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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

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### SOUTHPORT AND SWANWICK: CONTRASTING MOVEMENTS OF METHODIST SPIRITUALITY IN INTER-WAR ENGLAND

**T**WO distinct movements of Methodist spirituality, united by the Wesleyan tradition but contrasting in their interpretation of it, can be found in the period between the First and Second World Wars. One movement originated in the 1880s. 'For forty-two years', Samuel Chadwick wrote in 1927, 'the Southport Convention has witnessed to a specific doctrine of Scriptural Holiness'.<sup>1</sup> Chadwick (1860-1932), the Principal of Cliff College, the Methodist lay training centre in Derbyshire, was the dominant figure within the Wesleyan holiness movement during the 1920s.<sup>2</sup> Rack and Strawson identify the two strands within the Methodism of the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as more scholarly and respectable Methodism on the one hand and more enthusiastic and popular Methodism on the other. Cliff College and the annual holiness convention held at Southport represented the populist strand, which was sometimes viewed as the poor relation of Methodism's official orthodoxy.<sup>3</sup> Southport could also be seen as standing for a northern, more traditional Methodism,

<sup>1</sup>*Joyful News* (hereafter *JN*), 7 July 1927, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup>For Chadwick, see D. H. Howarth, 'Samuel Chadwick and Some Aspects of Wesleyan Methodist Evangelism, 1860-1932', M Litt, University of Lancaster (1977).

<sup>3</sup>H. D. Rack and W. Strawson in R. Davies, A. R. George and G. Rupp, eds, *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, vol 3 (1983), pp. 127, 225.

in what Rupert Davies suggests was a cleavage between the Methodist cultures of north and south which corresponded to divisions in English society.<sup>4</sup> For the Southport constituency of the inter-war years it was the atmosphere of past revivals in Methodism which must be kept alive.

By contrast, many of the younger Wesleyan Methodist ministers who formed the Fellowship of the Kingdom in the aftermath of the First World War were in the more sophisticated and prosperous south, especially London. They naturally identified with progressive thinking and were orientated towards the future. The manifesto of the Fellowship of the Kingdom (which became known as FK) proclaimed it to be a 'great Evangelical movement', combining 'all that is best in the spirit of the past' and applying it 'through present-day methods to the problems of the age'.<sup>5</sup> Methodism had to be remoulded along what was being termed 'liberal evangelical' lines. Those driving this new movement were dissatisfied with their own spiritual state and that of Methodism. Although they were aware of the traditional Wesleyan holiness position, they found it unsatisfactory. For example, R. Newton Flew (1886-1962), who joined the staff of Wesley House in Cambridge in 1927, describing a holiness meeting in 1915, said he felt like 'pharisaically thanking God' that he was 'not as these entirely sanctified people'.<sup>6</sup> It was awareness of the need for a new spirituality which produced what FK called the 'Quest', out of which issued a renewed sense of mission, entitled the 'Crusade'. An annual conference at The Hayes' centre, Swanwick, became the heart of this second movement.

### Origins of the movements

The history of the Southport Convention records that it was started in 1885 in order to 'make more vital the traditional faith of Methodism'.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Cook, a Connexional evangelist, was the convener of the first Convention and was Secretary and then President, using it as a vehicle for the presentation of the holiness message of Christian perfection, or a 'perfect love' for God which a person could know after entry into the experience of full salvation.<sup>8</sup> As well as Cook, the speakers at the first Convention were Thomas Champness, Hugh Price Hughes, W. H. Tindall and Charles Inwood. Champness was a Wesleyan District Missionary in the Bolton

<sup>4</sup>R. Davies, 'Methodism', in *The Testing of the Churches, 1932-1982* (1982), pp. 37-8.

<sup>5</sup>*Quest and Crusade* (1939), p. 44.

<sup>6</sup>G. S. Wakefield, *Robert Newton Flew, 1886-1962* (1971), p. 37.

<sup>7</sup>J. Baines Atkinson, et. al, *To the Uttermost*, (1945), p. 14.

<sup>8</sup>V. Cook, *Thomas Cook: Evangelist - Saint* (1913), p. 121.

District who began to train 'Joyful News Evangelists' and in 1883 launched, with his wife Eliza, a weekly paper entitled *Joyful News*, which soon reached a circulation of 30,000.<sup>9</sup> Hughes, probably the best known Wesleyan minister of the later nineteenth century, hoped that Southport would be 'the Pentecost of modern Methodism'.<sup>10</sup> Tindall, who had been decisively affected by the spirituality of the interdenominational Keswick Convention, was the first President of Southport, followed by Cook, Chadwick and J. A. Broadbelt, who succeeded Chadwick at Cliff. It was Chadwick's claim that Southport stood for the doctrine of sanctification taught by Wesley and embodied in the Doctrinal Standards of the Methodist Church. Southport had no official standing in Methodism, but it shared with Cliff College a significant place within lay spirituality, expressing deep nostalgia for the holiness ethos of the 1870s and 1880s.

The beginnings of the Fellowship of the Kingdom and of Swanwick belong to the twentieth century. At its inception, FK drew on three developments. The first was the phenomenon of small groups of Wesleyan ministers meeting together regularly. Some groups had been in existence since 1908 but during the First World War there was an intensified search for authentic spirituality. J. A. Chapman, who joined the staff at Didsbury College in 1925, was one of about a dozen members of a London group which met once a fortnight to discover and revive the true nature of Christian experience by study of the New Testament.<sup>11</sup> There was concern to meet the challenge of the time and these 'seekers' believed that their group meetings could address and remedy their 'great poverty towards God'.<sup>12</sup> The second development was the taking of initiatives in local mission. In June 1919 a retreat was held at Upper Warlingham, near Croydon, and through the recently discovered method of praying together and reaching a 'group mind' a decision was made to embark on a united campaign which would utilise twelve Methodist ministers. By December 1919 such missions, involving new methods and incorporating ministerial teamwork, were being described as constituting an opportunity for Methodism to 'advance to further triumphs for the Kingdom of God'.<sup>13</sup> The

<sup>9</sup>T. D. Meadley, *Kindled by a Spark: The Story of Thomas Champness* (Ilkeston, Derbyshire, 1983), p. 24; J. Brice, *The Crowd for Christ* (1934), pp. 30-2. For analysis see D H Howarth, 'Joyful News (1883-1963): Some Reflections', *Proceedings*, xlv, May 1983 pp. 2-15.

<sup>10</sup>*Methodist Times* (hereafter *MT*), 8 July 1886, cited in R. C. Standing, 'The Relationship between Evangelicalism and the Social Gospel with Special reference to Wesleyan Methodism', M. Phil, Manchester (1992), p. 110.

<sup>11</sup>*Quest*, p. 9.

<sup>12</sup>K. H. Boyns, *The Fellowship of the Kingdom* (1922), p. 3.

<sup>13</sup>*MT*, 11 December 1919, p. 16.

hope for Methodism lay in the future, not the past.

During the time when this impetus was being felt in London, William Russell Maltby (1866-1951), best known for his work with the Student Christian Movement and within Methodism as Warden of the Wesley Deaconess Order and as a driving force behind the Schools of Fellowship for training Methodist lay people, was providing the third strand which contributed to the beginnings of FK. Following a talk which Maltby gave at the Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1917, Chadwick encouraged Conference to appoint fifty members who would spend time in retreat reflecting on the penetrating analysis which Maltby had offered of Methodism's spiritual state.<sup>14</sup> Conference agreed. Always eager to be at the centre of anything which savoured of revival, Chadwick offered Cliff College as the venue for the conference, which was held from 24-31 January, 1918. The outcome must have been, for Chadwick, something of a disappointment. One of those present, J.A. Findlay (1880-1961), who became a Tutor at Didsbury College in 1919, acknowledged that the discussions and prayers did not produce the longed-for revival, but he was convinced that the Cliff conference did make history in that it encouraged the Fellowship movement, which had so evidently affected the quality of church life in Methodism. The concern for an experience of Christ that was communicable in contemporary society, an issue which was to dominate FK, was clearly coming to the fore.

The spiritual standpoints of FK and of the Cliff/Southport network were related to differing attitudes to modern biblical scholarship. Chadwick was not opposed to scholarship and because much of the current writing on the Wesleyan holiness was, in his words, 'composed mostly of milk and eggs - good and nutritious, soft and luscious, but not exactly strong meat', he was desperate to see young scholars explore and re-state holiness teaching.<sup>15</sup> It is implied by Strawson that the popular holiness tradition tended to be allied with obscurantism in theology.<sup>16</sup> But Chadwick was careful to affirm the place of biblical criticism, explaining that he was influenced by it during his early ministry, gave lectures on the subject and considered that it had contributed to a saner conception of inspiration.<sup>17</sup> His caveat, as always, was that revival was more important than speculation. Within FK, which contained significant figures in the Methodist scholarly community, the

<sup>14</sup>J. A. Findlay in F. B. James, ed., *William Russell Maltby* (1952), p. 4.

<sup>15</sup>*JN*, 21 June 1923, p. 4

<sup>16</sup>Strawson, *H.M.C.G.B.*, vol 3, p. 229.

<sup>17</sup>*JN*, 8 September 1921, p. 2.

basis of spirituality was the 'historical Jesus' in the Gospels.<sup>18</sup> Modern scholarship had produced a clearer view of Jesus than any age since the first century had enjoyed. These insights could lead to the transforming experience which the gospels communicated.<sup>19</sup> Chapman, a scholar and a man of deep spirituality, testified to an experience he had at the beginning of his ministry of the mystical presence of Jesus and of sudden freedom from doubt, fear and sin. Southport and Swanwick were both evidence, though in diverse ways, of a search for relevant Methodist spirituality.

### Diversity and unity in emphases

Three emphases were to be found in Southport's spirituality. First, Southport testified to entire sanctification or 'the blessing' of full salvation. This historic witness, for which Methodism was raised up, was now regarded as rare. Second, Southport speakers stressed the importance of urgent action. Conventions were, said Chadwick in 1919, 'a campaign and a crusade'. The issues were stark. 'A crisis is at hand. Methodism must find her feet and open her eyes. The only end to a policy of drift is disaster, and we have drifted longer than is safe'.<sup>20</sup> Chadwick described a Methodist minister who came from a city background to country Methodism and advocated whist-drives, dances and theatricals rather than prayer meetings and class meetings. The rural Methodists were incensed. 'I wonder what he knows of full salvation' commented Chadwick of the urbanite. Four days in a convention would, he added caustically, either 'convert him or compel his resignation'.<sup>21</sup> Third, Southport was seen as a key to revival in Methodism. J. E. Eagles, a Southport speaker, in a front page article in the *Methodist Times and Leader* in 1937, opined that Southport could mark the beginning of such a revival. Southport would, as always, preach Christian perfection. 'One day', Eagles believed, 'Methodism will hearken and respond, and then the patient sowing of the years will bring in...a great revival in the Church'.<sup>22</sup>

The Fellowship of the Kingdom was also characterised by three themes. In July 1920 the *Methodist Times* informed its readers that the Fellowship, although less than a year old, had found that there was a 'large response' to its three-fold appeal for the Quest, the Crusade and a new Fellowship.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>18</sup>G S. Wakefield, *Methodist Devotion* (1966), p. 90.

<sup>19</sup>J A. Chapman, *Fellowship with Christ* (1923), pp. 5, 6.

<sup>20</sup>*JN*, 27 February 1919, p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>*JN* 1 May 1919, p.2.

<sup>22</sup>*Methodist Times and Leader* (hereafter *MTL*), 24 June 1937, p.1.

<sup>23</sup>*MT*, 15 July 1920, p 13

Although the terms were new, there was continuity with historic Methodism. Crusades took the place of revivals. Small fellowship groups continued the spirit of the class meeting. *Joyful News*, in 1920, welcomed the new movement, hoping that the association of younger Wesleyan ministers would 'take up together the quest after the fuller and richer life'.<sup>24</sup> It would soon become apparent, however, when the Fellowship's Swanwick conferences were compared with Southport, that entire sanctification had little place in the spiritual ethos of the Fellowship. The clear divergence between the acknowledged questing for the Kingdom of FK and the professed solidity of Cliff was illustrated when Chadwick addressed a large audience at a holiness meeting during the 1923 Wesleyan Conference. He was not, he declared, on a quest since he had 'found' through the experience of 'Scriptural Holiness' what others were still groping towards.<sup>25</sup> With barely disguised contempt, he characterised those who were not willing to be led by the Spirit as still in the dark. Methodists who were looking for genuine spirituality were not agreed about the way in which the enterprise should be conducted.

From 1920 FK conferences at Swanwick affected many Methodist ministers. The belief was that in some way Jesus was present. At the first conference, in June 1920, a particularly vivid moment was described by K. H. Boyns: 'A Voice began to sound within each man's heart: and on a never-to-be-forgotten evening, He Himself, unheralded, was in the midst and spoke His own authentic word. Men had been thinking and speaking of His Cross: and there they found Him afresh and mightily'.<sup>26</sup> It is likely that Boyns himself made a contribution to this feeling of divine encounter. An address which he gave on the cross, into which he poured much of his own devotional sensitivity, was remembered as being vibrant with spiritual power. Two years later a report in the *Methodist Times* compared Swanwick to the meeting of Jesus with his disciples at the Last Supper: 'The difference between Swanwick and the Upper Room is not one of kind but only of degree'.<sup>27</sup> Imagery from the Old Testament was used in the following year to attempt to describe the awareness of God's presence: 'Many men during the past week have felt Swanwick to be holy ground'. The message which was conveyed during the whole of the inter-war period was that a

<sup>24</sup>*JN*, 8 January 1920, p. 5.

<sup>25</sup>*Methodist Recorder* (hereafter *MR*), 2 August 1923, p. 21.

<sup>26</sup>Boyns, *Fellowship*, p.7.

<sup>27</sup>*MT*, 13 July 1922, p. 11.

significant encounter with God, mediated through Jesus, was possible at the FK conference. 'In no previous conference', announced the 1931 report, 'has He been felt so near'. The focus was quite deliberately on the new rather than, as at Southport, the old, but the desire to make the cross central indicated a shared evangelicalism.

### Leadership and influences

During Chadwick's years as President of Southport, the chair from which meetings were directed was described by Norman Dunning, Chadwick's biographer, as Chadwick's throne.<sup>28</sup> The Convention was discontinued during the war and restarted in 1923, with the speakers in that year being drawn mainly from Chadwick's close circle within Wesleyanism - Broadbelt, Edward Davidson (a close friend of Chadwick's from student days), David Lambert and C.E.O. Rush from Cliff- but including two non-Methodists, Miss Crossley and Miss Hatch from Star Hall, an influential holiness centre in Manchester.<sup>29</sup> Enthusiasm in the Convention tent in that year was described as being 'at white heat', with handkerchief, hymn-books and hats being waved during the singing of 'I love Jesus'. One of the platform party called for an even greater response and the Cliff College contingent burst out with a song: 'We're a happy lot of people, yes we are'.<sup>30</sup> It was an important function of the leadership to inspire the audience. As at Cliff, Chadwick's personality and preaching dominated Southport until his death in 1932. Joe Brice, from the Cliff staff, gave a forceful address in 1936 at Southport in which he argued that those who criticised the teaching from Southport's platform because it was not found in the New Testament should read Wesley on spiritual perfection. The report in the *Methodist Recorder* suggested that Brice was taking on the mantle of Chadwick. Powerful spiritual leaders were needed to maintain the distinctive witness of Southport.

Individual speakers at Swanwick were not intended to have a high profile. The theme of Fellowship militated against dominating personalities. Small groups, which were central to the Swanwick style, similarly drew attention away from the 'platform'. But the impact of speakers and leaders

<sup>28</sup>*Uttermost*, p.49.

<sup>29</sup>*JN*, 19 July 1923, p. 4; For Star Hall, see E. K. Crossley, *He Heard from God* (London, 1959).

<sup>30</sup>*MR*, 19 July 1923, pp. 8-9



could not be evaded. Early influential figures were Chapman, who stated that what was best in his ministry stemmed from the Fellowship,<sup>31</sup> Findlay, a specialist in the New Testament and H. G. Tunnicliff, who was conference chairman and was known for his 'restful and beautiful' devotions.<sup>32</sup> Leslie Weatherhead's address on 'Soul Healing', with its encouragement to explore psycho-medical spiritual ministry, helped to make the 1927 conference one of the best yet held.<sup>33</sup> Ten years later, when Weatherhead was minister of the prestigious City Temple, he testified that FK had meant more to him than anything else in his ministry.<sup>34</sup> Donald Soper, although he was never in a local FK group, found at Swanwick a home for his thinking.<sup>35</sup> His range of abilities - a brilliant pianist, a leader of 'intensely spiritual worship', an unconventional evangelist and a motivator of the some of the recreational activities at Swanwick - made him in the eyes of FK as much 'Soper of Swanwick' as 'Soper of Tower Hill'.<sup>36</sup> W. E. Sangster's leadership was recognised at Swanwick before he rose to fame at Westminster Central Hall.<sup>37</sup> Weatherhead, Sangster and Soper formed a famous Methodist 'triumvirate' and although they were divided over politics, sacramentalism and evangelistic methodology, Swanwick and FK provided a common spiritual platform.<sup>38</sup> A vision for a Methodist spirituality which would be relevant to a new generation of clergy attracted and helped to shape key Methodist leaders of the future.

Both Southport and Swanwick were led by Methodists and in the main drew their support from Methodism. This does not mean that their leaders were isolationist. FK was part of a wider evangelical quest. The growing strength of the liberal evangelicalism of the Anglican Evangelical Group Movement was significant. Wesleyan indebtedness to the AEGM's Canon E. A. Burroughs was acknowledged.<sup>39</sup> From 1930 closer links were formed between FK and the AEGM. The latter had an annual convention held at Cromer which mirrored, for Anglican liberal evangelicals, the conservative

<sup>31</sup>*MT*, 30 December 1926, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup>*MT*, 11 July 1929, p. 12.

<sup>33</sup>*MR* 7 July 1927, p. 18.

<sup>34</sup>*MTL*, 8 July 1937, p. 15. For Weatherhead, J. Travell, 'Leslie Weatherhead: Preacher and Pastor, 1893-1976', *The Journal of the United Reformed Church History Society*, vol. 4, No. 7 (1990), pp. 447-455.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Lord Soper, 17 March 1994.

<sup>36</sup>*MT*, 28 February 1929, p. 1.

<sup>37</sup>*Quest*, p. 30

<sup>38</sup>P. Sangster, *Doctor Sangster* (1962), pp. 122, 139.

<sup>39</sup>J. A. Chapman, *Our Methodist Heritage* (1919), p. 2; K. H. Boyns, *Our Catholic Heritage* (1919), p. 2.

Keswick Convention. It was with Keswick, which began in 1875, that Southport tended to compare itself.<sup>40</sup> Chadwick was quite prepared to insist on the differences between Keswick and Southport. Methodism stood for 'the doctrine of *eradication* of inbred sin and *imparted* holiness, as against the Keswick teaching of *repression* of sin and *imputed* holiness'.<sup>41</sup> He could, however, be more conciliatory, for example in his comment in 1923: 'There are differences between the Methodist interpretation and the teaching, for instance, at Keswick, but we have no quarrel with Keswick'.<sup>42</sup> Broadbelt recalled that he had listened to powerful addresses by F. B. Meyer and A. T. Pierson and the Keswick atmosphere, 'electric with spiritual blessing', had 'made a never-to-be-forgotten impression upon my heart and mind'.<sup>43</sup> Leaders at both Swanwick and Southport had, therefore, allies outside Methodism. Within Methodism, however, there was limited cross-over of leadership. Chadwick was not invited to address the Swanwick gatherings. Some promoters of Swanwick, he admitted, said that 'The Hayes' had made Southport a 'back number', and while he made some attempt to appear neutral, he could not hide his disapproval of the fact that FK made 'no definite appeal along the lines of Methodist doctrine and experience'.<sup>44</sup> Progressives and traditionalists were straining in opposite directions.

### Developments

Despite its holiness distinctives, Southport did appear to experience some broadening. In 1926 J. E. Rattenbury, minister of Kingsway Hall in London, speaking at Southport for the first time, said: 'I make no claim to be an entirely sanctified man. I wish I could'. He had come, he explained, to learn from those who could claim a higher experience. Rattenbury's contribution was, significantly, greeted with a 'deep murmur' of appreciation.<sup>45</sup> By 1931 the *Methodist Times* was acclaiming the recovery of a 'lost chord' - of scholarly exposition of entire sanctification - at Southport. One such scholar was Newton Flew, who was obviously intrigued to be in the company of people looking, as he told them, 'too cheerful to be saints'. That Rattenbury

<sup>40</sup>For Keswick, D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (1989), Chapter 5.

<sup>41</sup>N. G. Dunning, *Samuel Chadwick* (1933), p. 148.

<sup>42</sup>*JN*, 18 January 1923, p. 4

<sup>43</sup>*JN*, 22 February 1934, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup>*JN*, 2 July 1925, p. 4

<sup>45</sup>*MR*, 8 July 1926, p. 9

and Flew could address Southport illustrated a process of development from an earlier era. A further evidence of broadening spirituality was the participation at Southport in 1933 of four members of the Oxford Group Movement, all of whom praised the teaching of the Group - about sharing spiritual troubles and spending the first hour of each day with God and attributed changes in their prayer and home lives to the application of these principles.<sup>46</sup> Joe Brice was ambivalent, commenting that Conventions were less popular because of the Groups.<sup>47</sup> Was there weakening as well as broadening? In 1934 Broadbelt regretted that the 'scholarship and saintliness' exhibited by earlier Southport leaders seemed to be missing and in the same year - Southport's fiftieth - it was noted that the average age at the Convention was rather high and that a smaller tent was used.<sup>48</sup> It appears that the first Southport tent seated 1,500 but that by the 1930s attendances were 6-800. Encouragements could be found, but commanding advocacy of full salvation was gradually becoming a feature of the past. Part of the sense of questing at Swanwick was the expectation of fresh spiritual discoveries. Two developments were important. The first was the place given to the celebration of what was consciously termed Holy Communion. This trend was a reflection, as Bebbington argues, of a rising standard of churchmanship among younger Free Church leaders who were attracted by Anglican ceremony and 'the persistent Romantic atmosphere of middle-brow culture'.<sup>49</sup> At the communion service in 1920 there was a discovery of the cross which 'breathed into us the energy of battle'.<sup>50</sup> S. E. Keeble, best known as one of the most prominent of Methodism's ministerial apologists for socialism, was particularly impressed by the profundity of these services. He was moved by the symbolism, at the 1922 conference, of a thunderstorm and resultant darkness which coincided with the communion. It brought a realisation of the meaning of the cry of dereliction which Jesus uttered as he, also in darkness, was dying.<sup>51</sup> By the following year the central feature of a Quiet Day was the celebration of communion at which, according to Keeble, the 'great Awe of the real Presence fell upon us' during a 'silent, wholly silent, partaking of the bread and wine'.<sup>52</sup> This concentration on the sacramental was reinforced by speakers such as W. E. Orchard who later became a Roman Catholic. In

<sup>46</sup>JN, 6 July 1933, p. 7; MR, 29 June 1933, p. 5.

<sup>47</sup>MT, 30 June 1932, p. 4.

<sup>48</sup>M. Edwards, *John A Broadbelt: Methodist Preacher* (1949), p. 34; JN, 22 February 1934, p. 4; 5 July 1934, p. 3.

<sup>49</sup>Bebbington, *Evangelicalism*, p. 205.

<sup>50</sup>MT, 15 July 1920, p. 13.

<sup>51</sup>MR, 6 July 1922, p. 5

<sup>52</sup>MR, 12 July 1923, p. 16.

1928 there was a feeling that at the communion 'God was very near' and one older FK member commented: 'I have never been more hopeful of the Movement than now'.<sup>53</sup> The Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, which began in 1935, added its stimulus. The new sacramentalism which was fostered at Swanwick was a distinctive feature of the evolution of the Fellowship.

A second crucial discovery at Swanwick was the place of corporate waiting upon God, often in silence. The occasion might be after a talk, for example when a 'deep silence' followed a message in 1920, or a small group meeting at which, as happened in 1921, a dozen men in a study circle would become silent in the 'consciousness of a great presence'.<sup>54</sup> In part the increasing stress on the Quiet Mornings and 'directed silence' was a recognition that many Methodist ministers, feeling trapped by 'Circuit duties and worries', were looking for inspiration through waiting upon God.<sup>55</sup> The mystical tradition, too, was valued. Ultimately the Quest was leading in the direction of a spirituality which could readily be located in the Catholic tradition, although to term it as Turner does 'a rich catholic spirituality'<sup>56</sup> is to neglect its evangelical features. By contrast with holiness conventions like Southport, however, which revelled in 'Great crowds! Hearty singing! Pentecostal blessing!' - as the *Methodist Times* report put it in 1925<sup>57</sup> - FK might have seemed to have lost its Wesleyan fervency. Yet the Methodist stress on experience was always present. There would have been general agreement with Chadwick's statement: 'The theology of the Methodist is Catholic; the religion of the Methodist is Evangelical; the experience of the Methodist is distinctive'.<sup>58</sup> Chadwick's position was that there was a 'Real Presence' of Christ available through the bread and wine and he defended those within Methodism who leaned in a sacramental direction.<sup>59</sup> Norman Dunning heard Chadwick say that if he had not been a Methodist he would have been a Roman Catholic and that if he could have returned in another life would have chosen to be an Abbot of a monastery.<sup>60</sup> Conservative, as well as liberal Methodists were involved in a process of broadening and development.

<sup>53</sup>*MT*, 5 July 1928, p. 15.

<sup>54</sup>*Quest*, p. 26; *MR*, 30 June 1921, p. 15.

<sup>55</sup>*The Bulletin* (hereafter *B*), June 1933, p. 3; June 1934, pp. 1-2.

<sup>56</sup>J. M. Turner, 'Methodism in England, 1900-1932', in *H.M.C.G.B.* vol 3 p. 320.

<sup>57</sup>*MT*, 16 July 1925, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup>*JN*, 24 March 1927, p. 4

<sup>59</sup>*JN*, 8 July 1920, p. 2; 17 February 1927, p. 1; 30 October 1919, p. 4.

<sup>60</sup>Dunning, *Chadwick*, p. 20.

### The place of the movements within Methodism

Chadwick's rather grim analysis of Methodism in the 1920s was that it no longer adhered to Wesley's vision for spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land. Southport, he averred, stood for this 'testimony' but, he said: 'In Methodism it stands alone'.<sup>61</sup> George Jackson, a Tutor at Didsbury College, had characterised the teaching of holiness at Conventions as 'jargon' and Maltby appeared to keep Southport at arm's length. Why, Chadwick anguished, does the modern Methodist despise Southport?<sup>62</sup> In 1926 Chadwick observed that the Wesleyan Conference took no notice of Southport and the Convention stood 'detached, isolated and distinct in the Methodist Church'.<sup>63</sup> Yet Southport was regularly and sympathetically reported in the Methodist press. Lengthy reports from the pen of Harold Murray, a journalist and also pianist at Cliff College anniversaries, were often characterised by unrelieved triumphalism. Chadwick was, however, stung into angry defence of Southport in 1926 when an article appeared in the *Methodist Times* enquiring why it was that by 'general confession' Convention supporters were 'the most difficult, awkward, cantankerous, obscurantist and touchy people' to be found in Methodist churches.<sup>64</sup> It was alleged that many ministers dreaded hearing that one of their members had received a 'blessing' at a Convention, since trouble was probably ahead. In reply, Chadwick rejected the condemnation as 'not of God', accusing critics of not believing in entire sanctification and of dealing harshly with those who claimed to be sanctified in the traditional Methodist way.<sup>65</sup> Spirituality could divide as well as unite.

Although the vision which motivated the birth of FK was a wide one, the inspiration was unequivocally Methodist. The terms 'Quest' and 'Crusade' intentionally broke with tradition, but the groups coming into being were 'seeking the old sources' and rather than setting up an organisation the movement had as a foundational aim 'its own extinction in a reborn Methodism'.<sup>66</sup> Thus FK never became an officially constituted arm of any of the Methodist denominations. Leslie Church, one of the members of the first London group, recalled a meeting with a Wesleyan elder statesman, Luke Wiseman of the Wesleyan Home Mission Department, in which

<sup>61</sup> *JN*, 7 July 1927, p. 1.

<sup>62</sup> *JN*, 10 July 1924, p. 3

<sup>63</sup> *JN*, 1 July 1926, p. 1

<sup>64</sup> *MT*, 24 June 1926, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> *JN*, 1 July 1926, p. 4

<sup>66</sup> Boyns, *Fellowship*, p.17.

group members explained their feelings. Wiseman was puzzled, but patient, confiding to Church later that he believed a great movement was beginning and at the same time warning against 'quietness'.<sup>67</sup> The anxiety felt by Wiseman over quietness probably sprang from his traditional evangelistic activism - he was a popular speaker at Cliff College anniversaries - and he was correct in detecting the increased attraction of a more contemplative spirituality. Despite the expressed desire of the founders of FK to 'restore to Methodism its old-time evangelistic fervour and power'<sup>68</sup> it was also asserted that practices associated with a traditional evangelistic approach - the penitential form and the prayer meeting might have to be discarded.<sup>69</sup> The sense of a radical Methodist spirituality was intoxicating.

What was the strength of FK as a clerical movement within Methodism? Seventy-nine people attended the first Swanwick, including three missionaries and five College students.<sup>70</sup> At the 1923 conference about 250 were present, of whom sixty were students.<sup>71</sup> Total FK membership by this stage was 500, with many meeting in local groups, and although the proportion of Wesleyan Methodists is not known, it would have been high, which suggests that approaching 20% of Wesleyan ministers had become FK members over the previous 3 - 4 years. This was a period of remarkable growth. Further increase in membership, to over 1,000, was to take place during the next ten years<sup>72</sup> but attendance at Swanwick declined, levelling out at approximately 100 ministers from the mid 1920s onwards. It is likely that the impact of being at Swanwick once or twice was considerable, but that relatively few members attended every year. There was a strategy for ensuring that Methodist College students were exposed to the influence of Swanwick. Deputations from FK went to address students and by 1929 FK student groups were recognised as central in the devotional life of least two colleges, including the Primitive Methodist Hartley College.<sup>73</sup> S. E. Keeble wrote in 1932 about the great value of Swanwick, which had been decisive for many College students and had 'infused new life into the souls of hundreds of ministers, mainly young. It has widened and modernised their

<sup>67</sup>L. F. Church in R. G. Burnett, *et. al*, *Frederick Luke Wiseman* (1954), p. 17.

<sup>68</sup>*B*, December 1969, p. 3.

<sup>69</sup>A. G. James and L. Keeble, *The Crusade* (1920), p. 13.

<sup>70</sup>*Quest*, p. 24; *MT*, 15 July 1920, p. 13.

<sup>71</sup>*MR*, 12 July 1923, p. 16.

<sup>72</sup>The figure in 1934 was 1,071: *MR*, 12 July 1934, p. 14.

<sup>73</sup>*B*, December 1929, p. 2.

religious outlook'.<sup>74</sup> Swanwick was committed to growth and to exercising an influence on younger leaders. The spirituality of the Fellowship was one which saw itself as a spirituality for the future.

### Conclusion

Southport and Swanwick, and the movements they represented, were united in their desire for renewal and growth within Methodism. FK emerged because of a feeling that the level of Christian life in the New Testament was far higher than that to be found in Methodism.<sup>75</sup> Both the traditionalists and the progressives venerated Wesley. Although Chapman considered that the doctrine of Christian perfection 'may be said to have passed beyond our horizon', he did regard it as Methodism's 'one original contribution to the theology of the Church'.<sup>76</sup> But the movements had divergent tendencies. First, Southport looked to the past while FK members had their eyes set firmly on the future. Weatherhead resisted any 'melancholy dirge' about the 'good old days.'<sup>77</sup> There was also a contrast between the rather rigid approach so often characteristic of the older holiness stream and the image portrayed by FK of a group which was open-minded, questing and changing. Third, while at Southport lay people were following the lead given by a few outstanding preachers, FK was committed to the process of ministerial members learning from each other in groups. Insights were there to be shared. Finally, the Fellowship wanted to reach beyond Methodism and to learn from all that was seen as best in the wider church, whether this was through the 'Jesus of history' school of scholarship or through sacramentalism. Despite the differences, however, the members of the Fellowship of the Kingdom, like those in the Southport network, were unmistakably Methodist. They did not have old-style revivals, but they had crusades. The attempt to share the experience of Christ and to open the fellowship of the church to others was an essential part of the Methodist tradition. The spirit of Wesley shaped the spirituality of both Swanwick and Southport.

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<sup>74</sup> *MR*, 7 July 1932, p. 24.

<sup>75</sup> Boyns, *Fellowship*, p. 10.

<sup>76</sup> Chapman, *Heritage*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>77</sup> *B*, December 1933, p. 1.

## 1: SIMON'S LIFE OF WESLEY

JOHN SMITH SIMON (1843 - 1933) published what came to be known as his 'Studies' of John Wesley in five separately-titled volumes between 1921 and 1934. The last volume, which Simon left unfinished at the point of Charles Wesley's death in 1788, was completed by his son-in-law Archibald Harrison.

In terms of sheer length and detail Simon's biography can only be compared with Luke Tyerman's *Life and Times of John Wesley* (3 vols. 1870), both being works which run to over 650,000 words. Their biographical technique is also in some respects rather similar and Simon's work may, indeed, despite its date of publication, be regarded as the last of the Victorian lives of Wesley. Both Tyerman and Simon follow the pattern of a year by year chronicle of Wesley's activities; both are fairly reticent about Wesley's private life; and both are in general uncritical about his personal character. Tyerman avowedly professed to do no more than record and document the 'facts' of Wesley's life, leaving what he rather oddly called the 'philosophy' of it to others. He allowed himself, however, some sharp comments on Wesley's early 'high-churchism', and here he was reflecting nineteenth-century Wesleyan suspicions of the new Anglo-Catholicism. He was also critical - on the preachers' behalf - of Wesley's restriction of their role as full ministers. Simon, on the other hand, takes a very reverential view of Wesley's foibles and of the more controversial aspects of his career. He took a more dispassionate (and better-informed) view of the nature of Wesley's high churchmanship. He was also a careful enough scholar to hint that Wesley's claims not to be breaking the law on conventicles and not to be separating from the church were legally shaky, and here one feels his instincts were correct.

Tyerman's *Life* remains in some respects a valuable storehouse of material, including some manuscript sources now probably lost, as well as summaries of newspaper and other attacks on Methodism not readily available otherwise. Simon drew much from Tyerman and the only new manuscript source readily identifiable in his work is the Bennet papers, including a source for Bennet's post-Methodist career which now appears to be lost. Otherwise, what he added to Tyerman was mainly from two new sources of information : Curnock's heavily-annotated edition of *Wesley's Journal* (1909 - 16) and the accumulated



articles and publications of the Wesley Historical Society (from 1897 onwards). These sources enabled him not only to add fresh details but also to attempt more explanations of individual episodes than Tyerman essayed to do. Thus, though he followed a similar chronicle structure to Tyerman, Simon did advance on his predecessor by pausing periodically to analyse and explain above all the constitution of Methodism as revealed in the proceedings of the various Conferences. This he did partly from the *Minutes*, partly from other sources. Indeed, in the preface to his fourth volume, he seems to indicate that his overall purpose was to 'describe Wesley and his work' and to 'record the progress of the constitution of the Methodist Church'.

Simon's strictly chronological structure had, of course, great advantages for these purposes. The most obvious drawback is that his remarks on Wesley's multifarious activities, on his changing views on theology and ecclesiology after 1738, and on much else are scattered and submerged in what at times becomes an excessively minute narrative. This is a pity as his comments can be perceptive. One might argue that his chosen method was old-fashioned even when he wrote, for John Telford's compact *Life of Wesley* (1886 with a supplementary chapter in a later edition taking account of the new Curnock material for the Oxford period and Georgia) broke fresh ground by abandoning narrative after about the early 1740s in favour of an analytical and topical arrangement. Furthermore, although Simon has interesting and perceptive things to say about Wesley's character (despite his reverential tone) these observations, too, are lost in the narrative. Like Tyerman again, he does not attempt anything like a sustained analysis of Wesley's character of the kind one finds in some of the earliest biographies, notably Hampson's. It is perhaps hardly necessary to add that he deals very cautiously with Wesley's love-affairs and marriage; and although he used Léger's (1910) edition of Wesley's account of the Grace Murray affair, he fails to grapple with Léger's remarkable analysis of Wesley's character as man and lover.

Much the same may be said of his account of Wesley's early years and Oxford period. The narrative is as factual and external as Tyerman's despite the details borrowed from Curnock. What is more surprising is that the account of Wesley's religious development up to 1738 is curiously flat, even though the conversion of 1738 is taken, conventionally, as the essential turning point. There is no attempt to discuss the claims made as early as the 1870s by R. D. Umlin and repeated by Léger in his other book in 1910, that the 'real' conversion was in 1724/5. Perhaps the most original and useful section of Simon's

work is his careful account of the old Religious Societies and their relationship with the new Methodist ones. (Against J. H. Overton, though with some hesitations, Simon saw the Methodists as initiating significant changes though owing much to the earlier type.)

One of the most characteristic features of Simon's tone, apart from his reluctance to criticise Wesley, was his tendency to soften the edge of controversies or at least to describe them, rather than attempt a judgment on them. This applies both to eighteenth-century conflicts and to the later scholarly disputes on Wesley's career. When he does reach a conclusion on the latter he often shows good sense (though he accepts the traditional and almost certainly incorrect claim that 'John Smith's' letters to Wesley were by Secker, while honestly showing the evidence against this claim). He is relatively mild even in his description of eighteenth-century Anglicanism, which still fares badly in the hands of some evangelical historians. In the main, Simon simply quotes Anglican historians on this subject. It is perhaps his affection for John Wesley that brings him near to implied criticisms of Charles Wesley for his intrigues against brother John and failure to support him, though he plays down the hostility of the preachers to Charles which could be very outspoken. On America, perhaps wisely, he does not adjudicate on the rival north and south versions of Methodist origins. Coke's controversial role in the origins of the Deed of Declaration and the ordinations for America, and the reactions of the preachers to ordination are also treated with circumspection (he omits any reference to Pawson's account of their reaction to the ordination scheme). On the Calvinist reaction to the 1770 Minutes he surprisingly follows Curnock in finding it difficult to see why the reaction was so violent. (It is even odder that he earlier remarked that most early eighteenth-century Anglicans were Calvinists!) On Christian perfection he claims that this was not peculiarly Methodist but a recovery of early church teaching. John Wesley would no doubt have agreed but this certainly understates the peculiarities of Wesley's position and its highly controversial nature. On all these matters it is arguable that Simon, though trying hard to see Wesley in his context, was too closely identified with his hero to be able to see why so much of his career and teaching were felt to be threatening both religiously and socially by his numerous critics. But on perfection he was also reflecting a tradition of glossing over the difficulties the doctrine had long caused.

These weaknesses make for a biography lacking bite, but also - or perhaps alternatively - lacking the degree of critical detachment and understanding of the social and mental context which would now be

thought necessary in a study of this kind. Here Simon repeated the defects of his predecessors and indeed many of his successors. Yet he did have real virtues. He added to Tyerman's chronicle more explanation and more context. One of the most attractive features of his presentation was his careful description of some of the main scenes of Wesley's mission - of London, Bristol, Newcastle and some lesser places as they were in Wesley's day. At a more personal and idiosyncratic level one must note an engaging oddity which has often aroused amused comment - his use of the 'historic present'. Often in the form of 'we see', in some passages he becomes a veritable eye-witness. 'Let us enter (the Temple Church in Bristol). We note Charles Wesley in his clerical habit. We see a group of pitmen listening...' and so on. Elsie Harrison in the memoir of Simon in the final volume remarks on this but fairly adds that 'that was just what it was to him'. He *was* present in his own imagination. 'He toured the dear land of England with his hero and... the eighteenth century at last became more real than the twentieth'. Certainly none of Wesley's biographers has companied with the evangelist as closely as Simon and this does add vividness as well as charm to his account. In somewhat the same spirit he empathises with Wesley's preachers - and here he scored over some other biographers in his use of the *Lives* collected by Jackson, which Simon rightly said were less read than they should have been by Wesley's biographers.

Despite all reservations Simon, along with Tyerman, still retains value as a chronicle and handy collection of facts over the whole of Wesley's career, and on a scale never likely to be repeated. It is only in the last thirty years that the complexities of Wesley's Oxford period have been unravelled by Green and Heitzenrater; that fresh light has been thrown on his theological development especially after 1738; that Ward has shown the real character of Wesley's *Journal*; and that the speculative but unavoidable insights of psychology have been applied to the image of Wesley which Simon helped to perpetuate. One ironical footnote is irresistible in conclusion. Only four years after Simon's death, Elsie Harrison published her *Son to Susanna*, a broadly psychological if romantic portrait of Wesley and his family, which is perhaps the most iconoclastic study ever produced by a Methodist. Mrs Harrison was John Simon's daughter.

HENRY D. RACK

## R. F. WEARMOUTH, ARMY CHAPLAIN

**R**OBERT WEARMOUTH, the historian: his five histories of Methodism and the working class are his memorial. Robert Wearmouth, the Army chaplain; much less well known.

Wearmouth's own account of his days as chaplain - *Pages from a Padre's Diary* - was published late in life and forty years or so after the end of the Great War. Nearly forty years on again we can be grateful for this rare record of Nonconformist chaplaincy service in that War. But what prompted its publication then, its impact and relevance plainly lessened by the Second World War as evidenced by his having to meet the cost of publication from his own pocket?

The Battle of the Somme in 1916 was Wearmouth's initiation as a young chaplain and the Fifth Army retreat in 1918 his maturing. He served over three years on the Western Front, an unusually long time. From his own account, Wearmouth appears as that rare being, a padre respected by his fellow officers and looked up to by the men he served. That he was also gratefully regarded by the bereaved families to whom in duty he wrote is evident from the many replies reprinted in his book. He attributes his easy accommodation to chaplaincy work to his earlier experiences as a private soldier in the Northumberland Fusiliers and later working down the mine. (These are the only personal non-chaplaincy recollections he allows himself in the memoir.) Wearmouth was no middle-class scholar patriotically deserting his Manse study. His own university days and his historical research all fell after the War.

From the records of the Primitive Methodist Army Committee, now deposited in the Methodist Archives at Manchester, it is possible to add one or two points of interest. As a Primitive Methodist, Wearmouth served as a United Board chaplain, alongside Congregationalists, Baptists and United Methodists, and with an equal duty towards men of all four denominations. (This happy and successful expression of church unity in action lasted in this form until Methodist Union when Primitive and United Methodist chaplains joined the much older Wesleyan Methodist chaplaincy organisation to form the Methodist Forces Board. The depleted United Board survived, and survives.)

Formed only in January 1915, the United Board was immediately engaged in a race to recruit chaplains for the expanding volunteer army. By June they had nominated sixty-six for service at home and abroad. Wearmouth was one of them. He was interviewed on 8 May and his appointment confirmed on 27 May. The practice was for each denomination within the United Board to interview its own volunteers and for the Board to put forward those approved, within a total set by the War Office, in the ratio of one third for each denomination, the Primitive and United Methodists counting for this purpose as one. Wearmouth was posted briefly to Salisbury Plain and left for France in

July 1915, the only United Board chaplain in his Division, for eleven months' apprenticeship at the Front before the Somme.

Chaplains (other than the few regulars) received temporary commissions and in the early years of the War were contracted for a minimum of one year's service. The Primitive Methodist records show that Wearmouth applied to be transferred to home duties a year on, in August 1916. He asked to see George Standing, the Senior Chaplain, United Board, Western Front (a fellow Primitive Methodist). Standing evidently persuaded Wearmouth to stay put: no-one could be spared a month into the Battle of the Somme. This incident is omitted from *Pages from a Padre's Diary*, though the harrowing experiences of near continuous service in a Casualty Clearing Station on the Somme are graphically described in diary extracts. Strain and stress, or perhaps impending illness, may have prompted the bid to return home; Wearmouth had an operation at Etaples in November 1916 as the Battle of the Somme finally petered out in the mud.

Wearmouth's diary extracts on the Retreat of 1918 are also graphic. The Primitive Methodist records show that Wearmouth was invalided home before the Allied advance, but returned to duty on 17 October. It is not clear where he was posted then or until he was demobilised and returned to circuit duties on 8 July 1920.

The Primitive Methodist Army Committee records contain one surprise. At the end of the War, it appears that Wearmouth was one of thirteen Primitive Methodist army chaplains who applied for a permanent commission. His name appears fifth of the seven recommended, a winning position, one might think, given the 251 United Board chaplains in service at the Armistice. But the vastly reduced complement of the War Office Chaplains' Department in peacetime allocated only five posts to the United Board as a whole. Wearmouth was passed over. His name however appears in the records as a Reserve chaplain at the time of Reunion; and he served local troops as a civilian chaplain in the Second World War.

May one read into Wearmouth's evident personal success as a chaplain in France, his delayed demobilisation and his candidacy for a permanent commission (in 1922 or 1923) a strong calling towards continuing army service? Wearmouth, the historian, lost to the army, hardly bears thinking about in retrospect, yet perhaps a fond regard for what might have been, as well as a desire to set down what he achieved as a chaplain, might lie behind his late published memoir.

J. H. THOMPSON

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## The Rev. Dr. Rupert E. Davies 1909 - 1994

Few Methodists have produced work of such range and acumen as Rupert Davies who died on 4 July 1994 aged 84. Educated at St. Paul's School and Balliol College, Oxford, he trained for the ministry at Wesley House, Cambridge and the University of Tübingen. He became chaplain of Kingswood School, Bath in 1935 and later Chairman of its Governors. In 1952, after some years in circuit in Bristol, he became Tutor in Church History at Didsbury College, Bristol and in 1967 Principal after the amalgamation with Wesley College, Headingley. From 1973 to 1976 he was again a circuit minister in Bristol and then, in retirement, Warden of the New Room. His honorary doctorate of British University was a mark of the esteem in which he was held there.

As a historian RED was one of those who renewed interest in the great Reformers during and after World War Two. His *The Problem of Authority in the Continental Reformers* (1946), *Why I am a Protestant* (1957) and his contribution to the important *The Catholicity of Protestantism* (1950) with his mentor Newton Flew paralleled the work of Gordon Rupp and Philip Watson, a very notable Methodist contribution to scholarship. His Fernley-Hartley lecture *Religious Authority in an Age of Doubt* (1968) continued the quest for the source of religious authority.

RED was, by training, a classicist and theologian but very quickly mastered the historical disciplines producing a series of fine contributions to Methodist history. First and foremost his editing with Gordon Rupp and later Raymond George of the four volumes of *The History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (1965, 1978, 1983, 1988). His own summary of Methodist theology in volume 1 and Methodism since 1932 in volume 3 were typical of his style as was the careful editing and introduction to volume 9 of *The Works of John Wesley on the Methodist Societies* (1989). For many non-Methodists and students RED's *Methodism* (1963, 1976, 1988) is still the best one volume introduction, though later work has stressed sociological factors more than RED did. Perhaps a slight Wesleyan and West Country bias makes his comments on United and Primitive Methodists a little dated but a book which remains a standard text book for 30 years is no mean achievement. *What Methodists Believe* (1976) like *Methodists and Unity* (1962) set out his ecumenical position which was sharpened by the failure of the Anglican-Methodist conversations which saddened him. *The Church of England Observed* (1984) parallels the more irenic approach of *The Church in our Times* (1979) and the symposium he edited, *The Testing of the Churches 1932 - 1982* (1982) which included another typical RED chapter on modern Methodism was followed up by

three articles in *Proceedings* later re-issued as *Methodism and Ministry* (1993) containing pungent personal observations.

RED had a crystal clear mind, his summaries of great Christian thinkers were a hallmark of his teaching at Bristol typified by recent books on the *Creeeds* (1987) and the *Commandments* (1990). The recent bibliography published by the Bristol WHS shows his enormous range including *The Christian Theology of Education* (1974) and the literary editorship of *The School Hymn Book of the Methodist Church* (1950). He was President of the Methodist Conference in 1970, convener of the Faith and Order Committee, a member of the Joint Liturgical Group, BCC and WCC Committees and the Anglican-Methodist negotiating panel after 1963. His theological range and socratic mind were given full play in all these groups. In all this he was ably upheld by his wife, Margaret, herself no mean thinker. Together they pioneered several projects in the area of human rights and women's ministry. Select Preacher at Oxford and Cambridge, RED maintained his preaching ministry right to the end.

We salute one of our finest historians and theologians. At a time when we have a dearth of historians in our ministry, he will be sadly missed, not least by those who had the good fortune to be his pupils.

J.M.T.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*Wesley-Langshaw Correspondence: Charles Wesley, his Sons and the Lancaster Organists*, edited by Arthur W. Wainwright in collaboration with Don E. Saliers (Emory Texts and Studies in Ecclesial Life 1), ([Atlanta, Georgia], Scholars Press for Emory University, 1993, pp. xvi, 91, n.p., ISBN: 1 55540 848 6 (hardcover), 1 55540 849 1 (pbk)).

In November 1988 Sotheby's offered for sale a small collection of correspondence, largely on musical matters, between two generations of the Wesley and the Langshaw families: Charles Wesley (1707-88) and his musician sons Charles Jr (1757-1834) and Samuel (1766-1837), and John Langshaw, organist of St Mary's, Lancaster (1724-1798) and his son Jack (1763-1832). Of the 32 letters, written between 1778 and 1827, 22 were from Charles Wesley to Langshaw, two were from Langshaw to Charles, six were from Charles Jr to Jack, and one was from Samuel to Jack; the one remaining letter was from Langshaw to Benjamin Cooke, the organist of Westminster Abbey. The collection was eventually acquired by Emory University to add to its already substantial collection of Wesley family letters and

papers, and is here published for the first time in an edition which also includes a further letter from Charles Wesley to Langshaw, held at the United Methodist Archives at Drew University.

With the exception of the one Samuel Wesley letter (of 1809), all the correspondence dates from two periods, widely separated in time. The letters of the first period, from 1778 until (probably) 1784, relate in the main to the musical education of Jack Langshaw, who had been sent to London in 1778 to further his studies with Benjamin Cooke. Finding Cooke inadequate as a teacher, he turned to Charles Wesley Jr for lessons. Jack became a frequent visitor to the Wesley family home in Marylebone, and was soon accepted as an additional member of the family. Charles regarded him as his 'adopted son' (Letter 5), and his letters to Jack's father are full of advice and news of Jack's progress. With Jack's return to Lancaster, the correspondence ceased. The five letters of the second period are from between 1822 and 1827, long after the deaths of both Charles Wesley and John Langshaw, and are all from Charles Jr. to Jack, by this time organist of St Mary's, Lancaster in his turn.

The chief interest of the edition is inevitably in the 23 letters from Charles Wesley, not least because (as he himself points out in Letter 10) he was by this late stage in his life an infrequent correspondent. Although cordial enough, they are often brief to the point of terseness, with little of the stylishness of expression that characterises the letters both of his brother John and his son Samuel. Not surprisingly, given the background to the letters, there is little here of Methodism. Nonetheless, Charles's reassurance to Langshaw in Letter 6 ('You need not fear our making Jack a Methodist. I dont [sic] wish my own Children to be so called. God, I trust, will make them real Christians that is, Sound Members of the Church of England') is revealing, and will doubtless be quoted in every future discussion of his attitudes towards Methodism and the established church. There is also some comment on politics and contemporary events, and in particular on the American Revolution which Charles (like his brother John) vigorously opposed.

But the main topic of the letters is music, and in particular the progress of Jack Langshaw as the pupil of Charles Jr. Along the way, and in piecemeal fashion, we learn about the musical activities of Charles Jr and Samuel as performers, composers and teachers; about the family concerts which Charles and Samuel organised; about other London musicians; and about various aspects of London musical life. Much of this is invaluable first-hand information, often adding to what we know from other sources. Despite their brevity and the fragmentary nature of the information they contain, these letters should be regarded as essential primary material for an understanding of London musical life in the early 1780s.

The isolated letter from Samuel Wesley of 1809, and the five letters from Charles Wesley Jr., written when both Charles and Jack were in their sixties, come as welcome and unexpected postscripts to the main series. From Samuel, writing to recommend Thomas Elliott as the builder for a new organ at Lancaster, comes the information not only that he had a house-organ at his home in Camden Town, but that it, too, was by Elliott, and had three stops and an octave of pedal pipes. From Charles, writing at greater length, comes a mass of reminiscences, family news, opinions about music, and information about his current musical activities, all



characteristically jumbled together.

What all the letters share is their wealth of references and their allusiveness. Composers and other musicals are routinely referred to by the initial letters of their surnames only, and musical works, concerts, and other events are often referred to in passing without being fully identified. In addition, Charles Wesley's letters are full of quotations and near-quotations from English literature, the Bible, hymns, and the Book of Common Prayer. The problems for the editor must have been considerable, and Arthur Wainwright has been largely successful in identifying each reference and explaining each allusion. He also provides a helpful introduction which sets the letters in their context. Both introduction and notes draw on Dr Wainwright's wide knowledge of both published and unpublished sources, in the Methodist Archives, the British Library, the Royal Academy of Music, and elsewhere.

*Wesley-Langshaw Correspondence* is the first volume in a new series of publications which draw on the riches of the Emory University resources on religion and theology. Scrupulously edited and attractively produced, it is an excellent start to the series, and a valuable addition both to the Wesley family literature and to first-hand writings on music in London in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

PHILIP OLLESON

(Philip Olleson is Lecturer in Music in the Department of Adult Education at the University of Nottingham. He is working on an edition of the professional correspondence of Samuel Wesley)

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*A Faithful Witness: John Wesley's Homiletical Theology* by Kenneth Collins (Wesley Heritage Press, Wilmore, Kentucky, 1993, pp 237 \$19.95)

It is sometimes said that John Wesley was not a major theologian, but this view is then supported by the fact that unlike, say, Aquinas or Calvin, he did not write a systematic theology. Professor Collins believes John Wesley, by publishing as well as orally preaching his sermons, showed that he intended them to have a dialectic as well as a kerygmatic role. This book seeks to analyse and systematise them. Using the Apostles' Creed as a rough framework, and adding a chapter on personal and social ethics, it sets out a theological system, quoting Wesley on almost every page.

His account of the Lord's Supper on pages 95-97 makes no reference to *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, which had John's name as well as his brother's on the title-page, and consequently he omits important aspects. Like many others, he refers to his well-known phrase 'a converting ordinance', and goes on to say 'John Calvin might have unduly "fenced the table"; John Wesley, on the other hand did not' (p. 97). This overlooks the requirement that communicants should show some ticket of admission, usually a class-ticket. The section somewhat oddly entitled 'Methodist

Ministry and Anglican Etiquette' (pp. 100-102) makes no reference to Wesley's actions in ordaining men from 1784 onwards and including ordination services in *The Sunday Service*.

Not surprisingly, more space is given to soteriology, but the chapter on 'the forgiveness of sins' overlaps confusingly with that on 'the Holy Spirit'. The point is, however, helpfully made that Wesley affirms that 'whosoever is born of God ... doth not commit sin', 'a teaching which for whatever reason has seldom been understood even within American Methodism, which has often confused this great liberty with the prerogatives of Christian Perfection, which is quite another matter' (p. 132 n.3). This confusion is not confined to *American Methodism*.

An Excursus raises the question 'Has the conversionist paradigm collapsed?' (pp. 149-61), remarking that the 250th anniversary of Aldersgate 'will perhaps best be remembered not for its joyful commemoration but for the intense scholarly debate which it has spawned' (p.149). Our author strongly maintains what he regards as the traditional view, namely that the Aldersgate experience was the time 'when John Wesley encountered a gracious God, exercised justifying faith, was born anew, and when he received a measure of assurance' (p.151). He thus seeks to counter four well known 'disclaimers' in which Wesley subsequently altered the *Journal*. The discussion of 'the faith of a servant, though not that of a son' overlaps with the discussion of assurance in the chapter on the Holy Spirit. He concludes that 'Viewing Aldersgate as a crucial event does not, after all, preclude the incorporation of the wisdom of the late Wesley' (p. 161). The modifications indeed show that Wesley came to have a more optimistic view of his state before Aldersgate: he was 'in a measure accepted' but lacked the proper Christian faith. One might reply that in a theology which sharply distinguishes the saved from the lost the person who is in a measure accepted has already crossed an important dividing line, even though a crucial experience still lies in the future. This raises an important pastoral and theological question, which is rarely discussed. Moreover, Professor Collins does not cite passages from the *Journal* and the *Letters* which give a very pessimistic account of his state after Aldersgate.

Many writers have criticised Wesley for defining sin as a voluntary transgression of a known law of God. Professor Collins cites Colin Williams as an example of this, and does well to disagree (p. 167 n.1), for it is only a part of Wesley's whole account of sin, and this attack on its alleged inadequacy quite fails to understand his doctrine of Christian perfection.

On social questions Professor Collins remarks that, though Wesley tackled many social problems, his thought 'lacked the kind of radical critique of institutional structures that has become the staple of modern theology' (p. 188). In this, as on the Aldersgate issue, he is in sharp conflict with some other American scholars, and it is only fair to pay serious attention to his point of view.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

*John Wesley and the Anglican Evangelicals of the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Cooperation and Separation with special reference to the Calvinistic Controversies* by A. Brown-Lawson (Pentland Press, 1994 pp. 410 £11.50 ISBN:1 85821 095 X)

This book is the printed version of a thesis written in 1968. Only incidental allusions in the main text and the footnotes to issues that were current in the 'sixties' have been revised and brought up to date. There is no book in the bibliography later than 1968, which means that the author has not made any use of the Bicentenary Edition of Wesley's Works being published by Abingdon Press. He pays the penalty very early on in his book when he accepts the attribution of the letter describing Wesley's call to an itinerant ministry as being addressed to James Hervey. The original of the letter that Wesley wrote to Hervey on March 20, 1739 has now been found, with the result that the date and recipient of the letter quoted in the *Journal* on June 11, 1739 are now unknown (Ward and Heitzenrater. *The Works of John Wesley* vol. 19, *Journal and Diaries II, 1738-1743*, p.66, footnote 32).

These defects should not be allowed to detract from the merits of the book. Dr. Lawson has made available to a wider public a thesis that has been in constant demand by researchers in the subject. Allan Coppedge (*John Wesley in Theological Debate*, Wesley Heritage Press, 1987, pp. 147-151) recommends his readers to consult Dr. Lawson's treatment of the relationship between James Hervey and John Wesley. Stephen Gunter (*The Limits of 'Love Divine'*) Kingswood, 1989, p 305) recommends Dr. Lawson's chronicled account of the Wesleys' first few experiences of field preaching. These references bear witness to what is a clear, thorough, comprehensive description of John Wesley's troubled relationships with the Evangelical clergy of the eighteenth century.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One deals with the vexed issue of Wesley's use of lay preachers. Part Two deals with the theological controversies between the Arminian Wesley and the Calvinistic Evangelicals over such issues as universal or particular redemption, the imputed righteousness of Christ, perfection and perseverance. The treatment of these controversies comprises much the larger part of the book. Dr. Lawson's willingness to look for examples of cases where Wesley modified his earlier teaching on a subject like Christian Perfection, and his willingness to put Wesley in the wrong when he deserves to be so treated, anticipate such tendencies in recent American scholars like Coppedge, Gunter, and Maddox. These works obviously take precedence over Dr. Lawson's book but at £11.50 Dr. Lawson is virtually giving his book away, so keen is he that we should buy it, and read it. For those who are coming fresh to the subject it is worth the cost of both time and money. The book is a delight to handle, the cover is eye-catching, the quality of the paper is very good, and the font size both pleasing to the eye and easy to read.

C. H. GOODWIN

*The English Baptists of the Nineteenth Century* by J. H. Y. Briggs (Baptist Historical Society 1994 pp 432, £15 paperback, £20 hardback ISBN: 0 903166 18 6)

This long-awaited volume is understandably more than twice the length of its two companions (on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries) put together: for the English Baptists the nineteenth century was an era of unparalleled growth and achievement. The succeeding volume on the twentieth century, yet to be published, may possibly take a narrative, chronological form in view of the greatly enhanced role of the Baptist Union in recent times. But for the Victorian period this approach, which John Briggs once described to the present reviewer as 'up the mountain, along the plateau and down into the dark valley' is clearly impossible: these gathered churches were all too different, too jealous of their individuality. The author rightly adopts a thematic treatment. So we have here congregational life and worship, believers' baptism and Holy Communion, the ministry and the colleges, Generals and Particulars (though not Strict and Particulars, who are mentioned only in passing), theology, Associations and the Baptist Union, numerical growth (including some valuable insights into the social and gender structures of the Baptist community), Home Missions, the B.M.S. and philanthropy, education and politics.

Each chapter is packed with information and is an ideal launching pad for future research (consult, for example, page 279 if you wish to pursue the theme of the considerable contribution of Baptist women to hymn writing). The second chapter, like all the rest, is wonderfully informative but rather sad, for the author shows how the classic Baptist comprehension of Baptism and the Lord's Supper underwent a sea-change in reaction to the Oxford Movement: the sacraments were downgraded into ordinances, in some extreme cases almost into optional extras, a wild individualism prevailed and the corporate understanding of the gathered church was thrown to the winds. In this way Victorian Baptists bequeathed a huge task of reinterpretation and renewal to the denomination's twentieth-century theologians, to which they have risen impressively. The fifth chapter on the union of the Particular and General Baptists in 1891, raises a serious question, especially as it is the longest in the book. The author has devoted much research to this unexplored terrain, which earlier Baptist historians dismissed with a page, a paragraph or even a footnote. It seems that John regards the union of 1891 as on a par with the Presbyterians' 1876 or the Methodists' 1932 and even more controversially, sees it also as the 'context' (p.175) of the Downgrade controversy. Whether this perspective is correct or not, only future research will show. Meanwhile we must congratulate the author, who seems to have taken on the later E. A. Payne's role as the Baptists' 'inter-continental ecumenical missile' (Gordon Rupp) on having found the time to make this most important contribution to his denomination's understanding of its history.

IAN SELLERS

## SHORTER NOTICES

*Rat-Rhyme: The Lives of Five Methodist Ministers* by H. Morley Rattenbury (pp. 32, £2.50 plus postage from D.C. Dews, 4 Lynwood Grove, Leeds LS12 4AU)

Morley Rattenbury has provided us with a welcome sketch of the five members of his family who, since 1828, have contributed a total of 276 ministerial years between them. The story begins with John Rattenbury (1806-1879), described by Morley Punshon as the greatest winner of souls of his generation. John's son, Henry Owen Rattenbury (1843-1904) served in thirteen circuits and produced eight children. Two of the eight were John Ernest Rattenbury (1870-1963) the high church evangelist and builder of Kingsway Hall, and the scourge of Methodist Union and Harold Burgoyne Rattenbury (1878-1961) who served with great distinction in China and as General Secretary of the Methodist Missionary Society. Harold Burgoyne Rattenbury's son, Harold Morley Rattenbury (b1915) is the author of the book. Each of the sketches is a faithful, warts and all portrait. It is a pity that the one deaconess in the family, Sister Helena, gets only half a line and how does the author, who has offspring, know for certain that he is the last of the ministerial Rattenburys?

NORMAN WALLWORK

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*Chapel in the Valley* by Louis Johnson (1992, pp.36, ISBN 0 9520708 0 4)

This well-produced, illustrated booklet tells 'The story of East Yell Methodist Chapel 1892-1992'. The author, a local preacher and former school teacher, gives a brief account of North Isles pioneers in the 1820s, details of the building of this chapel of his youth and retirement, and the contribution for over a century to Methodist witness in Shetland. Drawing on local memories and old photographs of ministers, pastors and leaders, it is a worthy and well-researched contribution to the centenary celebrations. The first printing is now exhausted, but if reprinted will be available from the author, Midgarth, Otterswick, East Yell, Shetland ZE2 9AU, £2.50 plus postage £1.00.

HAROLD R. BOWES

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*The Methodists. A History of Methodism in New South Wales* by Don Wright and Eric G. Clancy (Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1993 pp. xx, 276 + 8pp.illus. £24.95. ISBN: 1 86373 428 7)

This well-written and readable account is an appropriate finale to 165 years of Methodism which in 1977 united with Congregationalists and Presbyterians to form the Uniting Church of Australia. For almost a generation Methodism made little impact on a society of transported convicts but then grew with immigration,

Primitive Methodism becoming quite strong in the mining districts. The tensions of running a mission in the antipodes from Britain are clearly indicated. Many of the issues British Methodism has faced - attitudes to war, Sunday sport, central missions, church union - are to be found here. Indeed, anyone studying twentieth-century British Methodism would gain some useful insights from this book.

D. C. DEWS

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*Wisdom and Wit. An anthology from the writings of Gordon Rupp* compiled by John A. Vickers. (Methodist Publishing House for WMHS, 1993, pp 124, £3.75, ISBN: 1 85852 003 7)

The only fault with this book is that it is not long enough. Dr Vickers has pillaged Gordon Rupp's varied writings from 1941 to 1987 (not quite all the books are represented because at least one publisher was unco-operative) to give us the ecclesiastical equivalent of a bottle of champagne. Especially welcome are the samples of the newspaper articles which are now so difficult to track down. This selection will delight all Rupp addicts and send them back to the originals; we hope it will also introduce a new generation to one of the greatest of our historians.

E A ROSE

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## Local Histories

*Methodism in the favoured and interesting village of Brayton [Yorkshire]* by Richard Moody (42pp). Copies, £1.80 post free from the author at Green Lodge, Brayton Lane, Brayton, Selby, North Yorks, YO8 9DZ.

*Horwich Moor Methodist Church 1869-1994* by C. M. Aplin (22pp). Copies from the author at 45 Siemens Street, Horwich, Bolton, BL6 5PR

*Methodism in Much Wenlock 1800-1960* by D. T. Woodford (36pp). Copies, £5.25 post free, from the author at 9 Church Walk, Much Wenlock, Shropshire, TF13 6EN

*Methodism at Boasley Cross [Devon]* by R F S Thorne (8pp). Copies from the author at 31 St Mary's Park, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EK11 1JA, price 75p post free.

*The Moravians at Fulneck 1744 to the present day* by Ruth Strong (26pp). Copies £1.80 post free from the author at 11 Ashdene Crescent, Pudsey, Leeds, LS28 8NS.

*A History of Methodism in Sutton-on-Hull* by J. D. Heald (80pp). Copies, £5.00 post free, from G. Beecroft, 15 Cayton Road, Hull, HU8 OHD.

*Methodism in Cannock Chase: I An Open Mission Field...1776-1879* by C H Goodwin (66pp). Copies, £5.00 plus postage, from the author at 3 Merlin Close, Cannock, Walsall, WS11 1JB.

*A History of Methodism in the Parish of Drax (Camblesforth Church 1894-1994)* by Richard Moody (40pp). Copies, £2.50 post free from the author at Green Lodge, Brayton Lane, Brayton, Selby, North Yorks, YO8 9DZ.

The History of the Methodist Church in the Southend and Leigh Circuit: *The scene of early Methodism in The Rochford Hundred* (11pp); *Hadleigh, Chapel Lane* (15pp) and *Rayleigh, Eastwood Road* (16pp) by G Thompson Brake. Copies, £3.00 each from the author at 43 Florence Gardens, Hadleigh, Benfleet, Essex SS7 2PH.

*Queen Street, Chapel and Mission, Huddersfield* by Edward Royle (35pp). Copies £3.00 from the author, Dept of History, University of York, York, YO1 5DD.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1481. CHINESE PALINGS

Recent research into eighteenth-century Methodist restrictions against certain furnishings for preaching houses and other buildings has uncovered errors in two previous volumes of the *Proceedings*.

In a query on the matter of Chinese palings in Vol. vi (Notes and Queries No. 360), H. J. Foster noted correctly that the *Large Minutes* of 1789 forbid the construction of Chinese palings (along with tub pulpits). However, the edition of the *Minutes of Conference* which contains the first prohibition against palings is not that of 1779 as Foster states, but rather the 1776 edition (variously Q. 21 or Q. 22); in fact, several copies of the 1779 *Minutes* consulted do not mention the matter of palings.

The sequence of the matter appears to be as follows. The 1765 *Minutes* are the first to ban tub pulpits. This prohibition is repeated in the 1770 and subsequent

editions of the *Large Minutes*. Chinese palings are forbidden for the first time in the 1776 *Minutes*. The 1780 edition of the *Large Minutes* is the first to mention the combined prohibition of Chinese palings and tub pulpits.

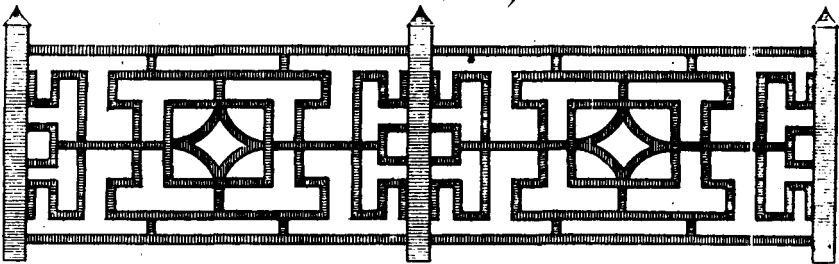
A response to Foster's query concerning a description of Chinese palings was published in Vol. xvii p.100 (Notes and Queries No. 686). A Mr. George Brownson is identified as possessing an illustration of eighteenth-century Chinese palings secured from 'an article attributed to the *Gentleman and Builder* (1760) by F. Hopper.' Attempts to locate this publication proved futile until, by computer wizardry, the correct citation was located.

What Brownson most likely referred to was *The Gentleman's and Builder's Repository: Or, Architecture Display'd* for which drawings and designs were provided by 'E[dward] Hoppus, Surveyor.' The fourth edition, revised, of this work (London: Printed for C. Hitch and L. Hawes, 1760), contains examples of Chinese palings (and other forms of Chinese architecture popular in mid eighteenth-century England) on several plates (esp. LXXXV, LXXXVII). These are, in part, reproduced below.

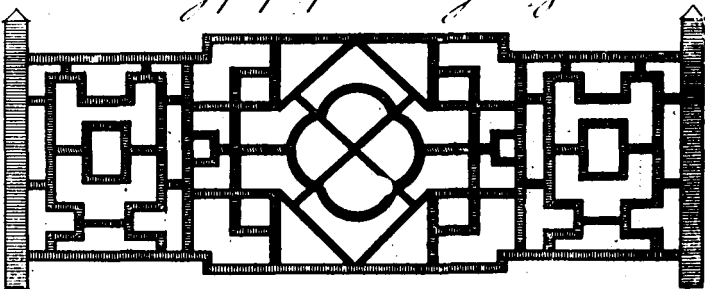
KAREN B. WESTERFIELD TUCKER

LXXXV

*Chinese Paling*



*Paling proper for a Court Yard, &c.*





## 1482. WILLS' 'HINTS TO TRUSTEES'

A fifth edition of John Wills' *Hints to trustees* has now been discovered by Dr. John Vickers, who has generously presented it to the Local Studies Library of Derbyshire Library Services, to join the third edition, which they already have. Photocopies of this 5th edition may be obtained from Mrs. J. Radford, Local Studies Library, County Offices, Matlock, Derbyshire. DE4 3AG at a cost of £6.30 including postage and packing. Copies of the Chapels Society reprint of the third edition are still available from Mrs C Van Melzen, Rookery Farmhouse, Laxfield, nr Woodbridge, Suffolk, IP13 8JA at a cost of £3.50 post free.

The fifth edition, published in 1893 and printed by W. Poyser of Wisbech, is a revised and somewhat enlarged version of the earlier work. Its title has been changed to *Hints to trustees of church property and care taker's* [sic] *manual*. The word *church* seems to replace *chapel* in the title and the text and seems to suggest an attempt to move 'up-market'. A new feature is a picture of the architect author on the title page, earnest, bespectacled and bewhiskered. A new section is a comparison between American and English school buildings, presumably based on information gained during Wills' visit to the USA in 1891, when he was a lay delegate to the Methodist Oecumenical Conference.

A condensed version of the manual, printed on cards to hang in vestries, was also available price 6d. I would be very interested to hear of any other editions of the manual which may be in existence and would gladly pay for photocopies. There seems to be no copy of the manual in the British Library nor the R.L.B.A. Library nor indeed in the public library system. Derbyshire holds the only original copies. Many copies must have been sold however and are possibly still lurking in chapel archives. Please check and get in touch with me if you find any.

DAVID A. BARTON

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## 1483. JAMES THORNE OF SHEBBEAR

I am preparing a biography of James Thorne, co-founder of the Bible Christians, to mark the bicentenary of his birth in September 1995. I would be most grateful for assistance in tracking down any references to him in both printed and manuscript sources. I shall also be glad to know of references to the Bible Christians which have not found their way into the standard histories of the denomination.

DAVID SHORNEY

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