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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

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

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Volume XXXIV

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### CHURCH METHODISTS IN IRELAND

**D**R. OLIVER BECKERLEGG'S interesting contribution on the Church Methodists (*Proceedings*, xxxiv, p. 63) draws attention to the fact that the relationship of Methodists with the Established Church followed quite a different pattern in Ireland. Had it not been so, there would have been no Primitive Wesleyan Methodist preacher to bring over to address a meeting in Beverley, as mentioned in that article. Division in Methodism in Ireland away from the parent Wesleyan body was for the purpose of keeping in closer relation with—and not to move further away from—the Established (Anglican) Church of Ireland. Thus, until less than ninety years ago, there was still a Methodist connexion made up of members of the Anglican Church.

In Ireland, outside the north-eastern region where Presbyterianism predominates, tensions between the Roman Catholic and Protestant communities made it seem a grievous wrong to break with the Established Church. In the seventeenth century, the Independent Cromwellian settlers very soon threw in their lot with that Church, which thereby has had a greater Protestant Puritan element than other branches of Anglicanism. Even though early Methodism in Ireland showed the same anomalous position regarding sacraments and Church polity generally, the sort of solution provided in England by the Plan of Pacification was not adopted until 1816, over twenty years later. Those who disagreed were not able to have the decision reversed at the 1817 Irish Conference. Meeting at Clones, they had formed a committee to demand that no Methodist preacher as such should administer the sacraments, and then in 1818, at a conference in Dublin, they established the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. Twenty years later, in a volume published to celebrate the centenary of Methodism, this action was justified by the comment that "they saw that, in a popish country, the established church was the principal support which the doctrines of the reformation had in the island".

Apart, however, from this main factor of the special Irish situation, this movement was also strengthened by the outstanding leadership of a noted evangelist of the time. This was the Rev. Adam Averell, who had resigned a curacy in the Established Church in 1792, and after some individual preaching on Methodist lines, had been received into full connexion in 1796. As an ordained Anglican clergyman, he could, and did, administer the sacraments to Methodists. He was elected President of the Primitive Wesleyan Conference in 1818, and was re-elected annually for the rest of his life.

The division was a temporary blow to Methodism. During the three years from 1815, the parent Wesleyan body decreased by over 10,000 members, more than one-third of the whole, whereas in 1818 the Primitive Wesleyans were only some 8,000 in number. Then for some sixty years there were two Methodist connexions in Ireland—the Wesleyan, which rapidly assumed the functions and responsibilities of a full Church, and the Primitive Wesleyans, who maintained the “primitive” ideal of John Wesley as a society inside the Church of Ireland.

Both bodies showed the Methodist spirit of evangelism. In 1844 the Wesleyan body returned 28,409 members in its statistics, whilst the Primitive Wesleyans returned 15,905. The total of 44,314 is the highest figure ever reached by Methodist membership in Ireland, though it should be remembered that technically the Primitive Wesleyans were also members of the Church of Ireland. The 1845 Famine, and the great emigration which ensued, eventually brought the total population of Ireland down by one-half, from eight-and-a-half millions to four-and-a-quarter, as it still is today. Methodist membership also fell considerably, but, relative to the total population, it actually improved.

Not so the Primitive Wesleyan section; time was making their position an anachronism, but they clung to it. In 1861 the Wesleyan Conference at Cork adopted a resolution favourable to the cultivation of friendly relations with the Primitive Wesleyans. It was not until 1866 that the Primitive Wesleyan Conference responded with similar sentiments. Even as late as 1870, the *Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* reports that “the great bulk of our people were decidedly in favour of a closer union with the Irish Church”, and that it was only some who wanted union with the Wesleyans.

But the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, made effective in that same year 1870, eventually brought home the fact that the Primitive Wesleyans were more “Methodist” than “Anglican”. Discussions were initiated between the two Methodist connexions in 1873. In 1876 the Wesleyan Conference adopted the principle of lay representation, which the Primitive Wesleyans had always had. At that time there were over 20,000 Wesleyans, but only some 7,000 Primitive Wesleyans, the majority in the region between Enniskillen and Clones. The necessary legal action was taken, and in 1878 the two Conferences united as the one Methodist Church in Ireland,

and the "Church Methodists" ceased. The original trust deed of the Primitive Wesleyan Methodist preaching-house in South Great George's Street, Dublin, like others, laid down that should the Primitive Wesleyan Methodists ever depart from the principle of connexion with the Established Church, the right of possession would be forfeited. It is one sign of the complete change of circumstances that the necessary legal action could be taken to alter this.

It is a point of interest that only in this present year (1963) has that site in Dublin finally passed out of Methodist use, with the transfer of the Dublin Central Mission to the Abbey Street property of the Methodist Church in Ireland. But there are still other traces of the former division of Methodism in Ireland. There are still two circuits in the northern town of Lurgan: one was Wesleyan, the other Primitive Wesleyan. The Methodist church at Castlewellan, Co. Down, still has carved on its gable-end the title "Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Chapel". There is a special sub-committee of the Statutory Trustees for ex-Primitive Wesleyan property. There are still examples of families, in the area where Primitive Wesleyan Methodism was strong, whose names even today are on the rector's list and on the Methodist minister's list. One superintendent minister told me recently how on one circuit in his preparation class he discovered that one boy was at the same time being received for confirmation in the Church of Ireland. On investigation he discovered it still to be a tradition in that family to hold membership in both Churches.

This different Methodist history in Ireland, with the existence of a connexion closely linked with the Established Church, does not mean, however, that Irish Methodism is thereby so much nearer Anglicanism today. One main factor behind Primitive Wesleyan Methodism was the desire to defend Protestantism. Today's relations with Anglicanism are another story, but it would be safe to hazard the opinion (whatever one's own private views) that in Irish Methodism now there is proportionately more hesitancy about the Anglican-Methodist conversations than there is even in England.

F. JEFFERY.

Our painstaking Secretary, the Rev. Thomas Shaw, has produced a 240-page cyclostyled history entitled *Methodism in the Camelford and Wadebridge Circuit, 1743-1963* (7s. 6d.). Unfortunately for prospective purchasers, every one of the limited number of copies produced has been sold; but it speaks well of the production itself, which is fully worthy of this encouraging "sell-out".

Other local histories we have been happy to receive are the following :

- Zion, Hove Edge. Brighthouse, by E. P. Green, B.A., M.Ed.
- Zion, Bedminster Down (no author or price stated).
- Rowhedge, Essex, by Derek C. Marshall (2s.).
- Wesley, Haverfordwest, by J. Ivor John (2s. 6d.).
- Pilling, Garstang, by Revs. E. G. Capstick and F. G. Mee (2s. 6d.).
- Broadwell, by Arthur Olorenshaw (10s. 6d.).
- Droylsden, by E. A. Rose (3s. 6d.).

## TWO WESLEY LETTERS

FROM time to time our hearts are gladdened by the unexpected emergence of the full text of a document which has hitherto been known to historians only in fragments. A letter recently donated to Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London, is such an event, and has enabled us to fill in another corner of the picture of Wesley's post-conversion years. We are grateful to the minister of Wesley's Chapel, the Rev. Max W. Woodward, for giving us permission to reproduce a transcript of the letter as it appeared in *Wesley's Chapel Magazine* for July 1963.

The document itself consists of four pages written by John Wesley on 26th February 1739. The first two pages carry a letter to George Whitefield, to whom the whole is addressed, and the third page is a letter to William Seward. Whitefield has written on the cover, "answered March 3rd".

A fragment of the letter from Wesley to Whitefield is reproduced in Tyerman's *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (i, p. 231). It is printed more fully, but with many omissions and inaccuracies, in the *Standard Journal* (i, p. 145), and this fuller though inaccurate version is reproduced word for word in the *Standard Letters* (i, pp. 280 ff.). As the previous versions are so faulty, we now offer a full and correct transcription from the autograph, with Wesley's abbreviations and capitals retained:

### JOHN WESLEY TO GEORGE WHITEFIELD

My Dear Brother,

London. Feb. 26 [1739].

One or 2 Letters (since the rec<sup>t</sup> of yours) I have had from my Mother. Let us praise GOD on her Behalf. Our Lord's Hand is not shorten'd among us. Yesterday I preached at St. Katherine's & at Islington, where the Church was almost as hot as some of y<sup>e</sup> Society rooms use to be. I think I never was so much strengthen'd before. The Fields, after Service, were white with people praising GOD. About 300 were present at Mr. Sims; thence I went to Mr. Bell's then to Fetterlane, & at 9 to Mr. Brays; Where also we only wanted more Room. Today I expound in Skinner's at 4, at Mrs. West's at 6, & to a large Company of poor Sinners in Gravel-lane (Bishopgate) at Eight. The Society at Mr. Crouch's does not meet till 8. So y<sup>t</sup> I expound before I go to Him near St. James' Square; where One Young Woman has been lately filled with the Holy Ghost, & overflows with Joy & Love. On Wedn. at 6 we have a noble Company of Women, not adorn'd w<sup>th</sup> Gold or Costly Apparel, but with a Meek & Quiet Spirit, & Good Works. I cannot say so much of those who come to Mrs. Sims' on Thursday: But they attend to y<sup>e</sup> Word; So y<sup>t</sup> I hope it Will shew y<sup>m</sup> what it is y<sup>t</sup> becometh Women professing Godliness. At the Savoy on Thursday Evening we have usually 2 or 300; most of them (at least) throughly awakend. Mr. Abbot's ParLOUR is more than filled on Friday; as is Mr. Parker's room twice over; where I think I have commonly had more Power given me than at any other place. A Week or two ago a Note was given me there, as near as I remember in these Words:

" Your Prayers are desired for a Child y<sup>t</sup> is Lunatick & sore vexed day & night ; That our Lord wou'd heal him, as he did those in y<sup>e</sup> days of his Flesh, & y<sup>t</sup> he wou'd give his Parents Faith & Patience till his time is come ". You will hear more of this.

On Saturday Sennight a middle-aged, wellrest Woman at Beach Lane (where I expound, usually to 5 or 600, before I go to Mr. Exall's Society) was seized, as it appear'd to Several about her, with little less than the Agonies of Death. We pray'd, that GOD who had brought her to y<sup>e</sup> Birth, w<sup>d</sup> [give] strength to bring forth, & " y<sup>t</sup> he wou'd work speedily, [that] many might See it & fear, & put their trust in y<sup>e</sup> Lord." Five days She traveld & groand being in bondage. On Thursday Evening our Lord got himself y<sup>e</sup> victory. And from y<sup>t</sup> moment She has been full of Joy & Love, w<sup>ch</sup> She openly declared at the same place on Saturday last. So y<sup>t</sup> Thanksgivings also were given to GOD by many on her Acc<sup>t</sup>. It is to be observed Her Friends have accounted her Mad for these 3 years, & accordingly, bled, blisterd her & what not? Come & let us praise the Lord, & magnify his Name together !

To The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr. Whitefield  
At Mrs Grevil's  
In the Wine Street  
Bristol.

The letter to William Seward<sup>1</sup> had not been published before it appeared in *Wesley's Chapel Magazine*. The text is as follows :

#### JOHN WESLEY TO WILLIAM SEWARD

London, Feb. 26. 1738/9.

My Dear Brother Seward,

Many of us joind together last night in Prayer, That the Word of God might have free course and be glorified among you. Persecution here Seems to be at a stand ; or rather, to decrease : Doubtless because of our present Weakness ; Least those who have not yet Root in themselves, in time of temptation shou'd fall away. I have had a Second Confer[ence] (a little before Mr. Venn's death) with Mr. Berriman. . . . did not enter into the Merits of the Cause ; . . . He spoke largely in commendation of the Serv[ice] of our Church, & of the Necessity of Church Unity ;<sup>2</sup> in all which we were fully agreed. His whole Behaviour was Mild & Friendly. At parting I told Him, There was No other thing he desired w<sup>ch</sup> I wou'd not gladly comply with : Only, I cou'd not cease to publish the Gospel of Christ : A Dispensation of the Gospel being committed to me.

Pray for us, my Dear Brother : Especially for

Your poor, weak Brother

JOHN WESLEY.

With the above, two other letters were presented to Wesley's Chapel by the same donor. These are :

- (a) George Whitefield to Edward Seward. Bristol, 23rd March 1738.

<sup>1</sup> For William Seward, generally known as " The first Methodist martyr ", see *Proceedings*, vi, p. 137 ; xvii, p. 187 ; xxxiv, p. 17, and Tyerman : *The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, i, pp. 163-8.

<sup>2</sup> Here the manuscript is mutilated, and an alternative rendering of this word would be " Amity ".

(b) William Seward to Benjamin Seward. Bristol, 25th March 1738.

The dating in these cases is probably that of the Old Calendar, and should properly appear as 1738/9. The identity of Edward Seward remains a problem. The other brothers we know. Benjamin became a Methodist, and was soundly condemned by Henry. Thomas became an Anglican clergyman, and William, of course, was the martyr. Was there a fifth brother, Edward, or is his name on this letter a slip of the pen?

These two letters also are reproduced in full in the issue of *Wesley's Chapel Magazine* already referred to. JOHN C. BOWMER.

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### The Rev. R. Lee Cole, M.A., B.D.

THE Wesley Historical Society (Irish Branch) has sustained a great loss in the passing of its President, the Rev. R. Lee Cole. A son of the manse, Mr. Cole entered the ministry in 1900, and travelled in the most important circuits in Ireland. He was one of the original Board of Trustees of the Irish Methodist Church, and the last surviving member of the Legal Hundred in Ireland. He had been Secretary of the General Education Department since 1918, and was a representative of the General Council of the United Church in Canada in 1929. In 1934-5 he was President of the Methodist Church in Ireland.

Mr. Cole had been President of the Irish branch of the Wesley Historical Society since 1948, and in 1956 had the distinction of being awarded a Fellowship in Methodist History by the World Methodist Council. His publications include *Lovefeasts, A Manual for Preparation Classes, The Wesleys came to Dublin, History of Methodism in Ireland*, and (just published) *The History of Wesley College, Dublin*. He was an outstanding preacher and lecturer, and a qualified musician.

R. H. GALLAGHER.

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The following publications, all dealing with Methodist history, have reached us:

*The Epworth Witness* (October 1963), which includes the first *Journal* of the Lincolnshire Methodist Historical Society.

*Wesley's Chapel Magazine* (April, July and October 1963).

*Journal and Proceedings of the Australasian Methodist Historical Society, Sydney* (June and October 1963).

*The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales* (Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church) (September and December 1963).

*Bathafarn* (the *Journal of the Historical Society of the Methodist Church in Wales*) (1963), which prints a newly-discovered letter of Dr. Coke and an account of Early Methodism in and around Wrexham, 1750-1805.

*Methodist History* (U.S.A.) (July and October 1963).

*Heritage* (the *Journal of the Methodist Historical Society of Victoria*) (October 1963).

## THE ORIGINS OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM

THE origins of Primitive Methodism are usually traced to the first Camp Meeting held on Mow Cop on 31st May 1807. It is not often realized that this Camp Meeting had been made possible only by reason of a revival which had been in progress since 1800, and for which Hugh Bourne was chiefly responsible. The focal point of this revival was a small chapel built by Hugh Bourne himself in 1801 at Harrisehead<sup>1</sup> on the slopes of Mow Cop. The important part played by the society of colliers gathered by Hugh Bourne in this chapel in preparing the way for the first Camp Meeting has not always been recognized. A study of the work of the society between 1801 and 1807 is essential to an understanding of the origins of Primitive Methodism.

Not long before the spring of 1799 the mother of Hugh Bourne had borrowed from a Mr. J. Mayer, a Burslem Methodist, a thick volume containing the life of Fletcher of Madeley, sermons by John Wesley, Jane Cooper's letters, the lives of Thomas Taylor and John Haime, Joseph Alleine's *Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, Richard Baxter's *Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live*, a Treatise on the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England, and other matters. Bourne, who was then nearing his twenty-seventh birthday, read this volume eagerly in the farmhouse at Bemersley. Wesley's "Sermon on the Trinity" was in the volume. One of Bourne's difficulties had been to discover which denomination held the truth. The problem, although common enough, was made more acute for Bourne by his father's rigid intolerance of all Dissent. His father, although himself "destitute of the realities of religion, opposed every community that dissented from the Church".<sup>2</sup> But Bourne had become friendly with a Quaker in the village of Werrington, and was "much edified" by the reading of Quaker history. Wesley's sermon on the Trinity now showed him that there could be "real, inward Christians" in every denomination in spite of many erroneous opinions being held. "Persons may be quite right in their opinions and yet have no religion at all; and on the other hand, persons may be truly religious, who hold many wrong opinions."<sup>3</sup>

The reading of this sermon opened the mind of Hugh Bourne, and cleared the way for reading the other treatises in the volume. Until this time Bourne had known nothing of Methodist teaching, but

this sermon of Mr. Wesley's on the Trinity was to me as a light indeed; it cleared my way through, and gave me to see that I might join any

<sup>1</sup> We have preserved the original spelling, as in Walford's *Memoirs of Hugh Bourne*: today it is spelt "Harrisehead".

<sup>2</sup> J. T. Wilkinson: *Hugh Bourne, 1772-1852* (1952), p. 14.

<sup>3</sup> Sermon LV.



really religious society, without under-valuing others, and might profit by all, and this has been a blessing to me ever since.<sup>4</sup>

Possibly this sermon played some part in Bourne's thinking when he had to decide his attitude to his own Wesleyan denomination in 1807. By that time he had himself formed a "really religious" society at Harrisehead, and it may well have seemed to him more important to foster the growth of this society than to obey the Conference injunction against camp meetings. If Bourne gave priority to faith over order, and this was certainly a distinctive mark of Primitive Methodism, then Wesley's sermon on the Trinity might be held to bear some responsibility.

But there was another and more profound difficulty in the mind of Hugh Bourne. At the age of twenty-seven he found himself unable to be rid of a sense of guilt which had haunted him for twenty years. As a boy of only seven years of age he had one day vowed to God that if God would help him to carry some heavy coals across a brook near his home he and the whole family would worship Him. Walford states that even this was hardly the whole extent of his promise, although not informing us what the remainder of it was.<sup>5</sup> But Hugh Bourne's father was a drunkard, a man of violence and "given to paroxysms of rage".<sup>6</sup> It was scarcely within the power of any boy of seven to bring such a father to worship God. It was not long before Hugh realized how the promise was beyond his power to perform. Then he attempted to persuade himself that he had not promised so much, but he

was immediately struck with the thought that he was trying to tell a lie to the Lord; his heart sank within him, and a foundation was laid for upwards of twenty years' sorrow.<sup>7</sup>

We may question, however, whether this was the "foundation" for Hugh Bourne's long night of mourning. It is much more likely that the foundation lay in the fear set up in his infant mind by a violent father. The working of Bourne's mind at the age of seven shows marked terror. His view of God was that of a child who fears that if he tells a lie he will be terribly punished. This fear of punishment was the real foundation for Bourne's childhood dread. There can be little doubt that it sprang from the terror engendered in his mind by the violent rages of his own father, and the punishments to which they doubtless gave rise in the Bourne household. The violence of the father's temper often caused the son to sigh in secret and to pray for deliverance.

Added to this was a constant fear of the torments of hell. From the age of seven at least, hell was a vivid reality to Hugh Bourne, as to many of his contemporaries. For twenty years "he seldom went to bed at night without a dread of awaking in hell before morning; and in the morning he awoke to fresh terrors".<sup>8</sup> When, Bourne being

<sup>4</sup> John Walford: *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the late Venerable Hugh Bourne* (ed. W. Antliff, 1857), i, p. 32.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 2, 8, 22.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 16.

aged nearly twenty-seven, his mother brought home the volume containing the works of Puritan divines, there would be added dread for his conscience. Alleine and Baxter make it very clear that there is only one fate for the impenitent sinner.

Canst thou abide the everlasting burnings? Canst thou dwell with consuming fire? When thou shalt be as glowing iron in hell and thy whole body and soul shall be as perfectly possessed by God's burning vengeance as the sparkling iron with the fire when heated in the fiercest furnace?"

"The certainty and terror of the torments of hell", no less than "the certainty and excellency of the joys of heaven", and "the eternity of both",<sup>10</sup> as portrayed in the volume, now brought Bourne to the edge of despair. The power of his unconscious fear and guilt burst into his conscious mind with the clarity of a voice.

It will not do to go after old Booty—it will not do to go after old Booty! It kept repeating in my mind with force for some time; it did not appear to be a voice but an impression equal to a voice. I was startled from head to foot.<sup>11</sup>

Old Booty was a London pawnbroker who had been said to have walked into the crater of the volcano at Stromboli. The sea-captain, one Barnaby, who told the story, concluded that they had seen a ghost walking into hell, since Old Booty had died in London. Bourne had read this story, probably in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1783. Now it made him feel that he was in dire danger of eternal fire. He began to accuse himself of the unpardonable sin by his constant delay in repenting, and saw himself as worse than Cain or Judas. Sleep and appetite deserted him, and he could not pray in this dark night of the soul. Then he realized that if he was not born again and went to hell he could at least go to hell praying; in a few days he was able to find comfort in prayer.

But deliverance was not far away. One Sunday morning, in the spring of 1799, he sat reading, in the Bemersley home, in Fletcher of Madeley's *Six Letters on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God*. This work, Fletcher's earliest, had been published posthumously in the *Arminian Magazine* for 1793.

Suddenly the Lord was manifested to me, as filling the Universe with His Presence, and I heard an inward voice proclaim twice: "Thy iniquity is forgiven, and thy sin is covered." Light, life and liberty and happiness flowed into my soul, and such rapturous joy that I could scarce tell whether I was in the body or not. When I could articulate anything it was: "My Father, my loving Father! My God, my reconciled God! My hope, my heaven and my all!" I now felt that I was able to believe in Christ with my heart unto righteousness, and with my mouth make confession unto salvation: the burden of my sin was quite gone.<sup>12</sup>

In the *Six Letters* Fletcher argues that just as there are bodily

<sup>9</sup> Joseph Alleine: *An Alarm to Unconverted Sinners*, chapter V.

<sup>10</sup> Richard Baxter: *A Call to the Unconverted to Turn and Live*.

<sup>11</sup> Walford, op. cit., i, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> "Self-review" by Hugh Bourne, dated 17th August 1800 (quoted in J. T. Wilkinson, op. cit., p. 26). See also *Proceedings*, xxviii, pp. 131-7.

senses through which external things can be known, so there are inward spiritual senses through which spiritual truth can be known. The same degree of certainty open to us by the perception of outward things is also open to us by way of inward revelation.

The revelation of Christ by which a carnal professor becomes a holy and happy possessor of the faith, is a supernatural, spiritual, experimental manifestation of the Spirit, power, and love and sometimes of the Person of God manifest in the flesh, whereby He is known and enjoyed in a manner altogether new. This manifestation is, sooner or later, in a higher or lower degree, vouchsafed to every sincere seeker, through the medium of one or more of the spiritual senses opened in the soul, in a gradual or instantaneous manner, as it pleases God.<sup>13</sup>

There can be no doubt that such a passage would come to Hugh Bourne as cool waters on parched ground. There was nothing in Fletcher about endless torment. There was much about the clear certainty of the Son of God being manifest in love to the soul of the sincere seeker. This was exactly what Bourne was needing after the terror that had dogged him for twenty years. The words of John xiv. 21, as expounded in Fletcher, came with special comfort: "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him." Wesley's sermon had opened the mind of Bourne; it was left to Wesley's "designated successor" to bring solace to his soul. The torment of fear was driven out of Hugh Bourne on that Sunday morning in the spring of 1799, by the perfect love which casts out fear. Bourne felt himself "filled with joy, and love, and glory, which made full amends for twenty years' suffering".<sup>14</sup>

Yet the actual guilt of Bourne had been no worse than normal. His open sins were few; the worst being that he was twice intoxicated in his nineteenth year. But the unreal fear and guilt inflicted on him by the threats of a violent father and the strict demands of an implacable Judge in heaven were far too heavy to be borne. In the remarkable "Self-review" written by Bourne eighteen months after his release from the burden, he tried to describe the experiences of his infant mind:

When I was four or five years old I had as clear ideas of God as was possible for anyone to have at that age; I thought that heaven was a place of happiness, and that those who were righteous and kept God's commandments, were admitted thither, and could see God—which I thought the greatest happiness—and were happy for ever and ever; and that hell was a place of torments, and all that did wickedly and broke God's commandments, were sent thither to be tormented by the devil and his angels, in blue flaming brimstone, for ever and ever. These views made me very intent on keeping what I thought were God's commandments.<sup>15</sup>

This insight into Bourne's mind makes it clear why he should be

<sup>13</sup> John Fletcher; *Second Letter on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God*, printed in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, June 1822.

<sup>14</sup> Walford, op. cit., i, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 12.

so stricken with remorse when he failed to keep his promise to the Lord after carrying the coals successfully across the brook at the age of seven. He was in fear of eternal torment for having broken a promise impossible to fulfil! His conscience had become a tyrant. "These views made me 'very intent' on keeping what I thought were God's commandments." Who can doubt that his view of God was in part a projection of his view of his own tyrannical father?

But the "Self-review" also stated:

I soon learned to read—instructed by my mother—and greatly delighted to read the bible and religious books; and having in one of them, Watts' Hymns, this line,—

"Jehovah rides upon a cloud,  
And thunders through the world,"—

I thought I should see him when it thundered, and accordingly I would be out of doors at such times, and my mother could not keep me in the house; having looked many times and could not see him, I asked my mother about it, and she told me he was invisible; however, I still got out of doors when it thundered, for I thought that the Lord was there, and I would be as near him as possible, for my soul was filled with love—love to him—and I thought I was greatly beloved by him also.<sup>16</sup>

The "Self-review" was written at the age of twenty-eight, and Bourne may have been reading back the experience of the love of God which came to him in the spring of 1799 into his childhood ideas of God. But it is more likely that he did indeed have some genuine sense of God's love at the age of five: "my soul was filled with love to him, and I thought I was greatly beloved by him also." If so, he would owe this very largely to his mother, for whom he had always the deepest reverence and love.<sup>17</sup> She was a woman of fine character, whose industry and great labours kept the family from want. It is not usual for an old man of eighty to think of his mother when dying, but Hugh Bourne did. His last words were: "Old companions! Old companions! My mother!"<sup>18</sup>

Hugh Bourne never forgot the debt he owed to Fletcher of Madeley. In the year 1822, twenty-three years after he had first read Fletcher's *Six Letters*, he published them in full in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, along with his own narrative of the "History of the Primitive Methodists". For him the origins of Primitive Methodism were bound up with the springtime of his soul when he sat reading the *Six Letters* one Sunday morning in the spring of 1799 in the farmhouse at Bemersley. It was then with overwhelming relief that he came to realize that God was not an implacable Judge but a loving Father: "My Father, my loving Father!" God was not, after all, like the father in the home of his boyhood. "Light, life, liberty and happiness flowed into my soul, and such rapturous joy that I could scarce tell whether I was in the body or not . . . the burden of my sin was quite gone."

The words expounded by Fletcher in the *Six Letters*—"I will love

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 3.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 374.

him and will manifest myself to him"—were often taken by Bourne as his text in the formative years of Primitive Methodism, and the same text was on his lips when he preached his last sermon on Sunday, 22nd January 1852, at Norton. The enormous relief that had come to him after twenty years' suffering set the fervent tone so marked in the early days of Primitive Methodism. Neither Bourne nor his early fellow-workers could be easy bedfellows of lukewarm religion.

The soul of Bourne had been unlocked by the Methodist emphasis on the love of God being inwardly manifest, and he gained his first convert when he began to explain this to his half-cousin, Daniel Shubotham. Daniel lived in a miner's cottage on the slopes of Mow Cop in the village of HARRISEHEAD. Early in the year 1800 Hugh Bourne went to work in the vicinity of HARRISEHEAD. His work was to provide timber for the Stonetrough Colliery nearby, and it required him to reside in the immediate neighbourhood for some months. He had a long conversation with Daniel in his HARRISEHEAD cottage on Christmas Day 1800. Daniel, who had been born into a good family and had been fairly well educated, had squandered his patrimony and was now a working collier, "ungodly and dissipated, bold and talented as a poacher", with "the bad habit of much swearing".<sup>19</sup> Bourne explained to Daniel how Jesus Christ must be manifested to him if he would be born again and go to heaven. He then put into Daniel's hands the "Self-review" that he had written the previous August containing a full account of his conversion and experience of the love of God. The result was the conversion of Shubotham himself.

Some weeks previously, another collier, Matthias Bayley, had been converted at the neighbouring village of Newchapel while listening to an open-air preacher from the Burslem circuit—the only preacher then in that circuit who practised open-air preaching. Bourne, Shubotham, and Bayley, each of whom had entered into a recent experience of conversion, now became fellow-helpers. They began to converse with the colliers around Mow Cop to such good effect that soon four more were "in deep distress, deeply awakened". One of these four had been connected with a newly-formed gang of highwaymen which had failed in its first attempt at highway robbery. The work of Bourne and his helpers now caused the gang to break up, "and those who were not brought to God by repentance were ere long brought to condign punishment or were transported for felony".<sup>20</sup>

This early episode in the Mow Cop revival throws a vivid light on the living conditions of the colliers in the area at the turn of the century. Around Mow Cop they were in the same desperate plight as the colliers of Kingswood in Wesley's early days. The physical aspect of Mow Cop was bad enough, with its "craggy rocks, unsightly knobs, holes, sharp slopes &c on which here and there stood the

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 53.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 71.

rough irregular, stone-built huts of the rustic colliers". But the moral aspect was worse. The

blast of immorality had put its mark on the habits of the people in nearly every mountain-hut and home—the genius of sin and ungodliness everywhere reigned predominant—midnight marauders prowled about in search of plunder—blasphemy, profane mirth, cock-fighting, bull-baiting, and other scenes revolting to the feelings of humanity everywhere prevailed through the district.<sup>21</sup>

There was a small Anglican chapel-of-ease in the neighbouring village of Newchapel, and a Methodist meeting held once a fortnight in the home of Joseph Pointon on the Cheshire side of Mow Cop. But neither could touch the depth of the need.

In the village of HARRISEHEAD itself, on the Staffordshire side of Mow Cop, there was only one Methodist, Jane Hall, and she now offered her cottage to Hugh Bourne and his helpers for mid-week prayer meetings. One by one, the colliers of Mow Cop came to this meeting, and many were converted. They began to talk freely about their experience, without ceremony, on the coal-pit banks, in their own hovels, and in the bowels of the earth "where at meal times they preached Jesus and the Resurrection".<sup>22</sup> Up to this point there had been no actual preaching. Neither Bourne nor Shubotham nor Bayley had been accustomed to preach; none of them was a local preacher. The entire movement among the miners had been set in motion by personal conversations and sustained by prayer meetings in Jane Hall's cottage.

By the middle of July 1801, little more than six months after Hugh Bourne's first convert, Daniel Shubotham, had been gained, there were so many converts that a chapel had become necessary to contain them. A deputation of colliers approached Hugh Bourne to ask for a chapel to be built, Daniel Shubotham having already agreed to provide a site in part of his garden at HARRISEHEAD. Hugh Bourne fell in with the idea, and promised to provide the timber at an estimated cost of thirty pounds. But a few days later the colliers came again to Hugh Bourne and explained that they were in no position to help with the cost of the building, but that they would gladly dig the foundations. Bourne was taken by surprise. He had had no experience in building, although as a wheelwright he was a craftsman in wood. Nor had he any resources of his own to meet the cost. He appealed to the Burslem circuit, but they turned a deaf ear to all he could say on behalf of Mow Cop and its needs. He could look for little help from Mow Cop itself, as the colliers were sunk in poverty. Nevertheless Hugh Bourne decided to build the chapel.

Before long, Bourne found himself involved in the building work "from head to foot". Materials had to be brought from a great distance on bad roads. There was no one "to lay on a hand or advance a single pound, and it was difficult at times to get materials carried". Before the roof could be covered, one of the gables was

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 49.

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 71.

blown down, and the roof fell in. Bourne wrote in his Journal: "I hope the Lord will have mercy on any one who has to pass through such scenes of trouble."<sup>23</sup> To make matters worse, two potters came from Goldenhill, some two miles away, and spread doubts among the Mow Cop colliers about the wisdom of all they were doing. They stirred up the colliers against Hugh Bourne, and even Daniel Shubotham and Matthias Bayley came under their influence. Bourne wrote: "I was under one of the greatest trials I was ever under within my whole life."<sup>24</sup> For a time there was acute danger of an end to the Mow Cop revival; it began to appear that a chapel might not be needed after all. But after a few weeks, Daniel and Matthias had their eyes opened to the mischief-making potters from Goldenhill, and they informed the two men that they were not to come any more to Harrisehead.

The work of Hugh Bourne in building the chapel continued for about eighteen months. Daniel Shubotham had conveyed his land to Hugh Bourne, William Handley, Joseph Pointon, and Josiah Mayer on 20th August 1801. Bourne and his co-signatories were able by a Deed of Trust dated 3rd February 1803 to convey the chapel, for a nominal consideration of five shillings, to a body of eighteen trustees who were to act under the Trusts of Wesley's Deed Poll of 28th February 1784. Hugh Bourne, who had built the chapel with his own hands, and with materials he provided himself, thereby brought it under the authority of the Wesleyan Conference and into the Burslem circuit. He remained a trustee of Harrisehead chapel for over twenty years after his exclusion from the Burslem Wesleyan society in 1808, retiring from the trust only when it was reconstituted on 21st June 1829.

The two Deeds of 20th August 1801 and 3rd February 1803, now in the possession of the Tunstall circuit, are fascinating primary sources for a study of the origins of Primitive Methodism. They contain the signatures of Hugh Bourne, as well as his brothers James and William, Daniel Shubotham, James Pointon, and the mark of Matthias Bayley. It is especially interesting to have the signatures of all three men—Bourne, Shubotham, and Bayley—who were the three original leaders of the Mow Cop revival.

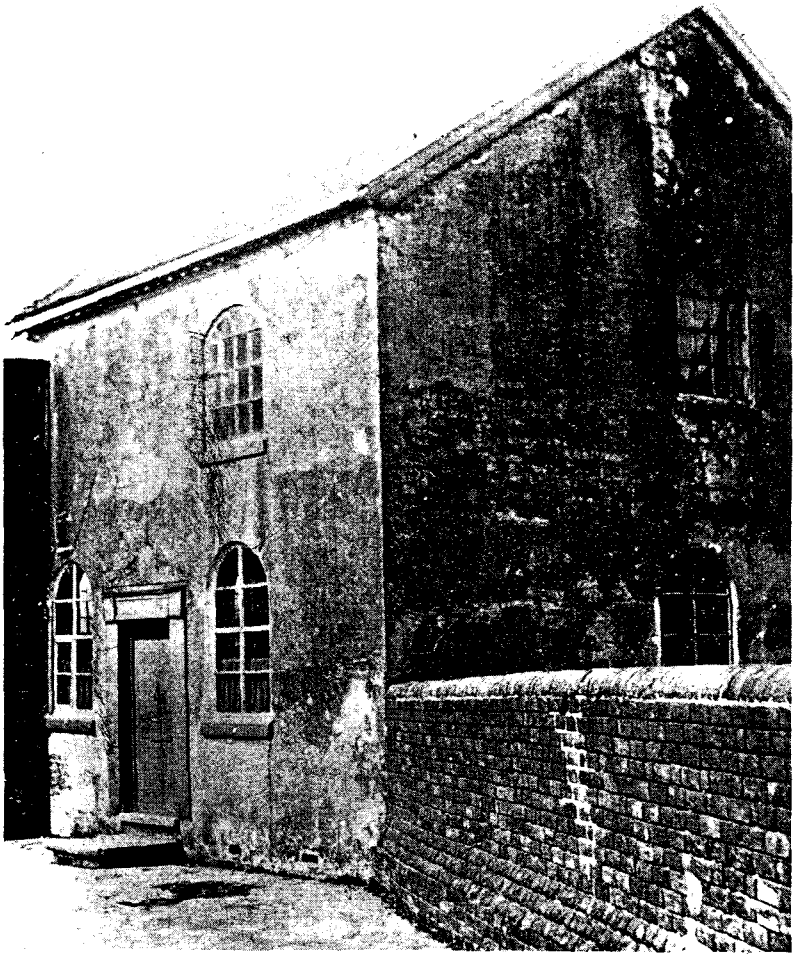
The Deeds provide written evidence of the outbreak of a revival among the colliers of Mow Cop six years before the Camp Meeting of 1807, for they show that it was necessary for Hugh Bourne to erect a chapel there in 1801 capable of holding 200 people. The importance of this Harrisehead chapel for the origins of Primitive Methodism lies in the fact that it was the society of colliers meeting in the chapel from which Hugh Bourne drew the encouragement and support he needed for the first Camp Meeting on Mow Cop on 31st May 1807.

LEONARD BROWN.

*(To be continued!)*

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 81.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 82.



HUGH BOURNE'S CHAPEL AT HARRISHHEAD.

This picture shows the chapel as Hugh Bourne built it, i.e. without the extensions which were added later.





POTTERY FIGURE OF JOHN BRYAN  
(1770 - 1856)

(See article on pages 87-88).



*Eich Serchog*  
*J. Bryan*

"EICH SERCHOG" i.e. Your affectionate J. BRYAN"

*Reproduced by kind permission of the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.*

## A NEW ATTRIBUTION FOR A POTTERY FIGURE

**D**URING the past forty years some enthusiasts for Methodist pottery have been adding to their collections a somewhat striking portrait figure in the belief that it represented William O'Bryan, with whom originated the Bible Christian denomination of Methodists. This figure is in Staffordshire ware, and although quite rare it appears to have been produced in at least two distinctive decorations: usually the figure is entirely black, but I have seen one example where the garments are rendered in cream with black edgings. He is depicted standing by a pillar comprising nine courses of masonry—a technical device frequently employed, as otherwise the figure by itself would not be self-supporting. On the top of the pillar there is placed a book with a red back and gilt-edged pages; the book is also partially held in the right hand. The whole object is 10½ ins. high, and on the oval base and in raised capitals the name is given with unmistakable clarity: J. BRYAN.

With the name being stated so boldly, one would have thought that no possible error of identification could have ensued; but unfortunately this has not been the case, and once the attribution of the figure to William O'Bryan had been made, successive writers simply followed suit.

O'Bryan claimed descent from one of Cromwell's Irish officers, but it is not clear if this officer was an Englishman who proceeded to Ireland with Cromwell's forces or if he was in fact one who, already settled in Ireland, joined the English army on its arrival. Be that as it may, this officer made his home in Cornwall at the time of the Restoration, and for many years the family name was spelt indifferently. William was the first to restore the Irish orthography, and in the relevant article in the *Dictionary of National Biography* the name is spelt "O'Bryan" on eight occasions, no other style being used. With evidence so plainly available, it is difficult to understand how anyone could have turned J. Bryan into W. O'Bryan. A much better attribution would have been the Rev. J. Bryan, who was an ejected minister at Coventry, and whilst a possible weak link in that theory would be the different style of dress, it has to be remembered that the potters were never over-scrupulous on such points.

Happily fresh thought has been given to this problem of identification,<sup>1</sup> and the true subject of the figure has emerged—John Bryan, a preacher who was admitted to the Wesleyan Methodist ministry in 1801. Confirmatory proof is to be found in a lithograph portrait which reposes in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, and through the kindness of the Library authorities there appears in these pages a facsimile of this portrait, which, placed beside an illustration of the pottery figure, permits a comparison of the two.

<sup>1</sup> vol. xli, p. 339.

<sup>2</sup> *Supplement to Staffordshire Pottery Figures of the Victorian Age*, by Thomas Balston, p. 3.

John Bryan (1770-1856) was born at Llanfyllin, Montgomeryshire, and a good deal can be ascertained about his career. His name appears in the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography down to 1940*, and A. H. Williams includes him in *Welsh Wesleyan Methodism, 1800-1858*. No treatise on the early years of Wesleyan Methodism in Wales would be complete without a reference to John Bryan, and an article on this energetic evangelist occupies a prominent place in *Oriel y Gweinidogion* (i.e. *A Gallery of Ministers*), published by T. Amos Hughes & Co. of Liverpool in 1900, the centenary year of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism. If we turn to *Hill's Arrangement*, we learn something of his 23 years' itinerancy as a minister, and note that eleven of these years were spent in Welsh towns, whilst of the other twelve Liverpool, Manchester and Rochdale claimed seven, and one is prompted to inquire if these years in Lancashire were spent amongst the Welsh-speaking people who sought a livelihood in industrial centres which were then developing so rapidly. Whitchurch saw him for twelve months, and the last four years as a travelling preacher were divided equally between Burslem and Epworth—in many respects strange and sharp contrasts to his previous spheres of activity.

Then, for some reason which so far has escaped me, Bryan settled in Leeds, where in Sweet Street off Meadow Lane he carried on a business as grocer and druggist for the next seven years. His name is to be found in Baines's trade directory for 1826, and it also occurs in connexion with the dispute in 1826-7 over the installation of an organ in Brunswick Chapel. Along with most of the local preachers in the Leeds West circuit he was involved in this unhappy controversy, and in J. Barr's *Facts relating to Brunswick Chapel Organ* his name appears in the list of signatories to a petition to the leaders' meeting protesting against the proposed installation of the organ. Bryan was not active as a local preacher after this dispute, and this could be the reason, as well as that of his wife's poor health, which led to his leaving Leeds for Caernarvon. In the latter town he was grocer and tea-merchant in premises in Castle Street, but above all he was a Methodist preacher, and continued so until his death in 1856 at the ripe old age of 86 years.

One wonders why pottery figures were made of this character who is now so largely forgotten. He must have enjoyed great popularity during his lifetime, though it is doubtful if his evangelistic fervour was greater than that of so many other preachers of his day and generation. But some Staffordshire potter must have thought that figures of J. Bryan were a sound commercial proposition. One example of this figure is in the possession of the Caernarvon Corporation, and occupies an honoured place in the mayor's parlour in the municipal offices. And so enthusiasts for collecting Methodist pottery can continue to seek out these arresting figures of J. Bryan confident in the knowledge that they are appropriate to their collections.

HORACE HIRD.

## THE BEGINNINGS AND GROWTH OF METHODISM IN OTFORD

OTFORD (Kent) in the Sevenoaks circuit lies geographically midway between the town of Sevenoaks and the village of Shoreham, being two miles distant from each. It shares with these two places in the history of Methodism, as part of the original Sussex circuit. The details of that history from 1746 to 1932 are contained in Walter D. Judd's book *The Record of Wesleyan Methodism in the Sevenoaks Circuit* (Epworth Press, 1932), which includes the many references in John Wesley's *Journal* to his visits to Sevenoaks and Shoreham between 1746 and 1790.

Otford itself is not mentioned in any records of John and Charles Wesley. This may seem strange, as it lies so closely between Sevenoaks and Shoreham, which were visited so often. But reference to the Kentish maps of the period<sup>1</sup> shows that until the later part of the eighteenth century the Darent Valley road followed the west bank of the river. This was the road which John Wesley would have used from Farningham to Sevenoaks in his travels to and from the Sussex circuit. As the village of Otford lay over the river on the east bank, he would have had no need to come into it. And apparently he never did.

This negative evidence is confirmed by the *Survey of Church Livings*, 1758, which says of Otford that it

contains 64 houses . . . no Papists, Presbyterians, Independents, Anabaptists, Methodists, Moravians and Quakers, or those who profess to disregard religion.<sup>2</sup>

Nonetheless, Otford had a Wesleyan Methodist chapel of its own within ten years of John Wesley's death. If the *Survey* of 1758 was correct, there was a period of some forty years during which the society was built up. There is no specific reference to the date of the founding of the society (as, for example, there is for Sevenoaks in 1753 and Shoreham in 1763). There is, however, good evidence for the spread of Methodism through the district, and Otford undoubtedly shared in this. The dynamic for this spread came from Sevenoaks, whilst Vincent Perronet at Shoreham exerted a strong influence.

Sevenoaks Methodism was deeply indebted to Mrs. Amy George (d. 1798) and her family, who among many activities entertained John Wesley on his frequent visits, made a home for the itinerant preachers, and built the first Sevenoaks chapel at their own expense and on their own land. Mrs. George's son (William, 1741-1814) and grandson (John, 1777-1809) shared in the work of preaching - around Sevenoaks. William George

<sup>1</sup> See *Archeologia Cantiana* (1931), vol. XLIII, p. 91 on roads in the Darent Valley.

<sup>2</sup> From the "Otford 2" Notebook, p. 87, of the late Dr. Gordon Ward in the Sevenoaks Public Library.

in addition to reading one of Wesley's sermons every Thursday evening at Sevenoaks, and singing and praying with the people . . . also visited the neighbouring villages where . . . he employed the same means of religious instruction. He also accompanied the preachers when they went to new places, especially where persecution was violent. Often he endured the insults, and the peltings with mud and grass, of a trifling or enraged mob. [And John George] constantly preached twice and often thrice on Sunday and walked ten, twelve or fourteen miles.<sup>3</sup>

The first reference to Otford occurs in the memoir<sup>4</sup> of Mrs. Elizabeth George (1742-1810), the wife of William George. Her maiden name was Cheeseman, a name appearing frequently in the parish registers of Otford, where she had relatives. The memoir tells how she was brought up to see

no harm in the common amusements of the day, such as cards, balls, plays etc. . . . [but later] she was led to consider them as engendering some of the worst indispositions of human nature . . .

And so she resolved never to indulge in them again.

. . . not long after, being at Otford with a relation who was a hearer of the late Reverend and Pious Vincent Perronet, vicar of Shoreham, she was induced to accompany her to hear the venerable man and the Methodist preachers who used to preach at his house every Friday night. And her heart began gradually to open to the Truth, till she was brought to seek the Lord in good earnest.

She became a Methodist, and in 1768 married William George.

Thus, although it is not known how Methodism started in Otford, there is a clear background-picture of the district in the last forty years of the eighteenth century. There were two well-established societies, at Sevenoaks and Shoreham, each continually fertilized by visits from John Wesley. There was also cross-fertilization between the two, as is evidenced by the preaching of William and John George and the itinerant preachers, and by the attraction towards Vincent Perronet<sup>5</sup> of those seeking serious religious experience. In 1799, as the memoir of John George recalls,

a considerable revival of vital religion took place in Sevenoaks and other parts of the circuit under the ministry of John Woodrow and William Henshaw.

In such a climate, without doubt, the seed was sown in Otford, for in the year 1800 a Wesleyan Methodist chapel was built. It is now a Roman Catholic chapel, having been bought from the Methodists in 1944,<sup>6</sup> but the original builder's tablet remains on the front wall—"J.M.E. 1800".

The tablet sets a dual problem—the initials, and the date 1800. Hitherto the records have stated that "the first Otford chapel was built in 1813".<sup>7</sup> The solution of the date problem is that it was

<sup>3</sup> *Methodist Magazine*, 1811, pp. 119, 233; 1818, pp. 481 and 561, where the stories of the George family are fully told. <sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> See *Proceedings*, xvi, pp. 40 ff.

<sup>6</sup> This small building must have a unique distinction of unintentioned ecumenicity: built by a member of the Church of England for the use of Wesleyan Methodists, it now serves as a Roman Catholic chapel!

<sup>7</sup> Judd, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

built as a private chapel in 1800. The *Visitation Return* for 1807 reported that Otford had

very few Methodists--these are called followers of Wesley. They have a meeting house which was erected 6 or 7 years ago and licensed according to Law."

The chapel was conveyed in 1813 to the official Methodist authorities, in the persons of Richard Gower, Methodist minister, and twelve other trustees, for the sum of £100. The original deed, dated 31st December 1813, is held among the Sevenoaks circuit documents. The founder was James Martyr,<sup>9</sup> who, the deed states,

several years ago started a meeting house or chapel at Otford for the celebration of divine worship by the people called Wesleyan Methodists. This conforms with the date 1800 on the building, and "J.M.E." could stand for J[ames] M[artyr] E[dificavit] or E[rexit].

The schedule to the deed shows that the land originally belonged to the Kentish magnate family the Polhills, and that in July 1773 it passed from Charles Polhill of Chipstead Place (near Sevenoaks) to James Wooden, butcher, of Otford; then by will made in 1788 it passed from James Wooden to James Martyr, his great-nephew. This will is recorded at Somerset House.

The Otford parish records show James Wooden as a substantial ratepayer and elector until his death in 1790. James Martyr is similarly readily traceable. He was married in 1786, and had several children baptized, one of them in 1790 with the names James Wooden Martyr. His wife was buried in the parish church in 1809 "at the west end of the chancel near her children John and Sarah". He himself died in 1837, aged 87 years.<sup>10</sup>

There is no record that James Martyr was a Methodist himself. It is not known why he built the chapel in 1800, nor why he was prepared to hand it over to official Methodism in 1813. A possible clue may be found by reference to the Hogsflesh family who lived in Otford in the eighteenth-nineteenth centuries. One member of this family was a relative of James Martyr and a co-legatee in James Wooden's will; another was his housekeeper in his old age; another is commemorated by a memorial in the parish church. Yet another appears as an applicant in the Lambeth Palace *Register of Dissenting Chapels in Kent*, under date 22nd June 1805, for the registration of an independent place of meeting in the village. It may have been that some members of this family represented the nonconformist element; that between 1790 and 1800 they leaned towards Wesleyanism and induced James Martyr to provide them with a private chapel

<sup>8</sup> Lambeth Palace Library: *Visitation Articles, 1807, Canterbury Peculiars*, vol. II. The licensing does not, however, appear in the Lambeth Palace *Register of Dissenting Chapels*.

<sup>9</sup> The name is misspelt "Martyr" in the records of the Department of Chapel Affairs.

<sup>10</sup> In 1790, the year of James Wooden's death and legacy, he purchased the property in the village now known as Cole's Well. He may have been buried in the parish church with his wife and children, but the register of 1837 lacks the interesting addenda as in 1809. There is no monument visible in the church.

out of his major share of James Wooden's estate; that by 1805 they had moved away from private Wesleyanism (for in the 1807 *Visitation Return* they are quaintly described as "the followers of one Huntingdon"); that this split the Wesleyan cause, or dissatisfied James Martyr, or both, with the result that he took the wise course of handing the chapel over to official Wesleyan Methodism.

A possible contributory factor to the incorporation of the Otford chapel into official Methodist circles may have been that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the Sussex (or Rye) circuit was divided into smaller units. In 1803 the Sevenoaks circuit was formed, including Dartford, Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge and Maidstone; and in 1814 the Maidstone circuit was separated. If the smaller circuit was able to feel more circuit-conscious, it may have attracted the private Otford society into the official fold. All this is vague and suppositional—but the whole story from 1800 to 1813 is shrouded in mist, except that the 1807 *Visitation Return* already quoted ends: ". . . But their number I am credibly informed is lessened of late years."

There are a number of records of the Otford chapel after 1813, among the Sevenoaks circuit papers. Its membership was never large—12 to 16 at peak—and even fell to 2 in 1877. Its stalwart in the middle of the century was Henry Townsend, who died in 1893 aged 87 years. A first-hand reminiscence of the chapel in 1858 is preserved in the *Methodist Recorder* Winter Number, 1905.<sup>11</sup> After 47 years as a local preacher in the circuit, William Franks described his first visit to Otford:

I went to Otford to take the evening service. There I was entertained by Mr. Townsend and his good wife. Henry was then in the prime of life, tall and muscular, with a massive head, and features that reminded one of Wellington; only a day-labourer, but a man of whom any circuit might be proud. For some years. . . [he] was the pillar of the little church at Otford, and when that cause was at its lowest point he never despaired. For months, even for years, he never failed to hold the weeknight prayer-meeting, though there was no one else to join him . . . but, in course of time, a few rallied round him, and his son-in-law, Robert Bye, came to take his place in his declining years, and to carry on the same unwearying devotion to God's house.

Robert Bye, a platelayer, was one of the many who came to Otford with the railway in the "sixties". He lived until 1930, dying at the age of 93 years. He is still remembered as the "great man" of the old chapel, and is commemorated by a memorial tablet in the present Methodist chapel, which was opened in 1936.

It may not be out of place, before concluding this article, to mention the date of the formation of the Sevenoaks society. It is clear that the year 1746 saw the first visits to Sevenoaks, within a few weeks of each other, of both Charles and John Wesley. There has been a tendency to associate with the same year the conversion of

<sup>11</sup> pp. 77-9.



the first female Methodist in the town, Mrs. Amy George, and also the formation of the first society class. Charles Wesley's visit is recorded in his *Journal* under date 16th September 1746, when he preached first at Sevenoaks and later at Shoreham. At the latter preaching, he mentions the presence of "our sisters from Sevenoaks". It has been suggested that Mrs. George was one of these ladies, and that in the following month she went to Shoreham

and invited Mr Wesley to come to Sevenoaks and preach, a request to which he at once acceded, and accordingly took his stand opposite Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School.<sup>12</sup>

This was the "Free School" to which John Wesley himself refers in his *Journal* under date 4th October 1746, to which passage<sup>13</sup> the editor of the Standard edition has added a note as above about Mrs. George—a reference which he acknowledges at taken from "The *Methodist Recorder*, Winter No., 1900, p. 91" in an article by the Rev. Thomas Brackenbury. Walter Judd in his *Record of Wesleyan Methodism in the Sevenoaks Circuit*<sup>14</sup> repeats this association of these incidents.

The true facts are, however, contained in the *Methodist Magazine* for July 1818, which in the memoir of William George recounts at length (and is the earliest record of) the story of his mother, Mrs. Amy George. This sets her spiritual experience as following her grief at her husband's death in 1753. She then went to London to hear the Methodist preachers, and invited them to Sevenoaks. John Bakewell was the first to make the visit. The memoir adds that she died in 1798 "after 45 years' membership of the society of which she was a founder member". This places the founding of the Sevenoaks society as in 1753. This is consistent with the reference to John Bakewell, who "became one of Wesley's preachers in 1749" and was apparently used for special assignments.<sup>15</sup> John Wesley's *Journal* makes no note of any invitation from Mrs. Amy George, either in 1746 or in 1753. The "sisters from Sevenoaks" mentioned by Charles Wesley in 1746 might well have been relatives of Mr. Watkins, who was with him on the occasion and who had family connexions in the town.

F. L. CLARK.

[Acknowledgements for access to records are made to the Connexional Archivist, the Rev. John C. Bowmer; to the Rev. G. F. Hunt and the Sevenoaks Methodist trustees; to the Vicar and Churchwardens of Otford Parish Church; to Miss Violet Underwood of Tunbridge Wells for personal reminiscences; and to Mr. Anthony Stoyel for references to reports on the parish of Otford in 1758 and 1807.—F.L.C.]

<sup>12</sup> Quoted from a little pamphlet held among the Sevenoaks circuit records, written by William Bird and dating from 1850, entitled *Suggestions for Raising Supplies for erecting Chapels and Schools; being Seven Years' Reminiscences Relative to the Commencement and Progress of a New Wesleyan Chapel and Day School in the Town of Sevenoaks, Kent*. The history of the finding of this pamphlet is told by Walter Judd, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

<sup>13</sup> *Journal*, iii, p. 265.

<sup>14</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 56-7.

<sup>15</sup> See Telford: *The New Methodist Hymn-Book Illustrated*, at Hymn 228.

## NEWS FROM OUR BRANCHES

### The Yorkshire Branch

The autumn meeting was held at St. John's, Birstall, on Saturday, 5th October. Mr. Norman V. Rhodes, a local devotee, spoke about John Nelson, whom he called "The Lionheart of Methodism". After tea we inspected the deeds (it was at Birstall that trouble with trustees over the ownership led Wesley to suggest a model deed) and Nelson's study in the chapel grounds. We visited Nelson's old house, and then at the parish church saw the baptismal entry and his crumbling tomb. We could not help but feel that Methodism should give more regard to these sites, both in publicity and in care, and we speak to ourselves. Nelson's later home has already been demolished, and No. 65, Buckroyd is an undistinguished terrace cottage which must surely be on some clearance schedule in the near future. It was after all here that the first Methodist society in the north met together.

The membership of the branch continues to grow, and has now reached 80. Our next meeting will be part of the 200th anniversary celebrations of the Heptonstall octagonal chapel, and will be held there on Saturday, 30th May 1964.

W. STANLEY ROSE.

### The Lincolnshire Branch

The first lecture of the newly-formed Lincolnshire branch was delivered by the Rev. W. Le Cato Edwards, the warden of the Old Rectory at Epworth, on Saturday, 12th October. Mr. Edwards gave a masterly sketch of Epworth through the ages, and showed the influence of the past and the locality upon the Wesleys.

The address has been published in the first *Journal* of the branch, which appeared in November. The new *Journal* is incorporated in the already-existing *Epworth Witness*, edited separately, and non-members may obtain this by application to Mr. Edwards at the price of 1s. 9d. post free.

The number in our branch is now 55. The next event is to be an exhibition of Wesleyana presented by Mr. Lawrence Elvin, which will take place in March. A pilgrimage to Epworth is planned for the later spring.

WILLIAM LEARY.

### The North-East Branch

**SUMMER OUTING.** About twenty members and friends, and a number of children, met on Saturday, 20th July, at Newbiggin-in-Teesdale, at what appears to be the oldest building in the world in continuous use for Methodist worship. Here the society steward, Mr. J. Hutchinson, told us of Methodist beginnings in the dale, of the building of the chapel in 1759, and of its enlargement in 1860. Afterwards some of us looked in at the Bowlees chapel, famed among Primitive Methodists for Willie Wilkinson and his bold if unorthodox approach to the Duke of Cleveland for the land on which the chapel is built.

Of his eighth visit to Teesdale, when he was 76, John Wesley says: "I went a little out of my way to see one of the wonders of nature." We did the same, and were similarly rewarded at the High Force waterfalls. Then back to Middleton, and by way of Romaldkirk and Bowes to beautiful Arkengarthdale, where a splendid tea awaited us, to round off a very satisfying outing.

**AUTUMN MEETING.** At the North Road Methodist church, Durham, on Saturday, 2nd November, about twenty members met for tea, and afterwards heard the branch secretary's paper entitled "Sketches of County Durham Methodists". In this were traced the beginnings and progress of the various branches of Methodism in the county, and the religious and social enrichment that had come through the dedicated service of members and ministers through the years.

**FUTURE EVENTS.** On the eve of Wesley Day, Saturday, 23rd May 1964, our speaker at 3.30 in the afternoon will be the Connexional Archivist, the Rev. John C. Bowmer; and it has been decided that the branch will support a "Wesley Day" rally in the evening, if this can be arranged.

Arrangements are also being made for an outing on Saturday, 18th or 25th July, to Blanchland (including the Abbey), Allendale and Cambo. Professor H. Cecil Pawson will be our guide.

Full details of these and other activities of the branch are given in the branch *Bulletin*, now available at 1s. plus postage to non-members, from Miss C. M. Bretherton, 6, The Craiglunds, Tunstall Road, Sunderland, Co. Durham, who will also welcome inquiries about branch membership.

HAROLD R. BOWES.

### The East Anglian Branch

The autumn meeting was held at Museum Street church, Ipswich, on Saturday, 9th November. In the regretted absence through illness of the branch's chairman, the Rev. John J. Perry, and of its president, the Rev. Hubert J. Martin, in consequence of another engagement, the Rev. Clifford Lever presided. The Rev. G. Osborn Gregory gave a highly interesting talk on "Henry Pearce's Eighteenth-century Class-papers". The speaker had obviously made a careful study of these fascinating documents, and from the poetry and illuminating comments they contained he skilfully and inimitably sketched the character of a very faithful Cornish class-leader who, in John Wesley's day and afterwards, tended his little flock with unceasing concern and affection. It was helpful to have some of the papers shown on the screen, and to hear certain of the most revealing passages effectively read by the Rev. C. Edward Roos. Tea was kindly provided by the local friends.

The secretary reported having received a considerable number of very interesting items for the branch's archives cabinet.

Museum Street will again be the venue for the next meeting, on Saturday, 30th May 1964, at 3 p.m. The speaker will be the connexional Book Steward, the Rev. Dr. Frank H. Cumbers.

W. A. GREEN.

### Branch Publications

Our branches continue to produce their own local bulletins of news and information. The following have been received in recent months:

- CORNWALL ... *Journal*, No. 8 (October 1963).  
 Publication No. 6—*Samuel Drew, 1798-1882*, by  
 T. R. Harris (pp. 24, 2s. 6d.).
- EAST ANGLIA *Bulletin*, No. 9 (July 1963).
- LINCOLNSHIRE *Journal*, No. 1 (now incorporated with *The Epworth  
 Witness*—see note above).
- YORKSHIRE ... *Notes*, No. 3 (June 1963).  
*Notes*, No. 4 (November 1963).

EDITOR.

## BOOK NOTICES

*John Wesley and the Christian Ministry*, by Albert B. Lawson.  
(S.P.C.K., pp. x. 210, 30s.)

This book (the greater part of a thesis which has been accepted by the University of Durham for the degree of Master of Letters) sets out an immense amount of material relevant to Wesley's view of the ministry, showing both the sources and the development of his opinions and practice. For most of the book we simply read the sources with the minimum of comment. Wesley's views prior to Aldersgate are examined, then the period prior to his reading of King's *Primitive Church* is shown to contain no significant development. There follows an examination of King and Stillingfleet and their effect on Wesley's views and actions culminating in his ordinations. The last two chapters attempt a reasoned statement of his position. "If the choice between ecclesiastical order and the direct revelation of the divine will had to be made, the latter must take precedence. He believed he had a special Divine commission and that necessitated special methods which often had to cut across tradition."

The crux of the matter is, of course, Wesley's action in September 1784. Here Mr. Lawson believes

Wesley intended to appoint Coke to take over his own personal authority in America, shared, of course, with Asbury, and to be enjoyed only whilst they remained there. Urged by Coke to do this by a formal ceremony, Wesley used a method of blessing which could be wrongly interpreted as "ordination" or "consecration". From ambitious motives, Coke wilfully interpreted the rite in this way, and naturally, Asbury and the American Methodists accepted it. What can neither be proved to be "ordination" or "consecration", from Scripture, the primitive Church, or Anglican custom, became accepted as such and exaggerated out of all proportion.

To this reviewer this appears to ignore the fact that Wesley sent Coke to America to set up the Methodist Episcopal Church of America with a prayer book and ordinal closely modelled on the Book of Common Prayer. That another interpretation of Coke's letter of 9th August 1784 is possible is shown in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 69. Similarly, the story of King's recantation is highly doubtful.<sup>1</sup>

A further caveat must be entered to the effect that despite the examination of King's work (and one paragraph on page 97), the rest of the book assumes that in Wesley's mind presbyter equals bishop (whereas King said they were different in grade). This leads to a most curious paragraph on page 151 which begins: "[Wesley] did not intend Coke to become a bishop because he would know that he was not entitled to confer orders higher than those he himself possessed." This reviewer has argued elsewhere<sup>2</sup> that Wesley did believe there was a difference of function between presbyter and bishop, and that he was himself Methodism's *episcopos*, set apart to that office (as he says of St. Paul<sup>3</sup>) "not of man nor by man". The doubts thrown on Mather's superintendency seem also to be without foundation.

Nonetheless, we owe a debt of gratitude to Mr. Lawson for bringing together into one volume the documents relevant to this subject.

VICTOR E. VINE.

<sup>1</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxii, p. 86.

<sup>3</sup> *Notes upon the New Testament*, at Acts xiii. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, xxx, p. 162 f.

*Eighteenth Century England*, by Dorothy Marshall. (Longmans, pp. 521, 35s.)

Methodist historians pick up any new book on the eighteenth century with fresh zeal, for anything which adds to one's knowledge of that period helps one to understand better the background of Methodist origin. Dorothy Marshall's book is one of ten in a series on the history of England, under the general editorship of W. N. Medlicott; several are yet to appear. The editor realizes the immensity of the task, and reminds us that "minute investigation" is not possible, but he does feel that the various writers will "deal fully with essential themes". The author of this volume declares that it is her intention to provide a book "mainly for those readers who are attempting a serious study of the period for the first time".

It was with this promise in mind that I turned to the book in the real hope of seeing justice done to the Methodist contribution of that century. We who interest ourselves in these things would not fail to describe Wesley and his work as an "essential theme", yet it is dealt with in half a dozen pages out of the 521 given to the whole century. We come to this work not as new students, however; but for the sake of new students one is compelled to guide them to other and more accurate beginnings.

Perhaps the date 14th May 1738 for Wesley's conversion can be attributed to a printer's error; but does one use this apology when a similar error occurs on the following page? There we have 1740 for 1742, the introduction of the penny-a-week idea. I have always understood that the Aldersgate society meeting was Anglican, but Dorothy Marshall says that John Wesley went to a meeting of the Moravians.

It seems a little odd that any modern historian should use any but the Standard edition of Wesley's *Journal*, but this one used the Everyman edition (1906). There is a misleading footnote which leaves the impression that Wesley frequently discovered the divine will by opening the Bible at random, believing that God spoke in this chance manner. We know, of course, that he did open it casually, and attached some significance occasionally to what his eye lighted on, but to presume that this was his general method would be far from correct.

Her bibliography refers to one of Dr. Wearmouth's works, and this is all.

The reference here is to pages 244 to 250, under a sub-heading "The impact of John Wesley", but the main stress falls on the persecutions endured and the moral regeneration which ensued. Without doubt the book is readable and well written, but either the author regards the contribution of Wesley as non-essential or just is not sufficiently interested to check the details.

WILLIAM LEARY.

*The English Free Churches*, by Horton Davies. (Oxford University Press, pp. viii. 208, 10s. 6d.)

The second edition of this book is to be welcomed as a readable survey of English Nonconformity from its beginnings in the Reformation upheaval to its present situation in an ecumenical age.

The "Three Denominations" are at home in this volume, but one gets the impression that Methodism here is a visiting cousin who bears a strong family resemblance to them and at the same time shows some marked characteristics of her own. The author is fully informed about the three sisters and rather less so about the cousin, or he would not have written

about the liturgical revival in the Free Churches as though it commenced with the Presbyterian *Directory of Public Worship* (1898) and only reached Methodism with the publication of *Divine Worship* in 1936, making no mention of the continuous use of the *Book of Offices*. And the visiting cousin lifts her eyebrows a little when she hears that "there *may still be* [italics ours] those who prefer crouching to kneeling as an attitude of prayer, and chrysanthemums to a cross on the Lord's Table".

Dr. Davies offers an admonitory word to Methodist historians who may still need to hear it (a word they have also heard from the Anglican side) when he says: "Methodism's greatness cannot be increased by diminishing the fidelity of the few evangelical ministers of the older Dissenting Churches in England."

THOMAS SHAW.

*Zinzendorf, The Ecumenical Pioneer*, by A. J. Lewis. (S.C.M. Press, pp. 208, 25s.)

This recent addition to S.C.M.'s "Christian Lives" series can be warmly commended to all our readers. The relationship between the Moravians and the early Methodists was worked out in considerable detail by the late Dr. C. W. Towson in his book *Moravian and Methodist* (reviewed in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 20), but the work now under notice places the contacts between these two bodies in a wider setting. As the life and work of Zinzendorf are unfolded, we are made to realize once again what Methodism owes to the Moravians; but this is the sort of thing that Methodist readers will naturally look for. Perhaps the most timely feature of the book is that which is indicated in the sub-title, "The Ecumenical Pioneer", and its most timely chapter comes at the end, where we have an account of a church in possession of "the historic episcopate" enjoying full communion with non-episcopal churches. It can be set down to the credit of the Moravians that, however much they have desired and sought union with other episcopal churches, they have resolutely maintained that to purchase that union at the cost of sacrificing their communion with non-episcopal churches is too high a price to pay. The author's lucid style makes this a most interesting work.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1114. CATALOGUING LOCAL HISTORIES.

I have recently prepared a list of over 150 local histories of Methodism in the Manchester area. I have compiled this from the catalogues of local public libraries, from the collection of local histories at Hartley Victoria College, from the local histories sent to the Department for Chapel Affairs with the recent return of accommodation, and from my own collection.

I am sure that similar lists could be prepared for other areas without undue difficulty; this could well be undertaken in the areas covered by our local branches. In this way a list covering the whole country could gradually be built up. I believe that such a list could only be satisfactorily compiled on a local basis because many local histories have had a very limited circulation and are completely unknown outside the particular area with which they deal.

Copies of the Manchester list may be obtained from me at 19A, Fairfield Avenue, Droylsden, Manchester. Please enclose a stamped addressed foolscap envelope.

E. A. ROSE.

## 1115. ACADEMIC THESES ON METHODIST HISTORY.

In addition to the list printed in *Proceedings*, xxxiv, p. 52, the following have come to our notice:

"Methodism and Anglicanism, 1791-1851"—Rev. J. Munsey Turner (Bristol M.A., 1956).

"The Relation of Methodism and the Church of England between 1738 and 1850"—Rev. William R. Davies (Manchester M.A., 1959).

Annotated edition of Charles Wesley's *Hymns on Patriotism and the American War of Independence*—Mr. D. A. Baker (Weymouth) (Birmingham M.A., 1959).

"The Development of World Methodism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries"—Rev. Jeffrey W. Harris (Manchester M.A., 1961).

"Wesleyan Missions on the Eastern Frontier of Cape Colony, 1820-40, with special reference to the Kaffir War of 1834-5"—Rev. N. Keith Hurt (London M.A., 1958).

"A Comparative Study of Christian Worship as it is set forth in the Writings of John Wesley and the early Methodists"—Rev. Trevor Dearing (Birmingham M.A., 1963).

"The Theology of Baptism in the Writings of John Wesley"—Rev. Brian J. N. Galliers (Leeds M.A., 1957).

"Methodist Churches in England"—Mr. D. C. Hewitt (Royal Institute of British Architects, 1959).

EDITOR.

## 1116. WESLEY'S ORDINATIONS: AN ELUCIDATION.

A letter written by John Pawson to Charles Atmore, printed in full in *Proceedings*, xii, p. 107, has been used by several writers in their endeavours to list Wesley's ordinations. The relevant sentence, according to the Rev. T. E. Brigden's version in *Proceedings*, xii, p. 107, reads: "He [i.e. Robert Johnson] and Mr. Ha—— were ordained priests when Mr. Wesley was here." This statement is used as it stands by Dr. Frank Baker (*Proceedings*, xxiv, p. 79) and by the Rev. H. Edward Lacy (*Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 118), but each in turn has had to leave "Mr. Ha——" as an unsolved mystery.

We are pleased to report that the autograph of Pawson's letter is in the Archives at City Road, London, and from it we have been able to establish that the ordinand's name is "Mr. Hunter". As it happens, the seal is affixed just where Pawson writes this name, and this led Mr. Brigden in the first place to read "Ha" instead of "Hu". A close examination of the manuscript, with the paper adhering to the seal set in its original position, establishes beyond doubt that what Pawson wrote was "Mr. Hunter". The reference is undoubtedly to William Hunter, the assistant at Berwick. Dr. Baker had already suggested his name as one of those who were ordained with Joshua Keighley on 28th and 29th July 1786—a suggestion which must now, of course, be abandoned.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

## 1117. ORDINATION CERTIFICATES.

Referring to the Rev. H. Edward Lacy's article in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, pp. 118 ff., entitled "John Wesley's Ordinations", two queries can now be answered. The ordination certificates of R. Johnson as deacon and Charles Atmore as elder have been found, and are now in the Archives at the Book-Room, London.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

## 1118. METHODIST CHAPELS AND THE TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT, 1962.

It is fairly well known that under the provisions of Section 32 of the above Act, certain buildings of special architectural or historical interest are protected, and that this is especially important in these days when so much redevelopment of towns is taking place.

In every town—and village, even—it is worth while noting what chapels are of interest, from the point of view either of their history or of their architecture, and submitting the names, together with a photograph and notes about each one (or, better still, a brochure if one is available) to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, Whitehall, London, S.W.1.

In Cornwall, two chapels have been put on the statutory list, namely Camborne Wesley and Redruth Fore Street. Both of these are among the largest and finest chapels in the West Country, and both have been Conference chapels in the past.

In addition, four chapels have been put on the supplementary list: Camborne Centenary, Carharrack Wesley, St. Day Wesley, and Ponsanooth. The buildings appearing on the supplementary list are (in the eyes of the Department) worth preserving if this is at all possible, but are not considered to be of sufficient interest to be included amongst those on the statutory list; and no special obligation is placed upon the owners of buildings on the supplementary list.

Other chapels and buildings of Methodist interest in Cornwall are at the moment under consideration.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

## 1119. AN UNUSUAL WESLEY "PICTURE".

In Sotheby's *Catalogue of a Portion of the Library of Samuel Timmins*, dated 20th April 1899, one of the items is:

A portrait of John Wesley, taken by electricity by Dr. Priestley, framed and glazed.

The lot containing this item was sold to "Downing" for £18 10s.

I wonder if any of the readers of the Wesley Historical Society *Proceedings* know of the present whereabouts of this picture, or can elucidate the mysterious process used by Joseph Priestley in the earliest years of current electricity.

A. T. GILL.

[Mr. Gill's address is: 27, Elm Park, Stanmore, Middlesex.—EDITOR.]

## 1120. A WESLEY PORTRAIT FOR A CORNISH VICARAGE.

The Rev. A. L. Parish, vicar of St. Gennys, Cornwall, informs us that, on the occasion of the centenary of the Tremayna Methodist chapel, in the parish of St. Gennys, a portrait of John Wesley was presented to the vicarage. It is a copy of the Frank Salisbury painting, and was paid for by the Tremayna congregation. A brass plate has been attached with the following inscription:

This picture was presented by the members of Tremayna Chapel on the occasion of their centenary 1962 to the vicarage of St. Gennys where the Rev. John Wesley was hospitably received on a number of occasions between 1745 and 1782.

The vicar comments: "On these walls I hope it will remain for many centuries to come!"

EDITOR.