

# Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

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## DONCASTER LOCAL PREACHERS' MEETING A CENTURY AGO

I HAVE had the opportunity of examining—with very great interest—the minute book of the Local Preachers' Meeting of the Doncaster circuit from 1835 to 1850. How little the fundamental purpose of the meeting has changed in a hundred years! The questions we ask today are just a variation on the four which were asked then:

1. Is there any objection to any local preacher?
2. Are there any alterations to be made in the places or hours of worship?
3. Are there any persons to be proposed as preachers or exhorters?
4. Who are to be examined?

They seem, however, to have been much more exact in their answers and stricter in their discipline than we are today, as the following quotations from the minute book will show:

Brother B— in consequence of misconducting himself towards M.N. of Awkley, in paying his addresses to her, in forsaking her without any justifiable cause, having made a promise of marriage to her, and in consequence of such conduct his name be taken off the Plan.

Resolved that an affectionate appeal be made to Brothers C— and J— respecting their connexion with the Secret Order of Odd Fellows with a request that they will withdraw themselves therefrom as the local preachers now present think such connexion quite inconsistent with their profession and calculated to be injurious both to themselves and the cause of God.

Rev. John Sedgwick to speak with Bro. E. J. — respecting his general conduct in the world, objections having been raised against him by several of the brethren present.

In September 1843, Brother W— was in trouble, having not only neglected an appointment but also having sent another preacher whom the last meeting had decided was unfit, and “coupled with this it was generally thought that Bro. W— was taking a sort of pleasure journey that was an infringement of the sanctity of the Sabbath”. In consequence of all this Bro. W— was censured.

It is good to notice that at the next meeting Bro. W—— justified himself, and the vote of censure was expunged.

Failure to attend a weekly class meeting was a serious offence, and for this Bro. W—— had his name placed at the bottom of the plan. Under similar circumstances there would be serious competition for this place today!

I liked this story of two preachers who made good after lapsing. Brother B—— of Adwick was suspected of poaching. Nobody had seen him in action, but the evidence centred around his keeping "a dog of a very suspicious kind, in fact one that appeared in every way calculated to suit the purposes of a poacher and consequently utterly unfit as well as unnecessary for the brother above named to keep". It was agreed unanimously that the dog must go, or else that Bro. B—— must cease to preach. The dog went, and the brother continued his service. At the same meeting it was reported that Bro. T—— of Tickhill had been seen intoxicated. The brethren therefore resolved to omit his name from the next plan, as the superintendent reported he had been suspended from membership. Some time afterwards it was reported that Bro. T——'s conduct had since been exemplary and that he wished to preach again, but at that meeting the brethren felt he had not yet sufficiently worked his passage home. However, a little later his name was restored, but "appearing as has been the invariable rule in all similar cases at the bottom of the plan".

It was good to see some of the names in this book, for they were the names of men who made Methodism strong in Doncaster. I was particularly interested in the name of Isaac Marsden, in whose memory a window was installed in Priory Place chapel. He was a great evangelist and soul-winner, and it was his preaching that led to the conversion of William Booth. Even he, however, was once "on the carpet". He was to be spoken with "by the Preachers both itinerant and local at a meeting which will be called for that purpose relative to certain unwarrantable expressions used by him when occupying the pulpit". There was no report given of that meeting, but evidently the brethren were satisfied that Isaac Marsden could not be put into a strait jacket, and he went his way with great results.

G. SELBY BELL.

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Circuit amalgamations in the Stockport area have called forth *Methodism in Stockport and District*, by Frederick Hunter (pp. 8, 6d.). It is a complete though necessarily abbreviated account of Methodism in all its branches in this part of Cheshire, and the name of the author is sufficient guarantee of its quality. . . . We have received the two latest issues of the *Journal* of our New Zealand Branch, and also the *Proceedings* of both the Victoria and the Sydney sections of the Australasian Methodist Historical Society. The latter contains an account of a Wesley Day meeting at the General Conference in Adelaide. . . . The latest number of the *Journal* of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales contains an appreciative review of this year's Wesley Historical Society Lecture on "Howell Harris".

# JOHN WESLEY AND ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY

## Some Unpublished Letters

(Continued from page 58)

### X

From two letters dated 24th November 1785 and 18th January 1786 (*Letters*, vii, pp. 301 and 313), we learn that persecution had not stopped, that work had been begun in Guernsey and that Dr. Coke had paid a short visit to the Islands. These originals are not in the Dodsworth collection, but the next letter, dated 14th March 1786, is hitherto unpublished:

Stroud.

March 14, 1786.

Dear Sir

Miss Morgan, now at Bristol, will be much obliged to you if you will be so kind as to speak to a gentleman in Guernsey, (perhaps you know something of him), Mr C. Guiller junr. who brought a large box of books for her from France. They are directed to James Ireland Esq., Bristol. She would be obliged to him if he would send them thither.

Dr Coke gives us a very pleasing account of the work of God in Jersey and Guernsey. It is plain your labour there has not been in vain, and I am in hopes Guernsey will overtake Jersey. I am now moving towards Scotland. Perhaps after the Conference, if I live, I may pay one more visit to Holland. I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in St Heliers, Isle of Jersey.

Mr. Brackenbury was at the Conference that year at Bristol, and he and Adam Clarke were put down on the Stations for Jersey. It would appear as if Brackenbury had serious thoughts of giving up preaching owing to the state of his health. In a letter written about that time by Miss Cooke to her future husband, Adam Clarke, she wrote:

I regret to learn the indisposition of Mr Brackenbury, but more so to hear of his intention to give up preaching. At Bradford and Trowbridge his preaching has been made an abundant blessing to my soul, but I shall never forget the last Bristol Conference when I heard him in Guinea-street Chapel, my every power was drawn out, and mercies innumerable, through the channel of his sermon, were communicated to my soul.

On 8th August Wesley, accompanied by Brackenbury, set off for Holland, and they spent nearly a month there. (*Journal*, vii, pp. 193-203).

### XI

During the first part of his time in the Channel Islands Adam Clarke's health suffered, and Wesley wrote to him on 3rd January

1787: "If you desire to have any health, you must never pass one day without walking at least an hour and take care not to speak too loud or too long. Never exceed an hour at a time." (*Letters*, vii, p. 362.) This admonition to Adam Clarke is enforced again in a letter, now first published, to Robert Brackenbury.

Deptford. Feb. 16, 1787.

Dear Sir

There is something very remarkable in the experience of that blessed man, Thomas Basher. If I can get a little time I will make a large extract from it for the Arminian Magazine. But the experience of our sister is far more remarkable and equal almost to any that I have seen: which I am the more surprised at because she is of so short standing, being a mere novice in comparison of Miss Johnson, Miss Ritchie and a few others whose experience most nearly resembles hers. I know not but I should write a few lines to her, only I suppose she does not understand English.

I [hea]r you inforce my advice to Adam Clarke, "Not to speak too loud or too loud". He must be reminded of this again and again, otherwise his usefulness, if not his life, will soon be at an end.

Whoever reads our Journals or the account of the work of God at Everton,<sup>1</sup> may observe that there always were in the beginning of any work, Divine dreams and visions. That these may be abused is certain, but still the rule obtains "Tolletur abusus, maneat usus". Bodily convulsions also have constantly accompanied the dawn of a general work of God. The nature of these likewise I have explained again and again to the satisfaction of all sincere enquirers. Those of another character never were and never will be satisfied. The despisers will "wonder and perish". But you have need to take great care to set the heads of the Preachers right that they may not hurt either themselves or others: nay, that they may not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by denying or undervaluing His work.

The marrying such a person as you mention would probably be a blessing to our brother de Quetteville.<sup>2</sup> I do not doubt but he will take your advice concerning immediate or improper self-denial. For every reasonable Christian knows that we must not offer murder for sacrifice. We must not weaken or any way injure our body for the good of our soul.

Dr Coke's intended subscription, I am afraid, has produced little or nothing. I never received or saw one guinea on that account. Whatever he received I suppose he carried with him. It is well if he did not carry it to the bottom of the sea, for we have heard nothing either from him or of him since he left England.

Any person's losing a degree of what God has given does by no means prove it was not given at all. She *was* undoubtedly saved from sin whether it has since re-entered or not. Let her now stand fast in the grace of God.

Had you not better expend those two guineas towards supplying the wants of the preachers? To which our brethren here will doubtless add what is needful. I think our sister may preach in private houses.

I expect to be in Bristol March 8-19; in Dublin about the middle of

<sup>1</sup> An account of the revival at Everton will be found in *Journal*, iv, pp. 317-22, 334-43.

<sup>2</sup> For further references to De Quetteville see *Letters*, viii, pp. 25, 28.

April. I see nothing amiss in the Tract; only that you seem to lay too great stress upon *sufferings*. They are not essential either to the being or even the *degree* of holiness. St John was just as holy as Paul though without a hundredth part of his sufferings.

My Dear Sir, Adieu.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in St Heliers, Isle of Jersey.

The lady referred to in the above letter was Miss Bisson, and there are numerous references to her in the *Journal* and several letters in the Standard *Letters*. Wesley lovingly exhorted her lest she fall from grace.<sup>3</sup>

In March 1786 Dr. Coke, with Wesley's approval, had issued an appeal for subscriptions for missionary work.<sup>4</sup> He had set out in October with three missionaries for Newfoundland, but owing to contrary winds they had drifted out of their course to the West Indies, and for five months Wesley had no word of or from him.

In a letter to Adam Clarke dated 3rd March 1787, Wesley announced his intention to pay a three-week visit to the Channel Islands after Conference. He made the journey, accompanied by Dr. Coke, and his own account of the journey with its many adventures and experiences will be found in the *Journal*, vii, pp. 309ff.

## XII

In October Wesley wrote to Mr. Brackenbury, and both Jackson and Telford print a letter of that date, but the original letter in our collection is much fuller and omits one sentence at the end.

London. Oct. 20, 1787.

Dear Sir

It was a good providence which [brought] that Penzance ship to Guernsey that so seasonably carried us unto Cornwall. We were never more acceptable in the Cornish and Devonshire circuits or more wanted there. And I am glad we were debarked [?] on the Islands, because very probably it is the last time I shall see them.

Mr De Queteville is undoubtedly a good young man and has a tolerably good understanding. But he thinks it better than it is and in consequence is apt to put himself in your or my place. For these fifty years if any one has [said], "If you do not put such an one out of the Society or I will go out of it," I have said "Pray go. I, not you, are to judge who shall stay." I therefore greatly approve of your purpose to give Mr Walker a full hearing in the presence of all the Preachers. I have often repented of judging too severely but very seldom of being too merciful. I hope Adam Clarke has now given you the reasons of his long delay.

I was sorry John Atlay had sent your books to Jersey before I returned to London. I had designed to send a few with them to be presented to some of our friends in Jersey and Guernsey, but must now wait for another opportunity. I enclose a few lines for Mrs Bisson for whom I feel an affectionate concern. I am much afraid the person you speak of does not love Mdlle L. so well as her fortune.

<sup>3</sup> For Wesley's opinion of Miss Bisson, see his letter to Mrs. Rogers, *Letters*, viii, p. 17.

<sup>4</sup> See Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley*, iii, p. 484.

I think our friends should not refuse to take their share of that nightly labour. It seems to me if they declined it they would be wanting in their duty both to their King and Country.

I am persuaded the heaviness which you feel is partly natural and partly preternatural. On the one side I believe the corruptible body presses down the soul and on the other Satan labours to distress you. But the God whom you serve is able to deliver you. He will, I trust, deliver you and that shortly. I ever am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in St Heliers, Isle of Jersey.

Forwarded by your obedient servant  
gd. J. Le Feuvre

### XIII

In the *Works*, xiii, p. 8 and in *Standard Letters*, viii, p. 27 a letter of 17th December 1787 is printed, but the last two sentences are copied from the end of a letter of 14th March 1786 (see above), and much of the MS. before us is omitted. The full letter is here given:

London. Dec. 17, 1787.

Dear Sir

Considering that the god of this world will not fail to fight when his kingdom is in danger, I do not wonder that persecution should come so soon to Jersey or Guernsey, but that it came no sooner. But when it did come I by no means approved of appealing to the secular court. It was just such an occasion as they wished for, giving them a fair opportunity of bringing us under their cognisance. But this is what I should have advised them if accused, with all possible love. I agree with you that the best method to be used in this exigence is fasting and prayer.

Wishing you all every possible blessing, I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
at Raithby, near Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

### XIV

The next letter in the collection is printed in a shortened form by Telford (viii, p. 103). The full letter is here given:

London. Nov. 7, 1788.

Dear Sir

I snatch a few minutes from visiting the classes to answer your acceptable letter. Mr Walker, who has been with us two or three weeks, set out for home yesterday. He gave us a very agreeable account of the state of religion in Guernsey. The preaching house is now serving us, at which Mr de Jersey wrought daily as a mason. Mr Clarke gives me a pleasing account of Jersey, complaining only of his want of a larger house at St Heliers. It is a larger sphere of action that he may possibly have, if he lives to the Conference. I exceedingly approve of your spending the winter at Bath. I believe God will make you of use

to many there, who are more ripe for your instruction than ever they were before. And I am persuaded you will yourself profit as much if not more by the conversation of a few in Bristol, Mr Valton and Miss Johnson in particular, as by that of any persons in Great Britain.

As you are naturally inclined to a kind of sadness I could not advise you to read books wrote either by Quakers or Mystics. I believe they are the very writers that are calculated to do you hurt, to teach you a gloomy religion instead of the cheerfulness of faith, which religion you should aim at in and above all things. Wishing you a continual supply of righteousness and peace and joy, thanks be to God,

I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.

at Raithby, near Spilsby, Lincolnshire.

In a letter written two days earlier to Adam Clarke Wesley makes no reference to a larger house, but does say: "Probably at the Conference your sphere of action will be enlarged." This happened, as Clarke was appointed Assistant at Bristol.

## XV

In 1789 Mr. Brackenbury went to Jersey in order to straighten out some matters connected with the Society, and whilst there received letters from Wesley. Three of these originals are in the Dodsworth collection and they are also in the Standard *Letters*, but appear there in abbreviated forms. The full text of the three letters is now given.

Bristol. Sept. 15, 1789.

Dear Sir

Your letter gave me great satisfaction. I wanted to hear where and how you were and am glad to find you are a little better in bodily health and not weary or faint in your mind. My body seems to have nearly done its work and to be almost worn out. Last month my strength was utterly gone and I could have sat stock still from morning to night. But, blessed be God! I crept about a little and made shift to preach once a day. On Sunday I ventured a little further, and after I had preached three times (one of them in the open air) I found my strength so restored that I could have preached again without any inconvenience.

I am glad Bro. de Queteville has more light with regard to full salvation. This doctrine is the grand depositum which God has lodged with the People called Methodists, and for the sake of propagating this chiefly He appeared to have raised us up.

I congratulate you upon sitting loose to all below. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free! I believe you will have no call to France at present: perhaps rather to Cornwall.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.

in St Heliers, Isle of Jersey.

Forwarded by F. P. Le Feuvre 6d.

Telford, following Jackson, gives the date of the above letter as 15th September 1790, and the name De Queteville is not given in full but as D—, and a note adds: "Was this William Dieuside in Guernsey?" It is evident that Telford had not got the original letter before him and thought the reference to Wesley's health indicated the date 1790. Moreover, the additional matter to the above letter that is given in *Letters*, viii, pp. 237-8, is part of a letter that is dated 15th September 1790, not to be found in either Telford or Jackson but which we are able to give below.

## XVI

The letter given in the Standard Edition, viii, p. 202, is incomplete. The full text is given here:

London. Feb. 24, 1790.

Dear Sir

Is the bailiff the same gentleman who subscribed to the chapel and let us have a lease for building? If so, how came his mind to be so changed? But his heart is still in God's hand. And therefore you take the very best way possible to allay the present storm by seeking Him that turneth the hearts of men as the [springs] of water. Without His help human means will not avail, but when He speaks there will be a great calm. If you had access to any friend of the bailiff perhaps by that means his mind might be softened, as it undoubtedly will as soon as this visitation has had its designed effect.

As you do not mention your being out of order I am in hopes your health is rather better than usual. It has pleased God to give me more strength than I had in autumn, but my eyes continue weak. It is enough that we are in His hands. I am, dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in the Isle of Guernsey.

Forwarded by Thomas Durell.  
5d.

## XVII

With regard to the next letter in the Dodsworth collection, there is a little uncertainty as to the exact date, as the writing is somewhat indistinct. It is probably 12th September 1790, though it may be 15th September, but it is not 17th September. As noted above, parts of the letter are given by Telford under the date 15th September 1790. The text of the original letter is as follows:

Bristol. Sept. 12, 1790.

Dear Sir

Our wheels are strangely clogged, neither of the preachers are come for whom I sent so long ago. As for John Bredin I think it was such madness for a dying man to think of marrying at all, (had there been no such particular objections as were in his case), that I do not see how I can trust him any more. Truly I think it will be better for him to go to Ireland again and to continue a supernumerary in his own country.

It is clear to me that no medicine will profit *you* so much as constant, moderate, riding on horseback. In season should not this be chiefly in the south of England? If you choose to go accompany me in any of my little journeys this side of Christmas, whenever you was tired you might go into my carriage. But exercise, one way or other, you *must* have, or you can have no health. I am not so ready a writer as I was once; but I bless God I can scrawl a little; enough to assure that I am,  
Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in the Isle of Guernsey.

John Bredin was the Assistant in Guernsey and there are numerous references to him in the *Letters*. He was rather a weak, discontented sort of man and not, in Wesley's opinion, very satisfactory as an Assistant.

### XVIII

Wesley was very concerned about the health of Robert Brackenbury, and on 15th October wrote to Joseph Sutcliffe a letter containing the following passage:

After long weighing the matter in my mind, I cannot think of a preacher more proper to save Mr Brackenbury's life and prevent him preaching himself to death (which he has almost done already) than Joseph Sutcliffe. I must ask you to go as soon as possible by Southampton to the Isle of Jersey. You will find a most hearty welcome both from him and from all the people.

Mr. Brackenbury returned to England and lived for a while in the neighbourhood of Portland. He received one more letter from Wesley:

London. Dec. 7, 1790.

Dear Sir

It gave me pleasure to see your letter dated from Portsmouth Common and to hear that your health is better. The little journeys which you are taking, together with moderate preaching, will I trust contribute thereto. I hope you will be able to spend a little time with us here at the time you mention, and if you choose to lodge in my house I have now a room at your service. And we have a family which I can recommend to all England as adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.

I will desire Mr Stephens to return to England as soon as it is convenient for his wife to travel.

I am, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate friend and brother

J. WESLEY.

Addressed to Robert Brackenbury Esq.  
in Chichester.

It would appear that Robert Carr Brackenbury availed himself of this offer of hospitality, and shared in the life at City Road. He was of the number of those who were present at the deathbed of John Wesley, and also attended his funeral.

CHARLES POLLARD.

## THE WESLEYAN REFORM MOVEMENT IN NOTTINGHAM

VERY little appears to have been recorded concerning the effect of the Wesleyan Reform agitation on Nottingham Methodism.

The following brief sketch is merely an attempt to state the facts, without bias, as far as they can be ascertained from a search of the local newspaper files of the period, and the few other sources of information which are available. No attempt is made to deal with the general question of the Reform Movement, or to express an opinion on the issues involved.

The subject needs little introduction. It is common knowledge that for some years prior to 1849 there was discontent and dissatisfaction amongst Wesleyan Methodists at the autocratic rule of the Rev. Jabez Bunting, and his refusal to concede reasonable reforms in the government of the Church. The unrest came to a head through the publication of the anonymous "Fly Sheets" and other similar propaganda. Messrs. Everett, Dunn and Griffith, leaders of this Reform movement, were expelled from the Connexion at the Conference of 1849. At once, through the medium of meetings and publicity, they aroused much sympathy and gained a considerable following amongst the Wesleyan rank and file.

Nottingham Methodism was deeply affected by this agitation and unrest during the years 1849 to 1852. This is not surprising when it is remembered that the Rev. Samuel Dunn was stationed in the Nottingham North circuit during the critical years of 1846-49, being superintendent from 1847 to 1849. During this period he commenced the *Wesley Banner*, and it was during his term in Nottingham that he refused to comply with the request of the Nottingham and Derby District Meeting to desist from publishing that periodical.

In G. H. Harwood's *History of Wesleyan Methodism in Nottingham*, Samuel Dunn, together with the other expelled ministers, receives scant recognition. Harwood says: "Samuel Dunn became a Methodist itinerant in 1819. He was fond of being A.I. in everything, and in 1849 was turned out of the Connexion." In spite of that brief and unsympathetic comment, Dunn appears to have gained the affection of Nottingham Wesleyans, and in fairness it should be stated that the membership of the North circuit rose from 1,610 in 1846 to 2,020 in 1848—an increase of 410 members in the first two years of his ministry in the circuit.

The news of the expulsion of Samuel Dunn reached Nottingham Methodists on Sunday, 12th August 1849.<sup>1</sup> On their way to Wesley chapel for the morning service crowds of people stood to read a large placard announcing the event, and also that Dunn and Griffith would be preaching on that day in the Manchester Corn Exchange. In the evening a large congregation assembled at both Wesley and Halifax Place chapels expecting to hear some announcement. The

<sup>1</sup> The expulsions had taken place on the previous day at the Conference at Manchester.

preacher that evening at Halifax Place was the Rev. Mr. Cusworth, and just before the sermon he announced that he would preach for a short time only as he had to go to Wesley chapel to address the people. Hundreds of the Halifax Place congregation went with him to Wesley, where he gave an explanation of the recent events at Conference. A local newspaper of the day describes his remarks as "smooth, well turned sentences in praise of Conference".<sup>2</sup>

The indignation of the people was roused and then increased when Mr. Cusworth professed to have forgotten the names of the expelled ministers, and making certain references to Dunn, to which the congregation took exception. At this point in the proceedings, the minister's remarks were interrupted by Mr. Richard Goodacre—who became a local leader of the Reform movement—asking, "What evil has our late superintendent done?" He was curtly told that this was not the time or place for questions, and Mr. Cusworth, seeing the meeting was liable to get out of hand, called for prayer, but before he could commence, the majority of the congregation rose and left the building.

As an example of the esteem in which Dunn was held by some of the Nottingham Wesleyans, it may be recorded that Mr. Goodacre travelled to Manchester on the following day, Monday, 13th August, to ascertain that minister's circumstances. At a meeting held on Tuesday, 14th August, in Mr. Green's timber warehouse, Hockley, Nottingham, with Mr. R. Mercer (also to become a prominent Reform leader) in the chair, Mr. Goodacre reported that Mr. Dunn was not homeless or destitute as he had feared, but had received generous hospitality from a Manchester sympathizer.

As a result of this meeting resolutions were passed, which were published in the advertisement columns of the *Nottingham Review* in the following form:—

At a meeting of Stewards, Leaders, Local Preachers and members of the Wesleyan Nottingham North Circuit, held in Nottingham, August 14th 1849, it was unanimously resolved:—

1. That this meeting expresses its strong admiration and appreciation of the character and conduct of the Rev. S. Dunn, and while it hereby affectionately offers him its deep and heartfelt sympathy under his present trying circumstances, gratefully remembers the unwearied efforts and self denying zeal with which he has unceasingly laboured for the spiritual welfare of ourselves and our children.
2. That this meeting views with alarm and indignation what it deems the unrighteous and un-Christian act of the Conference by which the Revs. J. Everett, S. Dunn and Wm. Griffith have been expelled the Connexion.
3. That this meeting pledges itself to the pecuniary support of these expelled ministers.

Signed in Behalf of the Meeting,

RICHARD MERCER,  
Chairman.

Messrs. R. Mercer, 3, Chapel Bar; J. Crowshaw, Pelham St., and Wm. Fields, Lower Parliament St., are appointed to receive subscriptions.

<sup>2</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 17th August 1849.

Events moved rapidly, for on Thursday, 16th August 1849, the three expelled ministers addressed a crowded meeting in the Mechanics' Hall, at which a vote was taken showing unanimous disapproval of the Conference action. Practical sympathy to these ministers was shown by a subscription list being opened to purchase an annuity on their behalf, towards which object £125 was raised in a few minutes.

On the following Sunday morning, 19th August, the Rev. S. Dunn preached in Hockley chapel, loaned by the Primitive Methodists for the occasion, and in the afternoon in the Mechanics' Hall he preached from the appropriate text, Acts v. 38: "Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God." He preached again at Hockley chapel in the evening. It is reported that the evening congregation at Wesley chapel was well below the average.<sup>3</sup>

Fears were entertained by the Conference party in Nottingham that the dissatisfaction would spread to the South circuit. Steps were taken to prevent the Rev. J. Everett from preaching at Radcliffe-on-Trent, as had been arranged. At this time there appears to have been no intention on the part of the Reformers to break away from Wesleyan Methodism. The expelled ministers caused a letter to be published in the local press over their three signatures, stating that for the present they did not intend to join any particular church, but to address meetings in the principal towns pressing for reforms by the Conference.

The aggrieved members began to operate "sanctions" at an early stage, for at the September Quarterly Meeting of the North circuit a deficit of £70 was reported, due to members withholding ticket money, while the South circuit Quarterly Meeting faced a deficiency of £102. There must have been some wealthy members remaining loyal to the Wesleyan cause, for both of these amounts were made good at the respective meetings. At the North circuit meeting a resolution calling for the restoration of the expelled ministers was ruled out of order.<sup>4</sup>

Nottingham was visited again by the three expelled ministers on 8th October 1849, when a tea and public meeting was held in the Mechanics' Hall. No less than 1,000 tea tickets were sold, and the Mayor presided at the evening meeting. As a result of a further meeting on the 18th February 1850, each of the two Nottingham circuits sent four representatives to the aggregate meeting in London, their names being: North circuit—Wm. James, Richard Goodacre, T. C. Elliott of Beeston and W. Banwell of Hyson Green; South circuit—Messrs. Bell, Oliver of Basford, Crowshaw and Marriott of Radcliffe.

The Conference party replied to these moves by arranging for Dr. Bunting to preach at Wesley chapel on 10th March 1850. This was the venerable Doctor's last visit to Nottingham. The chapel was

<sup>3</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 24th August 1849.

<sup>4</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 28th September 1849.

crowded to excess, and the collection made on behalf of the trust funds realized £100. The Rev. S. Dunn was present, and it is said that Dr. Bunting, during his sermon lasting over an hour, addressed one or two pointed remarks in the direction of that minister.

Counter action of a more serious nature was taken at this stage by the Conference party commencing a series of expulsions from the society of the Reform leaders. One of the earliest, and certainly the one to receive the greatest publicity, was that of Mr. R. Goodacre. His "mock trial" took place on 10th June 1850, when before a meeting of twenty-three trustees and leaders with the superintendent minister (Rev. G. Taylor) in the chair, he was charged with refusing quarterly subscriptions to the support of the ministry. Judgement was deferred for a few days, and during the interval the superintendent wrote to Mr. Goodacre in an attempt to avoid the inevitable expulsion. Mr. Goodacre would not alter his position however, and at the next meeting was required to surrender his class book and membership ticket.

This event received considerable publicity, many columns of the local press being devoted to a report of the proceedings and correspondence between the opposing parties. It considerably aggravated the grievances of the Reformers, and was shortly followed by the 1850 Conference, from which it became abundantly clear that no reforms were likely to be entertained. It seems to have been at this point that the Reformers began to think of a separation from the Wesleyan body. In this mood they met on Monday, 26th August 1850 and passed several resolutions, including the following:—  
 "... that a separate building be procured for holding religious services by local preachers and others on the Sabbath day".<sup>5</sup>

The die was cast, and the Rev. James Everett preached in the Corn Exchange, Nottingham, on Sunday, 8th September, 1850, a love-feast being held in the afternoon. The Corn Exchange was then taken for regular services, which commenced on 22nd September 1850, the preacher being Mr. S. Marsh. In addition, services were started at Carlton Hill, and at private houses in Pump Street, Princess Street, and Gedling Street. A plan was issued headed "Plan of the Wesleyan Methodist preaching appointments in the Nottingham West Circuit, 1850" on which there were the names of fourteen preachers, the name of the expelled minister heading the list.<sup>6</sup>

A little later the Corn Exchange meetings were transferred to the Mechanics' Hall, and, the number and resources of the society increasing, it was determined to build a chapel. On 20th March 1854 the foundation stone of the Wesleyan Free Church, Shakespeare Street, was laid by the Rev. Mr. Hunter, Baptist minister. This building was opened on 24th September 1854 by the Rev. James Bromley of Bath, and still maintains its witness in the centre of the City.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 30th August 1850.

<sup>6</sup> *Nottingham Daily Express*, 6th November 1877.

<sup>7</sup> *Nottingham Date Book*.

Apparently, however, even the Reformers were not all of one mind, for another group under the leadership of Mr. Richard Mercer separated from the main congregation, and built a large and imposing chapel in Park Row, which was opened on 8th April 1855 under the style of "The Wesleyan Congregational Free Church".<sup>8</sup> The cost of erection was largely borne by Mr. Mercer himself, but the cause had only a short life, and ceased to exist after a few years. The building was later purchased by the Established Church and in 1873 was consecrated as St. Thomas' Church by the Bishop of Lincoln.<sup>9</sup> The church has since been pulled down, and on the site now stand the offices of the Southwell Diocesan Board of Finance.

During these eventful years the membership of the two Nottingham Wesleyan circuits declined enormously, as the following figures will show:—

| <i>Decline in Membership.</i> |                           |                    |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------|
| Year.                         | Halifax Place<br>Circuit. | Wesley<br>Circuit. |
| 1849                          | —                         | 149                |
| 1850                          | 224                       | 392                |
| 1851                          | 264                       | 439                |
| 1852                          | 71                        | 89                 |
| TOTALS                        | 559                       | 1,069              |

These losses, totalling 1,628, represented nearly half the 1848 membership of the two circuits. Unfortunately membership figures for the Reformers are lacking, but it is known that in October 1852 they had fourteen preaching-places in their Nottingham circuit and 570 members. It would appear that a large number of the people leaving Wesleyan Methodism did not find their spiritual home in the Reformers' chapels. From the scanty evidence available, it seems probable that some joined the Primitive Methodists, who showed great sympathy with the Reformers by the loan of their chapels. Others may have joined the Wesleyan Association, and this seems to have been the case in the suburb of New Basford. Possibly the Baptists may have gained some adherents, as some of the leading Baptist ministers in the town displayed great interest in the Reformers' cause. The Sunday-schools suffered a similar decline, as may be instanced from the number of scholars on the books of Wesley chapel. In three years there was a reduction of twenty-four teachers and 224 scholars.

Up to the present only the town of Nottingham has been mentioned, but the same sad story of expulsions, discontent and bitterness was repeated over and over again in the suburban and country places of the two circuits. At Lenton the dispute came to a head over the preacher invited to conduct the Sunday-school anniversary services. Neither side being willing to compromise, services were

<sup>8</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 13th April 1855.

<sup>9</sup> *Nottingham Guardian*, 23rd April 1873.

held in the chapel by the Conference party, whilst the Reformers held rival services in the marquee erected for the purpose. At Radford the chapel was lost to the Connexion. In the village of Cotgrave a "mock trial" took place, with resulting expulsions, and a Reform chapel was erected. At the stone-laying ceremony, conducted by the Rev. W. Griffith, he said: ". . . as Reformers, they had been kicked out of their own house, and being without a roof to cover them, had resolved to erect another, under such provisions that they could not possibly be kicked out again".<sup>10</sup>

At Arnold the procedure of "stopping supplies" seems to have been carried out with some effect, for it is reported that after giving tickets for the September 1850 quarter, the superintendent in his concluding prayer "fervently implored the God of all grace so to soften the hearts of the people that he and his colleagues might not by their illiberality be reduced to starvation".<sup>11</sup>

As an illustration of the deep feelings aroused by the agitation, another incident at Arnold may be instanced. Nearly two-thirds of the society at this place went over to the Reformers, taking with them some of the musical instruments used in the chapel. One night a Reformer was returning from a meeting with one of the disputed instruments in his possession, when he was waylaid by three "singers" in the Conference chapel. With some violence they wrested the instrument from his possession and left him lying in the roadway. All attempts to settle the dispute having failed, the three Conference chapel "singers" appeared before the magistrates and were fined 16s. 6d. each including costs.<sup>12</sup>

The union of the Wesleyan Reformers and the Wesleyan Association into the United Methodist Free Churches did not work out altogether smoothly as far as Nottingham was concerned. A section of the Reformers withdrew and by 1863 had erected their own chapel in Great Freeman Street, under the title of the "Independent Methodist Church", which appears to have been linked to the Wesleyan Reform Union. This cause continued in existence for only a few years, as by 1870, or even earlier, the building had been taken over by the Catholic Apostolic Church,<sup>13</sup> who used it for worship until October 1951, when it was opened for the use of the Ukrainian Catholics.

As time passed, however, these differences healed, and the United Methodist Free Churches in Nottingham settled down to a period of prosperity and progress. By the year 1865 they had a circuit with two ministers, 864 members, fifteen preaching-places and 1,660 Sunday-school scholars. The growth continuing, a second circuit was later formed. The work and witness of this Church in Nottingham and district was considerable, and it brought a great contribution to the Union of 1907.

ROWLAND C. SWIFT.

<sup>10</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 24th September 1852.

<sup>11</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 13th September 1850.

<sup>12</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 28th May and 4th June 1852.

<sup>13</sup> *Nottingham Review*, 23rd October 1863, and *Nottingham Daily Express*, 2nd October 1877.

## BOOK NOTICES

*The Methodist Pilgrim in England*, by Frank Baker. (Epworth Press, pp. 96, 4s.).

Mr. Baker's book is the outcome of a suggestion of the Overseas Reception Committee of the Ecumenical Methodist Council (British Section) that our overseas visitors "would appreciate some information about the historic shrines of British Methodism". That modest suggestion has been most generously met, and once again Mr. Baker has placed us all in his debt by doing something not previously attempted, and by doing it so well. With this book as their guide, Methodists from overseas—and from much nearer home, for the matter of that—will miss very few places of real interest or importance in the history of Methodism in Britain.

How Mr. Baker does it is a mystery. He is a busy circuit minister—yet here he leaves Baedeker far behind in the fullness and accuracy of his local information, and completely out of sight in his manner of imparting it. One hardly knows which to admire most—his erudition, his industry, or his infectious enthusiasm. He even occasionally tells the Methodist pilgrim the bus numbers, and seems to be equally at home in Epworth, Oxford, London, Bristol, Birmingham, and Newcastle. Mr. Baker's "pilgrimage" is naturally centred on those pivotal areas of early Methodism, and while I have an idea that Manchester Methodists will miss some reference to Birchin Lane, Oldham Street, and the first Central Mission experiment, they will recognize the cogency of his suggestion that the North and North-West should have a "Methodist Pilgrim" of their own.

American visitors will naturally be grateful for the pages which lead them to the home and haunts of Francis Asbury. But the book is much more than a mere guide-book; it is a fascinating re-telling of much of the Methodist Story, and it could only have been the work of one with Mr. Baker's encyclopædic knowledge of the subject. F. H. EVERSON.

*The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, by John C. Bowmer. (Dacre Press, pp. xii. 244, 25s.)

This book, the Leeds M.A. thesis of our MS. Journal secretary, is a most important contribution to the history of Methodist worship. After describing the eighteenth-century background (Anglican, Dissenting, Moravian), the author combs Wesley's *Works* and other primary sources for anything that would throw light on the place, time, and manner of Methodist celebrations, giving particular attention to Scotland, and to the sick and dying. He considers the qualifications required in the celebrant (i.e. the history of Methodist ordination), and in the recipient (refuting the popular error that Methodism has never fenced the Table); he studies the doctrines in the Eucharistic hymns and the motives for the revision of the Office. He writes what is probably the first account of early Methodist communion plate (illustrated by some excellent photographs), and publishes for the first time an essay by Charles Wesley, *On a weekly Sacrament*. When we add that he does all this with the most scholarly documentation, out of a most thorough knowledge both of Wesley's *Works* and of liturgiology, it will be seen that this is a most valuable work.

Wesley's practices would have horrified a modern Anglo-Catholic: we need only mention his evening communions and his habit of starting

at the Prayer of Humble Access when pressed for time. Yet it is clear that many of his practices, and notably the frequency of his communions (between seventy and ninety a year even at the end of his life), have not been followed in modern Methodism. The main impression left by the book is of the way in which the Lord's Supper was intimately linked with the most evangelical aspects of the Revival. The author neither distorts the evidence nor conceals his sympathy for original Methodism.

Some of the material might have been more logically arranged; and the Greek better printed. On p. 110, n. 1, read "Weston" for "Watson", and on p. 206, n. 1, read "317" for "303-4".

The author's facts are unassailable, and his views deserve great sympathy, but occasionally an implication may be questioned. Thus on p. 94, we are sorry that he does not commend the basilican position, which alone is primitive. The implication (p. 108) that confirmation initiates into membership in the Church of England ignores the view of most Anglicans that this takes place at baptism, as the Anglican Baptismal service certainly seems to imply. In Georgia Wesley "divided" Mattins and the Eucharist by having them at quite different times; and the exodus of non-members, as subsequently practised, cannot be called "a similar procedure" (p. 118). Finally, the author speaks of Wesley's ordinations for England as "the final stage" (p. 148): now Methodists could receive the Sacrament from their own preachers. But the bitterest controversies came after Wesley's death, and we hope that Mr. Bowmer will now turn his interest and skill to this period.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

*Victorian Years. Volume Four of A History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, by Elie Halévy. (Ernest Benn, pp. viii. 507, 21s.)

M. Halévy did not write his *History* in chronological sequence, and this latest volume incorporates his last work, *The Age of Peel and Cobden* (1841-1852) published posthumously in English in 1948, with an essay and chronological table by Mr. R. B. McCallum to carry the story on from 1852 to 1895. Nevertheless, four-fifths of the book is by the original author.

From the Methodist point of view, the main interest in this period is the reform movement of 1849. The author's sympathies are obviously "anti-Bunting", and the blame for the tragic happenings of those years is laid at the door of "Bunting's intransigent Conservatism": "Their social position and turn of mind made the wealthy and most prominent Methodists the predestined adherents of the new economic creed of free trade of which Peel was now, together with Cobden, the hero." The Wesleyans are also blamed for the serious reverse which the cause of popular education suffered in 1843. Graham's Education Bill was dropped, according to M. Halévy, largely because the Wesleyans, who in 1839 had taken sides with the Church against the Dissenters, now "could not accept the hegemony . . . of a Church contaminated by Puseyism".

Not the least interesting pages of this book are those which deal with the Scottish "Disruption" of 1843. Thomas Chalmers is described as the "Scottish Wesley" who determined to regenerate and revive Scottish Calvinism by using Wesley's "revivalist methods", though in the event the secession split the Scottish Evangelicals and thereby weakened Methodism's position north of the Tweed.

This book is in every way worthy of its predecessors, and whets our appetite for the two subsequent volumes which will carry the narrative into our own century.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

*History of Methodist Missions: I. Early American Methodism, 1769-1844.* Volume Two: *To Reform the Nation*, by Wade Crawford Barclay. (Board of Missions and Church Extension of the American Methodist Church, pp. xiv. 562, \$3.50.)

The second of the six volumes of this new *History* is as good as the first. A third of it is occupied with the important history of the Indian Missions, but the remainder will probably be more interesting to English readers. This deals with American Methodism as an agency of moral and social reform: the relief of the poor, prison reform, temperance activity, and, especially, the work of Methodism in connexion with the abolition of slavery. This is followed by an examination of the Methodist experience, fellowship, discipline, theology and education, and the final section presents a detailed study of the preachers of the period. The book is particularly valuable for the use it makes of primary sources, and it should be read by the ever-increasing number of those who wish to know more about American Methodism.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

*From Luther to Wesley*, by Franz Hildebrandt. (Lutterworth Press, pp. 224, 16s.)

This is a book which possibly only two living Methodists could attempt, and Dr. Hildebrandt is one of those two. First a Lutheran pastor in Germany and now a Methodist minister in Scotland, he is richly acquainted with the works of both Luther and Wesley as are very few Englishmen. His mind is steeped in the teachings of both, and here he brings them together in comparison, in contrast, and in harmony. Contrast he certainly finds on some points, but in the essentials he discovers harmony, and the viewpoint of the book is perhaps best indicated by the titles of the two chapters in Part II: "The Revival of the Reformation" and "The Reformation of the Revival". Again, a characteristic comment (p. 66) is: "It is evident that the Methodist Revival has no more in common with Moravian quietism or Quaker spiritualism than Luther had with the Antinomians or Anabaptists; Wesley's place is with the Reformers in the main stream of the catholic tradition, protesting to the end against the abuses of Rome, but unshaken in the defence of the Church." On the other hand, Dr. Hildebrandt gladly admits his debt to Jellinghaus, who saw much that was good in the English "Keswick" movement. On a small point, would Wesley have heard Luther's "Preface to the Romans" read in the original language (p.13)? (Compare T. F. Lockyer in *Proceedings*, viii, p. 61f.)

We would suggest that not many Englishmen know both German and Latin, in which languages the many quotations of Luther are left untranslated, and that the use of so many Latin theological terms, while a convenient shorthand for the trained theologian, must make the book unintelligible for the layman. Further, the multiplicity of quotations at times baffles both the mind and the eye: p. 74 is a typographical maze of references to the Hymn Book, for example. Nevertheless, this is a book written with enthusiasm, rich learning and great ability, and its subject is of increasing importance.

STANLEY B. FROST.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 913. UNVEILING OF COMMEMORATIVE TABLET IN MANCHESTER.

On Tuesday, 25th September 1951, a bronze tablet on the wall of Pall Mall House, Church Street, Manchester, was unveiled by the President of the Conference (the Rev. Dr. Howard Watkin-Jones), to mark the site of the first Methodist preaching-house in Manchester. The address was given by the Rev. E. Benson Perkins, M.A.

The tablet is engraved with cream vitreous letters, whilst John Wesley's seal and monogram, immediately above the two last lines of the inscription, are in relief, deep red in colour. The inscription reads:

THE FIRST  
METHODIST  
PREACHING HOUSE  
IN MANCHESTER  
WAS BUILT IN BIRCHIN LANE  
AT THE REAR OF THIS BUILDING  
  
HERE JOHN WESLEY PREACHED  
ON EASTER DAY 1751  
  
THIS WAS THE CRADLE OF METHODISM IN MANCHESTER  
FOR THIRTY YEARS UNTIL WESLEY  
OPENED THE FIRST OLDHAM STREET CHAPEL IN 1781  
  
JOHN WESLEY'S SEAL AND MONOGRAM

"I LOOK UPON THE WORLD AS MY PARISH"

The story of the Birchin Lane chapel will be found in an article on Manchester Methodism in *Proceedings*, xxvi, pp. 2ff.

C. DEANE LITTLE.

### 914. METHODIST HISTORY PRIZES FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.

"John Wesley and the Moravians" was the subject for the essay in this year's Methodist history prizes, open to boys and girls in Methodist schools. The prize restricted to pupils at Rydal School was won by Peter Blatherwick, and the other prizes for boys were awarded as follows: First, Ian Miller (Woodhouse Grove); second, Roger Driver (Ashville); third, Gordon Lemmon (Culford). The successful girls were: First, Josephine Scott; second, Cathleen Page; third, Elizabeth Thomas (all of Hunmanby).

This is the third year of the competition, the results of previous years having been given in *Proceedings*, xxvii, p. 70, and xxviii, p. 23.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

### 915. THE ECUMENICAL METHODIST CONFERENCE.

The Oxford Conference has been fully reported in the *Methodist Recorder*, and it will have been seen that many of the lectures and addresses contained material of great interest to our members, who will await with some impatience the publication of the volume containing the verbatim reports.

Mention should here be made, for purposes of record, of the service "In Commemoration of John and Charles Wesley" which was held in the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin on the evening of 4th September. The church was crowded to excess and the service was conducted by the President of the Oxford John Wesley Society, the minister

of Wesley's Chapel, London, and the Warden of the New Room, Bristol. The sermon was preached by the Rev. Dr. John Scott Lidgett. The words of the service were taken almost wholly from those of Scripture, the writings of John and Charles Wesley, and the documents of early Methodism; and those who prepared the order of service with such loving care are to be warmly congratulated on a most fitting and worthy celebration in this historic church.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

916. JOHN WESLEY AND ROBERT CARR BRACKENBURY.

In Wesley's letter to Brackenbury dated 24th February 1779, printed in *Proceedings*, xxviii, p. 54, mention is made of a "brother Langham", but there is no reference to him in Wesley's *Works*. On that same day (24th February) Wesley wrote to George Robinson, of Langham Row, for whom he had a great regard (see *Journal*, vi, p. 286). Langham Row lies in the marshes of Lincolnshire, about twelve miles north-east of Raithby, so George Robinson would be known to Brackenbury, who was not only a Methodist preacher but also a county magistrate. In this letter Wesley promises, in response to Robinson's request, to visit Langham Row during his midsummer tour of the county. This he did, preaching at 11 a.m. on 5th July and then going on to Raithby.

In a very interesting letter to Wesley, dated 6th July 1775 and published in the *Arminian Magazine*, x, p. 496, Robinson, who had come into a small and very timely inheritance, wrote: "I will give bricks and ground to build a preaching-house upon, and will be at some expense besides, and convey it over to the use of the people called Methodists before one stone be laid."

In this chapel, the donor's pride and joy, Wesley preached. His last visit was on 2nd July 1788, and we are told, with other particulars (*Journal*, vii, p. 411), that:

the organ annoyed him. After the first verse he said, "Let that organ stop, and let the women take their parts." "They cannot sing without, Sir," replied Mr. Robinson. "Then," he retorted, "how did they do before they got one?"

So there was an organ in George Robinson's chapel, and evidently he was interested in the musical part of the service. Note, now, that "brother Langham" of Wesley's letter to Brackenbury is contemplating the purchase of some musical instrument, which could hardly be other than an organ.

Putting all these facts together, I suggest that the organ purchased was the one which later was to annoy John Wesley, and that "brother Langham" was George Robinson; that this was either Wesley's way of referring to their mutual acquaintance, or that he was confusing Robinson's name with that of the place where he lived (an easy mistake to make when we consider Wesley's extensive connexions), or that he intended to write "our brother at Langham". W. L. DOUGHY.

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The Derby Road chapel, Nottingham, has just celebrated its centenary, and its history has been written by A. E. Lee (pp. 18, 1s.). This admirable booklet leaves no relevant fact unrecorded, even to the name of the first violin in the choir in 1858. The society was a child of the Reform movement, and its influence in the suburb of New Lenton was and still is considerable. We congratulate Mr. Lee on an excellent production.