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Proceedings

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JOHN FLETCHER AND THE TREVECKA COLLEGE REVIVAL

On 24 August 1768 George Whitefield opened Lady Huntingdon's College at Trevecka in the parish of Talgarth, near Brecon.¹ At least three years before she had planned a college to train evangelical ministers, but it was not until the summer of 1767 that she found the man to preside over it - John Fletcher. After that all went smoothly. Howell Harris supervised the building works which began in December 1767, servants were hired, and a small farm established to provide food for the students. However the chapel was not ready for use until the day before the opening, and building work only ended in November 1768.²

The College buildings consisted of a sixteenth-century farmhouse, Trefeca Isaf (now called College Farm) and a wing erected for the use of the students. It is situated on the road from Talgarth to Llangorse, and only 500 yards away from Howell Harris's settlement. It was part of the lands known as Lower Trefeca which Howell Harris had leased for 21 years from his brother Thomas in 1765. Harris sublet the house, orchard and some land to the Countess for the remainder of the term in a deed dated October 1768.³ The central hall of the farmhouse became the College chapel and the rest of the original building accommodation for Lady Huntingdon, Fletcher and visitors. The new building provided bedrooms and a study for the students.

¹ This college is not to be confused with that founded in 1842 in Howell Harris's buildings by the Welsh Presbyterians (W.P. Jones, *Trevecca College*, Llandyssul, 1942).

² National Library of Wales, Trevecka letter 3227.

³ For a description of the house see *Brycheiniog*, vol. 10 (1964), pp. 90-94.; and for the lease see *Journal of Hist. Soc. of Presbyterian Church of Wales*, vol. 16, pp. 32-34.

The College departed from the pattern of the earlier dissenting academies. No fees were charged: the Countess was responsible for tuition, board, clothing and travelling expenses. No denominational test was imposed: the Connexion did not yet exist and students were allowed to enter the Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational Churches. The only requirements were a commitment to evangelism and paedobaptism.⁴ The curriculum was very similar to that of the academies, but often cut short when Lady Huntingdon sent out students to preach after a few months. Not all were able to return to their books.

Since the College was Lady Huntingdon's personal foundation there are no minutes, registers, or other formal records for the period up to her death in 1791. For information about its early history we are dependent chiefly on the letters written to her by Fletcher, masters and students when she was absent from Trevecka.⁵ It is to this that we owe the description of a religious revival at the College less than three months after it opened. Lady Huntingdon had gone to her Brighton chapel, but John Fletcher had not yet left for Madeley. He and Howell Harris apparently hoped for some such manifestation. On 2 November they both interviewed all the students and Harris emphasised to them the 'need to know God'.⁶ On the next day Fletcher preached to the students from Philippians iii.3. A further exhortation by Harris on 5 November was not successful but on 10 November Fletcher was able to send the following letter to the Countess:⁷

Lady Huntingdon's College
10th November 1768

My Lady

As I was going to Chapple last sunday afternoon⁸ I wrote a few lines to your Ladyship, where I complain'd of the want of power: All here wore a melancholy aspect as to spiritual things, a round of duties and

⁴ See G. F. Nuttall, *The Significance of Trevecca College* (1969).

⁵ These letters are the property of Cheshunt College Foundation at Westminster College Cambridge. I am indebted to the Foundation's Governors for permission to print John Fletcher's letter here.

⁶ The events leading up to the revival are recorded in Harris's diary (National Library of Wales, Trevecka diary 253). I am indebted to the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales for permission to consult the diary.

⁷ Cheshunt College archives, F1/1449

⁸ 6 Nov.

a form of godliness distinguish'd us from a worldly academy, and that was all, A spirit of levity, irony and trifling sat in the temple of God, and the humble broken wrestling spirit of prayer had disappear'd. I was almost carried away by the force of the stream, and wish'd myself away. I preach'd upon the six first verses of the 34th Psalm which was read that evening and I trust the conscience of 2 or 3 of the students bore them witness they liv'd at the utmost distance from the religion there describ'd. I spent the evening in giving them a reproof one by one, and insisting upon a promise that in the strength of the Lord, He with whom I expostulated, would make [a] stand for God in the college whether the others did or not. I told them that if things went on at this poor trifling formal rate I would advise your Ladyship to pick out half a dozen of the [most] earnest, and send the rest about their business, that room might be made for a better set. They pleaded guilty, and most of them with tears. Two of them propos'd the setting apart a day of fasting and humiliation. I fix'd upon the following Wednesday in my own breast, and found a hope that the Lord would then come and stir up our dear hearts. But He was better to us than my hopes, he answer'd before we call'd. Monday as I was at prayer in my room, between 12 and 1 Hull⁹ knock'd at the door and as soon I had let him in, told me he could not live, he was the most guilty and abominable of all men, he had trifled with God, he deserv'd the hottest hell and wanted to know what he must do. I put him upon praying and believing, and after complaining to the Lord he could do neither and attempting to do both with great agony for about an hour, the Lord set him at liberty. Prayer was then turn'd into Praises. 'What shall I render thee Lord, Thou has brought my soul out of hell, thou has blessed me, I'll tell my brethren,' etc. He seem'd to surrender himself very heartily to God to do or suffer any thing as a Preacher, Lord said he send me to the ends of the world or to the stake, if thou wilt, but give me to bring one soul unto thee - (He is just come again to my room while I write this, begging to know how he should walk more humbly with his God and lovingly with his brethren, and I have the comfort to see him enquire of the Bishop of souls while I continue my letter, but to return.) After we had spent another hour in praises and intercession for the college and its Foundress etc. I took him to the study and told his brethren I hoped the Lord had made him their Brother by giving him access to Our Elder Brother. They receiv'd the news in so very stupid a manner that I took him out of the room again. We went to get some refreshment, and coming back to the study we had the comfort to find our brethren upon their knees, praying as people who wanted an answer. When the afternoon lectures we[re] over, I stay'd in the study answering some questions which some of the students wanted to have resolv'd, about half an hour after 5 Ellis¹⁰

⁹ Probably Christopher Hull who was later expelled from the College.

¹⁰ William Ellis, who afterwards preached at Woburn (Beds.).

came in a hurry to the study, and said 'Hull and Cos[sons]¹¹ have got together and pray as I never heard any body pray.' They had got in one of the little Rooms near that of Mr Williams.¹² Hull was praying for the students that God would awaken them and take them from their vanity and carelessness and bless them as he had blessed him etc. etc. I had taken the students that were in the study with me to the bottom of the stairs from whence we could hear Joshua and Caleb thus praying for their prayerless Brethren. When shame had cover'd their faces I took them to my room and began to pray also, by and by one and another of the students came in and [joined] us, about 8 o'clock our hearts were greatly enlarg'd and we found Power Power coming upon us and loosing us from earth and self. Honest Gibbons¹³ acted his part manfully both in praying and singing, and helped me to fect in 4 of our brethren who were praying in an other room by themselves, but as they thought to little purpose. When we were all together the Lord loos'd again all our tongues, and we pray'd round, I trust, the prayer of humiliation and faith. We were in the dark but we needed no candle not so much as to give out hymns, admirably proper verses being given to one or an other of the young men to give out in the intervals of prayer. Shipman¹⁴ himself was forc'd to pray and was almost overcome. We parted at half an hour past ten after a watch night of the Lords own appointing. But most of the young men were soon brought back again, on the following occasion. Betty our Maid¹⁵ had stole into the room when we were all in the dark, and when she was alone she began to pour out her complaint as being empty, dry and forgotten in the midst of the general shower. We pray'd with and over her for about an hour more when the Lord set her at liberty also and turned her mourning into the greatest transports of joy and love.

The next morning I was agreeably waked by the hymns and prayers of the young men, who spent the day as Christians. At night we spent 2 or 3 hours in prayer in the chapel where the Lord met us. Mr Harris¹⁶ came and gave us a good lift by a prayer of faith and at night we went and invited his oeconomy¹⁷ to turn to the Lord with us. That evening your letters came just as Shipman (whose heart open'd in

¹¹ John Cosson went to Bethesda in Georgia with other students in 1772, and later preached to the Indians.

¹² Williams was the first master at the College. He later quarrelled with Howell Harris about Harris's daughter, was 'given over to Satan' by the Countess, and left Trevecka.

¹³ Daniel Gibbons, who later preached at Ulverston and Lancaster.

¹⁴ Joseph Shipman was one of the students expelled from St Edmund Hall, Oxford. He later left the College without completing the course. He appears to have been an unsatisfactory student.

¹⁵ Probably Betty Hughes who later married John Cosson.

¹⁶ i.e. Howell Harris.

¹⁷ Harris had founded a Moravian-type settlement at his home in Trevecka which he called his 'Family'. 'Oeconomy' was the Moravian term for a settlement.

stead of bigotry) had been heartily praying for your Ladyship, and asking pardon for having grieved you. He was melted by your condescension and seems exceeding glad of the proposal you make him, and I hope will do good if he keeps as simple as he has been these two days. Yesterday was our fast or rather our feast. At 6 o'clock we met in the chapple and spent 2 hours in prayer and singing with Mr Harris's people. We met again at 9 by our selves, Shipman who had discontinued to preach, open'd his mouth again, and gave us a warm sermon. The students read the Victory of David over Goliah [*sic*] and upon my desiring any one who had any word of exhortation upon it, to say on. Several spoke till half past eleven and Mr Williams amongst them. At 12 we met again and the young men dedicated themselves again to the Lord, I trust in a solemn manner. At two they seem'd to have had as much devotion as their fasting bodies would bear, and those who chose it went to get some refreshment. The fear of breaking these old bottles with new wine made [me] to avoid proposing devotions for the afternoon but Gibbons and Rowly¹⁸ [going] to pray in the Chapel the blessed sound drew one an other then till at four o'clock we were all in the field brought there without any command but that of the Holy Ghost. We had a good time thanks be to our good Lord, he took off weariness from the young men and gave them to feel the service of God may be perfect freedom. The door of intercession was [o]pen to us and strength given us to pray round and enter in at the opening. Your Ladyship, your companions, chapels and flocks were not forgotten, and something of the liberty of the children of God was seen and felt among us. A Welsh woman who drop[t] into the chapel threw in her mite of prayer in such accents as could have melted marble hearts, and the little boy that cleans our shoes was so far wrought upon as to make the chapple ring again with Love for an hour after we had left it with bitter cries for the coming of Christ to his soul. 'Come Lord Jesus, come to a little boy, come to a wicked boy, give me a new heart before I go to hell.' He was set at liberty. We went after this to return our neighbours the visit they had paid us in the morning and Shipman gave us a practical, experimental and very suitable discourse on Gal: v. 1. He had done with his points and preach'd much deeper than the surface of doctrines. Mr Harris warmly seconded him. We have often pray'd that this might not be a flash but a spark before a fire, and I hope that he who quenches not the smoking flax will not quench us. This little revival hath been wrought without any preaching and at a time when a violent cold disabl'd me from speaking and striking in with the Holy Spirit's influence. The effects of it are a love to prayer, an end of divisions, a degree of zeal for God, brotherly kindness and watchfulness, and an

¹⁸ Adam Rowly who later preached at Warwick.

apparent concern for souls and victory over flesh and blood. That this may last and encrease will be I doubt not the prayer of your Ladyship and I trust the endeavour of your Ladyships unworthy servant

J. Fletcher

My Christian respects wait upon the Elect Ladies and the dear Christian Friends at Brighthelmstone.

Excuse haste My Lady I hear our young men upon duty and I want to be with them. Mr Williams behaves very well and stedily among them. Enthusiasm is kept down. I fear they will fall rather by carelessness than by too much warmth.

15th November 1768. I thought it better not to send this letter the day it was written, and have just time to tell your Ladyship now, that my hopes of a revival among the young men so far as to be stirr'd up to remember on what terms they were admitted to the College continues so still. I shall leave them to morrow morning resolv'd I trust to seek the Lord where he is to be found. Shipman is come back, his spirit of bigotry is broken thro' grace as well as that of many more. I trust your Ladyship will have comfort from him, tho' it is eleven at night I hear a parcel upon their knees and beg to leave my pen to join them. I am your Ladyships unworthy Servant

J. F.

The young man from London came yesterday and gave us 2 or 3 prayers today sprinkled with sweet tears and what is better the blood of a saviour. I hear nothing from Davenport.¹⁹

This letter is important not only because it is the only description of the revival, but also the contemporary information we have about the appearance of the building. Although College Farm still stands, it is in a sad state of disrepair. The new wing is too dangerous to enter and the floor of the students' bedrooms has collapsed. The older part of the building is still habitable, and it appears that the chapel retains its original furniture. This is in complete contrast to Howell Harris's settlement which has been carefully restored and a small museum opened in the Victorian chapel.

EDWIN WELCH

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¹⁹ Neither of these persons can be identified.

THE MUSIC OF SAMUEL WESLEY ON RECORD : AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY

(The recent growth of interest in the music of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) has resulted in recordings of many of his works. This article surveys Wesley's output and discusses some of the recordings available.)

THE music of Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), son of Charles and nephew of John Wesley, has been largely overshadowed by that of his better known son Samuel Sebastian (1810-1876), with whom he is often confused. Samuel Sebastian, who was organist of the cathedrals of Hereford, Exeter, and Winchester, and of Leeds Parish Church, was the foremost composer of Anglican church music of his time. Many of his anthems have a secure place in the Anglican cathedral and parish church choir repertory, and one of them, 'Blessed be the God and Father', has recently had a far wider exposure than its composer can ever have dreamed of through its use in the BBC television adaptation of Joanna Trollope's *The Choir*. Many of his hymn tunes have appeared over the years in Methodist hymn books, often to words by his grandfather: of particular note is *Wrestling Jacob* ('Come, O Thou Traveller unknown'). His best known tune is *Aurelia* ('The Church's one Foundation').

Yet the celebrity of Samuel Sebastian should not blind us to the considerable achievement of his father. Samuel Wesley was the most brilliant organist and the most original and gifted English composer of his generation. Like his elder brother Charles (1757-1834) he first came to public prominence as a musical child prodigy; but unlike Charles, whose early brilliance soon faded, he continued to maintain a high profile in the London musical world throughout his life, both as a performer and as a composer.

As a composer Samuel was highly prolific, but comparatively little of his music was published in his lifetime. Until recently he was little more than a name in the history books, known chiefly from his Methodist connections and as the father of Samuel Sebastian, from some colourful anecdotes about his private life, and from a handful of compositions. Among these were his splendid eight-part motet 'In exitu Israel', a few other motets and anthems, and a few of the organ pieces. But the bulk of his output remained unpublished, unperformed, and unknown.

During the last twenty or so years, however, the situation has changed considerably, and a reassessment of Samuel's music and the important role he played in English musical life of his period is well under way. Modern editions have been prepared, there have been live and broadcast performances, and he has appeared as 'Composer of the Week' on BBC Radio Three. Most importantly, commercial recordings of a number of his works have been issued, as a result of which it is now possible as never before to get to know and enjoy the music of this immensely gifted and multi-faceted composer.

The Orchestral Music

Much of Samuel's considerable output of orchestral music dates from his teenage years and was written for the celebrated series of private concerts that he and his brother Charles organized at the family home in Marylebone between 1779 and 1787. The concerts involved a small professional ensemble and played to audiences which sometimes numbered over fifty, providing invaluable opportunities for the two brothers to perform and compose. Three symphonies by Samuel from this period are featured on a recording by the Milton Keynes Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Hilary Davan Wetton (Unicorn Kanchana DKP(CD) 9098). They are fluent and accomplished works, attractively written and always enjoyable, if not always entirely original in their style. The obvious point of comparison is with the symphonies of C. F. Abel and J. C. Bach, both of whom were based in London, and whose music would have been well known to Samuel.

Music from the same period is also represented by the Violin Concerto in D, included on a recording of English Classical violin concertos played by Elizabeth Wallfisch with The Parley of Instruments, directed by Peter Holman (Hyperion CDA 6685). This, one of seven concertos written for the family concerts, dates from 1781, when Samuel was only fifteen. It is a substantial and ambitious work, with virtuoso solo writing which makes considerable technical demands of the soloist. If, as seems likely, Samuel wrote it for himself to play, he must have been no mean violinist.

There is a smaller amount of orchestral music from later in Samuel's career. Most notable is the Symphony in B flat of 1802, also included on the Milton Keynes Chamber Orchestra recording. It is Samuel's only mature symphony: an ambitious work of great originality and power, quite unlike anything else written in England (or indeed anywhere else) at the time. Tantalisingly, nothing is known of the circumstances of its composition or performance.

Church Music

At the same time as the family concerts, Samuel was finding another outlet for his compositions in the unlikely surroundings of the Roman Catholic church. The most elaborate church music in London was to be found in the chapels of foreign embassies, which were the only places where Roman Catholic worship could at this time legally take place. The chapels with the strongest musical traditions were those of the Sardinian, Portuguese, and Bavarian embassies, and it was to one or more of these that Samuel gravitated in or around 1778, attracted largely by the splendour of the music and ritual, and no doubt also by the warmth of the welcome he would have received from Samuel Webbe, the leading figure in London's Roman Catholic church music at the time. Samuel's first compositions for the embassy chapels date from November 1780 and mark the beginning of an involvement with Roman Catholic church music that was to continue, off

and on, for most of the rest of his life. In 1784, much to the dismay of his family and of the Methodist community, he converted to Roman Catholicism. His period of whole-hearted commitment to Roman Catholicism appears to have been brief, however, and his later involvement was for musical rather than religious reasons.

Samuel was also involved with the music of the Church of England. He was repeatedly unsuccessful in his applications for church appointments, but he was able to maintain contact with Anglican church music through friends and professional colleagues. One of these was Thomas Attwood, organist of St Paul's Cathedral, who arranged to have parts of Samuel's Morning Service in F performed there on Christmas Day 1808. Many other pieces of Samuel's Anglican church music no doubt owed their composition to similar circumstances. The complete Morning and Evening Service was eventually performed at St Paul's in 1824 and was published by subscription later in the same year.

A recent CD of Samuel's sacred music by the Choir of Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, directed by Geoffrey Webber (ASV CD GAU 157) brings together a representative selection of Samuel's Anglican and Roman Catholic church music, together with some short examples of his organ music. Significantly, almost all of the choral items are billed as world premiere recordings. The Anglican church music is represented by the Jubilate and the Nunc Dimittis from the Service in F and a poignantly Purcellian setting of 'O Lord most holy' from the Burial Service, dating from 1800. From the Roman Catholic church music are two pieces ('Ave Regina Caelorum' and 'Magnificat Anima Mea') which date back to Samuel's first involvement with the embassy chapels in the early 1780s. The setting of 'Ave Regina Caelorum' is a little gem which deserves to be far better known, and is well within the grasp of choirs of only modest abilities. From slightly later on is an elaborate eight-part setting of 'Dixit Dominus' from 1800, and the darkly evocative *Carmen Funebre* of 1824, a setting of the last words spoken to Samuel by his father before his death. The most extraordinary item in the collection is an elaborate setting with virtuoso organ accompaniment of 'Domine salvam fac reginam nostram Mariam' written for use in the Portuguese chapel, when Samuel himself would doubtless have played the organ part. The organ music is represented by the popular 'Air and Gavotte' from the *Twelve Short Pieces* of 1816 and the Voluntary in D of 1828 dedicated to Samuel's friend William Drummer.

Large scale choral works

Samuel's largest choral work is the *Missa de Spiritu sancto*, for soloists, choir, and orchestra, written to mark his conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1784 and later sent to Pope Pius VI in Rome. At this time there was nowhere in London that could have accommodated a liturgical performance of it, and the conclusion is inescapable that Samuel wrote it without performance in mind, and solely to exhibit his considerable technical

abilities. The *Missa de spiritu sancto* appears never to have been performed subsequently, and it is thus the most spectacular example of a neglected Samuel Wesley composition. An edition is currently in preparation, and it is hoped that the Mass will have its world premiere performance later this year, and in due course a commercial recording.

Samuel wrote two other large scale choral works for soloists, chorus, and orchestra: the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day* and a setting of 'Confitebor tibi, Domine' (Psalm 111). Little is known about the circumstances of composition of either. *The Ode on St Cecilia's Day* is on a text written in 1694 by Samuel's grandfather Samuel Wesley of Epworth (1662-1735). It is dated 21 October 1794, and it seems likely that Samuel intended it for performance on St Cecilia's Day (22 November) of that year, to mark the centenary of his grandfather's poem. But no performance took place then, and it received its only performance in Samuel's lifetime at one of the Lenten oratorio concerts at Covent Garden in February 1799. There is a modern edition of the score and it has been performed and broadcast in recent years, but there is as yet no commercial recording.

Samuel's setting of 'Confitebor tibi, Domine' dates from 1799 and is his choral masterpiece. Like so much of his music, it shows his deep knowledge and understanding of a wide range of musical styles, from the Handelian, which informs much of the choral writing, to the more modern style of some of the solo items. Its performance history is entirely typical of the large scale works. It seems likely that, like the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, it was intended for one of the oratorio concerts, but in the event it had to wait until 1826 for its first performance, at a concert which Samuel promoted himself. Its next complete performance was not until 1972, following the preparation of a critical edition of the score. This opened the way to further performances, the most recent of which was in October 1995 as part of the BBC's *Fairest Isle* series in celebration of music by English composers. Like the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, it still awaits a commercial recording.

Organ Music

Samuel's fame in his own day was chiefly as an organist, both as a recitalist and as a soloist in his own concertos. He was particularly noted for his skill as an extempore player: his obituary in *The Times* hailed him as 'the most astonishing extemporaneous player in Europe', going on to remark that 'his resources were boundless, and if called upon to extemporize for half-a-dozen times during the evening, each fantasia was new, fresh, and perfectly unlike the others'.

This side of Samuel's genius is lost without trace, although a reflection is to be seen in a number of rapturous first-hand accounts of his playing. But he also composed copiously for the organ, and much of his output in the genre was published in his lifetime. Despite the publication of many modern editions in recent years, the organ music is still under-represented in performance and on recordings, except by a few artists who have gone

out of their way to include it. Jennifer Bate has recorded many of the important Op. 6 voluntaries in the various volumes of her 'From Stanley to Wesley' series of recordings. There is also an attractive CD of organ music by three members of the family (Samuel, his brother Charles, and Samuel Sebastian) by Margaret Phillips (YORK CD 111) where Samuel's contribution is represented by the delightful *Twelve Short Pieces* of 1816 and the G minor voluntary, Op. 6 No. 9. Other pieces crop up here and there on recital discs, but there is as yet no complete recording of the Op. 6 voluntaries, and no recording dedicated exclusively to Samuel's organ music.

Piano music

As with the organ music, a considerable amount of Samuel's piano music was published in his lifetime, and for much the same reasons: there was a ready market for it, and pieces could be published as single items at comparatively low cost. The burgeoning demand for simple and straightforward pieces for amateurs encouraged the production of pot-boilers, of course, as Samuel well recognized: 'what can I do?', he complained, 'they tell me to write something easy, and not to take more than six or seven plates'. But much of Samuel's piano music is of far greater interest than this self-deprecating remark would suggest, and now that a selection of the rondos and variation-sets is available in a modern facsimile edition it cannot be long before some of it is recorded.

Chamber Music

Among the music that Samuel wrote for the family concerts was a large amount for various chamber combinations. None of this repertoire is recorded, and the only chamber work currently in the catalogue is a very problematic piece which may possibly not be by Samuel at all. This is the large scale String Quartet in E flat, included in a compilation of English music for string quartet played by the Salomon Quartet (Hyperion CDA 66780). There is no autograph manuscript, but the style of the Quartet suggests a composition date in the 1820s; if it is indeed by Wesley, it shows an entirely new side to his musical character.

The future

As will by now be apparent, it is possible to hear a good deal of Samuel's music in recordings. There are still many gaps which one would like to see filled: in the area of choral music, the *Missa de spiritu sancto*, the *Ode on St Cecilia's Day*, and the *Confitebor*; in the organ music, a complete recording of the Op. 6 voluntaries; and some recordings of piano music to redress the almost complete absence from the catalogue of this side of Samuel's output. The vocal music is also ripe for exploration: there are large numbers of solo

songs, duets, glees, and catches which still are completely unknown. Nonetheless, a good deal has been done, and a good deal more is in prospect. Much of the recording activity comes as part of Hyperion's *The English Orpheus* series, a major project which, under the direction of Peter Holman, has so far issued over 40 CDs of little known or unknown English music of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. Samuel's music has already featured on many of the recordings, and we can expect that it will continue to play an important part in the series as it continues.

PHILIP OLLESON

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METHODISTS AND TRACTARIANS

Mats Selen. *The Oxford Movement and Wesleyan Methodism in England 1833-1882: a study in religious conflict*. Lund University Press 1992. Pp. 438. ISBN: 0 86238 313 7. Obtainable in Britain from Chartwell-Bratt Ltd, Old Orchard, Bickley Road, Bromley, Kent, BR1 2NE, £20.00)

THE relationship between nineteenth-century Wesleyan Methodism and Tractarianism has been surprisingly neglected by historians. A few studies such as R. N. Flew's essay, 'Methodism and the Catholic tradition' in *Northern Catholicism* (1933), Trevor Dearing's *Wesleyan and Tractarian Worship* (1966), J. C. Bowmer's *Pastor and People* (1975), Martin Wellings' paper, 'The Oxford Movement in late nineteenth century retrospect: R. W. Church, J. H. Rigg, and Walter Walsh' (forthcoming in *Studies in Church History*, 33), and most notably, John Munsey Turner's *Conflict and Reconciliation* (1982) and David Hempton's *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (1984), touch on the interaction and parallels between the two religious traditions. Mats Selen's *Oxford Movement and Wesleyan Methodism*, however, is the first really systematic treatment of the Wesleyan response to the Oxford Movement.

Selen's scholarship is impeccable. Less inclined to downplay the conflict between the two traditions than scholars working to a modern ecumenical agenda, Selen explains the historical context and theological basis of the mutual antipathy (chapters 5-9 are especially illuminating on the theological points of divide). The hostility of Wesleyan Methodism and Tractarianism, however, was perhaps not as inevitable as Selen assumes. The Oxford Movement of the 1830s had some parallels with the Oxford Methodism of the 1730s prior to John Wesley's Aldersgate Street experience. Wesley never entirely abandoned his high church sacramental heritage, even after jettisoning apostolical succession and the doctrine of *jure divino* episcopacy. The Oxford Movement sometimes was presented by its adherents as a 'completion' or 'perfection' of the work of the Evangelical Revival of the

previous century. It is well known that many Tractarians came from Evangelical backgrounds, and Pusey adopted an almost 'Evangelical' phraseology in his spiritual and sacramental writings. Tractarianism and Wesleyan Methodism might have found common ground in the mutual pursuit of holiness and disciplined devotion, even if the one was mediated through the confessional and the other through the class meeting; both movements historically were opposed to latitudinarian rationalism on the one hand and to merely 'high and dry' churchmanship on the other. Why then were they to become locked in such bitter polemic, and to remain so reluctant for so long to share their riches, except perhaps hymnody? Selen provides some compelling answers.

As Selen demonstrates, the implications of Tractarian ecclesiology and sacramental theology threatened the ecclesiastical identity of Wesleyan Methodism. The logic of 'no bishop, no church' explicit in the *Tracts for the Times* effectively 'un-churched' Methodism, reducing it to the level of other protestant nonconformist bodies. Methodists were stung by Pusey's accusation that they preached 'justification by feelings' and portrayal of Methodism as 'one of the most dreadful scourges with which the church was ever afflicted'; they were outraged by the Anglican Newman's charge of 'formal heresy' as well as schism. Of course, there had been a long tradition of eighteenth-century anti-Methodist polemic from within the established church; Bishop Lavington's *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared* (1749), being a classic specimen of the genre. Methodists were portrayed as dangerous enthusiasts and disturbers of the peace, lacking social respectability. Selen does not make the point, but it is significant that Newman and other Tractarians actually deplored the tone of much of this critique while also lamenting that the Hanoverian church authorities neglected to employ more forcefully the weapon of apostolical authority. The charge of schism increasingly was raised by high churchmen in the wake of Methodism's formal separation from the established church after Wesley's death in 1791. In spite of the *de facto* separation of Methodism in the 1790s, however, 'Church Methodists, continued to assert a qualified form of Anglican loyalty which satisfied contemporary latitudinarian definitions of church membership. As late as the early-1830s, Wesleyan Methodists posed as supporters of the established church, and were recognised as such by many Anglican divines. The rise of the Oxford Movement, by undermining the Church of England's status as a bastion of protestantism, pushed Wesleyan Methodism into adopting a more self-consciously denominationalist mentality and nonconformist identity.

Wesleyan Methodism's ambivalent ecclesiology (in spite of Jabez Bunting's efforts to sharpen it) rendered it vulnerable to Tractarian denials of its ministerial claims; the ecclesiological oversight being a product of John Wesley's refusal to accept that he had separated from the Church of England. By taking a prominent lead in responding to 'Puseyism', Wesleyan Methodists acted in ecclesiastical self-defence. They could turn the tables on the Church of England by claiming to be the more reliable custodian of

protestantism. Yet while Anglican Evangelicals shared in the anti-Tractarian rhetoric of the Wesleyan Methodists, they kept their ecclesiastical distance and did little to relieve Wesleyan Methodism from its increasing sense of isolation from the Church of England; an isolation regretted by some Methodist divines but relished by others.

In reacting to Tractarianism, Wesleyan Methodists gradually watered down their own sacramental inheritance, notably the doctrines of baptismal regeneration and eucharistic sacrifice; use of such term as 'priest' and 'altar', freely employed by the Wesleys, was rejected by nineteenth-century Wesleyans (as it was also rejected by nineteenth-century Anglican Evangelicals) because such terms were thought to imply belief in a eucharistic propitiatory sacrifice as taught by Tractarians. Tractarian apologists made capital out of the shift, but as Selen notes (p. 173), surprisingly they failed to dwell on the no less significant deviation of nineteenth-century Wesleyans from John Wesley's own teaching on justification.

Selen's exposition of the negative impact of Tractarianism on Wesleyan Methodism is searching, but he sheds much less light on Tractarian attitudes to the inner life of the Methodist movement; how representative of later Tractarianism were Pusey's strictures on Wesleyanism in his controversy with Thomas Jackson in 1842? While Selen's material is well ordered, there is an abstract character to his account of the theological debates. The printed pamphlet literature of self-conscious polemic is exhaustively utilised, but more use of archival diocesan or parochial records and private manuscript papers might have provided a corrective local emphasis; possibly modifying Selen's picture of unrelieved denominational polarisation. Parochial examples of growing Anglican-Methodist estrangement, notably over burial rights and education (which Selen, pp. 78-9, touches upon) under the pressure of Tractarianism, were sometimes offset by equally significant examples of continued co-operation and mutual influence up until about 1870. The impact of the Oxford Movement hardened denominational boundaries but Frances Knight's excellent study, *The Nineteenth-century Church and English Society*, suggests that in relation to Anglicans and Methodists, the process was slow and far from uniform. Wesleyan 'occasional conformity' persisted to a late period in some localities. Knight cites some remarkable instances of mutual cooperation between even Tractarians and Methodists; showing that many Cornish Methodists supported the revival of the bishopric at Truro in the 1870s, despite the distinctively Anglo-Catholic tone of the venture. In evidential terms, Knight's findings must be regarded as provisional, and her contention that for many Wesleyans, the Anglo-Catholic emphasis on sacramental worship was not in the least alien to their theological understanding may be open to question. Her research, however, reveals that high church Anglican-Methodist relations locally could be more complex than Selen allows. Moreover, as Frederick Jobson's espousal of the Gothic style illustrates,

Wesleyan Methodism was not immune from the architectural dimension of the wider Catholic revival.

Selen also tends to follow nineteenth-century Wesleyans in using the term 'Tractarian' too broadly, when merely 'high church' would have been appropriate - as in 'the Tractarian doctrine of baptismal regeneration' (by no means, of course, a peculiarly 'Tractarian' doctrine). It may have suited Wesleyan Methodists in the 1840s to blame 'Puseyism' for attacks on their 'church' status, but Selen overlooks the extent to which attacks on Methodism for breaching church order and authority predated the *Tracts for the Times*; they were a common theme in pre-Tractarian high church apologetic from at least the 1790s onwards, if not from the beginning of the Evangelical Revival. Many of the Anglican critics of Methodism in the 1830s, such as writers in the *British Critic* (Selen mistakenly dates Newman's editorship of the *British Critic* from 1836 rather than from 1838), were old-style high churchmen rather than followers or disciples of Newman and Pusey. Selen cites the *Church of England Quarterly Review* as sternly critical of Wesleyan claims to ministerial order in 1837, without noting that same journal was no less staunchly opposed to the *Tracts for the Times*. The Tractarians had no monopoly of anti-Methodist sentiment within the Church of England.

These minor weaknesses and omissions apart, Selen's study deserves to be recognised as an insightful, scholarly contribution to an important but neglected subject. Selen's work is a worthy successor to a tradition of penetrating Swedish scholarship on the Oxford Movement, stretching from Yngve Brilioth to Rune Imberg. As with the work of Brilioth and Imberg, Selen's study once again reveals that it often takes an outsider to shed critical light on what native historians might overlook.

PETER B. NOCKLES

Methodist Archives: Manuscript Accessions, Autumn 1995 - February 1997

Various items from the library of Hilda Harrison (d. 1993), d. of Archibald Harrison (President of Conference, 1943/44), including notebooks, sermon registers, printed class book, printed letters of 18th century Evangelicals, and miscellaneous news cuttings. Deposited by Sheila Himsworth. (MA 9410).

Papers of the Methodist Association of Youth Clubs, 1939-1979. Deposited by the Methodist Board of Lay Training. (MA 9423).

A manuscript letter of John Entwisle to the Rev. J. Keeling, 21 Jan 1836. Purchased. (MA 9462).

A manuscript letter from Samuel Waddy to the Rev. Jabez Bunting, 11 February 1837. Purchased. (MA 9467).

A collection of seven manuscript letters, including two from Mr Watson Smith to his son, Richard Smith at Kingswood School, 1841-42. Purchased. (MA 9489-95).

A collection of 18th century newspapers containing references to John Wesley and George Whitefield; 1760-91. Purchased. (MA 9589-96).

Correspondence files relating to the Faith & Order Committee, 1960-80 (MA 9597).

Parcel of Conference voting records for President & Vice-President of Conference, 1936-63. Deposited by the Conference Office. (MA 9598).

Manuscript papers of the Rev. E. Benson Perkins comprising: diaries, sermon registers, photographs, Epworth Old Rectory Local Management Committee minutes, and lecture notes. Deposited by the Property Division. (MA 9611).

Box of manuscript notebooks containing lectures and sermons (many in shorthand), re. to Rev. W. T. Davison and J. R. Rowe of Wesleyan College, Handsworth, Birmingham. Deposited by the Property Division. (MA 9613).

Album of Wesleyan class tickets 1816-1903 relating to the Richard family of Lancashire. (MA 9302).

PETER B. NOCKLES

BOOK REVIEWS

Issues in Education. Some Methodist Perspectives ed. by T. Macquiban (Applied Theology Press, 1996, pp. 163, £10.00, ISBN 1 874677 95 6).

'The attitude of Methodism to education has been wavering and uncertain' wrote A. W. Harrison, a former Principal of Westminster College and Secretary of the Methodist Education Committee, in 1932. The continuing ambivalence of Methodism to education is reflected in this collection of papers produced for a conference at Westminster College which, in the event, as Tim Macquiban laments in his introduction, failed to 'attract enough support to run'. It was a bold decision, therefore, to publish the still-born conference papers run on as 'a stimulus to the wider discussion of what it means to be a Methodist within the educational system today'.

Five of the eight papers, comprising just over two-thirds of the book, offer perspectives on Methodist attitudes to education in its historical context. Donald Tranter in a thoroughgoing re-evaluation of John Wesley's educational influence challenges Maldwyn Edwards' claim that 'John Wesley's importance as a social reformer lies chiefly in his service to education'. He argues that despite his passionate educational Arminianism, which found practical expression in both fee-paying and charitable school foundations, Wesley was no educational innovator and lacked a fundamental understanding of educational psychology. He concludes that, in numerical terms, the Methodist contribution to education during his lifetime was insignificant and that there is little evidence of any substantial Methodist activity in education after his death. Mark Bishop shows how precarious the management of Kingswood was for many years, whilst John Gibbs traces the gathering momentum of Methodist involvement in elementary education and teacher training from the mid-nineteenth century. David Carter assesses sympathetically, but not uncritically, the influence on elementary and higher education of J. H. Rigg, whom he regards as 'perhaps the most outstanding educationalist in the history of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion', whilst William McAllister shows how Methodist minorities in Northern Ireland exercised an educational influence disproportionate to their numbers.

Some unfortunate errors have crept into the text. W. E. Forster's surname is twice contracted to Foster; a misprint on page 90 renders the meaning of an extended quotation from Rigg's treatise on national education and public elementary schools unclear and Arthur Young is reported travelling prematurely around Ireland towards the end of the seventeenth century. There is a need for further research into Methodist involvement in education at grass roots level in the half-century following John Wesley's death to test Tranter's conclusion that vigorous Methodist initiatives were lacking. Local records, for example, reveal that Jabez Bunting, well-known for his rôle in the establishment of a northern school for the sons of itinerant ministers at Woodhouse Grove during his superintendency of the Halifax circuit in 1812, was also instrumental in the foundation of the Halifax British School in 1813. Moreover, almost half the scholars who passed through the school during the period 1813-21 were Methodists.

The concluding section of the book, with contributions from Howard Marratt on religious education, Steve Moore on higher education and Kenneth Wilson on the future of education, adopts an essentially philosophical approach and is considerably less wide-ranging in its discussion of the plethora of contemporary educational issues than, for example, Derek Robson's article in the *Epworth Review* for May 1996. Wilson ultimately pleads for a holistic approach to education and worship and suggests that the communal and personal emphases within the Methodist tradition place Methodism in a particularly good position to offer a society a contemporary Christian theology of education.

Protestant Nonconformists and the West Midlands of England: Papers Presented at the First Conference of The Association of Denominational Historical Societies and Cognate Libraries, edited by Alan P. F. Sell (Keele University Press, 1996, pp.xi, 179. £40.00. ISBN: 1 85331 173 1)

This volume, as its rather cumbersome title indicates, is one of the first results of Alan Sell's initiative to breach the defences of the hitherto largely self-sufficient denominational historical societies and initiate fruitful dialogue between them. It is to be heartily welcomed as such, even if it demonstrates how far we still have to go before anything resembling real dialogue emerges. What we have in these papers, in fact, is confirmatory evidence of how real the denominational isolation still is. Each contributor ploughs his or her own lone furrow, leaving the reader to find and explore connections and cross-currents where they exist. There is no over-all topic or theme running through the contributions, such as is found in the 'Studies in Church History' series published by the Ecclesiastical History Society.

Happily, the volume's geographical (albeit loosely defined) parameters do not restrict its interest for a wider circle of readers: on the contrary, there are many things here to invite or demand comparison between different regions. Despite its lack of cohesion, the volume is full of good things and deserves widespread attention.

The topics dealt with vary widely. Alan Argent explores the contribution of personalities from the West Midlands to the overseas missionary movement of the late eighteenth century, with particular emphasis on the Independent minister George Burder of Coventry. He uncovers some of the cross-currents affecting the establishment and development of the London Missionary Society. David L. Wykes takes a fresh look at the 'Priestley riots' in Birmingham in 1791, prompting a comparison with those in the Wednesbury area half a century earlier. John H. Y. Briggs, with 1791 as his starting point, surveys Baptist activity in Birmingham during the nineteenth century; and W. Eifion Powell deals with that of Welsh emigrant congregations during the same period. David Thompson takes a fresh look at R. W. Dale and the 'Civic Gospel'. The shortest and weakest contribution is the opening paper, on eighteenth-century Quakerism.

The Methodist ingredient is provided by Dorothy Graham in the form of a history of the Primitive Methodist educational venture, Bourne College, not hitherto chronicled. Opened in January 1876 at Summer Hill, Birmingham and moving in 1882 to purpose-built premises at Quinton, this 'middle-class' boys' school survived for little more than half a century. Dr. Graham draws extensively on the school records for her detailed account of its fortunes and some of the personalities involved. She offers some interesting reasons for its rather abrupt demise in 1928. A very useful addition to the history of Methodist educational activity - but one which belongs to the West Midlands by little more than geographical chance and takes no account of what educational contribution other denominations were making. Herein lies the weakness, not of Dr. Graham's paper, but of the volume as a whole and the conference from which it derives. But a worthwhile start has been made in the right direction.

John Wesley's Doctrine of Prevenient Grace by Herbert McGonigle (The Wesley Fellowship, 1995, pp. 31, ISBN 0 95163 324 4. Obtainable for £2.25 including postage from Dr H. McGonigle, Nazarene Theological College, Dene Rd., Didsbury, Manchester M20 2GU).

This is an admirably clear and lucid exposition of John Wesley's doctrine of prevenient or (as he liked to term it) 'preventing' grace - the grace of God which comes to fallen humanity before there is or can be any movement of their own towards God. Long before his 1738 conversion Wesley had rejected at least the extreme versions of predestination though he had problems in reconciling this rejection with Article 17 of the Thirty-Nine Articles. For some years he even allowed that some might be predestined to salvation but that everyone else nevertheless was offered the opportunity to obtain it. This compromise he abandoned by the 1750s in favour of all being open to the offer with freewill to accept or reject it. But, as Dr McGonigle shows, there are hints in the 1720s and 1730s that Wesley was combining the assertion that original sin leads to the helplessness of humanity to save itself with a belief that moral choice survives though salvation can come only by the grace of God. His developed notion of prevenient grace seems to owe a good deal to the High Churchman William Tilly, though Tilly saw this grace as being given specifically in baptismal regeneration. In formulating the doctrine Wesley was, as so often, fighting on two fronts. He wished to avoid the Deist and Arian tendency to think in terms of a 'natural' human ability to overcome sin, and therefore he rejected John Taylor's notion that we are subject only to penalties for our voluntary personal sins rather than inheriting Adam's failure. On the other hand Wesley wished to avoid predestination. The solution for him lay in prevenient grace. We have freewill, but this is not 'natural' to us - it is a supernatural gift and given to all humankind thus avoiding the moral problems of predestination. All may therefore accept or reject salvation and God cannot be blamed for injustice if the gift is refused (as Wesley thought He could be in the Calvinist scheme).

Dr McGonigle's account does leave issues which could be further explored. The Calvinist response is not examined in detail and if the subject were to be pursued beyond the historical period concerned, one might have to ask the difficult question of how far the Bible supported either of the warring parties on predestination. For firm believers in biblical authority this was always a problem. It is worth underlining the fact that Wesley was not simply an 'Arminian' before his conversion (by then an instinctive position for most Anglicans) but (much more surprising and very unlike many Anglican Evangelicals) remained an Arminian afterwards, though an 'evangelical' and in most respects an 'orthodox' one. But most Anglican Evangelicals were very 'moderate' Calvinists. They nevertheless were deeply suspicious that Wesley was

allowing too great a rôle to human effort in salvation as well as being shocked by his perfectionism. His doctrine of supernatural prevenient grace evidently did not dispel their suspicions that he was semi-Pelagian. Evangelical Calvinists were also on strong ground when they appealed to the moderate 'Calvinism' of Article 17. But although the subject does allow for further investigation Dr McGonigle has nevertheless given us an admirable exposition of Wesley's teaching, its sources and its development.

HENRY D. RACK

Ranters, Revivalists, Radicals, Reformers and Revolutionaries. A Celebration of Methodist Local Preaching in Yorkshire, by D. Colin Dews (Leeds, Leeds Methodist District, 1996. pp. 83. ISBN 0 9528261 0 0. £3.20 post free from Peter Harper, 52 Gledhow Wood Road, Leeds, LS8 1PA).

Colin Dews disarmingly claims that this booklet gives a 'popular' account and is not based on original research. In a sense this is true, but behind the text lies a deep knowledge and understanding lovingly gained from original research in a true celebration rather than history of those lay men (and women) who made Methodism the vibrant religious movement that it once was before clericalism and bureaucracy - ever lurking in the wings - finally took the centre stage. There is a structure to the book, but episodes and personalities tumble over each other in their enthusiasm to join a story that should be read with the same enjoyment with which it was evidently written. The first chapter gives as good a summary of the development of the lay preacher in early Methodism as the non-specialist is likely to find, and this sets the scene for a second chapter on preachers in public life, in which councillors, aldermen and MPs jostle with industrialists, professors and novelists for a place in the limelight. Occasionally, the office of lay preacher is stretched to include other prominent laymen, just as Yorkshire is frequently contracted from its furthest corners in Middlesbrough, Hull and Sheffield to mean Leeds, Bradford and district. But it is all fascinating material. Then we are introduced to Ranters, Revivalists and Women Preachers, where the Free Gospel Movement, the Independent Methodists and the Jumping Ranters - the Leeds Female Revivalists about whom the author has previously written - are brought in. This then leads on to a scattering of delightful word sketches of some of the 'characters' of the pulpit, from Jonathan Saville and Sammy Hick to Colour-Sergeant William Mason: repentant sinners calling others to repent. All life is within these covers, impressionistic but recognisably true.

EDWARD ROYLE

Pure, Universal Love: Reflections on the Wesleys and Inter-Faith Dialogue ed. Tim Macquiban (Applied Theology Press, 1995, pp. 73, £10.00, ISBN 1 874677 03 04).

With a foreword, an introduction and a bibliography, this volume contains four papers originally presented at a conference at Westminster College, Oxford, on the Methodist contribution to the academic study of religions. The papers focus on the writings of John and Charles Wesley, as follows - 'John Wesley's Premonitions of Inter-Faith Discourse', by Frank Whaling; 'John Wesley's Practice of Intra-Faith Love', by Tim Macquiban; 'Pure Universal Love Thou Art', by Martin Forward; and 'The Grace That Saves', by Roy Pape.

The papers place the theology of the Wesley brothers in its eighteenth-century setting, and seek to draw out pointers and principles that are relevant to the study of religions and the practice of inter-faith dialogue today. The papers are characterised by clear argument, appropriate quotation, and stimulating and open discussion.

On page 43 the page reference under note 18 should read 310, not 18. A statement attributed to John Wesley on p. 69 is rather a quotation by him from the seventeenth-century Quaker, Robert Barclay. The reference to the source of this quotation under note 13 on p.70, should read volume ii, not 11.

This is the third volume in the valuable Westminster Wesley Series.

NORMAN W. TAGGART

The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century by Melvin E. Dieter (Lanham, Md., Scarecrow Press, 2nd ed. 1996, pp.219, £56.05 cloth, £33.25 paper, ISBN: 0 8108 3045 0/3155 4. Obtainable in UK from Shelwing, 4 Pleydell Gardens, Folkestone, Kent CT20 2DN)

The holiness movement constitutes the seventh largest family of churches in Protestantism. The aim of this book is to demonstrate that today's holiness churches have their origins in a distinctive blending of Wesleyan and American revivalism which was never completely divorced from historic Methodism. Dieter argues that in nineteenth-century America the evangelical revival tradition of Jonathan Edwards which pressed for an immediate and definite point of conversion was blended with the Wesleyan advocacy of Christian Perfection derived from John Wesley to produce a unique American style of holiness revival. What had been an option for a higher Christian life within Methodism now became an immediate and definite point of attainment.

In my opinion the synthesis had been achieved as early as January, 1739 when Wesley recognized two kinds of new birth - a lower one associated with justification which left the believer in the process of conquering sin

within his life, and a higher one associated with entire sanctification which left the believer the conqueror of sin. The revival of 1758-1763 can be described as the first Wesleyan holiness revival when entire sanctification was offered as an immediate and definite experience.

David Middlemiss, in his book *Interpreting Charismatic Experience* has recently raised the question of how a genuine experience of divine revelation can be proved. In my opinion the scriptural answer is to live as though the revelation was true and let the course of history decide. The story Dieter narrates in his book is the historical vindication of John Wesley's conviction of the value and validity of his doctrine of Christian Perfection as Methodism's peculiar gift to the universal church.

C. H. GOODWIN

SHORTER NOTICES

Global Praise 1 by S. T. Kimbrough and Carlton R. Young, (GMB Music, The General Board of Global Ministries. The United Methodist Church, 475, Riverside Drive, New York 10115. \$6.95).

Global Praise 1 is a first volume of songs from many countries of the world. Its aim is to explore the use of music in the mission and evangelism of the global church and throughout the connexion of the people called Methodist; and to establish a collection of songs and music of indigenous people. The works of authors and composers from many parts of the world are brought together in this volume, with words in their own language together with an English translation. Two contributions from *The unpublished poetry of Charles Wesley* are set to music, together with three other of his hymns. Altogether 68 songs are included in this collection which gives opportunity to join with others around the world to sing and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

GWEN E. BRAKE

Directory of Methodist Libraries (Applied Theology Press, 1996, 52pp. ISBN 1 874677 04 2. Available from Rev Tim Macquiban, Director, Wesley & Methodist Studies Centre, Westminster College, Oxford OX2 9AT. £5 post-free)

The fifth in the Westminster Wesley Series, this is a most useful reference work which students of the Wesleys and of Methodism will find an invaluable guide to sources of material relevant to their studies. It lists thirty-three collections of Methodist books, archives and other material and

includes both independent collections and those in more general libraries, ranging from quite modest libraries to the huge, unique, and indispensable deposit in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre housed in the John Rylands University Library, Manchester. Information for each includes the size and scope of the collection, hours of opening, conditions of use, whom to contact etc - in short, much of what you need to know to assess how useful the library is likely to be for your needs. The Gwyron Aston Library at Epworth Old Rectory is included, as is Scunthorpe Central Library which has a large Methodist collection including a long, though broken, run of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*.

J. S. ENGLISH

LOCAL HISTORIES

'God is With Us': The story of Emmanuel Methodist Chapel, Morchard Bishop Devon 1846-1996 by various authors (40pp). Copies, £1.80 post free from Rev J. Moles, The Manse, Chulmleigh Road, Morchard Bishop, Crediton, Devon, EX17 6NZ.

'Christ is our Cornerstone': Methodism in Alton from the 1840s to the present by D. L. Woodcock (vi. 70pp). Copies from the author at 28 Windmill Hill, Alton, Hants, GU34 2SL, price £4.50 post free.

A List and Brief Details of Chapels in the Sleaford Circuit Past and Present by Colin Shepherdson and Peter Robinson (9pp). Copies from C. Shepherdson at 137 Horncastle Road, Boston, Lincs, PE21 9HX, price 75p post free.

A History of Snainton Methodist Church (Yorks) by D. J. Boulter (34pp). Copies, £2.85 post free, from the author at 46 Hungate, Brompton by Sawton, Scarborough, N. Yorks, YO13 9DW.

Methodism in Bramhall by Andrew Corrie (2nd enlarged ed, 70pp). Copies, £3.00 post free from the author at 34 Grange Road, Bramhall, Cheshire SK7 3BD.

Forward with the Past (Grimsby-Cleethorpes Methodist Circuit) by William Leary (46pp). Copies, £2.50 from the author at 4 Calder Green, Messingham, Scunthorpe, Lincs, DN17 3UA.

Two Centuries of Witness: A History of Methodism in Kingsley, Cheshire by Peter Robinson (60pp). Copies from the author at Cedar House, Highbank Road, Kingsley, Cheshire, WA6 8AD, no stated price.

Our Colsterworth Heritage by Barry J Biggs (44pp + index). Copies, £2.90 post free, from the author at Walnut Tree Cottage, Church Street, Foston, Grantham, NG32 2LG.

My Memories (150 years of a Methodist farming family in East Yorkshire) by L. N. Patrick. (51pp). Copies. £3.00 post free, from the author at 'Elim', Green Lane, North Duffield, Selby, North Yorkshire, YO8 7RR.

Arbroath Methodism: The Story of Wesley's Totum Kirkie by George W. Davis (62pp). Copies from the author at 6, Gowan Park, Arbroath, Angus, DD11 2BN price £4.75 post free.

Here for Good: (Methodism in the Manchester area 1747-1997) by John Banks. (36pp). Copies, £2.50 post free, from the author at 36 Wilton Crescent, Alderley Edge, Cheshire SK9 7RG.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1500 LORD FORTESCUE AND THE LAMERTON METHODISTS

The folk-lore of Victorian Methodism contains good yarns about antagonistic clergy persuading local landowners not to sell or lease land for a chapel, only to be defeated by the sturdy Wesleyans who get hold of the only piece of freehold land in the parish. Although some squires did refuse sites, due in part to the political sympathies of potential worshippers, others did not descend to such petty victimisation. The agents of these were for ever passing to them requests for favourable leases for deserving causes, whether a village school or a cottage hospital, and it was not in their interests to offer gratuitous offence to their nonconformist tenants.

Lamerton is a rural parish two or three miles north-west of Tavistock in West Devon and the modern population is below 600 souls. A major Victorian landowner was Earl Fortescue and the local Wesleyans had a chapel on his land. In 1869 they wanted to replace it. The superintendent minister, William Piggott, wrote to Henry B. I. Ford, Lord Fortescue's agent, applying for a site. Ford replied on 21 April 1869 enclosing the response he had just received from Lord Fortescue. The response was both kindly and sensible:

40, Upper Brook Street, W.

Apl. 20 '69

Dear Ford,

I have just received your letter of the 10th. I think the request of the Wesleyans of Lamerton a very reasonable one & will readily accede to it

provided they submit the plan & design of their proposed chapel to me before I renew & it proves to be a sanatorily proper & architecturally inoffensive building. I have no wish to saddle them with any unnecessary expense or to see a grand costly building erected. But for the same modest amount such very different buildings may be erected, one pleasing though quite cheap & unpretending, another hideous and pretentious - indeed in many dissenting Chapels & several Church of England ones I have lamented that the builders had the command of so much money to misapply in incongruous decoration.

Yours faithfully, Fortescue

The result was a small masonry gabled building seating 140, sideways on to the road with a small gabled porch on the long side. The author has seen it only since its closure, probably in the late '60s, but there were at least two arched windows with plate tracery. No date stone was noticed but the observant would understand the enigmatic message on the cast iron wall plate above the porch, 'LWMC' - Lamerton Wesleyan Methodist Church. The chapel is situated in a roadside community on the south side of the A384 a little distance from Lamerton church town. The letter is in the Tavistock circuit records in the Devon Record Office, Exeter.

ROGER THORNE

1501 THE WESLEY OBELISK, NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

This familiar monument, erected in 1891 on the Newcastle Quayside, is now back in position after a major restoration not only of the obelisk itself, but of the entire site in which it stands. Thanks to the initiatives taken by the Tyne and Wear Development Corporation this riverside area has undergone a renaissance, and the staff of the TWDC have been enthusiastic over the inclusion of the obelisk in the more general restoration. Moreover the precise setting of the monument has been named Wesley Square.

The pink and grey granite obelisk was a gift of Utrick Alexander Ritson (1842-1932), a Wesleyan contractor and coal owner with interests also in Water and Gas companies. The inscription describes it as a centenary memorial to John Wesley but is also served to mark the approximate location of Wesley's first sermon on Tyneside, preached early in the morning of Sunday 30 May 1742, to the text of Isaiah 53, verse 5, which is also carved on the obelisk. Elegant monograms made up of Wesley's initials adorn the four sides of the column.

Wesley always said he lived to be useful, and the obelisk appropriately had a utilitarian purpose as a drinking fountain for people, horses and dogs. Owing to road developments and resurfacing the dog trough had gradually become buried under the ground, but is now revealed again.

A large crowd gathered on Wesley Day 1996 for the celebratory rededication of the obelisk, led by the Rev Robin E. Hutt, Chairman of the Newcastle District. Members of the Newcastle District Methodist Arts Group (Peter Collins, David Lowry and Alan Bell), in eighteenth century costume, re-enacted some of the scenes associated with John and Charles Wesley's visits to Newcastle.

G. E. MILBURN

1502 CONFERENCE HANDBOOKS

Which branch of Methodism was the first to produce a Conference Handbook and in what year? Writing in *Proceedings* (xxxi, pp. 56-9) in 1957, Wesley Swift suggested that the first Wesleyan Conference Handbook was published in 1901. On the basis of his own collection he was unable to state if any more were issued until 1907, after which they appeared annually apart from a wartime hiatus 1916-9. His researches left a number of issues unresolved and it would be interesting to know if any were produced by the Wesleys before 1901.

Wesley Swift made no mention of the Handbooks of the non-Wesleyans. Could it be that Conference Handbooks were originated by the Primitive Methodists? According to Stephen Hatcher's *Primitive Methodist Bibliography* (1980), the oldest in his collections is for 1877 and it seems likely that by 1898 they were annual publications. In addition, by the beginning of the century the tradition of Primitive Methodist Districts producing quite lavish annual synod handbooks comparable to some of the early Conference Handbooks, had come into existence.

Presumably the United Methodists issued an annual Handbook from 1907 but what was the tradition in its constituent parts?

D. COLIN DEWS

1503 LONDON CENTRAL RELIEF COMMITTEE PAPERS

In researching the Methodist experience of the Great Irish Famine during the years 1846-50 I have come upon references to the London Central Relief Committee which raised a sum in the region of £6,000 for the relief of the starving in this country. Its Secretary was the Rev. (later Dr.) Elijah Hoole, then one of the secretaries of the WMMS. Neither the Methodist Archives in John Rylands nor the Archives of the MCOB have the minutes or papers of this Committee. Should anybody know of their whereabouts, I should be grateful for the information.

D. A. LEVISTONE COONEY
Adare, Co. Limerick, Ireland.

1504 WESLEYAN CHAPEL MONEY BOXES

Collectors of Methodist pottery will be familiar with Wesleyan Chapel money boxes and the example in the Hird Collection illustrated in the Rev. Roger Lee's *Wesleyana and Methodist Pottery*. This one is inscribed WESLEYAN CHAPEL, but other identical models are known with different inscriptions. I have recently acquired one simply inscribed SAVING BANK, and Roger Lee refers to one inscribed 'Samuel Townsend 1848'.

It would be interesting to know whether these chapels are modelled on a specific building, and not just figments of the potter's imagination. An example illustrated in Miller's *Antiques Price Guide*, 1992, may provide the answer. This is inscribed 'Sarah Ducker Fendull, Doncaster, Bourne 20 August 1846'. This much is clear from the photograph. The text underneath the photograph also states that it is moulded [*sic*] upon 'The Wesleyan Chapel, Bank Street, Mexborough'. Although these latter words are not visible on the photograph, the use of quotation marks presumably indicates that they are inscribed somewhere on the model. Does anyone know of an illustration of the Mexborough Chapel of the 1840s, or a description, which would confirm this?

Roger Lee warns collectors to beware of modern reproductions. A modern example I have seen was in a quite different style of pottery and in no way would have been confused with those described above, although it is possible the ones he has seen more closely resemble the originals.

JOHN H. ANDERSON

1505 A JOHN WESLEY WATCH

Gordon Hallam of 32 Syston Road, Queniborough, LE7 3FX has shown me an heirloom, which came to him from his grandfather, Thomas Biggs, a local preacher who was well-known in Leicester. It is a silver watch with an engraving of John Wesley on the dial. It has a verge escapement and fusee movement, hall-marked in Birmingham in 1801 and made by Alex Hollistone (of Liverpool or, possibly, London, known in horological records as in business in 1795) and sold by Eric Poyser and Sons, who are still trading in Nottingham.

Gordon would be interested to discover whether anyone has further knowledge of such watches. In the first decades after the death of John Wesley were many such watches (and, maybe clocks and similar items, other than the crockery, of which we are all well aware) being offered to the admirers of the Father of Methodism?

S. Y. RICHARDSON

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

will be delivered in Wesley's Chapel, City Road, London

on Monday, 30 June 1997 at 7.30pm

by **Roger F. S. Thorne JP FSA**

'All together now...The United Methodist Church 1907-1932.'

Chairman: The Rev C. Norman Wallwork MA

The Lecture will be preceded by TEA* for members at 5pm
and the Annual Meeting at 6pm.

** It is essential to book with the General Secretary by 20 June 1997.
Cost £1.00 per head.*

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS: Northern Line (Old Street Station) walk
down City Road.

The Museum of Methodism is being opened especially for us
FREE OF CHARGE (though a donation would be appreciated)
as long as the members are identifiable. We suggest members
wishing to visit the Museum produce a copy of the May issue
of the *Proceedings*, containing this notice, otherwise they will be
required to pay the normal entrance fee.

The 1998 WHS Conference will be held at Wesley College, Bristol,
14-17 April 1998 on the theme 'Revival, Retreat and ReUnion:
Methodism 1890-1932'. For further information, contact the Rev
Colin Smith, 13 Enmore Road, London, SW15 6LL.