

PROCEEDINGS

McAllum ⁴ administers the sacrament to that people on sabbath 12 current, and expects the Revd. Mr. Johnson ⁵ from Aberdeen to assist. I, and one of my colleagues hopes to communicate with them. May the power and spirit of Jehovah be with each of us.

I wish my dear friend every blessing as Son—Servant,—Soldier and an Ambassador of Jesus Christ. . . . I love all that love you in Ayr—give my love to them all. I do not know where I shall be stationed next year. I have little choice only I would wish to avoid a Walking Circuit.

(A SECRET) I have some thoughts of intimating a desire of Marriage to Mr. Wesley by way of Letter from a proposal of my friend, viz. as she has proposed to keep herself free from Conference, or Circuit Charge for a time. But I am afraid, Fear not say you. I am Dear friend yours affectionately
Henry Boyd

EDWARD DROMGOOLE AND JOHN WESLEY

In his researches in preparation for Vol. IV of the series *Religion on the American Frontier*, Dr. William Warren Sweet, the well-known Methodist historian, came across a hitherto unpublished letter by John Wesley. Although it has now been published on pp. 13-14 of Dr. Sweet's volume on *The Methodists* in the above series, it seems well worth while to reprint it in our *Proceedings* especially as Dr. Sweet has sent us some notes on Edward Dromgoole, the recipient. The letter was found among the Edward Dromgoole Papers, numbering several hundred, now in the Library of the University of North Carolina, Chapel, North Carolina.
Frank Baker.

"Edward Dromgoole", says Dr. Sweet, "was a native of County Sligo, Ireland, born in the year 1751. Reared a Roman Catholic, he was converted to Methodism and joined the society in 1770. It is probable that his public recantation of Catholicism alienated his family, and may have been a contributing factor in his removal to America the same year. He sailed for Baltimore, Maryland, in May, 1770, and made his way to Frederick County in that colony, where his Christian experience was renewed under the preaching of

⁴ Duncan McAllum was at this time the Assistant at Inverness.

⁵ Robert Johnson, the Assistant at Aberdeen. He had been ordained by Wesley in 1786.

another native Irishman, Robert Strawbridge. Dromgoole began preaching on the Frederick Circuit in 1773, and at the second Conference held in America, May 25, 1774, he was admitted on trial to the travelling connection, and assigned, with three others, to the Baltimore Circuit. In 1775 he was admitted into full connection. He served on several Circuits in Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina until 1786, when he ceased travelling, due to his marriage and growing family. He became a planter and merchant in Brunswick County, Virginia, though he remained active as a local preacher until his death, which occurred on February 12, 1835. The Methodist meeting house near his plantation home became known as Dromgoole's Chapel. His home was a stopping place for Methodist preachers as long as he lived, and Bishop Asbury was often a guest there. One of his sons, George Coke Dromgoole, served as a Congressman from Virginia, and a grand-son, Reverend Edward Dromgoole Sims was a distinguished teacher at several Colleges, among them the University of Alabama.

"Wesley's letter is in response to one written to him by Dromgoole, dated Brunswick County, Virginia, May 22, 1783. (*Arminian Magazine*, 1791, pp. 219. *) Evidently this is the first letter Dromgoole had ever written Wesley, for he devotes a major portion of it to an account of his life and conversion, and speaks of his friendship for the Rev. Devereux Jarratt, near whose parish he resides, thus establishing himself as a person to be relied upon. His principal purpose in writing Wesley is to explain Asbury's importance to the American work, and to advise Wesley to send no one to America to displace him. He states:

The preachers are united to Mr. Asbury, and esteem him very highly in love for his work's sake; and earnestly desire his continuance on the continent during his natural life; and to act as he does at present, (to wit) to superintend the whole work, and go through all the circuits once a year.

He further states that Asbury 'is now well', and has a large share in the affections of the people, 'therefore they would not willingly part with him'.

Wesley's reply to Dromgoole indicates that he has taken Dromgoole's advice in good part, assuring him that Asbury will not be replaced, since he is now persuaded that Bro.

* The superscription in the *Arminian Magazine* copy of the letter is actually "Virginia, Petersburg, May 24th, 1783."

Asbury has been 'raised up' to keep things in order in America, and that he was doing just what he would do if it had pleased God to bring him to America. Thus this letter furnishes additional light on the relationship between John Wesley and the American Methodists in the critical period immediately preceding the formation of the American Methodists into an independent ecclesiastical body."

The letter is addressed

Mr. Edward Dromgoole,
Brunswick County,
Virginia.

It reads as follows :—

"Bristol, Sept. 17, 1783.

My Dear Brother.

The more sensible we are to our own weakness the more strength we shall receive from above. As long as we feel that we are helpless and blind and poor, our strong helper will be always at hand. I am glad to hear, that notwithstanding all these Commotions, He is carrying on his work in America. It is a peculiar Blessing, that the Labourers are connected together, so as to act in concert with each other: And that God has given you all, to be of one heart and one mind that you may 'kindly think and meekly speak the same.' One would have imagined, that ye 'fell monster War,' would have utterly destroyed the work of God. So it has done in all Ages and Countries: So it did in Scotland a few years ago. But that his Work should increase at such a season, was never heard of before! It is plain, God has wrought a new thing in the Earth, shewing thereby, that nothing is too hard for Him.

I have not heard anything concerning Mr. Jarratt for a long season. You send me welcome News concerning him: I am glad to hear, that his Love is not grown cold. It is well, that you 'agree to disagree' in your opinions concerning Public Affairs. There is no end of disputing about these matters. Let everyone enjoy his own persuasion. Let us leave God to govern the world: And he will be sure to do all things well. And all will work together for his glory, and for the good of them yt love Him.

When the Government in America is settled, I believe some of our Brethren will be ready to come over. I cannot

advise them to do it yet; First let us see how Providence opens itself. And I am the less in haste, because I am persuaded Bro: Asbury is raised up to preserve Order among you, and to do just what I should do myself, if it pleased God to bring me to America. Go on in the name of ye Lord and in the power of his might! I am

Your Affectionate Brother,
J. Wesley."

NEW BOOKS AND ARTICLES

It is a good thing for students of Methodist history sometimes to turn their thoughts further back than the Wesleys and the Annesleys and gain a wider perspective of the framework into which the Methodist movement fitted. Mr. Duncan Coomer, M.A., one of our members, has helped us to do this in his recently published *English Dissent under the Early Hanoverians* (Epworth Press, 6/- net). This interesting volume traces the development of Dissent in the Three Denominations, and describes at some length the life of the Dissenting meeting-house in the early 18th Century, its worship, its parsons and people, its finance and doctrines. In the broader field Mr. Coomer discusses the relationship which existed between the Dissenting Churches and the Established Church, on the one hand, and the State on the other.

A great deal of careful research has gone into this admirably-documented book; the Bibliography itself is a welcome addition to the student's library. The most valuable section of the book for members of our Society is that which deals with the impact of Methodism on Dissent. Philip Doddridge is described as 'the one prominent Dissenter who had a good word to say for the new movement' and the criticisms of Isaac Watts and others are quoted at length.

The later years of Dissent are outside Mr. Coomer's scope, which is a matter of regret to me, for I had just read Samuel Bradburn's little pamphlet published in 1792: *The Question, Are the Methodists Dissenters? Fairly Examined*. Bradburn's question has never adequately been answered and there is no one more qualified than Mr. Coomer to answer it. Meanwhile, we are grateful for this interesting and informative study of the period into which the Wesleys were born and in which they began their work.