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All Subscriptions are due in March. Members are kindly requested to send to Rev. F. Baker without further reminder.

THE ORIGIN OF METHODISM IN MANCHESTER AND AREA

Part 4

JOHN BENNET'S EARLIEST SOCIETIES: SOME BI-CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS. (1747—1947)

John Nelson introduced Bennet to John Wesley in June 1742. He became a Methodist and commenced to preach in March 1743, aged 29. He soon began to form a preaching "Round" and to enrol societies in the Wesley manner. Bennet kept a manuscript *Journal* intermittently from 1742 to 1754.

Bennet throws vivid light upon the riots in Sheffield in 1743 when the fearless Charles Wesley bared his breast and dared the naked blade of Capt. Gordon. Two months later we watch Bennet eagerly hastening to catch John Wesley, a bird of passage southward bound.

"About 2 a clock in the morning we set out [from Mansfield] for Nottingham, we got there exactly at 5 where we found Mr. Wesley preaching at the Cross, there was a few serious souls, but a many proud conceited persons"

In the same year Bennet visited several societies on his way to Newcastle. he also called on many others on his way, with Wesley, to the first Conference in London, in 1744. His MS. *Journal* also refers by name to dozens of other societies—twinkling points of light—in his extensive Round.

Here are brief notes upon a few of the societies which Bennet founded, and especially those whose Bi-centenaries take place this year or next.

MILNTOWN (Chapel-en-le-frith)

The first place which he mentions is Milntown, part of his own home town. David Taylor, who had won Bennet for Christ, preached there late in 1741 and a society soon arose. Bennet joined that society and advanced its work, though he himself was not its founder.

July 1. 1743. We had a Monthly Meeting at Milntown and had 5 added to the Society, we were happy together.

A fortnight later he tells of his own first Society.

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BRAMALL

July 14. 1743. I went to Bramall [Near Stockport] and settled a Society there No 43 [Members] wrote 'em articles and they had one Quire hymns.

WOODLEY

A similar Society was formed at Woodley, 3 miles from Stockport.

July 7. 1744. I set out for Woodley in Cheshire it being the Monthly Meeting held there the first Saturday in each Month. I set out about 4 a clock got there abt 7. I found 'em very dull and heavy.

There is a gap in the *Journal* between Oct. 1744 and Feb. 1747—28 months of assiduous seed-sowing from which harvests are still being reaped.

BOOTH BANK (Cheshire)

In Feb. 1747 he visited John Cross and his wife at their farm in Boothbank, where a society, which soon became an active hive of Methodism, had already been formed,

DAVYHULME

On March 2. 1747, a violent mob made an organised attack upon Bennet at Davyhulme, probably in John Heywood's house.

The Bells were set a ringing at Flixton and Eccles for joy that a Methodist had been taken, but it proved not according to the expectation, . . .

Bennet escaped from the hand of the fowler and after thrilling adventures returned to the wrecked house later in the evening. "Many of our brethren" rejoiced with him, so it seems clear that a society existed prior to 1747.

OTHER SOCIETIES

His MS. Journal in 1747 also refers to his Societies in Astbury, Baguley, Bradbury Green, Hurdsfield [not Huddersfield] and also Oldfield Brow near Altrincham (Jany 1748).

MANCHESTER

On March 21. 1747 Bennet tells of the origin of the Manchester Society (W.H.S. *Proceedings* Dec. 1946, p. 119). Bi-centenary celebrations were planned for March this year (1947) but had to be postponed till autumn owing to the fuel crisis. A popular booklet entitled *The Manchester Round* written by Rev. F. H. Everson is being published by the two Manchester Synods.

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BOLTON AND HARWOOD LEE

On Nov 5. 1747

I got to Bolton abt 7 in ye Evening and spent some time with ye Society. 29 Persons entered their names. Lord increase the number and hasten Thy kingdom.

Nov. 22. at Abraham Cleggs in Harwood Lee, 2 miles from Bolton,

In this place they threatened to pull down the house. However we had a quiet meeting and many persons to hear. After preaching I took the names of seven down in order to begin a society.

Bi-centenary celebrations are being held in Bolton in November this year.

SHACKERLEY (Leigh)

Bennet on his frequent rounds from Davyhulme to Bolton crossed the Mersey at Barton Bridge and then broke his journey at Shackerley, near Leigh. On Nov. 21, 1747 he "proposed a meeting by ye Brethren once a week but all to no purpose". Some two months later he had his reward.

Jan'y 5. 1748. found many persons met together . . . I spoke from Isa 40.1. After the Exhortation I took several persons names in order to begin a little society. Lord grant that these may be built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ the true Corner Stone.

STOCKPORT

This valuable source book gives also a fixed date in regard to Stockport—

July 12- 1748 I preached at Stockport to a little Society from Roms 3. 22 &c. This was the first time of preaching.

What hath God wrought during these two centuries, 1747-1947, in Rochdale, Manchester, Bolton, Leigh and Stockport!

ROCHDALE

Rochdale was not mentioned in the parts of Bennet's *Journal* accessible to us, but for the sake of completeness we note that in a letter to Wesley dated 7th March 1747, he says:

I have been to Rochdale some few times since Mr. Charles was there [Jan. 1747] and begun a little Society (See Everett's *Wesleyan Methodism in Manchester*, p 54)

C. DEANE LITTLE

CHARTERHOUSE NOTES

2.

LETTERS OF JOHN WESLEY AT CHARTERHOUSE.

There are at Charterhouse three letters of John Wesley Feb. 20, 1781. To Ann Bolton.

This letter is printed in *Standard Letters*, vii 49. edited by Rev. John Telford.

There are some small inaccuracies in Telford's text.

line 2. "Through" should be "thro".

line 8. "Weighted" should be "weighed".

line 12. "Trouble" should be "troubles".

line 13. The word "his" is underlined.

The word "sake" should be "account".

The sentence, "On monday Sennight I set out for Bath and Bristol", is added on the reverse side of the paper. The remainder of the letter printed in Telford's edition, from "On Monday, March 8 I hope to be at Newbury" to the end, is not to be found in this letter.

Dec. 24, 1784. To Ann Bolton.

(This letter is not in Telford's edition. It was presented to Charterhouse in December, 1942, by Miss R. D. Williams, 3, Carroll Avenue, Guildford.)

London

Dec 24. 1784.

My Dear Nancy,

You have seldom had Hatred, but you have often had Coolness returned for Good-will. And your Tenderness for your bosom-Friends, made this a close trial to you. But I am not conscious, that this was ever the case between you & me. I loved you much the first time that you was with me at the Foundery: And so I have done ever since, without any intermission at all. You have therefore One Friend (if no more) that has never deceived your hope, or proved to you as the staff of a broken reed; And, I trust, never will. Use me, my Nancy, on all occasions, as the Friend whom God has provided for you. Perhaps as one "that cleaveth closer to you than a Brother". And surely nothing but Death shall part us.

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I hardly think it possible for any of us to do too much for our Parents, especially if they are under any trial or affliction. While my mother lived, I often thought, "I have known many Persons wish that they had done more for their Parents while they had them. But I was resolved, to have nothing of that kind to reproach myself with by & by." All that you do or suffer for them, God will repay sevenfold into your own bosom. And in due time He will make a way for you, to feed his Lambs also. Meanwhile you shall sink deeper & deeper into humble, gentle, patient Love, and do not forget, My Dear Nancy,

Yours most affectionately

J. WESLEY

To Miss Bolton
In Witney
Oxfordshire

June 24, 1788. To Peard Dickinson.

This letter is printed in *Standard Letters*, VIII, 67.

These changes should be made in Telford's Text.

- line 8. "Bengal" should be "Bengelius".
line 9. "Temp" should be "Temporum".
line 11. [set]. This seems to be "minute".

At my request, Mr. Charles Evans, Librarian of Charterhouse, Godalming, has re-examined this letter in Mr. Birley's absence from the country. I wanted to know whether the original really departed from the well-established form *Bengelius*. Mr. Evans says that the letter in question is very badly written, and could be taken either as an "a" or an "e". He thinks, therefore, that we can safely put down *Bengelius* as what Wesley wrote.

Mr. Evans agrees that the word "set", (printed by Telford within brackets), is difficult to read but is, almost certainly, "minute down". The O.E.D. has the words in this sense in a quotation from Addison dated 1712.

The Rev. George Spooner, M.A., informs us that he has recently acquired the original of Wesley's letter to Ann Bolton, 18th September 1787, (*Standard Letters* viii, 9). He says that the words "So I pressed on" are a transcriptional error, and that the sentence so beginning reads "So He [i.e. God] is and will be with you."
F.F.B.

JOHN WESLEY'S LETTERS TO MR. BERINGTON, 1780

In the archives of Coughton Court, near Alcester, Warwickshire, a seat of the Throckmorton family, are two unpublished letters of John Wesley. On June 13th, 1947, the Dowager Lady Throckmorton kindly placed them at my disposal for copying and gave permission for them to be printed in the *W.H.S. Proceedings*.

For a background to these letters we have to go to the year 1778, when Sir George Savile's Bill for the relief of English Roman Catholics became law.

It provided for the repeal of the punishment of priests who officiated in the services of their Church; of the power of the son of a Roman Catholic father to take possession of his father's estate, and of the disability of Roman Catholics from acquiring landed property by other means than descent. The Act provided that, in order to obtain the benefit of its operation, Roman Catholics should take a special oath abjuring the Pretender, the temporal jurisdiction of the Pope, and the power of deposition, as well as the doctrine that faith should not be kept with heretics, and that heretics, as such, may lawfully be put to death. The Church and realm of England were thus safeguarded against papal aggression and civil rebellion. The Bill was carried in both Houses without a division, with the consent of the English bishops, and by the united action of both parties in the State. In the first instance, it applied to England only, but in the following year it was proposed to apply it to Scotland; but the Scottish hatred of Popery, always more fierce than that of the southerner, was too bitter and inflammable, and the proposal led to a fierce and dangerous agitation in the Lowlands.

(Overton and Relton: *History of the English Church*.
1714-1800. pp. 213-4)

So alarming was the situation that no further action was taken in respect of Scotland, but the anti-papal delirium of that country passed over the Border to England and led ultimately to the infamous Gordon Riots of May and June, 1780. Feeling against the Roman Catholics was intensified by the recently formed anti-British league between France and Spain, whose combined fleets were at that time a constant menace to our shores. John Wesley refers to this in his *Journal* under date August 31, 1779.

It seemed to many people that the Roman Catholics, freed from these unjust disabilities, were propagating the peculiar tenets of their faith so aggressively as to endanger the peace and stability of the State. In consequence a

Protestant Association was formed, with the object of obtaining the repeal of Savile's statute and restoring the *status quo*. On Tuesday, January 18th, 1780, John Wesley wrote in his *Journal*.

Receiving more and more accounts of the increase of Popery, I believed it my duty to write a letter concerning it, which was afterwards inserted in the public papers. [N.B. The letter was also published as a broadsheet.] Many were grievously offended; but I cannot help it: I must follow my own conscience.

The letter may be read in the Standard Edition of *The Letters of John Wesley*, Vol. VI. p. 370. It is headed there, *To the Printer of the 'Public Advertiser,'* and dated from City Road, Jan. 12th, 1780.

Wesley begins by stating that he had received a pamphlet entitled *An Appeal from the Protestant Association to the People of Great Britain*, and, subsequently, 'a kind of answer' to this, with which Wesley disagrees, and then goes on 'to confirm the substance of that tract (the pamphlet) by a few plain arguments.' This open letter is well summarized for our purpose by Dr. J. S. Simon:

If read with care it will be seen that in it there is no attack on the chief doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church. Wesley says in his letter: 'With persecution I have nothing to do, I persecute no man for his religious principles . . . I will set religion, true or false, utterly out of the question . . . I consider not, whether the Romish religion be true or false; I build nothing on one or the other supposition.' He confined himself to one question, which he states in a few words: 'I insist upon it, that no government not Roman Catholic, ought to tolerate men of the Roman Catholic persuasion'

When reading Wesley's letter it is necessary to remember that it was written in the eighteenth century, and that it deals with a question that was then of great importance. It concerns the value of the oath of a Roman Catholic. Wesley says: 'That no Roman Catholic does, or can, give security for his allegiance or peaceable behaviour, I prove thus: It is a Roman Catholic maxim, established, not by private men, but by a public Council, that "no faith is to be kept with heretics." This has been openly avowed by the Council of Constance, but it never was openly disclaimed. Whether private persons avow or disavow it, it is a fixed maxim of the Church of Rome. But as long as it is so, nothing can be more plain than that the members of that Church can give no reasonable security to any Government of their allegiance or peaceable behaviour. Therefore they ought not to be tolerated by any Government, Protestant, Mahometan, or Pagan.' He then dwells on the important fact of the 'dispensing' power possessed by the Pope and priests, and concludes with these words: 'Setting then religion aside, it is plain that, upon principles of reason, no Government ought to tolerate men who cannot give

any security to that Government for their allegiance and peaceable behaviour'. [J. S. Simon: *John Wesley: The Last Phase*, pp 151-2]

For this letter the Protestant Association, on Feb. 17th, gave the writer its unanimous thanks, but there is no reason to think that either John Wesley or his brother Charles was ever a member of it.

A facetious kind of reply to Wesley's letter was published by a certain Father O'Leary, a Capuchin friar of Dublin, and an open correspondence between the two men continued for part of that year. There is a useful summary of the facts in *The Letters of John Wesley*, Vol. vii. p. 3., which is immediately followed by Wesley's reply to O'Leary, dated from Manchester, March 23rd, 1780. That letter also should be read and a second one to the same person, dated from Chester, March 31. These open letters were published in *Freeman's Journal*.

The peculiar interest of the Coughton Court letters begins to emerge when we observe that both were written on dates between that of Wesley's letter of Jan. 12th in the *Public Advertiser* and that of March 23rd in *Freeman's Journal*. They are addressed to

Mr. Berington,
31 Portman Square,

who, Lady Throckmorton informs me, was a secular priest and chaplain to and very valued friend of the Throckmortons of Buckland. He was also a prominent member of the Cisalpine Club, an association of Roman Catholic laity of a rather controversial nature, formed in 1792, "to resist any ecclesiastical interference which may militate against the freedom of English Catholics:" (*Cambridge Modern History*. Vol. X. p. 626.)

Let us keep the fact of Dr. Berington's great interest in the Cisalpine Club in mind as we read the two letters. No letter from him has been discovered nor is anything certainly known of the origin of the correspondence; but I think we may safely assume that Dr. Berington had read Wesley's letter of Jan. 12. in the *Public Advertiser* and, like many other people (*vide Journal*, Jan. 18) had written to him personally.

Here is Wesley's first letter to Dr. Berington, dated from City Road, Feb. 11. 1780. It reads exactly like a defence of his published letter of Jan. 12., to one who had written to him

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in a kindly spirit, disputing its main contention.

Sir,

A friendly Letter deserves a friendly Answer. I love the spirit wherein you write. But still I must ask

1. Was that public Decision of the Council of Constance ever publicly disclaimed?

2. Has not the *Bishop of Rome* still power to *dispense* with Oaths and Vows?

3. Has not every *Roman Catholic Priest* a discretionary power to *forgive* sins?

If these Premises stand, who can keep off the Conclusion, That Protestants ought never to trust Roman Catholics? I would not hurt an hair of their head. I feel a tender Goodwill for them. I would do them all the kindness that is in my power. But I cannot trust them. I am

Sir

Your obedient Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

It is much to be regretted that Dr. Berington's reply has not survived, but its general tenor can be deduced from Wesley's second letter, dated Feb. 24. Wesley obviously had in mind, as he wrote, both the matter and phraseology of his letter in the *Public Advertiser*, whose arguments he briefly rehearses.

To Mr. Berington

At No. 31 in Portman Square.

Sir,

Multiplicity of *business* has prevented my answering your last favour so soon as I would, And I may add, a Despair of doing good: for neither of us is likely to convince the other. Nevertheless, as you still write with mildness and Good humour, I cannot but consider what you say, and tell you just what occurs with regard to your Answers to my three questions.

I asked, first, "Has the *public* Decision of the Council of Constance, that no faith is to be kept with Heretics, ever been publicly disclaimed by the Church of Rome"? You answer, "It has been publicly disclaimed by the whole Church." When and where? Inform me, if you please. Its being disclaimed by a million of Individuals, is wide of the point. When and where did

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the Pope in Council, or even the Pope out of Council solemnly disclaim it? Let him shew me that can. Till this is done my question stands unanswered.

I asked, secondly, "Has not the Bishop of Rome a power of *dispensing* with Oaths and Vows"? You answer, "He has not a power of dispensing with them— unless they are *rash* or *unprofitable*." But who is to judge, whether they are rash or unprofitable? Certainly the Pope himself. So he can dispense with any Oath, when he judges it unprofitable! Then my second question remains unanswered.

I asked, Thirdly, "Has not every Priest the Power of Absolution, or forgiving sins"? You answer, "God alone *interiorly* absolves: the Priest only does it *exteriorly*." I reply, 1. I have known thousands of Roman Catholics in Ireland: but I never knew one who understood it thus. If they did, they would lay very little stress upon Priestly Absolution, For 2. What does *Exterior* Absolution, without *Interior*, avail? Is it not a solemn Nothing? But whosoever believes the Priest can do more, Him no Protestant ought to trust.

I am persuaded you have "told me what *you* believe," and perhaps many of your Acquaintance, But I know this is not the *Universal*, no, nor the General Belief of Roman Catholics, either in England, Scotland, Ireland, or any part of Europe or America where I have been. It is not the Doctrine which is delivered, either in the Canons or Catechism of the Council of *Trent*. These are the Standard of the Roman Catholic Faith, And these are full and express both with regard to Papal *Dispensation* and Priestly *Absolution*.

It really gives me pain to repeat these things, because I feel now Esteem and a Tenderness for you.

Yet I must still decline a personal Conference because I have not the least hope of its doing any Good. I shall not willingly say any more upon the subject, either in public or private. I pray God to guide you into all truth, and desire your Prayers for,

Sir,

Your truly Affectionate Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

Feb. 24. 1780

[Note the words 'in public.']

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Given Wesley's premisses, his conclusions as to the folly of any Government trusting to the oath of a Roman Catholic appear irresistible. Dr. Berington, as an educated man, must have realised the cogency of the argument, and seen that in order fully to gain the confidence of their fellow-countrymen and share in the full freedom and privileges of the State, it was necessary for him and his co-religionists to secure from the Roman hierarchy a complete repudiation of the attitude and claims indicated and implicit in these premisses.

Bearing in mind that Dr. Berington was a *prominent* member of the Cisalpine Club, it seems a reasonable assumption that Wesley's letters achieved more than he expected or knew; that they, and therefore Wesley himself, were amongst the operative factors leading to the founding of the Club, about twelve years later; for one of its avowed aims, as we have seen, was 'to resist any *ecclesiastical* interference which may militate against the freedom of English Catholics;' which, *inter alia*, surely means, to bring about such changes in the internal economy and policy of the Roman Catholic Church in this country as would render Wesley's premisses no longer true, and therefore his conclusions no longer valid.

Here, so far as we know, this interesting correspondence ceased. There is a kind of sequel. The national situation rapidly deteriorated, culminating four months later in the execrable Gordon Riots. The Methodist reaction to these abominations is well illustrated by a letter which Charles Wesley, who was in London at the time, wrote to his brother John on June 8th, giving a graphic account of what he had seen, and containing this passage:

Imagine the terror of the poor Papists. I prayed with the Preachers at the chapel (City Road) and charged them to keep the peace. I preached peace and charity, the one true religion, and prayed earnestly for the trembling, persecuted Catholics. Never have I found such love for them as on this occasion: and I believe most of the society are like-minded. (Jackson's *Life of Chas. Wesley*. Vol. II. p. 320.)

Later Lord George Gordon so insistently begged John Wesley to visit him in his prison in the Tower of London that at last he consented and spent an hour with him, on Dec. 19. 1780. Wesley refers to this in a letter written to one of his friends on Jan. 3. 1781. He begins by saying: "I had no great desire to see Lord George Gordon, fearing he

wanted to talk to me about political matters :” and continues :

In our whole conversation I did not observe that he had the least anger or resentment to anyone. He appeared to be in a very desirable spirit, entirely calm and composed. He seemed to be much acquainted with the Scripture both as to the letter and the sense of it. Our conversation turned first upon popery, and then upon experimental religion. I am in great hopes this affliction will be sanctified to him as a means of bringing him nearer to God. The theory of religion he certainly has. May God give him the living experience of it!

Wesley was almost 77 at the time of writing the Coughton Court letters, but the script is as clear, firm and characteristic as ever; a little faded, but easily read. The seal on the second letter is plain. That on the first is not quite perfect. In the centre appears to be a monogram, J. W., and two words are decipherable on the edge: LOVE. OBEY. A triangle with rounded corners, official, is stamped on the outside, with the words *Penny Post Paid*: one word on each side of the figure.

Perhaps there are members of the W.H.S. who can give further information. I wish gratefully to acknowledge the kindness and courtesy shown to me by the Dowager Lady Throckmorton, who is keenly interested in the Letters and anything that can be discovered about them. Except for the abbreviations in use at the time, which are few, I have preserved their original form, with capitals, punctuation and underlined words. They must not be printed in any publication other than this, which is for private circulation, without the permission of Sir Robert Throckmorton, Bart. It was Mr. John Purcell of Redditch who first drew the attention of the W.H.S. to their existence. W. L. DOUGHTY.

In *Proceedings*, xviii, p. 75 there is a statement that certain Wesley letters are quoted or referred to in the *London Quarterly Review* for October 1931. Amongst these are mentioned letters dated February 11 and February 24, 1780, to Dr. Berrington, Chaplain to Sir John Throgmorton.

I find that this reference is to an article by Rev. John Telford, editor of the Standard Edition of Wesley's *Letters* published in 1931. He says:

There are indications that a supplementary volume will be called for by and by. We recently read two letters, hitherto unknown, which are in the possession of the Throgmorton [sic] family. They were written . . . to Dr. Berrington [sic], Chaplain to Sir John Throgmorton, who was in disfavour with Rome because he belonged to the Cisalpine Party. Wesley addresses him at 31 Portman Square.

Mr. Telford quotes the three questions propounded by Wesley in the first letter and says Dr. Berrington's reply is not forth-

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coming but that Wesley's second letter goes more thoroughly into the subject.

It may be assumed that Mr. Telford saw these letters too late for insertion in the Standard Edition. I do not understand his spelling of the proper names; he was remarkably careful in such particulars.

F.F.B.

JOHN WESLEY AND LORD GEORGE GORDON

Through the kindness of Dr. R. F. Wearmouth, the *Methodist Recorder* of January 30, 1947 was able to publish an article of mine which included a hitherto unpublished letter of John Wesley's. As pointed out in that article, the letter was to one of the Secretaries of State, Lord Stormont. It is preserved in the State Papers (Domestic 37. 20. 1780), where Dr. Wearmouth discovered it.

Lord George Gordon, as a sequel to the Gordon Riots, sent a request from prison that John Wesley should visit him. Although Wesley did not wish to be embroiled in a political argument, he nevertheless wrote to Lord Stormont asking for the necessary permission. He received no reply, however, and a further request from Gordon induced him to go over Lord Stormont's head to the Leader of the House of Commons, Lord North. Asked whether he had any objections to the interview, North replied—"None in the world; but it lies properly with the Secretary of State". Armed with this note, Wesley approached Lord Stormont. The following is his letter, which produced the necessary warrant to see Gordon:

"My Lord.

Some time since, when Lord George Gordon desired to speak with me, (to which I had neither inclination nor disinclination) I took the liberty to ask your Lordship's advice. But as I was not favoured with an answer, upon his resuming his request, I wrote a line to Lord North. His answer I beg leave to inclose. I think verily, your Lordship knows my Sentiments too well, to apprehend any ill consequence of my conversing with Lord George: especially as I should be very willing to communicate to your Lordship, whatever (passed?) in our Conversation.

I am,

My Lord

Your Lordship's Willing Servant
John Wesley

City Road
15 Dec. 1780.

Your Lordship will be as good as to return Lord North's Letter."

FRANK BAKER.

NEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES

Many efforts have been made to present the story of John Wesley in the attractive style necessary to arrest the minds of children, and not all of them have succeeded. The latest attempt has been made by Miss Jessie Powell in *The Horseman with the Torch*, (Lutterworth Press, 4s. net), and a very good attempt it is. Unfortunately, the book is somewhat marred by one or two factual errors of some importance, but the author's selection of material and insight into the minds of the older children for whom she writes combine to make her narrative one of the best of its kind.

This month of September sees the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Thomas Coke, and it is good to know that the event is not to pass unnoticed. The Methodist Missionary Society, with commendable promptitude, have set their imprimatur upon *The Man who wanted the World*, by Cyril J. Davey (Cargate Press, 3s. 6d. net). For many years before his death, Mr. F. Deaville Walker was engaged in collecting material for a full-length biography of Coke, and that book may yet be written by another hand, but meanwhile this little book will certainly succeed in presenting a faithful picture of one of the greatest of the early Methodists to a generation which scarcely knows his name. As one would expect, Mr. Davey is primarily concerned with Thomas Coke as the Father of Methodist Missions, and much else of importance has had to be omitted in this short biography, but it can be heartily recommended as a suitable gift to the missionary-minded among the younger members of our Church.

Dr. William Warren Sweet is well-known for his full-length histories of American Methodism, and his latest work, *The American Churches*, is all the more welcome. This book, published by the Epworth Press at 5s. net., is the Beckly Lecture for 1946, and presents the story of American Methodism, chiefly in its evangelical expansion and social service, against the background of the various denominations. Not the least interesting section is that which deals with the religion of the American negro; indeed, the whole book is a useful contribution to a deeper understanding of the problems of our sister Church across the Atlantic.

A recent S.C.M. Press publication, *The Holy Communion*, (6s. net), contains a chapter on 'The Holy Communion in the

Methodist Church' by the Rev. E. Gordon Rupp. Whilst strictly outside the scope of our work, this chapter can be recommended as a useful introduction to the sacramental teaching and practice of the Wesleys and the later Methodists.

Lastly, mention must be made of an article by the Rev. Norman W. Mumford, M.A., in the April issue of the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, on 'The Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism in the Methodist Church.' Mr. Mumford, who has recently joined our Society, traces most painstakingly the usages in the administration of the Sacrament of Baptism, and the Orders of Service used, in the various branches of the Methodist Church prior to Union, and the article is a most useful summary of our constitutional history in this matter. Incidentally, it may be remarked that Mr. Mumford, like so many other explorers in this field, has failed to notice the revision of the Wesleyan Book of Offices prior to the well-known book of 1882, but this omission in no way detracts from the value of his work.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

THE ANNUAL LECTURE, 1947

The Rev. Wesley F. Swift has provided a most useful addition to the growing list of Lectures delivered at Conference time under the auspices of the W.H.S. In less than one hundred pages he has skilfully assembled material which goes far to fill a gap long conspicuous in our historical equipment.

We do not know of any treatment of the subject so comprehensive and detailed as this Lecture on *Methodism in Scotland: The First Hundred Years* (Epworth Press 3/6).

It is the product of much reading as revealed by the Bibliography included in the Appendices; Mr Swift has also made good use of the opportunities for local research afforded by long terms of residence in Scotland.

Wesley's personal work in Scotland ranged from 1751 to 1790, twenty-two visits being recorded. This is described with due attention to the political and religious background. His friendships and his controversies are here too. Rightly, the great contribution made by his preachers, often under most discouraging conditions, is also stressed.

These early years saw the establishment of Societies in many towns and villages, the fruit of evangelistic zeal; many of them were short-lived, the result partly of Scottish predilections, as explained by the Lecturer. Wesley's ordinations for Scotland in his later years are recorded, and his plans and hopes for Scottish Methodism assessed.

The Appendices give valuable lists of these causes, and of the way in which the early work was helped from Connexional sources.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

At the public delivery of the Lecture in the Wesley Memorial Church, Low Fell, Gateshead, Mr. C. T. Nightingale, of Edinburgh, presided over a good congregation which highly appreciated Mr. Swift's work in its spoken form; the book deserves a wide circulation as a readable treatment of an important subject. F.F.B.

W.H.S. ANNUAL MEETING

The Annual Meeting of the W.H.S. was held at the Wesley Memorial Church, Low Fell, Gateshead, on Friday, July 18th. It was preceded by a tea kindly provided by Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ibberson.

The President presided over an encouraging attendance of Members.

The memory of ten members who have died since the last report was sympathetically honoured. The President recalled his association in Circuit work with the Rev. F. M. Parkinson, who was an active member in the earliest days of the W.H.S. He passed away recently aged ninety-six.

The financial report was again satisfactory and the Secretary's report showed a substantial gain in membership during the year.

The officers of the Society, whose names are printed on the cover of the *Proceedings*, were thanked and reappointed, with one change. Rev. Leslie T. Daw who has compiled the Index for several volumes of the *Proceedings* was thanked for his careful work. He asks to be relieved of this post and the work will be undertaken by Rev. Wesley F. Swift.

Next year's lecture is to be delivered by Rev. F. Baker, B.A., B.D. on the Letters of Charles Wesley. Invitations to Lecture in 1949 and 1950 have been accepted by Rev. E. C. Urwin, M.A., B.D. and Rev. W. E. Farndale. F.F.B.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

866. In the Article entitled 'Methodist Statistics, 1838', in *Proceedings* March, 1947, the phrase 'seceding bodies' was used with reference to the Methodist New Connexion, Primitive Methodism, and the Wesleyan Association. The phrase was used as a comprehensive term by Woodhouse, and was repeated for convenience in this article, though not placed within inverted commas. This general reference, had, of course, no intention of implying that Primitive Methodism was a secession in the strictly technical sense. Within this context the phrase means no more than 'other branches'. It is generally agreed that the fountain head of Primitive Methodism was a fresh uprising of evangelical fervour, not a desire for constitutional reform. *Rev. G. Lawton.*

Limitations of space compel us to hold over some useful articles ready for use.

We hope in our next issue to include Welsh and Irish notes, also some notes arising out of our overseas connections.