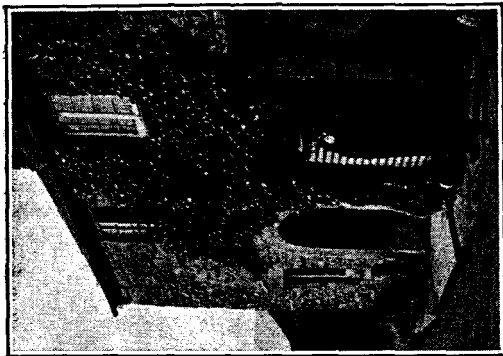




JOHN WESLEY

(At the old Chapel, Altnamum)

Blocks kindly lent by Mr. Stanley Sowton.



TREWINT

EARLY DAYS OF CORNISH METHODISM

I. THE GROWTH OF CORNISH METHODISM.

The story of the coming of Methodism to Cornwall is a familiar one, and so long as sincerity and zeal in religion are valued it will be an undying one. In these articles it is not proposed to repeat the well-known passages in the *Journal* describing the first coming of the two Wesleys in the July and August of 1743 and their subsequent work in the County, but as it were to fill in between the lines and illustrate the story with some facts which have come my way in the course of several years' research in Cornish religious history.

After its first planting in Cornwall, Methodism grew in numbers and influence, especially through the latter part of the 18th and first half of the 19th centuries. This growth was most marked in the western districts of Cornwall, being the mining districts in particular, where the greater proportion of the population was found. This is both the reason for, and the result of, the obvious concentration of the Wesleys' work in the west so evident in the *Journal* accounts, and contrasts with the comparative neglect of the Eastern agricultural areas later worked by the Bible Christians.

The mining districts then included the parishes of St. Just-in-Penwith, Camborne, Redruth, Gwennap, Breage, Sithney, Crowan and Gwinear,—names which will be familiar to every reader of the *Journal*. In these parts the work of the Wesleys bore much fruit, as we may gather from the returns of membership made to the Conference in and after the year 1766.

Up to 1764 Cornwall comprised one vast 'Round', but in that year, when Thomas Rankin was labouring in the County, it was decided to divide the circuit into two, the line of demarcation being a few miles east of Truro.¹ Returns from each circuit make it easy to compare the strength of Methodism in East and West. In 1767, 1,602 were returned for the West circuit, and 558 in the East,² though the geographical extent of the latter was almost twice that of the former.

1. *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, 1865. v. 176.

2. *Minutes of Conference*, in loc.

In succeeding years there was an ebb to a total of 1,971 in 1780, but in 1782 Revivals were experienced on a large scale in the St. Just area ushering in a phenomenal increase in membership, which was maintained, with some set backs, over many years.

In 1790 the total number of formally admitted members of Society was about 4,000. In 1810 it had risen to 7,875, and by 1830 there was a membership of 16,690.³ The population of the County was estimated as 188,269 in 1801, and in 1821 it was returned as 257,447. Within these years, therefore, there was a population increase of about 36%, and an increase of Methodist membership of 74%.—evidence of the great advance of the new mission.⁴

The rapid increase after 1780 roughly parallels the rising number of people engaged in mining and ancillary employments consequent upon extended use of improved machinery for pumping and ore dressing. The first engine on Watt's plan was erected in the Chacewater area about 1778, and more than doubled the depth at which ore could be gained. Trevithick's boilers and high pressure engines trebled the work done by the Watt engines, and as a result deep and wet mines hitherto impracticable, could be worked with profit, involving augmented numbers of labourers.

Some of the larger mines brought together daily hundreds of men, women and children to work them. 1,200 were employed at Poldice mine,⁵ Gwennap. In 1808 Dolcoath, Camborne, gave work to 1,600,⁶ Great Wheal Vor, Breage, in the same period had 592 men, 327 women, and 255 children on the books.⁷ In 1833 the small Deanery of Penwith, covering the chief mining parishes of West Cornwall yet measuring only about 25 miles by 5½, contained nearly 80,000 inhabitants—that is, almost a third of the whole population of Cornwall.⁸

A great mine dominated the countryside, and its doings were the topic of conversation in the whole district. When Methodism had found acceptance among a few miners, its spread among the crowds would be rapid. Since devotions, services

3. Ibid.

4. Table, *W. Meth. Mag.* 1824, 378.

5. Collins, *Observations on West of England Mining Region* (1912), 555.

6. Warner, *Tour through Cornwall* (1809), 131.

7. *Observations*, 170. 8. Grylls, *Visitation Sermon*. 1833, xi.

and conversions took place in the mines themselves, it was not long before Mining and Methodism became so interwoven as to be almost synonymous terms. This identification was of course assisted by the indifference of some of the parochial clergy to the new communities in their midst, as well as by the hostility of some others.

Richard Rodda had a miraculous escape as he prayed in the Cornish mine in the 1760's.⁹ No doubt the telling powerfully influenced his mates towards acceptance of the new faith. 'Foolish Dick' Hampton came in the course of his preaching journeys about 1812 to a Western parish, and, as he records,

'They brot me to Godolphin Mine, and theree,
stannin' up in a buckin' house, the Lord gove
me power to ex'ort hunderds of people'¹⁰

In Revival periods, many were 'pricked in their hearts' in the very bowels of the earth.¹¹ The mention of Revivals reminds us that the process by which the new enthusiasm spread was not a regular one. A strange rhythm is clearly discernible, with a marked ebb and flow of excitement, reaching its climax at about every sixteen years. The most prominent Revivals, affecting large districts and spreading far and wide in Western parishes were in the years 1764, 1782, 1799, 1814—the 'great Revival'—and 1832. Every one of these had its origin in a mining district, and the East of Cornwall was by comparison hardly touched at all. Local Societies were augmented and multiplied to an amazing degree. According to the old West Cornwall circuit and preachers' Book, the largest Societies out of the 33 Cornish Societies were, in 1774, Redruth (128 enrolled), Gwennap (146), Illogan (74), St. Just (70), and Camborne (76). At the height of the Revival of 1799 the largest Societies returned a membership of Redruth (754), Tuckingmill (459), St. Agnes (411), Kerley (376), Gwennap (342), Truro (234) and Perranwell (182). As a result of this great harvest the West circuits named from Redruth and St. Ives (the single West circuit set up in 1764 was divided in 1785) were further augmented by the creation of the Truro and Helston circuits. In the Penzance area no less than 2,000 were added to the local Societies.¹² That at

9. *Arminian Magazine*, 1784, 357.

10. *Foolish Dick* (1873) 48. 11. *W. Meth. Mag.* 1824, 330.

12. *Minutes* :

Zennor rose in number from 17 to 100, the Hayle Copperhouse Society from 65 to 150.¹³ In two days and nights at St. Ives in Easter week, 1799, 150 were converted, and in a few weeks the membership grew by nearly 400.¹⁴

The greatest of all the Cornish Revivals which fall within the first hundred years, however, was that of 1814. This was pre-eminently the 'great' Revival. It began at Camborne (not, as commonly stated, at Redruth) at a Love-feast held on the evening of Sunday, 6 February 1814. Among those present was Henry Andrew Vivian, a young Camborne Methodist whose MS. diary survives to tell of the days of excitement in the district. He says, 'the people spoke well until half-past ten, then the preacher (Mr. Haime) concluded, just as he had done the smoking flax burst forth into a blaze, for there was one here and another there and so on, crying for mercy, and the deare man of God would not give them up —no less than seven whent home rejoicing in a sin-pardoning God.' The excitement drove all else out of his mind, and on March 8 Vivian noted, 'I have not had time to write, it first broke out here at our Love-feast, where there where seven converted, the preacher menshoned it at Redruth and it had some good effect.'

Unparalleled scenes were witnessed, the chapel at Tuckingmill for instance, being 'occupied without intermission both day and night'¹⁵ for nearly a whole week, and again large increases of numbers in Society were recorded.

It had to be admitted, however, that there was very often a very serious falling off of interest and membership after the peak of the excitement had passed. For example, the zenith of the 1799 Revival saw Cornish Methodism with a membership of 10,739. In 1803 it was 7,405,¹⁶ and a similar tale could be told of the other Revivals, so that comment was made in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* on this feature of the Cornish Revivals.¹⁷ But in spite of minor ebbs and waves the tide came in irresistibly in the West.

In the East, a few scattered Societies kept the name and zeal of Wesley alive. A few Methodists were to be found in

13. *Methodist Mag.* 1799, 409f.

14. *Ibid*: see also *Memoirs John Edward Trezise* (1837), 48.

15. *Methodist Magazine*, 1814, 393.

16. *Minutes*, Cornish Circuits totalled. See *Meth Mag.* 1813, 167

17. *W. Meth. Mag.* 1824, 822: 1830, 363.

the hamlets and villages round Linkinhorne in 1767,¹⁸ though they did not total more than fourteen. Saltash and Maker reported that there were a few in 1779,¹⁹ Stratton a handful in 1798, St. Minver a few in 1812, without a place to meet in, and in 1816 at Morwenstow there were but six or seven. The rural districts had no gathering ground such as the Western mine supplied, and except in a small and late mining area round Callington and Calstock, where Methodism quickly became strong, the growth of power was slow and partial,—a fact which drew the attention of the Bible Christian leaders O'Bryan and Thorne and determined the shape of their mission.

Much assisting the Western growth was the (sometimes over-emphasised) indifference or hostility of the parish clergy and the 'coldness' and 'formality' of their services when contrasted with the excitement and emotional colour of the contemporary Methodist preaching. But if the Established Church may justly be accused of failing to present a living message, so may also the remnants of the old Dissent, whose failure was more lamentable than that of an Anglican Church stirring to the calls of a Samuel Walker, a John Penrose, a Henry Phillips, and others who will come before us in a later chapter.

Even the Calvinistic wing of the great religious awakening displayed in Cornwall an inability to capture the crowds,²⁰ and though Baptist and Independent labours were later prosecuted with much zeal, their successes were negligible beside the multitudes gathered to the Methodist ranks. An indication of this remains in the Returns made to the Bishop of Exeter in 1821 of Nonconformist places of worship in his Diocese, of which Cornwall then formed a part. At St. Austell, for instance, there were seven Methodist chapels, but only one for 'Calvinists'. At St. Agnes there were six Methodist and one Calvinistic place of worship.²¹ 'Only in the parishes of Kenwyn and Kea do the Calvinists appear to have been in the majority, and this is quite exceptional.'²²

Such was, in outline, the early and vigorous growth of

18. Venning, *East Cornwall*, (1901), 174.

19. Exeter Diocesan Registry, MSS, 1779, 2326.

20. See, for example, J. Wesley's comment in *Journal*,
Fri., 28 Aug. 1778.

21. Exeter Diocesan Registry MSS, 1821, 242, c.

22. J. Wesley, *Letters*, (1931) vii, 201. Ex. Dio. Reg. MSS, 242, c.

the Cornish Methodist community. Its close identification with the native Mining industry leaves its traces to this day in the close juxtaposition of Methodist Chapel and old mine workings. Its humble origin is still attested by the little wayside meeting-houses in the lonely hamlets of the moorland parts, and perhaps these little Bethels more effectively witness to the sincerity of the first generations of Methodists than the sometimes pretentious edifices of the towns.

In further articles the opposition with which Methodism had to contend may be set out in its bearing on the affairs of the day, and the important question of Methodist relations with the little-known revival taking place within the Anglican Church under the influence of Cornish Evangelical clergy, will be dealt with, while it may be of interest to give in conclusion some description of the lost unity of Cornish Methodism.

H. MILES BROWN.

This seems an appropriate place in which to call attention to two excellent little books dealing with Cornish Methodism which have been published recently.

Michael Verran of Callington and Thomas Carlyle, by the Rt. Hon. Isaac Foot, P.C. (Epworth Press 5/-). Mr. Foot tells us that for many years he has felt an obligation to gather up the materials for this story of a man whose name was brought to his notice in the perusal of Carlyle's *Life of John Sterling* over forty years ago. Twenty years later he was impressed by an article on the subject contributed to the *Methodist Recorder* by the Rev. Mark Guy Pearse, and later on the *Journal of Caroline Fox* impressed him by the glowing papers devoted to the story of Carlyle's intervention on Verran's behalf. This good man interested the author as a Methodist, of the Bible Christian type, belonging to Callington, the town in which he resides. In 1944 Mr. Foot became the possessor of a small file of papers which were offered for sale by the Sterling family, including the Petition drawn up in 1842 by Carlyle for the purpose of assisting Verran, reproduced in the book. This acquisition, with the publication about the same time of *Caroline Fox* by Wilson Harris led to the writing of this delightful memoir.

Michael Verran, born in 1808, was blessed with a mother who is called by Mr. Foot "an authentic representative of the best product of Methodism". Under her influence Michael became a Methodist. He became a miner like his father; beginning work as a little boy, he had to wait until he was thirty-five years of age before he learned to read or write. When the discovery of copper ore at Caradon, near Liskeard, about 1837, attracted many miners from West Cornwall Michael left his native place near Truro and found a home at Callington.

Chapter three tells in vivid prose the story of an eventful day in August 1842 when, with self-denying courage, he gave the first

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opportunity of safety to a fellow-miner in a situation which threatened him with immediate death by so doing. His words to his comrade revealed his firm assurance that after the moment of his violent death he would pass at once into the presence of his Lord. His life was spared in marvellous fashion, and knowledge of the event reached Thomas Carlyle, who was deeply impressed. For the results the reader must turn to the book where is shown the part played by John Sterling, between whom and Carlyle there existed "one of the noblest friendships in the history of English literature." Sterling was at this period resident in Falmouth, and Carlyle sought his advice and help.

Caroline Fox, of Falmouth, was a member of a West-country Quaker family. Sterling's friendship with her is nearly as famous as that which existed between him and Carlyle. Her help also was secured and a sum of money was raised to supplement savings which Michael Verran had been putting by for the purpose of securing some education. The Petition began with the following words in Carlyle's handwriting :

To Michael Verran, seemingly a right brave man, and highly worthy of being educated, these small gifts of money, if they assist him therein, are with all hopefulness and good regard presented by certain undersigned fellow way-farers and war-farers of his.

The author's main purpose in writing this book has been to pay tribute to Michael Verran and his wife whose headstone stands in the churchyard of Callington. He desires also to raise a memorial to Catherine Verran, Michael's mother, who died in 1876 aged 92. His aim is achieved; and in addition something is told of Cornwall and the Cornish miner of a century ago; John Sterling is brought to remembrance; a great deal of the personality of Caroline Fox is revealed; and light is shed upon the character of Thomas Carlyle.

Truly Rural, lights and shadows on the history of North Hill Circuit (Cornwall) of the Methodist Church 1743-1946, compiled by the Rev. Herbert Bolitho. The first 31 pages of the 102 contained in this book are headed "The General Story" of a Circuit within whose borders there is no town, no railway, no great industrial undertaking, no water mains or gas mains, no common drainage system, no secondary school, no place of public amusement. Amenities common to urban areas are missing, save that grid electricity reaches a few of the chapels. But a great story, worthily told in this book, began when Wesley came to this country side in 1743. Having told it with a full detail revealing careful research and skilful arrangement Mr. Bolitho prints many pages headed "Personalalia" containing a remarkable mass of information concerning men and women who have carried on the work of the Circuit in successive generations. This must be of intense interest to residents therein, but no lover of Methodist biography can fail to be delighted with these sketches. Many names worth remembering are rescued from oblivion by this admirable record. The book concludes with a chapter "Grave and Gay" and 6 useful appendices, mainly statistical. This praiseworthy produc-

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tion may be obtained for 5/6 post free from the Compiler who has been well served by his printer and other helpers. The book is enriched by many attractive illustrations.

Mr. Stanley Sowton has kindly sent us two blocks used in *Truly Rural* and they appear as our frontispiece.

The first is Trewint, the home of Digory Isbell; particulars may be found in *Proceedings*, xvii, 193.

The second is a bas relief of John Wesley to be seen over the door of the *old* Chapel at Altarnun, (Churchtown) which was used for worship up to 1859, and is now used as a schoolroom. It is the work of Neville Northey Burnard as a youngster, but it is not known from what original he worked. The Rev. Sabine Baring Gould, in *Cornish Characters and Strange Events*, (1st series, p 186 et seq) gives a sketch of this genius born in a Methodist family at Altarnun. The only education he received was in a Dame's school kept by his mother. He assisted his father, a mason, and his earliest carving implements were sharpened nails. At the age of fourteen he cut a tomb-stone for his grandfather's grave. He was eighteen when he carved in granite the Wesley relief. Sir Charles Lemon became his patron and introduced him to work in London where he soon secured many commissions. He received encouragement from Thomas Carlyle. The Lander Statue at the top of a prominent column to be seen in Truro is Burnard's work. He executed portrait busts of Professor John Couch Adams (a fellow-Cornishman), and of W. M. Thackeray. He exhibited at the Royal Academy in the middle of last century. F.F.B.

ROBERT JONES OF FONMON CASTLE

Robert Jones, of Fonmon Castle in Glamorganshire, was great-grandson of Col. Philip Jones (1618-1674), a faithful supporter of Oliver Cromwell, and the Comptroller of the Household under him and his brother. The Colonel hailed from Llangyfelach, but in 1654 he bought Fonmon Castle from the Earl of Bolingbroke, and it became henceforth the family seat. His adherence to the cause of Parliament had been far from profitless for him, and "notwithstanding the virulent attacks made upon him by Anglican clergy and

disillusioned Dissenters, he weathered the storms of the Restoration, secured his estates pretty well intact, and before his death had become High Sheriff of Glamorgan."¹ Under the Commonwealth he had been "the virtual ruler of

1. T. Richards: *Wales under the Indulgence*, 11.

Glamorgan", and in later days the family retained its position among the leading gentry of South Wales.

His grandson, Robert Jones, senior (1681-1714), was elected unopposed to Parliament, but his career was cut short by his early death at the age of thirty-three. Robert's wife was Mary, second daughter of Sir Humphrey Edwin, a wealthy London wool-merchant, who despite his open adherence to Presbyterianism was knighted in 1687 and made Lord Mayor of London ten years later. Sir Humphrey had bought the Llanfihangel estate near Bridgend in Glamorganshire and it was in this way that his family's connection with Glamorgan began.² Both Robert Jones and his wife

2. See the article on him in *D.N.B.* Two of his grandsons John and Charles, were M.P.'s and there are numerous references to their wives in *The Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon*, (i. 87n. and 174n. particularly).

were thus descended from people who had close connections with Dissent, but he himself was apparently a faithful member of the Established Church, and in his will he directed that his children should be brought up "according to y^e doctrines of y^e Church of England as by Law established."³ They had five children, Robert, Oliver, Elizabeth, Mary and Ann.

3. *N. L. W. Fonmon MS. 1.*

Robert junior was only eight years old when his father died. He was for some time a student at Christ Church, Oxford, (Matriculated April 24, 1724), but he apparently left without taking a degree. One of his contemporaries at Christ Church was Charles Wesley, but it appears they were not acquainted with each other at that time. After leaving Oxford, Robert Jones settled down on his estate in Glamorganshire, and in the year 1732 he was married at Penmark Church to Mary, fifth daughter of Robert Forrest of Minehead in Somerset. He had already been Sheriff of Glamorganshire in 1729, and like the rest of his family he seems to have taken a leading part in the public life of the County.⁴ He also seems to have

4. See also *W.H.S. Proceedings*, iv, 44.

been engaged in a lawsuit, in which his mother and only surviving sister, Mary, claimed £2,300 plus over £478 interest from him as being due to his deceased sister Elizabeth; judgment was awarded plaintiffs with costs. According to Charles Wesley, he was very much a man of the world in his youth.

Plunged in a world of fashionable vice,
And left his God, and lost his paradise.

The traditional account of his conversion reads as follows :

[In the year 1740, Howell Harris] was preaching at Llwynddiddan, in the vale of Glamorgan, not far from Fonmon Castle, the residence of Mr. Jones, a gentleman of an ancient family . . . Hearing of Harris's meeting he made for it with all speed, accompanied by a party of gentlemen, and having in his hand a drawn sword. In no degree alarmed by his threatening appearance, the preacher simply desired the people to make way, and changing his discourse from Welsh to English for the purpose of being better understood by his hostile visitors, was fortunate enough to see Mr. Jones's horse stick fast in the mud just within hearing distance. The truths which this furious country squire heard on the occasion so affected him that he became an altered man; . . . ⁵

5. H. J. Hughes: *Life of Howell Harris*, 126-7.

In its present form, however, the above narrative can hardly be correct. As early as July 1739, Henry Davies of Blaengwrach refers to him in a letter to Howell Harris: "Esq^r Jones of full moon [i.e. Fonmon] is a man y^t is truly inclin'd to piety, and very loving to assist those y^t comes [sic] together to keep Religious Societies, thereab^{ts}. He is an example of Godliness in his House and neighbourhood."⁶

6. *Trevecha Letters*, No. 174.

Harris experienced some opposition at Llwynddiddan in August 1738, and Jones's conversion may have dated from that time although he is not mentioned in Harris's Diary (No. 32) under that date, and there is no suggestion in Henry Davies's letter that he had been converted under the ministry of Howell Harris himself. Moreover, we would gather from Charles Wesley's *Elegy on the death of Robert Jones* that the change came over him gradually :

Roused from the sleep of death, he never knew
To fix the point from whence the Spirit blew,
So imperceptibly the stroke was given,
The stroke Divine, that turn'd his face to heaven.

However, the man who had been "friend to the world, and enemy to God," was so changed by July 1739 that he could be

described as "an example of Godliness." During this period. says Charles Wesley, God

Led him the way that nature never knew,
And from the busy careless world withdrew,
To serious solitude his heart inclined,
Tired with the noise and follies of mankind,
Impatiently resolved to cast the world behind.

On the first day of January, 1741, Howell Harris visited Fonmon, for the first time as far as we know, accompanied by John Deer of St. Nicholas in the Vale of Glamorgan. Harris describes the visit thus in his Diary, (No. 67):

there pt. 2 staid to pt. 6. Ye Ld. help'd me to say ye Truth on every subject & so had joy in comg. out—sd. how I went abt. at first ye Truth abt. ye Wesleys—ye good & bad—how I came from und ye Law to Xt.—of Justification by Faith only—this he understood so far in his head that I tear I did not convince him . . . was help'd to be witht. respect of Persons home. He was very meek and did bear Contradiction . . . parted in great Love—O how difficult it is for ye rich to be sav'd tho' near they come to it. . . .

The "bad" concerning the Wesleys was presumably their attitude towards Election and Christian Perfection, and what Harris regarded as Charles Wesley's hypocritical behaviour during his visit to South Wales in the previous November, pretending to Harris's face that he was almost a Calvinist himself, and then preaching undiluted Arminianism when his back was turned. Robert Jones himself sympathised with the Arminian standpoint, as Harris's account of another visit he paid in the following March shows, (Diary 70):

disputed abt. Election—free Will—fallg. from grace—Universal Redemption &c. O how is nature in love with this . . . but O how unlikely is a man to be convinc'd by Disputes &c.—had some sweet Discourse abt. Denyg. our own Righteousness &c.—but my soul was not full of Joy—I spake of ye Wesleys here ye good & bad &c.—parted in Love

Harris was at Fonmon again in May (Diary 73), and he reports that Jones "begins to see ye need for Xt's Righteousness." In the following June an open breach occurred between Harris and Charles Wesley at Bristol, owing to doctrinal differences, and they were not reconciled for some weeks. Harris himself spent those weeks partly at Bristol and partly in London, so that he had no further opportunity to visit Fonmon again for some time.

GRIFFITH T. ROBERTS.

To be Continued

"THE MANCHESTER ROUND"

It has been our pleasure to publish in the *Proceedings* the results of the painstaking researches which the Rev. C. Deane Little has made into the origin and early progress of Methodism in Manchester. With those researches the Rev. Wesley F. Swift has been closely associated. The work of these brethren forms the foundation of a booklet bearing the above title, in which the Rev. F. H. Everson sets forth the story in interesting and popular fashion, relating it very successfully to the life and opportunities of to-day.

The Bicentenary celebrations of the establishment of Methodism in Manchester were held on Tuesday, 14th October, and were impressively supported.

We have received a copy of a Souvenir celebrating the 150th Anniversary of Salem Methodist Church, Higher Broughton, Salford, the mother church of the Methodist New Connexion in Manchester. The first Conference of the M.N.C. was held in Leeds in August 1797. Rev. J. Mort was appointed to Manchester, an important centre of the movement.

The Society worshipped in the house of a member until 1800, when Mount Zion, the first M.N.C. Church in Manchester, was built in Nicholas Street, between High Street and Shudehill. This was sold after a short period of use, and the Society moved to a much smaller chapel over the premises of Abel Heywood, of 60 Oldham Street. In 1834 Ebenezer Church in Peter Street was opened and in 1851 Salem was opened in Strangeways, a remnant continuing to worship at Peter Street till 1863. Services were held at Strangeways until in 1889 under the leadership of Rev. J. Le Huray the Strangeways property was sold and the present spacious edifice was built for £6,800.

We understand that in course of preparing this booklet more material was gathered than could be included; we hope that when conditions are more favourable the full story will be told.

F.F.B.

METHODISM ON THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

Dr. William Warren Sweet, Professor of Church History at the University of Chicago, author of the Beckly Lecture for 1946 on *The American Churches*, reviewed in our September issue, has now published the fourth volume of a

massive work called *Religion on the American Frontier, 1783-1840*. The first three volumes dealt with the Baptists, Presbyterians, and Congregationalists. The fourth is on *The Methodists*. It is described as a "collection of scarce materials" and its 38 pages of bibliography are evidence of the research which Dr. Sweet and the students in his Seminars have put into its preparation.

In four introductory chapters the beginnings of American Methodism are outlined. When the other preachers sent out by Wesley returned to England, as the Revolution gained strength—Asbury alone remaining in America—Methodism developed as an indigenous movement under the leadership of American preachers. Coke arrived in 1784 and, together with Asbury, guided the Christmas Conference through its task of organising the Methodist Societies as an autonomous Church. "Although the smallest and most humble religious body in America, the Methodists" says Dr. Sweet, "were the first to secure an independent national ecclesiastical organisation". This organisation is then described, and the story of Methodist growth and expansion, unfamiliar to most British Methodists, is carried forward, in outline, to 1850. Methodism in the new Republic had an early start and the mobility of its itinerants gave it an advantage over other religious organisations. The hero of the story is the Methodist Circuit Rider, who braved the perils and hardships of the Frontier "to carry the message of the Gospel and its civilizing influence forward".

The rest of the 800 pages of this handsome volume is given to a collection of scarce materials, mainly from journals, letters, and reports, illustrating the work of the Circuit Riders. Of particular interest to British readers are extracts, almost telegraphic in brevity, from the journal of the saintly Bishop Richard Whatcoat, "that zealous father to American Methodism". There are two sets of Conference records, from Illinois and Indiana, and letters and reports on Methodist Missions to the Kansas tribe of Indians. Several transcripts of "Church Trials in the Early West" show with what scrupulous care discipline was maintained amongst preachers and people in communities where morals were lax and social graces were impracticable. A section on Methodist publishing activities gives us, what we wish we could have from some of Wesley's itinerants in England, details of the colportage work of the preachers, with lists of the books they carried with

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them for sale. A few specimen sermon outlines follow—on controversial theology, directed against Calvinists and Baptists. Finally, a transcript of a short exhortation given by James Axby, of Tennessee, which is as audacious and amusing as any of the legendary sayings of Billy Bray or Peter Mackenzie.

The whole book is admirably annotated. It provides varied and valuable material for the student and much to stimulate the interest of the more casual Methodist reader. Its price in England, alas, is 55/-.

E. T. SELBY.

THE EAYRS ESSAY PRIZES

(See *Proceedings*, xxiii, p. 22 and xxv. p. 13.)

It is well that we should keep up to date the list of prize winners of the Eayrs Essay Prizes, which are awarded annually for successful essays contributed by younger ministers.

The subjects of the essays, and the prize-winners, for the last two years, are as follows:—

11. 1945-6 Asbury as the Founder of American Methodism: A Comparison and Contrast with John Wesley.
First prize not awarded.
Second prize divided equally between the Revs. George Artinstall and George Lawton.
12. 1946-7 The relations between Methodism and the Anglican Church: 1791-1800.
First prize—Rev. Horace F. Mathews, M.A., B.D.
Second prize—Rev. Frank Baker, B.A., B.D.

The subject for 1947-8 is "The Relations between the Society of Friends and Early Methodism".

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

TWO LETTERS BY JOHN WESLEY

JOHN WESLEY ON FEMALE EDUCATION.

Wesley mistrusted fashionable boarding-schools, and did his best to persuade parents both of boys and girls to avoid them. Occasionally his outspoken advice undoubtedly caused

some estrangement. An example of this is the following letter to Samuel Lloyd, the banker of Devonshire Square, London, cousin of Mrs. Charles Wesley. It is published for the first time by kind permission of the owner, Sir Victor Wellesley. (The school which Wesley *does* recommend is probably Kingswood, where at this period girls were taught),

Bristol. July 8, 1751.

Dear Sir,

You have intirely satisfied me, with regard to those senseless Tales which I supposed had been told to you, as well as to others. But I cannot yet satisfy Mrs. Jones. I am just now come from her. She is still extremely displeas'd, not at you, but me; says 'I have acted a very unchristian Part; That her children are Good; & she cannot believe, the Good of Miss Lloyd was the very motive on w(hi)ch I acted.' So our Friendship, in all Human Probability, is at an end. But that I cannot help. If the Child perishes now, I am pure from her Blood; w(hi)ch otherwise I shou'd not have been.

Miss Lloyd may board for twelve pounds a year at Mrs. Robertson's, a serious & a prudent woman: And for forty shillings a year more, may be by day at one of the best schools in Bristol.

This is not only far safer than Boarding at one of those Schools w(hi)ch wou'd soon root out the very Notion of Heart-Religion) but likewise considerably less expensive: Entrance Money & other Perquisites being saved.

We must fight, before we can conquer, & run before we can win the the race. I trust you will so run, that you may obtain. I fear smooth Temptations far more than rough ones. But there is One who is able to deliver us out of all! I am.

Dear Sir,

Your very affectionate Servant,

John Wesley.

To
Samuel Lloyd, Esq.
In Devonshire Square,
London.

JOHN WESLEY AND HIS NEPHEW SAMUEL

John Wesley's concern for the children of his brother Charles is well-known. Young Samuel, the black sheep, caused his uncle much anxiety, first by his leanings towards Roman Catholics, and later by his forsaking of any kind of genuine religion.

A fresh illustration of this is seen in a letter which strangely escaped Mr. Telford's eagle eye when collecting material for the Standard Letters of John Wesley. It is to be found in Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley Family*,

just a short note dated April 28, 1790, and addressed "To Mr. Moore, at the New Chapel, City Road". It reads:

I have wrote freely to Sammy Wesley. I desire Mr. Dickenson will call upon him without delay, and invite him to his house. Probably if he strikes while the iron is hot he may save a soul alive.

The letter which Wesley had written to Samuel is in the writing of Elizabeth Ritchie, and dated April 29, 1790, though this may possibly be a slip, or a wrong deduction from Samuel's endorsement. Wesley writes:—

for some days you have been much upon my mind . . . I fear you want (what you least of all suspect), the greatest thing of all—religion. I do not mean external religion, but the religion of the heart . . . And I lament that fatal step, your relinquishing those places of worship where alone this religion is inculcated. I care not a rush for your being called a Papist or Protestant. But I am grieved at your being an heathen. *Standard Letters*, viii, 218.

Wesley's letter to his niece Sally, also written on April 28, echoes this anxiety:

I am glad to find you have not forgotten your way to the City Road . . . I wish Charles and Sammy could find their way thither.

A few weeks later, on June 12th, Wesley takes up the matter personally with the same Rev. Peard Dickinson to whose pastoral care he had commended Sammy, in phrases reminiscent of his note to Moore:

If the good impressions which Sammy Wesley frequently feels could be changed, he would probably be a real Christian. You should contrive to see him as often as you can. Who knows but you may save a soul alive. *Standard Letters*, viii, 222.

Wesley's dying efforts were unavailing, however, and did not have the success which he hoped. It is perhaps symbolic that as he lay on his deathbed young Samuel came to see him, but even as the young man was knocking at the door, his uncle in the little room above breathed his last.

FRANK BAKER.

NEW BOOKS

There has been a revival of interest in William Grimshaw, the Rector of Haworth, and this is an encouraging sign, for Grimshaw was one of the great figures of the Methodist Revival and he is all but unknown to the present generation. It is astonishing that since R. Spence Hardy's biography of more than eighty years ago so famous a helper of Wesley should have been almost completely neglected, but this defect in our literature has now been remedied by the publication of *Grimshaw of Haworth: A Study in Eight-*

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eenth Century Evangelicalism, by George G. Cragg, M.A. (The Canterbury Press, 6/- net).

Mr. Cragg is an Anglican clergyman, and it is not unfair to say that he is more interested in the Evangelical Revival than he is in Grimshaw. Indeed his avowed intention is to discover "the contribution of the Evangelical Revival to the conception of worship and doctrines in the eighteenth century", and for this purpose Grimshaw is a useful medium, a tool which he sharpens to good purpose.

This being so, the reader will not expect to find here a connected account of Grimshaw's life and work. But he will find a great deal of valuable information about the Evangelical Revival in its wider setting, and of the part played in it by such men as Grimshaw, Venn and Berridge in their relationships with the Wesleys. There is much unpublished material, such as manuscript letters, of which the author has made no use, but other available sources have been ransacked, and the appendices on Grimshaw's Creed and Covenant form a fitting conclusion to the book.

We are grateful to Mr. Cragg for a most readable and informative study, even though it is not without its defects and errors. It will awaken interest in its subject, and so prepare the way for the fuller biography of Grimshaw which is being written by one of our own members.

The Church Book Room is to be congratulated on its new series of short biographies of "Great Churchmen", and especially those of interest to our Society: *John Wesley: A Study in Sainthood and Genius*, by W. Leatham, B.A., and *Charles Wesley: The Poet of the Evangelical Revival*, by Frank Colquhoun, M.A. (Church Book Room Press, 9d. each).

John Wesley is entrancing in its style and treatment. By the attractive method of working back from what "Wesley is to our present consciousness, to what he was in his early life", the writer seeks to discover what lies behind it: "his conversion, and God's choice of him for a particular service". Three claims are made for Wesley: that he is the greatest figure in eighteenth-century England; that he is the greatest Churchman of the English speaking peoples; and that he is one of the four greatest experimental theologians of the universal Church; and the author abundantly proves his case. Had he been a Methodist, his appraisal of our Founder could scarcely have been more generous.

The same remark applies in almost equal measure to *Charles Wesley*. Like his colleague, Mr. Colquhoun has studied all the acknowledged authorities, and his careful examination of Charles Wesley as a Churchman and an evangelist is illuminated by some apt illustrations from the best-known of his hymns.

It is not too much to say that these little books, scholarly and evangelical, are the best of their kind that we have seen. We could wish that they had been published by our own Methodist Book room, but, at any rate, we can wish them a wide and well-deserved circulation, and anticipate with interest the publication of a companion booklet on *George Whitefield*, which is promised for next spring.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Studies in Religious Poetry of the Seventeenth Century. Epworth Press 7/6,

by Rev. W. Lamplough Doughty, B.A., B.D.

Mr. Doughty's studies have led him to browse in fertile pastures remote from those in which most of his fellow-members of the W.H.S. find their sustenance. But they will be thankful for the opportunity he gives them of widening their horizon by reading his pleasantly written account of what he has found in the writings of Henry Vaughan, Francis Quarles, Richard Crawshaw, Sir John Davies, Henry More and Thomas Traherne.

John and Charles Wesley were not born until after all the men we have named had passed away, but these studies have continually in mind the work they did in the following century.

Our members are recommended to read the book for themselves; to encourage them to do so the following points of interest to Methodists, especially those who are hymnologists, are selected for notice.

Hymn 466 (M.H.B.) by Vaughan, has "about it the fragrance of other days", and it will be understood better and enjoyed more when Vaughan's background and personality are known.

In a letter to William Law, Wesley curtly dismisses the notion put abroad at one time that Milton owed a great deal to the work of Francis Quarles, a man highly esteemed in the Puritanical coteries. The chapter devoted to him is headed "A Mystic in Half-Lights". The M.H.B. (162) contains four stanzas from a poem which reflects one of his happier moods; "they are presented as a complete and charming lyric". Mr. Doughty ventures to suggest that it is open to question whether a hymn-book is the proper place for these verses.

Richard Crawshaw is dealt with in an article reprinted from the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review* entitled "The Cross and Crucifix". Illuminating contrasts between his verses and those of Charles Wesley are revealed.

The daughter of Sir John Davies married the sixth Earl of Huntingdon and by that marriage was the great-grandfather of Theophilus, the ninth Earl, who married Selina, the Countess of Huntingdon, so famous in the Methodist Revival and the Calvinist controversies of the eighteenth century. Lady Margaret Hastings, sister of the ninth Earl, married Benjamin Ingham, one of the Oxford Methodists. Wesley was probably unaware of those links between Sir John Davies, whose work he held in high regard, and Methodism. A quotation from Davies (not quite accurate) occurs in his sermon on "The Deceitfulness of the human heart".

Davies insists on the separate existences of body and soul, a distinction which John Wesley uses in one of his letters to illustrate the sacrament of Baptism. In a list of books recommended for the reading of his preachers Wesley included three poets, Spenser, Milton and Sir John Davies.

Henry More, the Cambridge Platonist, receives full treatment. Mr. Doughty claims him as one of the minor heralds of the Meth-

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odist Revival. In his Christian Library, vol. III, Wesley printed one of More's Sermons. Wesley thought that clergymen should conquer so much of metaphysics as would enable them to read, with ease and pleasure as well as profit, Dr. H. More's Works. He also adapted some of More's Hymns for Methodist use, incidentally improving them. The present M.H.B. has three of them: 284, 301 and 220.

Thomas Traherne is described as a recent star in the literary sky whose brilliance was long eclipsed in the pages of a forgotten manuscript. F.F.B.

OBITUARY.

By the passing of Mr. Edmund Austen, J.P., of The Twitten, Broad Oak, Brede, Sussex, at the age of 85, the W.H.S. has lost a valued old member, and public life in the neighbourhood where he resided is deprived of one who was useful in many spheres throughout a long life in which he won wide esteem.

Mr. Austen farmed in the district for fifty years as his ancestors had done for centuries.

From his early manhood he took an interest in the history of the area near his home, situated between Hastings and Rye. Not long before he died he had the gratification of seeing the publication of a book arising out of his researches and inquiries pursued for many years, *Brede, the Story of a Sussex Parish*. Mr. John Austen, of Sheffield, has lent me a copy of his brother's work, and I have found great delight in reading it.

It is full of facts, but very far from being a mere compilation; it is based upon wide reading, as the footnotes show, but by no means dull. Mr. Austen has a pleasant simple style, and knows how to enliven his pages with humour.

Brede is noted for the existence in the vicinity of a flourishing iron industry for centuries preceding 1770, when the north, with its coal, caused the iron works to close. Brede iron craftsmen were renowned for their skill. For over 300 years Brede was under foreign domination as Ethelred the Unready gave the Manor to the Abbey of Fécamp in Normandy, and Brede did not regain its freedom until 1416.

Mr. Austen, who has written about East Sussex Methodism in our *Proceedings* at intervals during the last forty years, has enriched his book by a chapter on Methodism in Brede where he has held office for many years. In the Methodist Burial Ground at Broad Oak there now rests all that is mortal of a good man who will be long remembered.

The book, well illustrated and neatly bound, is published by Adam and Sons, of Rye, 7/6.

Mr. R. F. Gatenby, who retired through ill-health not long before his recent death, was for many years a loyal member of the W.H.S. More than once he cycled a long distance to attend the annual meeting.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A devoted Methodist, an active worker in Leyburn and area, he was deeply interested in the origin and development of local Methodism, and published many useful notes on the subject in the local Circuit Magazine. F.F.B.

NOTES AND QUERIES.

866. WESLEY AND THE ROMAN CATHOLICS. Two footnotes may be added to Mr. Doughty's article on "John Wesley's Letters to Mr. Berington, 1780" (pp. 38-44 above). In the first place, Berington's Christian name was apparently Joseph. This appears from a correspondence between him and Hannah More in 1809, when he defended the Roman Catholics against some remarks in her *Coelebs in search of a wife*. Incidentally, he is called "Rev. Joseph Berington", not "Dr." See William Roberts: *Memoir . . . of Hannah More* iii: 286 ff.

Secondly, one of Berington's letters to Wesley has been published at least in part. In Whitehead's *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*. ii: 389, he quotes a letter written by Berington in defence of the 'Council of Constance, apparently in answer to Wesley's first letter. The extract reads:—

"There never was a decision made at Constance tending to shew, that *No faith is to be kept with heretics*. The words of the Canon are not susceptible of such a comment, unless tortured to it. At all events no Council, Pope, Bishop, Priest, or Layman of our Church, ever understood them in the sense of your interpretation. But every Catholic Divine has at all times, in writing on the subject, utterly reprobated the idea of breaking faith with heretics, as contrary to every dictate of reason and religion."

Whitehead remarks that "these undoubtedly, are very extraordinary assertions, but there is no proof", and he wonders whether Wesley ever replied—"for there would be no end of answering groundless assertions." He himself brings forward additional evidence in support of Wesley's position.

Rev. Frank Baker, B.A., B.D.