

Wesley's visitors were expected to see every sick person within his or her district three times a week—

To inquire into the state of their souls, and to advise them as occasion may require. To inquire into their disorders, and procure advice for them. To relieve them if they are in want.

Sir John Simon said :

Side by side with ordinary doctrinal missionary enterprise, activity was devoted to establishing hospitals and dispensaries for the sick, and refuges for various classes of destitute and afflicted persons; important social societies were founded for the purpose of reclaiming and reforming the vicious and the criminal; and not least, various local efforts began to be made to provide education for the poor.<sup>10</sup>

Wesley's judgement on his own work was : "Many lives have been saved, many sicknesses healed, much pain and want prevented or removed." The Methodist contribution to eighteenth-century need was not inconsiderable, but more important still was that its social concern persisted powerfully to influence Victorian humanism in the next century, for, even when theological faith proved untenable for many, the sentiment of human benevolence and its practical expression remained. The creed of moral earnestness had evangelical origins, and the seeds of welfare politics sown in the eighteenth century plentifully germinated around City Road. Case-work, asserted Younghusband, is rooted among the six-and-forty who, two by two, visited between Wapping and Westminster in 1748; but Wesley would have pointed to Phœbe the deaconess, and claimed that his work was merely a practical expression of Matthew xxv.

WILLIAM C. DOWLING.

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<sup>8</sup> Asa Briggs: *Victorian People*.

<sup>9</sup> Young and Ashton: *British Social Work in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> Simon, op. cit., p. 131.

## JOHN WESLEY AND WILLIAM GREEN

**A** LETTER recently discovered in the Methodist Archives sheds some light on the case of William Green, to whom Wesley wrote on 25th October 1789.<sup>1</sup> Green was an itinerant in the Norwich circuit, and after hearing Wesley preach on I Samuel ii. 17, wrote him a letter which Telford says was "in bad taste and marked by bitter enmity against the Church". Wesley replied in the published letter just referred to.

The Archives manuscript is a letter written by Green to a friend, giving his own account of the incident and reproducing further correspondence. Green begins :

When I first saw Mr. Wesley's sermon on I Sam. 2. 17, I thought I saw many absurdities in it, and was determined to put down my thoughts by way of strictures; I accordingly did, and as Mr. W. came to Lynn just when I had finished them, I put a copy into his hand. About a month after he sent me the following answer.

He then reproduces the letter as printed by Telford (with a few minor verbal variations), together with the following reply which he sent to Wesley :

### WILLIAM GREEN TO JOHN WESLEY

My dear Sir,

Your very great condescension in answering my papers greatly endears you to me, more especially, as in all your controversial writings, the Christian and the Gentleman shines so conspicuous. You complain of my "spirit and manner". As to the former, I must be totally ignorant of myself, if I did not write in as good a spirit as I wish to die in! The manner I must own is very bold; but I presume, sir, there is something to be said for me! You must know I had finished my strictures before I had a thought of putting them into your hand, but as you came to Lynn just about the time, a thought struck my mind that I would give you the perusal of them; I had my scruples indeed touching the manner in which they were wrote, but I depended upon your good nature in passing it over; but if I had addressed you immediately by letter, I had most certainly wrote in a more becoming manner, for altho I am entirely free from the fear of any man, yet I should be very sorry to drop a word, either by letter, or in conversation, that might have the least tendency to offend you; and I must be the most egregious blockhead living, not to know that you are my superior in every sense of the word. Your endeavour, sir, to split the hair, "God does send wicked ministers to speak the truth, but not to speak lies. Hearken not unto them when they speak lies, but hearken to them when they speak the truth. They shall not profit the people when they speak lies, but they shall profit them when they speak truth." This is the distinction you make; but I think the Holy Ghost never intended any such distinction to be made. I entirely agree with you, sir, that thousands perish through a total contempt of religion, by continuance in gross sins, and by sins of omission, and that God will not suffer a man who sincerely strives to obey Him to perish for lack of knowledge; but I must believe that the *doctrine* of

<sup>1</sup> *Letters*, viii, p. 177.

salvation by Works hath an immediate tendency to alienate the minds of the hearers from Jesus Christ, The One only way of salvation. You say, sir, "To renounce the Church (wicked ministers and wicked people) is in fact to renounce connection with me". If these two things are really inseparable, I verily believe that you must immediately lose the better half of your most excellent sons in the Gospel, and that the whole Methodist Connection must tumble to pieces! As to myself, I do not renounce the *Church* but I do utterly renounce attending the ministrations of *wicked* men, neither can I in conscience exhort others so to do, but I shall esteem it my highest privilege, while I live, to be connected with that very respectable Body, of which (under God) Mr. W. is the Head. Your saying "I defy any man living to prove that I have contradicted myself at all in any of the writings which I have [published] from the year 1738 to the year 1788" is a very great word even for Mr. W. to speak. Ere I conclude, permit me, sir, to ask a question: Would it not be well to lay my papers before three judicious impartial friends? "In the multitude of counsellors there is safety": only it will be necessary that the spirit, the manner and the writer be left entirely out of the question! The question is, Are they scriptural, or are they not? Excuse my freedom, sir, and believe me when I assure you that I love and esteem you as much as ever I did.

I am your obedient son and servant in Christ,

WM. GREEN.

In a hitherto unpublished letter, Wesley replies to Green:

JOHN WESLEY TO WILLIAM GREEN

My dear Brother,

If we live to see another Conference, the question shall be considered, Whether we ought *still* to attend the ministry of ungodly men? Tho it has been largely considered already; namely, at the Dublin Conference.

I am your affectionate Brother,

J. WESLEY.

Green concludes:

Mr. W. has one copy of my strictures, Mr. Bradford another, and Mr. Tennant a third. A fourth I take the liberty of presenting to Mr. Benson, and subscribe myself your

very aff<sup>t</sup> Brother

WM. GREEN.

Green left the itinerancy shortly after this correspondence with Wesley. In a letter to Thomas Tattersall dated 6th January 1790,<sup>2</sup> Wesley says of Green:

Yet I am not sorry that your *small* friend has taken himself away; for he was really a dangerous man.

In the light of the above letter of Green to Wesley, we wonder if this is a just and generous judgement; but, of course, Wesley knew more about the man than we do.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

<sup>2</sup> ibid., viii, p. 195. (Green had been Tattersall's colleague at Norwich since the Conference of 1789.)

## SOCIETY AND CHURCH IN WESLEYAN METHODISM, 1878-93

**I**N the last quarter of the nineteenth century the Wesleyan Methodist society was becoming self-consciously a church. There was clearly no moment of transition, and the process was spread over the whole century, but there is a period of years during which the Conference made certain decisions which show that the erstwhile "society" was becoming aware of its nature as a "church".

In 1878 the question of a public service for the recognition of new members was under discussion, and the Conference agreed that "it is very desirable to offer some more public and formal mode of admitting new members to Society", and then a number of reasons were given, the second of which is most relevant:

Because it is of the highest importance to give all impressiveness to a member's entrance into fellowship with the Church of Christ. A welcome thus given by the Society, will, it is believed, tend to encourage the new members, whilst the public recognition will deepen their sense of responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

It was further agreed that "these services may, with great advantage, be associated with the administration of the Lord's Supper". If on inquiry it was found that any person to whom a ticket was being issued for the first time was unbaptized, the baptism should take place before or in association with the *recognition* of that person. These regulations were to be read to the ministers in the May District Committees.

What had been implicit now becomes explicit. Entrance into membership of society is "entrance into fellowship with the Church of Christ", and the observance of the two sacraments is associated with this entrance. Evidently the declaration that this was "desirable" did not have the intended effect, for after a lapse of five years we find that once again these regulations are to be read in the District Committees by Conference direction.

In 1884 the suggestion that there *might* be such a recognition service became part of the Standing Orders. In smaller societies it might take place at a weeknight service following a meeting of a class. Such services should be held *as far as practicable*. In the Report on Church Membership, presented to Conference and approved in 1889, we read:

The Conference directs that at the close of each Quarterly Visitation, those new members to whom tickets of membership have for the first time been given, should, wherever possible, be formally recognised as Church-members at a suitable service.<sup>2</sup>

At this stage it is still clear that the presentation of the ticket constitutes membership, which is publicly recognized *wherever possible*.

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of Conference*, 1878, p. 186.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, 1889, p. 412.

At first the form of the service was at the discretion of the superintendent, but the Conference of 1894 approved a *Form of Service for the Public Recognition of New Members*. In the introductory bidding, the minister says :

... We are assembled . . . that we may publicly acknowledge as members of the brotherhood of Christ's disciples these persons, who have already, according to our rule and order, been received into fellowship with the Church.<sup>3</sup>

The Apostles' Creed is recited, followed by various passages of scripture. Affirmations are made by those about to be recognized, and the minister gives the right hand of fellowship to each of the newly-received members, and uses words which almost repeat the words of the Anglican Order of Confirmation :

We joyfully welcome you, beloved, into the fellowship of the Church, and pray our God and Father so to defend you with His heavenly grace that you may be His for ever; that through His Holy Spirit you may daily increase in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, until you come into His heavenly kingdom.<sup>4</sup>

A footnote declares that this form of service is optional. Evidently those who framed the service were beginning to see the parallel between the "recognition" service and Confirmation, even though they recognized that according to usage the members had already been received by the Leaders' Meeting.

In the meantime another committee had been appointed in 1882 to consider the relation of baptized children to the Church. It was re-appointed in 1883, 1884 and 1885, and finally produced a report in 1886 which made no revolutionary pronouncements and did little more than emphasize the need for careful pastoral oversight of baptized children. It did not state that the children were "members" in any sense. This report went down to the District Committees, and the next year we read :

The Conference receives the Report of the Committee and resolves that, owing to the great divergence of opinion on this and some other related questions, it is not expedient at present to adopt any new regulation on the subject.<sup>5</sup>

The same Conference (1887) appointed a committee to enquire into the causes of decrease in our Societies and also, generally, into our mode of Church-membership, with a view to extend and consolidate the same and to secure a greater uniformity in our administration.<sup>6</sup>

This committee took two years over its work, and presented its report to the Conference of 1889. This committee reiterated the traditional view that the class meeting was the pivot of Methodist membership.

The Class-meeting then is not a mere appendage to the Methodist system—not a limb which can be removed without endangering the vital

<sup>3</sup> ibid., 1894, p. 448.

<sup>4</sup> ibid., 1887, p. 192.

<sup>5</sup> ibid., p. 453.

<sup>6</sup> ibid., p. 191.

organs, but is the very heart of the system, having relations most intimate and essential to all the discipline and fellowship of Methodism. The Class-meeting fellowship has been, in fact, the very tissue and substance of living Methodism, from the beginning hitherto.<sup>7</sup>

There were evidently those who wanted attendance at the Lord's Supper, rather than at the class meeting, to be the test of membership. Of the Lord's Supper, the report says:

This has often been spoken of as "the test of membership in the Christian Church". For such a view no New Testament authority can be pleaded. The Sacrament of the Supper is a sign and seal of membership in the Christian Church, but cannot, with propriety, be called the test of such membership. No Church theoretically admits Communicants to the Lord's Table without requiring evidence of their fitness; and it is to be regretted that, contrary to the original rule and usage of Methodism, admission to this Sacrament has for many years been allowed without the showing of the "Society" ticket, which is a certificate of fitness on the part of the Communicant.<sup>8</sup>

This *cri du cœur* is itself evidence that in the local societies attendance at the classes was falling off, and that at least some—probably members and ministers—were beginning to regard attendance at the Lord's Supper as the sign of continuing loyalty. The report continues:

Too many persons attend the Class-meeting very irregularly. In other cases, membership is very lightly estimated, so that absence for any reason during a few weeks leads to a quiet abandonment of it. Often through carelessness, sometimes of set purpose, removal to another place becomes the occasion of ceasing to meet.<sup>9</sup>

Ministers were then urged to pay more attention to the mechanics of Methodism. The Quarterly Visitation and "patient, diligent, minute attention to the meeting of the Classes" were not to be neglected for larger and more popular religious gatherings. Ministers must even be prepared to lead classes themselves. This was a valiant attempt to hold the old position, and the ministers were reminded that "no system can be more effective than the men who work it". There is reason to fear, so we are told, that some ministers have even sent the tickets to a leader instead of meeting the classes themselves!

All this underlines the determination of the Conference that Methodism should remain a society, yet there was recognition that it had become a church. This emerges clearly in the paragraph concerning exclusion from membership. A minister could on his own initiative or on the recommendation of the leader withhold a ticket, but the member concerned had the right to have the case considered by the Leaders' Meeting. The report reminds the minister that he must not withhold a ticket solely on the grounds of irregular attendance at class, and that in every case a member must be personally visited by the minister before a ticket is withheld.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, 1889, p. 407.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, p. 408.

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

It must not be forgotten that to exclude a person from membership is the most serious and painful exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, to be undertaken only when necessity demands it, and under a sense of solemn responsibility. Indeed, in the independent ecclesiastical position into which Methodism has been led by the Providence of God since the death of Wesley, exclusion from membership in the Class-meeting involves, for the time being, excommunication from the visible Church.<sup>10</sup>

This is in line with the view that sharing in the Lord's Supper is a sign and seal of membership. Members were to be encouraged to attend the Lord's Supper, which is itself evidence that they were not attending; and four years later, in 1893, Conference directed superintendents to bring the subject of attendance at the Lord's Supper before the Leaders' Meetings.

The 1889 report declared :

It is most important that a united and earnest attempt should be made to secure the presence of all our members, and the showing of tickets at the Lord's Supper. As regards strangers occasionally attending our services, who desire to participate with us, they may reasonably be expected to assure the minister of their fitness by explaining to him that they are members of another Church, or for what reason, not being members of any Church, they desire to be communicants; and such occasional cases can be met by the issue of a special note of admission by the minister. That the Table of the Lord should be open to all comers is surely a great discredit and a serious peril to any Church.<sup>11</sup>

In a church where members have to be urged and encouraged to attend the Lord's Supper, excommunication cannot be regarded as a dreadful fate. At any rate, between 1889 and 1894 over five per cent of the membership annually "ceased to meet", and were therefore "excommunicated for the time being". The intake of new members at that time represented over ten per cent of the membership, and the loss by transfers from circuit to circuit represented just under three per cent. Membership was much more fluid than in the present day. The use of the word "excommunication" brings the society one step nearer to becoming a church, and, reading between the lines, one discerns that there was some concern that members should be so lightly "excommunicated". In 1890 and the years following, an abstract of this report is printed in the *Minutes* under the heading "Church-Membership and the Class-Meeting". It was as a result of this report that a roll-book to contain the names of all the members of the society was instituted. Previously only the class-books had been statutory.

In 1891 the Conference turned its attention to the title of the Connexion, and recognizing certain legal difficulties in changing the description, nevertheless declared :

The title hitherto used is not, and never has been, inconsistent with the assertion for "the people called Methodists" of a true and proper position as a Church, with all the authorities, privileges and responsibilities of the New Testament Church; and in this view of our principles

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 412. (Cf. also *Proceedings*, xxxiv, p. 113.)

and of the facts of the case, the Conference, so far from discouraging, distinctly approves of the general and popular use of the term: "The Wesleyan-Methodist Church".<sup>12</sup>

The Annual Address to the Methodist Societies of that year provides a footnote. A spiritual apostolic succession is claimed if not an historical succession.

We have not to travel through the gloom of the Dark Ages to discover the Apostolic Church with which we are allied. We are united, without a break, to the men and women who, in the last century, "gladly received" the "word of salvation," and "continued steadfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers." Nor are we separated from the Church of the New Testament. Our direct descent from the early Methodists links us with the Church founded on the Day of Pentecost. A similarity of spiritual experience is a surer mark of succession than a continuity that is merely historical.<sup>13</sup>

There were a lot of unresolved problems—problems that were to be carried over into the one Methodist Church of 1932, but the "Wesleyan-Methodist Society", as represented by its Conference, had no doubts of its status as a church. One more detail awaited attention. The September class ticket for 1893 was headed:

WESLEYAN-METHODIST SOCIETY.  
Quarterly Ticket.

When the members received their December tickets, they read:

WESLEYAN-METHODIST CHURCH.  
Quarterly Ticket of Membership.

Members of society were now members of a church.

BERNARD E. JONES.

[The Rev. Bernard E. Jones, M.A., B.D., Ph.D. is holder of the Lamp-lough Chair of Philosophy and Psychology at Wesley College, Bristol.]

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, 1891, p. 321.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 376.

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We acknowledge, with many thanks, the following handbooks and brochures which have been sent to us recently. We are always glad to have such evidence of the work of local historians, and would assure prospective compilers that the Archives Department is ready to help them whenever possible.

*The Story of Methodism in the Liskeard Circuit, 1751-1967* (pp. 72) : copies from the author, Mr. Paul Bolitho, M.A., A.L.A., Bodinnick, Gipsy Lane, Liskeard, Cornwall, 6s. post free.

Usk (Mon) 150th anniversary (pp. 8) : copies from the Rev. F. Mervyn Wright, 1, St. Julian's Avenue, Newport, Mon.

*To Serve the Present Age* (pp. 34)—160th anniversary of Riseley chapel, Higham Ferrers, by Margaret Harris: copies from the Rev. John D. Searle, 51, Park Road, Rushden, Northants; no price stated.

Brookside, Barnet—souvenir of opening of new chapel: copies from the Rev. Cecil Dawes, 28, Evelyn Road, Cockfosters, Barnet, Herts; no author or price stated.

# JOHN FLETCHER'S GEORGIAN ORDINATIONS AND MADELEY CURACY

WITHIN the space of eight days, John Fletcher was ordained deacon and priest. On Sunday, 6th March 1757, he received deacon's orders, and on the following Sunday, 13th March, he received priest's orders. Hitherto no full details of these ordinations have been given in any Fletcher biography, and it is of interest to record them.

According to the Bishop of Hereford's register ("Lord James Beauclerk, from 1755 to 1771 inclusive"), Fletcher, with four others, was ordained as deacon on Sunday, 6th March 1757, and the following is a transcript of the ordination entry:<sup>1</sup>

*Ordination of Clerks.* On Sunday the sixth day of March in the Year of our Lord, 1757, the Right Reverend Father in God James by Divine Permission Lord Bishop of Hereford celebrating Holy Orders in the Chapel in Spring Gardens, Westminster, did then admit into the Holy Order of Deacons, the Persons whose names are hereafter written.

John William Fletcher,	of the University of Geneva.
William Troakoll	S.C.S. Magdalen Hall, Oxon.
George Kimber	S.C.S. Trinity College, Oxon.
Lewis Buck,	Exeter College, Oxon.
William Slocombe, B.A.	Baliol [sic] College, Oxon.

This is further attested by Fletcher's certificate of ordination as deacon, which reads:

By the Tenor of these presents We James by Divine Permission Bishop of Hereford do make it known unto all Men that on Sunday the sixth day of March, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fifty seven, We the bishop before mentioned . . . in the Chapel in Spring Gardens Westminster, did admit Our beloved in Christ John William Fletcher of the University in Geneva . . . into the holy Order of Deacons . . . and him the said John William Fletcher did there and then Canonically ordain Deacon . . .<sup>2</sup>

Fletcher's ordination as priest came a week later. According to the "Bishop's Register of the Diocese of Bangor, 1728-87", John William Fletcher of the University of Geneva was ordained by the Bishop of Bangor in the Royal Chapel of St. James on Sunday, 13th March 1757, at the request of the Bishop of Hereford.<sup>3</sup> This entry is attested by Edward Pearson, notary public, but unfortunately the person making the entry omitted to record whether Fletcher was ordained as deacon or as priest. However, in the "Subscription Book of the Diocese of Bangor, 1728-74", John William Fletcher of the University of Geneva, and three others, are recorded as subscribing to the usual Articles of the Church of England on 12th March 1757, prior to being admitted to the Holy Order of Priests.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> p. 19 r. & v. (Diocesan Registry, Hereford.)

<sup>2</sup> Certificate in the Methodist Archives, London.

<sup>3</sup> Department of MSS. and Records, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Ref. B/BR/4.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.* Ref. B/SB/2.

But in a note appended to this entry, the aforementioned notary public, Edward Pearson, states:

These four persons were ordained *Deacons* [writer's italics] in the Royal Chapel at St. James's by the Right Reverend John, Bishop of Bangor, March 13, 1757, which I attest.

Obviously, the word "Deacons" is here a scribal error for the word "Priests".

It is patently an error, since Fletcher had been ordained deacon already. He had, too, subscribed to the Thirty-nine Articles the day before his ordination as priest. In addition to this, the Bishop of Hereford, James Beauclerk, had written a demissory letter to the Bishop of Bangor, John Egerton, recommending John William Fletcher of the University of Geneva and one other person "being candidates for Priest's Orders", and asking his Lordship of Bangor if he would "do me the favour to ordain them on Sunday next"—this letter being dated 11th March 1757.

The fact that Fletcher was ordained priest on Sunday, 13th March 1757, is confirmed by his certificate of ordination as priest, which reads:

By the Tenor of these Presents, We John, by Divine Permission Bishop of Bangor, do make it known unto all men that on sunday [sic] the thirteenth Day of March, in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and fifty seven, We the Bishop before mentioned . . . in the royal chapel at St. James's, Westminster did at the Request of our Reverend Brother James, Lord Bishop of Hereford . . . admit our beloved in Christ John William Fletcher, of the university in Geneva . . . into the holy Order of Priests . . . and him the said John William Fletcher did then and there rightly and canonically ordain Priest . . .<sup>6</sup>

The Rev. George Lawton has written that it appears Fletcher was not ordained to a specific assistant curacy,<sup>7</sup> but the following entry in the Bishop of Hereford's register,<sup>8</sup> recorded for Monday, 14th March 1757, shows such an assumption to be incorrect:

MADELEY C. Licence to	} On the same day (i.e. the fourteenth day of March 1757) JOHN WILLIAM FLETCHER, Clerk, was admitted and licensed to perform the Office of a Curate in the Parish Church of Madeley in the County of Salop and our Diocese of Hereford.
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On the day following his ordination as priest, therefore, Fletcher became curate of the parish church at Madeley.

The ordination of Fletcher first as deacon and then as priest within

<sup>5</sup> ibid. Ref. B/O/231. (Lord James Beauclerk was bishop of Hereford from 1746 to 1781, and John Egerton was bishop of Bangor from 1756 to 1759; cf. C. J. Abbey: *The English Church and its Bishops* (London, 1887), ii, pp. 359, 357.)

<sup>6</sup> Certificate in the Methodist Archives, London. See illustration opposite.

<sup>7</sup> George Lawton: *Shropshire Saint: A study in the Ministry and Spirituality of Fletcher of Madeley* (The Wesley Historical Society Lecture, 1960), p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> p. 19 v. (For Fletcher's institution to the vicarage of Madeley, cf. *Proceedings*, vii, pp. 56 ff.)

By the order of His Grace, the Most Reverend Doctor John, Bishop of Bangor, we do make it known unto all men that on Sunday the thirteenth day of March, anno in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and fifty seven, the said Bishop, before mentioned, doth administer holy Orders under the protection of the Ministry, in the royal Chapel at St James, Westminster, where he was admitted at the hands of our Reverend Brother James, the said Bishop of Hereford, for rendering due service to his beloved in Christ, John William Fletcher, of the University in Geneva, concerning his Moral standing, age and fitness, the said said Bishop doth well satisfy into the holy Order of Priesthood according to the manner and form prescribed and used by the Church of England, and wherein the said John William Fletcher did then and there rightly and canonically ordain Priest, retaining his in his priory fitly and conveniently subscribed to the maintenance of his Religion, and to the strict Canons contained in the thirty sixth Canon, and his likewise having taken the Oath of supremacy, In Testimony whereof, we have caused our Episcopal Seal to be affixed, the day and year above written, and in the first year of our consecration to —

John

Bangor

CERTIFICATE OF ORDINATION OF JOHN FLETCHER AS PRIEST, 13th March 1757.

eight days, and the fact that he was ordained on each occasion in London by two different bishops, both of whom performed the office elsewhere than in their resident cathedrals or parish churches, indicates the laxity in relation to canonical rule which was prevalent in the eighteenth century. But in regulations "relating to the admission of persons to sacred orders, precept was more honoured in the breach than the observance."<sup>9</sup> This statement of Professor Norman Sykes can well be applied to Fletcher's ordinations. As far as the rapidity of his ordinations is concerned, Professor Sykes states that there were some instances of men being ordained deacon and priest on the same day.

In cases of urgency, despite the express prohibition of the 32nd Canon that "no bishop shall make any person of whatsoever qualities or gifts soever, a deacon and minister both together upon one day", episcopal registers may be found to record the issue of an archiepiscopal dispensation.<sup>10</sup>

Fletcher, however, must have had influence, possibly through Thomas Hill of Tern Hall, to achieve ordination to deacon and priest in quick succession, for where there was such influence, "ordination to the diaconate and the priesthood was achieved with great rapidity".<sup>11</sup>

That he was ordained in London by two different diocesan bishops was nothing strange in the eighteenth century. It was the established tradition of Georgian bishops

to set out in October upon their annual journey to London, returning to the country at the end of the parliamentary session in May or June. Custom required of them residence upon their sees during the Summer recess of parliament, and on other emergent occasions, and with this standard contemporary opinion was well satisfied.<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, to a prelate resident in London from October to June, the fulfilment of the canonical rule that Holy Orders should be conferred "only upon the Sundays immediately following Jejunia quatuor temporum, commonly called Ember weeks", and "that this be done in the cathedral or parish church where the bishop resideth", presented difficulties especially in relation to Advent and Lenten embertides.

This problem was solved in different ways:

by the retirement of the bishop to his diocese for a brief space (if sufficiently near the capital to permit an easy journey), by the summons of candidates to attend upon his lordship in town, by the issue of letters Demissory to other bishops ordaining in neighbouring dioceses or by reserving all save urgent cases to ordinations held by the bishop in person extra quatuor tempora. This last custom was contrary to the express injunction of the 31st canon . . .<sup>13</sup>

which, like other canons related to Holy Orders, was more honoured in breach. Fletcher was ordained deacon in London by his own diocesan bishop, Lord James Beauclerk, of Hereford, and that same

<sup>9</sup> Norman Sykes: *Church and State in England in the Eighteenth Century* (The Birkbeck Lectures, 1931-3) (Cambridge, 1934), p. 96.

<sup>10, 11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 200.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 94.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 96.

Bishop of Hereford wrote a letter demissory to the Bishop of Bangor, John Egerton, asking him to ordain Fletcher, again in London, but this time as priest. In neither case, as canonical law required, was he ordained in the diocese of Hereford.

Mr. Lawton comments that Fletcher's ordination to the diaconate and priesthood within the space of eight days "suggests that Fletcher was no ordinary candidate".<sup>14</sup> More probably, these ordinations should be viewed as illustrative of the lax practices of Georgian bishops in the eighteenth century—though, of course, no one would ever doubt that this Methodist saint was an extraordinary man.

WILLIAM R. DAVIES.

[The Rev. William R. Davies, M.A., B.D., Ph.D. is lecturer in Divinity at the Padgate College of Education, Warrington. His thesis on "Fletcher of Madeley as Theologian" was presented at Manchester University in 1965.]

<sup>14</sup> Lawton, op. cit., p. 5.

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#### EDITOR'S NOTE

The publication of the foregoing article provides a favourable opportunity to append a list of original Fletcher documents at present in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre, London. These represent only a small part of a vast collection of letters and manuscripts relating to John and Mary Fletcher in the Archives. The list is as follows:

1. Certificate of ordination as deacon, 6th March 1757.
2. Certificate of ordination as priest, 13th March 1757.
3. Declaration of conformity to the Liturgy on presentation to the curacy of Madeley, 14th March 1757.
4. Licence to preach on being appointed to Madeley as curate, 14th March 1757.
5. Presentation to the vicarage and parish church of Madeley, 4th October 1760.
6. Mandate for induction to Madeley, 7th October 1760.
7. Certificate of subscribing to the Thirty-nine Articles, 7th October 1760.
8. Certificate about conforming to the Liturgy, 7th October 1760.
9. Certificate of institution as vicar of Madeley, 7th October 1760.
10. Certificate of having promised to conform to the Liturgy, read the Common Prayers and the Thirty-nine Articles, 1st December 1760.
11. Certificate of appointment as chaplain to Lord Buchan, 7th December 1767. (Contains George Whitefield's signature as witness.)

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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We gratefully acknowledge the following periodicals, some of which are received on a reciprocal basis with our *Proceedings*.

*The Baptist Quarterly*, April 1968.

*The Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society*, May 1968.

*The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales*, March 1968.

*The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, May 1968.

# A HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL METHODISTS

(Continued from page 118)

## VII

**E**ARLIER in this history, the writer referred to the inclusion of South Normanton on the Original Methodists' plan in 1841.<sup>1</sup> The history of this society is of special interest, and, by following its progress throughout the period of its existence as a "free-gospel" sect, it will be possible to estimate its influence on the immediate neighbourhood and to appreciate its authority over the Original Methodist movement as a whole.

Primitive Methodism was brought to South Normanton in 1817. Thomas Gent, a farmer, converted part of his farm-buildings (erected in 1800) adjoining the "Shoulder of Mutton" inn-yard into a meeting-room for the newly-formed society, whose members had been deeply moved by the intense spirit and sincere utterances of Primitive Methodism's foremost woman pioneer, Sarah Kirkland. The room was eighteen feet square, and was seated with forms without back-rests. There were two leaded-light windows, between which a pulpit was placed. A tripod stove provided adequate heating.

The society grew rapidly, and very soon Bethel, as the place was called, became too small for the worshippers, who purchased land in Lees Lane, on which a new chapel (Zion) was erected in 1827 at a cost of £170.

The old chapel was not vacant for long. The Wesleyan Methodists, who had commenced their activities in South Normanton at the beginning of the century, began to meet there. Previously they had had no adequate premises, and even now they soon found the room too small for their rapidly-increasing numbers. They doubled the size of the room, put in larger windows, added a porch at the front, erected a "sugar-pot" pulpit, furnished over half the room with elegant seats, and installed special pews for the choir.<sup>2</sup> By 1845 their numbers had so increased that, in spite of such improvements to the little chapel, the Wesleyans found it necessary to build a new chapel in High Street.

For four years the Original Methodists had held their meetings in cottages and private dwelling-houses. Now a chapel was vacant, and John Tomlinson lost no time in securing the premises, which offered a seating capacity for 110 worshippers. A number of talented laymen, of whom Solomon Robinson and the brothers Jarvis and Benjamin Taylor were the most prominent, were active in the society at this time. It is possible that the property was obtained only just

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 171.

<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from notes left by the late Mr. John Tomlinson (1861-1949), grandson of the John Tomlinson mentioned in previous chapters.

in time to prevent a further decline in the fortunes of the Original Methodists in South Normanton. By 1845 their membership was reduced to six, whereas the Primitive Methodists, after a serious setback in 1841, had recovered much of their lost ground; and it is most likely that many adherents of the Original Methodists had returned to their former friends after the departure of the Rev. William Carthy from the Belper circuit. However, by 1849 the membership had increased to 14, and, according to the 1851 Census,<sup>3</sup> the average evening attendance was 54.

Much was said in our last chapter about the professed desire on the part of the Original Methodists for "free-gospel" unity throughout the land. However, little positive effort seems to have been made by the leaders of the movement to promote such unity, in spite of their much loud speaking on the subject. The activities of the Independent Primitive Methodists of the Vale of Belvoir who had seceded from the Primitive Methodists in 1829 were well known to the Original Methodists, whose preachers had served their fellow "free-gospellers" on numerous occasions at Bingham, Colston Bassett, Cotgrave, Tithby, Radcliffe-on-Trent, Lowdham and Hoveringham. As the century progressed, railway development in the county south of the Trent facilitated transport problems for the lay preachers who lived outside the area, and the Radford contingent of the Original Methodist preachers was in great demand by the Independent Primitive Methodists. The fact that no formal link was made either with the Independent Primitive Methodists or with the more widely-represented Independent Methodists, who were established in Nottingham in 1834, is evidence of the uncompromising character of the Original Methodists, who proudly boasted of their ability to provide all their societies with their own accredited preachers on every Sunday throughout the quarter without having to request the services of preachers from other denominations, though from 1856 onwards there was some relaxation of this rule.

All has been achieved with the Original Methodists' own preachers, without being necessitated to apply for distant help. The public know well enough our own preachers are a class of self-denying men, who when they travel do so at their own expense, and contribute to the collections likewise. For this reason they give them that patronage they will never give a stranger, whom they know not.<sup>4</sup>

The intransigence of the most prominent leaders of the 1850s, when the Original Methodists were enjoying their greatest success in winning over people to their cause, was an obstacle to "free-gospel" unity. Other denominations might claim "free-gospel" principles, but these were most clearly made manifest in all their purity in the Rules drawn up in 1843.<sup>5</sup> For these men there could be no compromise with any form of "hirelingism". It was the opinion of the Original Methodists that the Independent Methodists

<sup>3</sup> Home Office Papers, No. 129. (Public Record Office.)

<sup>4</sup> Annual Report of the Connexion, 1854.

<sup>5</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxv, pp. 171, 189.

could make no such claims. The most obdurate men, who could not easily forget their earlier encounters with "ministerial despots" under whose authority they had, in their opinion, unjustly suffered, came from Selston and South Normanton, and these same men exerted tremendous influence over the Connexion as a whole, as may be seen from the fact that John Tomlinson remained Connexional Secretary until 1861. Therefore, the vision of "a compact and well-organised front of 100,000 regularly enrolled members of the Free Gospel Churches"<sup>6</sup> never materialized. The Original Methodists chose for the time being to retain their separate identity.

And yet, before we decry them for lacking the ecumenical spirit, it must be stated that they were fully alive to the work of the Church overseas. The British and Foreign Bible Society frequently benefited from their contributions, and an appeal from the Society for New Testaments for China met with response from sixteen of the Connexion's societies, of which three contributed over £1 each to Mr. J. Rhodes, who remitted the total sum of £7 11s. 7d. to the Bible House in London.

Mention has been made earlier of the founding of Wirksworth Original Methodist chapel.<sup>7</sup> On 26th November 1855 a statement of the financial condition of the Wirksworth chapel trust was laid before the Brassington Branch Quarter-day, when it appeared that there were several accounts still unpaid relating to the chapel fittings which the Wirksworth friends, despite valiant exertions, were quite unable to meet. The meeting therefore resolved to recommend that a public collection on behalf of Wirksworth be made in every place. The General Quarter-day, held on 3rd December, adopted the recommendation, and the collection was appointed to be made throughout the Connexion on the second Sunday in February 1856.

The discussion regarding Wirksworth led the way to the consideration of the usefulness of a "Permanent Chapel Fund", to be supported by a quarterly contribution from each place, averaging two-pence per member. The money raised by this method was to be strictly appropriated to the support of chapels already built or in helping to build new ones when needed. With a view to carrying out these or similar suggestions, the Quarter-day directed that a notice be inserted in the *Record*, requesting all Original Methodists to deliberate upon the scheme and send the result of such deliberations to the March Quarter-day by their respective delegates. More will be said about this Fund in our next chapter.

Before concluding the present chapter, let us examine the progress or decline of the individual societies within the Original Methodists' Connexion during the 1850s.

The Original Methodists had their disappointments during these years. The cause at Golden Valley had ceased by January 1851,

<sup>6</sup> "Brief Observations on the State and Prospects of the world and the Church at the commencement of 1852" (*Original Methodists' Record*, 1st January 1852).

<sup>7</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxvi, p. 81.

and an attempt to mission Hasland, though encouraging in October 1850, when the society was included on the plan, had come to nothing by April of the following year. Belper, too, proved a disappointment, being removed from the plan in January 1851 after only two quarters. In the Mansfield PM circuit the Rev. Samuel Antliff made great headway from 1850 to 1852, and the Mansfield Woodhouse Original Methodist society ceased its activities in October 1851. Membership had fallen by that time to seven, and both the Primitive Methodists and the Wesleyan Reformers gained larger congregations at the expense of the "free gospel" society in that place. Other short-lived societies during these years were started at Oldacre Row (October 1850), Lings (April 1850), Kimberley (October 1852), Shipley Wood (October 1852), Pye Bridge (October 1852), Sutton (April 1855), and Clay Cross (July 1856). Some of these places were re-missioned at a later date, but without much success.

The Blidworth societies continued to make progress, but by 1856 they had patched up their differences with the Primitive Methodists and had broken off all contact with the Original Methodists. Indeed, the Fishpools society sought reunion with their former friends in October 1855, and the other two societies followed exactly one year later. It is most likely that the death of Thomas Kirkby on 17th March 1855, the most prominent Original Methodist in the Blidworth area, had much to do with the closure of the meeting-places only a few months later. Thomas Kirkby (1791-1855) was one of the first hearers of the Primitive Methodists when they opened a mission at Blidworth in 1817; when a building for public worship was obtained, he held the office of trustee, and later that of class-leader. Shortly after his marriage in 1828, he began to preach, and continued his labours, in spite of a delicate constitution, amongst the Primitive Methodists until 1840. After a dispute with his superintendent, he invited the Original Methodists to come and preach at Blidworth—an invitation which was accepted. Kirkby opened his house for preaching, and a society was formed, of which he was the respected and faithful leader until his death.

The death of Kirkby left the society without dynamic leadership, and when the Primitive Methodists built a new chapel in the area in 1862, over fifty ex-Original Methodists were numbered among the congregation.

Another well-established society to be lost to the Original Methodists at the same time was Heage. This place had prospered, and large congregations became the custom. By 4th March 1850, the quarterly report stated that "this place, for some time, has been gradually rising and strengthening, and bids fair to become a powerful society." The Original Methodists were not to be disappointed. The Annual Report of 1854, in its account of the Sunday-school Anniversary services throughout the Connexion, states that

the Sunday School anniversaries, speaking of them in general, have received extensive patronage from the Christian public. Although

provisions have been excessively dear, and some branches of trade have been [in] a depressed state, yet the congregations and collections have, in some instances, been far greater than usual. This was particularly the case at Heage.

The Primitive Methodists thus gained great numbers when Original Methodism in Heage ceased.

September 1857 saw the departure of one of the first three Original Methodist societies to secede from the Primitive Methodists in 1839—Portland Row. The meeting-place of this society is of great interest. Portland Row consisted of 47 houses built by the Butterley Company in 1823 for the colliers who worked in the nearby pits. It was said to be the longest row of houses in England without means of access to the back doors save by journeying round either end. Other rows were longer, but low tunnel-like passages at intervals usually provided a means of approach to the rear of the houses. At Portland Row there were no such “ginnels”. At the rear of No. 25 a chapel was built in 1823, when the Primitive Methodists from Belper first missioned Selston. It was here in the “Upper Room” (the chapel was actually the first floor of the building), which held 75 people (a hundred could be crowded in if need arose), that the Primitive Methodists usually worshipped until 1882, when the present chapel was built. The secession of 1839 was very serious for the PM cause at Portland Row, and for a short time the society was removed from the plan.<sup>8</sup>

A number of questions remain unanswered. Did the Original Methodists occupy the chapel at the rear of No. 25 after the 1839 secession, when local Primitive Methodism was completely eclipsed for a few months, or had the property been made over to the PM Connexion before that date? After 1843, when a small PM society was revived in the Row, who then used the Upper Room? Where else in the Row would the society to whom the chapel was out of bounds after this date meet in fellowship? The rooms of the other houses were small and totally inadequate for public worship. The “tommy shop”, which operated the “truck system” for the miners, stood at one end of the Row, and was considerably larger than the other 46 houses. Could meetings have been held there? It is certain that the chapel was not used by *both* societies, because their meetings and services were held at the same hour.

It is the writer's opinion that the Upper Room was occupied by the Original Methodists from 1839 until the time of reconciliation. Circuit missionary rallies were frequently held at Portland Row, and there are several references to well-attended public teas, for which adequate premises would be necessary.

There were no blessings, good wishes, or letters of appreciation for past services from the Original Methodists to those who had now deserted them. The following comment on Heage and Blidworth is

<sup>8</sup> See *Proceedings* xxxv, p. 150.

too typical to remain unquoted : " How is the gold become dim ; how is the most fine gold changed ! "

Not all the Original Methodists rejoined the Primitive Methodists of Portland Row when in 1857 the society was included in the Ripley circuit (which had been carved out of the Belper circuit two years earlier). Some preferred to unite with the strong Original Methodist society half-a-mile away at Middle Chapel, Selston.

At Greenhill Lane, Riddings, the Original Methodists built up a very strong society. A chapel was erected in 1849, and by 1853 the members found it necessary to improve it by fitting up some new pews, all of which were let. This made the chapel much more comfortable, and the congregation, already large, was even further increased.

At Selston the average evening congregation increased from 81 in 1851 to 170 in 1855. The camp meetings were extremely well supported here ; for instance, on Sunday, 9th July 1854, there were " thousands of well-educated people attentively hearing the word of the Lord "<sup>9</sup>—an exaggeration no doubt, but the numbers must have been very great.

At Ironville (now called Ironville) there was a very lively society of 28 members in 1850, and the number increased throughout the '50s and '60s.

Hucknall Torkard's prosperity continued in spite of inadequate premises, which accommodated no more than 110 worshippers. Both Brinsley and Brinsley Wharf showed increases in membership, though worship continued in private houses. Bleak Hall society, though its membership was small, had a flourishing Sunday-school by 1856.

In the early summer of 1850, North Wingfield was most successfully missioned from South Normanton, and was included on the plan in July of that year. Progress was rapid, as the following sentences indicate :

North Wingfield Camp Meeting was held on Sunday, the 20th of June. It commenced by perambulating the neighbourhood, singing, praying, and exhorting at intervals ; followed by preaching services in the open-air, both before and after dinner ; the word was listened to with attention by the congregation. At night there was a Lovefeast, the people got more into faith, and a divine influence rested upon the assembly. A comfortable chapel is much wanted at North Wingfield.<sup>10</sup>

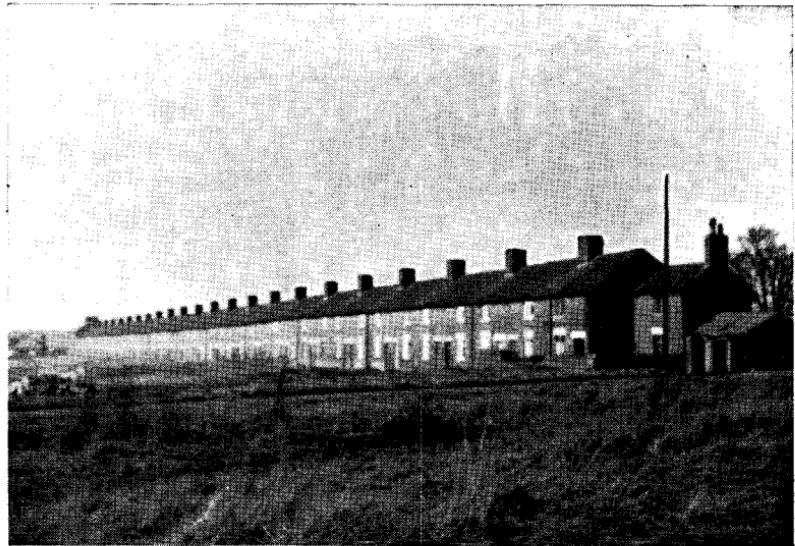
The South Normanton society continued to prosper, so that by 1857 the little Bethel was no longer able to contain the increased congregations. It was decided, therefore, to build a new chapel in Water Lane, the details of which we shall mention in our next chapter.

DONALD M. GRUNDY.

*(To be continued)*

<sup>9</sup> Annual Report, 1854.

<sup>10</sup> Our Annual Gatherings, 1858.



PORLAND ROW. Built 1823; recently demolished.  
The Chapel house is at the centre of the row.



REAR OF NO. 25, PORTLAND ROW.  
The Chapel, of which only a part remained when this photograph was taken,  
originally extended a further 20 feet over the ground in the  
front of the picture.

## THE FIRST METHODIST OF RETFORD

[The article which follows is reprinted from the Summer 1967 number of *The Nottinghamshire Countryside*, by the Editors' kind permission.  
—EDITOR.]

METHODISM was first introduced to Retford by a colourful Scot called John Macfarlane. As a young man he worked as a drover or "topsman" of cattle driven on the hoof to the London market. In order to avoid the heavy tolls of the Great North Road, a route through Blyth was often chosen, and he would not normally pass through Retford. In 1776 Macfarlane made his way here, possibly from Blyth. Although only of moderate height, he was a strongly-built man, and when provoked was quite capable of making effective use of his fists. He was unkempt in appearance and rough in manner, perhaps partly because he was a bachelor.

We do not know why he came to Retford, but it may well have been because of the new canal being constructed across the southern fringe of the town. The Chesterfield Canal was designed as a link between the coalfields of Derbyshire, the Trent at West Stockwith, and Hull. Begun in 1771, it had reached Retford by 1776, and the borough corporation paid a subsidy to the company so that the canal could be made wider from the town common up to West Stockwith. Macfarlane was employed as a navvy. Later, after the canal was opened, he became a boatman. He was already a Methodist, or was converted soon after his arrival.

When John Wesley decided to visit Retford in 1779 a mob of local rowdies, led by a certain John Willey, planned a warm reception. Wesley preached to a crowd in the market-place at the south end of the old town hall (near the modern bus stop), but thanks to Macfarlane and his friends there was no serious disturbance. It is true that one man did manage to get in a shot with a bad egg, but he missed the preacher and hit his sister. To the crowd's hearty enjoyment, she retaliated with a torrent of abuse that must have seemed somewhat out of place at an evangelistic rally.

Retford's first Methodist chapel was opened the same year. The inspiration was "Johnny Mack", as he was now affectionately known. In order to purchase a plot of land in Rosemary Lane (now Spa Road), he had to borrow £100, with a man called Johnson, of Mattersey, as surety. This chapel was on a private mortgage, and not owned by a trust according to the recommended "Conference Plan", and the creditor soon grew alarmed and demanded the discharge of the debt. Johnson, a rather crusty old man, replied that he would not fulfil his obligation without a fight. It was then found that the mortgage was invalid because the stamp was undervalued. An amicable solution to this tangled affair was achieved in April 1789, when a trust was formed and the property surrendered to it for £5.

The first meeting-house was a small plain building with a low

roof. The only seats were backless forms. However, it possessed two doors, one for each sex. A writer in 1855 commented that

down the centre was a railing separating the sexes as it was then very unusual for men and women to sit together promiscuously during the performance of divine worship.

The chapel was deemed too small to contain the crowd expected for John Wesley's second visit. By this time the great preacher was aged 83 and regarded as a national institution, and crowds were usually sympathetic to the man, if not always to his religious ideas. Unfortunately the entry in his *Journal* is rather cryptic :

Sat. [June] 24.—I preached at New Inn; afterwards at Newark, one of the most elegant towns in England; and in the evening at Retford, on "I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God."

According to a tablet in the wall of a house in Bridgegate, Wesley preached under a pear tree in an orchard just over the Idle in the parish of West Retford.

Almost as soon as the trust was formed the existing chapel was demolished and replaced by a new one. Although a great improvement, the new building was a modest affair 44 feet by 36 feet, completed in the summer of 1789 by Thomas Whitaker, a local joiner. It had side and rear galleries and "some good pews on the ground floor". A three-decker pulpit was on the north wall. It was soon dubbed "The Well". It was sturdily constructed of brick, and still stands after nearly two centuries of wear and tear as a place of worship, a warehouse, and more recently as a school of dancing. Rosemary Lane was renamed Meeting-House Lane in its honour. (It changed to Spa Lane four years after the chapel was closed.)

It is interesting to note the names and occupations of the first trustees :

- Gervase Woodhouse, Ouston, Lincs, gentleman
- Richard Beson, Walkeringham, Notts, farmer
- Joseph Cliff, Beckingham, Notts, farmer
- George Rose, Clayworth, Notts, farmer
- John Johnson, Mattersey, Notts, farmer
- Thomas Briggs, Gringley, Notts, boatman
- Richard Padley, Houghton Park, Notts, woodman
- Francis Clater, East Retford, Notts, druggist
- Joseph Wilson, East Retford, Notts, barber.

It is reasonable to suppose that Johnson was the man who stood surely for Macfarlane. Francis Clater achieved some success with his book entitled *Every Man His Own Farrier and Cattle Doctor*. A curious omission is the name of Macfarlane. He was never a trustee, and it is unlikely that he was ever admitted to full membership of the Methodist society. His name did not appear in any of the old class books that still survived in 1892. He certainly remained a loyal and honoured attender at services, and during his later years was permitted to sit on the pulpit steps as a concession to his growing deafness.

Almost before the Methodists had established themselves in the town they were rent by divisions. An Independent chapel for use by members of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion was built about 1798 on the south side of Chapelgate. At about the same time Alexander Kilham was forming his Methodist New Connexion at national level for the more radical (and Congregationalist) wing of the Methodist movement. Although no Kilhamite group appears to have been formed in Retford, some alarm was felt in 1798 when a young man called Joseph Unwin proposed to settle and preach in Tuxford until the next Conference, when he hoped to become recognized as a minister in Kilham's New Connexion.

A special meeting was held in April for the Retford stewards, class leaders and local preachers. They decided that Unwin's proposal appears to have a deal of Policy and Craft, which may be attended with fatal consequences to that Society [i.e. Tuxford], and materially affect others, [and] that he should be put a Stop to in every Place, as far as it lies in our Power to do it.

At first Retford was in the vast, sprawling Epworth circuit. This proved unsatisfactory, partly because of the distances involved in attending meetings and partly because of the infrequency of the services planned in Retford. In 1802 the Retford society, with a membership of 78, was deemed strong enough to head its own circuit. Within a year the circuit membership was 450. The first ministers were Charles Gloyne and William Naylor. These early Methodist ministers were well named itinerant preachers; for example, in the Retford circuit they were frequently on tour in the villages for periods of anything up to a fortnight, and they had to carry their books and personal effects in saddle-bags. Hospitality was provided at any farmhouse or cottage that would receive them. Pay was small and not always available on time. When William Naylor attended his first Quarterly Meeting in the area he was due to receive a quarterly allowance of £4, but found that funds had been exhausted by the time it was the junior preacher's turn.

During the early years of the nineteenth century the Methodist society in Meeting-House Lane continued to prosper. By 1821 the membership had risen to 200, and the chapel was inadequate for its needs. Land was purchased in a grass field called Newgate Close at the eastern fringe of the town in what was then Newgate Street (now Grove Street), and in 1823 a new chapel, seating 650, was dedicated. The society membership was then 250, and the circuit's total 820.

Meanwhile the father of local Methodism had fallen on hard times. His attempt to run a coal and hardware business failed, and he became an odd-job man. In old age he refused a place in Trinity Hospital because it involved attendance at the parish church and he would not "sell his soul to the devil for a place". Instead, the stubborn old Scot entered the workhouse, where he was known as "Johnny Mac-farthing". Friends conducted him to the stone-laying

ceremony in Newgate Street, and he had the honour of laying a stone. He just lived long enough to see the new Wesleyan chapel—the town's third in his lifetime—opened. He died in 1824, and was one of the first people to be interred in the new burial-ground behind the chapel. His death, combined with the opening of the new building, symbolized the passing of the pioneer days of Retford Methodism.

BARRY J. BIGGS.

[Mr. B. J. Biggs, B.A., M.Ed. is Head of the History Department at Eaton Hall College of Education, Retford, Notts.]

## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the London Conference, 1968,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

**Wesley's Chapel, City Road, E.C.1,  
On Thursday, 20th June, at 7-30 p.m.,**

BY

**Rev. A. KINGSLEY LLOYD.**

*Subject: "THE LABOURER'S HIRE: THE PAYMENT AND DEPLOYMENT  
OF THE EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS, 1744-1813."*

The chair will be taken by MR. JOHN E. PATER, C.B., M.A.

**The Annual Meeting** of the Society will be held, also at City Road, at **5-30 p.m.**

Mrs. Herbert Ibberson kindly invites members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom at **4-30 p.m.** It is essential that all those who desire to be present at the Tea should send their names to the Rev. G. Herber Davies, B.D., 49, City Road, London, E.C.1, not later than Monday, June 17th.

Wesley's Chapel is in City Road, opposite Bunhill Fields, and is five minutes' walk from either Moorgate or Old Street Underground stations.

This year's Conference **Exhibition** is being arranged by the Archives, and not, as in previous years, by the Wesley Historical Society; though the Archivist has drawn heavily upon the Bretherton Collection in the Society's library. The theme of the Exhibition is "The Methodist Conference, 1744-1968". Original documents will be on display in the Board Room of the Epworth Press, and material of general interest, such as handbooks and admission tickets, will be shown in the Wesley Club at the Central Hall, Westminster. The Board Room section will be open from 11 a.m. to 2-30 p.m., and that at Westminster from 9-30 a.m. until Conference rises. The work of the Wesley Historical Society will be featured on a separate stand, and it is hoped that members, whether representatives or not, will visit the displays both at Westminster and at City Road.

There will also be an exhibition of Methodist documents at the Public Record Office (situated at the Fleet Street end of Chancery Lane). This will be open from 1 to 4 p.m.

## JOHN WESLEY AND THE MORAVIANS OF FULNECK

JOHN WESLEY was not always as tactful in his *Journal* as he might have been. He paid two visits to the Moravian community at Fulneck—once in 1748, shortly after the erection of the first building, and again in 1780, when he toured the whole settlement. On both occasions he commented on the Moravians' ability to command huge sums of money for such enterprises. On the latter occasion he ventured upon some detailed speculation about their finances :

I see not what but the mighty power of God can hinder them from acquiring millions, as they (1) buy all materials with ready money at the best hand; (2) have above a hundred young men, above fifty young women, many widows, and above a hundred married persons, all of whom are employed from morning to night, without any intermission, in various kinds of manufactures, not for journeymen's wages, but for no wages at all, save a little very plain food and raiment; as they have (3) a quick sale for all their goods, and sell them all for ready money.

He added the tart comment : “But can they lay up treasure on earth, and at the same time lay up treasure in heaven ?”<sup>1</sup>

Extract XIX from Wesley's *Journal* containing this unfortunate remark was not published until 1786, and appeared at a time when there seemed a possibility of a *rapprochement* between the Methodists and the Moravians. Charles Wesley was in touch with the two leading English Moravians to this end. On 30th July that year he wrote to Benjamin La Trobe about “the friendly intercourse of your Society and ours”, to which his brother John was “very well inclined”.<sup>2</sup> A few months later, however, he was compelled to make excuses for his brother's tactlessness in this matter of reporting the Fulneck visit, writing to James Hutton :

### CHARLES WESLEY TO JAMES HUTTON

Dear James,

We are all agreed in disapproving the rashness of our *old* friend. When we are as near 100, we may be as weak as him. When he takes my advice he will make, perhaps, more than one retraction. Meantime let us possess our souls in patience.

I only wish you could force him to make good his words, and *produce the millions* you have hoarded up. Then, after paying your own, you would generously pay ours, and lastly the National Debt !

Vive, valeque—not unmindful of your old friend.

C.W.

Marybone

Nov. 23.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Standard *Journal*, iii, p. 292; vi, pp. 273-4.

<sup>2</sup> Letter in Moravian Archives, London. Cf. Thomas Jackson : *Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley* (London, 1841), ii, pp. 402-3.

<sup>3</sup> MS. letter in Moravian Archives, London.

John Wesley had already been challenged by the Yorkshire Moravians, and the columns of the *Leeds Mercury* carried several letters from his critics, to which he issued two brief replies which have not yet been reprinted, though they will appear in Volume ix of the *Letters* (Standard edition), for which I continue to discover material in various places. The first letter attacking the passage in Wesley's *Journal* appeared in the *Leeds Mercury* for 26th September 1786. It was dated "Leeds, Sept. 14, 1786", and signed "A.B.". Wesley abhorred anonymity (in others), and in the issue for 17th October his answer appeared :

To the Printer of the *Leeds Mercury*.

Sir,

If A.B. desires an answer, let him tell his name to me or to the public, and he shall hear farther from,

JOHN WESLEY.

London, Oct. 6, 1786.

The following week a reply appeared over a similarly anonymous—and successively alphabetical—signature :

To the Printer of the *Leeds Mercury*.

It may be very indifferent to Mr. John Wesley who A.B. is, as it is not his person, but the contents of what he inserted in the paper, that Mr. J. Wesley is concerned with. If Mr. J. Wesley can prove that the account he has published in his *Journal*, under April 17, 1780, is no lie, but the truth, he will do something to the purpose; but as this is impossible, he had better be silent, and take shame to himself. C.D.

Oct. 17, 1786.

A further letter (this time signed "E.F.") appeared three weeks later, in which the writer urged "A.B." to call Wesley's bluff and break his continued silence by giving his name. Even before this was written (on 9th November), however, Wesley had discharged his closing shot, which was printed in the issue for 21st November :

To A.B. alias C.D.

I advise you to know when you are well. For if you constrain me to speak, (if you *will* tear open a sore that is almost healed) I shall say more than you will like.

JOHN WESLEY.

Nov. 4, 1786.

This veiled threat brought no response except a letter from Jeremiah Clifford of Fulneck, dated 29th November, though this did not appear until the issue for 19th December. Clifford outlined the controversy in the columns of the *Leeds Mercury*, claimed that he was neither "A.B." nor "C.D." (it remains possible that he was in fact "E.F."), but affirmed that Wesley's account of the Moravians at Fulneck was false. Charitably he added that Wesley's erroneous statements were probably published innocently, being based upon misinformation.

Meantime hopes of a Methodist-Moravian union had faded, and La Trobe's death a few weeks earlier, on 29th November 1786, seems finally to have closed the door.<sup>4</sup>

FRANK BAKER.

<sup>4</sup> Daniel Benham : *Memoirs of James Hutton* (London, 1856), pp. 545-6.

## WESLEY'S LAST DAYS

THE following letter, a copy of which has been found in the Methodist Archives, was written by Mrs. Ford of London to her sister, Mrs. Pine, on the day before John Wesley died. He died on 2nd March 1791. It does not add very much to the full account of Wesley's last days as given by Miss Elizabeth Ritchie,<sup>1</sup> although there are a few welcome additional details.

Mrs. Ford and her sister were well known in early Methodist circles in London. They were daughters of a certain Mrs. Owen of Publow (Somerset),<sup>2</sup> and Mrs. Pine was the wife of one of the best-known of Wesley's printers. For further details of these two women and their families, see Stevenson's *City Road Chapel*, p. 385.

The letter, of course, takes us right into the midst of that coterie of early Methodists who so devotedly clustered round their leader in his declining weeks—Sister Beardmore, Mr. and Mrs. Rogers, Dr. Whitehead, Miss Wesley (daughter of the hymn-writer and niece of John), Mr. and Mrs. Jones, and, most prominent of all, the beloved Elizabeth Ritchie.

We are sure this letter will be read with interest by those who have not access to Miss Ritchie's account.

MRS. FORD TO HER SISTER, MRS. PINE

Camberwell, March 1st, 1791.

Dear Sister,

I wrote to you last week that our honoured father, friend and teacher had been ill, but was recovered—alas, it does not prove to be so. As every particular concerning him will be interesting to Mr. Pine and yourself, I will be particular.

On Thursday, February 17th, he preached at Westminster. The house where he drank tea had a vine let in at the window, by which he got cold and said his throat was sore. As he returned home, he put a handkerchief round his neck. On Friday he was very ill, but went to dinner at Islington. Sister Beardmore said he was hardly able to stand unless he was supported. He was cheerful; said it was well he had no appetite because it was best not to eat that he might preach tomorrow. After dinner, relating a circumstance of an angry gentleman hastily drawing his sword, he attempted to stand up and shew the attitude when they all thought he must have fell down, but he did not seem to know how weak he was.

On Sunday, he was very ill. He arose as usual, but at 6 or 7 said he would go to bed. His fever was high and pulse hard. Mr. Rogers said to him, "I trust, sir, you will be restored to us again". He replied, "Just as it may please God, brother". He got up a little before dinner and took a little boiled veal. Miss Ritchie gave me an instance of the superiority of his spirit to the tottering body. When eating, he could not guide his hand to his head through weakness. He cheerfully laid his hand down again and repeated to her some lines of poetry that the limbs would no longer obey the dictates of the will. He dozed away

<sup>1</sup> John Wesley's *Journal*, viii, pp. 131 ff.

<sup>2</sup> ibid., v, p. 484.

great part of the time and on Thursday he went to Mrs. Wolf's, but his fever returned and Friday morning he went home very ill. A slight delirium came on (and has continued at times ever since). Dr. Whitehead thought he would not have survived Saturday last, but a remedy was administered which gave him relief and on Sunday morning his head was clear. Miss R. and Miss Wesley were in the room and heard him repeat exceeding low and distinct :

Thy servants steps attend  
And, oh, my life of mercies crown  
With a triumphant end.

On seeing Miss Wesley, he embraced her affectionately and related something of a dream that a child had which referred to his situation. He was soon overpowered with drowsiness and on lying down the delirium returned, at which time he was quite gentle, putting down the bed-clothes and saying, "Now bring my gown, it is preaching time".

Last night he enquired who was in the room and on Miss Ritchie's saying, "Miss Wesley", he asked, "Sally, have you a zeal for God?" On her replying, he said, "Do you rise as early as you used to do?"

At three different times last night, he repeated,  
I the chief of sinners am  
But Jesus died for me

Dr. Whitehead calls his disorder a callapsus of the brain. His fever is very high and drowsiness great. He says a miracle may restore him, but every appearance is contrary to it.

Dear Miss Ritchie's being with him is a great consolation. He has often of late expressed a wish that she might be with him and close his eyes. Mrs. Rogers is at Shropser's, having lately laid in at his house. Last night Mr. Jones sat up with Mr. Wesley—a pleasant name, I love to mention it—Hereby, my sister, we are called afresh to attach ourselves to God, the source and fountain of all our mercies. This has been a pleasant stream, that has long yielded us supplies of profit and reproof, light and heat. Methinks I still hear his voice as lately speaking with more than human powers from "While we look not at the things which are seen, for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal". I seem to feel myself ascended with him to Paradise and my spirit united with the angel-bands who wait to be his convoy.

While one valuable friend after another is taken, it leaves this world but poor in prospect, and yet the right temper of a Christian is to be willingly carried along with the stream of divine providence and not to stir a hand, or thought to resist that mighty current; not to be carried on with it because there is no resisting it but cheerfully and voluntarily. My time is gone. With love to yourself and Mr. Pine, I am,

Yours affectionately,  
F. FORD.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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*Cirplan* for Lent 1968 records the tragic death of its secretary and treasurer, Mr. Arnold Whipp—a sad loss to the cause of Methodist history. It contains inter alia an article written by Mr. Whipp before his death, entitled "The Harvest Festival", and "Highlights from my Collection", by Dr. O. A. Beckerlegge.

## BOOK NOTICES

*The Burning Heart : John Wesley, Evangelist*, by A. Skevington Wood. (Paternoster Press, pp. 302, 30s.)

We examine each new "life" of Wesley with the question in our minds ; "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another ?" Dr. Wood's erudite and eminently readable book fulfils at least one basic requirement in a definitive life of Wesley in that it sees him primarily as a missioner—an evangelist. The many-sidedness of Wesley's life and ministry has been reflected in the range of biographies and biographical studies of him, but the one thing to which Wesley himself made all things subordinate was the mission of Methodism. Dr. Wood keeps close to this central theme in Wesley's life as he describes first "The Making . . .", then "The Mission . . .", and finally "The Message of an Evangelist". The author's encyclo-pædic and accurate knowledge of Wesley's writings is reflected in his selection and arrangement of incidents and quotations, but it is unfortunate that the old confusion between William and Walter Borlase (p. 173 f.) should appear in a life of Wesley which will be consulted as much as this one will.

Altogether, this is a book which all our members should possess, and the line of criticism which follows will, we hope, induce them to obtain it, rather than deter them from doing so. Dr. Wood is particularly concerned to make the point that Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience can be termed his "conversion" with or without the limiting adjective "evangelical" now generally associated with it. See the statements on pp. 30 (but why is the allusion referred to "unmistakable" ?), 35, 39, 48 (but the Charlestown Hymnbook was full of evangelical song), 52-4 (but this was Charles Wesley—see *Proceedings*, xxv, p. 97), 57 note 3 (but this insertion was Wesley's own), 58, 59 (here we are told that "in all his writings Wesley looked back to his Aldersgate Street experience as the crisis and turning-point of his career", but this, despite its phrasing, cannot mean that he was in the habit of constantly referring to it, for in fifty years of authorship and correspondence he never mentioned it !), 67 ff.

Dr. Wood has made a valuable contribution to the debate about the significance of Aldersgate Street, but ought he even to hint (pace pp. 56, 68) that the debate can now be considered closed ? It would be if Wesley's "very full accounts" of the events of 1738 had not been qualified by his cry of 1772, "Let me be again an Oxford Methodist!", and by his selection of more than a third of the hymns from his pre-conversion Charlestown Hymn-book for inclusion in the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*. The matter would be settled even more decisively if Wesley had not, in 1765 (*Minutes and Short History of Methodism*) and 1781 (*Short History of the People Called Methodists*) dated the origin of Methodism—so closely linked with his own spiritual pilgrimage—from the foundation of the Holy Club in 1729, and its development from the time of his realization (in 1737) that "holiness comes by faith", and his preaching (from 6th March 1738) of "salvation by faith": all this without even a glance at Aldersgate Street.

The facts, surely, are that immediately and for some time after that event, Wesley regarded the Aldersgate experience as the moment of his conversion, and consequently but mistakenly discounted the reality of his Christian life before that date. "John Wesley, Christian" began his spiritual life at his baptism (*Sermons*, i, p. 283, etc.), and it was deepened during the years 1729-38: "John Wesley, Evangelist" was not fully equipped for his mission until that latter year.

THOMAS SHAW.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1177. SUSANNA'S "CONSTRAINT".

In *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, by G. G. Findlay and W. W. Holdsworth, vol. i, p. 29, there is a reference to Susanna Wesley's reading about the German missionaries in the Danish colony of Tranquebar, Ziegenbalg and Plütschau, who have the honour of being the first Protestant missionaries to the East. The comment follows that this led

Mrs. Wesley to give weekly missionary instruction to her children, to the benefit of which John Wesley refers gratefully in his Oxford years.

This is a misunderstanding of what Susanna wrote. John (in telling about conducting her funeral on 1st August 1742) quotes a letter of hers to her husband, written on 6th February 1712. She says that after reading the account

For several days I could think or speak of little else. At last it came into my mind, Though I am not a man nor a minister, yet if my heart were sincerely devoted to God . . . I might do somewhat more than I do. I might pray more for them, and might speak to those with whom I converse with more warmth of affection. I resolved to begin with my own children . . . I take time every night to discourse with each child apart.

She goes on to say that with her neighbours too she began to discourse more freely and affectionately. I chose the best and most awakening sermons we have . . . Our company increased every night . . . Last Sunday I believe we had above two hundred, and yet many went away for want of room to stand. We banish all temporal concerns from our society.

Wesley's whole point in quoting the letter is to show that "even she (as well as her father and grandfather, her husband and three sons) had been, in her measure and degree, a preacher of righteousness". This must be understood with regard to her children too. She did not give them "missionary instruction", i.e. tell them stories of these missionaries. She tried to be a *missionary*, for the spiritual awakening of each child.

What was it which so stirred her? The account was *The Propagation of the Gospel in the East* by Anton Wilhelm Boehm. In 1709 he, who was Lutheran chaplain to Prince George of Denmark, consort to Queen Anne, translated from the German and published the letters of the Tranquebar missionaries. He himself had been a pupil of A. H. Francke at Halle, and became Francke's agent for publicizing the mission in England, and so enlisting, through SPCK, Anglican support. The first edition was re-issued in 1710 with additional material of the same kind (Part II). In a second edition in 1711 there was added a "Preliminary Discourse" by Boehm himself. This was followed in 1718 by a third edition, twice the size—Part III, now added, comprising 37 letters all concerned with the mission's English connexions and its development of work in British India. Susanna Wesley in 1712 would read the second edition. I have no doubt that what influenced her was its "Preliminary Discourse". Here Boehm writes on "The Character of a Missionary". He says that the first qualification must be the spirit of love:

The love of God is so communicative a love that such a one as is in possession thereof will find a sweet constraint upon his spirit to bring, if possible, all mankind to the enjoyment thereof.

This is what she sought to communicate to each of her children. She says that "Jacky's" night was Thursday, and Charles's Saturday. John was then aged nine, and Charles five. How close to Boehm's words which inspired her, and how close to the mother-love of Susanna herself, are Charles's lines :

The arms of love that compass me  
Would all mankind embrace!

JOHN FOSTER (University of Glasgow).

#### 1178. MEDALS OF DIVINES.

The late Mr. F. E. Macfadyen of Newcastle upon Tyne was a numismatist of no mean order, but late in life he disposed of his collection at Sothebys. There was a two-days sale, 15th and 16th July 1907, and the catalogue described "The important collection of English and Irish Copper coins, seventeenth century tokens, medals, tickets, passes and badges". Let 239 was mentioned as being *Medals of Divines*, and consisted of 21 items, viz.

Wesley (11) a series of Medals, five bronze and five in pewter, and a small portrait cliché by Carter, all varied;

Rev. W. Romaine (3) Rev. Geo. Whitefield (5) and two in pewter of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, all different in type or metal.

The medals of Wesley—both John and Charles—are well known and common, the others much rarer, and it would be interesting to learn if any reader possesses any examples.

HORACE HIRD.

#### 1179. A WESLEY TABLE-CLOTH.

Mrs. G. Herber Davies, of Wesley's Chapel Manse, London, has a white damask table-cloth approximately 2½ yards square. The repeated woven pattern carries a head-and-shoulders picture captioned "Rev. J. Wesley, A.M.", surrounded by a design made up of crosses, communion chalice and lovefeast cups. We should be interested to know if there are any similar table-cloths in existence, and also to have any information about their origin.

EDITOR.

#### 1180. DANIEL ISAAC AND JABEZ BUNTING: A POSTSCRIPT.

Although no echo of the controversy over Isaac's condemned book is recorded in the Conference *Minutes* of 1817 (see *Proceedings*, xxxvi, p. 6), the manuscript diary of Charles Atmore makes it clear that the matter was indeed raised again. The entry for 29th July 1817 reads:

... Mr Isaac's case came on. Mr Bunting made an admirable defence of his conduct tow<sup>ds</sup> Mr Isaac. The subject was renewed after dinner. The Conf<sup>e</sup> expressed their approbation of the conduct of the P. & Sec<sup>y</sup> of the last Conf<sup>e</sup> and their disapprobation of Mr Isaac's Letter.

Thus the censure of 1816 was in fact repeated the following year.

E. A. ROSE.

#### 1181. ORDINATIONS IN METHODISM, 1791-1836.

With reference to my most recent article on post-Wesley ordinations (*Proceedings*, xxxvi, p. 111 ff.), I regret that the name of Dr. Coke crept in by mistake in the entry relating to John Hodge, who was ordained in 1822. I am sure the Doctor would be present in spirit, but as he died in 1814 he could hardly have been present in the flesh! In the same article, for "Havard" read "Harvard" throughout.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

## 1182. CENTENARY TICKETS, 1839.

I have in my possession two class-type tickets apparently used to give admission to Centenary meetings in 1839. The printing is as follows :

**WESLEYAN CENTENARY MEETING**  
**January 16th, 1839**

At Two o'clock and Six  
ST. MARY'S WESLEYAN CHAPEL  
TRURO

Admit.....  
.....Leader.

One ticket has the name of Wm Abbott written in, and the leader's name of G<sup>e</sup> Masaon. The other has the name of Susan Abbott to be admitted, and the name of the leader as John Michael. Have any similar tickets survived for other local churches ?

FREDERICK PILKINGTON.

[In the Methodist Archives, London, there are Centenary tickets issued by the Garstang circuit, Great Queen Street chapel, London, and Baillie Street WMA chapel, Rochdale.—EDITOR.]

## 1183. NESTLETON MAGNA.

Some years ago a story of East Riding Methodism was written in a book entitled *Nestleton Magna*, by the Rev. J. Jackson Wray. Can any reader identify this author? Any suggestions should be sent to Mr. W. R. Craven, 324, North Road, Hull, Yorks.

EDITOR.

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*Methodist History*, published quarterly (subscription \$3.00 per annum) by the Association of Methodist Historical Societies, Lake Junaluska, North Carolina, U.S.A., for April 1968 contains two articles of interest to readers—"Aspects of Wesley's Theology after 1770", by John Allan Knight, and "The Gibbes Family of Hilton Park : an unpublished correspondence of John Wesley", by John A. Vickers.

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The 1968 Methodist Conference *Handbook* is a weighty affair, well produced and attractively printed in offset litho; but, for historians, it flatters to deceive! We know that well-written and knowledgeable articles on the history of Methodism in the Conference District are warmly welcomed by more people than those attending Conference; and London, of all places, could have done so much for us here. As it is, we have to be content with four half-pages (excellently done, by the way) borrowed from the inset of a Connexional Department. We feel that this is a lost opportunity to remind ourselves of our origins (at the place of our origins) and to trace a little of "our providential way"—but perhaps this is just another indication that Methodists are not really interested in these things.

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A symposium entitled *Church and Eucharist*, edited by Fr. Michael Hurley, S.J. (Gill & Son, Dublin, pp. 298, 21s.), contains contributions by Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists and Roman Catholics. It is an attempt "to sound the depths of their common belief in the Church and in the Eucharist". The Methodist writers are Robert A. Nelson ("Pulpit and Table in Methodism") and Hedley W. Plunkett ("Doctrine and Practice of the Lord's Supper in Methodism"), with comments by R. N. Brown (Presbyterian) and Charles Gray-Stack (Anglican).