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A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_whs_01.php

Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

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THE ORIGINAL METHODISTS, PRIMITIVE METHODIST REFORMERS

IT is not generally realized that the agitations in the name of reform, with their attendant secessions, which swept through the Wesleyan body in the third and fourth decades of the last century had their counterpart in Primitive Methodism. Such was the intensity of this period of social upheaval and clamour for rights and reformation that not even the so-called liberal "Primitive" connexion, the very mother of so many subsequent democratic working-class leaders, could escape the shaking of the foundations. True, the range and penetration of the Primitive Methodist secessions was as nothing when compared with the huge Wesleyan disruptions, but they were none the less as real, and many times more surprising.

In the Primitive Methodist separatist groups two things stand out. Firstly, the alleged cause of the divisions in every known case, on the part of the seceders, was remarkably similar to that which triggered off the Wesleyan upheavals, viz. the abuse of the ministerial office. Secondly, the resulting societies, almost without exception, adopted a Free Gospel system on the Independent Methodist pattern. The sustained and separated ministry, itinerant or otherwise, they would not accept.

It is the purpose of this article to examine in particular the Original Methodist or "Selstonite" division in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire in 1838-9. This attempt to create a Primitive Methodist Reform body did not have the success in establishing itself as had the much later Sunderland secession (1877),¹ or the continuity of the Shropshire and other Nottinghamshire divisions which ultimately linked with the Independent Methodists.² At the height of its comparatively short life, however, it was probably the largest Free PM grouping. Kendall is no doubt correct in his claim that the Selston

¹ Mounfield: *A Short History of Independent Methodism* (1905), pp. 43, 185 ff.; Kendall: *Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (n.d.), ii, p. 205.

² Mounfield, op. cit., p. 201 ff.

split was not the first in time or in importance,⁸ for as early as 1819 Robert Winfield, a former itinerant who had crossed swords with Hugh Bourne, had almost destroyed the work in Leicestershire and led away several thousands. The "Winfieldites" were short-lived, but disastrous to the connexion. The year 1821 witnessed a large disruption in Nottingham, much of which was later reabsorbed.

Although we can only be certain that the Original Methodists ("Selstonites" was the name given to them by the PM loyalists) survived in some areas as a distinct people for some thirteen or fourteen years, they may have continued for much longer. We shall present the evidence that we possess, inconclusive as it is.

The Sources of the Secession

We must rely completely upon Petty⁴ and Kendall⁵ as apparently the only recorders of the events of the Selston affair. A composite assessment gives us something of the following. The division arose in the Belper circuit during the superintendency of William Carthy (travelled 1824-61) in 1838-9. Ostensibly, the action of the dissidents was occasioned by the action of the Quarterly Meeting in increasing Carthy's meagre allowance of fourteen shillings a week to sixteen. The leaders of the Selston society, a mining community near Alfreton, but just inside Nottinghamshire, led the malcontents, who were scandalized at the prospect of meeting the two-shilling increase. The whole circuit appears to have been affected, but the net loss over the two years' agitation was no more than 63. This does not, of course, mean that fewer than a hundred were involved, for it is just as likely that gains in other societies helped to offset the actual losses. Carthy travelled extensively in the North Midland circuits, and whilst not in the front rank of the second-generation PM ministers, he was highly thought of throughout the connexion. He seems typical of the faithful, zealous and terribly underpaid itinerants who gave their all to the "Ranters". It is hard to see tyranny in Carthy, or injustice in the action of the Quarterly Meeting. Normanton (South Normanton), Northwingfield and Portland Row were other causes that were greatly affected. Allowing for a certain amount of licence on the part of Petty, he may well be right in describing the Belper circuit societies as "suffering places".

The second stream entered the Original Methodists from the Mansfield circuit. It began in 1838 in a large secession from the Hucknall Torkard society. George Herod (travelled 1819-62), the superintendent, was already a well-known figure in the wider Church. A pioneer missionary to many parts of Nottinghamshire, he had gained a considerable reputation not only as a successful evangelist, but also as a "strict disciplinarian".⁶ He is perhaps best known as the author of the useful *Biographical Sketches* (n.d.) of early PM leaders. Kendall says concerning him:

⁸ Kendall, *op. cit.*, i, p. 249.

⁴ Petty: *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (1860), p. 332.

⁵ Kendall, *op. cit.*, i, p. 249. ⁶ *ibid.*, i, p. 248.

... he was no ordinary man, as the books he has left behind testify. He had a remarkable acquaintance with our early history—although he was not free from bias in the handling of his copious materials.⁷

His official obituary goes so far as to place him with "the Methodist divines". This impression of a strong man with strong views might suggest that the Hucknall seceders may have had a cause. What that cause was we now have no way of determining. Other societies in the circuit were affected, but we only have record of that at Kirkby-in-Ashfield.

At this point in time we are left only to guess the reason or reasons behind the creation of the Original Methodists. Two shillings is barely sufficient cause, even in that touchy period, for open rebellion. At best it would only serve as tiny fuel for the fire of discontent. Unfortunately no copy of a pamphlet on the secession, written by Carthy, seems to have survived, so we are left with the task of having to draw our own inferences.

Nottinghamshire had already seen a considerable amount of PM internal strife. Thomas Charlton, in his first year as an itinerant, suffered greatly from a dissident party in the Nottingham society in 1821.⁸ Nottingham again suffered a disruption, this time of larger magnitude, in 1834. There was a withdrawal of between two and three hundred members on this occasion. F. N. Jersey, the superintendent, was seemingly unable to handle a situation that had been simmering since the 1821 difficulties. Matters came to a head when he lowered six of the senior local preachers from their places on the plan for alleged neglect of appointments. He was charged by the seceders with forcing this issue through a preachers' meeting when only eight of the fifty accredited preachers were present. Three times he was appealed to without success, with the result that the Nottingham Independent PM circuit was brought into being. Leadership was shared by some twenty local preachers, but the main responsibility for pastoral care was given to one of their number, a certain Isacher Jaquiss. At the height of the secession an attempt was made to control the Canaan Street chapel, and was successful to the degree of keeping the superintendent out of the pulpit.

The Independent PMs set up a large preaching-room in Cutler's Yard, Parliament Street.⁹ Canaan Street was never again the force that it had been, but it appears that many of the seceders did return to their PM allegiance when Jersey left the circuit. He eventually became a Baptist minister and went to America. He seems to have been typical of so many PM superintendents of this period, but much lacking in organizational ability, or even tact. The second and third ministers in the circuit both ultimately proved to be men of greater worth. Abraham Worsnop was much honoured, and was something of a popular author of devotional books. William Antliff, the junior minister, achieved even greater fame as a preacher and connexional

⁷ *ibid.*, i, p. 241.

⁸ *ibid.*, i, p. 249; Petty, *op. cit.*, pp. 121 ff., 333.

⁹ Dearden: *History and Directory of the Town of Nottingham* (1834), p. 47.

statesman. Neither man could apparently alter the sad course of events once the superintendent had helped to set their direction.

There is no conclusive evidence linking this secession with the Selston faction, but there was an Original Methodist society in Radford in 1851. It is possible that part at least of the remnant who did not later reconcile themselves with the PM connexion did link with the Original Methodists. An Independent Methodist society meeting in Kent Street in 1848¹⁰ may also have been connected with the disruption.

In 1817 William Clowes, accompanied by John Wedgwood, made a successful evangelistic tour of the Bingham district. His *Journal*¹¹ tells of much controversy at Bingham and Ratcliffe on the question of the paid ministry. Whilst Ratcliffe appears to have quietened on the issue, he states that one of the two leaders of the Bingham society was an avowed "Free Gospeller". Eventually a serious disruption did take place. Oddly enough, Clowes gives the impression that the free gospellers joined the Wesleyans. Kendall¹² is surely right when he says that although the seeds of discontent were obviously sown early in the Bingham society, the actual secession took place much later. Clowes's *Journal* was written many years after the vast majority of the events portrayed therein. It was in fact a series of reminiscences, with all the dangers of over-reliance on memory alone. He obviously failed to differentiate between two separate—if associated—events. In fact the actual separation, in and around Bingham, took place in 1829. The Independent PMs, as they became, were an entirely lay church, and most of the societies became officially part of the Independent Methodist connexion.¹³ John Parrott, sen., a leading Nottinghamshire layman, and friend of Clowes, would seem to have been one of the leaders of the rift. His name was removed from the circuit plan on 14th June 1829 at the request of the remaining Bingham PMs. Clearly families as well as societies were divided over what was in fact the doctrine of the ministry, for John Parrott, jun. entered the PM ministry that same year.¹⁴

We know that the Original Methodists were quite clearly a "free gospel" body. Accounts of the earlier secessions must have freely circulated in Mansfield and district and in North Derbyshire. Protagonists of the lay ministry are quite likely to have extended their influence into these districts, as the distances between the centres were not very great. It is not overstating the evidence to assume that these principles sounded strangely attractive, on economic grounds at least, to the poor miners and agricultural workers who would be the bulk and buttress of the societies. The paltry affair associated with Carthy, and the unknown cause connected with

¹⁰ Kelly: *Post Office Directory of Derbyshire, . . . Nottinghamshire, . . . Etc.* (1848?).

¹¹ cf. Wilkinson: *William Clowes, 1780-1851* (1951), p. 39; Kendall, *op. cit.*, i, p. 266.

¹² Kendall, *loc. cit.*

¹³ Mounfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 201 ff.

¹⁴ Kendall, *op. cit.*, i, p. 254.

Herod, are not likely to have been the real reasons, but might have served as an excuse.

Thus far we have not seen why the secessionists adopted the title of Original Methodists. That this was in fact their chosen name did not come to light until the remaining societies were traced through the 1851 Religious Census. It is very doubtful whether they seriously considered the question of the existence or otherwise of a separated ministry among the first generation of Methodists. The most likely reason would seem to be that the name they took to themselves was quite deliberately chosen in an attempt to remain as near as they could to the body they had departed from. If this conjecture is sound, then "Original" is as near as they could think to "Primitive" rather than any other brand of original Methodism. This is not to suggest, of course, that the original PMs were in fact free gospellers who had somehow lost their principles (Hugh Bourne did have to contend with this question in his relationships with the Quaker Methodists), but rather that the aggrieved party *believed* that it had been so.

The Results of the Secession

"The Selstonites dwindled until the feeble remnant was absorbed in the greater split from Methodism in 1849." So says Kendall.¹⁵ He may well be right, or at least largely so, for there are now no certain means of knowing. Certainly Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire contained some of the largest and strongest Wesleyan Reform circuits in the 1850s. But we are still left with the "free gospel" emphasis of the Original Methodists. Certainly Wesleyan Reformers were under no compulsion to take up a separated ministry, and many of them never did, but that such a ministry was allowed, to put it no higher, would make it very difficult for societies with a complete lay ministry as a *principle* to unite with them. Could the Original Methodists have changed so much in such a short space of time? If we think it possible, then Kendall's statement need not be challenged. One might assume that the natural church home for the Original Methodists was in fact the Independent Methodist connexion, and more especially since a group with an identical background, and very close at hand (the Bingham secession), had taken this very step. There is not a shred of evidence, however, that the Selstonites followed their example, and the history of the Independent Methodists is quite silent on the matter.

All we can say with certainty is that in March 1851 at least six societies were still in existence and actually using the title Original Methodist. As for the others, perhaps we shall never really know, just as we cannot tell the subsequent fate of the 1851 group. Perhaps Kendall was right and somehow a way was found to absorb them into the Wesleyan Reform movement. On the other hand, perhaps, as so frequently happened, they just ceased to be. One thing is clear: the Primitive Methodist reformers, so near in time to

¹⁵ *ibid.* i, p. 249.

their Wesleyan counterparts, were, when the dust and heat had died down, seen to be little more than a very localized faction, and nothing that they left behind lives on.

Original Methodist Societies declared in the 1851 Census¹⁶

The following entries are to be found in the returns for Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. They are set out exactly as entered, and follow the question-and-answer framework of the original form.

Folio 437

Name: Original Methodist Chapel.	Remarks:
Religious Denomination: Original Methodists.	Unpaid ministers.
District: South Normanton.	Boath [sic] the school
When Erected: 1800.	and congregation are
Separate for Use: Yes.	gradually increasing.
Free Sittings: 110.	
Others: —	
Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851: Morning: —	Afternoon: 52. Evening:
Signed: John Tomlinson.	Official Character: Chapel Steward. [54.
Address: South Normanton, Nr. Alfreton, Derby's.	

Folio 438

Name: Original Methodist Chapel.	Remarks:
Religious Denomination: Original Methodists.	The ministers who
District: Selston, Basford, Nott'm.	preach in this chapel
When Erected: 1839.	are entirely unpaid
Separate for Use: Yes.	ministers.
Free Sittings: 150.	
Others: 34.	
Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851: Morning: —	Afternoon: 252. Even-
Signed: John Green.	Official Character: Steward. [ing: 81.
Address: Selston, Nr. Alfreton, Nottinghamshire.	

Folio 438

Name: Original Methodist Chapel.	
Religious Denomination: Original Methodists.	
District: Bleak Hall Buildings, Kirkby in Ashfield, Nott's.	
When Erected: 1827.	
Separate for Use: Yes.	
Free Sittings: 150 all free.	
Others:	
Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851: Morning: —	Afternoon: 78. Evening:
Signed: Wm Osborne.	Official Character: (L.P.) [—
Address: Bleak Hall buildings, parish of Kirkby in Ashfield, Notts.	

Folio 438 (ii)

Name: Original Methodist Preaching Room.	
Religious Denomination: Original Methodists.	
District: Hucknall Torkard.	
When Erected: 1820.	
Separate for Use: Yes.	Used as day School.
Free Sittings: 94.	
Others: 16.	
Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851: Morning: —	Afternoon: 97. Evening:
Signed: Matthew Otter.	Official Character: (Steward). [104.
Address: Hucknall Torkard, Nott's.	

¹⁶ *Home Office Papers*, No. 129 (Public Record Office).

Folio 439

Name : Bottom buildings, or North Street Chapel, Radford, Nottingham.
 Religious Denomination : Original Methodists.
 District : Radford.
 When Erected : 1828.
 Separate for Use : Yes.
 Free Sitzings : 105.
 Others : 90.
 Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851 : Morning : — Afternoon : 112.
 Evening : 75.
 Signed : Isaiah Rhodes. Official Character : (Tenant, and Class Leader.)
 Address : 50, Upper Parliament St. Nottingham.

Folio 448

Name : None.
 Religious Denomination : Original Methodists.
 District : Northwingfield, Chesterfield.
 When Erected : —
 Separate for Use : Inhabited House.
 Free Sitzings : —
 Others : —
 Estimated Attendance 30/3/1851 : Morning : 6. Afternoon : 18. Evening :
 Signed : Jno. Wilson (X mark). [53.
 Address : Lings Colliery, Nr. Chesterfield.

WILLIAM PARKES.

[The Rev. William Parkes is superintendent of the Whitechapel Mission, London. In 1963-4 he held a scholarship at Candler School of Theology, Atlanta, Georgia, with a special interest in nineteenth-century non-Wesleyan movements.]

A Postscript

In recent weeks further information on the Original Methodists has come to light.

Mr. Donald Grundy, of Selston, who is hoping to complete a thorough historical survey on the movement, has in his possession important and hitherto unknown material. This includes bound copies of *The Original Methodist Record*, *A Free Gospel Magazine*, which was still being published well into the 1860s. Obviously many Original Methodist societies existed that have escaped notice in the 1851 census. A considerable amount of other Original Methodist gleanings from the area where they were once strong has also been gathered.

The magazine contains the usual biographical, general and theological articles common to all Methodist periodicals of the time; and notes on the doings of the connexion, and a section that served as the preaching-plan, also appear. Free Gospellism is naturally enough a constant theme. The magazine was published by C. Plumbe, at the Post Office, Sutton-in-Ashfield.

It is clear that the Original Methodists were well aware that in the Independent Methodists there existed a body with almost identical principles. The extreme lay church character of the Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire group is seen, however, in their reluctance to have too close a fellowship with the older body on the ground that they had compromised true Free Gospellism by allowing their travelling evangelists to "live off the fruits of the Gospel".

Advertisements in the magazine show that at least two editions of a distinctively Original Methodist hymn-book were published. So far no copy has come to light.

We also learn from the *Record* that in and around Derby some at least of the disaffected Arminian Methodists linked with the Free Gospellers when the union with the Wesleyan Methodist Association was completed in 1837. This is an interesting matter, as the question of where large numbers of the Revivalists went to has never previously been settled.

In spite of their ardent lay ministry principles, it is clear that little by little the Original Methodist societies found a home in surrounding UMFC circuits. The Selston society, the strongest in the connexion, and the mother church, was probably the last to do so, and this may have been as late as the mid-1870s. The society is still active. A few also seem to have returned to the PM body. Obviously the original motivation on which the connexion had placed so much emphasis began to lose its impetus as dwindling flocks felt an urgent need for more regular shepherds.

Mr. Grundy's work, when completed, will be most valuable. The writer gladly expresses his indebtedness to him for most helpful additional facts.

W.P.

We are grateful to authors and publishers for copies of the following local histories of Methodism :

The Bow Story (5s. from the Rev. Leslie G. Farmer, The Bow Mission, 3, Merchant Street, London, E.3).

Armada Methodist Church (no price given; from the Rev. Ian G. Cramb, 89, Greig Crescent, Armadale, Bathgate, West Lothian).

Milestones—Bromley High Street, Kent (no price given; from Mr. F. Scott, 105, Murray Avenue, Bromley, Kent).

A charge to keep—Brook Street, Derby (no price given; from Mr. J. B. Radford, 21, Conthorne Drive, Allestree, Derby).

Trinity Church, Nassau, Bahamas (no price given; from the Rev. Philip Blackburn, P.O. Box 497, Nassau, N.P., Bahamas).

On Zion's Hill—Zion Church, Fir Tree, Royton (4s. 9d. post free from Mr. Sidney Y. Richardson, 117, Shaw Road, Thornham, Rochdale, Lancs).

A History of Methodism in Halton (2s. 9d. post free from the Rev. George E. Diggle, 373, Selby Road, Halton, Leeds, 15.)

Downicary, Devon (1s. from Mr. H. Spencer Toy, 39, Dunheved Road, Launceston).

In the heart of the City . . .—Bishop Street Chapel, Leicester (5s. from Mr. A. A. Taberer, Portland Road Works, Leicester).

Methodism in Redruth (2s. 6d.) and *Dr. Boyes of Redruth* (1s. 6d.) from Mr. John C. C. Probert, 1, Penventon Terrace, Redruth.

We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of the following publications :

The Journal of Ecclesiastical History, April 1965.

The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society, 1964.

The Baptist Quarterly, April and July 1965.

The Amateur Historian, Spring and Summer 1965.

The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, July 1965.

Methodist History, July 1965.

Bathafarn (the Welsh Methodist historical journal), 1965.

JOHN WESLEY'S BREAK WITH MYSTICISM RE-CONSIDERED

ON 23rd November 1736 John Wesley wrote an important letter to his brother Samuel in which he said: "I think the rock on which I had the nearest made shipwreck of the faith was the writings of the mystics."¹ It has generally been agreed that this letter signifies the abrupt and complete break between John Wesley and his mystical masters, and the view appears to be confirmed by the fact that there is little mention of the mystical writers in the *Journal* between the time at which the letter was written and Wesley's departure from the New World.

However, there are signs of a renewed interest in the mystics which arose during Wesley's voyage to England. While he was on the high seas he undertook the writing of his *Abridgement of Mr. De Renty's Life*, and he describes this mystic as "one of the brightest patterns of heavenly wisdom".² The work was completed, and was followed by several days' meditation upon the subject of Wesley's search for an environment in which he could be holy. He writes:

... I reflected much on that vain desire, which had pursued me for so many years, of being in solitude in order to be a Christian. I have now, thought I, solitude enough. But am I therefore the nearer being a Christian? Not if Jesus Christ be the model of Christianity. I doubt, indeed, I am much nearer that mystery of Satan which some writers affect to call by that name. So near, that I had probably sunk wholly into it, had not the great mercy of God just now thrown me upon reading St. Cyprian's works. "O my soul, come not thou into their secret!" Stand thou in the good old paths.

How are we to interpret this passage? Knox suggests that the "mystery of Satan" is Roman Catholicism, and that this passage implies that Wesley was considering becoming a Roman Catholic. However, it seems more likely that Wesley is referring to mysticism. That this is no empty conjecture is shown by the passages in which Wesley speaks of mysticism in just these terms. It is mysticism which Wesley describes as being "set on fire of hell";⁴ it is mysticism which he calls "this specious snare of the devil".⁵ Wesley insists that Boehme should be dubbed "a demonosopher" because he spreads satanic ideas,⁶ and, when Charles Wesley becomes infected with mystical stillness, John speaks of "this masterpiece of the wisdom from beneath, the fairest of all the devices wherewith Satan hath ever perverted the right ways of the Lord".⁷

If this interpretation is true, the reference to St. Cyprian becomes much clearer. Knox is somewhat at a loss to explain how this particular Church father should have been instrumental in leading Wesley towards Rome; but if Wesley means that Cyprian saved him from the snares of mysticism, the reference makes more sense. Cyprian fled from persecution and set forth a rigid ascetic and ecclesiastical order, standing firmly against the nebulous musings which

¹ *Letters*, i, p. 207. ² *Journal*, i, p. 415. ³ *ibid.*, i, p. 416. ⁴ *ibid.*, i, p. 420.

⁵ *ibid.*, vi, p. 10.

⁶ *Works*, ix, p. 518.

⁷ *Sermons*, i, p. 378 ed.

had leavened the Church. The editor of the *Journal* points out that "A study of Cyprian would probably reveal one of the many sources of Wesley's scheme of life and discipline".⁸ If this is so, the meaning of the passage is clear: Wesley had been saved from the stillness and philosophizings he feared in mysticism by Cyprian's clarion call to asceticism and ecclesiastical order. This impression would be confirmed by Wesley's reference to "their secret" and his longing for "the good old paths", both of which would fit more aptly into his thinking about mysticism than about Roman Catholicism.

If our interpretation is correct, it poses the question: What could cause this strange lapse into mysticism? The answer is made difficult to find because we are driven to find order where Wesley indicates none, and we must rely upon calculated guesses based upon the available material. It seems as though the events surrounding this situation must be interpreted along the following lines.

Since leaving America the weather had been bad, and Wesley had become the victim of "unaccountable apprehensions" of unknown danger.⁹ This fear plagued him for several days, and he accounted it to be a fear of dying. However, after a slight intermission, he became "sorrowful and very heavy", and, once more, he could find no cause for it.¹⁰ Believing that his neglect of the souls of his companions was the possible cause of his depression, he tried to speak to them, but found himself unable to do so because of his spiritual malady. Seeking to employ his time, he finished his abridged *Life of De Renty*, and the study of this "brightest pattern" seemed to depress him still further, so that on 8th January 1738 he declared that he was convicted "by the most infallible of proofs, inward feeling," of unbelief, pride, irrecollection and levity of spirit.¹¹

In his agony he cried out for the mystical virtue of humility, and endorsed his plea with a quotation, significantly, from Thomas à Kempis—"Nihil est quod hactenus feci."¹² He sought humility believing that it would bring him a continuing sense of God's presence and tranquillity in every event of life. The following day he apparently began his struggle which was to decide whether, after all, his rejection of the mystics had been too hasty. He saw in De Renty's life a quality which was lacking in his own. For a short time it seems as though Wesley was tempted to return to the study of the mystics, but then it appears that he came to the conclusion that the way for him did not lie along the paths of mysticism, and that he then exclaimed: "O my soul, come not thou into their secret!"

What aspects of mysticism had held this almost fatal fascination for Wesley during this dark period of his life? First of all, it seems likely that Knox is right to see Wesley's spiritual struggle at this time as a struggle between the religion of William Law, who bade Wesley be content to "walk in darkness", and the religion of the Moravians, which was apparently one of light and resolution of spiritual

⁸ *Journal*, i, p. 416n.

⁹ *ibid.*, i, p. 413.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, i, p. 414.

¹¹ *ibid.*, i, p. 415.

¹² *ibid.*, i, p. 416; *Imitation of Christ*, I, xix, i.

darkness. It seems that Wesley was tempted to cling to the painful darkness and dullness which enveloped his soul, as though by suffering in this way he could find kinship with the sufferings of Christ. After the revival of his spirits he wrote: ". . . so from this day I had no more fearfulness and heaviness which before almost continually weighed me down." He repudiates the idea that it would have been more profitable for him to remain "*in orco*, as they phrase it", saying "Nay, but who art thou O man, who in favour of a wretched hypothesis, thus blasphemest the good gift of God?"¹³ Is it not likely that Wesley's vehemence springs from the fact that he had so recently been in danger of accepting the "wretched hypothesis"?

Secondly, on his own admission, it was the solitariness of mysticism which had tempted him—the belief that, if he were freed from contact with the outside world, he could then achieve his aim of personal holiness. He had now learned that solitude does not automatically produce holiness, and he knew that he must find some other way to holiness than retirement to "a desert".

Thirdly, if our understanding of the part played by Cyprian is correct, Wesley was lured by the concomitant of "darkness" and "solitary religion" which is "stillness". This view is confirmed in Wesley's later review of the influence of mystical beliefs upon him:

I had a plenary dispensation from all the commands of God: the form ran thus, "Love is all; all the commands beside are only means of love: you must choose those which you feel are means to you, and use them as long as they are so."¹⁴

It is significant that it is this third point which is treated at length in the famous letter to Samuel, and there are other similarities between the points mentioned in the letter of 1736 and the attractions felt in 1738. It appears that the letter marked the clarification of Wesley's objections to mysticism, but that the final battle with it had not then been fought. It seems probable that the actual break with the mystics—the moment when they ceased to have a hold upon Wesley—occurred as the ship bearing him towards England neared these shores. He landed in England as a man freed from mysticism's fatal snares.

From the time of his landing in England, the principles set out in the letter to Samuel and implanted in his mind on the return journey guided his every contact with mysticism. He regarded mysticism as striking against the nature of true Christian religion. It dissolved a true understanding of the Bible by its addiction to "vain philosophizings"; it warped the true Christian disregard for material things and contorted it into a morbid love of pain and deprivation; it produced antinomianism instead of moral purity and "stillness" instead of good works. It certainly appears that Wesley had won his battle with the mystics.

D. DUNN WILSON.

[The Rev. D. Dunn Wilson, M.A., B.D. is minister of St. James's Methodist church, Woolton, Liverpool. He is engaged in research into the relationship of John Wesley's theology to New Testament mysticism.]

¹³ *Journal*, i, p. 416.

¹⁴ *ibid.*, i, p. 420.

SUSANNA WESLEY, APOLOGIST FOR METHODISM

THE mother of the Wesleys was in many ways a remarkable woman—a statement which is neither novel nor open to question. Attention has usually been focused, however, on her skill in coping with her husband's idiosyncrasies and with the physical, cultural and spiritual needs of her many children, in which process she set the stage for Methodism. But Susanna Wesley was not merely a good manager, a patient though firm educator, and a pious Christian worker. She possessed a keen critical intellect and a thorough grasp of evangelical theology. Moreover she could express her convictions about abstruse and controversial subjects in a literary style at once clear, challenging and attractive.

John Wesley defined a good style as "perspicuity and purity, propriety, strength and easiness joined together".¹ His own literary achievements owe much to his mother's precept and example, though he far outdistanced her in his pursuit of the pithy sentence. Wesley himself published one notable sample of her writing as an appendix to an obituary notice of her in his *Journal* for 1st August 1742. Not unnaturally its subject-matter—her educational theory and methods—has drawn attention away from its style. Many other letters survive to fill out the picture, as also some meditations recently published in the form of prayers by our President Emeritus² and two treatises preserved in manuscript at Headingley College, the one in effect an exposition of the Apostles' Creed, the other "A Religious Conference between M [other] and E [milia]".³

A fact not known to any of her biographers, however, is that Mrs. Susanna Wesley used her considerable literary gifts in defence of Methodism, as the author of an anonymous pamphlet now extremely rare. This pamphlet adds yet a further refutation of the widely-publicized charge made by Samuel Badcock that Mrs. Wesley "lived long enough to deplore the extravagances of her two sons, John and Charles", and that she "considered them as under strong delusion".⁴

For this knowledge we are indebted above all to that painstaking researcher the late Rev. Marmaduke Riggall, who stumbled on the all-important clue in 1921 while transcribing Richard Viney's diary, and quickly realized its significance. In my own collection, in addition to one of the rare originals of Mrs. Wesley's pamphlet, there is

¹ *Letters*, iv, p. 256.

² *The Prayers of Susanna Wesley*, edited and arranged by W. L. Doughty (Epworth Press, 1956).

³ The first was printed in Adam Clarke's *Wesley Family* (2nd edn., 1844), ii, pp. 38-72, and the second appeared in 1898 as Publication No. 3 of the Wesley Historical Society. Both are discussed in Maldwyn Edwards's *Family Circle*, pp. 68-73.

⁴ See Adam Clarke, *op. cit.*, ii, pp. 107-22. It is certainly true, however, that in the early months of the revival Mrs. Wesley was critical of the Methodist emphasis upon assurance of salvation (witness her letter of 8th March 1738-9, quoted by Clarke).

treasured Mr. Riggall's manuscript transcription of the copy in the Methodist Archives in London, together with his voluminous notes, many of them tracing parallel passages in her known treatises and letters. It was his unrealized hope that this work might be issued as a further publication of the Wesley Historical Society.

In the early summer of 1744 Richard Viney, the pious but erratic ex-Moravian tailor, was engaged in sorting and repairing the books and pamphlets in Wesley's library at the Orphan House, Newcastle. Wesley himself was in and out of the building much of the time. In Viney's diary for Sunday, 27th May, Mr. Riggall came across this passage:

I read a pamphlet entitled *Remarks on Mr. Whitefield's Letter to Mr. Wesley, on his Sermon on Free Grace, In a Letter from a Gentlewoman to her Friend.* (Mr. W. told me his Mother wrote it.)⁵

There can be no doubt about the identification of this publication, even though Viney is slightly inaccurate in his transcription of the title, which in fact reads *Some Remarks on a Letter from the Reverend Mr. Whitefield to the Reverend Mr. Wesley, in a Letter from a Gentlewoman to her Friend.* This sixpenny pamphlet of twenty-eight pages had appeared in 1741 as a part of the Calvinist-Arminian controversy—an exchange of literary blows which divided Methodism into two camps. John Wesley's published sermon on *Free Grace* had provoked Whitefield's rebuking *Letter*, which in turn was answered by the *Remarks*. The pamphlet is in part a defence of the Wesleys by means of a counter-attack upon Whitefield, in part an exposition of evangelical Arminianism. As Mr. Riggall shows in detail, Viney's parenthetical statement about its authorship is confirmed by the internal evidence both of style and subject-matter.

A further confirmation of Mrs. Wesley's authorship of this early defence of Methodism is to be found in the ledgers of William Strahan, who printed both Wesley's *Free Grace* and Whitefield's *Letter*. His folio ledger recording accounts with publishers from 1739 to 1768 contains this entry on a page devoted to Wesley's publishing ventures: "For the printing and Paper of Mrs. W.'s pamphlet £3. 5. —."⁶ Without the evidence of Viney's diary this would prove as mysterious as other entries in Strahan's ledgers referring to items which have completely disappeared. Nevertheless it presents its own problems. It is the last of four entries under the date of 1st September 1742, subsequent to Mrs. Wesley's death and probably a year after the actual publication of the *Remarks*. Again, contrary to Strahan's normal custom, as exemplified by the items between which this is sandwiched, he furnishes no details about the number of sheets composed, the reams of paper used, or the copies printed. The most likely explanation seems to be that this affords another example (though far less explicit) of a transaction which had been overlooked and called to his attention at a later date, like the payment

⁵ *Proceedings*, xiv, pp. 194-5; cf. J. S. Simon: *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, p. 197.

⁶ Add. MSS. 48800, folio 37, British Museum.

made by Charles Wesley in 1755, which Strahan describes as "Owing of a former Account quite forgot by me, but remembered by him".⁷ In the context "Mrs. W." must surely refer to Mrs. Wesley, and we know of no other writing of hers which might fit the circumstances. No further external evidence comes to our aid. The imprint on the *Remarks* is simply "London: Printed, and sold at the Pamphlet-Shops of London and Westminster. MDCCXLI. (Price Sixpence.)". Unfortunately the work contains no printers' ornaments which might prove, nor any press figures (frequently used by Strahan) which would confirm, its issue from his press.

As a literary composition the *Remarks* is perhaps not as impressive as some other examples of Mrs. Wesley's work. Nevertheless it constitutes a competent *apologia* for Methodism, and contains a number of memorable passages. Some reveal the streak of satire which ran through the writings of other members of the family:

Interest [i.e. personal bias] hath an agreeable Way of putting out a Man's Eyes, and making him mistake that for Good, which indeed is Evil. (p. 2.)

One criticism ends with the pungency of a proverb:

As to his Compellations to Mr. Wesley of "Honoured" and "Dear" &c., I look upon them only as so many cant Words which are of no Signification, tho' possibly he might intend, by the frequent Use of them, to cut his Friend's Throat with a Feather. (p. 3.)

Noteworthy theological and even metaphysical observations abound, as in this passage on the nature of God:

We are wont to conceive and speak of the great God after the Manner of Man, and to call him a powerful, a wise, a just, a true, a loving, a holy God, &c., whereas we ought rather to say, He is Power, Wisdom, Goodness, Justice, Truth, Love, Holiness, &c. For as all these Perfections are in Him, they are neither distinguished from one another, nor from his Nature or Essence, in whom they are said to be; for, to speak properly, they are not in Him, but are his very Essence or Nature itself. . . .⁸

Mrs. Wesley urged upon her children precision in the use of words, and condemned Whitefield's somewhat slap-dash practice:

Mr. Wesley has said (which is true) "that all might be saved"; but I am sure he never said, "that all will be saved"; and I think there is a great Difference between those two Words, *might*, and *will*. (p. 25.)

In spite of her advanced years (she was 72), Susanna Wesley was a shrewd judge of the religious situation in which she found herself, and was almost certainly correct in asserting that the Wesleys' teaching on Christian perfection was a greater stumbling-block than their insistence on the possibility—though not the certainty—of universal redemption:

I am verily perswaded, that many of the Predestinarians are more angry with the Wesleys for Preaching up Gospel Holiness, than for their pleading so strongly for Universal Redemption; and if they

⁷ Add. MSS. 48802A, folio 10, British Museum.

⁸ Page 11. Mr. Riggall points out that this is an almost exact reproduction of a passage in the "Conference", page 18.

would let the former alone, they would forgive them the latter. (p. 25.)

Earlier in the work she had pointed out that Whitefield, in common with other critics, had in fact misunderstood her sons' view of Christian perfection :

I very much fear, that Mr. Whitefield's reviving this pernicious [predestinarian] Controversy, is one Reason why our Lord hath permitted him to fall into that dangerous, most shocking Practice, of making public Opposition against Gospel Holiness, which is the only Christian Perfection the Wesleys ever taught; for absolute Perfection they never preached.⁹ (p. 10.)

Although there is nothing in the *Remarks* which deals specifically with the Wesleys' teaching on Christian assurance of salvation and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which in the early days attracted even more charges of "enthusiasm" than their teaching on Christian perfection, the whole tenor of the pamphlet leaves little doubt of her complete sympathy with the Methodist movement as a whole. This was the same woman who thirty years before had outraged her husband by conducting society meetings in the rectory at Epworth, and who a few months earlier had urged her son John to see the hand of God in the preaching of a layman, Thomas Maxfield. The prompting of maternal affection undoubtedly cannot be disregarded, but this by itself fails to explain her warm advocacy of her sons' theological views. Her substantial agreement with them on doctrinal matters, as revealed by this pamphlet, is confirmed by a contemporary letter to the Countess of Huntingdon, who may indeed have been (as Mr. Riggall believed) the anonymous "Friend" to whom the *Remarks* were addressed. This particular letter was written "From the Foundry, July First, 1741" in response to Lady Huntingdon's kindness in sending some Madeira wine to one hitherto a stranger. The second paragraph eloquently portrays Mrs. Wesley's affectionate pride:

I do indeed rejoyce in my Sons, and am much pleased, that they have in any measure been Serviceable to yr Ladi^{sh}. You'll pardon the fondness of a Mother if I exceed in commending them, but I've known few (if any) that have labour'd more diligently and unweariedly in the Service of our Dear Lord: And blessed be His Great Name, He hath set His Seal to their Ministry,¹⁰ and hath made them instrumental in bringing many Souls to God. And tho in the Eye of the World they appear despicable, men of no Estate or Figure, & Daily Suffer Contempt, Reproach & Shame among men, yet to me they appear more Honourable than they wd do, if the one were ArchB^p of Canterbury, and the other of York, for I esteem the Reproach of Christ greater Riches, than all the Treasures in England.¹¹

Such a woman indeed deserves not only the title of "Mother of the Wesleys", but that of "Mother of Methodism". FRANK BAKER.

⁹ Here she seems to reverse her argument, claiming that Whitefield's attack on the doctrine of perfection is the *result* rather than the *cause* of his predestinarian advocacy; in fact, however, she did not treat them as essentially distinct controversies, but as a complex and sometimes unrealized attitude of mind which found expression in specific statements on each subject as occasion arose.

¹⁰ In *Remarks*, p. 26, she speaks about God "setting His Seal to their Ministry".

¹¹ Lamplough Collection, Methodist Archives, London.

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

THE visit of the Conference to Plymouth this year coincided, whether by accident or design, with the 150th anniversary of the formation of the Bible Christian Connexion, and we took the opportunity to mark this event both at the

Annual Tea

and the Lecture, which were held at the Greenbank church on Wednesday, 7th July. Mrs. Ibberson was again our generous though invisible hostess, and this year her guests and ours included a number of descendants of the families of the Bible Christian founders. Among those who were present were Mr. John Thorne Reed and his family from Weston-super-Mare (representatives of a family which provided the Bible Christians with outstanding leaders) and Miss Lois Deacon, a West Country authoress, who is a collateral descendant of William Mason, the second President. It was a disappointment that descendants of William O'Bryan and Samuel Thorne were unable through illness to be present, though we received greetings from them. A message of greeting was also received from the Rev. Richard Pyke [whose death since the writing of this report we are very sorry to record.—EDITOR]. The Rev. Dr. Maldwyn Edwards extended a welcome to our guests.

Business Meeting

After the President had opened the meeting, the names of members who had died during the year (including our late Treasurer, Mr. Sydney Walton, and the historical writers Mrs. G. Elsie Harrison and the Rev. J. Brazier Green) were read, and we stood awhile in silent prayer. The annual reports, presented in person or by communication, were received and considered by the meeting. The Treasurer's report showed a balance in hand of £601 11s. 9d., together with £225 invested in War Stock, and estimated liabilities of £612 18s. 2d. The Registrar reported a current membership of 826, being a net increase of 22 on the previous year; 56 new members had been enrolled during the year, 16 had lapsed or retired, and 18 had died.

There was some discussion on the future of the Manuscript Journal and its relation to the Journals now being produced by the local branches, and approval was given for a new scheme which is outlined on the next page.

Reference was made to the excellent work which has improved the approach to the Society's Library in the crypt of Wesley's Chapel in London, for which we are greatly indebted to Dr. Frank Cumbers and his helpers. The Librarian's report stated that over fifty people had visited the Library in person during the year, and that 180 books had been sent out by post.

The reports from the still increasing number of branches were most encouraging: two further branches—the Midlands and London—have been formed during the past year.

The Annual Lecture

The subject of the lecture, given by the Rev. Thomas Shaw, was "The Bible Christians, 1815-1907". It was appropriate that the chair should have been taken by Alderman R. G. Paynter, M.B.E., J.P., a leading layman in what is still a completely ex-Bible Christian circuit in North Cornwall. The crowded church bore witness to the interest of a West Country audience in a denomination which finished its course nearly sixty years ago but which had had long associations with Devon and Cornwall.

The story of the Bible Christians was further illustrated by the historical Exhibition of "Early Methodism in Devon and Cornwall" which was held at the Plymouth Art Gallery, and by a subsidiary Bible Christian collection under the charge of Dr. Glyn Court at Greenbank. THOMAS SHAW.

THE MANUSCRIPT JOURNAL

THE Annual Meeting of the Wesley Historical Society at Plymouth decided that the Manuscript Journal should cease to exist in its present form, since its function has largely been taken over by the local branches. It is proposed to inaugurate the following scheme in its place:

Each local branch is to be asked to send to the Manuscript Journal Secretary *three* copies of its bulletin or journal as published, in addition to the two copies already sent to the Editor. These copies will be sent on rota to any members wishing to receive them, as is done at present with the Manuscript Journal. Sheets of paper will be included for any manuscript contributions members may wish to make, as hitherto.

Most of the branches have already expressed their willingness to cooperate in this scheme. Any member who wishes to be placed on the rota (*whether he or she is at present on the Manuscript Journal rota or not*) should write as soon as possible to the Manuscript Journal Secretary.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Financial Statement, 1st May 1964 to 31st May 1965

RECEIPTS.		£	s.	d.	PAYMENTS.		£	s.	d.
Balance in hand, 30th April 1964	...	463	5	0	Printing of <i>Proceedings</i> (4 issues), etc.	...	350	19	4
Subscriptions and Donations					Secretarial and Editorial Expenses	...	22	19	10
General	...	379	7	11	Insurance	...	4	2	5
Irish Branch	...	31	0	0	Bank Charges	...			5
Advertisements	...	1	8	0	Balance in hand, 31st May 1965	...	601	11	9
Share of Lecture Collection	...	3	11	9					
Chairman's Donation	...	4	4	0					
<i>Proceedings</i> (back numbers) and Publications sold	...	64	6	2					
Legacy (late Rev. J. J. Perry)	...	25	0	0					
War Stock Dividend	...	7	15	6					
		<u>£979</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>4</u>			<u>£979</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>4</u>

Balance Sheet

LIABILITIES.		£	s.	d.	ASSETS.		£	s.	d.
Subscriptions in advance	...	366	3	2	Cash in hand—Treasurer	...	523	15	3
Life Members—					Registrar	...	77	16	6
70 at (say) £3 10s. 6d. each	...	246	15	0	Librarian	...	12	19	2
Accumulated Funds	...	226	12	9	War Stock (at cost)	...	225	0	0
		<u>£839</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>			<u>£839</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>

Library, Publications Stocks, Filing Cabinet, etc. unvalued.

7th July 1965.

ROWLAND C. SWIFT, *Treasurer*.
B. P. M. HOLLOW, *Auditor*.

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(Continued from page 50)

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OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

(*To be continued*)

NEWS FROM OUR BRANCHES

FROM our **Cornish** Branch we have received Journal No. II. 3 (May) and another of their excellent Publications (No. 9). Charles Thomas writes on "Methodism and Self-improvement in Nineteenth Century Cornwall". Copies (price 2s. 6d.) are obtainable from the secretary—Rev. Baynard P. Evans, The Manse, St. Keveverne, Helston.

ON Saturday, 29th May, the **East Anglian** Branch went to Culford School. The headmaster, Dr. Christopher Storey, and Mrs. Storey both addressed the meeting. The former exhibited and spoke about an oil painting of John Wesley emanating from Mrs. Vazeille and, according to a label on the back, executed by William Owen in 1778, though that painter was then only 18 years old! One point of extreme interest is that the Jackson portrait (not painted till 1827 and much criticized) which for many years formed the frontispiece of the old Wesleyan hymn-book, bears a striking resemblance to the Culford picture. Dr. Storey said there was obviously a link between the two: either Jackson copied from the portrait before them or both painters copied from the same unknown source.

Mrs. Storey sketched the history of Culford Hall, which, after housing several famous families, became a Methodist public school in 1935.

THE Annual General Meeting of the **Irish** Branch was held at Thomas Street church, Portadown, on Tuesday, 15th June, during the annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland. A memorial tablet to the late Rev. R. H. Gallagher was unveiled at Thomas Street the same day.

The secretary of our Irish branch is Mr. John H. Weir, 50, Meadowbank Place, Belfast, 9. Visitors to Belfast who wish to see the Historical Room at Aldersgate House should apply to Mr. Weir, who will be pleased to make the necessary arrangements.

An account of the unveiling of a Wesley plaque at Killyman Rectory is given under "Notes and Queries" on page 80.

THE **Lancashire and Cheshire** Branch held its spring meeting at the Central Hall, Manchester, on Saturday, 15th May. Two short related papers were given: "Ashton-under-Lyne and the Methodist New Connexion, 1797-1850" by Mr. E. A. Rose and "Rochdale and the Wesleyan Association, 1834-50" by Mr. David A. Gowland. Questions and discussion followed.—The branch summer outing took place on Saturday, 26th June, when Mr. W. H. Hoult was the guide to Methodist sites and chapels in the Mellor, New Mills and Chinley area. The twin themes of the afternoon were "John Bennet" and "Early Methodist Architecture".—Journal No. 2 has been received.—Secretary: Mr. E. A. Rose, 18, Glenthorne Drive, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs.

THROUGH an error of omission in "News from our Branches" in March last, the summer meeting of the **Lincolnshire** Branch was reported in the June issue (page 56). To this there is nothing to add except to record the name and address of the secretary: Mr. William Leary, Woodlands, Riseholme Lane, Lincoln.

AN inaugural meeting of the **London** Branch was held at Wesley's Chapel on Saturday, 29th May. The Rev. John C. Bowmer spoke on "The organization of British Methodism after the death of Wesley". Officers were appointed, and an autumn meeting arranged for.—Secretary: Rev. Brian J. N. Galliers, 21, Upper Shirley Road, Croydon, Surrey.

ON Saturday, 12th June, the **North-East Branch** visited Yarm, Osmotherley and Hawnby in the North Riding of Yorkshire.—Bulletin No. 6 contains articles dealing with Methodism in the Northumberland villages of Blanchland, Allendale and Cambo. No. 7 prints, among other items, the address delivered at the spring meeting by the Rev. Albert B. Lawson on "The Wesleys and James Hervey". Secretary: Rev. R. Walters Dunstan, 61, Ingleside Road, North Shields, Northumberland.

THE **Plymouth and Exeter** Branch have issued two Bulletins since our last report—June (No. 5) and August (No. 6). We also acknowledge No. 4 (February), overlooked last time.—The spring meeting was held at Shebbear on Saturday, 24th April, with a visit to Lake Farm, the home of John Thorne to which William O'Bryan came to preach in 1815, and to Shebbear College, where Dr. Glyn Court had arranged an exhibition of Bible Christian relics.—Secretary: Mr. W. R. West, 8, Redvers Road, Exeter.

South Wales Branch held its Annual Meeting at Trevecca on Saturday, 22nd May. The Rev. Griffith T. Roberts spoke on Howell Harris, and the substance of his lecture is printed in the recent Bulletin No. 3.—Secretary: Rev. W. Islwyn Morgan, 15, King Edward Road, Brynmawr, Brecon.

THE **West Midlands** Branch was formed at a meeting held in Handsworth College on Saturday, 27th March. Dr. Benson Perkins spoke on "World Methodism, Past and Future".—There was a pilgrimage to the birthplace of Francis Asbury in the summer, and a meeting of the committee on 22nd June to transact business.—Two Bulletins have been received.—Secretary: Mr. John A. Vickers, 5, Benson Avenue, Goldthorn Park, Wolverhampton.

THE **Yorkshire** Branch met at Scotland Street, Sheffield, on Saturday, 29th May. The Rev. William Parkes spoke on "Thomas Bryant, Independent Methodist", and after tea members drove to Cliff College to see the premises and the Wesleyana there housed.—Bulletin No. 7 has been received, together with a welcome Occasional Paper, in the form of a compilation entitled "The Growth of Yorkshire Circuits", drawn up by the secretary, the Rev. W. Stanley Rose, 1, York Road, Knaresborough, Yorks.

BOOK NOTICES

The Future of John Wesley's Methodism, by Henry D. Rack. (Lutterworth Press, pp. 80, 10s. 6d.) Ecumenical Studies in History, No. 2.

This book by one of our members is a timely contribution to the present study of Methodist ecclesiology and the nature of John Wesley's Methodism, made urgent not only by the Conversations with the Church of England but also by Methodism's participation in the ecumenical movement. The Lutterworth Press is doing a real service to the churches in launching this new series, the purpose of which is "to examine afresh problems of Church History . . . for the sake of Church Unity".

After two centuries of separate existence, and the passage of a generation since Methodist reunion, the time has come to look as objectively as we can on the Methodist movement as a whole. Mr. Rack accepts the view of Methodism which sees it as a movement which developed from a group of societies, loosely within the Church of England, to a separate nonconformist church. Throughout its history it has retained, though not without tension, much of its societary nature alongside its developing church character. This development, with its inherent polarities, which still persisted even after the healing of the divisions of Methodism in 1932, is clearly outlined in this book. The author's analysis of the concerns and stresses of the divided Methodism—holiness and discipline (Wesleyan Methodist), mission as determinative of order (Primitive Methodist and Bible Christian), and layman's church (Free Methodist), each embodying strands of John Wesley's movement—is particularly helpful.

The author discusses the proposals in the Conversations *Report* against this background, and proceeds to the conclusion that the mission of Methodism, if it is to be true to its original purpose of creating and sustaining scriptural holiness, could more effectively be continued within the new Church which acceptance of the proposals would bring into being. Clearly not all readers will draw the same conclusion, but all will be grateful to Mr. Rack for marshalling the facts on which they must make their own judgement.

The facts of Methodist history are set out accurately enough in this book, but by a strange omission the Methodist New Connexion is left out of the relevant paragraph on page 22, whilst one of its founders, William Thom, is seconded to the service of the Bible Christian William O'Bryan whom he never knew.

THOMAS SHAW.

The Office of Bishop in Methodism, by Gerald F. Moede. (Publishing House of the Methodist Church, Zürich, Switzerland; Abingdon Press, New York and Nashville, USA, pp. 277, \$6.50.)

Now that we have been invited to take episcopacy into our system, we have been led to examine the forms which *episcopate* at present takes in Methodism, and it would be generally agreed that Methodist ministers are presbyter-bishops exercising *episcopate* in the New Testament sense, whilst *episcopate* in another sense belongs to the Conference, the superintendents, and the Chairmen of Districts. But not many in Britain have considered very closely what happens when Methodism does take into its system the very word "bishop" and episcopacy as a distinct office. This is exactly what American Methodism has done, and we welcome this study of "Its History and Development" (to quote the sub-title) which appears to be a doctoral thesis at Basle by one who stands in the American tradition.

The first chapter traces the familiar story of the change in Wesley's view of ordination, his setting apart of Coke, and the Christmas Conference at Baltimore in 1784. The point that interests the author is his contention, contrary to the view of some American historians, that Wesley accepted the idea of an American episcopate controlled by an American Conference. He seems less fully aware of the delicate issues involved in Wesley's setting apart of Coke. (A. B. Lawson's book probably did not come out in time to be taken into account.) He quotes only one article from *The London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, and never from these *Proceedings*. The question whether Wesley's assumption of the power to ordain was fully justified by King, Stillingfleet, Ussher (an error in the spelling of whose name has been overlooked) and the presbyters at Alexandria is a complex one, and the author is somewhat rash in contending on page 39 that E. W. Thompson did not take certain factors adequately into account in his careful study of it. Like many other writers, Dr. Moede does not squarely face the issue that the arguments used to justify Wesley's presbyteral ordinations tend to render unnecessary his ordination of Coke, who was a presbyter. The usual reply is that what was involved both in the ordination of Coke and in subsequent American episcopal consecrations was not ordination to a third order of the ministry but appointment to office. This may be in broad outline true, but Wesley and Coke did not draw such a clear distinction, as their use of the word "ordain" shows. It is shown also by the three parallel ordination services in *The Sunday Service*, to which Dr. Moede pays no attention.

The second and third chapters are devoted to the complex history of the American episcopate. In these admirable chapters those who realize that such documents as *CPD* are full of theological issues will find fresh fields to explore, full of similar interest. The fourth chapter—"A true international Methodist episcopacy"—discusses the problems of structure which arise today in the vast American Church and the Conferences which are in various ways related to it. Yet a further problem arises—that of its relation to a still more international body, the World Methodist Council.

The last chapter examines two schemes for combining Methodism with Anglicanism and thus with episcopacy of a different type. The English scheme came too late to be considered, and the examples chosen are North India and the Blake proposals for America itself. The author takes a favourable view of these, but without stating his theological grounds very fully. All in all, this is an interesting book for those who like to study this kind of Methodist Faith and Order question. A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

Pioneer Preachers of Irish Methodism, by Robert H. Gallagher. (Wesley Historical Society, Irish Branch, pp. 174, 6s.)

Mr. Gallagher's many friends on both sides of the Irish Channel will rejoice in the appearance of this last fruitful harvest at the close of a long life devoted to the service of the Church and the study of its history. Mr. Gallagher contributed a number of articles on early Irish Methodist preachers to the *Irish Christian Advocate*, and was able to prepare these for re-publication before he died early this year. The result is a volume that is at once an invitation to browse and a useful reference book, at a price that will inspire admiration and envy. Here are short but informative lives of the preachers who died in the Irish work between 1747 and 1840. Some names, such as those of Adam Clarke, William Thompson and Richard Boardman, are widely known, and remind us of the tremendous

contribution made by Irish Methodism to the work in England, in America, and on the mission field. Others, such as Thomas Walsh, Charles Graham (the "Apostle of Kerry") and Gideon Ouseley, were outstanding pioneers in Ireland itself. But the greater number are little-known but heroic figures, all too many of whom came to an early grave either through persecution or less dramatically through those "damp beds" which are a recurring theme in the history of the early itinerancy. There could be no more fitting tribute to the earliest generation of Irish Methodists, nor to the author who stood in direct line of succession to them, than this posthumous volume which is a delight both to handle and to read.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

[The book may be obtained from the Secretary of the WHS Irish Branch, Aldersgate House, University Road, Belfast, 7. Profits from the sale are being given to the Irish Branch.—EDITOR.]

NOTES AND QUERIES

1140. A WESLEY PLAQUE IN IRELAND.

At Killyman Rectory in Co. Armagh, Northern Ireland, on 2nd June 1965, there was unveiled a plaque bearing the following inscription:

THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY
PREACHED TO A LARGE CONGREGATION
IN THESE GROUNDS ON JUNE 10TH 1775,
JUNE 2ND 1785, JUNE 14TH 1789.
THE REVEREND CHARLES CAULFEILD, RECTOR,
ENTERTAINED HIM ON EACH OCCASION.

The present rector, the Rev. D. W. Griffith, gave a hearty welcome to over two hundred Methodists, and referred to the planning of the project by the late Rev. R. H. Gallagher, then President of the Irish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society, this having indeed been the subject of one of his last actions before his sudden death in January 1965.

The President of the Methodist Church in Ireland, the Rev. Dr. S. H. Baxter, conducted the ceremony and preached, and the unveiling was performed by Mr. Gallagher's son, the Rev. R. D. Eric Gallagher, who is Secretary of the Irish Conference.

FREDERICK JEFFERY.

1141. INDEX TO "THE METHODIST MAGAZINE".

We are pleased to report that Mr. William Leary has undertaken to continue the index of place-names, memoirs, biographies and obituary notices in *The Methodist Magazine*. Members of our Society will recall that the Index to volumes 1778-1839 was produced as an Occasional Publication in 1899. Mr. Leary has given himself a tedious task, but many a student will thank him for supplying a much-felt need. Ultimately the completed index will be housed at the Methodist Archives or (is it too much to hope for?) be published like its predecessor; but in the meantime students requiring references up to 1860 are invited to write to Mr. Leary at Woodlands, Riseholme Lane, Lincoln.

EDITOR.

The Rev. William Parkes's lecture on Thomas Bryant and the history of Scotland Street chapel (MNC), Sheffield (see report from the Yorkshire Branch at the foot of page 77) has now been printed (pp. 24, price 2s. 3d. plus postage), and may be obtained from the author at 279, Whitechapel Road, London, E.1.