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James Shaw,
as long as you freely consent to,
and earnestly endeavour to walk
by these Rules, we shall rejoice to
acknowledge you as a fellow-la-
-bourer.

— — —

Wm Scott, President
John M. H. Secretary

Brook, 30. June 1853.



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Wesleyan Methodist Church.

MINUTES

OF

SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS,

BETWEEN

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.,

AND

THE PREACHERS IN CONNEXION WITH HIM.

CONTAINING

THE FORM OF DISCIPLINE

ESTABLISHED

AMONG THE PREACHERS AND PEOPLE

IN THE

METHODIST SOCIETIES.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR GEORGE WHITFIELD, CITY-ROAD;
AND SOLD AT ALL THE METHODIST PREACHING-HOUSES IN TOWN
AND COUNTRY.

1797.

[REPRINTED FOR THE METHODIST BOOK-ROOM, 1850.]

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LONDON :
PRINTED BY JAMES NICHOLS,
HOXTON-SQUARE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

IN the printed Minutes of the Conference for the year 1797 (see the authorized edition, Vol. I., p. 360) there is the following announcement:—

“Whereas, we, the undersigned, have, on this and the preceding day, carefully revised the Rules drawn up and left us by our late venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which were published by him in our large Minutes, to which we consented when we were admitted, and by which we were regulated through his life; and whereas we have collected together those Rules which we believe to be essential to the existence of Methodism, as well as others, to which we have no objection, we do now VOLUNTARILY and in GOOD FAITH sign our names, as approving of, and engaging to comply with, the aforesaid Collection of Rules, or Code of Laws, God being our helper.”

(Signed,) “THOMAS COKE, *President*, SAMUEL BRADBURN, *Secretary*,” and by WILLIAM THOMPSON, ALEXANDER MATHER, JOHN PAWSON, JOSEPH BENSON, THOMAS TAYLOR, JOSEPH BRADFORD, JOHN BARBER, JAMES WOOD, HENRY MOORE, JOSEPH TAYLOR, WALTER GRIFFITH, JOHN GAULTER, JOSEPH ENTWISLE, JONATHAN CROWTHER, JONATHAN EDMONDSON, CHARLES

ATMORE, RICHARD REECE, and other Preachers present at that Conference.

In the Minutes of the same year (Vol. I., p. 374) there is an Address to the Methodist Societies, dated Leeds, August 7, 1797, and officially signed, "in behalf and by order of the Conference," by "Thomas Coke, *President*," and "Samuel Bradburn, *Secretary*." That Address contains seven distinct heads or articles; the fifth of which (see Vol. I., p. 376) is as follows, and refers to the "Collection of Rules or Code of Laws" above-mentioned, as having been then made and signed by the Preachers present:—

"V. We have selected all our ancient Rules, which were made before the death of our late venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which are essential Rules, or prudential at this present time; and have solemnly signed them, declaring our approbation of them, and determination to comply with them; one single Preacher excepted, who, in consequence, withdrew from us."

The "Collection of Rules," thus "selected," "revised," and "signed," and brought down to the year 1797, inclusive, was, by order of the Conference, published in that year, in a pamphlet, under the following title:—"Minutes of several Conversations between the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., and the Preachers in Connexion with him: containing the Form of Discipline established among the Preachers and People in the Methodist Societies.—London: Printed for G. Whitfield, City-Road, and sold at all the Methodist Preaching-Houses in Town and Country. 1779."

The date of 1779, thus given to the pamphlet, is manifestly and indisputably a mis-print, and ought to have been, according to the undoubted fact, 1797.

This pamphlet, legally verified by affidavit on oath, was produced during certain recent proceedings in Chancery, and recognised as a "Code," both by the Vice-Chancellor, and subsequently by the Lord Chancellor, in their very important "judgments" upon the case then under adjudication. The latter observed, "They (the Conference) published what they considered to be the Code of the Laws of Methodism, in the year 1797, and they sign that Code with their names. That very Code has been given in evidence; it is the document described by the letter F."

Of the original pamphlet, whose history and authority have been thus stated, the present publication is an exact and faithful re-print. The only known variation is the insertion of the true date, instead of the one which a typographical error had introduced in the title-page of the first edition.

THOMAS JACKSON, *Editor.*

London,

July 13th, 1835.

It should be recollected by the reader, that this pamphlet professes to contain those Rules and Regulations *only* which were in existence and operation up to the year 1797. Many of these have undergone important modifications, or been wholly superseded, since that time; and various

others have been adopted by successive Conferences. The authentic sources of information on all these particulars are the printed "Minutes" of the Annual Conferences, signed by the President and Secretary for the time being. A collection of these Annual Minutes, extending from the year 1744 to 1847, has been published in ten volumes, 8vo., and may be had of Mr. Mason, 14, City-road, and 66, Paternoster-row, London. In a few instances the alterations since 1797, above-mentioned, have been intimated, in this edition of the "Code," by a note at the foot of the page; but in many cases this could not be conveniently accomplished at present.

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MINUTES,

&c.

It is desired, that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God.

That every person speak freely whatever is in his mind.

While we are conversing, let us have an especial care, to set God always before us. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises, and let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on this our labour.

SECTION I.

THE DESIGN OF GOD IN SENDING THE METHODIST PREACHERS.

Q. 1. IN what view may the Methodist Preachers be considered?

A. As messengers sent by the Lord, out of the common way, to provoke the regular Clergy to jealousy, and to supply their lack of service towards those who are perishing for want of knowledge; and, above all, to reform the nation, by spreading scriptural holiness over the land.

II.—THE RISE OF METHODISM.

Q. 2. WHAT was the rise of Methodism, so called?

A. In 1729 the late Mr. Wesley and his brother,

upon reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness; they followed after it, and incited others to do the same. In 1737 they saw holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified: but still holiness was their point.

God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise a holy people. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw Antinomianism in the way, which strikes directly at the root of all holiness.

III.—THE METHOD OF TRYING CANDIDATES FOR THE MINISTRY.

Q. 3. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the Gospel?

A. Inquire, Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? Have they gifts as well as grace for the work? Have they a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them an acceptable way of speaking? Do they speak justly, readily, and clearly? Have they had any fruit of their labour? Have any been truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

As long as the above marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

But before any one can be received even upon trial among us, it is necessary, that he should have been a member of the Society for some considerable time; that he should have acted as a Local Preacher; that he should be recommended by the Quarterly Meeting to the District-Meeting, and by that to the Confer-

ence;—and at the Conference in 1797 it was agreed, that, before any Superintendent propose any Preacher to the Conference as proper to be admitted on trial, such Preacher must not only be approved of at the March Quarterly Meeting, but must have read and signed the General Minutes, as fully approving of them; nor must any one suppose, or pretend to think, that the conversations which have been on any of these Minutes were intended to qualify them, as in the least to affect the spirit and design of them;—that he should then travel four years upon trial, during which time he must not marry; and being well recommended by the people where he has laboured, and by the Preachers who have laboured with him, he shall then be received into full connexion. The proper time for doing this is at a Conference. After serious, solemn prayer, the following questions shall be proposed to each candidate, which he shall be required to answer as in the presence of God:—

“Have you a lively faith in Christ? Do you enjoy a clear manifestation of the love of God to your soul? Have you constant power over all sin? Do you expect to be perfected in love in this life? Do you really desire and earnestly seek it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God, and to his work? Do you know the Methodist plan of doctrine and discipline? Have you read the Plain Account of the Methodists? the Appeals to Men of Reason and Religion? Do you know the Rules of the Society, and of the Bands? Are you determined by the help of God to keep them? Do you take no snuff, tobacco, or drams? Have you read and seriously considered the Minutes of the Conference? Especially have you considered the Rules of a Helper? and, above all, the first, tenth, and twelfth? and will you keep them for conscience sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening when opportunity serves, endeavouring not to speak too long or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children where you can? Will

you visit from house to house where it may be done? Will you recommend fasting and prayer, both by precept and example? Are you in debt?"

Having answered the above questions to our satisfaction, we then give him the Minutes of the Conference inscribed thus:—

“To A. B.

“You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer.” *

IV.—THE OFFICE AND DUTY OF A METHODIST PREACHER.

Q. 4. WHAT is the office of a Christian Minister?

A. To watch over souls as he that must give account; to feed and guide the flock.

Q. 5. How shall he be fully qualified for this great work?

A. By walking closely with God, and having His work greatly at heart; by understanding and loving every branch of our discipline; and by carefully and constantly observing the twelve rules of an Helper; viz., —

1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed. Never *while* away time, nor spend more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be, “Holiness to the Lord.” Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

* It was Mr. Wesley’s practice to give a copy of the Minutes thus inscribed to each Preacher, when he was admitted on trial. When he had passed acceptably through the period of his probation, and was admitted into full connexion with the Conference, the Minutes were presented to him with the following inscription:—“As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer.”—See Mr. Wesley’s Works, Vol. VIII., p. 326.—EDITOR.

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women, particularly with young women.

4. Take no step towards marriage without solemn prayer to God, and consulting with your brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one, unless fully proved; take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction you can on everything. You know the Judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. Speak evil of no one; else your word, especially, would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, lovingly and plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your own heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. A Preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin; no, not of cleaning your own shoes, when necessary.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not mend our Rules, but keep them, and that for conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those who want you, but to those who want you most.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel, and in union with your brethren. As such, it is your part to employ your time as our Rules direct; partly in preaching and visiting from house to house, partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which the Conference shall advise, at those times and places which they shall judge most for His glory.

Observe: It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care merely of this or that Society; but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as

many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and, with all your power, to build them up in that holiness without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember, a Methodist Preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline. Therefore you will need all the grace and all the sense you have; and to have all your wits about you.

V.—THE PECULIAR BUSINESS OF A SUPERINTENDENT.

Q. 6. WHAT is the business of a Superintendent?

A. To see that the other Preachers in his Circuit behave well, and want nothing. He should consider these (especially if they are young men) as his pupils; into whose behaviour and studies he should frequently inquire; and, at proper times, should ask, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend your time profitably? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons? These are either instituted or prudential:—

I. THE INSTITUTED are these:—1. *Prayer*: In private, in the family, and in public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these?

Do you use private prayer every morning and evening at least; if you can, at six in the evening, and the hour before or after morning preaching? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours? Do you avow it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, Have *you* family prayer? Do *you* retire at six o'clock?

2. *Searching the Scriptures*, by reading constantly, some part every day, all the Bible, in order, carefully, seriously, and with earnest prayer before and after;

and do this fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there. (2.) Meditating, at set times, by a fixed rule. (3.) Hearing the word preached at all opportunities, carefully, with earnest prayer to God for a blessing upon His word. Have you a New Testament always about you?

3. *The Lord's supper.* Do you use this at every opportunity? with solemn prayer, and with earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

4. *Fasting.* Do you fast every Friday? The neglect of this is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit by the habitual neglect of a plain duty! Let us amend from this hour. There are several degrees of fasting, which cannot hurt your health. Begin next Friday, and avow this duty wherever you go. Touch no tea, coffee, or chocolate in the morning; but, if you want it, a little milk or water-gruel. Dine on potatoes; and, if you want it, eat three or four ounces of flesh in the evening. But at other times eat no flesh-suppers. These exceedingly tend to breed nervous disorders.

5. *Christian conference.* Are you convinced how important, and how difficult, it is to order your conversation aright? Is it always in grace, seasoned with salt, meet to minister grace to the hearers? Do not you converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view? and always to conclude with prayer?

II. PRUDENTIAL MEANS we may use, either as common Christians, or as Preachers of the Gospel.

1. *As common Christians.* What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? what arts of holy living?

2. *As Preachers.* Do you meet every Society, also the Leaders, and the bands, if there are any? Do you live in holy watchfulness; denying yourself; taking up your cross; and in the exercise of the presence of God? Do you steadily watch against the

world, the devil, yourself, and your besetting sin? Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense, imagination, and honour? Are you temperate in all things? Instance in food: Do you use only that kind, and that degree, which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Do you eat no flesh suppers, and no late suppers? Do you use only that kind and degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul? Do you drink water, or wine, or ale? Do you want these?

Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

Do you endeavour to set God always before you? to see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means but a blessing must ensue. And the more you use them, the more you will grow in grace.

A Superintendent ought also to visit the classes quarterly, to regulate the bands, and to deliver tickets; to take in or to put out of the Society, or the bands:—At the Conference in 1797 it was agreed, that the Leaders' Meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial improper to be received into the Society; and after such declaration the Superintendent shall not admit such person into the Society. And no person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders' Meeting:—To keep watch-nights and lovefeasts; to hold Quarterly Meetings, and there diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of the Societies; to take care that every Society be supplied with books; to send to London a circumstantial account of every remarkable conversion, and of every remarkable death; to take an exact list of all the Societies in his Circuit once a year; to meet the married men and women, and the single men and women, in the large Societies, once a year; and to overlook the accounts of the Stewards.

The following advices are recommended to all the Superintendents.

Leave your successor a regular catalogue of all the Societies in the Circuit. See that every Band-Leader has the Band-Rules. Calmly and vigorously enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments, drams, snuff, and tobacco: give no band-ticket to any person who does not promise to leave them off. As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a band. Suffer no lovefeast to last more than an hour and half; and instantly stop all from breaking the cake with one another. Warn all from time to time, that none are to remove from one Society to another, without a certificate from the Superintendent in these words: "A. B., the bearer, is a member of our Society in C. I believe he has a sufficient reason for removing." Everywhere recommend decency and cleanliness. Cleanliness is next to godliness. Read the Thoughts upon Dress once a year in every large Society. In visiting the classes be very mild, but very strict. Give no ticket to any who follow the foolish fashions of the world. Meet the bands once a week; and keep a lovefeast for them *only*, once a quarter. Exhort every believer to embrace the advantage. Give a band-ticket to none, till they have met a quarter on trial.

As we always wish to act by united counsels, and as we desire that every person in any office in our Societies should fulfil the duties of his station, it is the duty of the Superintendent to take care, that the Leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God: let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done at the quarterly visitation of the classes. And, in order to this, allow sufficient time for the visiting of each Society.

Let each Leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers; not only how each person observes the outward Rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God. Endeavour to make the

meeting of the classes lively and profitable. Therefore change improper Leaders. But, in doing this, or in appointing a new Leader, great care and tenderness must be used ; and it is highly necessary to consult the rest of the Leaders on such occasions. It was agreed at the Conference in 1797, that no person shall be appointed a Leader, or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders' Meeting : the nomination to be in the Superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders' Meeting.

Let the Leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

Let us observe which of the Leaders are the most useful ; and let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

VI.—THE METHOD OF ADMITTING PERSONS INTO SOCIETY.

Q. 7. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Society ?

A. 1. Give notes to none but those who are recommended by a person you know ; or till they have met three or four times in a class, and are recommended by the Leader.

2. Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader with whom they have met two months on trial. Give them the Rules of the Society the first time they meet.

3. In large towns, admit persons into the Society on the Sunday following the visitation of the classes, by reading their names over ; then read also the names of those who are excluded. And admit persons into the bands at the quarterly lovefeast after the visitation.

4. As to the exclusion of members from the Society, the far greater number exclude themselves, by utterly forsaking us ; but with respect to others, let the Rules of the Society be carefully attended to, and the Lead-

ers be consulted on such occasions, and the crime proved to their satisfaction.

5. Let one or more of the Stewards be changed once a year. The proper time for doing this is at a Quarterly Meeting, when the Superintendent shall consult all who are present respecting who may be the most proper persons to act in that capacity.



VII.—RESPECTING THE ADMISSION OF LOCAL PREACHERS, AND THEIR DUTY.

6. RESPECTING the admission of persons to be Local Preachers: Let the Superintendent regularly meet the Local Preachers once a quarter; and let none be admitted but those who are proposed and approved at that meeting; and if in any Circuit this cannot be done, then let them be proposed and approved in the general Quarterly Meeting.

7. Every Local Preacher shall meet in class, and conform to all our Rules of Discipline. Let none be excused in this respect.

Let no Local Preacher be permitted to preach in any other Circuit, without producing a recommendation from the Superintendent of that Circuit in which he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office, with the consent of the Superintendent of that Circuit. The design of this Rule is to prevent any under the character of a Local Preacher from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting Local Preachers to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren the Local Preachers; who, considered as a body, we greatly respect.

8. Let no Local Preacher keep lovefeasts without the consent of the Superintendent, nor in any wise interfere with his business. Let every one keep in his own place, and attend to the duties of his station.

VIII.—THE REGULAR METHOD OF HOLDING A CONFERENCE.

Q. 8. WHAT is the method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences ?

A. 1. Elect a President and Secretary.

2. Inquire what Preachers have died the preceding year.

3. What Preachers have desisted from travelling.

4. What Preachers are to be admitted.

5. Who remain on trial : and who are to be admitted on trial.

6. Inquire into the objections which may be produced against any of the Preachers, who are to be examined one by one.

7. Appoint the Preachers to their respective stations for the ensuing year.

8. What numbers are in the Societies.

9. What is the Kingswood Collection.

10. What boys are to be received into the school, and what girls to be assisted.

11. What is the Yearly Collection ; and how this is expended.

12. What is contributed to the Preachers' Fund ; and who are to be relieved out of it.

13. How many Preachers' wives are to be provided for, and by what Societies.

14. Where and when may the next Conference be.*

IX.—THE PROPER BUSINESS OF A HELPER.

Q. 9. WHAT is the particular business of those Preachers who do not act as Superintendents ?

* In consequence of the growing extent of the Connexion, the business of the Conference has of late years been greatly increased beyond the subjects here specified. But much of the business which formerly occupied the time of the Conference is now transacted in preparatory Committees, consisting partly of laymen, and partly of Travelling Preachers.—EDIT.

A. To feed the flock, by constantly preaching morning and evening; to meet the Society and the bands weekly; to meet the Leaders weekly; to preach every morning where he can have twenty hearers,—but where he cannot, then to sing and pray with them; and to do any other part of the work which the Superintendent may desire him to do.

Q. 10. Should any of our Preachers follow trades?

A. The question is not, whether they may not occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did; but whether it be proper for them to buy or sell any kind of merchandise. It is fully determined that this shall not be done by any Preacher; no, not the selling of pills, drops, or balsams.

X.—DIRECTIONS FOR OBTAINING HIGHER
DEGREES OF HOLINESS.

Q. 11. WHY are not we ourselves more holy? Why do we not live in eternity? Why do we not walk with God all the day long? Why are we not wholly devoted to God, breathing the whole spirit of Missionaries?

A. Because we are idle. We forget our first Rule: “Be diligent; never be unemployed.” Do we spend as many hours in a day in God’s work, as we did formerly in man’s work? Do not some of us spend too much time in talking, or in reading history, newspapers, or other books, which have no tendency either to make us more holy or more useful?

That this may no longer be the case,—as often as possible, rise at four o’clock. From four to five in the morning, and from six to seven in the evening, meditate, pray, and read, partly the holy Scriptures, and partly the most close and practical parts of what Mr. Wesley has published. From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) read in order, with much prayer, the Christian Library, and all our other books, whether in prose or in verse, and especially all Mr. Wesley’s Sermons.

If any one will say, "I read only the Bible;" then he ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by the same rule, to hear only the Bible. If you need no other book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too: "Bring the books," says he, "but especially the parchments." If any say, "I have no taste for reading;" then you must contract a taste for it by use, or return home again.

In the afternoon visit as many of the sick, and those who want your help, as you can; and you will have work enough for all your time. Then no Preacher will stay with us who is as salt that hath lost its savour; for to such this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the useful knowledge you can procure.

XI.—DIRECTIONS FOR OBTAINING A CLOSER UNION
AMONG THE PREACHERS.

Q. 12. WHAT can be done in order to a closer union of our Preachers with each other?

A. Let them be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it. Let them pray for a desire of union. Let them speak freely and lovingly to each other. When they meet, let them never part without prayer. Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts. Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind. Let them defend each other's characters in everything as far as they can with a good conscience. And let them labour in honour to prefer the other before himself.

XII.—ON PREACHING WHERE WE CAN FORM NO
SOCIETY; AND ON FIELD-PREACHING.

Q. 13. Is it advisable to continue preaching in those places where we find that we can form no Society?

A. By no means ; we have made the trial in various places. But the seed has fallen by the highway side ; there is scarce any fruit remaining.

Q. 14. Where shall we endeavour to preach the most ?

A. Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers ; and where the Lord is in a peculiar manner reviving his work.

Q. 15. Have we not used field-preaching too sparingly ?

A. We have. Because our call is to save that which is lost. Now we cannot expect them to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them ; because we are peculiarly called to go into the highways and hedges, to compel them to come in ; because that reason against it is not good, "The house will hold all that come : " the house may hold all that come to the house, but not all that would come to the field.

The greatest hinderance to this you may expect from the rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists. But regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in the name of the Lord into the most public places, and call upon all to repent and believe the Gospel ; every Sunday in particular ; especially where there are old Societies, lest they should settle upon their lees. The Stewards will frequently oppose this lest they lose their usual collections. But this is not a sufficient reason against it. Shall we barter souls for money ?



XIII.—ON THE DECREASE OF THE WORK, AND THE PROPER MEANS OF PROMOTING A REVIVAL.

Q. 16. How can we account for the decrease of the work of God in any Circuit ?

A. It may be owing to the want of zeal and exactness in the Superintendent, occasioning the want of discipline throughout ; or to the want of life and diligence in the Preachers ; or to the people's losing

the life of God, and sinking into the spirit of the world. It may be owing to the want of more field-preaching; or of visiting more new places.

Q. 17. What can be done in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

A. Let every Preacher read carefully over the Life and Journals of the late Mr. Wesley, the Life of Mr. Fletcher, the Life of David Brainerd; and let us be followers of them as they were of Christ, in absolute self-denial, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. Let us only secure this point, and the world and the devil must fall under our feet.

Let all the Preachers be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline; and take care that no Circuit be at any time without Preachers.

Strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to go on to perfection. We all agree to defend this doctrine; meaning thereby, salvation from all sin, by the love of God and man filling the heart. We say, "That this may be attained in this life." The substance then is settled. And as to the circumstance, "Is this change gradual or instantaneous?" it is both the one and the other. From the time we are justified, there ought to be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change. There must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. But should we, in preaching, insist both upon the one and the other? Certainly, we must insist on the gradual work, and that earnestly and constantly. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous work also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, that the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their souls; the more watchful they are against all sin,

the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance upon all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are saved by hope; by this hope of a total change with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or rather decreases daily. Therefore, whosoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

XIV.—AGAINST ANTINOMIANISM.

Q. 18. WHAT is most destructive of Methodism, or the doctrine of inward holiness?

A. Calvinism, that is, the doctrine of unconditional predestination. All the devices of Satan have done far less towards stopping this work of God than that single doctrine. It strikes at the root of salvation from sin, previous to glory; it puts the matter quite upon another footing. This doctrine seems to magnify Christ; although in reality it supposes him to have died in vain. For the absolutely elect must have been saved without him, and the non-elect cannot be saved by him. It is highly pleasing to flesh and blood; unconditional perseverance in particular.

Let all our Preachers carefully read over Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Fletcher's tracts.

Let them frequently and explicitly preach the whole truth, though not in a controversial way. Let them take care to do it in love and gentleness.

Lay hold upon any that you find newly convinced of the truth, and warn them against predestination. Answer all their objections as occasion offers, both in public and in private. But do this with all possible sweetness both of look and accent. Frequently warn our people against hearing that doctrine. And pray much, that the Lord may prevent the evil.

We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, and therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, upon his authority, that if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.

With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do: "Labour," *εργαζεσθε*, that is, work, "for the meat that endureth to everlasting life." And, in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from, life.

We have received it as a maxim, that a man is to do nothing in order to justification. Nothing can be more false. Whosoever desires to find favour with God should cease from evil, and learn to do well. So God himself teaches by the Prophet Isaiah. Whosoever repents should do works meet for repentance. And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole affair. Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart. But who among those that never heard the Gospel? He that, according to the light he has, feareth God and worketh righteousness. Is this the same with, He that is sincere? Nearly, if not quite. Is not this salvation by works? Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition. What then have we been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid, about words; namely, in some of the foregoing instances.

As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because of our works. How does this differ from, "for the sake of our works?" And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*? which is no more than, "as our works deserve." Let him that can, split the hair.

The grand objection to one of the preceding propo-

sitions is drawn from matter of fact : God does in fact justify those who, by their own confession, neither feared God, nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule ? It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure, that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness ? His own thinking so is no proof. For we know, how all who are convinced of sin undervalue themselves in every respect.

Does not talking, without proper caution, of a justified or a sanctified state, tend to mislead men ; almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment ? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, according to our works ; according to the whole of our present inward tempers, and outward behaviour.*

XV.—THE MOST USEFUL WAY OF PREACHING.

Q. 19. WHAT is the best general method of preaching ?

A. To invite, to convince, to offer Christ, to build up ; and to do this in some measure in every sermon. The most effectual way of preaching Christ is to preach him in all his offices ; and to declare his law as well as his Gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly insist upon inward and outward holiness ; and, with this view, set forth Christ as evidently crucified before their eyes ; Christ in all the riches of his grace, justifying us by his blood, and sanctifying us by his Spirit. Always suit your subject to the state of your audience. Choose the plainest texts you can. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand. Be sparing in spiritualizing or allegorizing. Let your whole deport-

* The sense in which these doctrinal Minutes are to be understood is clearly stated by Mr. Fletcher, in his admirable "Checks to Antinomianism ;" who has also proved them to be strictly scriptural.—EDIT.

ment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn. Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation. Do not usually pray above eight or ten minutes, before or after the sermon. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death; and begin and end exactly at the time. The evening preaching should never begin later than seven o'clock, unless in time of harvest. Young Preachers might often exhort without taking a text.

Everywhere avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion, and singing our hymns, which you should take care to have in readiness.*

XVI.—HOW TO GUARD AGAINST FORMALITY IN PUBLIC WORSHIP, ESPECIALLY IN SINGING.

Q. 20. How shall we guard against formality in public worship?

A. By carefully warning the people against it. By taking care that our own minds are duly affected by the truths we preach; never losing sight of ourselves. By choosing such hymns as are suitable to the congregation. By singing not too much at once, seldom more than five or six verses. By suiting the tune to the words. By sometimes seriously asking the people, "Now, do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?"

Is not formality in singing creeping in, singing those complex tunes and anthems which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion? The repeating the same words so often, and especially while another is repeating other words, (the horrid abuse which runs through the modern church music,) as it shocks all

* The principal hymns on the great festivals of the church, here referred to, are inserted in the "Supplement" to the Hymn-Book in general use among the Methodists; so that there is not now the same necessity for providing those hymns as separate publications.—EDIT.

common sense, so it necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no religion in it. Besides it is a flat contradiction to our Lord's command, "Use not vain repetitions;" for what is a vain repetition if this is not? What end of devotion does it serve? Sing no anthems.

Do not suffer the people to sing too slow: this naturally tends to formality. In every large Society let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our own tunes first. Let the women constantly sing their own parts alone: let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass. Introduce no new tunes, till they are perfect in the old ones. Let no organ be placed anywhere, till it be proposed at the Conference. Recommend the Tune-book everywhere; and if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two in each place to pitch the tune for you. Exhort every one, whether man or woman, in the congregation, to sing. If a Preacher be present, let no other person give out the words. When they wish to teach the congregation to sing any new tune, they should only sing the tenor.

XVII.—ON VISITING AND INSTRUCTING THE
PEOPLE FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.

Q. 21. How shall we farther assist those who are under our care?

A. By instructing them from house to house. The necessity of this will appear if we consider, that personal religion, either towards God or man, is still very much wanted among us. How little living faith is there amongst us! how little communion with God! how little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature! how much love of the world, desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money!

How little brotherly love! what continual judging one another! what gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-

bearing! what want of moral honesty! Who does as he would be done by in buying and selling, especially in selling horses?

Family religion is very much wanting among us. Our religion is not deep, universal, and uniform; but too superficial, partial, and uneven. Public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels, will not be sufficient to reform those evils: we must therefore visit from house to house.

But we shall find many hinderances to this, both in ourselves and in the people.

1. In ourselves there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work. We have a base man-pleasing temper, so that we let men perish, for fear of offending them; we let them go quietly to hell lest they should be angry with us. Some of us have a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil. But the greatest hinderance is weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring is weak. We are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers! to choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness and terror, of love and meekness.

2. And we shall meet with many difficulties from the people. Some of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverseness by the force of reason, and the power of love. We shall find it difficult to fix things in their minds, without which all our labour will be lost. If we have not, therefore, great seriousness and fervency, what good can we expect? And after all, it is grace alone that must do the work. And when we have made some good impressions upon their hearts, if we do not look after them, they will die away.

We shall find that many are very ignorant, and know but little of the nature of repentance, of faith, and of holiness. Most of them have a sort of con-

fidence that God will save them, while the world has their hearts, and evil tempers have dominion over them. This private instruction is implied in those solemn words of the Apostle: "I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine."

O brethren, if we could set this work on foot in all our Societies, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God! If the common ignorance were banished, and the people in every house and in every shop were busied in speaking of the word and works of God, surely the Lord would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is absolutely necessary, as many of our people neither repent nor believe to this day. Look round, and see how many are still in danger of damnation; and then say, How can we walk, and talk, and be cheerful with such people, when we know their case? When we look such persons in the face, ought we not to break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazeal, and then set upon them with the most vehement and importunate exhortations? O, for God's sake, and for the sake of poor souls, let us bestir ourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

What cause have we to blush before the Lord this day, that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but set upon it sooner, how many more might we have brought to Christ? And how much holier and happier might we have made our Societies before now? And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many hinderances, and so there always will be. But the greatest hinderance was in ourselves, in our littleness of faith and love.

It is objected: "This will take up too much time, so that we shall not be able to follow our studies." Gaining useful knowledge is a good thing; but still saving souls is better. By this very thing we shall

gain the most excellent knowledge,—that of God and eternity. We shall likewise have time for gaining other knowledge, too, if we spend all our mornings therein. Only sleep not more than we need, and never be idle, or triflingly employed. But if we can do but one, then let our studies alone. Better throw away all the libraries in the world, than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

If some of the people will not submit to it, others will; and the success with them will repay us for all our labour. O let us follow the example of St. Paul! for our general business, “Serving the Lord with all humility of mind;” our special work, “Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock;” our doctrine, “Repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ;” the place, “I have taught you publicly, and from house to house;” the object and manner of teaching, “I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears;” his innocence and self-denial herein, “I have coveted no man’s silver or gold;” his patience, “Neither count I my life dear unto myself.” And among all our motives, let these be ever before our eyes, “The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood: grievous wolves will enter in; yea, of ourselves men will arise, speaking perverse things.” Let us write this upon our hearts, and it will do us more good than twenty years’ study.

We shall find it no easy matter to teach the ignorant the principles of religion. So true is the remark of Bishop Usher: “Great scholars may think this work beneath them: but they should consider, the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is of the greatest importance, so it is the master-piece of the wisest builder.” And let the wisest of us all try, whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay this ground-work rightly, to make the ignorant understand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trial of all our skill.

Perhaps, in doing this, it may be well, after a few loving words, spoken to all in the house, to take each

person singly into another room, where we may deal closely with him, about his sin, his misery, and his duty: these must be set home, or all our labour is lost. At least, let none be present but those who are familiar with each other.

The sum is, go into every house in course, and teach every one therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly. Make every particular plain to their understanding, fix it in their memory, write it in their heart. In order to this, there must be line upon line, precept upon precept. What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this!

We may, as we have time, read, explain, and enforce the Instructions for Children; the fourth volume of Sermons; and Mr. Henry's Method of Family Prayer.

Do we not loiter away many hours in a day? Let each try himself: no idleness can consist with growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, we cannot retain the grace we received in justification.

What shall we do for the rising generation? Unless we take care of this, the present revival will last only the age of a man. Who will labour herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now.

We must hear what the children have learned by heart. Choose some of the weightiest points, and try if they understand them; such as, "Do you believe you are a sinner? What does sin deserve? What remedy has God provided for guilty, helpless sinners?"

Often with the question suggest the answer; as, "What is repentance? Sorrow for sin, arising from a conviction that we are guilty, helpless sinners?" "What is faith? A divine conviction of things not seen?" When we perceive that they do not understand the stress of the question, lead them into it by other questions. For instance: we ask, "How do you think that your sins will be pardoned?" They answer, "By repenting, and amending my life." We ask farther, "But will your amendment make satisfaction for your past sins?" They will answer, "I hope

so, or I know not what will." One would think that these had no knowledge of Christ at all; and some of them have not. But others have, and give such answers, only because they do not understand the scope of the question. If we ask them farther, "Can you be saved without the death of Christ?" they immediately say, "No!" And if we ask, "What has he suffered for you?" they will say, "He shed his blood for us." But many cannot express even what they have some conception of; no, not even when expressions are put into their mouths. With these we are to deal exceeding tenderly, lest they be discouraged.

If we perceive them to be troubled, that they cannot answer, we must take the burden off them; answering the question thoroughly and plainly, making a full explication of the whole business to them.

When we have tried their knowledge, we must proceed to instruct them, according to their several capacities. If a man understand the fundamentals, we must then speak of what we perceive he most needs, either explaining farther some doctrine, or some duty, or showing him the necessity of something which he neglects; if he still understands not, we must go over it again till he does.

Next, inquire into his state, whether convinced or unconvinced, converted or unconverted, telling him, if need be, what conversion is; and then renew and enforce the inquiry.

If unconverted, we must labour with all our power to bring his heart to a sense of his condition; setting this home with a more earnest voice than we spoke before. We must get to the heart, or we do nothing; concluding all with a strong exhortation, which should enforce the duty of the heart, in order to receive Christ; the avoiding former sins; and constantly using the means of grace; and be sure, if possible, to get their promise to forsake sin, to change their company, and to wait upon God in his house. Let this be done solemnly, reminding them of the presence of God, who hears their promises, and expects the performance.

Before we leave them, engage the head of each family to call all under his care together, every Sunday before they go to bed, and hear what they can repeat ; and so continue till they have learned the Instructions for Children perfectly ; and afterwards let him take care that they do not forget what they have learned.

If we do this earnestly, we shall soon find what a work we have undertaken, in engaging to be Travelling Preachers.

XVIII.—ON INSTRUCTING THE CHILDREN.

WHERE there are ten children in a Society, we must meet them at least an hour every week ; talk with them whenever we see any of them at home ; pray in earnest for them ; diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses. Some will say, "I have no gift for this." Gift or no gift, you are to do this, or else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use every help God hath put into your way, in order to attain it. Preach expressly on the education of children when you make the Collection for Kingswood School.

Q. 22. We have been frequently reproached with the dress of our Preachers' children. How ought they to dress ?

A. Exactly according to the rules of the bands ; and it would be well if parents in general would observe this.

XIX.—ON CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD, BRIBERY, AND SABBATH-BREAKING.

Q. 23. HAVE we not made too great advances towards conformity to the world ?

A. We have. In order to prevent this, those school-masters and school-mistresses who receive dancing-

masters into their schools, and those parents who employ dancing-masters for their children, shall be no longer members of our Society.

Q. 24. Do not Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts, without due care to discharge them, still prevail in several places? How may these evils be remedied?

A. Let us solemnly and frequently warn the people against these evils. Read in every Society the sermon on evil-speaking. Let the Leaders closely examine, and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. Let the Preachers warn every Society, that those who are guilty cannot remain with us. Extirpate smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, out of every Society. Let none remain with us who will not totally abstain from every kind and degree of it. Speak tenderly, but earnestly and frequently, of it in every Society near the coasts; and diligently disperse among them "The Word to a Smuggler." Extirpate bribery; the receiving anything, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Show no respect of persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing. Largely show in public the wickedness of thus selling our country; and everywhere disperse "The Word to a Freeholder."

Q. 25. Several members of our Societies who make conscience of Sabbath-breaking have been much distressed, barbers in particular. What can be done to relieve them?

A. Let no member of our Society employ any barber on Sunday. Let all our people, who possibly can, employ only those barbers who conscientiously abstain from Sabbath-breaking.

Let none of our people make any wake or feast, neither go to any, on the Lord's day, but bear a public testimony against them.

A Preacher ought not to wear powder in his hair, or artificial curls.

No person ought to continue a member of our

Society who learns the military exercise, as a volunteer, on the Lord's day; nor any one who, after having been warned of the evil, will attend in order to see them exercise on that day.

XX.—ON MARRYING WITH UNBELIEVERS.

Q. 26. SOME of our members have married with unbelievers, yea, with unawakened persons: this has had fatal effects. They had either a cross for life, or turned back to perdition. What can be done to put a stop to this?

A. Let every Preacher enforce the Apostle's caution, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." Let him openly declare, that whosoever does this will be expelled the Society. When any such are expelled, let a suitable exhortation be subjoined. And let all be exhorted to take no step in so weighty a matter, without advising with the most serious of their Christian friends.

Q. 27. Ought a woman to marry without the consent of her parents?

A. In general she ought not. Yet there may be an exception. For if a woman be under a necessity to marry, and if her parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any Christian, then she may, nay, she ought to marry without their consent. Yet even then a Methodist Preacher ought not to marry her.*

XXI.—ON BANKRUPTCIES; STRANGERS STAYING AT THE SOCIETY-MEETINGS, LOVEFEASTS; FUNERAL SERMONS; AND TALKING IN OUR CHAPELS.

Q. 28. WHAT shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupt?

* For further regulations on the marriage of Preachers, see Minutes of Conference, Vol. V., p. 523.—EDIT.

A. Let the Superintendent talk with him at large. And if he has not kept fair accounts, or has been concerned in the base practice of raising money by coining notes, (commonly called the bill-trade,) let him be expelled immediately.

Q. 29. How often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the Society?

A. At every other meeting of the Society, let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same person not above three times. In order to this, see that all in every place show their tickets before they come in. If the Stewards and Leaders are not exact, employ others that have more resolution. And take care that no person attend a lovefeast without a note from the Preacher.

Let no lovefeast be appointed but by the consent of the Superintendent; nor any funeral sermon be preached without his consent, and for those only who have died happy in the Lord.

Q. 30. How shall we prevent persons talking in our chapels, before and after service is over?

A. Let all the Preachers join as one man, and seriously and solemnly warn the people against this growing evil.

XXII.—ON STRANGERS BEING ENTERTAINED AT THE PREACHERS' HOUSES; AND ON CLEANLINESS.

LET none of our friends who travel on business expect to be entertained at the Preachers' houses; neither let the people crowd into the Preachers' houses: let no one think that he has a right to go there, unless he has some particular business.

The Preachers' houses ought to be kept clean and decent. A Preacher's wife ought to be a pattern of cleanliness in her person, clothes, and habitation. And she should also be a pattern of industry, always at work for herself, her husband, or children.

XXIII.—IN WHAT CASES WE ALLOW SERVICE IN
CHURCH-HOURS.

Q. 31. IN what cases do we allow service in what are commonly called church-hours?

A. When the Minister is a notoriously wicked man; when he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious, doctrine; when there are not churches in the town sufficient to contain the people; and when there is no church within two or three miles. And it is expected that every one who preaches in church-hours will either read Mr. Wesley's Abridgment of the Common Prayer, or else the Lessons for the day.

XXIV.—HOW TO PREVENT NERVOUS DISORDERS.

Q. 32. WHAT directions shall be given to prevent the contracting nervous disorders?

A. Take as little meat, drink, and sleep, as nature will require. Drink no dram on any consideration. Eat very light, if any, supper. Never go out of the house to supper at any time. Be always at home before nine o'clock, if possible. And use full as much exercise daily as we did before we were Preachers.

XXV.—THE ORDER OF DISTRICTS; AND WHAT
BUSINESS IS TO BE DONE THERE.

Q. 33. WHAT regulations are necessary for the preservation of our whole economy?

A. Let the three kingdoms be divided into Districts in the following order:—*

1. *London*, Colchester, Rochester, Canterbury, Rye, Weathersfield.

* The number of Districts has since been increased, owing to the enlargement of the work. At present there are thirty-two in England and Scotland, and eleven in Ireland.—EDIT.

2. *Northampton*, Brackley, Bedford, Oxford, Higham-Ferrars, St. Ives (Hunts).

3. *Norwich*, Yarmouth, Diss, Thetford, Lynn, Walsingham.

4. *Bristol*, Taunton, Banwell, Bath, Stroud, Gloucester.

5. *Salisbury*, Portsmouth, Newbury, Poole, Bradford, (Wilts,) Shepton-Mallet.

6. *Isle of Jersey*, Isle of Guernsey, Alderney, and Sark.

7. *Plymouth-Dock*, Collumpton, Launceston.

8. *Redruth*, St. Austle, Penzance.

9. *Swansea*, Cardiff, Brecon, Haverfordwest.

10. *Birmingham*, Worcester, Stourport, Dudley, Shrewsbury.

11. *Chester*, Macclesfield, Burslem, Northwich, Leek.

12. *Manchester*, Stockport, Bolton, Liverpool, Rochdale, Oldham, Blackburn, Wigan.

13. *Halifax*, Colne, Keighley, Bradford, Huddersfield, Lancaster.

14. *Nottingham*, Newark, Leicester, Hinkley, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Burton, Derby, Castle-Donnington.

15. *Leeds*, Wakefield, Birstal, Dewsbury, Rotherham, Otley, Sheffield, Pontefract, Doncaster.

16. *Grimsby*, Horncastle, Epworth, Spalding, Barrow, Gainsborough.

17. *Whitehaven*, Isle of Man.

18. *York*, Hull, Pocklington, Bridlington, Scarborough, Malton.

19. *Whitby*, Ripon, Stockton, Barnard-Castle, Middleham.

20. *Newcastle*, Sunderland, Hexham, Alnwick.

21. *Edinburgh*, Glasgow, Dumfries.

22. *Aberdeen*, Dundee, Brechin, Inverness.

IRELAND.

23. *Dublin*, Wicklow, Carlow, Longford.

24. *Cork*, Bandon, Limerick, Waterford.

25. *Athlone*, Birr, Castlebar, Sligo.

26. *Clones, Cavan, Ballyconnell, Enniskillin, Brookborough.*

27. *Londonderry, Colerain, Lisleen, Ballyshannon, Omagh, &c.*

The names of all the Preachers in each District shall be read over by the Secretary, and a Chairman shall be chosen out of them by ballot of the Conference. The Chairman, so chosen, shall have authority to call a Meeting of all the Preachers in full connexion in that District, on any application of the Preachers or people, which appears to him to require it. But he must never *individually* interfere with any other Circuit but his own.

Whenever the Chairman has received any complaint against a Preacher, he shall send an exact account of the complaint in writing to the person accused, with the name of the accuser or accusers, before he calls a Meeting of the District to examine into the charge.

If it appear on just grounds to any Superintendent, that the Chairman of the District has been guilty of any crime, or that he has neglected to call the District, when there were sufficient reasons for calling it, such Superintendent shall have authority, in that case, to call a Meeting of the District, and to fix the time and place of meeting. The District thus assembled shall have power, if they judge necessary, to try the Chairman; and, if found guilty, to suspend him from being a Travelling Preacher till the next Conference, or to remove him from the office of a Superintendent, or to depose him from the chair, and to elect another in his place. Minutes shall be taken of their proceedings, which shall be laid before the next Conference.

If a Preacher be accused of immorality, the Preacher accused and his accuser shall respectively choose two Preachers of their District; and the Chairman of the District shall, with the four Preachers, chosen as above, try the accused Preacher; and they shall have authority, if he be found guilty, to suspend him till the next Conference, if they judge it expedient. But provided they cannot settle the business to the satisfaction

of the accused Preacher, then it shall be referred to the District-Meeting.

If there be a difference between two Preachers in a District, the respective parties shall choose two Preachers ; and the Chairman of the District, with the four Preachers so chosen, shall be final arbiters, to determine the matter in dispute. In both cases the Chairman shall have a casting voice, in case of an equality.

If there be any accusation against a Preacher, or any difficult affair to settle, not only the Circuit or Town Steward, but any Leader, or even member of the Society, shall be admitted as an evidence into a District-Meeting ; provided the matter has been first heard at the Quarterly Meeting.

The Chairman of each District, in conjunction with his brethren of that District, shall be responsible to the Conference for the execution of our laws, as far as his District is concerned.

The Chairman, in all cases which, in his judgment, cannot be settled in the ordinary District-Meetings, shall have authority to summons three of the nearest Superintendents to be incorporated with the District Committee, who shall have equal authority to vote, and settle everything till the Conference.

The Conference recommends it to the Superintendents of the Circuits to invite, on all important occasions, the Chairman of their respective District to be present at their Quarterly Meetings.

In order to render our Districts more effective, the President of the Conference shall have power, when applied to by the Superintendent, to supply any Circuit with Preachers, if any should die or desist from travelling ; and to sanction any change of Preachers which it may be necessary to make in the intervals of Conference ; and to assist at any District-Meeting, if applied to for that purpose, by the Chairman of the District, or by a majority of the Superintendents in such District. And he shall have a right (if written to by any who are concerned) to visit any Circuit, and to

inquire into their affairs with respect to Methodism, and, in union with the District Committee, redress any grievance.

All deficiencies in the quarterage of Preachers, their wives, and their children, with all demands concerning rents, furniture, &c., shall be taken an account of, as far as possible, at the Quarterly Meeting. The account shall be sent (signed by the Circuit Steward) to the District-Meeting, and from thence to the Conference.

As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper Meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal Meetings in general would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences. But, in order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow that other formal Meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the Superintendent, and the Leaders' or Quarterly Meetings; provided also that the Superintendent, if he please, be present at every such Meeting.

If the Conference shall see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such rule should be objected to at the first Quarterly Meeting in any given Circuit; and if the major part of that Meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, be of opinion that the enforcing that rule in such a Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit; it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of the majority of such Quarterly Meeting before the second Conference. But, if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new rule shall not, by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention, but shall strive, by every means, to preserve the peace of the Connexion.

All the matters relating to the building of preaching-houses and dwelling-houses shall be determined in the District-Meetings. All matters relating to the payment

of the debts of houses, collections for houses, and everything that appertains to preaching-houses and dwelling-houses, shall be considered and settled in the District-Meetings.

And, as the Districts always meet a little before the Conference, they shall then choose a Representative to attend the Committee for stationing the Preachers; and shall also determine what Preachers in that District shall attend the Conference.

But nothing in any District-Meeting shall be done contrary to any rule of Conference.

XXVI.—THE PLAN OF GENERAL PACIFICATION.

I. CONCERNING the Lord's supper, baptism, &c.

1. The sacrament of the Lord's supper shall not be administered in any chapel, except a majority of the Trustees of that chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the Stewards and Leaders belonging to that chapel (as the best qualified to give the sense of the people) on the other hand, allow of it. Nevertheless, in all cases, the consent of the Conference shall be first obtained, before the Lord's supper be administered.

2. Wherever there is a Society but no chapel, if the majority of the Stewards and Leaders of that Society testify, that it is the wish of the people that the Lord's supper should be administered to them, their desire shall be granted, provided that the consent of the Conference be first obtained.

3. Provided, nevertheless, that in Mount-Pleasant chapel, at Liverpool, and in all other chapels where the Lord's supper has been already peaceably administered, the administration of it shall be continued in future.

4. The administration of baptism, the burial of the dead, and service in church-hours, shall be determined according to the regulations above-mentioned.

5. Whenever the Lord's supper shall be administered according to the above-mentioned regulations, it

shall always be continued, except the Conference order the contrary.

6. The Lord's supper shall be administered by those only who are authorized by the Conference; and at such times, and in such manner only, as the Conference shall appoint.

7. The administration of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the above regulations, is intended only for the members of our own Society.

8. We agree that the Lord's supper be administered among us on Sunday evenings only; except where the majority of the Stewards and Leaders desire it in church-hours; or where it has already been administered in these hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parish church.

9. The Lord's supper shall always be administered in England according to the form of the established Church; but the person who administers shall have liberty to give out hymns, to use exhortation, and extemporary prayer.

10. Wherever divine service is performed in England on the Lord's day in church-hours, the officiating Preacher shall read either the service of the Church, our venerable Father's Abridgment, or, at least, the Lessons appointed by the calendar. But we recommend either the full Service or the Abridgment.

II. Concerning discipline.

1. The appointment of the Preachers shall remain solely with the Conference; and no Trustee, or number of Trustees, shall expel or exclude from their chapel or chapels any Preacher so appointed.

2. Nevertheless, if the majority of the Trustees, or the majority of the Stewards and Leaders, of any Society believe that any Preacher appointed for their Circuit is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the Preachers of the District, and all the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of that Circuit, to meet in their

chapel on a day and hour appointed (sufficient time being given). The Chairman of the District shall be President of the assembly; and every Preacher, Trustee, Steward, and Leader, shall have a single vote, the Chairman possessing the casting voice. And if the majority of the Meeting judge, that the accused Preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the rules above-mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that Circuit: and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another Preacher for that Circuit, instead of the Preacher so removed; and shall determine among themselves how the removed Preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference; and shall have authority to suspend the said Preacher from all public duties till the Conference, if they think proper. The District Committee shall also supply, as well as possible, the place of the removed Preacher, till another Preacher be appointed. And the Preacher thus appointed, and all other Preachers, shall be subject to the above mode of trial. And if the District Committee do not appoint a Preacher for that Circuit, instead of the removed Preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed Preacher till another Preacher be appointed, the majority of the said Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders, being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a Preacher for the said Circuit, provided he be a member of the Methodist Connexion, till the next Conference.

3. If any Preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases mentioned above, he shall be considered as suspended till the next Conference. And if any Trustees expel from any chapel a Preacher by their own separate authority, the Preachers appointed for that Circuit shall not preach in that chapel till the next Conference, or till a trial takes place according to the mode mentioned above.

4. If any Trustees expel or exclude a Preacher by their own separate authority, from any chapel, in any Circuit, the Chairman of the District shall summons

the members of the District Committee, the Trustees of that Circuit who have not offended, and the Stewards and Leaders of the Circuit; and the members of such assembly shall examine into the evidence on both sides; and if the majority of them determine, that the state of the Society in which the exclusion took place requires that a new chapel should be built before the meeting of the next Conference, every proper step shall be immediately taken for erecting such chapel. And no step shall, on any account, be taken to erect a chapel for such purpose before the next Conference, till such a Meeting be summoned, and such determination be made.

5. No Preacher shall be suspended or removed from his Circuit by any District Committee, except he have the privilege of the trial before-mentioned.

6. The hundred Preachers mentioned in the enrolled Deed, and their successors, are the only legal persons who constitute the Conference. And we think the junior brethren have no reason to object to this proposition, as they are regularly elected according to seniority.

7. Inasmuch as in drawing up the preceding regulations, we have laboured to restore and preserve the peace and unity of the Society, and, in order thereto, have endeavoured to keep the Preachers out of all disputes on the subjects therein specified,—be it understood, that any Preacher who shall disturb the peace of the Society by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's supper in our Societies, or concerning the Old or the New Plan, so called, shall be subject to the trial and penalties before-mentioned.

8. And in order that the utmost impartiality be manifested in these regulations for the peace of the whole body, we also resolve, That if any Local Preacher, Trustee, Steward, or Leader shall disturb the peace of the Society, by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's supper, or concerning the Old or the New Plan, (so called,) the Superintendent of the Circuit, or the majority of the Trustees, Stew-

ards, and Leaders of the Society so disturbed, shall have authority to summon a meeting of the Travelling Preachers of the Circuit, and the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of that Society. Evidence shall be examined on both sides ; and if the charge be proved, the Superintendent Preacher shall expel from the Society the person so offending.

ADDENDA.

1. THE Conference by no means wishes to divide any Society, by the introduction of the Lord's supper ; and therefore except that a majority of the Stewards and Leaders, who desire the Lord's supper among themselves, testify in writing to the Conference, that they are persuaded that no separation will be made thereby, they will not allow it.

2. The sacrament shall not be administered to a Society in any private house, within two miles of the Methodist chapel in which it is regularly administered.

3. We all agree that the pulpit shall not be a vehicle of abuse.

4. It has been our general custom, never to appoint or remove a Steward or Leader, without first consulting the Stewards and Leaders of that Society ; and we are resolved to walk by the same rule.

5. To prevent, as much as possible, the progress of strife and debate, and consequent divisions in our Connexion, no pamphlet or printed letter shall be circulated among us without the author's name, and the postage or carriage paid.

6. Nothing contained in these Rules shall be construed to violate the rights of the Trustees, as expressed in their respective deeds.

XXVII.—THE AGREEMENT WITH THE TRUSTEES
OF BRISTOL, IN 1794.

To the Members of the Methodist Societies.

BRISTOL, *August 8th*, 1794.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE have again taken into our mature consideration the state of our Societies in this kingdom, respecting the administration of the sacrament, and some other particulars which have engaged the attention of many of our people; and for the sake of peace and love have come to the following Resolutions:—

I. Preaching in church-hours shall not be permitted, except for special reasons, and where it will not cause a division, according to the Plan of Pacification.

II. As the Lord's supper has not been administered, except where the Society has been unanimous for it, and would not have been contented without it; it is now agreed, that it shall not be administered in future where the union and concord of the Society can be preserved without it, according to the Plan of Pacification.

III. The Preachers will not perform the office of baptism except for the desirable ends of love and concord; though baptism, and the burial of the dead, were performed by many of the Preachers long before the death of Mr. Wesley, and with his consent.

IV. It is agreed, that the management of the temporal and spiritual concerns of the Society shall be separated, as far as the purposes of peace and harmony can be answered thereby, or as they have ever been separated in times of the greatest peace and harmony; viz., the temporal concerns shall be managed by the Stewards chosen for that purpose, who shall keep books, wherein all moneys collected, received, or disbursed, on account of their respective Societies, shall be entered. 2. The spiritual concerns shall be managed by the Preachers; who have ever appointed Leaders, chosen Stewards, and admitted members into, and expelled them from, the Society, consulting their bre-

thren the Leaders and Stewards, according to the Rules before mentioned. The Preachers also, as hitherto, are to appoint love-feasts and watch-nights, and to vary the time and places of preaching, class-meeting, &c.

V. That the Trustees may have the fullest assurance that the Conference love them, and have not the shadow of a desire to oppress them, any more than to reject any proposals which they conceive calculated to restore and preserve peace and harmony, the following articles are added :—

VI. The Trustees, in conjunction with the Superintendent, who shall have one vote only, shall choose their own Steward ; who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made, for the purpose of paying interest of money due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal of all such moneys, so received and disbursed. The aforesaid Steward shall keep proper accounts in books provided for that purpose ; which books shall be open for the inspection of the Superintendent, and audited in his presence once every year ; or oftener, if convenient. Provided always, that when the necessities of the work of God require it, the Trustees shall allow quarterly, what may appear requisite for carrying on the work, so that it be not cramped : Provided, that if the seat-rents and collections fall short of what will be sufficient to discharge the rents, interest of money, and other necessary expenses of the chapels, the deficiency shall be made good out of some other revenue of the Society ; and that books shall be provided, wherein shall be inserted all the accounts, both of the Trustees and the Stewards of the respective Societies, which shall be open for the inspection of the Trustees and others, and that the said accounts shall be annually audited in the presence of the Trustees : Provided also, that nothing in these Resolutions shall be construed to extend to alter any of the powers contained in the trust-deeds.

VII. No Trustee (however accused, or defective in

conforming to the established rules of the Society) shall be removed from the Society, unless his crime, or breach of the rules of the Society, be proved in the presence of the Trustees and Leaders.

Signed, in behalf of the Conference,

THOMAS HANBY, *President.*

THOMAS COKE, *Secretary.*

XXVIII.—MR. WESLEY'S LETTER TO THE CONFERENCE IN 1791; AND THEIR DETERMINATION IN CONSEQUENCE OF IT.

TO THE CONFERENCE.

CHESTER, *April 7th, 1785.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,

SOME of our Travelling Preachers have expressed a fear, that after my decease you would exclude them, either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration, to assume any superiority over your brethren; but let all things go on among those Itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will admit.

In particular, I beseech you, if ever you loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the Preachers, in choosing children for Kingswood-school, in disposing of the Yearly Collection and the Preachers' Fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.

N.B. The Conference have unanimously resolved, That all the Preachers who are in full connexion with

them shall enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeable to the above-written letter of our venerable deceased father in the Gospel, except in voting for the President and Secretary.

XXIX.—CERTAIN RULES AGREED TO BY THE CONFERENCE AT DIFFERENT TIMES.

1. No ordination shall take place in our Connexion, without the consent of the Conference; nor shall gowns or bands be used among us; or the title of *reverend** be used at all. And if any brother shall break the above-mentioned rule, he thereby excludes himself from the Connexion.

2. No Preacher shall receive anything from the Circuit on account of his children who receive what is allowed from Kingswood-school, nor after they have arrived at the age of seventeen years.†

3. None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the Government under which we live. The oracles of God command us to be subject to the higher powers; and that “honour the King” is there connected with the “fear of God.”

4. No person among us shall call another heretic, bigot, or by any other disrespectful name, on any account, for a difference in sentiment.

5. No Preacher shall leave his Circuit, on any consideration, between the Midsummer and the Michaelmas quarter-days.

6. A General Fast shall be held in all our Societies, the first Friday after New-year’s-day, after Lady-day, after Midsummer-day, and after Michaelmas-day.

7. Every Preacher shall be considered as a Supernumerary for four years after he has desisted from travelling, and shall afterwards be deemed Superannuated.

* This rule has since been rescinded.—EDIT.

† By a subsequent regulation every Preacher is authorized, with certain exceptions, to receive the allowance for his children till they are twenty years of age. See Minutes, Vol. IV., p. 39.—EDIT.

8. Every Superintendent shall be at liberty to attend the Conference or not: * but, in case of absence, he shall send all his papers that are necessary, by the Representative of his District.

9. No division shall be made of any Circuit, where it does not appear to the Quarterly Meeting, the District-Meeting, the Committee of Representatives, and the Conference, that there is such an enlargement of the work as requires it.

10. Every Preacher, before he is admitted into full connexion, shall write an account of his life, and give it to Mr. Story.

11. All letters not directed to, or belonging to, the President, or the Committee of Representatives, are to be paid for by the Circuits respectively from which the Preachers come. And all the horses are to be paid for in the same way.

12. No Preacher who has been suspended or expelled shall, on any account, be employed as a Local Preacher, without the authority of the Conference.

13. No Circuit shall have more Preachers than it can support, unless in case of some extraordinary burden, in respect to wives and children; the Circuits in Scotland, Ireland, and Wales, being excepted.

14. We strongly recommend the religious observance of the Lord's day; and desire our Superintendents to exclude from the Society all who buy or sell on that sacred day, except in case of medicine for the sick, or for supplying necessaries for funerals.

15. Any Preacher brought out in the course of the year, if he have travelled nine months before the next Conference, shall be considered as if he had travelled the whole year.†

16. The Lord's supper shall be administered by the

* This rule has since been modified. See Minutes, Vol. III., p. 92; Vol. IV., p. 446.—EDIT.

† By a subsequent regulation it is determined that if a Preacher who is on the List of Reserve be appointed to a Circuit before Christmas, he shall be considered at the ensuing Conference as having travelled one year.—EDIT.

Superintendent only, or such of his Helpers as are in full connexion, as he shall appoint ; provided that no Preacher be required to give it against his own inclination ; and should it be granted to any place where the Preachers on the Circuit are all unwilling to give it, the Superintendent shall in that case invite a neighbouring Preacher, who is properly qualified, to administer it.

17. As several inconveniences have arisen respecting the change of Stewards ; to remedy this, let it be observed, that the office of a Steward ceases at the end of the year : and every Superintendent is required, at the end of the year, to change one Steward at least ; so that no Steward may be in office above two years together, except in some extraordinary cases.

18. No Preacher shall use tobacco for smoking, chewing, or snuff, unless it be prescribed by a Physician. And our people are desired not to provide pipes or tobacco for any of our Preachers.

19. It is desired that the money collected for the Yearly Collection, Kingswood School, and the Preachers' Fund, be entered in the general Steward's books, in the respective Circuits.

20. It is desired, that the Representatives for stationing the Preachers may always meet on the Wednesday * before the Conference.

21. That we may be favoured with the direction and blessing of God on our important work at the Conference, it is agreed, that, on the morning of the first day of the Conference, the President and Secretary shall be chosen, and the rest of the day be dedicated to fasting and prayer. And it is desired, that our Societies may join us in the solemn duties of the day.

22. Whoever shall leave the Conference before the business is finished, and the journals signed, must not complain on account of what may be done after their departure.

23. As the Preachers are eminently one body, no-

* The Representatives of Districts, who form the Stationing Committee, now meet on Friday morning, twelve days before the assembly of Conference.—EDIT.

thing should be done by any individual which would be prejudicial to the whole, or to any part thereof. Therefore, no Preacher shall publish anything, but what is given to the Conference, and printed at our own press;* the Book-Committee to determine what is proper to be printed; that, as a reward for his labour, whatever shall be approved of by the said Committee, and printed, the author shall have an hundred, out of every thousand of the books, whether large or small; and, if published in the Magazine, he shall have a reasonable allowance, the Conference being judges. But, should a manuscript be rejected by the Book-Committee, a Preacher may print it; provided he do not sell it at our chapels, nor advertise it from our pulpits. The design of this rule is to prevent any Preacher in our Connexion from selling at the doors of our chapels, or offering to sell, any books among our people, but those which belong to the Conference, and come from our Book-Room.

N.B.—If any Preacher be attacked by any of our enemies, and his character misrepresented, his printing a reply in his own defence shall not be deemed a breach of the above rule.

24. The Districts shall determine when and where any chapel shall be built. But we advise that no one shall be built till absolutely necessary, and till two-thirds of the whole expense be subscribed.

25. Several of the Preachers have found their own horses from the beginning. But we now recommend it to every Circuit to find horses for the use of the Preachers. But, in those Circuits which wish to be upon the same plan as formerly, it is desired, that no Preacher may collect money for buying horses; but that whatever may be judged needful of this kind may be done by the Steward of the Circuit.

26. All apothecaries' bills shall be discharged in the Circuits. And if the Stewards cannot pay the quarter-age of the Preachers, their wives, and children, they must have fewer Preachers the next year.

* This rule has been rescinded.—EDIT.

27. Let no District-Meeting, no Preacher, or number of Preachers, or people whatsoever, on any consideration, involve the Conference in any lawsuit; nor have any demand on the Conference for the expenses, or any part of the expenses, of any lawsuit; more especially concerning chapels or preaching-houses, without the consent of the Conference previously obtained.

28. We have been disappointed by married Preachers coming out to travel, in expectation of being themselves able to maintain their wives, independently of the Conference, who very soon became entirely dependent. How shall this be prevented? Let no Preacher be received on this plan, unless he can bring in writing such an account of his income, signed by the Superintendent, as shall satisfy the Conference. And if any person shall promise to maintain a Preacher's wife or children, he shall give a bond to the Conference for the sum he intends to allow.

29. Let every Preacher be merciful to his beast; not only ride moderately, but see that his horse is taken proper care of.

30. Let every Superintendent take care to provide every Preacher's wife who may be stationed along with him, a lodging, coals, and candles, or see that she is allowed fifteen pounds a year.

31. Let not all the Preachers in any Circuit come to the Conference. And let those who do come set out as late and return as soon as possible.

32. Prayer-meetings have been found exceedingly useful; therefore let us appoint them wherever we can make it convenient.

XXX.—THE RULES OF THE PREACHERS' FUND.*

Q. 36. How shall we raise a Fund for the support of the superannuated Preachers, their widows, and children?

* These rules have been superseded by "The Methodist Preachers' Annuitant Society," and by the formation of the "Auxiliary Fund."—EDIT.

A. We will ask the assistance of our respectable friends, once a year: and, this being done, the Preachers themselves shall subscribe in the following manner:—

1. Every Preacher who shall be admitted upon trial shall, at the next and every subsequent Conference, till his admission into full connexion, contribute one guinea.

2. Every Preacher, when he is received into full connexion, shall contribute two guineas; and every succeeding year one guinea.

3. No Travelling Preacher shall be entitled to any benefit from this Fund till he has paid, or caused to be paid, ten guineas towards the support of it; except as hereafter provided. But any Preacher in full connexion shall be entitled to the privileges of the Fund on paying ten guineas.

4. All the money received towards the support of this Fund shall be lodged in the hands of four Stewards, chosen by the Conference. These Stewards shall give sufficient security to the Committee chosen by the Conference, who shall see the rules executed. And this Committee shall keep exact accounts of all moneys received and paid, and shall lay them before the Conference every year.

5. Every Preacher whom the Conference judges to be worn out, and who has not departed from the work, shall receive twelve pounds a year for life. And every Preacher who has laboured longer than twelve years, without departing from the work, and is judged by the Conference to be worn out, shall receive one pound annually for life, for every year he has travelled above twelve, to the time he became superannuated.

But this allowance shall not preclude the Conference from extending mercy to any distressed brother, his widow or children, whose case may be represented to them. They shall consider his situation and circumstances, and add to his just demand what to them may appear needful to support him comfortably.

It shall likewise be in the power of the Conference

to make suitable provision out of the Fund for the children of deceased Preachers, and distressed widows, on any occasion which they shall judge necessary.

6. Every widow of a Travelling Preacher shall receive twelve pounds a year. And if her deceased husband travelled more than twelve years before he was worn out, she shall be allowed one pound annually for every year her husband travelled above twelve, till the time he was superannuated.

N.B. If a widow marry, she shall have but half her allowance during her second marriage. But if her second husband die, she shall again receive the whole as before, while she continues a widow.

7. If any Travelling Preacher be superannuated, or become an invalid, before he has deposited ten guineas in the Fund, he shall be allowed twelve pounds annually for life, on condition that he subscribe one guinea annually, till the ten guineas be subscribed, or that he make up the ten guineas sooner.

8. If any married Travelling Preacher die before he has deposited ten guineas in the Fund, his widow shall be allowed twelve pounds annually for life, on condition that she subscribe one guinea annually till the ten guineas are subscribed, or that she make up the ten guineas sooner.

9. No Preacher shall have any right to this Fund, till he be admitted into full connexion.

10. The widow of a Preacher that has never been admitted into full connexion shall have no right to the privileges of this Fund.

11. If any widow of a Preacher as aforesaid marry, her annuity shall be at her own disposal, and be paid to her quarterly, by the Superintendent of the Circuit in which she resides, and no otherwise.

12. No person shall be entitled to any benefit from this Fund who has voluntarily left the work, or who sets up for himself independently of the Methodist Conference and Connexion.

13. No Preacher who shall be excluded this Connexion for any crime or misdemeanour shall have any

benefit from this Fund, except the money he may have subscribed towards the support of it, which shall be returned to him.

14. No Travelling Preacher who neglects to pay his subscription for four years successively, except those engaged in Foreign Missions, shall have any benefit from this Fund. And every Travelling Preacher who does not bring or send his subscription to the Conference every year shall be fined five shillings.

15. This Fund shall never be reduced to less than one thousand pounds.

16. If it shall happen at any future period that the Fund cannot support the burden upon it, then, in such a case, the Committee, with the advice of the Travelling Preachers, shall advise the best method, and use the most prudent means, to raise the Fund.

17. No part of this Fund shall be applied to any other purposes than those directed by these rules; and all moneys that have been borrowed from it shall be repaid with legal interest.

18. The Head-Master of Kingswood School, for the time being, and the Book-Steward, for the time being, subscribing as above to the Fund, shall have all the privileges allowed by it.

The present Stewards of this Fund are, Alexander Mather, John Pawson, Thomas Taylor, and William Thompson.

The present Committee are, Robert Roberts, Thomas Coke, John Allen, Richard Rodda, Samuel Bradburn, James Rogers, Joseph Bradford, Benjamin Rhodes.

Q. How, or in what form, may a person leave a legacy to the Preachers' Fund?

A. Let him leave it to any person or persons that he can confide in, in trust for that purpose, without mentioning the design in his will;—suppose to any one or more of the present Stewards.

XXXI.—AN ACCOUNT OF KINGSWOOD SCHOOL.

Q. 37. WHAT can be done for the support of Kingswood School?

A. Let a public collection be made in all the chapels throughout the three kingdoms the Sunday before or after Midsummer, and let the following account be read :—*

“The wisdom and love of God have now thrust out a large number of labourers into his harvest; men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God, by saving their own souls, and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their carnal things; so that they have food to eat, raiment to put on, and a place where to lay their head, and are content therewith.

“A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married Preachers. These also lack nothing, having a quarterly allowance over and above for their little children; so that neither they nor their husbands need to be careful about many things, but may wait upon the Lord without distraction.

“Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those who have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother’s direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this, we have a school on purpose for them, wherein they have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.

“In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the institution! Is it fit that the children of those who give up themselves wholly to the work of the Lord, and labour to save souls from death,

* This collection is now generally made in the month of November.—EDIT.

should want what is needful either for the soul or body? Ought not we to supply what the parent cannot, because of his labours in the Gospel? How excellent are the effects of this institution? The parent, eased of his weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labour. And perhaps some of those children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall rest from their labours.

“It is well known that the children want nothing; that they scarce know what sickness means; that they are well instructed in whatever they are capable of learning; that they are carefully and tenderly governed; and that constant care is taken that the behaviour of all belonging to the house is such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.

“But the expense of such an undertaking is very large, so that necessity obliges us, once a year, to ask the assistance of all those, in every place, who wish well to the work of God, who long to see sinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

“All of you who are thus minded have an opportunity now of showing your love to the Gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that was ever set on foot in this kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know, that in doing this you lend unto the Lord: in due time he will pay you again.”

It is now agreed, that the boys shall be received into the school at the age of eight years, and that they shall continue till they are fourteen; that if any Preacher can give a sufficient reason why his boy should not go to the school, he shall be allowed twelve pounds a year from the Kingswood Collection; that the daughters of Travelling Preachers, from the time

that they are nine years of age, shall receive from the said Collection eight guineas a year, for four years.*

XXXII.—AN ACCOUNT OF THE YEARLY COLLECTION.

Q. 37. How may we raise a General Fund for carrying on the work of God?

A. By a yearly subscription, to be proposed by every Superintendent, when he visits the classes at Lady-day, to be received either then or at the visitation following.

To this end he may read and enlarge upon the following hints in every Society:—

“How shall we send a sufficient number of labourers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? suppose the north-west of Ireland, the north of Scotland, Wales, and many parts of England? Many are willing to hear, but are neither able nor willing to bear the expense. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: stay till the word of God hath touched their hearts, and then they will endeavour to provide for them who preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean time, to supply their lack of service? to raise a General Fund, out of which, from time to time, the expense may be defrayed? By this means, those who willingly offer themselves may travel through every part, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the Gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite to promote this glorious work?

“Besides this, in carrying on so large a work through the three kingdoms, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expense, or the work must be at a full stop. Many, too, are the occasional distresses of our

* The age at which the daughters of the Itinerant Preachers now begin to receive the allowance for education is eight years.

Preachers, or their families, which require an immediate supply; otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to leave the work.

“Let every member of Society, once a year, set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less, as God hath prospered him, at the Lady-day visitation of the classes. Let every one herein do as he is disposed in his own mind, and according to the ability which God giveth, and there will be no lack.

“Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like this since you first heard the Gospel sound? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are pressed above measure. ‘Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.’ Help to send forth able, willing labourers into our Lord’s harvest; so shall you be assistant in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to spread the Gospel of your salvation into the remotest corners of the kingdom, till the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land as the waters cover the sea; so shall it appear to ourselves, and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one Spirit: so shall the baptized Heathens be yet again constrained to cry out, ‘See how these Christians love one another!’”

The money thus subscribed shall be brought to the Conference by the Assistant Preacher.

XXXIII.—HOW TO PRESERVE THE CHAPELS.

Q. 38. ARE all our chapels safe?

A. Not all; for some of them are not settled upon Trustees; several of the Trustees for others are dead.

Q. 39. What then is to be done?

A. Let the Trustees who have debts on any of the chapels give a bond to settle them as soon as they can be indemnified.

Let the surviving Trustees choose others without delay, and let them indorse their Deed thus:—

“We, the remaining Trustees of the Methodist

chapel in M——, do, according to the power vested in us, by this Deed, choose A B C to be Trustees of the said chapel, in the place of D E F, deceased. Witness our hands.”

The Deed must have two new ten-shilling stamps on it; and for that purpose must be sent up to the Book-Room.

Every Deed must be drawn on parchment with two ten-shilling stamps.

If it relate to a chapel out of London, it must be acknowledged by the person or persons conveying the premises to Trustees, (after the execution of it,) before a Master-extraordinary in Chancery; and it must be enrolled in Chancery, within six lunar months after the execution, or it is of no validity. It must therefore be sent to the Book-Steward, allowing him sufficient time to get it enrolled.

Almost every eminent Attorney-at-law in the country is a Master-extraordinary in Chancery.

Q. 40. In what manner may a chapel or preaching-house be settled? *

A. In the following manner:—

This Indenture, made in the —— year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Third, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, and so forth; and in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and —— Between A B of D in the county of C on the one part, and F G H I K, &c., on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in consideration of the sum of five shillings of lawful money of Great Britain, by the said F G H I K to the said A B truly paid before the sealing and delivering hereof, the receipt whereof the said A B doth hereby acknowledge, and for divers other considerations him thereunto moving, the said A B hath granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents doth bargain and sell, unto the said F G H I K, &c.,

* This form of trust is now superseded by the “Model Deed,” which has been adopted by the Conference, and is sold at the Book-Room, 14, City-road, London.—EDIT.

and their executors, administrators, and assigns, all that lately erected house or tenement known by the name of the Methodist chapel, situated in ——— aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of ———, together with all the ways, drains, and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title, and interest in law and equity; to have and to hold the said chapel and other premises to the said F G H I K, &c., and their assigns for ever: Nevertheless, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit from time to time, and at all times for ever, such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called Methodists, held in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, or elsewhere, specified by name in a Deed enrolled in Chancery, under the hand and seal of the Rev. John Wesley, and bearing date 28th day of February, 1784, and no others, to have and enjoy the said premises, in order that they may therein preach and expound God's holy word, and perform all other acts of religious worship; provided that the persons so appointed preach no other doctrines than are contained in Mr. Wesley's Notes upon the New Testament, and his four volumes of Sermons, by him published; provided also, that the same Preacher shall not be sent to the said chapel for more than two years successively, without the consent of the said Trustees given in writing; that the said Trustees shall have full power to choose from among themselves a Steward, or Treasurer, who shall receive all the seat-rents, &c., which money so received shall be applied towards paying the interest of all moneys due upon the premises, for repairs of the said chapel, and toward reducing the principal till the whole is paid; that, in case of necessity, the said Trustees shall have full power to mortgage the premises, till the debt contracted be fully discharged; or, if the Methodist Society in that place should be dissolved, or come to nothing, or if a larger or more convenient chapel

should be wanting, then, in either of the afore-mentioned cases, the Trustees for the time being shall have full power to sell the premises, and, in the latter case, shall dispose of the purchase-money towards building another chapel.

In witness hereof, the said A B hath hereunto set his hand and seal, &c.

XXXIV.—CERTAIN REGULATIONS MADE AT LEEDS,
IN 1797.

To the Methodist Societies.

LEEDS, August 7, 1797.

DEAR BRETHREN,

WE think it our duty to inform you, by the earliest opportunity, of the measures we have taken, in order to satisfy those of our brethren who have been made more or less uneasy by sundry publications circulated through the Societies: and we trust, that on a serious consideration of the regulations we have agreed to at this Conference, you will see that the sacrifices in respect to authority, which we have made on the part of the whole body of Travelling Preachers, evidence our willingness to meet our brethren in everything which is consistent with the existence of the Methodist discipline, and our readiness to be their servants for Jesu's sake.

I. In respect to finances, or money matters:

1. We have determined to publish annually a very minute account of the disbursements or application of the Yearly Collection; and,

2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood School.

3. That all bills for the support of Travelling Preachers, and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expenses, and all other matters of a temporal kind for their support, for which the Circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the Quarterly Meeting,

and be signed by the general Steward of the Circuit, before they can be brought to the District Committee.

II. In respect to all other temporal matters :

1. It has been determined that no Circuits shall be divided till such division has been approved of by their respective Quarterly Meetings, and signed by the general Stewards.

2. That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the District Committees, till the approbation of the respective Quarterly Meetings be first given, signed by the Circuit Stewards.

III. In respect to the receiving and excluding private members of Society :

1. The Leaders' Meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial improper to be received into the Society : and after such declaration the Superintendent shall not admit such person into the Society.

2. No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders' Meeting.

IV. In respect to the appointment and removal of Leaders, Stewards, and Local Preachers, and concerning Meetings :

1. No person shall be appointed a Leader or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders' Meeting ; the nomination to be in the Superintendent, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders' Meeting.

2. The former Rule concerning Local Preachers is confirmed ; namely, "That no person shall receive a Plan as a Local Preacher without the approbation of a Local Preachers' Meeting."

3. In compliance with a request made by the Committee of persons from various parts, namely, "That the Conference be requested to re-consider and revise those Rules which relate to the calling of Meetings, and appointing Local Preachers, made last year," we say, "No Local Preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other Circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the Superintendent of the Cir-

cuit in which he lives ; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea but from men in office, who act in conjunction with the Superintendent of that Circuit which he visits." The design of this Rule is to prevent any, under the character of Local Preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them ; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expense, from inviting Local Preachers thus to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the Local Preachers, who, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable Local Preachers in the kingdom, who were in the Committee which met the Committee of Preachers appointed by the Conference, declared their high approbation of the Rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

4. As the Committee above-mentioned requested also, that the minute of the last Conference, concerning the calling of Meetings to consider of the affairs of the Society or Connexion, be explained ; and as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole body ; we have agreed upon the following explanation, namely,—

(1.) As the Leaders' Meeting is the proper Meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly Meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal Meetings, in general, would be contrary to the Methodist economy, and very prejudicial in their consequences. But,

(2.) In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow that other formal Meetings may be held if they first receive the approbation of the Superintendent, and the Leaders' or Quarterly Meeting ; provided also, that the Superintendent, if he please, be present at every such Meeting.

V. We have selected all our ancient Rules, which were made before the death of our late venerable

Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which are essential Rules, or prudential at this present time; and have solemnly signed them, declaring our approbation of them, and determination to comply with them, two Preachers excepted, who, in consequence, withdrew from us.

VI. We have determined that all the Rules which relate to the Societies, Leaders, Stewards, Local Preachers, Trustees, and Quarterly Meetings, shall be published, with the Rules of the Society, for the benefit and convenience of all the members.

VII. In respect to all new Rules which shall be made by the Conference :

It is determined, that if, at any time, the Conference see it necessary to make any new Rule for the Societies at large, and such Rule should be objected to at the first Quarterly Meeting in any given Circuit, and if the major part of that Meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, be of opinion, that the enforcing of such Rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit, it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly Meeting before the second Conference. But if the Rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole Connexion. Nevertheless, the Quarterly Meetings rejecting a new Rule shall not, by publications, public Meetings, or otherwise, make that Rule a cause of contention, but shall strive by every means to preserve the peace of the Connexion.

Thus, brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public Meetings.

1. We have delivered the whole of our Yearly Collection to your management. For we know by experience, that the bills of the Quarterly Meetings, if only mere justice be done to the Preachers and their families, will amount to much more than the Yearly Collection. The Conference will, in this business, have no authority whatsoever. They will have nothing but the trouble of receiving the money, and paying

the bills which shall have been sent to them from the Quarterly Meetings, and been approved of by the District Committees. And when the accounts are published by the Conference, every Quarterly Meeting may compare its own accounts with those of the Conference, and thereby have as complete a check as the nature of things can possibly admit of.

The Conference has reserved to itself the management of its own Book concerns. This is most reasonable, as the institution was established for the carrying on of the work of God, under the direction of Mr. Wesley and the Conference; was continued by the Deed, or codicil of Mr. Wesley's will, for the use of the Conference; as the whole burden of the management of the business lies upon the Conference, and the servants they employ, and on the Superintendents of Circuits; and also, as it is the only fund which can supply any deficiencies of the Yearly Collection, as the accounts published in our Minutes for several years past clearly evidence, the Yearly Collection having not been nearly sufficient for the wants of the Preachers and families, and for the carrying on of the work of God in general.

2. The whole management of our temporal concerns may now be truly said to be invested in the Quarterly Meetings, the District-Meetings having nothing left them but a negative.

3. Our Societies have a full check on the Superintendent by means of their Leaders' Meeting, in regard to the introduction of persons into Society; whilst the Superintendent has sufficient scope allowed him for the increase of the Societies, not only according to the common course of things, but at the times of remarkable out-pourings of the Spirit of God.

4. The members of our Societies are delivered from every apprehension of clandestine expulsions; as that Superintendent would be bold indeed who would act with partiality or injustice in the presence of the whole Meeting of Leaders. Such a Superintendent, we trust, we have not among us: and if such there ever should

be, we should be ready to do all possible justice to our injured brethren.

5. There is now no Society-officer among us who can be received without the consent of that Meeting to which he particularly belongs ; nor can any officer be appointed, except upon the same plan.

6. In order to prevent any degree of precipitation in making of new Rules, and to obtain information of the sentiments of our people on every such Rule, we have agreed to the article mentioned under the seventh head, by which no regulations will be finally confirmed till after a year's consideration, and the knowledge of the sentiments of the Connexion at large, through the medium of all their public officers.

In short, brethren, out of our great love for peace and union, and our great desire to satisfy your minds, we have given up to you far the greatest part of the Superintendent's authority : and if we consider, that the Quarterly Meetings are the sources from whence all temporal regulations during the intervals of the Conference must now originally spring ; and also, that the Committee formed according to the Plan of Pacification can—in every instance in which the Trustees, Leaders, and Stewards choose to interfere respecting the gifts, doctrines, or moral character of Preachers—supersede in a great measure the regular District Committees ; we may, taking all these things into our view, truly say, that such have been the sacrifices we have made, that our District Committees themselves have hardly any authority remaining, but a bare negative in general, and the appointment of a Representative to assist in drawing up the rough draft of the stations of the Preachers. And besides all this, we have given the Quarterly Meetings opportunity of considering every new law, of suspending the execution of it for a year in their respective Circuits, and of sending their sentiments upon it to the Conference before it be finally confirmed.

We have represented these measures which we have taken for your satisfaction, in as concise a manner as

we well could, giving you the sense of the whole, not only for brevity's sake, but for expedition, that you may be informed of the general heads of our proceedings as soon as possible. In the Regulations which will be published with the Rules of the Society, as mentioned above, you will have the whole at large.

XXXV.—SUNDRY ADVICES TO THE PREACHERS.

BE tender of the character of every brother, but keep at the utmost distance from countenancing sin.

Say nothing in the Conference but what is strictly necessary, and to the point in hand.

If accused by any one, remember, recrimination is no acquittance ; therefore avoid it.

Beware of impatience of contradiction ; be firm, but be open to conviction. The cause is God's, and he needs not the hands of an Uzzah to support the ark. The being too tenacious of a point, because *you* brought it forward, is only feeding self. Be quite easy if a majority decide against you.

Use no craft or guile to gain a point. Genuine simplicity will always support itself. But there is no need always to say all you know or think.

Beware of too much confidence in your own abilities, and never despise an opponent.

Avoid all lightness of spirit, even what would be innocent anywhere else. "Thou God seest me."

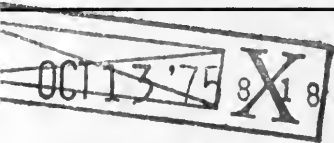
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