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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

*Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.*

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### CHOSEN BY GOD: THE FEMALE TRAVELLING PREACHERS OF EARLY PRIMITIVE METHODISM

*The Wesley Historical Society Lecture 1993*

**I**t is just over a hundred years since the last Primitive Methodist female travelling preacher died. **Elizabeth Bultitude** (1809-1890) had become a travelling preacher in 1832 and she superannuated after 30 years in 1862, dying in 1890. Of all the female itinerants the first, **Sarah Kirkland** (1794-1880), and the last, **Elizabeth Bultitude**, are the best known, but this is just the tip of the iceberg. Forty years ago Wesley Swift, wrote in the *Proceedings* about the female preachers of Primitive Methodism:

We have been able to identify more than forty women itinerants, but the full total must be considerably more.<sup>1</sup>

This was the starting point of my inquiry.

First it is necessary to take a brief look at the whole question of women preaching. The Society of Friends, because they maintained both sexes equally received Inner Light, insisted that anyone who felt so called should be allowed to preach. So it was that many women within the Quaker movement were able to exercise their gifts of preaching without restriction. Many women undertook preaching tours both in this country and abroad, finding release from male-dominated society and religion and equal status with

<sup>1</sup>*Proceedings*, xxix, p 79.

men in preaching the word of God. For many years female preaching was, on the whole, limited to the Quakers while the other denominations ignored it as being against Scripture, especially the Pauline injunction about women keeping silence in the church.

Other writers have dealt with Wesley and female preachers and with the agonising of Wesleyan Methodism on this subject<sup>2</sup>, so suffice it to note that the matter of the 'call' to women raised the question within Wesleyan Methodism as to whether it was a 'Quaker' call - meaning that women could receive 'immediate inspiration from heaven'<sup>3</sup> and have the right to preach equally with men. This type of call would appear to imply an occasional and immediate, rather than a sustained preaching ministry. This was the problem for John Wesley when he was faced with women who felt that they had a 'call' to preach. Often this call came with such intensity that they felt unable to deny it, but on other occasions they were called upon to step into the breach when the appointed preacher failed to turn up. The women of Wesleyan Methodism were well aware that any public utterance by them was liable to give offence and many took care to engage in what was virtually preaching, but which went by the name of 'exhortation'. Wesley rejected the preaching of women to great congregations, but was happy for them to speak in class and Band meetings. As time went on he was forced to bow to the inevitable and to allow women to preach 'in extra-ordinary cases'. His yardstick for judging their call was their usefulness and whether God owned their ministry. So he gave tacit, if reluctant approval, to Sarah Mallett<sup>4</sup> and others, but undoubtedly the two who had most effect on the preaching of women were Mary Bosanquet, who became the wife of John Fletcher of Madeley,<sup>5</sup> and Mary Barritt<sup>6</sup>. The Wesleyan Conference of 1803 passed a resolution insisting that 'in general' women should not preach, but if it was convinced that anyone had an extra-ordinary call she might be allowed to preach to her own sex.<sup>7</sup> This regulation remained in force for more than a century and was not actually rescinded till 1972, though the phrase 'to her own sex' was deleted in 1910. One of the women who ignored the regulation was Mary Barritt, who started preaching in her twenties, travelling many miles in the north of England. Many future well-known Wesleyan ministers

<sup>2</sup> Paul W. Chilcote, *John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism* (Metuchen, N.J. 1991); Earl Kent Brown, *Women of Mr. Wesley's Methodism* (New York, 1983); D.M. Valenze, 'Prophetic Sons and Daughters: popular religion and social change in England 1790-1850' (Brandeis University Ph.D. 1982) pp. 62-73.

<sup>3</sup> Zachariah Taft, *Biographical Sketches of.....Holy Women.....* vol.I (1825), Preface p. iv.

<sup>4</sup> Taft, op. cit. Preface, vol. I p.iv and p.84; *Standard Journal*, viii p.190.

<sup>5</sup> Taft, op. cit. vol. i pp. 20, 21-23, 25; *Standard Letters*, v. p 257; H Moore, *The Life of Mrs Fletcher* (1867 - 17th ed.) p. 125; J. Ritson, *Romance of Primitive Methodism* (1909) p.133.

<sup>6</sup> Z. Taft *Memoirs of the Life of Mrs. Taft* (1827) Part 1 pp. x, viii-ix.

<sup>7</sup> *Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference 1803* (1862 ed) p.187.

were converted under her ministry. In 1802 she married the Rev. Zachariah Taft and virtually worked as an itinerant alongside her husband in the circuits to which he was appointed. Zachariah was a believer in female preaching for its own sake and not just because of his wife's talents and he was an able apologist, writing a number of articles and many letters on the subject.<sup>8</sup> He was convinced that to deny women the right to preach was not in accord with Wesley's views and that if the 'father of Methodism' had still been alive women would have received 'that encouragement which they ought to have had'.<sup>9</sup> Taft observes, tantalisingly, that because Wesleyan Methodism had not accepted women's ministry 'many have left us and joined other communities, where they are eminently useful...'<sup>10</sup> As in 1825, the date at which Taft was writing, there were thirteen Primitive Methodist female itinerants and twenty-five Bible Christians one cannot help wondering if he had these in mind and is hinting at Wesleyan Methodism's lost opportunity and also that after Wesley's death the Connexion had become less flexible and less far-sighted than its founder.

Certainly there were at least three women who turned to Primitive Methodism to exercise their ministry, **Mary Dunnell**, **Ann Carr** (1785-1841), and more important for this paper, **Mary Porteous** (1783-1861), whose biographer categorically states that she would have remained with the Wesleyan Connexion if it had been possible for her to respond to the call to preach and ultimately to itinerate and exercise her ministry within that communion.<sup>11</sup> This was probably true for others who came from Wesleyan backgrounds and might well have become itinerants within that Connexion if it had been allowed. It seems that the frustrated women preachers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church found their services readily accepted by the Primitive Methodists and that they were welcomed in a denomination which made no distinction, especially in its early days, between men and women. **H.B. Kendall** wrote:

No sex distinctions were recognised when there was a duty to be done or a privilege to be enjoyed. It has been the mission of Primitive Methodism .... to give the Churches an object lesson in regard to the value of woman's work. Some of the most valuable of our early travelling preachers were females....<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> Z. Taft, *Thoughts on Female Preaching* (Dover 1803); *The Scripture Doctrine of Women's Preaching: stated and examined by Z. Taft*, (York 1820); *Biographical Sketches of the Lives and public ministry of various Holy Women* 2 vols. (1825 and 1828) (hereafter *Holy Women*); Taft Correspondence (Methodist Archives and Research Centre hereafter cited as MARC);

<sup>9</sup> Z. Taft, *Holy Women* vol. I Preface. p.v.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.* Preface pp. v, vi.

<sup>11</sup> J. Lightfoot, *The Life and Labours of Mrs. Mary Porteous* (1862) p.78.

<sup>12</sup> H.B. Kendall, *Handbook of P. M. Church Principles, History and Policy* (1898) p.42.

Hugh Bourne and others in early Primitive Methodism were attracted to and influenced by the Society of Friends, which doubtless led to the Connexion's emphasis on fervent evangelism, the importance of the laity and the use of women. This use of women in the ministry (both itinerant and lay) was one of the notable features of the first years of the Connexion's history. In 1808 Hugh Bourne published a tract: *Remarks on the Ministry* and concluded that any person whose labours were owned by God should be allowed to exercise their ministry 'without respect to persons'.<sup>13</sup> As the years passed and Primitive Methodism became more established and orthodox, the question of female itinerancy became an issue which exercised the minds of many Primitive Methodist historians and apologists.

Primitive Methodism began in the Cheshire-Staffordshire area, its principal founders being Hugh Bourne and William Clowes who believed in enthusiastic expressions of faith and the value of open air meetings. Unfortunately their unorthodox methods, especially their espousal of camp meetings, met with the disapproval of the Wesleyan authorities and both men were expelled. From the beginning women were accepted as readily as men and took part equally in all its evangelistic enterprises. There were around a dozen women who worked in the early days before the Connexion was established and before the Stations commenced. Some continued, but a number finished before 1820. Of these I mention three:

(1) **Mrs. Mary Dunnell**, a lady of considerable gifts, but of dubious ultimate value to the infant Primitive Methodist cause. She was undoubtedly the first female preacher of the camp meeting community, but because of her future behaviour was regarded as a troublemaker and virtually expelled.<sup>14</sup> (2) **Mary Hawkesley** whose gifts Hugh Bourne used in the Hulland Tract Mission before she became a travelling preacher in 1813.<sup>15</sup> (3) **Sarah Kirkland**, who is always regarded as the first female travelling preacher in spite of the fact that she retired from the itinerancy in 1820 so that her name never appeared on the stations. Her story is a familiar one. A young girl, converted at the age of seventeen and soon feeling a call to preach, but fighting it till finally in 1814 she took her first appointment at Sutton-on-the-Hill. The story of her evangelistic travels and missions during the following four years in the North and East

<sup>13</sup>J. Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the late Ven. Hugh Bourne (1855-7)* (2 vols.) vol. 1 pp. 172-7.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* I pp. 275, 325-6 and fn, 333, 337, 363; J.T. Wilkinson, *Hugh Bourne 1772-1852* (1952) p. 81; H.B. Kendall, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (n.d.) vol 1. p.92.

<sup>15</sup>Wilkinson, *op. cit.* p.95 fn. 33; Kendall, *History*, Vol 1 p. 178; H. Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodists* (Bemersley 1823) p.45.

Midlands is one full of adventure, excitement, not a little danger and considerable success. Sarah was engaged by Hugh Bourne as an itinerant at the princely sum of two guineas (£2.10) a quarter in 1816. The novelty of a female preacher drew crowds to her services and meetings and the Primitives were not slow to exploit this, as with later female itinerants. After about four years of arduous, but successful ministry Sarah married John Harrison, another travelling preacher, on 17 August 1818 at Bingham, near Nottingham<sup>16</sup> and for nearly two years they worked together as recognised itinerants. Their joint ministry was curtailed by John's ill-health and they retired in May 1820. John died on 22 July 1821 at the age of 25. Soon after, Sarah was asked to return to Hull, but declined and in February 1825 married fellow local preacher, William Bembridge. William and Sarah both died in 1880.<sup>17</sup>

The chief part of this lecture is concerned with the Primitive Methodist female itinerants who were actually stationed, but who are just a small percentage of all the women preachers of Primitive Methodism. It has been far from easy to track down these women. Evidence is scanty and, when found, often biased. Ninety have been traced,<sup>18</sup> but, I feel sure that there are still more lurking behind the initials of the stations of the travelling preachers listed in the Primitive Methodist *Minutes*. Sometimes it is possible to discover the sex of the itinerant by studying the accounts of the various funds published in the *Minutes*.<sup>19</sup> Other sources of information are of course, *the Primitive Methodist Magazine* and local church and circuit records. Just one example of the difficulties encountered - I went to Cornwall to find information about an Elizabeth and a Harriet, but they turned out to be Edward and Henry. However, I found a Sarah and a Mary I knew nothing about so ended up all square!

Memoirs have been found for only twenty women. These records vary in length, in the personal information they give and, in many cases, they seem to fit into a pre-conceived religious framework

<sup>16</sup>The parish registers of Bingham contain the following entry: John Harrison (a preacher of the Primitive Methodists called Ranters) a bachelor, and Sarah Kirkland (a preacher also of the same persuasion) a spinster, both of Bingham, were married in church by barns 17th August 1818. (Nottinghamshire Record Office). cf. G Herod, *Biographical Sketches of some of the preachers whose labours contributed to the originated and early extension of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*. (n.d.? 1855) p.321 where the date is given as 11 August 1818.

<sup>17</sup>*Primitive Methodist Magazine* (hereafter *P.M.Mag.*) (1881) *passim*.

<sup>18</sup>See E.D. Graham, *Chosen by God, A list of the female travelling preachers of early Primitive Methodism* (1989).

<sup>19</sup>For example, 'A. Go(o)dwain' was pledged' and she is found to be Ann; 'M Bugden', also pledged is Mary; 'E Brown' turns out to be Elenor and 'S. Willis' rejoiced in the name of Sophia. (*Primitive Methodist Minutes*) (hereafter *P.M.M.*) 1832 p.4; (1838) p.16; (1833) p.2; (1841) p.22; (1839) p.1; (1847) p.30; (1841) p.4. (1846) p.22.

concentrating on the woman's spiritual state and inner feelings. This is understandable when it is remembered that articles written for the *Magazine* were intended to inspire and encourage the readers. However, a few conclusions can be drawn from these twenty, though one would hesitate to say that this sample group, being less than a quarter of the number of known women, could, in any way, be regarded as typical of the whole.

The twenty women in question were all born before 1816 and thus fall into the early period of the Primitive Methodist Connexion's history. They became members between 1811 and 1834, soon becoming local preachers and quickly going on to be travelling preachers. Most of them were born in the North Midlands or further north. Little information is given about their backgrounds - usually 'poor, but industrious' - few had the benefit of much education and several went into service to supplement the family income. Not surprisingly most came from Wesleyan or Anglican backgrounds and about half of them were converted when Primitive Methodist missions visited their home localities. **Mary Ball** (1810-1860) of Belper was the only one apparently to attend a Primitive Methodist Sunday School. The two, **Mary Edward(e)s** (1802-1875) and **Fanny Hurlle** (1790-1858), who faced family persecution for joining the Primitive Methodists, not surprisingly came from families of pronounced Anglican allegiance.

In view of the missionary nature of Primitive Methodism it is interesting to note that anyone possessing any speaking ability was soon pressed into service first as a local preacher and then as an itinerant. The call to preach sometimes came from an overwhelming conviction of the girl herself, sometimes because of a need for someone to minister in the local situation and sometimes because the 'circuit authorities' simply 'put her on the plan' - e.g. **Elizabeth Allen** (1803-1850), **Elizabeth Smith** (1805-1836), **Rebecca Tims** (1803-1866), **Lucy Hubbold** (1809-1860) and **Mary Clarissa Buck** (1810-1876), who all went on to become travelling preachers. Many of the women felt a natural reluctance to accept the call, mainly through a sense of inadequacy - e.g. **Mary Porteous** kept it a secret for two years<sup>20</sup>; **Elizabeth Smith** doubted after she was 'attacked' by two clergymen<sup>21</sup>; **Lucy Hubbold** was so diffident that she did not go to her first appointment, went to the second and was so upset that she returned her plan, but finally became a travelling preacher.<sup>22</sup> When we remember the tender ages of most of this

<sup>20</sup> Lightfoot, *op. cit.* pp. 90-2.

<sup>21</sup> *P.M. Mag* 1837, p.177.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.* 1861, p. 201.

group of twenty this is easily understandable, as apart from two who were in their forties, the oldest was twenty-six and the youngest fifteen when they commenced preaching, giving an average age of nineteen.

The majority of these twenty women only served as travelling preachers for a short time, but several itinerated for a considerable period - **Elizabeth Bultitude** (29); **Sarah Price** (1807- ) (14); **Mary Burks** (1796-1837) (13/14); **Mary Clarissa Buck** (11 + 25 special). **Jane Aycliffe** (1815-1837) died at 22 after just one year. A few other relevant statistics: five remained single; six married their male colleagues; four married local preachers; two married twice and two married widowers. Usually after retirement or marriage the females reverted to local preacher status and in many cases were active as class leaders. They settled mainly in the North Midlands or further north except **Fanny Hurl** (Frome) and **Martha Doncaster** (1806-1875) (Australia). As well as marriage, ill-health, stress and strain may have contributed to their retirement. Most had large families - probably the norm rather than a Primitive Methodist characteristic - e.g. **Elizabeth Johnson** (1808-1860), who had seven sons, three of whom became Mayors of Walsall.<sup>23</sup>

A few points of interest from the little information there is on the rest of the women. When the Primitive Methodist Connexion decided to send missionaries to the United States of America **Ruth Watkins** (1803- ) was one of the four who sailed from Liverpool on 9 June 1829 for New York.<sup>24</sup> Three of the early female preachers came from Bronington-in-Flint, a small village near Whitchurch. The three women in question, **Ann Stanna**, **Sarah Spittle** and **Sarah Welch**, all worked for much of their ministry in the Shropshire/Cheshire/West Staffordshire area. This suggests that this was a region which very early came under the influence of Primitive Methodism and, perhaps more interestingly that this was one part of the country which was keen on employing female travelling preachers.

Certain circuits were very happy to have women itinerants and some went to extraordinary lengths to obtain a desired female itinerant, even offering to pay the difference in salary to another circuit to persuade them to take a man and let them have the woman.<sup>25</sup> No doubt there were several reasons for this. They were a novelty and

<sup>23</sup>Ritson, op. cit. p. 145 cf. list of Mayors 1872 & 1873; 1891; 1893 (Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council).

<sup>24</sup>*P.M.M.* 1829, p.4; *P.M.Mag.* (1829) pp.251, 321-3, 378-383; W. Clowes, *Journal* pp. 291, 293-4; John Holmes Acornley, *A History of the Primitive Methodist Church in U.S.A.* ( Fall River, Mass., 1909) pp.16-18; William H. Fudge, *The View from the Mountain* (1933) pp. 7-9.

<sup>25</sup>J.P. Langham, *The Tunstall Book: a souvenir of a Hundred years of Grace, 1810-1910*, (n.d.) p. 49.

drew large congregations, which helped the spread of Primitive Methodism. They were cheap, being paid less than the men, receiving as stipend only £2.0.0. (£2.00) a quarter in 1819, increased to £2.2s.0d. (£2.10) in 1823 with board and lodging. In 1831 it was decided that the women preachers, after two years travelling, should receive £2.10s.0d. (£2.50) whereas the men came more expensive at £3.15s.0d (£3.75) plus a board and lodging allowance for a single man; while a married man received £7.16s 0d (£7.80), plus a small expense allowance and 15d. (6p.) a week for each child under eight.<sup>26</sup> This could be of importance to an impoverished circuit or to one where the work was just starting to make an impact. Often circuits were so poor that they could not even afford these salaries. To a large extent the preachers were responsible for raising their own salaries and they were encouraged to improve their circuits, not only 'for the work's sake', but also with the hope of obtaining their full salaries. For example, **Elizabeth Smith**, when she started to travel, was appointed to open a mission in Radnorshire. Nothing having been said about salary, perhaps with supreme faith (or foolhardiness) she did not ask about it. However, as she set off she was told she would have to raise her own salary of two guineas (£2.10) a quarter. Again, when she was missioning in the Brinkworth area money was so short she often went to bed hungry rather than embarrass the circuit.<sup>27</sup> Several minute books preserved in Record Offices provide other instances of the financial straits in which circuits found themselves. Those in which women were involved included the Durham Circuit in 1846 when **Elenor Brown** was 'given liberty to collect to meet our present deficiency' and again in 1847 it was recorded

that Sister Brown have liberty according to her request to solicit private subscriptions towards her deficiency in salary being £1.1.0d (£1.05).<sup>28</sup>

Deficiencies in salaries are also shown for **Matilda Archer** (1815-1851) in the Ludlow Circuit (1839,1840); for **Mary Gribble** (1812-) and **Ann Woodward** (1810/11-) in St Austell (1835, 1836, 1837).<sup>29</sup> **Mary Porteous** 'begged' on behalf of the North Shields Circuit.<sup>30</sup> One particular instance is that of **Sarah Price** when she was stationed in the Redruth Circuit in 1828. The circuit's account for

<sup>26</sup> *P.M.M.* 1832, p. 32; 1831, p.2, cf. 1819, pp. 4-5; 1819/20, p. 5.

<sup>27</sup> *P.M. Mag.* 1837, p.98, 179.

<sup>28</sup> Minute Book for the Durham Circuit, 1841-48 (Sept. 19 1846), [8]; (June 19 1847) [11] (Durham R.O.).

<sup>29</sup> Ludlow P.M. Circuit Accounts 1836-44 (Dec. 23 1839; March 22 1840; June 22 1840; Sept. 21 1840) (Shropshire R.O.); Redruth Circuit Quarterly Accounts, 1828-30 (Sept.1 1828); St Austell Circuit Minute Book (June 8 1835; Sept. 7 1835; Dec. 7 1835; Sept. 5 1836; Dec 5 1836; March 6 1837; June 1837) (Cornwall R.O.).

<sup>30</sup> Lightfoot, *op. cit.* p. 132f.; H. Woodcock, *The Romance of Reality ...*(n.d.? 1904). p. 39.

September read:

|             |                     |                                      |
|-------------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Sarah Price | Sallery             | 6s. 4. <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub> d |
| Sarah Price | Travelling expenses | 1s. 6d                               |
| Sarah Price | Lodging             | 4s. 0d <sup>31</sup>                 |

Obviously, the circuit was financially embarrassed and Sarah was not paid the going rate for the job. This is not an isolated case, she also experienced it in the St. Austell Circuit, as did others, both sexes, elsewhere. It must be remembered that many of the congregations consisted of workers who earned only about the same wages as the itinerants<sup>32</sup> and could ill afford even a modest contribution to the travelling preacher's upkeep. The Connexion realised these difficulties and set up a Charitable Fund to help those who did not get their full salary. On the other hand a 'big stick' was virtually wielded by the resolution that any preacher being convicted of 'running out' a circuit would be 'fined at the discretion of the Annual Meeting.'<sup>33</sup> Perhaps this helps to explain the fines imposed and recorded in the Quarterly Minutes of the Redruth Circuit

that Sarah Price for the neglect of opportunity forfeit according to Rule  
and in the corresponding Accounts

Fines - Bekerleg - Price - Moorish 4s. 6d.<sup>34</sup>

The Preachers' Fund, a Friendly Fund designed to benefit those who joined it and to assist their widows and children, was started in 1823. For a while the women were allowed to participate but when it was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery of 28 January 1841 they were declared ineligible.<sup>35</sup>

The novelty value of female travelling preachers has already been mentioned and there are numerous references to their drawing power. Of Sarah Kirkland we are told that 'curiosity to hear a young female preacher hastily drew together a large concourse of people',<sup>36</sup> and in Hull the preaching room was too small for all who wished to hear her. Great crowds flocked to hear Elizabeth Allen

<sup>31</sup> Redruth Circuit Quarterly Accounts 1828-30 (Cornwall R.O.).

<sup>32</sup> J. Petty, *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion ...* (1880) p. 265 cf. Ritson op. cit. pp. 208-10.

<sup>33</sup> P.M.M. 1828, p. 6.

<sup>34</sup> Redruth Circuit Quarterly Accounts 1828-30 (Sept. 1 1828). (Cornwall R.O.).

<sup>35</sup> P.M.M. 1823, p. 4; John Hallam Book Fund Rules: Rules and Regulations of an Institution called the Primitive Methodist Preachers Fund formed at Hull August 25 1823 (Hull, 1823) [John Hallam papers. (MARC)]; Rules of the Primitive Methodist Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society, (1840, 1841) p.6.

<sup>36</sup> P.M.M. 1881, p. 164.

on her missions to Scotland and Ireland.<sup>37</sup> People had to be turned away when **Mary Buck** preached at Bradwell<sup>38</sup> and her superintendent minister reported of **Elizabeth Smith** that 'the novelty of a female preacher drew numbers to hear'.<sup>39</sup> So I think it is fair to say that in some quarters, at least, the large congregations and perhaps even the success of Primitive Methodism was due to the novelty of their female itinerants as much as to the more general appeal of Primitive Methodism itself.

Incidence of persecution seems to have depended more on circumstances than on the preacher's sex. **Sarah Kirkland** met with little persecution in her missions, but some of her male colleagues were actually imprisoned. It is not possible to say categorically that this was because she was a young woman, but I incline to the view that it was the local situation which determined the occurrence of persecution. To a certain extent this seems also to be true of **Elizabeth Smith's** ministry when she faced a hostile crowd at Ramsbury and elsewhere in the Brinkworth District.<sup>40</sup>

Another interesting point is the way in which Primitive Methodism spread. Often someone attending a camp meeting or service would invite the preacher to go to another town or village. This was doubtless true of both sexes, but, due to the novelty aspect, was particularly marked in the case of the women. **Sarah Kirkland**, **Elizabeth Smith** and **Jane Ansdale** certainly went on missions by special invitation. The Primitive Methodists were very ready to make use of every contact which was available to help the spread of the Gospel and it is likely that a network of useful contacts was built up over the years. We need to be aware of the hospitality offered, especially in the early days, to the travelling preachers, before chapels and preachers' houses were built. Thus a preacher would find a ready-made congregation of the householder and his family, plus friends, neighbours and relations. The missionary nature of the Primitive Methodist Connexion was very important. We have already mentioned the fining of itinerants for 'neglecting opportunities' and there are numerous examples of local preachers being 'dropped down' the list of preachers on the plan because they were not assiduous enough in their duties.

Little special consideration was given to the women just because they were women. They were expected to take their full part in con-

<sup>37</sup> W.M. Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism* (1909), p. 123; *P.M. Mag.* 1832, pp. 265-8; 1837, pp. 179-80.

<sup>38</sup> *P.M. Mag.* 1853, pp. 124; 305; 309; 1854, pp. 370, 748.

<sup>39</sup> *P.M. Mag.* 1832, pp. 265-8; 1837, pp. 179-80; T. Church *Gospel Victories* (1851) p. 88.

<sup>40</sup> *P.M. Mag.* 1832, pp. 294; 1837, pp. 180-81; T. Russell, *Autobiography of Thomas Russell* (Revised, n.d.) p. 27; T. Russell, *Record of Events in Primitive Methodism* (1869), p. 28; Kendall, op. cit. II p. 331; Ritson, op. cit. p. 147-8.

ducting services, in pastoral visitation and particularly in undertaking missions and 'opening' villages and towns. **Mary Porteous** was sent to the Ripon Circuit and it is expressly stated that there were five travelling preachers stationed there and that Mary was not given any special consideration because of her sex. The distances travelled by the early preachers are amazing, especially when we remember that most of the travelling was done on foot, with only occasional lifts in 'conveyances'. **Elizabeth Smith** travelled one hundred miles in a week, while **Mary Buck** journeyed vast distances taking special services for many years. It is an interesting exercise to plot the places visited by a particular preacher to see the area covered. Often they took three services on a Sunday (10.00; 1.00; 6.30) in three different villages several miles apart - there cannot have been much time for meals to say the very least! More important, however, one can imagine the danger these preachers faced as they travelled around the country - actual physical danger as well as possibly accusations of promiscuity, which is why the *Minutes* contain many regulations designed to avoid slander and to promote right behaviour.

The Connexion was very strict about 'propriety' and very anxious that no slander should arise. It was very unusual for women to travel round the country preaching and they could easily have become the cause of gossip:

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

Q. What shall be done if a preacher breaks this rule?

A. He or She shall be admonished for the first offence or breach and laid aside for the second offence or breach'.<sup>41</sup>

Their dress was very simple - Quaker style<sup>42</sup>:

Q. In what dress shall our travelling preachers appear in public?

A. In a plain one. The men to wear single breasted coats, single breasted waistcoats, and their hair in its natural form; and not to be allowed to wear pantaloons, fashionable trowsers, nor white hats; and that our female preachers be patterns of plainness in all their dress.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>41</sup> P.M.M. 1827, p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> P.M.Mag. 1868, p. 535.

<sup>43</sup> P.M.M. 1819, onwards see 1819, p.5; 1821, p., 7 etc.

We are told that one of the early female preachers appeared at a camp meeting in semi-quaker garb - dove-coloured silk bonnet, scuttle shaped;<sup>44</sup> they often wore a 'ranter's cap' which was a white linen bonnet with two white tabs which hung down on either side of the face and a black dress. There are two interesting comments in local archives. The Burland minutes read:

resolved that **Miss Buck** go to preach their sermons at Leek providing they will make her a present of a New Silk Dress. This Minute to be copied and sent to them - to be black as she is in mourning.<sup>45</sup>

and Preston Brook records:

resolved that T. King speak to E. **Quarton** respecting her superfluous dress, and the necessity of keeping her promises and that if she do not improve she go home.<sup>46</sup>

This last comment is perhaps expanded from Prees Green:

in our judgement Sister — does not conform to rule in plainness of dress, with regard to her cap, watch guard and bag, and we request her to conform in future.<sup>47</sup>

**Emma Quarton** was in that particular circuit at the time, so it must refer to her.

As indicated, quite a number of the women itinerants married their male counterparts, which accounts for their disappearance from the stations. I suspect that they continued to exercise their ministry, although they were no longer stationed in their own right. The 1827 *Minutes* record a Conference decision which may well have affected the ministry of some of the women travelling preachers:

No married female shall be allowed to labour as a travelling preacher (permanently) in any circuit, except that in which her husband resides (special cases excepted).<sup>48</sup>

**Mary Porteous** fell foul of this edict when the Conference re-stationed her in Whitby, while her husband, a seaman, was living in Gateshead. When she asked for a ruling on her case the General

<sup>44</sup>H. Woodcock, op. cit. p. 37

<sup>45</sup>Burland P.M. Circuit Quarter Day Minutes June 1838 - April 1845 (April 27, 1844, resolution 63) [Cheshire R.O.].

<sup>46</sup>Quarterly Meeting Minutes Book Preston Brook P.M. Church Circuit Sept. 1838 - December. 1846 (June 7, 1841, resolution 35) [Cheshire R.O.].

<sup>47</sup>F.M. Ridge, *The Story of a 100 years 1826-1926: being the account of the history of the Primitive Methodists in the Prees Green Circuit* (1926) p.15.

<sup>48</sup>P.M. Mins. 1827, p.4; cf. J. Lightfoot, *The Life and Labours of Mrs. Mary Porteous*, p. 102.

Committee decided that hers was 'an extraordinary case'. The implication is that while the itinerancy was permissible for unmarried women or widows, those with family responsibilities were excluded. A widow who itinerated was **Elizabeth Wheeldon** (1796-1841/4), who worked under her maiden name, **Elizabeth Hunt**, then retired on her marriage to Richard Wheeldon, but on his death she returned to the itinerancy and continued till her second marriage to fellow travelling preacher Samuel West.

There is no record of any females becoming superintendents or ever reaching connexional office. In fact they were merely co-opted members of the circuit quarter-day board where they were only allowed to speak, but not vote. Even this was altered in 1824 to read that 'none of our females speak or vote unless specifically called upon.'<sup>49</sup> All the travelling preachers had to keep a Journal and present it to the Quarterly Meeting. Unfortunately few extracts of women's Journals survive, but here are three examples:

**Ann Brownsword:**

Wed. 15th March 1820. At two o'clock I preached at Gawsorth, and at seven at Macclesfield. Sinners were crying out for mercy; - believers were praising the Lord. It was a glorious time; - three souls were brought into liberty, and one backslider was recovered. There is great work at Macclesfield: they are joining classes almost every meeting, and believers are alive to God!<sup>50</sup>

**Ann Stanna:**

Wed. 21st Feb 1821. At Barton ... five or six young men had come nearly four miles intending to pull me down. But while I looked steadfastly on them and spoke a few words, one of them turned as pale as death and began to tremble and observed that if what I said was true, he did not know where to hide his head; but he intended to persecute no more.<sup>51</sup>

**Sarah Spittle:**

Wed. 16th 1822. I preached at Red Lake ... There was a young woman who had been at service and was going home and who, hearing that a woman was going to preach, came to the preaching house and drank tea with me. She heard me preach: and after preaching and prayer meeting were concluded, the people requested her and me to stop all night. After supper I noticed her bonnet on the table, which was very dressy. I made a remark upon it. We slept together. I asked her if she ever prayed or saw herself as a sinner. She replied, 'Not till to-night. I will take the

<sup>49</sup> *P.M. Minutes* 1824, p.4.

<sup>50</sup> *P.M. Minutes* 1819/20, p.233.

<sup>51</sup> *P.M. Mag.* 1819/20, p. 256.

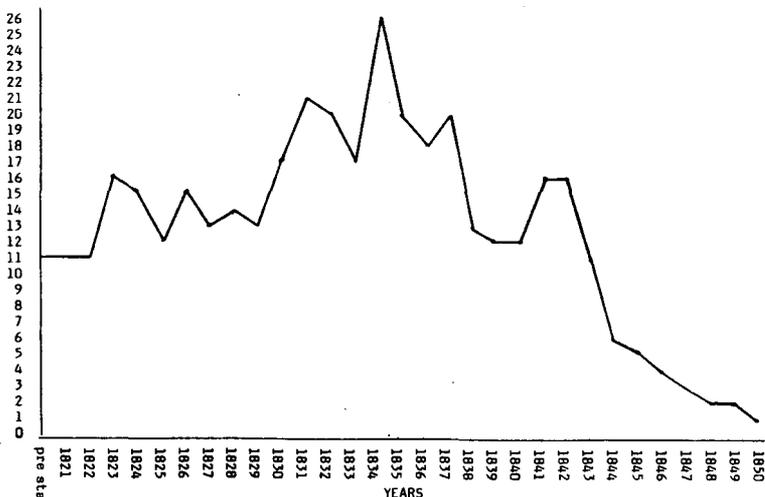
bunch off my bonnet if you will give me the liberty to speak with you.' I said, 'By all means...'<sup>52</sup>

With regard to their sermons the texts used were all capable of evangelical interpretation, e.g. 'Thou fool this night thy soul shall be required of thee'; 'For many are called but few are chosen'; 'Ye must be born again'; 'Prepare to meet thy God.'

On the whole their language was plain, down to earth and easily understood by all. They emphasised that everyone was equal in the sight of God. There were no barriers between rich and poor or social class in the chapel - all were sinners and all could be saved - this gave people self respect, a sense of worth, comfort and hope. As on the whole Primitive Methodism appealed to the poorer classes this emphasis on equality conferred status on each individual person.

### Decline

I would like to suggest a few factors which may help to account for the decline and ultimate demise of the Primitive Methodist female travelling preacher. The number of female itinerants reached a peak in 1834, when twenty-six were stationed and from then the number declined until only Elizabeth Bultitude was left.



**Fig 1: Number of P.M. Female Itinerants Working Each Year**

It would appear that once the Primitive Methodist Connexion had become established and organised it became more male -

<sup>52</sup>Ibid. 1823, pp. 43-4.

orientated at least in its public image of the itinerancy. It is likely that the leaders of Connexion felt that their movement would be more socially acceptable if it became more 'orthodox' and 'respectable' and if this meant shedding their female itinerants then this was a price they were willing to pay at this point in their development, though I cannot help feeling that the rank and file of the members regretted their passing. As the period of consolidation evolved obviously more lay opportunities arose for the women to exercise their talents within local churches and circuits. Ministerial training was another likely factor in the demise of the female itinerant phenomenon.

The strain of the itinerancy was such that many, of both sexes, retired. In the early days other women were accepted to take their place, but as time went on this no longer happened. The men were always replaced. As well as the strain of work, as we have already noted, the women often had to retire through ill-health or marriage. I feel these were contributory factors rather than actual causes for the decline of the women itinerants.

Early Primitive Methodism was essentially a missionary movement with the preachers breaking new ground in the Midlands, East Anglia, Yorkshire, the North-East of England and in Berkshire and Wiltshire particularly. These early missionaries used all available means to attract attention and to pull in the crowds, especially with street processioning, hymn singing, camp meetings and the novelty of women preachers. They faced ridicule and persecution, even imprisonment, and they endured privation and poverty. Their message was fierce and their style was passionate; as James Obelkevich puts it 'they preached the three R's, ruin, repentance and redemption and the appropriate style was plain, pithy and practical. Conversion was the aim, as many as possible and as quickly as possible.'<sup>53</sup>

Consideration of the stations of the Primitive Methodist preachers indicates a trend towards placing women in rural or missionary situations particularly later in the 1840s. The 1851 Religious Census statistics for the South of England, chosen as this area was 'missioned' later than the Midlands and the North of England, seem to confirm the theory that Primitive Methodism was most willing to use its female itinerants in missionary and evangelistic situations and in the more rural areas before a great deal of church building was undertaken. So, in 1840, 20.5 per cent of Primitive Methodist members were to be found in the South and 24 per cent of all the travelling preachers (both sexes) - 24 per cent of the total number of

<sup>53</sup>J. Obelkevich, *Religion and Rural Society, South Lindsey, 1825-1875*, (1976) p. 223.

males but 40 per cent of the women. In 1843 there were 22 per cent of all the travelling preachers in the same area, 22 per cent men and 45.5 per cent of the women. If the figures are extended to look at the use of women in rural areas in addition to these used in the South, we find that 70 per cent in 1840 and 91 per cent in 1843 of the females were stationed in these circuits. So it seems that the pioneering spirit of Primitive Methodism still exploited and relied upon the novelty value and attraction of the female preacher to present an impact on the area to be 'opened'. It is also likely that there was less pretentious chapel building, with correspondingly less need for administrators and financial expertise, to be found in such circuits.

In due course the evangelistic thrust gave way to revivalism as the societies which had been formed as a result of missions needed building up into cohesive 'chapels'. The converts needed not only spiritual food, but also a permanent and often a special place in which to receive that food, so a logical progression ensued from cottages and hired halls to the purpose-built P.M. chapel. Chapel-building with the attendant development of structures of church and connexional government brought a completely different outlook within the local chapel community. The mere possession of a site and bricks and mortar meant that special office holders were needed to 'service' these buildings, so there was a proliferation of offices, of trustees, and of financial and building experts, of astute negotiators who could meet and deal with professional and business men on all aspects and levels of building programmes. Inevitably the itinerant became involved in this and as they were regarded as predominantly male preserves this became yet another factor which acted against the continued use of women travelling preachers. Graphs based on the 1851 Religious Census indicate the 'explosion' of chapel building in the mid-nineteenth century just at the same time as the phenomenon of female itinerants was on the wane. It would seem illogical to think that there was no relation between the two facts, but equally illogical to regard this as the whole answer.

The building of chapels meant that there was now a tangible focus for the 'life' of the chapel community. A purpose-built building meant that all the ancillary organisations associated with Primitive Methodism evolved and developed. By providing activities such as Sunday Schools, tract societies, Dorcas societies, mutual improvement societies, sick visiting and missionary collecting, the chapel was not only catering for its own members and their families, but also for the local neighbourhood. Life in the community tended to centre on the local chapel and there were more opportunities now within the local chapel for dedicated service. So, from

the 1840s it appears that the women continued to exercise their ministry, but in a localised rather than an itinerant situation. It is a fact that there were many female local preachers, class leaders, Sunday School teachers, sick visitors and missionary collectors.<sup>54</sup>

It appears that Primitive Methodism was very willing to use women preachers, but was no longer ready to 'station' them officially. Why? Does this smack of double standards, in that they were happy to use the women, but not to give them equal status with the men? Was it male chauvinism? Or was it just plain jealousy? Did the men wish to relegate the women to a more respectable role in the church in order to appear more in line with the other denominations? Whereas the women had been very useful in the evangelistic era, now that the Connexion had settled down to a more mundane existence did they feel that it would be more appropriate for them to seem to be more conformist and thus hoped to bury their early 'ranter' image? Special occasions or missions would be ideal opportunities for the women to be used once again to attract the crowds in order to have great anniversaries and perhaps, unworthy thought, help to raise a good collection to assist with the upkeep of the chapel building so that the activities of the chapel community could continue to the mutual benefit of the members and the neighbourhood. As the Connexion strove towards attaining respectability in the eyes of the world and the other denominations the apparent excesses of its earlier years were toned down or abandoned and the female itinerant was one of the casualties. As Primitive Methodism moved nearer to the other denominations the phenomenon of the female travelling preacher became an embarrassment.

Social change affected Primitive Methodism as people moved from a rural to an urban environment. Much of Primitive Methodism had centred on rural areas and small village communities, largely untouched by the other denominations. So places like Scotter in Lincolnshire, Shefford in Berkshire and Cwm in Herefordshire were the heads of large and flourishing circuits. With the drift from the countryside the Connexion was forced to change its emphasis as well as coming to terms with the other changes which occurred as it made the transition from sect to denomination. As the denomination became more respectable, middle-class values pervaded its thinking and now it was considered better to engage in 'good works' rather than 'preach for hire'.

As Primitive Methodism built its chapels, developed its organisation and activities, became more conformist and respectable so the whole concept of the ministry changed. The status of the travelling

<sup>54</sup>*P.M. Mag.* 1862, contains the biographies of fifteen women, most of whom engaged in these activities.

preacher was raised. In the early days there had been virtually no training for the young preachers - they learned as they worked. Lengthy articles from older travelling preachers were published in the *Magazines* of 1823 and 1824 giving 'Advice on Preaching' of both a spiritual and practical nature, for example:

Always strive to be at your appointments in time to take tea... Keep a solemn, grave yet cheerful deportment ... Begin divine service exactly at the appointed time .... if any get converted or find peace with God, take down their names, and their residence, and go to them next day ...<sup>55</sup>

They were encouraged to study in order to further the work. Certainly both **Mary Porteous** and **Mary Buck** 'improved' themselves, for example, and the very fact that the preachers had to keep and present journals of their work ensured that they had at least the rudiments of good English. Evangelism and the saving of souls was considered to be much more important than formal education. Much of the evangelism was carried on in the homes of the people by 'conversation preaching' and it was not considered necessary to be highly educated to engage in this type of 'missioning' - a burning evangelistic fervour for the saving of souls was more important, together with a sound constitution, for the work was exhausting and arduous. It has been said:

It is generally known that the early Primitives possessed those peculiar qualifications which the good John Angell James said were needful for a missionary ministry, viz., 'brains, bowels and bellows,' i.e. good sense, a loving heart, and lung power.<sup>56</sup>

As the century progressed the educational demands of the ministry increased and the education of the congregations increased. As congregations became more knowledgeable and sophisticated they demanded better educated ministers<sup>57</sup> and so the need for a more professional approach and a formal programme of ministerial training became evident. Now a college training was preferred and this, added to the other factors, worked towards the change in the role of women in Primitive Methodism. In the country in general it was not yet considered necessary for women to be educated equally with men, so when the Connexion set up in 1865 a one year training

<sup>55</sup>Ibid. 1824, pp. 53-4.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid. 1878, p. 351.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. 1851, Thomas Smith, 'The Ministry in relation to the Pulpit' p. 21-30, especially pp. 23-4; for a discussion of the role of education in Primitive Methodism see F.J. McKeon, 'Primitive Methodism: An Educative Society 1819-1932 with special reference to the work of the early pioneers.' (M.A. Institute of Education Library, University of Keele), especially pp. 10-17; G.E. Milburn, *School for Prophets* (Sunderland 1981), *passim*; *P.M. Mag.* 1864, pp. 466-7.

scheme for ministers at Elmfield College in York followed by the establishment of a theological college in Sunderland in 1868 this further militated against the use of women in the regular ministry. It also appears that an ample supply of young men was coming forward to be trained and so by implication there was no need for women, who could, it was felt, therefore better employ their talents elsewhere.<sup>58</sup>

To sum up, it seems evident that although the preceding factors played a part in the decline and demise of the female travelling preacher, the chief prejudice, as the nineteenth century progressed was against women engaging in itinerant preaching. Women local preachers and evangelists were still welcomed and well used in the circuits and for missions. The climate of the age turned against some revivalist personalities rather than against revivalism itself. When the centenary of the Primitive Methodist Connexion was being organised in 1907 there was a considerable feeling that women were not being given their rightful place in the official programme of celebrations.<sup>59</sup> Then later when Methodist unity talks were under way the phenomenon of female itinerants was an embarrassment to the leaders of the churches and so was conveniently forgotten.

In this lecture I have tried to give a bird's-eye view of the work of the early female itinerants, rather than tell the individual stories, and to suggest some reasons for their disappearance. It was 1974 before Methodism accepted women into the ranks of the itinerancy, though if it had not been for the conversations with the Anglican Church it is possible that women would not have had to wait so long before being admitted to the ordained presbyteral ministry.

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM

(Dr Dorothy Graham is General Secretary of the WHS  
and Connexional Archives Liaison Officer)

<sup>58</sup>G.J. Stevenson, *Recollections of Methodist Worthies* (1881) vol. I p.86.

<sup>59</sup>*P.M. Leader* (Jan 24, Feb. 28, March 7 1907)

## CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF WESLEY'S HYMNS

### An unpublished fragment by Bernard L. Manning

(What follows was written as an introduction to a paper read by Bernard Manning to the Cambridge University Methodist Society on 9 February 1939 entitled 'Wesley's Hymns Reconsidered'. The paper was published in 1940 in the *London Quarterly and Holborn Review*, pp. 19-30 and pp. 154-165 and forms the third chapter of *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* (1942), but at some stage Manning discarded these paragraphs. They are published here by permission of Mrs P. M. Allen and Mr Christopher Hunter. The footnotes and title are mine. EDITOR.)

In our village in Westmorland,<sup>1</sup> we had two chapels. We did not trouble ourselves about denominational names. We had hardly heard of denominations. There was the high chapel<sup>2</sup> and there was the low chapel.<sup>3</sup> They were distant from one another only a stone's throw; but, as the names indicate, the hill in the village street separated them. At the high chapel we had our own ways which distinguished us from the low chapel. We had our burial ground. We had an endowment. We went back to 1662. We merely suffered lay preachers to preach the Word to us. We had a manse and a resident minister, a gallery, a pipe organ, a school room, a vestry, a library. The low chapel had none of these things. At every point the high chapel challenged the Parish Church; and either beat it, or gave it a run for its money.

The low chapel, for its part, was content with a humbler way of life. Yet even we at the high chapel were at times in debt to the low chapel. After morning service sometimes a friend would say to me, 'That was a low chapel hymn we had after the sermon today'; and there was no denying it. At the high chapel we chanted psalms; we sang hymns by Whittier, by Goethe, by Faber, by all sorts and conditions of men; but at times we sang low chapel hymns too. I dimly wondered even in those far-off days what it was that made a low chapel hymn so unmistakable and so distinctive. I have gone on wondering ever since.

<sup>1</sup>Ravenstonedale, 3 miles east of Kirkby Stephen

<sup>2</sup>Now U.R.C.

<sup>3</sup>Methodist, formerly Wesleyan

For the low chapel, as I need hardly say, was Methodist - Wesleyan Methodist - and the low chapel hymns were hymns written by the Rev Charles Wesley. Tonight I want to ask more particularly what gives to a Wesley hymn, a low chapel hymn, its peculiar and almost unmistakable quality.

There came a time when I had greater opportunities of observing the qualities of these hymns; for later, in the Wolds of Wesley's own county I was a regular occupant of my grandfather's back pew in a Wesleyan Methodist chapel.<sup>4</sup> The chapel boasted the best kind of Methodist architecture: square and high, with a gallery all round, the organ and choir behind the pulpit. On Sunday nights a prayer meeting followed the preaching service and I was always impressed by the slightly disingenuous way in which we began it. The Benediction was pronounced; but at once a hymn was given out. The organ played. The whole congregation rose to sing. We all appeared to have accepted the invitation to remain. Then began significant nods and scuffles. Coats and hats were fished out of pew corners and a general exodus followed. The choir in the gallery closed their enormous tune-books; at about the third verse the organist ceased to play; the gallery emptied itself, the last stragglers from the choir turning out the gas as they came downstairs to the entrance vestibule.

When the organ music ceased there was a change in the hymn which I can only describe as ghastly. True, the choir people still sang vigorously as they hurried out of the gallery, but there came a most anxious period when the last assistance from the gallery had ended, when the singing depended entirely on what we, the faithful remnant, downstairs could do; a few elderly and middle-aged men, half a dozen shrill ladies of uncertain age and a handful of children. Precisely at the moment when all seemed lost, and when we were so flat and so badly disorganised that the hymn was in danger of becoming two or three solos sung in ragged competition, relief arrived. The gallery, it is true, contained the younger and less spiritually voracious part of our congregation but even in the gallery and even in the choir were a few who had the root of the matter in them; and these now came bursting through the doors at the back of the chapel from the vestibule still lustily singing somewhere near the same point in the hymn as the majority of ourselves.

From that moment all went well. To be sure, the singing was not what it had been at the preaching service with the organ; but we had been rather painfully adjusted to a different standard now and

<sup>4</sup>At Caistor, built 1834. The pew now bears a plaque.

were content with the feeling that at least we could hold our own and should not collapse. Indeed we became so fond of our singing that, uninvited by the preacher, who had now left the pulpit for the communion rail, we punctuated the prayer meeting by odd verses even when we did not give out additional hymns.

This was the time when class leaders and others with a traditional or presumptive title to public piety left their pews and one by one moved forward to the communion rail to kneel: to kneel, or if we had an exceptionally 'good time' - you have not ceased, I hope, to use that marvellous Methodist phrase - to walk about the aisles. I can see Mr L. now, gently waving a red and white spotted handkerchief, as he starts the verses.

O that in me the sacred fire  
Might now begin to glow  
Burn up the dross of base desire  
and make the mountains flow.

O that it now from heaven might fall  
And all my sins consume  
Come Holy Ghost, for Thee I call  
Spirit of burning, come.

Suitable verses as my grandmother once observed, for a baker who had a renowned oven. When Mr L. was satisfied and Mr J., the farmer from a hamlet named Canada was about to begin his prayer, Mr C., the grocer's busman with a pathetic, grizzled beard, piped up in his thin voice:

Refining Fire, go through my heart,  
Illuminate my soul  
Scatter Thy life through every part,  
And sanctify the whole.

This verse was a general favourite; and Mr L. would now echo it, once or perhaps twice, with an unforgettable accent on 'Refining fire, go through my heart'. At last the man from Canada was allowed to begin his prayer and (now thoroughly excited) he prayed with emphasis and with that quaint transposition of vowels of which we Lincolnshire people have (I like to fancy) a unique mastery. 'Bless, O Lord, Thy preached word; follow it with Thy blessing; revit it on every heart'. We, who knew his prayer as well as he knew it, waited for the climax. He was a thickset man with a red face, a red bald head with a white beard below clean-shaven lips and hammering the pitch pine as if he were determined to

smash it to pulp, he roared 'Thou knows, Lord, it's not all done with bawling and shouting': nevertheless what could be done by that method he by no means left undone. At last he subsided and mopped his face and head whilst the baker began to sing again that chorus verse of 'There is a fountain': a chorus which seemed to me then, as it seems to me now, to contain in its exquisite simplicity the marrow of evangelical divinity:

I do believe, I will believe,  
That Jesus died for me,  
That on the cross He shed his blood  
From sin to set me free.

Do not wrong me by fancying that I recount these things cynically or callously or as a mildly sympathetic outsider. This is the Methodism that I love, the Methodism to which, with humility and affection and godly fear, I pray that I may still belong. It is the Methodism of your old unreformed hymn book: the Methodism which received a savage blow in 1904 when the new book and (worse still) the new tunes were planted on us, even at Caistor, by an omnipotent, but not omniscient, Conference. It is the Methodism, which, (blessed be God) has come back to you, if you will receive it, in your newest book,<sup>5</sup> so vast an improvement on the book of 1904 that I wish my grandfather were alive to see it.

For he, acid-tongued and stiff-necked if ever a Methodist was, never gave quarter to the book of 1904. He wearied everyone but himself by lamentations over the old hymns and the old tunes; and, little as I understood him, I listened. Today I understand and I agree. A whole generation of Methodists, 1904 to 1933, was robbed of its best heritage; and I remember with pride that, as long as he lived, he made his protest in the only way he could. With the new book to us at Caistor came the singing of *Amen* at the end of the hymns; and as a visible protest against the whole business he sat down promptly when the hymn ended whilst *Amen* was being sung. He did this with no single exception from 1904 till his death in 1918. Stiff-necked, if you will, but nothing wrong with his main judgment. Many people thought him a disagreeable old fossil no doubt, but on that occasion at least the old was better.

My paper will not degenerate into an autobiography or a family history. I revive these memories because they help us to answer

<sup>5</sup>*The Methodist Hymn-Book*, published in 1933.

my question: What gives a Wesley hymn its peculiar and unmistakable quality? To answer that, however inadequately, I must put the hymns in the particular setting in time and place in which first I learnt to love them.

B. L. MANNING

(The rest of this paper appears in *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* pp50ff)

### The Rev Kenneth B. Garlick 1923-1993

Kenneth Benjamin Garlick, affectionately known as Ken, was a most devoted member of our Society; he contributed articles to our *Proceedings* and he was our Registrar from 1969 to 1974 and librarian from 1974 until just before his death. He was not from a Methodist background but from Sunday School onwards he developed an intense love of Methodism. After pre-collegiate service in the ministry he was at Wesley College, Headingley, where I first knew him, as I was tutor there at the time. He wrote a short history of the College, to which he was devoted, in 1974 and *Mr Wesley's Preachers* in 1977. He edited *Hill's Arrangement* from 1971 and when that ceased he produced *Garlick's Methodist Registry* (1982), an invaluable work of reference. He was glad to be for a time a member of the connexional Archives and History Committee. When he was not a member of the Conference, he could be found in the gallery. He was a mine of information on Methodist personalities and history and always willing to share his knowledge with any enquirer. He will be very hard to replace.

All this was done without detriment to his busy life as a circuit minister; he travelled in the circuits for forty years. He delighted in preaching and pastoral work. A recent conversation I had with a student minister testified to Ken's effectiveness in encouraging candidates for our ministry.

He was a man of strong evangelical convictions and definite views, which he often expressed in a very forthright way. He did not hesitate to express his approval or disapproval of constitutional changes or developments in Methodism. In recent years he had lost a son and in his brief retirement he was unwell and unhappy at the loss of ministerial pastoral work. 'I miss the people' he said to me on the 'phone. He was glad to know of the re-establishment of our Library at Westminster College, Oxford but was not able to be present at its opening and died later in the same week. We mourn his loss and offer our sympathy to his wife and family.

A.R.G.

## **Opening of the Library, Westminster College, Oxford, on Tuesday, 4th May, 1993.**

Boxes of books; piles of pamphlets; loads of letters; albums of archives all on the move. In the summer of 1992 the WHS Library was in transit from Southlands College, Wimbledon, its home since 1980, to a new base in Oxford. An Agreement between the Society and Westminster College has meant the happy relocation of the WHS Library in the city in which Methodism had its beginnings. The Society would like to pay special tribute to the Rev. A. Raymond George for his patient and statesmanlike negotiations with the College and to Mrs Joyce Banks for her practical expertise, as well as to the Principal, the Chaplain and the Library staff of Westminster College for their help and encouragement.

The official opening of the WHS Library at Westminster College took place on such a gloriously sunny day that it was possible for the assembled guests and friends to meet outside in the College grounds. The College Chaplain, the Rev. Dr. Martin Groves, in welcoming the Society's Library relocation at the College remarked that it would be of great benefit in the College's development in the area of Methodist Studies. The Principal, the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Wilson spoke of his hope that Westminster College would become a world centre for research and scholarship in Wesleyan and Methodist Studies and said that he felt having the WHS Library readily available to scholars would enhance both the College's curriculum and the Society's image.

In a pertinent and witty speech, the Rev. A. Raymond George responded by thanking the College for its co-operation and generosity in providing space and resources to house the Library and said he hoped that full use would be made by scholars, members of the Society and students of the many treasures to be found in the collection.

After the speeches the party 'processed' to the Library, which is housed in a separate building near the College Library, and, having been presented with the key by the College Librarian, Ms Anne Hannaford, Mr. George ceremoniously unlocked the door and declared the Library officially open. Commemorative photographs were taken and then those present were invited to view the displays arranged by Mrs. Banks and to explore the collection.

The Rev. Dr. Henry Rack had been invited to give an inaugural lecture on 'Early Methodist Experience: Some Prototypic Accounts' which was much appreciated by guests, staff and students alike. The buffet refreshments which followed gave opportunity for people to meet socially and many returned to the Library for a more

leisured look at the collection in its new setting.

The one regret of the WHS members was that the late Rev. Kenneth Garlick, the Society's Librarian, was too unwell to join in the celebrations. It would have gladdened his heart to have seen the Library safely settled in its new environment .

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM

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### Annual Meeting and Lecture.

This was held at Stapleford Methodist Church on Monday 28 June 1993. The East and West Midland Branches of the WHS were the hosts at the members' Tea, prepared by the ladies of the church, and thoroughly appreciated by all present.

The Annual Meeting conducted all its usual business: remembering members who had died since the last meeting, receiving the accounts and reports from the various secretaries, electing officers for the coming year and planning future lectures.

Three important matters need to be highlighted - first, the move of the Library to Westminster College, Oxford. Second it was agreed that subscriptions should be raised from January 1994. Third, special thanksgiving was given for the life of the Rev. Kenneth B. Garlick, the Society's Librarian, who had also served the Society in a variety of capacities. Friends paid tribute to his interest in and study of all aspects of Methodist history; his pastoral ministry and work with young people.

In the absence of Mr. Geoffrey E. Milburn though ill-health Mr. E. Alan Rose, the Society's Editor, stepped into the breach and most ably acted as chairman for the Annual Lecture which was given by the General Secretary of the Society, Dr. E. Dorothy Graham. Dr. Graham's lecture title was 'Chosen by God: the Female Itinerants of Early Primitive Methodism', which had been the subject of her Ph. D. research. The lecture included some Overhead Projection images which illustrated the numbers, the ministry and decline of the female itinerant phenomenon. Thanks were expressed to the minister, the Church Council and the members of Stapleford Methodist Church who provided a venue and most hospitable welcome to the Society.

E.D.G.

## WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY — FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, 1992

### Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December 1992

| INCOME.                                    | £     |
|--|-------|
| Subscriptions (Note 1) ... ..              | 4,077 |
| Donations ... ..                           | 274   |
| Irish Branch ... ..                        | 410   |
| Sales of <i>Proceedings</i> (back numbers) | 517   |
| " other Publications, etc. ...             | 85    |
| Library—Tickets, Donations, Sales          | 137   |
| Annual Lecture Collection (½-share)        | 43    |
| Advertisements ... ..                      | 50    |
| Bank Interest ... ..                       | 155   |
| War Stock Dividend ... ..                  | 8     |
|  | 5,756 |
| EXPENDITURE.                               | £     |
| <i>Proceedings</i> and distribution        | 3,596 |
| Other Printing ... ..                      | 717   |
| Library ... ..                             | 952   |
| Annual Lecture ... ..                      | 70    |
| World Methodist Historical Soc.            | 60    |
| Administration Expenses                    | 435   |
| Insurances ... ..                          | 35    |
| Advertising ... ..                         | 26    |
| Subscriptions ... ..                       | 3     |
|  | 5,894 |
| Excess of Expenditure over Income          | £138  |

### Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1992

| ASSETS EMPLOYED (Note 2)                                | £      |
|---|--------|
| 3½% War Stock (at cost) (Note 3)                        | 225    |
| Current Assets—   | £      |
| Sundry Debtors ... ..                                   | 1,843  |
| Income Tax recoverable                                  | 1,013  |
| Leeds & Holbeck Bld. Soc.                               | 1,349  |
| National Savings Bank... ..                             | 173    |
| Trustee Savings Bank ... ..                             | 1,040  |
| Midland Bank (Deposit A/c)                              | 25     |
| " (Current A/c)   | 1,157  |
| Cash in hand ... ..                                     | 224    |
|   | 6,824  |
| Current Liabilities—                                    |        |
| Sundry Creditors ... ..                                 | 129    |
| Subscript'ns paid in advance                            | 4,039  |
|   | 4,168  |
| Net Current Assets ... ..                               | 2,656  |
|   | £2,881 |
| REPRESENTED BY  |        |
| Balance at 1st January 1992 ... ..                      | 2,154  |
| Less Excess Expenditure over Income                     | 138    |
|   | 2,016  |
| Conference Fund Surplus ... ..                          | 865    |
| (Signed) RALPH WILKINSON,<br><i>Honorary Treasurer.</i> | £2,881 |

### Notes to the Accounts

| 1—SUBSCRIPTIONS                                | £     | £      |
|--|-------|--------|
| Unexpired Subscriptions at 1st January 1992—   |       |        |
| Ordinary Members ... ..                        | 4,191 |        |
| Life Members (estimated)                       | 275   |        |
|  | 4,466 |        |
| Received during year* ... ..                   |       | 3,550  |
| Income Tax recoverable ... ..                  |       | 100    |
|  |       | 8,116  |
| Less Unexpired Subscriptions at 31st December— |       |        |
| Ordinary Members ... ..                        | 3,789 |        |
| Life Members (estimated)                       | 250   |        |
|  | 4,039 |        |
|  |       | £4,077 |

\*No account has been taken of subscriptions in arrears at 31st December 1991, whether or not recovered since, but any previous arrears received during the year are included in the above figures.

#### 2—ASSETS EMPLOYED

The Library and stocks of Publications have not been valued, and are not included in these financial statements.

#### 3—WAR STOCK

Market value at Balance Sheet date ... £79

**AUDITOR'S REPORT**—I have audited the financial statements in accordance with approved auditing standards. The amount of subscriptions paid in advance by members includes estimates based upon a reasonable interpretation of the available data. No account has been taken of possible arrears of subscriptions. Other assets and liabilities have been independently verified.

Subject to the matters mentioned above, in my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view on an historical cost basis of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31st December 1992, and of its deficit for the year then ended.

Barron & Barron,  
Bathurst House, 86, Micklegate, York, 7th June 1993.

(Signed) W. B. TAYLOR,  
Chartered Accountant.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Religious Census of Hampshire, 1851*, edited by John A. Vickers (Hampshire Record Series, Vol. XII, Hampshire County Council, 1993, pp. xxiv, 248, £15.00. ISSN: 0 267 9930, ISBN: 1 873595 30 1 - £17.00 by post from Hampshire Record Office, 20 Southgate Street, Winchester, SO23 9EF)

With this expertly edited and handsomely produced book, Dr Vickers brings to eight the number of English counties for which modern critical editions of the original enumeration returns of the 1851 ecclesiastical census are now available, the other counties being Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Devon, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, and Sussex (the last-named volume also being edited by Dr Vickers, in 1989, and providing, in methodological terms, the exemplar for the present edition). The returns for Hampshire (and Isle of Wight) places of worship total 833 (including 22 for Hampshire parishes in 6 non-Hampshire registration districts), which Dr Vickers reproduces in the order in which they are filed at the Public Record Office in Kew (i.e. by registration district, sub-district and parish), with copious annotations and with comprehensive indexes by place, signatory, and denomination (other than the Church of England). At the beginning of the returns for each of the 25 registration districts the relevant summary table is reprinted from Horace Mann's published report of the religious census, together with invaluable notes by the editor drawing attention to arithmetical and other inconsistencies between the table and the detailed returns for that district. The actual format of the returns, by contrast, has not been strictly preserved. Instead, the information for each place of worship is presented in six numbered sections: date and other details of the building; regular endowment of the living and other sources of income (Anglican churches only); accommodation for worshippers, sub-divided between free and other sittings; actual attendances on 30 March and/or average attendances in the past year; remarks; name, official character and address of informant. This approach has resulted in the suppression of some details contained in the census (for example, the date of the return, or whether a building was separate and entire or used exclusively for worship) unless they were of unusual significance. At the same time, some additional information is offered by the editor over and above that actually available from the returns, including parochial population for 1801 and 1851, identification of some Strict Baptist causes, and so forth.

The returns themselves are prefaced by an extremely useful twelve-page introduction, marred only slightly by a certain organisational weakness and by occasional lapses in proof-reading (thus, Compton not 'Crompton' census page x, Bruce not 'Brian' Coleman on page xvi), which considers their reliability, the problems inherent in their interpretation, and, all too briefly perhaps, the picture which they paint of religious conditions in Hampshire in 1851 in relation to other southern counties and to the country as a whole. Despite evidence that 'the planning and execution of the census show signs of having been hasty and poorly thought out'

(page xiii), Dr Vickers concludes that, in certain respects, 'it may be said to have unique value among all the ecclesiastical sources available for the period' (page xxi), and that it is sufficiently credible for meaningful comparisons to be made at registration district level. The volume also contains a note on editorial practice, a map of the registration districts and thirteen monochrome illustrations of the interiors or exteriors of Hampshire churches and chapels.

In short, Dr Vickers has succeeded admirably in his task of facilitating scholarly access to an indispensable fund of raw data for studying organised religion in mid-nineteenth-century Hampshire. However, quite understandably given the constraints of space, it has not formed part of his brief in preparing this edition to attempt an exhaustive analysis of those data, especially along denominational lines (doubtless partly because extensive interpretative work already appears in his unpublished 1986 University of Southampton doctoral thesis). Readers of these *Proceedings*, therefore, may find it helpful to have a thumb-nail sketch of the position of Methodism as revealed by the Hampshire census.

In all, excluding 3 duplicate forms and including 6 buildings which were described as 'Independent Methodist' (but mainly classified in the published report as belonging to the Congregational Church or Countess of Huntingdon's connexion), there were 194 Methodist returns, no fewer than 55 of them from the Isle of Wight, with at least 24 of the 194 places apparently not being used exclusively for religious worship. According to Dr Vickers, perhaps only 3 Methodist societies in the county were overlooked. Amongst the 194 were 81 Wesleyan, 61 Primitive Methodist, 38 Bible Christian, and 8 Wesleyan Association buildings (there were no New Connexion or Reform societies in the county, according to the census). One third of the returns were completed by ministers and the rest by lay folk, all men, nearly all office-holders of some sort (mostly stewards or local preachers), typically shopkeepers or artisans, and all but two of them literate. The number of sittings was 27,300, almost equally divided between free and appropriated, with standing room for an estimated further 7,400 persons. Seven-eighths of Methodist chapels had two or, much more rarely, three services on census Sunday, with total attendances in the general congregations and Sunday schools meeting at the same time of 41,600, equivalent, making no allowances for twicers, to one-tenth of the population of the county. To judge by the very high proportion of rounded figures (nearly three-fifths of three-digit and almost half of two-digit attendances ended in a nought), a detailed count of Methodist worshippers as opposed to a guesstimate must have been relatively uncommon. Average attendances, where given (on a bare majority of the returns), were only about one twelfth above those for census day in the aggregate, there being rather more chapels where the census figure was considered to be either at or above the average as to be below it. Illness and seasonal fluctuations were amongst the reasons cited for the shortfall. Detailed comparison between the Methodist returns for the 25 registration districts (i.e. omitting Hampshire parishes in other districts) and the relevant tables in the published report reveals far fewer discrepancies than one might have imagined, with a variance of just 1 in respect of the number of places of wor-

ship, 100 for sittings, and 500 for attendances, confirming the impression that the census remains a broadly accurate tool provided that the geographical unit of analysis is sufficiently large, thereby increasing the prospect that errors will tend to cancel each other out.

CLIVE D. FIELD

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*The Divine Dramatist: George Whitefield and the Rise of Modern Evangelicalism* by Harry S. Stout, (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1991. pp. xxiv, 301, \$14.99 paper. ISBN: 0 8028 0154 4)

Three volumes on international pietism/evangelicalism appeared at roughly the same time, Stout's essay on Whitefield, Ted Campbell's, *The Religion of the Heart: A Study of European Religious Life in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (South Carolina, 1991) and W. R. Ward's, *The Protestant Evangelical Awakening* (Cambridge, 1992). Three more dissimilar accounts of evangelicalism or pietism, three more dissimilar books, would be hard to imagine. Ward probes the social dimensions of the movement, its complex interconnections with domestic and international politics. Campbell explores intellectual commonalities in the inner life, spirituality and praxis of Jewish, Eastern Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant 'heart movements.' Stout focuses on language, image, performance, rhetoric and on a single figure. Some would doubtless embrace one account and reject the others; I would prefer to see the three as offering complementary analyses, each important in its own right.

Of the three, Stout's is easily the most readable. Indeed, it has been conceived for the general reader, achieves coherence through narrative biography and appears in a series aimed at wide readership, the Library of Religious Biography, edited by Mark A. Noll and Nathan O. Hatch, two of the premier American religious historians. As illustrative of the intended audience, the series and this volume do not employ footnotes. Readers of *Proceedings* may experience that as a distraction for they will quickly recognise the engagement with other scholars, the revisionist moves, the commentary implicit in the selection of quotations. 'A Note on the Sources' helps with approach and scholarship, but some readers may find orientation in Stout's *The New England Soul. Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England* (Oxford, 1986), an essay on rhetoric as 'the' resource of Americanisation and revolution.

Rhetoric has been Stout's forte. In the earlier volume, Stout has argued, following Perry Miller, Alan Heimert, and Sacvan Bercovitch, that fundamental transformations in American life derive from sermons and preaching. Such arguments sustain and come to focus in this biography of Whitefield. Stout picks up on Whitefield's early exposure to and continued fascination with theatre and builds a case for Whitefield's theatricality as 'the act' which sets the stage for many other modern developments: Americanisation, the revolution, evangelicalism, a transatlantic evangelical axis (especially Scotland and North America), marketplace capitalism and, of course, itinerancy.

A larger role for Whitefield would be difficult to create and is impossible to convey plausibly in a short review. Suffice it to say, that Stout makes

Whitefield's part as Pauline evangelist and American patriot very credible. Stout makes it possible to understand Whitefield's incredible appeal, his popularity in such diverse settings as Scotland, England and the colonies, his iconic value. As Whitefield swells, others diminish. Arminian Methodists will flinch and react to the walk-on role conceded to the Wesleys and the much larger role accorded Benjamin Franklin. Such slights add to, rather than redress, the serious recent exaggeration of Calvinist contributions to modernisation that have come from the now prominent evangelical scholars. A member of that camp, Stout makes Whitefield's Calvinism a self-evident and obvious posture. Thus his Calvinism, no less than that of New England, is deemed important, indeed essential, to an understanding of the larger patterns that would thereafter engulf the Atlantic world. More probing of Whitefield's Calvinism - some effort to ask how in the age of Enlightenment a figure very free of communal restraints would choose such a theological posture - would only enhance the study.

Still, this is an important work, an engaging biography that comments on larger historical patterns, a model of scholarship - instructive to the scholar and accessible to a popular audience. Highly recommended.

RUSSELL E. RICHEY  
Professor of Church History  
Duke University USA.

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*John Wesley and the Women Preachers of Early Methodism* by Paul Wesley Chilcote (Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1991, pp. 389, £31.90. ISBN: 0 8108 2414 0)

I first read Paul Chilcote's work as a thesis for Duke University, North Carolina, and found it informative and scholarly. This was only to be expected with Dr. Frank Baker as his mentor! It is, therefore, a great pleasure to have it more widely available in book form.

In his introduction Dr. Chilcote looks briefly at instances of women preaching, particularly in relation to Britain, from early Church History through the centuries to the Quakers in the seventeenth century before turning to the problem which faced John Wesley. How should he deal with those women who claimed to have an 'extra-ordinary call' to preach?

Many women undoubtedly felt a call to take part in public services - it was a question of whether they should be allowed to *preach*. Several did virtually preach, but it went by the name of 'exhorting'. Wesley considered each case on its merits and his yardstick was whether God owned the woman's ministry. Thus he sanctioned the work of Sarah Crosby and others.

In the decade before Wesley's death in 1791 more women such as Mary Bosanquet (Mrs Fletcher) and Sarah Mallet, took the opportunity, with Wesley's blessing, to proclaim their faith. However, after 1791 the Wesleyan Connexion adopted a more rigid stance and an 1803 Conference resolution insisted that 'in general' women should not preach, but if Conference was convinced that anyone had an 'extra-ordinary call' she ought to be allowed to preach to her own sex. This led to considerable

debate and, in particular, Zachariah Taft supported the cause of women's preaching for its own sake and not solely because his wife Mary (*née* Barritt) was a noted preacher. The later Bible Christian and Primitive Methodist Connexions welcomed women itinerants with open arms and used them equally with men in the first half centuries of their history.

In the main body of Dr. Chilcote's work there are extended biographies of a number of the more important women preachers, but it is the Appendix of forty-two biographical outlines, with bibliographical references, which provides much additional material and so forms the basis for further study and exploration into this absorbing subject.

E. DOROTHY GRAHAM

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*Revelation and Reason. Wesleyan Responses to Eighteenth-Century Rationalism* by A. Skevington Wood (The Wesley Fellowship 1992, pp. 104, £4.95 ISBN: 0 9516332 2 8 available from 45 Tamar Road, Bulkington, Nuneaton, CV12 9PU)

Dr Wood's aim is to show that the early Methodist leaders were not 'so preoccupied with the urgent task of evangelism that they failed to face up to the theological implications of deistic and Unitarian tendencies,'; and, further that they did not lack the intellectual capacity to engage in competent controversy with these heterodox people. After describing the role of reason in eighteenth-century theology and its effects on Deism, Unitarianism and orthodoxy, Dr Wood goes on to a detailed study of John Wesley's book on original sin against the Arian John Taylor and John Fletcher's and Joseph Benson's critique of Joseph Priestley. Discussion of the last two is particularly welcome since most studies of early Methodist theology are confined to Wesley himself. Dr Wood is perhaps a little hard on the Arians and even on the more radical Priestley since neither were simple rationalistic and they were certainly as opposed to Deism as the orthodox. In their own minds they were upholding the literal truth of the Bible against later theological elaborations by the Fathers (especially on the Trinity).

As to John Wesley, Dr Wood rightly emphasises that he aspired to be a man of 'reason' as well as of 'religion'. Some recent American writers, indeed, have seen him as being a good deal affected by Locke's style of empiricism, appealing to knowledge through the senses. In his writings on science and medicine he showed a deep distrust of speculation about causes beyond what can be known through the senses. He became very impatient with scholastic hairsplitting about the finer points of grace and works. Also, as Dr Wood notes, he distrusted speculation about the interrelationships of the Trinity while firmly upholding the doctrine as a 'scriptural fact'. He liked to talk in an 'empiricist' way about 'spiritual senses' for apprehending spiritual truth. But he also thought that experience testified to the truth of things like witchcraft and demon possession, unlike most of his 'reasonable' contemporaries. Wesley seems, then, to have been influenced by some of the more rationalising impulses of his day but was also prepared to defend revelation by more traditional appeals to signs

and wonders. Although Dr Wood does not fully explain this paradoxical mentality he certainly succeeds in his main aim of showing that his authors were competent apologists for orthodoxy in terms of their own day. He acknowledges that later historical and critical approaches to the Bible affect modern notions of revelations but he claims, fairly enough, that the basic issues today are not dissimilar to those of the eighteenth century: 'is reason alone to decide what is acceptable in revelation or is faith to be allowed to fulfil its traditional function when revelations transcends the limitations of reason?'

HENRY D. RACK

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*Unity and variety. A history of the church in Devon and Cornwall. Exeter Studies in History No. 29, by N. Orme (ed). (Exeter University Press, 1991, pp.xiv, 242. £7.95, ISBN: 0 85989 355 3)*

What would an ideal regional history be like? Would it have the imprimatur of seven senior clerics, including local bishops and Methodist chairmen? Would its subject be a peninsular that formed one diocese until 1877 and is 135 miles long? Would the main contributors be a group of academics, mostly from the local university? At any rate that was the plan adopted for this paperback volume which introduces itself as the third attempt at such a history, the first two being avowedly Anglican. The result is quite respectable and good value but is a collection of essays rather than a history.

Towards Dissent and Methodism the editor seems well intentioned and one named contributor is a Methodist although the book doesn't say so. The cover illustration is the parish church at Sampford Courtenay with the Bible Christian chapel behind it - and the former chapel near that. However it is not unexpected that church takes pre-eminence over chapel; each local Anglican and Roman bishop is listed with *his* dates but there is no reference to the local dignitaries of any other denomination, whether Methodist President or even Free Church of England bishop - Bishop Price lived at Ilfracombe for a time.

To many this book will be irritating because of what it omits - there is no reference in the index to James Shore and the Free Church of England, one of the three religious movements which nineteenth-century Devon fostered or gave birth to. More than any other part of the south west the ecclesiastical history of Plymouth is long overdue but it is hardly dealt with at all here. However as an aid to serendipity this book is very welcome, containing, as it does, many interesting nuggets, some arising from original research. For example, Devon has a population only one third of London north of the Thames but it has one hundred more places of worship. The earliest evidence for Christianity in the south west is a piece of fourth-century pottery bearing 'chi-rho' found in South Street, Exeter in 1945.

ROGER THORNE

*A Northumbrian Methodist Childhood* by A. Victor Murray, edited by G.E. Milburn (Northumberland County Library, 1992, pp.xix, 95. £5.95. ISBN: 1 874020 02 7)

To anyone who spent his early days in a North East colliery village (as the present reviewer did) this book brings back vivid memories of those days - words and phrases, chapel customs, class distinctions and local 'characters'. So much so that it is easy to suspend one's critical faculty and give undue praise, but even with the critical faculty awake one can only say that this is a charming book, a step back into pre-Union Methodism; in order words, what it meant to be a Wesleyan, Primitive or United Methodist.

The subject of this fascinating autobiography is Victor Murray, Vice-President of the last Primitive Methodist Conference in 1932 and Vice-President of the Methodist Conference in 1947. These memoirs, written in 1950, are among documents deposited at the Northumberland Record Office by his family. Geoffrey Milburn has edited them with an excellent introduction and an outline of Victor Murray's outstanding career - his work for SCM, a lectureship at Selly Oak, his travels in Africa, twelve years as Professor of Education at Hull and President of Cheshunt College, Cambridge.

Victor Murray was born in 1890 and grew up first in the Northumbrian village of Choppington (or, to be more precise, Scotland Gate, a name which greatly intrigued the enquiring mind of young Victor) and later at Berwick-upon-Tweed. Here we get a glimpse of Primitive Methodism in a mining community of nearly a century ago - impressions of 'folk Methodism', the ways of the old class meetings and their leaders, the foibles of the choirmaster who was likely to get 'huffed', the advent of the Christian Endeavour and the Sunday School Anniversary. So we could go on ...but with one regret. The story only takes us to about 1909, when the author was about eighteen years of age, for it was never completed.

This insight into a fragment of local history, spiced with humour and written with a deep understanding of human nature, should be welcomed by all who cherish Methodist lore and customs, indeed by all devotees of local history.

JOHN C BOWMER

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*Blue Ribbon Days* by Thomas E. Lewis, edited by G.T. Eddy. (Shrewsbury: Shropshire Books, Radbrook Road, SY3 9BJ, 1992, pp.89, £5.99 + £1.00 postage, ISBN: 0 903802 55 4)

Tom Lewis was born in Clungunford, Shropshire in 1863. He was a Methodist who spent most of his life in Shropshire and in neighbouring Knighton, where he was apprenticed to a Methodist grocer in 1878. Later he married his former master's daughter, Harriet Oldbury, and set up in business himself in Shrewsbury. In his last years in Birmingham, before his death in 1952, he dictated to his daughter his 'Reminiscences of a Shropshire Boy', which have now appeared in print.

The book has much of interest to Methodists. In Clungunford Primitive Methodist Chapel in the Leintwardine Circuit 'my Mother always started

the hymns as there was no music, and kept time with her foot. When the parson failed to turn up she would read a sermon, and always finished up with a prayer meeting'. For the annual Camp Meeting 'a procession was formed near Sycamore House (his home), this moved in full song to a field at the back of the school. At the left hand side of the field under the shade of oak trees, a waggon was procured, and the minister of the circuit, assisted by local preachers, conducted the service.' In Knighton the Oldburys' house was an open house for the Wesleyan ministry 'The parson very often stayed to supper coming in about midnight' having been preaching at Clun or Bishop's Castle. In Shrewsbury Thomas Lewis attended St John's Hill Wesleyan Chapel, where he became first a sidesman and later a society steward. Meanwhile he became a Sunday School teacher at Greenfields Wesleyan in the afternoon. Other reminiscences include Moody and Sankey in Shrewsbury, May Fairs, whinberry picking, the tallow chandlery ('the worst job'), and the village school.

Later, back in the Knighton Circuit he became a local preacher and preached over a wide area including a quarterly visit to the farmhouse belonging to the Griffiths family at Devannor near Abbey-Cwm-Hir (this society celebrates its 175th anniversary this year and must be, after Raithby, the second oldest Methodist society still worshipping in a private house) Tom Lewis describes it thus: 'The congregation was a few farmers with their family and their staff. A table was placed by the fire with Bible and Hymn Book. The service was at 11 a.m. It was told me that one minister who was preaching, in the middle of his discourse remarked "Excuse me Miss Griffiths, but I'm afraid the meat is burning". I stayed at the farmhouse until the Monday morning, 'taking a service in the afternoon at Cwmgwilin and one in the evening at Llanbister. Two of these three societies still survive.

The whole book is well illustrated with pictures from the period. It tells the story of a beautiful romance, and life as it was in the Shropshire border area a hundred years ago. It shows how Chapel and Church were entwined with life in the countryside, and in small market towns.

JOHN H. LENTON

## ERRATA

The following changes should be made to the text on p. 27 of the Feb. 1993 issue of the *Proceedings*:

3rd paragraph, 1st complete sentence, last section should read,

"...(2) Penrose or a family member possesses a copy of the *Receipt* in Penryn, and Penrose now wants it sent to him, presumably to share with his friends at Bath."

3rd paragraph, 3rd complete sentence should read,

"It seems unlikely, moreover, that an anti-Methodist broadside that has just been published would be available in Penryn but not in Bath or nearby in the bustling port city of Bristol."

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1465. PORTRAITS OF J. SCOTT LIDGETT

As author of a recent history of the South London Mission, I am keen to track down two portraits of the Rev. Dr John Scott Lidgett. One was painted by Andrew Burton and the other by Francis Dodd. I shall be grateful for any information about the whereabouts of these portraits.

JOHN D. BEASLEY  
6 Everthorpe Road, London SE15 4DA

### 1466. A TRANSLATION BY SAMUEL WESLEY SENIOR

The following is taken from the minutes of the Spalding Gentlemen's Society of 27 October, 1748: 'Wesley's MS Translation of Plato's Dialogue with Eupolis & his Hymn to the Creator. Read to the Company an Elegant Translation of a Dialogue between Plato & Eupolis the Poet (whom Horace mentions with regard) as to that Philosophers banishing poets his Commonwealth, as Fabulists injuries to the Deitie and Debauchers of the Morals of the People; & that Poets Defence of Them; And his Hymn to the Creator, in Plato's sense of Divinity, and in defence of Socrates: A MS by the Reverend Samuel Wesley MA. Rector of Epworth & South Ormsby. & vicar of Wroot, sometime a Member of this Society. Sent in Letter to M. Johnson dated from Wroot March i. 1722/3.

The Sentiments in this divine Ode are Pious, Sublime, & becoming a good man.' (SGS minutes. vol. fol. 26)

NORMAN LEVERITT

### 1467. THE REV ANDREW KINSMAN

A very belated comment on Note 1337 (*Proceedings*, xlii, p.189), by Dr O.A.Beckerlegge arising from his article on the Lavington Correspondence in the same volume. I have been researching my family history for many years and feel sure that the marriage mentioned by Thomas Salmon is *not* the re-marriage of Andrew Kinsman's father but the marriage of Andrew's sister, Mary (age 20) to John Barnett, for which a licence was issued at Exeter on 15 August 1746. According to the Tavistock parish register, a child was born to John and Mary Bennett (*sic*) in November the same year. 'The Person...at whose house the meetings have always been held' was indeed John Kinsman. John was aged about 50 at the time and remained married to Andrew and Mary's mother (also called Mary) who probably outlived him. We therefore have to look elsewhere for the causes of Andrew's move to Plymouth (which took place in 1745). The motives given by Dr Welch in his *Devonshire Association* article referred to by Dr Beckerlegge, would be quite sufficient to explain it.

R.J. KINSMAN