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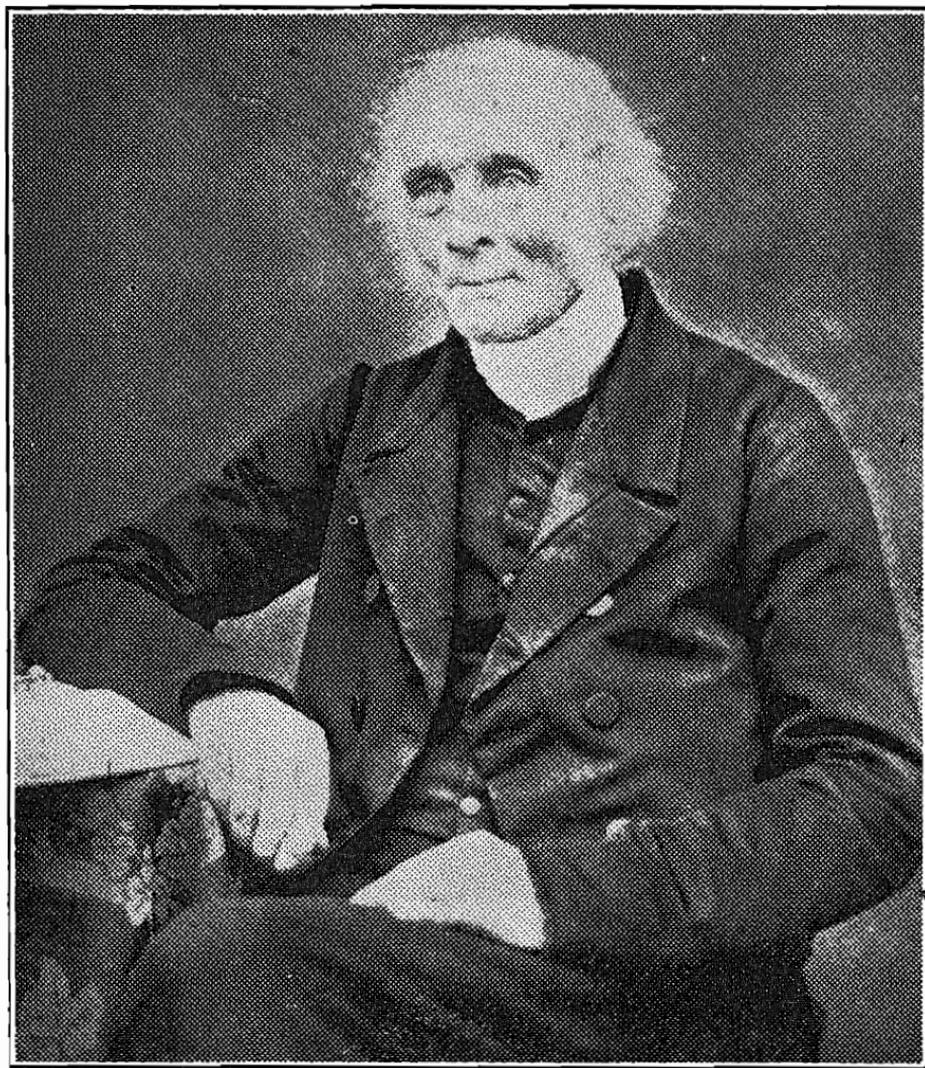
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**MR. ROBERT GATE, PENRITH**

By Courtesy of *The Cumberland and Westmorland Herald Company*

## THE BEGINNINGS OF METHODISM IN THE PENRITH DISTRICT

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### I.

The beginnings of Methodism in the Penrith district date back to the visits of John Wesley to the neighbourhood.

We read in his famous *Journal* under September 29, 1749, "I set out again for Whitehaven. The storm was exceedingly high, and drove full in my face, so that it was not without difficulty I could sit my horse; particularly as I rode over the broad bare backs of those enormous mountains which lay in my way. However I went on as I could, till I came to the brow of Hartside. So thick a fog then fell that I was quickly out of all road, and knew not which way to turn. But I knew where help was to be found, in either great difficulties or small. The fog vanished in a moment, and I saw Gamblesby at a distance, (the town to which I was going)."

This 'terrible journey' from Hindley Hill near Alston, thus described by John Wesley, lies across one of the highest and most exposed roads in the whole country, rising as it does to a height of 1,800 feet. It crosses the Pennines between Black and Cross Fells, called by Wesley 'those enormous mountains,' and descends the steep slope of Hartside to the Eden Valley. In these days the 'old road' along which Wesley came down from the mountains to Gamblesby can still be seen. The highroad now runs from Alston to Penrith, via Melmerby, where it joins the old road through Gamblesby to Penrith.

Wesley dignifies Gamblesby by the name of town. It is a large village eight miles from Penrith. Mr. B. Salkeld, according to the *Cumberland and Westmorland Advertiser*, July 1, 1884, states that this first visit of John Wesley to Gamblesby led to the gaining of the first adherents to Methodism in the village. These were Mary Watson, Sarah Sawyer, and Fanny Falder. The last named became specially active in good works in visiting the sick and the poor, and in other ways. She seems to have taken the

lead, but whether a Society was formed until after Wesley's second visit is not known.

Wesley's second visit to Gamblesby took place on April 18, 1751. He writes, "We then rode to Gamblesby, where I preached in the school house to as many serious people as it could contain." Wesley had come from Cockermouth on his way back to Hindley Hill. Richard Matthews was schoolmaster at that time and became a Methodist and Local Preacher. Following this second visit we do know that a Methodist Society was definitely established, the leaders being two brothers Joseph and Benjamin Salkeld, who became also Local Preachers. The former had one of the rooms in his house fitted up for preaching and in it a pulpit painted black to make it look more dignified and ecclesiastical.

Here services were conducted until the first chapel was built at Gamblesby, planned, it is said, by John Wesley himself on a later visit. Gamblesby became the centre of the Methodist movement throughout East Cumberland. It extended from there to other villages and began to make its influence felt in the life and habits of the people. Cock-fighting, Sunday games, *wakes* and *stangings*<sup>1</sup> were the order of the day in village life and generally ended in drunken carousals. A new and better state of things began, however, to take shape under the influence of Methodism, which spread more or less rapidly. Converts were won at Renwick, Skirwith, Hunsonby, Melmerby and other places. A class meeting was held at Melmerby as the most convenient centre.

The next recorded visit of John Wesley in the district is found in his *Journal* under May 27, 1752. He had ridden over the Pennines, down Hartside through Gamblesby and Penrith. He says, "I preached at Clifton, near Penrith, to a civil people, who looked just as if I had been talking Greek." Clifton is a village about two miles south of Penrith. Whether Wesley also preached in Penrith on this occasion we are not told but from other sources<sup>2</sup> it appears that Wesley visited Penrith on September 29, 1749 and first preached there in 1751. If so, both these occasions must have been at the time of his visits to Gamblesby as already mentioned. Methodism was very slow to take root in Penrith, which was notorious for its bull-baiting and

1. A Stanging was a rough form of amusement which consisted of taking people by force astride a pole to the public-house, where they were compelled to stand drinks all round. This practice was common in the country districts, and led to much heavy drinking.

2. *History of Penrith* by William Furness, p. 190  
Walker's *History of Penrith*, p. III

cock-fighting, and drunkenness. It was not till William Varty, a well-to-do business man in the town, was converted, that any progress was made. He played an important part in the establishment of Methodism in the town.

It was while on a business visit to Leeds in the spring of 1766 that a friend persuaded him to go to a Methodist service where the preacher was Mary Bosanquet, who afterwards became the wife of the Rev. John Fletcher, the famous Vicar of Madeley. In her Journal she writes under May 5, 1766, "I observed, as I was speaking from the words *The Master calleth for thee*, a gentleman among the congregation, who listened with great earnestness. As soon as the meeting was over I rode home, where I had not been long till this man came after me. He is a stranger and came into these parts about business. He felt a great alarm in his soul and declared he had always thought himself righteous; but now he feared he should go to Hell and insisted on telling me his whole life, and confessing his sins. He told me that he was building a house for an assembly, but he would go home and turn it into a preaching house, if I would come and speak in it that his neighbours might get the light he had got. I strove to prevail on him to return to his friend's house from whence he came, and to set off the next day for his own country, where he told me he had a good wife and family; but he insisted he would not leave till he had found the Lord."

On his return to Penrith, William Varty joined the Methodists. Up to that time he had been a staunch Anglican. There was no Methodist society at Penrith at that time and so he identified himself with the society at Gamblesby, and notwithstanding the distance he was seldom absent from class. He went in all weathers, generally riding on horseback. Although Mrs. Varty was very much against her husband joining the Methodists, ultimately her prejudices gave way. It is quite probable that William Varty was one of the two friends referred to by John Wesley in the *Journal* under June 30, 1766, where he writes, "About two we reached Penrith [from Whitehaven]. Two of our friends guided us thence to Appleby, a county town worthy of Ireland, containing at least five and twenty houses." As it was a very wet day and he was due at Brough it is not likely that he preached at Penrith on this occasion. Mr. Varty carried out his promise to Miss Bosanquet to convert the assembly room he was building into a "preaching room" for the Methodists. He also provided therewith a smaller room for class and prayer meetings, and another for the use of the travelling preachers when visiting

Penrith, which now became an established preaching place. This "preaching room" is up Crown Terrace Yard, off King Street and is now used as a warehouse.

Mr. Varty became the class leader of the little Methodist Society which was subsequently formed. They were much persecuted. In 1779 it is found on the Plan of the "Dales Circuit" of which Barnard Castle was the head.

The next entry in Wesley's *Journal* which refers to the neighbourhood is that under May 5, 1780, where he writes "After riding over another enormous mountain, [i.e., the shoulder of Cross Fell on his way from Nenthead near Alston] I preached at Gamblesby (as I did about thirty years ago) to a large congregation of rich and poor. The chief man of the town was formerly a local preacher, but now keeps his carriage. Has he increased in holiness as well as in wealth? If not, he has made a poor exchange." The spot where Wesley preached on this occasion, as probably on former visits, is still pointed out. It is on elevated ground just outside the present Hill Top Farm, where he could command a congregation gathered below. The very place Wesley would choose. He opened the service in characteristic fashion by announcing the hymn, "Come sinners to the Gospel Feast!" This was Wesley's last visit to Gamblesby.

The chief man referred to was Thomas Hall. He was agent and cashier to some lead mines on Hartside, and was known as 'Casher Hall.' His house still stands in the village. It was on this visit that John Wesley planned the first Chapel at Gamblesby, a very modest building; but either for want of funds or other causes it was not built till 1784. It was capable of holding little more than one hundred people and the total cost was only £50. Although the cost was so small, the money was difficult to raise. According to Mr. Salkeld "Old Dick Matthews," schoolmaster in the village, and also a local preacher, went round begging for the chapel and the result of his first day's work was under £1. Money must have been scarce in those days, or people had not been educated to give. When the Chapel was built £30 of mortgage remained on it for many years. The Chapel was erected on a site given by Mary Watson, one of the earliest Methodists. The black pulpit was transferred from Joseph Salkeld's house to the Chapel when the latter was opened, and did duty for many years.

When this old Chapel was pulled down to erect the present commodious sanctuary on the same site, a stone inscribed T.H. was found. Was it a stone laid by Thomas Hall, the chief man referred to in the *Journal* on Wesley's last visit to Gamblesby,

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May, 5, 1780. On this same day that John Wesley went on to Penrith. He arrived very tired after his long journey from Weardale, also having preached twice. When Mr. William Varty went to meet him at the Old Crown Inn, Wesley asked how long it would be before service time. He replied, "ten minutes," when to his astonishment the great evangelist leaned back in his chair and fell fast asleep, awakening quite refreshed just in time for service. Mr. Wesley says of this visit :—

"In the evening a large upper room, designed for an assembly, was procured for me at Penrith, but several of the poor people were struck with panic for fear the room should fall. Finding there was no remedy, I went down into the court below, and preached in great peace to a multitude of well-behaved people. The rain was suspended while I preached, but afterwards returned, and continued most of the night."

The "large upper room" was the assembly room which Mr. Varty after his conversion had set aside for the use of the Methodists.

Wesley's last recorded visit to the town took place May 11, 1786. "About noon we came to Appleby, the county-town of Westmorland. A very large room being provided, I preached with much liberty, and then cheerfully went on to Penrith."

## II.

The Dales Circuit was formed in 1757, under the superintendency of Jacob Rowell.<sup>1</sup> This extensive round originally included Hexham in the north, Darlington in the east, Swaledale in the south, Weardale and the Eden Valley in the west. Barnard Castle seems to have been the circuit town.

We find included in the Circuit Book, Melmerby with 31 members, contributing 14s. 6d. to the circuit funds in the June quarter of 1768. Both the Gamblesby and Melmerby Methodists met in class at the latter village for some years. One of the members was Joseph Benson, who was born at Townfoot Farm, Melmerby on 1768, and when a youth was converted under his cousin Joseph Watson. He afterwards entered the ministry and became twice President of the Conference, and was noted as a scholar and preacher. His famous *Commentary on the Scriptures* had great vogue a century ago. The Benson family played a large part in the building up of Methodism in the Eden Valley,

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1. See A. Steele's *History of Methodism in Barnard Castle*, p. 57

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also, Joseph Watson aforementioned, who was a man of great evangelistic zeal as a local preacher. Joseph and Benjamin Salkeld of Gamblesby were both great forces in local Methodism. The former removed later to Kirby Lonsdale, and preached the first Methodist sermon ever preached in Kendal. The latter removed to Appleby and became well known in Westmorland as a faithful preacher.

The building of the Gamblesby Chapel in 1784 was a local event of great importance, being the first in the Eden Valley. A strong society grew up there, so that in 1791 when the Barnard Castle circuit was formed upon the splitting up of the extensive Dales Circuit, Gamblesby returned 41 members, while Kirkoswald and Penrith between them only reported 7. Methodism in Penrith had a great struggle against bitter persecution, and only a few brave souls were prepared to face it. Its contributions to the Circuit hardly ever rose to more than a few shillings a quarter until 1803. The work spread more rapidly in the Fellside villages. Kirkoswald, Temple Sowerby, Cliburn and Morland, Langwathby, Renwick, Kirby Thore and other places are found on the Plan of 1791. Between this date and 1801 the membership on the circuit only increased from 383 to 408 so that progress was slow and difficult in a very hard and unresponsive soil.

In 1803 Brough became the head of a new circuit, which included Penrith, Gamblesby and all other societies in the Eden Valley and Westmorland, with 213 members. Penrith and Kirkoswald together had 12 members, Gamblesby 38, Kirby Thore 19, Cliburn and Morland 11. William Varty had been nobly holding the fort at Penrith, but in 1806 he was joined by a young man, Robert Gate, who was born at Scales near Keswick in 1780. He had been converted under Rev. John Braithwaite, while residing for a time in Durham, and later returned to Penrith. He was full of evangelistic fervour, and soon made his influence felt. He became Class Leader at Clifton and started to preach in 1807. When he married and set up home, he accommodated for many years the young minister stationed later in Penrith. Although the Quarterly Meeting agreed to allow him a small sum for the preacher's board, he seldom received it. On one occasion he received 13/- for two years. The room which Mr. Varty had placed at the disposal of the Methodists still continued in use. It was later fitted up more as a Chapel with the Creed and Commandments on the walls at one end. Dr. Coke, who visited Penrith in 1807, and conducted revival services, gave £5 towards plastering the room. Penrith became the head of a Circuit in

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1806, when the town Society had risen to 20 members and the whole circuit had 120 members. Mr. Varty became the first circuit steward.

The credit for the abolition of the barbarous sport of bull-baiting in at the beginning of the nineteenth century was largely due to the influence and efforts of William Varty.<sup>2</sup> He was greatly respected in the town for his sterling character and good works. He continued to serve Methodism with great devotion and was a diligent visitor of the sick and poor. One Sunday in 1814 he prayed "O Lord, let the riper for heaven be taken first." The following Tuesday he died suddenly when walking home.

After his death it was found that he had bequeathed the assembly room to the Methodist Society. A more suitable site in Sandgate Head was offered by his sons, who also purchased the original room and thus the first Methodist Chapel was erected in Penrith in 1815, which is still in use for worship. Thus the work of the founder of Methodism in Penrith was crowned at last with the building of a central Chapel, and Methodism became more than ever a living force in the life of the community.

Meanwhile Methodism was extending rapidly along the Fellside villages, but round Penrith itself the villages were more slowly occupied. It was found that Penrith was too weak as yet to stand numerically and financially as a separate circuit. It was therefore, reincorporated with Brough from 1818 to 1824 in the Brough and Penrith circuit, the villages on the Keswick side being joined to Cockermouth. It had become by 1824 better able both in financial strength and numbers to venture on a separate existence, and once more it became head of a circuit, with eighteen places, two ministers, thirteen local preachers, and 347 members. The local preachers were J. Brownrigg, J. Lowthian, W. Gowling, R. Gate, J. Watson, H. Moses, E. Idle, E. Saint, R. Alston, T. Lowthian, J. Lowthian, T. Cartmel, J. Tallantire. In 1826 there were 19 places in the circuit contributing £35 19s. 1d. per Quarter. The villages included most of those in the present Kirkoswald Circuit, some in the present Appleby and Kirkby Stephen Circuit, and the rest in the present Penrith Circuit. The first village Chapel built by the Penrith Circuit was at Morland in 1819, where from 1795 there had been a strong society sometimes having 40 members. Many of the earlier Chapels were very plain with white-washed interiors, backless seats, and the men sat on one side and the women on the other.

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2. See *History of Penrith*, by J. Walker, p. 109.

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The outstanding figure in the life of the Circuit during these years of development was Robert Gate. He was a worthy successor to William Varty. By his piety and leadership in evangelism and good works he played a large part in building up Methodism in Penrith and the surrounding villages.

In 1809 Robert Gate became a Leader in the town society and remained so for 57 years. In 1812 he followed Mr. Varty in the Circuit Stewardship. His great love, however, was for the work of preaching. A local preacher's work in these early days was pretty arduous. He sometimes preached at Penruddock at 9 a.m. (6 miles) then at Wallthwaite at 2 p.m. (6 miles further on) and at Keswick at 6 p.m. (another 6 miles), besides meeting two classes the same day and walking both ways in all 36 miles. Often it meant rising at 4 a.m. to reach some distant appointment and taking their own meals with them, as there were no Methodist homes to offer hospitality.

It was told of Joseph Watson, through whom Joseph Benson was converted, that he once walked from Melmerby to Brough twenty four miles and only got back in time to join his brothers setting off to work next morning.

The name of Robert Gate was for many years associated in the minds of all classes in town and country with all work for the good of the community. He formed a Good Samaritan Society in 1830, which still ministers to the sick poor, and started a Ragged School. He was an indefatigable visitor of the poor, not only helping with food and clothing, but ministering to their souls. He led a great number into the Christian way of life, and was a true Home Missionary.

When Robert Gate joined the Methodist society in Penrith, it numbered fewer than twenty members, and there was but one chapel (Gamblesby) in the whole area. He lived to see in the town 202 members, two Sunday Schools, (with 370 scholars) a flourishing day school, twenty three Chapels besides other preaching places, and 804 members. He was, under God, one of the great builders of Methodism in the town and district, and lived to a ripe and honoured old age, loved by the whole community for whom he had lived and worked during a long life with such zeal and selfless devotion. His death in 1866 in the 87th year of his age closed the second chapter of the history of Penrith Methodism. By this time Methodism had spread throughout the district, the plan of 1850 showing 39 places including Shap, Pooley Bridge, Matterdale and Patterdale, with three ministers and forty three local preachers.

G. H. BANCROFT JUDGE.

# EARLY METHODISM IN BRISTOL. WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO JOHN WESLEY'S VISITS TO THE CITY.

## VI. SOME EARLY FOLLOWERS OF WESLEY.

(Continued)

The United Society was formed in 1739 when the Nicholas Street and Baldwin Street Societies moved to the Room then erected in the Horsefair. There is extant a fragmentary list of the members of the United Society in Bristol on New Year's Day, 1741, written in Wesley's own handwriting, which takes us a step further in the identification of early Bristol Methodists.<sup>1</sup>

Old Bristol Poll Books were examined in 1903 by a student of Methodist history who "fairly conclusively" found the Bristol Society in 1741 to include an upholsterer (Richard Cross), a stuff maker (John Deschamps), a sea-captain (Jos. Turner), a broker and teaman (John Walcam), a cordwainer (John Alldin), a freeholder (Thomas Gough), a glassmaker (William Philips), a cordwainer (James Kelson), a house-carpenter (Wm. Martin), a gunsmith (John Tripp). The information gained from the Poll Books is admittedly not very illuminating, except so far as it enables us to see the material of which the mother society of Methodism was made up.<sup>2</sup> The list of members of the United Society contains no women's names at all, nor all the names of the male members.

In 1924 the Archives Department of the Bristol Corporation was instituted, and an examination of the 18th century Apprentice and Burgess Books preserved there has not only confirmed much of the evidence already at our disposal in the Poll Books, but has brought to light many interesting details, showing more fully than hitherto the material of which early Bristol Methodism was formed.

Difficulties of deciphering the exact names of the members as given in the list have prevented a complete record of their position and occupations from being prepared. Further, it has sometimes been found that several contemporary citizens appear to have borne the same Christian and surnames, so that identification is either impossible or based on mere conjecture.

1. Preserved in the Methodist Publishing House, London. A photographic reproduction is to be found in the Standard Edition of the *Journal*, Vol. II, p. 398.

2. W.H.S., Vol. IV., Pt. 4.

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The following particulars seem to me to identify many of the members of the Society as it was on January 1, 1741.

(1) *Thomas Sayse*, hooper, was admitted on December 13, 1745, into the Liberties of the City by Vote of Common Council on paying a Fine of Ten Pounds. No one was allowed to carry on business in the city until he had been admitted into the liberties of the city (i.e. until he had been made a freeman), and the fact that Sayse—and others too—was only granted such freedom upon payment of a heavy fine, shows that he was not a citizen of Bristol by birth. A man could become a burgess by gift, purchase, marriage, or by serving as an apprentice to a freeman.

(2) *Michael Castle*, sergemaker, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on January 10, 1738, for that he was the son of Michael Castle, sergemaker.

(3) *Thomas Wooton*, house carpenter, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on May 20, 1743, for that he was apprenticed to James Tucker, and hath taken the oath of obedience and hath paid 4/6.

(4) *Thomas Willis*, weaver, was made a freeman on June 26, 1747, because he was apprenticed to John Whillington, weaver.

This Thomas Willis of the 1741 Society who would be only about twenty-one years of age in 1747 can scarcely be the Mr. Willis at whose house Charles Wesley administered the sacrament to 30 or 40 colliers on Sunday, September 16, 1739.

(5) *Daniel Morris*, corkcutter, was made a freeman on March 22, 1725, because he was apprenticed to John Servis.

(6) *Richard Cross*, upholsterer, is most likely to have been the one who was made a freeman on January 23, 1740. On January 1, 1741, he would have been out of his apprenticeship for almost a year. If he is the same Richard Cross, upholsterer, who was amongst the "four young men" who formed a band on Wednesday, April 4, 1739, he was still in his apprenticeship when he joined the band. On June 6, 1733, Richard Cross, son of a Somerset yeoman, John Cross, was apprenticed to William Snooke, upholsterer, for 7 years. There are several entries about this time bearing the name Richard Cross, and it is not easy to say which was the Methodist. (The entry in the 1734 Poll Book probably refers to an older Cross).<sup>3</sup> But this Richard Cross fits in best with Wesley's statement about the youthfulness of the members of the band. Moreover, this confirms an interesting fact already established elsewhere, that the apprentice system was beginning to break down in the 18th century. Were this not so, we should

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3. Ibid.

scarcely expect to find a young man of about twenty-one years of age meeting with the Methodists. But at this period masters were losing the rigid hold upon their apprentices which had characterised the system until then. "In spite of some contradictory evidence, apprenticeship had really entered upon its last phase in the early decades of the 18th century."<sup>4</sup> We can partly account for the change by the opposition of freetraders to the Statute of Artificers, passed in 1562, which laid the foundation of the national system of apprenticeship. By this statute, anyone who wished to practise a trade had to be apprenticed to it for at least seven years, and the master was granted entire control of the apprentice. In the 18th century, not only were freetraders opposed to the Statute, but the trade guilds were weakening, legal opinion was against the system, and towns were frequently indifferent to the principles of the Act. Wesley appears to have benefited very considerably in the membership of his Societies, especially in Bristol, by the breakdown of this Statute. It is interesting to notice in passing, because of the light it throws upon the personnel of the Methodist Society, that only householders might take apprentices, and the latter could not leave their masters until they were twenty-four years of age, though the limit was often reduced to twenty-one years of age. Children were usually apprenticed at the age of twelve or fourteen.<sup>5</sup>

(7) *Isaac James*, mariner, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on March 14, 1725, "for that he married Frances, daughter of Benjamin Goolington, mariner, deceased."

(8) *Thomas Baker*, baker, was apprenticed to Elizabeth Wotton, widow of Michael Wotton, and was made a freeman on November 27, 1725.

(9) *David Evans*, is probably the taylor who was made free on October 18, 1739, because he married Mary, daughter of John Brown, taylor.

(10) *William Martin*, tobacconist, was granted the Liberties of the City on November 7, 1722, because he was son and apprentice of George Martin.

(11) *Joseph Rendall*, bellfounder, was made free on June 29, 1747, and was the son of Joseph Rendall, bellfounder.

If this is a correct identification, Joseph Rendall was probably only about fifteen years old in 1741, when his name appears among the members of the Bristol Society. But this is not unlikely in the light of a letter Wesley wrote from Bristol to James Hutton

4. Dunlop and Denman's "A History of English Apprenticeship and Child Labour," p. 224.

5. Ibid, pp. 65, 166, 223.

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on June 4, 1739, saying that in the evening of Wednesday, May 23, "the female bands admitted seven women on trial and *ten children*." Was Joseph Rendall one of the ten children?<sup>6</sup>

(12) *John Adams*, tyler and plasterer, was made a freeman on April 9, 1744, "for that he was son of Henry Adams."

(13) *Thomas Edwards*, linen draper, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on October 2, 1745, because he had been apprenticed to William Burrow.

(14) *John Dowell*, haberdasher, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on November 28, 1743, "for that he hath married Mary, daughter of Stephen Britten, joiner."

(15) *William Williams*, clerk, was made free on Feb. 2, 1742, having married Elizabeth, daughter of Edward Buckler, deceased.

(16) *James Lawton*, brazier, was made free on October 4, 1739, "by vote of Common Council on paying a fine of £21." Like Thomas Sayse he was evidently not a Bristolian by birth.

(17) *Thomas Gough*, of Corke, in the Kingdom of Ireland, mariner, was apprenticed on November 23, 1733, to Joseph Daltera, a merchant, and Mary, his wife for 7 years. Apparently Thomas Gough, who would in 1741 normally have been out of his apprenticeship for a year, served an extra period. An entry in the Burgess Books shows that he was granted his freedom on November 4, 1746. His master, Joseph Daltera, was a prominent citizen. In 1746 he was Second Warden of the Society of Merchant Venturers, and in 1760 was Master. He held the office of Sheriff in 1748.<sup>7</sup>

(18) *William Horwood*, junior, weaver, may have been the William Horwood who was granted the freedom of the city on August 8, 1717, having been apprenticed to Abraham Derrick. In 1741 he would be about forty-five years of age.

(19) *Joseph Reynolds*, writing master, was admitted into the Liberties of the City on February 17, 1721, because he had been apprenticed to George Symes.

(20) *William Philips*, hooper, was made free on May 10, 1714, after being apprenticed to James Mattock.

(21) The identification made from the Poll Books is confirmed in regard to *John Deschamps*, stuffmaker. He was made free on November 23, 1736, having married Christian, daughter of Thomas Fleming, taylor.

(22) *Edward Williams*, brazier, son of Edward Williams, mariner, was granted his freedom on June 27, 1747.

6. Letters, Vol. I, p. 316.

7. Beaven's Municipal Lists.

It appears evident from this list of early followers of Wesley that his visits to Bristol, especially in the early days, brought into the Methodist Society men of all trades and positions, but often youths still serving their apprenticeship whose masters might find some consolation for their charges' associations with the Methodists, in the fact that they regularly accompanied Wesley to the parish church, and so retained their connection with the Church of their upbringing.

The names of other early Bristol Methodists mentioned by Wesley in his letters and in the *Journal* might be searched for in the Apprentice and Burgess Books on some future occasion with profit.<sup>8</sup> But let us now look at some of the more prominent characters associated with early Bristol Methodism.

(1) *Thomas Maxfield* was converted in 1739, but was not, as many have supposed, the first of Wesley's lay preachers. That honour must go to John Cennick, whom we shall also notice. Maxfield was one of Wesley's first converts in Bristol, as we saw when considering the unusual "scenes" which accompanied Wesley's early preaching in Bristol. For a year or two after his conversion Maxfield seems to have travelled with Charles Wesley. In Cornwall he was seized by a press-gang who would have made a soldier of him, and was thrust into the dungeon at Penzance. He came from humble Bristol parentage<sup>9</sup> but he married a lady of considerable fortune. At the instigation of Wesley, a friend recommended Maxfield to Dr. Barnard, Bishop of Londonderry, for ordination. The bishop said, "Sir, I ordain you, to assist that good man, that he may not work himself to death." Thus Maxfield of Bristol became one of Wesley's chief preachers, but in 1762 differences sprang up between them, and Wesley and Maxfield separated.

(2) *John Cennick*, whom we may claim to have been Wesley's first lay preacher, was originally a land-surveyor,<sup>10</sup> but was employed as early as June, 1739, with Wesley's sanction in preaching to the Kingswood colliers. He was of Quaker parentage, and experienced his conversion on September 6, 1737, eighteen months before Wesley came to Bristol. He first met Wesley at Reading in March, 1739, and shortly afterwards, at Whitefield's suggestion, was appointed master of the school at Kingswood. His preaching there is interesting, for, like Wesley's, it was accompanied by

8. C.f. Letters, Vol. I, pp. 299-300; 326.

9. Tyerman's *Life and Times of Wesley*, Vol. II, p. 432.

The Burgess Books show that a Thomas Maxfield, toymaker and turner, son of William Maxfield, gingerbread baker, deceased, was living in Bristol in March, 1761. Was he of the same family as Wesley's helper?

10. *Ibid.* Vol. I, p. 274

"scenes." In 1740 Cennick quarrelled with Wesley over the doctrine of Election; the outcome of which was a serious division in the Kingswood Society. The Calvinists sided with Cennick, while the others upheld Wesley's Arminianism. Tyerman speaks of the first Methodist expulsion in 1741 when Cennick and fifty-one others withdrew from the Kingswood Society, leaving about one hundred to follow Wesley.

(3) "*Captain*" *Thomas Webb* first met Wesley about September, 1765. Webb, who was then thirty-one years of age, had lost an eye seven years before when serving with General Wolfe in Canada, and had also been wounded in his right arm. Although converted in Bristol at a Moravian Society, Webb—familiarly known as "*Captain*" though he only held the rank of Lieutenant in an Infantry Regiment,—was introduced to the Methodists of the city by the Rev. James Rouquet, Curate of St. Werburgh's. In 1769 Webb took a share in the planting of Methodism on American soil, but previous to his voyage to America, his preaching had become well-known among the Bristol Methodists. He returned to Bristol from America in 1783, and was largely instrumental in the building and opening of Portland Chapel in 1792. There is a memorial tablet to him in the north-east corner of the chapel which reads as follows:—

Sacred to the Memory of  
 THOMAS WEBB, ESQ.,  
 Lieutenant in the 48th Regt. of foot  
 Who died 20th Dec. 1796 aged 72  
 And whose remains are interred in the recess,  
 As a soldier  
 He was brave, active, courageous  
 And lost an eye at the siege of Louisbourg, 1758  
 When afterwards enlisted under the banner of  
 Christ as a christian  
 he was exemplary  
 for simplicity and godly sincerity.  
 As a preacher  
 he was faithful, zealous, successful  
 both in Great Britain & America.  
 In the latter he founded  
 the first Methodist Churches  
 and was  
 the principal Instrument  
 in erecting this  
 Chapel.

So much have later generations of Methodists esteemed "Captain" Webb, that there is a stained glass window in the north wall of the chapel, representing him in his scarlet regimental uniform in which he was accustomed to preach. There is also an engraved portrait of him in the vestry.

(4) *Silas Told* was the son of a physician at Bristol, where he was born in 1711. He was apprenticed as a sailor when fourteen years of age, and lived the adventurous life of the sea for eleven years. He was introduced to the Methodists in 1740 by Charles Casper Greaves.<sup>11</sup> His associations with Bristol Methodism are scarcely noticeable, because it was in London, as master of Wesley's Foundry school, that he became famous as a philanthropist and social reformer. There was scarcely a prison that he did not visit frequently, and where he was not gladly welcomed. He died in December, 1778, and was buried by Wesley on December 30th.

(5) *Henry Durbin* was a Trustee of the "New Room" in the Horsefair. He was a man of high character and good connections in the city. His nephew, Sir John Durbin, became well-known for the interest he took in the later municipal life of the city. He was Sheriff in 1743, 1763, and 1774, and Mayor in 1760 and 1778. Henry Durbin had been a member of one of the Religious Societies in the city.

An entry in the Apprentice Books tells us that on June 13, 1733,<sup>12</sup> "Henry Durbin, son of Thomas Durbin, of the parish of Walton in the county of Somerset, puts himself apprentice to Richard Charleton, apothecary, and Elizabeth his wife, for seven years." He was made a freeman on June 29, 1747,<sup>13</sup> fourteen years after he had been apprenticed. Though an admirer and staunch supporter of the Methodists and one who opened his home to the brothers Wesley on innumerable occasions, Henry Durbin remained a loyal member of the Church of England until his death, when he was buried in St. Thomas's Church. The entry in the burial register reads "1799, Henry Durbin, Esq. Jan. 1. 80 years, buried in the church."<sup>14</sup>

Durbin appeals to us as one who looked upon Methodism as a Society within the Church of England, and would have kept it as such had he been able. We find him ranging himself in 1794, two years after Wesley's death, upon the side of the "Old Planners," i.e. those who wished the appointment of preachers to be left in the hands of the Trustees and objected to the Sacra-

11. *Ibid.* Vol. III, p. 279

12. Entry No. 141. 13. Burgess Book, No. 10. Folio 103.

14. Quoted by the courtesy of the present Vicar.

ments being administered by any but clergymen of the Church of England (which excluded the majority of Methodist preachers).<sup>15</sup> We can appreciate Durbin's loyalty to the Church of England when we know that in 1759 he had been junior warden, and in 1760 senior warden of St. Thomas's, and the eulogy expressed on his mural tablet in the church fairly represents what his fellow parishioners thought of him up to the end.

Wesley writes in his *Journal* for Saturday, March 27, 1762, "I heard a large account of the children near Lawford's Gate, which has made so much noise here" (i.e. in Bristol). Henry Durbin wrote a posthumous account of these children, whose father was Mr. Giles, the carrier at the Lamb Inn, West Street. Durbin believed the children to be possessed by demons.<sup>16</sup>

On Thursday, September 21, 1780, Wesley writes in his *Journal*, "I married Mr. Horton and Miss Durbin. May they be patterns to all around them." John Horton was a drysalter, and member of the Common Council of London. Mary, his wife, (Henry Durbin's daughter) is buried in the graveyard of Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London.<sup>17</sup>

W. A. GOSS.

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## THE LATE DR. M. H. JONES' RESEARCHES AT TREVECKA.

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Wales may be "the land of religious revivals," but neither the Methodists nor the Moravians found a very ready and direct response there to their personal efforts,—unless, indeed, it was in South-East Pembrokehire, that "little England beyond Wales." But their *indirect* influence on Wales was tremendous, and it was mainly mediated through Howell Harris. That is why members of the Wesley Historical Society should keep in touch with the

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15. For an interesting account of this controversy as it affected Bristol, reference should be made to R. Burroughs' "A Centenary History of Old King Street Wesleyan Chapel, Bristol, 1795-1895." Apparently the congregations of the "New Room" and Guinea Street Chapel, unlike the trustees of those places, were desirous of receiving the sacrament at the hands of their non-episcopally ordained preachers.

The Bristol Trustees who were "Old Planners" were John Curtis, Daniel Lane, Nathaniel Gifford, Daniel Wait, junr., Henry Durbin, William Green, William Pine, Thomas Roberts, Edward Stock.

16. Latimer's *Annals of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 348

17. *Journal*, Vol. VI, p. 295, footnote.

## PROCEEDINGS

latest researches about the origins of Welsh Calvinistic Methodism in general, and the work of Howell Harris in particular.

Foremost among the workers in this field was the late Rev. M. H. Jones, B.A., Ph.D., who was Editor of the Journal of the Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society, and Curator of the Connexional Archives at Aberystwyth. When he was tutor at Trevecka College from 1906 onwards, Dr. Jones made acquaintance with the large and valuable collection of eighteenth-century manuscripts stored there, and gave a great many of his leisure hours to the work of cataloguing and collating the documents. Over a long period of years our *Proceedings* were enriched by painstaking contributions from his pen,—papers which brought forth out of the Trevecka treasures things new and old. Thus, it was Dr. Jones who first fully authenticated the leading part which Howell Harris took in the rapprochement between Methodists and Moravians after the period of alienation.<sup>1</sup> And now, the materials which were used by him for the "Davies Lecture" for 1922, and for his doctorate dissertation in the University of Wales, have been brought together in a posthumous volume by Mr. R. T. Jenkins, M.A., LL.B., Head of the Department of Welsh History at the University College of North Wales, Bangor.<sup>2</sup>

The work aims at "presenting new data from the manuscripts to illustrate the growth of Welsh Methodism," but there are, naturally, many sidelights on English Methodism too. The figures of John Wesley and Howell Harris are constantly placed side by side; both began keeping a Diary "at the time of their religious conviction"<sup>3</sup>; both were assiduous letter-writers, although the intimate letters of Harris were neither as scholarly nor as concise as those of Wesley;<sup>4</sup> their attitude to the Established Church was very similar;<sup>5</sup> whilst Harris's "Seiat" or Private Society, inaugurated as early as 1736, was comparable with Wesley's class-meeting,<sup>6</sup> and the "Association," on which Part II, Chapter III, is an illuminating study, began to meet some time before Wesley's first Conference.

The success of Howell Harris in evangelistic activities was one of several factors which led John Wesley to give his sanction to preaching by laymen.<sup>7</sup> When the Bristol Conference of 1746 divided the country into seven circuits and appointed Rounds for

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1. *W.H.S.*, xvi, 33.

2. M. H. Jones: *The Trevecka Letters* (Caernarvon, C.M. Book-Room).

3. *op. cit.*, 7.

4. *ibid.*, 67.

5. *ibid.*, 303.

6. *ibid.*, 221, 226.

7. *ibid.*, 241.

Wesley's assistants, Wales was named as the seventh circuit, and the name of Howell Harris appears in Myles' Chronological List of Preachers as one who helped the English organisation between 1747 and 1750; thus, in January, 1747, he went on a Round to Cornwall, and he attended the three consecutive Conferences of 1747-9.<sup>8</sup>

He had met many leaders in the new awakening in 1739, when he accompanied Whitefield to London and stayed there from April 25 to June 2,—months which were vital alike to his development and to that of Methodism. Harris's interdenominational outlook is exemplified by some half-dozen letters which show what arrangements were made for the oversight of his Private Societies during his absence. Responsibility was to rest on James Roberts, of Ross, a Baptist minister; Edmund Jones, of Pontypool, a Congregational minister; and Thomas James, of Cerrigcadarn, a Churchman.<sup>9</sup> Assuredly, Harris had no sectarian aim at the outset; the societies were to be *ecclesiolæ in ecclesia*, complements to the Established Church, and not competitors.<sup>10</sup> But it is easy for us to understand how separation from the Church was almost bound to come, when we read the long list of cases of persecution here given.<sup>11</sup>

Howell Harris had had little academic discipline,—one week of undergraduate life at Oxford was enough for him,—and perhaps it was partly owing to his lack of theological background that his teaching tended to become rigorous and dogmatic. In 1750 he separated from many of his fellow-workers as a result of a controversy as to whether "God died on Calvary." The illness which followed this estrangement made him unable to journey round exhorting those who were still loyal to him, so "the mountain had to come to the prophet,"—a number of his adherents came to Trevecka, and settled close at hand. This led to the establishment of the "Old Family," a religious-industrial community inspired partly by Francke's Pietistic institutions, partly by the Moravian settlements, and partly by Whitefield's Orphanage in Georgia.<sup>12</sup> The members of the retreat followed various callings,—there were over a hundred members at one time, and it was said that sixty trades were represented,—and they contributed their earnings to a common fund. Part of each day was set apart for united devotions. This was no ephemeral experiment; it attracted the very favourable comment of John Wesley,<sup>13</sup> and it

8. *ibid.*, 291-2.

10. *ibid.*, 256.

12. *ibid.*, 189.

9. *ibid.*, 234.

11. *ibid.*, 300-2.

13. *JWJ*, v, 25.

## PROCEEDINGS

was flourishing until Harris's death in 1773, whilst it persisted, without flourishing, until the death of the last survivor of the fraternity in 1847. The community seems to have been much neglected by historians. Dr. Jones waxes indignant that "there is a tract, as recently published as 1927, on the 'Industrial Revolution in South Wales,' in which the writer, a Lecturer in Economics," has nothing to say about it. However, from the details given by Dr. Jones, it is not easy to see how the settlement made any original and lasting contribution to the Industrial Revolution; it is very unlikely that the Owenite communities were directly inspired by the Trevecka community, any more than they were by the Franciscans or the Pietists. The tabular statement on page 197 certainly suggests that the "Old Family" was influenced by the "enlightened landlordism" of Breconshire Agricultural Society, with its turnip-growing propaganda, and that, in the printing press, woollen manufactory, and so forth, Harris was alive to many of the industrial improvements of the day. One would very much like to investigate these matters more fully.

The life of the "Family" was disturbed in the "Year of Victories" (1759) by the danger of French invasion. Howell Harris looked upon the Seven Years' War as a crusade against the papists, so he and twenty-four of his young men joined the militia, where he soon obtained the rank of captain.<sup>14</sup> A condition of his enlistment was that he should be able to keep his men together, and to preach as opportunity offered. The Trevecka manuscripts thus include such items as regimental notes and orders, and the account of a court-martial. It seems that Harris used his rank for various purposes. It entitled him to get large orders for officers' clothes for his tailor brother, Thomas.<sup>15</sup> And, on occasion, he found it a convenience to him when he did the work of an evangelist.

Dr. Jones quotes the following from the *Perlustrate or Guide Book of Great Yarmouth*.

"In 1760 Howell Harris a gentleman of eminent piety in the Principality, who had for some years preached Methodism, made an offer to the government to raise men for the defence of the nation, which was accepted. It so happened that the regiment in which he was Captain was sent to Yarmouth. On his arrival he enquired what had been done to introduce Methodism and was informed of the ill-treatment which Olivers had received. Harris adopted the

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14. *Trevecka Letters*, 14.

15. *ibid.*, 50.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

following device to obtain a hearing. He employed the town crier to give notice that at a particular time a Methodist would preach in the Market Place. At the time named a savage mob assembled, armed with bludgeons and brickbats, who swore that if the preacher appeared, he would never leave the town alive. Harris, who was then exercising his men at a short distance, after dismissing them, mingled with the crowd, and enquired the reason for such an assemblage. He was told that a Methodist preacher had been expected, and that it was well that he had not come as he would certainly have been killed. Harris told them that by their leave he would address them himself, and a table having been procured, he mounted upon it, attired as he was in his regimentals, and so astonished his hearers by the novelty of his exhibition and so softened them by his eloquence, that they were induced to listen, and he was allowed to finish his discourse without molestation. After this he frequently preached to the people."<sup>16</sup>

In 1768 Lady Huntingdon established a theological college at Lower Trevecka. This was not so large as Howell Harris's settlement, and should be carefully distinguished from it.<sup>17</sup> There was an interchange of mutual service between the two institutions, the Old Family lending to the new college the services of builders and a matron, and the students reciprocating by the supply of preachers for the community.

The core of this valuable work is an Inventory of the letters, which is most carefully arranged, and will doubtless be found of great service to research workers, although the letters from Wesley and Whitefield to Howell Harris are conspicuous by their absence from the list.

In a posthumous compilation of this kind, the result of what Mr. Jenkins modestly calls "salvage work," occasional repetition is perhaps only to be expected, but here there are several occasions when reiteration seems to become gratuitous. One cannot understand the statement, "The name *Evhorter* had been practically confined to Welsh Methodism from the start."<sup>18</sup> And, if Dr. Jones had lived, he would have seen that the publication of a new edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* made his correction of Dr. Rigg<sup>19</sup> unnecessary, and that the Standard Edition of *Wesley's Letters* contained some very cordial references to Harris.

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16. Quoted, *ibid.*, 15. Cf. J.W.'s testimony, *JWJ*, iv, 432; also a similar episode at Llandovery, in H. E. Lewis: *Howell Harris*, 131.

17. Cf. *W.H.S.* xii, 41,

18. *Trevecka Letters*, 280; cf. 281, n.

19. *ibid.*, 44.

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It is emphasised that these findings of Dr. Jones are only "first-fruits," and it is claimed that "in historical value, the Trevecka manuscripts are unsurpassed by any other known set of documents on the same period." It is to be hoped that this appetising volume of first-fruits will lead to the reaping of a rich harvest by other workers in the same and adjoining fields.

LESLIE T. DAW.

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## A WESLEY LETTER TO MRS. CROSBY

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In the literary organ of the Drew University, U.S.A., called *The Drew Gateway*, there was published in the fourth number of the fourth volume, July, 1933, a facsimile of a letter from Wesley to Mrs. Crosby. Many letters to this well-known Methodist lady appeared in the *Standard Letters*, but this is not amongst them. Dr. Frank Mason North says it was found in a packet of papers belonging to the late Bishop John Emory. Accompanying it are letters written to him by Charles Atmore, Samuel Drew, Jabez Bunting and Adam Clarke at the time of his visit to the British Wesleyan Conference in 1820, as the first fraternal delegate to that body from the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. It appears from the *Life of Mrs. Adam Clarke* that Bishop Emory was a guest at Dr. Clarke's home, Millbrook, near Liverpool, where the Conference of that year was held.

Dr. North suggests that the letter may possibly have been a gift from the great commentator to his distinguished guest. On the back of the letter, sent evidently by hand, and not by mail, is the address in Wesley's writing, "To Mrs. Crosby."

Manchester

April 3 1785

My Dear Sister,

So that Good Man has left fifteen thousand pounds behind him! He wou'd have been a much wiser man, if he had given away ten thousand of it, before he went to give an account to GOD. A blot is no blot till it is hit: But this scandalizes *me* more than ten Bankrupcies!

All our people shou'd be gently but earnestly guarded, against having itching ears. I believe T. Rutherford will be a very proper person to spend another year in Leeds Circuit.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

I am glad that you have full Employment for the little strength you have, and likewise that you assist poor Sister Brisco. She used to have a peculiar Love for Children, and an uncommon talent in building them up into Christians. I hope the Preachers do not suffer her to bury her talent in the Earth!

I hope to be in Dublin in seven or eight days hence, and in England again (if I live) in little above three Months. Peace be with all y<sup>r</sup> Spirits!

I am, My Dear Sister,

Yours very Affectionately

J. WESLEY.

The notes which follow the letter give an interesting account of Mrs. Crosby and of Sister Brisco. The latter was the wife of Thomas Brisco, one of the four preachers to whom Wesley bequeathed in his will "Whatever money remains in my bureau and pockets at my decease." Wesley's *Journal* contains several references to her work for young people.

What seems to be a reasonable suggestion is made identifying the man who left the large fortune with the person of whom we read in the following passage in the *Journal*: June 10, 1786: I went to Darlington. Since I was here last Mr. . . . died, and left many thousand pounds to an idle spend-thrift, but not one groat to the poor. O unwise steward of the mammon of unrighteousness! How much better for him had he died a beggar!

The writer of the notes asks what is the significance of the phrase, "A blot is no blot till it is hit"? Did John Wesley play backgammon? In the rules of that ancient game we read: A blot is an exposed piece, standing alone on a point and liable to be taken up by the opponent, who in so doing scores a hit. Evidently, the "blot,"—the exposed spot, the weak spot,—in that good man's character was only revealed when he was "hit" by death. It would appear that these two saints, the writer and the recipient, must have been familiar in childhood with this venerable game. [The W.H.S. is grateful to Dr. North for permission to reprint the letter.]

# WESLEY'S LETTER TO JOHN BREDIN

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Edinburgh

May 13, 1776.

My Dear Brother,

Astonishing! O Billy Black, Billy Black! Had he and his Wife no more Common Sense, no more love for God, for me, for you, for the Cause of God, than to utter one word of such an affair, to any living soul? "The severest stroke Methodism ever met!" It w<sup>d</sup> have been no stroke, had it been mentioned to none but *you* and *me*: as in all reason, it ought not! *They* kindled "y<sup>e</sup> Wild fire." Let them put it out, if they can.

I do not expect to be in the Isle of Man. I cou'd get thither; but there is no man can tell me when I cou'd get back.

You can do nothing with respect to George Guthrie, but stop every one once naming his name. I think, you have not received my last.

I am,

Your Affectionate Friend and Brother

J. WESLEY.

To Mr. John Bredin  
at Mrs. Cumberland's

in

Portpatrick, Lisburn.

We are indebted to our Vice-President for a copy of this hitherto unpublished letter. There are many references in Crookshank to Black and Bredin, but I find nothing to elucidate the letter. Perhaps some of our Irish members can help.

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F.F.B.

## NEW PORTRAIT OF WESLEY.

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Our members will have noted with great interest that a place of distinction was occupied in this year's Academy by a new portrait of John Wesley. This was painted by Mr. Frank O. Salisbury for presentation to Wesley's House and The Wesley Museum, City Road, and to commemorate the consummation of Methodist Union. The portrait was painted from the small authentic bust by Enoch Wood, and with the help of sittings by Charles F. A. Voysey, a descendant of the Wesley family. (For Voysey see Stevenson: *Memorials of the Wesley Family*, p. 287.)

The portrait has been engraved in Mezzotint by Mr. H. Macbeth-Raeburn, R.A. Application for artist's proofs, (in colour, Ten Guineas ; in Black and White, Five Guineas) should be made to Rev. G. H. McNeal, M.A., The Wesley Museum, 47, City Road, E.C. 1.

The profits arising from the sale of the engravings will go towards the fund for the restoration of Wesley's house, now being carried out. The date of the re-opening and dedication of the house, September 20th, will arrive before this issue of the *Proceedings* reaches our members, but we must postpone notice of this important event till our next.

The *Daily Telegraph* July 17, 1934, published a reproduction of this picture, with appreciative notice, in the course of which it was stated that Mr. Salisbury is now at work on two replicas, one of which will probably hang in Lincoln College, Oxford, and the other in one of the central Methodist institutions in the United States.

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## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE W.H.S.

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The Annual Meeting was held as usual at the time of the Conference, this year at Leicester. Seventeen members in all were present.

The Chair was taken by the President of the Society, supported by the Vice-President, the Minute Secretary and the General Secretary.

The Treasurer was unable to be present. The financial statement, certified by the honorary Auditor, was presented by the Secretary, and considered very satisfactory.

The Secretary reported the strength of the Society as 348, with, in addition, approximately 100 in the Irish Branch, and 70 in the New Zealand Branch.

A letter was received from Dr. Edward L. Watson, Acting Chairman of the Baltimore Sesqui-Centennial Organization, detailing what it is proposed to carry out in October. (See p. 123 above).

The officers of the Society, as printed on the cover of the *Proceedings*, were thanked and re-appointed.

It was announced that Dr. Harrison had completed the work of preparing for the press the fifth and final volume of Dr. Simon's great *Life of Wesley*.

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### W.H.S. LECTURE AT CONFERENCE.

The success attending the Society's new venture, a Lecture delivered under its auspices at Conference time, was very encouraging. Despite the fact that the Representative Session had broken up, and that ministerial billets were spread over an area of many miles, the floor of the spacious Bishop Street Chapel, Leicester, was well filled. The Rev. John Telford, B.A., presided, and the devotions were led by Rev. Thomas Heppell. All the hymns sung were written by early Methodist preachers. The General Secretary, in the course of a brief review of the aims and achievements of the Society, referred to its founders and early helpers, and invited new recruits. It was pointed out that in the Standard Edition of *Wesley's Journal* (Curnock), *Wesley's Letters* (Telford), *Wesley's Sermons* (Sugden), the student of the Methodist Revival now enjoyed greater facilities than ever. The study of Methodist origins was a most enriching pursuit both intellectually and spiritually.

The lecturer, Dr. Henry Bett, of Handsworth College, Birmingham, took as his subject "The Early Methodist Preachers." The vivid records of their work afforded him scope for an address replete with interest. An excellent report in the *Methodist Recorder* by Dr. Harrison emphasises one of Dr. Bett's main contentions. "The lecturer was at pains to dispel the illusion that Wesley's preachers were ignorant peasants. Wesley considered that his preachers were far better instructed in practical experimental divinity than most of the candidates for holy orders of that period. Dr. Bett had some very interesting things to say about the early education of several of the early preachers, showing how great a variety of upbringing they represented. No fewer than twenty-six of them eventually became clergymen in the Established Church, others becoming ministers of Dissenting Churches. Wesley expected his preachers to read five hours a day, and many of those who remained in the itinerancy became really learned men."

### THE IRISH BRANCH.

The Rev. William Corrigan presided over the Annual Meeting held at Cork, June 14, 1934. A letter of greeting was sent to the Secretary, Mr. Robert Morgan, who was unable to attend.

During the year a room in Edgehill College has been very generously set at the disposal of the Society, in which to house its relics.

A few days after the meeting a pilgrimage took place to Ballingrane, where Barbara Heck, one of the pioneers of Methodism

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

in America, was born in 1734. With the Irish ministers and laymen who took part was associated Bishop Lester Smith, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America.

### THE NEW ZEALAND BRANCH.

The Rev. Dr. C. H. Laws presided over the Annual Meeting in April. An interesting report of the work done during the year was presented by the Rev. Geo. Frost, Secretary and Treasurer. The Rev. M. A. Rugby Pratt was elected a Vice-President in the place of the late Dr. Pinfold.

Every quarter the members, now numbering approximately seventy, receive a copy of the *Proceedings* issued in England, accompanied by several pages of local matter. To these pages interesting articles have been contributed by Rev. A. B. Chappell, Rev. M. A. Rugby Pratt, Rev. T. A. Pybus and others. These articles are filed by the General Secretary in England, and in the course of time will form a useful mass of material relating to the history of the establishment and progress of Methodism in New Zealand and its many links with the wider life of the community. It was stated at the meeting that valuable historical documents were in existence in every province of the Dominion, and members present promised to secure data to supplement the valuable contributions already received.

### THE AUSTRALASIAN METHODIST HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

This Society, which has its headquarters in Sydney, is now well established. We are pleased to receive, in exchange for our *Proceedings*, its well-printed *Journal and Proceedings*, of which the seventh part was issued in July.

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## NOTES AND QUERIES.

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738. A JOHN WESLEY BODKIN.—I have just had sent to me a bodkin bearing the inscription :

The Rev. John Wesley M.A., Born 17 June 1703 ;  
died 2 March, 1791.

So far I have failed to find any reference to Wesley bodkins, though there must have been a great many made at the time. Can any of our members furnish any information?—*Rev. Edgar C. Barton.*

## PROCEEDINGS

739. REV. JONATHAN EDMONDSON, M.A.—The name of Jonathan Edmondson ranked high in his day and generation. He served for fifty years in the active work, and the esteem of his brethren raised him to the Presidency of the Conference in 1818. He was the author of several useful publications on theological and pastoral subjects. He died 7th July 1842, in the 76th year of his age.

He was interred in the church-yard of the Portsea Parish Church. In 1893 some local friends had the tombstone renovated. Since then the stone has become dilapidated again. A faculty has recently been obtained for the removal of old tombstones from this church-yard, as the Corporation is carrying out alterations in the neighbourhood. An undertaking, however, has been granted that this stone, with its special interest to Methodists, will not be removed, if it is maintained in good condition. Mr. Herbert Osborn, who sends us these particulars, has also furnished us with photographs of the stone, which is an impressive monument, worthy of preservation in our opinion, for its own sake, as well as because it is a memorial of one whose memory the Methodist people do well to cherish. Some help towards the restoration has been received by Mr. Osborn from members of the W.H.S. He will be grateful to receive further donations from any members who may be willing to help him in this labour of love. Address: 94, Chichester Road, Portsmouth.—*F.F.B.*

740. EARLY METHODIST SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK IN LONDON.—In our eighth volume, page 77, under the heading *Notes and Queries*, 464, notes on this subject were printed. Mr. Stanley Sowton has now taken in hand an examination of the materials contributed by Rev. T. E. Brigden and Mr. Brownson. An article from his pen dealing with some of the persons connected with the work, and the most interesting features of the enterprise appeared in the *Methodist Recorder*, August 30, 1934. The following passage extracted from the article shows the extent of the work, and justifies us in entertaining the hope that Mr. Sowton will be able to add to our knowledge of London Methodist topography. If any members can help will they please communicate with Mr. Sowton at 24, Bishopsgate, E.C. 2.

A Society was started in 1798 "for the establishment and support of Sunday Schools in London and its

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vicinity," and by 1810 this Society was responsible for seven schools "at the undermentioned places."—

No. 74, Golden-lane, Old Street ;  
Friar's-mount, adjoining Church-street, Bethnal-green;  
No. 5, Raven-row, Spital-fields ;  
Slater's-court, Blue Anchor-yard, Rosemary-lane ;  
Clerkenwell-green ;  
Poplar.

Between them they had an enrolment of 2,728 scholars and 172 teachers, together with three "lecturers" and a number of secretaries and assistant secretaries.

I can foresee, says Mr. Sowton, a very congenial series of lunch-hour tasks in identifying these various spots. In some cases the very thoroughfare has gone ; in others it has been re-named ; while there are one or two of these old Sunday Schools which linger in the memory of living man as centres of activity right down to the second half of the nineteenth century.—*F.F.B.*

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## VICE-PRESIDENCY OF THE METHODIST CONFERENCE

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The action of the Conference of 1934 in designating Mr. E. S. Lamplough for the Vice-Presidency of the Conference of 1935 will receive widespread approval, but none will note it with greater pleasure than the members of the W.H.S., especially those who have been most closely associated with him in the work of the Society, of which he has been the honoured Vice-President for a number of years.

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### ERRATA.

On page 147 of our last issue, in the extract from the Journal read 30th March instead of 30th April.

On page 113 of this volume read October 19th instead of 17th as the date of the letters written from Robertsbridge in 1779.