

Theology on the Web.org.uk

Making Biblical Scholarship Accessible

This document was supplied for free educational purposes. Unless it is in the public domain, it may not be sold for profit or hosted on a webserver without the permission of the copyright holder.

If you find it of help to you and would like to support the ministry of Theology on the Web, please consider using the links below:



Buy me a coffee

<https://www.buymeacoffee.com/theology>



PATREON

<https://patreon.com/theologyontheweb>

PayPal

<https://paypal.me/robbradshaw>

A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_whs_01.php

Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D., Ph.D.

Volume XXXVIII

August 1971

THE "TUCK NET" CONTROVERSY OF 1824

[The writer wishes to acknowledge the help given by the Baptist Union and the Baptists of Penzance in the compilation of this article.]

COMPARATIVELY little has been written of the relationship of Methodism to Dissent in the early nineteenth century. Whilst Dissent shared the renewal of the Evangelical Revival, there was much *odium theologicum* from the Calvinist-Arminian dispute; the Dissenting historians David Bogue and James Bennett charged Wesleyan Methodism in 1812 with error, scriptural ignorance, and enthusiasm. The tendency of Wesleyanism to regard itself as midway between Church and Dissent was an irritation; Dissenters much preferred the attitude of the various non-Wesleyan Methodist bodies. The general touchiness of contemporary Protestantism further prevented mutual understanding.

Local conditions doubtless varied widely, but most of these factors emerged in a dispute between the Wesleyans and the Baptists of Penzance in 1824. This "Tuck Net" controversy—so called from the title of one of the pamphlets written by the Baptist minister, G. C. Smith—was far removed in spirit from the great Free Church alliance with which the century was to end. This rather squalid dispute sheds light upon the ecclesiastical life of the neighbourhood, and shows a Baptist interest in certain Wesleyan Methodist internal problems in the second decade of the nineteenth century.

Wesleyan Methodism in Penzance was very strong. The Penzance circuit in 1824 returned 2,110 members, of whom about 430 came from Penzance, and 118 from Newlyn. Its traditions went back to Wesley's early visits to Cornwall, and the spacious Chapel Street building erected in 1814, largely through the Penzance banker William Carne, seemed to bear out the proud claim that Wesleyan Methodism was dominant in the area. The local Baptists, on the other hand, could only trace their ancestry back to 1797. A chapel was built in 1802, and a rapid increase in their numbers followed,

especially after G. C. Smith became the minister in 1807. This was due to the itinerant preachers of the Baptist Home Missionary Society; the number of Baptist chapels in Cornwall increased from two in 1789 to ten in 1822,¹ and Baptist causes were established in many villages. Smith founded six, including one at Newlyn, between 1812 and 1816.

This Baptist advance in a Wesleyan Methodist stronghold brought tension. The Wesleyans tended to resent the presence of evangelical Calvinism, and suspected Smith's aims; the Baptists disliked the dominant Arminianism, and by the employment of Wesleyan-style itinerants seized the opportunity presented by lapsed Methodist converts. According to Smith, a Wesleyan superintendent had declared at Mousehole that Calvinism was "a doctrine that came from hell, and to hell it would go".² The Bible Christian Conferences of 1821 and 1822 reported "vain janglings" over infant and believers' baptism.³ Smith also stated that a leading Wesleyan at Hayle Copperhouse had written to tell him that the Baptists had no business in Hayle, "because the Methodists were there". Hayle Methodists would rather see their old chapel used for a warehouse than sell it to the Baptists. Fear of proselytism was behind this attitude; yet at the Baptist Association meetings in 1821 and 1822 Joseph Burgess, the Redruth Wesleyan superintendent, was present and offered prayer.⁴ Smith in particular aroused the hostility of successive Penzance superintendents, and they kept a close watch on the activities of his Home Mission itinerants.

Their vigilance was amply rewarded in January 1824, when the *Baptist Magazine* published letters from John Jeffery of Newlyn and James Heath of Herland—two of Smith's itinerants. Jeffery was born at Mousehole of Methodist parents, but had been baptized by Smith. He had worked as a Baptist itinerant in the Isles of Scilly, and had come to Newlyn in 1823. Jeffery wrote:

A great part of the population of this town would be destitute of the gospel, but for the labours of your itinerant . . . That much has been done to chase away moral darkness from the souls of the poor in Cornwall, and that great success has attended their efforts, I thankfully acknowledge: but the tract of land in my rough map contains at least fifty thousand souls, and of this company not six, not five thousand are professors of religion. Newlyn and Mousehole were but partially supplied with the gospel by Mr. Smith and his assistants, (they could do no more) and there are many places yet unvisited by Baptist, Independent, or any other evangelical ministers.⁵

Jeffery declared that Buryan, Madron, Brane, Tredavoe and St. Michael's Mount were all in the same sad state. Heath wrote in

¹ *Baptist Magazine*, 1823, p. 331.

² G. C. Smith: *The Tuck Net* . . . , p. 86.

³ Bible Christian *Minutes*, 1821, pp. 6-11; 1822, pp. 8-9.

⁴ G. C. Smith: *Wheal Discord*, p. 30.

⁵ J. Waterhouse: *Remarks on an Extract of a Letter from Mr. Jeffery, Newlyn*.

similar terms of Gwinear, St. Erth, Porthleven, Goldsithney, Portreath, Angarrick, Herland and Hayle :

Were it not for itinerant labours in these parts, many of the Lord's poor children would be totally deprived of the means of grace, and the thoughtless and profane entirely destitute of the greatest of all human blessings, the gospel of our salvation.⁶

These tactless remarks stung the Cornish and Methodist pride of the two Wesleyan circuits of Penzance and Hayle. The superintendents, John Waterhouse of Penzance and Ralph Scurrah of Hayle, decided to take action. Waterhouse had been in the Penzance circuit since 1821.

His conduct was marked by fidelity and kindness . . . ; by his colleagues in the ministry he was greatly beloved, and to the flock of Christ he was a faithful and affectionate Pastor.⁷

Scurrah was held in high respect in Cornwall, and was noted for his persuasiveness in argument ; he and Waterhouse now had a chance to exercise this last quality. They made the situation worse by publishing pamphlets in reply to a letter in the *Baptist Magazine* : a reply to the editor would have sufficed, as Smith later pointed out. On 16th January, Waterhouse's pamphlet was published. It ran through several editions. He protested his respect for the Baptists as a body, but asked :

What must we say of a man who describes a place almost destitute of spiritual aid *but for his labours*, when in religious privileges it is equalled by few parts of our own country, and perhaps exceeded by none ?⁸

He added a list of all the places of worship in the area to prove his point. Scurrah answered Heath in similar vein. These pamphlets brought the whole relationship of the Baptists and the Wesleyan Methodists of the area before the general public ; the hidden tension between the two denominations was revealed. Nevertheless, all might still have been well had not G. C. Smith now come forward to defend his two assistants.

The Rev. George Charles Smith (1782-1863) was, in the words of his official obituary, "a bold, restless character".⁹ His lasting concern was for seamen ; a recent writer has said that most of the subsequent social work for sailors undertaken by evangelicals sprang from his efforts.¹⁰ He had served in the Navy during the Napoleonic Wars, and had been decorated ; he had also been a voluntary chaplain with the Army in Spain. When he entered the Baptist ministry, he began his lifelong work among the sailors whose hardships he had shared. Appointed to the Penzance pastorate in 1807, he was criticized for spending too much time in London in work amongst seamen. Mrs. Kathleen Heasman wrote that Smith had unbounded

⁶ R. Scurrah : *A Copy of a Letter from Mr. Heath . . . with Remarks*, p. 4.

⁷ *Wesleyan Minutes*, 1843, p. 461.

⁸ Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

⁹ *Baptist Handbook*, 1864.

¹⁰ K. Heasman : *Evangelicals in Action* (1962), p. 247.

energy and initiative, but had little perseverance in his work amongst sailors.¹¹ He certainly busied himself in their cause. In 1819 he founded the Bethel Seamen's Union, with its floating chapels, magazine, and social work. In 1823 he was involved in the provision of orphanages for seamen's children and a home for starving sailors.¹² He was also concerned with Baptist Home Missionary work, and was the secretary of the Isles of Scilly Industrious Society. A large output of tracts flowed from his pen. In the midst of these abundant labours, Smith was confronted with Waterhouse's attack upon his assistants. He regarded the pamphlets of the two Wesleyan superintendents as a wholesale attack on the Baptist community. Perhaps the bitterness of his replies to Waterhouse and Scurrah reflected his anxiety lest public subscriptions to his many enterprises should decrease.¹³

He soon published a long-winded pamphlet in three parts in reply to Waterhouse. It bore the singular title *The Tuck Net: or Free Animadversions on the Very Unkind and Very Unchristian Remarks of the Rev. J. Waterhouse and his Methodist friends, against Mr. John Jeffery of Newlyn, and his Baptist friends in general*. He accused Waterhouse of trying to ruin Jeffery. "Narrow minded sectarian bigots" among the Methodists were jealous of Baptist success. A covering letter in the *Baptist Magazine* had praised the Methodists; Jeffery's letter should be read in that context.

Are we perpetually to carry a trumpet before us and sound their praises?
Is it heresy to write a letter without mentioning them?

Smith then attempted to refute Waterhouse's argument that ample church accommodation existed in the area by drawing attention to the actual number of converts. He subtracted the various Methodist memberships from the population of each village; the very large remainder proved the truth of Jeffery's "moral darkness" claim. Through many interesting digressions, Smith sought to belittle Wesleyan Methodism: Methodist ministers were "sent here for a circuit", whereas men like Jeffery had the interest of the people at heart. Smith wrote another pamphlet in two parts, called *Wheal Discord*, in answer to Scurrah, accusing him of trying to drive Heath out of Cornwall.

The *Tuck Net* scandalized Penzance, where interest in religious matters had just been aroused by the dismissal of an eminent Anglican, Sir Rose Price, from the presidency of the local branch of the SPCK because of his Unitarian sympathies. Caution was thrown to the winds as happy printers worked on a stream of inflammatory pamphlets written in sublime freedom from apprehension of the

¹¹ Heasman, loc. cit. She adds that the facts are largely "written up" by his supporters, and that there is little documentation of Smith. She seems to be unaware of the *Tuck Net* pamphlets.

¹² *Bibliotheca Cornubiensis*, pp. 664-9; *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1863, p. 465.

¹³ One of Smith's societies, the Port of London Society, said in 1823 that its income "was not equal to the great expenditure and the claims upon its exertions". (*Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1823, p. 465.)

modern laws of libel.¹⁴ Waterhouse issued an *Appeal to the Public* on 18th March. He denied Smith's charge of trying to ruin Jeffery, and accused Smith of disturbing the peace of the town and of the two denominations. "Towards the Baptists I have in no instance acted contrary to the rules of friendship", wrote he. He quoted inaccurate articles for the purpose of fund-raising by Smith in other publications. He ridiculed Smith's attempt to show that the Wesleyan chapel at Street-an-Nowan was not in Newlyn,¹⁵ and urged him to repent of his "conceit and vanity". The answer to this was published by Smith's Penzance printers on 27th April. It was a letter purporting to have come from sixteen anonymous Wesleyans of the Falmouth circuit, attacking Waterhouse's "wicked and detestable opinions", and urging him to call a meeting with Smith to end the dispute. On 3rd May, Waterhouse published a letter to Smith, accusing him of being himself the author of the Falmouth letter, and further accusing him of misuse of funds in the building of Baptist chapels. The following day, the leaders of Falmouth Methodism published a letter to Waterhouse denying any knowledge of the anonymous pamphlet.

Matters now reached a critical stage. The Baptist ministers issued *A Solemn Appeal to the Wesleyan Methodists around Penzance*, in which Waterhouse was called "a slanderer, a disturber of the public peace, and an enemy to the prosperity of the Christian Church". The leaders of Penzance Methodism replied in a statement published in the *Royal Cornwall Gazette* on 22nd May and in the *West Briton* on the 28th.¹⁶ William Carne and fourteen Wesleyan laymen fully supported Waterhouse, and blamed Smith for the uproar. Smith was now in trouble, as the dispute had led to an investigation into the funds of the Isles of Scilly Industrious Society. The treasurer published a pamphlet accusing Smith of misappropriating £50 for the Baptist chapel at Newlyn. A furious denial was at once issued, and on this far-from-happy note the spate of pamphlets came to an end.

Among the other pamphlets published during the dispute were two tracts more conciliatory in tone, by "Vindicator". This writer urged both sides to realize the harmful effect the dispute was having in the town. In his *Impartial View of the State of Religion in Penzance and its Vicinity*, "Vindicator" gave an admirably detailed account of the various denominations in the neighbourhood. He supported Waterhouse against Smith, and spoke highly of the Wesleyan work among the Cornish tin-miners.

G. C. Smith was well informed on Wesleyan Methodist matters, and turned his knowledge to advantage in the various digressions of

¹⁴ There were at least twenty-two *Tuck Net* pamphlets, plus another nine on the Unitarian controversy going on at the same time.

¹⁵ To this day, Street-an-Nowan remains a clearly-defined part of the village of Newlyn.

¹⁶ This was the only time in the dispute that the local press was involved.

his *Tuck Net* and *Wheal Discord* pamphlets. He dealt with revivalism, membership, the Bible Christians, and local preachers, and so gives us a glimpse at familiar Wesleyan problems from the unusual standpoint of a Baptist minister. He denounced the "extravagancies" of Cornish Methodist revivalism, whether of the Wesleyan or the Bible Christian variety; he recalled the dispute ten years earlier over the "great revival", when the curate of Penzance had attacked the Wesleyans. He criticized Wesleyan conditions of membership in answer to the charge that the Baptists had no societies in many villages:

We know too much of the constant entrance and departure of persons from class meetings in this neighbourhood to place much reliance upon anything so fluctuating as the members in Society . . . ; so long as the simple desire to serve God professed by an individual is the qualification for admission, there will always be many persons who must rank among the way-side, stony-ground, or thorny-ground hearers.¹⁷

Such members, Smith maintained, only came into Methodism through fear of future punishment. "There is nothing to bind them—they were never converted—they were merely alarmed."

There is no doubt that Smith had raised a sensitive issue. The instability of Cornish converts following revivals was notorious. Since the end of the "great revival" of 1814, the Penzance circuit had lost 590 members, and this was by no means the biggest decline in the Cornwall District. "Some unjustifiable irregularities" were admitted by the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* during Cornish revivals in 1824.¹⁸ A review of Truscott's *Revivals of Religion Vindicated* admitted the declines following Cornish revivals, though this did not mean that conversion had not previously taken place.¹⁹ A writer in the *Magazine* from the Redruth circuit advocated a longer "on trial" period and "a resolute though kind and prudent exercise of pastoral authority in repressing what is manifestly wrong, or of evil tendency, among the new converts".²⁰ Waterhouse claimed that Smith had overlooked the "on trial" period in his "false colouring" of the matter; but the concern of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* in 1824 shows that the colouring was indeed anything but false.

Smith also exploited the Wesleyan-Bible Christian separation to his own advantage. He was a reader of William O'Bryan's history of the Bible Christians in the current numbers of the *Arminian Magazine*. From this, it appeared to Smith that

they heeded not the Methodists, but pursued a strait forward course, entering every village where the people would hear, warning every man, and teaching every man.

Waterhouse had listed the Bryanite chapel at Penzance among the chapels of the area; Smith pounced on this, hoping that "Mr.

¹⁷ Waterhouse, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

¹⁸ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1824, p. 330.

¹⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 821-2.

²⁰ *ibid.*, p. 330.

Bryan" would be thankful that a Wesleyan superintendent could mention the Bible Christians without abusing them. His praise of the Bible Christians and his view of their separation from the Wesleyans anticipated a later Methodist view of her own divisions:

It was thus that Christ Jesus laboured, thus the primitive church was planted:—thus the ejected clergy extended their talents:—thus Methodism was first established; and it is my firm opinion that whenever the Methodists Independents or Baptists become too rich, or great, or high-minded, or indolent, God will always raise up a plain, simple hearted people, who shall burst forth from unwieldy denominations, with a single eye to the divine glory—and burning love to precious souls, shall rush into all parts of the Kingdom as the voice of the Holy One, crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!"²¹

It is not surprising that in the reforming secessions from Wesleyan Methodism the reformers often held their meetings in Dissenting chapels, and that in the 1849 crisis Dissenting ministers openly sided with the Wesleyan Reformers. It would be instructive to know how far the traditional Methodist view of her troubled early nineteenth-century history came from non-Methodist sources.

Smith's praise of the Bryanites was not an unmixed blessing to the latter. The Bible Christians had missioned the Land's End peninsula in 1818, when in June of that year the Morvah circuit of 256 members was in existence.²² Their itinerants asked Smith if they could use the Baptist preaching-rooms at Mousehole and St. Just. Smith agreed, but before long one itinerant was a Baptist minister and another was an Independent minister!²³ The Penzance Bible Christians worshipped in a Baptist schoolroom, Smith emphasizing that "their Methodist brethren" did not accommodate them. His motive in praising the Bible Christians (he also praised the Bristol Tent Methodists of 1820) was to discredit the Wesleyans. Although Waterhouse in his *Appeal* answered many of Smith's allegations, he never mentioned the apparently delicate topic of Wesleyan-Bible Christian relationships. Even the ostensibly impartial "Vindicator" described the "Bryanite" preachers as "not generally qualified to address an intelligent audience", though they had been "rendered useful to many among the lower classes". Smith had aimed a shrewd blow.

Wesleyan Methodist pro-Anglican sympathy antagonized Smith. He criticized Waterhouse for listing the parish churches as places where the Gospel could be heard; he thought Waterhouse and Scurrah, whom he called Dissenting ministers, were afraid to speak the truth.

Cannot Messers. [sic] W. and S. remember the thundering anathemas against *Evangelical Preachers*, which rolled through the Chapel of Ease in this Town, at the visitation of last summer? Was not this *speaking out* the true sentiments of unregenerate men?

²¹ Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 98.

²² *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1844, p. 235.

²³ Waterhouse, op. cit., p. 99.

Smith had raised another sensitive issue for local Wesleyans; "Vindicator" underlined it:

My opinion is that all Wesleyan Methodists are as much dissenters as the Independents or Baptists, and it would be their honour, and not their reproach, firmly to avow themselves in the face of the world as dissenters.²⁴

The Wesleyan local preachers also came under Smith's criticism. The preachers are almost always what are termed local preachers, and it is notorious that the attendance everywhere depends upon what local preacher is sent.

Waterhouse was more than equal to innuendo of this kind:

. . . they are a pious, valuable and useful class of men, who preach without fee or reward; and if they were to preach in the floating chapel on the Thames, it would be as heart-searching a sermon as the Rev. G. C. Smith ever preached; and I will pledge myself not *one* of them would ever think of demanding a GUINEA for it!²⁵

It was an effective riposte, although it is doubtful if Smith's comment was entirely untrue.

The result of the *Tuck Net* dispute was that Waterhouse left Penzance in 1824, and Smith the following year. Both subsequently had distinguished ministries. Waterhouse became general superintendent of Wesleyan missions in Australia and Polynesia, and died in Van Diemen's Land in 1842. Smith went to London to continue his work amongst seamen. It is not altogether surprising to learn that his work involved him in trouble with the police, "to whom he gave battle single-handed".²⁶ He was severely criticized by *The Christian Advocate* (the first Methodist newspaper), and was involved in a series of disputes throughout his career; yet he never wavered in his concern for seamen, and he would later be remembered as "the morning star of the sailor's reformation".²⁷ He returned to Penzance in 1848, and died there in 1863.

The Wesleyan Conference Address to the Societies in 1824 declared: "We have nothing to do with sectarian objects and feelings. We war not upon other Churches, we desire no mere proselytes." Joseph Burgess was appointed as superintendent of the Penzance circuit; his prayers at Baptist Association meetings made him the obvious man to introduce a more conciliatory mood. The Baptists responded by removing Jeffery from Newlyn. After the departure of Smith, the Cornwall district committee of the Home Missionary Society was formed in 1826 to raise funds and to exercise "a vigilant superintendence over the labours of your agents in that immediate locality".²⁸ Both sides tried to make amends, and it is pleasant

²⁴ "Vindicator": *Clericus and the Independent Denomination of Dissenters* . . . , p. 12.

²⁵ J. Waterhouse: *An Appeal to the Public*, p. 34.

²⁶ *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1863, pp. 390-1.

²⁷ Theophilus Smith: *The Great Moral Reformation of Sailors* (1874), quoted in K. Heasman, op. cit., p. 247.

²⁸ *Baptist Magazine*, 1826, p. 384.

to record that when the new Baptist chapel was opened in Clarence Street, Penzance, in 1836, that redoubtable Wesleyan Richard Treffry jun. was one of the preachers.⁷⁹ Yet it was difficult to forget the atmosphere that had been created. An oblique reference to the *Tuck Net* controversy was almost certainly made by Samuel Drew, the Methodist metaphysician, whose daughter was about to be married to a Baptist. Drew wrote in a letter to John Reed of Helston on 29th May 1824:

I am inclined to think that there is not a point on which Independents, Baptists, and Methodists differ, which the dispassionate of all parties will not reduce to the class of non-essentials . . . ; those who have more religion in their heads than in their hearts are generally ready to brandish the polemical weapons; and when successful, they rejoice more at conquest than at the thought of having advanced the truth.⁸⁰

Such an attitude anticipated the development of the later Free Church alliance.

The Baptist cause at Newlyn eventually came to an end, though the Wesleyans were left to remember the truth of Smith's words that there was ample room for all by the successful establishment of Primitive Methodist causes at Penzance and Newlyn within three years of the *Tuck Net* controversy. Although that controversy vividly illustrated the difficulties preventing co-operation between Methodism and Dissent, and provided detailed local information on the religious life of early nineteenth-century Penzance, the only appropriate final comment must be the words of a satirical poem in one of the pamphlets:

Nor should such pious ministers of God
Retain so much the nature of the clod
From which they spring, and which they boldly feign
They leave . . .⁸¹

MICHAEL S. EDWARDS.

[The Rev. Michael S. Edwards, M.A., M.Litt. is a Methodist minister in the Oxford circuit, and the author of a thesis on "S. E. Keeble and Nonconformist Social Thinking, 1880-1914".]

⁷⁹ R. Treffry, sen.: *Memoirs of the Rev. Richard Treffry, junior* (1839), pp. 208, 224-5.

⁸⁰ *The Life of Samuel Drew, A.M., by his eldest son* (1834), pp. 396-7.

⁸¹ *The Traveller, or a shy fish glancing at the Tuck Net, by Erthusyo*, p. 7.

The Methodist Philatelic Society has produced its first handbook, entitled *United States Methodism on Stamps and Postmarks* (pp. 40, price 25p.). It is obtainable from Mr. J. T. Aungiers, 5, Cherry Walk, Cheadle Hulme, Cheadle, Cheshire, SK8 7DY.

Two recent numbers of *Methodist History* carry articles of general interest to our readers. In the April 1971 issue, there is a study of "The Nature of Ordination in Wesley's view of the Ministry", by Linda M. Durbin. In the July issue Mr. John A. Vickers writes on "Lambeth Palace Library: some items of Methodist interest from the Fulham Papers", and Dr. Maldwyn Edwards writes on Adam Clarke.

TWO MASTER BUILDERS

The Relation of John Wesley and Francis Asbury

[This article, by our President, commemorates the bicentenary of the embarkation of Francis Asbury for America on 4th September 1771—an event of tremendous portent for the future of Methodism in the United States.—EDITOR.]

IT is important to remember that when Francis Asbury attended the Bristol Conference in 1771, and then, on 4th September in that year, departed for America, he was only 26 years of age. John Wesley, on the other hand, was 68, and so there was a considerable difference of years, which brought its own advantages and handicaps. Even when John Wesley died, an old man of almost 88, Francis Asbury was still only 46 years old. It meant that there could be no sense of rivalry between the two, and certainly no jealousy. Both were men of dominant personality, and, with all their friendliness, expected to be obeyed. Nevertheless, the Atlantic Ocean rolled between them, and so each could forge his own destiny without a clash of wills. The supreme reason, however, why to the end they retained each other's respect was that both were free from pettiness and prejudice.

Yet the friendship was not without its strains. Wesley had no doubt that Francis Asbury was the proper one to send to America, but even so, he could remember the young man only from a four-year record of travel. For this short itinerancy Asbury had no advantages except the example and influence of his mother, the blacksmith forge where he worked, and the Methodist employer who hired him. Apart from this there had only been a short experience of lay preaching to prepare him for the strenuous demands of a Methodist preacher's life. Small wonder, therefore, that John Wesley found it difficult to realize that Asbury's latent powers quickly developed. There was another complicating factor. Wesley heard of his work from the beginning, but the information mostly came from Thomas Rankin. Two years before Asbury, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor had crossed the ocean, and two years after Asbury Thomas Rankin and George Shadford came, in answer to urgent appeals. The pithy note which Wesley sent to the lovable Shadford will not be forgotten:

Dear George,

The time is arrived for you to embark for America. You must go down to Bristol, where you will meet with Thomas Rankin, Captain Webb, and his wife.

I let you loose, George, on the great continent of America. Publish your message in the open face of the sun, and do all the good you can.

I am, dear George,

Yours affectionately.¹

Thomas Rankin was different in disposition from the frank and

¹ *Letters*, vi, p. 23.

friendly Shadford. He was entirely dedicated to his work, and he had immense discipline of will, but he lacked imagination and that adventurous spirit which prompted Asbury to go into the wilderness and blaze new trails. Neither Rankin nor Asbury could properly understand or appreciate the other. Rankin knew the importance of consolidating the work, especially in the large centres, and only with great caution opened up new territory. Asbury, on the other hand, had caught the vision and spirit of John Wesley himself. He knew that to settle down was to die. From the start, therefore, his design was to preach his way through the country, with the ultimate objective of establishing a system of circuits and conferences.

In one other respect Rankin and Asbury were at variance. Rankin could not forget his English background and sympathies, and was increasingly distressed when the rumblings of discontent threatened to break into open conflict. Asbury, on the other hand, with all *his* English background, was more ready to understand the American point of view. When John Wesley, therefore, heard from Rankin about Francis Asbury, it was, in effect, a tainted source. Rankin had no criticism of Asbury's character, but he was disturbed by his youthful exuberance and what seemed a possible failure to assess all the facts in a given situation. When Rankin returned home, and, standing high in the favour of John Wesley, was able to pour into his ear his own version of Asbury, there is no doubt that John Wesley was inclined to misunderstand both the motives and the conduct of the younger man at this particular period. Asbury put down any differences between John Wesley and himself to the harmful influence of Rankin. He referred to him as "Diotrephes", of whom, in III John 9, it is written "But Diotrephes, who likes to put himself first, does not acknowledge my authority". This is plainly evident in his letter of 15th January 1816 to Joseph Benson, in which he said that Wesley had always been respected and loved by hundreds and thousands in America as a great and apostolic man, and then continued:

I perfectly clear him in my own mind and lay the whole business upon Diotrephes. Little did I think that we had such an enemy that had the continual ear and confidence of Mr. Wesley . . . Dr. Coke said that as often as Mr. Wesley went to see Diotrephes, he came back with his mind strangely agitated and dissatisfied with the American connection . . .

If Wesley was adversely affected by Rankin's letters, it is all the more to his credit that in 1784 he responded to Francis Asbury's desperate appeal to send ordained ministers, since his American people were living without Christian ordinances. He sent out Whatcoat and Vasey in ministerial order as deacons, whilst Coke was ordained as "general superintendent" and sent out to ordain Asbury also as a "general superintendent". When Coke carried out Wesley's commission and ordained Asbury at the Baltimore Conference on 24th December 1784, he was giving a most emphatic token of Wesley's confidence in Asbury as the natural leader of the

American Methodist Church in its fresh beginnings. Even so, however, Wesley's fears were quickly aroused. He was very grieved that they translated "general superintendent" as "bishop". It revived all those suspicions which had been kindled by Rankin, and in his most caustic letter to Asbury on 20th September 1788 he said:

In one point, my dear brother, I am a little afraid both the Doctor² and you differ from me. I study to be little: you study to be great. I creep: you strut along. I found a school: you a college! nay, and call it after your own names!³ O beware, do not seek to be something! Let me be nothing, and "Christ be all in all!"

One instance of this, of your greatness, has given me great concern. How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called Bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never by my consent call me Bishop! For my sake, for God's sake, for Christ's sake put a full end to this! Let the Presbyterians do what they please, but let the Methodists know their calling better.

Thus, my dear Franky, I have told you all that is in my heart. And let this, when I am no more seen, bear witness how sincerely I am

Your affectionate friend and brother.⁴

Unhappily, this was the last letter that he wrote to the younger man, and Francis Asbury jotted down in his diary that the letter was "a bitter pill from one of my greatest friends". Actually, Wesley had more to concern him than the use by Coke and Asbury of the term "bishop". His own name had been erased from the *Minutes* of the 1787 American Conference, and it was not restored until 1789. He had also desired that Richard Whatcoat, an excellent man, should become superintendent, but this was ignored because it seemed unnecessary interference. In a letter to Whatcoat, John Wesley showed how wounded he felt.

It was not well judged by Brother Asbury to *suffer*, much less indirectly to encourage, that foolish step in the late Conference. Every preacher present ought both in duty and in prudence to have said, "Brother Asbury, Mr. Wesley is *your* father, consequently ours, and we will affirm this in the face of all the world." It is truly probable the disavowing *me* will, as soon as my head is laid, occasion a total breach between the English and American Methodists.⁵

John Wesley could not hope to understand the new American situation and those pragmatic arguments for changing the title of "superintendent" to "bishop" with its more commanding overtones. In America the term "superintendent" carried no weight, whereas they had been accustomed to the Anglican bishops and the authority of that office. Consequently, in the interests of discipline and authority, it was better that the title should be changed. Even so, Wesley had good reason to complain when, at the Conference of 1789, the question was asked "Who are the persons to exercise apostolic office in Europe and America?", and the answer was given "John

² Thomas Coke.

⁴ *Letters*, viii, p. 91.

⁶ Cokesbury College.

⁵ *ibid.*, viii, p. 73.

Wesley, Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury by regular order and succession”.

Now, whatever justification they had in their American Conference, they had no right to call John Wesley a bishop in Europe. This was wholly without his knowledge, and certainly without his consent. It could conceivably have held him up to ridicule, and undoubtedly caused him pain. This was the last of the tensions between the two men, but it had no power to diminish the respect and affection that they held for each other. To the end, Asbury was “dear Franky”, and often in his letters Asbury referred to his father-in-God as “dear old Daddy”. (In a letter written to Jasper Winscom of Bath, Virginia, dated 15th August 1788, he used the phrase three times over.) When Wesley died in 1791 the news of his passing came to Asbury as a severe shock. He said:

For myself, notwithstanding my long absence from Mr. Wesley and a few unpleasant expressions in some of the letters the dear old man has written to me (occasioned by the misrepresentation of others), I feel the stroke most sensibly, and I expect I shall never read his words without reflecting on the loss which the Church of God and the country has sustained by his passing.

So had the father become the “daddy”, and the revered leader had become the “dear old man”. Francis Asbury inherited the mantle that fell from Wesley’s shoulders. He also was cast in apostolic mould, and he also as a knight-errant contested the kingdom for Christ.

In this bicentenary year we salute one who was a master builder in the New World as John Wesley had been in the Old. Their place in the apostolic succession none will dare to dispute.

MALDWYN EDWARDS.

IRISH NOTES

The Annual General Meeting of the Irish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society was held at Portadown on Tuesday, 15th June, during the time of the 202nd Annual Conference of the Methodist Church in Ireland. The total membership of the branch now stands at 154, and the finances are in quite a healthy state.

A report was given of the successful Pilgrimage which took place on Saturday, 22nd May, tracing the visits of John Wesley and Thomas Coke to Tandragee (including Terryhoogan), Rathfriland, Warrenpoint and Newry, and concluding with an address on Thomas Coke given by Mrs. Marion Kelly.

The officers were re-elected as follows: Mr. Norman Robb, M.A. (President), Mr. Frederick Jeffery, O.B.E. (Vice-President), Mr. John H. Weir (Secretary and Treasurer) and Mrs. Marion Kelly, B.Sc. (Archivist).

Any visitor to Ireland who gives sufficient notice to Mr. Weir (50, Meadowbank Place, Belfast, BT9 7FF) can have access to the Irish Wesley Historical Room in Aldersgate House, Belfast.

FREDERICK JEFFERY.

THE CONVERSIONS OF JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY AND THEIR PLACE IN METHODIST TRADITION

I

THE assumption seems generally to be made that it is John Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience which stands within Methodism as the "typical example of true conversion",¹ so that from the beginning of the revival down to the present day his followers have been encouraged to expect—and indeed have found—an experience of justification by faith which mirrors that of Wesley himself. Richard Green, for example, generalized in this way from John Wesley's conversion when he wrote:

. . . all along its history, Methodism has held this consummated conversion . . . to be its great message, its great power. All the good which Methodism has done in the earth, to the multiplied thousands who have come under its influence, is believed by its adherents to be founded on the preaching of this great change.²

However, this assumption may be challenged, and the purpose of this article is to show that in fact the conversion experiences of John and Charles Wesley (and their consequent teaching about justification) were different; that from the start Charles's view was at least as influential as John's, and that soon after the beginning of the nineteenth century it entirely supplanted John's official doctrine.

Over the years much has been written about John Wesley, and yet it is only with difficulty that we can find a detailed exposition of his doctrine of justifying faith; and even where the attempt has been made to explain it carefully, some aspect or other of his teaching seems either to have been misrepresented or omitted.³ Our first task, therefore, is to set down exactly, from Wesley's own writings, an account of his doctrine of justifying faith.

It was the Moravians, first on board ship and then in Georgia, who taught Wesley that for all his extreme dedication to God, he lacked true faith, and was consequently "an unbeliever".⁴ They led him to understand that there is only *one faith* which both justifies and saves. Wesley wrote:

But does all this . . . make me acceptable to God? Does all I ever did or can know, say, give, do, or suffer, justify me in His sight? Yea, or the constant use of all the means of grace? . . . Or that I know nothing of myself; that I am, as touching outward, moral righteousness, blameless? Or (to come closer yet) the having a rational conviction of all the

¹ R. Green: *The Conversion of John Wesley* (1908) (1937 edn.), p. 39.

² *ibid.*, p. 39.

³ e.g. L. H. Lindström: *Wesley and Sanctification* (1950), pp. 87 ff.; C. W. Williams: *John Wesley's Theology Today* (1960), pp. 59 f., 64 ff. (perhaps the best account), and *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (ed. R. E. Davies and E. G. Rupp, 1965), i, p. 162 f.—in all of which saving faith is not clearly distinguished from justifying faith.

⁴ *Journal*, i, pp. 415, 418 ff.

truths of Christianity? . . . I have no hope, but that of being justified freely, "through the redemption that is in Jesus"; I have no hope, but that if I seek I shall find Christ . . . The faith I want is "a sure trust and confidence in God, that, through the merits of Christ, my sins are forgiven, and I reconciled to the favour of God."⁵

In England, the Moravian pastor Peter Böhler completed the instruction of this now self-confessed sinner who considered himself to be "under the wrath and curse of God", and in the days leading up to his conversion Wesley looked for this one living faith:

(1) By absolutely renouncing all dependence, in whole or in part, upon *my own* works or righteousness; on which I had really grounded my hope of salvation, though I knew it not, from my youth up; (2) by adding to the constant use of all other means of grace, continual prayer for this very thing, justifying, saving faith.⁶

Finally, on 24th May 1738, this gift was given. When, at the meeting in Aldersgate Street, his heart was "strangely warmed", Wesley said:

I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away *my* sins . . .⁷

We must notice that the faith Wesley received contained two features. He became aware not only of a feeling of reliance upon Christ, but he was also given a sense of God's pardon. Later Wesley was to give separate emphases to these impressions, but at first they were for him scarcely differentiated aspects of the one gift of living faith.⁸

There seem to have been two reasons for this initial lack of precision. In the first place, Peter Böhler had taught Wesley that the sense of reliance upon Christ and the assurance of pardon are given in the same moment,⁹ and this evidently led him to conflate the two. But secondly, he was misled by the definition of living faith which he found in the Homily *On Salvation*, where this same confusion is present—for "true faith" is there defined as a "sure confidence in God that, by the merits of Christ, [a man's] sins are forgiven, and he reconciled to the favour of God".¹⁰

It was not long, however, before Wesley realized a flaw in this definition of true faith,¹¹ and in an important letter to his brother Charles, in 1747, he set out the reasons for its inadequacy:

Is justifying faith a sense of pardon? *Negatur.*

I. . . . Some years ago we heard nothing about either justifying faith or a sense of pardon: so that, when we did hear of them, the theme

⁵ *ibid.*, i, p. 423 f.

⁶ *ibid.*, i, p. 472; cf. *Letters*, i, pp. 239, 254.

⁷ *Journal*, i, p. 476.

⁸ This confusion is particularly noticeable in the renowned sermon on "Salvation by Faith", preached at Oxford on 11th June 1738. (See *Sermons*, i, pp. 39 ff.).

⁹ *Journal*, ii, 13 ff.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, ii, p. 101. See A. C. Outler (ed.): *John Wesley* (1964), p. 128.

¹¹ The last discovered occasion on which Wesley put forward the view that justifying and saving faith is one was in the preface to a hymn-book of 1741. (*Works* (3rd edn., 1831, etc.), xi, p. 380 f.)

was quite new to us; and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other.

II. By justifying faith I mean that faith which whosoever hath not is under the wrath and curse of God. By a sense of pardon I mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven. . . .

But I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith.

III. Because, if justifying faith *necessarily* implies such an explicit sense of pardon, then every one who has it not . . . is under the wrath and curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to Scripture as well as to experience. . . .

Again, the assertion that justifying faith is a sense of pardon is contrary to *reason*; it is flatly *absurd*. For how can a *sense of our having received pardon* be the *condition* of our receiving it?

IV. If you object, . . . "But does not our Church give this account of justifying faith?" I am sure she does of *saving* or *Christian* faith; I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and testimony. All men may err; but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever.¹²

As the *Minutes* show, this distinction had been clearly made (perhaps for the first time) at the Conference which met in 1744. True faith is not one: it is first "justifying" and then "saving".

Q. 4. What is faith?

A. Faith in general is a divine, supernatural $\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\gamma\chi\omicron\varsigma$ [*elenchos*] of things not seen; that is, of past, future, or spiritual things: It is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God.

First. A sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, "Christ loved me, and gave himself for me." This is that faith by which he is justified, or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same Spirit bears witness, "Thou art pardoned; thou hast redemption in his blood." And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.¹³

It will be seen that the faith by which we are justified is defined as a sudden, supernatural awareness that "Christ died for me"; whilst saving faith is a similarly-bestowed awareness that "God has forgiven my sins". The one is quite distinct from the other, although normally they are given in immediate temporal succession.¹⁴

At the time of the 1744 Conference, Wesley considered that those who die lacking justifying faith, if they have heard the gospel, will not go to heaven;¹⁵ but soon, once again, he modified his views.

The Conference of 1747 had discussed the case of those who have no assurance of their interest in Christ's death, and yet who display "integrity, zeal, and fear of God, and walk . . . unblamably in all things". It was asked:

Can you suppose such as these to be under the wrath and under the

¹² *Letters*, ii, p. 108 f.; cf. *ibid.*, iii, p. 137 f.

¹³ *Works*, viii, p. 276; cf. *Sermons*, i, 124 ff.; ii, 448 ff.

¹⁴ There is delay, however, in some "exempt cases". See *Works*, viii, p. 282.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, viii, p. 276. Q. 6.

curse of God; especially if you add to this, that they are continually longing, striving, praying for the assurance which they have not?¹⁶

The answer then given was evasive; but Wesley came to admit that such as these were not under God's wrath: they had, he conceded, "the faith of a servant".

Looking back later to these early years, he said:

. . . nearly fifty years ago, when the Preachers, commonly called Methodists, began to preach that grand scriptural doctrine, salvation by faith, they were not sufficiently appraised of the difference between a servant and a child of God. They did not clearly understand, that even one "who feareth God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of Him."

Although Wesley described this faith as saving faith only "in its infant state", he said that nevertheless it "enables every one that possesses it to 'fear God and work righteousness'". And he added:

. . . whosoever, in every nation, believes thus far, the Apostle declares, is "accepted of him". He actually is, at that very moment, in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a *servant* of God, not properly a *son*. Meantime, let it be well observed, that "the wrath of God" no longer "abideth on him".¹⁷

This preliminary "faith of a servant" has been called by C. W. Williams "repentance faith",¹⁸ but it may be that a better term for it is "suppliant faith", for we shall see that the most important aspect of this lower form of faith is neither penitence nor the endeavour to obey God, but the "waiting for the reviving power of justifying faith": the pleading with God to give living faith, the faith of a son.

John Wesley, therefore, came finally to accept that there are *three* kinds of faith which suffice to give acceptance with God: *suppliant faith* (the effort to keep God's law and a pleading for a deeper faith); *justifying faith* (an assurance that "Christ died for me"); and *saving faith* (an assurance of God's pardon). Of these three, the first (suppliant faith) was regarded principally as a necessary forerunner to the other two—although the suppliant sinner was allowed to be, in perhaps a provisional manner, accepted by God. Complete justification was said to be given to the second (justifying) faith,¹⁹ which was the springing-up of true, living faith in the heart. The third (saving) faith was considered normally to be given immediately after justifying faith, and the Christian pilgrim, at last having peace with God, had now crossed over from darkness into light.

It has been generally assumed that the teaching of John Wesley regarding justifying faith was exactly matched by the experience of his brother Charles, and by the doctrine incorporated in Charles's

¹⁶ *ibid.*, viii, p. 293.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, vii, p. 199; cf. *ibid.*, vii, p. 236; *Journal*, i, pp. 423 n, 424 n, 442 n (Wesley's marginal notes, in which he admits that he himself had had the faith of a servant, and was not therefore under the wrath of God).

¹⁸ Williams, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

¹⁹ See *Sermons*, i, p. 126 f. for Wesley's account of the actual process of justification by faith.

hymns;²⁰ but it is now suggested that the experiences and opinions of the two brothers in fact differed on this important matter.

From Charles Wesley's *Journal* we learn how, on being told in April 1738 that "gross sinners" could believe "in a moment", his immediate reaction was to be "much offended", but it was not long before he began again to "consider Böhler's doctrine of faith", and to examine himself to see whether he was "in the faith" and, if not, "never to cease seeking and longing after it" until he attained it. Soon he confessed his "unbelief and want of forgiveness", and "with vehement prayer" he yearned for that gift.

Charles described the faith for which he, an unbeliever, longed, as being (in contrast to "idle" or "dead" faith) "finding" or "receiving Christ"; an awareness of Him "who loved *me*, and gave himself for *me*"; as receiving "the atonement". On 21st May his prayers were answered. It was the sister of his host who said the words: "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise, and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thy infirmities", but it seemed to Charles that Christ Himself had spoken. The *Journal* goes on:

I . . . felt . . . a strange palpitation of heart. I said, yet feared to say, "I believe, I believe!" . . . Still I felt a violent opposition and reluctance to believe; yet still the Spirit of God strove with my own and the evil spirit, till by degrees he chased away the darkness of my unbelief. I found myself convinced [i.e. that his "unrighteousness" was "forgiven"].²¹

It is not altogether clear whether at this time Charles shared that confusion of thought to which John later confessed. One early hymn suggests that he may have done so, for the implication here is that at his conversion Charles was assured both of Christ's dying for him and also of his pardon.

I felt my LORD'S Atoning Blood
Close to my Soul applied;
Me, me he lov'd—the Son of GOD
For *me*, for *me* he died!
I found, and owned his Promise true,
Ascertain'd of *my* Part,
My Pardon pass'd in Heaven I *knew*
When written on my Heart.²²

The general impression, however, is that from the start Charles Wesley distinguished with some clarity between two kinds of faith—one by which we are justified, and living faith which is the sought-for assurance of pardon and reconciliation with God.

The nature of the justifying faith is indicated by Charles's own attitude as he waited for his conversion. His prayer then was:

²⁰ W. R. Cannon: *The Theology of John Wesley* (1946), p. 117 f.; J. E. Rattenbury: *The Evangelical Doctrines of Charles Wesley's Hymns* (1941), pp. 255 f., 264 f.

²¹ Charles Wesley's *Journal*, i, pp. 84-91.

²² *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1740), p. 120. "For the Anniversary Day of one's Conversion".

“ O Jesus, thou hast said, ‘ I will come unto you ; ’ . . . Thou art God who canst not lie ; I wholly rely upon thy most true promise : accomplish it in thy time and manner.”²³

When we turn to the hymns, we find that this conviction about what God in Christ has promised and is ready to do emerges quite clearly as justifying faith. In other words, *for Charles Wesley suppliant faith is itself justifying faith.*

In his verses, Charles taught those who lacked living faith to regard themselves as sinners and unbelievers :

An unregenerate child of man,
To thee for faith I call . . .
Now, Lord, if thou art power, descend ;
The mountain sin remove ;
My unbelief and troubles end,
If thou art Truth and Love :
Speak, Jesu, speak into my heart
What thou for me hast done ;
One grain of living faith impart,
And God is all my own !²⁴

The gift of faith for which the unbeliever asks is described by Charles Wesley in a rich variety of metaphor and by many scriptural illustrations—all of which, however, point to its essential content as being an assurance of pardon or acceptance by God : i.e. it is John Wesley’s “ saving faith ”. Many examples of this could be given, but the following are representative verses :

Thou bidd’st us knock and enter in . . .
Be it according to thy word !
Now let me find my pardoning Lord ;
Let what I ask be given ;
The bar of unbelief remove,
Open the door of faith and love,
And take me into heaven !
Come, holy, celestial Dove,
To visit a sorrowful breast,
My burden of guilt to remove,
And bring me assurance and rest !
Thou only hast power to relieve
A sinner o’erwhelmed with his load ;
The sense of acceptance to give,
And sprinkle his heart with the blood.²⁵

Here we find the *unbeliever* looking for *living faith* which is an assurance of pardon—but to what preliminary faith is this greater gift given ? The answer becomes apparent as we read the following typical verses :

²³ Charles Wesley’s *Journal*, i, p. 90.

²⁴ John Wesley’s *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists* (1780), No. 150 ; cf. Nos. 113, 117, 156, 158.

²⁵ *ibid.*, Nos. 118, 165.

Save me through Faith in JESUS' Blood,
 That Blood which He for All did shed;
 For me, for me, Thou know'st it flow'd
 For me, for me Thou hear'st it plead;
 Assure me Now my Soul is Thine,
 And all Thou art in CHRIST is mine.

I now believe, in thee
 Compassion reigns alone;
 According to my faith, to me
 O let it, Lord, be done!

Lord, I believe the promise sure,
 And trust thou wilt not long delay:
 Hungry, and sorrowful, and poor,
 Upon thy word myself I stay;
 Into thine hands my all resign,
 And wait till all thou art is mine.

From sin, the guilt, the power, the pain,
 Thou wilt redeem my soul:
 Lord, I believe, and not in vain;
 My faith shall make me whole.

What shall I do my suit to gain?
 O Lamb of God, for sinners slain,
 I plead what thou hast done!
 Didst thou not die the death for me?
 Jesus, remember Calvary,
 And break my heart of stone.²⁶

This faith by which the sinner comes to be justified is suppliant faith—the faith of a servant. It emerges in the hymns as a belief that Christ has died “for me”, and a trust that God will keep His promise and give pardon to those who, after the manner of Charles himself, come asking for it. The character of this suppliant, justifying faith is clearly expressed in the following well-known verses:

For you and for me
 He pray'd on the tree:
 The prayer is accepted, the sinner is free.
 That sinner am I,
 Who on Jesus rely,
 And come for the pardon God cannot deny.
 My pardon I claim;
 For a sinner I am;
 A sinner believing in Jesus's name.
 He purchased the grace
 Which now I embrace:
 O Father, thou know'st he hath died in my place.²⁷

²⁶ Respectively: *Hymns for those that seek and those that find Redemption in the Blood of Jesus Christ* (1747), No. XIV; *John Wesley's Collection of Hymns* (1780), Nos. 152, 134, 136, 145. Cf. the *1780 Collection*, Nos. 115, 127, 131, 132, 162, and the early conversion hymns, *ibid.*, Nos. 30, 201 and 140 (“Wrestling Jacob”—a magnificent exposition of wrestling in faith for an assurance of acceptance).

²⁷ *ibid.*, No. 616; cf. *Sermons*, i, p. 80 f. (by Charles Wesley).

Thus the certainty that "Christ died for me", which John Wesley considered to be supernaturally given as a separate aspect of living faith, was for Charles an intellectual persuasion which perhaps gradually dawns upon the mind of the servant of God, giving him confidence to supplicate for living faith. Charles thus regarded "the faith of a servant" much more highly than John as being itself justifying faith, and one keen observer noticed that this difference was reflected in their sermons. Melville Horne, who on many occasions heard the Wesleys preach, says that Charles Wesley,

far from denouncing wrath on *sincere* Penitents . . . comforted them, by insinuating that they were in a *salvable* state. He told them that they had the faith of God's *Servants*, though they were not yet sealed, as his Sons, by the loving Spirit of Adoption. . . . To the best of my recollection, Mr. J. Wesley did not admit this *distinction* into his pulpit.²⁸

Our first finding, therefore, is that the conversion experiences of John and Charles Wesley, and their consequent teaching, differed fundamentally in regard to the faith by which we are justified. John argued that there are *three* kinds of faith by which God accepts us—suppliant, justifying, and saving; Charles that there are *two*—suppliant and saving. They agreed about the nature of the last of these—that saving faith is an assurance of pardon: but whilst John claimed that we are justified by a separate assurance ("that Christ died for me") directly given by God, Charles believed that we are justified by the exercise of suppliant faith itself. John said that justifying faith is a sudden enlightenment given to the passive suppliant: Charles that it is the act of supplication itself which is met by God's saving response. And between these two points of view there is a very real difference indeed. BERNARD G. HOLLAND.

(To be continued)

[The Rev. Bernard G. Holland, M.A., M.Th., Ph.D. is a Methodist minister in the Harrow circuit, and in 1970 was the Fernley Hartley Lecturer at the British Conference. His lecture was subsequently published by the Epworth Press under the title *Baptism in Early Methodism*, and is reviewed in this issue.]

²⁸ *An Investigation of the Definition of Justifying Faith* . . . (1809), pp. 28 ff.

We gratefully acknowledge the following periodicals, which have come to hand since the publication of the list in our last issue. Some of these are received on a reciprocal basis with our own *Proceedings*, and we are glad to take part in this mutual exchange of historical information.

The Baptist Quarterly, April 1971.

The Bulletin (1969-70) of the Committee on Archives of the United Church of Canada.

The Transactions of the Congregational Historical Society, June 1971.

The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, March and July 1971.

The Local Historian, Vol. 9, Nos. 5, 6 and 7.

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

FOR the thirty-fourth year in succession, members of our Society who attended the Annual Meeting were able to sit down to a tea provided originally by Mr. Herbert Ibberson, and since his passing, twelve years ago, by Mrs. Ibberson. At the conclusion of the meal, our renewed thanks to Mrs. Ibberson were expressed by Mr. John K. Hall.

Business Meeting

Thirty-one members were present for the tea and meeting, held at Park Grove, Knaresborough, and for the following lecture they were joined by a company which filled the chapel to its utmost capacity.

Devotions were led by the President (Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards), and the meeting began with the reading of the names of members who had died during the year. A message expressing the hope of speedy recovery from his illness was sent to Alderman Horace Hird of Bradford.

When we turned to the reports, we found that our current membership stood at 943—climbing slowly but steadily towards our hoped-for 1,000! Ten members had died during the year, and sixteen new members had been enrolled. The hope was expressed that the inclusion of copies of our revised Prospectus in the mailing of the branch journals would help the membership drive. Our decision last year to close the accounts at the end of the calendar year resulted in this “year’s” financial statement showing a deficit on the year’s working of £77 6s. 1d., but it was pointed out that the bulk of the year’s subscriptions are received during the first three calendar months. The editor and the publishing manager were thanked for maintaining the high standard, both in contents and printing, of the *Proceedings*. The report from the Manuscript Journal Secretary showed that only a minority of our members are making use of the journal or of the branch-publications rota.

The report from the Exhibitions Secretary drew our attention to the excellent work of the Yorkshire branch in the arrangement of this year’s exhibition and its accompanying booklet, *People and Places in Yorkshire Methodism*, and thanks were expressed directly in the meeting to Miss Joanna Dawson and Mr. Arnold Kellett. Thanks were also accorded to Mr. J. R. Metcalfe of Harrogate, who gave considerable help with the set of panels in the Conference Exhibition Hall. Reports from our branches were received and discussed—a feature of the Annual Meeting which, if time allowed, could be extended indefinitely.

All the officers of the Society were thanked and re-elected.

The Annual Lecture

The welcome we received from the local church this year extended beyond the tea- and meeting-rooms to the chapel itself, where the Poor Steward, Miss N. Calvert, had thoughtfully provided a floral arrangement based on the subject of the lecture—“John Wesley, the Reluctant Lover”. We were intrigued, not to say amused, to pass from the arrangement at the front of the church depicting “A brand plucked from the burning” to the window-ledges, where “Grace Murray”, “Sophy Hopkey”, “Widow Vazeille” and others were cleverly represented by flowers—indeed by thorns and thistles in one instance—and other objects. Our President, Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, held our attention completely throughout the lecture, and one hearer said afterwards: “We were so tightly packed into that pew that I would have been very uncomfortable if I had not been so

engrossed in what the lecturer was saying that I forgot that kind of discomfort." This is not the place to give a résumé of the lecture, except to say that Dr. Edwards confined his survey to the women in Wesley's life who might have become, as indeed one of them did become, his wife. It was a survey containing plenty of material for speculation, although we gathered that Dr. Edwards's own opinion was that Grace Murray was the only one who would have made an adequate partner for the itinerant founder of Methodism. Elizabeth Ritchie of Otley was also a friend of John Wesley, and someone had thoughtfully hung her portrait below the desk from which Dr. Edwards was speaking. We wondered what her opinion on these matters might have been, and we could draw no conclusions when, in the middle of the lecture, she fell to the floor! Such humorous speculation apart (inspired, no doubt, by the floral arrangements), we recognized the serious historical investigation behind the deceptively "popular" lecture, and we await—for not too long, we hope—the publication of Dr. Edwards's book *My dear Sister*, which will take account not only of Wesley's romantic friendships but of his extensive correspondence with women of his acquaintance.

The chairman for the lecture, the Rev. W. Stanley Rose, was on his own ground at Knaresborough, and it was particularly fortunate that he was able to preside this year, considering his many commitments as Conference Arrangements Secretary.

THOMAS SHAW.

MORE LOCAL HISTORIES

We acknowledge, with many thanks, the following handbooks and brochures which have been sent to us recently. We are always glad to have such evidence of the work of local historians, and they constitute a valuable addition to our Library.

Sunfields (Blackheath) centenary brochure (pp. 6) : copies from the Rev. Francis V. May, 1, Woolacombe Road, London, S.E.3; no price stated.

The Haven, Lord Street, Grimsby, centenary brochure (pp. 8) : copies, price 10p., from the Rev. David Ball, 22, Eastwood Avenue, Grimsby, Lincs.

Shepherswell (Dover) centenary handbook (pp. 8) : copies, price 10p., from the Rev. H. Austin Fairhurst, 61, Barton Road, Dover, Kent.

The History of Clarendon Church, Bath, by William E. Eyles (pp. 16) : copies from the Rev. J. Neville Ward, 5, Belgrave Road, Bath, Somerset, BA1 6LU; no price stated.

A History of Headingley Methodism, by J. Stanley Mathers (pp. 24) : copies, price 10p., from the author at Holmlea, Calverley Lane, Rodley, Leeds.

Brochure of new Church and Community Centre at Haverhill, Suffolk (pp. 8) : copies from the Rev. George W. Sharman, Fairleigh, 5, Wrating Road, Haverhill, Suffolk; no price stated.

Wibsey centenary brochure (pp. 20) : copies from the Rev. David B. Woolf, 47, Thorncroft Road, Wibsey, Bradford, Yorks, BD6 3ER; no price stated.

More Fragments of Methodist History in Hythe, by the Rev. Hubert A. Pitts (pp. 10) : copies, price 12½p., from the Rev. David G. Nash, Trevone, South Road, Hythe, Kent.

DR. THOMAS COKE AND METHODISM IN THE ISLE OF WIGHT

THE history of Methodism in the Isle of Wight is full of interest, but the only major book dealing with the subject, by John B. Dyson, is over a century old. Dyson used some material which seems now to have disappeared, but other documents unknown to him have since come to light. His book raises many tantalizing questions and leaves many annoying gaps. A letter recently acquired by Duke University fills in one period with some colourful detail, and introduces the island as one of Dr. Coke's numerous mission-fields; it also prompts yet more questions which we are unable to answer!

John Wesley had been detained in Cowes by bad weather in 1735 on his way out as a missionary to Georgia. When he next visited the island, in 1753, he seems to have found a little Methodist society already in existence, probably planted by laymen and nurtured by one of his preachers—in all likelihood Robert Gillespie, to whom Wesley addressed a letter in November of that year, "At Mr. Seaman's, In Newport, Isle of Wight."¹ The work made only fitful progress, however, even after the island came officially under the pastoral care of the preachers in the Wiltshire circuit, who visited Newport on one Sunday in each month.² This was Francis Asbury's last circuit before he went to America, and during 1770-1 he visited the island six times, spending thirteen nights there altogether.³ In 1775 Wesley promised Jasper Winscomb of Winchester that he would "make a fair trial of the Isle of Wight"—by which he apparently meant that he would allow the preachers to stay for a week or two each month instead of a day or two, though he refused to station a preacher there permanently.⁴ Again in 1779 he pointed out: "Ours are *travelling* preachers, therefore I can never consent that any of them should remain for a month together in the island."⁵

In 1780 there was a revival throughout the circuit, mainly through the roving enthusiasm of two free-lance local preachers, Robert Carr Brackenbury and Captain Thomas Webb.⁶ There is little doubt that some of the excitement infected the Isle of Wight, aided by the increasing attention which the island was now receiving from the itinerant preachers. One of the two junior preachers, John Walker, was at the centre of a movement to build a preaching-house to replace the loft in which the Newport Methodists had been meeting. Although this was never brought before the Conference for approval,

¹ *Letters*, iii, pp. 114-15.

² John B. Dyson: *Methodism in the Isle of Wight* (Ventnor, 1865), p. 55.

³ *ibid.*, p. 82. It is interesting to note that several pioneers of American Methodism were also associated with the Isle of Wight, notably Asbury, Richard Whatcoat (who also became a bishop), Thomas Vasey (whom Wesley ordained for America), and Captain Thomas Webb.

⁴ *Letters*, vi, p. 183; cf. Dyson, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-6.

⁵ *ibid.*, vi, p. 334.

⁶ Dyson, *op. cit.*, pp. 95-105.

and although Wesley gently tried to "check the independency of our friends at Newport", nevertheless he supported the venture.⁷ On 22nd June 1781 he wrote to William Tunney, the assistant in charge of the Salisbury (formerly Wiltshire) circuit: "Talk with Brother Walker about building at Newport. There seems a probability of doing good in the Isle, if all of you set your shoulders to the work." Wesley recommended that as many volunteer workers as possible should be employed, claiming: "The more labour the more blessing!"⁸ The assistant of the neighbouring Bradford-on-Avon circuit, John Mason, proved a tower of strength, and his advocacy secured half the money raised at the time—for which his reward was to be made assistant of the Salisbury circuit in 1782, so that he was in a better position further to reduce the debt.⁹

Although the building measured only 36 by 24 feet, the opening of the first real "chapel" in the island was a great event. Both Wesley and his right-hand man Dr. Coke were present for the occasion. Wesley's *Journal* records:

Wed. 10 [October 1781]. I opened the new preaching-house just finished at Newport, in the Isle of Wight. After preaching, I explained the nature of a Methodist society; of which few had before the least conception.¹⁰

This evidence of Methodist success speedily brought renewed persecution, thus described by Dyson:

Drums, tin-kettles, bells, horns, or any discordant thing was brought in to requisition to drown the preacher's voice, while a shower of rotten eggs, sticks, stones, with now and then a live animal, or any other offensive missile, fell with annoying and dangerous effect on the preacher and his audience. The dresses of the congregation were fastened together, that they might be torn when they separated; ferocious animals were turned into the worshipping assemblies, and sparrows were let loose to put out the lights; the top of the chimney covered with a lid, and the door tied, to suffocate with smoke those that were thus imprisoned; while foul imputations were cast upon the attendants on the private society meetings.¹¹

Wesley returned to the mainland immediately after the opening of the Newport preaching-house, but we now have evidence that Coke stayed on and tried to build up the work in the rest of the island. A fortnight later, still there, he recounted his experiences to Wesley—experiences both encouraging and disturbing, but which indicate that indeed a new chapter was opening up in the story of Methodism in the island. It may indeed be claimed that Dr. Thomas Coke was one of the keen promoters of work in the Isle of Wight, as he was in the Channel Islands, in which instance also he was associated with Winscomb, Brackenbury, and Webb. We give the letter in full, allowing it to tell its own story with a minimum of comment:

⁷ *Minutes*, i, pp. 120-1, 126, 135, 141, 150; *Proceedings*, xix, p. 68.

⁸ *Letters*, vii, pp. 69-70.

⁹ Dyson, op. cit., pp. 108-11.

¹⁰ *Journal*, vi, p. 337; cf. Dyson, op. cit., pp. 110-11.

¹¹ Dyson, op. cit., p. 107.

¹² *Proceedings*, xxi, pp. 83-4.

THOMAS COKE TO JOHN WESLEY

Newport
Octr. 23d. 1781

Hond. & dear Sir

Last Wednesday at 1 in the Afternoon I preached out of doors at West Cowes: during the time of Preaching, a Man whose Name is *John Grose* alias *Groves* came up to me, & offered me Two-pence, or rather pretended to offer it, for he did it with a Sneer. Mr. Shaw, who was apprehensive from something the Man had said before, that he wd. pull me off the Chair on which I stood, lifted up his Arm between me & *Grose*; on which *Grose* who is a very strong Man took hold of him, & shuffled him, & squeezed him in a very rough Manner indeed: Mr. Shaw in endeavouring to get loose from him tore *Grose's* Shirt, as *Grose* himself says: however, after Preaching was over (for *Grose* only made a noise during the Remainder of the Sermon) he (*Grose*) pursued Mr. Shaw, & came behind him unexpectedly, & beat him on the Back of his Head, on his Face, his Breast, Ribs, &c. in a most unmerciful manner, whilst one Willm. Foote kept off the People, & encouraged *Grose* as much as possible. Mr. Shaw made no return either by word or action; but many expected that *Grose* wd. murder him, & after Mr. Shaw was brought into the Inn, we were some time in doubt whether he was not mortally wounded, especially by the Blows he recd on the Back of his Head. These two Men John *Grose* or *Groves*, & Willm. Foote belong to the Excise-Cutter stationed on this Coast; & we think (with submission) it wd. be highly expedient for You to make a representation of this matter to the Board of Excise, that we may have quietness & peace in the Island.

I am

Dear Sir

Your dutiful Son

THOMAS COKE.

P.S.

Mr. Shaw is, blessed be God, almost recovered. He has still a Pain in his Breast, & sometimes a little Pain on the Back of his Head.

This main part of the letter is on pages 1 and 2 of the document. Later that day Coke wrote his afterthoughts vertically from bottom to top on page 3:

The Board, if You represent this Affair to it & the Commissioners think proper to interfere, will probably write to the Collector of Excise for this District, & desire him to make Inquiry: Now, the Collector is our Friend, & if called upon, will give them their true Character, for he himself told me he wd. And the Interference of the Board wd. probably have considerable Influence in stopping Persecution in all the Sea-Port Towns in the Island. We have had a Warrant to apprehend him (Jn. *Grose*) but he has been on Board his Cutter ever since, but the Collector promised me just now, that he wd. send Orders to the Captain to deliver him up. One Mr. Speden, the Victualler of the Transports, an Officer under the Commissary, has opened his house to us, at West Cowes, & I am to preach there this Evening. We are just arrived at Cowes, & find they have procured the Dissenting-Meeting-house for me, which I do not like, but must comply. At East-Cowes, one Mr. Mallett Shipwright has opened his House to us, & one Mr. Mackenzie Store-keeper to his Majesty has given us the Use of one of the Store-houses: there is likelihood of doing good in that place. My Congregations have

been crowded at Newport: three have been added to the Society, who appear to have a sincere desire of saving their Souls. The Morning-Congregations have not been bad. I hope to make a Visit or two at Yarmouth before I leave the Island. I am, Dear Sir, Yr dutiful T.C.

The letter was addressed on page 4 "To the Revd. Mr. Wesley in London", and marked "To be sent to him immediately". Whether Wesley did in fact take the protective measures suggested by Coke we do not know. It seems quite probable, however, especially as the suggestion came from a trusted observer who on this occasion was apparently spending a longer period in the Isle of Wight than had been spent by any previous itinerant preacher. Certainly Methodism in the island still had many problems to face, but it seems clear that a corner had been turned. When Wesley visited his followers there in October of the next year, he wrote in his *Journal*:

This place seems now ripe for the gospel; opposition is at an end. Only let our preachers be men of faith and love, and they will see the fruit of their labours.¹⁸

FRANK BAKER.

¹⁸ *Journal*, vi, p. 374.

A number of excellent books have come to us recently which really deserve fuller review than our space allows, but we commend them to our readers by means of the following brief notices.

A. H. Williams, in *John Wesley in Wales, 1739-1790* (University of Wales Press, pp. xxxviii. 142, £3) has extracted and annotated the references to Wales in Wesley's *Journal*, thus providing an indispensable supplement to the Standard edition.

From "Down-under" comes a study of *The Conferences after Wesley*, by Bernard L. Semmens (pp. 106, obtainable in this country by post through the Methodist Book Room, £4 25p.). This is an investigation into the workings of the Conference during that critical period which followed John Wesley's death. Mr. Semmens is anxious to show how Conference became what Jabez Bunting called "the living Wesley", with a character and mind of its own, especially with regard to the sacraments and to ordination.

Mining in the East Midlands, 1550-1947, by Alan R. Griffin (Frank Cass, pp. xvi. 338, £4 75p.) has many references to Methodism and its influence in the mining communities, especially during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Our worthy Secretary, aided and abetted by his wife, has produced a sheaf of memories in *Seven Circuits, mostly Cornish* (pp. 104, 15p.). It is obtainable from the Rev. Thomas Shaw, The Manse, St. Keverne, Helston, Cornwall.

Arthur Samuel Peake (Epworth Press, pp. xii. 212, £2 80p.) is a welcome biography of one of the best-loved and most highly-esteemed Methodists of pre-Union days. Dr. Peake came from the Primitive Methodists, and can surely be counted as one of the makers of twentieth-century Methodism.

Dissent in Politics, 1780-1830, sub-titled "The Political Life of William Smith, M.P.", by Richard W. Davis (Epworth Press, pp. xv. 268) covers the period of Lord Sidmouth's Bill, and deals with the part played by the Wesleyans in the cause of religious liberty early in the nineteenth century.

BOOK NOTICES

Baptism in Early Methodism, by Bernard G. Holland. (Epworth Press, pp. x. 200, £2 50p.)

Dr. Holland's book, the Fernley Hartley lecture of 1970, does for Baptism what Dr. Bowmer's did for the Lord's Supper. In a closely-reasoned book, which incorporates some of his Ph.D. thesis, together with much new material, he has explored Wesley's beliefs about Baptism with a greater thoroughness than any previous work. Valuable appendices include a short hitherto unpublished essay by Wesley entitled "Water Baptism is the Baptism of Christ", lists of early Wesleyan baptismal registers, and a comparison of the baptismal material in the *Sunday Service* with that in the Book of Common Prayer.

Dr. Holland maintains that in Anglican doctrine the outward ceremony of adult baptism and its inward counterpart may be separated in time, but still constitute one essential unity, whereas Wesley, without realizing it, separated them entirely, abandoned his belief in the baptismal regeneration of adults, transformed baptism into a general means of grace, and thus departed from the New Testament. On page 45 he writes:

Should a person be converted during the administration of baptism, then Wesley held this to be an altogether fitting but coincidental concurrence. For him conversion was the result of the free working of God's Spirit, signified indeed by baptism but bound up with the ordinance no more closely than that.

This seems to me to put too sharply what is no more than a difference of emphasis. Anglicans would admit that God works freely, for He is not bound by His own sacraments; but it is hard to think that Wesley would have denied that it is the expectation of a normal link between re-birth and baptism which gives baptism its essential character: it is rather more than a fitting coincidence that a sign should at least sometimes be immediately effective. Dr. Holland has summarized Wesley's position in a way which his actual statements hardly justify.

Dr. Holland rightly holds that Wesley believed in the baptismal regeneration of infants, and ably discusses the well-known difficulty of relating this to the adult new birth. (I should consider calling one "sacramental" and the other perhaps "psychological".) The idea that infant baptism should not be "devalued into mere christening" (p. 81) is unfortunately phrased, for, whatever the popular view, the word "christening" may involve a rich doctrine of incorporation into Christ.

He also shows that the various other groups of eighteenth-century evangelicals all held in one form or another that regeneration in some sense accompanies infant baptism, but had varying degrees of success in grafting on to this their new emphasis on conversion.

The author has done valuable research which throws much light on early Methodist practice. He has, moreover, a clear account of the facts about the services of 1784 and 1786, which have often been mis-stated, and a new theory of the reasons for Wesley's alterations.

Dr. Holland has some interesting references to the services for baptism and confirmation in modern Methodism. For the benefit of future historians it should be said that the traditional word "Recognition" was put on the cover of the 1967 service in error; it was not passed by the Conference. The remark that that service says that adult baptism should normally accompany confirmation (p. 143) would be better put by saying that it should

normally "be accompanied by" confirmation. Dr. Holland laments that the idea of the Christian's whole life being baptismal is not to be found in the general literature of the Connexion or in our services, except that baptism, both in 1936 and in 1967, is mentioned in the Reception Service in connexion with membership of the Church. It might be replied that as membership of the Church is incorporation into the Body of Christ, such a reference links baptism with the most vital doctrines, and that in any case, except when we are discussing the actual rite of baptism, it is better to speak of the thing signified rather than of the sign—or that these truths are expressed in other terms. Nevertheless, there is much truth in the view that modern Methodism has not done full justice to the doctrine of baptism; and this notable book should greatly help towards remedying this defect.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

The Birth of Methodism in England, by Elie Halévy, translated with an Introduction by Bernard Semmel. (University of Chicago Press.)

All students of Methodism should be grateful to Professor Bernard Semmel for disinterring from the *Révue de Paris* these two brilliant articles written in 1906. Professor Semmel's excellent Introduction illuminates the background to Halévy's long interest in Methodism, and discusses both the genesis of his famous thesis about the role of Methodism in preventing English revolutions, and its subsequent development by historians. Halévy's thesis was clear, coherent, and set out with Gallic style and succinctness. He complained of the simplistic stereotype of Methodism as the creation of "a few individuals endowed with a genius for leadership and organisation". He contested the over-dramatization of the events of 1738-9: "beforehand, absolute irreligion and immorality . . . afterward, a sudden mood of exaltation" and national reformation. The truth was less simple. Methodism was not a creation *ex nihilo*, but the result of "well-defined, pre-existing elements in combination". What were these elements? First, Halévy argues, a deep but *latent* popular Protestantism which manifested itself in those national characteristics of gravity and melancholia ("the English malady") noted by foreigners—attitudes and beliefs which only waited to be stirred up and organized. Dissenters did not tap this emotion because they were racked by internal doctrinal controversies over Arianism and other heterodoxies. Anglicans had made efforts towards national reformation, notably in their voluntary societies, such as the SPCK, and the religious societies (among them the Holy Club). But they were cut off from the people by their rigidly high-church principles, which did not accord with popular Protestant feeling. Yet from this very high-church zeal issued Methodism. How? By influences from outside England. First, from the ferment of ideas brought by Protestant refugees from the continent of Europe, especially the Moravians, who transmuted the high-church "ritualism" of the Wesleys into a theology more Protestant, more emotional, and hence more *popular*. Secondly, by copying the field-preaching and itinerancy of Welsh revivalists like Howell Harris (whose movement Halévy rightly recognized as anterior to that of English Methodism. Of course most of this has been said before—though never, perhaps, with such epigrammatic sharpness, objectivity, and synoptic historical vision.

Halévy goes on from here to push a more questionable though still fruitful hypothesis. In 1739, he argues, England was in the throes of a political crisis, which was to end in the overthrow of Walpole. This was itself the product of an economic crisis, a grave "crisis of overproduction",

accompanied by violent popular disorder in crowded centres of population dependent on the key woollen and coal industries. "It was in this violent atmosphere that . . . Methodism was born . . . It was but natural that Christian enthusiasm should endeavour to turn this popular ferment to its own profit." Was it coincidental that early Methodist preaching was concentrated on the areas of maximum unrest—in the West Country, Tyneside, the West Riding? Frightened contemporaries feared that Methodism would increase the unrest and crystallize its vague tendencies towards levelling into a truly revolutionary ideology. They need not have feared. There were indeed communitarian ideas floating about in the movement (see Fulneck and Trevecka), but the bourgeois leadership of the revival kept a tight grip on "the raw material of general revolt", and guided it into "a religious and conservative form". Already we see the germ of Halévy's later theory, expressed in the *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*.

Halévy's articles are open to detailed criticism which space here precludes. His knowledge of English economic and political history looks impressionistic; his grasp of theological nuance is shaky. Above all, he lacks insight into the inner spirituality of the movement. But when one considers the date of these essays—1906—and the unusual range of his sources (many of them ignored by Methodist historians working largely with denominational materials), they remain a *tour de force*. JOHN D. WALSH.

Methodism and Society, by Stuart Andrews. (Longman, Seminar Studies in History, pp. x. 140, 60p.)

Mr. Andrews's study of Methodism is one of a series designed for sixth-formers and other students working in seminar groups. Its purpose is to supply the background to and sufficient factual detail about the origin and development of Methodism to serve as a basis for informed discussion. A useful selection of extracts from primary sources provides the student with a kind of instant research-kit, and there is a brief concluding note suggesting lines of further research.

Mr. Andrews's outline is clear and economical; his errors few and minor. (Kilham was not expelled until the Conference of 1796 (p. 75); and it is somewhat misleading to say that "in 1812 . . . the Primitive Methodists were expelled for refusing to abandon their camp meetings" (p. 76).) It is always refreshing to view Wesley and his movement through non-Methodist eyes. Mr. Andrews is particularly good on the state of the Church in the eighteenth century, and gives us a helpful account of the relationship between Methodism and Evangelicalism. With a student readership in mind, it seems surprising that Rupert Davies's introductory book on *Methodism*, so readily available in paper-back, does not appear in the Bibliography, though room is made for such contrasted lightweights as Knox's *Enthusiasm* and the inevitable *Son to Susanna*. It should be noted, too, that Cragg's *The Church and the Age of Reason*, in revised form, is now volume 4 of the *Pelican History of the Church*.

Mr. Andrews has perhaps done himself less than justice in his choice of a title that may prove misleading. The student of Methodist history will not find here any extended discussion of Methodism's role in society, though there are interesting sections on "Methodism and Politics" and "Chartism and Trade Unionism". The closing chapter, on "Methodism and Revolution", with particular reference to the views of E. P. Thompson, whets the appetite for more. Can Mr. Andrews be persuaded to give us a more detailed treatment of the interaction between Methodism and its social and political *milieu*?

JOHN A. VICKERS.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1220. PIRATED EDITIONS OF WESLEY'S HYMNS: A FURTHER NOTE.

Mr. Leary and Mr. Grant have recently drawn our attention, in *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 196, and xxxvi, p. 32, to Thomas Wride's concern about the great success of unauthorized hymn-books. This was also the subject of a paper more than sixty years ago by the late Mr. George Stampe (*Proceedings*, iv, pp. 99 ff.), where the curious may find an alarming number of variations in transcription.

Wride's method of confusing the users of such books may well have been adopted by other preachers, and I suggest that this would explain the otherwise surprising fact that the familiar "Index to the first line of every verse except the first" originated not with the Book-room but with the pirates (see *Proceedings*, i, p. 121; ii, p. 28). If my explanation is correct, this index began life as an aid to sales rather than as an aid to devotion!

PETER HOWARD.

1221. DATING A WESLEY LETTER.

In *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 146, commenting on a previously unpublished letter of John Wesley to Samuel Newnham, Mr. Rose says it "must be assigned to the period 1784-5". (See also *Cirplan*, volume 2, No. 5, p. 3.) In case I am not the only member to be puzzled by this dating, I suggest the following grounds for putting it later.

William Palmer was admitted on trial by the Conference of 1784, and was stationed at Norwich as third man of four. In 1785, though still on trial, he became the assistant at Lynn, and at the following Conference, remaining on trial, he was reappointed. This would suggest that Wesley's letter was written during Palmer's first year at Lynn, and towards the end of the year, when both Newnham and Wesley could judge whether a further year would be of value.

One would be prepared, therefore, to hazard a date a month or two before the 1786 Conference; and finding that Wesley was at Dewsbury on 28th April of that year, preparing for Conference (*Journal*, vii, p. 158—*Diary*), one accepts gratefully Palmer's endorsement of the letter: "Dewsbury, Apl. 28, 1786".

PETER HOWARD.

1222. A POEM ON THE EPWORTH RECTORY FIRE.

A few months ago, the Misses Askew, of Dousland, near Tavistock, showed me a copy of a poem, *The Epworth Fire*, written by John Selkirk and offered to Mrs. N. P. Parker in appreciation of her husband's centenary painting (now in the Methodist Missionary Society's main committee-room) of John Wesley's escape from the fire at Epworth rectory in 1708. This was written in Newcastle on Tyne, and published in Sunderland by White & Carr, High Street, in 1840. An elder sister of the Misses Askew married a grandson of the author, and it was through her that the poem, together with a very pleasing portrait in oils of John Selkirk, came into their possession. No other copy of this poem is known, so far as I can find out, and it is a pleasure to report that the Misses Askew have generously presented both the poem and the painting to the Methodist Archives.

J. KINGSLEY SANDERS.

1223. MMS MISSIONARY RECORDS PROJECT.

In the last paragraph of her article in *Proceedings*, xxxviii, p. 7, Miss Janet Smith writes: ". . . many of our future records will be on film or tape! The recollections of older members are invaluable, and should be recorded." The MMS Archives have been gathering since early last year both oral and

