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**All Subscriptions are due in March. Members are kindly requested to send to Rev. F. Baker without further reminder.**

# EARLY DAYS OF CORNISH METHODISM

## III. EVANGELICALS & METHODISTS.

It will be well known that the movement usually called the Evangelical Revival was one of those deep stirrings in the human spirit which have occurred from time to time, and that it had its forerunners in many parts and in many lands. Though popularly coupled with the names of Whitefield and the Wesleys it was even in England a far wider thing, and Cornwall in fact shared in the stirrings of heart and spirit while John Wesley was still working in Oxford. Indeed it would not be too much to say that Cornwall was uniquely strong in a revival of Evangelical preaching by the Clergy of the Established Church,—a local revival which has too long gone unrecognized and unstudied. The Church of England was shewing a vitality and sincerity in these remote parts which compared very favourably with conditions elsewhere. The ramifications of this earnest school within the Cornish parishes and its relations with the Methodist preachers and organization form a fascinating study, the outlines of which may be given here.

The forerunner of all eighteenth-century Cornish Evangelicals was George Thomson, <sup>1</sup> Vicar of St. Gennys, a coastal parish in North Cornwall, from 1732-1782. This man, after a not uneventful early life, was converted about 1735, <sup>2</sup> and at once began Evangelical work in his parish and beyond. Very quickly he found a sympathetic response from John Bennet, the aged Curate in charge of North Tamerton, Tresmere and Laneast, all scattered, remote parishes in the northern part of Cornwall, and succeeded in helping him towards conversion in 1742. By this time Thomson was known to Whitefield, the two having met in Bath in 1739, <sup>3</sup> though not apparently to the Wesleys. <sup>4</sup> Acquaintance with the latter came in 1744.

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1. His own spelling in Registers, not 'Thompson' as in *Journals*.
  2. *Evangelical Magazine*, (1800) 222.
  3. Whitefield's *Journal*, 2nd March, 1739.
  4. The suggestion in footnote in *Journal* of J. Wesley, standard Ed. i, 350, is negated by parochial and diocesan evidence of residence.

The little Churches at St. Gennys, Laneast, Tresmere and North Tamenton were all honoured with visits from the great trio of evangelists, as all readers of the *Journals* will remember, and touching indeed is the freshness and enthusiasm of these early days of harmony. Thomson imitated the proceedings of the Wesleys, journeying into neighbouring parishes to preach, much to the disgust of his clerical brethren, one of whom wrote to the Bishop of Exeter concerning Thomson's 'irregular Meetings' and 'circumforaneous vociferations'.<sup>5</sup> There were also house meetings in the district led by the two zealous clergy. But after about 1750 we see an end of the co-operation between the Wesleys and Thomson (Bennet died in October, 1750)—Wesley turning aside until the Vicar of St. Gennys lay on his deathbed in 1782, though he was often enough in that part of Cornwall.

But by 1750 a new star had swum into the firmament, in Samuel Walker, curate in charge of St. Mary's church—the parish church of Truro. This man, the illustrious leader of the first generation of Evangelical clergy in Cornwall, came from Lanlivery in July, 1746, to his first duties in Truro. Speedily influenced towards conversion by the example and words of George Conon, the Master of Truro Grammar School, Walker set up parochial societies for his converted people. All this will be familiar to readers of John Wesley's *Journal*. But what is not so well known is that Walker stirred the local clergy into preaching Evangelical doctrines, and formed the sympathizers into a Clerical Club (1750-1759) which had the profoundest influence upon Cornish parishes. The names of Walker's colleagues in this little circle have not been preserved in connection with it, but it is possible tentatively to reconstruct the membership list from scattered references, and the result is illuminating, since the incumbents of some important parishes in the neighbourhood of Truro appear to have been sympathetic to Walker.

In addition to the Curate of Truro, the Clerical Club included John Penrose, Vicar of Penryn 1741-1776; Thomas Michell, Vicar of Veryan, 1743-1773; James Vowler, Curate of St. Agnes until 1758, succeeded by William Philp, who

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5. Exeter Diocesan Registry MSS 1744, 225, c.

died in 1762, and likewise an Evangelical; Samuel Cooper, Curate of Cubert; probably James Walker, Samuel Walker's brother, Vicar of Perranzabuloe 1730-1793; Henry Phillips, Vicar of Gwennap 1743-1782; and Mydhope Wallis, Rector and Prebendary of St. Endellion, 1754-1759. A distant friend and occasional visitor was Thomas Vivian, the Vicar of Cornwood near Plymouth 1747-1793, one-time Curate at Redruth, the 'T.V.' who wrote to Wesley in 1748 ascribing his conversion to a reading of Wesley's writings;<sup>7</sup> he was the only one of the above-named whose conversion was mediated through Methodist channels.

It will be seen how great an influence the companions of Walker could wield, for though there may be doubt about the formal membership of the Club on the part of some of them, there is none as to their sympathy with the Evangelical outlook. Walker himself estimated that the number over which he and his friends had influence was no less than ten thousand—the total of the population of the parishes concerned. Nor were the numbers responding to the faithful preaching of Walker and his colleagues negligible. The crowds attending the Truro ministry were very large, and at Penryn and Veryan the societies grew,—'My dear Michell writes me, that his company is advanced to thirty—Penrose, too, hath a larger number about him'.<sup>8</sup> This was in March, 1755 and in the following year we hear, 'The Lord is with us still; and the work prospers greatly under my two friends, Mr. Michell at Veryan and Mr. Penrose at Penryn'.<sup>9</sup>

There were seventy gathered in Society at St. Agnes under Vowler in 1758, and as many intending to join, while at Gwennap a 'plenteous harvest' was being gathered under Henry Phillips, so that Walker could write to Michell (1754) after preaching there, that he had never addressed 'a congregation where so many expressed an experience of the power of the word, and all in a manner heard with a more than curious attention. I was tempted to wish myself an

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6. The two mentioned in J. Wesley, *Journal*, iv, 406, as 'Mr C—and Mr Phelps'.
  7. *Arminian Magazine*, 1778, 586: the Vicarage was probably the 'Mr. V—'s at C—' where J. Wesley stayed in September, 1751, see *Journal*, iii, 539.
  8. Bennett, *Star of the West* (1815), 185.
  9. Sidney, *Life and Ministry of Rev. Samuel Walker*, (1838), 191.

assistant to my dear friend there, where the harvest is so plenteous and promising'.<sup>10</sup>

Though these clergy were Evangelical in sentiment, they were 'regular' in their churchmanship, and defended their point of view with vigour. 'Whatever good you intend to do', Walker told Penrose, 'you must do it in the Church'.<sup>11</sup> Wesley's correspondence with Walker on this matter issued in a determination on the part of the latter to remain aloof from the Methodists while they proceeded on irregular lines. He wrote to Charles Wesley in 1756, 'mean-time, there is a continual bar kept up between you and any regular clergyman, who cannot in conscience fall in with this measure (lay preaching). The most he can do is not to forbid them. He cannot take them by the hand. And so there must be two disunited ministrations of the word in the same place, by people who yet do call themselves of the Church of England'.<sup>12</sup>

In the doctrinal writings of Walker we may discern the outlines of a moderate Calvinism, together with a view of Assurance and of Perfection differing from the Methodist definition. Hence the two streams, Wesleyan Methodism with its itinerant ministry and Arminianism, and what is rather unsatisfactorily called 'Evangelicalism' with its Calvinism and observance of parochial order, began to divide. Under Walker the issues were made clear, and later Cornish Evangelicals followed the aloofness of the Curate of Truro and his school almost without exception. In 1758, Walker writing to his friend Adam, Rector of Wintringham, told him that Vowler at St. Agnes was being strangely opposed by the Methodists, who accused the Evangelicals of being 'well-meaning legalists'.<sup>13</sup> In 1762 John Wesley mentioned Vowler and his successor, Philp, as opposers of their fellow-labourers in the gospel!<sup>14</sup> The division, of course, grew in spite of good-will on both sides, and the free co-operation of the first years was destined never to be recovered. Methodist Societies began to grow in 'Gospel' parishes.

In the approach to Calvinism characteristic of the Church Evangelicalism of the eighteenth century, and its

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10. *Christian Guardian*, 1810, 442.

11. Penrose, *Of Christian Sincerity*, (1829), 180.

12. *Life of Walker*, 210.

13. *Life of Walker*, 436.

14. J. Wesley, *Journal*, iv, 530.

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insistence on the observance of canonical regularity we probably have the reason for the estrangement of Thomson from the Wesleys. John Wesley only turned aside to visit his old friend after a lapse of thirty years when he lay upon his death-bed.<sup>15</sup> It has been stated that Thomson, though still Vicar of St. Gennys, adopted Moravian views before his death,<sup>16</sup> but this need not involve more than taking over one or two minor points of their beliefs, and anything more is improbable, to say the least, in Lavington's diocese. It is much more likely that Thomson grew in appreciation of the developing school of Calvinistic Evangelicalism in the Church of England, and this theory is very strongly borne out by a study of the hymns attributed to him, and edited by Samuel Furlly, Rector of Roche in Cornwall. In these hymns the author (almost certainly Thomson) wrote,

Seek ye to know why some can melt  
Beneath the word, and some are stone,  
The cause why 'tis, and 'tis not felt  
Lies in Jehovah's breast alone.<sup>17</sup>

The exact relation between the Vicar of St. Gennys and the good Curate of Truro would be illuminating, but there is only the slightest evidence surviving that the two knew one another at all. Nevertheless the fact that estrangement developed between Thomson and Wesley at the same period as that between Walker and Wesley is significant.

After the death of Walker in 1761 there was no one well fitted to lead the Cornish Evangelical clergy. But the school did not die out. It maintained a strong succession even after the original clerical helpers of Walker had gone to their reward. Another St. Agnes curate, Thomas Wills, deserves mention as one who laboured with acceptance in that mining parish 1764-1778, when he left to become a minister in Lady Huntingdon's Connexion. Of these 'second generation' clergy Samuel Furlly is perhaps the most prominent. He became Rector of Roche in 1766 on the presentation of Mr. Thornton, and worked in that upland parish until his death in 1795. As to his relation with Methodism, we can only sense that the old close co-operation of his Yorkshire days had come to an end, his last letter from

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15. J. Wesley, *Journal*, vi, 366.

16. *Evangelical Magazine*, 1800, 318.

17. *Original Sacred Hymns*, (1776), 106.

Wesley, dated 1766, speaking of agreeing to differ on Assurance and kindred subjects.<sup>18</sup>

As time went on the number of clergy holding Evangelical doctrines greatly increased, and their influence became an important factor in the life of the Church of England. Speaking generally, these men were suspicious of the Methodism of Wesley, and repudiated its doctrinal system and its irregularities from their own interpretation, a Calvinistic one, of the Church's doctrinal standards.

Thomas Biddulph was Vicar of Padstow 1771-1790, marrying one of Walker's converts and preaching 'salvation by faith alone'; he was succeeded by William Rawlings, Vicar until 1836. This Rawlings was of the same family as that Rawlings who was so close a lay friend and helper of Walker at an earlier period; James Coffin, Vicar of Linkinhorne, 1780-1833, should also be mentioned as a prominent Evangelical of East Cornwall. He came under the influence of John Newton, Rector of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, and there is in existence a series of letters from Newton to Coffin, in which the worthy Cornish Vicar's leaning towards the Calvinism of the Evangelicals and his uneasiness about Methodism appear.<sup>19</sup>

In the last years of our period, however, the best known Cornish Evangelical was undoubtedly Henry Addington Simcoe, at first Curate and then Vicar of Egloskerry in North Cornwall, 1822-1863. In this parish Simcoe wielded an influence so great that in some ways traces remain to this day. As well as being parish priest, he was chemist, farmer, and physician to the whole district, and in addition poured forth a flood of Evangelical literature from a private press in his home at Penheale. Among this literature was a monthly periodical, *Light from the West*, surely the earliest parish magazine to be published in Cornwall. Appearing first in 1832, the magazine reveals from time to time Simcoe's Calvinistic leanings and his criticism of a Methodism then largely independent of the English Church. 'Let the *professed* disciples of Wesley', he commented after quoting Wesley on the subject, '*shew themselves Wesleyans indeed*', by 'keeping to the Church', and 'going to Church',

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18. J. Wesley, *Letters*, v. 21: for a visit by Wesley to Furly, *Journal*, v, 287.

19. Sixty-Eight Letters from Rev. John Newton, (1845).

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and 'exhorting all so to do!'<sup>20</sup> Simcoe also published against the 'noise, confusion and tumult' which characterised the Revivals in Methodism at the opening of the nineteenth century.

Mention must be made here of another Cornish cleric of an earnest type who had contacts with local Methodism, although it was only for a brief period that he could be deemed an Evangelical. This was Sir Harry Trelawny, whose life is a curious case of ecclesiastical wanderlust. He was successively a Churchman, Dissenter of moderate Calvinistic views ministering at Looe near his home, sympathetic to Unitarianism, then a Churchman again, and finally became a Roman Catholic!

While a Churchman—he was ordained by Bishop Ross of Exeter in 1781—he had considerable contacts with the members of the Methodist Society in the parish of Egloshayle, of which he was Vicar 1793-1804. We are informed that there was a friendly intercourse between the members of the Methodist Society and those whom Trelawny gathered around him. But when Trelawny left and these wished to join the Methodists they needed more 'perfect instruction'.<sup>21</sup> Wesley himself had written to Trelawny in 1780 congratulating him on his escape from the Dissenters and from Calvinism,<sup>22</sup> and possibly this may be an indication that Arminian views were then held by the Vicar of Egloshayle. Impressionable to a degree, however, it was not long before Trelawny's opinions were tending towards the Church of Rome, and in this communion he died, a priest, in 1834.

By the generality of Evangelical clergy, in Cornwall as elsewhere, however, it was felt that co-operation with the Methodists was difficult whilst the doctrines of Arminianism and Perfection were taught and 'faith was confused with feeling'.<sup>23</sup> Further, the gradual loosening of links with the Established Church and the approximation in Methodism towards an independent position made it impossible in their eyes. Methodism on its side, of course, remained closely loyal to the original deposit of Wesley's

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20. *Light from the West*, 1837, vi, 215.

21. *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1819, 561; 1829, 280.

22. J. Wesley, *Letters*, vii, 27.

23. *Life of Walker*, 154 etc.

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doctrines, effectively broadcasting them by the successful use of the itinerant plan developed by Wesley. To the members of Methodist Societies Evangelicalism seemed bound in legal fetters and greatly defective, to say the least, in its ideas of the love of God. The startling success which attended the Methodist labours in Cornwall, in striking contrast to the less spectacular influence of the Evangelical clergy in their parishes, gave rise to the assumption of its special blessing which rivetted loyalty to Methodism as to something divinely favoured and inspired above all rival movements.

### H. MILES BROWN

A Cornish Methodist Pioneer was commemorated recently, when a granite headstone was unveiled in Callington Churchyard. The inscription reads: "THOMAS DENNER, who founded the first Methodist Society in the parish of Callington. Died 5th October, 1802, aged 75 years."

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## THE NEW ROOM, BRISTOL

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A Bristol Conference naturally turns the spotlight on the New Room—our oldest Methodist shrine. When the Conference last met in Bristol, in 1935, the New Room had not long been restored to our possession and the famous statue of John Wesley on his horse was still a novelty. Since then a courtyard has been laid out on the other side of the Room, between the Horsefair and what used to be the main entrance to the chapel and the preachers' rooms. Mr. F. Brook Hitcher's statue of Charles Wesley, which shews him as the evangelist "offering Christ", now stands in the centre of the new courtyard. When the old cottages fronting the Horsefair are cleared away, it will face the new gateway and call the passers-by to think of the gospel the poet-preacher proclaimed and to ponder the message carved on the pedestal: "O let me commend my Saviour to you".

During the war, bombs fell all around the New Room, but the building escaped damage and the statues were preserved from injury by their protective coverings. The near-by house in which Charles Wesley and his wife lived for more than twenty years, No. 4 Charles Street, was also

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spared, though the house adjoining it was destroyed by fire. No. 6 Dighton Street, the home of Dr. Castleman, where Wesley ordained Coke, Whatcoat and Vasey for the work in America, was shattered in an air raid and has since been demolished. The bronze tablet which was affixed to the front of the house in 1934 to commemorate the event was uninjured and remains in our possession.

It has never been the aim of the Trustees of the New Room to turn it into a museum; the building, within and without, is to be preserved as it was when the Wesleys used it, with as few modern intrusions as possible. But by the generosity of friends some additions have been made to the library and the collection of manuscripts, pictures and relics which are treasured there. Chief amongst these are the two volumes which contain the membership rolls of the Bristol Methodist Society for the seventeen years, 1770-1786, written by Wesley himself. The whole roll of from 700 to 800 names was written out afresh each year, usually on his September visit to the city. It is arranged in columns for the full name of each member, condition, occupation and address. There are separate lists of the Bands and the Leaders, and, usually, a record of those admitted to the Society and of those excluded. A variety of small cipher marks probably indicate Wesley's judgment on the spiritual condition of the members.

Here is striking evidence of the thoroughness of Wesley's pastoral oversight of the Society. Read in conjunction with the published *Journal* and what survives of his Diary, these rolls provide valuable material for the student of Methodist beginnings. Further notes on them will appear in *Proceedings* when space permits.

Reference may also be made to Wesley's study chair, a fine specimen of Queen Anne work, which was given to the Trustees in 1936 and now occupies a place in his sitting-room above the Chapel, near the Enoch Wood bust.

During the Conference short lunch-hour talks will be given in the New Room and there will be full opportunity for visitors to see the building where so much Methodist history was made. For details see the last page of this issue.

E. T. SELBY

## HUGH BOURNE'S PRINTING PRESS

In September 1945 the Stoke-on-Trent District Synod learned that the printing-press which Hugh Bourne used in the district about 125 years ago was in danger of being sold for scrap. A 'Hugh Bourne Printing Press Purchasing Committee' was therefore formed, but this ungainly title was soon altered to 'District Historical Committee' and its scope was enlarged to permit it to care for Methodist relics and sites in the area.

Its first concern was the printing-press, which was found at Audley in a state of rusty disintegration. The press was transported to the Potteries, where it was cleaned and re-erected, and displayed with other Methodist relics at the 'How Great a Flame' Exhibition.

This large wrought iron hand-press was bought in 1823 by Hugh Bourne's brother James, and the first Primitive Methodist publishing house was established in a barn at Bemersley Farm, three miles from Tunstall. The bulk of the parcels of magazines and tracts were conveyed in carts to the canal quays, and shipped in barges to the various Circuits. Bourne followed the example of the Wesleys in his concern for the education of his people, and his publications ranged from a somewhat bulky *Ecclesiastical History* to a four-page collection of *Family Receipts*, which tells, among other things, how to relieve a cow choked with a turnip, and how to provide a cheap and wholesome dinner for fourpence!

After the Publishing House was moved to London in 1843, the press was in continual use by local printers in the Potteries, until in 1939, at a public auction of the plant of Messrs Eardley, of Tunstall, it passed into the hands of Mr. J. Lovatt, of Kidsgrove, who saved it from destruction. It was his intention that it should be preserved, and after his death his friend Mr. J. Dodd, printer of Audley, who then possessed the press, handed it over to the District Historical Committee.

The Committee eventually decided to offer the press to the Stoke-on-Trent City Museum in the hope that it might ultimately be one of the chief exhibits (it is an impressive machine) in a permanent Methodist collection. The City Council has now accepted the gift.

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The Historical Committee also turned its attention to Mow Cop, as the result of a letter in the *Methodist Recorder* complaining that a tablet commemorating the first Camp Meeting had been destroyed. It was found that there had never been any such tablet; the destroyed slate tablet had mentioned the nobleman who erected the folly 'castle'. The Committee has been in touch with the National Trust, who now own the summit of Mow Cop, and found the Trust willing to co-operate in every way. As a result, on Whit-Saturday, May 15th, a memorial tablet commemorating the beginning of the Primitive Methodist Revival, was unveiled on Mow Cop by the President of the Conference (the Rev. Dr. W. E. Farndale), supported by the Vice-President (Professor Victor Murray), both of whom appropriately enough, happen to have been brought up in the former Primitive Methodist Church.

The original intention was to carve the inscription on a 'great rock' but it was found that Mow Cop stone does not lend itself to this. The inscription has therefore been carved on a block of Kerridge stone, which has been slotted into a giant boulder. The inscription reads as follows:

A Camp Meeting near this Spot  
on May 31 1807  
Began the Religious Revival  
Led by  
Hugh Bourne and William Clowes  
And known as  
Primitive Methodism.  
Unveiled by the President of the Conference  
May 15 1948  
DOUGLAS A. WOLIEN

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## NEWBRIDGE, DUBLIN

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In Wesley's *Journal* for Tuesday 11th August, 1747, he says, "I waited on the Archbishop at Newbridge ten miles from Dublin . . ." The Archbishop was Dr. Charles Cobbe. I must confess, however, that up to recently I had taken it for granted that the Newbridge mentioned, was Newbridge, Co. Kildare, a well-known town near the Cur-

ragh, and that Wesley had made an error regarding the distance, which is much more than ten miles. But Wesley is quite right, for the Newbridge to which he went was Newbridge House, Donabate, ten miles north of the city. Dr. Charles Cobbe was of English birth, and had been successively Dean of Ardagh, Bishop of Achonry, Bishop of Dromore, and Bishop of Kildare. He became Archbishop of Dublin in 1742, and he died in 1765. He built Newbridge House in 1730. It still is occupied by the Cobbe family, or rather by Mr. T. L. Cobbe who very kindly entertained me, showed me the many treasures of the house, and permitted me to rummage through the family papers in search of sidelights on the Wesleys. Mr. Cobbe is the seventh in descent from the Archbishop. The family portraits which he showed me are interesting. There is one of Dorothea, Lady Rawdon, wife of Sir John Rawdon. Her sister was Mary, Countess Ferrers. After the death of Sir John Rawdon, she married Archbishop Chas. Cobbe of Newbridge. Her eldest son by the first marriage became later the Earl of Moira. He married Lady Elizabeth Hastings, the eldest daughter of the Countess of Huntingdon. There are also portraits of Lady Elizabeth Hastings, and Elizabeth, Countess of Moira, (the same person). These family connections throw a light on the relations of the two Wesleys with this group of people. They explain for instance why Charles Wesley was interested in that unfortunate nobleman Earl Ferrers, when he was awaiting execution in the Tower of London for murdering his Land Steward.

R. LEE COLE.

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## NEW BOOKS

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Many books have been written on the period of English Church life which covers the years of the Evangelical Revival, but none quite like *The English Church in the Eighteenth Century*, by C. Sydney Carter, M.A., D.D. (Church Book Room Press, 6s. net), for clarity, conciseness, sympathy of treatment and popular appeal. The monumental work of Abbey and Overton has never been superseded and remains a classic for students, but in Dr. Carter's 128 pages 'he who runs may read'.

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The Wesleys and Whitefield are, of course, the centre of the story, as is their right, and are here portrayed in the political and ecclesiastical setting which gave the Revival such significance. Here, too, are 'potted biographies' of the Evangelical clergy of the period, and a summary of the results of the Revival. In short, this book, so commendably readable and admirably documented, is a veritable *multum in parvo*.

We should add that this is a reprint of a first edition published in 1910, and it is a matter for surprise that nearly four decades should have passed before the reappearance of so excellent a study. It is a pity, therefore, that it contains no mention of the extensive work on Methodist origins which has been done during the interval, but this defect in no way mars the value of the book.

Another "background" book which has come to hand is *Protestant Dissent in Ireland, 1687-1780*, by J. C. Beckett (Faber & Faber, 15s. net). This is the second volume in the series on *Studies in Irish History*. As the Author explains, the term 'dissenter' as used in Ireland by eighteenth-century writers, usually meant 'Presbyterian'. This accounts for the fact that Methodism is relegated to a chapter on 'The Minor Sects' and is given less than a page, though, in fairness to Mr. Beckett, it must be added that Methodism did not take root in Ireland until his period was well advanced, and within that period was, theoretically, a Society within the Established Church.

The recent bi-centenary celebrations in Ireland will no doubt have sent many readers back to Crookshank's *History of Methodism in Ireland*, and they will find Mr. Beckett a sure guide to the clarification of many obscure points, especially in relation to the political situation, the struggle for religious toleration and the removal of the sacramental test in 1780.

This is a learned and authoritative treatise, and we are grateful for it. But we wonder why Mr. Beckett (or his publishers) should choose to give such words as 'Methodist', 'Moravian', 'Presbyterian', a lower-case initial letter instead of the usual capital. We hope this is not another example of the 'new look'.

WESLEY F. SWIFT

It may still be true that the name of William Law suggests little or nothing, even to the educated intelligence of the twentieth century, beyond the authorship of the *Serious Call* and *Christian Perfection*, but Mr. Hobhouse sets us wondering by the publication of *Selected Mystical Writings of William Law*, edited with Notes by Stephen Hobhouse, M.A., and a Foreword by Aldous Huxley (Rockliff Publishing Corporation, 425 pp., demy 8vo, 25s. net). How has he achieved this second edition, after only ten years, for a volume which, as its title plainly declares, is primarily a selection of the writings of a mystic and a recluse of two centuries ago? Does it mean that Mr. Hobhouse succeeded, ten years ago, in persuading his readers of the enduring value of Law's neglected works? Or does it mean a real revival of interest in mysticism, or at least in its greatest English exponent, to whom John Wesley owed so much?

There is, of course, much more than the writings of William Law within these pages, and the permanent value of this volume may lie in what Mr. Hobhouse himself contributes, as much as in the reproduction of Law's most characteristic passages. Furthermore, there is here a sufficient corpus of evidence to establish the religious genius of Law, in his own right, and not merely in reflection of the influence of Boehme. Law was the greatest of the English mystics, apart from his conscious discipleship of Boehme, and, as Mr. Hobhouse by his admirable choice of examples has shown, a superb master of English prose.

The purpose of this excellently produced book is 'to promote both a more living worship of God and a better understanding of the Christian Faith', and, for obvious additional reasons, we commend it to all students of the life of Wesley.

J. BRAZIER GREEN

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## NOTES AND QUERIES.

- £68. A STRANGE WESLEY PEDIGREE—One of our members, Mr. G. F. Parker, of Weston-on-Trent, has drawn our attention to an eccentric pedigree of the Wesley family, drawn up by the Rev. Mark Noble (1754-1827), and published from his manuscript

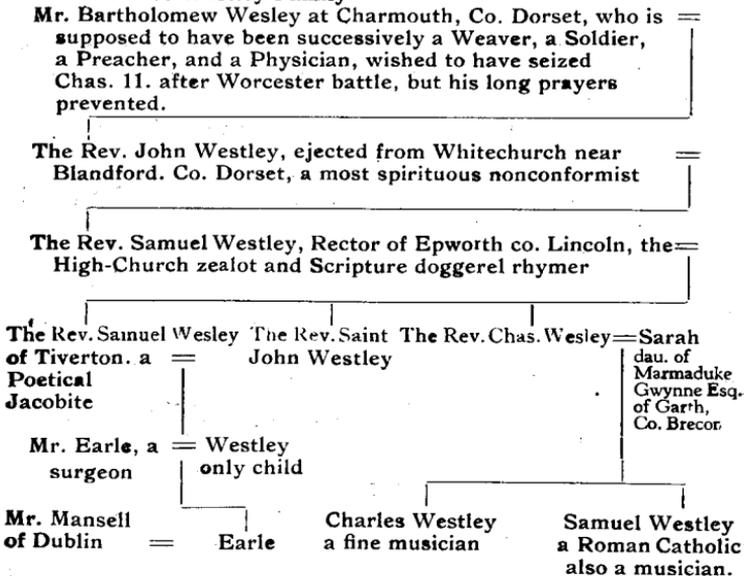
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in the *Reliquary*, vol. viii (1867-8), page 188. Its quaintness makes it worth preserving, although it adds nothing to our historical knowledge. Noble, who was born and passed his early years in the Birmingham area, would almost certainly have first-hand knowledge of Wesley and Methodism. He was the son of a Birmingham merchant who after trying his hand at the law and business eventually became a clergyman. His chief claim to fame was his work as antiquarian and biographer, though he was far from being in the first rank. The *Dictionary of National Biography* handles him very roughly, saying that

Noble's writings are those of an imperfectly educated, vulgar-minded man. His ignorance of English grammar and composition renders his books hard to read and occasionally unintelligible, while the moral reflections with which they abound are puerile.

It is as well to have this judgement in mind whilst perusing the document below.

Ye Westley Family



This is a strange pedigree. Republicanism begets Nonconformity,

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Nonconformity begets Conformity, Conformity begets three brats,  
a Jacobite and two Methodists, of the last Methodist comes a musician  
and a Papist. What a race!!!

John attempted to defend his brother Samuel's memory by  
representing him a Tory, not a Jacobite, but I think his reasons but  
weakly.  
Mark Noble.

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

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The Annual Lecture arranged by the W.H.S. will be delivered in the New Room, Bristol, on Friday, July 16th, to commence at 7-30. The subject is "Charles Wesley as revealed by his Letters", and the Lecturer is the Rev. F. Baker, B.A., B.D. The chair will be taken by Dr. C. C. Morgans of Bristol.

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The Annual Meeting will be held at the New Room on the same evening commencing at 6-0 p.m.

Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ibberson kindly invite any officers and members of the W.H.S. to Tea at 4-30 p.m. in the New Room. It is essential that those who desire to accept this invitation. should send their names to Rev. E. T. Selby 4 Charles Street, Bristol 2, not later than Wednesday, July 14th.

Lunch-hour talks of about 15 minutes will be delivered in the New Room.

Wednesday, July 14th, Rev. F. Baker : Miss Sarah Wesley of Bristol.

Thursday, July 15th, Mrs. Elsie Harrison : The Household at the New Room.

Saturday, July 17th, Mr. Stanley Sowton : Echoing footsteps of the Wesleys in Cornwall.

Wednesday, July 21st, Rev. E. T. Selby : John Wesley as Pastor in Bristol.

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EDITORIAL NOTE—We much regret that, owing to the limitations to which we are now subject, we are obliged to hold over several useful contributions which we had hoped to include in this issue. The fourth and final instalment of Dr. Brown's Cornish Notes will appear in December.