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# Proceedings

OF THE

# Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

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Volume XXXIV

March 1964

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## EDITORIAL

NOW that we in Great Britain are well immersed in "the Conversations", or, to give the full title, *Report on Conversations between the Church of England and the Methodist Church*, and also that fellow-Christians in other lands are listening-in to what we are saying, it would not be right for the Wesley Historical Society to remain silent and aloof. It may be thought that as we are an "historical" society our concern must necessarily be with the past; but surely the past must speak to the present. In our case, Wesley must speak to us today. In fact, he does. His words are quoted on every side, though sometimes, we fear, without due consideration of their immediate context and meaning.

It seemed to us that a useful contribution to the present debate would be to take some of Wesley's most frequently quoted sayings, examine them in their original setting, and consider their significance for today. We have therefore arranged for five such articles to appear between now and the momentous decision-making Conference of 1965. In this issue we begin with "The Open Table", to be followed by "Apostolic Succession" (Albert B. Lawson), "Episcopacy" (Victor E. Vine), "The Real Presence" (A. Raymond George), and "Churchmanship" (John H. S. Kent). They will probably be more controversial than those usually appearing in this journal, but we feel sure that readers will appreciate them all the more for that. Any opinions expressed will be personal to the writers, and must not be regarded as in any way committing the Society as a whole.

At the same time, we celebrate this year (on 3rd May, to be exact) the 150th anniversary of the death of that intrepid son of Methodism Dr. Thomas Coke. We welcome in this issue a contribution from J. Hamby Barton on Coke and American Methodism. In the next issue, N. Keith Hurt will write on Coke and British Methodism. We are not unmindful, of course, of the fact that we shall be remembering Dr. Coke again in our Annual Lecture this year.

We commend to all our members the timely message on pages 102-3 from our President, Dr. Maldwyn Edwards. It is something for us all to "read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest".

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

### To all Members

**A**T the moment the chief bond between members is the receiving of the quarterly *Proceedings*. Much more might be done, and ought to be done, to widen the activities of the Society. This challenge is not addressed to the officers, who do their work well, but who are largely dependent upon the use made of them by the membership itself. It may well be that many would do more than just be readers, were there given an indication of ways in which they could be of larger service. This challenge is then addressed to that section of the Society who only seek a lead.

First of all, let us have as complete a list as possible, year by year, of those who present post-graduate theses on aspects of early Methodism or subjects of related interest. Arising out of this, let any who have presented original work on some aspect of eighteenth- or early nineteenth-century Methodism be willing, when it is feasible, to let us have a digest of their research in article form. We cannot guarantee publication, but we are always on the look-out for new students of Methodism who have something distinctive to say about our beginnings. There may even be those who have done a graduate essay or a "project" at advanced level, who would care to send a digest of their discoveries.

Secondly, we need to encourage interest in the District branches of the Wesley Historical Society. These need not necessarily be co-terminous with District boundaries, but could take in a larger area still. Obviously a first desideratum is a well-publicized annual meeting of the branch—first of all for members, and then, after business affairs, a paper on an aspect of Methodist history, preferably of local or regional importance, which non-members also can attend. There ought also to be an annual pilgrimage to some place of Methodist historical interest, with tea and then a relevant talk by a qualified member or an outside authority.

Thirdly, members might consider jointly or separately doing some piece of research into early Methodism in their locality. The findings would be of interest to the branch, and might even be locally printed. Indeed, if the completed research were of sufficient worth, it might even be considered as one of the "occasional Publications" of the Wesley Historical Society. Much useful information in the past has been derived from local histories of Methodism, and some circuits have worthily celebrated the centenary of a church by an introductory article in the handbook on the history of that society during a hundred years of social, political and religious change. Many valuable records of this kind have been allowed to mildew in total neglect, and others have known a more dramatic end in the incinerator. "Oh, Iago, the pity of it!" Let any such brochures or booklets with articles of historical interest be sent to the Archives

for the discriminating scrutiny of John C. Bowmer! And, by the way, could not a branch, with infinite tact, offer its services to any circuit celebrating a centenary or bicentenary event and wanting a worthy record of historical value? Certainly the branch must be the watchdog to ensure that places of Methodist historical interest do not fall into neglect, and that important anniversaries are properly celebrated. Through the pages of the *Proceedings* branches can set down their meetings and activities for the interest and stimulus of others.

Overseas members will doubtless have their own branches, and news of their activities, including details of local research, would be of special value. From other countries it would also be a great benefit to know of students engaged in doctoral theses on any form of historical research with Methodist interest, so that other students in that same general field would have the opportunity of a correspondence that might be mutually instructive.

So, members of the Society, use us more, and let us use you more, that together we may serve the interests of Methodism and fulfil those objects of the Society for which it was founded. The expansion of our work and influence depends on you.

MALDWYN L. EDWARDS.

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We acknowledge, with thanks, the receipt of the following journals and publications, and would assure the societies concerned of our continued friendly interest in their work.

*The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, October 1963.

*The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, November 1963.

*The Amateur Historian*, Summer, Autumn and Winter 1963.

*The Journal of the Presbyterian Historical Society of England*, July 1963.

*The Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, Autumn 1962.

*The Baptist Quarterly*, July and October 1963.

*The Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, September 1963.

*The Bulletin of the Society for African Church History*, April 1963.

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It is with considerable pleasure than we learn of the formation of yet another local branch of our Society—to be known as the Devon and Exeter Branch. An inaugural meeting, attended by about twenty people, was held on Tuesday, 10th March 1964. We extend to the branch our very best wishes, and shall look forward to receiving further news of its development.

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#### ERRATUM

We regret to say that in our December 1963 issue (*Proceedings*, xxxiv, p. 95), under "News from our Branches", Publication No. 6 of the Cornish Branch was given the title *Samuel Drew*. It should have read *Samuel Dunn*. We extend our apologies to the author and to the branch.

EDITOR.

## THOMAS COKE AND AMERICAN METHODISM, 1784-92

**W**ILLIAM PHŒBUS, sometime physician and Methodist preacher and a member of the Christmas Conference of 1784, in his report of that Conference said:

Wesley ordained Coke his apostle or messenger to us . . . Then with his power and in the fear of God, we assembled at the city of Baltimore . . . and received Thomas Coke, L.L.D. with his testimonials from the greatest man to us in the world.<sup>1</sup>

This was Coke's function for America: agent for Wesley. In his lifetime he and his work were constantly overshadowed by the two fathers of American Methodism, Wesley and Asbury. Caught between them during Wesley's life and equally pressed between England and America after Wesley's death, Coke was constantly subject to the misunderstanding of those whom he faithfully tried to represent.

Nor have the histories rectified the misunderstandings. Jesse Lee, first historian of the infant American church, entertained an open hostility to Coke. Later works, focusing on Wesley and Asbury, have frequently reflected his views or given inadequate attention to the problem. An appreciative biography by Bishop Warren Candler in 1923 has been too little read. America needs to take a new look at Dr. Coke and acknowledge a debt to his selfless service. One step in this direction is a recent doctoral dissertation at Boston University by Thomas Smith. It is to be hoped that this issue of the *Proceedings* will inspire the reading of these works and further recognitions of Coke's work.

Coke's relationship to America can be summarized in three significant periods. These were the Christmas Conference of 1784, the Conferences of 1787, and the first General Conference in 1792. Each of these was of major significance in the development of the church.

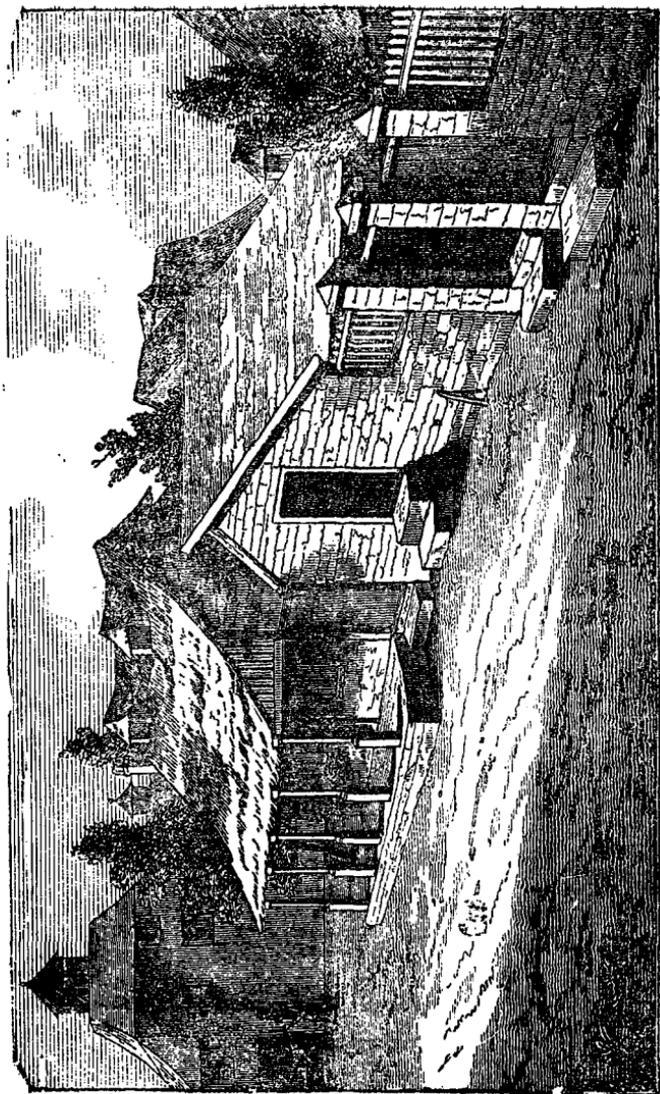
The year 1784 was the year of the establishment of the Methodist Conferences both in England and America. Coke was closely associated with both events, and the establishment in America should not be considered without keeping in mind his experience in the English settlement in July before embarking for America in September.

Wesley discussed the American problem and a tentative outline of its solution with Coke in February of 1784. This discussion continued until at the Leeds Conference in July the matter was laid before a select group of preachers. That Coke was to be superintendent of this American venture seems not to have been questioned.

<sup>1</sup> William Phœbus: *An Apology for the Right of Ordination* . . . (New York: T. Kirk, 1804), pp. 23, 25.



THE REV. THOMAS COKE, LL.D.



THE HOUSE IN WHICH DR. COKE PREACHED HIS FIRST SERMON IN JAMAICA.

He had the qualifications of orders, education and Wesley's appointment. That this appointment should be by formal ordination ceremony seems not to have been settled, however, until, after the Conference, Coke wrote to Wesley urging it. Consequently "everything was done", Whatcoat and Vasey were ordained, and Coke was "set apart as a Superintendent", the Prayer Book was prepared, and Wesley wrote a letter to explain the plan to the American preachers. Whatever else was in Wesley's mind was conveyed to Coke privately, to whose subsequent actions we must look to discern the whole plan.<sup>2</sup> Whatever he did carried Wesley's authority, and no evidence has survived to question his actions in Wesley's behalf.

Thus armed, the three missionaries arrived in New York. They were met by John Dickins, who heartily approved of the new plan and urged it to be effected immediately. But as Coke was careful of the propriety of Wesley's instruction to work in harmony with Asbury, he set out to the south to find him. In about ten days he came upon the site of an ensuing Quarterly Conference at Barrett's Chapel in Maryland, to which Asbury came. The fifteen preachers at the Conference mutually agreed to the expediency of calling a general conference of the preachers to consider Wesley's proposals. Although no such conference was proposed in any of the extant records of Wesley's plan, Coke evidenced no surprise or hesitation at calling a conference. Wesley was accustomed to doing all things in conference; this was the Methodist plan, in Britain and America.

The chief point of issue of the Christmas Conference was the source of authority for the new American church. Here Asbury and Coke contributed opposing ideas. Coke insisted that one of the prime resolutions of the Conference be the full recognition of Wesley's authority. So the *Minutes* of the Conference stated:

During the Life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, we acknowledge ourselves his Sons in the Gospel, ready in Matters belonging to Church-Government, to obey his Commands. And we do engage after his Death to do everything that we judge consistent with the Cause of Religion in America and the political Interests of these States, to preserve and promote our Union with the Methodists in Europe.<sup>3</sup>

This was the basis of authority in British Methodism; here in America the assumption was the same. John Dickins had told Coke: "Mr. Wesley has determined the point, and therefore it is not to be investigated, but complied with." Asbury probably judged such sentiments to be ill-advised, but he did not seriously oppose the passage of "the binding minute". Asbury, on his part, recognizing the temper of the American preachers, insisted that all things be put to vote. This was pointed up in his refusal to accept the appointment as Superintendent without the vote of the Conference. And Coke freely accepted this.

<sup>2</sup> See *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 11. In the letter reproduced there we see how fully Wesley entrusted the execution of his plan to Asbury and Coke.

<sup>3</sup> *Minutes*, 1785.

That these facets of the Conference were mutually exclusive sources of authority in the new church was yet to appear. The Christmas Conference was an experimental design, constructed first from the musings of Wesley and his advisers since at least 1755. Coke had recently added his conclusions. Finally the form of the church was pragmatically arrived at in the deliberations of the practical but unlettered preachers at Baltimore.

These men, from John Wesley to Adam Fonerdan, were working together in the great new task. The advice of Wesley transmitted through Coke was understood and gladly accepted. The Christmas Conference was not deceived by Coke concerning Wesley's mind, nor did the Conference claim privileges and powers which Wesley did not expect them to possess and employ. That later historians can see in that event the basis for the later tension between Wesley and the Conference, and the Conference and its episcopacy, in no wise detracts from the basic concord of the Christmas Conference. Some of the tenets of the Conference, such as the liturgy, fell by the wayside; the vexing problem of authority was to be a tare in the harvest, but more good seed was in good ground. Coke had planted well.

It was inevitable that the opposing notions of authority which the Christmas Conference had left unresolved would lead to a crisis in the church. This crisis was precipitated in 1787 on Coke's second visit to America.

Three conferences had been scheduled for the late spring and summer of 1787. Wesley, however, decided that Coke should visit in the early spring, possibly to allow time for him to return for the conferences in Ireland and England. This caused some irritation among the preachers, particularly Asbury, who disliked the necessity of adjusting his schedule to Coke's always limited time in America. The more serious issue, however, was Wesley's order, delivered through Coke, to appoint Whatcoat Superintendent to act with Asbury and Garrettson as Superintendent for the British possessions.

When Coke arrived in Charleston in March, Asbury somewhat unwillingly acquiesced in Whatcoat's appointment. But as Asbury and Coke met the Conferences the problems became serious. The sessions were marked with unrest. Rumours were rife that Wesley intended to recall Asbury. The preachers complained of the change of the Conference dates, and Coke was accused of attempting to administer the church by mail from the distance of Europe. Behind all complaints was jealousy of the Conference right of self-determination, the American temper.

Coke, upholding Wesley's authority, pointed to the "binding minute", and would have forced Whatcoat's appointment. Upon this Jesse Lee reported:

They had made the engagement of their own accord, and among themselves, and they believed they had a right to depart therefrom when

they pleased, seeing it was not a contract, made with Mr. Wesley, . . . but an agreement among themselves.<sup>4</sup>

By this means the issue of authority was settled. From that time the Conference of the American preachers was clearly the ultimate authority of the American Methodist connexion.

The period from the Conference of 1787 to the Conference of 1792 was marked with unrest and confusion. Coke attempted to calm the storm before leaving for Ireland in 1787. His effort was partially successful. But during the year the estrangement between Wesley and Asbury developed. Only scraps of correspondence have survived to tell that tale, but it was climaxed by Wesley's censorious letter to Asbury of 20th September 1788.<sup>5</sup>

Having thus cut loose from Wesley's authority, the American church did not yet have a clear understanding of its own organizational problem. Asbury's solution was to attempt to govern the church through the unfortunate expedient of the Council. Asbury conceived this governing committee to be more practical than the scattered conferences among which agreement had become more difficult. But the Council was always suspect as nothing more than Asbury's cabinet.

During Coke's 1791 visit opposition to the Council was climaxed with a demand for a general conference of all the preachers, the first such conference since 1784. James O'Kelly was the chief agitator of this opposition, but Coke himself assumed formal leadership of the call for the general conference.

In the midst of these discussions Coke became involved with two other problems. The first was his approach to Bishop White about the possibility of reunion with the Anglican communion in America. This excursion was probably undertaken solely on Coke's own initiative, but in the light of Wesley's letter to Asbury of 31st October 1784, where he suggested a cautious approach to Mr. Ogden and Mr. Jarrett, it seems probable that Wesley would have approved of Coke's advances. However, Coke, realizing the magnitude of the gap and being straitened for time by reason of Wesley's death, did not pursue the matter further than his brief conversation with Dr. White in Philadelphia. The second of Coke's problems was Wesley's death, and his emotional attack on Asbury and the American preachers who had contributed to the rejection of Wesley's authority in 1787.

Before his departure Coke printed a circular outlining his programme for the forthcoming general conference.

Wilmington, Delaware, May 4th, 1791.

Five things we have in view. 1. The abolition of the arbitrary aristocracy. 2. The investing of the nomination of the presiding elders in

<sup>4</sup> Jesse Lee: *A Short History of the Methodists* (Baltimore: McGill and Cline, 1810), p. 127.

<sup>5</sup> For Wesley's probable final word, see *Proceedings*, xxxii, p. 96.

the conferences of the districts. 3. The limitation of the districts to be invested in the general conference. 4. An appeal allowed each preacher on the reading of the station. And 5. A general conference of at least two-thirds of the preachers as a check upon every thing.<sup>6</sup>

When the general conference convened in Baltimore in November 1792, the preachers were prepared for a thorough revision of the organization of the church. Coke struck the keynote of the Conference in his opening remarks: "The members of this conference are the representatives of the people, and we are to all intents the legislature of the Methodist Episcopal Church."<sup>7</sup>

During the extremely difficult days of the sitting of the Conference Coke alone presided. Asbury purposely absented himself, since his own conduct was under review in O'Kelly's criticisms. O'Kelly's demand to break Asbury's absolute power of stationing was rejected, resulting in the withdrawal of O'Kelly's party from the connexion. But this schism did not break the Conference, which proceeded to a careful revision of the discipline. The most notable accomplishment was the General Conference itself as a standing body, to meet every four years as the supreme governing body of the church.

Thus in the great moments of the organization of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Christmas Conference of 1784 and the first General Conference of 1792, the church looked to Thomas Coke as a source of order and form. The fervour and indefatigable labours of Asbury and the American preachers were here moulded into the effective economy of Methodism largely by the skill and wisdom of Thomas Coke.

J. HAMBY BARTON.

<sup>6</sup> Alexander M'Caine: *The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy* (Baltimore: Richard Matchett, 1827), p. 64.

<sup>7</sup> William Guirey: *The History of the Episcopacy* (n.p., n.d., c. 1805), p. 372.

### The Rev. John J. Perry

IT is with great regret that we record the death of the Rev. John J. Perry, chairman of the East Anglia branch, which took place in Norwich on 29th January 1964. Mr. Perry, who was 71, was a highly-honoured member of the Wesley Historical Society, and was especially well known to habitual attenders at the Annual Meeting, over which he had on a number of occasions presided.

He commenced his ministry in 1918, after training at Didsbury College. He travelled widely throughout the country, and latterly was superintendent of the Preston (Wesley) and Norwich (St. Peter's) circuits.

John Perry was a faithful and beloved minister, a fine churchman, a man of great integrity of mind and heart, and a wise counsellor and friend. He was widely read; he was a lover of Charles Wesley's hymns and an authority on Wesleyana. His was a very gracious personality. I know that much more could be written, for I was proud to be one of his friends.

R. W. TROWER (Norwich).

## “A CONVERTING ORDINANCE AND THE OPEN TABLE”

[From time to time articles have appeared in the *Proceedings* on topics relevant to the present Anglican-Methodist discussions (e.g. Episcopacy, the Lord's Supper, Early Methodist Polity, etc.), but without being specially angled to have a bearing on the *Report* which is now before us. Meanwhile, a spate of literature from various pressure groups continues to increase. In this controversy, the words of the Wesley brothers are freely bandied, and, indeed, are often brought in to bolster up particular cases. If certain features of John Wesley's teaching and ministry are forced out of the wider context of his life, the special pleading can buttress a writer's own point of view. This, however, is not dealing fairly with our data. We have therefore asked a number of our people to take some of the much-quoted sayings of the Wesleys and discuss their true significance and relevance to "the Conversations". In so doing we hope we shall be able, as Methodist students, to make our own contribution by clarifying the minds of our readers and setting John and Charles Wesley in true relation to the present debate. We are also hopeful that this series of articles will reach a wider constituency than that of our normal circle of readers. Let truth be served!—MALDWYN L. EDWARDS.]

*Experience shows the gross falsehood of that assertion  
that the Lord's Supper is not a converting ordinance.*

—THE JOURNAL OF JOHN WESLEY, 27th JUNE 1740.

THIS is the first of a series of articles in which we shall examine some of the much-quoted sayings of John and Charles Wesley. We shall look at these sayings, (a) in their original context, and (b) as they are invoked to support issues involved in the present discussions between the Church of England and the Methodist Church. The particular issue under consideration in this article is that of "the Open Table", supported (it is alleged) by Wesley's statement that the Lord's Supper is a "converting ordinance". In its latest form, the argument runs like this: Wesley urged his people not to wait for conversion before coming to Holy Communion, therefore the present Methodist custom of inviting "all who love the Lord Jesus Christ" is quite justified.

Before we embark on a study of Wesley's actual words, the phrase "the Open Table" ought to be clearly defined. We take it to mean "an absolutely open Table", that the service is open to anyone who feels drawn to it, regardless of baptism, confirmation, or membership in the Christian Church. Let it also be clearly understood that we assume that the welcome always extended in Methodism to communicants in good standing of other branches of the Church is not for a moment in question. We do not challenge the fact that in Methodism the Lord's Table is open to members of other Christian communions. The question is: Did early

Methodism practise, and did John Wesley advocate, an absolutely open Table?

We must now turn to what Wesley said and the circumstances in which he said it. Our main sources are his *Journal* from 1st November 1739 to 3rd September 1741, Sermon XII ("The Means of Grace") and John Bennet's *Minutes* for 1747, and we must start by getting a picture of the situation in Methodism during the period covering these sources. We do this at the risk of tedium to our more knowledgeable readers, yet with a hope that it will be welcome background for the less knowledgeable.

The relevant period opens with Wesley and his friends meeting in a religious society which was basically Anglican, but which had acquired a strong infusion of Moravianism. This was the Fetter Lane society in London. Admission to the Lord's Supper was no problem here, for only members of the Church of England were involved. In October 1739 there came the first infection of "stillness". A certain Moravian, Philip Henry Molther, taught that unless a believer had "full assurance of faith" (and there were no "degrees of faith" to Molther) or, to express it in Methodist terminology, unless a believer was converted, he should not use any of the "means of grace", i.e. reading the Scriptures, prayer, attending the Holy Communion, etc. To use these, it was argued, without the full assurance of faith, would be to trust in "works" and to deny the basic doctrine of the Reformation—Justification by Faith.

Unfortunately, many of the Fetter Lane members were convinced by Molther's reasoning and immediately abandoned all religious exercises. Among other things, they deserted the Lord's Table.<sup>1</sup> Now it is to this situation that Wesley addressed his sermon "The Means of Grace", with its appropriate text from Malachi: "Ye are gone away from mine ordinances, and have not kept them." In a section of his *Journal* which Nehemiah Curnock describes as "more apologetic than journalistic",<sup>2</sup> Wesley gives a full account of what happened. The heart of his own position is set out under date 28th June 1740:

I showed at large: (1) That the Lord's Supper was ordained by God to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace, according to their several necessities. (2) That the persons for whom it was ordained are all those who know and feel that they want the grace of God, either to restrain them from sin, or to show their sins forgiven, or to renew their souls in the image of God. (3) That inasmuch as we come to His Table not to give Him anything, but to receive whatsoever He sees best for us, there is no previous preparation indispensably necessary, but a desire to receive whatsoever He pleases to give. And (4) That no fitness is required at the time of communicating, but a sense of our state, of our utter sinfulness and helplessness; every

<sup>1</sup> To complete the story, it should be added that it was on this issue that the followers of Wesley separated from the Fetter Lane brethren to found the first independent Methodist society at the Foundery, 18th July 1740.

<sup>2</sup> *Standard Journal*, ii, p. 500.

one who knows he is fit for hell, being just fit to come to Christ in this as well as all other ways of His appointment.<sup>3</sup>

This passage from the *Journal* quickly came under fire. It was published on 24th June 1744, and on 3rd November of the same year the Rev. Thomas Church, vicar of Battersea, issued his *Remarks on the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Last Journal*,<sup>4</sup> to which Wesley replied at length.<sup>5</sup> Then in 1747, Edmund Gibson, Bishop of London, who on the whole was not unfriendly to the Methodists, took Wesley up on this *Journal* entry, and Wesley again replied in great detail.<sup>6</sup> In both cases, the main point of criticism was that Wesley allowed, even encouraged, his people to partake of the Holy Communion without due preparation. Wesley's replies all fell back, ultimately, upon the conditions of membership in the Methodist societies and upon which notes were issued to non-members wishing to come to the Holy Communion.

The habitual preparation which I had in terms declared to be indispensably necessary was “a willingness to know and to do the whole will of God” and “earnest desires of universal holiness”.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, membership in the society, certified by the class ticket, was sufficient qualification for coming to the Lord's Table.

To return to the situation in the period 1739-42, to which the quotation from Wesley's *Journal* refers, it is important for us to be clear as to just what this situation was, and what it was not. Especially as we apply Wesley's words to our present debate, we must notice that in 1739 he was not dealing with the admission of “outsiders” to the Lord's Supper (which is generally the point of contention today) but with “insiders” refusing to attend—two very different things! Wesley's premise (to put it in logical terms) certainly was “The Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance”, but his conclusion was not “Therefore anyone may come”, but “Therefore members ought not to stay away, even if they had not received the full assurance of faith”.

It is to this situation that Sermon XII, “The Means of Grace”, also was directed, and careful annotators like Dr. E. H. Sugden and John Lawson are not always clear in the conclusions they draw from Wesley's statements. Lawson, for example, says correctly that Wesley believed that the one thing necessary for a man rightly to come to the Holy Communion was a sense that he needs forgiveness, and Lawson also feels that Wesley would have encouraged penitent seekers to be confirmed. “However,” he concludes, “the modern Methodist usage of a Communion open to all who sincerely desire to take it is in accord with the spirit of Wesley's rule.”<sup>8</sup> But, considering Wesley's use of class tickets or some other note of admission, we doubt it. Nor does Dr. Sugden, when he speaks of

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 361.

<sup>4</sup> Green: *Anti-Methodist Bibliography*, No. 185.

<sup>5</sup> *Standard Letters*, ii, p. 175 ff.; Green: *Wesley Bibliography*, No. 65.

<sup>6</sup> *Standard Letters*, ii, p. 277 ff.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 283 (to Dr. Gibson).

<sup>8</sup> Lawson, John: *Notes on Wesley's Forty-four Sermons*, p. 108.

Wesley's attitude to "unconverted men"<sup>9</sup> attending the Sacrament, seem to realize that so far as this sermon is concerned, it is true *only within the context of the society*.

If it could be shown that in the early days of the revival, say from 1741 to about 1745, all and sundry were coming into the Methodist services of Holy Communion,<sup>10</sup> such a situation did not last very long. We know from John Bennet's *Minutes* that admission notes were in use by 1747:

Q. How shall we keep off unworthy communicants?

- A. 1. By being exactly careful whom we admit into the society, and  
2. By giving notes to none but those who come to us on the days appointed in each quarter.<sup>11</sup>

This is the first mention of the use of these notes. Exactly when they were introduced we do not know; but I think we must acknowledge that this was a sound and sensible solution. It was not so rigid that sincere seekers, not being members, were turned away, yet a reasonable control was exercised. Admission by class ticket or note was not mechanical or legalistic, but essentially ethical, "every ticket implying as strong a recommendation of the person to whom it was given as if I had wrote at length, 'I believe the bearer hereof to be one that fears God and works righteousness'."<sup>12</sup> The chief thing is that the admission of non-members was *controlled*, that notes of admission were at best temporary, and that the *normal* way was for attendance at Communion to be inseparably linked with membership in society.<sup>13</sup>

We cannot but feel that Wesley's arrangements were the right ones. What he is saying to non-members who wish to attend Holy Communion is, in effect, this: "If you desire to come, sinful and uncertain as you are, we will not turn you away. In fact, we will

<sup>9</sup> Sugden, E. H.: *Standard Sermons*, i, p. 238.

<sup>10</sup> See Charles Wesley's *Journal* (i, p. 255) for evidence that this may have happened, though the service on this occasion seems to have been held in a church, and not on Methodist premises.

<sup>11</sup> John Bennet's *Minutes* (Publication No. 1 of the Wesley Historical Society, p. 49). It should be borne in mind, of course, that these rules could have been meant only for the places where Methodist communion services were held at this time, i.e. West Street, Snowfields and Wapping in London. The Sacrament may have been celebrated at the New Room, Bristol. Otherwise Methodists communicated at their parish churches. See my *Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, p. 63.

<sup>12</sup> John Wesley: *A Plain Account of the People Called Methodists*, IV, 1-3 (*Works*, viii, p. 256).

<sup>13</sup> It may be felt that I have moved away from opinions expressed in my book, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, chapter 8. The only respect in which this may be true is that, from a closer study of the evidence, I now see that Wesley's invitation to the Sacrament was much more controlled than I realized. His calling of sinners to the Feast was within the framework of the discipline of his societies. This point is not brought out as clearly as it ought to be on page 108. At the same time, looking at the chapter as a whole, my contentions are materially the same. Probably T. H. Barratt's statement that Wesley invited men to the Lord's Table on the same conditions as he invited them to the Lord is something of an over-simplification of the issue.

give you a note of welcome, but if you feel you want to come regularly you must join the society, submit to its discipline before you accept its privileges, and be watched over in love." To those in modern times who feel that the Lord's Table ought to be open to "all who love the Lord Jesus Christ" we imagine he would say: "If you love the Lord Jesus Christ sufficiently to desire to come to His Table, that love should be evidenced in your accepting the obligations of membership in His Church." This has been, in fact, the position of historic Christianity, Catholic and Reformed, Anglican and Presbyterian. Attendance at the Lord's Table is inseparably linked with what our Methodist statement on Membership calls "the duties and privileges" of membership in the Body of Christ.

Finally, it is interesting to note that all the smaller Methodist bodies laid it down in their rules and regulations that members must show their class tickets before they could be admitted to the Lord's Supper, or obtain a note of admission from the preacher. For evidence to support this from the *Rules* of the Methodist New Connexion, the Bible Christians, the Primitive Methodists and the United Methodist Free Churches, see my Wesley Historical Society Lecture, *The Lord's Supper in Methodism, 1791-1960*, chapter 3. Until 1932 the Wesleysans kept the Standing Order:

No person shall be suffered, on any pretence, to partake of the Lord's Supper among us unless he be a member of Society or receive a note of admission from the Superintendent (or from the preacher administering) which note must be renewed quarterly. . . . That the Table of the Lord should be open to all comers is surely a great discredit and a serious peril to any Church.

We would therefore conclude that the "Open Table", in the sense in which it is defined above, is a peculiar development of late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century Methodism. In essence, it is neither Anglican fish, nor Presbyterian fowl, nor good old Methodist red herring. We suspect that it belongs to a Methodism which had become unsure of itself and its doctrines, in which former disciplines were breaking down, and where there was developing an anxiety to get people in "with no strings attached".

There are, of course, those who will still maintain that, whatever happened in the past, Methodism today should practise the "Open Table", and they will defend their position in their own way. All we would point out is that, according to our judgement, Wesley's Sermon XII and his belief in the "converting ordinance" should not be quoted (as so often it is) as part of their supporting evidence.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

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According to our information, the Annual Meeting and Lecture will be held at Millhouses Methodist church, Sheffield, on Wednesday, 8th July. We hope that as many as possible of our members who are attending Conference, and all who live within reach, will endeavour to be present. Further details will be given in our next issue.

## THE ORIGINS OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM

*(Continued from page 86)*

EVER since Christmas Day in the year 1800, when Hugh Bourne had won Daniel Shubotham as his first convert at Harrisehead, he had wanted the Burslem Wesleyan circuit to take his converts "into society". The circuit was reluctant to do so, but at length, "perhaps as they were weary of my applications", they put a class-paper into the hands of Bourne and told him to take the converts into society himself. Bourne was thus forced into a "kind of headship" against his own inclination.<sup>1</sup>

Armed with this circuit approval, Bourne arranged for some of his converts during the years 1800-3 to attend a class in Joseph Pointon's home near the summit of Mow Cop. This class met on Sunday mornings. All the remainder of the converts were formed into a new class to be held on Monday evenings in the home of Daniel Shubotham at Harrisehead. Early in 1803 the Harrisehead chapel was opened, and then the class simply transferred itself from Shubotham's cottage to the chapel erected in part of his garden.

It was this Monday evening class which was to prove the source from which Bourne drew the strength and support he needed during the seven years between 1800 and 1807. Bourne always declared that this class was remarkable for its converting power: "Many were brought to a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins and I never knew a class more owned of God."<sup>2</sup> In fact, it was the support given to him by this class which enabled Bourne to arrange the first camp meeting on 31st May 1807 on Mow Cop.

The first travelling preacher to visit the new Harrisehead chapel was the Rev. John Grant, who was third minister in the Burslem circuit 1802-3. He had expected to have only thirty in the congregation for a Wednesday evening service. But said he: "When I came and saw the congregation I was surprised! I was astonished! I was amazed! There were about two hundred!" This meant that by their work in the two years or so before this visit, Hugh Bourne and the colliers had not only succeeded in building a chapel but also in packing it to the doors for a mid-week service in what had been one of the "most ignorant, profane, and ungodly parts of the nation".<sup>3</sup>

But the Harrisehead chapel was regarded as a mixed blessing by the Burslem circuit. The trustees at Burslem leaned strongly to the high Wesleyan tradition, as was clearly shown when they expelled from the Hanley chapel in 1797 all the members of the Hanley society who supported the Killhamite demands. The Burslem

<sup>1</sup> John Walford: *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the late Venerable Hugh Bourne* (ed. W. Antliff, 1857), i, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 85-6.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 86.

preachers liked things to be done with decorum, but at Harrisehead the services were sometimes so noisy that scarcely a word could be distinguished. As soon as the ordinary service had concluded, the colliers would start praying in full force. This was new in the Burslem circuit, and there was no stopping it at Harrisehead. Moreover the Harrisehead colliers were not slow to criticize the preachers from Burslem. Bourne wrote:

Our people [at Harrisehead] were as keen as fire in reproof, and the preachers not always paying attention to that strictness in which the Harrisehead people had been trained up, they met with keen reproofs; and to reprove a preacher was like a new thing upon the earth and it caused some stir at quarter days, and more than once it was said that restraining motions had been passed; but no one was hardy enough to deliver such a motion as it would have been like facing a drawn sword.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, by 1803, there was tension between the Burslem circuit and the colliers at Harrisehead sharp enough to suggest to Bourne the simile of a "drawn sword". There had been the desire for a camp meeting expressed early in 1802 in the form of "a day's praying on Mow", but the first cause of the tension was the strong revival spirit at Harrisehead which brought the visiting preachers from Burslem under criticism for their lack of fire. The entire work at Harrisehead had also gone forward without any support from the circuit, the chapel itself having been built at Bourne's own expense. There was a strong sense of independence at Harrisehead, and Bourne was not prepared to surrender his "headship", once it had been given him, to preachers who opposed open-air worship. It was this last cause of tension which led to the eventual break between Bourne and the circuit.

Hugh Bourne had read accounts of camp meetings held in America in the *Methodist Magazines* of 1802. The glowing accounts of these meetings brought to the forefront a suggestion which Shubotham had himself made as early as 1801. This suggestion was to have one full day's praying in the open air on Mow Cop. The colliers wanted this to be arranged during the summer of 1802, but Shubotham himself began to restrain them. His original proposal had been made before the chapel had been built or the colliers brought firmly within the Burslem circuit. Now that they belonged to a society within a circuit where open-air work was not in favour, he thought that it would be wiser not to proceed with the plan, lest the existing tension between the colliers and the circuit should be heightened. Shubotham's counsels prevailed, and the day's praying on Mow Cop was postponed.<sup>5</sup> But the plan was kept in the thoughts of the Harrisehead society until it was put into effect five years later at the first camp meeting in 1807. But a camp meeting was never far distant from the thoughts of the colliers, or from their prayers, from 1802 to 1807.

Meanwhile there began to break out in the Harrisehead society

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 88.

<sup>5</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 90.

such a strong spirit of revival that Hugh Bourne had his hands full, so that there was an additional reason for postponing the camp meeting. In September 1804 at Harrisehead

there was the greatest outpouring of the Holy Ghost I have ever known. The surrounding country was shaken; the veil was taken from many hearts, and we had so much work in praying for mourners that we gave up praying for a Camp Meeting; and Tunstall and even a great part, if not the whole, of the Burslem Circuit, more or less, was moved. It was the greatest time of power I had ever known.<sup>6</sup>

Moreover, the Harrisehead society now began to win some support and influence within the Burslem circuit. At Christmas 1804, the third anniversary of Daniel Shubotham's conversion, a lovefeast was held in the Harrisehead chapel attended by William Clowes and James Steele, who had both come from the Tunstall society as a result of the reports spread after the September class meeting. Within less than a month of his attendance at this Christmas lovefeast William Clowes was converted. After the lovefeast James Steele, a local preacher, Sunday-school superintendent and trustee at Tunstall, became a strong supporter of the Harrisehead colliers. In fact, he became eventually the first circuit steward of Primitive Methodism, and his name stands alongside those of Hugh Bourne, James Bourne and William Clowes in the Methodist Church Union Act of 1929. Hugh Bourne was able to write that through this Harrisehead lovefeast at Christmas 1804, "the Tunstall deadness, which had been proverbial for years, was done away, and Tunstall rose into revival notice".<sup>7</sup> The creative part played by the Harrisehead society in the origins of Primitive Methodism is clearly visible.

It was at the Monday evening class meeting at Harrisehead and in the weeks following the lovefeast at Christmas 1804 that Hugh Bourne had some of his outstanding mystical experiences. In early January 1805 he was

full of love, peace, and joy, and had as much as the body would bear. I saw all things clearly. It was put to me what I would choose, how I would choose to be, and my heart replied—just as Thou wilt, Lord. I desired no other worldly circumstances, and I thought if I asked any more love, the body would melt away as at times I could scarcely stand for the weight of glory.<sup>8</sup>

At this period Daniel Shubotham stood close enough to Bourne spiritually to be his counsellor. When, during the week following 15th January 1805, Bourne found that he had not the same experience as before, Shubotham told him on the Monday following that he was looking to feelings: if he had Christ, that was enough. "So I obtained deliverance."<sup>9</sup> On 18th February Bourne conversed with Shubotham after the Monday class until nearly one o'clock in the morning on being sealed by the Spirit and having the full assurance of faith. Then they prayed, and

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 98.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 101.

the Lord, I believe, sealed me with the full assurance of hope, and to the day of redemption. I found I was then stronger in God: I was let into God and had full room for growing up into Him. It appeared a more mighty work than any I had ever known; an extraordinary solidness and weightiness of spirit came upon me. This particular experience was a constant and steady recollection. Glory be to God! Religion gets deep and solid at Harrisehead.<sup>10</sup>

Three weeks later, on Monday, 11th March, Bourne came into the class while they were singing:

I kneeled down and the power of God came upon me, and the Lord sealed me afresh: I had more of God than I can remember having had at any one time. I had such discoveries that they were past human language.<sup>11</sup>

Indeed, Bourne had such a strong sense of assurance at this time that he felt he had scarcely any power to doubt or reason

without I am determined to reason wilfully or forcibly. I felt as if held by an irresistible power and I sank down into nothing before it, and everything died that was contrary to God. I felt it die away—I gave myself up to God. Immediately came the spirit of burning and I was made a habitation of God through the Spirit. I wondered at myself. I could scarcely believe what the Spirit witnessed. It testified that the searcher of hearts was present; that the mighty God was present; that the Creator of heaven and earth was present!<sup>12</sup>

There were others in the class who had similar experiences:

I spoke with E. Mollot and E. Baddeley; they have the spirit of burning, and are sealed also, and so is E. Hargreaves. Glory to God! The sealing I take to be the solid weightiness of the Spirit. After sealing, they have power with God in prayer more than ever. After Class we discoursed. T. Cotton said he had the solid weightiness, with sorrow and love for sinners, but not the spirit of burning. I said I had had both the weightiness and the burning, but not sorrow. Daniel Shubotham said J. Hancock had both; that himself had only the weightiness. T. C. [Thomas Cotton] said that in prayer sometimes his sprit seemed to go out of his body, and ascend to God—the body meantime was left almost senseless. They said it was the same with T.K. [Thomas Knight] and with old James Selby. Matthias Bayley sometimes groans in an agony for sinners. We are all unanimous in our opinions. It has been very difficult to understand each other when speaking of the deep things of God: these things are so very difficult to be put into human language.<sup>13</sup>

Bourne had done some reading in Quaker literature, and this, together with the release he had felt on reading Fletcher's *Six Letters on the Spiritual Manifestation of the Son of God* doubtless led him to expect extraordinary manifestations of the Spirit. But there was little at Harrisehead to counterbalance the stress on feeling. Sacramental worship was conspicuous by its absence. There was no Anglican church at Harrisehead or Mow Cop where the colliers could receive Holy Communion had they desired it. It would be most unlikely that the Sacrament would be administered at all at

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 103.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 104.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 106.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 106-7.

Harrisehead by the Wesleyan preachers of the Burslem circuit, since opinion there leaned strongly to the Anglican tradition. Bourne's early religious training had been in the Anglican churches at Bucknall and Biddulph, and he might have been expected to seek Holy Communion as a means of grace at Harrisehead. But there is no record of Communion services being held there at this period. In the Plan of Pacification of 1795 Conference agreed that the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper could be administered in any chapel by the wish of the people belonging to the chapel and with the prior consent of Conference. The trustees and leaders at Harrisehead do not appear to have asked for the Sacrament to be administered under the Plan.

Hugh Bourne and the colliers at Harrisehead nourished their spiritual life on the means of grace they could command without difficulty: preaching, prayer, lovefeasts, reading of Scripture, and searching conversation. The later history of Primitive Methodism always bore the marks of this early origin. It could always be charged with stressing experience but never with stressing the Sacraments.

It was typical of Bourne's practical turn of mind that the conversation between the class members at Harrisehead was not only on such themes as the difference between the "inspiration" and the "indwelling" of the Holy Ghost, living by faith, and perfecting holiness, but also on the importance of being diligent in business. Bourne regarded this last as "needful at all times and in all places": it was a "strong part of religion", for "six days shalt thou labour is a commandment".<sup>14</sup> Bourne was always the practical mystic.

It was after the Wesleyan Conference of 1805 that the tension between the Harrisehead colliers and the Burslem circuit became acute. At this Conference the Rev. Edward Miller was appointed to succeed the Rev. William France as second minister on the Burslem circuit. William France had accepted the revival without specially encouraging it. "He managed his preaching in his, and they [the Harrisehead people] managed their praying in their way."<sup>15</sup> But Edward Miller began to concern himself at once with the conduct of the Monday evening class.

Hugh Bourne had been thrust into his "kind of headship" in the society when he had been given the class-papers four years previously.<sup>16</sup> The Monday evening class was first formed by Bourne in 1801, and it met in Shubotham's cottage while the chapel was being built. Bourne appointed Shubotham as the leader, but he was not willing to undertake it unless Bourne, Bayley and Cotton would lead in turn, and others occasionally. In this way the colliers had held together, and together explored the deep things of God. But now Edward Miller desired that all this should be changed, and that the class should be led by nobody except Daniel Shubotham.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 109.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 114n.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 85.

Even Bourne would not be allowed to lead, and it implied that there was to be no more of Bourne's "headship". There can be no doubt that Bourne was cut to the quick. The whole work at HARRISEHEAD had been started by him; the chapel had been built by his own hands and at his own expense; he was the undoubted father in God of the HARRISEHEAD colliers. "When Daniel informed of this I was cut to the heart. But I was aware that Miller having got hold of his mind there was no remedy."<sup>17</sup> Bourne believed that Miller had talked to Daniel "until he had quite wheedled him".

This was the third occasion on which Daniel Shubotham had faltered in following Bourne. He had been swayed against Bourne by the two potters from Goldenhill who had almost wrecked the revival in 1801; he had opposed the desire of Bourne to hold a day's praying on Mow Cop in the summer of 1802 although he himself had mooted the idea the previous year; now he was willing to follow Edward Miller against Bourne and to become sole leader of the Monday class although previously refusing to accept the sole leadership.

Clearly Shubotham was by no means as ready as Bourne to risk offence to Edward Miller or the Burslem circuit. In things spiritual he was very close to Bourne; in policy he was out of step with him. Shubotham was a working collier, married with two children; Bourne was single and a skilled craftsman in his trade as wheelwright. Bourne was more independent economically, and was a stronger character than Shubotham. Daniel Shubotham could be more easily directed than Hugh Bourne, so that Edward Miller would be better able to control the revival with Shubotham as the sole leader of the Monday class. Bourne's "kind of headship" counted for little with Miller.

The Burslem circuit at this time would be watchful of any movement that threatened to get out of hand. Only eight years previously, in 1797, the Circuit had suffered grievous loss of membership through the defection of 142 members in the Kilhamite agitation, the Hanley society then being left with a remnant of only eight members out of 150. The work of Hugh Bourne at HARRISEHEAD had gone far to offset this loss; between 1800 and 1805 the circuit membership had increased from 750 to 1,359. Not all this remarkable improvement was due to the revival at HARRISEHEAD. The early years of the century saw Methodism attracting members for social as well as spiritual reasons; it was becoming a mark of respectability to belong to the Wesleyan Methodists. But the five years 1800-5 had also been the years when the work at HARRISEHEAD had created a strong society which made its influence felt powerfully throughout the circuit. After the notable HARRISEHEAD class meeting of September 1804 "the surrounding country was shaken", and "Tunstall, and even a great part, if not the whole, of the Burslem Circuit, more or less, was moved".<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 114.

<sup>18</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 98.

It was important, therefore, from the circuit standpoint, to retain the revival movement firmly within circuit control and to keep it respectable. Camp meetings might bring the whole circuit into disfavour by their flavour of political agitation during the continuing Napoleonic Wars; the idea of erecting tents and sleeping overnight on the site as in America might cause scandal in England. The tension with Harrisehead might lead to a separation with even more losses of membership than in the Kilhamite agitation. Edward Miller may have concluded that the "headship" of Bourne with his known desire for camp meetings was too strong for safety. Hence his action in placing the more pliable Daniel firmly in the saddle. A struggle for control of the revival had started. The circuit was taking over the "headship" at Harrisehead. Bourne resisted the change with the strongest argument; he said to Shubotham: "If you suffer him [Edward Miller] to turn you out of the plain, straightforward way in which the Lord has raised you up, the converting work among you will cease as surely as it did when you suffered the potters to turn you out of the way in which the Lord raised you up." But Daniel "had no ears to hear, neither had others".<sup>19</sup>

For the next twelve months after Daniel had complied with the will of the Rev. Edward Miller there was not a single conversion at Harrisehead. The underlying disagreement on policy had brought the class into the doldrums. Bourne believed that the work was being destroyed. He wrote in sorrow: "So the Lord might have said as in Jeremiah 12,10: 'many pastors have destroyed my vineyard'."<sup>20</sup>

It was in this situation that the camp meeting suggestion, seriously broached in 1802 but postponed, emerged again as a way out of the deadlock. Bourne saw in the proposal an opportunity to break free from the procedure imposed on the class by Miller, and to recover control of the revival. Shubotham countered by arguing against open-air worship. "This and other things caused the trial of faith to be heavy."<sup>21</sup> It required the fervour of Lorenzo Dow to overcome Shubotham's hesitations and to rally the colliers around Hugh Bourne.

Never was the visit of a roving evangelist more opportune than the visit of Lorenzo Dow to Harrisehead. At the beginning of the year 1807 Hugh Bourne saw the revival he had started six years before, and over which he had watched all the time as a shepherd of souls, in the "slough of despond". When Lorenzo Dow arrived at Macclesfield in April 1807, he was brought over to the chapel at Harrisehead. His first-hand reports of the revival fervour of the American camp meetings did even more than Bourne had dared to hope. The imagination of the colliers was so stirred that they were all on fire for a camp meeting. Bourne struck while the iron was hot. He came to the Monday class meeting as soon as Dow had departed, and asked the colliers to help him in arranging a camp

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 114.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 115.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 117.

meeting at Norton on 23rd August. The response was fervent:

They were all in a zeal in an instant; yes, they would help; and the next expression was "we'll have one on Mow". But, says another, there's preaching here forenoon and after, how can we? Daniel took up the preacher's plan, looked at it and said, "Thomas Cotton is planned in this chapel on Sunday May 31st.: that's the Camp Meeting". In an instant we were all on our knees, and everyone praying with all their heart, mind and voice, and the praying went on until everyone had faith to believe that the Lord would stand by, and support these two Camp Meetings.<sup>22</sup>

The colliers wanted a camp meeting so much that they were ready to help with two, instead of the one Bourne had suggested. They could not wait until August for the Norton meeting, but wanted an earlier one on Mow Cop. The support of the colliers was complete, and included even Daniel Shubotham. Hugh Bourne had resumed his "headship". The initiative was once more with him.

By arranging the camp meeting on the nearby Mow Cop for Sunday, 31st May, when Thomas Cotton was planned at Harsishead, the colliers had hoped to keep their intentions secret. Cotton could be counted on, as one of themselves, converted early in the revival, to agree to the general decision, and he would simply be asked to take the services in the open air instead of indoors. But alas, there was no keeping it secret: "the report flew through the country as if it had gone on the wings of angels".<sup>23</sup> Lorenzo Dow had already set the whole district alive with the idea of camp meeting evangelism, for his itinerary had included Chester, Warrington, Congleton and Burslem, as well as Macclesfield and Harsishead. The attempt to keep the meeting secret from the "opposers of open-air worship" was doomed from the start. It was also the first English attempt to follow in the wake of American evangelistic methods, and on this count alone it would attract the curious from far and wide.

The superintendent of the Burslem circuit, the Rev. John Riles, was one of the "opposers of open-air worship", but he was not unwilling to accept the first camp meeting whilst hoping that no further meetings would be held. He said to Bourne: "One meeting will satisfy all people." Bourne replied: "Then we will leave it as that meeting leaves it", to which Riles answered: "Very well."<sup>24</sup> But Bourne could not leave it there. He was so impressed with the day's proceedings on Mow Cop on 31st May that he published forthwith a penny pamphlet describing the event and advertising a further meeting in the same place on 18th July, as well as the Norton meeting to be held on 22nd August.<sup>25</sup> This pamphlet was reprinted in pirated editions and sold in thousands; it was "like setting the whole country on fire".<sup>26</sup>

This was too much for the Rev. John Riles:

<sup>22</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 118.

<sup>23</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 118.

<sup>24</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 119n.

<sup>25</sup> The pamphlet is reproduced in Walford, *op. cit.*, i, p. 119.

<sup>26</sup> Walford, *op. cit.*, i, p. 119.

Many persecuted and opposed, and especially the head preacher: he rose almost to madness; and the other preacher (Edward Miller) made strange work—they put out papers and sent them to the societies and circuits round.<sup>27</sup>

Clearly the Burslem preachers were alarmed. Attempts were made to persuade the Harrisehead colliers to desert Hugh Bourne. Daniel Shubotham and a few others agreed not to attend the second meeting which Bourne was arranging. At the first meeting Daniel and his wife had even "set the converting work agoing". But once again, under threat of circuit censure, Daniel changed his mind.

I met with Daniel, quite shaken! quite changed! He seems disposed to oppose Camp Meetings with all his might. I reasoned the matter over with him, and he complied at last, and seemed to be as much for Camp Meetings; but there is no trusting to such changeable persons. O Daniel, Daniel, the glory is departed.<sup>28</sup>

The glory had indeed departed. The Harrisehead colliers were never again of one heart and mind: "poor Daniel, like a weather vane, turned round again, and at last took his leave of Camp Meetings altogether".<sup>29</sup> Daniel received the thanks of John Riles, Edward Miller, and the Burslem Quarterly Meeting for not attending the second camp meeting. In point of fact, he had gone so far as to attend it for the purpose of opposing it.<sup>30</sup> There was grief for Hugh Bourne in Daniel's opposition. Daniel was only Bourne's half-cousin after the flesh, but he was his firstborn son after the spirit. It seems that Daniel, at a later date, was himself "turned out of the Methodist society" and "never joined any religious body thereafter".<sup>31</sup> But Hugh Bourne did not forget his son in the gospel. When Daniel came to suffer affliction he visited him, and pointed him "to the same Jesus as on Christmas Day morning, 1800".<sup>32</sup>

The second camp meeting was held on Sunday, 19th July on Mow Cop, but by the time Bourne came to arrange a third, on Sunday, 16th August at Brown Edge, and the long-anticipated meeting at Norton on 23rd August, the "opposers of open-air worship" had secured Conference support for their attitude. The Burslem superintendent returned from the Liverpool Conference and at once called a meeting at which he warned leaders and local preachers not to attend camp meetings.<sup>33</sup> The result was that at Brown Edge Bourne had many attending from Harrisehead, but there were no preachers "beside Thomas Cotton and I".<sup>34</sup> At Norton he found that his supply of preachers had been swept away except for himself, his brother James, and one preacher from Macclesfield and another from Knutsford;<sup>35</sup> but the proceedings were also enlivened by the arrival of Paul Johnson, M.D. from Dublin, who had travelled over specially from Ireland after hearing

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Walford, *op. cit.*, i, p. 148, "from an old journal".

<sup>28</sup> Walford, *op. cit.*, i, p. 148.

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 148.

<sup>30</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 152.

<sup>31</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 152.

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 152.

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 157, 161.

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 156.

<sup>35</sup> *ibid.*, i, pp. 161-2.

by letter from the Knutsford preacher about the previous camp meetings: "his coming was like light out of darkness".<sup>36</sup>

It was the Harrisehead society which still continued to support Bourne. In spite of the lack of preachers at the Norton meeting, he had still "a good supply of pious praying labourers from the Harrisehead society",<sup>37</sup> but the "headship" of Bourne in the society was now doomed. The Liverpool Conference had not gone quite so far as to make a regulation against Bourne's camp meetings, but it had disclaimed all connexion with them. They were condemned as being "highly improper in England and likely to be productive of considerable mischief". Henceforward, the Harrisehead society could not follow Bourne without disclaiming Conference itself. But the society was in no position to disclaim Conference, as Bourne himself had brought the chapel under Conference control in the Deed of Trust dated 3rd February 1803, which adopted Wesley's Deed Poll of 28th February 1784.

In this way, Hugh Bourne began to find himself isolated from the Harrisehead colliers who had meant so much to him since Shubot-ham's conversion on Christmas Day 1800. He could no longer pursue his camp meeting policy among them without requiring them to disclaim Conference. Bourne had lost his "kind of headship". But he felt constrained to continue with camp meetings in spite of all. In the spring of 1799 he had been delivered from a burden of fear and guilt borne for twenty years. Such a deliverance was not to be contained within the walls of Harrisehead chapel. He said of that springtime of his life that all the Bible looked new and all creation looked new, and he "felt a love to all mankind, and my desire was that friends and enemies, and all the world, if possible, might be saved".<sup>38</sup> He could accept no course which would restrain him from publishing the good news in the open face of the sun.

It was another year before Bourne was actually "put out of society". This was done at the Burslem Quarterly Meeting following Bourne's action in celebrating the anniversary of the first camp meeting by holding another on Mow Cop on Sunday, 29th May 1808. The Quarterly Meeting, held on Monday, 27th June 1808, did not summon Bourne to the meeting or officially inform him of the charge or charges alleged against him. He complained:

This was not upright. I was not a member of the quarter-day meeting; and as a private member of society, I might, if due cause had appeared, have been put out without quarter-day; but in addition to being a private member, I was a chapel trustee, which by rule entitled me to a hearing before expulsion; and in not being allowed this I was wronged . . . I had broken no rule or law of Wesleyan Methodism, and to have had me face to face might have brought the meeting into a dilemma.<sup>39</sup>

In making this complaint Hugh Bourne was on good ground. He had broken no law of Wesleyan Methodism since Conference had

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 162.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 37.

<sup>37</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 162.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, i, p. 178.

not made a direction against camp meetings, but only a disclaimer. Moreover, the Conference of 1794 had resolved, in a special address to the societies, that in cases of expulsion:

No trustee (however accused, or defective on conforming to the established rules of the society) shall be removed from the society, unless his crime or breach of the rules of the society be proved in the presence of the trustees and leaders.<sup>40</sup>

Bourne was a trustee at HARRISEHEAD chapel; his name can be seen to this day on the Trust Deed of the chapel dated 3rd February 1803. The chapel would not have been there at all but for the labour of his own hands in building it. He found it hard that when the camp meeting question came to an issue, he should be expelled from society without so much as a hearing.

The year of Bourne's expulsion is preserved in the Methodist Church Union Act, 1929, as the significant date for the origins of Primitive Methodism:

And whereas in the year one thousand eight hundred and eight and subsequent years numerous congregations and societies were formed in different parts of England under the direction of Hugh Bourne James Bourne William Clowes and James Steele and such congregations and societies were formed into one general community or connexion known and distinguished by the name of "the Primitive Methodist Connexion":<sup>41</sup>

The HARRISEHEAD colliers continued to worship in the Wesleyan chapel built by Bourne, who himself remained a trustee until 1829. The building was twice enlarged, in 1823 and 1838. By 1842 the society was regarded as the second in the circuit, with 200 members, 11 classes, and the largest Sunday-school except Tunstall. By that time, however, many of the original company had died; the officials were no longer colliers but men of "considerable standing" who were described as "steady, sober, thinking men". But it was the HARRISEHEAD colliers who played the crucial part in the origins of Primitive Methodism. Without them it is doubtful whether Hugh Bourne could have ever held the first camp meeting on Mow Cop or whether there would have ever been a "Primitive Methodist Connexion".

At the present time, due to subsidence, HARRISEHEAD chapel is in a sad state of disrepair, and it may soon be demolished. These words are written that some understanding of its finest hour may still linger on the scene. For the years from 1801 to 1808 were the years when Bourne was in his "kind of headship" among the mountain colliers and they stood with him upon the mount of God. As Bourne lay dying on 11th October 1852 he thought of his beloved mother. Did he think also of his old companions of the Monday evening class who had stood with him under the canopy of the sky

<sup>40</sup> *Minutes of Conference, 1794*, i, pp. 299-300; quoted in Peirce's *Principles and Polity of the Wesleyan Methodists*, p. 66.

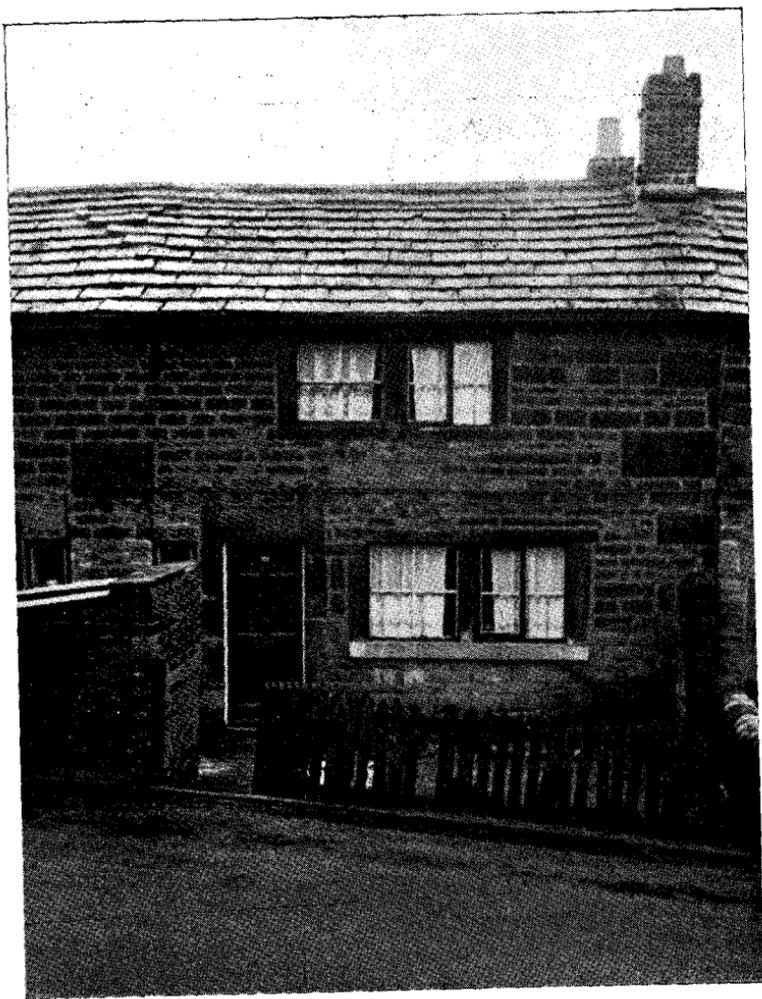
<sup>41</sup> Methodist Church Union Act, 1929; quoted in *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* (1957), p. 227.



**HUGH BOURNE'S CHAPEL AT HARRISEHEAD AT THE PRESENT DAY.**

The original chapel, bearing the date 1801, is on the right of the picture. The chapel was improved with a gallery in 1823. The longer building at right angles to the chapel is the Sunday-school room, erected in 1838 with one end inside open to the chapel so that the children might both see and hear the preacher.

*[Photo by kind permission of Mr. Norman Millard, Mow Cop.]*



JOHN NELSON'S HOUSE, NOW NO. 65, BROOKROYD, BIRSTALL,  
NEAR LEEDS.

at the first camp meeting on Mow Cop? Did he think of Daniel Shubotham, Matthias Bayley, and Thomas Cotton? For in his last moments he looked upwards and "pointing as if to something near at hand, exclaimed: 'Old companions! Old companions! My mother!'"<sup>42</sup>

LEONARD BROWN.

#### NOTE

The quotations from Bourne's Journal have been taken from John Walford's *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Venerable Hugh Bourne*, published in 1856-7. Walford was Bourne's nephew, and Bourne's personal papers passed into his hands for publication after Bourne's death in 1852. Walford's *Memoirs* are the earliest published sources available, but they are now very scarce. The Bourne Journal and other manuscripts which include Bourne's "Autobiography" and "Self-review" are in the library of Hartley Victoria College, Manchester. They have been most carefully collated, and many extracts from them published by the Rev. J. T. Wilkinson in his invaluable biography of Hugh Bourne (Eppworth Press, 1952).  
L.B.

<sup>42</sup> Walford, op. cit., ii, p. 378.

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## JOHN NELSON'S HOUSE

**P**ICTURED opposite is the little two-roomed stone-built cottage in Brookroyd, Birstall, near Leeds, which in the summer of 1741 became the meeting-place of the first Methodist society to be formed in the north of England. Here lived John Nelson, the stonemason who the previous year, while working in London, went to hear John Wesley preach at Moorfields, and was converted. Thereafter, despite intense opposition from many quarters, he spent his life preaching that gospel which he had found to be the power of God to his own salvation. His first converts in 1741 were his wife Martha, his widowed mother, his brother, and six Brookroyd neighbours, who formed the nucleus of the society which he asked John Wesley's permission to institute. During that first summer of 1741, increasing numbers of people gathered outside Nelson's home, waiting for him to return from work, to be instructed by him in the way of salvation. The society prospered, and in 1750 he acquired land some two or three hundred yards from his home, abutting on to the Leeds-Huddersfield road, where he built what became known as "John Nelson's chapel".

Old lithographic line-prints depict John Nelson's house as a detached thatched cottage, with low oak-beamed doorway and latticed windows. Now, however, it is one of a terrace of low cottages, one minute's walk away from the imposing St. John's Methodist church. With the modern trend for redevelopment, it is more than likely that before long these Brookroyd cottages will be replaced by red-brick flats or maisonnettes. So will vanish Methodism's first home in the north of England.

NORMAN V. RHODES.

[We express our thanks to Mr. Norman Rhodes for his investigations, and to Mr. John Bradley for the photograph.—EDITOR.]

## NOTES AND QUERIES

## 1121. CHURCH METHODISTS IN IRELAND.

Members of the Wesley Historical Society (Irish Branch) have been much interested in the article by Mr. Fred Jeffery on Church Methodists in the December 1963 *Proceedings* (xxxiv, pp. 73-5). "Church Methodists" was not the name by which they were known in Ireland. On all the society class tickets, magazines, etc. the name used is "The Primitive Wesleyan Methodist Church".

Mr. Jeffery rightly describes the division which took place in Ireland in 1816. In doing so, he refers to the Rev. Adam Averell as an ordained Anglican clergyman. It is true that he was ordained deacon, but he never took orders as a priest. And not being priested, he had no episcopal authority to administer the sacraments; yet he had been doing this among the Methodist societies in Ireland for years, and often on unconsecrated ground, such as in private houses, and even in barns. It was on this issue of the sacraments that he became the leader of the minority, who protested against the administration of the sacraments by the Methodist preachers.

After Mr. Averell's death, the Primitive Wesleyans in Ireland began to feel their position untenable, and negotiations towards union were entered into with the Established Church. These proved abortive, largely owing to the barrier of the historic episcopate, which many were not prepared to accept. Union, however, took place with their true friends and brethren the Wesleyan Methodists; though a few of the "Primitives" stood out and attached themselves more closely to the Church of Ireland, becoming a kind of evangelistic mission in connexion with that Church. They are altogether extinct now, but were known as "The Church Methodists".

ROBERT H. GALLAGHER.

## 1122. THE REV. JOHN BRYAN (1770-1856).

Further to Alderman Horace Hird's very interesting article on the pottery figure of the Rev. John Bryan, I find in the trustees' account book of the Charles Street Wesleyan chapel, Hanley, the two following entries:

June 18th, 1821	By Mr. Bryan's expenses to Manchester to supply for Mr. Newton the 20th May	£1 1 0
May 7th, 1822	By Mr. Bryan's expenses to Manchester in March to supply for Mr. Lessey	£1 0 0

These entries suggest that Bryan was in pastoral charge of the Charles Street society, which was then in the Burslem circuit, during the years 1820-22. He supplied for the Rev. Robert Newton and the Rev. Theophilus Lessey when they travelled from Manchester to take respectively the first and second anniversary services at Charles Street, Hanley, 1821 and 1822.

Charles Street chapel was opened on 26th March 1820. It was built on an important site in the centre of the town. The total population of Hanley was then only 13,000, but the Charles Street chapel had seats for a thousand people. The erection of this chapel would be, therefore, a notable event in the life of the town. The pottery figure of the Rev. John Bryan would probably be made as a souvenir of the occasion. He was the first minister of the new chapel, and he is shown standing by nine courses of masonry not simply to support the figure, but to symbolize his association with the new building as the first minister in pastoral charge.

The date of manufacture of the figure could be assigned definitely, on this theory, to 1820 or 1821, and the suggestion now made would explain

why John Bryan was made the subject of such a figure. This would be due not so much to any great popularity he enjoyed as to the desire by one of the many Methodist potters in the area to commemorate the building of the new chapel. Bryan would naturally take one of these souvenirs of his ministry at the new Hanley chapel with him when he left the Potteries. He could take it with him to Caernarvon when he settled there in later life, and it is possible, therefore, that the figure of the Rev. John Bryan which now "occupies an honoured place in the mayor's parlour" at Caernarvon may be the one which belonged to John Bryan himself.

LEONARD BROWN.

ALDERMAN HIRD comments :

I am grateful to the Rev. Leonard Brown for his contribution to my short study of the pottery figure of the Rev. John Bryan, and for reports of incidents in Bryan's ministry at Hanley.

It could very well be that the date of manufacture was about 1820 or 1821, and that it could have coincided with the opening of the Charles Street chapel, but it should be borne in mind that the device of a pillar, whether of masonry or of a single column, was not only a favourite one but also necessary to support a standing or upright figure like that of Bryan. Thus we have a wide variety portrayed of such diverse characters as Napoleon III, Louis Kossuth, Sankey, Moody, Voltaire, Sir Walter Scott, and many more.

Since my article was published I have learned something about the literary, poetical and musical abilities of John Bryan. In addition to being himself a hymn-writer, he translated no fewer than seventy-one of Charles Wesley's hymns into Welsh, and he was the first editor of *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd* (i.e. *The Wesleyan Magazine*) when it was published in 1809. A mine of information is contained in *John Bryan a'i Amserau*, by the Rev. W. Davies. This book on Bryan and his times was published at Bangor in 1900.

It has also been brought to my notice that there are male descendants of Bryan in the fifth generation, and examples of this pottery figure are treasured family possessions.

1123. PLACE OF MARRIAGE OF THE REV. AND MRS. W. M. HARVARD.

In *A Narrative of the Mission to Ceylon and India*, by the Rev. W. M. Harvard, one of the missionaries who accompanied Dr. Coke on the voyage 150 years ago, there is a reference on page 46 to the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Harvard:

Mr. Ault was married at Prestbury, in the county of Chester: and Mr. McKenny, in Dublin. Previously to their departure from London for that purpose, they with other Missionaries favoured Mrs. Harvard and myself with their company, at the celebration of our union. We had a particular wish that Dr. Coke should perform the ceremony: and, at our request, the polite Rector of our parish kindly gave his consent: we were accordingly united in London by our venerable leader in the presence of our affectionate Missionary companions, and friends. It has transpired, that ours was the last marriage the esteemed Dr. ever celebrated.

Can anyone say who "the polite Rector" was, and supply the name of the parish church?

W. NORMAN H. ROBB.

## 1124. A CHAPEL AT HACCONBY.

Here and there one finds chapels with some unusual story, and that at Hacconby in Lincolnshire is one. In the year 1867 a chapel was built in this village by Mr. W. Brown, a farmer, so that those of his men who wished to worship elsewhere than in the parish church might do so. There is no evidence that Mr. Brown was a Methodist, for the chapel he had built, and in which he in fact worshipped, was a united cause, consisting of General Baptists and United Free Methodists. Somewhere about the turn of the century the Methodists withdrew, and the Baptists remained to worship there, as they still do. It was a private chapel from its erection, a peppercorn rent being paid, until in 1932 it was purchased by the Baptists.

It is a plain building, seating about one hundred people. It is possibly unique for its size, as there are galleries along both sides, and a small organ loft opposite the pulpit. The distance between the galleries is so small that a person standing in one gallery can shake hands with a person in the opposite gallery. The galleries were erected, it is said, because of an error on the part of the builder, who used the internal measurements for the outside measurements, and in consequence, at his own expense, put in the galleries to remedy the deficiency in the seating.

I remember preaching in a chapel like this somewhere in Lancashire, but cannot recall the name of the place. Possibly other readers will know of similar chapels, where galleries are so close together that preacher and congregation might (almost) shake hands! WILLIAM LEARY.

## 1125. WILLIAM DARNEY: INFORMATION WANTED.

Mrs. E. V. Chapman, 68, Upper Washer Lane, Halifax, Yorks, writes: "I am pursuing the study of William Darney (converted and preaching from about 1741-2). Most usual sources have been consulted, but any local histories or unpublished minutes or account books, or references in letters, would be appreciated. Particularly interesting would be anything throwing light on his career before 1741, when he is believed to have been converted in Scotland, and after 1768, when his name disappears from the *Minutes of Conference*, up to his death in November 1774." Can any reader help? EDITOR.

## 1126. WHO WAS CATHERINE HUDSON?

Alderman Horace Hird, of Ridgeway, Grange Park Drive, Bingley, Yorks, writes to say that he possesses two volumes of John Wesley's *Notes upon the Old Testament*, published by William Pine at Bristol in 1765; and on the title-page of each volume someone has written in a contemporary hand:

The Gift of Mrs Catherine Hudson to  
The Revd. Mr. John Wesley  
The Gift of the Rev. Mr John Wesley  
To John Johnson Feb 24

1772

John Johnson's story is well known: he was a native of Somerset, but the last thirty-odd years of his life were spent in Ireland. But who was "Mrs. Catherine Hudson"? Can any reader shed light on this person?

EDITOR.