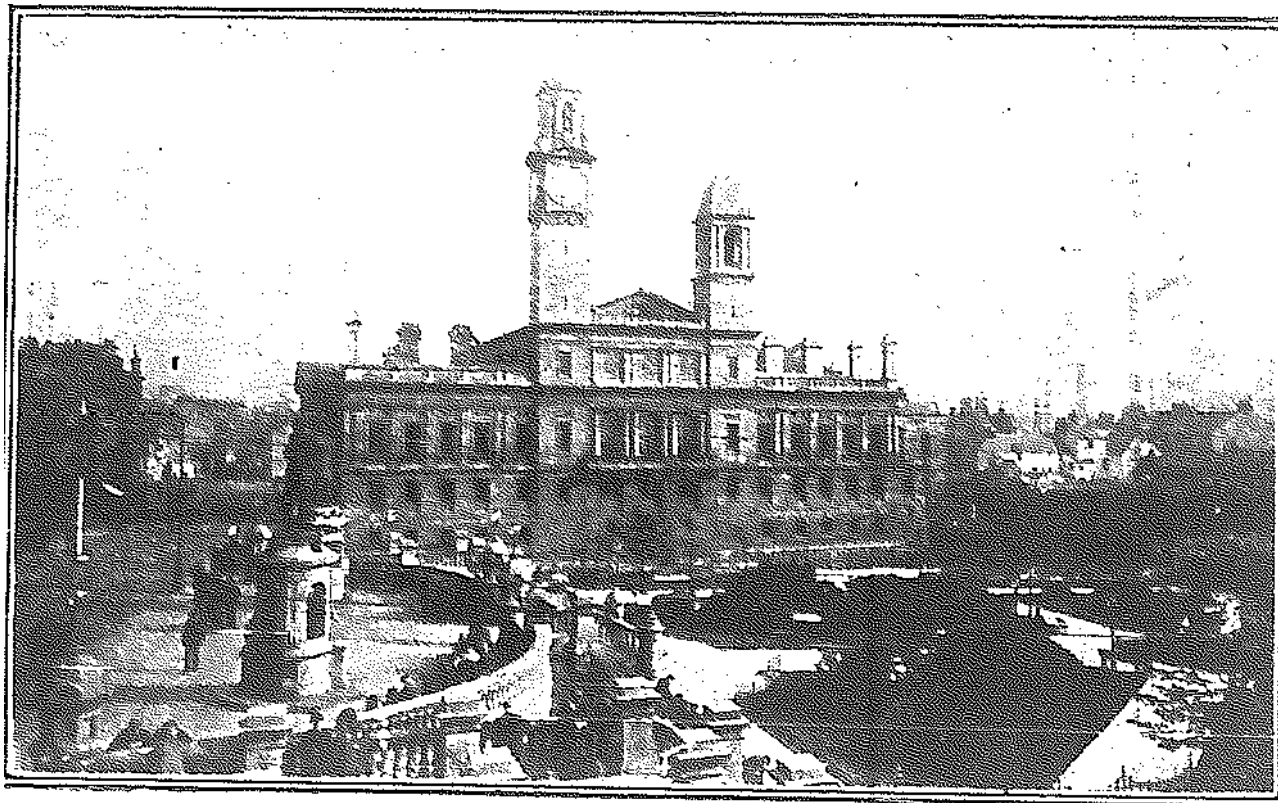


A Great Day for Scottish Methodism.

PAISLEY STONELAYING, TUESDAY NEXT.

The stone-laying of the new Central Hall, Paisley, on Tuesday next, September 10, will be a great day in the history of Methodism in Scotland and in Paisley. It will be the realisation of a hope too long deferred.



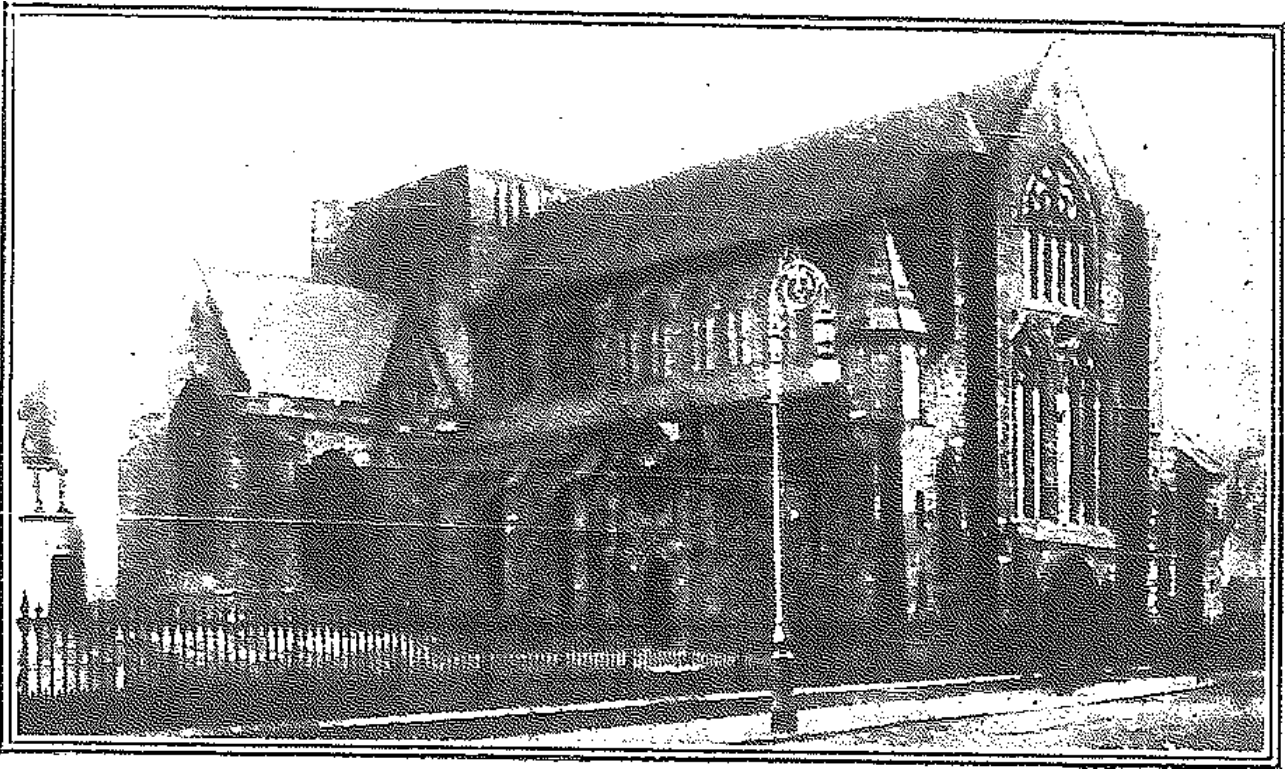
Paisley Town Hall, with site of New Mission Hall on left.

It will also be the crown of earnest, faithful, and devoted service. It will further be the opportunity for Methodist Evangelism in a great industrial centre. Whilst the great success at Paisley is a matter of grateful interest to Methodists in Scotland, it should also be of profound and encouraging interest to all Methodists, and Methodists everywhere should have a share in providing the funds that will enable Paisley to open its Hall free of debt. Will the Methodist people give the services at Paisley on the 10th a place in their prayers and in their thanksgiving? Pray that the day may be Scotland's Pentecost — a day when the presence of the Holy Spirit will be graciously manifested and realised by all who shall gather at Paisley, and upon all who unite in building this house for God and His people.

The Scottish Synod will meet at Paisley in the morning and in the afternoon and evening will unite with the Paisley Methodists in their stone-laying ceremony and their great public meeting.

Why should not their memory of Paisley be the best of all memories — the memory of a blessing that gave them a new power for Christ's service in their circuits? Thanksgiving! That God has so prospered the efforts of His servants as to make the stone-laying possible.

A year ago it seemed as if Paisley would not have its Hall — the money could not be secured. The Rev. J. Williams Butcher, in his circular last autumn, wrote: "Affairs at Paisley are approaching a crisis. We must build and that without any further delay. We must not build until we can see a minimum of £8000 irrespective of sums to be obtained at the stone-laying, the opening services and a bazaar." Two thousand pounds was then needed — and it seemed impossible to raise it. Dr. Pope gave stimulus and encouragement, by making himself responsible for £1000. Mr. Rolls' visit across the Border secured from generous Methodists the other £1000. Now, by the generous gifts from



Paisley Abbey: opposite the Site of New Mission Hall.

North and South £9,000 has been secured out of the total cost of £16,000. It is hoped that the stone—laying day will realise £3,000 at least — why not £5000? Scottish Methodists have already given generously, but Paisley needs the gifts of other Methodists if the crowning success is to be achieved. Will every reader of this article, at once, unite, that Tuesday next may be a great surprise even to Mr. Rolls, the most sanguine and hopeful of Methodist preachers; and a Methodist preacher who deserves the support of all his brethren and all Methodists.

Has Methodism a mission in Scotland? Paisley bears witness that it has! The witness from Paisley is that when Methodism speaks in its own language and appears in its own dress, it wins and wins Scotsmen. Live, warm, spiritual, brotherly, un-fettered Methodism always triumphs. It has triumphed gloriously at Paisley! It was my pleasure recently to have a Sabbath at Paisley. The morning congregation was six hundred; the evening a thousand: The congregation, not only in number but in their make-up, were a wonderful tribute to the grip Methodism has got of the working men and women, and the young men and women.

To face the Paisley congregations, and think of five years ago and of the people God has gathered—and all the people that have been gathered—and transformed is to be impressed by the wondrous power of God's grace and what grace can still do! Methodism like that at Paisley is needed in other industrial centres in Scotland, and will make Methodism north of the Border a greater power than it has been.

Paisley has succeeded, as far as methods are concerned, simply by what may be called the "old—fashioned" lines. The only modern feature of its ministries is the Saturday Night Temperance Concert. This is now becoming more general. The old Methodists had their Saturday night Band Meeting, and great meetings they were. The modern Methodist makes Saturday his opportunity to go out into the open air and bring in those who would otherwise be in the public house and give them entertainment cheaper, safer, and healthier, than that supplied by the publican. The men and women gathered in on Saturday night have made the best worshippers in God's House on the Sabbath.

Paisley has gone out on Saturday night, and has gathered in hundreds that otherwise would have still been without. One of the leaders coming to the Saturday Night Concert rather late, came across a man under the influence of drink, took him into the meeting, got him into a room, talked to him about good things. Mr. Rolls joined them, prayed with the man, the Spirit of God came upon him, he sobered, signed the pledge and gave himself to God, and ever since he has been one of Paisley's most consistent members. The man has not only been transformed, but his home.

At Paisley, as in other new centres, when the Methodist Church enters the lists against the drink, the publican is the loser, and poor drink—sodden and drink-ridden men and women are the gainers.

Image courtesy of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University

As John Wesley had to go out as a “field—preacher” to gather the early Methodists, so Paisley has gone out, and in the open—air service had great success. One Thursday night, in Dunn Square a man was sitting on one of the seats listening to the singing and heard John Slack speak. At the close he said to Mr. Rolls. “May I speak to you?” “Certainly!” “I want you to write to my wife for me. I dare not go home. A week ago I got the drink, and have since then been wandering from town to town. I have nothing left but what you see me stand up in. I have not had a bite today. When you had an your open-air service I was wondering whether to go on to Glasgow or throw myself into the river. The hymns you have been singing are not new to me. I listened to you, and now I want to be a good man. Will you write my wife and ask her if she will take me back?” “No! There are two things you will do to-night. First, kneel down and confess your sin to God. Second, you will go home by the ten o'clock train, and I will pay your fare.” The man found the favour of God and Went home to his wife. I have, seen a letter, in which he writes : “I am pleased to pen you these few words to say that I arrived home, safe;- wife and children all pleased to see me. I have been working all day today, Friday. Allow me to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the kindness you bestowed on me, also for the good words of advice you and Mr. Slack gave me by the grace of God I will be a better man in the future. ~Ever gratefully yours~.”

The man enclosed two shillings for his railway fare.



Rev W. H. Rolls

Here is another incident. At: the close of an open-air service, a woman asked John Slack to speak to her husband who was a slave to the drink. Her little girl had often asked her father to give it up. At last he promised to sign the pledge. The child said, “Oh father, signing the pledge is no use. Go to John Slack's meeting and give your heart to God; then you won't need to sign the pledge.” John Slack went to see the father. He was very deaf, but John Slack was able to make him hear, and he heard words of life and, kneeling at Christ's feet, surrendered to him.

Is not this social service of the highest type? Is not this the work that has ever been dear to Methodist hearts? This has been, and ever should be, our glory. The pity is that the Methodist Chapel, both old and new, everywhere is not having such records. Do thy first -works! Paisley, like our other Missions, is simply old-fashioned Methodism in the best sense, the fashion that is never out-of-date — Methodism seeking the lost.

The following incident is a witness, both to the value of the open-air service and to the genuine Christian character that is being produced by the grace of God. One Saturday night, a young married man and his wife, both under the influence of drink, followed the workers into the meeting in the Hall. There they signed the pledge. and gave themselves to Christ. That was two years ago, and from that day they have continued steadfast. About three months after their conversion the wife was taken seriously ill and for about fifteen months was a great sufferer, manifesting the spirit of the true child of God. She had to pass through an operation, and frequently it seemed as if the end were near. There was a beautiful spirit of resignation, and a perfect willingness either to remain here or pass to the Homeland. One day when Mr. Rolls visited her she said, “The Lord is good. I do not know what we should have done if this illness had come when we were both in the world. Then we spent all our money in drink and the theatre, but I would rather have all this suffering with Jesus, than all the pleasure of the world without Him.” “Witnesses unto Me!” Whilst Methodism produces such witnesses she may still retain the name of Methodism, and not fear the future. So long as these are added by the Lord unto us, we shall need our class meeting — a class meeting with its witnessing Methodists!

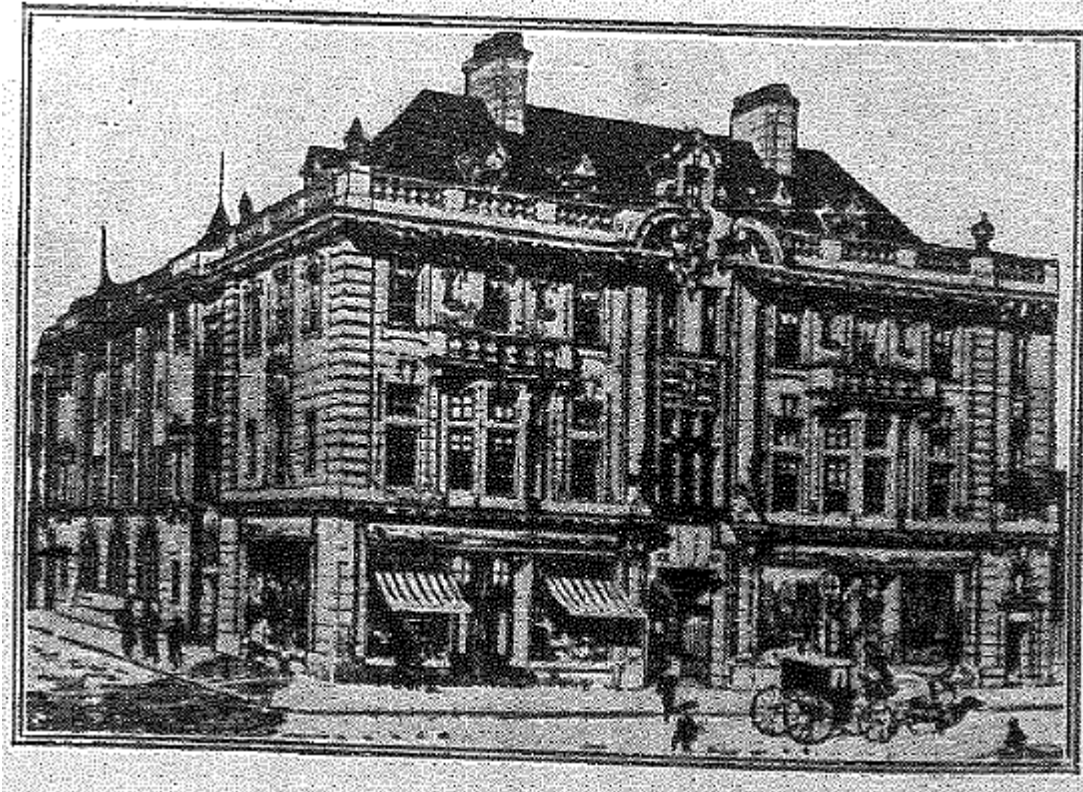
The Methodist service as conducted at Paisley attracts the people and retains the Methodist. A Methodist who had come North but had made his home in Scottish churches, removed to Paisley, and for a time worshipped in one of the other churches. Recently he found his way to the Methodist service in the Templar Hall; there he found what delighted him. The singing, as he put it, went with a swing and the whole service was an inspiration, and made him forget the uncomfortable seats. He had found the Methodist fire, the glow, the Methodist atmosphere!

The great hope of the Methodist Church in Scotland is in gathering the outsiders; this has been the success achieved at Paisley. On this point. Dr. H. J. Pope writes: — “Your work at Paisley fulfils, according to my View, the special mission Methodism has in the populous towns of Scotland. You are proving on a large scale that there is salvation for the reprobate.

The Churches of Paisley need a Mission like this- to vindicate and illustrate the completeness of their Christianity.” This need in Paisley is also expressed by Principal Hutton, Moderator of the United Free Church, and associated with Paisley during; the last fifty years. He writes: —

“I learn with great interest the Evangelical work in which you and your associates are engaged in our growing community, especially among the unattached or lapsed, and the enterprise you have in prospect I believe there is need for all workers of us with single eye to the spiritual well-being of society in our homes and streets, and I cordially wish your efforts to provide needful accommodation all success.”

“Methodism is not needed in Scotland,” is heard occasionally from Churches. The leaders however, think differently, and in Paisley we are welcomed as co-workers and not as intruders. Our success bears witness to our need.



New Mission Hall at Paisley

“H. K.,” in his article about Paisley wrote: “It is one of the great facts of the Situation (in Paisley) that the Wesleyan Methodist Church enjoys the hearty goodwill of all its neighbours. All the Churches are friendly.” This friendly spirit continues and at the stone-laying will be represented by the presence of Principal Hutton, the Revs Walter Mursell, W. A. Walton and Boyd Scott; and Provost Eadie. Who presides at the luncheon. The Abbeyclose United Free Church has kindly lent its Lecture Hall for the meeting of the Synod.

The success at Paisley has been greatly helped by the support given by Dr. H. J. Pope and the Home Mission Committee. Apart from their invaluable help Paisley could have had its opportunity. Dr Pope and the late Thomas Walker have rendered very great service by their counsel, support and guidance. Mr. William Walker, too, has made Paisley his debtor by his generous gifts. The late Thomas Champness supplied the funds for the employment of John Slack as Lay Missioner at Paisley. Methodists across the Border have already greatly helped the work of God at Paisley, and Scottish Methodism appreciates this “coming over to help.” Mr. H. B. Law, JP, spoken of in the May Synod as “the

Image courtesy of the Oxford Centre for Methodism and Church History, Oxford Brookes University

friend of all the circuits in Scotland," has given Paisley his generous sympathy and practical help. His generous help at a critical moment gave the Mission one of its greatest possessions – the services of John Slack.

Mr. W. Taylor, of Edinburgh, has shown himself a true and generous friend. Mr. J. Yorston, by his legal services and counsel, has rendered valuable and timely assistance. Messers J. Farquhar and J. Slater as circuit stewards and Treasurer and Secretary: Mr. John Marshall, Mr. J. J. King and Mr. J. Youden, by their services on the Committee; Mr. Francis D. Brown, as Treasurer of the Building Fund, have all been to Mr. Rolls and his workers a great help.

Paisley needs, and deserves, a multitude of helpers to unite with these to complete this great enterprise. Memorial stones will be placed next week by Mrs. A. W. Black, of Nottingham; Mrs. H. B. Lam-of Glasgow; Mrs. Robinson, of Edinburgh, Mrs. Josiah Nix; Mrs. S. Day, of Blackpool; Mr. J. Dennis of Bonnyrigg; Mrs. J. Hawley, on behalf of the Paisley Sunday School; Miss Ribbons, on behalf of the ladies sewing meeting.

Mrs. Robertson, of Paisley, has also very kindly promised to place a stone. Mr. Robertson was brought up in Methodism in Bradford and was the chief means of giving Methodism a new start in Paisley in 1896. She still has a warm place in her affection for the Church of her childhood and will make it expressive on Tuesday next.



High Street, Paisley

There are three other stones that are representative. The Scottish stone, to be placed by the Rev. J. Williams Butcher, will represent the gifts of the Scottish Churches. Mr. Butcher has taken a great interest in Paisley and devoted much time and labour to secure funds for this new Hall, as well as counsel and guidance in the development of the scheme. It was very fitting that he should be asked to represent Scottish Methodists. It is still more fitting, now that he leaves Scotland. It would be a great joy to him if he had a large sum to place on this stone. May we suggest that Methodists Other than in Scotland, may unite in this stone. Mrs. Rolls is to place a stone, representing shilling subscribers. Five hundred pounds was the sum hoped for — 10,000 shillings. Mrs. Rolls has had a very encouraging response. She will be glad to hear from many more. She deserves her £500. Let her have it by Tuesday.

Mr. John Slack has also set his mind upon £100, to place on the stone he is to lay. He has by the grace of God gathered many a life to Christ that will be a precious stone in the spiritual house. It would be a very delightful satisfaction to him, could he secure his £100 to help the building of the material house. Methodists delight to encourage humble, modest, and deserving servants of Christ. If Mr. Butcher, Mrs. Rolls and John Slack can have next week

£1,100 — the cup of joy of each will be full. Let Methodists everywhere start the Methodist New Year, by uniting with their gifts at Paisley and "increasing the joy" of Paisley Methodists. Contributions may be sent for the General Fund or marked for these representative stones. The Rev. W. H. Rolls, Wesley Manse, Hawkhead Road, Paisley, will be delighted to have your gift or promise and to know your wish.

W.H.G.