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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Volume XXXI

June 1957

THE BIRTH OF CHARLES WESLEY

WITH the approach of the 250th anniversary of Charles Wesley's birth there has been some apprehension as to the correct date for celebrating this event. Nor is this apprehension unnatural. Charles Wesley himself did not know when he was born. His *Journal* for 18th December 1736 reads:

I began my twenty-seventh year in a murmuring, discontented spirit; reading over and over the third of Job.

This implies that he was born in December 1710. In 1749 he wrote:

Mond. December 18th. My birthday. Forty years long have I now grieved and tempted God, proved him, and seen his works. I was more and more sensible of it all day, till I quite sunk under the burden.

This would make his birth-year 1709. The previous year he had been confused about the actual day, writing on 19th December to Sally Gwynne, soon to be his wife:

On Sat. morning I made an happy Mistake, thinking it my Birthday, & rejoicing continually, till at Night my Bro[the]r set me right. . . . Only I anticipated the Good, & had two Birthdays instead of One.

This was an accident, of course. Even as late as 1772, however, he was still not clear how old he was. He consulted senior members of his family. His sister Martha thought that he was born in 1711. John was nearer the mark in replying, "You could not be born later than December 1708".¹ So here we have four different years—1708, 1709, 1710, and even 1711, suggested as the year of Charles Wesley's birth—and all of them wrong!

John Whitehead, Charles Wesley's friend and physician, normally reliable in his facts, is the basic authority for the traditional information about Charles Wesley's birth:

Mr. Charles Wesley was born December 18th, 1708, old style, several weeks before his time, at Epworth in Lincolnshire. . . . He appeared dead rather than alive when he was born. He did not cry, nor open his eyes, and was kept wrapped up in soft wool until the time when he

¹ John Wesley's *Journal*, v, p. 330.

should have been born according to the usual course of nature, and then he opened his eyes and cried.²

Thomas Jackson's two-volume biography of Charles Wesley followed Whitehead in this statement, as did most other writers, including Adam Clarke and Robert Southey. This date is given on his memorial in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London. G. J. Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley Family* (1876), often very unreliable, in this instance scores a hit. On page 385 he argues that Charles was born in 1707, not 1708, and his argument was accepted by Alexander Gordon, writing for the *Dictionary of National Biography*. John Telford, in his *Life of Charles Wesley*, also accepted Stevenson's contentions, at the same time mentioning Charles Wesley's own uncertainty, and the belief that no documentary evidence was available. He did adduce one further piece of evidence, however: the fact that in the register of admissions to Westminster School in 1721 Charles's age is given as thirteen. Since the elections took place in April, this would mean that he had become thirteen in December 1720, and was therefore born in 1707. Mr. Telford argued that since the boy's parents were then living and the events were fresh in their minds, this must be conclusive. This appears reasonable, but in actual fact the parents *were* wrong five years later when they tried to recall details of the birth and baptism of their older son John. This I was able to show from documentary evidence in the Diocesan Registry, Lincoln, at the 250th anniversary of John Wesley's birth.

The matter of Charles Wesley's birth can also be settled from the documentary evidence available at Lincoln. It has been generally known that some of the Epworth parish registers were missing, being burned in the 1709 fire. Samuel Wesley relied upon a faulty memory in supplying a certificate of John's baptism, such as was necessary when he offered himself for Holy Orders. Yet all the time the evidence was there, in Samuel Wesley's own hand, strangely overlooked by its author! For in accordance with normal ecclesiastical procedure at the end of each year the rector had supplied the Bishop of Lincoln with transcripts of the entries in the parish register. A number of these transcripts still survive, including the baptism of John, and—what is more important for our present purpose—that of Charles. This baptismal entry is in the year 1707/8, i.e. from March 1707 to March 1708 according to modern reckoning. It reads:

Decemb: 29—Charles, Son of Sam Wesley, Clerk, & Susanna.

Not the slightest hesitation need be felt, therefore, in celebrating this coming 18th December as the 250th anniversary of the birth of the world's greatest hymn-writer.

FRANK BAKER.

² J. Whitehead: *Life of the Rev. John Wesley* (1793), i, p. 97.

The March issue of *The Epworth Witness* is as racy and informative as its predecessors. The Rev. W. Le Cato Edwards writes of some interesting discoveries made during the restoration of the Old Rectory and of their significance. Copies (8d. post free) may be obtained from Mr. Edwards, Wesley Manse, Epworth, Doncaster.

WESLEY AND COKE

THE recent book by Mr. Thompson¹ and the articles by Mr. Vine² revive interest in matters of great historical importance and current significance, namely Wesley's intention in setting apart Coke,³ and the whole place of episcopé in Methodism.

We begin with a brief account of the earlier history of the word "bishop". The classic account is that of Bishop Lightfoot. I quote the opening words of his famous excursus on "the synonyms [sic] 'bishop' and 'presbyter'": "It is a fact now generally recognised by theologians of all shades of opinion, that in the language of the New Testament the same officer of the Church is called indifferently 'bishop' (episcopos) and 'elder' or 'presbyter' (presbuteros)."⁴ This view of what we might call the first-century use of the word is still generally held. But in the second century the word episcopos came to be used in a more restricted sense. In any city only one of the presbyters, presumably their leader or chairman, was then called episcopos, and thus the two titles came to be distinguished. That much can hardly be denied, but there are various possible interpretations of it. One is that the "essential ministry" (a term invented, I think, for the purpose of this theory) did not belong in the first century to all who then were called episcopoi, but only to the apostles and their successors, though at a later date all the episcopoi shared in the "essential ministry"; in other words, first-century presbyter-bishops were not bishops in the modern sense of the word.⁵ Another interpretation is that even when the presbyters were no longer called bishops a measure of episcopal authority was, so to speak, latent in them; the chairman was at first called episcopos simply because he was the episcopos *par excellence*; in other words a second-century presbyter, though not called a bishop and not normally performing such functions as ordination, nevertheless by virtue of the original identity of bishops and presbyters could not be deprived of a kind of inherent right to ordain, which might suitably be exercised in certain circumstances. Of course the function of a first-century presbyter-bishop was to oversee the flock, but when the bishops were distinguished from the ordinary presbyters there was a natural tendency to think of the bishop's main functions as to oversee the presbyters and to ordain; and this is what is usually meant when episcopal functions are discussed today. Thus, to put the history at its

¹ Edgar W. Thompson: *Wesley: Apostolic Man. Some Reflections on Wesley's Consecration of Dr. Thomas Coke* (London, 1957), reviewed in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 21.

² Victor E. Vine: "Episcopé in Methodism", in *Proceedings*, xxx, pp. 162-70; and his article in *Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 18-19.

³ Cf. my article, "Ordination in Methodism", in *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, April 1951, pp. 156-69.

⁴ J. B. Lightfoot: *St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians* (2nd edn., London, 1869), pp. 93-7.

⁵ Cf. K. E. Kirk (ed.): *The Apostolic Ministry* (London, 1946), especially pp. 7-14.

simplest, at first every presbyter was called a bishop; later, a mere presbyter was not called a bishop.

By the time of Jerome, as Lightfoot pointed out,⁶ scholars had realized that the separation of the two offices was a departure from the New Testament; and this knowledge has to some extent continued to exist in the Church ever since, though sometimes it has not been grasped very clearly. Wherever an episcopalian is aware of it, he has to reach some decision how many, if any, of the original functions of the presbyter-bishops may be deemed now to remain in the presbyters.

What view did Wesley hold about this? Not much attention has been paid to his treatment of the classic passages in the *Explanatory Notes on the New Testament*. On Acts xx. 17 he says: "Perhaps elders and bishops were then the same, or no otherwise different than are the rector of a parish and his curates." This really wavers between two theories. At Philippians i. 1 he says: "The word *bishops* here includes all the presbyters at Philippi, as well as the ruling presbyters: the names bishop and presbyter, or elder, being promiscuously used in the first ages." This really reads the later distinction back into the first century, except as regards the actual nomenclature. Thus Wesley did not take Lightfoot's view of complete identification in New Testament times.

Hence it is not altogether surprising that in a famous letter to Asbury Wesley objected to Asbury's use of the title "bishop", and said that he never allowed it to be used of himself.⁷ On the other hand, he claimed that he was "a scriptural episcopos as much as any man in England or Europe",⁸ and (lest anyone should think the use of the Greek word significant) we may note that he also wrote that he was "as real a Christian bishop as the Archbishop of Canterbury".⁹ No doubt he hesitated to call himself a bishop, because he was not a diocesan bishop as that word is used in the Church of England to which he belonged, but he claimed to be a bishop in the scriptural sense.

How is this claim to be a scriptural bishop compatible with the use he made of King and of Stillingfleet? King did not say that presbyters were bishops but that there were two grades, presbyters and bishops, though they were of one order. Mr. Thompson has clearly shown that Wesley said nothing of grades, but at first qualified the words "of one order" by the word "essentially", but later omitted it, and spoke of a right to ordain without noting the conditions laid down by King, which were not in fact fulfilled. Mr. Thompson concludes: "King's book does not justify Wesley's consecration of Coke."¹⁰ Much the same is true of Wesley's use of the supposed parallel at Alexandria, which was mentioned by Stillingfleet.¹¹

⁶ Lightfoot, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-7.

⁷ *Letters*, viii, p. 91.

⁸ *ibid.*, vii, p. 284.

⁹ *ibid.*, vii, p. 262.

¹⁰ Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 30; cf. pp. 28-30. *Journal*, iii, p. 232; *Letters*, vii, p. 238.

¹¹ Thompson, *op. cit.*, pp. 30-32.

But even if the circumstances had precisely resembled those which in the early centuries were held, according to King and Stillingfleet, to justify ordination by presbyters, the question would still remain whether Wesley was consistent. We have here a most awkward dilemma, which is the nub of the whole question. He claimed to be an episcopos either because he thought that all presbyters were episcopoi or because he thought that he was a special kind of presbyter. If the former, then his view, however loyal to the New Testament, contradicted King; and if the latter, he had no need of King at all, for his claim to be an episcopos did not in that case rest on his status as a presbyter. In short, his claim to be an episcopos might have pleased Lightfoot but is inconsistent with his use of King.

It is just possible to go precariously between the horns of this dilemma by saying that in his view King had meant that all presbyters, though they are not all bishops, have a kind of latent episcopacy, which is fittingly exercised in special cases such as his own. But if Wesley thought this, he did not make it clear. However that may be, it is clear that Wesley's claim to ordain rested on his claim to be an episcopos, however that episcopacy was related to his status as a presbyter.

We now ask the related question to what office he set apart Coke. According to the certificate, to that of Superintendent. Was this equivalent to episcopos? In the service-book which Wesley sent to America in 1784 there were forms for the making of deacons, the ordaining of elders, and the ordaining of a Superintendent [sic],¹² which are closely modelled on the Anglican services for the making of deacons, the ordering of priests and the consecration of bishops respectively. Despite the avoidance of the word "bishop", which we have already considered, it looks as though the Superintendent was conceived as a kind of episcopos.

But this throws light on our earlier dilemma. If Wesley's claim to be episcopos was based on the idea that all presbyters are episcopoi, then Coke also was already an episcopos, and there was no need to set him apart as Superintendent. Therefore we must take the other view, that Wesley's claim to be an episcopos arose because he thought he was a special kind of presbyter, that is, he had a special divine commission; it was by virtue of this, whether or not in conjunction with a latent episcopacy in all presbyters, that he set apart Coke to a similar office.

The nature of this special divine commission need not be expounded here, for it has been clearly expounded by Mr. Thompson and has been splendidly epitomized in the very title of his book—*Wesley: Apostolic Man*. We may add that Professor Norman Sykes, in a very sympathetic review of this book,¹³ says that Wesley's action must be defended on the ground of "ineluctable necessity"; this is a somewhat similar defence to that used by Mr. Thompson, and is

¹² So spelt in the book of 1784: I use in other contexts the normal spelling.

¹³ *Friends of Reunion Bulletin*, February 1957, pp. 12-14.

reminiscent of some of Wesley's own utterances; but the fact remains that it was fitting that this act should be performed not by *any* presbyter, as it might have been if ineluctable necessity were the only criterion, but by one who exercised an extraordinary spiritual oversight of the Methodist people both in America and in England.

There is one smaller point. Mr. Thompson refers to this act as the consecration of Dr. Coke. This is of course the usual Anglican term for making a bishop, and, somewhat oddly in view of that fact, our American brethren lay great stress on it, saying that their bishops in Methodism are not ordained, but only consecrated; therefore, they say, it is clear that bishops are not a separate order of the ministry. But this is sadly unhistorical. In *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*¹⁴ Wesley spoke of the Ordination of Superintendants, and Coke spoke of ordaining Asbury as Superintendent.¹⁵ But I have thought it best to confine myself to the actual phrase which Wesley used on the Certificate, which simply was: "set apart as a Superintendent".

Thus if Coke's superintendency was in any sense episcopacy, Wesley's claim to be an episcopos cannot rest solely on his status as a presbyter. The very arguments that make Coke a bishop show that Wesley, simply as a presbyter, was not. We cannot have it both ways. The presbyters at Alexandria, King, Stillingfleet, and Lightfoot are not to be lumped together as though they all pointed to exactly the same thing. If Alexandria were decisive, Wesley could not rightly claim to be an episcopos. If Lightfoot has the last word, there was no need to set apart Coke. Mr. Thompson's view of a special commission avoids these difficulties, and all that I am maintaining is, I hope, implied by it.¹⁶ This does not mean that no use can be made of the other items of the traditional Methodist apologetic. It is easier to understand how a presbyter might have such an extraordinary commission if we accept King's view that presbyters had inherently the same rights as bishops. The practice at Alexandria, mentioned by Stillingfleet, is more intelligible when we see that in the early centuries the presbyters, though not bishops, had a kind of latent episcopacy; and all this is explained by the original identity of the two terms, as expounded by Lightfoot.

Mr. Vine goes so far as to say that we are committed by Wesley to the view that episcopé is not a question of ordination but of

¹⁴ Mr. Thompson does not use this, the title which has been shown to be correct by the Rev. Wesley F. Swift in *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 12-20.

¹⁵ This is shown by the title of Asbury's sermon on that occasion; cf. L. Tyerman: *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley* (2nd edn., London, 1872), iii, p. 436.

¹⁶ And by Mr. Vine, who puts it in a nutshell in *Proceedings*, xxxi, p. 19. But the fact remains, despite Mr. Vine, that Wesley's use of King's views on the status of presbyters was misleading if he was a scriptural episcopos by special commission and rested his claim to ordain on his position as episcopos. Thus Mr. Lawson (*Proceedings*, xxxi, pp. 23-4), though he puts the matter somewhat differently, is surely right in saying that Wesley was not consistent. We now see that his action can be defended, but not the consistency of all his arguments.

function, which resembles the modern American view. This overlooks the fact that Wesley did after all provide for the ordination of superintendents. The distinction of order and function needs further thought. It seems to resemble the secular distinction between rank and office. The terms are not biblical, and their historic development has largely been outside Methodism. No doubt the distinction is important, but the terms seem to need more precise definition before it can be asserted with any confidence what falls into either category.

Leaving the historical aspect of the matter, I ask finally the more controversial and theological question where episcopé should reside in Methodism today. Mr. Vine has admirably shown in the historical portion of his article that after Wesley's death it was divided in this country between the Conference, the District Meeting, and the first preacher in the circuit. It was therefore quite proper to change the title of the first preacher from "assistant" to "superintendent", and to say, as W. B. Pope did, that the superintendent occupies the position of early episcopacy. But not, if Lightfoot was right, of the earliest episcopacy, that of the first century. Episcopé in the original sense, the care of the flock, belongs to the presbyters, the Methodist ministers, though indeed in exercising this they are to act under the direction of the superintendent. The distinctive episcopé which superintendents have is second-century episcopé, the oversight of the ministers. Mr. Vine is right in saying that our kind of episcopacy or superintendence has many advantages; but as it is something of a departure from what we now see to have been the New Testament conception, it is at least arguable that it is capable of further modification without doing violence to any Methodist principle.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE.

The recent celebrations at Mow Cop of the 150th anniversary of the first camp meeting have called forth a souvenir handbook issued by the Historical Committee of the Stoke-on-Trent District. The forty pages of this booklet contain several illustrations of early Primitive Methodist personalities, chapels and documents, and a number of articles relating to the origins of Primitive Methodism and the significance of Mow Cop. This is a souvenir of permanent value, and how it could be produced for 1s. 6d. is a mystery. Copies can be obtained from the Methodist Book Centre, Gitana Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent.

I lived in a Village (Woolston Book Co., Nottingham, 6s.) is much more than an autobiography, as its name suggests. As an autobiography pure and simple it would have been of real value, for the author, the late Mr. Tom Shipside, was not only "a devoted layman . . . who from the humblest beginnings rose to be an authority on the village life of the community", and a "rugged character" at that. His connexions and those of his family led him into many researches of value both to local historian and genealogist, and particularly to Methodists. The scene is set in Oxton, but the book contains much interesting information on Methodism in the Southwell circuit generally, and also of neighbouring areas. Nor is it simply the fruit of reminiscence only, but of painstaking research. It is well illustrated, and there is a good index.

THE "SCARE-CROW HOUSE" AT BIRSTALL

A New Wesley Letter

THE original of the Wesley letter which follows is in the possession of Mr. G. E. Windeatt, of Druid, Ashburton, Devon, through whose kindness I have been allowed to make the transcript. The letter was sent from Madeley on Wesley's first visit after John Fletcher's marriage to Mary Bosanquet the previous November, and the recipient, John Valton, had been present at the wedding ceremony.

John Valton (1740-94) was the Assistant at Birstall, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. His parents were French Roman Catholics who had settled in London in 1738. His education was at first Roman Catholic, but on being sent to a grammar school in Yorkshire he turned Protestant and became a member of the Church of England. At Portsmouth, where he was an ordnance clerk, and later at Purfleet, he came into contact with Methodists; and after a long period of vacillation he was converted and became a Methodist. He first wrote to Wesley anonymously, and, being admitted on trial as a preacher in 1775, he lived on a small pension, refusing any remuneration, except food, from the circuits in which he travelled.¹

In 1781 Valton was appointed to Birstall, and thus became involved in the well-known affair of the Birstall trustees, which provided a test case for early Methodism. I assume that Wesley's letter below refers to this matter, which is dealt with very fully by Tyerman.²

Briefly, the Birstall trustees found it necessary in 1782 to rebuild their chapel. Lacking £350 of the cost, they proposed to borrow this sum from eight intended new trustees. A document was eventually drawn up to serve as the security, in which the trustees were to receive "the rents and profits" from the pews and seats, for the upkeep of the chapel, the payment of interest on their loan and ultimate repayment thereof, and the maintenance of the preacher. This provision would have occasioned no difficulty; and one is tempted to assume that this was pretty much the scope of the bond Wesley approves in the letter which follows below.

JOHN WESLEY TO JOHN VALTON

Madeley

March 24. 1782.

My Dear Brother,

I have no objection to your Proposal: Let the Trustees give such a Bond as you mention; & see that the Scare-crow House be made as handsome & convenient as the House at Leeds is. In particular, I beg

¹ Valton's autobiography, written at Wesley's "importunate desire", is printed in *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, vi, pp. 1-136.

² *Life of John Wesley*, iii, pp. 373-83.

all the Windows may be sashes opening downward. Do not spoil y^e House to save a little expence.

I think you have my plan

Huddersfield	April 23
Halifax	Wed. 24
Kighley	Sat. 27
Bingley	Sund. 28
Yeadon	Mond. 29
Otley	Wedn. May 1

Frid. 3	Bradforth	Sat. 4	Wakefield	Sund. 5	Birstal noon
Evening,	Bradforth	Mond.	Daw Green	Tues.	Leeds

I am,

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother,
J. WESLEY.

A further clause was later added, however, to the effect that after the death of John and Charles Wesley the appointment of preachers to the chapel was to be made by the trustees and certain class-leaders. This struck at the root of the connexional principle of Methodism, and would have led to independency.

Unfortunately Wesley was prevailed upon, against his better judgement, to sign the revised document. He relates the story to Charles in his letter of 28th May, by which time he had reached Alnwick. He writes :

The history of the matter is this: When I was at Dawgreen, near Birstall, the trustees for Birstall house brought me a deed, which they read over and desired me to sign. We disputed upon it about an hour. I then gave them a positive answer that "I will not sign it"; and, leaving them abruptly, went up to my room.

About noon I preached at Horbury. In the evening I preached and met the Society at Wakefield. At night, a little before I went to bed, the trustees came again, got round, and worried me down. But I think they cannot worry *you*. May you not very properly write to Mr. Valton? — "If the trustees will settle the Birstall house on the Methodist plan, I will sign their deed with all my heart; but if they build an house for a Presbyterian meeting-house, I will not, I dare not, have anything to do with it."

Wesley's signature was witnessed by Thomas Briscoe and Alexander Mather;⁸ the deed was dated 14th May 1782. Charles Wesley proceeded to act on his brother's suggestion; the Conference raised the matter with grave concern; and not until January 1784 was a settlement reached.

The questions may be asked: when did Wesley allow himself to be persuaded into taking this false step, and when was he at Dawgreen that year? The *Journal* is silent on the matter. The plan Wesley drew up for Valton anticipated a visit to Dawgreen on Monday, 6th May, but there is no entry in the *Journal* for that day. Wesley was in Birstall on the 5th, and later in the day rode on to

⁸ Mather was the Assistant at Leeds, and Briscoe was the third preacher in the Birstall circuit.

Leeds. On the 7th he was still in Leeds (*Letters*, vii, p. 122). He may well have made a special journey to Dawgreen (Dewsbury) on the intervening day—the 6th—but the details of his letter to Charles would indicate the 9th as the vital date. On the 9th he was en route for Sheffield, and the *Journal* tells us he preached at Wakefield in the evening. The letter to Charles says that he preached at Horbury “about noon” and at Wakefield in the evening on an unnamed day, and that he was at Dawgreen earlier that same day. The two references must surely be to the same day. Where Wesley spent the nights of the 7th and 8th we do not know, but from either Leeds or Birstall it would be a natural thing to take in Dawgreen on the way to Horbury and Wakefield.

I cannot explain the dating of the deed as 14th May, when Wesley was miles away at Thorne in Lincolnshire, except on the supposition that then, as now, deeds were not always dated for the day when they were signed! Or perhaps that was the day when the Birstall trustees affixed their signatures to the document which Wesley had already signed on the 9th.

The curious term “Scare-crow House” is not to be thought of as a proper name, but as a good-humoured term of reproach. (Cf. “When you build at Blackburn, do not build a scarecrow of an house”—letter of 15th October 1785.) It adds point to his stricture that the new building be made more beautiful than the old, revealing a side to Wesley’s nature often overlooked. It was the appalling disregard of his plea to make the new preaching-houses beautiful, as well as convenient—no doubt “to save a little expence”—which led, in the next century, to such flagrant violation of a proper sense of dignity and grace in Methodist architecture. His concern for the sort of windows to be put in illustrates his astonishing grasp of practical detail.

LESLIE W. HAYES.

EARLY WESLEYAN CLASS TICKETS

Comments and Catalogue

(Continued from page 9)

From 1768 till 1821 inclusive the date was printed (with odd exceptions), the size remained the same, and the four quarters of March, June, September and December were used—save in the years 1770, 1773 and 1774, when there were *five* tickets issued, as in 1766.

Our catalogue from this point onwards, therefore, takes on a slightly simpler form.

Year	Quarter	Letter	Text	Member	Collection
1768	March	L	"Unto Thee . . . soul" (Ps. xxv. 1)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o
		LB	"Keep yourselves from idols" (1 John v. 21)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
	June	M	"Remember . . . Lord" (Ps. xxv. 7)	Bridget Mann	V W ^o
		MB	"Love hopeth all things" (1 Cor. xiii. 7)	Margt. Somerell	E W ^o
	Sept.	N	"The Lord . . . for the oppressed" (Ps. ix. 9)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o
		NB	"Love . . . provoked" (1 Cor. xiii. 5)	Mgt. Somerell	E
	Dec.	O	"The fear . . . evil" (Prov. vii. 13)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o
1769	July—date written	OB	"Be strong in the Lord" (Eph. vi. 10)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W ^o
			"Speak evil of no man" (Titus iii. 2)	Wm. Gordon	V
	March	P	"He that . . . surely" (Prov. x. 9)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o
		PB	"Put on . . . armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11)	Ed. Leech	E V W ^o
	June	Q	"The fear of the Lord . . . life" (Prov. xiv. 27)	Saml. Cliff	E V
		QB	"Stand . . . having . . . truth" (Eph. vi. 14)	Margt. Somerell	E W ^o
	Sept.	R	"Whoso putteth his trust . . . safe" (Prov. xxix. 25)	Mary Lowe	V W ^o
RB		"Stand . . . having . . . righteousness" (Eph. vi. 14)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o	
			(Three quarters only used this year.) The last capital B for Band till Dec. 1812.		
1770	Jan.	S	"Set your affection . . . above" (Col. iii. 2)	Saml. Cliff	E V
		Sb	"We have access by faith" (Rom. v. 2)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W ^o
	March	T	"Ye must be born again" (John iii. 3)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o
		Tb	"Whosoever abideth . . . not" (1 John iii. 6)	John Redfearn	W ^o
	June	U	"Ask in faith" (James i. 6)	Saml. Cliff	E V
		Ub	"Put on . . . armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11)	Betty Earnshaw	E V W ^o
	Sept.	W	"If any man . . . new creature" (2 Cor. v. 17)	Hannah Low	V
		Wb	"Walk before . . . perfect" (Gen. xvii. 1)	Mary Drew	W
Dec.	X	"God . . . able to deliver" (Daniel iii. 17)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o	
	Xb	"Abide in Me" (John xv. 14)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o	
1771	March	Y	"Acquaint now thyself . . . at peace" (Job xxii. 21)	Ann Goddard	E V W ^o
		Yb	"Put on . . . armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
	June	Z	"We must all . . . judgement seat of Christ" (2 Cor. v. 10)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o
		Zb	"Whosoever is born of God . . . sin" (1 John iii. 9)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W ^o

Year	Quarter	Letter	Text	Member	Collection
1771	Sept.	A	"Ask, and ye shall receive" (John xvi. 24)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W
	Dec.	Ab	"Walk in wisdom . . . time" (Col. iv. 5)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W ^o
		B	"God is no respecter of persons" (Acts x. 34)	B. Mann	V E W
1772	March	Bb	"He that believeth . . . himself" (1 John v. 10)	Mgt. Somerell	E V W ^o
		B, Bb	as above also issued for February 1772.		
	June	C	"Him that cometh . . . cast out" (John vi. 37)	Mgt. Somerell	E V
		Cb	"Watch and pray . . . temptation" (Matt. xxvi. 41)	(No name)	E V W
	Sept.	D	"Labour not . . . life" (John vi. 27)	Ann Goddard	E V W ^o
		Db	"Walk worthy of the Lord" (Col. i. 10)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
	Sept.	E	"If thou canst . . . believeth" (Mark ix. 23)	Saml. Cliff	E W ^o
		Eb	"Be diligent . . . blameless" (2 Peter iii. 14)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
	1773	Feb.	Similar tickets for May (C, Cb), August (D) and November (E). (Three quarters only used this year—not December.)		
	1774	Feb.	F	"Acquaint now thyself . . . at peace" (Job xxii. 21)	Grace Carlin	E V W^{o}
"		Fb	"He that saith . . . him" (1 John ii. 4)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
May		G	"Verily . . . see the kingdom of God" (John iii. 3)	Mary Middleton	E W ^o
Aug.		Gb	"Put on . . . armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
		H	"Strive to enter . . . not be able" (Luke xiii. 24)	Sar. Leach	E V W ^o
Nov.		Hb	"He that believeth . . . himself" (1 John v. 10)	Sis. Somerell	E V W ^o
		I	"Thou hast destroyed thyself . . . help" (Hosea xiii. 9)	Sar. Leach	E V W
Feb.		Ib	"Be thou faithful . . . crown of life" (Rev. ii. 10)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
		K	"Seek, and ye shall find" (Matt. vii. 7)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o
May		Kb	"If ye continue . . . disciples indeed" (John viii. 31)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
		L	"Bring forth . . . repentance" (Matt. iii. 8)	Peter Rothwell	V E
Aug.		Lb	"Let your light so shine . . . heaven" (Matt. v. 16)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o
		M	"Every one that asketh . . . opened" (Matt. vii. 8)	Bridget Mann	V E W ^o
Nov.		Mb	"To do good . . . pleased" (Heb. xiii. 16)	Wm. Gordon	V E W ^o
	N	"And when . . . forgave them both" (Luke vii. 42)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o	
Dec.	Nb	"Every tree that bringeth not forth . . . fire" (Matt. vii. 19)	Mgt. Somerell	E W ^o	
	O	"Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matt. vii. 7)	Bridgt. Mann	V W ^o	
	Ob	"Whatsoever ye shall ask . . . do" (John xiv. 13)	Wm. Gordon	V E W ^o	
		(Five issues this year.)			

Year	Quarter	Letter	Text	Member	Collection	
1775	March	P	"Have faith in God" (Mark xi. 22)	Grace Carlin	E V W	
	June	Pb	"Examine yourselves . . . in the faith" (2 Cor. xiii. 5)	Jon. Kilowen	W	
		Q	"That which ye have . . . I come" (Rev. ii. 25)	B. Mann	V W	
	Sept.	Qb	"Let no man take thy crown" (Rev. iii. 11)	Mary Bosanquet	E V W ^o	
		R	"We shall reap, if we faint not" (Gal. vi. 9)	Saml. Cliff	E V W	
Dec.	Rb	"I am not ashamed . . . have believed" (2 Tim. i. 12)	Ed. Leach	E W ^o		
1776	March	S	"Seek, and ye shall find" (Matt. vii. 7)	Ann Higginbottom	E V W ^o	
		Sb	"Grow in grace" (2 Peter iii. 18)	Mgt. Summerell	E W ^o	
	June	T	"Knock . . . opened unto you" (Matt. vii. 7)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o	
		Tb	"Stand fast . . . made us free" (Gal. v. 1)	O. Higginbottom	E V W ^o	
	Sept.	U	"Every one that asketh receiveth" (Matt. vii. 8)	Bridget Mann	V E W ^o	
		Ub	"Be not entangled again . . . bondage" (Gal. v. 1)	O. Higginbottom	E V W ^o	
	Dec.	W	"He that seeketh findeth" (Matt. vii. 8)	Mgt. Summerell	E V W ^o	
		Wb	"It is written . . . holy" (1 Peter i. 16)	Mgt. Summerell	E V W ^o	
	1777	March	A	"Buy the truth, and sell it not" (Prov. xxiii. 23)	Grace Carlin	E V W ^o
			Ab	"Ye are the temple of God" (Rom. iv. 16 [sic—should be 1 Cor. iii. 16])	Mgt. Summerell	E V W ^o
June		B	"Wait on the Lord . . . thee" (Prov. xx. 22)	S. Cliff	E V W ^o	
		Bb	"Walk in the Spirit" (Gal. v. 16)	Ann Bennett	E V W ^o	
Sept.		C	"Put on . . . armour of God" (Eph. vi. 11)	Mary Harrison	E V W ^o	
	Cb	"The fruit of the Spirit is love" (Gal. v. 22)	Margt. Summerell	E W ^o		
1778	March	D	"Verily there is . . . righteous" (Ps. lviii. 11)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^o	
		Db	"And of Zion . . . her" (Ps. lxxxvii. 5)	Grace Watson	E W ^o	
	Dec.	E	"The backslider . . . ways" (Prov. xiv. 14)	Grace Watson	E V W ^o	
1778	June	Eb	"Thou standest by faith . . . fear" (Rom. xi. 20)	Jos. Janion	W ^o	
		F	"Be sober, and hope to the end" (1 Peter i. 13)	Bridget Mann	V E W ^o	
	Sept.	Fb	"If I have . . . no more" (Job xxxiv. 32)	M. Summerell	E W ^o	
		G	"I love them that love me . . . find me" (Prov. viii. 17)	G. Watson	E V W ^o	
	Hb	"Let love be without dissimulation" (Rom. xii. 8)	J. Garbot	Panton		
		H	"Be ye holy . . . conversation" (1 Peter i. 15)	Saml. Clough	E V W ^o	
			N.K.S.			

Year	Quarter	Letter	Text	Member	Collection
1778	Dec.	I	"Whosoever will . . . freely" (Rev. xxii. 17).	B. Mann	V E W ^c
		Ib	"He that is our God . . . Salvation" (Ps. lxxviii. 20)	John Mills	V E W ^c
<p>To this year 1778 belong two unidentified tickets referred to in the introduction. Each is an upright oblong, 2½ by 1½ ins. One dated March 1778 has the text "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus as Lord, so walk ye in Him". It bears the name Mary Harvey. The other is dated June 1778, with the text "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. v. 8). This also was issued to Mary Harvey. The March ticket has the letter O, and the June the letter N. The usual tickets bearing her name for September 1777 and December 1778 and for March 1786 are in the Lamplough Collection.</p>					
1779	March	K	"Draw nigh to God . . . you" (James iv. 8)	Saml. Clough	E V W ^c
	June	Kb	N.K.S.		
		L	"Set your affection . . . earth" (Col. ii. 2)	Saml. Clough	E V W
	Sept.	Lb	"Above all . . . perfectness" (Col. iii. 14)	Ann Bennett	E W ^c
		M	"It is a good . . . grace" (James [sic—should be Heb.] xiii. 9)	Sam. Cliff	E V W ^c
	Dec.	Mb	"Behold we . . . which endure" (James v. 11)	H. Crussell	V E W ^c
N		"PREPARE TO MEET THY GOD" (in capitals) (Amos iv. 12)	Mary Cawley	V E W ^c	
Nb		"HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD" (in capitals) (Zech. xiv. 20)	Mgt. Summerell	W ^c	
1780	March	O	"To him that . . . salvation of God" (Ps. l. 23)	Saml. Cliff	E V W ^c
		Ob	"Blessed be the Lord . . . kindness" (Ps. xxxi. 21)	Mgt. Summerell	E W ^c
	June	P	"Ye that love the Lord, hate evil" (Ps. xcvi. 10)	S. Cliff	E V W ^c
		Pb	"A faithful man . . . blessings" (Prov. xxviii. 20)	H. Crussell	V E W ^c
	Sept.	Q	"Let us hold fast . . . without wavering" (Heb. x. 23)	Bridget Man	V E W ^c
		Qb	"Being justified . . . God" (Rom. v. 1)	Margt. Summerell	E W ^c
	Dec.	R	"Ho, every one . . . waters" (Isa. lv. 1)	Grace Watson	E V W
		Rb	"He that . . . water" (John vii. 38)	Edmund Leach	E V W ^c
Dec.	Rb	"Be ye holy . . . conversation" (1 Peter i. 15). Signed J.K. —the last of the above-mentioned unidentified tickets.	Mary Harvey	Lamplough	

(To be concluded)

THE NORTHERN BIBLE CHRISTIANS

“THE Bible Christians?—Oh, they were a Methodist branch which existed in the West Country.” Such is the remark often made of that romantic section of our now united Methodism. And if one knows more than that, one is apt to assume that their adventures in the north of England came to a close in 1830 when the little Northumberland Mission, so romantically, yet tragically, established by Mary Ann Werrey in 1823, was handed over to the Primitive Methodists at the time of the secession of William O’ Bryan and his friends.¹ But for half a century, off and on—till the close of their history as a denomination in 1907—they maintained work in the north, and some of their causes continue to this day.

For a long time after the 1830 débâcle, nothing further was attempted in the north; but suddenly in 1859 the *Minutes* record “Westmorland: One to be sent”, and in the following year one John Graham is reported as minister there, with four local preachers, two preaching-places and nineteen members. But the isolated mission was destined to have a short life, and all trace is lost by 1862.

Another nine years passed, and in 1871 “Cumberland” figures in the *Minutes*, R. Kelley and E. Rogers being stationed there with nine local preachers, seven preaching-places, and seventy members; and sites for chapels are reported at Swarthmoor (famous for its Quaker connexions), Ravenglass, New Millom, and Dalton; two chapels had been erected by the following year. By 1874 there were three circuits in the north, viz. Cumberland, Barrow, and Durham, whither E. Rogers now went; and the Address to the Canadian Conference (*Minutes*, p. 29) tells how “Calls are continually reaching us from various towns and centres of large populations in the North of England, as well as from some places in Scotland; so that we could usefully employ at least a dozen Ministers, had we the men and the means.” By that time at least three chapels had been erected—at Dalton, Haverigg, and Swarthmoor.

The next few years shew increasing activity in the north, the District being designated the “Barrow and Durham District” in 1875. Cleator, Cramlington, Cleveland, and Galston appear as circuits in 1876, Galston (fourteen miles north-north-east of Ayr) being the only place where the Bible Christians had work north of the Border. With joy the Address to the Canadian Conference announces: “We have at length crossed the border, and entered on Scotland’s famous and historic ground” (*Minutes*, 1876, p. 29). No chapel was reported, but three preaching-places are mentioned as existing at Galston, reduced to one the following year.

The next year or so saw extensive chapel-building, places being erected at New Herrington and Murton (Co. Durham); Moorsholm,

¹ The story is told in F. W. Bourne’s *The Bible Christians, their Origin and History*, pp. 143 ff., 165 f. and 193; and by Wesley F. Swift, “The Women Itinerant Preachers of Early Methodism” (*Proceedings*, xxix, p. 78).

Brotton, and Loftus (all in Cleveland); Barrow;² Kirkland (Cumberland); and Whittington Moor (Chesterfield). A minister was appointed in 1877 to start work in Bradford, and another in Chesterfield two years later. This was none other than Thomas Henry Carthew, who, after a brief sojourn in the Bible Christian ministry, entered that of the United Methodist Free Churches, went out to East Africa, and died there, a martyr to self-sacrificial labours. His moving story is told by A. J. Hopkins in *Trail Blazers and Road Makers*.

This period was perhaps that of the widest extension in the north; but many of the causes had a short lease of life, and many were connexionally subsidized. The grants in 1879, for instance, were: Millom £20, Barrow £130, Durham £80, Cleveland £96, Cramlington £44, Bradford £80, Chesterfield £36; in that year there were in all fifteen chapels, nineteen preaching-places and ten ministers in the north. But the work was constantly hindered by removals; the change of job that caused Cornish emigrants to move to distant mining and quarrying areas, thus establishing Bible Christian missions there, just as frequently caused them to leave those areas, and the missions suffered heavy losses. In 1880 Chesterfield lost its minister, its membership being reduced from 45 to 21 because of removals, and the cause died out within a year or so, though the chapel remained connexional property for a number of years, at least as late as 1892, and in 1883 it had been reported "The rent at Chesterfield has been sufficient to meet the interest and slightly reduce the debt".

The main centres of work by that date were Millom, now a self-supporting circuit with 202 members; Barrow and Dalton (191 members); Durham (225 members); and Cleveland (106 members). Ennerdale (the new name for Cleator Moor), with a chapel and manse at Kirkland, continued a small and struggling cause for some years; they attempted to expand, and in 1888 the *Minutes* note that "preaching has been begun at Pica, where the Gospel is much needed"; they attempted also to open up Frizington; but the 1892 Conference decided that as "the outlook is not promising, as there is no room for extension, and little hope of growth on the ground already occupied", the place be given up; it was "distant from our work, and may easily be worked by some other Methodist Church"; the sale of the chapel was authorized.

The commencement of the work in Bradford in 1877 inaugurated a new era in Bible Christian enterprise in the north. Hitherto it had been largely confined to small towns and villages whither emigrants from the West Country had found their way. But Bradford was the precursor of other industrial centres. There was a chapel there in 1878, but this was a temporary expedient, and a new chapel in Toller Lane was reported in 1886. In April 1891 further work was opened at Marion Street mission room, Listerhills.

² This chapel, after being in very low water for some years, enjoyed a glorious revival in the autumn of 1954.

In 1888 a preacher was appointed to Blackburn, as a suitable hall had been offered to the Connexion; and it was this that caused the Conference consciously to decide on that new area of which Bradford had been the unconscious beginning: "This shall be considered the initial step in the extension of our operations in populous and important centres throughout the country." The next year Blackburn was authorized to purchase the premises of which the Central Hall formed a part, for not more than £1,500, and the work there evidently prospered, due no doubt to their typical aggressive evangelism: they reported 254 open-air meetings in 1891! In 1892 they opened an additional preaching-place in Highfield Road, and talked of building there, but in 1894 that place was closed, and a new hall opened at Higher Audley. A chapel was built there in 1898, and in 1903 the original hall (in Barton Street) was sold to the United Teetotal Mission, and a chapel built in Johnstone Street in 1904 or 1905.

In October 1889 work in Sunderland was opened, and the Durham circuit renamed "Sunderland" in 1890. They reported fifty-seven new members in 1891, and in April of that year started services at Station Town; the following year the schedules mention four chapels and three preaching-places in that circuit. Again there was much fluctuation; in 1893 sixty new members were reported, and in November of that year a chapel was opened at Station Town, but closed in 1897 on account of the closing of the colliery, and authorized to be sold "if possible for the amount of its debt". It was still unsold in 1906. Already in 1897, through the closing of other collieries, the Sunderland Mission had been virtually reduced to two societies, at Murton and Wingate, but new spurts of life led to the planning of chapels at Murton in 1902 (they had enjoyed a gracious revival in 1898) and at Easington Lane in the same year; a new chapel was opened in the circuit in 1905. That year was of course the year of the Welsh Revival, and the *Minutes* tell how "especially in Wales and the North of England the revival glory has surpassed any experience in living memory". Barrow reported seventy-seven new members; Dalton fifty; there were two hundred conversions at Murton, leading to a circuit increase of 115; there were fifty-six new members at Birmingham; and even Swarthmoor (attached now to Dalton), where not a soul had turned up for special services in the winter of 1902, reported thirteen members—the first time for nine years that any members had been reported.

In 1890 premises were offered in Bolton, and the chapel was bought in 1891. A married preacher was appointed in 1901. This place was clearly determined not to be old-fashioned, and reported the installation of electric lighting in 1903.

In 1894 Birmingham (strictly speaking a Midland rather than a northern city, but included here for the sake of completeness) was added to the stations. A hall holding three hundred was bought in Priestley Road, Sparkbrook, and in 1897 three chapels and one preaching-place are reported; these were presumably Priestley Road,

Elkington Street, and King's Heath, the preaching-place being the Board School at Aston; they opened a chapel at Small Heath in 1898, and another at Aston in 1899. In that year it was reported that "at the original hall in Priestley Road the cause has suffered by diminution since the erection in the immediate neighbourhood of a great Mission Hall with ample resources" (presumably the Wesleyan Central Hall). This led to the purchase of a new site at Handsworth, where a chapel was opened in 1903. The Priestley Road premises were finally authorized to be sold in 1906, and a new chapel was opened at Small Heath in 1907.

In conclusion, the following checklist of chapels and preaching-places, as far as can be traced from the *Minutes*, may be of service. (No mention is made here of unnamed preaching-places.)

<i>Place</i>	<i>Chapel or pr.-place³</i>	<i>Opened, bought or built</i>	<i>Closed or sold</i>
Millom ...	... chapel	built by 1874 (1872?)	
Ravenglass	... chapel	built by 1874 (1872?)	
Haverigg	... chapel	built 1874	
Silecroft	... pr.-pl. (?)	opened by 1894	
Dalton ...	... chapel	built 1873	
Swarthmoor	... chapel	built 1874	closed 1902; reopened 1904
Barrow			
Roose Road	... chapel	built 1876	
Durham ...	... chapel	built 1880	
New Herrington	chapel	built 1875	sold to PM, 1895; cause becomes PM
Murton	... chapel	built 1876	
Wingate	... chapel	built 1887	
Haswell	... chapel	built 1888	closed 1897; reopened ?; closed 1906
Sunderland	... pr.-pl.	opened Oct. 1889	closed 1892 ("inadequate")
Station Town	... pr.-pl. chapel	opened April 1891 built Nov. 1893	closed 1893 closed 1897; reopened 1903; closed 1906
Hetton-le-Hole	... pr.-pl.	opened 1892	
Annfield Plain	... pr.-pl.	opened by 1877	closed 1878
Cramlington	...pr.-pl. (ch.?)	opened 1876	closed 1882
Galston	... pr.-pl.	opened 1876	closed by 1878
Cleator Moor	... pr.-pl. chapel	opened by 1876 built 1878	
Kirkland	... chapel new chapel	built 1877 built 1882	closed 1892
Pica ...	... pr.-pl.	opened 1888	
Cleveland			
Moorsholm	... chapel	built 1877	closed 1887; sold c. 1906

³ In most cases a preaching-place existed before the chapel was built; unless it bears a distinct name it is not listed.

Place	Chapel or pr.-place	Opened, bought or built	Closed or sold
Cleveland—continued.			
Loftus...	... chapel	built 1878	"to be sold" 1893;
	new chapel	built 1885	old chapel sold 1906
Brotton	... chapel	built 1878	
South Eston	... chapel	built 1884	closed 1907?
Chesterfield	... chapel	built (?) 1878	closed 1880;
			still owned in 1892
Whittington Moor	chapel	built (?) 1878	closed 1880(?)
Bradford ...	... chapel	built (or bot.?) 1878	
Toller Lane	...new chapel	built 1886	
Marion St. Mission Room, Listerhills	pr.-pl.	opened April 1891	
Blackburn			
Barton Street	... chapel	bought 1889	closed 1893;
			sold 1903
Highfield Road	... pr.-pl.	opened 1892	closed 1894
Higher Audley	... pr.-pl.	opened 1894	
	chapel	built 1898	
Johnstone Street	chapel	built 1905	
Bolton ...	... chapel	bought 1891	
Birmingham			
Priestley Road, Sparkbrook	chapel	bought 1894	closed 1902;
			not yet sold in 1906
Elkington Street	chapel	opened by 1897	
Aston Board School	pr.-pl.	opened by 1897	
Aston ...	... chapel	built 1899	
Small Heath	... chapel	built (or bot.?) 1898	
	new chapel	built 1907	
King's Heath	... chapel	opened by 1897	
Handsworth	... chapel	built 1903	

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

Pitkin Pictorials, Ltd. have done Methodism a good service by including *The Pictorial History of Wesley's Chapel and its Founder* in their "Pride of Britain" series. This book, with its glossy art cover, contains forty-eight handsomely produced pictures of the exterior and interior of Wesley's Chapel and House, and reproductions of some famous Methodist engravings. The minister of Wesley's Chapel, Dr. Ronald V. Spivey, has contributed a running commentary on the illustrations, and the whole forms a delightful souvenir of this hallowed shrine. Nothing like this has been done for Methodism before, and no praise can be too great for the manner of its conception and execution. Copies can be obtained at the unbelievably cheap price of 2s. 9d. post free from Dr. Spivey at 49, City Road, London, E.C.1. . . . The *Handbook of the Nottingham Conference, 1957* is, quite frankly, a disappointment, for its contents do not match up to its attractive cover. For its primary purpose it is no doubt adequate, but those who have come to regard the Conference Handbook as traditionally a repository of historical information will be sent empty away. To cram the history of Methodism in three counties into 7½ pages was an impossible task. Unlike many of its predecessors, the Nottingham *Handbook* will be of little use to the historian of the future. Copies are 2s. 3d. post free from the Rev. W. J. Joyce, Carter Manse, Ruddington, Nottingham.

BOOK NOTICES

Selected Trevecka Letters (1742-1747), transcribed and annotated by Gomer Morgan Roberts. (Caernarvon: The Calvinistic Methodist Bookroom, on behalf of the C.M. Historical Society, pp. xii, 232, 12s. 6d.)

A generous grant from the Pilgrim Trust has enabled the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Historical Society to launch a new series of publications, the Trevecka Records Series, of which the present volume is the first. The letters have been copied and annotated with that meticulous care which we have learnt to associate with every task which the Rev. Gomer M. Roberts undertakes. Out of about thirteen hundred letters covering the period 1742-7 he has selected 107, giving priority to those "which passed between Howell Harris and the leaders of Methodism (and kindred movements such as Moravianism) in England, Wales and Scotland". Naturally they have most to teach us concerning the history of the Calvinistic branches of the Methodist Movement, but they are also full of interest to the disciples of John Wesley and the adherents of Moravianism. It is probably true to say that Harris had more contacts than any of his contemporaries with every party which regarded itself as being in some sense "Methodist", and this volume serves to underline once again the importance of the Trevecka MSS. to every student of Methodism. Three of these letters were addressed to John Wesley and one to his brother Charles, and there are many illuminating references to them in other parts of the book. Another person who figures in this volume is the John Jones who left the Calvinists in 1746 and attached himself to Wesley, becoming later a tutor at Kingswood: from these letters we learn much concerning the reasons which induced him to change sides, and incidentally of the man himself. Moreover, the volume has much to teach us of early Methodism in many parts of Britain, including London, Bristol and Plymouth. We are very grateful to the editor for making these letters available to us, and to the Pilgrim Trust for making their publication possible. May others follow their good example, so that *every* document in the Trevecka collection can be published in the not too distant future!

GRIFFITH T. ROBERTS.

Thomas Haweis, 1734-1820, by Arthur Skevington Wood. (S.P.C.K. for the Church Historical Society, pp. x, 292, 50s.)

The gaps in our knowledge of the religious history of eighteenth-century Britain are gradually being filled. Thomas Haweis has long merited a worthy biography, and Dr. A. Skevington Wood, one of our members and contributors, has done justice to the task, for which he was awarded the degree of Ph.D. by the University of Edinburgh. Full use has been made of manuscript and printed sources (including our *Proceedings*, to which special reference is made). It was particularly fortunate that Dr. Wood's work on Haweis was commenced shortly after a large accumulation of MSS. by and about him had passed through the salerooms. These included his autobiography up to 1796 (used here for the first time), and his diary, 1791-1818.

This work, therefore, provides the first fully-documented biography of Haweis. It is more than that, however. It throws light on many other personalities of the Evangelical Revival, and upon movements in which Haweis was particularly concerned, such as the St. Edmund Hall expulsions, the rise and development of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, and especially the formation of the London Missionary Society, of which Haweis was (to say the very least) one of the chief promulgators.

The illustrations comprise a portrait of Haweis, the exterior and interior of All Saints' Church, Aldwinckle, and one of the All Saints' rectory, where Haweis lived from 1764 to 1809. In the text is a reproduction of one of his letters. The book is attractively produced, as well as being a sound and readable work of scholarship, and if fifty shillings seems unduly expensive, the purchaser may console himself with the fact that he owns what will undoubtedly remain for many years the definitive biography of one of the more important figures of the Evangelical Revival.

FRANK BAKER.

Edgehill College, 1884-1957, A Triumph of Faith, by Richard Pyke. (Epworth Press, pp. 74, 10s. 6d.)

This record of the history of Edgehill College is a fitting companion to the author's earlier work on Shebbear College. It was because the boys' school had prospered so well that the Bible Christian Conference approved the further venture of a school for girls, and this was opened in 1884. The denomination was justly proud of the new school, and Thomas Ruddle, of Shebbear, went so far as to say, "I have never seen a school which, taken all in all, I prefer to our own." A disastrous fire in 1920 threatened the very continuance of the school, but faith prevailed (hence the apt sub-title), and the present attractive buildings rose from the ashes of the old. This book has been lovingly written by one who is not only a Methodist historian but a former bursar of the school. It is adequately illustrated, and contains discerning pen-portraits of former staff and governors. It is a mine (albeit a small one) of information.

THOMAS SHAW.

The Social and Political Influence of Methodism in the Twentieth Century, by Robert F. Wearmouth. (Epworth Press, pp. xiv. 265, 35s.)

The Politics of English Dissent, by Raymond G. Cowherd. (New York University Press, pp. 242, \$5.)

John Scott Lidgett: A Symposium, edited by Rupert E. Davies. (Epworth Press, pp. xxii. 212, 21s.)

Dr. Wearmouth has now completed his series of studies in the social and political influence of Methodism, and this new volume, like the previous four, reveals the same meticulous research and reliance on original sources. The period under review is, of course, that of our own lifetime, and perhaps we are too near the events described to be able to accept Dr. Wearmouth's judgement as necessarily final. "Methodism divided was more successful than Methodism united" (p. 79), for example, is a sweeping assessment of the results of Methodist Union from which we beg leave to differ; and we doubt whether Dr. J. Ernest Rattenbury would now subscribe to his quoted opinions from 1921. However that may be, Dr. Wearmouth has examined the rise of the Labour Party, the development of the Welfare State, and the Methodist impact on the trade unions with his usual care, and has given us a picture of contemporary history from an unusual angle, enabling us to see that Methodism has fulfilled its social destiny in ways which John Wesley could never have foreseen. The weakness of this book is that far too many pages are taken up with biographical details of Methodist laymen (many of them still living) who have served as trade union leaders, in local government, and as mayors. The lists are impressive, but necessarily selective, and therefore invidious; Dr. Wearmouth could have made his point quite effectively without condemning us to boredom for forty or fifty pages.

Every student of Methodist social history is under debt to Dr. Wearmouth for these five books which represent the fruit of a lifetime of research, and

which will be quoted by scholars for generations to come. We crave one further favour from him. Dr. Wearmouth is a septuagenarian, albeit a very youthful one, and as busy as a bee. If he could find the time to write the story of his life (as he once told it to us in a never-to-be-forgotten hour of delight), a new generation would discover that behind the writings of this distinguished historian there lies a romance of intellectual striving and spiritual aspiration which is itself the best commentary on all that he has hitherto given us. *My Early Life*, by Dr. Wearmouth, would be a Methodist best-seller, and we hope that some day he will write it.

The sub-title of Mr. Cowherd's book is "The Religious Aspects of Liberal and Humanitarian Reform Movements from 1815 to 1848", and the period may well be regarded as the greatest age of social and political reform in England. Those years saw the expansion of religious liberty, the abolition of slavery, the extension of the franchise, the commencement of popular education, the first Factory Acts, and the removal of trade restrictions; and Mr. Cowherd discusses these reforms in the light of the Dissenters, their religious advocates. The writings of M. Halévy, Dr. Wearmouth, Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, and others, have made us familiar with the issues involved and the impact upon them of the various branches of Methodism, but that is not to say that this present book is superfluous. Here we have the detached viewpoint of an American Professor of English History; and though Methodists enter largely into the narrative as "dissenters by circumstance rather than by choice", we see how all the denominations, "a distinct religious and social minority", worked together for the common weal. Our space is insufficient to demonstrate this in detail, and we must content ourselves by giving the book an unreserved commendation. Its production is in keeping with the lavish, almost luxurious, standards which characterize so much of American publishing, and its contents, so fully documented both in footnotes and in bibliography, make it a treasury of knowledge as well as an ornament for the shelves.

John Scott Lidgett has become part of our Methodist history. As a child he received the blessing of Jabez Bunting as that great controversial Methodist statesman lay on his death-bed. His grandfather, like Lidgett himself, was twice President of the Conference, and Lidgett lived to be the greatest Methodist of our time. Before his death in 1953 at the age of ninety-eight, he was already a legendary figure, and the stories associated with his name (many of them no doubt apocryphal) will be recounted for generations to come. He was an honoured member of our Society, and his only contribution to the *Proceedings* appeared, we are proud to recall, under the regime of the present editor, whose earliest Methodist recollection is of hearing Lidgett during his presidential year in 1908. The brethren who have contributed to this symposium have done their best within the limits imposed upon them, and we are grateful for these glimpses of a many-sided genius. His work at the Bermondsey Settlement, at the University of London and on the London County Council, his prowess as a theologian and an ecumenical statesman—they are all here within the covers of this book, which will remain a not unworthy memorial to one of Methodism's greatest sons. But we still sigh for a definitive biography, and justice will not have been done until Lidgett's "Life", covering almost half the span of Methodism's history, has been written in the good, old-fashioned way. Until then, we must be content that in these pages his memory, and the knowledge of the debt that Methodism owes to him, will be kept ever-green.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

NOTES AND QUERIES

984. EPISCOPE IN METHODISM.

I read Mr. Lawson's comments on my article with deep interest. There is no doubt about the way John Wesley would have voted: he says in a letter to Fletcher of 15th January 1773 (in the words of Homer) "'The rule of many is not good; let there be one ruler.'" I see more and more unless there be one 'Leader' the work can never be carried on." But what would be the reactions of an eighteenth-century man if he were brought up in the twentieth century is subject to more speculation than certainty. There may be a case for concentrating episcopé in thirty pairs of hands rather than a thousand pairs; but let us be clear that we are no more treading in the constitutional tradition of the last 160 years than the last 160 years was treading in the constitutional tradition of Wesley's day—all three are different. I am doubtful of the wisdom of welcoming Separated Chairmen on the grounds that it is part way towards "Wesley's manifest ideals and practice"; I hesitate to think that Mr. Lawson is advocating a twentieth-century autocracy after Wesley's model—the Halifax Circular would undergo a reprint!

To revert to the interpretation of Wesley's mind: it is both usual and accepted today to speak of Wesley's inconsistency in this field. Wesley himself replies: "I defy any man living to prove that I have contradicted myself at all in any of the writings which I have published from the year 1738 to the year 1788" (*Letters*, viii, p. 179). Our difficulty today in understanding Wesley's mind results from the modern emphasis of the Oxford Movement on theological aspects of Church order. Wesley was not concerned with the distinction between Protestant and Catholic; in his day the two opposing ideas were Episcopal and Presbyterian. Pawson's comment remains true: "[Wesley] was deeply prejudiced against a Presbyterian and as much in favour of an Episcopalian form of government". Add to this that Wesley believed that "Bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order". It can only follow that (to use Mr. Lawson's phrase) a bishop is not of a "different spiritual rank" from a presbyter, but he does have a different function. (See also Thompson: *Wesley: Apostolic Man*, p. 28.) Hence Wesley avoided the word "consecration", perhaps because he wished to avoid implying a "different spiritual rank". But quite clearly he was conferring a different function on Coke (and Asbury) and later on Mather. May I be permitted to refer to the first full paragraph on page 19 of last quarter's *Proceedings*. I believe Wesley's mind on this point can be summed up: "identity of orders and distinction of function".

I find rather strange Mr. Lawson's suggestion that if Coke's "superintendence was purely administrative", "action of a sacramental character" was out of place. Why should it be? This again seems to be applying modern "Catholic" ideas to eighteenth-century practice. Let us hear Wesley's comments on his own ordination: "But if any man (bishop or other) ordain that I shall not do what God commands me to do, to submit to that ordinance would be to obey man rather than God. And to do this I have both an ordinary call and an extraordinary. My ordinary call is my ordination by the Bishop: 'Take thou authority to preach the word of God.' My extraordinary call is witnessed by the works God doeth by my ministry, which prove that He is with me of a truth in the exercise of my office." (*Letters*, i, p. 322; see also v, p. 257.) Applying this attitude to the "setting apart" of Coke, Wesley would surely have regarded that action as the "ordinary call" to Coke to exercise his function "to preside

over the Flock of Christ" (Wesley's certificate to Coke). This passage has interesting implications regarding Wesley himself: Wesley could be the Superintendent of Methodism (for this use of the word see letter by Charles Wesley in J. S. Simon: *John Wesley the Master Builder*, p. 74) without a church ceremony setting him apart—he had an "extraordinary call witnessed by the works God doeth by my ministry". Hence Wesley can write to Mrs. Fletcher of "my proper labour" (*Letters*, vii, p. 128): "It seems to have been the will of God for many years that I should have none to share *my proper labour*. My brother never did. Thomas Walsh began to do it; so did John Jones. But one died and one fainted. Dr. Coke promises fair; at present I have none like minded" (italics not mine). Hence, as indicated before, "We are committed by Wesley to the view that God calls certain men to exercise episcopé, that it is not a question of succession, or even ordination, but of function."

I am, however, a little disturbed at Mr. Lawson's distinction between the sacramental and administrative aspects of the office, and his implication that our Separated Chairmen are following the intention of "many of the senior preachers" of Wesley's day who "seem to have felt that the Connexion ought to be governed by Methodist bishops who should be *more than administrative officials*" (italics mine). This appears to be not only applying "Catholic" ideas to eighteenth-century practice, but also trying to move Methodism much closer towards the "Catholic" position than last year's legislation justifies.

VICTOR E. VINE.

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Nottingham Conference, 1957,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN THE

Ebenezer Methodist Church, Arnold, Nottingham,

On Wednesday, 10th July, at 7-30 p.m.,

BY THE

Rev. OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE, M.A., Ph.D.

Subject: "THE UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCHES."

The chair will be taken by

MR. NOEL SHAW (Haydon Bridge, Northumberland).

The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held at the same church at 6 p.m.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ibberson kindly invite any members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom of the Ebenezer church at 5 p.m. It is essential that all those who desire to accept this invitation should send their names to the Rev. Allan Thornber, B.D., 19, Milner Road, Sherwood, Nottingham, by Monday, 8th July, at the latest.

To reach Ebenezer church from the centre of Nottingham, take a No. 20, 20A, or 52 'bus from the Market Square, and alight at the Library in Arnold. It is one minute's walk from that point to the church, which is situated in Front Street, and which may be easily recognized by the clock on the front of the building. Total travelling time from the Market Place: 20 minutes.