



ROSLIN CHAPEL AND CASTLE IN WESLEY'S DAY.

## ROSLIN CHAPEL AND CASTLE IN WESLEY'S DAY.

Engraved January 9th, 1789. See also *Antiquities of Scotland*  
by Francis Grose, F.A.S. 1797. (T.E.B's collection)

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Record in *Wesley's Journal* :

1780. May. A gentleman took me to see Roslin Castle, eight miles from Edinburgh. It is now all in ruins ; only a small dwelling-house is built on one part of it. The situation of it is exceeding fine, on the side of a steep mountain, hanging over a river, from which another mountain rises, equally steep, and clothed with wood. At a little distance is the chapel, which is in perfect preservation, both within and without. I should never have thought it had belonged to any one less than a sovereign prince ! the inside being far more elegantly wrought with variety of Scripture histories in stone-work, than I believe can be found again in Scotland ; perhaps not in all England.

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## EARLY METHODISM IN DALKEITH, SCOTLAND.

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In the January issue of the *Methodist Magazine* there appeared an article by the Rev. John Telford, B.A., entitled "An Old Preacher's Diary." The article described the experiences of Zechariah Yewdall (who laboured as a Methodist preacher from 1779 to 1830), as recorded in the two volumes of his manuscript diary.

The courtesy of the Connexional Editor has enabled me to peruse these interesting volumes at leisure. They have been of interest to me chiefly on account of the record they give of Yewdall's labours in Scotland, and particularly in connection with the origin of the Society at Dalkeith. I am partly indebted to this manuscript diary for some of the material used in this present article.

Dalkeith, in the county of Midlothian, lies about seven miles south-west from Edinburgh. It is bounded on three sides by estates belonging to the Duke of Buccleuch, the Marquis of Lothian, and Lord Melville. Its modern inhabitants are mostly miners, whilst some are employed in iron works and a carpet factory.

Methodism owes its introduction into Dalkeith to the labours of Zechariah Yewdall. Yewdall was appointed to the Berwick-on-Tweed Circuit at the Conference of 1786.<sup>1</sup> He had anticipated being appointed to Edinburgh, as he was wishful that his step-son should study medicine there, and was greatly distressed when the news of his Berwick appointment reached him. However, he accepted the situation and arrived at Berwick on Friday, September 14. The next morning the preacher at Berwick, William Hunter,<sup>2</sup> came to see him with the glad news that a preacher was wanted for Musselburgh, near Edinburgh and in the Edinburgh Circuit, and that Yewdall was to go there forthwith. On arrival he found the outlook promising. He writes :—

Musselburgh was the first place we preached at in Scotland, but as they have not had preaching on Lord's days, our success has but been small. The people of the English Church having built a new Meeting, our friend Bourhill has bought the Forms, Pulpit, &c., as they stood for little, and taken the place being desirous to give his neighbours a fair trial he desired to have constant preaching on the Lord's day. On this account Mr. Pawson wrote to desire one of us from Berwick to come; as I had been disappointed in coming to Edinburgh I thought now Providence had fully opened my way to be near my wife.

Yewdall first visited Dalkeith on November 13, 1786. From his own words and also from independent information it would appear that he was the first Methodist preacher to attempt the formation of a Society there, though the place may have been spasmodically visited by some of his predecessors. Of his first visit Yewdall writes :—"We got a place formerly occupied by the Church of England,—had a tolerable company for the short notice, who behaved well and serious." The following week the congregation was three times as large, and Yewdall's diary

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1. Zechariah Yewdall was born on November 8, 1751. His parents were members of the Society of Friends. He joined the Methodist Society in 1771, and became an itinerant preacher in 1779.

2. For biographical notes on William Hunter, see *Proceedings*, xv. 102-108. He was now in his fourth year at Berwick.

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continues to record increasing prospect of success. He found great comfort in the support and prayers of an old blind woman, who had been a member of the Methodist Society in Whitehaven. He had a conversation with the Duke of Buccleuch's gardener, who told him he approved of his preaching in general, only he had to object to his insistent emphasis on "the assurance I spoke of." After some conversation, the gardener allowed it was a Christian privilege, but thought many good Christians died without it.

During this period Yewdall divided his time between Musselburgh and Dalkeith, giving each place equal attention both on Sunday and weekday. On April 18 he visited Prestonpans for the first time. Some difficulty was experienced in procuring a room, but eventually an obscure one was obtained and after half-an-hour's warning it was well filled with expectant hearers. Henceforward, Prestonpans was included in the preacher's itinerary. Occasionally Yewdall had a turn in Edinburgh itself.

At the Conference of 1787 Yewdall was appointed to the Edinburgh Circuit with Charles Atmore and Joshua Keighley,<sup>3</sup> but was afterwards informed that he was to remain at Musselburgh with an exchange with Edinburgh every six weeks.<sup>4</sup> In September of this year Yewdall gave up preaching at Prestonpans,<sup>5</sup> and commenced weeknight preaching at East-houses, a village quite near to Dalkeith.

The ex-Episcopalian Chapel in which the Dalkeith Methodists worshipped was in a ruinous condition and completely out of repair. Above the room used for worship there was a dove-cote, and a stable underneath. Yewdall's diary at this period exhibits serious concern at the state of affairs. On December 3 he writes, "We came to an agreement for the Chapel at Dalkeith. I have got a lease for five years. I am to find money to put it into repair, and it is to be refunded in the rent." There is reason to suppose that this plan was never adopted, for a fortnight later he writes, "We are at a loss what to do for a Chapel in Dalkeith. We have some thoughts of

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3. Keighley, however, died of fever whilst on his way to take up his appointment at Edinburgh.

4. In the printed *Minutes* for 1787 Musselburgh appears as a separate Circuit, with Zechariah Yewdall as the preacher. The Circuit disappears in 1788 and succeeding *Minutes*.

5. The cause was revived again in 1813, and persisted thereafter for some years, only to be abandoned again.

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building." It would appear that he had serious doubts as to the wisdom of the projected lease, and communicated those doubts to Wesley, for on December 27, 1787, Wesley wrote him as follows :—

You are in the right. You can have nothing at all to do with the chapel upon these terms. Nay, a dove-cote above it would be an insufferable nuisance, as it would fill the whole place with fleas. "What is to be done then?" Why, continue instant in prayer, and God will show you what you are to do. But he that believeth doth not make haste. I cannot advise you to set about building a house, unless you could find one or two responsible men, who would engage themselves to finish the building in such a manner, for an hundred and fifty pounds. Otherwise, I think you would be more bold than wise. . .<sup>6</sup>

The diary for the next three months is full of anxiety concerning the Dalkeith Chapel. A piece of ground was offered but could not be procured for lack of funds. Yewdall complains bitterly of the lack of sympathy and help shown by his colleagues in Edinburgh. Help came to the harassed preacher from an unexpected quarter when Dr. Coke, having preached in Edinburgh on Sunday, visited Dalkeith on Monday, March 25, 1788. The Doctor saw the necessity of building without delay, and gave Yewdall his blessing on the scheme and a guinea for its furtherance. Thereafter building operations proceeded apace, and the foundation stones of the new Chapel were laid on May 1. Three weeks later Yewdall was cheered by a visit from John Wesley, who was thus able to see the condition of affairs for himself. At this period a storm of persecution broke upon the small Society and Yewdall became seriously exercised by reason of dwindling congregations. An even more serious blow fell when he learned that at the Conference of this year (1788) he had been appointed to the Berwick Circuit. He writes :—

When I got the news I passed a sleepless night. What to do I know not. I am engaged for the Chapel—the subscriptions are nearly out—the workmen want money, and I am at a loss where to get it. A raw, young, inexperienced young man, J. Crowther, is ordered in my place, who I fear would not be fit for it, and both congregation and Society would be scattered.

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6. *Wesley's Works*, xiii. 16., 8vo. edn.

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It appears that Yewdall had had to purchase all the materials, and had become personally responsible for the entire payment. Moreover, trustees could not be procured, so that the Chapel was his own personal property! In his distress, Yewdall faces in his diary the alternatives of either selling the Chapel or going to prison for the debt. Eventually, in October, Alexander Mather lent him £20 and also wrote to Wesley on his behalf. Wesley replied, intimating that he would be answerable for a hundred pounds.

In November of this year Yewdall spent three Sundays at Dalkeith, and on November 9 the Chapel was opened for public worship, Yewdall himself conducting the services. He writes:— “It was a matter of encouragement to see it crowded out at the door, so that a considerable number could not get in. Though I am sensible curiosity brought many, yet I was glad to see that, as I feared their prejudice was too great.” It was with great regret that Yewdall was compelled to return once more to his own work in the Berwick Circuit.

His troubles at Dalkeith, however, were by no means ended. His own words are our best guide :

January 26, 1789. I know not when I have passed a month of greater trials, which arose, 1st, on account of the want of money for the Chapel, Mr. Wesley having disappointed me, and not being able to borrow it, having tried in vain. 2nd, on account of the thinness of the congregation, occasioned partly by the severity of the weather, the newness of the House, and partly the violent opposition of the Bigots, and advocates for Predestination. These and other things made my heart sore, and wore out all my patience.

Final deliverance from his financial troubles came to Yewdall in February. He resorted to the expedient of giving Wesley a gentle reminder of his promise to find the money, and enclosed copies of Wesley's own letters to that effect. Wesley replied, confirming his promise, and desiring Mr. Mather to borrow the money till he should be able. This Mather did, and so brought Yewdall “a prospect of full deliverance.”

In April of this year the building and furnishing of the Chapel was completed, and the greater part of the bills paid. On the last page of his diary our faithful guide writes:— “Everything is ready to be accommodated, and I set at full liberty from it.” In the same month Yewdall received a letter

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from Wesley, who said, "I am glad to hear that there is so fine a prospect at Dalkeith. So is generally the way of our Lord, to try us first, and then to comfort."<sup>7</sup>

The "full liberty" of which Yewdall speaks in the closing quotation from his diary evidently refers to the making over of the property into the hands of trustees. This was done by the execution of a Deed of Disposition on June 25, 1789. A copy of this very interesting document is preserved in the safe at the Nicolson Square Chapel, Edinburgh, and a few extracts from it may be of interest.

We learn that the ground for the Chapel was purchased on April 22, 1788, from James Simpson, Shoemaker in Dalkeith, and the rights and infestments were taken in Yewdall's name. The trustees whom Yewdall nominated in this Deed of Disposition were:—The Rev. Messrs John Barber and James Bogie, Ministers of the Gospel, William Murray, tailor in the Pleasance near Edinburgh, William Bain, Tailor in the Canongate of Edinburgh, John St. George, Weaver in Leith Walk, Harry Innes, Clerk in the Excise Office, David Hodge, Brewer in the Canongate, Edinburgh, Robert Kerr, Overseer of the works at Newbattle, and William Shellinglaw, Labourer in Dalkeith.

The ground on which the Chapel was built is described as follows:—

All and whole that piece or portion of the garden belonging to the said James Simpson on the South side thereof next the back vennel thereof from the corner of the stable formerly belonging to John Watson now converted into a shop possest part thereof by James Hardie Meal Maker and part thereof by Ebenezer Clarkson Surgeon in Dalkeith; northwards along the East side of the new South Street and bounded thereby on the West on the South by the back vennel of Dalkeith on the East by that garden of old belonging to John Reid Portioner of Dalkeith and now to John King and which piece of ground is a part of that yeard and Barn disponed by Peter Simpson Carrier in Dalkeith to Isobell Amslie his Mother in liferent and to the said James Simpson his Eldest Brother in fee. . .

The number of Trustees was to be kept up to nine, exclusive of the minister. The usual clauses with reference to the persons who may officiate in the Chapel are incorporated in the Deed, and reference is also made to Wesley's Deed Poll.

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7. *Wesley's Works*, xiii, 17., 8vo. edn.

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The zeal of Yewdall for purity of doctrine is evidenced by the fact that he adds to the deed certain qualifying phrases which are certainly quaint, if not unique. They are to the effect that if any duly authorised preacher

shall uphold or inculcate any other doctrines than the following he is hereby declared to have forfeited all right to preach or preside in the said Chapel and my said Trustees are hereby authorised to prohibit and prevent him therefrom and which doctrines are declared to be the following viz : First The Fall of man by the sin of our first parents Second The redemption of man by Christ Jesus who gave himself a ransom for all Third Repentance from dead works Fourth Justification by faith in Christ Fifth Sanctification by the Holy Spirit Sixth Inward and Outward holiness as the fruits of both Seventh a resurrection of the Dead both just and unjust ; the general judgment ; with the consequences of both Eighth The Godhead of Christ ; his equality with the Father together with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity these doctrines being clearly laid down in the word of God and summed up and illustrated in the said Revd. Mr. John Wesley's notes upon the new Testament and his four volumes of sermons.

Two other conditions were also imposed upon the Trustees by Yewdall. They were required to borrow money "for finishing the Chapel" and were authorised to grant an heritable security over the Chapel and piece of ground. The revenues derived from seat-rents and collections were to be applied "first for the payment of the Interest of the said sum and for reducing the principal ; second For making what necessary repairs and alterations about the said Chapel shall be deemed necessary ; and third for payment of the stipend of the minister officiating in the said Chapel for the time being." To this end, the Trustees were instructed to keep an "exact accompt book;" and "in the event of the entries in the said book being too numerous and the business of the said Chapel too great for any of my said Trustees conveniently to attend to to employ a Clerk and allow him a suitable salary." History does not record whether the clerk's services were ever required ! The third condition imposed upon the Trustees was that the Chapel should be sold "either by public roup or private bargain" if sufficient money could not be raised when the "principal sum shall be called for." In such an eventuality any surplus money raised in this way was to be used



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“in procuring a place of public worship within the said town of Dalkeith.”

We learn very little of the future of Dalkeith Methodism from the ordinary Methodist literature. Valentine Ward makes the following reference in his *Strictures on Methodism*:—“The first time I visited Dalkeith, I saw a sufficient cause for the smallness of our congregation and society, in the miserable state of the Chapel. An alteration was made, which independent of making the Chapel quite comfortable, and of contributing to the revival of the work of God, brings in a considerable profit.” This refers, I think, to the construction of the ground floor of the Chapel into shops. which entailed the confinement of the actual place of worship to an “upper room.”

Methodism in Dalkeith seems never to have prospered, and the numbers were always small. When we remember the sacrificial labour and the mental and spiritual struggles of its founder, Zechariah Yewdall, it is pathetic to have to record, in conclusion, that Methodism in Dalkeith has now been defunct for many years, though the building which we must associate with Yewdall's memory still bears an inscription which testifies to its origin.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Yewdall's autobiographical notes on his experiences at Dalkeith, condensed from his diary quoted above, will be found in the *Arminian Magazine*, 1795, pp. 371-4, 421-2.

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## WESLEY LETTERS IN NEW ZEALAND.<sup>1</sup>

NOTES BY REV. PRINCIPAL C. H. LAWS, B.A., D.D.

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There are in the library of Trinity Methodist College at Auckland, New Zealand, three letters of John Wesley and parts of a fourth. Two of these letters were written to Mrs. Jane Barton, of Beverley, Yorkshire and were presented to the College by the Roman Catholic Bishop, the Right Reverend Dr. Cleary. He accompanies the gift with the following note. “The ‘Jenny’ of these letters of John Wesley was Mrs. Jane Barton, of

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1. See above p. 10 and p. 54.

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Beverley, in Yorkshire, England, who gave these letters and a number of others to Francis Denton, who was a lodger at her house in Norwood, Beverley. He left them in turn to his second son, Henry Denton, who gave these two letters out of his collection to his brother Frank W. Denton, in 1900, when the latter, then a resident of New Zealand, was on a visit to Beverley. This Frank W. Denton returned to New Zealand in the same year, and in 1920 sold the letters to Bishop Cleary. Francis Denton died at Beverley in 1892, aged 85 years."

[The transcript kindly furnished by Dr. Laws shows that the letters to Mrs. Barton dated respectively 21st February, 1772 and 21st January, 1773, have been printed in Wesley's *Works*, where they are included in a series of thirty-two letters to Miss Jane Hilton, afterwards Mrs. Barton of Beverley.—*F.F.B.*]

The third letter, together with a fragment of a fourth, was presented to the College through the Rev. William Baumber. It reads as follows:—

Newcastle upon Tyne,  
June 19 1781.

Dear Sir,

I am glad Mrs. Foley & you join hand in hand, striving together for the hope of the Gospel. Undoubted'y your way will lie thro honour & dishonour, thro evil report, & good report. But I trust you will not be ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, the power of God unto salvation. He that shall come, will come, & will not tarry: and he will bruise Satan under your feet. It may be, I shall be able about y<sup>e</sup> middle of August, to spend one night at Birmingham. Fight on & conquer! I am, with love to Mrs. Foley,

Your Affectionate Brother,

J WESLEY

Mr. Broadbent's letter.

(Cover:—To Mr. Ambrose Foley,  
at Quinton, near Birmingham.)

[Two other letters to Foley are mentioned in the Standard Edition of the *Journal* and may be expected to appear in the promised new edition of Wesley letters.—*F.F.B.*]

The remaining letter is addressed to Mrs. Foley but is unfortunately in a fragmentary condition.

## WESLEY'S WILL AND THE CONFERENCE.

CONTRIBUTED BY MR. H. W. SURTEES.

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As many strange accounts have been given relative to what passed at the Conference respecting Mr WESLEY'S Will and the Deed executed by him, we think it necessary to give a short account of that transaction.

At the Conference the three Executors of Mr. Wesley's Will were introduced. The President then informed them, that, as Mr Wesley's Books were burdened with a debt of sixteen hundred pounds and upwards, the Conference was willing to make provision for that debt, and to take the Books off their hands. The Executors replied, that in *their* opinion, their authority was to continue over the property, for the benefit of the Conference, as long as they should live; and therefore they could not comply with the proposal.

The Conference were greatly surprised at this; and the President replied, "Gentlemen and Brethren, we think you can only be Executors of the property which Mr Wesley died possessed of: we cannot think that your authority extends to the property which may arise out of it *by our means!* Nevertheless, that we may meet you, and agree, if possible, we propose to incorporate you with us, so that you may be present at our Conferences when the money is disposed of, and have a voice in the disposal of it. You shall also be Members of the Committee to be formed in LONDON, for the regulation of the Press, and the examination of the Accompts: and we think this will be a safe and effectual way to fulfil the design of the Testator."

This proposal the Executors refused. The Conference therefore determined to give up the entire property into their hands, in order that the Executors might sell it to them, or dispose of it otherwise, as they might think fit, giving them a month or thereabouts to consider the subject.

Before the expiration of the month the Executors had taken the opinions of two of the greatest Lawyers in the nation, who both declared that the DEED was TESTAMENTARY, and that it superseded the Will in respect to all the Books, Pamphlets and Copy-rights, being made

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subsequent to the Will. Yet the Trustees of the Deed, wishing for peace and desirous to agree with the three other Gentlemen, made the same offer to them in LONDON, which was made by the Conference at MANCHESTER : and declared to them, that if they would comply with the proposals of the Conference, the Deed should for ever lie dormant. This offer they also refused.

The Trustees have now administered to the Deed, and have disposed of the property to the Conference, that they may fulfil the grand end which the Testator had in view.

We, whose names are hereunto affixed, do testify, that (though we cannot exactly recollect *every word* that was spoken on the subject) we believe the above is a just statement of the whole transaction.

THOMAS COKE.  
JAMES CREIGHTON.  
HENRY MOORE.  
RICHARD RODDA.  
JOSEPH BRADFORD.  
JAMES ROGERS.  
GEORGE WHITFIELD.

LONDON, Dec. 23, 1791.

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## A NEW ZEALAND BRANCH OF THE W.H.S.

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This volume of the *Proceedings* contains several references to Wesleyana in New Zealand, and it was reported at our last Annual Meeting steps were being taken to form a Branch of the W.H.S. in that country. Our readers will be interested to learn that the movement has now made a successful start.

Prior to the session of the last New Zealand Conference a circular was issued to all likely to be interested. As a result a well attended meeting was held, to the chair of which was elected the Rev. C. H. Laws, B.A., D.D.

A good deal of enthusiasm was shown and some fifty members were enrolled. Our new friends hope to keep in close touch with what is done in this land, and will endeavour to ascertain more completely than hitherto what Wesleyana there may be in New Zealand. Special attention will also be devoted

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to the early history of Methodism there and its connection with the Methodism of England.

The Rev. Geo. Frost, of Auckland, was appointed Secretary and we congratulate him and Dr. Laws upon the very promising venture with which they are associated. Up to the present the only New Zealand names on our roll, other than these two, have been those of the Rev. James Pinfold,, Rev. Percy Paris, and Mr. T. L. Hames. F.F.B.

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### PORTLAND CHAPEL, BRISTOL.

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The attention of our members and of the Methodist public generally has recently been attracted by the renovation of the "New Room" at Bristol.

Following closely upon this event there has been published a book called "The Chapel on the Hill" by Mr. A. J. Lambert, giving the story of a sanctuary which for historical interest is to be ranked next to the New Room so far as West of England Methodism is concerned. Mr. Lambert has endeavoured with success to give a popular account, and has dealt not only with interesting origins but has brought the story right down to the present time, with a wealth of detail such as makes his book entertaining as well as historical.

Our older readers will remember with much esteem the name of the late Rev. H. J. Foster, who in early numbers of our *Proceedings* wrote a great deal about Bristol Methodism of the first period. There has recently been discovered amongst our papers an article that he left fully prepared for the press on this same subject. We print it in the hope that it will prove interesting to those who have the new book and that it may encourage others to continue their reading beyond that early period with which alone Mr. Foster deals.

The article is not dated, but it may be noted that Mr. Foster died in 1910. (See *Proceedings* vii, 145 for obituary and portrait). No attempt has been made to bring the article up to date, a fact which should be borne in mind when its topographical details are read.

For the reproduction of the early signatures, to which Mr. Foster makes reference, the book must be consulted. Mr. Foster's photograph of the same is not forthcoming, F.F.B.

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### PORTLAND CIRCUIT, BRISTOL.

The Bristol (Portland) Circuit is classic ground in Methodist history. To the King Street Circuit belongs the honour of claiming as within its boundary "The Old Room"—now the Welsh Chapel—lying between the Horsefair and the Broadmead. The Kingswood Circuit boundary encloses what is now the Chapel of a Reformatory, but is now all that is left of Wesley's Kingswood. It is in fact the original schoolhouse for the children of colliers, long serving also as preaching-house, and running The Old Room such a close race for the honour of being the first chapel of Wesley's building. The Portland boundary runs, moreover, too high up the slope of the Kingsdown plateau to take in King's Square, with, at one corner, Carolina Row, a favourite out-door "pitch" of Wesley's to the last; and, at the corner diagonally opposite, Nr. 6 Dighton Street,—the most westerly of the houses taken in by Messrs. Cridland and Rose,—the home of John Castleman, surgeon, and of Letitia his wife, "genteel, and yet a Christian," says Wesley; where also he ordained Dr. Coke, and his two preachers, Whatcoat and Vasey, to go and put into due Church order what has become the Episcopal Methodism of America. Just outside the circuit limits also, and just behind the home of the Castlemans, in Charles Street, is the very little changed, high brick house which was for many years Charles Wesley's home in Bristol.

But a spot still more interesting does belong to Portland. The traveller by the Great Western Railway, going out from Bristol to London or Clifton, may see near the river bank three towering glass-house cupolas of brick. With some rebuilding in their upper portions, there these have stood in Avon Street, St. Philip's Marsh, for two centuries. Under their shadow, a very few yards to the eastward runs Bread Street, the southern end of which, when the Wesleys first came to Bristol, was a mere path running across an open space known as The Brickyard, and, as it does still, running into Cheese Lane. On the South of this again were open Brickyards, and in one of these, was the "little eminence in a ground adjoining to city" from which on Monday afternoon, April 2nd. 1739, casting aside his old prejudices, and "submitting to be more vile," John Wesley had broken through, and for the first time in England, preached in the open air. In Paul Street,—it may be added,—close by Portland Chapel, at what is Mr. W. G. Newcombe's shop, died on September 19, 1828, Sarah Wesley last surviving daughter of Charles Wesley.

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She was on a visit to Bristol with her brother Charles, the famous organist; her body lies only a few yards beyond the Circuit boundary, in St. James' Churchyard, along with several younger and infant brothers and sisters. In Portland Street itself, at what is now, and always has been, No 3, resided at the date of Matthew's *Directory* for 1793-4, "Webb, Lieut. Thomas," whose connection with Portland Chapel makes it a place of interest and pilgrimage for American Methodists just as Whitefield's grave makes the New England village of Newbury Port, near Boston, U.S.A. a spot known and sacred to thousands in two Hemispheres.

Portland Chapel stands for much in the history of the Methodist Church. Its erection played an important part in the long and heated controversy which began at Wesley's death in 1791, and ended with the Plan of Pacification, the great constitutional work of the Conference of 1795. It is easy to quote Wesley against modern Wesleyans. It is as easy to quote Wesley at one time or in one mood against Wesley at another time and in another mood. But what in fact was Methodism without John Wesley to be? Had he been "building better than he knew," and, in his later life, better than he dared to know? Had he left behind him a true New Testament Church? Had it a valid ministry, from whose hands the people might receive the sacraments, or must they go elsewhere for them, perhaps to the Church of England? Wait till he was gone, he had himself told Bradburn, and the Methodists would be "a regular Presbyterian church." The men who built Portland Chapel knew their own mind about the "church" *status* of Methodism whether "Presbyterian" or not. When the Chapel was opened The "Revs." Samuel Bradburn and Thomas Roberts, A.M., were the preachers, and at the request of some of the Trustees, wore gowns and bands, and read the prayers in surplices. A bell, which had belonged to St. Ewens, one of the oldest churches in the city,<sup>1</sup> and had been sold when the church was demolished, was hung in a bell-turret of the new building, and was rung,—as it has always been since,—half an hour before the service time, and again when the preacher entered the reading desk to begin the liturgy. A modest little cross—still there,—was put upon the apex of the end-gable. In the words of President Charles Atmore, one of the earliest ministers at Portland, its builders made it "one of the most elegant chapels in the Methodist Connection, if not in the Kingdom." An outside report, in 1797, says "*Portland Street*

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1. It is dated 1698, and bears the legend: "Come away—Make no delay."

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*Chapel*, Kingsdown, is spacious and handsome, has a large gallery, and painted altar-piece,"—still the very apple of their eye to the older worshippers!—"a turret with a bell, and the service of the Church of England read by preachers in Mr Wesley's Connection."

The public knew what the founders of Portland meant. And the Vicar of Westbury-on-Trym understood, too. The chapel was planted on the very outskirts of all building in the Bristol suburbs of the time, and just outside the boundary of the wide, straggling parish of Westbury. He published his strong protest against such proceedings, and seemed inclined to claim some jurisdiction over this new Methodist sanctuary. Such a claim, formally made and pressed with all legal urgency, had led to the secession of the Countess of Huntingdon, in 1783, and to the formation of her Connexion. Her Spafields Chapel, opened in 1777, was within the parish of St James, Clerkenwell, and the vicar of St. James, Rev. William Sellon, claimed the privilege of preaching in the chapel whenever he pleased, and of nominating the ministers who should officiate there, as her Grace's "Chaplains," he formally demanded that the sacramental moneys, and the revenue from seat-rents or other sources, should be paid to him as vicar of the parish; and invoked and obtained for his demands the support of the Consistory Court of such a prelate as Bishop Lowth. After some years of struggle the Countess and her friends found no relief from such claims but in formal separation from the Church of England.

An episcopal chapel, still standing on Redland Green, Bristol, was an earlier intrusion into Westbury parish. It had been built in 1743 by Mr Cossins, of the mansion now known as Redland High School, for the accommodation of his family and his few neighbours. For many years it was not consecrated, though served by an appointed clergyman, and remained private property, entirely independent of Westbury church. But in 1781 its advowson had been formally added to the living of Westbury, when Rev. W. Embury Edwards had been instituted to this, for the very purpose of ending such a conflict of jurisdictions. Mr Edwards found the minister and trustees of Portland clear about their own independence, and about their own intentions; and after a short skirmish of pamphlets, in which Bradburn's courtesy does not shine as conspicuously as does his clear grasp of the situation, and his clear conception of the Church position up to which—Wesley willing or Wesley unwilling,—God had led Methodism, the trustees were left to go their way in peace, without further interference from the minister of the parish.



But there was a large and influential body of Methodists to be reckoned with also, who clung to the Church of England, and stoutly refused for themselves, and were for denying to others, the administration of the sacraments by the Methodist preachers. They stood, they said, for Wesley's "Old Plan." Moreover the Trustees amongst them raised another far and large reaching issue. Should Methodism be one strong, united Church, knit together by a supreme, central authority, the Conference? Or should it be a mere loose association of self-governing circuits; or of chapels whose Trustees should appoint the preachers, and perhaps rule the Church? (He who "pays the piper" may come to "call for the tune,"—of the pulpit, and of the church life). The men of the "new plan" claimed full Church rank for the United Society of the People called Methodists, under the authority of the Conference. Mr Henry Durbin, an early convert of Wesley in Bristol, a retired "chymist" of Redcliffe Street, and a man of high character and connections in the city,—the visitor will find his monument in St. Thomas' Church, which is worth a visit for its own sake,—Mr William Pine, the Bristol printer, and the other Trustees of Wesley's old Chapel in the Broadmead, led the list of Old Planners. They had already had a tussle with Wesley himself, and with his young and eager lieutenant, Dr Coke, from which the Doctor had not quite emerged the uppermost of the wrestlers. All over England the trustees, preachers and members watched the struggle in Bristol. The future of all Methodism was being decided here. Captain Webb and the promoters of the building of Portland chapel struck thereby the first decisive blow for the "new plan." The Captain printed a circular, took his collecting book, and put himself down for ten guineas, though by no means a rich man.

He begged £25 from his friends in London, and with John Hall as his faithful companion, begged up and down Bristol, not forgetting to look up on Monday mornings any absentees of Sunday. The foundation stone was—probably—laid in 1791; the chapel was opened on August 26th, 1792, and emancipation was begun. But Mr Durbin and his friends found their opportunity for a master counter-move in the August of 1794. It is an old story, and dramatic to a degree. On the 11th, the Sunday after the Conference in Bristol, the Lord's Supper was administered at Portland. Henry Moore, appointed to the Circuit a few days before, assisted Dr Coke at the Doctor's request; he had been ordained by Wesley himself. On the Monday evening he was to preach at the Old Room. In the

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morning he was served with legal notice from the Trustees, that, as the Conference had appointed him, and not they, they forbade him to preach in their Chapel. He went down to keep his appointment, and found the congregation waiting, but also several Trustees in the pulpit. He acknowledged to the people that by their trust deed they had the power which they claimed, and then called upon all those who agreed with him to follow him up to Portland Chapel, "where," said he, "the Word of God is not bound!" For that the Portland men had built their chapel. Almost the whole audience rose and went with Moore, leaving the trustees to their chapel and its pulpit. As they went up the hill, the attention of a casual passer-by was attracted by the strange procession. He was told that "the trustees had turned the Methodists out of their Chapel." He followed them. Henry Moore's sermon that evening awakened his conscience and led him to Christ. Within a week steps were taken to secure the site on which stands to-day Ebenezer, in Old King Street. This spirited action and the opening of that fine chapel convinced the "old plan" party that further opposition was hopeless, and the Conference of 1795, as has been said, registered the liberty, and the full church *status* which had thus been secured. The building of King Street finished what the building of Portland began. Portland is one of the few historic buildings of our Methodist Church.

The Trustees of Portland themselves could on occasion show that their Trusteeship was not a mere holding of the property. The Rev. Bryan Collins, one of Wesley's clerical helpers, presuming on his special position as a clergyman, preached his "church" notions in their pulpit, and talked against the administration of the Sacraments by the preachers. The superintendent wrote: "The work of God, to the great grief of my soul, was seriously impeded by him." The Trustees resolved: "That Portland Chapel be henceforth closed to the ministrations of the Rev. B. B. Collins, unless the Methodist Conference should particularly desire the exercise of his ministerial functions therein, —or otherwise a Committee of the Trustees of the said Chapel shall be previously called to know their opinion respecting the same, a majority of whom shall decide." The Pacification of 1795 had not yet arrived.

A rich blessing often crowned these Sacramental occasions at Portland. Charles Atmore came to Bristol from the midst of the wonderful Revival which had swept over Yorkshire in the winter of 1794-5. On his first Sunday evening at Portland he

had "a good time," the power of God was with the Word, and the softened hearts of his hearers were made ready for humble access to their Lord's Table. Not fewer than five hundred remained to partake of the Supper. "Many were so deeply affected as to cry out, and were hardly able to take the bread and wine. Three obtained the gospel liberty, and were enabled to praise a sin-pardoning God." Many successors have stood in that same "painted apse," and found something of the acceptance of themselves and their service which Atmore believed such a season of blessing betokened, to the people who had at the price of long contention won such a privilege for their Chapel.

The accompanying reproduction of a page of the early Trustees' minute-book preserves the names of several of these builders of Portland. The records of the early meetings,— "Vestry meetings," as they significantly call them,—are very meagre, and for some years are signed by all present. John Pawson is the first minister whose signature so appears, in February, 1805; but the page shows that Bradburn was present in June, 1793, and "appointed stewards for the ensuing year." The agreed to accept two days' notice for a meeting, and imposed on Absentees,— a list of them will be noted,—five shillings as a *forfit* except such Trustee shall be sick or out of town on Business 5 miles. Stewards not giving such notice to forfit 5 shillings in *lue* of the absent Trustee." These makers of Methodist history left a debt, and the early minutes often record the straits they were put to, to find what would replace loans called in, and to meet current demands. The palmy days of Portland finance did not arrive till long afterwards. The "flush" of prosperity was in the years when Rev. John Rattenbury was superintendent of the Circuit, and when very many of the families who led the way in building of Victoria and Cotham and Redland chapels, crowded the Portland pews with prosperous and wealthy Methodists and their children. Only at the Centenary celebrations of the Chapel did the capital debt disappear.

*Thomas Webb* will attract at once our special attention. (By the way, he did not sign the trust deed). But other names have their own interest. Portland chapel stands next to City Road in its wealth of notable mural tablets. A visitor should not miss a small, inconspicuous, plain oval disc of time-stained marble over the choir vestry door, with its tender inscription: "In memory of *William Hunt*, who departed this life the 18th. Sept. 1811. Aged 53 years. This little stone is erected by a surviving friend, the Companion of his earliest piety, as a small token of Friendship and

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Esteem." Hunt was a prosperous "Manchester man" in Union Street, and had been one of the six Methodists who, in conjunction with Wesley's old Kingswood boy, James Easterbrook, the vicar of Temple Church, met in the vestry there, to exorcise by wrestling prayer the demon from George Lukins, the possessed man of Yatton. He did quieter work for years as a leader in the Bristol Society. "An old local preacher," too, as says the Minute-book of the chapel. A traditional touch makes an "absentee" live again, *James Ewer*. He wore a queue or pigtail long after other gentlemen had laid aside the fashion. His mural tablet is not far from Hunt's, and his wife's name is there also. A leader at twenty years of age, she led a class for half a century, and, like her husband, was noted for her kindness to little children. The beginnings of the prosperous day-school at North Street were laid in a charity school to which Mrs. Ewer left a bequest, in order to secure an annual dinner to the scholars on the recurrence of her birthday. The dinner was always of roast veal, and tradition has handed on the picture of the venerable old saint passing along the tables and giving to each child a squeeze of lemon juice over the veal. When Charles Atmore came to his new appointment and found his house not ready, Mr. and Mrs. Ewer welcomed him and his,—second,—bride to a week's warm hospitality in their home in Dighton Street. Thomas Roberts buried him on February 10, 1815, "in a vault in ye crowd,"—a quaint local name for the crypt beneath the chapel,—where his wife was laid beside him nine years later by James Wood.

Two *John Halls* are present at the Vestry meeting of the Trustees, the first two links in a chain of five Bristol *Halls*. John Hall, one of the builders of Portland; his son John Hall, the second, the great promoter of Old Market Street, where his body lies; his son, John Wesley Hall, the friend of Henry Moore's later years; his son, Samuel Romilly Hall,—in association with his devoted sister, the promoter of Wesley Chapel, where his body lies, and President of the Conference; his son Alfred Hall,—too early deceased,—one of the builders of Cotham Chapel. Family life in such successive generations has distinguished Bristol Methodism. The walls of Portland, as well as its graveyard, commemorate the long intertwining of the family stems of Griffins and Harpers and their kin the Helliers, until for literally a century there was hardly a year when some member of the allied stocks was not in office and work in the ancestral sanctuary.

Every visitor to Portland is struck with the mural tablets which cover the walls, many of them bearing very significant

names. That of John Hall the first, under the window near the door of the minister's vestry, not only preserves the memory of "an eminent example of simplicity of manners and benevolence of heart," which greatly endeared him to Wesley, but carries his preaching back to the very beginning of Methodism in Bristol; "for more than fifty-eight years a persuasive and successful preacher of the Gospel." He died December 23, 1798, aged 77, years; as a young man of nineteen he must have begun preaching sameway back in 1740. Methodism proper was only a year old then, in Bristol or London. His wife, Bathsheba Hall, has found an honoured place in the pages of Wesley's *Journal*: "That saint of God," he calls her. When her husband, who had lived at Bedminster, removed to Fishponds, on the other side of the city, a place "remarkably dead for many years," "a flame broke out immediately," and all was revival and prosperity. Like all those early saints she kept a diary, some pages of which are given in the *Arminian Magazine* of 1781. In September of the previous year, her too short course was run, and at thirty-five she was laid to rest with a funeral sermon by Wesley at the Chapel of Kingswood School. John Hall was a farmer. He determined to apprentice his boy John to Thomas Lewis, in Horsefair, a glazier, whose tender care of the valetudinarian Charles Wesley in his later life in Bristol has endeared him to the students of Methodist history. When the lad was informed of this, he confided to his sympathizing sisters that he did not think the trade "respectable." "Respectable, my son! Surely you don't expect a trade to make *you* respectable! No, you must make the *trade* respectable." He lived to found the still flourishing and important business in the Broadmead, and was able to outdo his father in giving, when Captain Webb was begging for Portland. The collecting book which he prepared for the Captain is, or was, in the hands of one of the Shums of Bath, and whilst the farmer gave seven guineas, the glazier gave fifteen.

One other name which has its memorial on the chapel walls, within and without, also carries us back to the beginnings, with a pre-eminence of interest. On April 24, 1794, Samuel Bradburn buried in the grave yard Thomas Westell, "one of the first three Methodist preachers," says the entry in the burial book; Thomas Maxfield, another Bristol man, and Thomas Richards being customarily but not too accurately, accounted the others. His position as a preacher was not very definite or constant; there were in those formative days some "half-itinerants." The *Minutes* of 1747 reckon him "journeying as an assistant," but stationed in

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Bristol. Eight years later he appears as a "local preacher." The poll-books of Bristol elections, and Wesley's own MS. note of Bristol members, show that all along he kept his home in the city, and exercised his vote as a freeholder, whilst, as we know, he went from time to time on extended preaching tours, and from 1765 to 1768 acted pretty steadily as a travelling preacher, finally ending his days on the Preachers' Fund. The heroism of his early Gospel "raid" upon Cornwall is one of the treasures of Methodist story. Thomas Maxfield's case forced upon Wesley the definite final acceptance of "laymen's" preaching. But Thomas Westell had raised the question. In the simplicity of his zeal and uprightness of heart he had begun preaching without knowing it, in what looks like a volunteered excursion in to the work of Gloucestershire. Susannah Wesley saved Maxfield's liberty, for him and for all future Methodism. Mrs. Canning, a pious old lady of Evesham, interposed between Wesley and Westell: "Stop him at your peril! He preaches the truth, and the Lord owns him as truly as He does you or your brother." Where or how he began to preach we do not know, but we can date very precisely the other fact which makes Thomas Westell's name precious. Wesley broke through and became "more vile" by preaching in the Brickyard near St. Philip's Plain on Monday, April 2, 1739. On the following Wednesday four young men of Bristol suggested that Wesley should form them into a Society according to Peter Böhler's rules for that in London. Thomas Westell, carpenter, was one of the four. It was the first Society of Wesley's own forming and under his sole direction, and was the nucleus of not only the Bristol Society, but of the world-wide Methodism of to-day.

[THE LATE] H. J. FOSTER.

N.B.—Many changes have taken place since these notes were written. The 'Old Room' is again in the possession of the Conferense. The Reformatory Chapel was destroyed shortly after the war. Also the boundaries of the Portland Circuit have been changed; indeed Portland is in the Bristol (Clifton) Circuit to-day.

A.H.W.

## NOTES AND QUERIES.

693. ORKNEY ISLES CIRCUIT.—At the Conference of 1835 the Orkney Isles Circuit was formed, with two ministers, and the next year 146 members were reported. In 1841 the Orkney and Wick Circuit (as it was then styled), disappears from the *Minutes of Conference*. According to Coley's *Life of Thomas Collins* "Methodism's work in Orkney, flock, fold and fruit, was handed over to the Free Kirk." But the Free Kirk was not founded until 1843. Can any member throw any light upon the fate of our numerous societies in the Orkney Islands, and suggest the reason which led to their abandonment? I am most interested in this matter, and shall welcome any suggestions or help.—*W. F. Swift*.
694. JOHN WESLEY AT DUNBAR, SCOTLAND.—An unrecorded incident.—A newspaper cutting, dated October 26th, 1883, taken from the *Berwickshire News*, I believe, has recently come into my possession. I quote it verbatim:—

In one of Wesley's visits to Dunbar, when preaching in the open air, a young man in the crowd cried 'Stick to your text.' The effect was electric. Wesley was so much confounded as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet. For an ordinary unlearned man thus to address one who was among the ablest theologians and most learned men of his age, who had passed with distinction through the University of Oxford, was so extraordinary that Wesley was struck dumb with astonishment, and had not a word to say. After a little, he went on with his discourse in a much less confident tone than formerly. Next day, preaching to a great crowd on the Calton Hill, Edinburgh, he began by saying, "My friends, I was preaching last night at Dunbar; and a man cried out, 'Stick to your text;' now, I am going to stick to my text today, and I hope my text will stick to you." It is interesting to know that the man who thus interrupted Wesley afterwards came under the power of the truth, and became a converted man. He was living, though in extreme age, when the Rev. Mr. Dodds came to the Free Church at Dunbar. Mr. Dodds visited him on his death-bed, and had much satisfaction in witnessing his peaceful and happy end. He received from the

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man's own lips the account of the incident narrated above.—*Wesley F. Swift.*

695. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST VISIT TO HEXHAM.—Mr. H. F. Fallaw, of Gateshead, who has been a local preacher for over 60 years, has recently contributed some interesting reminiscences to a Northern newspaper. Mr. Fallaw resided in the ancient town of Hexham from 1868 to 1870 and was well acquainted with Mrs. Waters, of Quatre Bras, who died in July, 1879 within a few weeks of her hundredth birthday.

She remembered hearing Wesley preach in Hexham Market Place when she was eleven years old. This was on Thursday, June 3rd, 1790. She remembered the ministry of Rev. Wm. Tranter in 1813. Mr. Tranter also died in 1879 having passed his centenary.

Mr. Fallaw is rightly proud of having conversed with one who had heard Wesley and we think his recollection may well be added to those which have recently appeared in the Press.—*F.F.B.*

696. Two very interesting Wesley letters, so far as I can tell hitherto unpublished, have recently been offered for sale at Sotheby's.

One was written from Bristol, September 27th, 1768 to Mr. Churchey, near the Hay, Brecon. Many letters to this correspondent are published in the Works.

The other was written to a lady on the morning of that memorable Sunday, November 18th, 1770 when he preached a funeral sermon for George Whitefield. In it he says "It is sure none is a member of a *Methodist* Society, that has not a ticket. This is a necessary thing, but it is only a small one. The great point is, To conform to the Bible *Method* of Salvation."—*F.F.B.*

697. WESLEY'S RESCUE FROM THE FIRE.—In his volume entitled *John Wesley, Evangelist*, the late Rev. Richard Green describes this well known incident.

It will be remembered that at the critical moment, when it was discovered that the child Jacky was looking out of an upper window, a man cried, "Here, I will fix myself against the wall; lift a light man and set him on my shoulders." This was done and the child was rescued just before the roof fell in. Mr. Green says the name of the man who devised the expedient was Rhodes, and that his grandson, a retired sea-captain in Wellington, N.Z. preserved the tradition of the name. See also *Proceedings*, iv. 216.



## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The Rev. E. H. Maggs has sent us an extract from the *Northwich Circuit Magazine*, March, 1928, in which are quoted the curious lines composed impromptu by John Wesley's father when he dined at Temple Belwood by invitation of a gentleman who was a strange blend of avarice and oddity. (These lines may be read in Tyerman's *Life and Times of Samuel Wesley*, p. 451.) An old letter from which the editor of the *Northwich Circuit Magazine* derives his information, says: "the authenticity of the following grace may be relied upon. It is given on the authority of the late William Barnard of Gainsborough, whose father, the preserver of John Wesley from the fire of 1707, [should be 1709] was present at the time it was spoken."

Mr. Maggs would like to know what confirmation there is for this name, Barnard. Two men were mentioned in the story, so that there is no necessary conflict with what Mr. Green stated.

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### THE LATE MR. W. D. ALLOTT.

We note with deep regret the death of this veteran member at the age of 71. Mr. Allott was deeply interested in the history of Birstall Methodism, in the founding of which his great-grandfather was a fellow-worker with John Nelson. He corresponded frequently with our editorial staff and with the help of the late Mr. Riggall gathered all that he could relating to the work of Viney and Bennet in the neighbourhood. We believe that he had made considerable progress in shaping his materials and we trust that some permanent use may be made of them.—F.F.B.

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## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE W.H.S.

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The Annual Meeting of the Wesley Historical Society will be held in the Committee Room B, Belgrave Hall, Leeds, on Thursday, July 17, at 2-15 p.m.

The Officers of the Society will be pleased to see any members whether they are members of the Conference or not.