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Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

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Volume XLIV

September 1984

JOHN WESLEY AND AMERICA

IN 1976, the bicentennial year of the United States of America, I wrote:

As Oxford undergraduates neither John nor Charles Wesley seems to have bothered his head much about America. They came out as missionaries almost on the spur of the moment, and during a comparatively brief stay they both suffered severe hardship and disappointment. Yet strangely enough both planned to return, and to their dying day both retained a deep affection for America and its people. At least a small measure of the phenomenal growth of Methodism in the U.S.A., and therefore in the world at large, can be traced to this affection, while the distinctive quality of American Methodism is in turn indebted to American affection for "Mr. Wesley". The Wesleys' mental pictures of America were always coloured by what they personally experienced in the newly founded colony of Georgia, where they spent most of their time, or in South Carolina's proud Charleston, though Charles Wesley also spent a month in Boston *en route* [back] to England.¹

The time seems to have come for me to expand that paragraph, at least so far as it refers to John Wesley and America.

There was a strong strain of the romantic in Wesley. This seems to have overcome even his fervent dedication to the pursuit of learning and holiness in Oxford, which had led to his firm refusal to succeed his father as rector of Epworth. In a long logic-chopping letter to his father, meticulously composed between 10th and 19th December 1734, he announced this decision, which seemed unshakable.² Yet within a year he and a group of his Oxford Methodists were on their way to Britain's newest colony, apparently under the idealistic spell of the "noble savage" who might be brought into the fold of the true Shepherd, and in the process confirm and strengthen Wesley's own visions of

¹ Frank Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury* (Durham, N.C., Duke University Press, 1976), p. 3.

² *The Works of John Wesley* (Oxford edn.), Vol. 25, *Letters*, i, pp. 397-410.

"holiness unto the Lord".³ His first dispatch home for the columns of the *Gentleman's Magazine* described a long interview with some Chickasaw Indians, "showing what a deep and habitual sense of a divine Providence is imprinted on the minds of those ignorant heathens, and how excellently they are prepared to receive the Gospel".⁴ Alas! His multifarious responsibilities in a huge parish, magnified by his conscientiousness in learning new languages in an attempt to cope with every last resident, and finally frustrated by an emotional entanglement in a place where he had looked forward to seeing no women "but those which are almost of a different species"⁵ eventually proved too much for him. Not only that, however. He had become disillusioned about the Indians, and swung to the other extreme when he presented his report to the Georgia Trustees, describing them as mostly "gluttons, drunkards, thieves, dissemblers, liars". And yet, paradoxically, to the end of his days he constantly looked back nostalgically upon his Georgia Indians, and they furnished him with frequent examples to challenge mere nominal Christians.⁶ Even the weather remained vividly in his memory. In his *Journal* for 7th August 1766, for instance, he says of one remarkable occasion: "We had as hot a day as most I have known in Georgia." (The meteorological tables in the *Gentleman's Magazine* show that the thermometers on that and the two following days hit 70, 71, and 73 degrees, and it was hardly likely to be higher in the West Riding of Yorkshire, where Wesley was.) On at least two other occasions his *Journal* compared British weather to that in Georgia—on 26th May 1762 and 1st September 1784—on the latter occasion as his preachers were gathering in Bristol to set out for America.

The evidence shows that Wesley saw himself—again somewhat romantically—as forsaking family, friends, comfort, and civilization, when he embarked for Georgia, perhaps never to return. In fact he was back in England within a little over two years, almost a quarter of this period having been spent on two tiny ocean-going vessels from and to his native land. But these twenty-one months on American soil made a huge impact on a very long life, and thus indirectly on the lives of the millions of his followers through the centuries. He learned to compare the spiritual values of liturgical sophistication and simple faith; he came to understand human nature more fully, and encountered the horrors of black slavery; he began to experiment with spiritual song on a much larger scale, and was introduced to the rich treasures of German hymnody; he even inaugurated meetings for Christian

³ See his letter to John Burton on 10th October, as he prepared to board the *Simmonds*: "I hope to learn the true sense of the gospel of Christ by preaching it to the heathens . . . They are as little children, humble, willing to learn, and eager to do the will of God . . . I then hope . . . to feel the powers of that second motive to visit the heathen, even the desire to impart to them what I have received, a saving knowledge of the gospel of Christ." (*ibid.*, pp. 439-42).

⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 464-6.

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 440.

⁶ Frank Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury* (Durham, Duke University Press, 1976), p. 9.

fellowship as a supplement to formal worship, and welcomed laymen and women as fellow-workers in his parish. Indeed Georgia proved a fertile soil for the trial planting of many important features of his later English Methodist societies. Small wonder that he regarded this missionary period as "the second rise of Methodism" after its beginnings in Oxford.⁷

Wesley's successor in Savannah, George Whitefield, more than echoed Wesley's own realization, that in spite of the frustrations something important had been accomplished. Perhaps his exuberant testimony owed a little to the deference which the younger man felt was owing to the older, the pupil to the tutor, but only a little:

The good Mr. John Wesley has done in America, under God, is inexpressible. His name is very precious among the people; and he has laid such a foundation that I hope neither men nor devils will ever be able to shake. Oh! that I may follow him as he has Christ!⁸

On the face of things, however, Whitefield himself accomplished a great deal more during his own seven visits to America, from the last of which he did not return. His thousands of converts maintained and spread along the eastern seaboard the revival which Wesley believed had begun in Georgia,⁹ and some of their disciples kept the evangelical flame burning for a generation, until just before Whitefield's death, when the appeal came from New York to Wesley for some experienced Methodist itinerant preachers to organize the infant society there.¹⁰

The year 1738 was an epochal one for John Wesley. In February he stepped on English soil once more; on 24th May his heart was "strangely warmed"; 13th June to 16th September he devoted to visiting the Moravians in Europe; on 9th October, during a two-day walk to Oxford, he eagerly read the first edition of the first description by Jonathan Edwards of the "Great Awakening" in New England, a book which had come hot from the London press the previous year.¹¹ Immediately he made an extract for a friend, though it was not until 1744 that he published his own abridgement of Edwards's work, as *A Narrative of the Late Work of God*. Wesley could hardly have been expected to sympathize with Edwards's Calvinism, but in fact this

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 13.

⁸ George Whitefield: *Journals* (London, Banner of Truth Trust, 1960), 2nd June 1738 (p. 157).

⁹ See *Journal*, 29th May and 5th June 1737, and his letter to James Hutton, 16th June 1737 (Oxford edn., Vol. 25, p. 509). See also his sermon, *Some Account of the Late Work of God in North America* (1778), I. 1-4, where he claims, not only that "it pleased God to begin a work of grace in the newly planted Colony of Georgia", as well as "a wonderful work of God in several parts of New England", but also that as the New England revival spread southward, so the work "advanced by slow degrees from Georgia towards the north", the two being linked by the preaching of Whitefield.

¹⁰ The thread of evidence so far remains very thin, but see Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury*, pp. 30-2.

¹¹ Jonathan Edwards: *The Great Awakening*, ed. C. C. Goen (Yale University Press, 1972), pp. 32-46.

was merely the first of five of his publications which Wesley edited for publication, the others being *The Distinguishing Marks of a Work of the Spirit of God* (also in 1744), *Thoughts concerning the Present Revival of Religion in New England* (1745), *An Extract of The Life of the late Rev. Mr. Brainerd, Missionary to the Indians* (1768), and an extract from Edwards's major work, *A Treatise concerning Religious Affections*, published in Volume 23 of Wesley's own *Works* (1773).¹²

Wesley's massive use of the work of Jonathan Edwards itself underlines his continued commitment to the religious life of America, long after his departure in 1737, though he seems never to have corresponded with Edwards. Among his huge list of correspondents, however, were many Americans, quite apart from his British preachers and the Moravians. We may instance the Quaker, Anthony Benezet; the Salzburger, Martin Bolzius; Samuel Davies, Edwards's successor as President of Princeton College; Alexander Garden of Charleston; Devereux Jarratt of Virginia; Ann Jarvis, his grand-niece, who had married a sea-captain trustee of John Street Methodist Church in New York; John Mosely of Philadelphia; Gilbert Tennent of New Jersey; William White, first bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and Dr. Carl von Wrangel, provost of the Swedish Lutheran Churches on the Delaware.

Wesley also published a revised handful of works by American writers other than Edwards: Cotton Mather's *Life and Death of the Renown'd Mr. John Eliot, who was the first Preacher of the Gospel to the Indians in America*, in Volume 50 of his *Christian Library* (1755); *The Good Soldier* (1756), a sermon by Samuel Davies preached to a company of Virginia volunteers; excerpts from Benjamin Franklin's *Experiments and Observations on Electricity* in his own treatise *The Desideratum; or Electricity made Plain and Useful* (1760); several of Benezet's works in his own *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774); and four works on the Revolutionary War by the expatriate Joseph Galloway (1780-1)—though perhaps it is cheating a little to mention a loyalist in this context!

Wesley's deep interest in the proclamation of the gospel in America continued unabated during the decades following his return. Discussing a Scots proposal for "a concert of prayer and praise" designed "to revive true religion in all parts of Christendom", Wesley suggested:

Might it not be practicable to have the concurrence of Mr. Edwards in New England, if not of Mr. Tennent also? It is evidently one work with what we have seen here. Why should we not all praise God with one heart?¹³

In 1749 he first read Edwards's *Extract of Mr. Brainerd's Journal*. He

¹² For fuller details see Charles A. Rogers: "John Wesley and Jonathan Edwards", in *The Duke Divinity School Review*, Vol. 31 (1966), pp. 20-38, which deals also with Wesley's retort to Edwards's *Freedom of the Will*.

¹³ *Letters* ii, 16th March 1745 (Oxford edn., Vol. 26, p. 128).

read it somewhat critically, because Brainerd magnified "his own work above that which God wrought in Scotland, or among the English in New England".¹⁴ At least from 1753 onwards, Wesley warmly assisted Dr. John Gillies of Glasgow—later Whitefield's editor and biographer—with a massive work on international revivals entitled *Historical Collections relating to Remarkable Periods of the Success of the Gospel*, of which the first two volumes appeared in 1754.¹⁵ It is indeed possible that Wesley recommended to Gillies the two volumes of Thomas Prince's *Christian History*, published in Boston, 1744-5, which he had read in April 1753, for Gillies made extensive use of the American accounts therein, depending almost solely upon them, indeed, for his very lengthy narrative of the "Great Awakening".¹⁶ Gillies also included a narrative of the work in Virginia from Samuel Davies, dated 1751, and contributions continued to flow in, to fill an Appendix in 1761, to which again Wesley's writings contributed. Wesley assisted in other ways. On 1st September 1757, Gillies wrote telling Wesley:

Scotland is a bad place for getting subscriptions for books. I had hardly been able to publish the *Historical Collections*, but for the subscriptions you got me in England.

Wesley's correspondence with the Rev. Samuel Davies of Hanover Country, Virginia, apparently arose from a visit paid to the two Wesley brothers in London by Davies and Gilbert Tennent on 26th October 1754, when they were raising funds for the College of New Jersey, now Princeton University. Wesley termed this "an admirable design, if it will bring Protestants of every denomination to bear with one another". Davies noted in his diary:

Notwithstanding all their wild notions, [the Wesley brothers] appear very benevolent, devout, and zealous men, that are labouring with all their might to awaken the secure world to a sense of religion . . .¹⁷

Wesley sent parcels of his works, especially his hymns, to Davies, and rejoiced to hear how the black slaves would sometimes spend whole nights in singing them.¹⁸

The lack of documentary evidence to the contrary seems to imply that after the death of Samuel Davies in 1761 John Wesley had fewer contacts with America, and even Whitefield, with whom his correspondence had slackened, remained in Great Britain from 1755 to 1763. In January 1764, however, Wesley wrote a "kind letter" to Whitefield, who responded by hinting that his old friend should send over some

¹⁴ *Journal*, 9th December 1749.

¹⁵ *Letters*, Oxford edn., Vol. 26, pp. 505, 513-14.

¹⁶ Gillies: *Historical Collections* (Banner of Truth Trust reprint of the 1845 edn.), pp. 337-427.

¹⁷ Davies: *Journal*, ed. G. W. Pilcher (Urbana, Ill., University of Illinois Press, 1967), p. 132; cf. Wesley's own *Journal*, 26th October 1754, though he does not mention Davies.

¹⁸ *Journal*, 27th July 1755; 1st March 1756; 28th January 1757.

preachers to America: "Here is room for a hundred itinerants".¹⁹ Whitefield undoubtedly repeated his pleas in person after his return in 1765, when they once more began to meet frequently. Wesley sadly described him on 28th October as "an old, old man, fairly worn out in his Master's service, though he has hardly seen fifty years". In 1766 a determined effort was made to secure a "quadruple alliance" between the two Wesleys, Whitefield, and the Countess of Huntingdon.²⁰ Meantime still other letters were reaching Wesley from America, urging him to send over some itinerant preachers.²¹ Urgent confirmation came from Dr. Carl Magnus von Wrangel, "one of the King of Sweden's chaplains", who had "spent several years in Pennsylvania". When Wesley dined with him in October 1768, Dr. Wrangel "strongly pleaded for our sending some of our preachers to help [the American Christians], multitudes of whom are as sheep without a shepherd".²²

Whether arriving before or after this dinner with Dr. Wrangel, a letter from Thomas Taylor an Englishman in New York, written 11th April 1768, settled the issue for Wesley. Taylor recounted the story of the society there, the impact of Whitefield's last visit to New York, the homespun efforts of Philip Embury and Thomas Webb as preachers, and the hope of worthy permanent premises if only Wesley could send some help, especially a qualified itinerant preacher.²³ Wesley hesitated no longer. He printed Taylor's letter, circulated it among his preachers and leading laymen, and at the 1769 Conference called for volunteers for America, as well as taking up a collection from his preachers, which paid for the passage of those volunteers, with sufficient left over to make a generous gift to the New York society. Wesley quite deliberately sent over two qualified itinerants rather than the one asked for—Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor—and entrusted them to the oversight of Whitefield, whom they visited before leaving for America. In gratitude for Wesley's warm advocacy of their infant cause, the New York trustees named their new home Wesley Chapel.

Emboldened by his obvious concern, invitations came to Wesley to return in person to the country of his first missionary venture. Immediately on arriving in New York, Boardman wrote to Wesley:

There appears such a willingness in the Americans to hear the word as I never saw before . . . But, dear sir, what shall I say to almost everybody I see; they ask, 'Does Mr. Wesley think he shall ever come over to see us?'"²⁴

¹⁹ Tyerman: *Whitefield*, ii, pp. 477-8.

²⁰ *ibid.*, ii, pp. 496-7, 531-2, 534.

²¹ *Some Account of the Late Work of God in North America*, I. 8. It is quite possible, however, that Wesley's slightly vague dating is incorrect, and that he was in fact thinking of later letters, such as that from Thomas Bell of 1st May 1769, for which see Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury*, pp. 81-2.

²² *Journal*, 14th October 1768.

²³ Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury*, pp. 72-9.

²⁴ New York, 4th November 1769 (see *Arminian Magazine*, 1784, pp. 163-4). Pilmoor had written from Philadelphia, where Boardman had left him, on 31st October (*ibid.*, 1783, pp. 276-7).

Wesley was obviously moved, and seriously considered undertaking the arduous voyage, even though he was now nearing threescore years and ten.

Successive letters partly tell the story. On 30th December 1769, he wrote: "It is not yet determined whether I should go to America or not . . . I must have a clearer call before I am at liberty to leave Europe." To Ann Bolton, on 25th January 1770: "If I should be called to America (though I determine nothing yet), it might be a long time before we meet again." To Lady Maxwell, on 17th February: "I have some thoughts of going to America; but the way is not yet plain. I wait till Providence shall speak more clearly on one side or the other." His last letter to Whitefield, on 21st February 1770, written after hearing that his old friend had arrived in Charleston, South Carolina:

I trust our Lord has more work for you to do in Europe as well as in America. And who knows but before your return to England I may pay another visit to the New World? I have been strongly solicited by several of our friends in New York and Philadelphia. They urge many reasons, some of which appear to be of considerable weight. And my age is no objection at all; for I bless God my health is not barely as good but abundantly better in several respects than when I was five-and-twenty. But there are so many reasons on the other side that as yet I can determine nothing; so I must wait for further light. For the present I must beg of you to supply my lack of service by encouraging our preachers as you judge best, who are as yet comparatively young and inexperienced . . .

Whitefield did in fact encourage Boardman and Pilmoor, both in Philadelphia and in New York.²⁵

The months passed by, and Wesley's efforts to recruit more preachers for America during 1770 failed. About his own visit he still remained unclear. On 14th December 1770, he wrote: "If I live till spring, and should have a clear, pressing call, I am as ready to embark for America as for Ireland." On 13th July 1771, he wrote:

My call to America is not yet clear. I have no business there as long as they can do without me. At present I am a debtor to the people of England and Ireland, and especially to them that believe.

At the Conference in August 1771, however, five preachers volunteered, of whom Francis Asbury and Richard Wright were dispatched. Wesley could therefore write on 14th August, perhaps with some relief: "As yet you need take no thought about my going to America; I have some more business to do in Europe."

Other preachers had already travelled to America at their own expense, though it was not until 1773 that Wesley felt sufficiently confident to name two of them at the end of the list of preachers for America in his *Minutes*: "Thomas Rankin, George Shadford, Francis

²⁵ Tyerman: *Whitefield*, pp. 588-9.

Asbury, Richard Boardman, Richard Wright, Joseph Pilmoor, Robert Williams, John King." Early in 1772 Captain Thomas Webb had arrived in England on a recruiting campaign for still more itinerant preachers, and was allowed to deliver a rousing exhortation to the preachers assembled in the 1772 Conference. He had succeeded in winning over both George Shadford and Thomas Rankin, who had therefore volunteered to set sail for America in the spring of 1772.²⁶

Even by the end of 1771, however, Wesley's mind seems to have been clarified, first, that he was not really *needed* in America, with six British preachers already there; and secondly, that there were problems enough to keep him in England, especially those arising out of the misunderstood doctrinal statement of his 1770 Conference, and his launching of a thirty-two volume edition of his collected *Works*. So that when his old clerical friend, Walter Sellon, asked him about the rumour that he was going to America to seek bishop's orders, Wesley's enigmatic reply (on 1st February 1772), at least seems to make it clear that the visit was at least as unlikely as his ecclesiastical elevation:

You do not rightly understand your information, "I am going to America to turn bishop." . . . I am not to be a bishop till I am in America. While I am in Europe, therefore, you have nothing to fear. But as soon as ever you hear of my being landed at Philadelphia, it will be time for your apprehensions to revive.

From 1773 onwards the organization of American Methodism became tighter, under the administration of Thomas Rankin, whom Wesley had deliberately named his General Assistant—almost the equivalent of the bishop which it was rumoured that Wesley was to become. Rankin summoned the first American Methodist Conference that year, and in its general organization, its agenda, and its printed *Minutes*, saw to it that Mr. Wesley's precedents were followed. During the following years, though native American preachers were rapidly multiplying, Wesley's English itinerants were clearly in command. This pre-eminence was shattered in 1777, when their British nationality seemed to make it imperative, both for them personally and for the general health of American Methodism, that they should leave a country torn by a war demanding independence from Britain. It was a tearful farewell, marked by twenty-five American signatures on a declaration of loyalty to "the old Methodist doctrine" and "the whole Methodist Discipline, as laid down in [Wesley's 1770] *Minutes*".²⁷

Asbury remained, of course, as did James Dempster, though he left the itinerancy, became a Presbyterian minister in New York, and lost touch with Methodism. It was Asbury who managed with some difficulty to preserve the handful of separatist American preachers in their avowed loyalty to the ways of Wesley until the end of the war and the

²⁶ Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury*, pp. 60-1, 94-5.

²⁷ MS. *Minutes of the 1777 Conference*, kept by Philip Gatch (Methodist Theological School in Ohio, Delaware, Ohio). Cf. Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury*, pp. 98-100.

formation of a new church in a new nation.

Most of the American-born Methodists favoured independence from all control by Great Britain, and some of them knew that Wesley himself had felt that way until he read Samuel Johnson's *Taxation No Tyranny*, and under its influence published *A Calm Address to our American Colonies* (1774). Few of them, however, had seen that offending work, because of the closure of all the ports except British-held New York, the means by which letters did filter through.²⁸ Those Virginian preachers who wished to extend national independence into a complete break with Wesley's Methodism, however, did not command the same wide base of support as did Asbury. Englishman though he was, Asbury managed to secure annual delaying votes until such time as the war ended and Mr. Wesley could come to their aid. The tenor of Wesley's letters remained the same throughout, along the lines reported by Freeborn Garrettson in 1781:

We met and received Mr. Wesley's answer, which was that we should continue on the old plan until further direction. We unanimously agreed to follow his counsel, and went on harmoniously.²⁹

The American Methodists continued to rely for sacramental administrations upon a number of sympathetic clergy of different denominations scattered along the eastern seaboard, and to wait somewhat impatiently for the ordination of their own preachers. Nevertheless both membership and ministry doubled in numbers during the war, so that when peace came in 1783 seventy preachers were caring for almost 4,000 members.

Restoration of normal conditions was subject to seemingly interminable delays. A few months later Lord Cornwallis surrendered at Yorktown; in March 1782 a new Government took over in England; preliminary peace plans were signed in November 1782; on 3rd September 1783, the Treaty of Paris was signed, and ratified on 14th January 1784. Thus there was a lengthy but inevitable delay before "further direction" came from Wesley, although communications across the Atlantic had improved considerably. Wesley himself had not been idle, however, though he was less anxious because in 1782 William Watters had assured him that the ordination controversy had been put to rest.³⁰ On 17th September 1783, he wrote to another American preacher, Edward Dromgoole:

When the Government in America is settled, I believe some of our brethren will be ready to come over. I cannot advise them to do it yet. First let us see

²⁸ See Frank Baker: "The Shaping of Wesley's *Calm Address*" (*Methodist History*, October 1975, pp. 3-12, especially I. 5). Cf. Wesley's letter of 22nd February 1782 to William Watters: "Now and then I suppose you can contrive to send a letter to New York and thence to your friends in England."

²⁹ Freeborn Garrettson, *Experience and Travels* (Philadelphia, Hall, 1791), p. 207 (at the Conference beginning 16th April 1781).

³⁰ *Letters*, 22nd February 1782.

how Providence opens itself. And I am the less in haste because I am persuaded Bro. Asbury is raised up to preserve order among you, and to do just what I should do myself, if it pleased God to bring me to America.

On 3rd October of the same year he warned the American preachers against what might offer itself as a simple and speedy solution, the embracing of any free-lance preachers who arrived from England, "who will not be subject to the American Conference", nor place themselves under Asbury's direction. The same letter reinforced Asbury's authority as General Assistant.³¹ Meantime Wesley discussed with Dr. Thomas Coke, his ordained right-hand man in England, something much more drastic and imaginative, which eventually led to Wesley's "little sketch" of a new church, a revised Book of Common Prayer, Ordinal, and the Articles of Religion, his assuming of rights of ordination, and a commendatory letter "To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our Brethren in North America". At last he was doing for America what he had long refused to do for England—founding a new church.

This is not the place to describe in detail the actual formation of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America. I wish simply to underline the fact that this was something long considered, a deliberate plan on Wesley's part. Into this plan he distilled the essence of his great love both for the Church of England and for his American followers. He prepared for them two key documents—the preface to his *Sunday Service*, and his printed letter to the American preachers—dated respectively from Bristol 9th and 10th September 1784, on the eve of Coke's departure for America as his ambassador and plenipotentiary. His love for his native Church, a love constantly preserved and proclaimed in spite of his many departures from her ways, including this unauthorized revision of her prayer-book, appears in the opening sentence of the preface:

I believe there is no Liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of a solid, scriptural, rational piety, than the Common Prayer of the Church of England.

It was this in particular, as well as a reformed episcopacy, that he sought to bequeath to the American Methodists. His love for these transatlantic followers, and his acceptance of their political independence as providential, are amply demonstrated in his letter to them:

By a very uncommon train of providences, many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from their mother country, and erected into independent states . . . A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the Congress, partly by the provincial Assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these States desire my advice; and in compliance with their desire, I have drawn up a little sketch.

³¹ Jesse Lee: *A Short History of the Methodists* (Baltimore, Magill & Clime, 1810), pp. 85-6.

The following paragraphs of the letter, numbered 2-6, outline his long-deferred decision "to violate the established order of the national church" by exercising at last his conviction that as an ordained presbyter he was empowered in extraordinary circumstances—which then existed—to ordain his preachers. He had therefore, he continued,

appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint *Superintendents* [a term replacing bishops in his *Sunday Service*, and one with a long history in that usage] over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as *Elders* among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's Supper.

In the following sentence he reiterated his claims about the Book of Common Prayer, but extended them to the Church of England itself—"I think, the best constituted national Church in the world." He sets aside the idea of once more asking English bishops to ordain the preachers as being too slow and too perilous, involving the danger of entangling his American brethren once more with the English hierarchy. And he closes with his own declaration of independence for them:

They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.

This was no grudging concession to rebellious children, but a conscientious attempt to guide the destinies of the whole Methodist family, of whom he believed himself to be the father and acknowledged head. That this was in a measure challenged by Asbury's refusal to accept Wesley's dictum without the concurrence of the American preachers; that only sections of the *Sunday Service* came into widespread use; that only three-quarters of Wesley's 1780 "Large" *Minutes* was transcribed directly into the first American *Discipline*; and that *épiscopos* was eventually translated more literally into "bishop" rather than "superintendent", hardly disturbs the basic fact that in principle American Methodism heartily welcomed Wesley's plans for their new church. The leading personnel for that new church, her doctrinal standards, her administrative structure, her ordering of worship, was his magnificent birthday present for them.³²

Wesley continued in close touch with American Methodism to his dying day. True, there were occasional sharp exchanges, but Asbury's references to "dear old Daddy"³³ evinced not only his mistaken belief that Wesley was losing his grip, but also his genuine affection for the spiritual father of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Wesley's transatlantic correspondents multiplied to encompass many American-born preachers. It is altogether fitting that to one of these was written

³² For fuller details about the points raised in the last three paragraphs see the present author's books, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, chapters 14 and 15, and *From Wesley to Asbury*, chapters 8, 9 and 10.

³³ Asbury's letter to Jasper Wincom, 15th August 1788 (*Letters*, iii, p. 62).

his last American letter, on 1st February 1791, only a month before his death. In spite of disclaimers in the letter itself, his hand was still firm, especially in penning the address, "To the Revd. Mr. Ezekiel Cooper, in Annapolis":

Near London, Feb. 1, 1791

My dear brother

Those that desire to write or say anything to *me* have no time to lose, for time has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind. But I have reason to be thankful for the time that is past. I felt none of the infirmities of old age for fourscore and six years. It was not till a year and an half ago that my strength and my sight failed. And still I am enabled to scrawl a little, and to creep, though I cannot run. Probably I should not be able to do so much, did not many of you assist me by your prayers.

From time [to time] I have given a distinct account of the work of God which has been wrought in Britain and Ireland, for more³⁴ than half a century. We want some of you to give us a connected relation of what our Lord has been doing in America, from the time that Richard Boardman accepted the invitation and left his country to serve you. See that you never give place to one thought of separating from your brethren in Europe. Lose no opportunity of declaring to all men, that the Methodists are One People in all the world; and that it is their full determination so to continue,

Though mountains rise, and oceans roll
To sever us in vain.³⁵

To the care of our common Lord I commit you, and am

Your Affectionate Friend & Brother
JOHN WESLEY

Thus within a month of his death Wesley begged for a history of American Methodism, and asserted his oneness with his brethren across the Atlantic in the words of his brother Charles. How many times he had thought sadly of his leaving the American shores over fifty-four years earlier, and of all that had happened since to his friends there! We may in closing, especially in this bicentennial year of American Methodism, realize his sense of physical separation yet of continuing spiritual fellowship between the two major branches of the Methodist family, as we read part of the fuller context of Charles Wesley's words:

We part in body, not in mind.
Our minds continue one.
And each to each in Jesus join'd,
We hand in hand go on.

³⁴ Actually "many".

³⁵ John and Charles Wesley, *Redemption Hymns* (1747), p. 69. Last hymn in the work, entitled, "At Parting of Friends", v. 4 of eight.

Subsists as in us all one soul,
 No power can make us twain,
 And mountains rise, and oceans roll,
 To sever us in vain.

Present we still in spirit are,
 And intimately nigh,
 While on the wings of faith and prayer,
 We each to other fly.

FRANK BAKER.

LOCAL HISTORIES

Paisley Methodist Central Hall—A History (24pp) 1983. Copies, price 60p post free, from Mr. A. Jones, 20b, Park Road, Paisley, Renfrewshire, Scotland.

Nutgrove Methodist Church (St. Helen's): 100 Years of Worship in the Present Church. Commemorative Brochure. (12pp) 1983. by Kenneth M Lysons. Copies, price 80p post free, from the author at Latham, Scotchbarn Lane, Whiston, Prescot, Merseyside, L35 7JB.

Combe Martin Methodist Church: *A short history and souvenir 1883-1983*. Copies, price £1.15 post free, from Pastor Blacklock, Methodist Manse, Combe Martin, Devon.

Braunton Methodist Church, 150th Anniversary 1833-1983. 12pp. with folding map. Copies, price £1.20 post free, from J. R. Flewelling, 7, Brannoeks Hill, Braunton, Devon, EX33 1BD.

The Oatlands Story 1883-1983: A Brief History of Oatlands Methodist Church (Harrogate) (17pp.) 1983. by Arnold Kellett. Copies price 50p plus postage, from R. J. Wise, 5, Mallinson Way, Harrogate, HG2 9HL.

A History of the Methodist Church on Bushey Heath 1883-1983 (18pp.) by John M. Wood. Copies, price 70p post free, from Mr. M. H. Wilson, 16, Pickets Close, Bushey Heath, Herts, WD2 1NL.

Methodist Church, Williton, Centenary Brochure 1884-1984, (8pp.) by A. G. Pointon. Copies, price 20p post free from Mrs. S. Pearce, Dashwood House, Bicknoller, Taunton.

Looking back at 200 years of Methodism in Worsley (Manchester) by Paul Hassall (52pp.) 1984. Copies from the author at 7, Summerfield Road, Roe Green, Worsley, MANCHESTER M28 4RS, price £2.00 post free.

Delph Methodist Sunday School 1784-1984 by Alan Braley (36pp.) illus. Copies £1.50 post free, from Mr. R. Stubbs, 63, Grains Road, Delph, OLDHAM, OL3 5DS.

THOMAS COKE AND THE CHRISTMAS CONFERENCE OF 1784

Like him or not, errors or not, overshadowed by Asbury or not, justice should be done to his undoubted importance in the history of early Methodism in America. He was the transmitter from Wesley of American ministerial orders, he was the chief formulator of the original *Discipline*, he was a pioneer in several aspects of social concern, and the effective promoter of government by quadrennial General Conference.¹

THE Bicentennial celebrations which are dominating the American Methodist scene throughout this year are focused on two main events: Wesley's ordinations in Bristol early in September 1784, and the subsequent gathering of American itinerants in Baltimore, Maryland, in December, at which Francis Asbury was ordained and the Methodist Episcopal Church formally established. Throughout this sequence of events Thomas Coke, as Wesley's young confidant and assistant, was a key figure. From the outset his involvement brought him obloquy, not least from Charles Wesley, and some of the accusations are still being trotted out usually without any fresh examination of the evidence.

The course of events is well enough known, and can be read elsewhere.² Here I am concerned with some of the background to those events and some of the underlying issues involved.

Three particular charges have repeatedly been brought against Coke for his part in the events of 1784. The first is of a more general nature than the others, and raises the question of motivation, always a problematic one for the historian (unless he is also an amateur psychologist and can therefore take it in his stride). Charles Wesley was the first, in caustic verse-comments on the news of the ordinations, to assert that Coke was motivated by self-seeking ambition and a desire for "high place and the glamour of office".³ There is no space to deal adequately with this charge here, and I must content myself with general observations which seem to me relevant to the issue:

(a) Much hinges on the ambiguous term "ambition" and the particular meaning we choose to give to it. No one lacking ambition ever achieved anything worthwhile; but worldly self-aggrandisement (which is what Coke has been accused of) is quite a different matter. That Coke was both naïve and often indiscreet is amply borne out by

¹ Frank Baker: *From Wesley to Asbury: Studies in Early American Methodism* (1976), p. 142.

² e.g. in Frederick A. Norwood: *The Story of American Methodism* (1974), the best one-volume history, or in Volume I of *The History of American Methodism*, edited by Emory Stevens Bucke (1964). For the British angle, see Frank Baker, *op. cit.*; also John Wesley and the Church of England (1970) and John A. Vickers: *Thomas Coke, Apostle of Methodism* (1969).

³ Frank Baker (ed.): *Representative Verse of Charles Wesley* (1962), pp. 367-9; Vickers, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-6.

the evidence, but neither his depiction of the character of a Christian bishop⁴ nor his own track-record lends much support to the charge that he was basely motivated.

(b) It is unquestionable that, irrespective of his attitudes and actions, by 1784 Coke was a suspect person both to Charles Wesley and to some of the senior itinerants. Many saw him as a young upstart who had usurped their place in John Wesley's confidence and favour. The ordinations in 1784 merely confirmed Charles Wesley's worst fears on the matter. As for the itinerants, their continuing suspicions were reflected in the determined and successful attempt to keep him out of the Presidential chair,⁵ though most of them were eventually won over by his championship of their cause in the power-struggle between preachers and leading laity in the 1790s.

The other two charges are more specific. Coke has been accused (a) of persuading Wesley against his better judgement to take actions which he later regretted, namely the ordinations at Bristol, and (b) of subsequently ignoring Wesley's explicit wishes and intentions by substituting a plan of his own for the Methodist Church in America. These charges do not have quite as venerable a pedigree as the first, but they go back a long way and are still being repeated. Thus the American historian John Alfred Faulkner wrote in 1930 of Coke's letter of 9th August 1784 as "the last straw to break the reluctance of Wesley to face the hail of indignation which must necessarily meet him for such a notorious violation of church rules".⁶ He went on to endorse Drinkhouse's charge that Coke (or Asbury, with Coke's connivance and acquiescence) suppressed the "little sketch" which Wesley had prepared as a blue-print for the future of American Methodism; and this has surfaced once again in the bicentennial year in an article by Bishop John B. Warman.⁷

These two charges therefore deserve more attention as part of our attempt to assess Coke's role in the events which brought into existence the Methodist Episcopal Church.

(a) That Wesley regretted some of the consequences of his actions in Bristol is clear; but there is little evidence that he came to regret the actions themselves—a distinction ignored by many commentators of this segment of Methodist history. On the contrary, having crossed his Rubicon, Wesley continued to ordain during the remaining years of his life, and not for America only, but for Scotland and the mission field, and eventually, in 1788, even for England. The most substantial

⁴ The sermon Coke preached in Baltimore on 7th December 1784 on the occasion of Asbury's "ordination to the office of a superintendent" was published in both America and England in 1785. The ideal bishop he delineates bears little resemblance to the typical Anglican prelate of the time.

⁵ Vickers, *op.cit.*, pp.193-4, 238-9. Coke was President in 1797 and again in 1805.

⁶ John Alfred Faulkner: *Burning Questions in Historic Christianity* (1930), pp. 214-15.

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 217-18; John B. Warman, "The Christmas Conference: The Dark Side", in *Circuit Rider*, March 1984, pp. 6-8.

matter on which he took issue with Coke and Asbury was one of terminology—the substitution of the more biblical title “bishop” for the more neutral one “superintendent”. Behind that lay his awareness that the control of affairs in the American connexion was slipping from his grasp; and this in turn inflamed the resentment he felt at being dropped from the list of “Superintendents” in the American *Minutes* of 1787.⁸

The ordinations themselves were quite another matter. Nearly two years after they were performed, he wrote to Henry Brooke of Dublin, firmly reiterating his continuing loyalty to the Church of England, but writing also of what he had done to meet the needs of “our brethren in North America”. There is no hint of regret or apology here for the existence of an autonomous Methodist Episcopal Church. The American Methodists, he wrote, had been “wholly cut off both from the English Church and State”. Therefore,

In so peculiar a case I believed it my duty to take an extraordinary step in order to send them all the help I could. And I bless God it has had an admirable effect.⁹

These words surely go far beyond what was required if, as J. A. Faulkner argued, Wesley was merely concerned to defend Coke, out of a sense of honour and chivalry, from “the indignation of his opponents”.¹⁰

(b) Wesley’s letter of 10th September 1784 to “our brethren in America” says that in the light of the “peculiar situation” resulting from the recent War of Independence, and in response to requests for advice from “some thousands of the inhabitants” of the newly-independent States, he has “drawn up a little sketch”.¹¹ This “little sketch” has been the source of a mystery which I would contend is more apparent than real. E. J. Drinkhouse, the historian of American Methodist reform movements, began it at the end of the last century. He makes much of the fact that this “little sketch” disappeared and has never subsequently come to light. His conclusion, recently quoted by Bishop Warman, was that Coke (with or without Asbury’s connivance) deliberately destroyed this key document, his motive being that he had no intention of putting Wesley’s plan into action, but rather of substituting his own scheme for the American Methodist Church.¹²

The most detailed examination of this issue is in Faulkner’s book, published in 1930. Faulkner fully accepts the hypothesis of the suppression of the ‘little sketch’. but offers a slightly different and more

⁸ See especially his letter to Asbury 20th September 1788 (*Standard Letters*, viii, p. 91).

⁹ *ibid.*, vii, p. 333.

¹⁰ Faulkner, *op.cit.*, pp. 231-2.

¹¹ *Standard Letters*, vii, pp. 237-9.

¹² E. J. Drinkhouse: *History of Methodist Reform* (1899), i, pp.253, 280. Drinkhouse is hostile to Coke throughout, depicting him as inconsistent and devious.

subtle explanation, in which Coke's role is subordinated to that of Asbury:

It was Asbury, rather than Coke, who was behind the suppression of Wesley's "little sketch", because he had long since become convinced that the remaining episcopal clergy in America were entirely out of sympathy with Methodism, with the exception of so few that they were negligible, that the Methodist spirit was uncongenial to the Anglican Church, that the liturgy . . . was not suitable to the societies here, that Wesley's idea of providing a few ordained men to grant the sacraments pending a union with the regular Episcopal Church to be later established was chimerical . . .¹³

I do not know what Drinkhouse meant by saying that his explanation was "morally certain"; but it is certain that there are other plausible explanations that can be advanced, and that Faulkner's version of it is little more than a tissue of suppositions for which he produces no support apart from questionable readings of ambiguous evidence. My own explanation is the one which Faulkner rejects for reasons which I find unconvincing: quite simply that there never was a "little sketch" in the form of a third document separate from Coke's "ordination" certificates and the letter to "our Brethren in America". Wesley was not providing a detailed blue-print for those who now found themselves, in his own words, "at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church". Rather, the "little sketch", such as it is, is embodied in the letter itself. The "missing document" has never been found because it was never lost.

By its very nature, such a thesis can never be positively proved, perhaps; though it could be disproved by the rediscovery of the missing "sketch". But all the evidence seems to me to support it. There is the position of Wesley's reference to the "little sketch", at the close of the first paragraph of his letter, pointing forward to all that follows. Again, Wesley himself acknowledges in this letter that at this juncture he had little option but, in Frederick Norwood's words, to "leave his far-flung children free".¹⁴ So he wrote that "they are now at full liberty . . .". He was talking of liberty from Anglican usage and authority, not from his own "apostolic" influence, which he hoped he could still exercise, despite the distances between him and them. Nevertheless, it would surely have been totally incongruous for him to have appended to this statement any detailed instructions for the shaping of the new Church.

We know that John Dickins had seen Wesley's proposals when Coke arrived in New York and strongly approved of them. Why then did he not protest at their subsequent suppression, especially if the proceedings at Baltimore ran as counter to them as Drinkhouse asserted? Indeed, why did not Wesley himself have nothing to say about the outcome of the Christmas Conference, if the Church which emerged was so different from what he had intended and proposed? Faulkner's explanation of this is particularly unconvincing, and he misuses his

¹³ Faulkner, *op.cit.*, p. 226.

¹⁴ Norwood, *op.cit.*, p. 100.

only piece of firm evidence by applying to the 1784 ordinations a statement that by 1789 Wesley had serious misgivings about the advisability of his ordinations as a whole.¹⁵

We may best judge Wesley's frame of mind and intentions at this time by reference to a letter to Asbury which was not available to either Drinkhouse or Faulkner, written while Coke was in mid-ocean, on 31st October 1784.¹⁶ Wesley's testimony to Coke's character is that he was "a man after [Asbury's] own heart, seeking neither Profit, Pleasure nor Honour"; and he goes on:

You are aware of the danger on either hand: And I scarce know which is the greater? One or the other, so far as it takes place will overturn Methodism from the foundation: Either our travelling Preachers turning Independents, & gathering Congregations each for himself: Or procuring Ordination in a *regular* way, & accepting Parochial Cures.

Despite his continuing protestations of loyalty to the Anglican Church, Wesley was clearly by now determined to safeguard the autonomy of his own movement in the interests of evangelical religion. But the exact *means*, so far as America was concerned, were left largely to Asbury and Coke to determine:

I suppose the Doctor & you have now considered at large, what Method will be most effectual, to fix the work on such a stable foundation, as will not easily be overturned.

So much for any detailed blue-print to which the American Methodists were slavishly to adhere.

Coke's involvement in the newly-formed Church did not end with the Christmas Conference and his return to England a few months later. Despite the difficulties of eighteenth-century travel, he made eight more voyages across the Atlantic and back during the next two decades. Yet his standing with the American Methodists remained somewhat equivocal, his loyalties were divided, and Asbury was clearly reluctant to share his authority with his fellow bishop.¹⁷ Besides, his American superintendency was only one of a range of commitments. He was also deeply involved in the affairs of the British connexion both before and after 1791, was quite a prolific author, and above all was the founding father of the British missions, both home and overseas. All this is another story, but needs to be remembered here as the context in which his significant contribution to American Methodism was made.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

[Note.—Parts of this article are based on a paper given at the conference on Methodist history held at Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, Kentucky, in August 1984 and published as part of a report of the conference.—J.A.V.]

¹⁵ Faulkner, *op.cit.*, pp. 231-2, citing the footnote in Tyerman's *Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley*, iii, p. 441.

¹⁶ *Proceedings*, xxxiii, pp. 11-12. The original is at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.

¹⁷ See my article "Coke and Asbury: A Comparison of Bishops" in *Methodist History*, October 1972, pp. 42-51.

JAMES EVERETT: 1784-1984

THE bicentenary of the birth of one of Methodism's most famous "stormy petrels" certainly calls for comment if not celebration; for during most of his sixty-six years in the ministry (two-thirds of a century—he entered the ministry in 1806 and died in 1872) he was a figure to reckon with.

This is not the place to attempt another biography in the ordinary sense of the word; there would be little point in making a mere précis of Richard Chew's 546-page standard biography published in 1875. It will be enough to outline the main details of his life. Born in Alnwick on 16th May 1784, he was the son of John and Margaret Everett (née Bowmaker). Of his father we know little. His maternal grandfather, James Bowmaker, was one of the first Methodists in the town, and built its first chapel. His first wife (Margaret was a child of his second marriage) had been Jeannie Keith, a friend of Grace Murray. It seems that it is to his mother rather than to his father that he owed his first religious instruction, and for his mother he always had a deep affection until her death at the age of 82, and it was no doubt due to her that a few days short of his sixth birthday he heard Wesley preach in the chapel and felt the old man's hand on his head in blessing. To this we may well attribute his devotion to the memory of Wesley and his later omnivorous collecting of anything associated with him.

In 1797 he was apprenticed to the trade of "flax dresser and grocer" in the town, applying himself to the trade with diligence, but engaging in many lively boyhood pranks, and at the same time full of both mental and physical activity—fishing and bathing, drawing and reading; in other words, he early showed signs of the many-sided nature that was later to be so characteristic.

He was awakened to a sense of conviction of sin by a sermon preached by a local preacher early in January 1803, and after some further time of seeking, the light suddenly broke in upon him as he was walking to chapel one evening, and Wesley's words

Who did for every sinner die
Hath surely died for me

"were applied with inexpressible joy to my heart". The then familiar pattern was followed; he heard the call to preach, and his first attempt was made towards the close of 1803 in Alnwick Workhouse. The following year he removed to a position in Sunderland where in due course he was received on full plan and made, much to his discomfiture, a class leader. Clearly his gifts were being recognized at the early age of twenty-two. In July 1806 he paid a visit to his home, and there met the brothers Thomas and Jacob Stanley, whose parental home was Alnwick, and it was they who encouraged him to enter the itinerant

ministry. On 1st October he heard from Jacob Stanley that his name had been put forward, and that he must be prepared to find himself called out if there were a deficiency in ministerial ranks in the course of the year. He hesitated, and opened his heart and mind to William Bramwell, the Sunderland superintendent, who convinced him that these doubts were a temptation of the devil, and soon requested him to supply the place of the junior minister, who was ill. This he did, and at the end of the year was formally recommended for the itinerancy at the quarterly meeting. Accordingly, "Hill's Arrangement" recorded Sunderland as his first circuit, 1806. Thereafter his circuits were:

	Years		Years
1807 Shields	1	1821 Sheffield, <i>Sup.</i>	1
1808 Belper	1	1822 London, <i>Sup.</i>	1
1809 New Mills	1	1823 Sheffield, <i>Sup.</i>	2
1810 Barnsley	2	1825 Manchester, <i>Sup.</i>	9
1812 Dewsbury	1	1834 Newcastle on Tyne East	2
1813 Bramley	2	1836 Newcastle on Tyne West	3
1815 Manchester	2	1839 York	3
1817 Hull	2	1842 York, <i>Sup.</i>	7
1819 Sheffield	2		

In 1849 he was expelled, but remained in York until 1853; thence he moved to Newcastle, where he lived until 1859, when he moved to Sunderland, dying there in 1872. In these circuits he was a supernumerary.

He should have been received into full connexion in 1810, but the nervousness and hesitation that had caused him to question his calling as a local preacher, a class leader, and an itinerant, caused him again to hold back, and it was not until 1811 that he felt ready. He was then stationed in Barnsley, and it was while he was in that circuit that he first met James Montgomery, with whom he became a close friend, and who published a number of Everett's works. When he was appointed to Sheffield in 1819 that friendship ripened, and those two, with John Holland and Ebenezer Elliott, became known as the "Sheffield poets". But he had already entered the lists as a writer. While he was in Belper a Unitarian minister had published a sermon attacking the doctrine of the "miraculous conception". To this Everett replied with a 78-page booklet "Objections to the Doctrine of the Miraculous Conception considered", which he submitted for criticism to Jabez Bunting, William Myles, Edward Hare (all then stationed in Sheffield) and to his old mentor Jacob Stanley. The work was printed in Belper in 1809. It is interesting, in view of notorious later events, to see the regard in which Everett held the redoubtable Dr. Bunting, whom he first heard preach while he was *en route* for Belper; he broke his journey in Sheffield, and heard

Rev. Jabez Bunting preach at Heeley, about a mile and a half from Sheffield, in a private dwelling on Rom. viii, 17. It was one of his excellent

stereotyped sermons . . . I was much delighted with both matter and manner . . . We walked into Sheffield together and while here I enjoyed much of his society.¹

From 1813 to 1815, when he was in Bramley, Bunting was in the adjacent Leeds circuit, and relations were such that Everett on a number of occasions supplied for Bunting; and when he wanted to attend Conference in 1815, together with his superintendent, leaving the circuit without a minister (contrary to rule), it was Bunting who suggested a means of evading the law. Though Everett benefited by Bunting's suggesting how he could bend the rules, it should have served him as a warning!

But by the time he wrote his *Historic Sketches of Wesleyan Methodism in Sheffield* (1823) he was already critical of Bunting's rule; he was later to state that one reason for writing that local history was to "preserve as far as possible [Methodism's] earlier characters and characteristics", as "in consequence of the crooked policy of Mr. Bunting Methodism was fast shifting from the simplicity and practice of primitive times". That was written after 1849, and smacks a little of hindsight. But he had started on his book in his first year as a supernumerary when he remained in Sheffield, 1821-2, and in the latter year he was appointed, still a supernumerary, to "assist in the concerns of the Bookroom"; he was to have care of the shop, and "afford such literary or general assistance to the editor and book steward as may be found convenient". Bunting was Editor, so that Everett served under him. The subservient position did not trouble him; but he gradually felt that Bunting had not those qualities of character that inspired confidence:

He appeared to me to be a mere manufacturer of tools, as much for purposes of subservience to his own views . . . as for the general prosperity of the work of God.

As he served this period at the Bookroom during the time when he was completing his *Methodism in Sheffield*, and seeing it through Montgomery's press, there may perhaps have been some reason for his later statement. To look back with yearning for the "simplicity of primitive times" is of course always a temptation; but the fact that times do change, and that one cannot live in the past, does not necessarily mean that they change for the better. Some years later, however, though he had, as he admitted, kept Bunting at a distance while at the Bookroom (his uncomfortable and uncertain status, together with a return of his bronchitis, caused him to resign after five months)² he acceded to an invitation of Bunting to accompany him on a holiday in the Lakes. It was in August 1838 that Bunting called on Everett, who had then resumed the active ministry in Newcastle, and invited him

¹ Chew: *James Everett: A Biography* (1875), pp. 73-4.

² But that short residence in London afforded him the unforgettable opportunity of visiting Charles Wesley's widow a day or so before her death at the age of 96.

on the trip, Mrs. Bunting and Everett's colleague joining in urging him: his colleague felt it might draw the two closer together. They conversed happily enough, though Everett notes Bunting's confession that

My attention has been so much engrossed with Methodist politics and the concerns of the Connexion, that I have had but little time for other pursuits.³

This, Everett felt, was precisely the trouble; it had a dampening effect on the spirituality of the church; and he was not the only critic of Bunting who regretted it the more, as (to quote Everett again)

the doctor was a man of sound judgement, clear intellect, and admirable in all his movements as a tactician; of natural, easy, appropriate expression, and formed for great achievements.⁴

Part of the trouble was, of course, that Bunting was not concerned with Methodist politics only; he did his utmost to obtain Methodist support for Tory candidates in parliamentary elections. Dr. David Gowland has dealt with this in some detail in his *Methodist Secessions* (Manchester, 1979), and Everett took strong exception to it, writing *Remarks on the Vote given to Lord Sandon by Rev. Jabez Bunting* while in Manchester in 1833. It was a thousand pities that the two men, both excellent in their way, could not find a *modus vivendi*. But the one would brook no opposition, and the other was not prepared to "kowtow" to any man. It was the story again of the immovable object and the irresistible force; made as they were, accommodation was probably impossible and a fatal clash inevitable.

All this time Everett was writing; it is probably true to say that he could not help doing so. His early riposte to the Unitarian was soon followed by *Remarks on a Pamphlet lately circulated in the neighbourhood of Cawthorne, Barnsley* (1812), a reply to a pamphlet by the Cawthorne curate, attempting to stem the spread of Methodism. In his following circuit he published a series of pamphlets, distributed gratis, to check some of the prevailing vices, and in his next, Bramley, 1813-5, he defended Methodism in a light-hearted satire, *The Visions of Sapience*, against the attacks of a renegade local preacher, and attacked the madness of Johanna Southcott, then gaining a following, in *The Virgin, or an Ode to Johanna Southcott*. In these two satires he first used a favourite trick of his, that has ever since caused problems for historians and bibliographers—the use of quaint pseudonyms; the *Visions* bore the names of "Criticus" and "Castigator" (i.e. Everett and William Naylor, his colleague), and the *Virgin* was attributed by its author to "Peter Pindar, Junior, with notes humourous [sic] and explanatory, by Isaac Bickerstaffe, Esq."

³ Chew, op. cit., p. 309.

⁴ *ibid.*

Not all of his writing was in defence of the faith. Some was verse, in which he had often engaged, including hymns written for the Sheffield Sunday School Union, and some sermons; and he wrote at least one story. Much of it was of substantial length, but some were in the nature of pamphlets and broadsheets; his *Stanzas addressed to Dr. Adam Clarke on finishing his notes on the Bible* (1826), for instance, was a two-page pamphlet. Later, of course, he was to write a number of substantial biographies, the most popular being the life of Samuel Hick, entitled *The Village Blacksmith* which, first published in 1831, passed through very many editions, both here and in America, and even in Italy, and was reprinted as late as the 1890s. This gift was recognized by official Methodism—it may well have lain behind the appointment to the Bookroom in 1822—when in 1837 he, with others, was invited to contribute to a book of *Prayers for the Use of Christian Families*. Everett's contribution was to be morning and evening prayers for Easter Day, and although he had a prejudice against printed forms of prayer, he complied with the request. Similarly, in 1832, he contributed to *Sermons on Important Subjects*. When he was still a young man of thirty-four, in 1818, Joseph Benson selected Everett to reply to an attack on Methodism by the Rev. Latham Wainwright, and this gave rise to a short series of pamphlets in reply to each other. But Everett's greatest services to the Connexion occurred on two occasions in 1825 and 1830; in the former year he discovered that publishers were proposing to issue a pirated edition of Fletcher's *Works*, and he with the Bookroom considered that the Connexion held the copyright; the Bookroom killed the attempt by issuing a cheaper edition. On the second occasion he discovered that a Manchester printer was pirating the hymn-book (by no means the only pirate, as the price of Conference copies was high); when the printing-house failed, Everett purchased the stereotype plates for £40 and sent them to the Bookroom, and in appreciation John Mason, the Book Steward, presented him with a copy of Richard Watson's *Institutes*. It was this action that led directly to the production of the *Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, with a Supplement* in 1831, thus renewing the copyright. His gifts were similarly in 1838 recognized when he was summoned to form one of the committee to consider the celebration of the centenary of Methodism.

We have referred to Everett's relations—or lack of them—with Jabez Bunting. Dr. John Kent has said, rather unkindly, that Everett "was deeply influenced by personal admiration for Adam Clarke and rancour against Bunting". Whether "rancour" is the right word to describe his attitude to the "dictator" we will not further discuss; but he certainly admired Clarke, who was, after all, the greatest scholar that Methodism has ever produced, and whose gifts Everett, with his enormously wide-ranging interests and untiring activity, was well able to appreciate. Until 1815, when he was appointed to Manchester, he had only heard Clarke speak in Conference; now they became firm friends, the doctor being ready to impart constant instruction to this

attentive and receptive student; for Everett, with his love of antiquities of all sorts, to visit Dr. Clarke's library was a rare treat. Teasing Everett on his love of antiquities and curiosities, Dr. Clarke is reputed to have asked him to let him know if he came across the horn-book from which Eve taught Cain his letters! But the doctor knew and learnt to appreciate Everett's gifts, not least his practical gifts, and, to take but one example, it was Everett whom he entrusted with the negotiations for the sale of the copyright of his *Commentary*. On at least two occasions also, Dr. Clarke invited Everett to accompany him on journeys to Shetland and to Ireland. This friendship lasted until the end of Dr. Clarke's life, and Everett performed the duty of a friend in writing his biography, *Adam Clarke portrayed* (1843-9), which passed through at least three editions.

This friendship was certainly due in part to the fact that both men were of independent mind. Neither was prepared to be the tool of Conference. At the time of the Leeds Organ case Everett took no active part, but he noted Dr. Clarke's vigorous criticism of the course pursued by the District Meeting (where Bunting again bent the rules). But when, seven years later, the theological institution controversy erupted, Everett took up his pen in *The Disputants, by a Disciple of the Old School*. As later in the case of the *Fly Sheets*, an attempt was made to discover the author by the circulation of a "General Declaration", by the leading ministers of the London District, to ministers asking for their signatures denying authorship; and, as later, Everett declined to sign. He objected on two grounds: first, he repudiated the right of the officials or members of one District Meeting to interrogate members of another (would London tolerate such an inquiry by the Newcastle District?); and second, he declined to answer such questions when Bunting and his friends refused themselves to meet charges brought against them in the public press. Briefly, he had no basic objection to ministerial training; his objection was to the manner of its introduction "without the consent of the people", and by means of packed committees. Later he acknowledged authorship,⁵ and because he had revised some of his opinions therein expressed, himself consigned the unsold copies to the flames.

In connexion with the centenary of Methodism there appeared *Wesleyan Takings, or Centenary Sketches of Ministerial Character*, though some had originally appeared in parts as early as 1834. The idea was prompted by the action of Wesley in requiring his preachers to supply accounts of their life and work for the *Magazine*; as these were no longer demanded, the authors (for it was a joint production) decided to supply the want—"takings" is obviously derived from the phrase "taking a portrait or sketch". The first dozen in volume I

⁵ In his *Methodism as it is*, and at the great Centenary meeting in Newcastle. For an account of his address at that meeting, which George Smith, no friend of Everett's, described as the most remarkable of all the eloquent addresses, see George Smith: *History of Wesleyan Methodism*, iii, (4th edn., 1864), p. 377.

(1840) were all of considerable length, the rest of the one hundred in the volume were brief outlines; and a similar pattern was followed in volume II, at the end of which most of the characters were identified. Published anonymously, they were in fact the joint production of Everett and Joseph Beaumont; but at the time a considerable number of men were suspected, including, surprisingly, S. D. Waddy, W. M. Bunting, and even James Montgomery. They were widely discussed and heartily condemned, though it is difficult to see why; whilst there were frank reflections on men's weaknesses, there was generous acknowledgement of their gifts. Of Bunting it was written:

All acquit him of selfishness; all unite in giving him credit for the purest motives; and when his proceedings are viewed in the aggregate he will be found to be generally philanthropic in his views, feelings, and purposes. But we again enquire—How has he obtained such ascendancy in the body? Not by fraud, not by misconduct; but by lending his superior talents to promote the best interests of the connexion;⁶

and again, speaking of his power in prayer,

We have heard many highly gifted men engaged in this hallowed exercise; but we must confess, that in him there has been a nearer approach to heaven, a mightier struggle with the Angel of the Covenant, a firmer hold on the horns of the altar, a stronger resemblance of God and man holding converse with each other as face to face, than in almost any other person, except Bramwell, that ever came under our notice.⁷

There was much more in that strain. One can only assume that Bunting read no further than the opening paragraph, which speaks of him as being

a Hercules from his cradle; one, who, simply contemplated as a preacher, has not added a single cubit to his stature, or changed one hair black or white, from the first eight or ten years of his ministerial career.⁸

Of the *Fly Sheets* we do not propose to speak at length; they have been often discussed, and one can read about them in great detail—and the consequent “trial” at Conference—in Chew's *Life*,⁹ in Gregory's *Side Lights*,¹⁰ and, more succinctly, in the present writer's Wesley Historical Society lecture;¹¹ it is the main topic associated with Everett. Perhaps one ought to say that, although his authorship was never proved, although his biographer refuses to acknowledge it, and although he himself never later acknowledged it, the present writer considers it highly likely—phrases used in the *Fly Sheets* are found elsewhere in his writings—though perhaps one should allow for the

⁶ *Wesleyan Takings* (3rd edn., 1841), p. 11.

⁷ *ibid.*, p. 30.

⁸ *ibid.*, p. 1.

⁹ *James Everett: A Biography* (1875), pp. 361 ff.

¹⁰ B. Gregory: *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism* (1896).

¹¹ O. A. Beckerlegge: *The United Methodist Free Churches* (1957), pp. 30 ff.

possibility of joint authorship with some person or persons unknown, which could explain Everett's silence: he would not wish to incriminate anyone else.

His expulsion, together with that of his fellows Samuel Dunn and William Griffith, and James Bromley a year later, was followed, as is well known, by wholesale expulsions and secessions up and down the country, totalling some 100,000 members in five years. Wherever "the three expelled" travelled, they were greeted as heroes, for the first two were senior men (Everett in 1849 had travelled 43 years and Dunn 30), widely known as writers, popular preachers and evangelists. Everett had been living as a supernumerary in York since 1842 (his two long spells as a supernumerary were the result of severe and crippling bronchitis, which inhibited active work in the winter months), and was highly popular there; so much so that within a month the sum of £441 had been contributed by local friends to provide him with an annuity of £40. But when throughout the country between £3,000 and £4,000 was raised for the three, Everett added his own £441 to the aggregate. There were other signs of his popularity in York also. From the point of view of the parent body, there was the tragic sign of the loss of 1,000 members in three years—one-third of the circuit's strength. On the other side, when Everett with Griffith found himself in York at the time of a large missionary meeting, the two entered Centenary Chapel, to the consternation of the platform; apparently the meeting was rather flat, but at the end someone rose in the gallery, shouting "Three cheers for the expelled!", and this was followed by cheer after cheer.

The immediately following years were occupied with Reform meetings up and down the country, with the holding of "Delegate Meetings" to try and come to terms with Conference, and indirectly to establish the Reform community. Nor was his pen still, though much of his writing was concerned with the Reform movement. His greatest contribution, however, was his editorship of a hymn-book for the Reformers, as they could not obtain them from the Bookroom. This was identical with the current parent hymn-book apart from the fact that the Supplement was different (for copyright reasons), and appeared in 1853, bearing the title *The Wesleyan Methodist Hymn-Book . . . with Miscellaneous Hymns*, and the Romney portrait. Later, after the union with the Wesleyan Methodist Association in 1857, when he was elected President, he was asked with Matthew Baxter to provide a hymn-book for the united church, and the *Hymn Book of the United Methodist Free Churches* appeared in 1860. Again it was based on the *Wesley Collection*, and carried Wesley's portrait.

This last detail is perhaps significant. Not only did it proclaim that the Reformers had no quarrel with Wesley, but only with some of his successors; in addition it was no doubt a further sign of Everett's own veneration for the father of Methodism. He was an inveterate collector of all sorts of things—minerals, medals, coins, pictures, autographs,

and, far from least, Wesleyana. It was an ironic coincidence that the two people most responsible for instigating the hobby of Wesleyana-collecting, James Everett and Thomas Jackson, should meet in the Conference of 1849, when the latter, in his capacity as President, had to pronounce the expulsion of the former. Later, another Wesleyan, Luke Tyerman, gathering materials for his life of Wesley, corresponded with Everett with a view to obtaining the latter's collection of Wesleyana, and in 1862 the sale of the bulk of this material was effected; it was a rare collection, possibly unique at the time, including very many letters, an almost complete collection of class tickets, printed works, journals, and the manuscripts of some of Everett's own unpublished historical writings, and much else.

Perhaps the most fitting note on which to close, and the way in which Everett would himself like to remember his veneration of Wesley, is to recall that we all owe a debt to Everett of which most are unaware. All Methodists of an historical frame of mind, and many others, are familiar with H. P. Parker's famous painting, now in the Mission House, and often reproduced, of the Epworth fire. What is not generally known is that Everett suggested the theme and outlined the scene. Parker had approached Everett to ask him to suggest a proper subject for the centenary of Methodism; Everett suggested the theme of the fire, as "But for the escape, Methodism, for anything we know to the contrary, would never have existed." Parker doubted its suitability; but after Everett had graphically described what he had in mind in considerable detail, Parker said, "It will do", and the next morning brought Everett a rough sketch in oils. Everett followed it up with a long letter to Parker which he reproduced in his published description of the painting, *H. P. Parker's Historical Wesleyan Centenary Picture* (1839—there were at least seven editions). The artist paid tribute to Everett by including him in the picture, in the person of the figure with the outstretched arms, between the dog and the group below the window. Everett could not have wished for greater immortalization!

In 1853 he had moved from York to Newcastle, as it was nearer to his home, near to many of his friends and to his wife's relatives. But as his bronchitis was worsening with increasing age, on finding that a visit to Sunderland seemed to do him good, and bearing in mind that Mrs. Everett had some property in the town, he moved thither in 1859. He remained active in mind and body, preaching as his health and opportunity permitted, and of course still writing. His active travelling may be said to have ceased in 1866, in which year he travelled 700 miles; in the previous ten years he had averaged 5,000 miles—not bad for a man approaching eighty! And by now his friends were departing one by one, culminating in the death of his wife in 1865. After gradual decline in strength, he himself died on 10th May 1872, within six days of his 88th birthday.

The Annual Assembly of the United Methodist Free Churches resolved that a bust be erected in his memory in the Metropolitan

Chapel, Willow Street, not far from City Road. When that chapel was closed, some years ago, the bust was removed to the crypt of Wesley's Chapel. It is fitting that it should preside over the permanent Wesley Museum recently opened there.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGG.

BOOK REVIEW

The Methodist contribution to Education in the Bahamas (circa 1790 to 1975) by Colbert Williams (Alan Sutton, Gloucester, (1982) pp. 256 £16.00)

On the attainment of internal self-government by the Bahamas in 1964 both the Premier and the President of the Senate were Methodists, while of the 23 members of the government in the House of Assembly 16 had received all or part of their education in a Methodist school. Three years later the government included no Methodist or Methodist-educated member. To begin to understand the reasons for this stark contrast, or its implications, a reading of this book is essential, though it cannot be claimed that it will be easy.

It is perhaps, natural in preparing an academic thesis, (for that, quite unedited, is what we find here,) to wish to include all the material gathered in the course of research. The impression given by Dr. Williams is that every single word from every notebook has been pressed into service. Not surprisingly, then, it is not always easy to keep in mind an impression of the wood when surrounded by so many trees: but it is worth the effort.

With great assiduity the author has tracked down, on both sides of the Atlantic, a variety of valuable primary material and has used it to telling effect in presenting this account of one aspect of the mission of Methodism. So concerned is he, however, to acknowledge his many sources that he (unfairly to himself) gives the impression of depending on secondary authorities as firmly as on the primary. Other people's theses are not always so reliable!

The preface explains the circumstances in which the material was gathered and prepares us for some of the personal idiosyncracies we later meet. It is truly refreshing to find in an academic work the prejudices of the author coming to the surface, whether we agree with them (as in his partiality for Charles Wesley's hymns) or not (as in his concentration on the Boy Scout Association at the expense of The Boys' Brigade, a Methodist import to the Bahamas).

These references, however, serve to illustrate a great strength of this book. Very wisely, the words of the title are taken in their widest sense. Although there is a thorough consideration of 'formal education', the whole work of the churches is surveyed, both in New Providence and in the Out Islands. The very size of this closely-printed book reflects the care with which every detail is set in a very full background.

There will be those who differ from Dr. Williams' assessment of more recent history. His attempted rehabilitation of R. P. Dyer, that stalwart defender of racial segregation, and his view of the policies of the present Bahamas government will not carry universal assent, but he knows this, of course. The value of this book does not lie in its controversial pages, and is not seriously harmed by its defects in presentation (any more than by its many misprints), it lies in its pioneering a new path: a new way of seeing the role of a church in the process of nation-building. This valuable book points to what needs to be done in respect of many other territories, large and small, and perhaps we may one day have such a study of Great Britain!

PETER HOWARD

TEGG v. EVERETT : THE PUBLICATION OF THE SECOND EDITION OF ADAM CLARKE'S COMMENTARY

MANY who have consulted the Methodist Archives will be familiar with that section known as "Preachers letters and portraits", a major collection of some 50,000 letters, primarily those of Methodist ministers. Inevitably in any such large collection of letters from so many different ministers there will be much material without any direct relation to other items. It is therefore always pleasing to come across a group of letters which illustrate the history of a particular event. One such group is the collection of twelve letters from Thomas Tegg to James Everett¹ relating to the proposed new edition of Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Bible, and dating from 1830 to 1833. Unfortunately Everett's side of the correspondence is for the most part not available in the Methodist Archives but at two crucial points in the negotiations Everett had copies of the letters made and these are available in Manchester.²

For health reasons, from 1821 to 1834, James Everett gave up the regular Methodist ministry, and traded as a bookseller, first in Sheffield and then in Manchester; and it is to his Manchester address that Tegg addresses these letters. Thomas Tegg, who was born in 1776, was a London publisher and bookseller whose reputation rests chiefly on his cheap reprints, abridgements of popular works, and his distribution of remainders which he purchased on a large scale.

Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Holy Bible was first published in parts between 1810 and 1825, and in America from 1811 to 1825. What ensued is described as follows by Everett in *Adam Clarke portrayed*.³

The Doctor at this time published, as a separate work, with a distinct preface, including his reasons for it, "The whole Book of Psalms. The texts carefully printed from the most correct copies of the present Authorised Translation, including the marginal readings and parallel texts. With a commentary and critical notes; and, at the end of each Psalm, a copious analysis of its whole contents." Some of the parts of his general Commentary being out of print, and having passed the 70th year of his age, he was unwilling—other reasons combined, to engage in the labour of superintending a new edition, and therefore authorized the biographer to correspond and treat with Mr. Paul, bookseller, New York, America, respecting the copyright, under the impression that, as he had derived no advantage from its sale, a new edition, with his last corrections, emendations, additions, &c., might be acceptable to the American public, whose

¹ The call numbers for this particular collection are MAM PLP105.9.6—MAM PLP105.9.18.

² MAM PLP38.52.37.

³ 1849. Vol.3. pp. 442-443.

demand had brought into the market, in that country, two stereotyped editions, by two different houses. This negotiation (*sic*) having fallen through, the writer was next authorised to negotiate with a London publisher, and with the exception of signing the agreement, which was afterwards amicably done by the Doctor's executors, he brought the matter to a close with Mr. Tegg, who agreed to give two thousand guineas for the copyright, which was afterwards settled down to £2000. This enterprising publisher afterwards purchased the copyright of the Doctor's other works, printed and in MS., and gave the principal part of them to the world, in 13 volumes, with the exception of his Bibliographical Dictionary, the whole of which were committed to the hands of the present writer to edit.

Tegg's letters, all dated from his business address, 73, Cheapside, are in a hand not always easy to decipher, and there is a marked lack of punctuation. On 8th October 1830 Tegg wrote to Everett—

I thank you kindly for your letter of the 6th inst., on receipt of which in order to make myself master of the subject I went to Mr. Clarke's⁴ . . . to learn the state of the old stock and to speak to that gentleman . . .

One condition in yours at first rather startled me, viz. that Mr. Clarke was to be the printer of the work . . . I felt some difficulty in this matter, but that I will readily waive as it is but natural the Dr. should stipulate that his son do print the work—the next difficulty is . . . the price for the copyright and the odd stock of the old edition. It is one of the most difficult parts of our profession to name the value of an article of which I am no judge but if you or the Dr. will candidly state the amount required I will within five minutes say yes or no—but if left to me I must (I am sorry to say so) decline to state a sum . . .⁵

The negotiations nearly come to an abrupt halt for on 11th October 1830 Tegg writes—

The price you have set for the copyright of the book being so far above what I consider its value, and being shackled by the printing clause in the agreement, I must decline any further thought of it, although I confess I should have liked the work—you make a comparison with Moore's *Life of Byron*⁶ . . . I need not tell you that is in many parts bad, in none good, in all holding out incentives to vice, is a bad work to [cast?] in comparison as to the value with the Bible seeing the present state of society—but I must correct the amount quoted for Moore's *Byron*: it was 4000 *not* 6000 guineas . . .⁷

Obviously from Tegg's point of view this letter eventually had the required effect on Everett for on 12th February 1831 Tegg is writing—

I was sorry at the termination of our former negotiations as I am certain that if Dr. Clarke's son had proceeded in publishing, it would have been at a very great outlay of capital with a probable risk—you now state that you have full power rested in you . . . May I ask the favour of an answer by return of post saying if for the 2000 pounds or guineas . . .?

Does the above sum for the copyright give me the liberty of choosing a

⁴ i. e. Theodore S Clarke.

⁵ MAM PLP105.9.6.

⁶ Thomas Moore, the poet, published his biography in 1830.

⁷ MAM PLP105.9.7.

printer . . . ? The present imperfect stock: does the above sum include the purchase of, or if not at what price am I to have it? What terms of credit do you propose?⁸

The business appeared to be almost concluded on 21st February 1831 when Tegg wrote—

. . . I hope this matter respecting Dr. Clarke's Bible will now terminate for I feel ashamed at the trouble you have taken—in the prices and terms I offer I beg to say they are my ultimatum. I cannot deviate . . . I therefore beg to propose to give two thousand pounds for the copyright to be paid in four bills, viz. 4, 8, 12 and 16 monthis . . . For the stock in hand I will propose ten shillings a ream, and as there is a very large quantity of the old stock I propose to pay for the same in two bills at 3 and 6 months. I have arranged with Dr. Clarke the printing may remain with that gentleman.⁹

It would appear from a copy of a letter from Everett to Tegg dated 28th February 1831 that he agreed to these terms, save that he introduced a new element: he required interest to be paid on the bills. to this on March 2nd 1831 Tegg would not agree and negotiations again came to a standstill. On 17th March 1831 Everett again tried to move Tegg from the position he had taken, but on 21st March 1831 Tegg once more firmly rejected any alteration to the terms of the proposed agreement.

The next stage in the negotiations is recorded in Everett's own copy of his letter to Tegg dated 27th September 1831—

It appeared to me some time back that all negotiations was for ever closed; but your traveller has again agitated the subject, for which I am not sorry, as it is still the conviction of my mind that you are the proper person for this great work.

There is but one obstacle in the way, and I should advise as a friend its abandonment . . . You necessarily connect the purchase of the *stock* with that of the *copyright*: the Dr. considers the one perfectly independent of the other. You are aware from your own experience of the difficulty of proving to any man that his property is of less value than he himself believes it to be . . .¹⁰

Everett in a further three pages of meticulously neat writing goes on to propose many new variations of the proposed agreement. However, Tegg did not rise to the bait, but tempered his reply with a reference to the current political atmosphere on 11th October 1831—

Lest you should think I am not doing my duty towards you by keeping silence so long after having received your letter I send this note to explain the cause, which is the extreme excited state of public feeling on the Reform Bill. I really, who never before felt fear, think it behoves me as the father of a large family to pause before I enter into any great engagement while the country is in its present state. This I trust you will think prudent—I received yours with pleasure, and had it not been for the cause

⁸ MAM PLP105.9.8.

⁹ MAM PLP105.9.9.

¹⁰ MAM PLP38.52.37.

above stated I should have closed with the Dr.'s proposition made through you as I see nothing in it that I ought to object to . . .¹¹

The death of Adam Clarke on 26th August 1832 rather altered the situation, and apparently his literary executors first approached the Wesleyan Methodist Book Committee. On page 11 of the minute book the entry reads:

Offered the copyright and remaining stock of the Commentary [of Clarke.] The Committee, after maturely considering the subject were unanimously of opinion that the offer should be respectfully declined.¹²

There is a long gap before the next letter of the series, that of 12th March 1833, which Tegg begins dramatically—

I think I shall astonish you when I inform you that I have concluded the purchase of the late Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary together with the whole of the stock. I signed an agreement with the executors last night and I am already in the field preparing to bring out the New edition.¹³

Obviously the death of Adam Clarke altered the position for Tegg for he offered the executors his original terms, £2000 for the copyright and £900 for the stock, in cash and bills. In the same letter Tegg asks Everett if he will write the text of the prospectus for the new edition "as I know of no gentleman so competent to write it as yourself."

Tegg's enthusiasm for the project has cooled by 18th March 1833 when he reports that he has paid for both the copyright and the odd parts: "not one perfect copy" he adds somewhat bitterly. He continues—

The stock which I have delivered to me is very heavy, and the more I think on the subject the more I am puzzled how to act or what to do with it—if I offer it at the regular trade price it will never go—if I reduce the price will it not injure the new edition? . . . If I remember rightly one of the reasons you have for my purchasing the stock was that a great proportion of the purchase of the copyright would be paid for by a sale of the odd parts. Had you, Sir, in forming that calculation an idea of selling the stock at a reduced or of selling a few only at full price?

Since I have written the above, a friend has just called on whose judgement I have great dependence. He advises a reduction in price of the old stock, but not to the trade only, but to the public also, as an inducement to complete the copies which are most numerous in the hands of individuals in an imperfect state. Acting on this suggestion I have thought of the following scale—Say

	Small Paper		Large Paper	
	Wholesale	Retail	Wholesale	Retail
Job	3/-	4/6	6/-	9/-
Psalms	6/-	9/-	9/-	13/6

¹¹ MAM PLP105.9.13.

¹² MAW Pd Ms.643. Meeting of Sept. 13th 1832.

¹³ MAM PLP105.9.14.

and all others in proportion. By this mode it is suggested to me that it will prevent the seeming depreciation which otherwise would be visible by a great difference between the wholesale (the present) and the former retail price of the work and as there are only odd parts no perfect sets can be made up.

It is not possible to quote the whole of this long letter but one other section is of particular interest—

I have put a portrait into the hands of an engraver, and I purpose to commence publishing part 1 on the first of June. I would sooner but the portrait cannot be done in less than 2 months.¹⁴

Turning again to the Book Committee Minutes the entry for 22nd April 1833 reads—

The special meeting was called in consequence of an advertisement sent to be stitched up with our magazine, of Mr. Tegg's Edition of Dr. Clarke's Commentary, upon which the advertising Committee had declined to decide. It was resolved that the advertisement of Dr. Clarke's Commentary sent by Mr. Tegg be stitched in the next month's Magazine, and that the whole work be sold by the Book Room if the terms on which it shall be offered are approved by Mr. Mason.¹⁵

Such an advertisement does not, however, appear to be present in the copy of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* in the Methodist Archives.

The letter from Tegg to Everett dated 6th May 1833 is concerned with the problems of obtaining suitable proof readers, possible reduced prices for local preachers, and a query concerning the observations of H. S. Boyd of Sidmouth on the Greek article which is at the end of Ephesians; and Everett is informed that 10,000 prospectuses have been ordered for him. There were sent to him with a brief covering letter on 6th May 1833.

Evidently Tegg kept to his publication schedule as on 5th June 1833 he informs Everett that he sent Part 1 to him the previous Saturday [1st June]. He continues—

I shall surprise you when I say that Mr. Mason has not used 50 small paper and I believe none of the new edition, and my letters from ministers in the country state that they understand that the book Committee are cool on the work.

Obviously the terms offered to Mason were not acceptable to him. Tegg, however, is undeterred for he states that—

a gentleman called here on Monday and related to me part of the conversation which took place in the Committee of which the following sentence is a specimen—

'Indeed Mr. Mason you may as well try to drown a cork as try to prevent the sale of Dr. Adam Clarke's Commentary'.

¹⁴ MAM PLP105.9.15.

¹⁵ MAW Pd Ms.643. pp. 30-31. John Mason was Book Steward from 1827 to 1864.

That Tegg had nothing to worry about is clear from his further statement—

That it does sell will be best understood when I say on Saturday last *the 1st* before part one had been ready 24 hours I was obliged to obey the sale of the public and put a new edition to press—this day the 5th Inst. I am about to put to press the octavo, a new edition having sold 6000 copies. This good news must be bitter news to those whose censure or whose cold approval (which is worse than censure) would do us harm.¹⁶

the author should have the last word—

Now, my dear Everett, tell Mr. Tegg. It will not be to him a *second hand edition* for the multitudinous emendations and corrections from the author's own last hand will give him a complete new *copyright*.

The above appears in a facsimile of Adam Clarke's handwriting at the foot of his portrait which forms the frontispiece to his commentary.

D. W. RILEY

¹⁶ MAM PLP105.9.18.

BOOK NOTES

Three recent titles from the Francis Asbury Publishing Co. Inc. (Box 7, Wilmore, Kentucky 40390) may be new to many members. I shall be glad to handle orders from Britain.

Pentecostal Grace by Laurence W. Wood (1980, pp. 276, \$8.95) is a study of Wesley's doctrine of perfect love from a pentecostal angle.

Introduction to Christian Doctrine by John Lawson (1980, pp. 287, \$8.95) is perhaps the most useful introductory book on systematic theology since Maldwyn Hughes' *Christian Foundations*. Detailed and balanced in approach (which is that of a moderate conservative), it is certainly the best bargain on its subject currently available, and should be invaluable to theological students, circuit ministers, R.E. teachers and any others starting from semi-ignorance.

Wesley and Sanctification by Harald Lindström (pp. xxii, 228, \$8.95) is a welcome reprint of a standard work first published in 1947.

All three volumes are in paperback.

The United Methodist Publishing House has issued John Wesley's *Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America* (1984, no price stated), a facsimile reprint of the 1784 edition with an introduction by James F. White. Two appendices give the variant pages omitting the manual acts in the Lord's Supper and signation in the Baptism of Infants.

JOHN A. VICKERS

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

BECKMINSTER Methodist Church, Wolverhampton, was the place appointed for the 1984 Wesley Historical Society annual gathering, and its not-too-distant location from the Conference hall ensured a representative gathering of members and friends. For those who had never before visited Beckminster, this well-appointed chapel with its spacious adjoining rooms, set in its own grounds, was a delight in itself. By the continuing kindness and generosity of our treasurer and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Swift (though all regretted their inability themselves to be present), members were once again entertained to tea. Thanks for this hospitality and to the Beckminster ladies who had prepared and served the meal, were expressed from all who partook.

Business Meeting

Thirty members and several visitors attended the Annual Meeting, and there were nine apologies for absence. After the opening devotions led by the President, the Rev. A. Raymond George, the meeting recorded and then remembered in silence and prayer the eighteen members who had died during the year.

The minutes of the previous meeting having been received, the officers of the Society, as nominated by the Executive, were re-appointed, with thanks for their services.

Encouraging reports were given by or received from those responsible for the smooth running of the Society. The financial report is summarized on the next page. In addition to formal business, however, it is good to be able to high-light two items in particular. First, we were delighted to have a first-hand account and a message of greeting from the Irish Branch, conveyed by their Chairman, the Rev. Chris Walpole. Then, secondly, the Annual Meeting was happy to agree to the Conference Secretary's suggestion that the next joint Conference sponsored by the Wesley Historical Society and the World Methodist Historical Society should be held at Wesley College, Bristol, from 1st to 4th April 1986, with the title "Methodist Missions and the Methodist Mission". (Please book these dates now, and look out for further details in due course.)

It was announced that the 1985 Annual Lecture will be given by the Rev. Dr. John Newton, and that in 1986 the lecturer will be the Rev. Dr. Norman Taggart. Suggestions were received for future lectures.

Last, but not least, it was a great joy to the Annual Meeting to have with us the Rev. Dr. and Mrs. Frank Baker, and the President extended a very warm welcome to them, to which Dr. Baker replied with thanks and greetings from America.

The Annual Lecture

There was a large attendance in the evening, and presiding over the gathering was Mr. S. C. Redhead, LL.B., who is an official of our Society's West Midlands branch and himself a member and local preacher at Beckminster. Dr. Baker lectured on "John Wesley and America". As most of our readers are aware, Dr. Baker recently retired as Professor of English Church History at Duke University, Durham, North Carolina, where he has lived and worked since 1961, and is Editor-in-chief of the present authoritative edition of Wesley's *Works*. The text of the lecture, surveying the whole of John Wesley's connexion with America from his mission to Georgia in 1735-7 until his death in 1791, is printed in full in this issue of *Proceedings*.

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1376. BIBLE CHRISTIANS IN LONDON.

A Baptism Register for the Clapham and Waterloo Bible Christian circuits has recently been deposited in the Lambeth Borough Archives via the Surrey Record Office. The depositor's father was an architect. He was also a member and choirmaster at Waterloo Road chapel, where his grandfather, the Rev. John Cleverdon Honey, had been minister (1865-8). During the building of an extension to the chapel a cupboard was found behind the wall-covering, and it was here that he discovered the register. The first entry was found to be of the baptism of his own mother, Alice Caroline, daughter of John Cleverdon and Caroline Sarah Honey, on 20th February 1867, at Garner chapel.

The register contains 132 entries. These give the child's name, parents' names, parish and county of residence, father's occupation, date and place of baptism, and the name of the minister. Most of the baptisms took place at Waterloo Road, but the first seven were at Garner chapel. There were also baptisms at Oxton chapel; the Bible Christian Reading-Room, Blair Street, Brunswick Road, Poplar; East Road chapel, City Road; and Wirtemberg Street chapel, Clapham. There is a substantial gap from 26th May 1897 to 13th February 1927, from which date the baptisms are duly recorded as being at Waterloo Road United Methodist chapel.

Information from the depositor states that he believes John Cleverdon Honey came from Bideford. He was in fact born in Devon, 23rd November 1834, and died at Bideford, 14th February 1912. He was President of the Bible Christian Conference in 1878. (See O. A. Beckerlegge: *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits*.) He also states that Eric Edward, baptized 24th April 1927 (entry No. 73), son of Winifred and Arthur Downing, was the grandson of the Rev. Samuel Gordon, who was minister at Waterloo Road just before the re-discovery of the register. He also notes that later addresses being frequently in the suburbs indicates that many of the active members of the society had moved away from the immediate vicinity of the chapel, which closed in 1939.

It is hoped that more deposits of this kind will be made as awareness of their importance increases.

SHEILA J. HIMSWORTH.

1377. A HISTORICAL MARKER AT PILL

On Thursday 30th August, 1984, as part of the programme of the American Methodist Bicentennial Pilgrimage, a historical marker was dedicated at Pill, near Bristol. It was from this spot that Francis Asbury and Richard Wright embarked for America in September 1771, followed two years later by Thomas Rankin and George Shadford accompanied by Captain Thomas Webb; and to these we should almost certainly add Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey in 1784.

The memorial stands on the village green, close to the creek from which these historic voyages began. Wesley was not present to bid farewell to any of his preachers (despite the spurious claims of the new painting "Offer them Christ" to historical authenticity). The site nevertheless has rich associations

for Methodists on both sides of the Atlantic. The new memorial, sponsored by the World Methodist Historical Society, is in the form of a block of Portland stone with the inscription set into its upper face:

Francis Asbury in 1771 and Thomas Coke in 1784 and other
Methodist preachers sailed from here for America.

Erected to mark the Bicentennial of the

Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S.A., in 1984.

Sponsored by the World Methodist Historical Society
in memory of George Ruck.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

1378 THE MUSEUM OF METHODISM.

On the following Sunday, 2nd September, many of the American pilgrims joined in the special service to mark the opening of the new Museum of Methodism in the crypt of Wesley's Chapel, London, and the rededication of John Wesley's tomb.

The Museum is a major addition to the City Road site and sets out to be an important teaching aid on our Methodist heritage. In addition to the central display telling the story of Methodism from the childhood of the Wesleys to the 20th century, secondary displays deal with such topics as the other branches of Methodism, chapel architecture, ministerial training, Methodism and the Arts, and the World Parish. There is also a special display of the extensive collection of Wesley pottery and other Methodist ceramics.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

1379 METHODIST POSTCARDS

In the handbook for the 1907 Primitive Methodist Conference, held at Leicester, there is a whole-page advertisement for centenary publications including "Centenary picture postcards, price 1d per packet of six". I have in my collection three postcards (and photocopies of three others) which are, I believe, some of these P.M. Centenary cards: they are endorsed "Souvenir Postcard" on the back, and depict Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, "The first Primitive Methodist pulpit", "Fordhays Farm (Hugh Bourne's birthplace)", "Bemersley Farm (Hugh Bourne's house)", and "Engleseabrook Cemetery with Hugh Bourne's Tomb at end of path". Are these, I wonder, all the official postcards published for the centenary of Mow Cop or was there more than one set of six cards? Also, were there others issued in 1911 to commemorate the centenary of the Primitive Methodist Connexion? Information of any other official Primitive Methodist souvenir postcards would be most welcome.

Also in my collection are some cards published by J. W. Ruddock, of Lincoln, at the time of the Wesleyan Conference held in the city in 1909. This was, I believe, common practice, but I would appreciate confirmation of this and also details of any similar cards issued by *local* publishers in other Conference towns. The Lincoln postcards are of the President, the retiring President, and one showing Conference personalities (19 tiny portraits, together with photo-

graphs of Wesley Chapel, Lincoln, and the Cathedral). J. S. ENGLISH.
1 Dorton Avenue,
Gainsborough, Lincs.

1380 SUSANNA WESLEY'S LAST WORDS.

In Elsie Harrison's *Son to Susanna* (1937) it is said on p. 195 that her last words were: "My dear Saviour! Are you come to help me in my extremity at last?" What is the authority for these words?

In J. S. Simon's *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies* there is an account of Susanna's death drawn from the record of Wesley who was present; and in this her last words were: "Children, as soon as I am released sing a psalm of praise to God" (p. 81). Mrs. Harrison quotes these words also but follows them with those given above. It is strange that Wesley omitted them if they were really spoken. Simon is presumably drawing on the account given by Wesley in his *Journal*, Standard ed., Vol. 3: 29-32 where Curnock also quotes in a footnote John's letter to his brother Charles.

In her references at the end of her book Mrs. Harrison (who was of course Simon's daughter) gives, in connection with this chapter, Moore's *Life of Wesley*, Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley Family* and the Journals of John and Charles. It may be that the words are given in one of these and if so I should be grateful to have the reference. T. FRANCIS GLASSON.

1381 CITY ROAD ARRANGEMENTS.

When George W. Dolbey wrote *The Architectural Expression of Methodism* (1964) only a few City Road arrangements had survived and most of those noted in the book had already been lost. A recent "discovery" of this arrangement, the Newbury Wesleyan Church of 1837, is now the only known surviving example after City Road. Continuing research shows that many more chapels once had this arrangement and such an example was Cherry Street chapel, Birmingham, opened in 1782 and demolished in 1887 for the building of the old Central Hall. A photograph in the Wesleyan Conference Handbook for 1915 shows a box-pewed interior with centre aisle. In front of the double-decker pulpit is the font. Underneath the octagonal shaped balcony is a recess which appears to be an apse for the communion area; the details are not clear from the photograph. D. COLIN DEWS.
