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A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_whs_01.php

Proceedings

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THE ORIGINS AND GROWTH OF PRIMITIVE METHODISM IN EAST SURREY

DESCRIPTIONS of southern England as poor territory for Nonconformity abound in the writings of nineteenth-century ministers and laity. Seeing Anglicanism as wholly predominant in the South, contemporary observers were quick to draw connections between the perceived ecclesiastical tyranny of the Established Church and the social and political domination of the squirearchy. The Congregationalist, John Burnet, in 1844 wrote of this 'spiritual despotism' in rural Surrey that 'the clergy and gentry who practise this contemptible, petty tyranny, seem to be quite unconscious of their self-degradation.'¹ The establishment of the Surrey Congregational Union in 1862-63 followed on directly from the perception of continuing failure in the county, where 'Nonconformity had made less progress...than any other county of England.'² Baptists faced the same difficulties.³ So too did Methodists: W. W. Pocock as late as the 1880s described Hampshire, Surrey and Sussex as a 'Methodist wilderness' in which more than 500 parishes were without a Methodist chapel or Methodist preaching, and he claimed that, in Surrey and Sussex, 'where Methodism has no hold, the contrasted evils of superstitious Anglicanism and of fatalistic and antinomian Dissent too commonly divide the ground between them', though it was hard in practice to claim much influence for the latter.⁴ As with the Congregationalists and Baptists, the efforts of Wesleyans to reach out from London to the villages and towns of southern England were given

¹ Quoted in J. Waddington, *Surrey Congregational History* (1866), p.135.

² E.E. Cleal & T.G. Crippen, *The Story of Congregationalism in Surrey* (1908), p.xii.

³ See, for example, A.H. Stockwell, *The Baptist Churches of Surrey* (c.1909-10), section on 'The Home Counties Association'.

⁴ W.W. Pocock, *A Sketch of the History of Wesleyan Methodism in some of the Southern Counties of England* (1884), pp.4, 31 & 37.

institutional expression, in this case in the formation of a system of Home Mission circuits under the auspices of the London Second District Committee.⁵

Primitive Methodism suffered just as much, if not more so, from this perceived lack of influence in the South. The preoccupation of mid-Victorian Nonconformists with missionary activity in rural areas, and with the use of London as an area of relative strength which could act as a base for this work, is interesting as a contrast to much recent scholarly work on church decline in London itself; nevertheless it is also true to say that these extra-metropolitan impulses have been played down by the natural tendency of Nonconformist historians themselves to concentrate on areas of relative Dissenting strength. Kendall's detailed centennial history of Primitive Methodism made scant reference to the work of the General Missionary Committee in establishing missions throughout the South in the second half of the nineteenth century, whilst devoting a chapter to the colonial expansion of the connexion; the recent 'remarkable extension' of Primitive Methodism in London was covered in a brief epilogue.⁶ The connexion's greatest strength in England always lay in the Midlands, the North-East and parts of East Anglia, and the more recent studies of R. S. Moore, J. Obelkevich and J. S. Werner have all tended to draw their material primarily from one or more of these areas.⁷

The relative weakness of Nonconformity in large areas of the South, and especially in Surrey, was confirmed by B. I. Coleman's analysis of the published figures from the 1851 census of religious attendance, and arguably underlined by A. M. Everitt's comparative discussion of Nonconformity in Kent and the Midlands, although patterns of religious practice in Kent appeared to vary more widely than in Surrey.⁸ The detailed study of the South, on the surface of things, would appear to offer little promise to the historian of Nonconformist growth. This article has been written, nevertheless, in the belief that it is sometimes as rewarding to study religious 'failure' as it is 'success', and in doing so to attempt to understand the reasons why particular denominations and movements were unable to expand beyond a certain size, and why some areas proved to be less favourable ground for them than others. It sets out to examine the foundation and early growth of one small network of Primitive Methodist chapels in suburban South London and rural East Surrey, to consider various possible sources of constraint on Primitive Methodist growth in the area, and to elicit a number of persistent, underlying tensions.

⁵ Pocock, *op. cit.*, p.6.

⁶ H.B.Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (2 vols., c.1905,) Vol 2 pp.407-413 & 539-540.

⁷ R.S.Moore, *Pit-Men, Preachers and Politics: The effects of Methodism in a Durham mining community* (1974); J.Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society: South Lindsey 1825-1875* (1976); J.S.Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (1984).

⁸ B.I.Coleman, 'Southern England in the Census of Religious Worship. 1851', in *Southern History*, Vol.5 (1983); A.M.Everitt, *The Pattern of Rural Dissent: the Nineteenth Century* (1972).

The study has been made possible by the existence of a fine set of records for the Croydon circuit from the 1850s through to the 1920s. These include a near-complete set of the Quarterly Meeting minutes, from 1852 on, Sunday School minutes from 1869, Secretary's minutes for the Laud Street chapel from 1876 to 1891, a variety of chapel accounts and treasurers' accounts, and a variety of roll books. Together these sources help to give a very clear, institutional picture of the Croydon Primitive Methodist circuit - the major decisions, the places where missionary activity was undertaken, the numbers of members, the organisation of the preachers' plan, the financial position of the chapels, and so on. Two other groups of sources help to add colour. The first is a collection of letters written about 1900 from relations and friends of the founders of the Croydon circuit, on the occasion of the circuit's jubilee; these give a particularly good account of how Primitive Methodism came to be established in Croydon. Secondly, there exist in the same collection extracts from the journal of one Joseph Odell, subsequently President of Conference, but in 1868 and 1869 a visiting preacher who worked in Croydon.⁹

I

The printed 1851 figures for religious attendance in extra-metropolitan Surrey identified the Poor Law unions nearest to London as those in which Nonconformity was strongest, though even here it lagged well behind Anglicanism.¹⁰ The Croydon Union was one of these, and it was the only one in which Primitive Methodism had gained a foothold by that date. The union was the most populous in Surrey and consisted of ten parishes in all, nine from Surrey itself and one from across the county border in Kent, and covered most of north-east Surrey; with a population of over 20,000, Croydon accounted for two-thirds of the population of the whole union.¹¹ The town's dominance within the area, and indeed within East Surrey as a whole, increased dramatically in the second half of the nineteenth century. Its population expanded more than six-fold between 1851 and 1901 to reach 134,000, growth which was recognised by its achievement of

⁹ All these sources are deposited in the Local Studies Collection of the Croydon Public Library (hereafter CPL). Tantalisingly there is a possibility that a further set of sources exists elsewhere, for in 1970 an anonymous brief history of the Cherry Orchard Road Methodist Church listed some twelve individual sources, none of which appear in the main collection at CPL; these included a number of jubilee brochures for various chapels, minute books for the Band of Hope, the Teachers and the Choir, and an account book for pew rents. I have been unable to trace these sources.

¹⁰ J.N.Morris, 'Religion and Urban Change in Victorian England: A Case Study of the Borough of Croydon 1840-1914' (Oxford University D.Phil. thesis, 1986), Appendix 4, Table 2; see also Coleman, *op. cit.* Dr.D.B.Robinson, Surrey County Archivist, is currently working on an edition of the detailed census returns to be published by the Surrey Record Society; I am indebted to him for his suggestions and advice.

¹¹ The ten were Addington, Beddington, Coulsdon, Croydon, Merton, Mitcham, Morden, Sanderstead, Woodmansterne (all Surrey) and Penge (Kent).

Municipal Borough status in 1883 and then of County Borough status in 1889.¹² Its economy was boosted by the railways, which enabled it to act both as a dormitory suburb for the commuting middle class, and as a centre for retailing, and until the early twentieth century its status as an agricultural market was enhanced both by the railways and by improved road communications.¹³ As the largest town in East Surrey it functioned as the centre of a variety of networks, political, religious, administrative, economic and judicial; hustings for the parliamentary division of East Surrey were held there, it was one of the assize towns for Surrey (along with Guildford and Kingston), the workhouse for the Croydon Union was situated there, metropolitan police operations in north-east Surrey were based on Croydon, and many voluntary and religious organisations for East Surrey held their meetings there.¹⁴ The links between Croydon and its surrounding rural parishes were thus very strong in the late nineteenth century, and the town was well placed to act as a base for Nonconformist missionary initiatives in rural Surrey.

Anglican influence over Croydon was perhaps greater than in many other towns in the south, for the Archbishop of Canterbury's status as Lord of the ancient Manor was reinforced by much church ownership of land in the parish and by the informal, behind-the-scenes influence this enabled the Archbishop to wield.¹⁵ Dissent had managed to gain a foothold in the parish by the nineteenth century, with Quaker, Independent and Baptist meetings in existence there by the 1720s, and Wesleyan Methodists appearing in the 1800s.¹⁶ By 1851 the Independents and Baptists each had two places of worship in the parish, the Wesleyans one, the Quakers one and, by then, the Primitive Methodists also one; the Independents also had three chapels in neighbouring parishes (Beddington, Merton and Mitcham), and the Wesleyans one in Mitcham.¹⁷ Within Nonconformity itself, then, Coleman's comment on Surrey as a whole rang true: 'What Nonconformity there was in Surrey was predominantly in the older Dissenting denominations.'¹⁸ Overall, however, the attendance rate both in the Union at large and in Croydon parish alone lay heavily in favour of Anglicanism, with two-thirds of the population attending worship in the Church of England.¹⁹

¹² Morris, *op. cit.*, ch. 6 in particular.

¹³ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-40.

¹⁴ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 28-30.

¹⁵ Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47 & 59-60.

¹⁶ W. Beck & T. F. Ball, *The London Friends' Meetings, showing the Rise of the Society of Friends in London* (1869), pp. 325-327; Cleal & Crippen, *op. cit.*, p. 37; Stockwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79; Croydon Wesleyan Chapel, North End: registers of burials and baptisms 1829-1848 (transcripts at CPL, originals at Surrey Record Office).

¹⁷ 1851 Census of Religious Worship, returns for Croydon Union (Public Record Office, Ecclesiastical Returns, HO 129).

¹⁸ Coleman, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

¹⁹ This is after adjusting attendance figures to account for 'twicers'; Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 430 & 436.

Croydon's rapid growth in the Victorian age and its apparent domination by the Established Church probably gave many Nonconformists the feeling that here was an important opportunity and a need for their evangelistic work. Certainly this dual perception - need and opportunity - lay behind William Booth's first evangelistic efforts in the area, as will be shown later, and the efforts of the Wesleyans to expand their presence, but it was also there in Primitive Methodism, which was brought to Croydon by one David Hodgson in the late 1840s. Hodgson was a Lincolnshire man, a county which was something of a Primitive Methodist stronghold, and had been converted about the age of 18 to 19 years old, eventually becoming a local preacher in the Louth circuit.²⁰ In 1847 he moved south to Croydon to take charge of a farm at Chipstead for his uncle, and, in the absence of a local Primitive Methodist circuit, tried at first to worship with the Wesleyans at their chapel in North End.²¹ As his brother later commented, 'the union was not a happy one. The young raw countryman was too noisy for London Methodists'.²²

Unfortunately there is no detailed description of him, but he was clearly a dynamic, remarkable young man. His widow was later to recall that, in late 1847, he had gone to a Wesleyan Quarter Day and told them "that he had a Divine impression on his mind to mission the Old Town & that he should do it for the Primitive Methodists.' The brethren discouraged him & said it was a Hell upon earth; & wanted the courage of a lion."²³ However Hodgson did go there that winter to hold services every night indoors, presumably in a sympathiser's cottage, and again the following winter when, having gained his licence for open-air preaching in September 1848, he conducted services in the open.²⁴ In the same year he approached the London circuit of the Primitives and invited them to mission Croydon; accordingly a preacher, John Ride, was sent to reside and work in Croydon.²⁵ Ride apparently reported back to the circuit 'a deplorable account of the vice and Sabbath breaking prevalent'.²⁶

In early 1849 Croydon seems to have been formally constituted as a mission station, its first society class book containing no more than about half a dozen names.²⁷ The first quarterly meeting was held on 5th March of that year, and the minutes were signed by John Ride, 'travelling preacher'.²⁸

²⁰ Letter from W.T.Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

²¹ Loc. cit.

²² Loc. cit.

²³ Letter from Mary Ann Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL; 'Old Town' refers not to Croydon in general but to a particular street and its immediate vicinity lying north-west of the ancient Parish Church, a low-lying area characterised in the nineteenth century by poor, cheap housing.

²⁴ W.J.Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

²⁵ Letter from Rev J.Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

²⁶ Loc. cit.

²⁷ Loc. cit.

²⁸ Minutes of Quarterly Meeting (hereafter Minutes), entry for 5 March 1849.

In the early years the mission station was based in a small building in Old Town, but this was inadequate accommodation in the long run and by the late 1850s the search was on for a permanent home; it soon acquired one, and in the words of David Hodgson's widow:

I heard my late Husband relate at a meeting at Laud St...that one night he had a dream that he was to go to a place "Bog Isle" (where the present Laud St. Chapel now stands). The impression was so strong upon his mind that in the afternoon of the day after the dream he walked over to Bog Isle, & saw a piece of ground to be sold. The thought came into his mind that it would be a good situation for a P.M. Chapel. I remember that a few days after one of the ministers came to his house (I forget the name) & they both went to look at the land, & it ended in the land being bought by Mr. Hodgson & he gave it to the P.M. for a Chapel. Mr. Hodgson used to say 'That Chapel was of God.'²⁹

For a number of years the station remained extremely small: of an estimated total of 9,067 attendances at all churches throughout the census day in 1851 only 47 were Primitive Methodist, whereas the longer-established Wesleyan chapel recorded some 385.³⁰ Primitive Methodism never became much more than a tiny minority in and around Croydon, but because of the massive overall growth in the town's size, it was able to expand quite considerably over the next half-century. In December 1852 there were 45 full members, a figure which rose to 51 early in the following year, fell back to around 40 in early 1854, and rose again beyond the 60 mark late in the 1850s.³¹ By 1867 the numbers had risen to 135.³² The circuit showed steady overall growth in the late nineteenth century, but had a number of periods in which membership fell again; one exceptionally heavy fall was from 265 members in 1873 to 173 in 1878, but numbers crept back up again to reach 462 in 1898, a year in which the Croydon circuit was divided so that the chapels founded under its control at Penge could form a circuit of their own.³³ The new, reduced Croydon circuit achieved 361 members in 1902, expanded fitfully to 1908, and then began a sharp slump, falling to 324 by 1912.³⁴ The survey of churchgoing carried out in Greater London for the *Daily News* in 1902-3 recorded a total of 824 Primitive Methodist attendances in Croydon, a number which, at a notional figure of 676 after adjusting for 'twicers', would have been less than double the actual church membership at that time.³⁵ Since the total attendances recorded in 1902-3 were 52,962, the connexion had increased its proportion

²⁹ Mary Ann Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

³⁰ Morris, *op. cit.*, p.430.

³¹ Minutes, *passim*.

³² Minutes, 2 September 1867.

³³ Minutes, *passim*.

³⁴ Minutes, *passim*; see in particular entry for 4 September 1911 when the meeting expressed itself as being "especially humbled" at having contributed to the connexional decline.

³⁵ R.Mudie Smith, *The Religious Life of London* (1904), p.446.

from 0.5% in 1851 to 1.5% half a century later, when its membership had increased eight-fold.

Although these figures give a good idea of the relative size of Primitive Methodism in Croydon in the late nineteenth century, and of the broad outlines of its growth, they tend to mask the extraordinary activity, energy and commitment of the Primitives. Croydon became the effective centre of the connexion's activity in East Surrey and western parts of Kent, with preachers trekking out from it to mission towns and villages within a 30-mile radius. Between 1853 and 1868 no less than thirty-one individual settlements outside the town were the focus of Primitive Methodist evangelistic work.³⁶ Already by 1854 the station was holding camp meetings at Cheam, Banstead, Chipstead, Ewell and Redhill as well as Croydon;³⁷ over the next few years they extended their work to Norwood, Reigate, Nutfield, Shirley, Bletchingley, Merstham, Penge and Carshalton, to name but a few.³⁸ Much of this work was sporadic and did not lead to the formation of permanent chapels; it was informal, experimental, dependent very much upon open-air preaching and camp meetings, and upon cottages and meeting rooms being made available by sympathisers.

The evangelistic work of the station in the second half of the nineteenth century falls into three distinct phases. The first lasted from about 1852 to the late 1850s, and it was typified by a scattering of missionary activity in all directions, but particularly directed southwards into the towns and villages of East Surrey. Quarterly Meeting minutes give the impression of innumerable missionary forays, yet only at Redhill, Penge and, eventually, Reigate were the nuclei of permanent chapels formed.³⁹ Redhill became a mission station in its own right in the late 1860s.⁴⁰ The second phase lasted from the early 1860s to the early 1870s, and marked a greater concentration of effort on classes in or near Croydon, some of which eventually became fully-fledged chapels, and on missionary sallies into the emerging suburbs of South London, such as Mitcham, Sutton, Wimbledon, Kingston, Surbiton, Epsom, Twickenham, Beckenham, Bromley, Sydenham, Forest Hill, West Wickham and Wallington.⁴¹ Again, many more communities were missioned than were to become centres of a permanent Primitive Methodist presence, but chapels were established at Sutton, Bromley, Streatham, Wimbledon and Peckham;⁴² Forest Hill and Kingston became, sometime in the 1880s, mission stations in their own right.⁴³ This phase was

³⁶. Minutes, *passim*.

³⁷. Minutes, 5 June 1854.

³⁸. Minutes, *passim*.

³⁹. Minutes, *passim*.

⁴⁰. References to Redhill in the Minutes cease by the end of 1862: entry for 2 September 1862; see also deed of conveyance for Brighton Road, Redhill, Primitive Methodist Chapel dated 20 September 1869, at Surrey Record Office (ref. 457/121).

⁴¹. Minutes, *passim*.

⁴². Minutes, 20 March 1871, election of stewards.

⁴³. See printed notice listing stations in the London Second District, dated April 1894 and inserted in volume of Minutes for 1883-1896.

also marked, in 1870, by the division of the station and the formation of Croydon circuit, embracing existing chapels and meetings at Croydon, Carshalton, Penge, Merton, Wimbledon and Sutton, and of Kingston circuit.⁴⁴ The third phase was one which in a sense lasted into the twentieth century and signalled the end of extensive evangelistic activity. Camp-meetings, love-feasts and open-air services began to disappear, and the circuit's activity became centred almost exclusively on its chapels; by 1897 these were ten in number, five of them inside the Borough of Croydon, but three - Penge, Bromley and Peckham - were formed into a separate circuit in 1898.⁴⁵

Joseph Odell in his journal gives a fascinating if brief insight into the adventurousness of many of the preachers and evangelists in the first two phases of the station's expansion. He arrived in Croydon in November 1868 to take over the work of the circuit superintendent, who was temporarily ill, and then was urged to remain there ('I felt this to be providential'⁴⁶); he undertook missionary work in the Croydon Common area (a poor, working class area north-east of the town centre), holding revival services on Sundays and weekdays, and carrying out open-air preaching.⁴⁷ Services initially were held in a cottage in Cross Road; in early 1869 he formed the following there into a proper Primitive Methodist class, and subsequently added new meetings and classes, and a Mission Band which was nicknamed 'Odell's heavy artillery'.⁴⁸ His journal reveals a great deal of pride at the number of conversions made during his work at Croydon Common. Interestingly, he emphasised the efforts he made to contact classes of people not usually touched by religious denominations:

I find I visited the Brickfields almost every week, & amongst my converts & very warmest friends & helpers were the "Brickies" as they were called.⁴⁹

Odell's energy had in fact created the nucleus of what became Cherry Orchard Road Primitive Methodist Church.

The decline, in the third phase of the station's history, of the sort of open-air, informal missionary work at which Joseph Odell was adept did not appear at first to have dented its overall growth. Despite a temporary setback when membership plummeted from 265 in 1873 to 170 in 1878,⁵⁰ Croydon circuit continued to grow steadily until it reached 393 members in 1904, taking into account the loss of about 160 members in 1898 on the formation of Penge circuit.⁵¹ Declining interest in outreach took place in

⁴⁴ Minutes, entries for 15 June 1868, 7 December 1868 and 13 May 1870.

⁴⁵ Minutes, entries for 5 September and 5 December 1898.

⁴⁶ Joseph Odell, notes from his Journal, November 1868 to July 1869 (mss at CPL).

⁴⁷ Loc. cit.

⁴⁸ Loc. cit.

⁴⁹ Loc. cit.

⁵⁰ Minutes, entries for 17 March 1873 to 2 December 1878.

⁵¹ Minutes, *passim*.

this period against a background of what Kendall described as 'a deeper sense of [the denomination's] own true church life' and which was reflected in the substitution of the word 'Church' for 'Connexion' in the revision of the Consolidated Minutes carried out in 1901.⁵² The same sense of a deeper, more formal, corporate and denominational spirit can also be caught from the local preacher John Whittock's Statement of Doctrine, completed in 1912:

I have been a member of the Primitive Methodist Connexion since infancy, although not of course a full member...It seems to me that our form of Church Government is very satisfactory, is in accordance with commonsense and is founded on a real protestant basis.⁵³

Whittock's readiness to countenance flexibility in evangelistic methods - 'Cases are different and have to be treated on different lines. Emotion might move one man, whereas in another it might be repulsive.'⁵⁴ - already must have seemed a long way from the ardour of Odell. The 1900s, as with so many Nonconformist denominations, were a turning point in the Circuit's fortunes: membership dipped from 1904 to 1906, climbed back again to 389 in 1908, and thereafter sank into a decline which, sharp at first, eased a little by the 1920s.⁵⁵ By 1932 the 'mother' chapel, Laud Street in Central Croydon, was struggling to keep going; after Methodist reunion the Circuit maintained a separate organisation and existence for some years, but in 1946 it was split up and merged with Wesleyan circuits in the area.⁵⁶

II

In spite of its energy and growth in the second half of the nineteenth century, Primitive Methodism remained at best a marginal if colourful feature of the religious scene in Croydon and surrounding areas. A number of possible sources of constraint suggest themselves: first, popular opposition to the Primitive Methodists; second, the problems they had in relation to resources of money and manpower; third, the competition they faced from other groups such as the Salvation Army and the Wesleyans; and fourth, the social structure of South London and East Surrey.

Popular opposition to the Primitives was focused on their open-air work, appears to have come from the very poorest sections of Croydon's population, and chiefly involved shouting, barracking, jostling and general ridicule; rarely does it seem to have involved real violence. It was there from the beginning of the station. David Hodgson's widow attested

⁵² H.B.Kendall, 'The Primitive Methodist Church', in W.J.Townsend, B.Workman & G.Eayrs (eds.), *A New History of Methodism* (1909), vol 1, p.593.

⁵³ John Whittock's Statement of Doctrine, mss at CPL.

⁵⁴ Loc. cit.

⁵⁵ Minutes, passim.

⁵⁶ R.C.Swift, *Methodism in the Purley Circuit* (1980), p.61.

The persecution was cruel. The meetings used to be broken twice or more during the hour, & one poor man was so anxious for the truth, that he used to climb a ladder by a window because he dared not set a foot inside the room for fear of persecution from his family. With such joy D. told me he had met the very man in the old Town who said to him "Blessed truths I used to hear on that ladder Sir."⁵⁷

Hodgson's brother reinforced this picture:

In the streets they were assailed by mobs of the Victims of the drink traffic and the Publicans...On one occasion my Bro's coal cap was torn off. He had several hats destroyed I fear. Rotten eggs, stones, filth of the worst kind was thrown at them and upon them when preaching in the open air.⁵⁸

Nor was it any better nearly twenty years later, when Joseph Odell was missioning Croydon Common:

I was walking along Church St. Croydon one afternoon, and a group of young fellows - probably a dozen - stood at the corner waiting for anything to give them fun; as they caught sight of me, - it was fair game to mock the open-air preacher, so they started singing one of the hymns familiar by use in the open air - They shouted the chorus at me; to their surprise I walked into their company - joined with them & sang away - looking at them to urge them to go on. The never bargained for this, so they soon stopped singing & I instantly raised my hat & closed my eyes & begun to pray most earnestly. How they ran in all directions.⁵⁹

Interestingly, Quarterly Meeting minutes make few references to this sort of disruption, which suggests how predictable and widespread it really was. It was confined mostly to the poorer parts of the town, and seems to have involved mainly, but not exclusively, men. Probably, then, there was an anarchic, ridiculing, and even 'fun' element in it. There were possibly more profound tensions at work as well: working class resentment against teetotalism for one thing, in addition to a more general feeling that the character of working class life was in some way threatened by organised religion. Whatever the explanation, it is clearly a little difficult to fit alongside Joseph Odell's claims of success amongst the very poor: what it suggests is that, if some were attracted to the Primitives, the hostile response of others actually made their work that much more isolated.⁶⁰

A second possible constraint was the much more straightforward one of

⁵⁷. Mary Ann Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

⁵⁸. W.J.Hodgson to J.T.Bagnall, 1900, at CPL.

⁵⁹. Joseph Odell, notes from his Journal.

⁶⁰. Popular hostility to Primitive Methodists was of a piece with crowd actions against the Salvation Army and temperance activists; for a separate examination of some of the strands of this hostility, see J.N.Morris, 'A Disappearing Crowd? Collective Action in Late Nineteenth Century Croydon', in *Southern History*, Vol. 11 (1989).

shortage of material and human resources. Quarterly Meeting was acutely aware of the way in which shortage of money restricted their activities. In March 1856, for example, they had to withhold their usual contribution to the General Chapel Fund because of their financial difficulties.⁶¹ Throughout the period the circuit's finances were precarious, but the situation seemed to worsen towards the end of the century. By the late 1890s there were difficulties in collecting subscriptions due from each of the chapel societies.⁶² In late 1897, with circuit debts of £3,435, contributions to the Furnishing Fund of the London Second District were restricted.⁶³ Individual chapels suffered too: the Portland Road chapel, for example, operating by 1900 with a slender annual balance of £50, for every year except one after 1906 until 1918 recorded a deficit.⁶⁴ Perhaps even more serious, however, were the constant difficulties the circuit faced over finding and keeping suitably qualified preachers. In the 1870s they appear to have been at a particularly low ebb, when there were numerous instances reported to Quarterly Meeting of preachers neglecting to keep their preaching appointments.⁶⁵ Quality of service was also an issue; in December 1876, for example, it was resolved 'That bro. Marshall be respectfully informed to have a greater variety of sermons; so as to enable him not to preach the same subject before the same congregation more than once.'⁶⁶ Difficulties in finding suitable preachers were not helped by the strict but necessary standards of morality and conduct expected of them. As with all Nonconformist denominations at this time, bankruptcy led to automatic suspension from office; this happened to several Croydon preachers.⁶⁷ Immoral conduct, however that was defined, also did, though here sometimes sheer embarrassment persuaded the offender to resign first; in December 1866, for example, it was resolved:

That J. Garside's name come off the plan, he having sent in his resignation. He resided at Penge, was the class leader & society steward, & the services were held in his house. Some time ago a report was in circulation that he was several times seen with a young female at unreasonable hours, & when spoken to on the matter, immediately sent in his plans, left the society, shut his doors against the preaching services, & refused to see any parties to clear up the matter. We have strong reason to fear there was truth in the report.⁶⁸

To popular hostility and shortage of resources a third brake on Primitive Methodist activity could be added, namely the strength of competition in

⁶¹. Minutes, 4 March 1856.

⁶². Minutes, 8 March 1897.

⁶³. Minutes, 6 September 1897.

⁶⁴. Treasurers' Accounts 1891-1922, Portland Road Primitive Methodist Chapel, at CPL.

⁶⁵. See, for example, four cases at one meeting alone in Minutes, 16 September 1872.

⁶⁶. Minutes, 4 December 1876.

⁶⁷. Minutes, *passim*, but see particularly suspension of Bro Hall, entries for 14 June and 6 September 1869.

⁶⁸. Minutes, 3 December 1866.

the area. This could be seen as having come most damagingly from organisations other than religious ones as well as from churches, but it is extremely difficult to assess just how much this was so, and it is easier in the main to identify rival denominations: for the Primitives these were principally the Wesleyans and the Salvation Army.

The Wesleyans were present in Croydon from at least as early as 1811, when the town was within the newly-created Brentford circuit; this vast circuit included all of East Surrey outside Central London and extended almost to Sevenoaks.⁶⁹ Croydon Chapel was founded before 1829, and judging from the baptism and burial registers which have survived from these early years, was initially very small.⁷⁰ By 1851 Wesleyan societies were also in existence at Mitcham, Dorking, Warmingham and Godstone, although Croydon remained the largest.⁷¹ By mid-century, then, Wesleyanism was already more strongly rooted in East Surrey than was Primitive Methodism. By 1902-3, the total Wesleyan attendance at the then six Croydon chapels had reached 4,113, from 385 at the one chapel in 1851.⁷² The greater success of Wesleyanism in the south was possibly due to the fact that it seemed to appeal to the lower middle classes in particular, and these were precisely the kind of people settling in large numbers in the suburbs in this period. However there is some evidence that the Wesleyans had some success in attracting working class members as well; one report in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* for 1870 said of the work in Addiscombe:

Our work there is in a very good state - The congregation is exclusively from the working-class, and all the services are well attended. To preach there is a great pleasure. The people drink in the truth.⁷³

This was a matter of half a mile, no more than that, from Croydon Common where Joseph Odell's hard work had led to the formation of a new Primitive chapel. Could it be that Wesleyans and Primitives were actually trying to get at the same people - the 'brickies' and other workers of the area? Mostly the Wesleyans were in the suburbs, not in the poorest parts of the town, but they may well have creamed off some followers who would otherwise have gone to the Primitives.

More direct competition undoubtedly came from William Booth's Salvation Army, which shared the same enthusiasm for open-air preaching and for evangelising the poor. Again Croydon acted as the centre of a network: the Croydon station of the Christian Mission, established in 1869, was worked along lines similar to the Primitives, with regular revival services, open-air meetings and preaching, and a preachers' plan.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Pocock, op. cit., p.27.

⁷⁰ Croydon Wesleyan Chapel, North End: registers of burials and baptisms 1829-1848 (CPL & Surrey Record Office).

⁷¹ Morris, D. Phil. thesis, pp. 431-435.

⁷² Morris, op. cit., pp. 430 & 436.

⁷³ *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1871, p.372.

⁷⁴ Minutes of Elders' Meetings, Croydon Branch of the Christian Mission, 1869-1871, at the Salvation Army Heritage Centre, Judd Street.

Throughout the early 1870s, and again in the early 1880s when the Salvation Army emerged in its more familiar form, Booth's followers met exactly the same popular hostility that faced the Primitives.⁷⁵ There are some detailed records which relate to the early years of the Christian Mission in Croydon, and these suggest that the same problems of resources were also encountered.⁷⁶ They were clearly targeting the same sections of society as well, working in the poorer parts of Croydon - the Old Town area, and the decaying central market area of Surrey Street, Crown Hill and Church Street. But there were a number of differences between them, too, which may well help to explain the greater attraction - in the long run - of the Salvation Army. Booth's organisation was a very tight, centrally organised body; its superintendents were selected by Booth himself and appointed to local stations; for the most part its operations in Croydon remained highly concentrated and localised, perhaps thus using resources more efficiently, and only later moving out to areas around the town to establish new barracks and citadels;⁷⁷ above all, the Salvation Army, with its quasi-military organisation and uniforms, remained a highly distinctive church, retaining aggressive, open-air evangelistic tactics long after the Primitives had begun to abandon open-air work in favour of more conventional, chapel-based activities. The growth of the Army was substantial, but not spectacular; nevertheless, in relatively affluent, expanding Croydon, as a new denomination without a tradition of evangelism developed originally in a rural context, they do seem to have achieved greater success than the Primitives in attracting the urban poor. With a total attendance in 1902-3 of 1,671, they had already outstripped the Primitives.⁷⁸

Thus despite their success in building up the Croydon circuit, Primitive Methodists in the Croydon area did face a number of difficulties - popular hostility, shortage of money and manpower, and competition from other religious groups - which, taken together, could suggest that there was a definite ceiling to their activity beyond which they were unable to expand. However the evidence that each of these factors did act as a brake on the circuit's growth is far from conclusive, and it could equally be argued with some conviction that each may actually have spurred the circuit's members to greater effort. A better guide to the circuit's potential for growth in the period, it could be claimed, would be an analysis of the social constituency at which the Primitives' efforts were principally aimed, bearing in mind their reputation as a poor man's denomination. Changes in geographical units of analysis, as well as rearrangements of the Croydon circuit itself, mean that it is not possible, from the published summary census reports,

⁷⁵ Morris, 'A Disappearing Crowd?', *passim*.

⁷⁶ Minutes of Elders' Meetings, *passim*, though it has to be said that the difficulties faced by Booth's followers in Croydon were much more acute than those of the Primitives at that time.

⁷⁷ Minutes of Elders' Meetings, *passim*.

⁷⁸ Morris, D.Phil. thesis, p.436.

to produce a detailed comparison of the social structure of the area covered by the circuit in the mid-nineteenth century and again in the early twentieth century. It is possible, nevertheless, to use the 1861 summary report to analyse the social structure of the Croydon Union of parishes, and the 1911 report to analyse that of Croydon County Borough, and in this way to get a rough approximation to the scope of the circuit's operations over the half-century. In Table 1 the results of this analysis are presented for both sets of data, using the Registrar-General's 1951 description of British society in terms of five classes to rearrange the occupational classification of both reports, along the broad lines adumbrated in Gareth Stedman Jones's *Outcast London* (1971).⁷⁹

Social Class	1861				1911			
	Males	%	Females	%	Males	%	Females	%
Class 1	1274	11	522	8	4575	10	118	1
Class 2	957	8	533	8	7844	16	4698	20
Class 3	2210	20	440	7	13623	28	4847	21
Class 4	5019	44	3977	63	14174	29	10606	46
Class 5	1936	17	835	14	8234	17	2859	12
Working Pop.								
Totals	11396		6307		48450		23127	

Table 1: Social Classification of the Working Population of the Croydon Union (1861) and Croydon County Borough (1911)

Notes:

The categories used represent the following occupational groups:

Class 1 - large employers, merchants, bankers, higher officials, property owners and the liberal professions

Class 2 - small employers, small dealers, wholesalers, retailers, caterers, local government officials, teachers, entertainers, musicians, subordinate officers, clerical occupations

Class 3 - artisan crafts, skilled labour, lower-class traders, higher class domestic service

Class 4 - semi-skilled or intermediate workers in transport, agriculture, wood, metals and textiles, soldiers, sailors, subordinate government and local government service, police

Class 5 - general unskilled labour, unskilled work in land and water transport, service and manufacture, municipal labour, street traders.

Even taking at face value the assertions of contemporaries that organised religion largely failed to make much headway amongst the unskilled working class, Class 5 in Table 1, nevertheless in 1861 and again in 1911 the pool of potential church members for all those denominations which aimed explicitly at the working class was far larger than actual, approximate

⁷⁹ G. Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society* (1971), Appendix 1; census data for Croydon are set out in greater detail in Appendix 2 to Morris, op. cit.

attendances. The total working population in 1861 in the skilled and semi-skilled working class (Classes 3 and 4) in the Croydon Union was 11,646; in 1851 total attendances (adjusted for 'twicers') recorded for Baptists, Wesleyans and Primitive Methodists was 1,276, and even if this figure is as much as doubled to allow for working class Anglican attendances, and then increased again by 49% on the assumption that church attendance kept pace with population growth between 1851 and 1861, then it still suggests that less than a third of the 'pool' actively worshipped with these denominations. This would in fact represent a surprisingly high proportion of the working class, if it could be taken as an accurate 'maximum' figure, but it still qualifies the suggestion that by itself competition between denominations was a source of weakness to them, and this is confirmed by the situation in Croydon alone in 1911, when the adult working population in Classes 3 and 4 was 43,249, and yet an estimated attendance for the 'competing' denominations (Brethren, Salvation Army, Primitive Methodists, United Free Methodists, Wesleyans, Baptists and a proportion of Anglicans), increased again by 27% to match population growth, again suggests that well under half of this section of the population attended.

Competition may at times have cramped Primitive Methodism in East Surrey, but it appears to have been of marginal significance when set beside the fact that there was sufficient scope for all these denominations simultaneously to increase their attendances in the skilled and semi-skilled working classes. Viewed from this angle, popular hostility and shortage of money and manpower in turn were likely to have been significant not so much as independent constraints in themselves, but rather as symptoms of the general inability of organised religion to increase its hold above a certain ceiling in these classes.

III

Any attempt to provide an explanatory framework for the growth in the South of denominations such as the Primitive Methodists faces the almost intractable difficulty of unravelling specific causes of growth and decline from the general, cultural context of the region in the late nineteenth century. Seen from one angle, the establishment of a network of chapels and their overarching circuit organisation throughout the suburbs of South London and East Surrey was the outcome of remarkable energy and commitment, a sure sign of religious vitality. From another viewpoint it is striking how little headway the Primitives made in the area; despite the existence of what must have seemed a huge missionary opportunity, their appeal never touched more than a small fraction of the southern working class. If their importance within the worshipping community grew a little over the half-century, it was at a time when the relative size of that community was shrinking: in summary theirs was a marginally increased share of a substantially diminished cake.

Many sources of explanation other than those examined in the preceding section - such as patterns of economic activity, industrial relations, settlement patterns, leisure activity, amongst others - could be adduced as components

of a possible explanation of the Croydon circuit's vicissitudes, but they would all suffer from the weakness of being considerations at a general level which it would be difficult to relate closely to the history of something so comparatively small and particular, and which could not themselves at once explain growth and limitations on growth. In these circumstances it may be necessary, though perhaps a little weak, to acknowledge that nothing more than the most partial and contingent understanding of the processes of church growth and decline will be possible. Nevertheless the history of Primitive Methodism in East Surrey does suggest two further reflections which, indirectly at least, have some bearing on the wider history of Nonconformity in the South.

The first reflection is that the Primitives' activities in East Surrey can be interpreted as having been vulnerable to fluid demographic trends. The relative weakness of Nonconformity in the rural areas of the South in the early and mid-nineteenth century has already been mentioned in this article; it was pinpointed in Coleman's study of the 1851 figures, and also in Everitt's study of Kent, which concluded that Nonconformity in that county was chiefly an urban phenomenon.⁸⁰ The research of R.C.W. Cox on the birthplace of heads of household resident in Croydon in 1851 suggested that a high proportion would have come originally from rural settlements in the South; of 763 born between five and ten miles from the town, for example, 285 were identifiably from rural areas, and of these 87% were working class; of the total 495 working class heads of household in this sample, 50% were from rural areas.⁸¹ Only 23% of the total 3,773 heads of household in 1851 were born in Croydon parish.⁸² By 1911 34% of Croydon's population had been born in the Borough itself, and 27% in London, whereas only 5% had been born in extra-metropolitan Surrey.⁸³ Croydon's massive growth in the late nineteenth century was largely fuelled by immigration rather than an endogenous increase in the birth rate or decrease in the death rate, though either or both of these factors may have had some bearing, and a substantial proportion of this came from rural areas initially, shifting gradually towards migration outwards from London; this trend is likely to have been true of the growth of suburban South London as a whole. Resistance by the rural settlements of East Surrey to Primitive Methodism was confirmed by the circuit's general failure to establish permanent chapels there, and by its gradual concentration on the more heterogenous populations of the suburbs, which nevertheless still contained a high proportion of people - particularly the working class born in those same settlements. By the 1880s and 1890s, when the proportion of working class migrants coming to the outer suburbs from Inner London was increasing, church life in London itself

⁸⁰ Coleman, *op. cit.*; Everitt, *op. cit.*

⁸¹ R.C.W. Cox, *The Urban Development and Redevelopment of Croydon 1835-1940* (Leicester University Ph.D. thesis, 1970), p.451.

⁸² Cox, *op. cit.*, p.442.

⁸³ 1911 Census Report, County of Surrey (1911); see Morris, *op. cit.*, pp.403-404.

was already entering protracted decline, so patterns of migration if anything confirmed rather than overturned the relative weakness of Primitive Methodism in the suburbs.⁸⁴

The second reflection is that the history of Primitive Methodism in East Surrey is not an isolated, seemingly heroic story of enthusiasm, growth and ultimate failure, but rather one sub-section of the narrative of southern history gradually being rewritten by social historians, and as such it is entirely consistent with their work. It is premature to speak of a consensus of views, but common features include the acknowledgement that southern working class society was resistant to authority and punctuated by scenes of disorder well into the late nineteenth century, that popular hostility to aggressive evangelism was widespread, and that the received notion of a well-ordered, respectable South derived much from the impact of the suburbs and became generally true only in the twentieth century.⁸⁵ The experience of Primitive Methodism was of a piece with that of the Salvation Army, the temperance movement, and many other moral and religious movements.⁸⁶ Underlying the particular reasons which may have retarded or accelerated the growth of Primitive Methodism in East Surrey, then, was a much more general difficulty, namely a popular culture which was resilient in the face of attempts to change it, suspicious of authority and tenaciously loyal to patterns of belief and behaviour which were well established in the South by the beginning of the nineteenth century.

J. N. MORRIS

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⁸⁴ H. McLeod, *Class and Religion in the Late Victorian City* (1974), especially ch. 2, 'Who Went to Church?', and tables on pp.312-314.

⁸⁵ See, for example V. Bailey, 'Salvation Army Riots, the "Skeleton Army" and Legal Authority in the Provincial Town', in A.P. Donajrodski (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (1977); J. Etherington, 'The Lewes Bonfire Riots of 1847', in *Sussex History*, Vol. 1 (1978); R.D. Storch, ' "Please to Remember the Fifth of November": Conflict, Solidarity and Public Order in Southern England, 1815-1900', in R.D. Storch (ed.), *Popular Culture and Custom in Nineteenth Century England* (1982); G. Morgan, 'The Guildford Guy Riots', in *Surrey Archaeological Collections*, Vol. 76 (1985); C. Hare, 'The Skeleton Army and the Bonfire Boys, Worthing, 1884', in *Folklore*, Vol. 99 (1988); Morris, 'A Disappearing Crowd?'

⁸⁶ See, for example, J.N. Morris, 'The Temperance Movement in Victorian Croydon', in *Proceedings of the Croydon Natural History and Scientific Society*, Vol. 17, Part 8 (1984).

LOCAL HISTORIES

Methodism in the Pettigo Area by Neville McElderry (104pp): copies, price £2.84 post free, from the author at Muckross, Letter, Co Fermanagh, Northern Ireland, BT93 2BE.

The Story of Methodism in North Cave 1758-1991 by K.E. Laister (24pp): copies, price £2.00 post free, from the author at 9 Church Avenue, North Ferriby, North Humberside, HU14 3BY, cheques payable to Miss Laister.

CHARLES WESLEY, THE *ODYSSEY*, AND CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

IN *Jesus Through the Centuries*, Jaroslav Pelikan refers to the use by Clement of Alexandria of the passage in Book XII of Homer's *Odyssey* where Odysseus tells his crew that, in order to prevent him from succumbing to the Sirens' song, they

must tie me hard in hurtful bonds, to hold me fast in position upright against the mast, with the ropes' end fastened around it; but if I supplicate you and implore you to set me free, then you must tie me fast with even more lashings.¹

A little later, Odysseus warns his helmsman of the dangers of the whirlpool Charybdis:

You must keep [the ship] clear from where the smoke and the breakers are, and made hard for the sea rock lest, without your knowing, she might drift that way, and you bring all of us into disaster.²

'It was Clement of Alexandria,' says Pelikan, 'who made the most effective and profound use [among the early Fathers] of the image of Odysseus at the mast as a foreshadowing of Jesus [on the cross]'³. He goes on to cite a passage from Clement's *Exhortation to the Greeks*, where Clement actually quotes the line about keeping the ship clear from the smoke and breakers and then urges his readers to avoid the siren song of earthly Pleasure. I quote here from the Roberts and Donaldson translation:

Sail past the song; it works death. Exert your will only, and you have overcome ruin; bound to the wood of the cross, thou shalt be freed from destruction: the word of God will be thy pilot, and the Holy Spirit will bring thee to anchor in the haven of heaven.¹

This Patristic comment connects with at least two Charles Wesley hymns, one still very familiar the other now, I suspect, hardly known at all except among specialists and enthusiasts. The familiar hymn is of course 'Jesu, Lover of my soul', where the second half of the first stanza is:

¹ *Jesus Through the Centuries* (New Haven: 1985), p. 42. The passage cited from Homer is xii, 158-64, in Richmond Lattimore's translation (New York; 1967).

² xii, 219-21, quoted in Pelikan, p. 43.

³ Pelikan, p. 42.

¹ Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers: Translations of the Writings of the Fathers down to A.D. 325* (Grand Rapids, Michigan; 1989 [Reprint of the Scribner's ed. of 1899-1905]), ii, 205.

Hide me, O my Saviour, hide,
 Till the storm of life is past;
 Safe into the haven guide;
 O, receive my soul at last.⁵

The original title of the hymn is 'In Temptation,' and Clement in his comment on Homer is dealing with temptation, the temptation to succumb to the charms of ancient pagan custom - skilfully using one of the great classics of pagan literature to do so.

Here, Clement and Charles Wesley are both seeing things from the standpoint of the individual - a hypothetical 'Greek' or 'heathen' in Clement's case, a believer undergoing temptation in 'Jesu, Lover of my soul.' But in another Wesley hymn the nautical image modulates from individual into communal significance, for the Church as a whole triumphant in the haven of heaven, and the metaphor is sustained for two stanzas. The whole hymn is worth quoting as it appears in the 1780 *Collection*:

Rejoice for a brother deceased!
 Our loss is his infinite gain,
 A soul out of prison released,
 And freed from its bodily chain.
 With songs let us follow his flight,
 And mount with his spirit above,
 Escaped to the mansions of light,
 And lodged in the Eden of love.

Our brother the haven hath gained,
 Out-flying the tempest and wind,
 His rest he hath sooner obtained,
 And left his companions behind.
 Still tossed on a sea of distress,
 Hard toiling to make the blest shore,
 Where all is assurance and peace,
 And sorrow and sin are no more.

There all the ship's company meet,
 Who sailed with the Saviour beneath,
 With shouting each other they greet,
 And triumph o'er trouble and death.
 The voyage of life's at an end.
 The mortal affliction is past,
 The age that in heaven they spend
 For ever and ever shall last.⁶

⁵ G. Osborn, ed., *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (London: 1868-72), i, p. 259.

⁶ John Wesley, *A Collection of Hymns for the use of the People called Methodists* (1780), ed. Franz Hildebrandt, Oliver Beckerlegge and James Dale (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), no. 48 (pp. 139-40).

The sources of the imagery in the second and third stanzas are obviously multiple, and on one level can certainly be related to Charles Wesley's own experience of sea travel - still a very risky business in the eighteenth century. The alarming storm experienced by both Charles and John Wesley on their way to Georgia is well known, but Charles Wesley's return to England on his own was also fraught with danger, the ship being near to sinking several times.⁷ When he returned from Ireland in October 1748 after one of his missions there, the storm was so severe that the master of the vessel was swept overboard, and Wesley was constrained to write 'a thanksgiving hymn,'⁸ the second stanza of which concludes:

His piloting hand
Hath brought us to land
And, no longer distress'd,
We are joyful again in the haven to rest.

The hymn ends

With joy we embrace
The pledge of his grace,
In a moment outfly
These storms of affliction, and land in the sky.

(Here, Wesley is virtually plagiarizing himself, harking back to 'Rejoice for a brother deceased,' which was first published in the *Funeral Hymns* of 1746 and possibly written in 1744.)⁹

Idiom and experience are fused here, but may it not be possible that the concept of the haven of heaven owes something to Clement of Alexandria's Christianizing commentary on Homer, likely to appeal to the bright young Student of Christ Church, trained in the Classics at Westminster and starting to read the Fathers in earnest in the days of the Holy Club? Such reading would have informed his imagination, and stayed with him till the end of his days.

JAMES DALE

(Dr. James Dale is Associate Professor of English at McMaster University, Ontario, Canada.)

⁷ See Charles Wesley's *Journal* for October and November 1736, (*The Journal of the Rev. Charles Wesley*, ed. T. Jackson, 1849, i, pp. 48-55), especially this, at the end of the voyage: 'I returned thanks to God for bringing us to the haven where we would be' (i, p. 55).

⁸ *Journal*, ii, pp. 38-40. I have not been able to locate the hymn (pp. 39-40) in the *Poetical Works*.

⁹ *Collection*, (1983 ed) notes on pp. 138 & 139.

AN UNUSUAL DISCOVERY

In 1955 I was stationed in the Blackheath and Lee Circuit in South East London. The Manse was in Dorville Road, Lee, S.E. 12. In the kitchen was an old chest of drawers. One morning when one of the top drawers was left open, our daughter, Anne, who was then two years old, was playing on the floor underneath. Looking up she said, 'Naughty, writing'. (It should be pointed out that in those days all the furniture was Manse property and we were doing our best to teach her to respect it!) We were dismayed by her remarks, but on investigation we discovered that there was, in fact, some very interesting writing on the underside of the open drawer.

Written in ink were the words, 'D. Burnham Rigby used this drawer as a desk late at night Sep. 22nd 1868 before his departure to Sydney on Oct. 1st. Visiting Rev. G. Bowden and his ideal wife.'

Alongside, written in pencil, was this diary:

- [1868] Sept. 13 Preached in open air at Pickering near Scarborough.
 14 Called at York - On to Manchester - Stayed night at Withington.
 15 To London from Cheadle. Arrived at Butler's. Tulse Hill at 5.
 16 Went to Mission House with Mr. Butler - Boyce's to Supper.
 17 Mrs. Powell and Laura at Butler's. Came to Bowden's Blackheath. Greetings! Greetings! Lidgett in, very nice
 18 Talked and wrote letters. Mission H. Ordered outfit at Chubb's. Fixed to sail on Oct. 1st by 'Sabraon'.
 19 Alf Healey came. Rev. Thos. Hodson of India telling tales and trying to seduce me from Australia - No go.
 Sun. 20 Preached (Morning) Greenwich. Good time. Home to dinner. Heard Bowden night B'heath on 'Walking in Light' - Nervous Closing appeal very touching - Beautiful thoughts on Union with Christ. Oh if I could preach like that.
 Society Meeting - B's address too mechanical - B. called on Hodson and Self to pray - Music in doors. Mrs. B. promised that on Sunday evenings Hymn 222 (Monks) 'For those at sea' should be sung on my account.
 21 Tea with Angelina.
 22 Tea with Mr. Geo. Lidgett - good debate on *φίλην το ζῴοντων*
 23 Dinner with Angelina. Preached at Blackheath - very good audience. Mechanical time - no glow.
 24 Went to see Alf Healey at Putney. Aged folks came. God bless them.
 25 Came home, Quiet melancholy evening - Read morning.
 26 Shall I preach at Radnor Str.? Uneasy mind.
 Sun 27 Read prayers at B' for B. who preached.
 'Clouds that on your wondrous way
 Travel towards the gates of day,
 Rising from the twilight's verge,
 Onward still your course to urge,
 Oh, for once your silence break!
 To my longing spirit speak!
 Ere you leave me say oh say
 My distant loved ones how fare they.'

D. Burnham Rigby
 Sep. 22nd 1868

It seemed incredible that this piece of Methodist history should have remained undetected for 87 years and then for it to be discovered by a child. Apart from anything else it demonstrated the longevity of Manse furniture, although the chest of drawers had been relegated from the guest bedroom to the kitchen! Following the discovery I replaced the bottom of the drawer and although the diary's centenary has long since passed the writing remains clear. Students of Methodist history will recognise references to several well-known Methodist names, particularly Lidgett, Boyce, Hodson and Bowden.

I have tried to find out more detail about Mr. Rigby, but have not been very successful. The Mission House has discovered that his name is in a list of appointments to the Australian Wesleyan Methodist Conference in 1869. By then the style of his name had been changed to Daniel B. Rigby. Enquiry in Australia has established the fact that in 1869 he was stationed in the St. Leonard's suburb of Sydney, N.S.W., but nothing more seems to be known about him. It would be a bonus if this publication could add further information to an interesting piece of personal history.

ALAN O. BARBER

(The Rev Alan O. Barber is a former assistant Secretary of Conference)

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

Will be delivered in

West Avenue Methodist Church, Gosforth,
Newcastle-upon-Tyne

on

Monday, 29th June at 7.30 p.m.

by

Dr. Barrie Biggs

Sons of the Soil: Methodism in the Rural Community

Chairman: The Rev. Edwin Thompson

The Lecture will be preceded by TEA for members at 5 p.m.

and the ANNUAL MEETING at 6 p.m

** Those who intend to be present at the Tea should inform Dr. E. D. Graham,
34 Spiceland Road, Birmingham, B31 1NJ, by June 17th. .*

TRAVEL DIRECTIONS:

West Avenue Methodist Church, Gosforth, is 2 miles north of Newcastle. There is a Church Car Park at the rear of the Church, Ivy Road and limited street parking in the vicinity. Public Transport: NORTHUMBRIA BUS STATION, Haymarket. Services: 42-43 (Stand C), 44-45 (Stand B), 355-6 (Stand Ex.F). Buses every few minutes. Bus Stop: West Avenue, High Street, Gosforth is at the Church entrance. Tea and Annual Meeting entrance is by the side door in Ivy Road. METRO STATION, HAYMARKET. Airport Line, every 10 minutes. Alight at Regent Centre Metro Station. Walk back to High Street - 10 minute walk.

JOHN WESLEY'S PREFERMENT TO ST. DANIEL'S CHURCH, NEAR PEMBROKE.

SOME years ago in *Proceedings*, xli, pp.133-8, I ventured to question the assertion made by A. Barrett Sackett in an earlier issue (xxxix, pp.158-165) that John Wesley had been preferred to St. Daniel's Church near Pembroke. More recently, I was led to re-read his article and to examine again the evidence for his assertion. As a result it may now be possible to take the matter a stage further.

The two notices relating to the preferment appeared in January 1772 in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the *Bristol Journal*, though the one in the former was much more succinct than the other; it merely noted, among other 'ecclesiastical preferments', 'The Rev John Wesley, A.M.: to St. Daniel's near Pembroke'. The notice in the *Bristol Journal* on the other hand stated quite categorically that Wesley had been 'preferred to the perpetual advowson of St. Daniel's near Pembroke by John Barnes, Keeper of his Majesty's Stores'. An advowson is the patronage of a benefice - the right to present to a living, as distinct from the benefice itself. It is safe to say that many of the lay impropriators who enjoyed the right to present their friends to livings in the diocese of St. David's in the eighteenth century would have cut sorry figures indeed as incumbents themselves. In other words, what John Wesley was given in 1772 was not the benefice of St. Daniel's but the right to present any person of his choice to it.

How valuable was this patronage? Let Wesley himself answer. On February 26th, 1772, in the course of a letter to Christopher Hopper, he referred, almost casually, to 'My Welsh church' - surely a reference to St. Daniel's, writing as he did a mere month or so after the appearance of those notices: 'My Welsh church' he wrote, 'has a fine air, but no land or money belonging to it' (*Standard Letters*, v, p.308). An advowson to a living which lacked the necessary means to maintain the building, let alone to support the incumbent! The fact appears to be incontrovertible: John Wesley was given a dilapidated church which had been restored and which he could use as a preaching-house, just as, a few years later, he was given another preaching-house by another Methodist, John Allen at Marloes nearby, with this difference: Allen built his *de novo* himself, whereas St. Daniel's had once been a consecrated church and as such, could be used (and was used by Wesley) to celebrate Holy Communion.

No doubt Christopher Hopper had seen one of those two notices (probably the one in the *Gentleman's Magazine*) and it may have aroused his curiosity if indeed it had not caused him some concern. He could now rest assured: John Wesley would continue to lead Methodism and to itinerate as of yore - indeed, in that same letter he was told that Wesley hoped to be at Manchester on April 6th and thence proceed to Glasgow, Perth and Aberdeen, a long and rather inexplicable journey for a newly appointed incumbent of a remote Pembrokeshire living.

A. H. WILLIAMS.

BOOK REVIEWS

Class and Idol in the English Hymn by Lionel Adey (University of British Columbia Press, Vancouver, 1989, pp.341, £28.00, ISBN: 0 7748 0304 5)

This is the second of two studies of hymns by Lionel Adey. When the present reviewer commented on *Hymns and the Christian "Myth"* in *Proceedings*, xlvI, p. 80 he greeted its publication with much enthusiasm and a few reservations, and looked forward with interest to the second work. On this occasion, his enthusiasm is a little diminished while his reservations have grown greater.

Adey reveals in the Preface that his three objects in the book are 'to show how the Learned and Popular traditions (of hymnody) bifurcated during the late eighteenth century and then came together during the late nineteenth, to show how hymns transmitted class-conditioning to children, and to trace the intrusion of other secular concerns, such as nationalism, into the sacred domain of hymnody'. Broadly speaking, he is successful in achieving all three objects, though his attempt to answer one of the most perplexing and, for his theses, pertinent questions of all - what did people actually sing, as opposed to what did compilers offer to them? - is unconvincing. It would have been better to admit that there is no sure means of knowing.

A book with thirty-three double column pages of footnotes, and which is densely packed with detail on every page, is likely to contain some small errors. 'O little Child of Bethlehem' on page 145 should be 'O little town...' More serious is the occasional inexplicable exegesis: it is simply not true, for instance, that Keble's 'There is a book, who runs may read' refers at first to the Bible (page 36). The 'book' is God's creation from the outset (as in Watts's 'Nature with open volume stands'). One is also disturbed by some strange over-simplifications, such as the assertion on page 18, and repeated later, that hymn-singing became legal in Anglican churches in 1822. Presumably this is a reference to the Cotterill case, and if so the date is not quite correct, but it overlooks the fact that the legal position of hymns was a matter of controversy for years after that, and was the subject of a report to the Lower House of the Canterbury Convocation as late as 1872. The whole matter is complex, and it would be unfortunate if a book which appears as authoritative as Adey's were to give the impression that it were simple.

Despite all these reservations, there are many good things in this book. As in the previous volume, Adey treats the Wesleys and Watts fairly and thoroughly. His evaluations of hymns and their writers indeed, while sometimes quirky, are usually extremely perceptive. A comment from the previous review applies to the second Adey volume too: 'Every serious student of hymnody should read this remarkable, scholarly book'. It should be read, slowly and carefully, for it contains a mass of detail and much useful analysis; but it should be read with caution, for it is not without a few errors of fact or questionable judgements.

NEIL DIXON

The Religion of the Heart. A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries, by Ted A. Campbell (University of South Carolina Press, 1991, pp.217, \$29.95 ISBN: 0 87249 746 1)

Students of early Methodism are becoming increasingly aware that their subject was part of a movement of Protestant renewal stretching from Continental Europe to America, and some have suggested Roman Catholic parallels as well. The great merit of Professor Campbell's book is that he takes account of all these groups and for good measure adds Russian Orthodox sectarians and Hasidic Judaism. He sees them all as united by a common concern for 'the religion of the heart'. This is, of course to extend the scope of the book well beyond the

Evangelical Revival, but since he confines himself to Europe there are few references to the American Great Awakening. Indeed Professor Campbell seems to regard that Awakening in its origins as only a 'distant experience' (p.172) of the Evangelical Revival, a view which some would certainly question.

Although Professor Campbell sees some of the sources of the 'religion of the heart' in much earlier strands of the Christian tradition and fully recognises the distinctive styles and the varieties of context which mark the diverse groups which he describes, he nevertheless sees them as expressing a common mood originating in the seventeenth century and continuing to develop in the eighteenth. Unlike the 'objective' sacramentalism of Catholicism or the Word-centred theologies of the Reformation, the 'religion of the heart' focussed on a more 'subjective' and 'affective' piety of the will and affections as the central point of contact between God and humankind. Though the Christian and Jewish forms of the new religious style were not at one in their ultimate religious values because of the Christian belief in the deity of Christ, they were similar in their ways of approaching the religious ultimate.

Professor Campbell is careful to make it clear that his kindred religions of the heart in fact took shape in very different cultural and religious environments. The quite considerable infiltration of Catholic modes of piety into Protestantism is not much explored, and perhaps wisely, since such borrowings were liable to be bowdlerised and tailored to Protestant needs. (John Wesley's Catholic borrowings are a good example of this process.) It is perhaps only at a high level of generalisation that the parallels between these groups can be shaped into a common religion of the heart. There was a great deal of infighting even between the different branches of the Revival, let alone between all the groups studied here. In tracing the sources of these movements, moreover, it is perhaps significant that Professor Campbell nowhere mentions the work of Professor W.R. Ward on the European Awakening. For Professor Ward, while recognising some of the same factors at work as those described by Professor Campbell, places much greater stress on the sources of revival in central Europe; on the shared apprehensions of the Protestant world in face of the Catholic threat; and on the individualist self-help efforts of the revivalists in face of the failure of state churches to deliver the social and religious disciplines they promised. Although Professor Campbell recognises that material and secular factors played a part in the formation of the religions of the heart, one is tempted to say that in the end his picture of them as a response to the problems of a changing world is largely in terms of a retreat into the private life of the soul in devout groups though he recognises some borrowings by them from the Lockean style of the philosophy of knowledge. Professor Ward, on the other hand (and surely rightly) stresses the aggressive policies of Francke's Halle and of John Wesley's Methodism (and for that matter, one might add, of the early Quakers).

Given the wide scope of this book it was perhaps inevitable that the author's knowledge and use of the primary and secondary sources would be uneven. His compressed treatment of a large body of material also sometimes leads to oversimplified and even misleading statements and in a number of cases to simple error. On the Continental side there is rather too much reliance on older English sources including Ronald Knox's *Enthusiasm*. (The sexism, racism and elitism for which Campbell chides him are for some historians the least of Knox's prejudices!)

Yet it is fair to say that the book is a courageous and imaginative attempt to draw together for comparison areas of religious life which are too often treated in isolation from each other. Both the overall argument and the attempt to discover common ground between these diverse yet by no means unrelated groups should

challenge specialists to grapple with the issues Professor Campbell raises; and he is also informative for more general readers.

HENRY D. RACK

John Wesley: Un Anglican Sans Frontières. 1703-1791, by Louis J. Rataboul (Presses Universitaires de Nancy, 1991, 160FF, ISBN 2 86480 459 X)

As a bicentennial tribute to John Wesley, it is good to welcome this new biography. The author, Louis J. Rataboul, is an honorary professor of the University of Nice. A specialist in British church history, he has also taught at the University of Paris-Nanterre. This new study, the first major work in French since *Wesley: Maître d'un Peuple, 1703-91* (Paris, 1940) by Agnès de la Gorce, deserves the closest attention. A Catholic historian, the author clearly succeeds in attaining his objective of writing a most readable and lucid study for the general French-speaking reader, largely ignorant of the slightest knowledge of John Wesley. Professor Rataboul has successfully produced a much-needed new synthesis, reading extensively in recent studies. He has delved deeply into the resources of the *Journal* and the *Diary*. An admirable introduction provides a bibliographical survey with acknowledgement of the continuing value of the work of Tyerman for source material. The author regrets that he was not able to profit from the research and insights of the biography by Henry D. Rack, which appeared after his own book had been completed.

The book itself is beautifully bound, with excellent print, a good index, footnotes and select bibliography. The little-known portrait of Wesley painted in 1787 by William Hamilton is a refreshing change from usual portraiture. The text itself is well-documented and chapters have neat sub-divisions. Certain points of detail should be mentioned. There are mis-spellings of 'Priestley' (p.14), 'Rack' (p.16), 'Address' (p.31), 'Whigs' (p.31) and 'Sykes' (p.231), for example, and a contraction of *Gulliver's Travels* to *Gulliver* (p.34). On p.32, Ireland should be included in the list of countries. On p.67 the little-known, bizarre episode of Wesley confronted by a pistol-brandishing Mrs. Hawkins needs a reference footnote. On p.98, Gwennap Pit is incorrectly sited in Wales. With regard to the mob violence suffered by Wesley, the reference on p.151 is better, bringing out the special case of Ireland, than the generalised comment on p.144. Undoubtedly, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, worked amongst the aristocracy but, as her biographer Gilbert Kirby comments, the Countess was far from confining her attention to the nobility (p.226). She was indeed present at Leeds in 1762 but did she preside over Mr. Wesley's conference (p.448)?

Within a logical and well-balanced frame, the writing throughout is fluent and cogent, lucid and evocative, with a penchant for arresting comment and shrewd assessment. The opening chapter on the sixteenth and seventeenth-century religious background lays a firm foundation and owes much to Professor Rataboul's *L'Anglicanisme* (Paris, 1982). Chapter Two on the eighteenth-century background is sound and detailed though conventional. Noteworthy is the incisive way in which major issues and problems concerning Wesley's life are treated. Following other modern biographers, especially R.P.Heitzenrater, he handles the question of the 'elusive Mr. Wesley' with a keen eye for complexity and indeed contradiction. One of the most stimulating chapters is 'Le Sentimental Impénitent' with wide-ranging comment on his mother Susanna, Sally Kirkham, Kitty Hargreaves, Mary Pendarves, Sophy Hopkey, Grace Murray, and his wife Molly. To the central issue of Wesley's lifelong apostolic mission in the service of

Christ, three chapters are given. Each factor in Wesley's spiritual pilgrimage is ably examined, the early Epworth years, ordination, the 'Holy Club', the Moravians, together with comment on his reading and personal discipline. A judicious balance is drawn between the two 'conversions', that of the new spiritual impulse of 1725 and the decisive, heartwarming 'evangelical' conversion of 24th May 1738. The missionary endeavours of the following years are vividly portrayed in three stirring chapters: 'Ma paroisse, c'est le monde entier'; 'Rivalités évangéliques'; 'Face au monde hostile'. A chapter is devoted to the analysis of the psychological and emotional reaction to the preaching of the Gospel and one to the formation of an increasingly self-conscious 'Methodism' towards the close of the century.

This important new biography of John Wesley makes excellent reading. It is written with verve, thought-provoking in contemporary comparisons, judicious and critical but infused with obvious underlying admiration. It merits an extensive French readership and, surely, a good English-speaking one. The matter of translation should certainly be considered. A fitting conclusion is the final sentence: "A wonderful Anglican apostle whose last words were a message of confidence and hope revealing to us the secret of his success: 'The best of all is, God is with us'".

JOHN WALLER

Religion in Victorian Britain (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press in association with the Open University, 1988, 4 volumes): *Volume I: Traditions*, ed. by Gerald Parsons (pp. viii, 328. h/b £45.00, ISBN 0 7190 2510 9, p/b £7.25, ISBN 0 7190 2511 7); *Volume II: Controversies*, ed. by Gerald Parsons (pp. viii, 308. h/b £45.00, ISBN 0 7190 2512 5, p/b £7.25, ISBN 0 7190 2513 3); *Volume III: Sources*, ed. by James Moore (pp. xi, 545. h/b £50.00, ISBN 0 7190 2943 0, p/b £12.95, ISBN 0 7190 2944 9); *Volume IV: Interpretations*, ed. by Gerald Parsons (pp. ix, 225. h/b £40.00, ISBN 0 7190 2945 7, p/b £8.95, ISBN 0 7190 2946 5).

This set is primarily intended to serve as the textbooks for students pursuing a new undergraduate Third Level course at the Open University, A331 'Religion in Victorian Britain', but it is also being offered as a benefit to students and teachers in other institutions of higher education. The first two volumes comprise a series of twenty-three essays by seven members of the University's Faculty of Arts, all but two (which have been adapted from other publications) being especially written for the course; these cover the principal religious traditions (including Judaism and the various shades of unbelief) and controversies of the age and are mainly distilled from a rather less than comprehensive range of secondary literature published up to 1987 (mostly since *circa* 1970). Amongst them is a chapter on Protestant Nonconformity, charting the transition from Dissenters to Free Churchmen, which largely takes the form of a critical commentary on Richard Helmstadter's evaluation of 'The Nonconformist Conscience' and tends to undervalue denominational diversity. The third volume contains ninety-six lengthy - arguably, too lengthy - extracts from contemporary printed sources, concentrating on the theological and intellectual dimensions of Victorian religion, and the fourth is an eclectic 'reader' of ten previously printed articles of the later 1970s and early 1980s, none of them revised in any significant way as regards either content or layout.

Such a mammoth enterprise inevitably contains many individual nuggets of information as well as judicious summaries of modern scholarship, but its cumulative impact is rather disappointing. There is, in particular, an obvious need for much tighter editorial controls, in order to eliminate the not infrequent

duplication of material; to broaden coverage, not least thematically (there is no sustained analysis, for instance, of the 1851 religious census, overseas missions, sabbatarianism, religion and the arts, or the era's 'new religious movements' such as the Brethren and Mormons); and to tap professional expertise from outside the Open University. This general assessment has been expanded upon by the present reviewer in a recent article which attempts a volume-by-volume analysis of the work's contents, strengths and weaknesses: 'Marching to Zion: Faith and the Victorians', *Labour History Review* Vol. 55, No.1 (Spring 1990), pp.49-61. Although it is not proposed to cover the same ground here, a more specific comment on the set's potential value to readers of these *Proceedings* may be appropriate.

The deficiencies are, in truth, especially apparent in the treatment of Methodism which, given the size of the movement's constituency in the Victorian era, will be found to be exceedingly thin, there being no more than four substantive discussions extending to seventeen pages in all. These comprise a sketch of the characteristics and divisions of early nineteenth-century Methodism, some reflections on Methodism and the working class, a survey of the progressive professionalization of the Methodist ministry, and an extract from Robert Key's *The Gospel among the Masses*. The information given, moreover, is not always entirely free of misconception or factual error. Here, for example, is Parsons's account of the origins and entire history of the Bible Christians, who bring up the Methodist rear after a brief nod at the Calvinistic Methodists: 'Almost entirely confined to Devon and Cornwall, they were founded in 1806, independently of Methodism but in imitation of it, and sought membership of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. Denied membership because of the uncompromisingly individual style of their leader William O'Bryan, they formed their own Connexion and functioned rather as a local West Country version of Primitive Methodism. By 1900 they numbered some 17,000'. Outside of this handful of dedicated pages, there are only fleeting glimpses of Methodism. Thus, incredible though it may seem, a chapter on the impact of biblical criticism entirely disregards the notable contribution of Arthur Samuel Peake in popularizing the scientific approach to the scriptures and, if Henry Guppy is to be believed, in saving the British Churches from a violent fundamentalist controversy. Many other Methodist worthies suffer a similar fate, and even Hugh Price Hughes receives a distinctly limited exposure. As a guide to late nineteenth-century Methodism, *Religion in Victorian Britain* certainly bears no comparison with the, itself somewhat inadequate, third volume of A. History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain.

CLIVE D. FIELD

Evangelical Spirituality. From the Wesleys to John Stott by James Gordon (SPCK, 1991, pp xi, 340. £12.99. ISBN: 0 281 04542 9)

Recent books of spirituality have tended almost to bypass Puritan and Evangelical writing. David Bebbington's recent *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* singled out four basic characteristics of the tradition - evangelism, activism, biblicism and the centrality of the cross in devotion to Christ. Now James Gordon, a Baptist from Aberdeen, provides a parallel approach to Bebbington, neatly pairing as representatives of Evangelical Spirituality the Wesleys, Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield, John Newton and William Cowper, Charles Simeon and Hannah More, Horatius Bonar and the largely forgotten Robert Murray McCheyne, R.W.Dale and C.H.Spurgeon, D.L.Moody and F.R.Havergal, H.C.G.Moule and J.C.Ryle, P.T.Forsyth and Alexander Whyte, Samuel Chadwick and Campbell Morgan, Martyn Lloyd-Jones and John Stott. While all share a basic core of belief, there was great variety of style and cultural background - the

Arminian-Calvinist divide, diverse approaches to sanctification and the Baptism of the Spirit, to the atonement, to the millennium and co-operation with other Christians. The place of Dale and Forsyth in this particular succession may seem a little strange though no one can dispute the centrality of the cross for them. 'Do not say God is love. Why atone?..... the New Testament says God has atoned. What love!' - is Forsyth at his evangelical heart.

The book is lively and readable. Gordon summarizes the Wesleys well, avoiding the creation of a composite 'Wesley'. Charles's hymns are 'unparalleled examples of communicable theology'. Despite doctrinal diversity, there was much common vocabulary between Wesley and Whitefield both of whom saw the world as their parish.

The Anglo-Calvinist tradition stands out well. From Newton and Cowper (whom Gordon portrays sympathetically) to John Stott there is a clear continuity, best known by its hymnody. Dale and Spurgeon reveal great diversity in late Victorian dissent with Dale's political activism and 'Christian worldliness' pointing to a wider, more liberal style not threatened by modern thinking. Forsyth really follows Dale. His stress on the corporate nature of faith is strangely downplayed. He was a thinker with a greater breadth than anyone else Gordon deals with save for Edwards and Dale. Methodists will note that Samuel Chadwick - rather underrated now - takes an honoured place in the evangelical succession.

The priority of grace is the key to evangelicalism - 'the grace that masters the soul and recreates the will' (Forsyth). The second leitmotif is the centrality of the Bible with the tendency to allegory. Social awareness, albeit of a conservative style as in More, is a constant theme in the early days of Evangelicalism, tailing off in the high days of Keswick introversion but re-awakening as in Stott's attempt to generate a much broader approach typified by the Lausanne Congresses.

Gordon does not dodge Evangelical faults. 'Individualism, emphasis on feelings, guilt-making and scrupulosity, world-denying attitudes, suspicion of cultural life, withdrawal from social involvement to which might be added, an anti-intellectual strain, a tendency to be judgmental of non-Evangelical Christians, a dismissive attitude to other spiritual traditions and sometimes an unlovely spiritual pride, are amongst the weaknesses, failings and distortions sometimes present in Evangelical piety' (p.324). But nevertheless Evangelicalism is a vital element in the Christian panorama not least in its sheer spiritual energy and zeal. Methodism in its central tradition because of its Arminianism and its lack of pre-millennialism was always somewhat apart from the tradition Gordon outlines, particularly in its Anglican form, but that is another story worth exploring. Mr Gordon's book has useful bibliographies and if he helps to open up a tradition too easily dismissed as spiritually and intellectually inadequate, it will serve a very useful purpose.

JOHN MUNSEY TURNER.

Heaven is near the Rocky Mountains: the journals and letters of Thomas Woolsey 1855-1869; edited by Hugh A. Dempsey. (Calgary, Alberta, Glenbow Museum pp. 189. \$19.95)

This book, published in late 1989, fills a long-felt gap in the published religious history of the Canadian west. Woolsey, a native of Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, was ordained by the Canadian Methodist Church and proceeded immediately into the then Hudson's Bay Territory to continue the missionary activity inaugurated by Robert T. Rundle in 1840 under the British Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society.

Woolsey remained for nine years without interruption serving whites, natives and mixed-bloods in a vast western area. A diligent letter-writer, he communicated with the mission rooms and several periodicals as often as circumstances would permit, describing the Indians, the fur trade, his missionary work and conditions generally, an important record for the time and place. The present volume gathers these and presents them in edited form together with an introduction by Hugh Dempsey, Curator of the Glenbow Museum.

While I personally am grateful to have the letters made available at last, there are some cautions to be made. Woolsey, a printer during his young manhood in London, was distinctly a literary man, and throughout his life a mind richly stored with literary treasures was reflected in his writings. Mr. Dempsey has stripped these away as 'extraneous material', leaving an undecorated result which hardly does the author justice. The 1850-1860s era was a time of deep hostility between Roman Catholic and Protestant churches, and in the Canadian mission fields the churches were in keen competition for the allegiance of the native peoples. This is reflected in Woolsey's letters, but the reasons for it Mr. Dempsey attributes to Woolsey's personal eccentricity, rather than to official church policy.

Despite these reservations we can be grateful to have this collection at last available; unfortunately, Thomas Woolsey's personal journal, a record we know he kept, has never been discovered, so consequently his letters are at best a fragmentary account of his activities. It is the hope of Canadian historians that an intensive search may even yet uncover it, adding much to our knowledge of this heroic missionary and his times in the last days of the Hudson's Bay Company's fur empire. In the meantime, *Heaven is near the Rocky Mountains* fills a useful place in the annals of Methodist missionary history.

J. ERNEST NIX

'The Calvinist Catholic' is the theme of the Bernard Manning Centenary Conference to be held at the Windermere Centre, Cumbria on 19-21 June 1992. The programme will include lectures by Dr Clyde Binfield and the Rev Alan Gaunt, a visit to the High Chapel and manse, Ravenstonedale, readings from Manning's works and a special service. Further details from R.M. Francis, 2 Gray's Inn Square, London, WC1R 5AA. The cost is £48. The deposit of £10 should be made payable to 'URC Windermere Centre'.

A One-Day Meeting of the Charles Wesley Society will be held on Monday 27 July 1992 at Wesley Memorial Methodist Church, Oxford. Speakers will include the Rev Gordon S. Wakefield and Canon A. M. Allchin. The cost, including luncheon, is £12.00 (\$22.50). Further details from Alan Rose, 26 Roe Cross Green, Mottram, Hyde, Cheshire, SK14 6LP.

H.L. Malchow: *Gentlemen Capitalists: The Social and Political world of the Victorian businessman*, Macmillan, £50.00, (0 333 55717 4) consists of extended essays about a quartet of Victorian businessmen-politicians, including William McArthur (1808-79), Lord Mayor of London, Liberal MP for Lambeth and prominent Wesleyan Methodist.

Correction On page 110 of the February *Proceedings* the date of the draft Anglican-Methodist Ordinal is given as 1974. This should read 1968.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1455. AN INSCRIPTION ASCRIBED TO JOHN WESLEY

In the Old Vicarage of Temple Church, Bristol, there was in 1940 a piece of glass, presumably originally a window pane, on which are two dactylic hexameters in Latin, said to have been inscribed on it by John Wesley when he was a guest of the Vicar. They are:

Gutta cavat lapidem non vi, sed saepe cadendo,
Sic homo fit doctus non vi, sed saepe legendo.

They may be translated:

A drop hollows out a stone, not by violence, but by often falling;
So a person becomes learned, not by violence, but by often reading.

Underneath them there is another pair of dactylic hexameters, signed and dated 'Geo Calcott 1770'.

I owe to Mr. Jasper Griffin, F.B.A., Fellow and Tutor of Balliol College, Oxford, the information in these paragraphs: Ovid wrote a couplet

Gutta cavat lapidem, consumitur anulus usu,
atreritur pressa vomer aduncus humo

(Ex Ponto. iv. 10. 5-6)

'Dropping water hollows a stone, a ring is devoured by wear, the curved ploughshare is worn away by being pressed into the soil.'

In the sixteenth century Lambinus quoted the first line in the form which the piece of glass has, and said it was by Ovid. Ciofanus called this 'A most inept line and worthy of a poet like Lambinus, not like Ovid'. Burman, later, called it 'That well known and almost proverbial line ... who its author is, I don't know'. It turns up, apparently, also as an interpolation in a poem of Claudian. The second line has been made up to go with this monostich as it originally was; the rhyme shows that it is not classical, but its author and date are unknown.

The second word of the inscription is not clear. It should have been 'cavat', but it looks suspiciously like 'carvit', which is impossible on metrical and other grounds. As Wesley would have been unlikely to make such a mistake, this throws some doubt on the ascription of it to Wesley.

The house had ceased to be the Vicarage and was occupied by the sexton, Mr. Bolwell, and his wife, but the Vicar retained a room in it, in which was the piece of glass. In November 1940 the adjacent Temple Church was destroyed by enemy action, and during the night Mr. and Mrs. Bolwell hastily left the house; the house was not destroyed, but they did not return to live there. They went elsewhere with their possessions, in which someone included the piece of glass. Many years later they offered it to Methodism. The matter was referred to the New Room, where it was gratefully accepted. It was, however, the property of the diocese of Bristol; so the Bishop of Bristol (the Rt. Rev. Barry Rogerson) was informed. On March 16th 1991 at a lunch for members of the Methodist Heritage sub-committee of the connexional Archives and History Committee, the Warden of the New Room (The Rev. A. Raymond George) narrated the history of the piece of glass; the Bishop thanked Mr. and Mrs. Bolwell for preserving it, and graciously presented it to the New Room as a token of our continuing search for visible unity; and the Rev. Ian T. White (Chairman of the District and of the Trustees) offered prayer. It now hangs in the Adam Clarke room.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

1456. A STOIC SOURCE FOR THE 'COVENANT PRAYER'?

Readers of *Proceedings* will have been astonished to find in *The Oxford Book of Prayer* (ed. George Appleton, 1985, p. 326) this prayer of Epictetus which bears a striking resemblance to a central part of the 'Covenant Prayer' as it now stands in (e.g.) *The Methodist Service Book* 1985, p.D 10. The Stoic prayer reads:

Do with me henceforth as thou wilt. I am of one mind with thee, I am thine. I decline nothing that seems good to thee. Send me whither thou wilt. Clothe me as thou wilt. Wilt thou that I take office or live a private life, remain at home or go into exile, be poor or rich, I will defend thy purpose with me in respect of all these. (This is from Diss. ii 16,42)

There is of course nothing here exactly like 'I am no longer my own', which comes from the Pauline 'you are not your own...' (I Cor. 6: 19-20), because for Epictetus there is no need for any price to be paid: humankind is already naturally cognate with deity sufficiently. The theme of submission is, in the Puritan theology, kept in its place by integration within a covenantal theology and spirituality (cf. the two-part article in the 1991 volume of *Studia Liturgica*, 'Daily Prayer in the Reformed Tradition', by the Rev Diane Karay Tripp). In the Alleine *Directions*, correspondingly, 'Put me to what thou wilt..' is not part of the main prayer of the covenanting act, which concentrates on the new relationship of grace between the Trinity and the penitent; it occurs among the preliminary devotions, in that section which dwells upon the image of God as our employer and master, whose appointments and directions should not be questioned. John Wesley kept the Puritan schema and its implied order of values. The now familiar 'Covenant Prayer', which derives from George B. Robson (see D.H. Tripp, *The Renewal of the Covenant in the Methodist Tradition*, 1969), has taken the paragraph from the preliminary devotions and given it a central place.

A number of historical and other questions arise, which the prominence of Epictetus' prayer in the Oxford anthology brings into more public debate than before:

1. Has Epictetus influenced the wording of the Alleines? (D.H. Tripp's 1969 study did not enquire into the nexus of sources and influences behind Wesley's Puritan source).
2. Was Wesley aware of any such possible Stoic influence in the text which he borrowed? (The late N. Allen Birtwhistle, in a footnote of his *They Who Will Hear*, (1961), glanced at this issue, but did not live to pursue it).
3. Is there any evidence that Robson, in his service of 1922 prepared for the Sunday School Union, or the committee which adapted his service for the 'Blue Cover Order' and again for the 1936 *Book of Offices*, were influenced by, or aware of the similarity to, this Stoic text? No extant sources known to us as yet throw light here; we must hope that readers may discover unpublished material germane to the investigation.

There are also theological and additional pastoral-liturgical questions. The relationship between Stoicism and New Testament Christianity is ambiguous - see for example Rudolf Bultmann's study, 'Das religiöse Moment in der ethischen Unterweisung des Epiktet und das Neue Testament' in *Zeitschrift für die neuestamentliche Wissenschaft* xiii (1912) 97-110, 177-191 which discusses this prayer specifically. Further: does this prayer of Epictetus say exactly what we want most of all to say now about God's relationship with us?