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# Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

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Volume XXXI

September 1958

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## EDITORIAL

THE editorial policy of this magazine is concerned with two classes of readers. There are the non-specialists, who have neither the time nor the inclination for research, and therefore prefer "popular" rather than technical articles. They probably constitute the majority of our members; and we try to show our appreciation of their interest and support by catering as much as possible for their tastes. There are also the students, the research workers, who rely upon the *Proceedings* to provide them with much of their basic material, and expect the magazine to reach the standard that befits a learned society. We have often been urged to print bibliographical articles which will enable the student to deal usefully with the agglomeration of Methodist literature which confronts him, so that he may sift the wheat from the tares, and be guided in his search for the facts he needs. There are many promising "beginners" in our ranks today, and such articles have special value for them. Our recent studies of the *Sunday Service of the Methodists* and a similar article in this issue have this aim in view, and we hope to continue the series from time to time. Many will find them dull reading, but we crave their indulgence for the sake of those who need this foundation upon which to build.

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"Of making many books there is no end." There is certainly no diminution in the number of books which deal with the Wesleys and Methodism, or which provide material for a deeper understanding of the social, political and religious background of the years in which Methodism came to birth; and to this fact our regular feature "Book Notices" bears witness. We have outgrown the adulation, almost reverence, of our fathers: the phrase "Mr. Wesley" is as old-fashioned as it sounds; but the Wesleys and their times continue to exercise a fascination far beyond the limited membership of our Society. In this we rejoice; though as we survey our more or less static membership we may be pardoned if we exclaim: "Would God that all the Lord's people were prophets!"

## THE INTERPRETATION OF JABEZ BUNTING

(Continued from page 132)

**I**N the later nineteenth century Jabez Bunting was interpreted from the denominational point of view. Church historians, encouraged by unrevised habits of university teaching, still exaggerated the importance of patristic studies; this often caused them to depreciate all later church history as mere denominational chronicle, and sometimes to behave as though ignorance about Clement of Alexandria was far more abysmal than ignorance about Martin Luther. As a result, denominational history had usually been insular. (One of the most useful effects of the ecumenical movement may be the growth among historians of a greater willingness to think of the history of the Church as a single body of events, and not as a bundle of parallel stories about separate "churches": nothing is less convincing about the World Council than the "of Churches" which completes its title.)

In the period under discussion, the most remarkable piece of writing about Wesleyanism was undoubtedly Dr. H. B. Workman's introductory essay in the *New History of Methodism*. Much of this work is now as faded as the gold letters on its spine, but this attempt to decide on "The Place of Methodism in the Life and Thought of the Church" is still very much alive, and by no means limited by denominational frontiers. But while Dr. Workman elaborated the mediæval parallels to Wesley and Methodism which had suggested themselves to Southey and F. D. Maurice (parallels the exact value of which it is difficult to decide—have they more than a literary interest?; are we betrayed into them by a passion for championship tables?), he had less to say about the nineteenth century. When Tyerman published his *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, James Dixon, then superannuated and blind, wrote to him and said: "I used to think as you do up to 1849, namely, that Methodism was the most glorious development of the grace and truth of God ever known in the world; but the horrors of that dreadful time shook my confidence, which, I am glad to say, your book has very much revived." Dr. Workman stood a long way from 1849: he felt able to assert that "the virtual suppression of Evangelicalism as a governing force in the Church of England has made Methodism more conscious of itself as the representative Evangelical Church of the country." The development of the Anglo-Catholic movement had meant that "even the Wesleyan Methodist Church, which at one time was regarded as a sort of poor connexion of the Establishment, had drifted into complete separation", and allied itself with a non-conformity prepared to resist hotly the alleged intention of those whom Workman was still calling the Tractarians to "undo the work of the Reformation". Workman did not mention Jabez Bunting, or 1849, or the transformation of the Wesleyan Conference; it is equally

important that he laid positive emphasis on the Methodist doctrine of Assurance and said in comparison little about the Methodist doctrine of Perfect Love. For him the meaningful changes in nineteenth-century Methodism were: first, the altered relationship of Wesleyanism to other ecclesiastical bodies; and second, the acceptance—general, if not universal—of the itinerant as a full minister. In fact Workman's summary of Methodist nineteenth-century history makes one wonder if, when he claimed for Methodism "a definite place in the progress and development of the one Holy Catholic Church" he was actually pointing to the fact that denominationalism had at last found its place in the life and development of the Methodist societies.

This might have implied the most drastic criticism of Jabez Bunting—or for that matter of Hugh Price Hughes—but Dr. Workman seemed to regard what had happened as the inevitable, welcome outcome of Tractarian pressure from without, plus internal change best covered by the word "progress": Methodism had become ecclesiastically mature, *reçu*. His treatment of the changed status of the itinerant took the rather odd form of the assertion, based on the uncertain authority of Harnack and the dubious evidence of the *Didache*, that "the chief office of the Early Church revived by Methodism was that of apostle". The Wesleys (Charles until he married), Whitefield and Coke were "apostles", together with Asbury, but "the apostolate died with Wesley. The one remaining 'apostle', Coke, with his roving commission, was always jealously regarded by the prophets and presbyters, who succeeded to Wesley's authority though not to his office". (The reference to Coke presumably is limited to the "apostolate" in England.)

Dr. Workman's intention seemed to be to suggest that Methodism had conformed to a pattern of development for "churches" established by the Early Church, but his position was somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, he explained the disappearance of the third- and fourth-century "apostle" in terms of the jealousy of the "episcopos", who aspired to his place and duties; he hinted that something similar took place in Methodism, giving the dislike of Coke as an example, and implying some degree of disapproval of events under Bunting. However, the force of the statement was qualified by the assertion that "the 'apostolate' died with Wesley", which suggested that for a moment Workman had shifted from "apostle" to the wider term Apostle, without noticing the new implications. In any case, the period 1791-1830 could hardly be described in terms of an attempt by Bunting and his fellow "episcopoi" to overthrow an "apostolate": the policy of the consolidators was to lift the itinerants to the status of full ministers, and the struggle which is the core of Wesleyan history at the time arose from the stubborn resistance of many of the itinerants to such a change. They did not want to be "ministers": they wanted to be Methodist preachers; they were not jealous of the authority of the Wesleys or of Asbury, though they resented the idea that Coke was really on a level with these

“apostles”; their hero was Adam Clarke, not without his own right to the title “apostle” as defined by Workman. Although they would have accepted Dr. Workman’s second suggestion, that whatever was the nature of Wesley’s position it perished with him, they did not make this the basis for further claims about themselves, and this was the extraordinary development, on which Workman’s analogy threw no light whatever. Symbolically, they called a halt to the ordinations which Wesley himself had begun.

There is the further difficulty that Workman, as has already been shown, thoroughly approved the main course of nineteenth-century Wesleyan history. The question which James Dixon raised with Tyerman, and which clearly haunted Bunting himself in the last years of his life, was whether a subtle tragedy had not taken place in which both sides in the Methodist Disruption were losers—a tragedy whose profoundest mark was the paucity of Methodist theology about Perfection in the nineteenth century, and for which it was small compensation to say that Wesleyan Methodism was no longer a poor relation of the Church of England. This question Dr. Workman did not reach. Indeed, the general attitude of the *New History* to the divisions of the nineteenth century was to emphasize that they were not “doctrinal”, and therefore not particularly important. Even in the restricted sense which this doubtless would have for students of the patristic era this was by no means entirely true, since the doctrines of the Church, the Ministry and the Sacraments were fundamental subject-matter of the secessions. Such comment always implied that the diseased personality of Jabez Bunting must take the blame for the Disruption. The Disruption was never seen as having a positive aspect, even from the Wesleyan point of view.

Dr. Workman made a more direct attempt to throw light on the period in his section on “Methodism and Puritanism”. There he attributed some of the characteristics of Methodism to its inheritance from the seventeenth century of a dualistic attitude to life. This had shown itself in Methodism in such forms as “the cultivation of the ugly”, or “as in the struggle over the Theological Institution”, of “a suspicion of culture”; another example had been an “indifference to all political and social issues, more ostentatious, possibly, than real”.

The first instance seems rather dubious, and one’s confidence is not increased by Workman’s comment that the cultivation of the ugly was “aggravated by the Philistinism of the Georgian age”. When Matthew Arnold talked about Philistinism he meant a brute indifference to the arts, whereas the Georgian, however ugly a late Victorian might have thought his products, consciously aimed at a cultivated taste. For Workman, Methodist Gothic was evidently an improvement on Methodist Georgian; Wesleyan Methodism officially adopted the Gothic style for chapels, etc. in 1848 (partly on the ground that it was the cheaper method of the two), but that either style was evidence of a dualistic attitude to life one may doubt. Methodism simply followed the dominant taste of the age, just as

the present century has seen a third variety of chapel—for which Light Industrial might be a reasonable architectural description. In all three cases beauty was the aim, but Workman left out two points: a good architect is both rare and expensive, and in the hierarchy of English society Methodism long occupied a place subject to a cultural time-lag.

The second case is equally doubtful. The opposition to the plan put forward by Bunting for a Theological Institution was based on an explanation of the success of Methodism worked out in terms of its actual history, not in terms of an abstract attitude to "culture". John Wesley had told Samuel Furlly that of all men a clergyman "should imitate the language of the common people throughout", and this at once defined both the manner and the audience of Methodist evangelism. If many Methodists in the 1830s dreaded the results of "culture" in ministers, it was also because of their long experience of university-raised Anglicanism in the parish pulpit. The universities themselves had not risen far from their eighteenth-century squalor, as the mid-century Commission was to prove, so that nervousness about "young men gathered together into institutions" was more reasonable than it seems today. It was unfair in any case to accuse the Puritan of a suspicion of culture. Puritanism proper was a university movement, in revolt against the illogicalities of old-fashioned thought about education, politics, and the Church settlement. Methodism, it is true, was affected by the pietism of the later seventeenth century, but this was a distinct growth, whose rebellion against the contemporary scientist and biblical critic was, as A. N. Whitehead saw, an ominous event in the intellectual history of Christianity. In Bunting's lifetime the representative of this tradition was the Anglican Evangelical: he, not the Methodist itinerant, spent his leisure at meetings of a Prophetic Investigation Society, or speculated as to the costume which Louis Napoleon would wear when he was revealed to an astonished world as the Antichrist. It was in the second half of the century that Methodism fell seriously out of step with the environing world of thought, substituting, one might almost say, pietism for perfectionism. But that a suspicion of culture, caused by a dualistic attitude to life, was a reason for the attack on Bunting's scheme one may doubt. The plan was the occasion, not the substance, of the secession: on its substance this analogy threw no light.

In the third instance Dr. Workman covered himself against possible objection by saying that indifference to all political and social issues was possibly more ostentatious than real. Nevertheless, the use of the word "all" gave the statement the air of exaggeration, or suggested that only certain issues counted in the mind of the writer. There has been a constant tendency to criticize the Methodism of 1815-50 because it did not choose the social and political issues that later generations have felt they would have chosen as fields of action. The "no politics" rule, to which Workman presumably referred, was accepted out of political partisanship, not political indifference:

there was great anxiety lest the prestige of the Connexions (for the Primitive Methodists worked the same rule) should be thrown on one side of the party war. As long as the major subjects of politics were secular this could be achieved by formal indifference: the few occasions when Bunting broke bounds were significantly seized on and handed down to posterity. But once, as in the 1840s, the subject-matter of politics lay in fields where religion and the State encountered each other, and once the policy of Sir Robert Peel's government had united the Wesleyans against the Tory Party, the complaints about Bunting's political activities ceased, the political importance of the *Connexion* became gigantic, and the "no politics" rule dropped into the background. Here, if anywhere, the dualism to which Workman referred might have been supposed to operate, but not as a generator of political indifferentism: the "come-outer" spirit, as American church historians sometimes aptly call it, worked to promote a vigorous and successful interference in national politics—the defeat of Sir James Graham's educational schemes. Taken as a whole, Workman's use of this concept of dualism betrayed his conviction that in the early nineteenth century nothing tragic had happened (and of course he may have been right); he made this assumption clear when he went on to say that Methodism had virtually outgrown this "Puritan" streak in its make-up thanks to the influence of Newman and his school.

The interpretation of Bunting implicit in such generalizations leads to several reflections. One has to remember that Dr. Workman wrote in the full tide of Nonconformist self-confidence. He lived, as may be seen from his confident use of Harnack's exploitation of the *Didache*, at a time when it was possible not only to believe in the results of modern criticism, but also in the results of modern history. In both instances, later horizons are obscured. The results of modern research are in danger of cancelling one another out; the publication of a new Commentary is no longer an event. Workman's black-and-white contest between an Evangelicalism championed by Methodism and an Anglo-Catholic Establishment has disappeared. Workman could say that the dissidence of dissent had given way to a nobler conception of evangelical solidarity, "the end of which is not yet": present-day spectators of the Free Church Council may sometimes wonder if it is not far off. All this means that Workman's implicit opinion of Bunting was natural enough: an unfortunate interruption of the general advance down the century. At the same time, one is tempted to say that Dr. Workman's approach to Methodism, through analogies drawn from other centuries and cultural systems, was unfortunate as an historical method. There was even a touch of the comic about his anxiety to show that Methodism was respectable because things like it had happened before. Closer attention to the career of Bunting would have compelled him to admit the historical awkwardness of Methodism, the permanent challenge it presented to orthodox ways of describing the Church. JOHN H. S. KENT.

*(To be continued)*

## THE "MINUTES OF CONFERENCE"

THE yearly *Minutes of the Annual Conference of the Methodist Church* (to give it the full authorized title) is a volume indispensable to every minister, as well as to every "connexionally-minded" layman, as a repository of information and a work of reference. But the *Minutes* of today is also a source-book for the historian of tomorrow, and as such it may come to have a scarcity-value equal to some of its predecessors. No Methodist historian can work effectively without constant reference to the series of annual *Minutes* of Methodism in all its branches, and it is regrettable that some of the earlier volumes are now almost unobtainable. Furthermore, the earliest Wesleyan *Minutes*, which are so vital to an understanding of the development of Methodism in its formative years, present problems which involve a certain amount of specialized knowledge. This article, therefore, attempts to give the student the necessary information to find his way through the tangled undergrowth, and so to make more intelligible the uses to which the Wesleyan *Minutes* can be put.

### I. Wesley's "Doctrinal" and "Disciplinary" Minutes of 1749

The first printed *Minutes* were published in 1749 in two duodecimo pamphlets, each with the title *Minutes Of some late Conversations, Between the Revd. M. Wesleys and Others*. They were printed in Dublin, and contained thirty and thirty-two pages respectively. The smaller pamphlet covered the Conferences from 1744 to 1747, and as its contents were concerned mainly with matters of doctrine it came to be known as the "Doctrinal Minutes". The second pamphlet dealt with the Conferences from 1744 to 1748, and because it contained the regulations on discipline it was called the "Disciplinary Minutes". These *Minutes* are Wesley's own abridgement and re-arrangement of manuscript Minutes of the proceedings of the Conferences, and as such they are incomplete. Had they been our only source of information we should not have known, for example, that four of "our Lay Brethren" were brought in to share in the first Conference. Our knowledge of these Conferences has fortunately been supplemented, as we shall presently see. A fuller description of these rare pamphlets is given in Green's *Wesley Bibliography*, pp. 64-5, and in Osborn's *Outlines of Wesleyan Bibliography*, p. 26. They were reprinted *in extenso* in the first volume of the Revised *Minutes*, published in 1862, to which reference will be made later.

No other annual *Minutes* were published until 1765.

### II. The Bennet and "Headingley" MS. "Minutes"

It is probable that members of the early Conferences kept their own private record of their deliberations. Two of these manuscript accounts still exist. One of them is in the handwriting of John Bennet, one of the early preachers. (The early societies in Lancashire

and Cheshire, it will be remembered, were known as "John Bennet's Round".) It contains Bennet's copy of the Minutes of the Conferences of 1744, 1745, 1747, and 1748; and, indeed, his account of the 1748 Conference is the only known record of that year. The second manuscript is a little book which is preserved at Headingley College, Leeds, and "it is accompanied by a document, which authenticates it satisfactorily as the copy used by Wesley and carried in his pocket until he began to publish the Minutes". It begins with the Wednesday of the 1744 Conference (thus omitting the first two days), and records the transactions of each Conference from 1744 to 1747. The contents are in four handwritings, with occasional corrections in Wesley's own hand. These two manuscripts therefore supply a double record of the Conferences of 1744, 1745, and 1747, together with the "Headingley" account of 1746, and Bennet's narrative of 1748. The two copies probably had a common origin, as there are only a few verbal differences between them.

These two valuable documents were published in 1896 as the first *Publication* of the Wesley Historical Society. Bennet's text was printed *verbatim*, with Wesley's emendations noted where necessary. The "Headingley" Minutes for 1746 were also printed in full. These two documents, taken in conjunction with the two printed pamphlets of 1749, give us a complete account of the first five Conferences. We may add to them as a matter of interest, if not importance, Richard Viney's copy of Wesley's "Agenda" for the 1744 Conference, which was reproduced in *Proceedings*, xiv, pp. 201-3. Viney wrote in his Diary on 1st June 1744:

He [Wesley] also brought me y<sup>e</sup> articles annex'd on y<sup>e</sup> left hand and which I copy'd for my own use, which he intends to be consider'd of at y<sup>e</sup> Ensuing Conference of his Labourers, for me to look over, also desir'd I would set down all y<sup>e</sup> objections I had against anything.

It is significant that the "Agenda" and the "Minutes" cohere, as illustrating both Wesley's careful preparation for the Conference and his personal authority as its chairman.

It remains to be said that the first *Publication* of our Society has long been out of print, but it is hoped that some of the documents found therein may be reprinted in the fourth volume of the forthcoming new *History of Methodism*.

### III. The Conferences from 1749 to 1764

The first volume of the revised *Minutes* (published in 1862) contains two accounts of the Conference of 1749. The first (on pages 44 and 45) is a transcript of the only printed record of that Conference, which appears in the 1753 *Large Minutes*, a document which will be described later. It is very brief, and in at least one particular—the number and names of the circuits—it had been brought up to date at the time of publication in 1753. The second account (on pages 708 to 710) purports to be a copy of notes "preserved in the handwriting of the late Rev. John Jones". But this is an error.

We have it on the authority of the Rev. Richard Green, and of Mr. George Stampe, into whose possession the document later came (*Publication I* of the Wesley Historical Society, pp. 5, 73), that the handwriting in this manuscript is Wesley's own, with the exception of a few names of preachers, and a few lines of other matter. It was therefore reprinted as a supplement to part 5 of Volume IV of our *Proceedings*, paged in continuation of *Publication I*. This supplement also contained a transcript of Wesley's MS. copy of the Minutes of the Conferences of 1755 and 1758, which in the 1862 Revised *Minutes* had also been wrongly ascribed to John Jones. Finally, the 1862 Revised *Minutes* contained an account of the 1753 Conference, "from notes preserved in the handwriting of the Rev. Jacob Rowell", one of the early preachers who was present at the Conference.

To sum up: we have authentic records of every Conference from 1744 to 1749, and also of 1753, 1755 and 1758. For the years 1750-2, 1754, 1756-7 and 1759-64, only fragmentary records exist. These are mainly to be found in the references in Wesley's *Journal* and also in *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*. For the London Conference of 1754 there exists a plan of the preaching appointments for the week, which enables us to identify at least some of the preachers who attended the Conference. The preaching plan was the subject of an article in the *Methodist Magazine*, 1855, pp. 223-8, and it was also reproduced in Tyerman's *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, ii, p. 188.

Mention must also be made of the *Minutes* of the Irish Conference. The Revised *Minutes* of 1862 (see section VIII below) contain Jacob Rowell's notes of the proceedings of the first Irish Conference, held at Limerick in 1752. These notes are important because they give the Irish "Stations" for the ensuing year. The first printed Irish *Minutes*, a six-page duodecimo pamphlet, were published in 1778; the next issue known to us is dated 1783, and from that year they were published annually, with the exception of 1791. A "collected" edition was published in Dublin in 1864.

#### IV. The printed "Minutes" from 1765

The first annual *Minutes of Conference* was published in 1765 under the title *Minutes of some Late Conversations, between the Rev. Mr. Wesleys and Others*. It was a duodecimo pamphlet of twelve pages, and was dated "Manchester, August 20th, 1765". Richard Green says of it (*Wesley Bibliography*, p. 131):

With [this pamphlet] commenced the series which has been continued to the present time, the volumes gradually expanding as Methodism has increased or its organization become more complicated. . . . In this little tract the Stations, or appointments of the preachers, occupy about one page and a half. All is entered in the form of questions and answers; and the short, sharp sentences declare plainly who prepared the *Minutes* for the press. . . . As the *Minutes* for several years were sold for one penny each, they became known as "the Penny-Minutes".

### V. The "Large Minutes"

In 1753 Wesley published a digest or compendium of the *Minutes* of 1744 to 1748 (published in 1749) and of the unpublished *Minutes* of 1749 and 1753. It bore the title *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Reverend Mr. John and Charles Wesley, and Others*, and it contained sixteen pages. This was the first of a series of six such compilations issued during Wesley's lifetime, and as these pamphlets were slightly larger than the annual *Minutes* they became known as the *Large Minutes*. The 1753 *Large Minutes* contained nothing other than is found in the documents from which it was compiled, with the exception of "a single sentence relating to the prevention of improper persons entering the society, which sentence cannot be traced".

Subsequent editions of the *Large Minutes* followed in 1763, 1770, 1772, 1780 and 1789. The six editions were printed in parallel columns in the 1862 Revised *Minutes*, thus showing the gradual changes and enlargements made in them. Together with the annual *Minutes*, these six editions of the *Large Minutes* are an indispensable tool for the student of the growth of the Methodist Constitution. They were the precursor in Wesleyan Methodism of Simon's *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline*, and, in our own day, of *The Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church*.

In the early days it was the custom to give a copy of the *Large Minutes* to a Methodist preacher when he was taken out "On Trial", and in the book was written: "You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer." In some copies an additional sentence appears: "Observe: you are not to ramble up and down, but to go where the Assistant directs, and there only." When the preacher was received into full connexion with the Conference he was given another copy of the *Large Minutes* containing the inscription: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer." This custom was maintained throughout the life of Wesleyan Methodism: my grandfather's copy, dated 1871 and bearing the time-honoured inscription, lies before me as I write; it contains a footnote: "N.B. Brother Swift has been On Trial four years."

### VI. The 1797 "Collection of Rules"

The Leeds Conference of 1797 "carefully revised the Rules drawn up and left us by our venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which were published by him in our *Large Minutes* . . .", and to this new "Collection of Rules, or Code of Laws" all the preachers present, with one exception, subscribed their names "as approving of, and engaging to comply with [them]". This "Collection of Rules" was a very lengthy document, and amongst other things it included the Plan of Pacification, the "Leeds Regulations",

and the Agreement made with the Bristol Trustees in 1794. Nevertheless, the 1789 edition of the *Large Minutes* continued to be reprinted and used, but Dr. Samuel Warren's lawsuit in the Court of Chancery in 1835 revealed the fact that from the legal standpoint it was a defective document. The Lord Chancellor described it as "a mere guide and assistant to the Preacher", and accepted as the only legally-valid Code of Laws the "Collection of Rules" issued by the Conference of 1797. After the decision of the Court of Chancery the edition of the *Large Minutes* then in use was laid aside, and the 1797 "Collection of Rules" was substituted for it. It was reprinted and issued under the title *Minutes of Several Conversations, between the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., and the Preachers in Connexion with Him, Containing the Form of Discipline established among the Preachers and People in the Methodist Societies*. This document came into use in 1835, and it remained unaltered (apart from a few changes in legislation which were indicated in footnotes) until it was superseded in 1896 by Simon's *Summary of Methodist Law and Discipline*.

### VII. The 1812 Edition

The Conference of 1812 passed the following resolution :

A complete and correct edition of all the Minutes of the Conference, from the year when they were first printed to the present time, shall be published in octavo; the edition to consist of two thousand copies, of which every Preacher is expected to purchase at least one.

The first volume of this "collected" edition appeared in the same year. It contained the *Minutes* for the years 1744 to 1749, taken chiefly from the *Large Minutes*, and the annual *Minutes* from 1765 to 1798. Volume II, dated 1813, contained the *Minutes* for 1799-1807; volume III (1813) the *Minutes* for 1808-13; volume IV (1818) the *Minutes* for 1814-18. From that time the annual duodecimo volumes continued as before, and every few years these were collected into another octavo volume. Thirteen such volumes were published, the last, in 1859, containing the *Minutes* for 1855-7.

### VIII. The "Revised" 8vo Edition of 1862

The 1812 edition, as we have termed it, was defective and in many ways inaccurate, especially in respect of the earlier years, and for that reason the modern student will be well-advised to use it with some degree of caution. The Conference of 1858 appointed a committee to make preparatory arrangements for a new "collected" edition of the *Minutes*. The first volume appeared in 1862. In addition to reprints of the "Doctrinal" and "Disciplinary" *Minutes* of 1749, it contains brief notices of the fifteen other Conferences up to that of 1764, full *Minutes* from 1765 to 1798, the six editions of the *Large Minutes* in parallel columns, the 1797 "Code of Laws", and other notes to which we have already referred. The editor's claim that "much care has been bestowed, and much valuable counsel taken, in order to render this volume as accurate as possible" is

fully justified, and the book remains a standard reference work of major importance to the student.

Volumes II to XIII of the 1812 "collected" edition were also reprinted in this revised edition, exactly the same years being included in each volume, but revised and reset, so that page-references to one edition are not accurate for the other. These "collected" volumes continued to be issued until volume XX, published in 1879, which contained the *Minutes* for 1876 and 1877. Thereafter only the annual volumes were issued.

### IX. The "Index" to the "Minutes"

The *Minutes* of the Wesleyan Conferences, like those of all the other branches of the Methodist family, are a vast storehouse of information. Their importance, however, is unique; not only because they represent the main stream of development in our constitution, but more particularly because they include the fifty formative years before the first secession. They contain nearly twenty thousand pages, in which to search for any given scrap of information is like looking for the proverbial needle in a haystack. But the student is fortunately spared such irritating and time-wasting labour. In 1890 the Rev. Charles E. Wansbrough published his *Handbook and Index to the Minutes of the Conference*, a volume of over 300 pages which contains an exhaustive index to the *Minutes of Conference* from 1744 to 1890. The "revised edition" (section VIII above) is used for 1744 to 1877, and the annual volumes from 1878 to 1890. For good measure Mr. Wansbrough added a number of valuable appendixes, including the text of Wesley's Deed of Declaration and of the 1797 "Code of Laws". This useful "tool for the job" (to borrow a phrase popularized by our present Book Steward) can still be obtained second-hand without undue difficulty, and even a cursory glance through its pages will excite the curiosity and stimulate the interest of the most casual reader. Who could resist the temptation to track down such fascinating references as, for example, "Fines, when imposed upon Preachers", or "Preachers, wives of, cautioned against being absent from Public Worship"? It is our hope that this bibliographical article, together with Mr. Wansbrough's useful index, will help to unlock the treasure-house which is known by that dull and unimaginative name, the *Minutes of Conference*.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

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### Mr. Stanley Sowton

It is with deep regret that we record the recent passing of Mr. Stanley Sowton, one of our oldest members. He was not an historian in the strict sense of the word, though he did some useful research work. But he will be chiefly remembered by our Society for his devotion to Trewint. The little Isbell cottage and the "pilgrim's garden" will be his memorial, and we are grateful for his friendship and his abiding interest in our work.

## PICTURES FROM JOHN WESLEY'S JOURNAL

[This is an unusual type of contribution to our magazine, but we feel that its imaginative insight and spiritual quality more than justify its inclusion in our pages.—EDITOR.]

### South Carolina—April 1737

A LONE she stood, in wonder lost ; nor heard  
The voices of that April morn ; the song  
Of birds, the whispers delicate and shy  
Of newly-opened leaves, the hum of bees,  
5 The rolling laughter of the stream in spate.  
In deep amaze she stood, a young black slave  
In Carolina's newly-peopled land.  
She knew not whence she came, nor anything  
Of parents or of home ; nor had a thing  
10 Her own to call. He said she had a soul ;  
And with such earnestness, she could not doubt.  
A passing stranger he, from distant land  
Who told her this. Oh, she had marked him well ;  
His graceful mien, his glance so quick and bright.  
15 And as he sat at meat he spoke to her :  
" Pray bring me water." That was all he said.  
His voice melodious, his courtesy  
And gentle thanks had charmed her youthful heart,  
She might have been a lady with white skin,  
20 It was so strange ! And afterwards he sought  
To speak with her alone. Persistently  
He asked her whence she came and what she knew.  
Did she know God ? What could she know of God !  
And she with artless word and simple truth  
25 Her story told. He marked the penury,  
The helpless desolation of her life ;  
And with such pity in his earnest gaze  
He told her of the God Who loved her soul,  
Who made her for Himself, Who all things made :  
30 Who when her body died her soul would take  
To live with Him in endless joy and peace ;  
If she were good. She had a soul, he said.  
" 'Twas like the wind : you cannot see the wind.  
You cannot see your soul." And suddenly  
35 The wind fell on her face. " The wind, the wind !"  
She cried. " I have a soul." And looking up  
She saw the racing clouds, the trembling leaves,  
The glory and the grace of living things.  
God made them all, and she belonged to God.  
40 All things were hers, and she was part of all.  
Her heart was full of joy unspeakable.  
The questions vague, of why she was a slave,  
And why her skin was black ; forebodings dark,  
And secret fears, fell from her fettered mind.  
45 She heard the freset in the stream, the joy  
Tumultuous of melted winter snow  
Seeking in ritual immemorial

The mighty bosom of the distant sea,  
 As her young heart the ocean of God's love.  
 50 New was the world in that first day of joy  
 And wakeful in the night, the silent stars  
 Spoke to her things unutterable.  
 The morning came, and ready to depart,  
 The stranger sought to speak with her once more.  
 55 He knew the peril of his work half done ;  
 The door to life just open, soon would close  
 And leave a deeper darkness on her mind.  
 And so they stood : she in her ignorance,  
 And he a learned man. His feet had walked  
 60 In cloisters cool, far from this uncouth land.  
 The ancient world to him was open book.  
 He knew the sharpening touch of cultured minds,  
 For saints and scholars were his ancestry.  
 But most he sought the will of God to know  
 65 In ceaseless prayer and unremitting toil.  
 No hireling shepherd he ; 'twas all his joy  
 Lost souls to win. And so with patient care  
 He asked : " What had she learnt ? What did she know ? "  
 And perfectly, with artless grace she told  
 70 Him every word, nor one forgot, so deep  
 In her young heart the good seed lay. A glow  
 Was on his face : the joy of work well done.  
 One promise she must give, one solemn vow :  
 The way to God was open, would she pray  
 75 To Him Who loved her ? He would make her good.  
 His solemn words, his searching look, stirred in  
 Her heart the hidden fire of purpose strong.  
 She gave her word ; she answered truth with truth.  
 It was enough. He was content. One smile  
 80 He gave ; one word of blessing spoke ; then swift  
 Upon his waiting horse, the man of God  
 Was gone. Bereft she stood. Oh how bereft !  
 How soon, how sore bereft ! Oh never more  
 His face to see ! Oh never, never more !

\* \* \*

### London—February 1791

85 **B**EFORE the waiting dawn laid fingers light  
 On eastern sky, or birds waked from their nests,  
 Or footsteps fell in London's empty streets,  
 He was awake. Long habit this, to seek  
 'Ere day began, the dew of heavenly grace.  
 90 Long past the day when in a distant land  
 He sought with labours vast and heavy heart  
 The will of God to learn. Unswerving was  
 The search, until with joy of burning heart  
 He found the priceless pearl. Behind him lay  
 95 The teeming years. Before : a few short days.  
 Yet forward must he look, the time redeem.  
 In urgent tones he spoke : " Pray read to me."  
 And straight a book of holy writ was brought.

100 "No, no, read me the message in that tract."  
 It was no book of comfort for the soul.  
 He needs not comfort for his dying hours  
 Who all his life had lived so near to God.  
 It was a plea from one whose skin was black ;  
 A cry for justice from an injured race.  
 105 And as the hearer listened to the tale,  
 The past returned and gripped his soul anew.  
 He saw the deadly blight ; the white man's sin  
 Against his fellow man, for whom Christ died.  
 He heard the mournful song of toilers dark.  
 110 He saw the auction mart, the cruel chains.  
 He heard a voice, 'twas young and clear. He saw  
 Her kneeling on the ground, with claspèd hands  
 Uplifted to the sky. "Oh make me good,"  
 She prayed : "Oh make me good, that I may live  
 115 With Thee Who for Thyself hast made my soul."

\* \* \*

The fire leapt in his heart. Gone was the gulf  
 Of years. Who fights for God is ever young.  
 No peace against this evil thing so long  
 As God allowed him breath. Imperiously  
 120 He called for pen. He would pass on the torch  
 To younger hands ; as when the runner in  
 Olympian games, himself exhausted in  
 The race sinks helpless to the ground, yet holds  
 Aloft the sacred fire and sees with joy  
 125 Unspeakable the torch pass on its way  
 Victorious to the end. And as he wrote  
 The scholar's skill returned, the learned phrase  
 Obedient to his pen. His burning heart  
 Shaped fast the argument with telling word :  
 130 "Go on, in name of God. Oh lose not heart ;  
 If God be for you, who can be against ?"  
 At last the task was done. No, one thing more :  
 The letter must be signed with his own name ;  
 'Twas not completed else. Alas ! his strength  
 135 Was gone. The pen lay heavy in his hand.  
 Yet still his courage held until at length  
 The fingers frail obeyed the patient will.  
 Serene and tranquil was his face. The peace  
 Of God was his, the work well done, the fight  
 140 Well fought ; the battle won. Now the pale dawn  
 With ready hand turns the majestic wheel  
 Of day and fills the streets with throbbing life.  
 No bell rang out the victory of faith  
 And love. No flag unfurled. Only a clear  
 145 Exultant note of purest joy : the thrush  
 In Bunhill Fields began his morning song.

HELEN BISHOP.

The April 1958 issue of *The Kingdom Overseas* commemorates the centenary of Women's Work, and contains interesting reproductions of engravings in early missionary magazines.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

THE pleasant setting of St. Margaret's Church, Whitley Bay, proved a little off the beaten track for some members, and not quite so many as in recent years were able to attend the Annual Meeting. Once again the meeting was preceded by a happy tea-table fellowship, our hosts being the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. R. F. Wearmouth.

Among the officers prevented from attending the Annual Meeting was our Treasurer—Mr. Herbert Ibberson. The members were sorry to hear that the reason was indifferent health, and we would all wish him renewed strength.

### Business Meeting

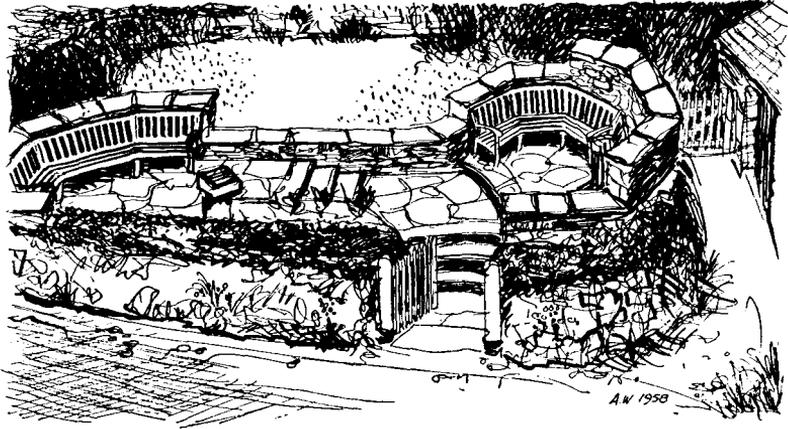
The financial statement made it quite clear that although our credit balance has increased by nearly £40, the position is still far from satisfactory. Not only does that balance include the Fieldhouse bequest of £50, earmarked for publishing, but it must be offset by our liabilities to those who have paid subscriptions in advance, these liabilities being about three times as large as our balance. It is somewhat difficult because of this factor to assess our current income - expenditure ratio, but it seems that we are just about paying our way. What we really need in order to be completely solvent is an influx of new blood. Unfortunately the membership returns show that there was a net decrease of three on the year, in spite of the enrolment of twenty-nine new members. More new members are urgently needed. Will YOU continue to help by telling others about the work of the Society, and set yourself the target of gaining at least one new member this year? (N.B.—If "continue" is in your case the wrong word, you may of course substitute "begin" !)

Our membership is 715, including 569 ordinary members, 62 life members, 78 kindred societies and libraries, and 6 associate members. The "official" drive for membership has inevitably been delayed pending the completion of several projects which themselves are to be advertised along with a letter to Universities and Libraries throughout the world. One of these projects is the General Index to the *Proceedings*. After careful revision and supplementation by Mr. John A. Vickers and a small team of workers, this is now approaching publication stage. Members will hear more about it later. Another project is the issue of "Publication No. 5", a revised and greatly enlarged reprint of the John Cennick bibliography which recently appeared.

It was a great joy to receive the Librarian's report, showing that after many frustrating delays the Library's new home in the crypt of Wesley's Chapel is being enclosed and shelved in preparation for the installation of the books. This has been made possible by a special arrangement with a local craftsman who is supervising the task in his spare time, and also by a very generous gift from the immediate family of our late President to the F. F. Bretherton Memorial Fund. The fund now stands at just over £330, almost all of which has been spent in materials and labour, so that much more will be needed if the project is to reach a really worthy completion—something like another £300 at least. Gifts may be sent either to the Treasurer or the Secretary.

The arrangements for the following two annual lectures were confirmed: 1959, Rev. Dr. R. F. Wearmouth on "Methodism and the Trade Union Movement"; 1960, Rev. George Lawton on "Some Aspects of the Rev. John Fletcher". All the officers were thanked and re-elected.





## A PILGRIM'S GARDEN AT TREWINT

JOHN WESLEY loved gardens, especially those at Stanton and Wroot, at Frederica and Savannah. It is therefore fitting that directly opposite the Isbell cottage at Trewint, on the edge of the Cornish moors, there should now be an attractive "Pilgrim's Garden" as an added amenity to the now far-famed Wesley shrine. Designed by a landscape artist, fashioned by a young Methodist craftsman, made colourful by a lady with "green fingers", it provides an oasis of quiet, though so close to the noisy main road carrying countless motorists to and from the Delectable Duchy.

Mrs. Wilfred Wade, wife of the Chairman of the Cornwall District, opened the Garden on Wesley Day, 1958, and there followed an altogether worthy worshipful service of dedication which will linger in many memories—as one man put it, "like lavender".

The central feature of the Trewint "Pilgrim's Garden" is, very fittingly, a replica of a sundial made by John Nelson and given by him to his beloved Birstall. There is no better place in Cornwall in which to tell the imperishable story of the coming to the west of the three Johns—John Wesley, John Nelson and John Downes.

Just as the Isbell cottage itself is no mere museum relating to the dead past, but an integral part of Christ's living Church, so the "Pilgrim's Garden" has been created and consecrated to be a place of worship and of prayer. During the comparatively short time since it was opened, hundreds of motorists (and not all of them Methodists) have turned aside to look and listen and linger, to discover that John Wesley left something of himself behind at Trewint, and to take away with them the free but priceless gifts it offers to all pilgrims—rest, beauty, and peace.

STANLEY SOWTON.

## BOOK NOTICES

*John Wesley among the Physicians*, by A. Wesley Hill. The Wesley Historical Society Lectures, No. 24. (Epworth Press, pp. viii. 135, 10s. 6d.)

Dr. A. Wesley Hill has written a very good book, the sub-title of which indicates that it is a "Study of Eighteenth Century Medicine". He starts with why Wesley practised medicine, and in the next chapter by what authority. There then follows a great deal of material on eighteenth-century practice generally and Wesley's relationship to it, and of how Wesley was affected by some of the leaders in medicine of his time, particularly Dr. Tissot, an eminent Swiss physician, to whom Dr. Hill gives a full chapter.

The author points out Wesley's opposition to excessive bleedings and innumerable remedies that were generally used at that time, and he most interestingly entertains us with humorous descriptions and anecdotes of such treatment. He emphasizes many of Wesley's successes and quite frankly admits his errors, such as in the use of Peruvian Bark, but one feels that there is a frequent over-emphasis of Wesley's medical achievements in contrast with the average physician of the time.

Later in the book there is a discussion of Wesley's valuable experiments with electrical treatment, and the closing chapter on his *Primitive Physick* is well presented.

Though there is a bias in favour of Wesley's views on medicine, there is another aspect of his approach to the art of healing that is emphasized throughout the book, and this is of inestimable value. We must remember that John Wesley was a highly-educated man, capable of intense and accurate observation, with a great interest in all matters relating to the needs of the human being. The right emphasis on this has been given by the author, and it is in the light of this tremendous interest and concern that it seems to me we need to consider John Wesley's relation to the art of healing. He was one of the first of our great men to recognize, and to be anxious about, the needs of the whole man in his environment. Whatever his successes or failures were in remedies prescribed; and however they may be compared with the remedies of the average physician of his time—are, I think, of lesser importance. The fact that he was so concerned about helping those who were ill in body, mind and spirit, so that they might become whole, was undoubtedly his greatest aim. The author has given splendid emphasis to this, and for it we are indebted to him for the writing of this book.

PERCY L. BACKUS.

*John Venn and the Clapham Sect*, by Michael Hennell. (Lutterworth Press, pp. 295, 30s.)

The reader who is well versed in Evangelical bibliography will be well aware of a certain novelty in such a book as this. For, as the author observes in his Preface, the Venns have always been their own biographers. Yet Mr. Hennell's intrusion needs no apology, for he has succeeded in presenting a scholarly yet attractively-written account not only of John Venn but also of his circle. We see this second-generation Evangelical in his wider associations with the Church Missionary Society and the Christian philanthropists who met in his Clapham parish.

In a necessarily brief review we can only take up one matter which bears upon Anglican-Methodist relations in their historical context. Mr.

Hennell follows Canon Charles Smyth in regarding "regularity" as the distinguishing mark of the genuine Evangelical. "The chief difference between John Venn and both the Huntingdonians and the Methodists was about Church Order" (p. 268). But although exemplary in the main, Venn was not impeccable, for during his incumbency at Little Dunham he overstepped parish boundaries and even preached in a farmer's hall near Fakenham in 1791—an irregularity which Mr. Hennell is compelled to deplore as nothing less than "gross". Whilst in the pulpit "there is more in common between the style of John Venn and John Tillotson than there is between John Venn and John Wesley" (p. 259), we seem to hear an echo of the latter's voice as Venn boldly (or rashly, according to one's presuppositions) exclaims, when advocating the despatch of lay catechists to the mission field: "I would sacrifice a great deal to preserve Church order, but not the salvation of souls." A. SKEVINGTON WOOD.

*The Faith of a Methodist*, by Eric Baker. (Epworth Press, pp. 102, 8s. 6d.)

Dr. Baker's Fernley-Hartley Lecture is a welcome statement of the faith of a Methodist, expressed in commendably clear and concise language. Its major plea is that Methodist theologians the world over should concentrate their diligent attention on the meaning and implications of the doctrine of Christian perfection. In the first part of the book this plea is made and the need for it established; in the second part Dr. Baker briefly examines some of the major articles of Christian belief and seeks to show the bearing of the doctrine of Christian perfection upon them. If the author's point is conceded, that the New Testament envisages a life of perfect love as the normal life of Christians in this world, most of what he writes will follow. If, on the other hand, the New Testament tension between what is and what ought to be is recognized, some of his statements will be of dubious worth. "Perfection," says Dr. Baker, "at any one moment consists not in conformity to some absolute rule, but in the completeness of the response made at that moment to the love of God at whatever stage we may have arrived in our pilgrimage" (p. 41 f.). But who is to say that at *any* given moment our response is complete, and who is to say that it is complete at *every* given moment? While Dr. Baker's repeated references to "becoming" are salutary, we would contend that "mature" is a better translation of "teleios" than "perfect". In spite of his definition, Dr. Baker cannot get away from the concept of an absolute standard, as is shown by his criticism of Reinhold Niebuhr (p. 39), and his outburst against those who maintain that the Sermon on the Mount is impracticable to this workaday world (p. 55). The reviewer must agree with Niebuhr that an impossible ideal is not irrelevant.

What Wesley was chiefly contending for is that God is always summoning Christians to vaster ranges of experience, and to a more complete commitment and obedience. In so far as Dr. Baker's lecture focuses attention on this serious call to a sanctified life it will perform a most important service.

We must also regretfully criticize Dr. Baker's statement that Wesley's experience in 1738 was "the conversion of a good man into a Christian" (p. 22). If such a view were seriously maintained, Methodism would have to be classed among the sects. Aldersgate Street is better interpreted as Wesley's introduction to a new dimension of Christian experience.

On some points Dr. Baker's views differ from the traditional positions. Three of these we find particularly welcome. His brief criticisms of the

doctrine of Assurance we believe are sound. Assurance is a by-product of the communion of a Christian with God; it is not an end to be sought. In his conception of Sin, on the other hand, the author is very close to Wesley in laying stress on the element of wilfulness. We also welcome his reference to Original Sin: "We all inherit the tendency which makes sin very probable, but it only becomes guilt when we yield to that tendency" (p. 65). Here the writer's ruling interest in the spiritual and the moral finds appropriate expression, as it also does in his insistence on the continuing goodness in creation, including man. A great deal of theological muddle would be avoided if these positions were generally accepted. Further, in the chapter on Immortality, the longest chapter in the book, Dr. Baker recognizes that the idea of the natural immortality of the soul is not a New Testament concept. The New Testament is concerned with the offer of eternal life, something very different.

*The Faith of a Methodist* differs from what is normally expected of Fernley-Hartley Lectures, though with the expressed approval of the Trustees. It is not designed for scholars as a contribution to scholarship, but for a much wider public who want to know what Methodists believe. For this purpose it is admirably suited. It should find a place in many Methodist homes and in all public libraries.

PERCY SCOTT.

*Say to the Wind: The Revival of Religion in Nottingham, 1780-1850*, by John C. Weller. (Church House, Park Row, Nottingham, pp. 72, 4s. 6d. post free.)

*The Story of Methodism in Newland*, by Frank Baker. (pp. 67, 3s. post free from Mr. N. Boyes, 173, Newland Avenue, Hull, Yorks.)

*Pages from a Padre's Diary*, by R. F. Wearmouth. (pp. viii. 138, 13s. post free from the author at 313, The Broadway, Cullercoats, Northumberland.)

The Anglican author of *Say to the Wind* has given us a penetrating study of seventy formative years in the religious life of Nottingham, a period during which new denominations came into being and all the existing Churches underwent a remarkable transformation. All this Mr. Weller largely attributes to the evangelistic preaching and unique pastoral methods of the Methodists. The historical notes are inevitably compressed, but Methodism is given a lion's share of the available space. This book may well presage a new ecumenical approach to local church history, and we warmly commend it. At the price it is a bargain not to be missed.

Our tireless Secretary has been "at it again", this time with a century record of the Hull chapel where he ministers. His *Methodism in Newland* is crammed with facts, figures and illustrations, whose documentation is the measure of the author's exhaustive research. Good wine needs no bush, and this local history is such a model of excellence that it deserves a wide sale.

Some time ago in these pages we urged Dr. Wearmouth to write the story of his life. Whilst the greater part of his latest book is occupied with his experiences as a chaplain in World War I, at least one-third is devoted to the romantic story of his early years. First a miner, then a serving soldier in the Boer War, this remarkable man "started from scratch" to achieve a university education and an honoured place in our ministry. Those who admire Dr. Wearmouth's work as one of our foremost Methodist historical scholars will want to read this book. It is indeed a "story of struggle and triumph".

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

## 1004. JOHN WESLEY'S LAST LETTER.

With reference to the Note No. 998 in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 145, it seems to me that no Methodist in Cork—of all places!—would have suffered Mr. Wesley's last letter to fade away, and I cannot help wondering if James Rogers did not write "Cork" for "Dublin". If so, the letter could well have been written to his "dear Alleck"; and indeed Alexander Knox was just the sort of man who might have either lost, or, for personal reasons of loyalty to his "venerable old friend", suppressed the letter.

THOMAS E. WARNER.

## 1005. NINETEENTH-CENTURY LITURGY.

The Rev. Wesley F. Swift's study of nineteenth-century liturgy (*Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 133-43) suggests to me that a brief statement might be made about the use of the liturgy in Irish Methodism. The Irish churches all use the sacramental and baptismal services printed in the Book of Offices, but there remains to be told something about Morning Prayer, the liturgical service which is used in the Centenary church, St. Stephen's Green, Dublin. It dates back to 1788, when Mr. Wesley consented to the church service being read in the Whitefriar Street chapel by Dr. Coke or Henry Moore at eleven o'clock on three Sundays in the month.

The service then used was the usual Prayer Book service, and not Mr. Wesley's abridgement. The prayer book used by him in Dublin still exists with his signature on its title-page. I cannot find any evidence that the service was used in the Old Gravel Walk chapel, but it was used in Abbey Street chapel until about 1870. When the Whitefriar Street congregation moved to St. Stephen's Green in 1843 the use of the Prayer Book service was continued. There was a demand, however, for a shorter and more varied form of service, and a new Morning Service Book was compiled and brought into use in 1876.

The morning service so reconstructed is diversified for each Sunday of the month. In general it is as follows: Hymn; Prayer (extempore, concluding with the Lord's Prayer); Psalms for the Day (read responsively by minister and people); First Lesson; a Cantic (Jubilate, Te Deum, Benedictus, Venite, or a Psalm); Second Lesson; second Cantic (Paschal Cantic, Magnificat, Sanctus, or a Psalm); Collects (including General Confession, General Thanksgiving, abbreviated Litany); Children's Worship; Announcements and Offertory; Hymn; Sermon; Concluding Worship. In order to link the book with the Methodist Hymn-Book of 1933, the Psalms and Canticles have been given the modern pointing. The Revised Version of the Bible is also used.

The congregation of the Centenary church is greatly attached to its service-book, and there is the advantage that it familiarizes them with the Psalms (which are printed in the book), and with the great hymns of Scripture and of early Christian use. It has also the great advantage that the congregation is given the opportunity of joining audibly in the worship, often in phraseology of intercession that has been hallowed by use through many centuries. It should be added that this service is not in use in any other Methodist church in Ireland.

R. LEE COLE.

## 1006. COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE AT NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE.

In 1743 John Wesley erected his "Orphan House" at Newcastle upon Tyne. It was his second building scheme (the New Room at Bristol was

the first; the Foundery in London, though earlier than the Orphan House, was of course not built by Wesley), but the name was misleading, for though the House was used as a library, a school, a hostel, a preaching-house and a book-room, it was never used for housing orphans. The original deed, bearing Wesley's signature, is still preserved at Brunswick chapel in Newcastle, and a contemporary description of the House from Richard Viney's diary was printed in *Proceedings*, xx, pp. 127-9. The original Orphan House was demolished in 1856, and in January 1858 the "Orphan House Wesleyan Schools" were opened on the same site. By this time other chapels had been built in Newcastle, including Brunswick, a hundred yards away, in 1821, and the Orphan House was no longer needed for worship. The second Orphan House was demolished in 1957.

The Brunswick trustees decided that the recent Newcastle Conference was a suitable occasion on which to commemorate the Orphan House, and on Sunday morning, 13th July 1958, a plaque was unveiled by the President of the Conference (the Rev. Dr. Norman H. Snaith) on the site of the Orphan House now occupied by Messrs. Barratt (Northampton) Ltd. at 51, Northumberland Street. The ceremony, which was attended by the Secretary of the Conference and other Conference officials, and by the Revs. John C. Bowmer and Wesley F. Swift, representing the International Methodist Historical Society, took place in a cloud-burst, and to save the onlookers from being drenched to the skin the proceedings were reduced to a minimum. Mr. Bowmer gave a brief address, and the President unveiled the plaque with the words: "As President of the Methodist Conference, I unveil this plaque to the glory of God and in memory of John Wesley and his preachers. What the New Room of Bristol was to the south, this Orphan House was to the north, and we give God the praise."

The plaque bears the inscription:

JOHN WESLEY  
Erected on this Site in 1743  
"The Orphan House"  
Headquarters of Methodism in the North.

Inside the shoe-shop now occupying the site a place on the floor has been picked out in blocks of a lighter colour than the rest, to mark the centre of the doorstep of the original Orphan House. The key-stone of the entrance to the second Orphan House—a carved head of John Wesley—is now in the lobby of the new hall at Brunswick chapel.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

#### 1007. THOMAS BEARD AND MR. TURNER OF BONGS.

Almost no biographical facts are known about Thomas Beard, the soldier-preacher whose untimely death in Newcastle hospital late in 1774 occasioned two fine hymns by Charles Wesley: "All worship and love" and "Soldier of Christ, adieu!" (Osborn, *Poetical Works*, v, pp. 219-24). Beard is a north-west Derbyshire surname; Beard Hall is a very old farmstead in New Mills; Mr. James Beard entertained Wesley on his New Mills visits; and the name has been on the New Mills circuit plans for a century. The mother society of the New Mills circuit was the Bongs (the *Journal* incorrectly gives the name as "Bangs"), and here, as the *Journal* notes on 28th April 1745, Wesley was entertained by a Mr. Turner. The note also mentions that Turner rode to York to visit John Nelson when he was imprisoned there.

Nelson was in York prison from 7th May to 7th June 1744. Wesley in

his *Journal* records meeting Nelson and Thomas Beard on 11th June when they were being marched to Sunderland as impressed redcoats. Referring to the same meeting, Nelson wrote: "I and Thomas Beard, my fellow-prisoner, met Mr. Wesley . . ." (*Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, i, p. 128). There are no known grounds for linking Turner and Beard, and Turner may well have undertaken the 140 miles return journey over the Pennines in order to visit Nelson because he had preached at the Bongs. Nelson tells us he was thronged with visitors: "all that week I had company as much as I could tell what to do with". But it is just possible—and this long shot is made to stir further inquiry—that the presence of Beard in York may have been an even stronger incentive.

W. H. HOULT.

1008. WAS CHARLES WESLEY BURIED IN UNCONSECRATED GROUND?

Since I wrote the paragraph on this subject (*Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 124-5) I have been in correspondence with the parish clerk at St. Marylebone parish church. He makes three interesting points. First, the burial register gives only the following particulars: "Burial April 5th 1788, Revd. Charles Wesley." Second, there is a note in the register of memorials: "June 23rd 1788, Revd. Charles Wesley, a Flatt Stone—Yard." Third, the parish clerk says that there were several burial grounds for the parish, though whether all were consecrated is not known; but Charles Wesley was buried in the churchyard of the Old Church, where several of the parish clergy were buried. My correspondent agrees with my conclusion that Charles Wesley's burial in consecrated ground is as near certain as can now be determined.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

1009. FORMATION OF LOCAL BRANCH IN EAST ANGLIA.

An attempt is being made to form a local branch of the Wesley Historical Society in East Anglia, in the hope of stimulating interest in local Methodist history and perhaps making some positive contribution to its study. The Methodist Conference (and the Wesley Historical Society Lecture) never come into East Anglia, and there must be many members whose only contact with the Society is the quarterly *Proceedings*. A local branch would aim to fill that gap.

As a first step, we are calling a meeting of all interested on Saturday, 11th October, at 3 p.m. At the invitation of the Rev. and Mrs. John J. Perry we shall meet at 539, Earlham Road, Norwich, and Mr. Perry has promised to talk on his extensive collection of Wesley pottery. We shall also take the opportunity to make any necessary plans for further activities.

Will the members of our Society in East Anglia who can accept this invitation please notify me as soon as possible at 71, Beechcroft Road, Ipswich. If they can bring interested non-members with them, these will be equally welcome. How ambitious our future plans can be will largely be determined by the response to this invitation. JOHN A. VICKERS.

*The Handbook of the Methodist Conference, 1958* was a great improvement upon its predecessor. The Rev. John C. Bowmer managed to compress a surprising amount of information into his article on "Methodist Beginnings in the North East", though we regard the limitation of so important a theme to six pages as short-sighted editorial policy. Our Society might well consider producing its own historical Conference handbook! It is a pity that the picture of the first "Orphan House" is wrongly described in the caption as the "second".