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**“BUT, LORD, LET IT BE BETSY!”. LOVE AND
MARRIAGE IN EARLY METHODISM.**

REMARKABLY little has been written on this subject by Methodists or indeed others, apart from comments on the sad case of Wesley himself, though the alleged love lives of Methodists figured in scandalous rumours in the eighteenth century and have surfaced again in generalised speculations from time to time.¹ There were in fact two contradictory images of Methodist moral character in the eighteenth century. One was that of lecherous preachers and unspeakable orgies, the type of charge levelled against new and mysterious religious movements throughout history. The other image, however, was of an excessively ascetic group, morbid and deluded; and post-Freudian versions of this suggest repression, perversion or sublimation of the sexual urges according to taste. The most savage example of the second view appears in E. P. Thompson's *Making of the English Working Class* as part of his attack on Methodism. Thompson was a great historian but his views on Methodism were coloured by personal hostility and though they contained important insights which Methodist historians have seldom faced up to, they reflect only one side of the evidence and one type of possible interpretation. In this paper I propose to present a sample of evidence, partly unpublished, partly overlooked, which may help to suggest a more balanced view.

Much of Thompson's interpretation is well known and is part of a recurring debate which began long before him, about the possible counter-revolutionary effects of Methodism in the early nineteenth century. To this he added, what is also debatable, that Methodist religious and moral teaching and disciplines also provided at least some of the psychological mechanisms by which work-discipline was imposed during the Industrial Revolution. These claims are not our present

¹ A rare exception to the lack of scholarly treatment is H. Abelove, 'The Sexual Politics of early Wesleyan Methodism' in J. Obelkevich *et al.* (ed.), *Disciplines of Faith*, (1987) pp86-99, further developed by Abelove in *Evangelist of Desire* (Stanford, 1990).

concern, but he comes closer to our subject when he says² that Methodist discipline was not only external but internal as well: it was 'a deformity of the sensibility complementary to the deprivation of the factory children whose labour they condoned'. It was³ 'almost diabolical in its penetration into the very sources of human personality, directed towards the repression of emotional and spiritual energies'. Or rather, it displaced these emotions from expression in personal life - for example in human love - towards the service of the church. Chapels became traps for the human psyche 'in which were staged a constant emotional drama' centred on personal salvation, which directed into these religious and churchly channels the emotions which would otherwise have been expressed in ordinary human love. In a lurid phrase Thompson claimed that⁴ this was nothing less than 'a ritualised kind of psychic masturbation'. This led to a 'central disorganisation of the human personality' and hence acted both as an aid to work-discipline and as sexual repression. As evidence he cites examples of imagery in hymns, visions and descriptions of religious experience both in Methodism and - more luridly and perhaps more cogently — in Moravianism. Similar charges have been popularised elsewhere. The novelist Glyn Hughes published a diatribe in the *Guardian* some years ago about the effects of Methodism on Yorkshire workers. In his novel *When I used to play on the Green* (1982) he gave a fictionalised account of the life of Grimshaw of Haworth which is in many ways a brilliant imaginative reconstruction of that extraordinary man but readers should be warned that there is no evidence for a lurid orgy involving William Darney the pedlar-preacher. The Wesleys accused Darney of many things but not, significantly, of anything of this kind.

What are we to make of all this? So far as the psychological perversion charge is concerned it may be said at once that, as one critic has noted, it is doubtful whether religious conversion is as massively and generally effective as this suggests in transforming personality completely and permanently as Thompson implies.⁵ But it is also the case, as will be argued here, that although some of the effects that Thompson suggests are plausible up to a point, they can co-exist with normal human feelings and that the balance between them varies considerably in individuals. The conflict between loyalty to God's work and the desire for fulfilment in marriage and family is, it will be shown, common in Methodist lives but it could be resolved in ways which satisfied both concerns. One may sympathise with Thompson's strictures while allowing that a concern to obey religious imperatives is not in itself a perversion of the human spirit.

² rev. ed. (Harmondsworth, 1968) p310 with later explanations to critics, pp.917-18.

³ op. cit., p.404

⁴ op. cit., p.405

⁵ J. Kent, *The Age of Disunity* (1966) pp x-xi. Kent also notes that factory discipline depended on material penalties rather than religious manipulation.

The killjoy effects of what is often loosely called 'Puritan' sentiments is of course a very old charge and certainly contains truth. The poet R. S. Thomas memorably expressed it for Wales:

Protestantism - the adroit castrator
 Of art, the bitter negative
 Of song and dance and the heart's innocent joy –
 You have botched our flesh and left us only the soul's
 Terrible impotence in a warm world.⁶

Yet, as was remarked earlier, anti-Methodist satire often claimed the opposite - that Methodism was licentious and orgiastic. Wesley himself was pursued by scandal, to some extent even in the private gossip and correspondence of his followers. His fondness for warm though pastoral correspondence with young women was lamented and criticised as indiscreet and embarrassing even though basically innocent if naive.⁷ Some went even further. Thomas Hanby, who should have known better, wrote to a fellow-preacher James Oddie in 1788: 'Let nobody know but yourself. Mr W. has actually made love to Miss Ritchie and there is no small stir about it in the Cabinet'.⁸ James Lackington, the renegade Methodist and bookseller in his sometimes rather lubricious *Memoirs* tended to dwell on Methodist sexual misconduct and printed an alleged love-letter by the aged Wesley to a young woman which was a transparent fake and fairly clearly known by Lackington to be such.⁹ Wesley himself generally ignored such charges and carried on with his work, but he did give hostages to fortune.

Not all charges of this kind were false for, as in all revivals, there were scandals connected with Methodist perfectionism and with the antinomianism which can be a by-product of extreme ideas of salvation by grace through faith alone. Of the latter danger Wesley himself was well aware especially where it involved Calvinism. (He was rather more reluctant to curb perfectionists). One relatively innocent case is that of David Taylor, a protégé of Lady Huntingdon, who objected to the prayer book marriage service and the clergy who administered it. He seems to have simply exchanged vows at home before friends, which probably counted as a more or less legal common-law marriage before

⁶ R. S. Thomas, 'The Minister' in *Selected Poems 1946-68* (Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1986) p.32.

⁷ Pawson's description of Wesley's character printed in H. D. Rack, 'Wesley Observed', *Proceedings*, 49, p.17.

⁸ Hanby to Oddie 6 September 1788 in Tyerman MSS II, f.27 in Methodist Church Archives, Manchester (no reference). For another batch of rumours and an explanation and refutation which shows how they arose from hostile gossip, see J. C. Bowmer and J. A. Vickers (eds.), *Letters of John Pawson* (Peterborough, 1994), I, p.87.

⁹ *Memoirs of...James Lackington* by Himself (new ed., 1803) pp.204-10. Lackington's later retractions in his *Confessions* (1804) made much less impact, though they were also less interesting.

the 1753 Hardwick Act but was seen as scandalous by his friends.¹⁰ John Wesley thought highly of his Bristol housekeeper Sarah Ryan but despite her spectacular religious experiences she appears to have contracted a bigamous marriage, though she may not have been entirely to blame.¹¹ Wesley's use of such a woman and his correspondence with her naturally excited scandal and fury from his wife, though it is fair to say that she was a close friend of the Methodist saint Mary Bosanquet, later married to the saintly John Fletcher. Much worse was the case of James Wheatley who was guilty of seduction and cut off by Wesley.¹² Worst of all was the case of Westley Hall, in his Oxford days a paragon of holiness but later an antinomian polygamist whose wife - Wesley's sister - had to bring up his children by servant girls.¹³

A bizarre example showing the effects of antinomianism appears in a letter by Henry Piers.¹⁴ Piers found that a preacher 'under your inspection' (he wrote to Wesley) had been lodging in Piers's vicarage, and was found to be living in adultery with a bogus wife. Charged with this the fellow said 'that the Lord had not showed him it' and 'if it was so he would'. 'for that he shows him everything' and he has 'never had the least conviction on that account'. He said the Wesleys had never charged him with adultery; that John Wesley had sent him to preach the gospel; that his soul was full of grace; that he had great favour with God; that God was with him especially in prayer and preaching; and that he could no more doubt of his justification than of being alive. This was exactly what many felt was the result of preaching justification by faith alone, grace as against works, if good works were not enforced.

Yet it is fair to say that these were very exceptional cases though they were just the kind of thing that made Wesley so hostile to predestinarian Calvinism and so insistent on pursuing holiness, though his own doctrine of perfection was also liable to lead to excessive claims. In practice the alternative charges of excessive asceticism and repression were really much more telling. Methodist rules of conduct and condemnation of popular amusements offered considerable support for such charges. But were Methodists also hostile to marriage? Wesley, at first sight at least, may seem a case in point, though his public statements on marriage changed over time and were not always consistent with his own behaviour. Above all, he was much more at odds with his followers' beliefs and behaviour here than on most issues. (Incidentally, it is worth observing that we need to be careful not to

¹⁰ Tyerman MSS, III, f.301; see also *Pawson Letters*, III, p142 to Atmore 1800/1801.

¹¹ *Arminian Magazine*, (1779), pp286ff.; L. Tyerman, *Life of John Wesley* (1871), II, pp.109-10, pp.285-87.

¹² *Works of John Wesley*, ed. F. Baker, XXVI (Oxford, 1982) pp.464—65; E. J. Bellamy, *James Wheatley and Norwich Methodism in the 1750s* (Peterborough, 1994).

¹³ *Wesley, Works*, ed. Baker, XXVI, pp.469-73.

¹⁴ MS Letters to John Wesley, Methodist Church Archives. Piers to Wesley 27 March 1753.

identify Wesley's views with those of his followers, for too many discussions of 'Methodist' teaching and practice turn out to concentrate on Wesley himself.)

The history of Wesley's vacillations on love and marriage has often been told. To summarise briefly, he had at least two traumatic love affairs, in Georgia in the late 1730s and in England in the late 1740s. In both cases he pursued remarkably similar courses of alternate assertion and hesitancy which led to the women marrying other men and provoked him to grief and resentment. Then, in 1751, he married a widow who turned out to be a termagant, though if she was psychologically disturbed (as is often supposed) he was certainly not an ideal husband. The marriage caused great scandal as well as distress to Wesley himself. It is often suspected that the psychological roots of his problems lay in early domination by his mother.

Be that as it may, Wesley's advice on marriage was noticeably discouraging both in general and in particular cases. Nor was this simply the result of his own experiences, for the negative attitude appears even in his Oxford period and persisted despite his own tangled relationships which began in that period.¹⁵ His *Thoughts on Marriage and the Single Life* (1743) generally follows Pauline prescriptions – a normal married life if already married at conversion but avoid marriage if you have the ability to do so. He adds that the single life is best for those pursuing perfection. In his revised version as *Thoughts on a Single Life* (1748) he still prefers the single life but concedes that marriage is after all compatible with perfection. In an autobiographical letter¹⁶ designed to justify his proposed marriage to Grace Murray, written to his brother Charles in September 1749, he traces his changing views. For practical reasons and because he did not expect to find such a woman as his father had (psychologists may find this revealing!) he did not expect to marry; but he also thought that the intimacies of the marriage-bed hindered perfection. The arguments and examples of holy married friends had convinced him that this was wrong. But the 1748 pamphlet still listed numerous practical reasons for preferring the single life. The basic points were the way in which marriage and family ties limited freedom to serve God and other people whole-heartedly without diversion of time, money and effort. In 1785 in *Thoughts upon Marriage* he once again rehearsed the advantages of the single life and suggested that his own youthful yearnings for marriage were a substitute for waning love of God.

Whatever doubts one may have about Wesley's own motivation, the practical arguments against marriage, particularly for Methodist itinerant preachers and for the more single-minded rank and file, had real weight. That is, economic weight and weight in terms of an exacting

¹⁵ For what follows see Abelow, *Evangelist of Desire*, pp.49-73.

¹⁶ Wesley, *Works*, ed. Baker, XXVI, pp380—82, John Wesley to Charles Wesley, 25 September 1749.

life of service to God and humanity. This was what counted again and again with people far less psychologically inhibited than Wesley may have been. It is these factors which have been overlooked or misunderstood by Thompson and other critics and the evidence is plentiful to prove it, though it does weigh on the other side in a few individual cases. The preachers had no regular allowances until the early 1750s and even then they were only £12 per annum, and wives' allowances were later still. For many years even these were not forthcoming and married preachers with large families were a terror to local stewards.¹⁷ Both Wesley brothers can be found deterring or positively forbidding individuals to marry for financial reasons. It is painful to add that John was harder than Charles or many of the preachers when his followers and even his own sister lost partners or children. They were told not to grieve inordinately and to be glad to be free for the Lord's work or to love all the Lord's people. These sentiments were certainly not always shared by the victims despite their robust faith and painful belief that such tragedies were the Lord's mysterious will.¹⁸ Wesley was noticeably less than warm in writing to a newly-married preacher.¹⁹ 'I can say nothing about your wife until I see her.... If you are more holy and more useful by your marriage you will be happier, if less holy and less useful you have made an ill bargain. What you *was* I know; what you *will be* I do not know: but I hope the best. But the main point is to give our whole heart and our whole life to God'. This was Wesley's rationale which in the end he followed himself and he is also noticeably reluctant to sanction the marriages of his more intimate female correspondents. Sincere though he no doubt was in his concern for their spiritual welfare, one suspects that he feared he would lose his tutelage over them once they were controlled, following contemporary convention, by their husbands.

Yet he was not always consistent. Perhaps he had favourites. One such was Samuel Bradburn, a preacher who was both uxorious and suspect by some for his witty behaviour in the pulpit. Wesley certainly helped Samuel very materially in both his marriages. In the first case he bullied the girl's reluctant guardian into consenting and then married the couple on the spot in the family drawing-room!²⁰

The Methodists themselves certainly did not in general follow Wesley's prescriptions to the point of permanent celibacy. Indeed even the preachers, who were more cautious than most, for economic as well as religious reasons, resented Wesley's extreme views. In 1785 John Pawson wrote to Charles Atmore that it was an 'unkah thing' (*sic*) that

¹⁷ Details in A. K. Lloyd, *The Labourer's Hire*, (1987).

¹⁸ See H. D. Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast* (2 ed., 1992) pp.542—43.

¹⁹ Wesley to Tattershall 6 July 1760 in T. Byrth (ed.), *Sermons of Thomas Tattershall* (London and Liverpool, 1848) ppvi-vii. This letter is not in J. Telford's 'Standard' edition of Wesley's letters. I owe the reference to Dr. John Walsh.

²⁰ T. W. Blanshard, *Life of Samuel Bradburn* (1870) p.67.

'Mr Wesley should still endeavour to make us believe that marriage is sinful in the sight of God when the Apostle tells us it is honourable'. So, he added, we cannot safely 'call any man Rabbi'.²¹

Some did, indeed, share Wesley's views as did some Evangelical Anglicans. The eccentric vicar of Everton, John Berridge, thought it might be his duty to 'take a Jezebel' (as he put it), resorted to drawing lots from scripture and was relieved to find a scarifying text against marriage. He thought that God had saved Wesley and Whitefield from the consequences by giving them 'a brace of ferrets' as wives.²² But it is probably more common to find signs of sexual tension and struggle for lack of marriage and anxious searches for a suitable partner when circumstances allowed for one to be taken. Anxieties of this kind have been read into the use of the imagery of the 'Song of Songs' for devotion to Christ. Some Methodists and other evangelicals did indeed follow this long-standing tradition which post-Freudians inevitably find suspicious. Such language certainly aroused Thompson's suspicions. But we need to be careful here. Such language - like other kinds of biblical imagery - is used as a conscious allegory by too many very different kinds of people in different circumstances to be convincingly interpreted in a blanket fashion as a sign of sexual repression or sublimation for particular vulnerable groups, though it may indeed be true of some individuals.²³ Where we have cases of bad marriage experiences, which did happen to some Methodists, we may indeed suspect that the language of divine love could have been coloured and emphasised by such experiences. But this seems to be as much a case of compensation as repression or perversion of human feelings. Women who had bad marriages sometimes seem to have found Methodist friendship and fellowship gave them affections they had not found in marriage.

Cases of celibacy on principle, a devotion to virginity for its own sake, or rather so as to give complete devotion to God, are hard to find and are probably best regarded as a version of the more general concern to be free for God's work. Ann Cutler ('Praying Nanny') may be one of the rarer cases. She kept aloof from the very possibility of attraction or scandal by never being accompanied by a young man even to escort her home late at night. She wrote 'I am wholly thine. I will have none but Thee. Preserve Thou my soul and body pure in thy sight... In my body keep me pure, in my soul pure - a chaste virgin to Christ for ever. I promise Thee...that if Thou wilt be mine I will be thine, and cleave to none other in this world'. Her journal shows that she had actually

²¹ Pawson to Atmore 15 December 1785 in *Pawson Letters*, I, p.35

²² Berridge to Lady Huntingdon 23 March 1770 in [A.C.H. Seymour], *Life and Times of Selina Countess of Huntingdon* (1844) I, p389. The scarifying text was in II Esdras x. 1 'When my son was entered into his wedding chamber he fell down and died'; also Jeremiah xvi.2 'Thou shalt not take thee a wife'.

²³ M. J. Crawford, *Seasons of Grace* (New York, 1991) pp.213-16

covenanted with God 'to live and die a virgin'.²⁴ But this is rare and the language used closely reflects that used to describe Methodist experiences of perfection in general. As to men, Joseph Sutcliffe records that Westley Hall, later to be such a scandal, had claimed 'the gift of continence' in the Holy Club and Wesley had evidently aimed the same way at first, as may have others.²⁵ If anyone had doubted the validity of marriage, that supreme pair of saints, John Fletcher and Mary Bosanquet must have persuaded them by their union.

Everyone had hoped for it after their long wait. But it is interesting that one observer recorded the 'improving' nature of the occasion. He said he had never seen such a 'blessed wedding' while adding significantly, 'I now saw indeed that marriage is honourable to all, being instituted by God in a state of innocence and in the Garden of Paradise' - as if he had hitherto had doubts.²⁶ Though many of the leading preachers seem to have remained unmarried until old or infirm, as Joseph Sutcliffe noted, this is most likely to have been for financial reasons (as indeed Sutcliffe acknowledged) or as the result of concern to preserve freedom for Christian service, a concern which we shall see is very typical.²⁷

Women were not usually as determinedly virginal as Ann Cutler. A friend wrote to Miss Briggs in 1782 that 'I apprehend the *single life* is still your choice and design, which I neither blame nor commend - your love for retirement to bring your thoughts fully bent on heaven may make it more eligible'. She should follow Providence and reject or accept 'offers' (of marriage) 'as your reason best approves'. (She was free to choose as her father had left her a 'competence').²⁸

Hester Ann Roe²⁹ used religious arguments to oppose her family's pressure to marry - a pressure to which women were peculiarly subject - and she was deterred by the example of a friend who married an irreligious man. 'But the Lord loved her and sent a lingering affliction and slew the body but saved the soul'. Pressed to marry one suitor herself, she escaped when he died. This looks like a reluctance to sacrifice her independence to pursue religious activities, a consideration which weighed heavily (as many examples show) on women. Roe was not against marriage as such, however, as she married a Methodist preacher.

Frances Mortimer of York came under similar pressure from friends to marry Mr Wren, a Lady Huntingdon minister. She did not want to lose her female religious support group but Wren in effect subjected her to emotional blackmail by pleading ill health and that the state of his

²⁴ W. Bramwell, *Short Account of the Life and Death of Ann Cutler* (Sheffield, 1796) p.15.

²⁵ J. Sutcliffe, MS 'History of Methodism', 4 vols. continuously paginated, f.322 in Methodist Church Archives (no reference).

²⁶ J. R. Robinson, *Notes of Early Methodism in Dewsbury* (Batley, 1900) p.65.

²⁷ J. Sutcliffe, *op. cit.*, 326.

²⁸ Tyerman MSS, II, f. 166.

²⁹ G. Malmgreen in J. Obelkevich (ed), *Disciplines of Faith*, p. 61.

soul was being damaged unless he married her. She did marry him, found he tried to stop her from meeting the Methodists, but was released by his death and later, as we shall see, married a Methodist preacher. Her reflections before her first marriage are illuminating: 'my affections were not entangled; I felt no desire to change...my conscience, however, is somewhat delicately circumstanced'. This was because of Wren's pleas of health and religion.³⁰

Mary Holder reflected interestingly on the rival claims of single and married life. She remained single until the age of thirty-five with her parents and then married a Methodist preacher, while being a preacher herself. She hesitated much with prayer about marriage and regretted the loss of her 'band sisterhood'. But she was also intimidated, once she was married, by the responsibilities of a preacher's wife: 'the going in and out before the people and setting an example worthy their imitation'. But she settled down happily with the 'kind husband which He (God) hath given me'.³¹

It is clear from a good deal of evidence that Methodists generally did approach marriage with self-questioning and anxiety, but not really for the reasons implied by Thompson and others. On the contrary, many wished to marry but were hindered by exacting standards of a peculiarly Methodist and evangelical kind. They were concerned that their spiritual life should not suffer; that their religious work would not suffer; and in this context that their freedom of action should not be curtailed. But provided these reservations were met they were perfectly well able to enjoy marriage like anyone else. It was not the case that natural inclinations for this had been perverted into a religious substitute and servitude. For women the scruples just listed were particularly compelling because they were at the mercy of their husbands' wishes, though both men and women could be adversely affected by a wrong choice. Up to a point of course their misgivings reflected common eighteenth-century as well as common human considerations: sufficient money, congenial companionship and compatibility and simple love. But religious benefit and freedom for religious work counted above all. We may even suspect that for some women freedom for religious work, for some the freedom to preach, was also an expression of freedom for a life not bound by mere domesticity.

Here are some examples of Methodist reflections before marriage. In 1798 Thomas Dixon, an itinerant aged fifty, thought of a wife and in his diary prayed: 'Direct my heart in the choice of one who will truly be helpful to me in the way to glory and keep me from any thought that would stain my soul and from any one that would hinder me in my work'. He married a widow of his own age very happily.³²

³⁰ J. Sutcliffe, *Experiences ...of Mrs Pawson*, (1813) p.67.

³¹ Z. Taft, *Biographical Sketches of... Holy Women*, (1825, repr. Peterborough, 1992) I, pp.105ff.

³² Tyerman MSS, II, f.308.

The charismatic William Bramwell had doubts about the marriage of the leading woman preacher Mary Barritt to Zechariah Taft. He made it clear, however, that he thought marriage no less holy than the single life. He was simply afraid that marriage would inhibit Mary's preaching.³³ In the event she married Taft who was an outspoken advocate of female preaching for a couple of decades after the Wesleyans had officially restricted it in 1803. She continued to preach and Bramwell was delighted.

A particularly detailed (and to us probably unconsciously amusing) list of considerations before marriage is given by Thomas Olivers.³⁴

He asked a series of questions:

Am I called to marry at this time? - Yes.

What sort of person ought I to marry? — 'Such a one as Christ would choose for me'

What sort would this be? - 'I fixed on the following properties in the following order, putting that first which I judged to be of most value in the sight of God': first, grace - no preacher ought to marry anyone - 'not eminently gracious'. Next, 'tolerably good sense' - a Methodist preacher 'ought not to take a fool with him'.

Third, 'as I know the natural warmth of my own temper, I concluded that a wise God would not choose a companion for me who would throw oil, not water, upon the fire'.

Next, as he was thrown among a poor people, the lady should have 'a small competence' (as Wesley himself advised and preachers often observed).

Finally, he looked around for someone in whom all these virtues were present 'in the highest degree'. He at once thought of Miss Green, known throughout the north for her piety. He 'opened his mind' to her, was accepted, and had never regretted it.

That it was not only religious qualities that were looked for may be gathered from a poem on 'The Batchelor's Wish' published in Wesley's *Arminian Magazine*³⁵: This runs in part:

A beauteous face let others prize,
The features of the fair:
I look for spirit in her eyes
And meaning in her air...
The charming puppet may pass by,
Or gently fall and rise,
It would not hurt my peace; for I
Have ears as well as eyes.
I want to know the inward state
And temper of her mind....

³³ *Memoirs of...William Bramwell* by his family (1848) pp. 211-12; J. Sigston, *Memoirs of...William Bramwell* (3 ed.) (1821) p.206.

³⁴ T. Jackson (ed.). *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*, (3rd. ed.) (1866-68) II, pp79-80.

³⁵ *Arminian Magazine*, (1779) p.44.

Further desirable qualities according to this poem are:

A Quaker plainness in her dress....

* * *

Provision neither in excess

Nor scandalously mean....

Conventions had to be observed as with other people and quite apart from religious considerations. Miss March wrote to Miss Briggs offering worldly wise commiseration on her being jilted. 'As the affair went on he began to consider you as *a woman* and as one to be his wife, and you did not happen to hit his fancy. But nothing can excuse the *cruelty* of his manner of putting an end to the affair, for this was void of 'justice or sense of decorum'.³⁶

A curious light is thrown on Methodist courtship by the sober approach of that notably sober man, John Pawson, then a widower, to Mrs Wren, whom we have already met as unhappily and reluctantly married to a hard Calvinist. 'She was not ignorant of his (Pawson's) superior worth both as a man and as a minister; and his property could not fall much below the hope of her family'. With characteristic frankness and rather disconcerting honesty (but he was a Yorkshireman!) Pawson said that 'as it had pleased Providence to take away his wife and my husband, he had thought a union between us could be happy. Finding his disposition formed for social life, he wished to marry. He felt himself capable of a natural affection for me in the Lord; though he could never speak of that love of which many make their boast'. Next day he called to talk of 'temporal affairs', all in the same 'cool, composed, rational way'. Frances remarked that 'though I was a little surprised at the coolness of his address' (as well she might be) she felt 'a calm and confidence in God' and 'a hallowed serenity rested upon my soul' She had none of the uneasiness which had pervaded her first venture.³⁷ One is not really surprised to find that they married very happily.

Though spiritual considerations dominated along with a judicious attention to 'temporal affairs' (which was also an aspect of religious duty), it is important to realise, if one is to understand the full dimensions of these partnerships, that religious seriousness did not exclude other concerns. In 1783 Thomas Rankin asked to be posted to London because of his wife's business interests there; and apparently his wife was unable to bear the hardships of an itinerant's life. He was attacked for his request by his brethren but for once Wesley (who could be ruthless about posting regardless of families but evidently had a high regard for Rankin) allowed him to be a supernumerary, though in this

³⁶ Tyerman MSS, II, f.170.

³⁷ Sutcliffe, *Mrs Pawson*, p73.

case he continued to be active in preaching and other help as long as Wesley lived.³⁸

Nor was love absent even in the romantic sense which sober Pawson disclaimed. Thus Joseph Benson in 1779 looked for 'a person of understanding and piety capable of helping me in the ways of God *and* (my italics) whom I can truly and affectionately love'.³⁹

But the most delightful and outspoken example of this can be found in Samuel Bradburn, who we have seen was helped by Wesley to marry against the doubts of his beloved's guardian. His account of his approach to marriage makes it clear that for him Methodist conventions could scarcely restrain his sentiments. 'I am minded to marry because I think I shall be much more steady, consequently more happy and useful in such a state than I can be single. It will also prevent foolish, lying reports about me when I preach'. But he went on 'O Lord, assist me to get the woman I love'. He prayed for guidance in his choice but added 'But, Lord, let it be Betsy!'⁴⁰ After her death Wesley encouraged him to marry again (which he did with almost indecent haste) and Samuel wrote to his beloved: 'My dear and lovely Sophia', addressing her in a touching mixture of religious concern and warm affection. 'Help me, my lovely and better self by your prayers, your example, to devote my whole self, my life to the glory of the one and blessed God'.⁴¹

These male cases, if taken by themselves, might suggest subordination of women to men's work and indeed to men's piety - and this was indeed liable to be true, especially where the preachers and their vocations were concerned. Yet it is clear that women (not least women preachers) were just as anxious to marry in a way which preserved their religious interests and vocations. Indeed, as it was observed earlier, they had even stronger reasons for doing so, which was why some of them never married. Where women preachers were concerned, it was sometimes the case that they gave up preaching on marriage - and felt guilty for doing so - but in a number of cases, like the Tafts, they continued and even enlarged their labours. Under the wings of their husbands they could more easily avoid offence by addressing congregations - sometimes from the pulpit steps, at the end of their husbands' sermons.

This is not to say that all marriages turned out well, for inevitably some did not. Writing to James Oddie in 1787, Thomas Hanby was 'truly miserable' with his 'former connection in the marriage line'. He now 'searched for one of a pacific spirit, young or old, poor or rich'. Happily

³⁸ Tyerman MSS, II, f.107.

³⁹ MS letter of Joseph Benson in Methodist Church Archives PLP 7-7, dated 21 June 1779.

⁴⁰ Blanshard, *Bradburn*, p61.

⁴¹ Bradburn to Miss Cooke, 27 June 1786, in MS letters in Methodist Church Archives PLP 14-6.

he found her -plus her handy dowry of £400.⁴² His correspondent James Oddie could sympathise. With a nice mixture of classical and scriptural examples he complained eloquently about his wife: 'Socrates had his Xanippe, Abigail her churlish Nabal, Job a wife who tempted him to curse God, Moses a Zippora averse to duty and David a scoffing Michal', and he was cursed in the same way.⁴³ But there were erring preachers too. In a letter to his friend Atmore old John Pawson's long memory threw up a sorry catalogue of preachers fallen mostly through drink and women.⁴⁴

Yet I hope the more sober examples given here are sufficient at least to show that, apart from the primary religious imperative, there was a wide range of other concerns and affections of a normal human kind which more than balance the cases of abnormality and repression. If time and knowledge permitted there could be added to these an exploration of friendship between Methodists. There was the sisterly support which fortified many women; and friendship between men which could be equally supportive, not least in lonely preachers' lives. Then there is family life and the question of the treatment of children which was not as repressive as is often supposed - Charles Wesley was a particularly affectionate father as his verses for his children and championing of his musical sons' careers show.⁴⁵ But I hope that the evidence I have adduced here may help to encourage a more sensitive and discriminating approach to the relationship between religious imperatives and human feeling among the early Methodists.

HENRY D. RACK

A paper delivered to the Association of Denominational Historical Society on 28 October 1999 at Dr. Williams's Library, Gordon Square, London.

⁴² Tyerman MSS, II, f.48.

⁴³ Tyerman MSS, II, f.37.

⁴⁴ Pawson to Atmore 20 October and 3 November 1800 and 1800/01 in *Letters*, III, pp.22-28, pp.139-44.

⁴⁵ For some information on Methodist family life see L. F. Church, *The Early Methodist People* (London, 1948) pp.222-62. For Charles Wesley's 'Account of his Two Sons' see T. Jackson (ed.) *Journal of Charles Wesley* (London, 1849) II, pp.140-50, and childrens' version S. T. Kimbrough and O. Beckerlegge (eds.), *Unpublished Poetry of Charles Wesley* (Nashville, 1988) I, pp.279-86.

Ellen Gretton & Her Circle by Barry J. Biggs 40pp. (available from 1 Dorton Avenue, Gainsborough, Lincs DN21 1UB, £2.50 plus postage). Between 1781 and 1785 John Wesley wrote at least ten letters to an obscure young dressmaker, Ellen Gretton, who was then living in Grantham. In this attractive booklet, Dr. Biggs reconstructs the life of a modest Methodist using family archives and other local sources. In 1783 she married a local farmer, William Christian of Skillington and was instrumental in founding a society in the village. The booklet is carefully documented and indexed.

E.A.R.

THE BRACKENBURY MEMORIAL LECTURES

JOHN Wesley recorded in his journal for July 5 1779, 'preached about eleven at Langham Row. In the afternoon we went to Raithby. It is a small village on the top of a hill. The shell of Mr. Brackenbury's house was just finished, near which he has built a small chapel. It was quickly filled with deeply serious hearers. I was much comforted among them, and could not but observe, while the landlord and his tenants were standing together, how 'Love, like death, makes all distinctions void'.

On July 5 1979 the Revd Dr. John A. Newton came to Raithby to preach at the 200th Chapel Anniversary and the local historian and Robert Carr Brackenbury enthusiast Terence Leach had the idea of inaugurating an annual lecture at Raithby Chapel. He persuaded the Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology, the Tennyson Society, the Lincolnshire Methodist History Society and the local Methodist Circuit to support the venture, proceeds of which were to be devoted to the upkeep of the chapel. The first lectures were held in the evenings of the 5th of July but this was found to be not always convenient and in 1984 they were switched to the afternoons of the second Saturdays of July to provide a more fixed time. Members of the Brackenbury family have often been in the audience and in 1983 Charles Brackenbury was the lecturer.

Terence Leach himself gave the first lecture, *The Writers of Spilsbyshire* and the intention was to have them on a rota of local history, Methodist and Tennyson subjects (although this was not always maintained) and looking at the list of lecturers and their subjects one sees why the Brackenbury Lectures have become an important item on so many people's calendars. The speakers have ranged from university professors to well known local historians (using the term in the widest sense), all of them experts in their subjects, which have been wide-ranging and varied as can be seen from the list given below.

At one of the early lectures a lady miraculously produced tea from the boot of her car, and members of the SLHA Local History Committee provided plum-bread, scones etc. This practice continued until the ladies of the Spilsby Methodist Circuit began to provide teas in the the old school at Raithby, but this year tea was provided at the Methodist Church in nearby Spilsby.

Attendances at the lectures have obviously varied but usually fifty, sixty, or sometimes even more people have made the journey to Raithby; some are regular visitors, others come because of the subject or the speaker, but all seem to enjoy their afternoon in the country and the quiet calm of this, the oldest Methodist chapel still in use in Lincolnshire.

This year the twenty-first lecture was reached and it was most appropriate that the lecturer was the Revd Dr John Newton. He spoke on Sir Henry Lunn (1859-1939), the Horncastle-born Methodist, pioneer ecumenist and founder of the Lunn Travel Agency. This was especially fitting as John Newton is himself, of course, Lincolnshire-born. There was a good attendance of over sixty people, many of whom went on to enjoy tea at the

Methodist Church schoolroom in Spilsby. The lecture, like previous Methodist ones, was published in the journal of the Lincolnshire Methodist History Society.

Like many of Terence Leach's projects the Brackenbury Lectures were basically organised by a committee-of-one and since his death I have carried on in similar fashion with help from the societies in suggesting possible names and subjects for the lectures. The standards set in previous years were more than maintained by this year's lecture and it is hoped that they will long continue to commemorate not only Robert Carr Brackenbury but also Terence Leach whose idea they were and who held Raithby, its chapel, and its builder Robert Carr Brackenbury so close to his heart. It was to him, as it was to John Wesley, '....an earthly paradise'.

J. S. ENGLISH

THE BRACKENBURY MEMORIAL LECTURES 1980-2000

1980	Terence LEACH	The Writers of Spilsbyshire.
1981	David ROBINSON	The Dreams of John Parkinson, the founder of New Bolinbroke and the 'accidental' founder of Woodhall Spa.
1982	Christopher STURMAN	Rev John Rashdall, Curate of Orby.
1983	Charles BRACKENBURY	The Brackenbury family.
1984	Rod AMBLER	Churches and chapels in the local community: religious life in Raithby and district in the 19th century.
1985	Betty KIRKHAM	Langham Row and the Robinson family.
1986	Ann WARD	Spilsby & the Lincolnshire Rising in 1536.
	Terence LEACH	The Copledikes and Harrington Hall.
1987	Nigel KERR	Buildings of delight: Spilsby and its surroundings.
1988	Rex RUSSELL	From cock-fighting to chapel building: changes in popular culture in Lincolnshire.
1989	Norman PAGE	Tennyson and his biographers.
	Terence LEACH	Willingham and all the Rawnsleys.
1990	Arthur OWEN	Louth Street and Lud Ford: new thoughts on some old roads.

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| 1991 | Henry D RACK | From young Mr Wesley to old Mr Wesley. |
| 1992 | Philip COLLINS | Tennyson: poet of Lincolnshire. |
| 1993 | David ROBINSON
Terence LEACH | Sir Joseph Banks - boyhood and Lincolnshire connections.
Revesby Abbey, the home of Sir Joseph Banks and his family. |
| 1994 | Barry J BIGGS | The Persecution of early Lincolnshire Methodists. |
| 1995 | Marion SHAW | A Dream of Fair Women: Tennyson and 19th century feminism. |
| 1996 | Linda CRUST | William Paddison: a farmer in the Lincolnshire Wolds. |
| 1997 | E Alan ROSE | The Methodist Robespierre? Alexander Kilham (1762-1798), founder of the Methodist New Connexion. |
| 1998 | Robin BRUMBY | The Methodists and the bottle of gin: <i>The Northern Cobbler</i> and Tennyson's other Lincolnshire poems. |
| 1999 | Brian DAVEY | The Horncastle Police Force 1838-1857. |
| 2000 | John A NEWTON | Sir Henry Lunn: Lincolnshire Methodist and Pioneer Ecumenist (1859-1939). |

Timothy Hackworth 1786-1850 by Geoffrey E. Milburn (2000, pp32)

This booklet reproduces the text of an article first published in the Bulletin of the North East Branch of the Wesley Historical Society in 1975. It gives a fascinating account of the career of this pioneer of railway engineering and of his allegiance to Methodism.

Attractively produced and lavishly illustrated, it is available from the author at 8 Ashbrooke Mount, Sunderland, SR2 7SD at £3.50 post free.

J. A. V.

Clerihew Corner

The saintly John William Fletcher
was certainly no lecher.
He was such a slow tie-the-knotter
that Mary quite thought he'd forgot her.

J.A.V

Alfred Austin Taberer 1910–2000

Alfred Taberer's association with the Wesley Historical Society spanned more than half a century. He became a member in the mid 1940s and by 1949 was appointed to a new office, that of Publishing Manager. This gave him a place on the Executive of the Society which office he held for the rest of his life.

Alfred was born into a Primitive Methodist home, son of a printer, in Chester, educated at the College School and the City and County School. In business he followed the trade of his father and added to the life of business the other great interest in his life, that of music. He studied the organ under Dr Roland Middleton, the organist of Chester Cathedral, becoming a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists. His first appointment as organist was at Rossett Presbyterian church and still as a young man he played the organ at St John Street Methodist Church, Chester. It was here he married Phyllis Cross in 1948 and six years later moved to Leicester, where he was appointed organist at the Bishop Street Church in that city.

In Leicester he established his printing business and served Methodism by printing preaching plans, handbills and brochures, taking on the printing of the 'Daily Record' for the Nottingham Conference of 1972.

Alfred and Phyllis moved to Broxton, Cheshire, occupying the large house known as Bankhead, where he installed his printing apparatus and continued to serve the community and the church. He was soon involved in the chapel at Brown Knowl, playing the organ, but extending his work to the St John Street Chapel in Chester and often adding Evensong at the Bickerton Parish Church. He led a full life in music and printing. When later they moved first to Bunbury and then to Nantwich, both printing and organ were his chief occupations and delights.

His wider connexional involvements go back to the 1932 Uniting Conference, when he was a representative. In following years he represented his District at Conference on a number of occasions, was on the Connexional Stationing Committee for some years and served on the Text Committee for the production of *Hymns and Psalms*.

In 1955 he became the printer for the *Proceedings* of the Wesley Historical Society, continuing this labour of love until a severe operation in 1984 compelled him to reduce his work load. In those years he came to know hundreds of members of the Society and at each annual meeting when deaths were reported, Alfred was able to speak a personal word about most of them. But the printing of the *Proceedings* was the best tribute to his excellent workmanship. He never had to print an erratum, so careful was his hand; even a full stop upside down caught his eagle eye!

Alfred was a quiet, unassuming person, possessed of a remarkable memory, able to quote prose or verse fitting to so many occasions and having a dry humour, all of which endeared him to many friends. On arranging the furniture in one of his house-moves, he said, pinned between the table and the wall: 'Give me somewhere to stand, and I will move the world.' His musical knowledge was of the highest order and his

conversation on either Methodist tunes or Charles Wesley's hymns was to share with one the wealth of his experience and his wonderful appreciation of verse and music.

The Society salutes a most devoted member and worker and gives thanks to God for his long and fruitful life.

W. L.

BOOK REVIEWS

Missions and Society in the Leeward Islands, 1810-1850. An Ecclesiastical and Social Analysis by David U. Farquhar. (Boston, Massachusetts: Mt. Prospect Press, 1999. pp. x, 241. \$45.00. ISBN 0-913619-02-7)

Caribbean Adventures: Extracts From Missionary Journals edited by David U. Farquhar ([2nd edition]. Boston, Massachusetts: Mt. Prospect Press, 1999. pp. xxii, 257. \$35.00. ISBN 0-913619-01-9)

David Farquhar first published *Caribbean Adventures* (his selection of excerpts from Methodist missionaries' writings) in 1993, and he was able to complete work on a revised edition before his death in 1998. The new edition was then brought out in conjunction with *Missions and Society*, a monograph based on his 1971 D.Phil. thesis at the University of York. Together, they comprise a substantial contribution to the history of early Methodist missionary activity in the British West Indies.

Missions and Society deals with religious proselytizing by the major denominations in four of the Leeward Islands (St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, and Antigua, the island of Farquhar's birth). In seven densely packed chapters, Farquhar discusses the impact of various missionary initiatives in the decades before and after the slaves were emancipated in the 1830s. The Methodists and Moravians were able to play leading roles in the Leeward Islands during that time as a result of their early start in the 1750s and the long-term assistance they received from Britain. As with their counterparts in the metropole, Methodists and Moravians became involved in an increasingly complex web of religious, educational and philanthropic enterprises. The various little charities supported by island Sunday scholars epitomized this trend. Probably the most important new development in the early nineteenth century was the resurgence of the Church of England. A bishop for Barbados and the Leeward Islands was appointed in 1825, and the construction of numerous Anglican churches and chapels soon followed. For a time, religious rivalries became intense, but a clear front-runner emerged by the 1840s. The Antigua census of 1844 shows, for example, that Church of England adherents easily exceeded those of any other single denomination, although when taken together, the Methodists and Moravians had slightly more members than the Anglicans. The other Leeward Islands experienced similar patterns of denominational growth and Anglican triumph.

It is a shortcoming of Farquhar's monograph that he fails to emphasize the many parallels between developments in the British Caribbean and the British Isles. In England, for example, the success of the Dissenters (Old and New) was challenged by a resurgent Church of England after Waterloo. The resulting competition led to the building (and often over-building) of churches, chapels, and Sunday schools, the establishment of ever more charities, and a sense among many early Victorians that a new 'age of faith' was dawning. Much the same could be said about the British West Indies. Moreover, Farquhar sometimes lapses into error, as when he confuses the Quaker Joseph Philp with the Methodist-turned-Moravian Joseph Phillips. He has not taken into account recent research in this field (none of the items in his bibliography was published after 1970), although it must be said that the array of printed and manuscript primary sources that he has consulted is truly awe-inspiring. Anyone wanting to do research in this field should first consult the impressive bibliography in *Missions and Society*.

Caribbean Adventures presents extracts from the writings of four Methodist missionaries in the Caribbean. The selections from the journals of John Brownell (covering 1801-3 on St. Kitts) and Matthew Banks (1827-28 on Antigua and St. Kitts) occupy just eleven pages each. About three-quarters of the book is devoted to the journal of Thomas Kennington Hyde, which covers the years 1819-25 and 1829-30 when Hyde was stationed on Nevis, Antigua and Montserrat. Of a different genre and generation, the final item is a memoir by James Hartwell that covers his missionary work on various islands (including Haiti) from 1840 to 1873.

Farquhar provides some historical context in his short introduction, and he talks briefly about his editorial practices in the preface. Among other things, he writes 'throughout, I have endeavoured to adhere to the original texts but here and there it became necessary to recast or substitute phrases which were either too archaic or too faint to be deciphered' (p. viii). In fact, a number of his transcriptions are misreadings, as one example will make clear. On 19 July 1827, Matthew Banks wrote that he had become sick during the preceding night. He ascribed it to 'a collection of acid and bile on the stomach' and wrote that he had found some relief when he took 'a little opium medicine' - this according to Farquhar (p. 17). The actual manuscript states that relief came from 'a little opening medicine' (presumably some sort of laxative). Readers should be aware that many other passages have been similarly mistranscribed or silently altered.

Furthermore, the subtitle of the book states that journal 'extracts' are being presented, but in the text itself. Farquhar does not always indicate where material has been deleted from individual entries, and he gives no indication where whole entries have been omitted. For these reasons, careful scholars will want to consult the originals in the School of Oriental and African Studies in London or the reproductions of the manuscripts widely available on microfiche.

Those interested in Methodist history are nevertheless in Farquhar's debt for presenting copious primary material on nineteenth-century missionary enterprises. Almost every page contains descriptions of the obstacles facing Methodist missionaries. These range from destructive hurricanes and

earthquakes to tropical diseases to minor nuisances like the centipedes that Thomas Hyde found lurking in his clothing in the morning, and then, months later, in his dreams (pp. 53, 80). African religious practices or 'obeah' posed a constant challenge to organized Christianity (as they do today). Likewise, the indifference and even hostility to Christian standards of sexual morality exhibited by many whites, free non-whites, and slaves were a perennial cause of lament by the Methodist ministers. As Hyde writes in 1825: 'O what a sink of licentiousness is the West Indies. As missionaries, our greatest cause of grief originate[s] here. The inhabitants of the land are eaten up with lust' (p.133).

Both books are welcome additions to our knowledge of missionary activities in the Caribbean although, as noted above, neither is without its shortcomings. One hopes that the prodigious labours of the late David Farquhar will serve to stimulate further research on this important but relatively neglected area of Methodist proselytizing overseas.

ROBERT GLEN

Dr Franz Hildebrandt, Mr Valiant - for - Truth by Amos Cresswell and Max Tow (Gracewing. Leominster 2000. pp 254. £12.99 ISBN 0 85244 322 6)

On my first Sunday at Cambridge in 1949, I heard Professor Charles Raven preach and Franz Hildebrandt lecture on Charles Wesley - two men of Christian integrity whose friendship and deep alienation feature in this fine and welcome biography. Franz Hildebrandt (1909-85) was one of the youngest signatories to the Barmen Declaration of 1934. He was a close friend of Dietrich Bonhoeffer; 'curate' in Berlin to Martin Niemoeller. After arrest and release in 1937, he fled from Germany, as his mother was Jewish. He acted as pastor to German refugees in Cambridge, assisted by Raven and Max Warren. Though interned for a time in 1940, he developed a great love for Cranmer's liturgies, the Authorized Version and Charles Wesley's hymns.

In 1947, Hildebrandt became a Methodist minister - no re-ordination needed, simply 'reception into Full Connexion'. Notable ministries in Cambridge and Edinburgh followed, though Dr Wilbert Howard feared he had an ideal view of Methodism which might be difficult to sustain. Drew University, New Jersey, 'headhunted' him in 1953, enabling him to teach his Lutheran-Wesleyan theology of which *From Luther to Wesley* (1951) was a foretaste and *Christianity According to the Wesleys* (1956) a legacy. A very unpleasant episode in the university led to his resignation. At the same time, he found the proposals of the Anglican-Methodist negotiations intolerable, as, for him, they involved what he believed to be re-ordination and the acceptance of the historic episcopate which was not found in Scripture. Here again are two integrities, since the supporters of 'The scheme' saw what Hildebrandt called 'woolliness' and 'ambiguity' as openness to the Spirit and the future. Sadly, Hildebrandt resigned from the Methodist ministry on not being 'permitted to serve' in the Church of Scotland. The Methodist

bureaucracy seemed at its clumsiest, though we have only one side of the story. Looking back, there was naivety on both sides. He became a 'locum' minister in the Church of Scotland, doing his greatly valued pastoral work but, at 58, this seemed a waste of a fine theological mind.

Amos Cresswell and Max Tow (an American Methodist minister) give a fair and loving picture of an honest, vigorous thinker, deeply influenced and scarred for life by the battle against Nazism, utterly convinced of the truth at the heart of the Reformation, - through Christ, in the Word, by Grace alone, by faith alone. He had a happy family life and hoped to find his beloved cats in Heaven! Hildebrandt's style could seem abrasive at times, as Raven felt, but truth must be defended at all costs.

Here is a most enjoyable and worthy book - though there are a few minor slips. J. S. Whale was President of Cheshunt College not Professor (p. 148), N. H. Snaith was not a 'professor' either (p. 173). Maybe the authors are a little unfair to Sir Anthony Eden (p. 101) who had to negotiate with Stalin in 1942 when the war was in the balance. Temple, incidentally, suggested Fisher as his successor. Gordon Rupp is roughly handled (p. 182). Herbert Butterfield warned him to watch his humour but his integrity should not be doubted. Few, I fear, appeared at their best in the 'Conversations' debates in the 1960s - the polemics of that period now seem dated beyond recall.

It is ironic that, when Franz Hildebrandt died, his name was not on the ministerial list of any church, though his Lutheran ordination was always proudly asserted. A lasting legacy is his introduction to the *Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodist* (1780) in the Bicentennial Edition, volume 7. Part of this is printed here, with three sermons, including one in memory of Dietrich Bonhoeffer and a catechism by those two great Lutherans and twentieth-century heroes.

JOHN MUNSEY TURNER

John Wesley: His Puritan Heritage, by Robert C. Monk, 2nd edn. (The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham, Maryland, and London 1999. pp.xii, 283. £71.55 ISBN 0 8108 3637 8.)

The first edition of this pioneering work was published in 1966 and reviewed in the *Proceedings*, xxxvi, 1967-68, pp.62-63. The second edition, thoroughly revised and expanded and with a fully updated bibliography, is most welcome. The great strength of Professor Monk's study is its detailed and comprehensive analysis of John Wesley's selection and editing of Puritan divinity for inclusion in his *Christian Library*. Wesley shared the Puritans' intense concern for 'Practical Divinity' and so commended many of their writings to his Methodist people, both for the theological instruction and as a guide to a disciplined Christian life. It was the moderate Puritans - Presbyterians, rather than radicals or Independents - whom Wesley preferred - men of the stamp of Richard Baxter, Richard and Joseph Alleine, Samuel Annesley, John Preston and Philip Henry. In a new, introductory chapter ('John Wesley and the Puritan Ethos'), Dr. Monk makes clear

Wesley's criterion for an author's inclusion in his *Library*, namely, that he must be, 'one who expressed the genuine gospel in both teachings and life itself'. Wesley's inclusion, therefore, of so many Puritan divines - 31, as against 29 Church of England writers - speaks powerfully of his endorsement of the tradition in which his parents were raised.

Dr. Monk helps the reader by indicating typographically precisely how Wesley dealt with his Puritan authors. He uses bold type for the original text of the Puritan author; italic for Wesley's omissions; and brackets for Wesley's emendations and additions. There is an expanded section on the Christian life in Puritanism and Methodism, and the author takes full account of the studies in this area that have appeared over the last thirty years. Again, in his treatment of 'Christian Life within the World', Monk goes beyond his previous coverage of Christian witness in daily life, the 'duty of reproof' of sin in unbelievers, and efforts for their conversion. He now explores the wider social dimension, and deals fully with Puritan and Wesleyan attitudes to poverty and human need, showing that, unlike many Puritans, Wesley did not make any sharp distinction between 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. In this section, Dr. Monk draws fully on recent studies in the field, such as Theodore W. Jennings' *Good News for the Poor: John Wesley's Evangelical Economics* (1990).

This is an excellent contribution to Wesley studies, and should help students appreciate more fully the riches of the Puritan tradition of life and faith, and the ways in which it has fed into Methodism. The new edition is published as No. 11 in 'Pietist and Wesleyan Studies' and well deserves its place in the series. The 1966 edition was published by Epworth Press at 42s. (£2.10). It is an index of spiralling publishing costs that the 1999 one costs £71.55.

Among typographical errors, the following may be noted: for 'Henry Sougal', read Scougal (p.127); for '*serious* and *Basie* in the *acts of Religion*', read '*serious* and *Busie*'; (p.146); for 'quietest tendencies' read 'quietist tendencies' (p.242); and for 'social and ethic backgrounds', read 'social and ethnic backgrounds' (p.245). But these are minor blemishes in what is surely a seminal work of scholarship.

JOHN A. NEWTON

When My Cue Comes: The Autobiography of the Rev Sidney Y Richardson. (Teamprint, Loughborough 2000. From the author at 22 Garton Road, Loughborough LE11 2DY. ISBN 1 871431 11 5 £6 inc P& P (and free bookmark).

Nobody who knows Sidney would doubt that this would be a lively, quirky and readable book. Its 158 pages give a full flavour of the author's life. He has been a paradox always, an opponent of the Conversations who became the secretary of the local Council of Churches, a Northerner who settled in the South, and a late entrant to the ministry after spending all his working life as a 'schoolmaster' (not 'teacher').

My family seems to have just missed Sidney at several different points in his early career, though my father reckons he taught with Sidney at Rochdale Grammar for most of a term. His descriptions of his early life in Birkenhead are fascinating. His university career, as the first from his family to go, comes from a completely different age. His memories of France in 1930 as the 'young man in a hurry' tell the reader that Sidney has not changed much. Sidney always comes across (despite his academic image as a linguist) as essentially practical. A keeper of hens, then in retirement (always something temperamentally difficult for Sidney) he founded a most successful printing business for the churches in Loughborough. A generous man, he tells the story of the lodger who came.. and stayed... and stayed.. for 22 years, and the minister's wife who in 1970 had never had a carpet in her bathroom; he fitted one on the spot. There are memories of pupils like Cyril Smith and Donald Crompton.

The only cavil must be about the omission of some of his own family; while he delves into great (and interesting) detail about his ancestors, his descendants do not get the same treatment. The first woman President of the Conference, the Rev Kathleen Richardson, is only mentioned in one anecdote on page 122. She rang up her father in law (Sidney) in Stevenage in 1970 to ask whether the Stevenage Methodists would consider her as their next minister to succeed him. 'They'd be stupid if they did not' was his down to earth reply. She was interviewed and accepted but we don't get told what followed.

This is one of several autobiographies by ministers which have appeared recently. Because Sidney entered the ministry late, this has a different 'feel' from the others. The book is well produced with many pictures. It retains a freshness and accuracy of recall (e.g. preaching in the Otley Circuit in the early 1930s) which persuades me to recommend it to all who enjoy reminiscence. Sidney is always looking for the 'cue's which lead to the next stage of his life. When the cue comes he answers.

JOHN H. LENTON

NOTES AND QUERIES

1543 200 YEARS OF WELSH-SPEAKING METHODISM

It was in 1800 that the Wesleyan Methodist Conference resolved, at the instigation of Thomas Coke, to send missionaries to Wales to minister especially to Welsh speakers who constituted the vast majority of the population. The year 2000 therefore marked the bicentenary of the official beginning of Welsh-speaking Methodism. By way of celebration a number of events were organised during the year.

The Spring Synod of the Cymru District was held in Pendref Chapel in Denbigh. Pendref, opened on 1 January 1802, was the first chapel to be built by the Welsh-speaking Wesleyans. During the Synod Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes gave a fascinating and informative lecture on John Bryan (1776-1856), one of the most influential figures in Welsh Wesleyanism during the early years of

the nineteenth century. The Synod also featured an exhibition of items relating to the history of Welsh-speaking Methodism arranged by the Eric Edwards, a former Chairman of the Welsh Methodist Assembly, a frequent writer on historical subjects and author of *Yr Eglwys Fethodistaidd: Hanes Ystadegol* - an invaluable compendium of facts about Welsh Methodism published in 1980 with a supplement in 1987. The exhibition had been previously displayed in the public library in Ruthin. The Synod ended with a celebration of hymns by Welsh Methodists, led by Mr Geraint Roberts of Denbigh. The selection was made by Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes and ranged from the earliest Methodist hymns to the work of modern Welsh hymnwriters such as the Tudor Davies and George E. Breeze. The selection included both original hymns and translations. Charles Wesley was represented by John Bryan's Welsh version of 'Thou Shepherd of Israel, and mine' and the late Gwilym R. Tilsley's translation of 'Love divine, all loves excelling'. There were also translations by E. H. Griffiths, Selyf Roberts and others. The singing was supported by members of the male-voice choir, Côr Meibion Twn o'r Nant.

Later in the year Saturday 7 October was dedicated as a day to celebrate the contribution of Welsh-speaking Methodism. The celebration began at mid-day on the lawn outside Bathafarn farmhouse near Ruthin. This was the home of Edward Jones (1778-1837) who, following his conversion to the Wesleyan cause in Manchester, was indefatigable in his efforts to establish Methodism in Wales. A short service was conducted by the Rev. Tudor Davies, and then the Rev. Dr. Owen E. Evans explained the significance of Bathafarn and the work of Edward Jones. The meeting continued after lunch in Bathafarn Memorial Chapel in Ruthin with an afternoon session chaired by Mrs Eurwen Pennant Lewis. Three speakers offered appreciations of the special contribution of Welsh-speaking Methodism to Wales: the Rev. E. H. Griffiths spoke on our hymnody, Dr Lionel Madden on our literature and magazines, and the Rev. Hugh Rowlands on our contribution to public and social life.

LIONEL MADDEN

1544 WHS LIBRARY

The Wesley and Methodist Studies Centre is now a fully fledged research centre within Oxford Brookes University. Peter Forsaith, who is a member of the WHS Executive Committee and the Archives and History Committee, has recently been appointed Methodist Heritage Co-ordinator for the Wesley and Methodist Studies Centre with responsibility for the Library, Archives and Art Collections. He succeeds Martin Astell, who has moved to the Essex Record Office.

The WHS library catalogue (which includes collections at Bristol and Bath) is available on-line at <www.opac.brookes.ac.uk:8001/wes>. The current Centre newsletter is on the website <www.brookes.ac.uk/schools/education/wmsc>

The new Westminster Institute of Education of Oxford Brookes University was officially launched on 17 November 2000.

PETER FORSAITH