

## CHAPTER IV.

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### “A Circuit of Note.”

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JOHN RIDE, who came to Brinkworth Circuit as superintendent in July 1828, was one of the greatest missionaries and Circuit superintendents that the Primitive Methodist Church has produced. For practically the whole period of his ministry he was engaged in extension work, and finally died on the Mission Station at Benalla in Australia. To him, more than to any other single individual, is to be traced the wonderful spread of Primitive Methodism eastward, springing from the Brinkworth Circuit, which only ended when the missions of the Hull and Norwich Districts rendered further advance unnecessary. With him as its human guide, the Brinkworth Circuit began to be what Hugh Bourne described it to be, “A Circuit of Note” in the Connexion, and what Mr. Kendall writing in 1907 has described as “The famous Brinkworth Circuit.” Famous it was

in the days gone by for the light it gave, by the power of God, to scores of benighted villages and towns, and "Of Note" it is as a Mother of Circuits in the past, and as a most loyal and vigorous Circuit of to-day. Full proof of this we hope will be shown in this chapter. By Faith, by Love, by Liberality and Self-Denial, allied to Laborious care and unstinted Zeal, the Circuit has ever shown true greatness of spirit. All things considered it has made a contribution to Connexional Life which will favorably compare with that of any other Circuit. In 1833 the Brinkworth District was formed, and included the following Circuits, viz., Brinkworth, Blaenavon, Witney, Frome, Pillowell, Haverfordwest, HEAD Motcombe, Redruth, St. Austell, Bath, OF A Stroud, Salisbury, Shefford, Moreton, and DISTRICT. St. Ives. The District remained undivided until the formation of the Bristol District in 1848, and the London District in 1853. Before these divisions, in addition to the Circuits named above, the Brinkworth District included Worcester Branch, Reading, Aylesbury, Buckingham, Luton, Weymouth, Poole, Southampton, Maidenhead, Swansea. Pembroke, Hereford, and a number of intervening stations. The Salisbury and Southampton District was mainly formed out of it in 1893, and the name, for the sake of easier localisation, was in 1896 changed to the Brinkworth and Swindon District. In the early days of our church several villages gave their names to Districts, but only for a

short time, and the village of Brinkworth alone is found to-day as the name of a District. It is not likely to lose its proud distinction now, and so a permanent memorial of the village victories of our church in the past will be retained.

On the Circuit Plan, Jan.-Apr., 1829, appears the following special Notice: "A Missionary Meeting will be held at Wootton Bassett on Good Friday, to commence at two o'clock; likewise a General Fast will be kept throughout the Circuit on Good Friday."

That Meeting was held, and presumably BERKSHIRE the Fast was observed, and remarkable MISSION. results followed. Long and earnest were the prayers offered that the proposed Mission into Berkshire might be crowned with success, and Mr. Ind was heard to declare his conviction that for every penny contributed a soul would be won. As everybody knows, that was but a faint adumbration of the glorious results to be achieved. With a balance in the Circuit Funds of £7 10s. 8d., and a membership, excluding Stroud Branch, of 527, the superintendent J. Ride, with John Petty, set out on April 27th, to explore and evangelise into Berkshire. The Circuit at that time stretched from near Tetbury to Liddington and Badbury, and from Cricklade and Stratton to near Calne and Chippenham. Beyond these bounds the missionaries now stepped, and leaving for the present the north-east corner of Wilts, they opened their Mission

at Wanborough on April 27th. Thence they visited successively Little Hinton, Church Hinton, Bishopstone, Idstone and Ashbury, carefully feeling their way to see if there was need of their services. At Ashbury they found a clergyman, rare among his class, who afterwards, hearing Mr. Jukes, declared that his curates had come. At Bourton, after singing through the village, they preached the first Primitive Methodist sermon in Berkshire. Day by day the missionaries journeyed on through that week and the next, as told by Mr. Petty himself, and on May 1st preached at Ramsbury and Aldbourne, and then returned to Wootton Bassett, visiting other villages on the way, Mr. Petty, apparently, being called away shortly to other parts of the Connexion.

The Report they gave showed the great need and urgency of the establishment of a Mission to Berkshire and that part of Wiltshire bordering it. As Mr. Heath had found it in North Wilts, so they found it in Berkshire. There were no Wesleyans, and very few Dissenters of any kind, and, save at Ashbury, clergymen with evangelical sympathies were unknown. The opposition and cruelty the missionaries received gives abundant evidence of the lack of religion, and consequently of morals, amongst all ranks of society, as does also the bitter and persistent persecution levelled against their early converts. The response made to the appeal of God thus made known by those who had been "to spy out

the land" was immediate and continued. The Circuit and the missionaries alike vowed to win this district for Christ, and the heroism of the latter, both men and women, was used of God to accomplish this.

On May 10th, Mr. R. Jukes was definitely set aside as the missionary. He took the same route largely as his predecessors, preaching also with varied success at Ogbourne, Baydon and Highworth, and to Shrivenham he payed repeated visits during the next month. Here he absolutely failed to

R. JUKES effect any apparent good, being only  
 AND greeted with ridicule, molestation, and  
 T. RUSSELL. opposition, and he had to leave the  
 place at last without establishing any  
 society. The June Quarterly Meeting sent out Mr. Moore to assist him, and together they labored hard, endured much persecution, but were "cheered with signs of good, and the prospect of ultimate success." In September, Mr. Moore was succeeded by Mr. T. Russell, a man of great physical endurance, who became pre-eminently the Apostle of Berkshire. At Upper Lambourn the first Society of seven members was formed at the end of September, 1829, and with other small societies a membership of forty-eight was reported to the December Quarterly Meeting, with a contribution therefrom to the Circuit Funds of five guineas. Mr. Ride was now sent to superintend the mission, with Mr. Russell as his colleague. On the

# PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHERS SUNDAY PLAN Of Brinkworth Circuit.

Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee. 1st Tim. 4. 16.

| 1827.<br>PLACES AND TIME.                          | JULY    |         | AUGUST   |          |          |          | SEPT.    |          |          |         |         | OCT.     |          |
|--|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|---------|---------|----------|----------|
|  | 22      | 29      | 5        | 12       | 19       | 26       | 2        | 9        | 16       | 23      | 30      | 7        | 14       |
| Brinkworth $\frac{1}{2}$ past 9<br>and 6 ... ..    | 15<br>2 | 12<br>4 | 9<br>3   | 7<br>8   | 17<br>2  | 10<br>10 | 20<br>3  | 6        | 10<br>28 | 21<br>1 | 14<br>3 | 11       | 22<br>2  |
| Seagry 10 and 6 ...                                | 7<br>4  | 36<br>3 | 34<br>32 | 10<br>27 | 24<br>1  | 30       | 8        | 24<br>28 | 11<br>3  | 9       | 6       | 2        | 12<br>1  |
| Langley 2 ... ..                                   | 4       | 3       | 32       | 27       | 1        | 23       | 36       | 20       | 34       | 3       | 10      | 7        | 1        |
| Cricklade $\frac{1}{2}$ past 1 & 6                 | 6<br>19 | 2<br>31 | 4<br>16  | 38<br>18 | 11<br>36 | 2<br>38  | 10<br>39 | 3        | 15<br>40 | 2<br>13 | 1       | 3<br>19  | 32<br>31 |
| Blunsdon 6 ... ..                                  | 6       | 2       | 48       | 3        | 11       | 2        | 10       | 3        | 15       | 2       | 1       | 3        | 32       |
| Eascott 2 ... ..                                   | 16      | 19      | 13       | 26       | 48       | 18       | 31       | 28       | 18       | 18      | 29      | 6        | 47       |
| Broad Town 10 & 6...                               | 9<br>3  | 8<br>6  | 15<br>21 | 14<br>1  | 20<br>35 | 11<br>8  | 29<br>2  | 26<br>10 | 9<br>28  | 7<br>6  | 12<br>2 | 1        | 21<br>20 |
| Wotton Bassett $\frac{1}{2}$ past<br>1 and 6... .. | 21      | 15      | 2        | 11<br>14 | 3<br>9   | 6<br>32  | 28<br>29 | 8<br>26  | 30       | 28      | 2       | 20<br>32 | 27<br>11 |
| Tottenham 2, Gret-<br>tenham 6 ... ..              | 20      | 28      | 42       | 33       | 43       | 17       | 24       | 11       | 7        | 25      | 29      | 12       | 45       |
| Guadiere 2, Clack 6                                | 28      | 27      | 26       | 36       | 46       | 10       | 12       | 21       | 10       | 17      | 42      | 24       | 46       |
| Christian-Malford 2,<br>Dauntsey 6 ... ..          | 14      | 45      | 29       | 30       | 44       | 43       | 24       | 36       | 21       | 15      | 20      | 34       | 47       |
| Malmesbury 2 and 6                                 | 2<br>7  | 4<br>23 | 3<br>24  | 6        | 2<br>42  | 9        | 3<br>11  | 15       | 20<br>8  | 1       | 3<br>10 | 12       | 2<br>30  |
| Hallavington 2, Stan-<br>ton 6 ... ..              | 30      | 24      | 23       | 41       | 32       | 12       | 10       | 7        | 42       | 36      | 30      | 8        | 9        |
| Garsdane, Stonehill 5                              | 29      | 21      | 43       | 42       | 22       | 15       | 14       | 11       | 6        | 41      | 37      | 9        | 44       |
| Hook 5 ... ..                                      | 9       | 8       | 17       | 11       | 20       | 6        | 27       | 8        | 47       | 7       | 39      | 1        | 48       |
| Broad-Hinton 2 ...                                 | 3       | 6       | 15       | 1        | 9        | 8        | 17       | 10       | 26       | 6       | 32      | 42       | 11       |
| Stratton 6 ... ..                                  | 16      | 19      | 13       | 38       | 40       | 18       | 39       | 16       | 19       | 18      | 38      | 6        | 38       |

### PREACHERS.

1. S. Heath
2. G. Holloway
3. E. Foizey
4. J. Kellet
5. M. Cutler
6. J. Dixon
7. C. Carey
8. J. Hathrill
9. P. Ford
10. T. Wall
11. C. Matthews
12. W. Collett
13. B. Wheeler
14. J. Matthews
15. J. Sly
16. J. Skinner
17. J. Dash
18. J. Eggleton
19. B. Godwin
20. T. Dash
21. J. Matthews
22. A. Woodward
23. T. Knapp
24. J. Smith

### ON TRIAL.

25. W. Webb
26. A. Trotman
27. P. Woodward
28. W. Miles
29. J. Brooks
30. I. Teagle
31. I. Brush
32. W. Horsell
33. M. Sherrer
34. J. Simkins
35. I. Gee
36. M. Sealey
37. T. Spencer
38. J. Matthews
39. J. Page
40. R. Sharps
41. J. Smith

### EXHORTERS.

42. J. Dixon
43. R. Matthews
44. A. Sly
45. A. Matthews
46. C. Smith
47. J. Habgood
48. A. Reynolds

NOTE.—S. Sacrament; L. Lovefeast; T. Tickets; C. Collection.  
Quarter Day will be held at Brinkworth, Sept. 17th. Preachers will meet  
at 9 o'clock, Leaders and Stewards at 2.

That no Person be permitted to preach among us, whose name is not on the Printed Plan, or approved  
of by the Circuit Committee. Every Preacher must strictly attend to his own appointment,  
unless prevented by Sickness or some other lawful cause.

PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHERS' SUNDAY PLAN  
OF THE  
BERKSHIRE MISSION OF THE BRINKWORTH  
CIRCUIT, 1827 and 1830.

"The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few."—Luke x. 2.

| MONTHS              | DAYS | TIME. | OCT. |    | NOVEMBER. |    |    |    |    | DECEMBER. |    |    |    | JAN. |   |
|---------------------|------|-------|------|----|-----------|----|----|----|----|-----------|----|----|----|------|---|
|                     |      |       | 18   | 25 | 1         | 8  | 15 | 22 | 29 | 6         | 13 | 20 | 27 | 1    | 8 |
| Bishopstone ...     | 5    |       | 1    | 4  | 3         | *  | 10 | 5  | 4  | 2         | 3  | 4  | 1  | *    | 2 |
| Ashbury ...         | 1½   |       | 1    | 4  | 3         | *  | 10 | 5  | 4  | 2         | 3  | 4  | 1  | *    | 2 |
| Hinton ...          | 10   |       | 1    | 5  | 2         | 4  | 1  | 5  | 4  | 20        | 1  | 4  | 1  |      | 1 |
| Wanborough ...      | 2    |       | 3    | 5  | 2         | 4  | *  | 30 | 3  | *         | 1  | 5  | 4  |      | 1 |
| Baydon ...          | 10   |       | 3    |    | 4         |    | 20 |    | 3  |           | 2  |    | 5  |      | 4 |
| Aldbourne ...       | 4    |       | 3    |    | 4         |    | 20 |    | 3  |           | 2  |    | 5  |      | 4 |
| Bourton ...         | 10   |       |      | 3  |           | 10 |    | 2  |    | 4         |    | 3  |    | 2    |   |
| Marston ...         | 3    |       |      | 3  |           | 1  |    | 20 |    | 4         |    |    |    | 2    |   |
| Ogbourne St. George | 10   |       |      |    |           |    |    |    |    |           |    |    |    |      |   |
| Ogbourne St. Andrew | 2    |       | 4    |    | 5         |    | 3  |    | 20 |           | 4  |    | 3  |      | 5 |
| East Garston ...    | 10   |       |      |    |           |    |    |    |    |           |    |    |    |      |   |
| Eastbury ...        | 2    |       |      | 2  |           | 3  |    | 1  |    | 10        |    | 2  |    | 1    |   |
| Lambourn ...        | 2    |       |      |    |           |    |    |    |    |           |    |    |    |      |   |
| Up-Lambourn ...     | 5    |       |      | 10 |           | 2  |    | 4  |    | 3         |    | 1  |    | 5    |   |
| Uffington ...       | 1½   |       |      |    |           |    |    |    |    |           |    |    |    |      |   |
| Woolson ...         | 5    |       |      | 2  |           | 1  |    | 4  |    | 10        |    | 5  |    | 2    | 3 |

"Take heed how ye hear."

PREACHERS.

1. R. Jukes, T.P.
2. T. Russell, T.P.
3. J. Habgood.
4. G. Morse.
5. J. Baker.

C. For Collection.  
T. For Tickets.

N.B.—The preachers on this Plan are subject to the same Rules which are on the Circuit Plan.



January plan of 1830, "The Berkshire Mission" appears with the following places:—Ashbury, Bishopstone, Hinton, Wanborough, Aldbourne, Ogbourne St. George, Ogbourne St. Andrew, Eastbury, East Garsdon, Lambourn, Upper Lambourn, Bourton, Marston. By the end of the year the Mission reported 303 members, and the Mission has become the Shefford Mission, with J. Ride, T. Russell, (Miss) E. Smith, M. Harding and T. Adams as the missionaries; and it has a separate plan of its own with twenty-seven preaching places. In January 1831, the Mission became the Shefford Branch, and Jan. 1832, saw the Branch formed into a Circuit with 596 members, seven travelling preachers, about forty local preachers and exhorters, and forty-eight preaching places. It had certainly grown large enough and strong enough to become a Circuit, but as this is the story of Brinkworth Circuit and not of the Shefford Circuit, afterwards called Newbury, the wonderful work the daughter Circuit accomplished, with its soul-stirring account of the heroic labors of Ride, Russell, Bishop, (Miss) E. Smith and others, must be left to be told elsewhere. Here we will only pause to give some account of Missionary work in those days. A Plan of the Berkshire Mission, which will illustrate somewhat the methods of labor referred to by Mr. Ride below, is here given.



The P.M. Magazine of 1834 contains the following account of a—

### MISSIONARY SYSTEM

sent by "John Ride," as operating in the Shefford Circuit, and may be taken as "a plain unvarnished tale" of what was done in the operations sketched above, and further on in the chapter.

1. Every preacher sent out to mission is to preach eight sermons a week, three on the Sabbath and five on the week days; and as many more as he chooses.

2. Sometimes two preachers are sent out together; and sometimes one preacher is sent out by himself. If there be but one preacher, he takes up eight places, towns, villages, or neighborhoods. He takes them before him without omitting any; so that his missionary range covers a certain part of the country; and he does not omit any particular place on account of its appearing to be unlikely, but sweeps the country as far as he goes.

3. His duty is to preach one sermon a week at each place, in regular order. His Sunday preaching is usually given to the towns if there be any on his mission. And his preaching is almost uniformly in the open air, winter or summer. After preaching he endeavors to obtain a house to hold a prayer meeting. And if he have no one to assist he sings and prays; and then sings, prays, and concludes. Of course, he speaks a little if he chooses.

4. In addition to these labors, he diligently visits from house to house, and uses all other prudent means to bring forward the work of God. They sometimes lend tracts.

5. He is expected to live on his mission. The diligent family visiting is one peculiar means of opening his way; and if he conducts himself properly, it is found that almost uniformly the Lord opens his way both for food and lodging. But still he must expect privations.

6. So soon as the work breaks out, he forms societies, and uses every means to cultivate the minds of the people, and improve their talents. He meets the classes after preaching, and brings forward all he can to pray in the class meetings.

7. As soon as any appear to have talents for further usefulness they are formed in praying companies, and planned to hold meetings at different places on the Sundays,—and this is also a nursery for local preachers.

8. So soon as any of the week-night places can, by this means, have Sunday services, the week-night preaching is immediately taken off to once a fortnight, and this opens the missionary's way to take in new places. And so he proceeds until his mission is made into a branch,

9. If a place be long before a society be raised, they do not hastily give it up, but try every possible means to bring it forward.

10. When the missionary has preached a quarter at his eight places, he makes a general collection at every place for the support of the mission; and this seldom fails paying his salary, and sometimes it does more. And in like manner he makes a collection at the end of each quarter.

11. When two preachers are sent out together, they take up sixteen places, and follow each other in rotation, on a regular plan, preaching once a week at each place. And in all other respects proceed on the system already laid down.

12. If grievous persecution breaks out at any place, it is made known as soon as possible throughout the Circuit, and every society is engaged to pray for that particular place. And this has been blessed indeed.

Such is the bare outline of missionarying in "the brave days of old." Read with sympathetic insight, and alongside the facts and figures of the period, there is enough to warm the blood of the coldest, and enough to inspire the bravest and most self-sacrificing. At first, no doubt, the missionarying was less systematic than this, but it was all on the same lines,

and the details of the picture may be a little filled in by the aid of the following incidents :

On their first journey, Messrs. Ride and Petty entered Aldbourne amid great excitement, caused by the news of their arrival. Their earnest prayers at the cross were attended by the loud mocking laughter of children, adults only looking on from a distance, but at the close they found themselves surrounded by hundreds of people, who had come in to see them from all the neighborhood. The preaching was done to the accompaniment of the music of "merry-andrews," close behind the preacher. A horseman attempted to ride through the listening crowd; the clerk of the church walked round the congregation ringing a large bell, and getting the children to shout and scream. The missionaries, however, won the battle, and concluded the service in an orderly manner amidst quietness. Let it be noted that while this was going on at Aldbourne, many of the friends were assembled for prayer near Wootton Bassett, and in most earnest supplication on behalf of the missionaries they continued for many hours. Thus prayer and courageous zeal went together.

Preaching under the starlight at Church Lambourn, the exertion necessary to make himself heard caused Mr. Russell to vomit a quantity of blood, this sign of suffering opening for him the first

home there. This house became the preaching house, and to at once protect the dwelling and the tenant from probable damage, Mr. Russell walked to Salisbury and back, thirty miles, through the snow to secure a license. The preaching, as Mr. Ride says, was "generally in the open air," for sympathisers dare not open their houses either for the preachers or for services for fear of persecution or dismissal from their employment, and some of the preachers "had to wander on the Downs all night, after preaching, having nowhere to sleep." Only after a long round of agonising prayer in the corner of a wood at Ashdown, in February 1830, in the snow, did Mr. Ride and Mr. Russell obtain sufficient power and assurance to continue the mission against the widespread and powerful opposition manifested. The cry of "God give us Berkshire" from the souls of men prepared to die if necessary for Berkshire, gave them the county for Primitive Methodism; the shout of faiths' victory was heard, "Yonder country's ours; yonder country's ours."

In the Circuit Account book for June 1830, appears the following item: "Paid to Mr. J. Habgood for going to Abingdon, 13/-." There he had been sent to visit Mr. Russell in gaol, to which he had been sentenced for three months, ostensibly for selling the ten pennyworth of hymn books without a license, though the magistrates repeatedly offered to set him

at liberty if he would promise not to preach. Again we find the following items in the early years: "For licenses £1; 10/-; etc;" "Expenses for attempting to take J. H. before the magistrates, £1 10s. 9d.;" "Law expenses at Ashton Keynes, Hook, Blunsdon" were incurred to preserve property acquired; "Collections to meet expenses of trials of persecutors at Cirencester," and the Minutes' Books often refer to persecutions at Cricklade and elsewhere, and "that the travelling preachers all live together" indicates the pressure of circumstances, financial and otherwise. The following incident in the life of George Wallis, a native of Wootton Bassett, who became one of the early and well known ministers of the District, is given by Mr. Kendall, and illuminates the "Missionary System" given above: "One evening, Mr. G. Wallis, who had been preaching at a distant  
 A STRAW village, made for the hospitable home of  
 BED. Mr. S. Goddard, near Newbury, but found that all had retired to rest. Not caring to disturb them, he crept into a heap of straw to sleep. Later on came Mr. Thomas Russell, who had been unable to find shelter elsewhere. The family were soon roused by the new comer, and the youthful missionary, like John following the bolder Peter, left the straw for more comfortable quarters."

However, as we have heard it said, "Difficulties were made to conquer," and "The devil was made to

try, not to triumph over, the souls of men." Enemies were numerous, but friends were found also. Bigotry was almost universally prevalent amongst the adherents, and especially the clergymen of the State Church, but again and again the ministers and members of the Free Churches of those times succoured our missionaries; the Baptist minister's wife rushes into the threatening crowd at Aldbourne and brings Thomas Russell to shelter, and Mr. John Wilkes of the London Religious Protection Society, rescues the same missionary from Abingdon gaol at the end of a month's imprisonment. Mr. Russell appears at Brinkworth Missionary Meeting with plastered forehead and a black eye, from the determined persecution of Faringdon, but the warm hearted support of Missions by the Circuit is increased. William Hawkins, a farm laborer, is dismissed for joining the new "Society," but in a few years he is a prosperous farmer, and a friend of "the cause" all around. Thomas Hunt, of Broad Town, is threatened with dismissal if he will not cease to preach, but the church prays about his difficulty; and the foolish farmer is bluntly told by another farmer, "If you do sack Hunt, then he shall thatch my ricks, his wife shall darn the stockings, his boy shall make bee hackles. I'll set them on at once, and I'll open my barn for the services." Everywhere it may happen that great opposition is met with from "the lawyer, the constable, the clergyman, and the devil," but at

the end of ten years there are hundreds of Primitive Methodist preaching places of all kinds, thousands of church members, and hundreds of local preachers and other workers, in Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Hampshire, who are steadfastly bent on winning men for Christ, on saving men from sin and hell, and into heaven at last by the preaching of the Gospel of the Cross of Christ.

Great days were those for the Brinkworth Circuit. The constant coming and going of the missionaries, coupled with the constant life of the Circuit work, which was still growing; the efforts to secure permanent foot-hold by securing sites of land, and then by the erection of Connexional buildings, and again the calling out and sending forth of fresh missionaries into new fields of labor, kept the fire burning in new-born souls, and the meetings full of inspiration and power that gave the assurance of a life of vigor in the years to come. The story of the further Missionary work of the Circuit may now be briefly told.

When Shefford Branch was made a Circuit in January 1832, Brinkworth retained the following list of "Places," viz., Brinkworth, Seagry, Langly, Kington, Cricklade, Blunsdon, Eastcott, Broad Town, Wootton Bassett, Tottenham, Grittenham, Goatacre, Clack, Christian Malford, Dancey, Greenhill, Purton, Stone Hill, Stratton, Tytherton,



Avon, Badbury, Chiseldon, Wroughton, Cleverton, Malmesbury, Purton Stoke, Preston, Hampton, Hannington, Hilmarton, Bushton, Little Summerford, Moreden, Sutton, while Foxham and Coat also appear in the Account Book List, a total of 37 places. No

membership record however is to be found until September 1833, when it is given as 530. At Wootton Bassett a cottage was turned into a chapel in 1831, and at Purton Stoke in 1832, and at the June Quarterly Meeting of 1832 the Circuit resumed its missionary operations. The way eastward and southward being blocked by other Circuits, attention was perforce directed to the west of Wiltshire. In Chippenham no society had been formed since the attempts of the earliest days. It was now decided to "re-open" Chippenham, and Mr. Samuel Turner and Jas. Baker (born and converted at Hodson near Chiseldon) were sent as the missionaries of this new undertaking. For one quarter this appears on the "Plan" as the Castlecombe Mission, and that marks the beginning of the new extension. Thence they passed to Chippenham. Considerable opposition was met with, but the firmness of Mr. Turner overcame magisterial and other resistance, a foothold was gained, the Friends' Meeting House was ultimately purchased, Calne and other places were entered and services planned thereat, and at the end of six months the Chippenham Mission Plan contained eighteen places, including three market towns. Societies had been

formed at Stockley, Calne, Headington, Binacre, Laycock, Derry Hill, Studley, Thickwood, Biddleston, Coate, Rowde, and Cherhill, besides Chippenham itself, and the membership was over a hundred. This had been accomplished only by the great zeal and sturdiness of these pioneers, stayed and supported by the loyalty of the converts. Dowsed with water, and threatened with fire, and enduring privations, the missionaries triumphed, for the churches of the Circuit and the Mission prayed without ceasing for their victory, and God gave them power. In 1835 the Mission became a Circuit, with 350 members, and forty-one preaching places.

The joy of success filled the Circuit, and the work at home was vigorously prosecuted, with signs following. A Revival broke out at Hook at which twenty people professed conversion; other societies were enlarged, and the aggressive spirit grew. A conviction that Brinkworth should mission  
BRISTOL. Bristol had been in the mind of the Circuit for a considerable time, but it was a great thing to attempt. Bristol was a city of fame, a centre of influence in all the west country. To mission Bristol as Primitive Methodists would be a great undertaking, but a wise one. Could it be done? The Western Mission of 1823 had failed at Bristol, but the Brinkworth Circuit, though a village Circuit, possessed this advantage: it was near enough to keep in constant touch with its missionaries if they were

sent, and strong enough to help and re-inforce if necessary. At the end of nearly a year of anxious thought and prayer it was decided to make the advance. It was the will of God that Brinkworth should mission Bristol, and Samuel West and Samuel Turner were chosen for the work. The Bristol Mission was on the "Plan" for April to June, 1833, with these brethren planned, but only probably that the matter might be plainly brought before the whole Circuit, as a plea for further prayer, and the arrival at Bristol occurred on July 13th of that year. Their departure was preceded by the usual Missionary Meeting in the evening of the Quarter Day at Stratton, and by the stimulus of the "Union Camp Meeting" on Bishopstone Down as the Plan has it, in which the Brinkworth and Shefford Circuits united, on June 16th. This Camp Meeting was a great success, the projected mission was laid afresh on many hearts, and the selected missionaries were strengthened. After resting a night at Mr. Jas. Franklin's at Clack, doubtless full of prayer and thought these two zealous and laborious brethren, "well provisioned," set off on the march for Bristol. A preliminary survey of the condition of things at once convinced them of the abundant necessity of the preaching of the Gospel of the Grace of God. Great degradation was manifest, and again and again they were filled with unutterable anguish as they attempted "to save some" of those who so plainly needed salvation. On Sunday, July 14th, they commenced

their work by singing through the streets, and holding a service at Poyntzpool, where Mr. West preached a powerful and impressive sermon. This was followed by a service in the afternoon at Queen's square, and at night Mr. West preached at the Drawbridge. Something was done to reach the people's hearts day by day, and at the above places, on the Plain, and at Broad Street, the services were continued. The next Sunday saw them again preaching; at the Drawbridge a large congregation listened to the discourses, and a great influence rested upon them. Sinners were convicted, sought advice and counsel, and found pardon for sin. Dolman's chapel, a small building, was opened for worship on August 2nd, in the midst of a poor and dense population who had been blessed by the labors of the missionaries. The following extracts from Mr. West's journal will show us the missionaries at work: "Friday, July 19th.—I preached at Broad St., and held a prayer meeting. A powerful meeting. The people, during the week, had listened with great attention to the gospel of God: many hearts have been melted, and

MR. WEST'S there is every appearance of a good  
 JOURNAL. work at Bristol. O Lord, send us a  
 mighty shower. Amen. Wednesday,  
 24th.—Brother Turner preached on the Plain in the full glory. The word went home, and there is an evident breaking out of the work of God. The harvest appears quite ripe.—Lord, raise up laborers." And so on the journal runs. Let the reader pause to

contemplate such work as this by the two Brinkworth missionaries to Bristol. A work not unique, thank God, in the annals of our church, but a work at one with those other efforts which successfully planted Primitive Methodism in London and the great provincial cities of our land. For it is a fact that this mission had established Primitive Methodism in Bristol; the villagers had seized a secure foothold in the city, Brinkworth had taken hold of Bristol, and for nearly four years carefully nourished the Connexional life thus planted. More than once in those early days, the cupboard of the missionaries was replenished direct from the village Circuit. "Let us go and see how Brother West and Brother Turner are getting on at Bristol," cries good old Stephen Matthews of Brinkworth to Baker Matthews, and at

once preparation is made. First, the  
**STORES** donkey is brought out, then the cart;  
**REPLENISHED.** a bag of potatoes is placed therein  
 with other smaller provisions; all is  
 crowned with a good gammon of bacon, and off amid  
 the good wishes of the folk for the thirty mile journey  
 to Bristol. There the donkey is put up, and on the  
 broad shoulders of the visitors, potatoes and bacon  
 are carried through the streets of Bristol to the  
 preachers lodgings. The scene that took place  
 between the four may well be imagined, and we may  
 be sure that they would not part till they had made a  
 tour of the preaching places, and had a "round" of  
 praise and prayer for both Brinkworth and Bristol,

Such an act was a regular feature of the provisioning of the preachers both in the Berkshire and the Bristol Missions at first, and what is recorded above of the former is proof of the necessity of such practical sympathy. As the day, so the deed, and for the people and the times, that was a good way to work, and thereby and by similar conduct the souls of men were knit together, and the cords could not be broken. The preachers were beloved of the people, and "The Old Brinkworth Circuit" had a warm place in the hearts of the preachers. By October, 1833, the Bristol Mission Plan shows the following places regularly supplied by the two missionaries, aided by three groups of Prayer Leaders:—Dolman's Chapel, Bedminster, St. Phillips' Plain, Fishponds, Great Gardens, Little Ann's St., and Kingswood; Made-forever was added later. By slow degrees, and at a cost, the mission was developed, and at March Quarterly Meeting, 1837, the Bristol Circuit was formed with 190 members, twenty preaching places, and twenty local preachers. To-day there are in Bristol six Circuits, which of late years particularly are showing considerable enterprise, promising a bright future.

The next mission that appears on the plan is that of Tetbury, just over the border of Gloucestershire. It had been decided "That Bros. Preston and Excell go out on a Mission to Tetbury and the country

round, to commence April 8th (1838)." As a result

the Plan of the Tetbury Mission appears  
TETBURY. next quarter with Tetbury, Culkerton,

Crudwell, Sherston, Luckington, Did-  
marton, Horton, Hawkesbury Upton, Nailsworth,  
Minchinhampton, Avening, Eastcot and Oaksey,  
supplied by T. Cummin and J. Excell, T.P's, three  
local preachers and auxiliaries from Brinkworth,  
Seagry, etc. Hard was the soil here, and slow the  
progress, for hyper-Calvinism was deeply rooted. No

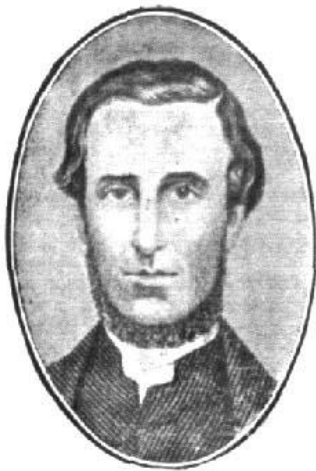
longer the brilliant victories of Berkshire, Chippen-  
ham, or Bristol, but long continued and arduous  
effort. But the fire of the old times burned steadily  
on for a score of years, until at last a Circuit  
was formed. Meanwhile, twelve months after this

mission was opened, it was decided to "open a  
new mission at Cirencester in April," and the July

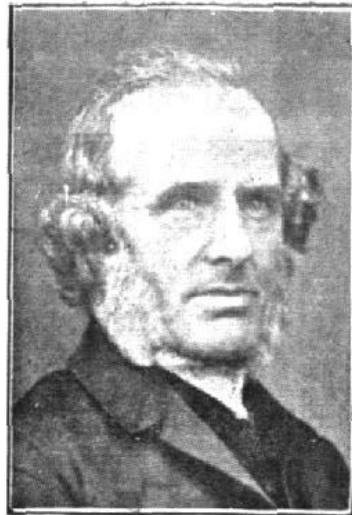
Plan of 1839 shows Cirencester  
CIRENCESTER. Mission with Sabbath appointments

at Cirencester, Watermore, Easing-  
ton, Randcome, North Cerney, and Bainton, and  
week-night appointments at Down Ampney, Latton,  
Poulton, Ashbrook, Somerford Keynes, Siddington,  
Preston, Daglingworth, and Upper Duntsborne;  
J. Godwin and J. Best were the missionaries.

At the beginning of 1840 these two missions  
were united and became the Tetbury and  
Cirencester Branch, with 100 members, and 19  
preaching places, with Mr. D. Kent as super-  
intendent.



Rev. L. S. NULLIS.



Rev. R. DAVIES.



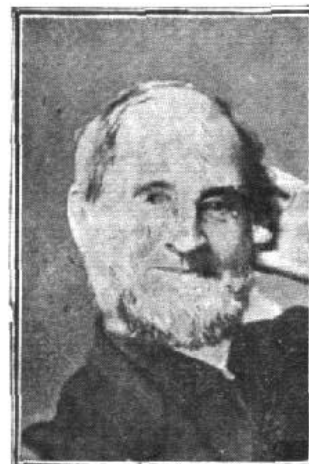
Rev. G. WARNER.



REV. THOMAS CUMMIN.



REV. DANIEL HARDING.



REV. SAMUEL TURNER.



Rev. I. HEDGES.



Rev. R. JUKES.



Rev. S. WEST.



Leaving this for a time we next note that "Cheltenham Branch" is added to the Circuit at the same period that Cirencester Mission was opened. This branch included Cheltenham, Gloucester, Houlstone and Chorlton, with fifty-two CHELTENHAM. members. Up to this time Cheltenham had been a Mission of the Moreton-in-the-Marsh Circuit in Gloucestershire, evidently became detached therefrom, and, unable to stand alone was probably offered to, or offered itself to, the powerful Brinkworth Circuit, whose fame was known in all the Connexion. Under this fostering care, the branch continued until 1845, losing Gloucester early, but missioning Tewkesbury and other places. It is now under the care of the General Missionary Committee.

Yet again the Circuit's Missionary zeal leads it to undertake another mission. Primitive Methodism was introduced into Worcester at the WORCESTER. time of the imprisonment of Mr. Brownsword in 1820, became a branch of the Birmingham Circuit and was afterwards attached, perhaps somewhat loosely, to Kidderminster Circuit. News comes to Brinkworth that Worcester needs missioning, and so a letter is written to ask Kidderminster Circuit if they wish to give up Worcester and its dependencies, and if so, to send a proper statement of it. Hugh Bourne, visiting the Circuit writes, "Our Brethren intend to establish a

Mission in Worcestershire," and Mr. Preston follows this with the following: "This Quarter Day (Sep. 21 and Oct. 10, 1840) agreed to take up Worcester (as a mission). We think we can support it. We have prayed much about it, and believe it to be of the Lord. May he help us, open our way, and prosper the undertaking. Amen." Worcester was "taken up," Mr. Best was placed in charge, and Mr. Preston went with him, a matter of a fifty mile journey as the crow flies "to see how things are, and take him lodgings." The journey was done partly by road and partly by rail; the old tramping days are o'er. It was also decided that Bro. Best take in six villages (evidently on Mr. Ride's Missionary System) besides what they had, and Mr. Preston was deputed to attend the December Mission Quarter Day. Thereat the membership reported was forty-four, with six preaching places. Thence onward to the end of 1849, with one period of decline, the Mission grew, but at that time, the Worcester Branch was offered to the General Missionary Committee, but joined in 1850 to the Ludlow Circuit. When separated from the Brinkworth Circuit, it had a membership of 104, with two ministers, fourteen local preachers, and eleven preaching places.

Once more this wonderful missionary Circuit takes in hand a Mission, the last to be undertaken, at its north-east corner, where Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Berkshire, and Oxfordshire come together. Four

places, viz., Filkins, Eastleach, Little Faringdon and Whelford, had been received from the Witney Circuit, Alscott, Brize Norton, Southerop, FILKINS. Quennington, Hatherop, and Fairford were missioned and the Filkins Mission was constituted. This Mission reached a membership of 128, and then in 1844 made a part of the Cirencester, Cheltenham and Filkins Branch. The next year the Cirencester and Cheltenham parts of this branch, grown large and vigorous, were made a Circuit, and the Filkins Mission became part of the newly formed Highworth Circuit. When this last named Circuit was broken up, the Filkins Mission part of it was attached to the Faringdon Circuit, of which it forms a part at the present time.

Lastly, we must follow the fortunes of the Tetbury Mission. In February, 1840 we find the Tetbury and Cirencester Branch formed from the Missions so named. In two years Tetbury has disappeared and with it the greater part of its dependencies. A few, of the places, however, are found on the Circuit Plan, and perhaps the rest are accounted for by the word Mission, Mission, Mission, Mission, which have regular appointments made on the same Plan. At any rate this seems a very likely explanation for we now see, in April 1843, the appearance of the Tormarton Mission Plan, upon which are gradually put the places formerly found in the Tetbury Mission. Two years later Hawkesbury

Upton heads this Mission and gives its name thereto, and remains thus for thirteen more years. In 1858, to it are added from the parent Circuit, Malmesbury, Seagry, Christian Malford, Cleverton, Startley, Stanton, Hullavington, Garsdon, Brokenborough and Tetbury, and the eighteen places thus brought together form the Malmesbury Branch. The Malmesbury Circuit began its career in January 1859, with 191 members and sixteen preaching places. Thus, a year before the celebration of the Jubilee of the Connexion, the crowning point of the last missionary effort of the Circuit was reached, the culminating point of a wonderful, an amazing display of missioning and extension zeal that operated without cessation for a period of thirty-five years. From the time of Mr. Heath's opening sermon on the Green of the spiritually neglected village of Brinkworth, to the date given above, we see a sustained effort, and a plan working out, that fully justifies the eulogiums bestowed by every Connexional historian upon "The famous Brinkworth Circuit."

This section will fittingly be closed by an account of the successful enterprize which ended with the formation of a Circuit from its latest missionary movement.

**The Final Assault on Malmesbury:** This town is only five miles from Brinkworth. Around it on

every side for thirty-five years the forces of Primitive Methodism had operated, but never more than a temporary lodgment had been effected. The persecution of the first missionaries to Malmesbury has been already referred to, but in spite of it, the town appears on the first Plan of the Circuit, and the difficulty of achieving success is seen from the following facts. The name appears on the Plan till October 1836 (except from Jan., '29 to Apr., '30); from August 1840 to May 1842 it is connected with Tetbury Mission; for three months in the beginning of 1843 it is on the Circuit Plan, and then disappears for eight years, tho' it is probably occasionally visited as a "Mission" appointment.

A Society of three members had been formed there about April 1830, but this never reached more than twelve in number, and from 1836 to March 1853 no membership was reported at all. In the early period again for two or three years, a Chapel was rented at £4 per year, but had to be vacated because of failure to build up a church. But now the hour of triumph approaches. In May '52 services are once more planned, and in the early  
**THE HOUR** part of '54 a Society of four members  
**AND** is formed. The hour has come, and  
**THE MAN.** God sends the man. The western section of the Circuit is placed in the care of George Warner. The March Quarterly

Meeting\* “seeks divine help and guidance in the matter” of missioning Malmesbury once more; “the power of God came upon the meeting in a marvellous manner: the brethren rose from their knees assured that it was God’s will that they should undertake the work;” and they at once appointed Mr. Warner thereto. For the arduous task the man was well fitted. Very powerful in body, of robust health, he was equally courageous and daring; he feared nothing. Rev. S. Turner, one of the best missionaries the District has known, his first super at Banbury, and an enthusiastic Circuit are at his back, and God’s call sounds in his ears; he cannot fail. He finds Malmesbury “a dark, dead place.” He preaches incessantly in the town and in the surrounding villages, and lives in the town. He visits much, labors readily in the temperance work and social work of the town, and gains the ear and sympathy of the inhabitants. The Mission succeeded; sinners were converted; a barn was rented and fitted up, and the cost more than raised. By March 1850 the membership of the Society numbered fifty; on April 17th the stones of a New Chapel were laid; on August 17th and 18th, the Chapel, seated to hold about 350 people, was opened amid great rejoicing; and a mission of the Brinkworth Circuit was once more crowned with success.

\* The quotations here are from the Life of G. Warner by J. Stephenson.

## 2.—A Summary of Thirty-five Years' Work.

It has become a truism to say "Spiritual results cannot be tabulated," and all agree that "figures are not everything." Nevertheless, in this world of flesh and spirit, "Tables" of figures are among the instruments by which spiritual labors and triumphs are bodied forth. Counting heads or hearts may be carried too far, but two good souls are better far than one, whatever the capacity; and, after all, the journey of human spirits through this life must always have its landmarks. A tabulated statement of the things enumerated above will be handy here, and help to gather into one view the labors just recorded.

### List of Missions, with dates.

|  | Date of<br>Commencement | Date of<br>Independence |
|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Stroud Branch                                      | .. .. 1827              |                         |
| Berkshire Mission                                  | .. April 27th, 1829     | 1831                    |
| Chippenham Mission                                 | .. July 7th, 1832       | 1835                    |
| Bristol Mission                                    | .. July 14th, 1833      | .. 1837                 |
| Tetbury Mission                                    | .. April, 1838          | .. 1845                 |
| Cheltenham Branch                                  | .. April, 1838          |                         |
| Cirencester Mission                                | .. April, 1839          |                         |
| Filkins Mission                                    | ..                      | .. 1845                 |
| Worcester Mission                                  | .. Oct. 14th, 1840,     | Transferred 1850        |
| Tormarton, Hawkesbury }<br>Upton, and Malmesbury } | 1850-55                 | .. 1859                 |

### List of Circuits resulting therefrom.

| Present<br>Circuits. | Circuits formed directly therefrom,<br>with dates.   |
|----------------------|--|
| Brinkworth           | {<br>Shefford, 1831<br>Chippenham, 1835<br>Bristol, 1837<br>Cirencester, 1845<br>Highworth from Filkins Mission, 1845<br>Malmesbury, 1859<br>Swindon, 1877 |

| Present<br>Circuits.                  | Circuits formed directly therefrom,<br>with dates.   |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Shefford, afterwards<br>named Newbury | { Mitcheldever, 1835<br>Andover, 1837<br>Farringdon, 1837<br>Wallingford, 1837<br>Reading, 1837<br>Petersfield<br>Hungerford |
| Mitcheldever ..                       | Winchester   |
| Andover ..                            | Romsey   |
| Wallingford ..                        | Chinnor, Oxford 1845   |
| Reading ..                            | High Wycombe, 1848; Windsor 1848;<br>Aylesbury, 1839; St. Alban's,<br>Hertford, Henley, Brentford, etc.                      |
| Witney ..                             | Banbury, 1840; Chipping Norton   |
| Aylesbury ..                          | Luton I., II.; Stewkley  |
| Swindon ..                            | Swindon I. 1877; Swindon II. 1890  |

### View Points. 1. *Periodical* (Statistics & chief changes).

| Dates   | Membership | No. of Chapels | Income | Societies |
|---|------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 1829 (March).   | 527        | 4              | £44    | 22        |
| Brinkworth, Seagry and W. Bassett are the strongest places.<br>No Society yet formed at Purton, though preaching is conducted.  |            |                |        |           |
| 1840 (March).   | 744        | 10             | £70    | 33        |
| Berkshire, Chippenham, and Bristol Missions successfully carried out, and four others now in full operation. Chiseldon and Highworth Societies have become strong. Seagry sunk to 12 members. Four vigorous Missions simultaneously being carried on. |            |                |        |           |
| 1850 (March).   | 801        | 15             | £57    | 34        |
| Broad Town, Wootton Bassett, and Ashton Keynes have become strong Societies. Other Missions completed, Hawkesbury Upton alone remains.  |            |                |        |           |
| 1860 (March).   | 852        | 15             | £105   | 26        |
| Malmesbury Circuit formed; Swindon and Purton greatly developed.  |            |                |        |           |
| 1870 (March).   | 848        | 20             | £90    | 30        |
| Stratton Society has become very strong.  |            |                |        |           |
| 1877 (March).   | 927        | 25             | £100   | 29        |
| New Swindon has reached a membership of 125. At this date Swindon Circuit was formed, taking 433 members, and leaving Brinkworth with 494 members and nineteen Societies.   |            |                |        |           |



2. *Interperiodical.*

In writing of the Missions of the Circuit, our thought glance has been chiefly directed outwards from the Circuit. It is necessary now that we should carefully note the movements of aggression within the Circuit; ere we pass to consider the inner Circuit life almost exclusively. Notice therefore that continuously the boundaries of the Circuit were being pressed outwards, and at the same time there was an intensive culture of the Lord's garden whose boundaries had been set up. At "HOME PART" the time when the Berkshire AGGRESSION. Mission was being worked separately, there were no less than forty-eight preaching places on the Plan of the "Home Part," and the Missions themselves, except Bristol and Worcester, were really the result of Circuit extension followed by the strategic move upon a promising centre of population lying just over the border. To those who know the topography of North Wilts, this will appear plain from the following. Before the assault on Chippenham, Sutton Benger, Christian Malford, Bremhill, Tyther-ton and Foxham had been enclosed; North Marston, Kempsford, Castle Eaton, etc., preceded the Fairford Mission and Cricklade Branch of 1833-5, and laid the groundwork of the revival of this in the successful Filkins Mission of 1841. The Tetbury Mission was somewhat of an advance into "The Beyond," altho' Somerford, Stonehill and Oaksey foreshadowed the

gradual movement which pushed rapidly on Tetbury in 1838; and finally in 1839, the march on Cirencester, with its bitter persecutions, was supported by the Circuit at North and South Cerney, Ampney and Latton, while Ashton Keynes and Cricklade were well within reach and co-operated. On the south-east side of the Circuit it will be interesting to note that at some time or other the following places had a place on the Plan, viz., Haydon Wick, Barwick, Monkton, Gospel Oak, Coped Hall, Dauntsey, Highway, Clevancy, Thornhill, Barken, Thornend, Lydiard Plain, Greenhill, Liddington, Uffcott, Woodshaw, East and West Kennett, and Avebury. To-day these are served in some other way.

Taking the Plan of July to September 1844, the Circuit is seen at the height of its operations. On this Plan we have: 1. The Home Part with forty-four places; 2. Cirencester Branch with twenty-six places; 3. Cheltenham Branch with five places; 4. Worcester Branch with thirteen places; 5. Filkins Mission with twelve places; and 6. Tormarton (heir to Tetbury) Mission with fifteen places: 115 preaching places and a total membership of over 1,300.

During the thirty years only one period of decline is noted, viz., that of the years 1834-7. This was caused chiefly by a prolonged period of industrial depression, in which wages were very low and work

hard to get—so it is stated on the Circuit Reports of the period. Here we find that matters were in a trying condition; in the Account Books elaborate care is taken to record the deficiencies of salary due to each preacher; every item of income is raked in, some so small that 'twere better to have left them unrecorded, and special donations were required quarter-day after quarter-day. The contributions of Brinkworth Society once sank as low as £2 11s. 8½d.; of Seagry to 1s. 1d.; of Wootton Bassett to £1 9s. 7½d.; and the whole Circuit income to £32 3s. 6d. However, Brinkworth Circuit was not born to die, nor to languish; the period of depression passed and the missionarying was resumed with renewed vigor.

Methodists eat figures; it is a part of their daily regular food supply, and thereon they grow strong. Enough has been given above to supply for many meals, and it will be advisable to chew the cud lest indigestion follow. This, at least, has thereby been abundantly made plain, that when Hugh Bourne wrote that "Brinkworth has done great things in missionarying," he only used words of truth and soberness, and the half has not been told.