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Ridley sculp^t

Adam Clarke.

Ætatis 33.

Preacher of the Gospel.

ILLUSTRATION.

Portrait: Adam Clarke, aged 33. From Ridley's engraving in *The Arminian Magazine*, 1789.

The late Rev. C. H. Kelly stated a few years ago that besides the painting at the Book Room there are sixty different portraits of Adam Clarke. I have a mezzotint which the late Rev. Richard Green considered the best portrait of Dr. Clarke in later life. Like the painting at the Book Room, it bears no artist's name. Etheridge tells us that Clarke when he was at Bristol (1789) sat for his portrait to Thomas Holloway, best known for his engravings from the Raphael cartoons. He excelled as a draughtsman and engraver rather than as a painter, as Etheridge terms him. His portrait of Clarke may be found in *The Arminian Magazine* 1789. "Mr. Adam Clarke *Ætatis* 27." Six years later appears "Adam Clarke *Ætatis* 33. Preacher of the Gospel. *Ridley sculpt.*"

We reproduce this latter portrait because it is an improvement on Holloway's work, and more interesting, as the preacher appears in the garb of the Methodist itinerant of the eighteenth century so well estimated by the Rev. Henry Bett in the article that follows. Clarke's quiet humour, concerning his portraits, is revealed by Dr. Etheridge who tells us that from several preceding failures, Adam Clarke had come to the conclusion that his face was not an auspicious one for the pencil, and he consented to sit on only two conditions: "First, that you do not make me appear better than I am; for that will reflect on my Maker, as though he had not made me good enough: and, secondly, that you do not make me appear worse than I am; for that will be to burlesque me."—T. E. B.

THE ALLEGED ILLITERACY OF THE EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS.

Few things are more surprising, in a world of surprises, than the condescending way in which almost all who have written of eighteenth-century Methodism have referred to the intellectual status of the early Methodist preachers. We are told that they were 'uneducated men,' 'unlettered laymen,' 'ignorant men of humble position'; we hear of their 'irreparable want of education'; we are informed that they had little more than 'the gift of voluble utterance'; and that 'very few could boast more than the veriest rudiments of a secular education.' All these are express statements of reputable historians of Methodism and biographers of Wesley. Notwithstanding, we are persuaded that this legend as to the illiteracy of Wesley's preachers is perverse and baseless. How did it arise? There were several things which contributed to it.

There was clerical prejudice, in the first place. Every

clerical attack upon Methodism expatiated upon the ignorance of the Methodist preachers. This must be heavily discounted; indeed, it may be dismissed at once. It was a mere blend of clerical bigotry, social pride, and University priggishness on the part of men who would at once set down every Methodist preacher and every Dissenting minister as not of their caste, and therefore an ignoramus.

Then there are admissions on the part of the Wesleys that their preachers were 'unlearned.' But it is only fair, in assessing the significance of the word, to remember the standard of knowledge that the Wesleys would have required of a man before they called him 'learned.' The Fellow of Lincoln and the Student of Christ Church would have held no man learned unless his classical scholarship were exact and considerable. There were probably not a great many at Oxford, and certainly there were very few indeed among the ordinary clergy, who were 'learned,' according to this standard. "What are the usual examinations for the degree of a Bachelor or Master of Arts?" John Wesley wrote, in the later years of his life. "Are they not so horribly, shockingly superficial as none could believe it if he did not hear them?" When Wesley confronted the charge that his preachers were 'unlearned men' (in the *Farther Appeal to Men of Reason and Religion*) he admitted that 'some of those who now preach are unlearned.' But he was prompt to retort the charge upon the clergy who brought it. 'Men in general' he said, 'cannot easily imagine how little learning there is among them (i.e., the clergy). I do not speak of abstruse learning, but of what all divines, at least, of any note, are supposed to have, namely, the knowledge of the tongues, at least, Latin, Greek and Hebrew, and of the common arts and sciences. How few men of learning, so called, understand Hebrew, even so far as to read a plain chapter in Genesis! Nay, how few understand Greek! Make an easy experiment. Desire that grave man, who is urging this objection, only to tell you the English of the first paragraph that occurs in one of Plato's Dialogues. I am afraid we may go farther still. How few understand Latin! Give one of them an Epistle of Tully, and see how readily he will explain it without his dictionary. If he can hobble through that, it is odds but a Georgic in Virgil or a Satire of Persius sets him fast.' It was Wesley's clear contention that his preachers compared well in intellectual equipment with the average clergymen. He showed that the ordinary clergy had only a pretence of learning. He frankly admitted that most of his preachers were not classical scholars, but of them he

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went on to urge: 'Indeed, in the one thing which they profess to know they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination in substantial, practical, experimental divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the University (I speak it with sorrow and shame, and in tender love), are able to do.'

Then there are some damaging references by Charles Wesley to the general status of the preachers. He had always more of social and ecclesiastical prejudice than his brother. His persistent fear that the preachers wished to 'usurp the sacred character' led him to depreciate both their origin and their attainments. He wrote:

Raised from the people's lowest lees,
Guard, Lord, Thy preaching witnesses.

John Wesley asterisked the first line and added the laconic note: 'Query?'

As a matter of fact they were not 'raised from the people's lowest lees.' With the exception of half a dozen of the earliest preachers who were soldiers, they were nearly all from that social grade which lies between the working class and the middle class proper—artisans in business for themselves, small tradesmen, small farmers, and the like—a class from which a great deal of what is best in English life has always come, and which it is certainly unjust and untrue to describe as the dregs of the nation.

Then there has been a notion that ordinary educational facilities were lacking in the early eighteenth century. Except for the very poor, and specially neglected classes like the colliers, this was not the case. For children of the class to which Wesley's preachers belonged, educational opportunities were about as good then as they have ever been since, until the last two generations, at any rate. And for a plain reason. The population was so much smaller that the ancient Grammar Schools of Edward the Sixth and Elizabeth, and the Parochial Schools of Anne, made a more or less efficient provision for the children of this class. With the rise of industrialism, and the enormous increase of population that resulted from it, these schools became hopelessly inadequate. And in consequence there was probably a much larger proportion of illiterates in the English population of 1830 than in that of 1730. The old endowed schools were a great deal more adequate in a population of five millions (1700) or six millions (1750) than in a population of sixteen millions (1841) or eighteen millions (1851).

The scanty references in the *Lives of the Early Methodist*

Preachers' to their own school days confirm the belief that the educational provision for their class was fairly adequate and fairly efficient. Peter Jaco was the son of a man engaged, in his own boats, in the pilchard fishery, and when the lad was old enough he joined his father at the business, but he was at school until he was fourteen. Thomas Olivers was apprenticed at eighteen to a shoemaker, but apparently he had been at school until that age. Alexander Mather was 'at the Latin School' at Brechin, until he ran away, still a mere lad, to join the Pretender's Army. Thomas Walsh was at school until he was nineteen, gained a good knowledge of Latin and Mathematics, and then set up as a schoolmaster. Thomas Rankin had such an education that he was on the point of entering the ministry of the Church of Scotland, when he became a Methodist preacher. William Ashman 'went to school to the Dissenting minister.' John Valton, who was brought up a Catholic, was educated first at an abbey in France, and later in a grammar school in Yorkshire, where he got a good knowledge of Latin. Jasper Robinson, though he was only a potter by trade, had been at school until he was fifteen. Benjamin Rhodes' father was a schoolmaster, and the lad was at school until he was sixteen. Everything in their own references to their early days goes to show that practically all Wesley's preachers had a good elementary education, and many of them the rudiments of a classical one.

Their records in after-life are equally against the theory that they were unlettered peasants. In Myles' *Chronological History*, lists are given of the preachers who entered on the work before the death of Wesley. Of these, twenty-four were originally clergymen, and fifteen more were never properly itinerants. Then, many of the remainder only travelled for a very brief period—a year, perhaps, or two or three years, and then retired. Only 280 men, from 1739 up to Wesley's death, had spent upwards of ten years in the ministry. Making a deduction in respect of those who entered in the later years of Wesley's life it would perhaps be fair to reckon something under two hundred as the total of those who may properly be called the early Methodist preachers. And no less than twenty-six of them took orders, sooner or later, in the Established Church. That is to say, *nearly one seventh* of Wesley's preachers who really settled to the work, and gave their lives to it, became clergymen. We may mention, as examples, John Jones, John Hampson the younger, Melville Horne, Jonathan Reeves, and John Haughton. Jones had been classical master at Kingswood, and was the author of a Latin Grammar. He was a

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graduate in both medicine and arts, and became Vicar of Harwich. Hampson took his degree at Oxford, and became Rector of Sunderland. He wrote the earliest Life of Wesley, and also published a creditable translation of the 'Poetics' of Vida, with learned notes. Horne succeeded Fletcher at Madeley, and later became Vicar of Olney. He was one of the founders of the London Missionary Society. Reeve's became Chaplain of the Magdalen Hospital. Haughton became Rector of Kilrea, and Wesley visited him there in 1778. It must be remembered that those who succeeded in taking orders did so in the face of almost insuperable difficulty and prejudice. It was a great deal easier for a drunkard to get ordained than for a Methodist. "But whatever learning they have," Wesley wrote in 1781, 'if they acquired it there (i.e. at Kingswood School) they cannot be ordained' (you mean, episcopally ordained, and indeed that ordination we prefer to any other, where it can be had) 'for the Bishops have all agreed together not to ordain any Methodist.' O that they would all agree together not to ordain any drunkard, any sabbath-breaker, any common swearer, any that makes the very name of religion stink in the nostrils of infidels, any that knows no more of the grounds of religion than he does of Greek or Hebrew! But I doubt that fact. I cannot easily believe that all the Bishops have made such an agreement. Could I be sure they had, I should think it my duty to return them my sincerest thanks. Pity they had not done it ten years ago, and I should not have lost some of my dearest friends. However, I am extremely obliged if they have agreed to prevent my losing any more the same way; if they have blocked up the door through which several others were likely to run away from me."

Many other of Wesley's preachers became ministers of various Dissenting churches. The number is uncertain, but it must have been fairly considerable. Some examples will occur to anyone who knows the early history of Methodism. When, for instance, the two Hampsons seceded, at the time of the Deed of Declaration, the elder became the minister of an Independent Church at Southborough, John Bennet became an Independent minister at Warrington, and Edward Perronet at Canterbury. Charles Skelton, Samuel Larwood, John Edwards, John Whitford, John Thorpe, and Alexander McNab all became Dissenting ministers, and all were in charge of churches in large towns.

If we add the preachers who entered the Dissenting ministry to those who took orders in the Established Church, it is probable that *one man out of every four or five* of Wesley's early preachers was ultimately ordained to the regular ministry.

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Some others, who ceased to itinerate for various reasons' entered learned professions. John Hosmer, for example, when his health would no longer allow him to travel as a Methodist preacher, qualified as a surgeon, and practised for many years at Sunderland. John Floyd also qualified as a surgeon, and practised at Leeds. John Whitehead became a schoolmaster and then travelling tutor to a wealthy young man, and while in Holland took his degree at Leyden (then a famous medical school) as a Doctor of Medicine. He wrote an early *Life of Wesley*. John Cattermole and William Pennington became schoolmasters.

Then an astonishing number of Wesley's preachers who remained in the itinerancy became (in spite of slender opportunities and difficult conditions) really learned men. Thomas Walsh was a prodigy of biblical learning. Wesley said of him that if he were questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell, after a brief pause, how often the word occurred, and what it meant in each place. "Such a master of biblical learning," Wesley declared, "I never saw before, and never expect to see again." Francis Asbury became thoroughly proficient in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, despite his incredible toils in the wilds of America. The Hebrew Bible and the New Testament that he carried for thousands of miles in his saddle-bags, and read every day of his life, are still venerated relics across the Atlantic. Christopher Hopper and William Roberts gained an effective knowledge of Latin, Greek and Hebrew. So did Alexander Coates, and he had in addition the very unusual equipment in the eighteenth century of a knowledge of Dutch and Danish. So did Andrew Coleman, but he had had a sound classical education as a boy, and was a prodigy of memory as well, so that at fourteen years of age he had *the whole* of the *Aeneid* by heart. So did Thomas Taylor, and spent a stated time, every day, upon the Hebrew Old Testament, the Septuagint, the Greek Testament, and the Vulgate. So did George Story, who, according to Southey, "tried, in early life, to imitate the various erudition of Eugene Aram." Joseph Benson was classical master at the Countess of Huntingdon's seminary at Trevecka; he kept terms at St. Edmund's Hall at Oxford, and was refused ordination by the Bishop of Worcester on account of his relations with Wesley. The level to undergraduate studies at Oxford, by the way, evoked his withering contempt. He wrote an admired Commentary, and was certainly one of the soundest biblical scholars of his day. Adam Clarke, who received the Master of Arts and Doctor of Laws degrees from Aberdeen, in recognition of his scholarship, was beyond question the foremost

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biblical scholar of the age in England. Duncan McAllum was proficient in Latin, Greek, Hebrew and Syriac, and preached both in English and Gaelic. Joseph Sutcliffe was a good Latin, Greek and Hebrew scholar; he translated Saurin's sermons from the French, and published a Commentary. He received the Master of Arts degree from Aberdeen, on the solicitations of Dr. Olinthus Gregory (the friend and biographer of Robert Hall), who attended his ministry for a time, and greatly admired him. Henry Moore was an intimate friend of Wesley—a fact which is in itself some warranty of intellectual power. He was a good classical scholar, and was preparing for Trinity College, Dublin, when his father's early death ruined his prospects of a University career. He read Greek and Latin authors with Wesley as they travelled in the coach together. He wrote the Latin verses upon his wife's tombstone at City Road, beginning

Nobilis ingenio, mitis, formosa, pudica

Anna! exigua hic cespite tecta jaces.

Wesley had a considerable foreign correspondence, and when his French had got rusty, in his old age, Moore dealt with his French letters for him. He also wrote one of the early biographies of Wesley.

Wesley expected his preachers to give five hours every day to reading and study. At the three early Methodist centres of London, Bristol, and Newcastle-on-Tyne there was provided, by the decision of an early Conference, a library for the use of the preachers, including sixteen Latin writers, twelve Greek writers, and a Hebrew Bible.

Then, apart from express educational acquirements, a quite extraordinary proportion of Wesley's preachers were men of intellectual distinction, in one way or another. Joseph Cownley, Wesley declared deliberately, was 'the greatest preacher in England,' and he was also one of the best read men of his generation. John Downes was a man of remarkable artistic and mathematical gifts. When a boy at school, learning algebra, he went to his master, Wesley relates, and said, 'Sir, I can prove this proposition a better way than it is proved in the book.' The master thought it impossible, but had to acknowledge that the lad was right. Downes taught himself to engrave on copper, and produced the portrait of Wesley prefixed to the first edition of the Notes on the New Testament. 'I suppose,' says Wesley, 'he was by nature full as great a genius as Sir Isaac Newton.' John Mason was an excellent botanist. Dr. Adam Clarke said that 'his botanical collections would do credit to the first Museum in Europe; and especially his collections of English plants, all

gathered, preserved, classified, and described by himself,' James McQuigg, was one of the best Irish scholars of his day, and edited two or three editions of the Irish Bible for the British and Foreign Bible Society. He was urged to give up his work as a preacher, and accept a Readership in Irish at Trinity College. He was the only man of his time who could read the old Irish manuscripts in the University Library. Thomas Olivers wrote 'The God of Abraham praise,' one of the greatest hymns in the language, and 'Helmsley,' one of the most popular tunes in the English psalmody. He was an expert controversialist. Wesley said that he was 'a full match' for Toplady, and Fletcher wrote of 'his talents as a writer, a logician, a poet, and a composer of sacred music.' Edward Perronet, the son of the Vicar of Shoreham, wrote an immortal hymn, 'All hail the power of Jesu's Name.' Benjamin Rhodes wrote another, which will live at least as long as Methodism, 'My heart and voice I raise.' Samuel Bradburn was an orator of the first rank, if we may believe his contemporaries; it is the testimony of Thomas Jackson, the biographer of Charles Wesley, that he had heard the best preachers in England and Scotland for the half century past, but had never heard anything equal to Bradburn's torrential eloquence.

Then, finally, there is to be remembered that abiding evidence of the literary gifts of these men, the *Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers*. Many of them, like Shakespeare, may have had little Latin and less Greek, but they had a wonderful mastery of English. The prose of John Nelson and Silas Told, for example, is as lucid, as flexible and as vigorous as that of Bunyan or Defoe. There is a grotesque contrast between the delightful style of the early Methodist preachers and the style—or, to quote the phrase of Swift, "that quality of their writings which the poverty of the English language compels me to call the style,"—of some later writers whose references to them have been insufferably patronizing. Edward Fitzgerald's words about the memoirs of the early Methodist preachers are well known: "It is wonderful to read pure, unaffected, undying English, when Addison and Johnson were tainted with a style which all the world imitated."

In the face of such facts as we have alleged, we submit that it is an abuse of language to refer to Wesley's preachers as if they were illiterate boors. Seldom in this world, surely, has there been any body of men who have pursued knowledge with greater ardour under discouraging conditions, or who have been marked by more general distinction of intellect, than the glorious company, the goodly fellowship, of the early Methodist preachers.

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THE LATE
REV. JAMES CONDER NATTRASS,
B.A. London, B.D. Aberdeen.

As we go to press we sadly report the death of our dear colleague on Sunday, December 6th, at the age of 73. He was a worker in the Wesley Historical Society from the year of its first annual meeting at Liverpool in 1896, and as senior editor succeeded the Rev. Richard Green and the Rev. H. J. Foster. We have delayed our *Proceedings* that we may include a portion of his contributions. They reveal his characteristic industry and accuracy. He was our guest during his last two visits to London for church committee work and we were touched by the courage with which he endured physical suffering. We have lost for awhile a comrade of sterling worth and spirituality, unselfish and affectionate in the circles of his family, friendship, and church.

Our secretary, the Rev. F. F. Bretherton, B.A., and myself represented our Historical Society at the memorial service in Gosforth chapel, and officiated at the interment in the cemetery at Stockton-on-Tees. The Chairman of the District, Rev. A. Mitcheson Brown, bore testimony to the faithful services of Mr. Nattrass as a minister. Dr. F. J. Nattrass, and Miss C. M. Nattrass, son and daughter, with other relatives, and representatives of the churches and civic life of Newcastle, North Shields, Blyth, Middlesborough and Stockton-on-Tees were present, and friends and fellow workers are still sending written tributes to the memory of one who experienced deeply the reality of "fellowship in the Life Eternal."

THOS. E. BRIGDEN.

SOME EARLY TRUST DEEDS.

I. ALLENDALE. II. NEWBEGIN. III. ALSTON.

Every student of Methodism is aware of the importance which belongs to its Trust Deeds, and of the vital issues which were fought out in connection with them, both in Wesley's lifetime and in subsequent years. The difficulties which arose in regard to the settlement of the first Preaching-house built in Methodism, viz. that in the Horse Fair, Bristol, (of which Wesley laid the first stone on Saturday, May 12, 1739), were prophetic of

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many like experiences in years to come. *Experientia docet*, and it is by this way that Methodism gradually learned wisdom. Wesley had intended not to be responsible for the New Room in Bristol, either in its cost or direction, and appointed eleven trustees by whom he supposed the burden would be borne. He soon found that he had made a mistake, for a considerable amount of debt on the property was laid upon his shoulders. But what was of graver moment, Whitefield and some friends in London saw that the trustees would have power to control the preaching and even to expel Wesley himself from the preaching-place he had built; they therefore required the abolition of the trusteeship as the condition of giving financial help. The trustees were probably glad to get rid of their responsibility, the deed was cancelled, and the property was vested in Wesley alone. (See Tyerman's *Wesley*, i, 270).

The same question of the extent of the rights and powers of trustees kept arising from time to time, and caused Wesley great anxiety; indeed, for more than a century chapel properties were lost in various parts of the Connexion through faulty deeds. Wesley early saw the necessity for a Model Deed that would safeguard the Methodist Preaching-houses which were being built all over the United Kingdom, and accordingly he published one in 1763, which the Conference recommended for general use. The Deed of Declaration of 1784, and the Model Deed of 1832, have completely defined and declared the legal conditions under which Methodism now holds its properties in perfect security.

One of our friends in the North of England has in his possession a number of Trust Deeds and other legal documents of very early dates concerning preaching-houses in the extensive Dales Circuit. Of these he has kindly granted us permission to make full use. Accordingly we print *verbatim* the earliest of these, dated 15th January, 1750, with extracts from other two dated respectively 30th August, 1759, and 24th January, 1763 (with subsequent developments). A few elucidatory notes are added.

I.

ALLENDALE METHODIST CHAPEL.

COPY.

This Indenture made the fifteenth day of Jaunary in the twenty fourth year of the reign of our Sovereign Lord George the Second by the Grace of God of Great Britain Ffrance And Ireland King Defender of the faith And so forth And in the year of our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred

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And fifty BETWEEN John Fforster of Hay Leazes in the County of Northumberland Weaver John Harrison of Greenly Cleugh in the Said County Yeoman George Pearson of Hunter Sheels Loaning in the Said County Cowper And George Johnson of Old Town in the County aforesaid Yeoman of the One part And Henry Ffrench of Dodbank head in Whitfield in the County of Northumberland aforesaid Yeoman And Henry Ffrench the Younger of Dodbank head aforesaid House Carpenter of the other part WHEREAS the Christian Society or Congregation of protestants dwelling within the limitts and Boundarys of Allendale in the said County of Northumberland or near thereunto And Commonly Called or known by the name of Methodists And who from time to time assemble themselves for the performance of divine Worship within the limitts And boundarys of Allendale aforesaid being destitute of a Meeting house or place of Worship for the more uniform regular And Stated Exercise And performance of divine Worship have Authorised And requested of the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson And George Johnson to purchase of And from the said Henry Ffrench the parcel of Ground in the hereinafter in part recited Surrender particularly mentioned And described whereon to Erect And build a Meeting House or place of Worship for the use of the said Society in the Exercise of their Religious Worship which they the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson And George Johnson have Accordingly purchased upon the trusts hereinafter mentioned And set forth of And concerning the same And the said Society or Congregation have also begun to Erect and build a Meeting House or place of worship upon the same AND WHEREAS at a Court Baron held for the Manor of Hexham in the Said County of Northumberland the Eleventh day of October in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven hundred and fifty the said Henry Ffrench And Jane his wife did surrender into the hands of the Lady of the said Manor One parcel of Ground Containing twenty yards in length And twelve yards in breadth As the same was then measured And Set out being part and parcell of a Close or Inclosure at Waterholmegarth in West Allendale Called the Back Close which said parcell of Ground Bounders on Keenly Common on the West the Easter loaning on the North On a Close called the Long Close on the East And the said Back Close on the South of the Yearly rent of One

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penny To the use and behoof of the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson And George Johnson their Heirs And Assigns To Hold to them their Heirs and assigns for Ever According to the Custom of the said Manor Rendring therefore yearly to the Lady of the Manor her Heirs and Assigns One penny at feasts Accustomed And doing other Services therefore due And of right used who were accordingly admitted Tenants As in And by the Surrender thereof remaining with the Court Rolls of the Said Court relation being thereunto had it doth more fully And at large appear NOW THIS INDENTURE WITNESSETH And the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson Do hereby Confess Acknowledge and declare and each and every of them for himself Doth Confess Acknowledge and Declare That the said above in part recited surrender of the above said parcel of Ground part and parcel of the Close or Inclosure therein mentioned at Waterholme-garth in West Allendale called the Back Close made and passed to them their heirs and assigns was so made passed and taken in the names of them the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson their Heirs and assigns And they were accordingly admitted tenants to the same And that the said parcell of Ground and premisses thereby surrendered to them their Heirs and Assigns as aforesaid Are and at the time of the making And passing of the said Surrender thereof were Surrendred And were so intended to be so Surrendred unto them the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson their Heirs and Assigns as aforesaid IN TRUST and to and for the Several uses Intents and purposes hereinafter mentioned and set forth of and concerning the same and to and for none other uses Trusts Intents or purposes whatsoever (that is to say) IN TRUST to permit and suffer the said Society or Congregation of protestants or such person or persons as by the said Society or the majority of the members thereof Shall be for that purpose nominated and appointed And his their and every of their Agents or workmen to carry on build finish and compleat the House now building upon the said parcel of Ground in the said above in part recited Surrender mentioned and Surrendred to them the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson their Heirs and Assigns and Intended for a Meeting house or place of worship for the said Society or Congregation of

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Methodists And Also for the Society or Congregation of Methodists for the time being within the limits and boundaries aforesaid And from and immediately after the same shall be so built finished and compleated then upon this further TRUST to permit and suffer the said House with all the rights Easements Emoluments and appurtenances thereto belonging or in any wise appertaining to be set apart and appropriated for a Meeting House or place of Worship for the use of the said Society And of the Society of Methodists within the Limits and boundaries aforesaid for the time being And not to suffer the same to be used or occupied or enjoyed by themselves or any other person or persons or made use of to any other Intent or purpose whatsoever than as and for a place or House of Religious Worship for the said Society and for the Society of Methodists within the limits and boundrys aforesaid for the time being unless by the express direction and Consent of the said Society or the Majority of the Members thereof or of the Society of Methodists for the time being or the Majority of the Members thereof within the limits and boundrys aforesaid And Also IN TRUST from time to time And at all times from and after the said House shall be built finished and compleated to permit and suffer the said Society or Congregation of Methodists And the Society or Congregation of Methodists for the time being within the Limits and boundrys aforesaid to use Employ and Enjoy the same together with all the rights Easements Emoluments and appurtenances thereunto belonging for the Exercise and performance of their religious worship and other meetings and occasions of the said Society And of the said Society of Methodists for the time being within the limits And boundrys aforesaid AND ALSO from time to time and all times from and immediately after the said House shall be built finished and compleated to permit and suffer the Minister or preacher of the said Society And of the Society of Methodists for the time being within the limits And boundrys aforesaid to officiate and perform divine service in the said Societys in the said Meeting house or place of Worship at all such stated And also at all such occasional times And seasons as the said Societys or the Majority of the Members thereof shall from time to time agree upon and appoint AND ALSO upon this further trust that whensoever hereafter they the abovesaid said trustees John Fforster John Harrison George

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Pearson and George Johnson And also whensoever hereafter the Trustees for the time being of the said Society And of the Society of Merhodists for the time being within the limitts and boundaries aforesaid And to whom the said Meeting House or place of Worship of the said Societys shall from time to time hereafter be surrendred upon the trusts herein contained shall by the death of any one or more of them or by his or their removal defection or ceasing to be a member of the said Societys be reduced to two in Number that then the surviving trustees or trustee or his Heirs shall and will upon request surrender over the said Meeting House or place of Worship and premises together with all and singular the rights Members easements and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in anywise appertaining now erecting and building upon the said parcel of Ground in the said Above in part recited surender And herein above mentioned unto such person or persons And in such manner And form as the said Society or the Society of Methodists for the time being within the limitts and boundarys aforesaid respectfully or the majority of the Members for the time being thereof shall nominate and appoint upon the same trusts And for the same uses Intents and purposes in these presents contained or upon such further or other trusts AND to and for such other person or persons uses Intents and purposes As the said Society or as the Society of Methodists for the time being within the limitts and boundrys aforesaid respectively or the majority of the Members for the time being thereof shall direct and appoint And to and for none other uses trusts persons intents or purposes whatsoever And the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson do hereby for themselves severally but not jointly nor the one for the other of them nor for the Acts of the other of them and for their Several and respective Heirs Executors Administrators and assigns Covenant promise Grant and Agree to and with the said Henry Ffrench and Henry Ffrench the younger And to and with each of them their and each of their Heirs Executors Administrators and assigns in manner and form following (that is to say) that they the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson George Johnson their heirs and assigns and every of them shall and will from time to time and at all times for Ever hereafter stand and be seized of the said parcell of Ground in the said above in part recited Surrender mentioned And

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also of the House now erecting and building upon the same when the same shall be built finished and compleated for a Meeting House or place of Worship for the said Societys together with all and singular the rights members Easements and appurtenances thereunto belonging or in any wise appertaining upon Trust and to and for the severall trusts uses intents persons and purposes herein above mentioned and declared of and concerning the same And to and for none other use trusts persons intents or purposes whatsoever And shall and will permit and suffer the same premisses with the appurtenances to be from time to time and at all times for Ever hereafter enjoyed accordingly and that without any interruption Let suit hindrance or denyal of them the said John Fforster John Harrison George Pearson and George Johnson or any of them their or any of their Heirs or assigns or any other person or persons Lawfully claiming or to claim by from or under them either or any of them IN WITNESS whereof the partys abovesaid to these present Indentures have interchangeably Set their hands and seals the day and year first above written

John (L.S.) Fforster John (L.S.) Harrison
 Georg (L.S.) Pearson George (L.S) Johnson

Sealed and Delivered by the within named }
 John Fforster George Pearson and George }
 Johnson in the presence of us }

THOS ORD CHRISTOPHER HOPPER
 JOSEPH LAZONBY

Sealed and delivered by the within named John }
 Harrison In the presence of us }

JOHN SMITH JOSEPH SMITH

1. 'The Rev. Philip Hawkes, Superintendent of the Allendale Circuit, says that this Indenture "clearly refers to the first building erected at Keenley and where our Keenley Chapel now stands." Among the Circuit Deeds is the Surrender of the Manor of Hexham, dated 11th October, 1750, to which reference is made in the Indenture now published. It will be observed that in this document the objects of the Trusts are purely local; in it there is no reference to John Wesley or to the Methodist Conference, nor to any standard of doctrine. In a subsequent Indenture of the 22nd November, 1763, these deficiencies are supplied, and the purposes of the Trust made more definite. For this later deed specifies that the Trustees "shall from time to time and at all times for Ever hereafter take care that a Preacher or Preachers appointed at the Yearly Conference of the Methodist Preachers in London Bristol or Leeds and no others to preach or expound God's Holy Word in the said House at convenient times as the same is Expounded in the Explan-

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atory Notes on the New Testament and the Sermons published by the Rev. Mr. John Wesley” Wesley’s Model Deed of that very year was already beginning to exert its influence.

2. It will be observed that whilst this Indenture is dated 15th January 1750, it cites the action of a Court Baron held for the Manor of Hexham on 11th October, 1750. On the surface there seems to be an error in the date of year in the one case or the other. It is not so; both are correct, but they need some explanation. Previous to 1752 the year began on March 25 and, of course extended to the following March 24. So it was with the year 1750 and hence both 11th October and 15th January were included in it, and in this order. The Act which adopted the Georgian Calendar was passed in 1751; it also enacted that henceforth the New Year was to be reckoned from 1st January. The year 1751 therefore only reckoned from 25th March to 31st December, and the year 1750 was the last full year under the old method of calculation.

3. Christopher Hopper was one of the witnesses to this Indenture. Converted in the year 1743, his widespread labours planted and then nursed Methodism in many places in the North of England, and it is more than probable the first Society in Allendale was the result of his preaching. On March 24th, 1747, Wesley preached in the Churchyard at Blanchland, and says of the congregation that “they were gathered out of the lead mines from all parts; many from Allendale, six miles off” (*Journal* iii, 286). This passage suggests that a Society was already established in Allendale. Hopper visited Allendale in August and December of the same year (*E.M.P.* i, 197); in 1748 he removed to Hindley Hill in Allendale, and the next year began teaching a school there (*loc cit* 198-199). Wesley preached in Allendale Town near the Cross on July 29th, 1748. His next visit was on May 25th, 1752, when he preached in “the room.” On this occasion he “found the poor Society well-nigh shattered to pieces. Slackness and offence had eaten them up.” But his visit proved a means of revival. (*Journal* iii, 364; iv, 29).

4. In Myles’ *Chronological History*, 3rd edition, 1803, in the list of Preaching Houses, this one is recorded as “Kinley, 1752,” and another at “Allendale Town, 1778. In the *Journal* iii, 429, there is a footnote to a visit paid by Wesley to Hindley Hill in the evening of September 20th, 1749, as follows: “Hindley Hill is now in the Allendale Circuit.” At the time of Wesley’s visit Christopher Hopper lived there in a farmhouse, the long kitchen of which provided a preaching-place or room for the Society. In 1754 Hopper’s converts built a chapel at Keenly, close by. This was the second Methodist place of worship in the North of England,—the Newcastle Orphan House being the first. A picture of the “Keenly Chapel,” as well as the Orphan House is given on p. 57. It will be noted that the dates given in Myles and in the *Standard Journal* are incorrect. The old Orphan House was demolished in 1856, and the present buildings were erected. The old Keenly Meeting-house is standing but is no longer used as such.

J. CONDER NATTRASS.

II.

NEWBEGIN

(Now Newbeggin in the Middleton in Teesdale Circuit).

Date of the Deed, 30th August, 1759.

Parties to the Deed, Robert Robinson of the one part and Christopher Hopper, Newcastle on Tyne, Gentleman: Matthew

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Lowes, Newcastle on Tyne, Gentleman : Jacob Rowel, Barnard Castle, Gentleman : Thomas Atkinson, Bowlees, Miner : John Ridley, Woodside, Miner : John Spence, Stoneylee, Miner : James Ainsley, Woodside, Miner of the other part.

Portion of Land, Twenty yards long, fourteen yards in breadth, adjoining Newbegin Beck : price five pounds. *Purpose of Trust*, "for use of said Society and of the Society of Methodists to permit and suffer all such ministers and preachers who shall from time to time be sent by the Reverend John Wesley during his life natural and after his decease by his successor or successors." The surviving trustees were authorized to fill up vacancies in the trust and to keep up the number to seven, with the approbation of John Wesley or his successor. In case Methodism should fail, the Trustees were to dispose of the house and apply the money to other charitable purposes.

1. Christopher Hopper did not sign the deed. Matthew Lowes and Jacob Rowell were well-known preachers whose labours in the Dales Circuit were very great.

2. Steele in his *History of Methodism in Barnard Castle and the Dales Circuit* says that this Meeting House was "capable of containing two hundred hearers," and that its cost did not much exceed sixty pounds."

3. A letter from Rev. Chas. F. Brend, Superintendent of the Middleton-Teesdale Circuit, says in regard to Newbiggin Chapel : "The building in which Wesley preached is still in use for our regular services. The pulpit in which he preached is now standing in the Schoolroom unused. It is in an excellent state of preservation, and with a few minor repairs would be quite usable. It is rather higher than our modern pulpits, and has a very old-fashioned kneeling-board just under the desk."

Is there any other Chapel in Methodism that has been *in continuous use* from so early a date as 1759?

III.

ALSTON,¹ TOWN FOOT.

Date of the Deed, 24th January, 1763.

Parties to the Deed, Thomas Hall of Alston House, Alston, Gentleman of one part, Richard Turner of High Skelgill, John Lee of Cowgap House, John Turner of Low Skelgill, and Joseph Walton of Middle Skelgill of the other part.

Conveyance of a piece of land for the sole use of the Christian Society called Methodists to erect and build a Meetinghouse . . . for Divine Worship. The deed was signed by all parties.

Deed of 22nd October, 1796.²

Parties thereto, The said Thomas Hall then of Gamblesby of the one part, and George Hetherington of Newcastle upon Tyne Gentleman, Thomas Dodd of Nenthead Gentleman,³ John Dodd of Alston Gentleman, Ralph Vipond of Fewsteads, Garrigill, Lead

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Ore Miner, and John Vipond of Shield Hill Top, Garrigill, Miller, of the other part.

Recital that some time since an Assignment had been made of the said premises by the said Thomas Hall for the purpose of erecting a Meetinghouse which Assignment had been lost destroyed or mislaid so that the Title was not valid in Law, and the said Thomas Hall in consideration of the sum of Five Pounds had consented to re-assign the premises to the said George Hetherington, Thomas Dodd, John Dodd, Ralph Vipond and John Vipond.

Deed of 17th June, 1797.

Parties thereto, "the said George Hetherington, Thomas Dodd, John Dodd, Ralph Vipond, John Vipond and William Hunter, Assistant Methodist Preacher for the time being in the Circuit of Hexham of the one part and Anthony Busting of the Chapel in Weardale of the other part. This is a Deed of Sale of the Meetinghouse for the sum of fifty five pounds, it having "become too small and incommodious to contain the Congregations usually assembled in the exercise of Religious Worship." In accordance with the terms of the Deed the property was converted into dwelling-houses, and is still in use as such.

1. The Society at Alston was formed by Christopher Hopper in 1748 (*E. M. P.* i, 198). John Wesley notes in his *Journal* iii, 364, a visit to Alston, July 28, 1748, when he preached at the Market Cross—not the present structure which was erected in 1764, but an earlier one a little higher up the hill.

2. The first trustees had evidently died or otherwise ceased to be trustees in the interval between 1763 and 1796, and the parties to the second deed had been appointed in their place. They were named and appointed by the Society.

3. This is the Thomas Dodd who wrote to Alexander Mather an account of William Hunter's last affliction and death. (*E. M. P.* ii, 251-256).

J. CONDER NATTRASS.

WILLIAM HUNTER.

EARLY METHODIST PREACHER AT RICHMOND,
PLESSEY, BARNARD CASTLE, DALES CIRCUIT,
YARM, YORK, BERWICK, SUNDERLAND,
NEWCASTLE, HULL AND ALSTON.

In the Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers Methodism possesses a small library of Christian Biography of great historical interest and very much spiritual value. A few of these autobiographies are of considerable length, and from them we are able

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to gain a fair conception of the extensive travels and toilsome labours in which their writers engaged, for the love of Christ and the salvation of men. But others are brief and give but few details: they are pourtrayals of religious experience rather than narratives of incidents. No doubt in Methodist literature, and in unpublished Journals, Letters etc., much information is to be found which would give us a fuller idea of their work, and so enable us to form a more complete estimate of their service and devotion. In the present article an attempt is made to bring together such material in succinct form in the case of one of the humbler members of that noble brotherhood of John Wesley's Preachers, viz., William Hunter.

The "Account of Mr. WILLIAM HUNTER, written by Himself" was originally published in the *Arminian Magazine* for November 1779 (Vol. ii. 587-598), and was accompanied by his portrait. It consists of a letter to Wesley dated August 18, 1779, and a "Postscript" headed "Richmond, August 29, 1779." From the Postscript it is evident that the letter was written in London, where the 36th Conference was opened on Tuesday, August 3, and "continued and ended in peace and love," toward the close of the week. Of that Conference William Hunter would be a member, as doubtless he was of many others. The place from which the Postscript was written would be Richmond in Yorkshire, after Hunter returned home to the Thirsk Circuit of which he was then Superintendent. After Hunter's decease on August 14, 1797, a letter containing an "Account of his last affliction and death," written by Mr. Thomas Dodd of Nenthead, to Alexander Mather, and a letter of testimony to his character from a friend of between twenty and thirty years appeared in the *Arminian Magazine* for January, 1798 (xxi, 26-32). The four communications mentioned above constitute the whole of the material contained in his *Life, E.M.P.* ii, 240-261.

John Wesley paid his first visit to Plessey on Good Friday, April 1, 1743, but it is very likely that his brother Charles had been there during the preceding autumn, and formed the first Society in the village. On the occasion of John's visit, among those who heard him were several members of a family named Hunter, who were living on a farm in the neighbourhood. Some of the sons were blessed by his preaching, including William, then a lad about fifteen years of age. The influence of Wesley's preaching was deepened by that of Christopher Hopper, and after being under deep conviction of sin for several months he entered into the joy of pardoning love. He soon began to preach and

was also appointed a class-leader. For upwards of twenty years he continued in these labours in the country around; "several of preachers," says he, "spoke to me about travelling: but the importance of the work made me afraid; till in the year 1767 at the London Conference, Mr. Rowell recommended me, and I was taken in upon trial." He was appointed to the Barnard Castle or Dales Circuit, and remained in it for two years. He entered upon his work with great fear because of the many difficulties in his way, but he gave himself up to the Lord who gave him favour with the people.

The Dales Circuit, as it was named until 1790, was formed in 1765, when the whole of England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland was divided into thirty-nine Circuits. Steele in his *History of Methodism in Barnard Castle* and the principal places of the *Dales Circuit*, says that in 1757 "Jacob Rowell was entrusted with the formation of the Dales Circuit, of which Barnard Castle was the Circuit Town, including Swaledale, Arkengarthdale, Wensleydale, Teesdale, Weardale, Allendale, Alston and Hexhamshire." A great amount of successful pioneering was done in this wide and mountainous region by Christopher Hopper, Jacob Rowell, Matthew Lowes, Thomas Hanby and others, even before the Circuit was formed. When Hunter became third preacher in the Circuit in 1767, Societies had been formed in very many places, and preaching-houses erected in a considerable number, as Keenley (Allendale) 1750, Barnard Castle about 1751 and a second in 1764, Newbiggin (Teesdale), 1759, Weardale 1760, and Alston 1763.¹

Jacob Rowell, William Brammah and William Hunter were the preachers appointed to the Circuit in 1767. They were all men of particularly devoted spirit; Rowell was the ablest man of the three, the others were men of more slender abilities but pre-eminently men of holiness and great as winners of souls. They were all married men. In the disbursements of the mid-summer Quarterly Meeting, 1768, the following items are found:—

	£	s.	d.
Mr. Rowell and Family.....	5	15	0
Mr. Bramer and Wife	5	15	0
Mr. Hunter and Wife	4	6	0

Of William Hunter's wife nothing is known, nor whether they had any children.

In 1768, Richard Boardman became Superintendent of the Circuit, but remained only one year; at the Conference of 1769, he and Joseph Pilmoor volunteered to go to America to establish

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and extend the work that had been begun in New York and elsewhere. Whilst Hunter was residing in the Circuit a violent persecution against the Society broke out in Wolsingham. In defence of his flock Hunter appealed successfully to a neighbouring magistrate, who is said to have been of infidel principles. He was, however, so impressed at the trial that "he decidedly espoused Mr. Hunter's cause," and the offenders were compelled to pay the costs, and enter into security to keep the peace in future.

In 1769 Hunter removed to Yarm, which Circuit had been formed in 1765, "comprising Stockton, Hartlepool, Guisborough, Stokesley, Whitby, Ripon, Northallerton and thirty other places." (*Journal* iv, 329n). Within the area there are now more than two hundred chapels. A chapel was built in Yarm in 1762.² Hunter remained in the Circuit as third minister for two years; in the first year, Jacob Rowell was again his Superintendent, in the second year John Nelson was the second preacher.

At the Conference of 1771 Hunter returned to the Dales Circuit for one year with Rowell for his Superintendent and James Watson as colleague. It was whilst Hunter was preaching in the chapel in Weardale [High House] on Sunday afternoon, December 1, that "the power of God fell on the congregation in a wonderful manner," and a great Revival began, the story of which both in its progress and decline, Wesley records at such length and warmth of interest, *Journal*, v, 464-472.

Hunter was appointed to Hull as Superintendent in 1772. It had only been separated from the York Circuit the previous year, and covered the area afterwards occupied by the Scarborough, Pocklington and Holderness Circuits.

In 1773 he removed to York, where he remained two years. By the courtesy of the Rev. John Telford, B.A., I am able to quote a paragraph relating to Hunter from an unpublished letter of John Wesley to Christopher Hopper, dated July 25, 1774:—

"It was not two or three or a few inconsiderable people who desired that Billy Hunter might stay another year at York, but the Stewards and the leaders and the most considerable persons both in grace and understanding. I was agreeably surprised by the account they gave of him as I had conceived him to be not the best though not the worst of our preachers."

1. It is remarkable that in all the cases named the original buildings are still standing.

2. This Chapel, which Wesley so much admired, has been in continuous use ever since it was built.

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Manifestly Wesley was pleased by this appreciation of Hunter's work, and readily consented to the wish expressed that he should continue in the Circuit for a second year.

In 1775 Hunter returned to Hull: in 1776 he went to Scarborough for two years: in 1778 to Thirsk for two years: in 1780 to Newcastle for two years: in 1782 to Keighley for one year: in 1783 to Berwick, as its first Superintendent, for four years, surely a very rare, if not unique record. In 1784 Wesley made his Deed of Declaration by which the Conference was legally constituted. Among the names of the hundred preachers who were made members of the Conference is that of William Hunter, —a fitting recognition of a good man and his devoted work. It will be observed that after the "Declaration and Establishment" of the Conference in 1784, Hunter continued in Berwick for other three years, the full term permitted by the Deed to any preacher who was not an ordained minister of the Church of England.

In 1787 Hunter removed to Sunderland where he was Superintendent for two years. In the Collection of Wesleyana at the Conference Office there is a letter from Hunter to Miss Mary Smith of Newcastle on Tyne, which we are permitted to reproduce. The recipient of the letter was no doubt the older daughter of William Smith, who in 1769 married Miss Vazeille, step-daughter of John Wesley. Mary Smith would be about sixteen years of age at this time. She and her sister Jane were always reckoned by Wesley as his grandchildren.

Miss Smith

Sunderland
5 Nov 1787

My dear Mary,

Peace and grace be your portion forever. I was troubled when I parted with Mrs. Planché and you the day was so wet but I trust you got safe home without hurt. I am pleased, my love, to see Mrs. Planché and you so happy together. I hope you will seek to be made a partaker of that religion which she has experienced. You know nothing can make you truly happy till you are lovingly acquainted with the Lord Jesus Christ. You feel by experience that nothing in this world can give you abiding peace or any solid satisfaction, all is fleeting and vain, and it will ever be so, till you seek the Lord with all your heart—Then you will find Him a soul-enriching portion. He will come by His Spirit and dwell in your heart, seal your pardon, and make you supremely happy. Then, My Dear Mary, commence a humble follower of your blessed Saviour, you know you are His property. He bought

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you at the expense of precious Blood. He says unto you 'My child,' give me thy heart, then give Him your heart now. He will make it all new and open Heaven in the same, and give you to feel a happiness that none are acquainted with but the children of God. You know, my love, time is short 'tis uncertain, death may be on his way so then get ready when your Lord shall call, it may be soon. You will pardon my freedom in dropping you this line.

I pray God to bless you forever and with great esteem.

Your most affectionate friend,

Wm. Hunter.

Alnwick Circuit was constituted in 1789, with Hunter as its Superintendent for one year: thence he went to Glasgow for one year. The wide Yarm Circuit, as Hunter knew it in 1769, 1770, had been lessened considerably by the separation of Thirsk Circuit in 1774, and of Whitby Circuit in 1783: from the Conference of 1791, the remaining portion was known as the Stockton Circuit, and its first Superintendent, for the period of three years, was William Hunter. The following year, 1794, he was in Hexham as a Supernumerary, but in 1795 resumed his ministry as Superintendent of the Circuit. He was also appointed Chairman of the Newcastle District. That year the Conference unanimously adopted the "Plan of Pacification," with a view to establishing "a general and lasting peace and union" throughout the Connexion. Unhappily the object was not attained; Alexander Kilham, who was then stationed at Alnwick, issued further provocative pamphlets, and eventually was summoned to attend a District Meeting to answer charges preferred against him. William Hunter presided over this Meeting. "Mr. Hunter, the Chairman of the District, was one of the excellent of the earth, devoted to his great work as a preacher of the Gospel; but, taking no active part in the general affairs of the Connexion, he was but little qualified to cope with the restless brother whose case was thus brought before him." Such is the judgment expressed by Dr. W. W. Stamp in his *Orphan-house of Wesley*, p. 184. As he drew the material for this portion of his book from the MS. Journal of the Rev. John Stamp, son-in-law of Mr. William Smith, of Newcastle, who was a guest in his house at the time, this estimate of Hunter is no doubt a fair one.

In 1796, Hunter removed to Sunderland for a second term of service. During the year his health broke down, and the Conference of 1797, which met at Leeds on August 1, placed him as Supernumerary at Alnwick, one of his former Circuits. The

faithful servant's work was, however, nearing its close: on August 14, about four in the morning "the happy spirit of this blessed man of God took its flight into the regions of the eternal repose." (*E.M.P.* ii, 256).

An interesting memorial of William Hunter within two months of his death still remains. It is a Deed dated 17 June, 1797, for the sale of the meeting-house in Alston, which had become too small and incommodious for the congregation. To this Deed William Hunter was a party, and signed both it and the receipt for the purchase money. He is therein described as "Assistant Methodist Preacher for the time being in the Circuit of Hexham," of which Alston was then a part. This statement is perplexing, as Hunter was Superintendent of the Sunderland Circuit, not of the Hexham Circuit of which Samuel Bardsley was Superintendent.

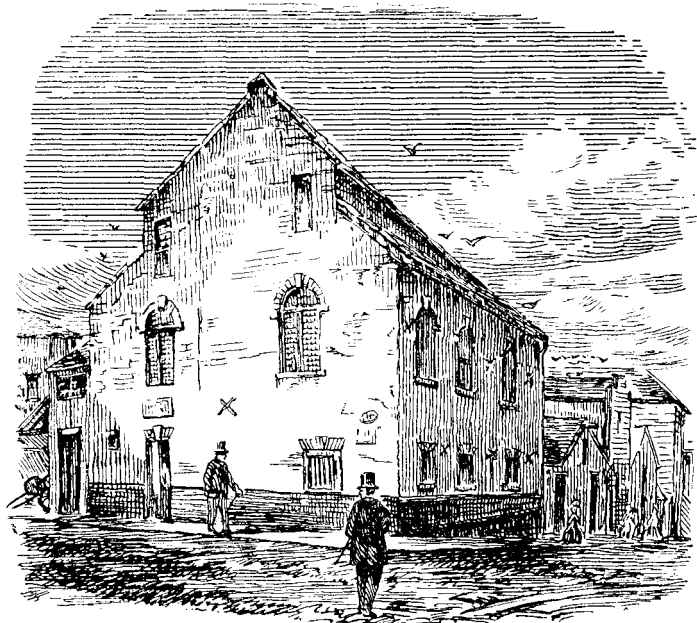
There only remains one more record to be added to the testimony borne in the preceding pages to the life, work and character of William Hunter, namely that of his obituary as found in the *Minutes of Conference* for 1798.

"WILLIAM HUNTER, a man truly devoted to God, and for many years a happy possessor of that "perfect love which casteth out fear." His deportment was grave and serious, without any mixture of lightness or trifling. His humility shone in a variety of instances. When in company with his brethren, the Preachers, his unassuming and modest carriage showed that he preferred each in honour to himself. It seemed as if he continually recollected our Lord's words, "He that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger: and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." In preaching the Gospel, and, indeed, in all his conversations, his expressions were solid and weighty, and his manner though very deliberate, was peculiarly energetic, so that few could hear him without being affected. In his intercourse with the people, he was truly a pattern to all, manifesting a uniform piety, a deadness to the world, and a conversation that adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour. He laboured as an Itinerant Preacher, with an unblemished character, thirty years, and departed this life full of peace, love, and joy, August 14th 1797, aged seventy-four years."

Hunter's age as here given is in error: in his *Life* he gives 1728 as the date of his birth.

[Notes on the Alnwick *Deeds* will appear in our March *Proceedings*.]

J. CONDER NATTRASS.



**THE OLD METHODIST PREACHING HOUSE
ST. MICHAEL'S LANE, DERBY.**

The first Methodist Chapel erected in the Town or County.

DERBY—THE OLD CHAPEL IN ST. MICHAEL'S LANE.

On the 16th May, 1925, under the auspices of the Wesley Guild Council, a Tablet on the Old Methodist Preaching House in St. Michael's Lane, Derby, was unveiled by the President of the Conference, the Rev. Amos Burnet, bearing the Inscription :

In this Building, which was the
First Methodist Preaching House
in Derbyshire, John Wesley preached
on March 20th, 1765.
This Tablet was erected by the
Derby and District Wesley Guild
Council, 1925.

It is a fitting opportunity to gather the scattered references to this early Chapel, and the names of some associated with it who laid the foundations of Derby Methodism.

Mrs. Sarah Crosby (1729-1804) joined the Society at the Foundery having been converted in 1749. She shortly afterwards became a Class Leader. In 1759 a young woman led to the service at the Foundery, was converted, and persuaded by Mrs. Crosby to join the Society. This was the beginning of a life long friendship. She married and with her husband Mr. Dobinson removed in 1761 to Derby. Sarah Crosby accompanied them and records in her diary :

"January 31st, 1761. On the 7th I left London and the 8th reached Derby."

In Derby Mrs. Crosby's real work began. She gathered a Class together which grew so rapidly that she shortly had two hundred persons present :

"I was not sure whether it was right for me to exhort in so public a manner, and yet I saw it impracticable to meet all these people by way of speaking to each individual. I therefore gave out an hymn, and prayed, and told them part of what the Lord had done for myself, persuading them to flee from all sin."

This was apparently the beginning of Methodism in Derby. It

was also the beginning of preaching by women among the Methodists.¹

Mr. and Mrs. Dobinson rendered great service at this early period of Methodist History, as did Mrs. Crosby. She is spoken of by Mrs. Dobinson as

“An instrument of strengthening their hands in the Lord, so that notwithstanding many threatenings from some of the Magistrates, and much opposition and discouragement in many ways, the Lord manifested His power, and raised up a people to show forth His praise.”

Monday, August 15th, 1762 marks the first visit of Wesley to the town, but as he had previously intimated that he did not intend to preach on this occasion, he merely gave half an hour's familiar address to a house full of people, and spent some time in prayer. This no doubt was under the roof of Mr. and Mrs. Dobinson.

A more formal visit was on March 27, 1764, when Mr. Dobinson arranged with the Mayor for Wesley to preach in the Market Place. This was frustrated by a mob, not very furious, but sufficiently boisterous to drive the Preacher from his post, just after he had announced his text; ultimately he took refuge in his friend's house, meeting the Society later in the day.

Wesley next visited Derby in 1765. On Wednesday, March 20, he records how he came in a post chaise to Derby, where :

“The new house was thoroughly filled and the people behaved in a quite different manner from what they did when I was last here.”

This and the occasions which follow, were in connection with the Chapel in St. Michael's Lane. The “New House” so called by Wesley himself, was the first Methodist Chapel of any kind erected in the town or county of Derby and may be regarded as the Mother of the very numerous family throughout Derbyshire. (The Methodists of Crich, in the Matlock Circuit contend that theirs was the first Chapel in the County, but it would appear to be later than Derby. They have however the satisfaction of claiming it as the only Chapel in Derbyshire, in which Wesley preached, which remains in use for its original purpose).²

1. “An Early Woman preacher—Sarah Crosby.” Rev. A. W. Harrison. *W.H.S. Proc.* xiv, 103.

2. Myles' *Chronological History* gives 1765 as the date of the Chapels in both Derby and “Creitch.” No other Chapel is mentioned in the county of earlier date. Wesley preached at Crich “in their new house” on March 25, 1766.—J.C.N.

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This first home of the Derby Methodists was a very unpretending structure. Its exterior tells us of very humble beginnings. One peculiarity is very uncommon in Methodist Chapels—it has a Clerestory with square lights at intervals. On the authority of the late Mr. John Wills, the Methodist Architect, there is no evidence that it was designed to light the Chapel, but rather to form upper rooms over the ceiling for use probably as living rooms for the Chapelkeeper, or possibly as Vestries.

During the next forty years, this plain sanctuary became endeared by the most sacred associations to the growing Society. In this place John and Charles Wesley, Fletcher of Madeley, and a host of other good men occasionally preached. In 1799 the Rev. Richard Watson was one of the Circuit Ministers. In 1803, soon after his appointment by the Conference to London, the Rev. Jabez Bunting preached a sermon here on his Wedding-day after travelling with his bride from Macclesfield. His text was 1 John, i, 9. Robert Newton had a connection with Derby as a preacher of occasional sermons for about half a century up to within a year of his death in 1854.

An interesting incident was related in 1883 by Mr. John Humphreys, a famous King Street Leader :

“ More than 20 years ago I accompanied by request Mr. Wm. Turner and the Rev. Dr. Dixon to the old Chapel, then a Malthouse. These venerable men had expressed a wish to visit once more this scene of early Methodist labours. As they looked round and recognised here and there a trace of the old Sanctuary, for this is still practicable, Dr. Dixon observed, with great emotion, that when a young man he had often walked on a Sabbath morning from Castle Donington to this place, a distance of ten miles, to worship in the Old Chapel, and he referred with much pathos to his recollections. ‘ The Word of the Lord was precious in those days ’.”³

A noted layman who worked here was Joseph Pearson. He came to Derby in 1782, when eight years old. He was a scholar and teacher in the Sunday School established as early as 1786, Removing to Bath he commenced the first Wesleyan Sunday School in that City and was principally instrumental in raising up many others in the neighbouring towns and villages.

3. *One Hundred Years ago!* Wesleyan Methodism in Derby, [by Joseph Jones] 1883. Of this booklet the late Mr. George Stampe wrote, “ that rare tract I was years in getting it.”

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

The Rev. Theophilus Lessey, senr. was one of the Circuit Ministers when the old Chapel was closed, and Superintendent when the new Chapel was opened in 1805.

The most interesting link between the two Chapels was the personality of William Turner. From being a worshipper in the Chapel at St. Michael's Lane, he was closely identified with every extension of Methodism in the town up to his death in 1861 at the age of 91. His tablet records :

“ He was a zealous member and office bearer of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in this Circuit for 67 years, contributed to its funds, and manifested a deep concern for the religious training of the young, and died humbly trusting in the merits of his Redeemer.”

In August, 1804. the Rev. Wm. Jenkins, of Manchester, then about to remove to Sheffield spent a Sunday in Derby when on his return from the London Conference. He conducted service in the old Chapel. The day was hot and the place crowded. To make matters more uncomfortable, hard by was a Knackers' yard, the stench from which was dreadful. On leaving the Chapel in the evening it is related that Dr. Fox, at that time the leading physician in the town (father of Sir Charles Fox, designer of the Great Exhibition of 1861) a godly man, though not a Methodist, suggested to Mr. William Turner that a new Chapel should be built, and offered £50 towards that object. Dr. Fox's offer was accepted, and steps were immediately taken for the erection of the “ New House ” in King Street, which was opened in 1805.

Thus it came about that the Old St. Michael's Lane Chapel which had served Methodism for over forty eventful years, was sold and removal made to King Street.⁴ The building after being used for a Malthouse, has been for many years an Organ Builder's Works.

4. *King Street Wesleyan Chapel, Derby*, A Centenary Memorial, 1805-1905, by B. A. M. Alger, 1905. See also Mrs. Dobinson's Obit. *Meth. Mag.*, 1803; St. Michael's Lane Chapel, *Christian Miscell.* December 1870, February 1871; *Tyerman's* II., 398, 501, III., 244; *Memoirs of Jos. Pearson of Bath*, by Rev. Henry Fish, M.A., S.S.U., 1849; *Methodist Monographs, Headlights and Sidelights on the Movement in Derby*, by George J. Pratt, F.C.I.S., 1925.

G. ARTHUR FLETCHER.