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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor : REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT

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RICHARD IRELAND AND JOHN WESLEY

AN intrinsically important Wesley letter to a hitherto unknown correspondent is something of a rarity. We are grateful to one of our members, Mr. L. E. S. Gutteridge, for starting us on a train of interesting research. Recently there passed through his hands the following letter, with its confession of Wesley's own tendency towards irascibility as a tactful approach towards a criticism of his correspondent's failings, and with its underlining of the difficulties which Wesley faced in begging money, even from wealthy folk, for the "New Chapel" in City Road, London, whose foundation stone he had laid only four days earlier:

Near London

April 25th, 1777.

Dear Sir,

We old men need not use ceremony toward each other: We have seen more of it in the world than we like. We may speak plain: What should hinder? We have no ill designs upon each other. My design ever since I saw you first at Dorking was to do you all the good I could. It is true this is not a very easy matter: for you are not too easy to be advised. Men of Seventy seldom are; for age is apt to stiffen our minds as well as our bodies. And perhaps you are a little too apt to lean to your own understanding: This I have frequently observed with concern. Do you not likewise halt on the same foot with me? Are you not warm enough? My anger would be as a whirlwind, if I did not watch continually. Does yours never break loose? Yet, I can say I never saw you in a passion. But does not God see? And is it not high time now you are on the verge of Eternity, to cast off every weight? To throw aside the sin that so easily besets you, and so prepare to meet your God?

But perhaps you expect I should say something on another head. Then I will, and with all plainness. You say, "Nay speak not of it: I tell you I will give nothing: not a shilling, not a farthing." Pray do not so say before you are asked. This is neither sense nor manners. "But there was no necessity for building." There was an absolute necessity. For as soon as the lunatics are removed from St. Luke's the Foundry will be pulled down. And we have multitudes of old and decrepit people, who can never get to Spitalfields or West Street. Yet

I allow there is no necessity for your giving anything, unless you love me, unless you love the Work of God, unless you desire to lay up treasure in heaven; Unless you desire the blessing of God to come now upon your Soul and Body and all that you have! If so you may send five, fifty, five hundred pounds to, Dear Sir,

Your affectionate Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

Who was this unnamed, but obviously wealthy and somewhat obstinate Methodist? Along with the fact that, like Wesley, he was in his seventies at the time, his first meeting with Wesley at Dorking provides the most likely clue. An examination of all the references to Dorking in Wesley's *Letters* and *Journal* at first leads us on a false trail after Mr. Rose, the apparent founder of Dorking Methodism—though Wesley's mention of first seeing his correspondent at Dorking almost certainly implies that he was not actually living there, at least not in 1777. We pick up the scent again. At last we come on the following, in Wesley's *Journal* for 17th February 1780:

I preached at Dorking, and could not but reflect in this room I lodged the first time I saw poor Mr. Ireland. "Emphatically poor!" Poor beyond expression—though he left fourscore thousand pounds behind him!¹

Our minds immediately leap to the Rev. John Fletcher's wealthy patron, who was occasionally at cross-purposes with Wesley—James Ireland of Brislington, near Bristol. Alas, we soon realize that this Mr. Ireland had not relinquished his earthly treasure in 1780, a fact which leads to the Dorking reference being inserted in the *Journal* index with a query, for no other wealthy Methodist Mr. Ireland was known. For a time we ponder the possibility of confusion between the two James Irelands, father and son—the kind of thing that has occasionally occurred in Methodist as in other history. Alternatively, we wonder whether a misprint in Wesley's *Journal* might solve the problem—"Poor . . . though he left £80,000" having crept in instead of "Poor . . . though he leave £80,000". Yet somehow neither explanation seems very convincing.

We branch off in another direction. If a Mr. Ireland, dying between 1777 and 1780, had really left £80,000, he must have left some mark on the periodicals of the day, for this was a very considerable fortune, especially in the eighteenth century. A search in the *Gentleman's Magazine* is quickly rewarded. Among the "Deaths of considerable Persons" in the issue for January 1780 is recorded the death on 9th January of "Rich. Ireland, esq; of Riegate Place, aged 80."² Here at last is our man, wealthy, in his seventies in 1777, and to make assurance doubly sure, living at Reigate Place, about seven miles east of Dorking.

Wesley's first recorded visit to Dorking had been in 1764.³ The

¹ *Journal*, vi, p. 268.

² *op. cit.*, 1780, p. 51.

³ *Journal*, v, p. 43.

second visit he mentions was on 19th December 1770, though there may possibly have been others intervening. On this second occasion he preached also at Reigate.⁴ The assumption seems to be that Mr. Ireland met Wesley at Dorking, and invited him to Reigate, and it is noteworthy that Wesley preached there both in the evening and the following morning, presumably having stayed overnight at Reigate Place. A similar itinerary was followed in December, 1771.

Mon. 16. I rode to Dorking, where were many people but none were cut to the heart.

Tuesday. I went on to Reigate Place.⁵

Wesley goes on to describe this Surrey showplace:

In King Henry the Fourth's time this was an eminent monastery. At the dissolution of monasteries it fell into the hands of the great spoiler, Henry the Eighth. Queen Elizabeth, pleased with the situation, chose it for one of her palaces. The gentleman who possesses it now has entirely changed the form of it; pulling down whole piles of ancient building, and greatly altering what remains. Yet, after all that is taken away, it still looks more like a palace than a private house. The staircase is of the same model with that at Hampton Court: one would scarce know which is the original. The chimney-piece in the hall is probably one of the most curious pieces of woodwork now in the kingdom.

Richard Gough, in his 1789 edition of Camden's *Britannia*, is rather more scathing of Ireland's treatment of the palace than is Wesley, but he adds some useful details:

This priory founded by William Warren, earl of Surry [in the time of John], . . . afterwards successively the seat of the earls of Essingham and Peterborough and of Humphry Parsons, esq., lord mayor of London, was sold 1766 . . . to Zachary Ireland of Dorking, who, though it had been not long before rebuilt, pulled it down, and sold it piecemeal, and let the remainder to ordinary uses.⁶

Wesley himself, after describing the magnificence of Reigate Place, added the characteristic comment:

But how long? How many of its once bustling inhabitants are already under the earth! And how little a time will it be before the house itself, yea, the earth, shall be burned up!

Something of the same note was echoed in his first sermon at Reigate Place:

I preached in the evening to a small company on "It is appointed unto men once to die." All seemed moved for the present. They saw that life is a dream: but how soon will they sleep again?

Truly Wesley had little hope of those who trusted in riches entering the kingdom! It is just possible, of course, that this sermon was actually preached in Reigate itself, particularly as his earlier visit had mentioned Reigate only, as did the next in February 1773.

⁴ *ibid.*, v, p. 398.

⁵ *ibid.*, v, p. 441.

⁶ Vol. I, p. 175. Gough has erred in recording Mr. Ireland's Christian name as "Zachary", as may be seen from references to him in the *Victoria County History* of Surrey, iii, pp. 203, 236.

We believe, however, that for Wesley Reigate really meant Reigate Place, and his record of 15th November 1775 implies regular preaching at the mansion:

I preached at Dorking; the next evening at Reigate Place, I think to the largest congregation that I have seen there. But still I fear we are ploughing upon the sand; we see no fruit of our labours.⁷

This is the last mention of Reigate or Reigate Place, though Wesley's silence must not necessarily be construed as neglect, for many of his visits to places in the home counties are unrecorded in the *Journal*. The additional evidence of his diary, however, from 1782 onwards, proves that although he continued to visit Dorking, Reigate had been dropped from his itinerary, even though he travelled from London via Wandsworth and Mitcham, and thus could easily take Reigate on his way. It seems almost certain, therefore, that the small and struggling society there was abandoned, and that the reason was at least in part Wesley's estrangement from Richard Ireland, exemplified by this letter. FRANK BAKER.

⁷ *Journal*, vi, p. 83. In February 1773 he says: "On Monday the 15th and the following days I took a little journey into Surrey"; and in December 1774 he preached at Reigate to "a larger congregation than ever before".

Duncan Coomer, M.A., LL.D.

By the death of Dr. Duncan Coomer, at the age of sixty-nine, the Wesley Historical Society has lost a valued member and generous friend. In Southport and Bournemouth, where successively he resided, he held every office open to a Methodist layman, and was frequently a representative to Conference. Whilst he was in America as a representative to the Ecumenical Methodist Conference at Springfield, Mass., in 1947, the University of Washington conferred upon him the honorary degree of LL.D., and for the recent World Methodist Conference at Oxford he acted as Secretary, carrying out his arduous duties with characteristic thoroughness. He was a founder-member of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, and treasurer of the Friends of Reunion, two movements in which he was deeply interested.

These activities were not allowed to exclude wider interests. Besides being an amateur printer and bookbinder of considerable skill, Dr. Coomer was an expert historian. He was a member of the Council of the Royal Historical Society, and in 1944 was awarded the degree of Master of Arts at Liverpool University for a thesis on *English Dissent under the Early Hanoverians*, a book which revealed much careful research.

At a recent meeting of the Historical Association, Lord Quickwood spoke feelingly about Dr. Coomer as a staunch and valuable friend. This expresses exactly what he was to our Society, and the tribute will be endorsed by those who were associated with him in its executive. He acted for a long period as the auditor of our accounts, and his generosity to our Society, as to so many other good causes, will long be remembered. The memory of our friend will linger with us as that of one whose fellowship has enriched our lives, and to his widow we express our most sincere sympathy. F. F. BRETHERTON.

THE WOMEN ITINERANT PREACHERS OF EARLY METHODISM

AN indispensable book of reference to every student of Methodist affairs is the volume popularly known as *Hill's Arrangement*, or, to give its proper title, *Ministers and Probationers of the Methodist Church with their Appointments in Chronological and Alphabetical Order*. Not the least interesting and valuable section of the book is the alphabetical list which records—literally from A to Z—the names of the Ministers and Probationers who have “died in the work”, a noble army of more than eight thousand preachers, beginning with Alfred F. Abbott and ending with Peter G. de Zylva. What toils and achievements are represented by this list, and what memories are stirred as we scan the names! And with what surprise we light upon the entries:

BULTITUDE, ELIZABETH (P): Commenced 1832; Died 1890

POTTER, ANN (U): Commenced 1825; Died 1835

Elizabeth Bultitude and Ann Potter, almost the sole representatives of their sex in this long and imposing list of Methodist preachers—*itinerant preachers*—who, after they had served their generation by the will of God, fell on sleep. (The identity of the other woman preacher in the list—Margaret Adams—is obscured because her Christian name is not given.) Who were these women, and by what right do they claim this lonely place amongst the travelling preachers of the Methodist Church? Thereby hangs a tale, and that tale we shall here attempt to unfold, for the name of Elizabeth Bultitude is like a window opening upon another world, a glimpse into a period of Methodist history now half-forgotten, and yet too romantic to be allowed to disappear altogether into oblivion. For though the name of Elizabeth Bultitude stands in isolated splendour upon the pages of *Hill's Arrangement*, she was but the last of a race of devoted women who had their place amongst the itinerant preachers of Methodism, and whose influence and work deserve greater recognition than has hitherto been given.

I. WOMEN PREACHERS IN WESLEYAN METHODISM

The long and interesting chapter on “Women Preachers” in Dr. Leslie F. Church's recent book, *More about the Early Methodist People*, has made it unnecessary for us to tell again here the story of those women preachers whose labours were countenanced, and sometimes encouraged, by John Wesley. Nor do we need to trace the change in Wesley's attitude towards the whole question, from 1761 when he flatly declared that “the Methodists do not allow of women preachers” to 1789 when he could give Sarah Mallet advice on the conduct of her services. Dr. Church has admirably fulfilled these tasks, and those who turn to his pages can read of Mary Bosanquet, Sarah Crosby, Mary Sewell, Grace Walton, and others, whose names are sufficient to indicate that although Wesley did not in one sense encourage women preachers and never called a woman

to the itinerancy (though these women were itinerant preachers in all but name), he did nevertheless recognize that there were exceptional cases, and where there was a clear call of God he was prepared to lay aside his own prejudice and permit women to preach within the orbit of the Methodist societies.

It is to be assumed that during the period immediately following Wesley's death there were many women who exercised their gifts in the ministry of the Word, for in the early years of the nineteenth century the question of female preaching came into prominence, both in Ireland and in England. The attitude of the Irish Conference to Miss Alice Cambridge and others has been dealt with by Dr. Church¹ and need not concern us here.

In 1803 the question was asked at the English Conference held in Manchester: "Should women be permitted to preach among us?", and the following resolution was passed:

We are of opinion that, in general, they ought not. 1. Because a vast majority of our people are opposed to it. 2. Because their preaching does not at all seem necessary, there being a sufficiency of Preachers, whom God has accredited, to supply all the places in our Connexion with regular preaching.

But if any woman among us thinks she has an extraordinary call from God to speak in public, (and we are sure it must be an *extraordinary* call that can authorize it), we are of opinion she should, in general, address her *own sex*, and *those only*. And upon this condition alone should any woman be permitted to preach in any part of our Connexion; and, when so permitted, it should be under the following regulations:—1. They shall not preach in the Circuit where they reside, until they have obtained the approbation of the Superintendent and a Quarterly Meeting. 2. Before they go into any other Circuit to preach, they shall have a *written* invitation from the Superintendent of such Circuit, and a recommendatory note from the Superintendent of their own Circuit.²

This regulation remained effective in Wesleyan Methodism for more than a hundred years,³ and it presented a most formidable barrier to any woman who felt the "call to preach", for the restrictions were obviously designed to deter any female aspirants to the pulpit. For all practical purposes, female preaching had received official condemnation. It is not surprising, therefore, human nature (and especially feminine nature) being what it is, that during the years immediately following the Conference of 1803 there were many women who defied the law and indulged in what was now "irregular" preaching.

The most famous of these was Mary Barritt, a Lancashire lass

¹ L. F. Church, *More about the Early Methodist People*, pp. 173-5.

² *Minutes of Conference*, 1803 (1862 ed.), p. 187.

³ This was never repealed, but was revised in 1910, when the words restricting the preaching of women to their own sex were deleted. The other provisos remained unaltered, and an addendum urged that the preaching of women should be restricted to neighbourhoods in which there was no special opposition. (*Minutes of Conference*, 1910, pp. 609-10.) This was the official position in Wesleyan Methodism up to Methodist Union in 1932. Sociologists will find here much food for thought!

who began to preach in her early twenties. She travelled extensively in the northern counties of England, and under her preaching such notables as Joseph Taylor and Thomas Jackson were converted. Dr. Church has told the story of her early career,⁴ but her significance for our present study is that by her marriage in 1802 to the Rev. Zechariah Taft she became the storm-centre of a controversy which led to the Conference resolution of 1803, and the echoes of which were heard for many years. Zechariah and Mary Taft were a remarkable couple and admirably matched. Taft himself seems to have made a special study of "female preaching", for in addition to his *Holy Women* (published in 1825), and a reprint in 1819 of William Bramwell's *Short Account of the Life and Death of Ann Cutler* (with an appendix by himself), he wrote three pamphlets on the general subject.⁵ In the third of these, which he dedicated to his wife, he refers to her under the thin disguise of "an eminently pious female, who thought it her duty to call sinners to repentance", and writes of the commendation which such eminent ministers as John Pawson, Alexander Mather and Samuel Bradburn had bestowed upon her work.

Mary Taft published in 1827 an extensive account of her work as a revivalist in an autobiography which carries the narrative to the end of 1805, three years after her marriage,⁶ and enough is known of her later work to make it clear that in all but name she was an additional itinerant preacher in the circuits in which her husband travelled. There was some justification for Joseph Benson's caustic comment at the time of Taft's marriage that he was "taking a female to assist him in the ministry". Taft appears at first to have obeyed the Conference injunction. He wrote in 1809:

Ever since I had the honour to call Mrs. T— by my name, I have laid down one general rule of conduct relative to this subject, that is, never to introduce her as a public character, nor suffer her to preach in any other circuit but at the request or by the consent of the superintendent of that circuit, or suffer to speak in any of my pulpits while there is opposition from any men in office, if I have known of it. I do not know that I ever deviated from this rule, except in one instance.⁷

In later years he was not always so circumspect. Although his wife's name never appeared on the preachers' plans, the appointments assigned to her were indicated by an asterisk; and in the Conference of 1833 complaint was made of this irregularity, Dr. Bunting alluding with some scorn to the asterisks on the plans. John Pawson, however, supported her preaching and recommended her employment for special services.

⁴ op. cit., pp. 163-9.

⁵ *Thoughts on Female Preaching* (Dover, 1803); *A Reply to an Article inserted in the "Methodist Magazine" for April 1890, entitled "Thoughts on Women's Preaching"*, extracted from Dr. James MacKnight (Leeds, 1809); *The Scripture Doctrine of Women's Preaching: Stated and Examined* (York, 1820).

⁶ *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Mary Taft: formerly Miss Barritt*. In Two Parts. (Ripon, 1827.)

⁷ Quoted in *Methodist Recorder Winter Number, 1895, p. 68.*

Throughout her long preaching career Mary Taft was frequently the object of criticism, and, sometimes, abuse.⁸ But her sense of call never left her, and whatever may have been the legality or otherwise of her activities the fact remains that her ministry was responsible for the conversion of hundreds if not thousands of sinners. Historically, she remains a picturesque, almost romantic, figure, the nearest approach to a woman itinerant preacher that Wesleyan Methodism ever had.

Echoes of this controversy were heard at intervals in Wesleyan Methodism throughout the rest of the century. Every now and again a woman would appear with "an extraordinary call" (which Jabez Bunting, intransigent on this matter, described as "every fanatic's plea"), but so far as we know the question of female preaching never became a live issue and the Conference was never pressed to change its mind. Whether this was for the good or ill of Wesleyan Methodism it is idle to speculate; it is time to turn to some other branches of Methodism in which the situation was very different.

II. HUGH BOURNE AND WILLIAM O'BRYAN

One of the minor curiosities of Methodist history is the fact that Hugh Bourne and William O'Bryan both determined almost simultaneously to employ women as itinerant preachers. It is impossible to say precisely which of the two was the first; we are probably on safe ground if we suggest that they were both providentially led at the same time. It is a fact, however, that within a few years of Zechariah Taft "taking a female to assist him in the ministry" and the Wesleyan Conference ban of 1803, both Hugh Bourne in Staffordshire and William O'Bryan in Cornwall were discovering that women could render valuable help in the revivals of which they were respectively the instruments.

We will consider first the case of Hugh Bourne. His interest in the subject of female preaching can probably be traced, in part, at any rate, to the fact that as early as 1799 he "read the books of the first Quakers",¹⁰ and also to his association with the "Quaker Methodists" of Warrington whom he met for the first time when some of them walked the forty miles to the first camp meeting on Mow Cop in May 1807. He met them again later in the same year when he attended their Annual Meeting at Macclesfield and accepted an invitation to preach in their societies at Warrington and Risley. Bourne became a regular visitor to these two Quaker Methodist

⁸ William Atherton, in his funeral sermon on the death of Joseph Taylor, said: "God often works by strange instruments. Balaam was converted by the braying of an ass, and Peter by the crowing of a cock; and our lamented brother by the preaching of a woman one Good Friday morning." The woman was Mary Taft, then Mary Barritt. (Footnote on page 106 of T. P. Bunting's *Life of Jabez Bunting*.)

⁹ T. P. Bunting, *op. cit.*, p. 667.

¹⁰ Quoted by H. B. Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, i, p. 11. I am grateful to the Rev. J. T. Wilkinson for verifying this and other references from Bourne's MS. Journal (which has never been published) at Hartley Victoria College, Manchester.



ELIZABETH BULTITUDE



SARAH KIRKLAND



MARY TAFT

societies, the latter of which had been formed as a result of the visits of Lorenzo Dow in 1806. It was during his second visit to Warrington that Mrs. Richardson, afterwards famous as an evangelist, was converted, and at Stockton Heath he would hear of the fame of Dorothy Ripley, the Yorkshire-born Quakeress revivalist from America, whom he later met at Nottingham in 1818.

The influence on Hugh Bourne of the Quaker Methodists of Warrington and neighbourhood, with their Quaker dress and mode of speech, has never been adequately assessed. It is evident that they impressed him, though they failed in their attempts to convert him to Quakerism. Peter Phillips, one of their pioneers and stalwarts, remained a lifelong friend of Bourne, and it was in his home at Warrington that Bourne's pamphlet on "The Ministry of Women" was written.¹¹ The second Annual Meeting of the Quaker Methodists at Macclesfield in June 1808 had considered the matter of female preaching, and had asked Bourne, who was present, to prepare answers to certain questions which had arisen. The pamphlet, which was printed at Phillips' request, was the result. It was a defence of female preaching, based on scriptural grounds, and Bourne makes the interesting expository point that "even if any woman who prayed or prophesied would not submit to rule, he [Paul] does not say let her be stopped but let her be shorn".

In our attempt to give the background of the female itinerants of Primitive Methodism we must not omit a reference to Mrs. Fletcher of Madeley, and to Elizabeth Evans, the "Dinah Morris" of *Adam Bede*.¹² In the later years of Mrs. Fletcher's life Bourne was not infrequently at Madeley and records that he heard her preach. He tells us also that in the same neighbourhood he had persuaded a Mrs. Mitton "to give herself to labouring for the Lord". As for Elizabeth Evans, Bourne first heard her preach on 25th June 1809:

I led the class in the morning at Wootton. . . . We were informed that Betsy Evans, Samuel Evans' wife from Derby, would speak at Wootton. He also is a local preacher. She began about two o'clock. Her voice was low and hoarse at first from having preached so much the week past and having caught several colds: but she got well into the Power. She appears to be very clear in Scripture doctrines and very ready in the Scripture. She seemed to speak fully in the Spirit; and from the little I saw of her she seems to be as fully devoted to God as any woman I ever saw.¹³

In the following March, Bourne made a special journey from Shropshire to Derby to see Samuel and Elizabeth Evans, the latter of whom he described as "an extraordinary woman".

Lastly, we must not forget the popular Mrs. Dunnell, who was persuaded to preach at the Wesleyan chapel at Tunstall (contrary to rule!) as a means of preventing her from attending the first Norton camp meeting in August 1807, where Hugh Bourne was

¹¹ It was finished on 22nd June 1808 and published in the same year under the title *Remarks on the Ministry of Women*.

¹² For the story of Elizabeth Evans see L. F. Church, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-63.

¹³ Quoted from Kendall, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

relying on her help. She did attend other camp meetings, however, and for some months in 1810 and 1811 laboured as an itinerant in Derbyshire and Staffordshire. In the latter part of 1811 Mrs. Dunnell was responsible for a split amongst the Derbyshire societies and disappears from our sight. She is of interest and importance to our present study because, although not a Primitive Methodist, she was the first woman itinerant to work under the supervision of Hugh Bourne, and is therefore the prototype of the Primitive Methodist itinerants whom we are presently to consider. The first of such itinerants was, of course, Sarah Kirkland. We have this information on the explicit statement of Bourne himself, and to Sarah Kirkland and her successors we shall later return.

Now for William O'Bryan and the Bible Christians. In the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* for 1821, Hugh Bourne wrote:

In the latter part of the promise, in Acts ii. 17-18, which respects daughters and handmaidens prophesying or preaching, a remarkable coincidence has taken place in our Connexion and in the Connexion which has arisen in Cornwall. It is really surprising that the two Connexions, without any knowledge of each other, should each, nearly at the same time, be led in the same way as it respects the ministry of women. Both Connexions employed women as exhorters, and as local and travelling preachers. When the two Connexions became acquainted with each other, and found so striking a similarity in their proceedings with regard to Female Preachers, it became a matter of desire to know by what steps each Connexion had been led into the measure.¹⁴

The Primitive Methodist Conference of that year, therefore, passed a special resolution on the maintenance of a friendly correspondence with the Bible Christians, and the Book Committee was instructed to receive communications from William O'Bryan, the founder of the Bible Christians, and insert them in the *Magazine*.¹⁵ A correspondence followed between Hugh and James Bourne on the one hand and William O'Bryan on the other, in which Hugh Bourne is addressed as "Dear Brother in our Lord Jesus Christ", and James as "Very dear Brother in our common Lord".¹⁶ O'Bryan states that he was influenced to employ women preachers by the success of his own wife, Catherine O'Bryan, and he emphasizes the fact that she was the first of the women preachers in the Bible Christian Connexion. Crowds of people gathered to hear her, and there was such a great ingathering under her ministry that it was deemed advisable to call another woman, Elizabeth Dart, into the work. This was in 1816, and Elizabeth Dart, who may claim to be the first woman Bible Christian *itinerant* preacher, heads the list of the fourteen women itinerants already in the work when the first Conference was held in 1819.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

(To be continued)

¹⁴ *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1821, p. 162. Article entitled "On the Rise of Female Preachers in the Connexion which originated in Cornwall".

¹⁵ *General Minutes of Meetings held by the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, 1821, p. 13.

¹⁶ *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1821, pp. 112, 162.

THE BEDFORD ASSOCIATION :

An Early Ecumenical Movement

THERE is an interesting Declaration "By Order of the Conference, to Persons of every Denomination" printed in the *Minutes of Conversations between Preachers and Delegates, Late in Connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley, held in Sheffield, on the 28th, &c., of May, 1798.* (Leeds: Printed by Binns and Brown; and Sold by T. Hannam, and all the Preachers in the New Itinerancy—Price One Penny.) This twelve-page booklet corresponds to what we know as the *Minutes of Conference*, and was the second of its kind issued by the then New Connexion—its name not yet determined with exactness.

Among other matters, the Declaration speaks a good word for The Bedford Association :

We look upon our cause to be part of the general cause of religion, and believe that we are acting in the order of Providence. Enlarged and benevolent principles are diffusing their blessed influence thro' the world. An Association of Christians of different denominations has been formed at Bedford, to promote the knowledge of the Gospel; including a plan for universal union in the genuine Church of Christ. The Bedford Association is truly evangelical; it requires no man to give up his sentiments, form of worship, or church fellowship; nor even of accommodation of language. All that is necessary to become a member of it, is to be a sincere Christian. The object of the union is to restore the Church of Christ, in some measure, to its primitive harmony and unity; to spread more effectually the knowledge of the Gospel among mankind, where the people have hitherto remained destitute or negligent of its advantages—and to instruct the dark and depraved parts of the British Colonies and the Heathen world. In a word, to encourage and support every spiritual and evangelical undertaking, for which there may be evident occasion, and which does not interfere with the internal concerns of the churches. In such a union of Christians there is strength! And we will cheerfully [sic] pledge ourselves to come forward with our support of such a generous and evangelical undertaking. But let none insinuate, that because we thus firmly pledge our readiest support to the above laudable undertaking, we are about to swerve from the genuine doctrines of Methodism. NO! Be it known to all the world, that we have not separated on account of *doctrines*—therefore every suggestion of that kind is entirely groundless! The Bedford Association requires no uniformity of sentiments, &c. and we are convinced, that—to think and let think is very consistent with genuine Christianity.

Thus reads the "Declaration" signed by W. Thom and A. Kilham, the President and Secretary of the New Itinerancy. It was the precursor of many more in which the desire was expressed for the unity of Christ's people, and especially in respect of those who had been "in Connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley".

J. DAYSON CROSLAND.

UNITED METHODISM IN SCOTLAND

TO many, no doubt, this title will seem a complete misnomer; for it is so long since the smallest branch of present-day Methodism had any work in Scotland that Scottish Methodists have not so much as heard whether there be any United Methodism! And many south of the Border, too, will be surprised to hear that the United Methodist Church once had work north of Hadrian's Wall. But for some fifty years one section of the former United Methodist Church—the United Methodist Free Churches—maintained a struggling existence in Scotland. I am unable to say whether the New Connexion or the Bible Christians ever worked there, but perhaps some member of the Society can give information.

When the first Conference of the Wesleyan Association was held in 1836 in Manchester, there were three representatives from Scotland: Robert Anderson represented Edinburgh, and the "Scottish United Methodist Churches" were represented by J. C. Kennedy and D. K. Shoebottom. These "Scottish United Methodist Churches" were clearly the results of earlier secessions, which had banded together and now allied themselves with the newly-formed Wesleyan Association, though not completely merging for some years. The 1836 Wesleyan Association Assembly "placed on record the satisfaction it has derived from the visit of Messrs. C. J. Kennedy¹ and D. K. Shoebottom, as the Representatives of their brethren of the Methodist Churches in Scotland, who are separated from the Wesleyan Conference"²; and also addressed a communication to the "Scotch Methodist Churches", and appointed fraternal delegates to their yearly meeting in Edinburgh in September 1836, and in subsequent years. The Scottish group thus maintained a separate identity for some time. From later "stations" it seems that the "Scottish U.M.C." stand for Paisley and Dundee, so that we may say that United Methodism began in Scotland in these two centres and Edinburgh. The following year, 1837, Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee figure in the list of stations, and in the annual statistics Edinburgh is returned with 146 members and three preaching-places or rooms. Glasgow has 103 members and one chapel, whilst Dundee has 250 members and one chapel.

By 1838 six towns or cities are represented—the most there ever were. Edinburgh has two chapels, one representing the Wesleyan Association, the other the "Scottish U.M.C."; Dundee and Glasgow are there, and in addition there are Paisley and Johnstone (a small town a few miles along the main road out of Paisley) with 100 members, and Dumfries and Aberdeen with thirty members each. But these two last societies had a very short life, for they disappear the following year, their place being taken by Kilmarnock in 1840,

¹ The initials are always printed "J. C." in the *Minutes*, except here; but Fowler's *Paisley Directory* always prints "C. John Kennedy".

² *Minutes*, p. 16.

by which time the apparently strong Dundee church has disappeared.

For several years the statistics show work in the four remaining towns, the two Edinburgh churches coalescing in 1842, after which there is no change until 1846, when Kilmarnock disappears. Seven years later Edinburgh also ceased—it reported only twenty-nine members in 1852. In 1857 there was, as we might expect, an accession of strength, for in that year the bulk of the Wesleyan Reformers joined with the Wesleyan Association to form the United Methodist Free Churches. Hence in Scotland, the work which had shrunk to two societies—Glasgow and Paisley—was strengthened by the addition of Wesleyan Reform societies at Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Two years later, in 1859, Edinburgh was the only remaining centre in Scotland, showing sometimes one, sometimes two, preaching-places. A note in the 1871 *Minutes* suggests that the second place in the Edinburgh circuit was Greenock, for in that year it is noted that the Greenock society with sixteen members, hitherto included in the Edinburgh figures, had been given up. (The Greenock *Directory* for the relevant years makes no mention of this small society in its list of local denominations, but the *Greenock Telegraph* made occasional announcements of its services.) Edinburgh then remained the only circuit until the accession of Aberdeen again with sixty-one members in 1869, and these two were joined by a new Glasgow society in 1875, with 160 members—a figure which had grown to 210 two years later.

But the old story repeated itself. Edinburgh disappears in 1880, Aberdeen in 1882, and Glasgow itself in 1884, and after that date the United Methodist Free Churches never had work in Scotland. Always in the Newcastle District, they were no doubt too far removed from any others of like mind to be able to enjoy the sense of oneness that is Methodism's glory. Every consideration appears to have been given by connexional authorities to the Scottish preference for a settled ministry, for several men stationed there had tolerable tenures of office—Brown's *History of Paisley*, indeed, reports that C. J. Kennedy was minister there from 1834 till his death in 1854. And while, as today, far too many probationers were sent to labour in this difficult field, at the same time some of these were destined to become well-known names in later years: such were T. A. Bayley, Aquila Keene, Thomas Swallow, Samuel Saxon Barton, Thomas Newton, John Peters, and later Robert Brewin and William Redfern, most of whom became President. But the societies died out, often doubtless on account of their small size and remoteness from their fellow Free Methodists; but it would be interesting to know why a society such as Dundee with 220 members, or Glasgow with 130 members, suddenly disappeared.

Nor does it seem that the societies were burdened with capital debts, such as explains the demise of many of Valentine Ward's societies.³ Several of the societies had "preaching-places" but no chapel—

³ Cf. Wesley F. Swift, *Methodism in Scotland*, p. 85.

which no doubt represents a hired room, or in some cases the homes of members; what else can be intended than private houses when Kilmarnock, with forty-eight members, reports five preaching-places in 1842? Both Glasgow and Edinburgh had chapels in early days—Edinburgh having two in 1841. The "Tabular View" of the *Minutes* of 1844 reports a chapel in Paisley for the first time, but Fowler's *Paisley Directory* records one as early as 1836, at 5, Sir Michael Street, changed to 7, Oakshaw Street in 1838, though we cannot be sure that these were not merely hired. The 1844 chapel was situated at 2, New Street, according to the *Directory*, where the society called itself the "Congregational Methodists". They had been noted as the "United Methodists" in 1838, and as "Dissenting Wesleyan Methodists" in 1836; but the identity of these three is assured by the name of the minister, C. J. Kennedy, common to all three. Later, according to Brown's *History*, Mr. Kennedy bought the old Wesleyan chapel at 12, George Street in 1850 for £720, where the congregation remained until his death four years later, after which his trustees sold it to the Swedenborgians, who were still worshipping there in 1886.

Kilmarnock was reported as having a chapel in 1845, but as they only reported preaching-places in preceding years, and had died out within two years, one suspects that the schedules were filled in wrongly! The old Edinburgh society died out in 1852-3, as has been noted; but when the Wesleyan Reformers joined in 1857, they already had a chapel, though it is described as simply a preaching-place from 1859 onwards, and in the mid-sixties two preaching-places are recorded, one evidently being Greenock. Aberdeen, which had joined in 1868-9, bought a chapel in Dee Street in 1872-3; the later Glasgow society never had a chapel of its own.

Perhaps in closing it may be permitted to mention the other dissenting branches (apart from Primitive) of Methodism. There is now one Wesleyan Reform church in Scotland, at Clydebank, dating from a secession in 1937; and in 1920 there was (according to Vickers' *History of Independent Methodism*) one Independent Methodist church in the country. Does it still exist? There was an Independent Methodist society in Glasgow in 1820 which continued for many years, the Conference being held there in 1851, 1869, and 1878. This society met in premises in Low Green Street from 1822 to 1862, then built a chapel in Charlotte Street, near Glasgow Green, and worshipped there until it removed to a new chapel in Robson Street, Govanhill, in 1896.⁴ It was largely the foundation of Alexander Denovan, who was instrumental in starting causes also at Hamilton, Lanark, Bothwell and Paisley (in High Street in 1832-3, according to the *Paisley Directory*). Denovan was President of the Independent Methodist Conference no less than thirty times. Is anything more known of these two branches of Methodism in Scotland?

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

⁴ A. Mounfield, *A Short History of Independent Methodism*, p. 105.

WILLIAM HAMMET

The First Methodist Missionary to Jamaica

IN a short article in *Proceedings*, viii, p. 75, C. H. Crookshank related some facts regarding William Hammet, whose call to missionary service probably came through Dr. Coke in 1784 when Hammet was stationed at Lisburn. This article is intended to supplement those facts. In 1786 he was among the "preachers admitted this year", and was put on the list of stations for Newfoundland.¹ With Coke and others he sailed from Gravesend on 24th September 1786, and after many adventures they were blown by a hurricane into the harbour of St. John's, Antigua, on Christmas Day. In 1787 and 1788 Hammet was stationed at St. Christopher's, where he established Methodism; no reference is made to him in the *Minutes* in 1789, but in 1790 he was stationed at Jamaica, and thereafter his name disappears from the *Minutes*. Myles states² that he travelled from 1784 to 1791. Why did this missionary, who made an excellent start in St. Kitts, St. Eustatius and Jamaica and ensured the success of the mission, and received official mention in the *History of Jamaica*, suddenly drop out of our Church records?

In Jamaica, Hammet formed a first society class³ (not to be confused with that formed by Dr. Coke) which in three years increased from eight to 150 members, and directed work at the famous Parage chapel in Kingston, where, on account of official opposition, he had to desist from preaching⁴ after withstanding much persecution. Coke visited Kingston on 10th January 1791 and found Hammet critically ill with a fever, and took him to the cooler climate of America. "But alas," wrote a commentator of the time, "how short-sighted is man. This very step, which was dictated by pure benevolence, ended in the ruin of that great and useful minister."⁵ On arrival in America, Coke learnt of the death of Wesley, and hurried home to England, leaving Hammet behind in Charleston. There Hammet died on 15th May 1803, having separated from Methodism and built his own chapel, Trinity. It has not been easy to trace his movements, or ascertain the reasons for his disaffection.

About 1791 there was an estrangement between Coke and Hammet, who when he seceded took with him other members and preachers. In October 1792 he made a scurrilous attack on Dr. Coke in a sixteen-page pamphlet entitled:

An Impartial Statement of the known inconsistencies of the Reverend Dr. Coke, in his official station, as Superintendent of the Methodist Missionaries in the West Indies: with a brief description of one of his Tours through the United States. Charleston: Printed by W. P. Young, Franklin's Head, No. 24, Broad Street. MDCCXCII.

¹ *Minutes of Conference*, i (1786), p. 187.

² *Chronological History of Methodism*, 4th ed., p. 452.

³ *Papers relating to Methodist Missions*, LXII, December 1835.

⁴ Pilkington, *Daybreak in Jamaica*, p. 55.

⁵ *Papers relating to Methodist Missions*, LXII, December 1835.

For our present purpose only the opening statement need be quoted :

To the Ministers and Preachers, late in connexion with the Rev. Mr. Wesley, in Europe.

Fathers and Brethren, Several of your delegates to the West-Indies have been inhumanly and unchristianly treated. We have no other source of redress, but to appeal to your bar for justice. . . . Why should we be cast into disgrace, and loaded by our adversary with reproach, and branded with the epithet of *schismatics*, while it can appear, that he is the author of everything that looks like it, on the Continent, or in the West-Indies? That the Lord may direct your deliberations, for the promotion of his glory, is the prayer of, Yours, Etc, William Hammet, Charleston, October 24, 1792.

Coke retaliated in a pamphlet of twenty-two pages in 1793.⁶ It was a defence of Methodist missions as well as of his own character. The Rev. Frank Baker tells me that the copy in his possession was sent as a circular to Mr. Mill at the Methodist chapel, Hexham, with a note from Dr. Coke at the foot of page seven, which reads :

My very dear brother,

The invectives contained in the Pamphlet answered above, and the Assiduity with which they have been circulated during my absence by my Enemies, and, I may truly add, the enemies of the Preachers, obliged me to send one Copy of my Answer to each Circuit. I hope therefore you will excuse the expense of this. God bless you. My love to Mrs. Mill and Mr. Franklin. I am your very affectionate Brother.

T. COKE.

Separation from British Methodism did not end Hammet's work as a preacher, though only scanty facts are available and these mostly through the records and contacts of others, and the general impression is that his activities did not have happy results. He led a small society in Charleston,⁷ and evidently kept contact with West Indian Methodism, for when he heard of the spiritual needs of slaves in the Bahamas he sent a negro evangelist to them in 1793 and possibly other helpers too; and though the mission proved a failure, Findlay says some good fruit was left, and the responsibility for this work was later undertaken by an American negro named Paull. The American-born Lorenzo Dow (so prominently associated with the foundation of Primitive Methodism) called at Georgia on his return to America in January 1802, and though he found no regular Methodists in the town, "one of Hammet's party, Adam C. Cloud" gave him the use of a preaching-house.⁸ What significance and influence is denoted by the phrase "Hammet's party"?

Another glimpse of Hammet is through William Turton,⁹ Methodist preacher from 1795 to 1818, the second man of negro extraction to be received into the ministry and who may have claim to be one of the two first preachers to be received from overseas districts. Turton was born in Barbados of an old planting family, and when

⁶ *An Address to the Preachers lately in Connexion with the Rev. J. Wesley, containing Strictures on a Pamphlet published by Mr. W. Hammet.*

⁷ *History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society*, ii, p. 53.

⁸ Herod, *Biographical Sketches*.

⁹ *Methodist Magazine*, 1821, p. 203.

his slave-owner father died his mother administered the estate and arranged for the religious instruction of the slaves, but sought to protect her small son from religious teaching. He came under the influence of Methodist missionaries, however, and acknowledged in conversion the direction of Warrener and Baxter (Warrener had sailed with Coke and Hammet in 1786). The British Conference appointed him to several West Indian circuits, and in 1800 he arrived in New Providence and found there an unhappy state of religious life. His mission was strenuously opposed and his character attacked because two or three persons, in the guise of Methodist preachers from Mr. Hammet, had formed a society among a few black folk, and had brought the name of Methodist and the cause of truth under such suspicion that a Colonial Assembly law prohibited American and English preachers from conducting services unless they held a licence. This Hammet society split into two: one led by the negro Paull (already mentioned) and the other by Anthony Wallace, who appealed to Dr. Coke for a leader. William Turton, who was licensed by the Governor, was sent, and he tried to undo the harm by announcing that he would receive as Wesleyan Methodists those ready to join him. On the general situation he says: "As soon as I began to show myself active I was represented as hurtful to the slaves. The behaviour of the American preachers was brought forward and few knew the difference between them and the Wesleyan missionaries"—a sentence now obscure in meaning, but which perhaps holds a clue to the mystery surrounding Hammet.

Another Hammet reference gives the same unsatisfactory lead. Francis Asbury, whose comment on the appeal Hammet made to the British Conference in 1792 was that he "could acknowledge no further connection with him, who could so attempt to rend the body of Christ", instructed William M'Kennedy¹⁰ to write to Dr. Coke from Charleston on 6th December 1810. In this letter, over seven years after Hammet's death, M'Kennedy wrote:

There are a few remaining in this place of the followers of Mr. W. Hammet, who are like sheep without a shepherd. They have solicited us to preach for them; and for some months, we have given them one sermon on each Lord's Day. Most of them, I believe, wish to be united fully with us, but fear the strictness of our discipline. There are indications that Hammet and his work influenced both West Indian and American Methodism, but not permanently.

What is the solution of the mystery of William Hammet? In the work of a Methodist preacher he made a good start and then dropped out of the picture. I have seen no documentary evidence, but I have it on the unquestionable authority of a friend who some years ago met Hammet's descendants, that Hammet became a slave-owner. If that is true, he may have been amongst those rebuked by the British Conference for implication in the slave trade. It is a theory that fits the few known facts which long research has brought to light, and would also find interpretation in early Methodist history.

FREDERICK PILKINGTON.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, 1811, p. 394.

BOOK NOTICES

New Birth, by Bernhard Citron. (Edinburgh University Press, pp. xvi. 215, 21s.)

This study of the evangelical doctrine of Conversion is a refreshing book. It is written by a man who abandoned the Liberal Judaism in which he was brought up and after a very unsatisfying period in the wilderness was converted to Christ. The author's purpose is "to discuss Conversion, not as the experience of one individual or of many, but as the experience of the whole Church". "Regeneration is as real as generation", he maintains, and the sense of wonder and the spirit of testimony are never far away.

"New Birth" is used in its most comprehensive sense. There is a study of the Purpose of God, pre-conversion experience, conversion, sudden and gradual; and about half the book is devoted to an exposition of the life of the "New Man". Though making a careful examination of the writings of the Protestant Fathers, the author leaves no doubt that he is most at home with John Calvin.

Readers of the *Proceedings* cannot complain that John Wesley has been neglected. There are several most appreciative references both to his work and to his thought. Continental writers, especially Haering and Brunner, are criticized for their unfair treatment of Wesley and Methodism. Methodists will expect to find some criticism of the doctrine of Christian Perfection as Dr. Citron acknowledges Calvin as his master, but they will be surprised to read the following: "Comparing Calvin's and Wesley's accounts of man's lifelong struggle we are inclined to consider Wesley's view as much more pessimistic than that of Calvin." This statement appears to be based on a misunderstanding, for while Wesley held that a regenerated man may fall entirely away from grace, he did not maintain that this happens whenever a man sins with the result that he lives a series of Christian lives entirely separated from each other. We do, however, most heartily commend this book.

PERCY SCOTT.

Quaker Social History, 1669-1738, by Arnold Lloyd. (Longmans, pp. xv. 207, 21s.)

This book ends where Methodism proper is generally supposed to have begun, with the year 1738. In this it seems to be symbolic of the two religious bodies. Methodism took up the warm personal Gospel as Quakerism was laying it down in the pursuit of a somewhat rigid discipline of social conduct, so that the early Methodists were hailed as a new brand of Quakers. Though the two bodies for the most part went their own way, there was some reciprocal influence, Methodism being influenced by the social witness of the Friends, while itself assisting in their spiritual rebirth.

All this makes it the more important that we should understand how the Quakers came to adopt their distinctive social outlook, to which Wesley gave the sincere praise of imitation, while at the same time becoming (as he justly complained) so formal in their religion. Dr. Lloyd's work is invaluable in helping us to such an understanding, nor must the term "social history" be construed as excluding the general history of the Society of Friends during this period of re-orientation.

Based on a careful study of voluminous manuscript sources, letters, accounts, minute books, official "epistles", and other documents, *Quaker Social History* traces the gradual change of outlook in Quakerism, and the hardening of the codes of social behaviour. In

examining this general theme, Dr. Lloyd illuminates many aspects of Quaker life, such as the Friends' marriage procedure and the work of the Women's Meetings, and Quaker finances, including their system of poor relief. The illustrations, mainly of contemporary documents, really do illustrate the story, and like the book in general, are excellently produced.

FRANK BAKER.

The Churches in Scotland Today, by John Highet. (Jackson, pp. xii. 257, 15s.)

The Claims of the Church of Scotland, by G. D. Henderson. (Hodder & Stoughton, pp. viii. 251, 15s.)

A Short History of the Episcopal Church in Scotland, by F. Goldie. (S.P.C.K., pp. x. 168, 14s. 6d.)

It is a sad fact of history that Methodism has made little impression on the religious life of Scotland, and a good deal of ignorance still exists concerning our traditions and polity. I remember a Presbyterian minister in Aberdeen who thought that Methodists used Sankey's *Sacred Songs and Solos*! The first two of the books here reviewed will do little to dispel the darkness of ignorance, though admittedly that is not their purpose. Mr. Highet has made a valiant attempt to grasp the intricacies of our constitution, though not without some errors; but why a quarter of the section on "The Methodist Church" should be devoted to an exposition of the Temperance and Social Welfare Department (as it then was), to the complete exclusion of Home Missions and, except for four words, Overseas Missions, it is difficult to understand. Nevertheless, this is an interesting, comprehensive and indeed unique survey of the religious life of Scotland, which we are happy to commend, though like Professor Henderson's book, it leaves us with an overpowering sense of the dominance of Presbyterianism, and of Methodism as an "also-ran". Professor Henderson's references to Methodism are of necessity incidental: we are somewhat patronizingly "recognized as consisting of earnest people with a high standard of morality and liberality", and we would regretfully agree that "Methodism in the north remains an English movement". However, this is a book to be read with profit, especially in the light of Wesley's conviction that after his death Methodism would become "a regular Presbyterian Church". We have two complaints: we deplore the modern insistence on the "claims" of the Churches; and, secondly, neither of these books contains an Index.

Mr. Goldie's account of the Scottish Episcopalians makes excellent reading. It reminds us that they are native to Scotland and not (as some suppose) an offshoot from the Church of England; that they possess a Communion Office unsurpassed in any Protestant Church; and that with more than four hundred congregations and a communicant membership of 56,000 they are a force to be reckoned with. They suffered grievously under the penal laws which followed the rebellion of 1745, and their fortunes were at the lowest ebb when John Wesley preached in their churches at Keith, Aberdeen, Banff and Leith, and worshipped with them at Edinburgh and Glasgow, where, in contrast to the Presbyterian form, he found the service like "old wine". We are sorry that Mr. Goldie does not repeat a statement made in an earlier history of this denomination, that Wesley sought ordination for some of his preachers from a Scottish bishop; perhaps, after all, the story is not true. This book will, however, help to illuminate the Scottish scene in Wesley's day as in our own.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

NOTES AND QUERIES

917. A PROHIBITION AGAINST METHODIST MEETINGS.

In the catalogue of an exhibition held at the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, in 1938 to celebrate the bi-centenary of John Wesley's conversion, there is printed the text of a letter addressed from Jerveaux Abbey, near Bedale, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, to Elizabeth Duckworth, East Witton. The letter is dated 27th December 1815:

I have lately been informed that there are Public Preachings and Prayers at your House and that travelling Preachers called Methodists regularly attend. I give you Notice that if any public meetings of this kind are held in the House you rent of the Earl of Ailesbury it will be my Duty to compel you to quit it, as it is let to you for a residence and not for the purpose above mentioned. At the same time that I give you this Notice, I beg you most clearly to understand, that I mean not to interfere with your private Devotions in any way most suitable to your own wishes, but Public Meetings I am most positively directed by the Earl of Ailesbury not to allow in any of his Houses.

I am, Your ob't Humb. St.

JOHN CLARIDGE.

This letter, mild-tempered though it is, illustrates the difficulties which beset the early Methodists in villages which were "tied" to the local squire. The original of the letter is in the possession of the Rev. Percy H. Smith, one of our members.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

918. CHARLES WESLEY'S MONUMENT AT MARYLEBONE.

After nearly twenty years of happy family life at Marylebone, Charles Wesley was carried to his last resting-place in the old Marylebone churchyard in 1788. A modest gravestone marked the spot, and later a grateful Methodism provided a more worthy memorial. This obelisk was subsequently removed to a position close to Marylebone High Street, where it suffered sadly from neglect. .-

When the Missionary Society moved to Marylebone Road the memorial was suitably restored, but the "blitz" years, combined with London's general sootiness, again wrought havoc with this monument, and it became as neglected and woebegone in appearance as ever.

Happily, all this distressing neglect is to be ended. The old Marylebone chapel has been demolished; the rector has been negotiating with the Marylebone Borough Council, the Old Marylebone Society, and a small unofficial group representing Methodism, and the result is a matter of considerable interest.

Marylebone High Street is to be widened; a portion of the old churchyard has been walled off, ornamental railings have been erected, and a very beautiful "Garden of Rest" will eventuate, in a part of which the Charles Wesley memorial will have an honoured place.

Plans have been made to dedicate the "Garden of Rest" on the afternoon of Saturday, 29th March, the anniversary of Charles Wesley's death. Following the open-air ceremony there will be a service of recollection and thanksgiving for Charles Wesley in the adjoining spacious parish church, which seats 1,500 people. At that service the singing will be led by the Wiseman Choir from the Westminster Central Hall, and the Rev. Dr. W. E. Sangster will preach. London Methodists will no doubt crowd to this commemorative service, which will be very impressive, and Methodists at a distance will follow it with their thoughts and prayers.

STANLEY SOWTON.