

WILLIAM GRIFFITH (1806-83)

The "Hercules of the Reform Movement"

ON 16th July 1883, observers in Becket Street, Derby, would have seen a largely-attended funeral at the chapel then styled United Methodist Free Church. The congregation, which filled the place to overflowing, was made up of ministers of all denominations and laymen of all classes. As the procession moved from the chapel to the cemetery in Uttoxeter Road, people lined the streets, whilst hundreds more were gathered in the cemetery itself.¹ The funeral was that of William Griffith, the former minister of Becket Street. Many years had passed since his expulsion from the Wesleyan connexion in 1849, and whilst his political views were not always acceptable in Derby, he was revered for his forthright and honest character.

William Griffith was born in London on 4th November 1806. His father, also William Griffith, became a Wesleyan minister in 1808.² At the age of eight he was sent to Kingswood School, and when he was twelve he was converted as the result of a revival which swept through the school.³ He was, apparently, no more than an average pupil.⁴ Even in his schooldays, however, if we believe the anecdote told in his obituary, he was possessed of great strength of character. A group of his school friends had committed some minor school offence; Griffith knew who they were, but was not himself implicated. Rather than reveal their names to the schoolmaster, however, he allowed himself to be beaten so severely that he could not dress himself for some days.⁵

After leaving Kingswood, he taught for some time at a school near Bristol. There he came into contact with members of the Church of England, and as a result developed anti-State Church views which remained with him for the rest of his life.⁶ He next taught at a school near Salisbury run by a certain Mr. Dredge, who was a keen Wesleyan. Here he came to the attention of Isaac Bradnack, the superintendent of the Salisbury circuit, who placed his name on the circuit plan. After some years as a local preacher, Griffith became a probationer minister, and was placed on the President's List.⁷

In 1828 he was sent to the Reading circuit to replace a young minister, Andrew Doncaster, who had died.⁸ While there, he lived with Thomas Squance, the superintendent, who thought highly of him. At the Conference later that year, however, he was appointed to Windsor. In 1829 he returned to Reading,⁹ where he gained experience in open-air preaching. In 1830 he was appointed to the

¹ B. A. M. Alger: *History of Derby and District affiliated Free Churches* (Derby, 1901), p. 112.

² R. Chew: *William Griffith: Memorials and Letters* (1885), p. 1.

³ *Minutes of the Annual Assembly of the United Methodist Free Churches*, 1883, p. 12. Memoir by the Rev. J. Dinsley.

⁴ Chew, *op. cit.*, pp. 3-9.

⁵ *UMFC Minutes*, 1883, p. 12.

^{6,7} Chew, *loc. cit.*

^{8,9} *ibid.*, pp. 7-9.

Devonport circuit.¹⁰ In this station he was both "popular and useful", showed remarkable energy, and took great interest in the topics of the day, including negro emancipation (for whilst the slave trade had been abolished in Britain in 1807, it was not abolished in the colonies until 1833). This is the first indication of that interest in radical politics which was to last throughout his life.

In Plymouth a crisis intervened. As the District Meeting of 1832 approached, Griffith faced his final examination for the Wesleyan ministry. Without warning, he vanished, and took ship to Jersey. He had lost his sense of divine favour, and had resolved never to preach again.¹¹ While in Jersey, he accepted the invitation of a sea captain to go with him on a voyage to Yorkshire. When the ship reached Hull, he renewed his friendship with Thomas Squance, and after some earnest conversation was persuaded by Squance to renew his preaching. Following this interlude, although Griffith had resumed his career as a preacher, his name is missing from the *Minutes* of the Wesleyan Conference.¹² We learn from Chew, however, that he was sent to the Frome circuit in 1834.¹³ After Frome, Griffith was appointed in 1835 to Hastings, and in that year his name reappears in the *Minutes* as a probationer.¹⁴ In 1836 he was received into Full Connexion and appointed to the Southwark circuit.¹⁵ His subsequent appointments were to Birmingham East (1838), Gloucester (1840), Frome (1842), Knaresborough (1844), North Shields (1845), and Ripley (Derbyshire) (1847-8).¹⁶

The Ripley circuit, of which Griffith became superintendent in 1847, had just been separated from the Belper circuit. It was an area with a tradition of Radicalism. Near to Ripley was Pentrich, the scene of the abortive rebellion of 1817, which resulted in the execution of the three ringleaders, one of whom was Isaac Ludlam, reputed to have been one of the ablest preachers in the Belper circuit.¹⁷ In nearby Belper, Chartist meetings were held in the 1840s.¹⁸ The town of Ripley was in an expanding mining and industrial area, and would have afforded opportunities for the new minister. He seems to have been a successful superintendent, and was very popular there, as events were to prove.

Griffith had previous connexions with Derbyshire. His wife,

¹⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 12.

¹² *ibid.*, pp. 13-15. A reference by Benjamin Gregory to "another escapade by William Griffith", dealt with by the Manchester Conference of 1833, in all probability refers to this. (See *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism, 1827-52* (1898), p. 127.)

¹³ Benjamin Gregory (*loc. cit.*) further states: "The case was referred to a Committee, who unanimously recommended that 'he be placed under the direction of the President, without his name being printed'." The Rev. Kenneth Garlick has pointed out that in the 1846 edition of "Hill's Arrangement" Griffith is listed as being stationed at Edinburgh in 1830 and Sheffield West in 1831—clearly incorrect by comparison with the *Minutes*, a much more reliable source. ¹⁴ *Minutes*, 1835. ¹⁵ *ibid.*, 1836.

¹⁶ Information from *Minutes* supplied by the Rev. Kenneth Garlick.

¹⁷ B. Gregory: *Autobiographical Recollections* (1903), p. 129.

¹⁸ J. E. Williams: *The Derbyshire Miners* (1962), pp. 79 ff.

Eliza, whom he had married when he was stationed at Frome, was the daughter of Joseph Bourne, son of William Bourne, who founded the pottery at Denby, between Belper and Ripley. The Bourne family were staunch Wesleyans, and had built two chapels locally—Denby and Street Lane.¹⁹

Griffith's radical views have already been noted. They became more extreme as he grew older, and as he did not hesitate to express them it seems very probable that they hampered his ministerial career. In 1838, for instance, John Waterhouse, who was being sent abroad to the South Seas Mission, wished to take Griffith with him as his assistant. The appointment was subject to the consent of the Missionary Committee, and was not ratified, as Jabez Bunting vetoed it. In later years, writing to a friend in Australia, Griffith claimed that he was "too Radical to be so far out of his more direct influence".²⁰ As further evidence of Griffith's lack of favour with the establishment, Richard Chew states that it was thought at the time that his stationing at North Shields was by way of being a rebuke for his advanced opinions.²¹

In the late 1840s and 1850s there arose a growing demand for the constitutional reform of the Methodist connexion. Anonymous writings began to appear in 1844 and following years. These *Fly Sheets from a Private Correspondent* were printed in Birmingham, but bore no printer's or publisher's name. They contained pointed attacks on important people, but were chiefly aimed at Jabez Bunting as the key figure in the "metropolitan hierarchy". Caustic and abusive, the pamphlets, at first only sent to ministers, were eventually distributed far and wide. The Wesleyan Conference retaliated with the anonymous *Papers on Wesleyan Matters*, published in 1849, which were as outspoken as the publications they condemned. Previous to this, at the Conference of 1848, Dr. George Osborn had moved that all the preachers should be asked to declare that they had had nothing to do with the *Fly Sheets*, and, despite the opposition of nearly half the Conference, he was allowed to send a "declaration" to all ministers. Despite repeated pressure, when the 1849 Conference assembled in Manchester there were thirty-six ministers who had refused to sign the "declaration". As it would have been impossible to discipline so many, it was decided to question a few. James Everett, the chief suspect, was questioned first, and on his declining to answer was expelled. Griffith also was expelled, together with Samuel Dunn, the superintendent of the Nottingham circuit and editor of an anti-Bunting periodical, the *Wesley Banner*. Griffith had refused to give an undertaking that he would send no more articles to the liberal *Wesleyan Times*, and Dunn had refused to discontinue the *Wesley Banner*.²²

¹⁹ G. A. Fletcher: *Records of Wesleyan Methodism in the Belper Circuit* (1903), p. 66; for Griffith's visit to Denby in 1839 see Chew, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁰ Quoted by Chew, p. 19 (letter addressed to Mr. James P. Roberts).

²¹ Chew, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

²² R. E. Davies et al. (eds.): *A History of the Methodist Church in Great*

These expulsions caused widespread sensation, which extended far beyond the confines of Methodism and aroused much comment. *The Times* said that the Conference had

taken that step which smacks more of the Inquisition than a British tribunal . . . and we pronounce them at once a gross outrage on all our old English principles of fair play.²⁸

Despite Professor W. R. Ward's rather harsh comments on him, Griffith seems to have been popular in his circuit.²⁴ At a meeting held in Ripley in August 1849, just after his expulsion, the speaker asked everyone who supported Griffith to stand, and the whole room rose as one man.²⁵ Also at Ripley a month later, a meeting "attended largely by the working class" raised £20 in its collection for the "three expelled".²⁶ A tea-party for 800 people was held in Derby in October 1849 in honour of the three.²⁷ Only ten days after their expulsion, a "monster meeting" was held in Derby and a subscription list opened in support of the three.²⁸ This controversy over the *Fly Sheets* damaged Wesleyanism in Derbyshire more severely than in any other county except Norfolk,²⁹ and circuits adjoining Ripley were seriously affected.³⁰

After some heart-searching, Griffith's wife's parents at Belper left the Wesleyans in support of their son-in-law.³¹ As Mr. Bourne was the owner of the Denby and Street Lane chapels, these places withdrew from the circuit, and with two other chapels formed a small Free Methodist circuit.³² Griffith's continued residence in the Ripley area caused some embarrassment to his successor, Samuel Timms, particularly when Griffith was invited to preach. In reply to a protest by Timms, his answer was firm:

God gave me a commission to preach. The Conference has no power to annul that commission . . . In every Wesleyan chapel, in any part of the kingdom, and *especially in the Ripley Circuit* [*italics original*], particularly when that chapel is not on the Conference plan, I shall gladly avail myself of an opportunity to preach, whenever its trustees or its managers, or a majority of them invite me.³³

Little is known of Griffith's activities between 1850 and 1855, but it may be assumed that he was still living in Derbyshire. In 1855

Britain, II (1978), pp. 318 ff.; O. A. Beckerlegge: *The United Methodist Free Churches* (1957), pp. 30 ff. ²⁸ Davies et al., op. cit., p. 321.

²⁴ W. R. Ward: *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (1972), p. 265.

²⁵ *Wesleyan Times*, 20th August 1849, p. 549.

²⁶ *ibid.*, 27th August 1849, p. 556.

²⁷ *ibid.*, 22nd October 1849, p. 712.

²⁸ *Derby Mercury*, 29th August 1849.

²⁹ R. Currie: *Methodism Divided* (1968), p. 204.

³⁰ D. A. Barton: *Aspects of Nonconformity in six Derbyshire Towns* (Sheffield M.A. thesis, 1981). For Cromford circuit, see p. 238; Belper circuit, pp. 322 ff.; Derby, pp. 84 ff.; Ilkeston, p. 240, note 64.

³¹ Fletcher, op. cit., p. 66. Griffith's father remained in the Wesleyan ministry until his death in 1861; his mother, on the other hand, was known to attend Reform meetings.

³² *ibid.*, p. 16. On the death of Mrs. Bourne (Griffith's niece by marriage) in 1898, the Denby chapel was left to the UMFC, whilst Street Lane was left to the Wesleyans. A circuit plan of 1864 survives. ³³ Chew, op. cit., p. 78.

That material is selected from four or five separate accounts by Wesley, each directed to different audiences and naturally giving slightly different perspectives on the events (his description of Sophy Hopkey to his mother is quite different from that designed for his defence before a Georgia jury). These editorial distinctions would seem to be of use to a psychologist making a careful analysis of such circumstances.

One would also expect that in outlining Wesley's development from month to month, year to year, the author would give special care to the matter of time sequence in the choice and use of source material as he attempts to discover what Wesley thought or felt *at any given time*. The chapter on Wesley's theology frequently overlooks the matter of dating source references, and some crucial points in the description of Wesley's developing self-understanding suffer from confusion in this regard. In one instance, Moore quotes the *Journal* for January 1738 (published in 1740, by the way), blithely inserting in the text a footnote from the fourth edition ("the faith of a son", added 1774), and then describing Wesley's view of himself *at that time*, 1738, on the basis of an understanding that developed later in his life (p. 95).

One word for the theologians: Moore has provided some food for thought in his interpretation of Wesley's thought as a "theology of passivity" (synergism is understood as "reactive" passivity based on the "rationalization" of intensely active modes of behaviour; Christian perfection is the exemplification of "pure passivity"). Just how well the psychological concepts fit the theological expressions, I leave the theologians to decide.

At times, then, the careful historian might think that Moore is analysing a "straw man" and selecting the evidence to fit his theories. We should not simply accuse him of silliness, as some reviewers did Erikson, and our concern for what might appear at times to be his careless historical work should be tempered by the recognition that much more historical spade work remains before an attempt such as Moore's can even hope to succeed. The situation should improve as additional volumes of the new Oxford Edition of Wesley's *Works* continue to provide a critical basis (both in substance and form) upon which careful Wesley scholarship can proceed.

RICHARD P. HEITZENRATER.

The Comenius Faculty of Protestant Theology in Prague has published in the form of a mimeographed study text a work by Dr. Vilem Scheeberger entitled *Prehledné dejiny metodismu* (A Concise History of Methodism). In 246 pages the author deals with the background to and the origin of Methodism and its spread across the world, devoting special attention to Czech Methodism in the USA and Czechoslovakia as well as in other European countries. The development of Methodist historiography is outlined in the introduction, and the concluding section contains statistics of Methodism and a survey of Czech writing on Methodism, most of which is to be found in periodicals. This is the first concise history of Methodism to be published in Czech.

BOOK NOTICES

John and Charles Wesley: Selected Prayers, Hymns, Journal Notes, Sermons, Letters and Treatises, edited with an Introduction by Frank Whaling. Preface by Albert C. Outler. (SPCK (1981): pp. xx. 412, £8 95p. in paperback.)

John and Charles Wesley are known the world over on many counts—as preachers, organizers, hymn-writers and the like, but not so widely for their spirituality. So it may come as a surprise to some, especially to those who know them only superficially, that a selection of their writings should be included in a series entitled “The Classics of Western Spirituality: A Library of the Great Spiritual Masters”. But this book justifies their inclusion. Dr. Albert Outler in a commendable Preface establishes the fittingness of the Wesleys to be ranked among the world’s great spiritual masters. Both John and Charles, each with a different style yet with a common mission, should command attention. A Foreword, presumably by Dr. Whaling himself, sums up the contents of the book with an indication of the range, depth, and significance of the spirituality which is the subject of those contents.

The most valuable contribution, however, is Dr. Whaling’s essay of 64 pages on the spirituality of the Wesleys. He begins by making the point that John and Charles should be studied together, for they are complementary to each other. They inherited many traditions, “but what developed was *their* [Whaling’s italics] vision of God” (p. 3); but this, in turn, led to a “radical renewal of the tradition they had inherited”. Then follows a succinct account of the life of John Wesley as providing background for spirituality and determining its meaning. The elements of Wesley’s later spirituality were already present in germ in the rectory at Epworth. Whaling then dispels two false ideas about Wesley—(i) that he was simply and literally *homo unius libri*, and (ii) that he gave little weight to reason. Then follows a discussion on whether his conversion should not be dated 1725 at Oxford; his rejection of mysticism and his reaction against Moravianism; his careful use of time; the influence of the Eastern Fathers; and the Holy Club setting of spirituality in a social and liturgical context. The importance of the Georgia episode lay in “the cross-fertilisation between German and Anglo-Saxon piety as seen in his translation of the great German hymns”. The year 1739 represents a watershed in the development of Wesley’s spirituality, for henceforth he was to communicate his spirituality to others. The thrust of Charles Wesley’s spirituality lay, of course, in his hymns—in their “personalism, adoring wonder and their immediacy”.

Time fails me to summarize the remainder of this interesting essay including, as it does, a comparison of the Wesleys’ spirituality with that of other contemporary groups, the place of Justification and Assurance, and the conception of Christian Perfection or Perfect Love. Whaling is sure that even in

our modern world of computers, cosmonauts and communists . . . the general principles of their [i.e. the Wesleys’] integral spirituality are as valid as ever.

His hope is that

through this book the whole church will be led again to look at the spirituality of the Wesleys and to so reinterpret it that its principles may be actualized in our present global situation.

Then follows the actual selection of the works of the Wesleys, chosen to illustrate the themes just outlined in the Foreword, but preceded by brief but useful "Notes on Specific Extracts". To be asked to make such a choice is to be given an unenviable task, but Dr. Whaling has done well. There are extracts from John's major works, and some of his translations of German hymns, together with over 120 hymns by his brother Charles. Perhaps the selection is not everybody's choice—but what is "everybody's choice"?

The book has an American aspect—probably through its printing—so the British reader has to get used to such Americanisms as "gifted", "circuit riders", "missionize", "Savior", etc., together with the use (more than once) of the word "parameter" not in the *OED* meaning, but in the sense of "perimeter".

All told, then, this is a valuable contribution to Wesley studies, and is warmly to be commended.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

Geschichte der Evangelisch-Methodistischen Kirche, edited by Karl Steckel and C. E. Sommer. (Christliches Verlagshaus, Stuttgart (1982): DM.35).

It is a pity that English Methodists have so little knowledge of their continental relations. This is perhaps mainly because most of the information is locked up in the German language; and unfortunately the *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* has a much narrower scope than the *New History* of 1909. But it is also the case that the predominant influence in the origins and development of Methodism on the continent of Europe has come from the United States: the English contribution has been slight.

This is made clear in the present work, which is confined to the German-speaking lands, with brief introductory sketches of English and American Methodist history and more elaborate chapters on the German-American origins of continental work. The present-day "Evangelical-Methodist" church is the product of a union (in 1968) between Methodism and the Evangelische Gemeinschaft—a body very similar to Methodism in its theology and religious ethos. (It had an interesting origin in the United States in the late eighteenth century, combining revivalist influences with Reformed Pietism, Methodism and the Mennonites in its pedigree.) Both German-speaking Methodism and the Gemeinschaft developed in America to serve the needs of immigrants. During the second quarter of the nineteenth century they began missionary work on the European continent to remedy what they felt to be the unevangelical state of the established churches. The small English contribution came through the Wesleyan layman C. G. Müller, who had lived in London and returned to his native Württemberg in 1830. But when the Wesleyan and American missions joined up they organized on the American episcopal pattern.

This book tells its story in a straightforward manner, and is designed for the general reader as much as for the expert. There is perhaps rather too much on the external, formal life of the church, on organization and on church unity negotiations. One could wish for a clearer picture of the ordinary members' lives; of their social and religious characteristics; and of the churches' relationship with society. One reason for a lack of clarity on this last point may be that for many years these small communities had an ill-defined legal status and an ambiguous relationship as "free churches" with the dominant state churches of Lutheran Germany. There

are strong contrasts here with the large American Methodist churches operating in a non-confessional state, and even with England, where the free churches in the nineteenth century were strong enough to create an aggressive alternative to the Church of England. Equally striking is the extent to which American and British Methodism came to be influenced by "liberal" theology and "social gospel" attitudes. Continental free churches remained conservative and pietistic in ethos on these matters, though this gave them some affinities with elements in Lutheranism.

Continental free churches have indeed had a hard path to travel in relation to the state churches—far harder than have their English counterparts; and to this situation have been added the traumas of Nazism and world war (on which themes this history is understandably rather reticent). It is, to repeat, a pity that most English Methodists have too little knowledge of their continental relations; but this reviewer hopes that these remarks may serve as a reminder of their work and a tribute thereto. On a more personal level, it is also a reminder to him of kindly hospitality and friendship offered to a stranger nearly twenty-five years ago.

HENRY D. RACK.

Between Pulpit and Pew: Folk Religion in a North Yorkshire Fishing Village, by David Clark. (Cambridge University Press (1982): pp. xii. 186, illustrated, £13 50p.)

This book, based on research in the village of Staithes in the mid-1970s, is primarily a piece of sociology, but employs also the methods and insights of anthropology and history. According to the style of anthropological study, David Clark lived in the village for fifteen months as a "participant observer", recording the lives of the inhabitants with the meticulous objectivity associated with studies of South Sea islanders. His findings are reported in the book with luminous clarity and simplicity, and the author draws out their significance by reference to other work in the sociology of religion and by a full account of the nature and social history of the village community itself. The result will probably come to be regarded as a classic study of its kind, and deservedly so.

Those coming to the book with little knowledge of sociology (like this reviewer) may find certain sections rather hard going, and at times in the more theoretical sections the writing can become somewhat laboured and portentous. One example will suffice:

Birth and death probably constitute the greatest crises of the life cycle, since within them cultural and structural transfigurations are underpinned by fundamental physiological changes in the individual. (p. 110)

And how!—one is tempted to add. But it would be unjust to judge the book from this example. It is on the whole very well written, and is certainly not intellectually pompous. In fact it is marked by an attractive humility, and in its descriptive passages it can grip like a novel.

The central concern is to elucidate the role of religion in the village community of Staithes. As with other fishing and mining communities, socially and geographically isolated, established religion made little headway here, whereas nonconformity flourished. George Fox found "many professors and Ranters" (the pre-PM kind!) in Staithes in the seventeenth century, and Methodism took ready root in the eighteenth and nineteenth. The standard Methodist interpretation of the impact of the revival on Staithes (as on other neighbouring fishing villages) was that the first preachers found a wild community, riddled with superstition and paganism,

and transformed it into one filled with evangelical virtues. Certainly the impact of Methodism was very considerable, but the story is far from simple. Clark shows very clearly the persistence in Staithes of a popular "folk religion", based on traditional taboos and superstitions, existing alongside Methodism, and indeed living in symbiotic relationship with it. No doubt some of the cruder pagan practices have been eradicated, but much of this old folk-culture persisted into the twentieth century, affecting both those outside and inside the chapels, and despite the pressures of secularization it lives on still.

Clark makes clear that folk religion, like the "sacred culture" of chapel life, helps individuals to make sense of life in an unpredictable world, and also to preserve communal identity and values. Staithes, huddled between the cliffs and the sea, has always been a "face-to-face" society, with strong local and family loyalties, as well as keen feuds and rivalries. This has had an inevitable effect on chapel life, generating such an acute sense of loyalty to the two causes—Wesleyan and Primitive—that fifty years after Methodist Union they are still successfully resisting all pressures towards amalgamation.

Staithes therefore is a "thorn in the flesh" for official Methodism, and Clark quotes a good many exasperated comments about it by ministers and others. However, he is always anxious to express the Staithes point of view—not in any partisan way, but in order to stress the importance to Staithes folk of the need to preserve communal and traditional values. Chapel religion and folk religion, sometimes working separately and sometimes together, are vastly important in this.

When one attempts to draw any general conclusions from this book it becomes immediately clear that it raises more questions than it answers. I can only commend it warmly as a highly interesting piece of social investigation which forces one to think and think again about the relation of Methodism to community life, both in the past and today, and about the continuing relevance of non-institutional religion and popular folk-cultures in our modern society.

GEOFFREY E. MILBURN.

Samuel Chadwick and Stacksteads, compiled by Kenneth F. Bowden (1982). Privately printed and published, and sold on behalf of Stacksteads Methodist church, Bacup: pp. 24, price £1 plus postage, available from the author at 34, Fernhill Crescent, Stacksteads, Bacup, OL13 8JU.

The reproduction of a detailed local map of the Stacksteads area on the cover sets the context of the story, and indicates the degree of detail that marks its telling. The familiar account of the beginnings of the full-time work, prior to candidature, of Samuel Chadwick (1860-1932), the local lad who rose to become a famous missionary in Leeds, editor of *Joyful News*, Principal of Cliff College, and in 1918 President of the Wesleyan Conference, is told with added touches of local insight and knowledge. Good use is made of established published material, unpublished material from Chadwick's journal, and material from an unpublished thesis. Later visits made by Chadwick to Bacup after his lay pastorate of 1881-3 are reported, as is the story of the Stacksteads Memorial Chapel.

This is a useful, interesting and well-written booklet. Six illustrations, a cover portrait and a reproduction of a circuit plan accompany the map.

DAVID H. HOWARTH.

Wesley's Centenary Memorial: The history of Westminster Central Hall, by John V. Ellis; *Eight Essays*, edited by Dr. Paul Sangster. Both published by the Westminster Central Hall, London (1982): £1 25p. each plus postage.

These two booklets have been published to mark the 70th anniversary of the opening of the Central Hall in 1912, and are presumably opening shots in a campaign to claim priority in the 1991 bicentenary celebrations. John Ellis writes from the vantage-point of someone associated with the Hall throughout its history, and gives us much interesting detail, architectural and musical as well as historical. One day someone will ask, and attempt to answer, the more searching questions that are ignored here; but meanwhile, despite an elementary blunder over Caxton's printing-press and the ungentlemanly addition of several years to Isobel Baillie's age, he provides a readable and welcome record.

His booklet would have been enhanced by the incorporation of much of the material in its companion. The eight articles (to call them "essays" is to claim too much for them either in content or in literary quality) constitute a mediocre medley which scarcely enhances Methodism's "public image" at the heart of the national life, and certainly needed much less indulgent editing. The shining exception (all the more so for having originated as a private letter, not written with a view to publication) is a detailed appraisal of the architecture of the Hall by John Betjeman. For this alone (in two senses of the phrase) the booklet deserves to become a collector's item.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

Cheltenham's Churches and Chapels, A.D. 773-1883, by Steven T. Blake. (Cheltenham Borough Council Art Gallery and Museum Service (1979): pp. iv, 42, no price stated.)

Chapels and Meeting Houses in the Vale of Evesham, by Benjamin G. Cox. (Vale of Evesham Historical Society (1982): pp. 18, £1 50p.)

The growth of Cheltenham as a spa town during the eighteenth century resulted in its mediæval parish church becoming totally inadequate for the expanding population, and under these conditions both Old and New Dissent began to flourish. Gradually, from the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the Anglicans began to respond, and subsequently numerous churches were erected which now give the town much of its character. Of particular interest, now that it is a joint Anglican-Methodist church, is St. Matthew's, built from 1875 to a vast auditorium plan, and considered to be one of Ewan Christian's best works. This same period saw further nonconformist chapels opened, in part as a result of secession within the Old Dissent, but also from a desire to replace older premises by something more imposing and commodious. One of the most delightful chapels of this era is the Gothic Salem Baptist of 1844.

The Vale of Evesham, an agricultural area surrounding a market town which grew outside the gates of Evesham Abbey, saw the Old Dissent established by the early eighteenth century; and the town became the centre of a Methodist circuit in 1745. In these villages nonconformist architecture tended to be simple and vernacular, in marked contrast to that of the prestigious chapels of Cheltenham.

Cox rightly points out that "chapels and meeting houses have been an almost completely neglected subject", and although both these booklets help to make this subject a little less neglected, there is a difference in their *raison d'être*: that on Cheltenham was published to accompany an

exhibition, whereas that on the Vale of Evesham was inspired by the need to photograph and record local chapels before either demolition or cottage conversion takes place.

The Cheltenham booklet describes churches of all denominations, including Roman Catholic and the Jewish synagogue, and has useful foot-notes and a selection of illustrations. That on the Vale of Evesham illustrates almost all the chapels so described, and includes a reproduction of a circuit plan; but in places the historical account of individual congregations is somewhat vague, possibly reflecting a lack of source-materials. Both booklets would have been improved by the inclusion of maps, and that on the Vale of Evesham by a bibliography. These minor criticisms should not be allowed to obscure the usefulness of these publications to the chapel historian, especially when the same premises were used by a variety of sects. Those contemplating similar booklets would do well to consult these for ideas.

D. COLIN DEWS.

They seek a City: Methodism in Grahamstown, by Leslie A. Hewson. Drawings by Dorothy Randell. (Grahamstown, South Africa, Institute of Social and Economic Research, Rhodes University (1981): pp. x. 110, R6. 50).

This careful chronicle of Methodism in Grahamstown is both a piece of exact research and an act of *pietas*. Even the author's modesty cannot entirely hide the fact that he himself has played a distinguished part in the more recent history which he recounts; and he stands in a long line of Methodist leaders in Grahamstown who looked back with loving gratitude to the great year of 1820 and their founder under God, William Shaw.

After an introductory review, the book's four main chapters cover respectively the first preaching-places, chapels and churches from 1822 to 1962, Methodist schools and colleges, and Commemoration Chapel. There is also a note on homes of notable Methodists, and documentation extending to almost thirty pages.

PAUL ELLINGWORTH.

Brief Notices

Morels of Cardiff: The history of a Family Shipping Firm, by J. M. Gibbs. (National Museum of Wales, Cardiff (1982): pp. 183, £4.)

In 1861 Philip and Thomas Morel, brothers and Wesleyans from Jersey, came to Cardiff to join their elder brother's chartering business. Six years later they set up their own shipping concern, which grew as the port itself grew, until by 1898 they were the biggest shipowners in Cardiff. They married Martha and Susanna Gibbs, sisters and Wesleyans from the Isle of Portland, and later took their brother-in-law into partnership. The fortunes of this Methodist firm up to its liquidation in 1957 are told by Thomas Morel's grandson, who was Vice-President of Conference in 1958.

Queen's Essays, edited by J. Munsey Turner. (The Queen's College, Birmingham (1980): pp. 191, £5 (£3 to old students).) Copies from the editor, 37, Rothwell Road, Halifax, W. Yorks, HX1 2HA.

This commemorative volume of essays—in the editor's words “a mixed grill”—was published to mark the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of The Queen's College as an ecumenical institution. The historical interest lies chiefly in Mr. Turner's outline history of the college, in which he traces both the Anglican and the Methodist parentage in a piece entitled “Ministry to the Whole Person”, and in Gordon Wakefield's felicitous cameo of Henry Bett, but there is much here for the theologically-minded.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1370. "A FULL, FREE, AND PRESENT SALVATION".

In Note No. 1319 (*Proceedings*, xlii, pp. 64-5), I asserted that although Wesley proclaimed salvation, full, free and present, he did not use that phrase in writing. That negative answer to Dr. Beckerlegge's query No. 1310 (*ibid.*, xli, p. 166) may now be supplemented by the following notes.

Richard Green's Fernley Lecture entitled *The Mission of Methodism* (1890) contains the expression twice, with the adjectives in different order. On page 101 he states that Wesley "permeated the active religious sentiment" of Britain by the proclamation of "a free, full, present salvation". It reads as though it were Green's own composition. But on page 183 the words occur again in a quotation from a document identified as "The Pastoral Resolutions" which Green calls "that invaluable Methodist preacher's *vade mecum*". The passage runs:

Let us preach constantly the leading and vital doctrines of the gospel: repentance towards God; a present, free, full salvation from sin; a salvation that is in Christ Jesus, and apprehended by the simple exercise of faith: a salvation which begins with the forgiveness of sins, this forgiveness being certified to the penitent believer by the Holy Spirit, and by the power of that Divine Spirit who bears the witness, a change of heart; a salvation which is the only entrance to a course of practical holiness . . .

It was perhaps natural to assume that by "*vade mecum*" Green meant what was commonly called "The Liverpool Minutes" of 1820. And, in fact, his quotation differs only a little from the revision of that pastoral classic of Bunting's which was adopted by the Wesleyan Conference of 1885. (See, e.g., Spencer and Finch's *Constitutional Practice and Discipline of the Methodist Church* (1951), p. 310.)

However, Jabez Bunting's original did not contain any mention of "present, free, full salvation". This expression appeared in paragraph 9 of the answer to Question XXIV recorded in the *Minutes* of the Manchester Conference of 1821. As this little document is less known and less accessible than the original of 1820 (given in full, for example, in H. W. Williams's *Constitution and Polity of Wesleyan Methodism*, 2nd edn. (1881), pp. 323-9), it may be useful to give the relevant passage, which runs:

We again solemnly resolve after the example of our venerable Fathers in the gospel, with all plainness and zeal, to preach a free, present, and full salvation from sin; a salvation flowing from the mere grace of God, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, apprehended by the simple exercise of faith, and indispensably necessary to a course of practical holiness. And in this great work, our only reliance for success is upon the promised grace of the Holy Spirit, by whose inspiration alone it is that the gospel in any instance is rendered the "power of God unto salvation".

As an official pastoral ideal the expression "free, full, present salvation" almost certainly dates from 1821. But it seems curious that, after only one year, Bunting's "Let us . . . preach constantly all those leading and vital Doctrines . . . which peculiarly distinguished the original Methodist preachers" was felt to be in need of this explication. One wonders: Was it Bunting's own idea?—and again, was it immediately incorporated

in his 1820 document, which in 1821 was ordered to be read out at all District Meetings?

The variations in the form of the expression are curious, but insignificant beyond indicating that probably the phrase was idiomatic amongst Methodists for a period. But in the matter of usage, differences of theology as well as polity may be reflected. Originally, the ministry pledges itself to ponder and reproduce the ideal. In the Primitive Methodist usage cited by Dr. Beckerlegge, the ministry is measured up to the ideal, and reported on, by representative laymen. GEORGE LAWTON.

1371. THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST "OTHER SIDE".

Mr. M. C. Clipson of Oldham recently let me have a collection of papers from the Whitechapel Mission (now deposited with the Methodist Archives and Research Centre) concerning opposition to Methodist Union within Primitive Methodism. The papers include a list of interested ministers and laymen. The leaders were J. E. Thorpe, T. R. Auty, T. W. Bevan, and J. Whitaker. The ground of opposition was fear of sacerdotalism and clericalism and a dislike of the ministerial session of the Conference, though a letter signed by Thorpe, Auty and Bevan notes that "our sole purpose is to save Primitive Methodism from absorption and subsequent extinction".

The papers date from 1922-4, and include two pamphlets against union by a United Methodist, John N. Higman, which suggest financial factors also—it will cost more!—and an open letter from the Wesleyan Sir Henry Lunn inveighing against lay Vice-Presidents who might be modernists, "outspeaking" Peake!

There must be much more of this sort of material about, which ought not to be allowed to perish. J. MUNSEY TURNER.

1372. JOHN WESLEY'S COPY OF "PRINCE EUGENE OF SAVOY".

The John Rylands University Library of Manchester has recently purchased an item which will be of some considerable interest to Methodist historians. The anonymous *Life and Actions of Prince Eugene of Savoy* is a lively piece of instant history which was first published in 1702 and carried the story as far as the battle of Cremona. A further seventy-five pages were added to the text in the second edition of 1707, taking events as far as the siege of Milan, and it is this edition which John Wesley obtained some time between 1720 and 1724, although whether he paid the full purchase price of three shillings and sixpence would no doubt be difficult to establish today. From the Latin inscription on the endpaper it is clear that Wesley acquired the volume while he was at Christ Church, Oxford. Unfortunately there are no annotations in the book, though Wesley did add "J.W." to the half-title, and "J. Wesley" to the title-page.

Dr. V. H. H. Green does not record the fact that Wesley ever read this history: however, his detailed lists do not start before 1725, but from these it can be seen that this volume would not be an unusual one for the young Wesley to possess. Nevertheless, it would appear that later John Wesley disposed of the book, for around 1770 to 1775 it was the property of R. Bliss, the Oxford bookseller, stationer and circulating librarian, whose engraved trade-label is attached to the front paste-down.

It would be interesting to learn more of the provenance of this volume.

DAVID W. RILEY.

1373. A METHODIST FONT.

I have in my possession a "Methodist font" which I obtained a few years ago when I lived in Sunderland. The bowl is approximately 9 in. in diameter, and made of white pottery with grey marble markings. It is set on a stand (an integral part of the font), and the total height is 5 in.

On the inside of the bowl there is an engraving of John Wesley; this I consider to be a reproduction of William Ridley's engraving of the Eldridge portrait. (A similar etching is on a loving-cup I also obtained in Sunderland.) Around the head and shoulders are the words, in semi-circle:

THE BEST OF ALL GOD IS WITH US

Underneath the portrait there is the inscription:

THE REV. JOHN WESLEY, A.M.
WESLEYAN METHODIST SOCIETY
ESTABLISHED 1739.

There are two inscriptions on the outside of the bowl—(i) in small print, a text:

In the O Lord do I put my trust; let me never be confounded.

(Note that the second e of "thee" is missing, and the word "confounded" is used instead of AV "ashamed".) Beneath this text there is the figure of a heavenly messenger, complete with trumpet, and the words (in large script):

But Jesus said, Suf-
-fer little children, and
forbid them not, to come
unto me: for of such is
the kingdom of
heaven.

This inscription is set in a border of flowers, etc. (ii) On the other side, again set in a wreath of flowers, there is the inscription:

How happy every child of grace,
who knows his sins forgiven!
This earth, he cries, is not my place,
I seek my place in heaven,
A country far from mortal sight.
Yet, O! by faith I see
Thy land of rest, the saints delight,
The heaven prepared for me.

The two handles on the font act as canopies to the figures of two men's heads, both of which have ruffled collars, almost Egyptian-like.

I wonder if other fonts were produced, and if so, how many? Is this piece of Wesleyana peculiar to the North-East? If any reader of the *Proceedings* can throw any light on this object I shall be most grateful to know more.

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There is a continuing demand from students and researchers for back numbers of these *Proceedings*, and whilst these can in most cases be supplied without difficulty as far back as volume XXVI, issues before this are becoming more and more scarce. The Publishing Manager would be glad to hear from anyone having early numbers which for any reason it is not desired to retain.