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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

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FOUNDED IN 1786

The Origins of the Methodist Missionary Society

FROM time to time the question is asked: "When did the Methodist Missionary Society begin?" The reason why there is any discussion about the answer lies in the nature of the Society's constitution. What really complicates the situation is the fact that in the ordinarily accepted sense of the term the Methodist Missionary Society is not a "missionary society" at all.

The M.M.S. is quite different from the L.M.S., the B.M.S., or the C.M.S. It has no separate, autonomous identity; its members are not distinguished by the donation of an annual subscription. There are Baptist churches which are in the Baptist Union and which do not support the Baptist Missionary Society; there are Baptist churches which support the B.M.S. but which are not in the Union. There is no equation between the Baptist churches in Britain and the Baptist Missionary Society such as we know in Methodism.

Our organization is comparable with that of the Church of Scotland, which has a Foreign Missions Committee but no missionary society—still less a number of missionary societies like those of the Church of England. Our *Minutes of Conference* refer officially to "Overseas Missions" rather than to the Society. The Conference session where the membership of the Missionary Committee for the forthcoming year is agreed, and where its business is brought under review, is the one in which the Society's officers are appointed. This corresponds more nearly to the annual meetings of other missionary societies than does our London May Meeting. What we call the Methodist Missionary Society is the whole Methodist Church organized for the conduct of its overseas work. This is the meaning behind the statement that "every member of the Methodist Church is a member of the Methodist Missionary Society".

* * *

In five years' time the Methodists of the West Indies will be celebrating their second centenary. Deaville Walker, in *The Call of*

the West Indies,¹ says of the service held in 1760 in the spacious drawing-room of the mansion on Nathaniel Gilbert's Antigua sugar plantation, when he preached to his own slaves :

It was the first Methodist service ever held for heathen people. That room was the birth place of West Indian Methodism and of the missionary work of our Church.

So no doubt it was, but we can hardly claim that occasion as the birthday of the M.M.S. This earliest phase of Methodist overseas evangelism is characterized by the work of enthusiastic individuals, and may go back as far as 1744 to activities in Flanders. The official backing and financial support of the home Church were not given to these men, though, as we have seen, one of them, Gilbert, opened what is now our oldest mission field. In 1960 we shall share in the rejoicings of our West Indian friends as they remember how the work began among them, but we shall have to wait some years longer before we can celebrate the bi-centenary of official support by the Methodist Church in this country for missions overseas.

It would be tempting to claim 1784 as our date of origin, for in that year Dr. Thomas Coke published his *Plan for the Establishment of Missions among the Heathens*. We may compare his position then with that of Carey six years later. Coke called "The first General Meeting" of his society for "the last Tuesday in January at No. 11 West Street, near the Seven Dials, London, at Three o'clock in the Afternoon". Before the meeting (if it ever took place) he had already received subscriptions to the total of £66 3s., and, as we have seen, Methodist work had already begun overseas. The Baptist Missionary Society, with every justification, claims Tuesday, 2nd October 1792 as the day of its beginning. At that time they had no missionaries on the field, and no real backing from the Baptist churches in this country. In widow Wallis's back parlour at Kettering were gathered twelve ministers, a theological student and a deacon. They placed gifts into Andrew Fuller's store snuff-box totalling £13 2s. 6d., and this sum, with the proceeds of Carey's *Enquiry*, represented their total resources as they passed their historic resolution. From this time on the B.M.S. was a living, active force; but Carey's scheme died quietly, and it was not revived until 1813.

We may be grateful that Coke's *Plan* of 1784 did not succeed, for two years later the Conference appointed overseas missionaries, and the present structure of the M.M.S. began to take shape. Earlier in 1786 Thomas Coke had prepared *An Address to the Pious and Benevolent, Proposing our Annual Subscription for the Support of Missionaries in The Highlands and adjacent Islands of Scotland, The Isles of Jersey, Guernsey, and Newfoundland, the West Indies, and the provinces of Nova Scotia and Quebec*. To this document, which makes it quite clear that Coke expected to work through normal Conference and circuit methods, Wesley wrote the Preface :

¹ p. 31.

Dear Sir,

Bristol, March 12, 1786.

I GREATLY approve of your Proposal for raising a Subscription in order to send Missionaries to the Highlands of Scotland, the Islands of Guernsey and Jersey, the Leeward Islands, Quebec, Nova Scotia, and Newfoundland. It is not easy to conceive the extreme want there is, in all of those places, of men that will not count their lives dear unto themselves, so they may testify the Gospel of the Grace of GOD.

I am, dear Sir,

Your affectionate Brother,

JOHN WESLEY.

To Dr. Coke.

Coke now had Wesley's sanction for an appeal, an essential support that had been withheld two years previously when he published his *Plan*, and it is not surprising that the new scheme was favourably received by the Conference in July. With the blessing of the Church, Coke sailed soon afterwards with John Clarke and William Hammet, who were designated for Newfoundland, and William Warrener, designated for Antigua. Here was the beginning of the fulfilment of Coke's desire that "the Methodist Connection shall become a seminary to fill the vineyard of Christ with devoted labourers".² It was the "Connection", not the society of his 1784 *Plan*, that sent men out.

By 1790 it was clear that Dr. Coke needed help in his care of the overseas missions, and in the *Minutes of Conference* of that year it was noted that a committee had been formed for "the management of our West Indian affairs". The members were Coke, three missionaries on the field, and five well-known preachers in the home work. Presumably the overseas members took part by correspondence and by consultation with Coke during his visits. In each succeeding year Conference, though it modified the appointments and details of administration in connexion with the overseas work, made it clear that Coke was acting as their representative. So in 1799, in answer to the question "Are there any further directions or regulations in respect to the West Indies Mission?", the reply begins with the affirmation "We, in the fullest manner, take those Missions under our own care, and consider Dr. Coke as our Agent." The Conference of the following year insisted that "The Superintendents in foreign stations shall be responsible to the British Conference and to their agent, Dr. Coke", and made rules for the accounts of the overseas work to be laid before them. In 1804 a "Committee of Finance and Advice" consisting of the London preachers was set up by the Conference to assist Dr. Coke. The same Conference directed that yearly collections should be made in the chapels of circuits which Dr. Coke had not visited, so that although at this stage there were no local committees or collectors, Methodism officially through its Conference was backing the work which had come into being through the agency of Thomas Coke.

² *An Address to the Pious and Benevolent*, p. 12.

The reason why 1813 is often given as the date of our foundation is that it was the year in which the first auxiliary society was established. On 6th October at the "Old Boggard House", Leeds, nineteen resolutions bearing the strong imprint of Jabez Bunting's mind were supported by thirty-nine speeches in what was the first public meeting, as opposed to a service of preaching, worship or prayer, that had ever been held in a Methodist preaching-place. In a short time other towns had followed this example, and new life and vigour came to the missionary cause. The formation of these auxiliaries, later welded into the larger organization of the M.M.S., was celebrated by the jubilee in 1863 and the centenary in 1913.

* * *

It will be seen that there are three clearly-marked phases in the history of our overseas missions. The first was that of unofficial enterprises undertaken by free-lance individuals. This may be regarded as probably beginning in 1744 and lasting until 1786. The second phase is that from 1786 to 1813. Here Conference has taken responsibility for overseas ventures,³ and throughout the period increasing help is given by committees to Dr. Coke in his administration of the missions, and provision is made for a broader basis of financial support; but the only *collector*—as opposed to those who received and transmitted the annual public collections—is Coke himself. The year 1813 sees the beginning of the third phase with its fuller organization and the new title of "The Methodist Missionary Society". Almost immediately we find most of the marks which are so familiar to us today: in 1814 the "Penny a week Society" was formed in Edinburgh; in 1816 Juvenile Missionary Associations were formed in London East, Leeds, Hull, Halifax, and Kingswood school, and the same year saw the appointment of Richard Watson as the first Home Organization Secretary, and the first issue of the *Missionary Notices*, precursor of *The Kingdom Overseas*. The first mention of collecting boxes is in 1817.

When the time came to consider how the centenary of the 1813 meeting in the Boggard House might be celebrated, it was decided that a history of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society should be published. Dr. G. G. Findlay was asked to write it, and because of the thoroughness which characterized his methods it did not appear until 1921. This was two years after his death, and the work was completed by W. W. Holdsworth.

With the intention of demonstrating that the M.M.S. was not a missionary society in the normally accepted sense of the term, and that Wesleyan foreign missions had begun prior to the foundation of the "W.M.M.S. of the Leeds District", Findlay gives the whole of his first chapter and part of the second to tracing the origins of

³ In the *Address to the Pious and Benevolent*, pp. 5 and 6, Dr. Coke indicates that the decision is still with "Mr. Wesley", but this may perhaps be no contradiction of the statement that Conference accepted responsibility for appointing Clarke, Hammet and Warrener. In so momentous an undertaking the Conference would be likely to follow very closely the lead of its founder.

missionary interest in Methodism and to an account of the establishment of the first overseas work, under the full control of the Conference, before 1813. This was the year when Coke sailed for Ceylon. It had become imperative that the financial support which he had secured, almost by his unaided efforts, for the work already begun in the west should become the responsibility of the whole Church now that he was going away to open new stations in the east. The developments in Leeds and the success of the L.M.S. showed how this might be done, but there was never any suggestion that control should pass from the Conference.

With these facts in view it is interesting to read again Articles I, II and XXII of the Constitution of the Methodist Missionary Society :

I. NAME.

This institution, designated "The Methodist Missionary Society", is the Department of Overseas Missions of the Methodist Church which has been entrusted by the Methodist Conference with the maintenance, supervision and development of all the missionary work overseas of the three branches of Methodism brought together in the Union of 1932.

II. MEMBERSHIP.

Inasmuch as from the beginning of Methodist Overseas Missions at the Conference of 1786, the initiation, direction and support of Overseas Missions have been undertaken by the Conference or Conferences of the Methodist people, and the obligation to preach the Gospel to every soul of man has been regarded as resting upon every member of the Church, the Methodist Missionary Society is none other than the Methodist Church itself organized for Overseas Missions, the members of the Methodist Missionary Society are the members of the Methodist Church and every member of the Methodist Church as such is a member of the Methodist Missionary Society.

XXII. THE CONSTITUTION AND THE CONFERENCE.

This Constitution of the Methodist Missionary Society is approved and authorized by the Methodist Conference, by which alone it can be amended or abrogated.

N. ALLEN BIRTWHISTLE.

The Epworth Press has published an admirable pocket-size anthology from Wesley's writings, *Through the Year with Wesley*, compiled by Frederick C. Gill (pp. 219, 8s. 6d.). It could not have been done better. . . . We have received the Third Jubilee Handbook of the Carver Street Methodist church, Sheffield (pp. 22, no price indicated, obtainable from the Rev. Roland Wilson, 39, Stone Grove, Sheffield, 10). The first hundred years of the history of this historic chapel, the scene of thirteen Wesleyan Conferences, is given much less space than the last fifty years, but the story is excellently told, and the booklet well printed with two handsome exterior and interior views of the chapel. . . . The society at Banner Cross, Sheffield, celebrated its jubilee in 1954 (though the church dates from 1929), and the illustrated handbook, containing much historical data (pp. 20, 2s. 6d.) can be obtained from the Rev. H. Tomlinson, 339, Millhouses Lane, Sheffield, 11. The interiors of Carver Street and Banner Cross well illustrate the change in Methodist architecture between 1805 and 1929.

JOHN CENNICK, 1718-55 :

A Bi-centenary Appreciation

ILLUSTRATION : John Cennick, aged 35.

TWO hundred years ago, on 4th July 1755, John Cennick died, and was buried in "Sharon's Garden", the Moravian burial-ground at Chelsea. Eight hundred people attended the funeral, among whom were a number of eminent Methodists. Present-day Methodists may not readily recall his name, for his place in early Methodism was small, and covered no more than a year or two. He was John Wesley's first schoolmaster at Kingswood. He also holds the distinction of being one of the very first preachers. He is known for his two popular Graces and one or two hymns. His life neither began in Methodism nor ended in it, but the brief interval of a year or so has given him a secure place in Methodist history, and for that we rightly take note of him on the occasion of the bi-centenary of his death.

Like many of the early Methodist preachers, he himself wrote a short account of his life, in which he tells at great length the spiritual struggle which ultimately led to his conversion. Apart from a separate booklet published in 1745, there is an almost identical copy forming a preface to one of his volumes of hymns.¹ He also kept a diary. This was not published during his lifetime, but portions of it appeared in the *Moravian Messenger* for the years 1874, 1875 and 1876. There is also a little sketch of Cennick by J. E. Hutton,² undated, the only record of its kind at present available. His hymns run to several volumes, but of these and his other writings Dr. Frank Baker writes elsewhere in this issue.

The early days

John Cennick was born at Reading on 12th December 1718. Three days later he was baptized at St. Lawrence's church. He was of Quaker extraction, though he himself was brought up in the Church of England by parents who had recently embraced the Anglican faith.

Cennick's mother exercised Pharisaical principles in the bringing up of her children: regular attendance at the church and daily religious instruction. Sunday was a day to be feared. "My mother would not suffer me to play on the Lord's Day, but confined me to read or say hymns all day long with my sisters. This I then counted the worst of bondage and indeed cruelty."³ John did not take well to his mother's lessons, and his instinct for play was often in conflict with his mother's determined aim. Yet he developed a serious

¹ *Sacred Hymns for the Children of God, in the days of their pilgrimage*. Second edition. Published by B. Milles, 1741.

² Out of print. (Copy in Library at Moravian Publishing Office, 42, Onslow Gardens, Muswell Hill, London, N.10.)

³ *Autobiography*.

nature, and soon a consciousness of sin. His nightly prayers were burdens of promises of how good he would be the next day! It is uncertain what schooling Cennick had, if any, other than that which he received from his mother, and however ill-equipped he was for the world, Mrs. Cennick saw to it that in religion at any rate he was well instructed.

At the age of fifteen, however, John broke away from the home influence, and sought the company of those who were more worldly-minded. He became fond of card-playing and singing comic songs; he went to horse-racing and dances. Play-going was a popular occupation among the impious classes, and Cennick readily warmed to this type of amusement. Such a life was not his real vocation, and his excursion into the baser world was only a brief interval. His desire to earn his own living took him to London, but his search for work in that city proved unfruitful. Eventually his mother bought a shop, and installed John in the small but fairly prosperous business.

His spiritual course took a turn about the same time as he was searching for a job. One day, as he was walking down Cheapside, he was suddenly struck with a deep sense of guilt. He says: "The hand of the Lord touched me." But it was a long struggle, and page after page of his autobiography unfolds the distress of the months which followed. During the year he hovered between the extremes of atheism and Romanism. Once he resolved to enter a monastery. He tried the method of starving his body in order to purify his soul. He would go for long periods without food, and often ate grass and acorns. He prayed for hours every day, and gave pennies to the poor, attended the Sacrament, refrained from the grosser sins. He often spent long hours on Salisbury Plain, and far into the night wrestled with his own thoughts.

This state of mind continued until August 1737, in his nineteenth year, when he "began to resign myself, in the midst of my distress, to the wise disposal of God . . .". Not until 6th September 1737 did he find release. On that day he went once more to the old St. Lawrence's church, and

I heard the voice of Jesus saying: "I am thy salvation." I no more groaned under the weight of sin. The fear of Hell was taken away, and being sensible that Christ loved me, and died for me, I rejoiced in God my Saviour.⁴

Like John Wesley the following spring at Aldersgate, Cennick went somewhat unwillingly that autumn Sunday to St. Lawrence's, but he came away a changed man, transformed by the love that had waited to receive him.

Cennick and Wesley

Early in the year 1738 a friend loaned Cennick a part of George Whitefield's *Journal*. It was his first introduction to Whitefield, and the *Journal* contained sufficient to make Cennick long to meet the author. An odd circumstance brought an answer to his prayer.

⁴ *ibid.*

He went one night to the home of a lady for supper, where he met a man from Oxford. In the course of the conversation the name of Kinchin was mentioned. Whilst that in itself meant nothing to Cennick, the report that Kinchin was a religious man meant everything. He must go to Oxford and meet this kindred spirit. The journey bore a quick result. He met the man he sought, and with him George Whitefield. It was the beginning of a valuable friendship.

The Methodist revival had already begun. A few Methodist societies had been formed, and Whitefield was regularly preaching at the pit-heads in Kingswood. Cennick joined Whitefield, and it was there he met John Wesley. The foundation stone of Kingswood school had been laid by Whitefield, but Wesley bought the site and proceeded with the erection of the school. When it came to the appointment of a master in charge, Whitefield recommended Cennick, and Wesley agreed.

Shortly before the appointment took place an event occurred which gave Cennick further distinction. He was invited to join others in an open-air service. The preacher for this occasion had not arrived at the appointed time, and Cennick was asked to start the service.

I had no power to refuse, or gainsay, and though I was naturally fearful of speaking before company . . . yet so much was I pressed in spirit to testify the salvation of Jesus to the people, that I fell on my knees, and besought the Lord to be with me in the work . . .⁵

The young preacher arrived before Cennick had gone far with the service, and pressed him to continue. He preached his first sermon under the sycamore tree, close by the proposed school. That was on 14th June 1739, about ten weeks after John Wesley had "submitted to be more vile", and less than four months after George Whitefield had conducted his first open-air service. On the following day Cennick "expounded a part of St. James' Epistle at White Hill, about a mile distant from the school", and two days later he was under the sycamore tree again. Soon he was visiting the villages near by, and receiving evidence of the usefulness of his preaching. Many flocked to hear him, and he quickly realized that God was calling him to this work.

It is one of the strange judgements of John Wesley that he approved of Cennick's action immediately he heard of it. During most of the year 1740 Cennick worked in Kingswood, both in his school appointment and as Wesley's assistant in the society. As a preacher he had extraordinary gifts, and often witnessed the excitement which overcame the hearers. He was unused to the terrible convulsions which were the frequent outcome of many of the services, and he did not regard them with favour. He had seen these extravagances when Whitefield was preaching, but now that they accompanied his own spoken word his heart rebelled against them.

The year 1740 was one in which "we enjoyed sweet peace, and

⁵ *ibid.*

had many remarkable meetings at the School". There did not appear to be any hint of the trouble which so swiftly followed, and the year which began so well and with such satisfying prospects was to end in a storm of controversy and the ultimate expulsion of Cennick from the Methodist society.

The trouble which led to Cennick's expulsion began towards the end of 1740. The determined Arminianism of Wesley came into conflict with the pro-Calvinism of Cennick. The latter had always loved and admired Whitefield, and grew more and more to love the gospel of election which Whitefield preached. The doctrine of Perfection, which was to involve Wesley in so many theological battles in future years, was to Cennick neither a doctrine worth fighting for nor a pattern worth following for life. The matters which separated Wesley from Cennick were not, however, wholly theological, though the root of the trouble must be looked for in their doctrinal differences. Had Cennick not openly and publicly denounced Wesley, and had he been a little more grateful for his privileges, it is possible that the relationship would have remained amicable. Wesley could bear long with those of opposite opinion, but it was a grave error that had been committed, and it became still more serious when several members of the Bristol society supported Cennick. Soon a couple of dozen people were thrilling at Cennick's ill-chosen diatribes against John Wesley, and the more eloquent, whom Cennick did not attempt to silence, repeated them. On 12th December Wesley heard what was happening, and made a cold and dangerous journey from London to Bristol to examine the truth of the report by a personal interview with Cennick.

"I was greatly surprised when I went to receive him," wrote Wesley, "as usual, with open arms, to observe him quite cold . . . I pressed him to explain his behaviour. He told me many stories which he had heard of me: Yet it seemed to me, something was still behind: So I desired we might meet again in the morning."⁶

The matter lay dormant over Christmas.

On 17th January 1741 Cennick wrote to Whitefield, but he was in America and a copy of the letter fell into Wesley's hands.⁷ Cennick told Whitefield that he trembled for the ark, and hoped he would come quickly to the rescue. But there were others who trembled for the ark too, and John Wesley amongst them, though for a different reason, and his coming was to help it in its trouble. The storm was not confined to one or two, the whole society was involved. For the sake of the society Cennick trembled, but for the sake of the same society Wesley contended. When the two met for a second time, Wesley armed with a copy of the letter to Whitefield, theological differences were waved aside. Wesley's good name must be cleared, and it was on this count that Cennick must repent or get out. He was not, at the moment, prepared to do either.

⁶ *The Journal of John Wesley*, 12th-20th December 1740.

⁷ *ibid.*, 22nd February 1741.

Time and place were fixed for a further and final interview. This gave Wesley time to prepare the full charge. He committed to writing what he proposed, and hastened back to Kingswood to deliver the ultimatum. In the sorry document Wesley accused Cennick of "tale-bearing, back-biting, evil-speaking, dissembling, lying, and slandering". It was a serious charge, and tabled in emphatic and unmistakable terms. Then followed the verdict:

I John Wesley, by the consent and approbation of the Band Society in Kingswood, do declare the persons above mentioned to be no longer members thereof. Neither will they be so accounted until they shall openly confess their fault, and thereby do what in them lies to remove the scandal they have given.⁸

The friends of Cennick offered to leave without more ado, providing Wesley would not press the charge against Cennick further. But Wesley would have no scapegoat. Cennick himself must either repent or leave. But Cennick did not confess; on the contrary he held to his own innocence: "Unless in not speaking in your defence," he protested, "I do not know that I have wronged you at all." Wesley would have no more of it. "It seems then," he replied, "nothing remains but for each to choose which Society he pleases." The members made their choice, and so did Cennick, and some fifty continued to support and follow him, while a similar number remained faithful to their first love.

During the period of controversy Charles Wesley wrote to Cennick,⁹ but handed the letter to John for delivery if he thought fit. John suppressed the letter, possibly because its tender tones were unsuited to the occasion, but more probably because he preferred to handle the matter alone. The battle was over before Charles Wesley's letter saw the light of day, and Cennick had lost it. It is easy to be biased in Wesley's favour, but he too had used Cennick's name in a sermon in London, the only difference being that Wesley was an ordained representative of the people and the Church; Cennick could make no such claim.

Wesley's was the superior wit, which meant that in argument he was assured of victory, but even here he made the grave error, which was never challenged, of hinting that he was not wholly troubled about Cennick's doctrines. This implied the dubious possibility that Cennick might have continued in his favour but for the scathing remarks made against him in public. It is hard to see how this would have been the case, for Wesley was very much concerned with the doctrinal purity of his preachers.

Twenty years afterwards Wesley could find no good thing to say about Cennick, and this after the young man had been dead and buried some five years. "I visited the classes at Kingswood," he wrote in 1760. "Here only there is no increase; and yet where was there such a prospect till that weak man, John Cennick, confounded

⁸ *ibid.*, 28th February 1741.

⁹ Quoted in John Wesley's *Journal* under date 8th March 1741.



The Rev. ^d JOHN CENNICK
Etatis suæ 33.

the poor people with his strange doctrines?"¹⁰ That, to say the least, was unfair comment, and its only useful purpose is to remind us that Cennick's influence was such that his work, good or ill, had lasted so long.

Cennick himself reflected on the incident with nothing but kind words for John Wesley. He blamed others, rightly or wrongly, and suggested that Wesley was influenced by the advice of people who were not clearly informed, and was not therefore wholly responsible for his action. Such a judgement is not necessarily final, but it does throw light on Cennick's willingness to excuse a great man whom he dearly admired and loved.

There is no need to conjecture what would have happened if Whitefield had come in time. Two months passed before he set foot in England. He had spent the last week on board ship preparing a reply to Wesley's sermon on "Free Grace". Either he did not know of the Kingswood trouble or he regarded it as a minor episode in a much larger affair. When he landed he lost no time in dropping a line to Cennick:

Hasten hither, my brother, with all speed, and then we shall see what God intends to do for us and by us. It is a trying time now for the church. The Lord give us a due mixture of the lamb and the lion.

Cennick obeyed, and in a few days came to London.

An interim period

Cennick had broken with Wesley, but a friendship was maintained which proved the large-heartedness of both. Cennick now joined Whitefield, with whom he had from the first been on the most intimate terms. When he arrived in London, he spent a short time with Whitefield, preached in the wooden Tabernacle, and then set out for Gloucestershire, where he met Howell Harris, four years his senior.

During the next few years Cennick laboured in Wiltshire, where he bought a portion of ground and a house, and showed signs of settling down to a local ministry of an almost independent nature. Soon the villages and towns in the county claimed him as their minister and preacher. In spite of many privations and much opposition he carried on an effective work among the people. He still looked after the class at Kingswood, and in all his labours the societies grew in number. In May 1743 he laid the foundation stone of a church at Tytherton, on the piece of ground he himself had bought. In the earlier Reading days he had dreamed of building a church, and now his dream was being realized. Inside the church today one may see the half-century-old chair behind the communion table, made from the wood of the pear tree beneath which Cennick stood so often when he preached to the people in his own orchard.

The settled life in Wiltshire soon ended. It came about by a chance visit to London, where he met several notable Moravians, among them Zinzendorf, Spangenberg, Böhler and James Hutton.

¹⁰ *The Journal of John Wesley*, 12th October 1760.

"I love brother Spangenberg," he wrote to Whitefield in May 1742; "my heart is with his heart in the Lord Jesus." It was a love which was stronger than appeared to be the case at first. He became as dissatisfied with his Calvinism as he had been with Arminianism. Repeated visits to the Brethren quickly confirmed his views that there was more in the teaching of the Moravians than in any other he had known. When the Moravian Conference met in London in 1745 he pressed Wesley and Whitefield to go along with him. They declined the invitation, and he went alone. It was a time of great enjoyment, and he told James Hutton afterwards: "One word from you, is like a drop of honey in the wilderness."

No further time was lost. Cennick handed over his Wiltshire societies to the Moravians, but at Bath and Kingswood disorder ensued. For himself, he was now ready to go where his new leaders directed, and by the end of the year the next step was clearly seen.

Cennick the Moravian

In December 1745 John Cennick accepted an invitation to Ireland. His reputation as a preacher had reached Dublin. Cennick regarded the invitation as a call from God, and set out, but was prevented from sailing, and the visit was for the time being abandoned. What at first appeared to be a frustration turned out to be a blessing, for by the end of the month Cennick found himself on his way to Germany in the company of the distinguished John Paul Weiss. Early in 1746 the two arrived at the old castle of Marienborn in the Wetterau, the centre of Moravian life and the headquarters of the Brethren. The stay was of five months duration, and enabled Cennick to see the famous home of Zinzendorf, besides enjoying the profitable experience of conversing with many of the Moravians. He attended lovefeasts, preaching services, birthday celebrations, and farewell gatherings. He himself preached—the greatest thrill of all. Of exceptional value was the short period he spent at the theological college at Lindheim.

Back in England in May, he prepared for the projected visit to Ireland. The journey this time was without incident, and soon he was in Dublin among a group who had prayerfully prepared for his coming. His first service was conducted in the Baptist church hall in Skinner's Alley, and his success seemed assured from the start. Opposition was soon met, however, and it took a variety of forms—mainly mob violence, but the Roman priest, Father Lyons, used his tongue and pen to degrade Cennick's name. The music-halls introduced his name into comic songs. By a misfortune of ill-chosen words in the course of his Christmas sermon, when he referred to the "babe that lay in swaddling clothes", Cennick was soon nicknamed "Swaddling John" by the quick-witted Irish.

The hall in which Cennick preached, and which was for a time his headquarters, had an interesting subsequent history. In 1747 Wesley saw it, and liked it so much that he bought it, and Skinner's

Alley became the Methodist headquarters for Dublin. The Moravian work continued in Big Booter Lane.

John Cennick's success in Dublin soon spread to the north of Ireland. Joseph Deane, a grocer from Ballymena, invited him to visit his home, and the largest part of his Irish labours continued in the north. There was much persecution, and once or twice he was hunted down. He suffered much for his preaching, but faced the opposition with true Christian courage and went on unafraid. In a few years many societies had sprung up in Down, Tyrone, Antrim, Cavan, Armagh, Monaghan and Donegal. Cennick's popularity grew with the months, as his travels widened. When the long struggle with opposition ended he went forward with increased zeal, and success attended his work. In all this he remained true to the Moravians, who in 1749 had made him a deacon. During his mission in northern Ireland he built ten chapels, and set up over forty religious societies. He occasionally visited England, and loved Howell Harris enough to visit him in Wales. He preached at Fetter Lane and at the chapel in White Alley, and was instrumental in starting a revival at Barking. He made visits to Derbyshire and Yorkshire, including the famous northern headquarters of the Brethren at Fulneck. He was the spiritual father of John Montgomery, the father of James the poet and hymn-writer.

Cennick's work was, however, fast drawing to a close. Periods of depression came upon him, though in public he maintained a vigour and joyousness which gave constant life and power to the people to whom he ministered. His health was giving way, largely as a result of the cold and damp he endured so often on his journeys. The societies he had founded made increased demands on his strength, and in all his building projects he gave personal supervision and often shared in the manual work. Both domestic and church financial problems worried him, and, worse still, some of the old controversies pursued him to Ireland. His beloved friend George Whitefield joined battle with him, and this broke Cennick's heart. He knew his days on earth were numbered.

One of his last duties was to open a new church in Booter Lane, Dublin. Hence he hurried to Wales, and then rode to London, arriving at Fetter Lane on 28th June, where he was found to be in a high fever. For six days he lay in bed cared for by the kindly hands of his dearest friends, until at the hour of seven on 4th July 1755 he breathed his last. He was only thirty-six, but he had run a good course and left a clear mark in the hearts and lives of many people.

WILLIAM LEARY.

The 1954 Wesley Historical Society Lecture, *Thomas Jackson: Methodist Patriarch*, by E. Gordon Rupp (Epworth Press, pp. 54, 3s. 6d.), was not available in book form at the time of its delivery. It will now be welcomed by our members as a worthy tribute in the well-known "Ruppian" style to a "one-talent" man who achieved greatness in Methodism's most difficult years.

THE MORAVIAN BURIAL-GROUND AT CHELSEA, LONDON

BEHIND an unpromising exterior in a corner of King's Road, Chelsea, within a stone's throw of Battersea Bridge, there can be found one of the most interesting—and least known—of those historic London sites which have significance for Methodism. Let the visitor open the gate of Moravian Close, 381, King's Road, Chelsea, and he will find himself in "Sharon's Garden", a haven of peace surrounded and secluded from the roar of London's traffic by blocks of high buildings, in which during two hundred years nearly nine hundred members of the Moravian Church have been laid to rest.

The history of this Moravian burial-ground is interesting in itself, apart from its associations with early Methodism. Beaufort Street, which flanks the east side of "Sharon's Garden" and runs between King's Road and Cheyne Walk, is built on land formerly occupied by Beaufort House, a large mansion reputed to have been the site of the house of Sir Thomas More, who purchased an estate in Chelsea about 1520 and resided there after his resignation as Chancellor in 1532. Beaufort House, which faced where Battersea Bridge now is, was formerly the residence of the Duke of Beaufort, and was purchased in 1736 by Sir Hans Sloane for £2,500 at a public sale. It was pulled down in 1740.

Ten years or so after the demolition of Beaufort House the stables of Sir Thomas More's mansion and part of its extensive garden were purchased from Sir Hans Sloane by Count Zinzendorf, who converted the stables into a chapel and the garden into a graveyard. At the same time he bought the near-by Lindsey House, at the corner of what are now Cheyne Walk and Beaufort Street, and by extensive alterations adapted it for Moravian purposes. It was Count Zinzendorf's intention to make the whole estate into a Moravian settlement, perhaps on the Herrnhut model. Indeed, he removed his whole establishment from College Street, Westminster, which belonged to James Hutton, to Lindsey House, from which he conducted all the affairs of the Moravian Church. Lindsey House remained in Moravian hands until 1774, when owing to financial difficulties it had to be sold to raise much-needed funds. However, the chapel, the minister's house and the burial-ground were retained, and remain to this day the property of the Moravian Church. Lindsey House can still be seen, converted into separate houses, as Nos. 96-100, Cheyne Walk.

The Moravian custom of separating the sexes has divided the burial-ground into four plots: in the north-west section are buried the boys and unmarried men; in the north-east square the girls and single women; the married women in the south-east square, and the married men in the south-west. In this latter plot lie some of Wesley's closest associates: Peter Böhler, to whom more than any other man Wesley owed the "warming of the heart" in Aldersgate Street



THE MORAVIAN BURIAL-GROUND AT CHELSEA, LONDON.
(The graves of Cennick, Böhler and Hutton are in the plot of which one small corner

on 24th May 1738; James Hutton, the bookseller at the "Bible and Sun" in Little Wild Street (now Wild Court, off Kingsway), in whose home Böhler formed the religious society in May 1738 which later moved to Fetter Lane, from which Wesley and others withdrew to the Foundery in 1740; John Cennick, master at Kingswood School and one of the first lay preachers, who himself went over to Moravianism.

A simple, flat stone marks each grave, and because of the expense of maintenance only a few graves, including those of Böhler, Hutton and Cennick, are kept clear of grass. The burial-ground was specially exempted from the Act of Parliament of 1855 which closed the other intra-mural graveyards of London, whilst in 1886 the Moravians obtained permission by Order in Council to continue burials in "Sharon's Garden" on condition that they were restricted to members of the Moravian Church and that the Moravian custom was perpetuated of burying but one body in each grave and that deeply. The graveyard is spaced for about a thousand graves, but the number of interments is not numerous—881 to date (the first was in February 1751)—and often two or three years will pass without a burial taking place. The one-time Moravian chapel is now a sculptor's studio, and the minister's house has become a private residence.

The visitor will have no difficulty in identifying the graves of Böhler, Hutton and Cennick in the south-west plot, with their inscriptions cut deeply into the stones:

Petrus Boehler / a Bishop of the / Unitas Fratrum / Departed / 27th
 April 1775 / in the 63rd year / of his age.
 James Hutton / born, Sept. 14th 1715 / departed this Life / May 3rd 1795
 John Cennick / Departed July 4th 1755. / Aged 36 Years

"Sharon's Garden" is a little bit of eighteenth-century England tucked unobtrusively away in a corner of twentieth-century London. The pilgrim will find it easy to recapture the atmosphere of those distant days when Sir Thomas More walked upon this very spot with his influential friends Holbein and Erasmus and Henry VIII in the garden of his Chelsea home, and those later days when men famous in Methodist history loved its quiet peace. Nor will he feel far in spirit from those early Moravians who every Easter Day met at Fetter Lane at three o'clock in the morning, walked to Chelsea, and there, forming a circle around the graves of their departed friends, heard the "noble Easter Litany" recited by one of their ministers and then joined in the Lovefeast in fellowship with the Church triumphant. Those same brethren will surely be amongst the "cloud of witnesses" on Monday, 4th July next, when on the two hundredth anniversary of John Cennick's death a service of commemoration will be held in "Sharon's Garden", and Cennick's own hymn will be sung:

So, whene'er in death I slumber,
 Let me rise
 With the wise,
 Counted in their number.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

I. Hymns

Cennick's first literary production was a volume of hymns, and it is on his hymns that his fame chiefly rests. Largely under the influence of German hymn-writers, he developed a fondness for experimenting with peculiar metres, and seems to have been the means of introducing into this country the metre 8.3 3.6 in which his well-known "Ere I sleep" is written. He has not the strength of Charles Wesley, and is much more inclined to sentimental banalities. Yet he is often very pleasing, though most of his seven hundred and fifty hymns are now forgotten.

1. "Sacred Hymns for the Children of God, in the days of their pilgrimage. By J.C. . . . Rev. xix. 5 . . . Ps. lxvi. 8 . . . Mat. xxvi. 30. London, Printed and Sold by B. Milles, over against the Cock Distil-House in Houndsditch, near Bishpsgate (*sic*). MDCCXLI."

12mo, pp. xxxii. 220.

BM EP.

151 hymns, with an alphabetical index at the end. The hymns include the well-known Graces, "Be present at our table, Lord" and "We bless Thee, Lord, for this our Food" (pp. 75, 76), and also "Ere I sleep, for ev'ry Favour" (pp. 78-9).

The lengthy preface is autobiographical.

1a. Ditto. "The Second Edition." The imprint is exactly the same as that of the first edition, even to the misprint "Bishpsgate".

12mo, pp. xxxii. 243.

BM MH FB Didsbury Coll.

152 hymns, with alphabetical index at the end. The hymns have been completely rearranged and numbered; in the first edition the index referred to the pages, in this one to the numbers. There have been numerous revisions, and the one hymn added ("Fountain of thy People's Bliss", No. 135) is really a re-drafting of one of the original hymns ("Fountain of all thy People's Bliss", No. 136).

2. "Sacred Hymns for the Children of God, in the days of their pilgrimage. By J.C. . . . Rev. xix. 5 . . . Ps. lxvi. 8 . . . Mat. xxvi. 30. London: Printed by John Lewis, in Bartholomew-Close: and sold for the author, at the Tabernacle."

12mo, pp. xii. 117, (iii).

MH FB Didsbury Coll.

86 hymns, numbered, with an alphabetical index at the end, giving both number and page of the hymns. None of these hymns appear in **1**.

Preface.

2a. Ditto. "London, Printed by John Lewis, in Bartholomew Close: And Sold by the Author, at Mrs. Powel's at the top of Bunhil-Row, near Oldstreet. 1742."

12mo, pp. xii. 117, (iii).

BM.

This seems to be practically identical with the first edition, but slight typographical differences (such as some broken lettering on p. 59) suggest that it has been reprinted after an interval.

3. "Sacred Hymns for the Children of God, in the days of their pilgrimage. By J.C. Part II. . . . Rev. xix. 5 . . . Ps. lxvi. 8 . . . Mat. xxvi. 30. London, Printed by John Lewis, in Bartholomew-Close: And sold by the author, at Mrs. Powel's at the top of Bunhil-Row, near Oldstreet. 1742."

12mo, pp. (iv). 196, (iv).

BM MH Didsbury Coll.

140 hymns, numbered, with alphabetical index at the end, to both number and page. Apparently all these hymns are published for the first time.

Preface.

4. "Sacred Hymns for the use of Religious Societies. Generally composed in Dialogues. By John Cennick, late of Reading in Berkshire. . . . Eph. v. 19

. . . Isaiah vi. 3. Part I. Bristol: Printed by Felix Farley, M.DCC.XLIII."
16mo, pp. 52. BM EP FB MH.
39 numbered hymns, not previously published, 15 of which are composed in
dialogue form.

4a. Ditto. "Bristol printed; London re-printed; and sold by M. Lewis,
No. 1, Pater-noster-Row. MDCCLXX."
12mo, pp. 52. MH Didsbury Coll.
Cf. **5b.**

5. "**Sacred Hymns for the use of Religious Societies.** Generally compos'd in
Dialogues. By John Cennick, late of Reading, in Berkshire. . . . Eph. v. 19
. . . Isaiah vi. 3. Part II. Bristol: Printed by Felix Farley, M.DCC.XLIII."
16mo, pp. 96. BM EP FB MH Didsbury Coll.
72 numbered hymns, not previously published, 8 of which are in dialogue
form.

Brief preface.

p. 85, No. LXVII, "Note, These were done by Mr. Joseph Humphreys".
(The inference is apparently that hymns 67-72 are all by this early Methodist
preacher.)

5a. Ditto. "London: Printed by John Hart, in Popping's Court, Fleet-
Street; and sold by J. Lewis, in Bartholomew-Close, near West-Smithfield.
1744."
16mo, pp. 96. MH.

5b. "Sacred Hymns for the Use of Religious Societies. Printed in the
year 1752. 12mo, pp. 146."

G. Osborn: *Outlines of Wesleyan Bibliography*, p. 81.

Osborn stated that the same texts were given on the title-page, and that
"some call the book Cennick's". He was apparently unable to collate the
contents, but it seems likely that this is a reprint of **4** and **5**, although by that
time **6** also was published. It is fairly certain that there were other editions
of both **4** and **5**, including one of **5** corresponding to **4a**, and one of **4** cor-
responding to **5a**.

6. "**Sacred Hymns for the use of Religious Societies.** By John Cennick, late
of Reading in Berkshire. . . . Eph. v. 19 . . . Isaiah vi. 3. Part III. London:
Printed by John Hart, in Popping's Court, Fleet-Street; and sold by J. Lewis,
in Bartholomew-Close, near West-Smithfield. 1745."
16mo, pp. 240, (viii). MH.

149 numbered hymns, not previously published.

At the end is an Index to all three parts, with references to page and part,
but not to the number of the hymns.

6a. Ditto. "London: Printed and sold by M. Lewis, at the Bible and
Dove, in Paternoster-Row. MDCCLXIV."
16mo, pp. 240, (viii). BM FB Didsbury Coll.

7. "**Collection of Sacred Hymns** . . . Rev. v. 9. The Christians were used
to meet together, and sing an Hymn to Christ as to God. Plin. Epist. The Third
Edition. Dublin: Printed by S. Powell in Crane-Lane. M,DCC,XLVII."
16mo, pp. 70, (ii). MH.

63 numbered hymns, with alphabetical index to pages. Most of the hymns
seem to be original and unpublished, but with at least two exceptions—Isaac
Watts's "Come, let us join our cheerful songs" and John Wesley's translation
from Rothe, "Now I have found the ground wherein".

The Moravian authorities unhesitatingly assign this to Cennick, and are
supported by the character of the hymns themselves.

Obviously there were earlier editions of this collection, which may be avail-
able somewhere. The Rev. Richard Butterworth, in *Proceedings*, viii, p.
156, speaks of a third edition, S. Powell, 1749, but this is probably a misprint,

like the date assigned in the same article to Cennick's *Hymns to the Honour of Jesus Christ*.

8. "Hymns to the Honour of Jesus Christ, composed for such Little Children as desire to be saved, and go to Heaven . . . Matt. xxi. 16. Dublin: Printed by S. Powell in Crane-lane. M DCC LIV."

16mo, pp. 10, 66.

MH.

42 numbered hymns, not previously published, each with a brief introduction, including seven dialogue-hymns.

pp. 3-10, "The Preface to the Children . . . Your Loving Brother / and Minister, / John Cennick, / Philbatch. / Nov. 16, 1753."

9. "The Divine Musical Miscellany, being a Collection of Psalms and Hymn Tunes: great part of which were never before in print. . . . Printed by R. Williamson and sold at Mr. John Morgan's in Half Moon Alley the 3rd house from Bishopsgate Street."

(See *Proceedings*, v, pp. 101-8, article by J. T. Lightwood.)

Small oblong 8vo, pp. 68 + index.

Advertised in *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1754, at 2s. 6d.

Many of the tunes are specially composed for Cennick's various collections, including his Dialogue Hymns. The *Miscellany* was prepared for use in Whitefield's Tabernacle, London, where Cennick had in earlier years conducted hymn-singing classes, but there is no suggestion that it was actually prepared by him. There is an 11-page introduction on the elements of music.

10. "Nunc dimittis. Some Lines of the Reverend Mr. Cennick's (Who departed this Life, July 4, 1755.) Which he wrote some Time ago, and carried with him in his Pocket-Book, where they were found after his Decease. London: Printed and Sold by M. Lewis, in Pater-noster-Row. 1756."

Small 8vo, pp. 8.

BM.

Poem of 108 lines in decasyllabic couplets.

10a. Ditto. "Printed and Sold by M. Lewis, in Paternoster - Row. MDCCLVII."

8vo, pp. 6 + 1 p. advertisement of Cennick writings.

BM.

10b. Ditto. "London: Printed and sold by M. Lewis, in Paternoster-Row. MDCCLXII."

Small 8vo, pp. 8.

BM.

p. (2) has list of Cennick writings.

10c. Ditto. "London: Printed and sold by H. Trapp, No. 1, Pater-noster-Row. MDCCLXXXIII. (Price One Penny.)"

8vo, pp. 8.

BM.

p. (2) has advertisement of items sold by H. Trapp.

10d. Ditto. "London: Printed and sold by H. Trapp, No. 1, Pater-noster-Row. 1787. (Price One Penny.)"

8vo, pp. 8.

BM.

p. (2) has advertisements of items sold by H. Trapp.

10e. Ditto. "London: Printed and sold by H. Trapp, No. 1 Paternoster-Row. 1791. (Price One Penny.)"

8vo, pp. 8.

BM MH.

p. (2) has advertisements of items sold by H. Trapp.

10f. Ditto, pp. 209-13 of "Scriptural Supports for the timorous Christian, in the prospect of Death. . . . By Reynold Hogg. With Cennick's beautiful Lines on Death. . . . London: Printed and Sold by Archer and Catherwood, 58, Chiswell Street. . . . 1823."

8vo, pp. 213.

BM.

"Introductory Address . . . The poem of Cennick has pleased me so much, that I thought it would not make an improper close to these meditations; and

as I apprehend it is very scarce, and little known by many truly pious persons, I have taken the liberty of inserting it." (p. xi.)

This poem is also reprinted in 59.

11. "A Collection of Hymns of the Children of God in all ages, from the beginning till now. In Two Parts. Designed chiefly for the Use of the Congregations in union with the Brethren's Church. . . . London: Printed; and to be had at all the Brethren's Chapels. MDCCLIV."

8vo, pp. (xii), 380, 390, (xxxviii).

BM EP FB MH.

My own copy, which formerly belonged to John Newton the hymn-writer, and contains his autograph, has notes on the authorship of many of the hymns. It assigns 645, 646, 662 and 664 in the 1st Part to Cennick, and in the 2nd Part 95, 148, 171, 173, 363, 373, 398. Four of these are from published collections of Cennick's hymns, the remainder not, though they are in his style, and almost certainly his. The Preface refers to "recent and wellknown" hymn-writers such as "Dr. Watts, Stennet, Davis, Erskine, Wesley, Cennick, &c."

12. "A Collection of Hymns, for the use of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren. . . . London: Printed; and sold at the Brethren's Chapels in Great-Britain and Ireland. M.DCC.LXXXIX."

8vo, pp. viii. 276, (xxxviii, i).

BM EP FB MH.

See John Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*, under Cennick: "Additional hymns from his MSS were published by his son-in-law, Rev. J. Swertner, in the Moravian Hymn Book, 1789, of which he was the editor."

None of the hymns in the *Collection* are assigned to their authors. Four of those noted in 11 are reproduced, including one from 1. "Ere I sleep" appears in neither 11 nor 12, although its companion-piece, "Rise, my soul", appears in 11. Neither do Cennick's well-known Graces appear in either collection.

Practically one-half of the section "For Children" (602-35) is adapted from 8, as is also one in the section "Hymns for the Sick".

Under "Moravian Hymnody" Julian's *Dictionary* notes the later editions of this, which became the standard Moravian Hymn Book:

Manchester, 1801 (revised and enlarged to 1,000 hymns).

Ashton-under-Lyne, 1826 (enlarged by the addition of a supplement of 200 hymns published at Manchester in 1808). This edition was itself reprinted as "Liturgy and Hymns for the use of the Protestant Church of the United Brethren".

There were still later revisions in 1849 and 1886, with another appendix in 1876.

See also the separate hymns included in the following publications listed below: 14, 16, 20, 21, 25, 26, 29, 33, 35, 41, 45. For poems cf. 65, 67, 71.

(To be continued.)

The *Handbook of the Methodist Conference, Manchester, 1955* (pp. 120, 2s., obtainable from the Epworth Press), is excellent value for money. As well as the usual Conference information, it contains useful articles on Methodism in the Manchester area, including ministerial training, the Chapel Office, and the Manchester and Salford Mission. It is worthy of its place in the long series of Conference Handbooks which have made a unique contribution to the historical literature of Methodism.

Those readers who wish to follow up the theme of the Rev. N. Allen Birtwhistle's article in this issue on the origins of the Methodist Missionary Society will find interest in *Its Origins and Name*, by Edgar W. Thompson (M.M.S., pp. 28, 1s.). This interesting booklet is a valuable essay on the same subject from a different standpoint by one of our most esteemed older members.

BOOK NOTICES

The Lord's Horseman: John Wesley the Man, by Umphrey Lee.
(Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, pp. 220, \$2.75.)

John Wesley and the Eighteenth Century, by Maldwyn L. Edwards.
(Epworth Press, pp. 207, 10s. 6d.)

An Economic History of England: The 18th Century, by T. S. Ashton.
(Methuen, pp. viii. 257, 18s.)

The Ecclesiastical Courts, being the Report of the 1951 Commission.
(S.P.C.K., pp. xx. 98, 15s. 6d.)

Our first book is a reprint of a biography of John Wesley first published in 1928. Its author, one of our American members, does justice to his subject, and like most Wesley biographies this one has its own indefinable "something" which makes it different from all the rest. We regret that the re-writing of the Preface has caused to disappear (without ill-intent, we are sure) the glowing tribute to the Wesley Historical Society which the earlier edition contained. There are two more serious omissions. One—a letter from John Wesley to his sister Molly—is fortunately available in the *Standard Letters*. The other, a full transcript of Wesley's own account of the Grace Murray episode (occupying 85 pages in the first edition) has doubtless been left out on grounds of economy. This is a real loss, especially to American readers, for Augustin Leger's *John Wesley's Last Love*, which alone contains it *in extenso*, has long been out of print.

Dr. Maldwyn Edwards's many admirers will welcome the lithographic reprint of his first book which twenty-two years ago established him as an historian of great promise. Those hopes have been abundantly fulfilled, and it is encouraging to find so great a demand for the first of Dr. Edwards's trilogy of studies of the social and political aspects of Methodism from John Wesley to the time of Methodist Union. It is a pity that readers of this reprint are deprived of the valuable bibliography which the earlier edition contained. It has been omitted without explanation or comment, though by a curious chance the Contents page has been left uncorrected in this particular.

Professor Ashton's volume on the economic history of eighteenth-century England is the first of a series of five which will span the period from the Middle Ages to the second world war. If every volume reaches the high standard of the first the publishers will have conferred a boon upon the reading public. The book may be said to be complementary to that of Dr. Edwards noticed above, for whereas the latter discusses the policies and ideas of the period, this is concerned with the continuity of its economic life, and covers such subjects as agriculture, internal and overseas trade, money and banking, manufactures and labour. Here is a wealth of information presented interestingly in a book which lights up the background of the Methodist revival and supplements the kindred studies of Dr. Wearmouth and Dr. Edwards.

Our last book contains the recommendations of the Commission on Ecclesiastical Courts set up by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York in 1951. Half the book is historical, and those who wish to study the procedure of the Church courts from the time of William the Conqueror to 1832 will find it of enthralling interest.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

NOTES AND QUERIES

955. A REVIVAL AT SWANSEA.

There was sold recently at an Exeter stamp auction a "cover", stamp one penny black, plate 5, being a letter, dated 1st March 1841, written by Mr. Joseph Williams of Swansea to his "respected young friend" Mr. John Bragg at 72, Northwood Street, Birmingham. The letter has a postscript which reads:

Having a small space left I may just inform you there is among Mr. Wesley's people here what they call a revival; perhaps you know what it means. There are several young men and women who seem greatly alarm'd at their spiritual state, and meet every morning about six o'clock for the purpose of prayer, and every evening for the same purpose, and remain until a late hour, sometimes until past 12 o'clock, some weeping, others rejoicing in a kind of ecstasy, some loudly lamenting their state apparently in utter despair; their bodily actions and the contortions of their features with the uproarious noise of their devotions call together a great crowd to witness what they consider strange and unusual. Yesterday morning the preacher delivered a sermon on the occasion defending the practice. I was much pleas'd with the principal part of the sermon and more especially with one anecdote. He told us of a Gentleman residing at Bath who had several servants, his favourite female servant turn'd pious and by her influence and example the others by degrees follow'd, the master found it out and turned several of them off, and engaged others; but the principal female having so long conducted herself so well he did not send her off with the rest only requested she would no more follow what he consider'd fanatics. Shortly after he was taken ill and in the agonies of death he sent for several of the servants and asked them one by one—can you do me any good? They shook their heads in great concern and answer'd—no. He then sent for the pious female servant and ask'd her the same question—can you do me good while now in the arms of death? She said—Oh, Sir, I can pray for you; well then, says he, do so; and knelt down by the bedside and did so, the result was that he died in a very hopeful state; but the preacher told us the story with fine effect, much better than I can convey it in writing.

I went to the chapel twice last week in the evenings, remained a short while each time but not late enough to see the extraordinary excitement spoken of. They tell me that the young women as well as the young men are much excited and express themselves some in prayer others in praise perhaps several at a time. I waited while three young men engaged in prayer one after the other without getting off their knees. I can have no objection to ardour in devotion but highly approve of it only that sometimes when carried to extremes it presently fails and the excited person becomes dejected and falls into despondency, or returns like the sow to wallowing in the mire. Two of the former description I have known lately at Swansea, they were sent to the lunatic assylum without hopes, and the latter is a more common case.

The letter has a further postscript: "Tis necessary on my behalf that you read this with a friendly eye."
JAMES K. WHITEHEAD.

956. A MUSICAL LINK WITH THE WESLEYS.

There has recently come into my possession a leaflet which has an interesting link with the Wesley family. In the county of Durham there is the small ecclesiastical parish of Hamsteels. On 6th July 1875 the present

parish church was consecrated, and the first incumbent was the Rev. Francis Gwynne Wesley, whom I take to be the third son of the famous Samuel Sebastian Wesley (see Stevenson's *Wesley Family*, p. 538). The leaflet, autographed by F. G. Wesley and published by Novello, consists of two hymns, written for the consecration of Hamsteels parish church and named *Hamsteel—No. 1* and *Hamsteel—No. 2*. Whether they have been used elsewhere I cannot say. Dr. F. B. Westbrook, whose judgement I have sought on their musical value, does not rate them very highly, but the leaflet itself is an historical link with the descendants of Charles Wesley.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

957. "WESLEYBOBS."

The query about "Wesleybobs" in our last issue (p. 24) has produced three replies.

Mrs. E. V. Chapman of Halifax writes: "There is no doubt in my mind that this is nothing to do with Methodism at all. It is simply 'wasslebobbs' (wassail), and round here they are called wassle—not wesley—bobbs."

The Rev. George Lawton of Gayton, Stafford, elaborates the same point: "I suggest that the key to the term lies in the region of punning slang. Ernest Weekley, a most erudite wordman, states in his book *Words and Names* that the words 'jolly wassail', which occur in a Christmas song, are changed by merry singers into the phrase 'Johnny Wesley'. Following this clue, it may be suggested that the term 'wesleybobs' was originally 'wassail-bobs'. 'Bob' is colloquial for 'ball' in Yorkshire as elsewhere. The term 'wassail-ball' (bob) may well be a corruption of the old term 'wassail-bowl', the drinking-bowl which adorned the festive table. This term is found as far back as the year 1610. This derivation of 'wesleybobs' gives only a slight link with Wesley, but it may prove to be true that admiration for John Wesley, or his popularity, originated the pun."

From the Rev. H. Austin Fairhurst of Maidstone, Kent, there comes the following: "Forty years ago in Bolton, Lancs, the word 'wesleybob' was used as a term of schoolboy abuse, hurled at all who attended the Wesleyan day school at Astley Bridge, Bolton, and I believe the same word was used in other parts of the town. In retaliation, those who attended the Anglican day school were known as 'churhybobs'. I have never heard the words used other than in a personal way."

Mr. Lockett's query has certainly improved our etymological knowledge!

EDITOR.

958. PULPIT DRESS.

Referring to Mr. White's query (No. 953) on page 24 of the last issue, the term "surplice fees" has often the flavour of jargon although it is standard English. It is still in use to denote that part of an incumbent's income which is derived from the more personal services of marriage, burial of the dead, and churching of women. Strictly, no fee is chargeable for the last named, but an offering is enjoined. Dr. Johnson defines the term as "fees paid to the clergy for occasional services". It was in use at the very beginning of the eighteenth century, for Thomas Warton in the *Progress of Discontent* impishly shows a parson as chuckling over a good yield in this respect. The term means then, not money for the provision of ecclesiastical garments, but moneys paid for duties done when the surplice was the canonically correct dress.

It is not a legitimate inference from this resolution of the City Road trustees quoted by Mr. White even that an Anglican clergyman wore cassock and surplice *in the pulpit* at Wesley's Chapel. He may have done,

or not, according to his churchmanship, or to what he felt was Wesley's wish in the matter, or perhaps even out of deference to the trustees. In some Anglican churches in earlier days (and it is so in a few even today) the pulpit would be the one place where a surplice would not be worn, being changed for the "gown" immediately before the sermon. In other churches the gown was put on over the surplice. A Court of Appeal case in 1896 confirmed an order of the Queen's Bench that the black gown is the lawful garment to be worn for preaching. In Queen Anne's time the surplice in the pulpit was considered very "high-church", but there have been times when the gown was thought to be "unevangelical". We can be pretty certain that at City Road a clergyman would wear cassock and surplice in the "desk", i.e. for prayers, and also when performing the occasional offices. And we can be reasonably sure that so long as episcopally-ordained "Readers" were obtainable, the Methodist preacher not so ordained would not wear the surplice, and probably not a cassock. The first "Reader" who was not an Anglican clergyman might feel that if he was to get the "surplice fees" he might just as well wear the canonical garments, but whether he did so or not is doubtful. This, however, is not Mr. White's question.

The resolution of the City Road trustees to supplement the preacher's allowance by these fees is interesting from the point of view of Methodist finance. It would seem that an Anglican term, used colloquially, made a meteoric flight through the Methodist atmosphere, but never established itself as a Methodist term for fees for ministerial duties. On the other hand, the term is not haphazard—it defines the Reader's emoluments and excludes fees like pew rents, etc.

GEORGE LAWTON.

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Manchester Conference, 1955,

WILL BE DELIVERED AT

Heaton Moor Methodist Church, Stockport,

On Tuesday, 5th July, at 7-45 p.m.,

BY THE

Rev. JOHN H. S. KENT, M.A., Ph.D.

Subject : "JABEZ BUNTING—THE LAST WESLEYAN."

The chair will be taken by MR. J. RICKARD.

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the Society will be held at Heaton Moor at 6 p.m.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ibberson kindly invite any members of the Society to TEA at Heaton Moor at 5 p.m. It is essential that all those who desire to accept this invitation should send their names, by 1st July at the latest, to Mrs. G. E. Amans, 84, Tatton Road South, Heaton Moor, Stockport, Ches.

Transport: Buses every ten minutes from MANCHESTER, No. 89 from Albert Square or No. 92 from Piccadilly. Book to Heaton Moor Road, then 5-7 minutes walk along Heaton Moor Road, on left-hand side. From STOCKPORT the No. 75 bus from Mersey Square to the top of Parsonage Road, which is one minute from the church.