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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor : REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT

Volume XXIX

December 1953

A SECOND HOLY CLUB

IN my article in *Proceedings*, xxviii, pp. 105-9, on "Three Evangelicals" passing reference is made to the fact that Thomas Haweis formed a religious society in Oxford which Luke Tyerman does not hesitate to call a second Holy Club.¹ A few further details may be of interest.

Thomas Haweis was born in Redruth on 1st January 1733-4. After leaving Truro Grammar School, he was apprenticed for a time to a surgeon and apothecary in the city. After his conversion under Samuel Walker, the Evangelical curate of St. Mary's, he felt a call to the ministry, and was prepared by Walker and George Conon, his former schoolmaster. He was enabled to proceed to Oxford through the generosity of Joseph Jane, himself a Truro man, then Vicar of St. Mary Magdalen, Oxford. Haweis came up to Oxford with another protégé of Walker, George Burnett, evidently early in 1756.

When Haweis returned to Oxford for the Hilary term in January 1757, Burnett did not accompany him. Haweis soon felt the need for some spiritual companionship. He acted upon John Wesley's principle that those who lack fellowship should create it. He began to converse with those of his fellow-students who, like himself, were preparing for the ministry of the Church, and to impress upon them the evangelical truths which he had received. He then invited a small group of them to his rooms. They met regularly to read the Greek Testament, discuss theology, share their Christian experience, and join in prayer. It is to this that Tyerman refers in the passage mentioned above:

Young Haweis had formed a society at Oxford analogous to the "Holy Club" of the Wesleys and their friends, more than a quarter of a century previous to this . . . Haweis, in fact, had founded a second Society of "Oxford Methodists", a Society which grew into such importance as to lead, in 1768, to the expulsion of six students, belonging to Edmund Hall, "for holding Methodist tenets, and taking upon them to pray, read, and expound the Scriptures in private houses".

¹ *Life of George Whitefield*, ii, p. 375.

This is a significant link with the first Methodists. Methodism found no permanent footing in the University of Oxford after the members of the Holy Club had dispersed. The history of Methodism in Oxford between the disbanding of the Holy Club and the St. Edmund Hall expulsions in 1768 is largely a tantalizing blank. Haweis' little company of evangelically-minded candidates for holy orders provides almost the only evidence of continuity.

We have an eye-witness glimpse of this fellowship from the pen of Thomas Wills, a schoolmate of Haweis and another debtor to the influence of Walker and Conon. He came up to Magdalen Hall in March 1757, and was immediately introduced to the club by Haweis. The first time he ever knelt in a religious society was in the cloisters of Christ Church, where Haweis' rooms were situated. He was greatly struck with the prayer, and still more by the fact that he could perceive no book in use. The impression of what he saw and heard remained with him, and he became a regular attender.²

News of this spiritual venture and its effects reached both George Whitefield and the Countess of Huntingdon. Whitefield wrote: "Many in Oxford are awakened to the knowledge of the truth", and: "Many students at Oxford are earnestly learning Christ."³ Lady Huntingdon mentioned prayer meetings as common amongst the students, and added: "I am really rejoiced that so many at the Universities are determined to be on the Lord's side. May they be kept faithful and steady!"⁴ Walker was naturally delighted at Haweis' endeavours, and reported to Thomas Adam of Winteringham: "Tom Haweis is at Christ Church, and doing some service among a few of the young gentlemen there. He tells me today he is remarked as a dangerous fellow. . . ."⁵ This was the beginning of that opposition from the University authorities which eventually culminated in the 1768 expulsions.

The club moved its headquarters from Christ Church to Magdalen Hall in 1758, after Haweis' ordination as priest and his subsequent transference to the latter College. Haweis was now curate to Jane at St. Mary Magdalen. The strength and influence of the society was growing, and the number of inquirers was increasing. Walker was able to inform Adam: "Tom Haweis has good speed at Oxford. There are pretty many already coming to him, and he hopes very well of some of them."⁶ It was a real source of comfort to Haweis in his difficult ministry. He wrote:

My chief encouragement came from the number of young students to whom my conversation had been made useful and who attached themselves to me with the most affectionate regard. They frequented my rooms, and, deeply impressed with the necessity of seeking redemption

² *Memoir of Wills*, p. 11; *Evangelical Magazine*, 1802, pp. 293-4; Haweis' MS. Autobiography.

³ Seymour, *Life and Times of the Countess of Huntingdon*, i, p. 226.

⁴ *ibid.*

⁵ Letter from Samuel Walker to Thomas Adam, April 1757, in Sidney, *Life of Samuel Walker* (2nd ed.), p. 329.

⁶ Letter from Samuel Walker to Thomas Adam, 7th June 1758, *ibid.*, p. 436.

in the Son of God, they began to pray and search the Scriptures, and whenever we met at my rooms, reading the Greek Testament and profitable converse was always concluded with prayer: sing we dared not.⁷

They also endeavoured to improve themselves in general literature and religious knowledge. The names of some of those who were attracted to the club will be familiar to readers: Thomas Biddulph, later vicar of Padstow and father of Thomas Tregenna Biddulph; Matthew Powley, nominated by Henry Venn in 1767 to the perpetual curacy of Slaithwaite, and from 1777 to 1806 vicar of Dewsbury; John Pugh, afterwards rector of Newport, Pembrokeshire (probably the "Mr. Pugh" in John Wesley's *Journal*, v, p. 483 and vi, p. 163, and to be distinguished from the evangelical vicar of Rauceby and Cranwell); Thomas Bliss, to become vicar of Ashford and Yarnscombe and to win approbation from Augustus Toplady. Cradock Glascott and William Jesse were probably of the company too.

When Haweis was ejected from his curacy in 1762 for no other crime than that of being faithful to evangelical principles, the club seems to have continued under the leadership of James Stillingfleet (1729-1817: Fellow of Merton and later Prebendary of Worcester; not James Stillingfleet of Hotham, 1742-1826). S. L. Ollard, in *The Six Students of St. Edmund Hall*, p. 3, mentions a group which sometimes met in Stillingfleet's rooms and sometimes at the house of Mrs. Durbridge, whose husband, a saddler, had been a friend of Whitefield. Stillingfleet, we know, supplied Haweis' church after his departure.⁸ It was through Stillingfleet, moreover, that the Countess of Huntingdon was informed of the club. This would appear to confirm the link between Haweis' club and that mentioned by Ollard.

The St. Edmund Hall expulsions halted the evangelical succession at Oxford for a period, and the initiative passed to Cambridge. Haweis' Holy Club, dating as it does from 1757 to 1768, gives us a valuable picture of Methodism (in the wider sense of the term) in the University of its birth in the years after the Wesleys had left.

A. SKEVINGTON WOOD.

⁷ Haweis' MS. Autobiography.

⁸ *ibid.*

"Local histories" continue to appear. Pride of place must go to *Early Methodism in Bedford*, by Joan M. Anderson (pp. 31, 1s.). This booklet is excellently written, illustrated and printed, and a generous gift by a well-wisher enables it to be sold cheaply. . . . *The Centenary of Sale (Wesley) Church*, by Harold Buxton and Kathleen H. Litherland (pp. 36, 3s. 6d.) is another splendid example of what a "local history" ought to be. The "lay-out" of its pages exhibits modern technique at its best, and the booklet owes much to the line drawings of Charles Rogers. . . . The Powell Street chapel, Castleford, has also celebrated its centenary, and the handbook includes a short historical sketch, by Alan Stafford, of this former United Methodist church and circuit. . . . The history of Harehills Avenue, Leeds, has also been briefly written for a jubilee handbook, though much of its information has been accessible elsewhere.

THE WOMEN ITINERANT PREACHERS OF EARLY METHODISM

(Continued from volume xxviii, page 94)

ILLUSTRATIONS: (1) Title-page of the *Minutes of the First Conference* of the Bible Christian Connexion, 1819; (2) Facsimile of the Stations of the Preachers, from the first Bible Christian *Minutes of Conference*, 1819, p. 7; (3) Facsimile of list of "Itinerant Females" from the Bible Christian *Minutes of Conference*, 1822, p. 5.

III. THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN "ITINERANT FEMALES"

IT is evident that amongst the early Bible Christians there was some heart-searching in the matter of "female preaching", for a discussion took place on the subject at the first Conference at Launceston in August 1819. A favourable conclusion, in the light of the arguments adduced, was inevitable, and after a summarized report of the discussion the *Minutes* proceed, appropriately enough, to answer the question: "What Females have we among us, as Itinerants?" Fourteen women are named, some of them the most famous in the history of the Bible Christian Connexion.

I have gone through the *Minutes* of the Bible Christian Conferences with great care, and find that between 1819 and 1861 (when the last "itinerant female" was accepted) no fewer than seventy-one women travelled in the circuits of the denomination. Most of them served for short periods only: twenty-seven, for instance, travelled for three years or less. Only fifteen reached double figures; amongst them were Elizabeth Dart, Susanna Baulch, Patience Bickle, and Ann Cory of the fourteen first named in 1819. Most of the women retired from the itinerancy because of ill-health or marriage, a few becoming supernumeraries for a short period. Three died in the active work: Margaret Adams (1819-22); Ann Potter (1825-35); and Jane Gardner (1838-41); the obituaries of all three appear in the *Minutes* in the usual way. The woman who travelled longest—from 1825 to 1853—was Catherine Harris. In 1853 she became a supernumerary and her name remained on the *Minutes* until 1873, when she was living at "Blissland, near Bodmin, Cornwall". Thereafter all trace of her is lost, both in the *Minutes* and in the *Bible Christian Magazine*, and we are left to wonder if her name should appear in the "Alphabetical List" in *Hill's Arrangement* with her three comrades named above.

The numbers of the "itinerant females" rose gradually from fourteen in 1819 to twenty-seven in 1825-7. These were the peak years, and thereafter the numbers dropped to six (with one on trial) in 1844 and one (the last of the 1861 acceptances) still in the active work in 1868. The "female preachers" (as they were now called) then disappear from the Stations, apart from Catherine Harris, supernumerary.

The women preachers had to serve three years on trial, and their "quarterage" was fixed in 1820 at £1 10s. per quarter as compared

M I N U T E S
OF THE
F I R S T C O N F E R E N C E,
OF THE
P R E A C H E R S I N C O N N E X I O N

WITH
WILLIAM O'BRYAN.

*Held at Baddash in Launceston, begun Tuesday, the 17th,
and ended Wednesday, the 25th of August.*

1819.

~~~~~  
**DEVON:**

PRINTED AND SOLD BY S. THORNE, AT THE OFFICE OF THE  
ARMINIAN BIBLE CHRISTIANS, NO. 5, MILL-PHEASANT, STOKE-  
DAMAREL: SOLD ALSO BY ALL THE PREACHERS, AT THEIR  
PREACHING HOUSES, IN TOWN AND COUNTRY.

—  
**1825.**

TITLE-PAGE OF THE *Minutes of the First Conference*  
OF THE BIBLE CHRISTIAN CONNEXION, 1819

Q. 9. How are the Preachers stationed for the ensuing year ?

A. WILLIAM O'BRYAN, General Superintendent.

*Kilkhampton.* John Parkyn, Susan Baulch, and Elizabeth Dart, to travel as her health will admit.

*Shebbear.* Harry Major, Catherine Reed, and Ann Mason, Supernumerary.

*St. Neot.* William Mason, and Elizabeth Trick.

*Truro.* Andrew Cory, Margaret Adams, and Grace Mason.

*Michaelstow.* William Metherell, Richard Andrew, and Patience Bickle.

*Morvah.* Edmund Warne, and Betsy Reed.

*St. Keverne.* John Metters, and Susan Furze.

*Luxillian.* James Thorne, Henry Freeman, Sarah Cory, and another Female.

*Dock.* Elizabeth Gay.

*Brentor.* George Lyle, and John Kitt.

*Ringsash.* Samuel Thorne, and Mary Ann Soper.

*Buckfastleigh.* Richard Sedwell.

N. B. Our Sisters to change under the direction of the General Superintendent.

Q. 7. Who are our ITINERANT FEMALES ?

A. Elizabeth Dart,  
Ann Mason,  
Patience Bickle,  
Susan Furze,  
Mary Ann Soper,  
Catharine Reed,  
Ann Cory,  
Susanna Baulch,  
Elizabeth Courtice,  
Ann Vickery,  
Ann Guest,  
Mary Toms,  
Mary Ann Werrey,  
Ann Slooman,  
Eleanor Turner,  
Mary Billing,  
Ann Brown,  
Mary Mason.

with £3 for a single man; and in making provision "for our sisters, should they be unable to travel, through indisposition of body" the Conference of that year decided:

We agree that when any of them shall be so disabled, they shall (if needed) be entitled to receive the same support, as when they travelled; so long as they continue to maintain a becoming character, and remain single; or if married to a travelling preacher.

Despite these meagre allowances the women preachers, along with the others, were expected in 1830 and again in 1831 to "give up ten shillings of their salaries the ensuing year" as a means "to improve the Finances of the connexion". In 1837 the Conference raised the women's allowances by five shillings a quarter, and it was decided that the single preachers, both male and female, were to "bear their own expenses for medicine and medical attendance except in cases where the Doctor's bills exceed the sum of ten shillings per year".

There is no doubt that the labours of these devoted women involved much hardship and personal sacrifice, which may account for the fact that so few, comparatively speaking, travelled for any length of time. The physical and mental wear and tear of the itinerancy in those pioneering days is reflected in the admission of the women preachers in 1825 as members of the "Preachers' Fund", with an annual subscription of ten shillings, and the instruction of 1823: "It is desired to be remembered, that our Sisters are not expected to preach any more than twice on Sundays." An addendum to the Stations in the earlier years: "Our Sisters to change under the direction of the General Superintendent" (i.e. William O'Bryan), may also have been prompted by the desire to save the women preachers as much hardship as possible. At least one "broke down" under the strain, for in 1839 "Sister Pinwell remains on trial on account of the delicate state of her health".

The Conference of 1820, under the heading of "advice to the preachers in general", directed the women preachers as follows:

Our sisters who travel as helpers, should keep their own place, be watchful, always neat, plain, and clean, discreet, humble, grave as mothers in Israel; diligent according to their sex, as well as our brethren, being as much as they can their own servants, and helps to the families where they go: and when they leave their room in the morning, leave everything in its proper place.

Let all, both male and female, take care of their health; beware of taking too long journeys, and of remaining with wet clothes on; and also, beware of going out after preaching at night; and of sleeping in damp beds.

And a footnote adds:

Our friends who lodge the preachers, are earnestly requested to pay particular attention to this, especially in winter, as otherwise it may possibly cause the preacher his life!

That the "itinerant females" fully exemplified these excellent qualities is evident from the fact that the Conference recommended

our Itinerant brethren, who intend to marry, to choose their partners from among our sisters, who have dedicated themselves to the service of God, by coming forward as travelling preachers: and we do agree that those preachers who so marry, shall be entitled to the first support from the connexion.

Some preachers followed this good advice: among them were James Thorne, who married Catherine Reed, and J. H. Eynon, who married Elizabeth Dart, the earliest of the women itinerants, under whom he had been converted. Eynon and his wife became pioneer missionaries for the Bible Christians in Canada.

It is impossible within the limits of this article to recount the adventures of these women as they continually broke fresh ground in the interests of the Bible Christian Connexion, first in Devon and Cornwall, and later throughout the entire south of England and elsewhere. For a more detailed account of, say, Mary Ann Werrey in the Scilly and Channel Islands; Catherine Reed, Patience Bickle and Ann Mason in London; and Mary Toms in the Isle of Wight, the reader must turn to the pages of F. W. Bourne's *The Bible Christians: their Origin and History* (1905), and Richard Pyke's readable little book *The Golden Chain*. Perhaps the most remarkable story in connexion with the "itinerant females" concerns Mary Ann Werrey. In 1823 she left Jersey, and shortly afterwards journeyed north by sea to Newcastle-upon-Tyne, en route for Scotland, under the strong conviction that in a dream God had called her to preach in Glasgow. From Newcastle she preached her way through Morpeth and Alnwick to Belford, where ill-health cut short her work, but as a result of her efforts the "Northumberland Mission" was formed, and in the following years Mary Armstrong, Ann Guest, and other preachers, built on the foundation she had laid. In 1830, the year following William O'Bryan's separation from the Connexion, the Bible Christian societies in the Northumberland Mission were handed over to the Primitive Methodists by the two preachers in charge at the time, before they left for the West of England to join the disaffected O'Bryan. There were five societies: Milfield, Wooler, Lowick, Bowsden, and West Allerdean, with a total membership of 92, and they were absorbed into the Berwick-upon-Tweed P.M. circuit.<sup>1</sup> So ended a romantic chapter in the history of the Bible Christians, and never again did the denomination penetrate so far in Great Britain from the county of its birth.

These glimpses of a few of the "seventy-one" are sufficient to demonstrate the calibre of the women who were called into the itinerancy of the Bible Christian Connexion. No "itinerant female" was ever appointed as a superintendent of a circuit, nor, so far as I can discover, did any serve on connexional committees, but in all other respects, especially in the early years, they shared to the full the hardships, the anxieties, and the successes of the itinerant ministry.

<sup>1</sup> W. M. Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism*, pp. 365-7.

## IV. THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST "FEMALE PREACHERS"

We have already noted the influence of the Quaker Methodists upon Hugh Bourne, his early interest in female preaching, and his employment of Mrs. Dunnell from 1807 to 1811. The pages of his manuscript "Journal" (carefully transcribed by the Rev. J. T. Wilkinson, Principal of Hartley Victoria College, who has kindly placed his typescript at my disposal) contain scores of references to women preachers whom he encouraged in the early days of the Primitive Methodist movement. Amongst them were Elizabeth Austin of Mill Dale, Mirah Slack of Codnor ("I had much conversation with her about the work of the Ministry"), Anne Milward of Alstonefield, and Hannah Parrott, who conducted a "very lively" lovefeast at Wellingore, near Newark. But two names recur more frequently than the rest: Sarah Kirkland and Mary Hawksley, both natives of Mercaston, near Derby. Sarah Kirkland, the younger of the two, was a girl of twenty when she began to preach in 1814. Two years later Hugh Bourne engaged her to be a travelling preacher, the first woman itinerant preacher in the Connexion, agreeing to pay her two guineas a quarter out of his own pocket. "She laboured in Derby circuit with such success, that the quarter day insisted on the right to pay her salary."<sup>2</sup> In 1818 (the year when Bourne called her "a great preacher"), she married John Harrison, and they were appointed to labour together with William Clowes in Hull. Four years after her husband's death she married again, and though continuing as a local preacher she never returned to the itinerancy.<sup>3</sup>

Mary Hawksley was an older woman. On 7th May 1813 Bourne wrote in his "Journal":

Her husband is a soldier in Spain. She is often afflicted in body and on that account scarcely able to do service. She works lace work and thereby gets a scanty living. Her mother has violently persecuted her of late and she will be obliged to leave her parents. She has talents for labouring and some think that she is called to the ministry.

She was indeed, and, to quote Bourne again, "she laboured considerably as a travelling preacher". The date of her "call" is uncertain, but of Bourne's high opinion of her his "Journal" leaves us in no doubt.

The names and activities of the Primitive Methodist women preachers are more difficult to trace than those of the Bible Christians. The Stations in the Primitive Methodist *Minutes* do not give the Christian names of the preachers, and it is therefore impossible to identify the women amongst them unless we have other sources of information. We have been able to identify more than forty women itinerants, but the full total must be considerably more. The names of the preachers appeared in full in the Annual

<sup>2</sup> J. Walford, *Life and Labours of the late Venerable Hugh Bourne*, i, p. 413.

<sup>3</sup> The story of Sarah Kirkland is so well known that it does not seem necessary to re-tell it here. Her portrait was printed in *Proceedings*, xxviii, p. 92, and a biographical sketch will be found in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1883, pp. 475-8.

List in the *Minutes* of 1844, but there is no woman amongst them; the last woman, therefore, must have been accepted before that date.

Amongst the first race of these women preachers are some who have left their mark on Primitive Methodist history: Sarah Spittle, who pioneered in Shrewsbury, Mary Allen, Jane Brown, who preached the sermon at the opening of Canaan Street chapel, Nottingham, Jane Ansdale, who missioned in Weardale and afterwards married the rector of an episcopal church in Philadelphia, and Ruth Watkins, who with William Knowles founded the Primitive Methodist mission in New York in 1829. The labours of these and other women are described in Joseph Ritson's *Romance of Primitive Methodism*, and scraps of information can be gleaned from the badly-indexed and not always accurate pages of Kendall's two-volume *Origins and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*. In the latter work (i, p. 208) there is a facsimile of a part of the Plan of the Nottingham circuit for 1818, showing how the female preachers were indicated only by their initials. The career of one of them may be taken as typical of the rest. Mary Burks began in the Scotter circuit in 1822, and thereafter travelled in Lincoln, Grimsby, Hull, Louth, Malton, and York, becoming a supernumerary in 1835. In 1828, feeling the strain of her continuous journeys, she asked the Hull Quarterly Meeting to buy her a donkey on which to ride to her appointments. The request was turned down, which is hardly surprising, for the sight of a woman six feet tall traversing her circuit on a donkey would have been more than a little ridiculous!<sup>4</sup>

The devotion of these Primitive Methodist female itinerants was equal in every way to that of their Bible Christian contemporaries. Mary Crossley, for example, was in Hull at the time of a cholera epidemic in 1832, and stuck to her post like a man.<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Smith set out from Ludlow to mission untried ground in Radnorshire:

The preacher came to give her directions. He gave her a map of the road, the place being nearly thirty miles from Ludlow; and he directed her to the family that had sent the invitation; and at the conclusion said, "You must raise your own salary." She asked him what it was, and he replied two guineas for the quarter. "O," said she, "I did not know that I was to have anything."

At Ramsbury the persecution was so severe that when Elizabeth's turn came, it was left to her option whether to go or not.

She went early in the day to visit the people. The preaching had been out of doors, but a man offered her a barn; and while she was preaching, there came a number of young men with eggs, stones, etc. to throw at her. But as soon as they saw her, one of the ringleaders turned and said, "None of you shall touch that woman."<sup>6</sup>

Ann Brownsword, one of Bourne's early protégées, who later helped to establish Primitive Methodism in Manchester, recorded a typical day's work:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Article in *Primitive Methodist Leader*, 7th December 1907.

<sup>5</sup> *op. cit.*

<sup>6</sup> *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1837, pp. 97-8, 181.

<sup>7</sup> *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1819, p. 255.

Sunday, February 5, 1820. I preached at Ramsor at ten o'clock; the Lord sent his softening grace among us, and it was a precious time. At two I preached at Botley Hill, out of doors, to about five hundred people. The Lord was at work; sinners were convinced; believers were blest; and one backslider was recovered. At six I preached at Burland Green to a crowded house.

The best-known of all the Primitive Methodist women preachers was, of course, the now almost legendary Elizabeth Bultitude, who was the last of the line just as the equally-famous Sarah Kirkland was the first. There are still living a few people who knew Elizabeth Bultitude as an old woman at Norwich in the years of her retirement. She was born at Hardwick in Norfolk in 1809 of Wesleyan Methodist parents. Her conversion took place at a Primitive Methodist camp meeting when she was seventeen years old, and six years later, in 1832, she began her work as an itinerant preacher in the Norwich circuit. She travelled thirty years and retired in 1862 to Norwich, where she died on 14th August 1890 at the age of eighty-one. It was her proud boast that during the whole of her itinerant life she missed only two appointments, both of them on account of the weather, that she had preached five or six times each week and three (sometimes five) times on Sundays. Here is her career set out as it would have appeared in an imaginary Primitive Methodist *Hill's Arrangement*:

| BULTITUDE, ELIZABETH |                |      |                      |
|----------------------|----------------|------|----------------------|
| 1832                 | Norwich        | 1    |                      |
| 1833                 | Mattishall     | 1    | 1845 North Walsham   |
| 1834                 | Lynn           | 2    | 1847 Soham           |
| 1836                 | North Walsham  | 2    | 1849 Fakenham        |
| 1838                 | Soham & Watton | 2    | 1850 Upwell          |
| 1840                 | Wisbech        | 1    | 1853 Hinckley        |
| 1841                 | Fakenham       | 1    | 1855 Aylesbury       |
| 1842                 | Peterborough   | 2    | 1857 Wallingford     |
| 1844                 | Aylsham        | 1    | 1858 Newbury         |
|                      |                |      | 1860 Faringdon       |
|                      |                |      | 2                    |
|                      |                | 1862 | <i>Supernumerary</i> |

It is interesting to notice that though two-thirds of her ministry were spent in her native East Anglia, the last nine years took her much further afield. By the end of her active work she must have become a woman of considerable experience. In her prime Elizabeth Bultitude was a force to be reckoned with; in her later years she had become an interesting survivor from a bygone and half-forgotten age; and even today, sixty years after her death, her name is one to conjure with in some former Primitive Methodist circles.<sup>8</sup>

There was little to choose between the allowances paid to the Bible Christian and the Primitive Methodist women itinerants. We have seen that Hugh Bourne paid Sarah Kirkland two guineas per quarter out of his own pocket, but the preparatory meeting to the first Conference, held at Nottingham in 1819, fixed the allowance at £2 per quarter, and this was ratified at the first Conference in the following year. The allowances were increased in 1823, however, to

<sup>8</sup> An extended account of Elizabeth Bultitude appeared in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1891, pp. 564-5.

“£2 2s. od. a quarter, and no more, with board and lodging”. In 1831 it was decided that the women preachers, after two years’ travelling, should receive £2 10s. per quarter, as compared with £4 for a single man, in addition to a maximum allowance of £2 10s. for board and lodging. This regulation was being ratified as late as 1849.<sup>9</sup> Provision was also made for a small payment in cases of sickness. In 1823, for instance, Ann Stanna received £5 from the Contingent Fund for 33 weeks sickness, and in 1829 Mary Allen was paid £1 4s. for November 1 to 29 in the Lincoln circuit, and £1 — “her Doctor’s bill in part”; and the Conference of 1864 generously provided an annuity of £20 for Mary C. Buck, then a supernumerary, “as she had fallen on evil days”.

The female preachers were permitted to join the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers’ Fund; Ruth Watkins and Elizabeth Allen were admitted in 1829. The yearly meeting of the Fund passed the following resolution in 1830:

That females pay half in every respect of that is paid by the men, and be entitled to half of the annuity in all similar cases, only that £3 be allowed for each funeral. But in the case of her marrying she shall have no further claim from the fund.

But in 1836 it was resolved “that the fund be no longer open for the admission of females”, and this was ratified in the new rules brought into operation in 1841: “No female travelling preacher shall be admitted as a member of the Society.”

From the very first Conference the female preachers were exhorted to be “patterns of plainness in all their dress”, and in 1832 we read:

No preacher, travelling or local, shall be allowed to take any female alone with him, nor to suffer any female so to accompany him, (his own wife excepted) in going to or returning from any of his appointments. And the female preachers shall be under a similar regulation.

Also, no married female shall be allowed to labour permanently in any Circuit, except that in which her husband resides, special cases excepted.<sup>10</sup>

As with the Bible Christians, so also with the Primitive Methodists there is no trace of a woman preacher becoming a superintendent or reaching connexional office. Indeed, they were not even members of the circuit “quarter-day board”, unless they were co-opted amongst “such other persons as the meeting may think proper”, though even so, “females may be allowed to speak in quarter days, but not to vote”. This was altered in 1824 to read: “That none of our females speak or vote unless specially called upon.”<sup>11</sup> The general impression we receive from such knowledge as we have is that the women itinerants of the Primitive Methodists had not quite the same status as those of the Bible Christians, though such rights and privileges as they possessed were equally well secured.

<sup>9</sup> *Consolidated Minutes*, 1849, p. 88.

<sup>10</sup> *Various Regulations*, 1832, p. 5f.

<sup>11</sup> *Minutes of Conference*, 1822, p. 5; *Large Minutes*, 1824, p. 4.

## V. CONCLUSION

This present study is of necessity incomplete, and many interesting fields of inquiry remain to be examined in more detail. For example, we should like to know more about the payment of allowances to the women itinerant preachers, especially in the later years. The principle of "equal pay for equal work" was then unknown, and how these women existed—apparently without complaint—on a pittance it is hard to say. Much information is probably lost for ever, but some may still remain embedded in old circuit books and records, waiting to be brought to light by the earnest investigator.

One thing is clear, however. The "itinerant females" of the Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists held a real though subsidiary place in the ranks of the travelling preachers. That place was due to two convictions in the minds of both William O'Bryan and Hugh Bourne: first, that there was no scriptural objection to the employment of women preachers; and, second, that there were women with the necessary gifts and graces who could be used for the furtherance of their evangelistic work. For the Bible Christians and the Primitive Methodists were essentially evangelistic movements in a way and to a degree that at that time the Wesleys, the Methodist New Connexion, and the components of the United Methodist Free Churches were not. This would appear to explain the early and ready full-time employment of women in the first two denominations, and their neglect in the other three.

Undoubtedly the women we have been considering had many gifts and graces, as well as a good deal of physical courage and stamina, and a holy zeal for the Lord's work. They had other advantages as well, such as a popular appeal to a natural curiosity in the towns and villages to which they went. In Richard Pyke's *The Golden Chain* there is a facsimile of a handbill issued in connexion with the opening of a Shoreditch chapel in 1826. After announcing that "Three Sermons will be preached by James Thorne of the Sheerness Circuit" the leaflet continues: "It is also expected that A FEMALE will address the congregations in the afternoon and evening". We may hazard a guess that the anonymous female proved at least as great a "draw" as the renowned James Thorne himself.

"Itinerant females" were a phase, though an interesting and useful phase, in the development of two branches of the Methodist family. They had their day and ceased to be. Whether their story has any bearing on the modern question of "women in the ministry" it is not for the present writer to say. Suffice it to quote some words of Dr. Johnson to his faithful Boswell regarding a Quaker meeting: "Sir, a woman's preaching is like a dog's walking on its hind legs. It is not done well; but you are surprised to find it done at all."<sup>12</sup>

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

<sup>12</sup> For this delightful quotation I am indebted to my friend the late Rev. Stanley Kirkland Bridge. It comes from Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, under date 31st July 1763. (Everyman edition, i, p. 287.)

## M. ELIE HALÉVY ON METHODISM

THERE was a time when students of early nineteenth-century English history simply ignored Methodism. That they no longer do so with such complete equanimity is largely due to the work of the French historian, Elie Halévy. His *History of the English People in the Nineteenth Century*, first published in French in 1913 and in English in 1924, has recently appeared in a complete and revised edition in seven volumes.<sup>1</sup>

It would be a pity, however, if either Halévy's facts or his opinions about Methodism were taken for granted by students, as though his *History* were for once that rare thing, a completely reliable secondary source. For while Halévy deserves credit for seeing something of the relevance of Methodism in the social pattern of the 1830's, he is not a trustworthy source of fact where Methodism is concerned, and this in turn affects the value of his interpretation.

### I. Roman Catholic Emancipation

In his second volume,<sup>2</sup> Halévy described Catholic Emancipation as "a victory of Liberalism over Evangelicalism, and Evangelicalism suffered from the defeat". Therefore "the powerful Methodist body . . . was forced to register, if not, as in 1820, an actual decline in numbers, at least a marked diminution in its growth."<sup>3</sup>

There certainly was a check, which lasted until the year 1831-2, when the increase was 6,553. But the reason brought forward by Halévy is far too vague. He says:

In 1829 the report [the Annual Address of Conference to the Societies] ascribes the disappointingly small increase to "the distress of the times . . . and to various other causes which have been in active and injurious operation". This guarded language refers to the disputes occasioned by the question of emancipation, on which the report preserves absolute silence.<sup>4</sup>

As the Annual Address in question covered the year 1828-9, it was hardly likely that there would be an official comment on a subject on which no official action had been taken at the time. But the phrase "various other causes", although it may imply some reference to emancipation, is much more likely to mean the troubles that followed the Leeds secession. This was the Conference which debated the memorials from many circuits protesting against the way in which the Leeds affair had been handled in the previous year. Halévy makes no mention of the Organ controversy at all, nor does he seem to be aware that there was no full-dress discussion of the Emancipation Act in the 1829 Conference.<sup>5</sup> There can be little doubt that the Address was understood at the time as referring to the debates and divisions in some places over the Leeds Special District Meeting, and the consequent failure to concentrate on the

<sup>1</sup> The footnote references in this article are to the first English edition.

<sup>2</sup> *History of the English People, 1815-30* (London, 1926).

<sup>3</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 276.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, p. 276.

<sup>5</sup> It is hardly likely that Gregory in his *Sidelights* would have omitted reference to any *lengthy* debate; he is not shy of the Catholic question.

work of evangelism. Characteristically, the Address avoids any direct reference to the Leeds secession.

But, in his third volume,<sup>6</sup> Halévy reveals a surprising misunderstanding of the whole matter of Methodism and Emancipation. He says: "In 1829 the Conference had not had the opportunity of making any official pronouncement on the question of Catholic Emancipation, for the Bill had been rushed through Parliament in the interval between two Annual Conferences."<sup>7</sup>

It is unlikely that the timing of the Bill was affected by a desire to avoid a clash with Jabez Bunting; the Methodists themselves hardly realized their political power until the controversies about education. But this is a minor point. What Halévy appears to suggest is that the Wesleyans were incapable of any public action unless the Conference happened to be in session at the time of some national crisis. This is an error; from the days of Lord Sidmouth's sudden attack the Methodists had possessed machinery to deal with political emergencies. The powerful Committee of Privileges, which consisted of the most prominent preachers and laymen in Wesleyan Methodism, was able to act on its own authority, subject to the approval of the next Conference, which it never failed to obtain.

Clearly, Halévy wishes to explain the fact that Wesleyanism made no public pronouncement on the emancipation issue. He says: "But it was common knowledge that the majority of Wesleyans were opposed to emancipation."<sup>8</sup> The reason is simple: no pronouncement was made because the Committee of Privileges met and discussed the problem. For this there is, first, the testimony of the Rev. Joseph Entwistle, in the memoir, published by his son in 1848.<sup>9</sup> Entwistle had received a letter from Adam Clarke, in which the latter asked: "How is it that our *President* and our Heads of Houses do not call upon all our people to petition both houses, and carry, if necessary our remonstrances against those Papists, even to the foot of the Throne?"<sup>10</sup> Entwistle agreed with the fiery Irishman on the principle, but made this note on 14th March 1829:

Received a letter from Mr. Mason, as Secretary of the Committee of Privileges. They have met and come to the following resolution:

That with respect to the Bill for the relief of His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects, now before the House of Commons, the Committee of Privileges do not think it their duty to take any proceedings in their collective capacity: but every member of the Methodist Society will, of course, pursue such steps in his individual capacity on this occasion as he may think right.

*A wise conclusion, in my opinion: for, as a religious body, I trust the Methodists will never move collectively on any civil or political question.*<sup>11</sup>

No one could doubt Entwistle's personal feelings: he signed petitions in Bristol against the Bill as an ordinary citizen, and he wrote

<sup>6</sup> *History of the English People, 1830-41* (London, 1927).

<sup>7</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 166.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>9</sup> *Memoir of the Rev. Joseph Entwistle.*

<sup>10</sup> *op. cit.*, p. 436.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, p. 436.

to his son after the Bill had become law: "We must submit; but I feel as if part of my birthright was gone."<sup>12</sup>

The Wesleyan acceptance of the situation was the chief reason for the failure to mention the issue in the Address of 1829. The resolution of the Committee, given above, was circulated throughout the Wesleyan Connexion, and was the basis of the advice given by superintendents to the laity.

The opinions of Adam Clarke and Joseph Entwistle exhibit divergence on the question of petitioning, and it so happens that evidence has survived which reveals why the Wesleyan Connexion did not protest officially against the Bill, as it could have done, and as Halévy thinks that it would have done.

This evidence is to be found in the autobiography of Thomas Jackson.<sup>13</sup> The key to the situation was that Jabez Bunting was President that year, and in favour of Catholic Emancipation, a fact of which Halévy seems unaware. From Jackson's account it looks as though Adam Clarke, driven by the lack of official action, joined with Thomas Allan, a lay member of the Committee, to call a meeting of the Committee of Privileges in the City Road vestry, in London, without Jabez Bunting's knowledge, although, as President, he was an *ex-officio* member. Such a meeting was bound to agree on the need to petition. Jackson continues:

Dr. Bunting, who was then stationed in Manchester, received intelligence<sup>14</sup> of this meeting, and in the midst of its deliberations unexpectedly appeared, asking for what purpose the Committee had been called together. On being informed, he said that the Committee had no authority to meet for any such purpose; and that, if it should pass any resolution in opposition to the Catholic claims, or propose to send any petition to Parliament against the Bill which was then pending, he would inform the Government that the Committee was acting without authority, and would enter his protest against its proceedings in the public papers. The consequence was, that the meeting broke up, its members deprecating a public dispute between the President of the Conference and one of its most important committees. Those Methodists who were on principle opposed to the measure affixed their names to petitions drawn up by Christians of other denominations.

Bunting's claim that the Committee had no authority was a vigorous bluff characteristic of the man; all it meant was, that the Committee had no authority from *him*. But as Jackson comments:

If the Committee of Privileges was not appointed to petition Parliament against the admission of Roman Catholics to legislative power, did the Conference, on the other hand, appoint him to issue what was, in fact, a prohibition?

Jackson's evidence is all the more convincing, in that he was a right-hand man of Jabez Bunting, was President at the grim Conference of 1849, and, in his autobiography, describes Catholic Eman-

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, p. 440.

<sup>13</sup> *Recollections of my own Life and Times*, pp. 407 ff.

<sup>14</sup> This phraseology particularly suggests that he had been left in ignorance of the meeting.

cipation as the one issue on which he thought Bunting was mistaken—for Jackson, too, was opposed to the Emancipation Act. These years, however, were the period in which Bunting was at the height of his powers and influence, and there can be little doubt that he alone prevented such action against the Government. His achievement may not have been without importance in English history, for, as was seen in 1839 and 1843, the full weight of Wesleyanism in protest was a tremendous political factor, and its absence in 1829 may have played a vital negative rôle. Finally, Jabez Bunting's position shows again why the Address of 1829 was silent on the subject: *he* would have allowed no unfavourable comment; the Conference could hardly suffer the added thrust of a favourable one.

## II. The "Toryism" of Wesleyanism

In the section from which the last quotation was taken,<sup>15</sup> Halévy goes on to emphasize the Toryism of the Wesleyan Connexion as a whole. He points out<sup>16</sup> that the Wesleyan Conference, when the issue of disestablishment arose, adopted the same attitude of "unfriendly neutrality" which had characterized its rare reflections on the Reform Bill, and continues:

This attitude was by no means acceptable to certain members of the local congregations . . . A Wesleyan Minister in Lancashire, the Rev. Joseph Rayner Stephens, without referring the matter to his superior,<sup>17</sup> accepted the position of Secretary of a Church Separation Society. He was suspended from the ministry . . . This was the signal for the revolt that broke out among the Lancashire Methodists. A considerable body of laymen, led by a minister named Warren, took possession of the local chapels and refused to accept the authority of their superintendents.

There is considerable confusion here.<sup>18</sup> No relevant connexion existed between the suspension of Stephens and Warren's revolt. Indeed, one of the most bitter conservative thrusts at Warren was that, as a member of the District Meeting at Manchester, he had voted for the suspension of Rayner Stephens until the Conference; and in the Conference debate he said that Methodism should maintain its middle position between Church and Dissent.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Warren was so little opposed to Establishment, that when he became disgusted with his own handiwork, and left the infant Association, he became an Anglican clergyman, and remained one for the rest of his life. There can be little reason, therefore, for linking the names of Stephens and Warren.

But the personal question apart, there is no truth in the statement that the suspension of Stephens was "the signal" for the rising of the North. In fact, that revolt had two main sources; the proposal to set up a theological institution—which was what brought Warren

<sup>15</sup> *History of the English People, 1830-41*, p. 156.      <sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, p. 157.

<sup>17</sup> Benjamin Gregory's version is that Stephens advocated disestablishment "in utter disregard of the judgment of his Superintendent, the genial George Marsland. . . ." (*Sidelights*, p. 151.)

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, p. 157.      <sup>19</sup> Gregory, *op. cit.*, p. 158.

himself into the field; and the dissatisfaction in towns such as Liverpool and Rochdale with the way in which the Leeds troubles had been handled. Many of the radicals who enlisted under the banner of the Association were opponents of Anglicanism, and there was a tendency to associate the proposal for a college with the ideas of Anglicanism, but it is safe to say that the issue of disestablishment played little part in the contest, in which Stephens himself was not a partisan. While many members of the Association had supported parliamentary reform, there is no concrete evidence that the attitude of the Conference towards the Reform Bill was a specific grievance. The whole issue was much more an *internal* one than Halévy suggests.

### III. Concessions to the Laity in 1835

In this third volume, Halévy says of the concessions of 1835:

The same year the entire organisation of the Methodist body was revised so as to give the lay members a limited control over the chapel funds, but on the other hand to preserve unimpaired the spiritual authority and the exclusively clerical character of Conference.<sup>20</sup>

The first part of this sentence is misleading, because the funds in question were the Contingent Fund and the Auxiliary Fund; no drastic revision was needed for this change, which was simply the final development of a long-accepted policy. These were, in any case, *connexional* funds; properly speaking, chapel funds were *local*, and these had for a long time been largely in the hands of laymen.

The second part of the sentence is expanded in the fourth volume,<sup>21</sup> where Halévy writes:

And the obligation placed on the Superintendents to consult at regular intervals the leading laymen of the connexion was so minutely regulated by the enactment of 1835 that it was rendered to a large extent ineffective. Jabez Bunting remained the Methodist Pope. When he persuaded Conference to found a Theological College, he had himself appointed President and distributed the teaching posts among his partisans.<sup>22</sup>

This is misleading also, because the obligation—only an annual one—was to discover if a majority of the local lay officials in each circuit (hardly “the leading laymen of the connexion”) thought that the circuit was dissatisfied with an existing law, or wished some new law to be enacted. The aim of the law—or this part of it—was not to reduce the power of the superintendent, but to provide a legitimate channel between the circuit and the Conference. Moreover, the concluding sentence of the last quotation suggests that the proposal for a theological institution came after the Warrenite troubles, and if Halévy thought that this was the case, it would explain the connexion between Stephens and Warren made in volume three.

### IV. 1849

In this last volume Halévy makes his most remarkable omission, when he describes the agitation and disruption of 1844-9 without any

<sup>20</sup> *History of the English People, 1830-41*, pp. 157-8.

<sup>21</sup> *History of the English People, 1841-52*.

<sup>22</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 328-9.

reference to the famous "Fly Sheets". The passage leads straight on from the statement that Jabez Bunting distributed among his followers the chief posts in the Institution.

The voice of complaint, therefore, was not silenced. . . . In 1846 the discontent came to a head. . . . An independent press came into existence among the Methodists, which opposed Bunting's political views.<sup>23</sup>

There is, however, no reason for saying that discontent came to a head in 1846; the explosion was three years later. The question of newspapers is more complicated than Halévy suggests. The use of the Press as a weapon in connexional warfare dated as far back as the Warrenite troubles, when John Stephens, the brother of Rayner Stephens, employed the *Christian Advocate* to defend the rebels and attack Jabez Bunting. Largely through the efforts of Bunting, the *Watchman* was launched as a semi-official Wesleyan paper, to defend conservative policy. As the struggle became more intense, other papers superseded the *Christian Advocate*, but were not very successful, and by the end of 1848 the *Wesleyan Record* and *Wesleyan Chronicle* had withdrawn from the field. The Fly Sheets had meanwhile appeared—the first was in 1844, and then others followed in 1846, 1847 and 1848—and the *Watchman* carried on a vicious campaign against them. The Fly Sheets were anonymous, and, until 1849, circulated only among the ministers. A further Conference counter-attack was opened on 1st January 1849, when the anonymous *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* began to appear from the Book-room. The *Papers* were pamphlets, similar in size and anonymity to the Fly Sheets, but more able, and more savage, in tone. The *Wesleyan Times*, the latest of the opposition papers, was first published on the 8th January 1849. At the same time Samuel Dunn, aided by William Griffith, began a *monthly* periodical (the *Wesleyan Papers* also appeared at monthly intervals) called the *Wesley Banner*. In the case of the *Watchman* and the *Wesley Banner* the editors were known; the *Papers* and the Fly Sheets were anonymous.

Now it is incorrect to say that these various papers chose political opinions as the chief subject of their invective. The Fly Sheets began with a fierce attack on the internal economy of Methodism; but the second, which appeared in 1846, was what set the theme for the next three years. Its aim was to make Joseph Fowler, the hope of the liberals, President of the Conference, and to break the custom of re-election at intervals of eight years, which meant that Robert Newton would be President in 1848. The campaign failed, and Newton was President, but the opposition worked for success in 1849. As a result the *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* concentrated their attack on Fowler, without mentioning his name. The *Watchman* ran a similar campaign against the unwilling liberal leader. The importance of the Fly Sheets was clear, from the vigour with which the *Papers* attacked them. The *Wesley Banner* strove to defend the liberal group, while denying that its Revivalism was connected with

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329.

political radicalism, and avoiding claims such as lay delegation.<sup>24</sup> The key to the situation was the election of liberal Presidents in 1845, 1846 and 1847; Jacob Stanley, William Atherton and Samuel Jackson. Newton interrupted the succession, and the whole Press campaign centred on the question of the election of 1849. The anonymous but official *Papers on Wesleyan Matters* provided the opportunity for the public appearance of the Fly Sheets in 1849.

Halévy's description of the contest is not very relevant. He says: In 1846 the gain in membership for the whole of the United Kingdom was only 310, in 1847 there was a loss of 5,000. Bunting and his supporters laid the blame for this on the malcontents, who, they said, were bringing the Society into discredit by shaking the authority of its rulers.<sup>25</sup>

Presumably the reason for the mention of the United Kingdom is that the loss in Great Britain in 1846-7 was 2,089, and in Ireland 2,913. But the Conference of 1847 discussed the state of the Connexion very briefly at the last moment, and it is clear that the erratic career of Caughey, and revivalism in general, were its main themes. The remarks made by Jabez Bunting given in Gregory<sup>26</sup> refer to the need for a revival of the spirit, and discountenance the hasty exclusion of members. Fowler's description of the diseases of the Connexion, made in 1843,<sup>27</sup> indicates many of the subjects left out by Halévy. While Bunting was always on guard against attacks on the pastorate, his explanation of the decline of the 1840's more often mentioned Socialism, Sabbath-breaking, wealth, insufficient pastoral visitation, and the new, somewhat artificial revivals, as explanatory evils.

Halévy continues: "The latter [the malcontents] retorted the blame on Bunting and his partisans, who, according to them, had isolated the Society from the mass of the nation." As has been seen, the disputes centred on much more parochial questions. Halévy does not distinguish the three parties in Methodism: the radicals, who often put politics before religion, the liberals, who usually put religion first; and the conservatives, who, in the years between 1846 and 1850, were thinking first of institutional Methodism. One does not deny that there was a political background to the struggle, but it should not be forgotten that, in this essentially ecclesiastical contest, a favourite way of depreciating one's opponent was to accuse him of political motives. On this basis, Halévy writes: "Bunting took the bold step of expelling three ministers for collaborating with the opposition press."<sup>28</sup>

This is very inexact. Thomas Jackson and George Osborn, who seemed to have a personal and passionate desire to unmask the author of the Fly Sheets, led the conservative forces, and Bunting, now ageing rapidly, was not the dominant figure. The expulsions were the almost unanimous work of a bitter and often hysterical Conference, which was infuriated by the refusal of James Everett,

<sup>24</sup> cf. Eckett's criticism of the Fly Sheets for this omission.

<sup>25</sup> op. cit., p. 329.

<sup>26</sup> *Sidelights*, p. 420.

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.*, p. 346.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329.

Samuel Dunn and William Griffith to say whether or not they had written the Fly Sheets. Everett was expelled for contumacy, on this charge. Gregory thought that if the prosecutors had stopped with Everett, the subsequent troubles might not have occurred. But Dunn and Griffith were also expelled, on the ground that they published the *Wesley Banner*, and wrote for the *Wesleyan Times*. Griffith undoubtedly sent to the *Times* reports of the proceedings of Conference, which was forbidden; he defended himself on the ground that "conservative" ministers sent similar reports to the *Watchman*, which was true. But the account of the Conference makes it clear that they were the other two ministers most suspected of the Fly Sheets; and, in a sense, the charges on which they were expelled were substituted for the lack of evidence on this point. Only in James Everett's case was the charge plausible, because of the similarity in style between the Fly Sheets and his known writings, and also because of his undoubted predilection for anonymity.

Halévy argues that the chief point in the subsequent battle was the freedom of the Press:

*The Times* declared the decision of the Conference a threat to the liberty of the press and gave its blessing to the attempts made by the victims of an irresponsible tyranny to reform the Constitution of a Church whose political conservatism it pronounced detestable. With this powerful support, the rebellion spread.<sup>29</sup>

This leads him to the conclusion that the foundation of the United Methodist Free Churches was due "not to a doctrinal, but a political issue".

Both statements are prompted by the same instinct to find the causes of what happened in Methodism in the rest of English society. The freedom of the Press certainly played a part in the debates which followed, but the central issues were those internal to Methodism. In the host of tracts that were written, the laws of 1835, the Fly Sheets, the Brotherly Question, the powers of Conference and of superintendent ministers, formed the favourite topics. Methodism, as a society, had a far greater historical autonomy than Halévy realized. At the root of the Fly Sheets controversy lay a division of which he did not suspect the existence. On the one side were those who believed that whatever authority the ministry possessed derived from the congregation; on the other side were those who believed that the ministry possessed an authority which the congregation could neither give nor take away. This was a fundamental disagreement about the nature of the Church, and cannot be "explained" simply by referring to the political struggles of contemporaneous England. In the last resort, the history of the Church cannot be treated as though it were the same kind of history as that of secular society, and Halévy's misunderstanding can be traced to failure to remember that Methodism was still, in the early nineteenth century, a thorough-going religious movement, and not, as he unconsciously assumed, just an unusual form of political organization.

JOHN H. S. KENT.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, p. 329.

## BOOK NOTICES

*The Royal Burgh of Ayr*, edited by Annie I. Dunlop. (Oliver & Boyd, pp. xii. 342, price not stated.)

*The English Religious Tradition*, by Norman Sykes. (S.C.M. Press, pp. 121, 7s. 6d.)

*The Sacraments of Methodism*, by Robert W. Goodloe. (Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, pp. 160, \$1.75.)

William the Lion granted Ayr its royal charter 750 years ago, and to celebrate the event the Town Council has subsidized the production of a handsome volume in which every aspect of the burgh's life and history is fully chronicled. Even those who do not know Ayr will find this a most interesting book, and will learn much about Scottish customs, civic administration, and religion. The authors of the chapters on the Churches of Ayr have done their work exceptionally well, and give to Ayr Methodism an adequate place. This book is a model of its kind, and if the Town Council shows such enterprise in other matters, Ayr must be a delightful place in which to live.

A book by Dr. Norman Sykes is an event, and his reprint of a series of broadcast talks does not disappoint. Four hundred years in a hundred pages is a remarkable feat of compression, and we cannot over-rate the quality of a work in which, covering very familiar ground, the master-hand traces so expertly the post-reformation English tradition in all its aspects, Catholic, Protestant, evangelical, social and missionary, in relation to the development of Church, State and Society. Many will put down this excellent book wondering why the author's Birkbeck Lectures have never been reprinted.

The title of Dr. Goodloe's book flatters to deceive. It makes no contribution to our historical knowledge, and both theologically and liturgically it is inadequate to the theme. The author seems unaware of the work in their respective fields of Dix, Maxwell, Raymond George and J. C. Bowmer, and of the vast literature produced in recent years on Baptism on this side of the Atlantic. This is a well-meaning book, but elementary in its treatment of a fascinating and important subject.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

*Heritage without End: A Story to tell to the Nation*, by Alan Walker. (The General Conference Literature and Publications Committee of the Methodist Church of Australasia, pp. 95, price not stated.)

The author is the leader of Australian Methodism's "Mission to the Nation", and we imagine that this little book will have served well its evident purpose, which is to tell those brought into the Church through the Mission something of its history and activity. In a series of attractively written sketches the story of Methodism in Australasia is set before us, from 1814 when there appeared in the "Stations" of the British Conference the entry: "New South Wales—Two to be sent", to the present day. The stories of the early days are among the most romantic in the history of World Methodism, and the accounts of present-day activity in Social Service, Education and kindred fields give us a picture of a virile Church keenly alive to the needs of the modern age. We believe that a book on British Methodism similar in purpose, style and format could be of great service.

RALPH J. PRITCHARD.

## CORRESPONDENCE

[Mr. Lawton's article on "The Proverbial Element in Wesley's *Journal*" in *Proceedings*, xxix, pp. 58-65, has resulted in some correspondence, which we print below, together with Mr. Lawton's reply to his critics.—EDITOR.]

MR. LAWTON can hardly be right in connecting the phrase "Awly-pawly" with a ball-game called "awly-awly". Wesley himself thought it an onomatopœic transliteration of a Hebrew phrase, אָלֵה פִּלְאֵי as a glance at *Letters*, i, p. 6 shows.<sup>1</sup> It has no association at all with the idea of "jumping from scheme to scheme", the character referred to being either God or the Devil. Whether this early essay of Wesley's in textual criticism is right or not is another matter. That particular combination of Hebrew words does not seem to be found in Scripture, though it means "God of Wonders". Perhaps it comes from Cabbalistic literature.

REGINALD KISSACK.

ONE correction springs to the eye: on page 65, in Lackington's anecdote about Wesley at Charterhouse, the source of Wesley's repartee is, quite obviously, *Paradise Lost*, Book I, II, lines 262-3, where Satan exclaims:

To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:  
Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.

Mr. Lawton's quotation from Plutarch is surely quite beside the mark, and Wesley's reply is remarkable for its appropriate allusion rather than for any striking originality.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

[Other correspondents have made the same point.—EDITOR.]

THE "ball of contention" (p. 69) is surely the golden ball or golden apple, the "apple of discord" which according to ancient legend the goddess of strife threw amongst the guests at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis.

"As strong as an ox" (p. 61) is surely a proverb in its own right, dating from the time when the ox was the beast used to pull heavy loads. "As strong as a horse" is perhaps of later origin, deriving from the time when the horse displaced the ox as a draught animal.

ROBERT H. HARTE.

MR. LAWTON'S guess at the origin of "No gown, no crown" (p. 64) as being a version of *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* is surely wide of the mark. It is far more likely to be a deliberate corruption of William Penn's most important work, *No Cross, No Crown*.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

*Mr. Lawton replies as follows:*

Mr. Kissack is right: "Awly-pawly" is onomatopœic. I took the whole phrase as if it were a parenthesis describing the bishop—he did jump from one building scheme to another. But the phrase does not refer to the bishop at all, and so my conjecture is unlikely to be true.

<sup>1</sup> The pointing of the Hebrew characters as printed in the *Letters* has been corrected here through the good offices of Dr. Norman H. Snaith.—EDITOR.

However, it was only a conjecture, as my use of the word "perhaps" indicates.

"Better to rule in hell than to serve in heaven". The Miltonic origin of this phrase is, of course, certain, as I had myself discovered since writing the article. I neither said nor suggested, however (as Mr. Vickers implies), that Wesley was "strikingly original". My point is that it is proverbial *in form* and witty in use, not that Wesley is there and then transmuting Plutarch. Even so, is it not possible that the great Milton could owe something to Plutarch?

"No Gown, no Crown". The immediate point is that Wesley reports it as an Irish proverb. The crux of the question lies here—is he mistaken? He uses the proverb "No cross, no crown" himself (e.g. *Letters*, ii, p. 114). This goes back a long way beyond Penn (1669); see e.g. Green's *Works* (1587), and Bishop Paulinus (353-431). If Wesley had thought that the phrase "No gown, no crown" was a parody on "No cross, no crown", he surely would never have called it an Irish proverb. The context, especially in the parallel passage given in *Journal*, viii, p. 152, seems to suggest that the drunken man is taunting Wesley and his followers with being "not Church". If the man was a Roman Catholic, I suggest he is meaning something like *Extra ecclesiam nulla salus* in its degraded sense. Assuming that the phrase is a proverb, I suggest that it is akin to others like "No priest, no mass".

On the other hand, if Wesley is mistaken, Dr. Beckerlegge's conjecture may prove fruitful. One may then be tempted to suggest, for example, that it is a waggish recollection of Cennick's sermon on the Swaddling Clothes. If in the development of his theme, he used the "gown" motif (i.e. the sinner's need of a garment) it is possible that those who dubbed him "swaddler" may have parodied his teaching in some such wisecrack as the proverb-like "no gown, no crown".

"Ball of Contention". A slight correction should first be noted. The quotation from the "Sermons" should read "ball of controversy". This occurs again in Sermon CIV, *Works*, vii, p. 185, where it is linked with the idea of unfruitful leisure. The suggestion that the phrase should be identified with the classical "apple of discord" is attractive, but I think not convincing. This apple was not commonly referred to as a ball, neither was it tossed to and fro, as Wesley says the ball of controversy is. I think this phrase is a variant of the proverb "bone of contention", which he uses six or seven times, e.g. Sermon XX, *Works*, v, p. 246. The whole thing, and not least the word "toss", suggests sport, if not football then perhaps tennis, which Wesley played in his Oxford days.

"As strong as an ox". The phrase "as strong as an ox" would seem not to be a proverb in its own right. Neither the older nor the more modern authorities give it. Ray (1670) for example, who made a special grouping of proverbial similes, does not give this one. It is not easy to find examples even of its use as a common idiomatic simile. The ox has been proverbialized as fated to labour, but not for its strength. Indeed the proverb "as strong as a horse" may well be due to the contrast between the two animals. Two horses, for instance, could displace six oxen as a ploughing team.

My critics have given me pleasure in sending me back to the text of Wesley and to other books, on the *qui vive*, and I am grateful to them.

GEORGE LAWTON.

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 936. METHODIST HISTORY PRIZES FOR RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.

The subject for the fourth annual prize essay competition in 1952 was "John Wesley and the beginnings of Methodism in America". The entries were adjudicated by the Rev. Dr. E. Douglas Bebb, and the prizewinners were: Margaret Miller, Elizabeth Thomas, and Margaret Dawson (all of Hunmanby Hall), Roy Paton (Rydal), Paul Ballard (Kent College), Roger Driver (Ashville), and D. Miller and P. M. Stonham—equal—(both of Woodhouse Grove).

The competition for 1953 was adjudicated by Mr. Stanley Sowton, the subject being "Methodism and the Emancipation of the Slaves". The winners were: Dorothy Jeary (East Anglian School); Jillian England (West Cornwall School) and Heather Faulkner (Hunmanby Hall)—equal; N. D. Hodgins and Peter Blatherwick (Rydal)—equal; R. M. Hillman (Rydal), R. G. Emery (Kent College).

Details of the competition and the awards for previous years were given in *Proceedings*, xxvii, p. 70; xxviii, 23, 83.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

### 937. LORD MANSSELL. (*Journal*, 30th August 1758.)

Wesley informs us (*Journal* iv, p. 284) that there used to be preaching at Margam (Glamorganshire) "till Lord Mansell, dying without children, left the estate to Mr. Talbot. He forbad all his tenants to receive the preachers, and so effectively put a stop to it." Curnock, in a footnote on Lord Mansell, says: "Or rather, Sir Thomas Mansell, Bart., who died Nov. 29, 1750, and left the fine estate to his son-in-law, Mr. John Talbot, of Laycock Abbey." Nicholas (*Annals and Antiquities of the Counties and County Families of Wales*, ii, p. 642) informs us, however, that it was Sir Thomas Mansell's son, Bussy, fourth Lord Margam, who died in 1750, whereupon the title became extinct and the estates passed to Bussy's nephew, the Rev. Thomas Talbot, son of Mary Mansell by her husband, John Ivory Talbot, Esq., of Laycock Abbey. If Nicholas is correct, Curnock's note would appear to be both unnecessary and erroneous. On the fourth Lord Margam, see also *The Complete Peerage* (1932), viii, pp. 384-7, where he is described as rich and very covetous, "peevish and misanthrope to the greatest Degree". But was he the parliamentary candidate of 1734 who promised to have always "a Tender regard to those Just Privileges they [i.e. the Dissenters] at present enjoy" (Richards: *Piworthianaeth a Pholitics*, p. III)? That would well accord with his later tolerant attitude towards the Methodists.

GRIFFITH T. ROBERTS.

### 938. JOHN WESLEY'S USE OF HIS TIME.

The general impression one gets of John Wesley's life is of one who lived in a constant whirl of activity. So do most ministers in the active work today. Can we take Wesley as any guide to the way we should use our time—making allowance, of course, for differences of circumstances? Nobody can alter the fact of Wesley's vast travelling and frequent preaching. But did he, in fact, preach and speak oftener than, say, my colleagues? I wonder.

I took a year almost at random: 27th May 1765 to 26th May 1766. I have yet to make a proper analysis, but I find that out of 365 days we have no account at all of 110 days, and on four days Wesley states (*Journal*) that he "rested"; on one day that he "wrote". Four days

were spent at Conference, five days in crossing the Irish Sea. We know well from general evidence that those 110 days were not spent in idleness, but the account given of the majority of the other days shows a great deal of time spent in preparation and quiet. The true picture will be seen when the Diary is compared with the *Journal* and other evidence added; but I suggest (to start somebody else off!) that Wesley's life was by no means the constant round of riding and preaching from morn till night, year after year, that I for one have held before myself as a standing rebuke. It took him six days to revise the roll of the London society! I feel a little happier about the time I take each quarter getting my membership figures to balance and correcting eleven class-books against *my* roll! Perhaps the man was human, after all.

ALFRED H. S. PASK.

939. EARLY METHODISM AND DRESS.

John Wesley's opinions on dress are well known to all students of Methodism. They have moved some people to ridicule, but it would be well to study the fashion-plates of the period before pronouncing judgement, and also to consider Wesley's strictures in the light of eighteenth-century practices. At the heart of them, as in the case of almost every judgement that Wesley made, there is a core of common sense.

These early ideas of what is fitting and unfitting in dress lingered for a long time in many parts of Methodism. This is exemplified by the following lines, which appeared, needless to say, anonymously, in a Hull local paper in 1852. The Connexion was then in a state of turmoil, and they are evidently the work of one of the malcontents, with contemptuous reference not only to ministers and their wives, but also to the *Watchman*, the weekly organ that supported the policy of the Conference.

Thoughts suggested on seeing the *Wife of a Wesleyan Minister* appear in Feathers and Flowers at Thornton St. Chapel, 1852.

"WATCHMAN! WHAT OF THE NIGHT?"

*Soldiers* the Martial plume do wear;  
*Children* blow feathers in the air;  
*Gay Belles* adorn with Ostrich plume,  
 And tresses deck in *full costume*!  
 But *what* have preachers' wives in view,  
 That they adopt *these fashions* too?  
 Is it to tell us they've no health  
 In the best part of Christian wealth,—  
 The Spirit's power within?

How, are the Preachers looking out?  
 What are these *Watchmen now* about?  
 Ask *them*—"What of the night?"  
 'Tis vain their crying—danger's here!  
 When lo! A wife so very near  
 Proclaims the *case outright*.  
 Then rouse *ye, Watchmen*, one and all,  
 Listen to reason's pressing call—  
 The enemy's within!

It is consoling to reflect that no editor today would accept a contribution written in such a spirit, nor would it be easy to find a "Methodist" capable of writing it.

W. L. DOUGHTY.