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"The Distressed State of the Country . . ."

The background of poverty in the Baptist Churches of Lancashire during the Industrial Revolution, 1760-1832.

JOHN WESLEY wrote in his diary (February 8th, 1753) "In the afternoon I visited many of the sick; but such scenes, who could see unmoved? There are none such to be found in a Pagan country. If any of the Indians in Georgia were sick (which indeed exceedingly rarely happened, till they learned gluttony and drunkenness from the Christians), those who were near him, gave him whatever he wanted. O who will convert the English into honest Heathens?"

On Friday and Saturday, I visited as many more as I could. I found some in their cells under ground; others in their garrets, half starved with cold and hunger, added to weakness and pain. But I found not one of them unemployed, who was able to crawl about the room. So wickedly, devilishly false is that common objection: "They are poor, only because they are idle." If you saw these things with your own eyes, could you lay out money in ornaments or superfluities?"¹

There is plenty of evidence of political and clerical insensibility to the sufferings of the poor, though throughout the period the amount spent on poor relief continued to grow. The minute book of the Church at Accrington (November 20, 1816) on a day for prayer and fasting says ". . . multitudes crowd together with great anxiety to form petitions and offer them to a temporal prince totally destitute of grace and almost of the tender feelings of humanity, desirous that their sorrow may be alleviated and that they may obtain more of that meat which perisheth . . ." Dr. Whitley (*Baptists of North-West England*, p.171) points out that the delegates to the Association meetings held at Burslem in 1816 travelled by the same road by which the Blanketeers attempted to reach London, "but the Association was like Gallio as yet and cared for none of these things. Its outlook was still on purely denominational concerns, and the Churches were exhorted

¹ *The Journal of John Wesley*, Everyman Edition, Vol. II, p. 246.

to take an interest in the Irish Society and the B.M.S. being thus educated into some sense of corporate responsibility." Yet in 1792, Joshua Wood of Salendine Nook was attacking the barrenness of the hyper-Calvinism of many of the members. In the Circular Letter, "The Uniformity of Christian Zeal," he says, "Some professors have a kind of zeal for the doctrines of the Gospel which is not approved of God. When they hear these they smile, hearken diligently, and are ready to say within themselves, 'O brave! This is preaching'; but when they have duties strictly enforced from Divine Authority, and from Gospel motives, then they put on a frowning countenance, soon drop their attention and say, 'This is poor legal stuff, and the preachers of it are half Arminians, if not altogether so.' But the zeal of such persons is not genuine, and their wickedness in slighting duty is exceedingly vile, so that we are at a loss for a name fully to express its atrocious nature." It is true that there are no public resolutions until 1811, when the Association thanked the London Committee for stopping Lord Sidmouth's Bill, but year after year there are notes in the Circular Letters on the state of the country. In 1807, The Itinerant Society was first suggested because of "the very destitute state of some parts of this country and the depressed state of many of our Churches." In 1809 the minutes record "Many (Churches) complain of embarrassed circumstances on account of badness of trade and dearness of provisions." In 1817, the Association agreed, "That it be recommended to the Churches to take into consideration the distressed state of the country and to observe such a day as may be most convenient as a day of fasting and prayer." It will be clear from other extracts from Church minute books and letters that the Churches took the only action of which they were then capable. They helped to bear each other's burdens.

The congregations were almost exclusively made up of poor, working people. There were merchants and mill-owners here and there—Ainsworth and Kelsall at Ogden and Rochdale, James Bury at Accrington, and the Hope family at Liverpool—but on the whole there were "not many mighty, not many noble" as this world judges. The minutes at Ogden and Accrington faithfully record the class struggles between the weavers and the owners, in which the Church was called to arbitrate. The Registers of Births and Deaths (many in Somerset House) record, though not as often as one could wish, the occupation of the father of the child or other person buried in the Church yard. At Colne, for example, between 1814 and 1816 twelve children were registered, ten of them the children of weavers. The registers at Ogden show, incidentally, the beginnings of the displacement of wool by cotton in Lancashire.

REGISTER OF BURIALS.

1793	November 14.	Sam Clegg.	Woollen Manufacturer.
1794	January 27.	John Whitehead.	ditto.
	May 26.	Benjamin Chadwick.	ditto.
	August 26.	James Wild.	Husbandman.
	December 17.	Samuel Fielding.	Woollen Manufacturer.
	December 17.	John Gartside.	ditto.
	May 25.	Thomas Brown.	ditto.

REGISTER OF BIRTHS.

1794	July 20.	Benjamin Gartside.	Woollen Manufacturer.
	August 23.	Edmund Robinson.	Cotton Manufacturer.
	June 4.	Edmund Milne.	ditto.
	July 18.	Daniel Knott.	Woollen Manufacturer.
1795	August 7.	John Wade.	Cotton Manufacturer.
1797	October 20.	Eli Fielding.	Innkeeper.
1798	April 29.	Sam Brearley.	Cotton Manufacturer.
1801	February 7.	Eli Unsworth.	ditto.
1802	March 28.	Charles Taylor.	Innkeeper.

The Registers of the General Baptist Church, Burnley (Ebenezer) show the members about equally divided between farming and woollen industry (spinners, combers and weavers.) This does not mean that the two occupations were completely separate. It was a common thing for a farmer to have a few looms for his women folk to operate in their spare time and also for a handloom weaver to have his plot of land to eke out his earnings. Jesse Ainsworth, uncle of Henry Kelsall, who appears to have been treasurer of the Church at Ogden "supplemented his farming with woollen manufacture in a little mill at Ogden." (MS lent by Lord Rochdale, great grandson of Henry Kelsall.) At least four ministers worked at the loom—John Hirst of Bacup, who went back to the loom during his ministry to discharge a debt due to a failure in business, Edmund Whitaker of Burnley, Richard Ashworth of Lumb and William Gadsby who served two apprenticeships, first to ribbon weaving and later to shoddy weaving. The records of the Church at West Street, Rochdale throw another light on the social strata from which the members were drawn. Out of the first hundred members who signed the Church Covenant, over forty (probably forty-six) could not sign their names but made a mark.

The minute books of the Churches, the memoirs of ministers, sermons and Circular Letters provided abundant evidence of the poverty which existed everywhere among Baptist people during this period. John Wesley, in the entry which begins this essay, describes the homes of the people in cells and garrets. William

Pendered, minister of the York Street Chapel, Manchester, records in his diary on June 15, 1812. "During the past fortnight I have been engaged in calling on the poor children belonging to the Sunday School, and in the cellars and garrets in which I have been, I have met with many such instances of extreme wretchedness. Hundreds of poor families have nothing to eat but potatoes, and of these they are unable to obtain sufficient to satisfy the cravings of hunger."² The Sunday School at York Street had 424 children on the books when the School was visited by Government investigators collecting evidence for the report on "The State of children employed in manufactories in the United Kingdom, 25th April, to 18th June, 1816." Two hundred and eighty-four children were present on the Sunday of the investigations, eighty-six of them worked in factories. The Report states that the children were asked how old they were when they began to work in the factories. Four of them were five years old, five were five and a half, and five were six years old. The letters and memoir of William Gadsby confirm this picture, adding greater detail and continuing it up to the middle of the century.³

The poverty of the town and village Churches was no less than in Manchester. The Sunday School at Accrington was closed down for December and January, 1804-5, because the children had neither the shoes nor the clothes to withstand the cold. And not merely children. The Church Meeting at Ogden (1823, February 7th) was poorly attended "through the severity of the weather. After the devotional exercises it was agreed that a collection should be made for the poor." The minute book from Rochdale tells a similar tale. "February 28th, 1801. Times still continue to be calamitous and the poor want for bread. April 4th, 1801. Betty Bagshaw says that the cause of her absention is with herself. She is poor and can scarcely find the necessaries to come, but wishes not to be cut off." It is necessary to remember that the members had to walk to Church meetings sometimes three and four miles over exposed country to understand the frequent references in minute books to the weather. The most revealing records are to be found in letters sent by Richard Ashworth, minister at Lumb, to the Particular Baptist Fund in London applying for help towards his salary. These letters are copied into the Church minute book. He sent the first letter on January 17th, 1829. He wrote, "It is not pleasant to me to think of becoming burdensome to our Christian friends, but necessity urges us to apply. . . . Neither my wife nor I has any private property and indeed, we have

² *Letters and Memoirs of the Late Mr. Wm. Pendered of Manchester*, by his son, 1819.

³ *A Memoir of the Late Wm. Gadsby*, by Jn. Gadsby, 1844.

scarcely bare necessary utensils so that I am almost ashamed when Christian friends call upon us. . . . We are neither of us, my wife nor I, engaged in any secular occupation besides weaving calico by which we earn (both of us together) in general four shillings and sixpence a week." The letter is endorsed by the deacons who state that they are able to give their pastor £13. 10s. 3d. for his salary during the previous year and have made a collection for the Fund of 19s. 3d. "which though but small, is all that our poor people could contribute." The next letter was sent in September of the same year requesting the gift of some books, as he had "scarcely any books and no means of purchasing any . . ." He again states that, "We have no secular concern beside weaving calico which my wife labours at, and I when I have opportunity, but owing to my increasing labours and calls from home I think we have not earned (both of us together) on an average above three shillings in the week. . . ." The deacons' letter of endorsement shows a slight increase in the salary to £14 6s. 0d., but the collection for the Fund is down. "We have made a collection which amounts to £0 10s. 1d., which though small, you would not wonder at if you were acquainted with the distress of our neighbourhood. . . ." The third letter was sent up to London in the summer of 1830. His financial affairs had suffered with the growth of the Church and its activities. "We . . . are not engaged in any secular concern except weaving calico which my wife labours at and I also when not called off elsewhere, but as we have been getting a Chapel this year I have been from home a great part of my time and can scarcely help getting into debt."

With a pastor who was one of themselves and who appears to have written the minutes, it is not surprising that they are full of concern for the poverty of the congregation.

"1829. September 26th. Preparation Meeting. Agreed that each member who is able pay one half-penny per week in order to defray small expenses of the Church."

The letter to the Association meeting at Shipley in 1830, describes the erection of the new Chapel. "We are erecting a new Chapel to the joy of the neighbourhood, many in which are working hard (that is on the building itself) and pinching themselves of the necessities of life in order to give as much as possible towards the Chapel. . . ." The Chapel was finished and the pews brought from the old building and installed. "The pews when let were first ordered to be 14d. the fronts; next 1s.; next 11d.; next again 9d., but at the Pastor's request they were lowered to 1s. the fronts and in proportion backwards." But by the next year the

rents had to be reduced again. "1832. April 28th. The Conversation meeting. Agreed to lower the seats a penny each through the Chapel on account of the extreme distress."

Richard Ashworth was not alone in sharing the poverty of his people. It was the lot of every minister who came to Lancashire. When Thomas Muckley of Wern was invited to the pastorate at Ogden he was offered the munificent sum of £50, but the Church was able to offer this extraordinary amount only because: "The old man Ainsworth (farmer and mill-owner) told us we did not need to fear the money would be made up." Richard Ashworth had to be content with what his people could find which rose from £13. 10s. 3d. in 1829, when he commenced his ministry to £18 in 1831. John Jackson who went to Accrington in 1817 had no idea what his salary would be! In the letter accepting the call he wrote: "I have only to add that I cast myself and my family upon the care of an indulgent Providence and under that upon your Christian liberality for support, and humbly hope that so long as God shall enable me to serve you faithfully I shall not fare the worse for not having stipulated any specific salary." His hopes might not have been very high had he read the minute of a meeting held a few days before his acceptance. "Privation of trade and consequently increased poverty agitated much fear whether all the Church could produce by way of temporal support, would be adequate to the minister's necessity. . . ." Richard Ashworth had three children to support out of his meagre income. George Dean took with him eight children when he moved from Burnley to Lineholme, Todmorden. At a meeting on January 17th, 1819, the congregation was asked to approve the coming of "Brother Dean with his family." The meeting went on to pass a second resolution which said, "We think it best that Bro. Dean has a certain sum quarterly to depend on for his labours. Agreed to give him £16 yearly till we are able to do more for him." The Rev. John Walker who has collected what information there is about the early days of Ebenezer, Burnley says: "So far as we know he never did receive a larger allowance than this mere pittance . . . The husband of one of his daughters died and left two children for his widow to support. She, with her children, removed to her father for assistance and protection. His aged mother about the same time lost her second husband. He took her and her daughter who was in a very infirm state into his house. After the two last removed back to Halifax he gave them something regularly to their support till they died. All out of £16 a year."

It is hardly to be wondered at that when the ministers died early in life they left widows and orphans quite unprovided for.

The Baptist periodical literature of the time contains many appeals for public subscriptions for families "left in necessitous circumstances." James Hargreaves in his *Life of Hirst*, gives details of two cases in Lancashire.⁴ John Hindle of St. George's Road, Manchester, "died in 1800 leaving a widow and several children to mourn their loss. His family was well provided for by the liberality of religious friends. . . ." The circumstances of the family of Benjamin Dickenson do not appear to have been so comfortable. "The public papers at Waterford (he had removed there from Pendle Hill in 1806) noticed his death in a very respectable manner. They passed many and just encomiums upon his abilities, character and piety; and used successful endeavours to excite the sympathy and generosity of the public, in behalf of a bereaved, mourning widow and five children. Much was done by the benevolence of both Islands to place the family *above the reach of absolute poverty.*"

The public subscriptions for the widows and orphans of ministers makes a convenient point at which to turn to the way in which the poverty of the Church's members was met. It is impossible to say that what was done was in any way adequate to meet the amount of distress, but remembering that the majority of the members were poor themselves, what they did to relieve the poorest can only be described as a sacrificial outpouring of Christian charity. If the Association took no notice of the march of the Blanketeers, it was not because they were unmoved by the poverty which drove the weavers to such calamitous protests. The Churches relieved poverty directly, where they could; they began a system of self-help and education which raised up working class leaders. What Chesterton said of the first century is true of the Baptist Churches of Lancashire during the eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries. "The spirit of the early century produced great men because it believed that men were great. It made strong men by encouraging weak men. Its education, its public habits, its rhetoric were all addressed to encouraging the greatness of everybody. And by encouraging the greatness in everybody, it naturally encouraged the superlative greatness in some."⁵ This is not the place to describe how the Churches encouraged hand-loom weavers to take public office. The ill-prepared, pathetic adventure of the Blanketeers was soon routed by the defenders of the old order, but they were not able to hold back the rising tide of education of which the Free Churches were the consistent champions.

The Church at Rochdale drew up a declaration of doctrine

⁴ *The Life and Memoir of the late Rev. John Hirst*, by James Hargreaves, 1816, p. 158.

⁵ *Charles Dickens*, by G. K. Chesterton, p. 6.

in 1805, and followed it by a statement of the duties incumbent upon all members in the form of a Covenant which members had to sign. Two of the duties laid down bear on our subject.

- " 5. That we will in Church affairs make no difference or distinction but condescend to the meanest person or service for the edification of the brethren.
14. . . . And if any of our brethren are reduced to want we will willingly communicate to them assistance as their necessities shall require."

The minute books of the Church, however, are not very helpful in showing how the assistance was given. Those at Ogden, Accrington, and the Coldhouse Chapel, Manchester contain some information. The members at Ogden on February 15th, 1821: "Agreed that John Clegg and John Garside, wait upon Mary Taylor at Bradley to know whether she is in want of help from the Church." The members of the Church at Accrington on August 10th, 1821: "Agreed to make a collection for the poor members of the Church." On September 7th, 1821 ". . . James Entwistle related his interview with Alice Pearson—she complained of want of clothing. . . ." On March 8th, 1822, "a collection to be made for the poor." Few attended the Church meeting on February 7th, 1823, "through the severity of the weather. After the devotional exercises it was agreed that a collection should be made for the poor." On January 12th, 1827: "It was agreed that a collection be made for Martha Foster of Haslingden Grain." On July 11th, 1828, ". . . a proposal to form a Benevolent Society referred to consideration till next meeting." On August 8th, 1828, the rules of a society were read to the Church and Congregation and the Society was called, "The Benevolent Society for the Poor." On December 11th, 1829: "Agreed that there be a collection in the Chapel some Sunday before long for Jane Madin who is in great distress at present." The collection was made on Christmas Day and a Christmas Box given to Jane Madin of £1 2s. 6d. On June 11th, 1830, it was "resolved that Ann Cooper and Mary Holker endeavour to collect some relief for Ann Pilkington who is ill." The charity of the Coldhouse Chapel, Manchester, is innocently told on a small piece of paper pinned to the first page of the Church Roll and Account Book (1832-1874.)⁶ It is quite obviously the statement prepared by the distributor of the Church's alms. It reads as follows.

⁶ Church Roll and Account Book of the Old Scotch Baptist, Thorniley Brow, later the Coldhouse Chapel, Shudehill, Manchester, 1832-1874. In the Manchester Public Library.

"Church members," 1st April, 1836, £2 2 9.

Mary Heywood ...	5 0	Not of the Church :	
Hannah Mather ...	5 0	Kenyon	5 0
Mary Edwards ...	2 6	E. White	2 0
Betty Burrows ...	2 6	S. Burgess	2 6
Willm. Petrie ...	5 0	Brett	6
Mary English ...	5 0	M. Edwards lodger	2 6
Jas. Carruthers ...	5 3½		
	£1 10 3½		12 6

The first thing to notice about this statement is that the entire collection was distributed. This was the normal practice of the Church. The accounts show that the Church's income was divided into two parts, the larger part being given to the poor and the rest spent on Communion wine. In 1832 the total income was £34 3s. 5d., of which £23 9s. 0d. was distributed; in 1833 the income was £34 10s. 4d., of which £23 9s. 4d. was distributed; in 1834 the income was £34 16s. 6d., and £23 16s. 1d. given away, and so on. In 1836 there was an addition £2 10s. 0d. to the total given away "for Joseph William's funeral." The second thing to notice is that "M.E.", presumably the Mary Edwards who appears in the list, and "M.H.", the Mary Heywood, appear many times in the Church accounts. "M.E.", seems to have received a regular five-shillings a week for years. William Gadsby writing to Mr. Tiptaft in 1840 says, "I think there are about ninty upon our regular poor lists."⁷

Gadsby's exertions on behalf of the poor of Manchester were no doubt prompted by his own knowledge of poverty. His father was a road-maker and there were six children. John Gadsby says, "As soon as he was able to hold a child in his arms, even while seated, he had to fill the occupation of nurse, and he was then barefooted and ragged." At the age of thirteen he was apprenticed to a ribbon weaver. At twenty-two he began a second apprenticeship to a shoddy weaver, for which he had to pay 20s. down and 1s. a week for twelve months to learn the trade. He was so poor when he married that, "All he and his wife had was her umbrella which they sold to buy a deal table. He has been heard to say that he knew what it was to thank God for a single twopence sent by a friend."⁸ No wonder that when he came to Manchester and worked among poverty he worked incessantly to beg money and clothes to relieve the distress. *The Manchester Gazette*, (December 9th, 1826) said, "We understand that the Rev. Mr. Gadsby, who by his praiseworthy exertions for the poor of this

⁷ *Sermons, Fragments of Sermons and Letters by William Gadsby of Manchester*, 1884.

⁸ *A Memoir of W. Gadsby*, by his son John Gadsby.

town in canvassing among his friends in London, obtained twenty cwt. of cast-off clothes (the carriage and the packing cost him £18) still continues to exert himself in acts of benevolence. We learn from very good authority that he has purchased and distributed within the last week ten pairs of blankets, four or five pieces of flannel, and that some of the members of his congregation have copied their pastor's laudable example.” A study of his hymns, sermons and letters shows that this was not charity in the narrow sense, but proceeded from a lively and indignant concern for the condition of the poor.

The poverty of ministers was relieved in the way mentioned above. The Particular Baptist Fund in London made small grants to necessitous cases. But the amounts were exceedingly small though they were accepted with pathetic gratitude by the well-nigh starving ministers. Richard Ashworth whose letter we have quoted, received a grant of £6 to add to the £13 his congregation gave him, and the four shillings and sixpence a week he and his wife earned weaving calico. But it is clear from his letters that all ministers who could were expected to implement their salaries by teaching. In the first letter he says, “Neither of us as yet keep a school, and being inconveniently situated, we cannot at present attend to it.” In the second letter asking for a gift of books he refers again to teaching. “Neither of us keep a school. In the present distress, and especially in our poor neighbourhood, there are scarcely any families who can afford to send their children to a weekday school.” Hargreaves at Ogden, Littlewood at Rochdale, and Harbottle at Accrington all turned to teaching to provide a necessary and welcome addition to the Church gifts. Prof. Norman Sykes says, “The addition of the office of schoolmaster to that of curate or parish priest was a recognised means of eking out the inadequate stipends of curacies and poor benefices. The seventy-eighth canon ‘Curates desirous to teach to be licensed before others’ specially provided for this, in parishes lacking a public school, by decreeing that curates of the degree of M.A., or B.A., who were willing to teach children ‘for the better increase of their living and training up of children in principles of true religion’ should receive licence thereto from the Ordinary in preference to any other person.”⁹

William Jackson, the minister of the Coldhouse Chapel, noted above for its generosity, had a short way with the poverty of ministers. Let them work in a secular occupation. He wrote a rather bitter pamphlet entitled “The duty of Christian Pastors to support themselves—illustrated in a series of letters addressed to Mr. J. Bennett, tutor of Rotherham Academy, containing

⁹ “The Church,” by Prof. N. Sykes, in *Johnson's England*, footnote to pp. 25, 26.

remarks on his sermon entitled 'The obligation of the Churches to support their ministers.' To receive a salary from the Church is to "barter with the heavenly treasures of God and make merchandise of his professing people." Ministers are like men in other trades "wherein remuneration is proportionate to ability and the highest bidder generally obtains their services." In reply to the objection that if pastors were not supported by the Church they would soon be left without them he retorted, 'They would be left without hirelings who care not for the sheep, and that they may be so left is one reason why pastors are enjoined to labour with their own hands.'

To end this survey let us look at the major sufferers in times of poverty—the children. The registers of births and deaths are probably very incomplete, but one gets the impression from them that deaths among children were numerous. "Progress in the attack on mortality figures was slow. 'You must remember,' said Johnson when consoling Boswell for the loss of a child, 'that to keep three out of four is more than your share. Mrs. Thrale has but four out of eleven.'"¹⁰ And it is not surprising that it should be so when conditions in the town are remembered. William Pendered's picture of his Sunday School children living in cellars and garrets has already been quoted. George Gould, who gave evidence before the committee of inquiry into the condition of children in factories, was asked, "Do you know that many of these persons (who did not work in factories) work in damp cellars, or unwholesome garrets, very irregularly, and frequently dissipating their wages, wasting their wages, wasting their health by playing and drinking on Mondays and working fourteen or fifteen hours often on the other days?"¹¹ The investigator at the York Street Sunday School selected twenty children of "delicate and unhealthy appearance." Eighteen of these worked in factories. James Phillips Kay (afterwards Sir Kay Shuttleworth) in "The Moral and Physical condition of the working classes employed in the cotton manufacture in Manchester, 1832," says of the children that they were "ill fed, dirty, ill clothed, exposed to cold and neglect; and in consequence more than half of the offspring of the poor (as may be proved by the bills of mortality of the town) die before they have completed their fifth year. The strongest survive; but the same causes which destroy the weakest, impair the vigour of the more robust; and hence the children of the manufacturing population are proverbially pale and sallow, though not generally emaciated nor the subjects of disease." The children in the country probably fared

¹⁰ "Industry and Trade," by H. Heaton, in *Johnson's England*, p. 228.

¹¹ "State of children employed in manufactories of the U.K. 1816," p. 96f.

better. "Outside the towns many, but by no means all, had the use of some piece of land, while the northern wife combined dexterity with the needle with ability to bake a large variety of bread and cakes."¹² How large a variety may perhaps be seen in a home-made rhyme by John Lord, schoolmaster at Bacup. "Beginning with Christmas, he carries us down through Candlemas to Shrovetide, seven days before Easter, the time when 'Pancakes are in their prime'; and when 'Fig-pies come thick and fast' we are fully reminded that Mid-Lent with its dainty Simnels is near at hand. . . .

Now spiced bread and Christmas boxes,
Cheese and cakes and tarts and ale—
All for modest lads and lasses,
Living in Rossendale.¹³

But even in the country where children worked for their parents in their homes the children's working life began early. Defoe says of the Yorkshire clothier's home which he saw on his tour, ". . . scarce any Thing above four Years old, but its Hands were sufficient for its own Support."¹⁴ John Hirst began work at seven setting cards for his brother.

It must not be thought, however, that either the children or their parents, at least those who belonged to Baptist Chapels, lived lives of unmixed gloom. Edward Nuttall, historian of the Church at Lumb says that until the new chapel was built, parents and children went over the hills to Goodshaw. "They carried their dinner under their arms, as an old member now amongst us, who was one that crossed the rugged hills to Goodshaw some sixty years ago tells us. He says, 'there have been loads of currant cake carried over to Goodshaw on a Sunday and eaten there for dinner.' It is said by many of the children of our pious ancestors that it was no uncommon thing in those days for them to be roused out of a warm bed in the dark during the winter months in order to ensure their being at the Sunday School in time! . . . They were often heard singing some of the songs of Zion as they went their way and hence could not fail to be reminded of the Jews going to Jerusalem to worship."¹⁵ Singing for the people of the Dean valley was more than a past-time. It was, next to their religion, what made life worth living. The first minister of the congregation at Lumb and then at Goodshaw was John Nuttall, the founder of "The deighn Layrocks" (The Dean Larks), so

¹² "Industry and Trade," by H. Heaton in *Johnson's England*, p. 248.

¹³ *Old Hymn Tunes*, by R. J. V. Wylie, p. 14.

¹⁴ Quoted by J. L. Hammond in *The Town Labourer*, p. 161.

¹⁵ *History of Providende Chapel, Lumb*, Edward Nuttall, 1879, p. 6.

that, however desperate the condition of the people, the Sunday worship never lacked in hearty singing and playing. On October 29th, 1831, the Church at Lumb "agreed to pay for the repairing and stringing of Robt. Ashworth's Bass Violin. . . ." Anniversaries and field days were looked forward to throughout the year. William Pendered records that during the Whit-week races in Manchester, they took five hundred children to a field out of town returning to the school for tea. On July 13th, 1829, the officers of the Sunday School at Accrington "resolved that Nancy Entwistle and Mary Holker be appointed to superintend the Fair Feast, and that John Marsh and Rt. Fish go abegging for the feast. . . ."

There were other indirect ways in which the bitterness of poverty was relieved—the Sunday services, evening and Sunday afternoon classes to read and write, libraries, opportunities offered to men and women of leadership in the local Church, encouragement of youths of ability to enter the ministry. Judged in the light of modern state-administered schemes of social welfare all this must seem pitifully inadequate. But let it be judged for what it was—an attempt by a poor community to share the common burden.

C. B. WBYATT.