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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

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### A MICRO-THEORY OF METHODIST GROWTH

**D**ESPITE Methodism's unique concern with evangelism, and hence its growth, and its remarkable collection of membership statistics extending over two centuries, little has been done to analyse or account for the way Methodism has grown since Aldersgate. From time to time different Methodist Conferences have received reports attempting to explain why a particular Methodist denomination has suffered a reverse.<sup>1</sup> But such explanations have rarely made detailed reference to membership figures, and have concerned themselves with isolated problems rather than with the whole growth process. Hence little is known of the fundamental problem of Methodist history: why do Methodist denominations increase and decrease when and where they do? The practical significance of this problem for mission work and use of resources need not be stressed. But growth studies are no less important to the historian. Why, for example, did the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the Primitive Methodist Church grow much more vigorously than the Wesleyan Methodist Association, the United Methodist Free Churches and the United Methodist Church? Various guesses—more or less disinterested—have been made. But a thorough analysis of this problem would tell us a good deal about Wesleyan, Primitive and Free Methodism and about their relation to English society.

Perhaps because of the neglect of these problems, the subject of growth is obscure. Growth studies can be distinguished in two ways, as long- and short-run studies and as macro- and micro-studies. A short-run study would deal with year-to-year changes or with brief but significant periods of growth, such as 1873-87. A long-run study would examine the growth of a particular unit throughout the length of its existence. Although macro-study would of course deal

<sup>1</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm: *Primitive Rebels* (Manchester, 1959), passim; Robert F. Wearmouth: *The Social and Political Influences of Methodism in the Twentieth Century* (London, 1957), pp. 46 ff.

with the long run, the macro-micro distinction is not merely one of time but of size of unit. A macro-theory of Methodist growth would seek to explain the complete growth-pattern of Methodism as a whole. A micro-theory is one that deals with sections or parts of Methodism, such as separate denominations, areas, or even chapels. But a micro-study can be short- or long-run. It might, for example, deal with the growth of the Bible Christian denomination, 1801-41, or with Wesleyanism in Yorkshire, 1739-1932.

"Growth" can be described in various ways. A growth study has for its subject-matter quantitative changes occurring in a particular unit or group. A basic methodological problem of such a study is the definition of an index which will measure such changes. Most of these indices are derived from denominational records.<sup>3</sup> They may contain errors, especially "dead wood", but such errors are probably relatively constant, and do not prevent usual comparisons or conclusions being made. Errors also occur in such sources as the count of attendances in the religious census of 1851, but these also are relatively unimportant.

The membership figures in the *Minutes* are very detailed, and can be used to form several indices. Absolute growth can be calculated by expressing the increase or decrease in full membership in a year as a percentage of the full membership of the previous year. For example, Wesleyan Methodism in Great Britain numbered 331,183 in 1866 and 337,070 in 1867—an increase of 5,887 and a growth rate of 1.8 per cent for 1866 to 1867. Growth rate enables us to form a much more precise picture of the significance of a particular quantitative change. Wesleyanism increased by 5,887 full members in 1866 to 1867, and by 5,911 in 1809 to 1810. But whereas the former increase constituted a growth rate of 1.8 per cent, the latter provided a growth rate of 4.5 per cent per annum. Although the two numerical increases were virtually identical, the growth rate shows the period 1809 to 1810 to have been much better for Wesleyanism than the period 1866 to 1867.

But even growth rate has its limitations as an index of growth. It tells us nothing about the rate at which new members are joining the group—which can only be ascertained from recruitment data where such exists. Nor does it tell us about the larger significance of these absolute numerical changes. We cannot tell from the growth rate whether the group is making headway or losing ground among the population as a whole. This can only be told by relating membership figures to the relevant population, preferably to the fifteen-plus age-group, but where this is impossible, to the total population. A "membership-population ratio" (m.p.r.) can then be found. Probably the simplest way of doing this is to express membership

<sup>3</sup> A vitally important and virtually unused source of material is available in chapel records. If, for example, Wesley Historical Society branches could collect chapel membership figures, they would secure a vast store of fascinating information which might otherwise all too easily be lost.

as a percentage of population. In 1841, British Wesleyanism numbered 328,792 full members; in 1931, 500,010. Wesleyanism grew 51 per cent in this period. But its m.p.r. (population age fifteen-plus)<sup>3</sup> was 2.79 per cent in 1841, but 1.47 per cent in 1931—a decrease, in m.p.r. terms, of 1.32 per cent. Growth rate alone suggests considerable success in this period; m.p.r. suggests considerable difficulties. A similar figure to m.p.r. is Professor Inglis's "Index of Attendance", which he calculates by expressing attendance figures as a percentage of relevant population.<sup>4</sup>

The present study uses these concepts to develop a section of a long-run micro-theory of Methodist growth. This theory seeks to answer two questions: (1) Why do the Methodist denominations differ in their growth patterns? and (2) Why do the various denominations grow where they do? No attempt is made to consider the problem of decline or to discuss the general problems relating to macro-patterns of Methodist growth, although some reference to macro-problems is obviously necessary to elucidate the behaviour of micro-units.

The background to the emergence of Methodism in the eighteenth century is dominated by the Church of England and the older dissenting denominations, Congregational and Baptist. We do not know how strong Anglicanism was in 1739, or where its strength was distributed. But the 1851 religious census does contain figures of Anglican churches in 1801. This data can be assumed to correspond, at least approximately, with the situation in the eighteenth century, since Anglican church-building throughout the century before 1821 was very slight indeed.<sup>5</sup> Population estimates broken down by county are available for 1781.<sup>6</sup> In 1801, the Church of England had 11,789 churches in England and Wales. Assuming that no churches had been built during the period 1781 to 1801—an assumption sufficiently correct for the present purposes—then in 1781 the Church of England had one church per 640 persons. But thirteen counties contained 680 churches, giving an average of 2,680 inhabitants per Anglican church.<sup>7</sup> These counties constitute the major industrial regions of eighteenth-century England: the North-East, the North-West, the West Riding of Yorkshire, the Midlands, London, and Cornwall. They contained, in 1801, 55 per cent of British Wesleyan full membership.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, whilst in Great

<sup>3</sup> Unless stated, m.p.r. is calculated here on the basis of total population.

<sup>4</sup> K. S. Inglis: "Patterns of Religious Worship in 1851", in *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 1960.

<sup>5</sup> *Parliamentary Papers*, 1852-3, vol. 89, p. xl. I assume, following the census, that churches whose date of building was returned as "Not Stated" were built before 1801.

<sup>6</sup> Phyllis Deane and W. A. Cole: *British Economic Growth, 1688-1959: Trends and Structures* (Cambridge, 1962), p. 103.

<sup>7</sup> Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Derbyshire, Durham, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, Middlesex, Northumberland, Staffordshire, Surrey, Warwickshire, Yorkshire (West Riding).

<sup>8</sup> Following Edwin H. Tindall, *The Wesleyan Methodist Atlas of England*

Britain as a whole the Wesleyan m.p.r. was only 0.85 per cent, in these thirteen counties it averaged 1.19 per cent. In other words, the bulk of Wesleyan membership and the greatest sustained Wesleyan growth occurred in precisely the areas where the Church of England was weakest.

In this respect Wesleyanism differed from the older dissent. No membership figures comparable to those of Methodism exist for the Congregationalists or Baptists in the period 1781-1851. But the 1851 census enables calculation of a detailed index of attendance for all three denominations. These figures show Wesleyan strength to be concentrated north of a line from the Severn to the Wash, and Baptist and Congregationalist strength to the south of this line. This general picture shows the distribution of Methodist strength to reverse the traditional Anglican pattern, whilst the distribution of Congregationalism and Baptists follows this pattern. More specifically, Wesleyanism had a higher index of attendance than Congregationalists and Particular Baptists combined in eight of the thirteen counties where Anglicanism was weakest in 1781,<sup>9</sup> whilst Congregationalists and Particular Baptists combined had a higher index of attendance than Wesleyan Methodism in eleven of the fifteen counties where Anglicanism was strongest in 1781.<sup>10</sup> The exceptions to these tendencies are largely due to the relative failure of Methodism in London and Birmingham and its relative success in Hull and Nottingham. Despite these exceptions, whilst the older dissent generally grew strong where the Church of England was strong, deriving (at least historically) much of its membership directly from the Church of England, Methodism grew strong where the Church of England was weak, and recruited from those sections of the population that Anglicanism failed to reach. This difference between the growth patterns of the three denominations should be associated with Methodist indifference to—and Congregational and Baptist enthusiasm for—disestablishment: the former denomination was much less directly in competition with the Church of England than the latter two.

The large-scale pattern of high Methodist growth in areas of Anglican weakness produces the basic geography of Methodism. A similar small-scale pattern underlies this broad distribution. Methodist historians have long held that Wesley gained his chief support from "a very independent class of people", as J. H. Rigg put it: "the miner, the foundryman, the handicraftsman, the 'statesman'

*and Wales* (London, n.d.), p. 46, I estimate county membership figures by totaling circuits with circuit-towns in the relevant county. This involves a small error due to overlapping.

<sup>9</sup> i.e. Cheshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Staffordshire, Yorkshire (West Riding); but not Derbyshire, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Surrey or Warwickshire.

<sup>10</sup> i.e. Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Dorset, Herefordshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northamptonshire, Rutland, Suffolk, Sussex; but not Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire or Yorkshire (East Riding).

freeholder, and the staunch yeoman . . . the skilled artisan and day-labourer of the towns". "The purely agricultural regions of England", on the other hand, gave Wesley little encouragement.<sup>11</sup> By extension, emphasis has been laid on certain postulated mental states of those sectors of the population where Methodism grew most. These include "independence" of mind; the mental tensions consequent on an "isolated, hard, chancy and poor" life, such as that lived by fishermen or miners;<sup>12</sup> or the anxieties and rootlessness of a new oppressed proletariat.<sup>13</sup>

These theories are very interesting. But they lack documentation. They may even be unnecessary. Perhaps Methodism grows where Anglicanism is weak not because of the mental characteristics of the population of such areas but because in these areas communities can be gathered and chapels built without persecution or disruption by squire or parson. This freedom from the secular and ecclesiastical restrictions of the declining state Church could be secured in various ways. Industrial towns and villages were safe from the sanctions of a Church-minded squire or a zealous parson. But so were areas where churches were few, where parishes were extensive and contained several townships remote from the church, or where the incumbent was non-resident. Weaknesses of this sort antedated the Industrial Revolution, and in many cases were centuries old. This pattern has been clearly shown in the case of Yorkshire,<sup>14</sup> where Methodism established itself most successfully in the out-townships of straggling parishes, in new industrial settlements, and in parishes with non-resident or pluralist clergymen. A similar process has been noted in Devon and Cornwall,<sup>15</sup> whilst the calculations of the distribution of Anglican churches discussed above suggests that such processes also operated in Staffordshire, Cheshire and Lancashire, and in the North-East.

If this interpretation be correct, it may also be true that there could be too much freedom from squire and parson for maximum growth. Small areas of Anglican weakness such as out-townships, small or new industrial settlements, present relatively manageable units for a congregation or chapel to influence. Areas of virtual Anglican eclipse, such as the large urban regions of south-east Lancashire, Warwickshire or London prove relatively unrewarding to Methodism—as to the older dissent—presumably because of the difficulty of communication and influence in a larger and denser

<sup>11</sup> W. W. Pocock: *A Sketch of the History of Wesleyan-Methodism in Some of the Southern Counties of England* (London, 1885), pp. 3-4.

<sup>12</sup> Hobsbawm, *op. cit.*, pp. 136-7.

<sup>13</sup> E. P. Thompson: *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963), pp. 46, 381, 388 ff.

<sup>14</sup> B. Greaves: *An Analysis of the Spread of Methodism in Yorkshire during the Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries (1740-1831), with Special Reference to the Environment of the Movement* (Unpublished thesis, Leeds, 1961).

<sup>15</sup> Michael Cook (ed.), *The Diocese of Exeter in 1821: Bishop Carey's Replies to Queries before Visitation, Vol. II: Devon* (Torquay, 1960), p. xvii.

population-unit and because of the variety of cultural and social opportunities such units offer. In 1801, Lancashire ranked only tenth, Warwickshire eighteenth, and Middlesex thirtieth strongest Wesleyan county in m.p.r. terms. The most striking contrast is between the West Riding, where Wesleyanism formed 2.6 per cent of the total population in 1801, and Lancashire, where it formed only 1.4 per cent.

Wesleyanism continued to grow rapidly till Waterloo. The years 1816-17 apparently saw the first check to the roughly continuous rapid growth of the Wesleyan m.p.r. which began some time in the eighteenth century. This check soon became a fall in m.p.r. which, in 1819-20, manifested itself in the first absolute decrease in Wesleyan membership in twenty years. It is no coincidence that these Wesleyan reverses accompany the emergence of new Methodist movements, of which the Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians and Tent Methodists are the best known. Just as the *macro*-context of Wesleyan growth in the eighteenth century appears to be the failure of the established Church (and the older dissent) to cope with the social situation in which it found itself, so a *macro*-explanation of the "new" Methodism of the 1810s might be the failure of Wesleyanism to deal with the social situation created by protracted war and industrial revolution. Such an explanation is at least strongly suggested by the fact that although, throughout the period 1801-41, the total Methodist m.p.r. continued to increase at a considerable rate, the Wesleyan m.p.r. grew at a much slower rate after 1811. A "new" Methodism had apparently pre-empted much of Wesleyanism's growth, perhaps by appealing to new types of industrial and agricultural wage-earners to whom an increasingly bourgeois Wesleyanism was alien.

If such a *macro*-interpretation of Methodist growth in the period after 1800 be allowed, then a *micro*-interpretation would locate each individual new Methodist denomination within one or more sections of the wage-earning part of the population—a procedure much in accordance with the usual assumption of Methodist historians that these new denominations were socially and economically inferior to Wesleyanism. Certainly both Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians were poorer, as denominations, than the Wesleyans. But the materials for an adequate assessment of the social characteristics of different denominations, such as analysis of class-books or studies of the local distribution of membership of individual chapels, are unfortunately not available.

These deficiencies may be off-set at least partially. The new Methodism apparently supplemented the growth of the old, by extending the social appeal of Methodism to new and poorer groups, and by supplementing Wesleyanism's geographical coverage, just as Wesleyanism supplemented that of Anglicanism. An initial examination of the geography of Methodism after 1800 might suggest the following argument. Even after Waterloo, Wesleyanism continued

to dominate the east and north-east coast, the east Midlands, the West Riding, and Cornwall. But there were various gaps in the Wesleyans' coverage: London and Lancashire, where evangelical nonconformity did not flourish; the central and west Midlands; the Berkshire-Wiltshire-Gloucestershire area, roughly bounded by Thames, Avon and Kennet; the south and south-east coast; and certain parts of the South-West, notably Somerset, North Devon, and perhaps parts of Cornwall. This latter area produced the Bible Christians, who subsequently moved round the south coast to the Medway towns. The Thames-Avon-Kennet area produced the Tent Methodists. The central and west Midlands produced the Primitive Methodists, who, when the Tent Methodists collapsed, took over and dominated Berkshire and North Wiltshire. Various objections could be raised against this argument. But it could be used as a basic hypothesis in a detailed study of Methodism in the period after Waterloo.

Preliminary statistical investigation confirms the argument, at least in part. Primitive Methodism began in Staffordshire and Derbyshire. Its most notable success outside this area was in the East Riding. It also did well in Norfolk and Northumberland. In four of these counties the Wesleyan m.p.r. increased less in the twenty-year period 1811-31 than it did in the ten-year period 1801-11; whilst in the East Riding the Wesleyan m.p.r. actually *decreased* in 1811-31. Only four of the eleven counties in which the Primitive Methodist m.p.r. grew most between 1811 and 1831 were among the ten counties where the Wesleyan m.p.r. increased most in this period.<sup>16</sup> In 1831-41, only four of the eleven counties where Primitive Methodism grew most were among the nine counties where Wesleyanism grew most, in m.p.r. terms;<sup>17</sup> whilst three of these eleven Primitive Methodist counties saw a decrease in the Wesleyan m.p.r. during the decade.

A similar association between Wesleyan weakness and Bible Christian strength can be seen in Devon, Somerset, and (to a lesser extent) Hampshire and Kent. Cornwall seems to provide a considerable exception to this tendency, for in 1831 both Wesleyans and Bible Christians were stronger in Cornwall than anywhere else. But the case of Cornwall may not be quite so straightforward. The distribution of the two denominations within the county varied considerably. If a line is drawn through the Carrick Roads northward, east of Truro but west of St. Ervan, Cornwall is divided into east

<sup>16</sup> Primitive Methodist counties: Bedfordshire, Derbyshire, Durham, Leicestershire, Norfolk, Northumberland, Nottinghamshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Yorkshire (North and East Ridings). Wesleyan counties: Bedfordshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Dorset, Durham, Kent, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Rutland, Yorkshire (North Riding).

<sup>17</sup> Primitive Methodist counties: Berkshire, Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Herefordshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire (East Riding). Wesleyan counties: Bedfordshire, Berkshire, Cornwall, Devon, Huntingdonshire, Lincolnshire, Shropshire, Yorkshire (North and East Ridings).



and west. In 1831, 73.9 per cent of Cornish Wesleyans, but only 41.8 per cent of Cornish Bible Christians, were members of circuits with circuit towns in western Cornwall. Conversely, 58.2 per cent of Cornish Bible Christians, but only 26.1 per cent of Cornish Wesleyans, were members of circuits with circuit towns in eastern Cornwall. It is possible that Bible Christian growth in Cornwall was, at least partly, associated with Wesleyan weakness.

The third major development in the growth of Methodism, following the emergence of Wesleyanism and the "new" Methodism of the early nineteenth century, was Free Methodism. Neither the Wesleyan Methodist Association nor the United Methodist Free Churches succeeded in making any significant headway after the secession that created them. Their growth was "lateral" growth from amalgamation with existing groups of Methodists rather than "frontal" growth from recruitment of the non-Methodist population. The Free Methodist m.p.r. rose sharply from 1857 to 1863, remained stable for the rest of the 1860s, and declined from 1870. The membership of Free Methodism depended almost entirely, therefore, on recruits from Wesleyanism and their descendants. In 1871, Free Methodism formed more than 0.5 per cent of the total population in five counties: Wesleyan membership in each of these had fallen by more than 30 per cent between 1850 and 1855.<sup>18</sup> The two strongest Free Methodist counties in 1871—Cornwall and Lincolnshire—were both areas of traditional Wesleyan strength. The general association between Wesleyan and Free Methodist strength is upset mainly by Lancashire. Lancashire dominated the Wesleyan Methodist Association, providing a third of its membership. Even in the United Methodist Free Churches, Lancashire provided nearly one-fifth of the membership. Although the other "reforming" Methodist denominations—the Wesleyan Reform Union and the Methodist New Connexion—also did relatively well in the county, it was not a scene of great Wesleyan or Primitive Methodist triumphs.

After 1881, Methodist denominations in Great Britain began to experience a fall in m.p.r. which persisted until the first world war. But in this period these denominations, especially Wesleyanism and Primitive Methodism, were very susceptible to the increasing migration of the population, particularly from north to south. This migration generally involved a shift from areas of traditional Methodist strength, in the North, East, or far West, to areas of traditional Methodist weakness in the Home Counties and the South-East. Analysis of m.p.r. trends in such areas as Northumberland and Durham, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, and Cornwall, on the one hand, and Essex, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, Kent, Surrey and Sussex, on the other, points to significantly different growth-situations in different parts of England. A steady decline in the *national* m.p.r. was accompanied by a sharp drop in m.p.r. in the traditional areas of

<sup>18</sup> Cornwall, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Northumberland, Yorkshire (West Riding).

Methodist strength and stable or rising m.p.r.s in the traditional areas of Methodist weakness. "Overmigration" occurred. According to the figures, Methodists left their traditional areas for the South-East much more quickly than the population of those areas did as a whole. This was to create severe problems at both ends: of empty chapels in the traditional areas, of scarce resources in the South-East.

The period of the North-South shift marks a fourth phase in the development of Methodism. In the eighteenth century, Wesleyanism grew in the "gaps" of Anglicanism. In the early nineteenth century, the "new" Methodism grew in the "gaps" of Wesleyanism. Later in the century, Free Methodism grew out of Wesleyan strength as, perhaps, the older dissent—with which Free Methodism had much in common—grew out of Anglican strength. Finally, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the distribution of Methodism as a whole began to change, resulting in accelerated decline in the North and increased growth in the South.

The emphasis of this analysis has been on micro-factors such as interdenominational and interregional differences. The latter have been examined mainly at the county level, but, ideally, micro-analysis would concentrate on individual chapels, since the chapel is in many ways the most important social and cultural unit of Methodism. Micro-problems shade into macro-, and certain suggestions about the macro-analysis of Methodist growth have been made here. I hope to develop some of these suggestions at a later date. But none of the arguments outlined here are presented as a definitive study of Methodist growth. They are offered rather as a possible starting point for inquiry.

ROBERT CURRIE.

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We have received two Epworth Press books which are of interest to Methodist readers. Thomas M. Morrow's *Early Methodist Women* (pp. 120, 15s.) consists of short sketches of Sarah Crosby, Hannah Ball, Frances Pawson, Mary Fletcher and Sarah Bentley. Many a women's meeting could profit from a series of talks on these brave female pioneers, and Mr. Morrow's book will serve as a sound guide. . . . *The Puritan Spirit* (pp. 358, 42s.), by Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, gathers together over thirty previously-published studies in historical subjects, and as such it will be welcomed by a wide circle of readers. We specially notice the chapter entitled "Early Quakerism and early Primitive Methodism" as another indication of Methodism's debt to the Society of Friends (on which subject see also *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 1).

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With the publication of the *Proceedings* thrice yearly, instead of quarterly, "News from our Branches" will appear annually in the February issue. Branch secretaries are asked to send to the Editor brief reports of the autumn meetings, together with any plans for future events. Latest membership figures will also be welcome.

## FOUR LETTERS FROM EBENEZER BLACKWELL

THE name of Ebenezer Blackwell was one to reckon with in early Methodism. His heart and his purse were ever open to the Wesley brothers. He was their friend and confidant, their financial adviser and benefactor, for over forty years. His home at Lewisham was a haven of rest for John Wesley, who frequently retired there to write or to recover from sickness. One of the best accounts of Blackwell is an article by the late Rev. John Telford in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for 1895, pp. 759-65.

Through the good offices of Miss K. E. Bryon of Martins Bank, we have been able to inspect some correspondence of Ebenezer Blackwell which is in the possession of Mr. Edward Holland-Martin of Overbury Court, Tewkesbury, Glos. Read alongside the correspondence of John and Charles Wesley, it makes instructive reading and fills up certain gaps. The first letter demonstrates the intimacy which marked the friendship between the Wesleys and the banker. Charles Wesley's lengthy sermons ruined Blackwell's chances of staying to the sacrament, and evidently, then as now, worshippers had a concern for their Sunday dinners! But when we turn to brother Charles's *Journal*, we get a different account of the service. However much Blackwell was distressed and bored by the service, the preacher thought himself to have had a good time. So writes Charles in his *Journal* for that day:

An extraordinary blessing attended the Word preached both at the Chapel and every other place. In the Sacrament, I was constrained to pray again and again, with strong crying and tears. So it was every day of this *great and holy week*.<sup>1</sup>

Letters II and III, written within a few days of each other, should be read alongside the replies of Charles Wesley dated 24th January and 2nd February 1753, and published in *Proceedings*, xxii, pp. 185-6. Blackwell did his best to restore the family relationships which had been badly ruptured by John's marriage in 1751.

The fourth letter takes its place in relation to the unhappy events of Mrs. Wesley's tampering with her husband's correspondence. Blackwell is frank enough to tell Wesley that he should not have left his letters lying around.

In his memorial verses to Ebenezer Blackwell, Charles Wesley described him as a "roughly honest soul" who "abhorred the polish smooth", and this well accords with the rather rough style in which these letters are written. One would have expected a more polished literary style from a banker of Blackwell's standing. However, "He spoke the language of the heart".<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, ii, p. 53.

<sup>2</sup> *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley*, vi, p. 354.

## I

## EBENEZER BLACKWELL TO CHARLES WESLEY

Dear Sir,

I pray you to bear with my folly if you see the things I write of in another light than they appear to me, though I trust the whole I shall say will be spoke in much love and not with an evil desire of finding fault.

The Almighty has been pleased to place you in an high station, therefore as a city that is set on a hill you cannot, nor ought good actions, to be hid, but like unto a candle properly situated should give light unto all that are round about you.

I shall omit mentioning all old things, and only speak a little of what has passed since you last came to town. Your brother, the Sunday before he left London, gave notice that he should meet you at Oxford the Wednesday following, and that you designed being in town the next day and desired that as many as could, would meet you at the Foundery on Thursday evening. You did, indeed, come to town time enough to have met the people as you appointed, but was so exceedingly tired you could not stop at the Foundery, but went on to Mr. Perronet's. The people waited for some time, every moment expecting you as they knew you was come to town, but you ordered Mr. Maxfield to give them an exhortation etc. Dear Sir, if the same spirit that rested on David, had dwelt in your breast, would you not, like him have rejoiced when they said unto you, come, let us go into the house of the Lord? And on recollection, do you not think it would have been proper, if it were only for an example to the people, to have spent some short space with them in prayer and thanksgiving, if your strength would not have admitted of more? For sure, you must own that Praise was due to your kind preserver in your journey, etc.

With regard to what I shall now mention I assure you it has been the cause of great uneasiness to several that frequently attend the service in the chapel; that is, your keeping the people very often so long there on a Sunday that it is impossible that either they or their servants who are at home preparing dinner for them should go to their Parish Church or any other place of worship in the afternoon before they come to the Foundery. Indeed, your Brother does not act in that manner, therefore I pray you sir to follow his example.

My intention this morning was to have spent the time I am writing this, with you at the sacrament, but indeed I am sorry to tell you, but I must, that you this Day (instead of your holy, devout behaviour invite me to) did by your unthinking, careless behaviour force me from the Table of the Lord. You did, indeed, read the Prayers but alas! it was more like a Priest of the World who had been up all night and was now half a-sleep on the Desk. Sir, I say, that neither myself, or many that were about me could understand one half of what you said, and pray how do you think we could say AMEN, or beseech the Lord to hear us when we knew not what petition you had asked. And as for the first Lesson in particular, you read it so very low that I dare say not one in ten throughout the chapel could hear or perfectly understand what you read. And then how unlike to the rule laid down in that Book by which all our actions should be governed and wherein we are told that all things should be done in decency and order, was your going into the pulpit to preach with the surplice on, and though it may be done in some

places and on particular occasions, yet it is very uncommon in and about this city. Therefore, indeed, sir, I must own that your discourse had very little effect on me, and I am afraid not much more on many others. When the preaching was over I enquired whether you had a cassock on, they told me you had, but that it was your whim every now and then to preach so. I pray you, dear sir, that you will leave off these odd whims and act with decency and consistency in the solemn work you are engaged in, surely as you have separated yourself from the world, you ought to have a double watch over your actions, that you do not cause an evil report to be brought of the Gospel you have in so particular a manner engaged to preach and support.

And now, sir, though I have been thus free in telling my mind (which I should not have done, had not one very closely concerned with you told me that you had both been spoke and wrote to several times, about your irregularity, but to little or no purpose) yet I must intreat you to remember what I said in the beginning of this letter that it is only done in love, and I earnestly pray the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, it may be deeply impressed on your heart.

And though I shall not sign my name to this, yet you must know from whom it comes. Many of the circumstances, as well as the handwriting will tell you, nor shall I in the least deny it, if you ask me the question. And I pray you, Dear Sir, in return and how you can answer the contrary at the Great Day of Accounts, I know not, that you will freely (for you are not to mind the persons of any one) tell me, as oft as you can see, the faults and errors of my life, so that by an earnest and deep humiliation before my God, he may be pleased through the merits and for the sake of our Lord Jesus to give a repentance unto life eternal and a power to forsake and hate sin with an utter hatred.

I am, dear sir,

[There is no signature.]

Sunday noon,  
18<sup>th</sup> March  
1749

To the Rev. Mr. Chas. Wesley.

## II

### EBENEZER BLACKWELL TO CHARLES WESLEY

LONDON, 22nd January, 1753

Dear Sir,

It is not my present design to enter into any arguing about the cause of the unhappy difference which now subsists between you and your wife and Mr. John Wesley and his wife, but this from my soul I say that if you and Mrs. Wesley will but come to town and spend one week or a fortnight here, I am persuaded with the assistance of a friend or two we shall be able under the directions of our God to put all things in such a situation as will make you all perfectly easy and perfectly happy, that from henceforth you may go on with that love and harmony which is and must be expected of any persons so engaged and so united as you two are.

This I declare, that if you both will come to town to make the tryal and cannot in a fortnight's time say from your very souls that you are exceeding glad of your journey, I promise to pay your whole expense both to London and back again.

\* This was a mistake for "19".

Dear Sir, I do desire and intreat you to indulge me in this for I cannot be said nay, and let not any thing prevent either you or Mrs. Wesley from coming, for indeed I hope it will be a far happier journey than any you have yet ever taken.

My dear Bet and Mrs. Dewell sends their kind love to you both as well as, dear sir,

Your very affectionate friend and humble servant,

To  
The Rev. Mr. Chas. Wesley,  
at Bristol.

E.B.

### III

EBENEZER BLACKWELL TO CHARLES WESLEY

LONDON, 30th January, 1753

Dear Sir,

I hardly know how to write more to the purpose than my last and I am vastly Discouraged in attempting anything farther since I have received your letter which I suppose you meant for an answer but I cannot call it an answer to mine. You seem to take the intentions of my letter far different from what I meant, for I only mean this. In the first place, to have that true Christian love and friendship established between you all, which is absolutely necessary for your carrying on the great work you seem to be called to; and in the second place to have any agreement between your brother and you with regard to your marriage settlement to be in the most strong, full and effectual manner complied with *all which* is what *both* parties have seem to be very desirous of; but a true Christian harmony, I am persuaded can never be perfected without both yourself and Mrs. Westley will come to town.

Sir, it is neither in your or the Trustees power to give up any thing that is settled on Mrs. Westley, therefore I beg of you not [to] esteem me such a fool as to ask it. I have nothing to do in this affair but to make and if possible [keep] peace between you all which by the Grace of God I would most willingly do. Therefore I desire, agreeable to what I before requested of you, a plain answer whether you with Mrs. Westley will come to town and if you will, I desire you not to fail to bring your marriage settlement with you for I find that neither Mr. Perronet your trustee nor Mr. J. Westley, the party concerned with you have any copy thereof. In hopes of your compliance herein,

I am, dear Sir,

Your truly affectionate and very humble servant,

E.B.

To the Rev. Mr. Charles Westley,  
at Bristol.

### IV

EBENEZER BLACKWELL TO JOHN WESLEY

LONDON, 30th June, 1758

Dear Sir,

I have received your favour of the 5th inst.<sup>4</sup> I have been much at Lewisham, so that I have had but little opportunity of hearing anything about Mrs. Wesley since she left London, but upon the receipt of yours

<sup>4</sup> For this letter see Standard *Letters*, iv, p. 21.

I went to enquire about your letters being opened, when Mr. G.<sup>5</sup> told me that he had opened them, having a general order from you for that purpose, but that he read none that was particularly addrest to you.

Two or three days after you left London, Mrs. Wesley brought me a letter of S.C.,<sup>6</sup> which she gave you (if I remember right) on Sunday evening before you set out and which you left upon a chair in one of your rooms, the contents of your letter I thought were very improper for any woman to write to you about Mrs. Wesley. I went to see S.C. but she, not being at home, came to my house, I spoke my mind very freely, she at last owned she had done very wrong in writing such a letter and promised she would ask Mrs. W.'s pardon and solemnly declared she would never speak or write of Mrs. W. again to you; how far she has kept her promise you can best tell, for indeed I have not that high opinion of her which I know you have. She has, I know, wrote to you since and has received one or more letters from you. She is very imprudent, she shows your letters about and thereby gives great offence to many belonging to you, but whether this may be through jealousy or no, I won't determine, but yet I really think you should be very cautious in your writing to her, if not totally to avoid it.

Mrs. W. showed me your letter you sent her from Bedford, and the answer she returned you. I had some hand in framing, from which you will know my sentiments of your letter. She is now come to town full of grief and anger. I went to her and asked her about writing to you. She said she was now determined no more, and said she had by a letter to Mr. Welsh acquainted him with your reasons of it, what I can understand of them is, That you generally send your letters to her under covers to other people and she is particularly offended at your sending a letter to S.R.<sup>7</sup> by Capt. Dansie with directions to give it into her own hands, and to enquire particularly after her health and at the same [time] taking no notice of her either by letter or the Captain's enquiry after her; whether this is true in every particular, I shall take upon me to determine, but this I am likewise fully persuaded of, that you are not cautious enough in your writing to S.R. as well as S.C., and I am afraid that you will sooner than you are aware of, see the ill effects of it, for the letter to S.R. has, I am afraid, broke all hopes of a reconciliation between you. Mr. Jones and myself are most grieved. I showed him your letter to me, his answer agreeable to my own sentiments were that Mrs. W had acted in many things exceeding wrong and was very much to blame on that account, and that you had not been so cautious as you ought to have been to avoid laying a stumbling block in her way, or in removing one once laid, so that you see, Dear Sir, we cannot quite agree with what you say of yourself therein.

O, Sir, I intreat you at all times to deal as freely with me as I have done with you, and indeed, I will receive as I would have you receive mine, viz: as a mark of true friendship and esteem.

I heartily rejoice at the willingness of the Irish to hear the word and your success therein. I hope that many, very many, will have reason to bless God for his sending you among them.

I have spoke to your Brother, who says he has wrote to you promising to do what he can in England for as long time as you shall think proper to stay in Ireland. He purposes setting out for B—— on Monday morning by the Stage Coach.

<sup>5</sup> Who is "Mr. G."?

<sup>6</sup> Sarah Crosby.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Ryan.

As to public affairs, God has done great things for us. He has stemmed the torrent of the proud and has given strength unto the weak. May we ever ascribe the glory to him, and think the King of Prussia is in a fair way of making peace on his own terms. When any is concluded on, I hope it will be a good and lasting one, that the Kingdom of our Lord may yet flourish more and more, though we have often seen that the blood of the martyrs have been to the growth of the Church as rain to the new mown grass.

When the time comes, I shall be very glad to see you, but where ever you are, I pray God by His grace to strengthen you yet more and more, and bless you with an abundant success.

My wife and Mrs. D——<sup>8</sup> desires to be most kindly remembered to you.

I am, dear sir,

Your very affectionate and most obedient servant.

I do not sign my name and wish that you had omitted putting yours, because your letter was by mistake at the Post Office, sent to one whose name is pretty much like mine, who opened it and read it. Farewell.<sup>9</sup>

To the Rev. Mr. John Wesley,  
at Mr. Beauchamps,  
in Limerick,  
Ireland.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

<sup>8</sup> Mrs. Dewell.

<sup>9</sup> For Wesley's reply, see *Standard Letters*, iv, p. 22.

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As promised in our last issue, we give below a list of recently-received local histories of Methodism. A further list will appear in February.

Ladock (Cornwall) (pp. 8) : copies from the Rev. Stanley E. E. Underhill, The Manse, Probus, Truro, Cornwall; no price stated.

Fremington (Devon) (pp. 8) : copies from the Rev. R. Keith Parsons, Homestead, Shorelands Road, Barnstaple, Devon; no price stated.

*Gunnerside Chapel and Gunnerside Folk* (pp. 72), by Margaret Batty, B.A., B.D. : copies from the author at The Manse, Reeth, Richmond, Yorks, 5s.

Trinity, Droylsden (pp. 22) : copies from the Rev. William W. Ion, 61, Broadway, Fairfield, Droylsden, Manchester; no price stated.

Forest in Teesdale (pp. 22) : copies from Mr. H. L. Beadle, Dale House, Forest in Teesdale, Barnard Castle, Co. Durham, 3s.

*Continuing the Journey*, the story of Knutsford Methodism (pp. 72) : copies from the Rev. Clifford T. Harris, 12, St. John's Road, Knutsford, Cheshire; no price stated.

*Methodism in Gainsborough* (pp. 16), by J. S. English : copies from the author at 60, Woodfield Road, Gainsborough, Lincs; no price stated.

*The Chapel in the Market Place*—Corbridge, Northumberland (pp. 20), by the Rev. John P. Horner : copies from the author at Eastrigg, Corbridge, Northumberland, 2s.

*Methodism in Ashton-under-Lyne* (pp. 44), by E. A. Rose : copies from the author at 18, Glenthorne Drive, Ashton-under-Lyne, Lancs, 3s. 6d.



# A HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL METHODISTS

(Continued from page 57)

## V

**I**N their *Annual Report of the Original Methodist Connexion* for the year ending 1st September 1851, the Quarter-day delegate, John Tomlinson, and vice-delegate, John Goodhall, include the following remarks:

Our little connexion in all its departments has flourished. We scarcely need advert to its finances, because we are not burdened with a hired ministry; yet, of late, this has claimed more attention on account of our "Record", which is making its way admirably, spreading our principles and increasing the number of our friends; and on account of our new Hymn Book, which we think, and many well-read men belonging to other denominations think, equal to any other in the English language, whether for paper, type, composition, or price; we recommend all our Societies and Congregations to purchase a full supply, and to use them in preference to any other.

The Original Methodists, then, looked forward to the future with confidence and hope. Far from their being "a feeble remnant", in Kendall's phrase, their influence during the 1850s was greater than ever before, so that by 1856 the Connexion consisted of a main circuit (Selston circuit) and three branch circuits—Brassington, Derby, and Radford. By 1st April 1852 the editor of the *Record* could report that

our excellent Hymn-book is now being generally used in our congregations, with a very few exceptions, and even these are giving orders for a supply. It is a happy circumstance, that the more it is used the more excellent it appears, and the more satisfaction it gives as a guide in the pleasing service of vocal melody in public worship.

The hymn-book referred to contained four hundred hymns, and was printed in the best style from new type. It could be purchased from C. Plumbé, at the Post Office, Sutton-in-Ashfield, for 1s. 2d. (plain) or 1s. 6d. (embossed and gilt).

The closing months of 1852, according to the report of H. Clark (who was Quarter-day delegate at the time) showed 26 chapels and other preaching-places, 54 public speakers, and 424 members, representing an increase on the previous quarter of three places, three preachers, and 18 members. By January 1854 John Tomlinson, in an address to the Original Methodist preachers, could declare that by commencing as a separate connexion they had

published [them]selves to the world and the church in [their] own vicinity, as teachers and guides of the public mind. A number much greater than we could reasonably expect, though very small in comparison to other large Christian communities, recognised us as such, and ranged themselves under our teaching. That number has increased, until at the present time there are not less than three thousand human

beings, either immediately or remotely, dependant upon our ministry for oral instruction in the all-important science of salvation.

By 1851 the Original Methodists had extended their influence well beyond the narrow confines of the Erewash Valley into the towns and villages of central Derbyshire. Camp meetings were regularly held and efficiently organized at Ashbourne, Brassington, Middleton, and Hognaston. In July 1851 these four places were grouped together to form a second circuit, and with the addition of Wirksworth in October of the same year, became known as the Brassington branch of the Original Methodists. The following year Kirk Ireton was included, and in 1853 Crich Carr and Mercaston joined. The last-mentioned village had experienced a very powerful Primitive Methodist camp-meeting in 1816. In April 1855, missions were commenced at Winster and Bole Hill.

Some of these societies of the second circuit were of short duration, but others, notably Middleton, Brassington, and Wirksworth, proved themselves the sheet-anchor of the Original Methodist cause. Indeed, Brassington and Wirksworth remained until the Connexion was dissolved. A separate Branch Quarter-day was instituted, and this usually preceded the General Quarter-day by one week. Four of the brethren appointed by the General Quarter-day meeting of December 1851 to visit the Preparatory Quarter-day of the Brassington branch reported that the proceedings of the business meeting were marked by peace and harmony and the after-meeting "favoured with much of the Divine presence and power". This was on 1st March 1852.

On the following morning, two of the brethren in their journey home called at the works of John Smedley of Lee Bridge Hall, and there saw

what they conceived to be one of the finest Christian exhibitions ever witnessed :—about 300 of his work-people assembled in one large room, and he himself uniting with them in singing God's praises, then reading and expounding the scriptures to them, and closing the whole with solemn prayer, all audibly joining in reciting what is generally called the Lord's Prayer.<sup>1</sup>

We have referred to this gentleman in an earlier chapter. What the delegates witnessed was the regular custom every morning in the works of this influential manufacturer.

At the General Quarter-day held at Selston the following Monday, it was unanimously resolved that at each place in the circuit either a private subscription or a public collection should be made, in aid of the new chapel at Brassington, and that the amounts should be forwarded by the local treasurers to the general treasurer, John Green, on or before 17th May.

By this means a neat, commodious chapel was soon erected, brick-built, and measuring 30 by 21 feet. There were a number of rising

<sup>1</sup> *Original Methodists' Record*, April 1852.

pews, containing 53 sittings—all let; the remainder of the chapel was occupied with free seats. It was settled on the Connexion, and enrolled in the proper court in London. It was opened for worship on Sunday, 17th October 1852, when two sermons were preached by the greatly-respected J. Rhodes of Nottingham; and on the 24th the opening services were repeated, with Hannah Green of Selston as the preacher. Congregations were large, and collections liberal. On Monday, 18th, nearly two hundred friends took tea in the chapel. In the *Record* of 1st January 1853, thanks are expressed by the Brassington trustees and society to Mr. J. Wadson, of Bradbourn, who generously gave the land, and J. Smedley, Esq., of Lee Bridge Hall, who rendered valuable assistance in the chapel's erection.

When the Original Methodist cause in Wirksworth first began, meetings were held in a private house, but on Sunday, 10th October 1852 a large room was formally opened by Mr. W. Osborne of Bleak Hall, who preached two sermons to crowded congregations. Very soon a revival took place, and new members were added. The society continued to prosper, and on 6th August 1854 a neat chapel, with wood floor, rising gallery, and gas lighting, was opened in "The Dale". This was not a new chapel: it was occupied first in 1828 by the Primitive Methodists, who had no use for it after 1846, when they moved to Gorsey Bank. The total expenditure on the necessary alterations amounted to just over £100, and an interesting resolution was passed at the Branch Quarter-day, held at Wirksworth on 21st August 1854:

This Quarter-day resolves that £60 shall be taken up in ONE POUND SHARES, for Wirksworth Chapel, legal promissory notes to be given by the Trustees, and the Shareholders to receive 5 per cent. per annum interest, the whole or any part of the principal to be called in at three months' notice.

Persons wishing to be shareholders were requested to apply to Mr. J. Rhodes, Holborn Brass Foundry, Nottingham. Early application was advised, as a considerable number of the shares were already taken up.

On 9th October 1853 a chapel was repaired and reopened for the Original Methodists at Crich Carr. It was conveniently situated, and from the start was free of debt. The opening sermons were preached by Mr. Osborne, and on the following day there was a public tea, at sixpence each. Similarly at Hognaston on 24th July 1853 a small chapel was opened. James Green, who, like his brother William, was a veteran of Waterloo, preached the opening sermons.

In the autumn of 1854, a number of people in Derby, of "Free Gospel" persuasion, banded themselves together to form a cause independent of a paid ministry. At first considerable difficulty was experienced in finding a meeting-place, but ultimately a room in Gisborne Street, formerly occupied by the Primitive Methodists, was obtained, the landlord heartily approving the society's principles. There was a lack of forms and a pulpit, but with great determination

the members obtained timber and tools and themselves set about the construction of these necessary furnishings. The preacher on the opening Sunday was Mr. W. Dale of Shirley. A class was formed, and arrangements made for two preaching services on Sundays and a week-night service on Wednesdays. The Derby Wesleyan Reformers came to their assistance with the provision of preachers. The cause quickly prospered, and was given the name "Christian Free Church".

Shortly after this it was made known to the Original Methodists that there were in Derby those who, like themselves, had stood out against "a despotic power, claimed and exercised by their pastoral lords".<sup>2</sup> On examination it was found that the Original Methodists differed only in name. An interchange of preachers was arranged, and within six months the society had increased to three large classes and the hired room become much too small for the overflowing congregations. Original Methodist class tickets were distributed to the members by Mr. W. Osborne on the first Sunday in September 1855.

One the most influential "Free-Gospellers" of Derby, and the man more than any other responsible in encouraging union with the Original Methodists was James Chambers (1777-1856). At the age of 17 he became an exhorter on the Wesleyan plan, and was soon recognized as a talented and acceptable preacher. He laboured in several different circuits, having to remove frequently on account of his employment. In an account of his life we read :

It appears that he had had his mind fixed upon the great subject of the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ for many years, and was what is called a Millenarium [sic]. It appears however that he at length began to be uneasy, believing that he had omitted a part of his duty, and determined in future that it should form part of his topics in public. These views not being entertained by his then superintendent, he soon began to lay hands upon him, preferred five charges against him, and finally expelled him without a trial, after labouring more than 40 years for them.<sup>3</sup>

However, almost immediately after his expulsion from the Wesleyan Connexion, the Arminian or Faith Methodists of Derby wrote to him, inviting him to join forces with them. This invitation he accepted, continuing with them up to the time of their breaking-up in 1836. After the Arminians had officially amalgamated with the Protestant Methodists and others and had joined the Wesleyan Association, Chambers did not unite himself to any particular denomination, but preached first for one and then another. Like the other brethren who joined in fellowship at Gisborne Street, by 1854 he seems to have lost all confidence in a paid ministry. He died on 22nd March 1856 an ardent lover of Free Gospellism.

It seems to the writer unlikely that James Chambers was the only

<sup>2</sup> Report on the Derby Branch of the Original Methodists' Connexion (*Original Methodists' Record*, October 1855).

<sup>3</sup> "A Brief Account of James Chambers", by Hugh Bateman (*ibid.*, July 1856).

ex-Arminian of Derby to have slowly found his way over a period of nearly twenty years into the Free Gospel camp. Though the union of 1836 took in about 1,200 members and 70 local preachers from the Arminians, could it be that as far as the Arminians of Derby were concerned, the union proved an unhappy one in which their views could never really be contained?

The Original Methodist societies of Derby rapidly increased in number. Meetings were held at Carrington Place, Kensington, Leaper Street, Lodge Lane, Peel Street, and Spondon,<sup>4</sup> in addition to the meeting in the room in Gisborne Street. A separate Quarter-day was held for the first time on 26th November 1855, and, as in the case of the Brassington Branch Quarter-day, this took place one week before the General Quarter-day. The Lodge Lane chapel was the place usually preferred for the Quarterly Meetings.

Yet the Derby Branch of the Original Methodists' Connexion, though vigorously active at first and showing as many as 14 preachers, was to enjoy a life-span of little more than two years. All their activities ceased in 1857. The reader will rightly ask where all the members went. Surely the year is significant! For some time the Wesleyan Reformers had held their services in the lecture hall at the Mechanics' Institute, but on 27th July 1856 they removed to Brook Street chapel, built in 1802 by the Baptists. In the wider union of 1857, with the Rev. William Griffith as the first United Methodist Free Church minister of Brook Street,<sup>5</sup> is it not possible that the Original Methodists of Derby were prepared to wave aside their differences and join their fellow Christians in an exciting new venture under the ministry of no "pastoral overlord" but a man of widely-known democratic leanings?

Perhaps not all the Original Methodists were so inclined, for in April 1863 we find a re-emergence of the Derby circuit. A camp meeting was held at Alveston on 14th June, and a Circuit Committee was formed consisting of the following men: W. Neale, J. Briggs, J. Linny, J. Rushton, E. Winfield, W. Bennett, and T. Waine. The treasurer was W. Neale, and J. Briggs served as secretary. A final Quarter-day was held at Agard Street chapel on 25th May 1863. The circuit then consisted of Agard Street, Draycott, Alveston, and one cottage meeting-place. These activities were the last ever to be organized by the few remaining stalwarts of the Original Methodist cause in Derby. The fact that the preachers' plan for April-June shows seven preachers on full plan of whom three lived in Abbey Street and two in Green Street suggests that the revival was of a purely local character. Few of the old names re-appear on this plan, whether as preachers, exhorters, helpers or prayer-leaders, which suggests that this last attempt to revive the cause aroused but little

<sup>4</sup> The Arminian Methodists had previously met here and at Alveston (now Alvaston).

<sup>5</sup> He had previously served the Brook Street congregation as Wesleyan Reform minister.

interest in those who had found their spiritual needs provided for in other sanctuaries.

In the spring of 1856 it was decided to make the flourishing Radford society the focal point of a separate branch circuit. It is difficult now to understand why this decision was made. The Radford society had always been somewhat isolated from other societies in the Connexion. Only Hucknall Torkard was within reasonable travelling distance for the local preachers who served the Connexion from Nottingham. Though two societies within a radius of five miles of Radford had been established in October 1852—at Kimberley and Shipley Wood, the following April saw the end of their Free Gospel activities. Perhaps the preachers had complained of the inadequate opportunities in this outpost within the confines of the Original Methodists' Connexion. It was certainly unreasonable to expect them to trudge their weary way to the remote villages of central Derbyshire, though the Midland Railway enabled them to reach the Derby Branch societies without much inconvenience. Perhaps it was anticipated that the missioning of other districts in and around Nottingham would be encouraged with the well-equipped Radford society providing the impetus for such an advance. Whatever the reasons, the first Branch Quarter-day was held in the Radford chapel on 13th July 1856. Hucknall Torkard was now included in the new branch circuit.

However, the Original Methodists failed to benefit from this new initiative. After only two years, the Radford society, with its thriving Sunday-school, splendid facilities, increasing membership and enviable library, sought re-union with the Primitive Methodists, and by July 1858 had severed their connexion with the Original Methodists. Hucknall Torkard was immediately re-entered on the Selston circuit plan.

DONALD M. GRUNDY.

(To be continued)

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All the members of the Wesley Historical Society will be delighted to know that the Rev. John C. Bowmer, the editor of these *Proceedings*, has been awarded the degree of Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Leeds for a thesis on "Church and Ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley to the death of Jabez Bunting". Dr. Bowmer is a specialist in this field, and the honour is richly earned.

MALDWYN L. EDWARDS.

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In addition to the local histories of Methodism referred to on page 79, we are pleased to notice the following :

*Soli Dei Gloria*—Maiden Street, Weymouth (pp. 64) : copies from Miss E. M. Pearson, 57, Charmont Road, Rodwell, Weymouth ; no price stated.

Wickersley (Rotherham circuit) Opening Ceremony booklet (8 pp.) : copies from the Rev. John H. Morrell, 46, Blyth Road, Maltby, Rotherham, Yorks ; no price stated.

## GEORGE BAXTER AND METHODISM

**A**MONG the most exquisite and charming productions of the Victorian era, not to say the most finished works of art, were the "oil prints" of George Baxter. Born in Lewes on 31st July 1804, the son of John Baxter who carried on the business of a printer, wood-engraver and publisher, George no doubt learned much in his father's workshop, and was soon engraving wood-blocks for his father's use.

Years earlier—in indeed in the middle and later years of the eighteenth century, artists foresaw the possibility of producing a print from wood-blocks, thereby providing facsimiles of the works of the great artists at small expense. It remained for Baxter to bring this about. In the production of these beautiful oil colour-prints, he used a foundation or key-plate of steel, and a separate wood-block was used for each colour, twenty or more blocks often being prepared for one print. Briefly, Baxter's method was first to make a complete engraving of the picture he intended to reproduce, and then to print this in ink. Afterwards he added individual colours one by one, each from its separate block, and so built up his complete colour-print. We may imagine the labour and painstaking work involved, when we consider the colour and quality and exactness of his prints, for they will bear inspection with the magnifying-glass. It has been said :

His prints are distinguished for conscientious and elaborate detail, their perfect register, their brilliancy and depth of colour, their life and softness and delicacy of finish.

It was shortly after his marriage in 1827 that he produced his first (now very rare) colour-print by his new method. He did this in 1829, being in all probability encouraged to experiment with wood-block printing by that supreme artist in wood-engraving Thomas Bewick. For the next thirty years he continued at work, producing in all nearly four hundred different prints, varying in size from one of 25 by 18½ ins. to the exquisite little "needle-prints" (so called because they were produced to fit on small boxes of needles) measuring 1 by 1¼ ins.; but even on these tiny prints the detail is amazing.

His subjects were varied—royal portraits, residences, etc.; views; flowers and fruit; rural scenes and scenes of humble life; religious pictures; the Great Exhibition; portraits, and so on. Some of these were produced for illustrating books such as ladies' pocket books and the like, children's books, etc. But in the 1840s he was engaged by the London Missionary Society, the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society, and the Baptist Missionary Society, to produce prints of events and persons of interest to their supporters. Many of these were intended to illustrate missionary books.

(1) The first print of Methodist interest is of the "*John Wesley*" *Missionary Ship*. It is an exquisite little oval sepia aquatint:

unlike the vast majority of Baxter's prints, it was never issued in colours. It measures  $4\frac{1}{8}$  by  $2\frac{3}{4}$  ins., and is of some rarity.

Three volumes of the *Wesleyan Juvenile Offering* (a miniature juvenile missionary magazine) contain Baxter prints, viz. in 1846, 1847 and 1848:

(2) *Wesleyan Missionary Station at Waingaroa, New Zealand* shows the natives assembling in their canoes for worship at the Wesleyan chapel. It measures 6 by 4 ins., and is very rarely met with. Some copies of the magazine had a similar view, but easily distinguished, printed by the aquatint process by J. Bannister.

(3) *Hindoo Temple at Gyar Behar*—a Wesleyan missionary station in India. It measures  $4\frac{1}{2}$  by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  ins., and in contrast to the last item is not Baxter's best work, and is quite common.

(4) *The Wesleyan Chapel, Pophams Broadway, Madras*—a delicately tinted print of a typical Brunswick-style chapel. The print measures 5 by  $2\frac{3}{4}$  ins., and a good print is quite rare.

(5) *Destruction of the Tanjore by lightning off Ceylon*. This print appeared in Elijah Hoole's *Madras, Mysore, and the South of India* in 1844, and in a later book, *Missionary Memorial*. The print measures  $5\frac{1}{8}$  by  $3\frac{1}{8}$  ins.

(6) *The Rev. J. Waterhouse superintending the landing of the missionaries at Taranaki, New Zealand*. This print, which measures  $16\frac{1}{4}$  by  $11\frac{7}{8}$  ins., never appeared in a book, and was produced in colour in 1844; a sepia version appeared some eleven years later. In 1845 the *Wesleyan Juvenile Offering* contained a woodcut of this picture, with a key to the various persons, etc. depicted. Against a background of palms and other trees, Waterhouse is seen conversing with a chief who has a crowd of his followers behind him, apparently welcoming the missionaries. On the horizon is the missionary ship *Triton*, and nearer the shore a boat contains the Rev. Charles Creed, directing the landing of goods, while at the water's edge Mrs. Creed is being carried ashore by native women. This print is of considerable rarity.

(7) *Vah-ta-ah*, an oval portrait of a Fijian cannibal princess converted through the Wesleyan missionaries; it measures  $3\frac{3}{8}$  by  $2\frac{5}{8}$  ins., and was produced for J. W. Waterhouse's book *Vah-ta-ah, the Feejeean Princess*, in 1857.

(8) Finally, towards the end of his working life, Baxter produced a half-length portrait of Wesley, a reproduction of the Romney portrait. This measures  $4\frac{1}{4}$  by  $3\frac{3}{8}$  ins., and is quite scarce.

In spite of the fineness of his work, and the popularity of some of his prints, especially those of *The Coronation of Queen Victoria* and *The Opening of Queen Victoria's First Parliament*, Baxter was never financially successful. He constantly had to borrow money, and in 1860 held a sale of all his effects. This, however, proved a fiasco, as most of the lots were bought in, and during the



next four years he toured the country and held sales of his prints in places as far apart as Sunderland and Bristol. He eventually sold his plates and blocks also; and in 1865 on his own petition was adjudged a bankrupt. He died as the result of an accident on 11th January 1867.

Methodism may well be proud of the fact that the great artist found inspiration in Methodist subjects for some of his creations.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

### Financial Statement for the Year ended 31st May 1967

INCOME.	£	s.	d.	EXPENDITURE.	£	s.	d.
Subscriptions in advance br't forward from previous year—				Printing of <i>Proceedings</i> (4 issues), etc. ...	332	9	11
Ordinary Members ...	464	9	9	Secretarial and Editorial Expenses ...	16	2	10
Life Members ...	273	0	0	Insurance ...	4	9	7
Received during year ...	318	11	0	Lecturer's Honorarium ...	10	10	0
	1,056	0	9	London Electricity Board		13	1
Less Unexpired Subscriptions (see Balance Sheet)	754	17	6	Advertisements ...	22	1	3
	301	3	3	Committee Expenses ...	8	11	0
Irish Branch ...	43	16	0	Bank Charges and Cheque Book ...	1	6	0
Share of Lecture Collection	12	12	7	Sundries ...	1	18	0
<i>Proceedings</i> (back numbers) and Advertisements ...	14	9	8				
Publications sold ...	7	13	6				
War Stock Dividend ...	7	15	6				
Bank Interest ...	4	3	4				
Balance of Expenditure over Income ...	6	7	10				
	<u>£398</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>		<u>£398</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>8</u>

### Balance Sheet

LIABILITIES.	£	s.	d.	ASSETS.	£	s.	d.
Unexpired Subscriptions—				Cash in hand—Treasurer ...	236	18	6
Ordinary Members ...	478	7	6	Registrar ...	55	6	10
Life Members (79 at (say) £3 10s. od. each) ...	276	10	0	War Stock (at cost) ...	225	0	0
	754	17	6	Trustee Savings Bank ...	479	3	4
Accumulated Funds b/fwd.	247	19	0				
	1,002	16	6	Library, Publications Stocks, Filing Cabinet, etc. unvalued			
Less Balance of Expenditure over Income ...	6	7	10				
	<u>£996</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>		<u>£996</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>

12th July 1967.

ROWLAND C. SWIFT, *Treasurer*.  
F. HAMMOND, *Auditor*.

## THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

IT was appropriate that the Annual Meeting and Lecture in connexion with the Middlesbrough Conference should be held at the historic Yarm Octagon. Its comparative inaccessibility did not prevent the usual number of members and their friends from assembling on Wednesday, 12th July, first for the Tea generously provided by Mrs. G. Ibberson of Barnsley, and later for the business meeting and Lecture. The Rev. Dr. A. Skevington Wood, speaking in the schoolroom in which he had once been a scholar, thanked the Yarm ladies who had tastefully arranged the tea on Mrs. Ibberson's behalf.

### Business Meeting

Devotions were led by the President. The fraternal nature of the Society was brought out once again by the reading of the list of members who had died during the year. It included the Rev. W. Lamplough Doughty, who had served as President, and Mrs. Gladys May Swift, the widow of the Rev. Wesley F. Swift, former editor of these *Proceedings*.

The Registrar reported a current membership of 881, a net increase of 29 on the previous year. New members enrolled during the year totalled 41, but there were 8 deaths, and 4 members retired or lapsed: we are still a long way off our target of 1,000. The Treasurer's report showed that the total assets of the Society amount to £996 8s. 8d., a figure which includes £754 17s. 6d. advance subscriptions. The complete statement is printed opposite.

A good deal of time was spent on reports received from local branches, either through their members present or by correspondence. Much good work is being done in all the branches. Miss Joanna Dawson, of our Yorkshire Branch, spoke about the field work still to be done, and was congratulated on her own recently-published studies of Methodism in Nidderdale.

Alderman Horace Hird was congratulated upon the excellence of the Exhibition of Methodist History currently on view at the Dorman Museum, Middlesbrough.

The meeting endorsed the recommendation of the Executive Committee that the Society's Library at City Road should be joined to the reference library at the Methodist Archives and Research Centre. The combined library will come under the supervision of the Archivist, and its resources will be of the greatest value to our members.

### The Annual Lecture

Under the chairmanship of the President, a stimulating lecture was given by the Rev. Frederick Hunter on "Wesley, Catholicity and Comprehension". Mr. Hunter claimed that Wesley's passionate concern for holiness—ethical, evangelistic and ecumenical—his practical interest in the unity of the Church, and his lifelong conviction that a return to the doctrine and discipline of the Primitive Church was the only foundation for this union in mission and holiness, was the key alike to his high churchmanship, his ecclesiastical pragmatism, and his creation of the Methodist societies. As the lecturer dealt with such long-controverted matters as the influence of the King and Stillingfleet on Wesley, the Erasmus episode, the Dighton Street ordinations, and Coke's later views and actions, we began to see a way in which they could be resolved. For the details of this thesis we must wait (however impatiently) the publication of the lecture at the end of the year.

THOMAS SHAW.

## BOOK NOTICES

*Battle for the Free Mind*, by Ian Ramage. (Allen & Unwin, 42s.)

Evidently Dr. William Sargant's *Battle of the Mind*, with its entirely mischievous attack on John Wesley's "brain-washing" techniques, demanded a full-length reply, because the book has gone into many editions. Ian Ramage, a New Zealand Methodist scholar, has now done us this service in a book which first of all exposes Dr. Sargant's own strong bias in minimizing the distinction between brain and mind and between bodily and mental processes, so that he is a near kinsman of the old Behaviourist school. Then Mr. Ramage quite properly shows that in attacking John Wesley for his "hell-fire preaching" and his brain-washing and conditioning and indoctrination of converts swept in through mass evangelism, Dr. Sargant shows no knowledge whatever of his primary sources. If he had read the *Works*, or even the *Sermons*, he would have known that John Wesley had only one sermon on "hell-fire"—intellectualized and far removed from the direct appeal to fear shown in Jonathan Edwards's preaching. As for mass hysteria, it was always deplored by the brothers Wesley, and after a few years the phenomena ceased. Frankly, John Wesley was very much a child of his age in his calm appeals to men of reason, as his sermon on "The Nature of Enthusiasm" clearly demonstrates. Mr. Ramage has wholly demolished Dr. Sargant's case against Wesley's evangelism. Indeed, the attack could have been even more devastating—but perhaps you don't kick an opponent when he is down.

MALDWYN L. EDWARDS.

*A History of Nidderdale*, by the Pateley Bridge Local History Tutorial Class, edited by Bernard Jennings, M.A. (The Advertiser Press Ltd., Huddersfield, pp. 504, 42s.)

Nine years ago a Workers' Educational Association class at Pateley Bridge, Yorks, set out to study the history of Nidderdale. It was later constituted a Leeds University tutorial class, and the results of its labours have now appeared in a lengthy volume of over 500 pages. If any of our readers wish to know how to write local history in a big way, this book will show the way. It traces the history of the dale from early days to modern times, and deals with industry, mining, farming, housing, education and religion. With forty pages devoted to it, Methodism comes in for liberal treatment. One of our members, Miss Joanna Dawson, who is also a member of our Yorkshire Branch, took an active part in the research, and we understand that through the efforts of Miss Dawson and her "class-mates" many early Methodist records have been unearthed and are now in safe custody. (We commend this work to all our branches!)

For many years, one of our best-selling pamphlets has been *How to write a Local History of Methodism*. Those who would like to see the principles therein advocated put into practice could do no better than to purchase this book. We hope it will have a wide sale both within and without the county of York.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

*Lady Glenorchy and her Churches*, by D. P. Thomson. (The Research Unit, Crieff, pp. 80, 12s. 6d.)

I have before me a privately-published little sketch of Willielma, Lady Glenorchy, by the Rev. D. P. Thomson, D.D., of The Research Unit, Barnock, Crieff, Scotland. It is well written, albeit the language seems at times to be rather archaic.

Dr. Thomson traces Lady Glenorchy's ancestry and her early life, her conversion, and her friendships both with Evangelical ministers in Scotland and south of the Border, with other titled ladies of her circle, and with John Wesley. Lady Glenorchy's foundation of her various churches and religious enterprises in England and Scotland are thoroughly and adequately recounted, and their histories to the present day are recorded. There are many interesting photographs, which high-light Dr. Thomson's travels and researches.

However, I find it a trifle confusing to read about a certain place, church or person, follow through to the present time—and then go back to the original starting-point! Again, the writer mentions a person or place in connexion with Lady Glenorchy, and then proceeds to give a family history of that person or place: it seems to me that this is irrelevant to his main purpose, and that other details more essential to the story could have been inserted instead.

A study of this kind will obviously have no wide public appeal, but those who, including myself, have worked in this field, as well as others locally interested, will be grateful to Dr. Thomson for making the results of his labours so readily available.

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM.

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## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1167. ACADEMIC THESES ON METHODIST HISTORY.

The following have come to our notice since the list appearing in *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 136:

- "The contribution of Lady Glenorchy and her circle to the Evangelical Revival"—Mrs. E. Dorothy Graham (Leeds B.D., 1964).
- "The History of Methodism in Manchester and Salford to 1932: a Bibliography"—Mrs. Georgina Mary Madden (London Diploma in Librarianship, 1965).
- "Methodist Secessions and Social Conflicts in South Lancashire, 1830-57"—Mr. David A. Gowland (Manchester Ph.D., 1966).
- "Divisions and Reunions in Methodism"—Mr. Robert Currie (Oxford D.Phil., 1966).
- "The nature of the Free Church Ministry, with special reference to (a) the writings of A. M. Fairbairn, J. Oman, P. T. Forsyth and J. Scott Lidgett and (b) recent Reunion Proposals"—Rev. Edgar Richards (London Ph.D., 1967).
- "Baptism in Wesleyan Methodism: Practice and Doctrine to 1882"—Rev. Bernard G. Holland (London Ph.D., 1966).
- "Primitive Methodism in Nottinghamshire, 1815-1932"—Mr. G. M. Morris (Nottingham Ph.D., 1967).
- "Church and Ministry in Wesleyan Methodism from the death of John Wesley (1791) to the death of Jabez Bunting (1858)"—Rev. John C. Bowmer (Leeds Ph.D., 1967).

### 1168. ORDINATIONS IN METHODISM, 1791-1836.

I am grateful to several of our readers who have supplemented the list of Wesleyan ordinations which appeared in the June issue (pp. 37 ff.). I hope to publish these additions in our next number, but before doing so I should be glad to hear of any further cases. As I said in my article, they should be well authenticated.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

## 1169. THE REVIVALIST METHODISTS.

Mr. Barrie S. Trinder, of Flat 2, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, sends the following quotation from *The Religions of Britain—or a view of its various Christian Denominations* (Shrewsbury, 1826), p. 288:

This connexion [i.e. Revivalist Methodists] is perhaps the smallest of any and is chiefly under the superintendency of Mr. Robert Winfield of Amberston near Derby. The Revivalists approximate in discipline, practice and institutions to the Primitives, being also like them distinguished by extraordinary zeal and by encouraging field and female preaching. They have societies in various parts of the kingdom, particularly in Shropshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, etc. Their first Conference was held at Northampton in 1821 and in 1823 they had 13 circuits, 25 travelling preachers and 71 local preachers. Mrs. Ford, well known in Shropshire, is considered one of their most popular preachers, and Mr. Woodruff of the Iron Bridge a principal member and local preacher.

Mr. Trinder would welcome any further information on Robert Winfield or on the Northampton Conference of 1821. EDITOR.

## 1170. INFORMATION WANTED ABOUT THE REV. HUGH GILMORE.

Mr. R. B. Walker, The Department of History, University of Adelaide, South Australia, writes:

Further information is sought about the career of the Rev. Hugh Gilmore as social reformer before his arrival in South Australia in June 1889. He was born in Glasgow, orphaned, and brought up in poor circumstances. Converted at 19, he entered the PM ministry in 1865 and served at Berwick, Hartlepool, Blyth, Darlington, North Shields and Preston. He was a foundation member of the Dialectic Club at Durham. His short ministry at Adelaide won him great respect as an outstanding preacher, "Christian socialist" and leading social reformer, and his premature decease occasioned unprecedented scenes of mourning by the whole community.

## 1171. WESLEY GENEALOGY.

From correspondence and articles in the *Proceedings* (see, e.g., Notes and Queries 1163, p. 63 above), it would appear that my narrative pedigree on John Wesley's family has been missed by a number of writers. This was published in *Blackmansbury*, i, Nos. 5 and 6 (December 1964 and February 1965), and ii, No. 6 (February 1966), and was reviewed at some length in *Proceedings*, xxxv, pp. 110 ff. The notes with the pedigree attempt to deal comprehensively with all that has been written on the subject to date, and include details of the families to which the Wesleys were related, where known, and many other details of careers of members of the family. The facts given in the notes indicate that John Wesley was not entitled to use armorial bearings.

MALCOLM A. PINHORN

(Shalfleet Manor, Newport, Isle of Wight).

## 1172. LEEDS RESEARCH.

I am doing research into the condition of Methodism in the Leeds District, 1914-67, as study for Ph.D. in the Sociology of Religion at Leeds University. The main part of the inquiry consists of a contemporary survey, but this must be set against the background of history. I should like therefore to purchase or borrow *Minutes* of the Methodist Conference 1914-52 and 1963-7 and Leeds District May Synod Agendas 1914-48. Newspaper cuttings, centenary and anniversary booklets, etc. would also be useful. My particular interest is Methodism's impact on society (e.g. Christian Citizenship). Would anyone able to help please write to me at 17, Kensington Terrace, Hyde Park, Leeds, 6.

BRYAN S. TURNER.