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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. WESLEY F. SWIFT.

Volume XXX

September 1956

GREETINGS FROM OUR NEW PRESIDENT

7, Langley Park,
Mill Hill, London, N.W.7,
16th July 1956.

My dear fellow-members of the Wesley Historical Society,

My old friend and one-time colleague the respected and capable editor of our *Proceedings* allows me to express to you all my humble and hearty thanks, not only for electing me as your new President, but for the generous way in which you did so. Never in my life have I had a greater surprise. Such an honour was far indeed from my thoughts. How very good and trusting you all are! With due modesty, however, I can state that no one of the many whom you might have chosen treasures more than I the traditions of our beloved Methodism, or holds in greater respect and admiration that distinguished minister of God John Wesley, who founded our world-wide communion.

My debt to Methodism is greater than I can express. My ancestry on both sides goes back to Wesley's day, and I was nurtured in the Wesleyan tradition. From boyhood the outstanding names in our history have been familiar to me. My father's branch of a large family remained, for the most part, loyal to "t'owd body", but another branch broke away during the disturbed times of the mid-nineteenth century, and one member of it was widely known in North Lincolnshire as "Reformer Doughty".

You have called me to stand in a succession of distinguished men, the mere recital of whose names is both humbling and stimulating. Tribute has already been paid to our late beloved President, F.F.B., and I add mine. I valued his friendship, and have preserved all his helpful correspondence. I can only say that with the help of God I will endeavour to give some little justification of your choice and to further to the best of my ability the aims of our Society.

I thank you all again, and commend you to the love of God.

Sincerely yours,

W. L. DOUGHTY.

JAMES BOURNE (1781-1860) AND THE BEMERSLEY BOOK-ROOM

FOR a century there has been what seems almost a conspiracy of silence about James Bourne. So much so that at this date it is very difficult indeed to secure the facts that will enable the historian to form a reliable estimate of the part played by Hugh Bourne's younger brother in the rise of the Primitive Methodist Connexion.

At first sight it seems somewhat strange that this should be so. Although almost nine years younger than Hugh,¹ and very different in temperament, James was very closely linked to his brother both by affection and by the course of events. Both brothers were licensed as preachers under the Toleration Act on 16th July 1807 in preparation for the memorable second Camp Meeting on Mow Cop.² For their part in the Camp Meetings both were excluded from the Wesleyan Society, and on the same occasion.³ In 1809 they undertook joint financial responsibility for Primitive Methodism's first paid preacher, James Crawfoot.⁴ In 1810 they assumed joint control of what has been called the first Primitive Methodist Society—that at Stanley, which had been rejected by the Burslem Wesleyan circuit.⁵ In 1811 they jointly purchased land and built at Tunstall the first Primitive Methodist chapel.⁶ From the very formation of the Primitive Methodist Book-Room in 1821, in their jointly-owned farmstead at Bemersley, near Tunstall, they shared full responsibility for its workings—Hugh Bourne as Editor, James Bourne as Book Steward. Small wonder that when Hugh Bourne prepared his *History of the Primitive Methodists*, he spoke constantly of "H. and J. Bourne" as the architects of the new Connexion, and recorded a number of the pioneer preaching and society-founding ventures of his younger brother.⁷

There is no doubt at all that Hugh Bourne regarded James as co-founder with himself of the Connexion, witness his preface to the "consolidated" *General Minutes* of 1832 :

In [God's] Providence the Primitive Methodist Connexion rose, un-designed of man.

It was long composed of two members, Hugh and James Bourne, who continued to expend their property and labours in promoting religion,

¹ Hugh was born 3rd April 1772, James in February 1781. See J. T. Wilkinson's *Hugh Bourne*, p. 14n. Mr. Wilkinson has greatly enriched this present article by many valuable criticisms and suggestions.

² Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 51 and n.

³ *ibid.*, p. 61n.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 73.

⁵ H. Bourne's *History of the Primitive Methodists*, pp. 28-31. Cf. H. B. Kendall's *Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, i, pp. 115-8, and Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 76. See also the following paragraph.

⁶ Wilkinson, *op. cit.*, p. 88 and n.

⁷ Cf. Thomas Russell's "The Two Brothers; their love for, and help to, each other" (1868), pp. 6, 7, quoted in Kendall's *Origin and History*, i, p. 154.

the fruits falling into other communities, they not being willing to take further care upon them.

They visited new places; and in one of these, Standley, in Staffordshire, they, in March, 1810, raised up a class of ten members. These they attempted to join to the Wesleyans. But their design being frustrated, they, contrary to their inclinations, were necessitated to take upon them the care of a religious Connexion.

. . . And towards the latter end of the same year, a class at Tunstall joined them.

The phrase about the "class at Tunstall" is a reference to the fact that the leader of a parallel movement had joined forces with them—one who was eventually to be acknowledged as another joint founder of the Connexion. However half-heartedly he was welcomed, William Clowes was soon sharing many connexional responsibilities with the two brothers. He was joint signatory with them in 1830 of the Deed Poll by which the Connexion was legally established. Like James Bourne, William Clowes was three times recorded as having presided at the annual conference.⁸

Of one thing, however, we may be sure. Until 1838 the reins of the Connexion were firmly in the hands of Hugh and James Bourne, and not until 1842 did the somewhat restive steed which they were driving really get the bit between its teeth and go where it would. Both men were natural leaders, though of differing types. Hugh was a student and a mystic, yet a man of great spiritual initiative and of an impulsive temper. James was more level-headed and restrained, a schemer rather than a dreamer, and withal a "canny" man of affairs. Hugh consistently deferred business decisions to his younger brother, and was ready to sign away hundreds, even thousands of pounds, after a staccato questioning: "What's this, James Bourne? James Bourne, is it necessary for me to sign? Is it right, James Bourne, that I should sign?" Sometimes in the Conference itself James would check his brother's hasty anger with a stern "Sit thee down, Hugh!"⁹

The key to their retention of power in the Primitive Methodist Connexion, however, lay not only in their qualities of leadership but in the siting of the connexional Book-Room and headquarters in their farm at Bemersley. This was not accomplished without opposition. There was no dissenting voice when the Conference of 1820 appointed Hugh Bourne connexional Editor. The choice was obvious. It was not so obvious, however, that his brother James should become the connexional Book Steward, though the hesitation was probably caused as much by the envisaged concentration of power in the Tunstall area as by any doubt about James Bourne

⁸ Strangely enough, there is no known instance of Hugh Bourne ever having been President. The records before 1842 are unsystematic, however, and contain only casual references to the Presidents or Secretaries of the Conference.

⁹ John Walford's *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the late Venerable Hugh Bourne . . . Edited by the Rev. W. Antliff* (1855), ii, pp. 303-5; Antliff's *Hugh Bourne* (1872), p. 428.

personally. At any rate Hull put forward a rival candidate in the person of Edward Taylor, so that the *Minutes* read :

60. Q. Who shall be Book Steward ?

A. If the *Magazines* are printed in Hull Circuit, E. Taylor. If in Tunstall Circuit, J. Bourne.¹⁰

The *Magazine*, which was thus left to decide the fateful question of the site of the Book-Room, had already had a somewhat chequered history. The first number of *A Methodist Magazine*, dated April 1818, had been printed for Hugh Bourne at Burslem. Pausing awhile after this trial venture, in January 1819 he recommenced in earnest with a monthly magazine under the same title, and bearing the imprint of J. Fowler, High-Cross, Leicester. The issues for January to August appeared without incident, but then Bourne dropped the project for lack of response. The 1820 Conference agreed to the magazine's resuscitation, whereupon Bourne published three "substitute" numbers to complete the first volume. The first two were printed by Brougham of Burslem, but Bourne was so dissatisfied with the workmanship that he took the last number to Richardson & Handford of Derby, in spite of the extra travelling involved. The title-page of Volume II for 1821 also bears this Derby imprint, but the December issue was "Printed by J. Bourne, Bemersley, near Tunstall".¹¹

Whether James Bourne secured the position of Book Steward because of the retirement of the elusive Edward Taylor we cannot tell. The Conference of 1821, however, completely ignored the minute of its predecessor, and settled the issue by the following resolution :

48. Q. How shall the book concern be managed ?

A. James Steel, James Bourne, Hugh Bourne, Charles John Abraham, and John Hancock, are elected as a book committee, to manage the concerns for the ensuing year. These are to receive and examine all matters to be inserted in the magazine, and all other matters which it may be necessary to print. H. Bourne is appointed editor, and J. Bourne book steward. . . . The committee are empowered to establish a general book room, and a printing press, for the use of the connexion.¹²

The Book Committee was composed exclusively of Tunstall men. The Hull delegates, however, resolved to have at least a little of their own way, and secured agreement that until the connexional press was actually established, the magazine work should be given to "their printer at Hull". In the interval, therefore, Hugh Bourne had to carry out his editorial duties on what was almost enemy territory, and even to pay his own expenses in travelling there and

¹⁰ Kendall's *History*, ii, pp. 2-3 ; cf. Wilkinson's *Bourne*, p. 118.

¹¹ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 28, 59, 92-3. In June 1820 Bourne issued the "substitute" for September 1819, in August that for October 1819, and in November that for November and December 1819.

¹² *General Minutes*, 1821, pp. 13-14. Taylor's name does not appear in the stations for 1821, though the Rev. J. T. Wilkinson points out that at the 1822 Conference he was one of five asked to see to the execution of the Deed Poll, and was on the same occasion appointed treasurer of the Contingent Fund for the Hull Committee.



JAMES BOURNE (1781-1860)

(from the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1826).

back!¹³ Before the end of the year, however, James Bourne had managed to secure a printing press, and he commenced his career as Book Steward by printing at least one number of Volume II of the *Magazine*—that for December 1821.¹⁴ Actually a far more noteworthy baptism for James Bourne's Bemersley press was the issue of the first edition of what came to be known as the *Small Hymn Book*, but whose original title was *A Collection of Hymns, for Camp Meetings, Revivals, &c. For the use of the Primitive Methodists. Edited by Hugh Bourne*. The imprint on this volume is noteworthy: "Printed at the office of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, by J. Bourne. 1821."¹⁵

From this imposing title, which continued to be the official imprint, it will be seen that this remote Staffordshire farmstead was not only functioning as editorial office, printing press and warehouse for the Primitive Methodist Book Concern, but was also the connexional headquarters. Whether this was with the sanction or even the knowledge of the members of the 1821 Conference we do not know, for there is no printed minute to guide us. The Bournes and their Tunstall colleagues appear to have won a silent victory over Clowes and Hull, and they retained their tactical advantage for twenty years. Most of the connexional activities continued to revolve around Bemersley. In 1827, for instance, "H. and J. Bourne" not only headed the Book Committee, but also the General Committee and the General Missionary Committee, on none of which William Clowes served, though he headed the "Committee for examining Manuscripts", and the "Contingent Fund Committee" met in Hull.

The position of the Bournes was undoubtedly strengthened by their financial stability. Hugh Bourne himself was quickly exhausting his patrimony by generous giving, but James was securing for himself more tangible assets than gratitude by his comparative wealth. The members of the Book Committee had been empowered to purchase a printing press. According to the confidential minutes of the 1832 Conference, the committee members were actually intended to serve as trustees for the Book-Room, and "to have found the money for setting it on foot. But they all failed, and J. Bourne was left to struggle with the difficulties alone." From his private resources, therefore, he purchased press and types, and set them up

¹³ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, p. 111. The Hull printer was almost certainly John Hutchinson of Silver Street, who printed editions of the *Minutes* of 1819 and 1821, and probably for 1820 also, when the Conference was held in Hull itself. The "official" 1819 *Minutes*, however, are surely those printed in Nottingham, where the Conference met. For 1820 the only edition so far seen was printed by Brougham of Burslem. For 1821 a rival edition to Hutchinson's was printed by R. Sugden of Halifax, the Conference itself having met at Tunstall.

¹⁴ Walford, *op. cit.*, ii, p. 112, claims that "some of the numbers for the year 1821 were printed by James Bourne", but the only one bearing any imprint at all (apart from the first) is the last. One feels that if James Bourne had indeed commenced any earlier than December his imprint would have been on the issue concerned.

¹⁵ Copy in the possession of the Rev. Wesley F. Swift.

in an outbuilding of the Bemersley farm, while a large squat barn was furnished as book-room and warehouse.¹⁶

The *Minutes* of the Annual Meeting held at Loughborough, 1822, a mere three pages, but the first record printed by Bourne, was mainly occupied with "Regulations of the Book Room". It arranged for regular book-parcels to the circuits, sought quarterly remittances in payment, and allowed the preachers ten per cent discount on their orders—though expecting them to bear their own losses. The fifth regulation shows that however cautiously Conference might move, there were going to be no half-measures about Bourne's new project as far as he himself was concerned, for he had secured equipment for binding as well as for printing:

5. That it be recommended to the circuits to get their binding done at the book room, if the book room can do it as well and as cheap as they can get it done elsewhere.

One of the "Sundry Articles" in these *Minutes* reveals not only that the little group at Tunstall was functioning as a connexional executive, but also that their power was still being challenged:

14. That the written minutes of this Annual Meeting be put into the hands of the book committee, and that they be delivered in at the next Annual Meeting; and that a copy of them be delivered to the committee at Hull, to be also delivered in at the same time.

N.B. Any circuit may write for advice, on any point, to either the book committee, or the committee at Hull.

James Bourne's first balance sheet of sorts was presented to the 1823 Conference. It covered three years, 1820-2, apparently including everything from the appointment of Hugh Bourne as Editor in 1820. With sales amounting to £1,503 17s. 4½d., the Book-Room showed a profit of £157 5s. od., set off by outstanding debts from the circuits of £160 12s. 3½d., and also by the fact that over £100 of the supposed profits actually consisted of stock in hand. The Book-Room was far from paying its way. There was perennial difficulty in persuading the circuits to pay their accounts, so that in the end the defaulting circuits and their "old outstanding debts" were listed in print, albeit only in the confidential *Various Regulations*.¹⁷ The annual turn-over fluctuated considerably throughout the Bemersley period, though there was a gradual overall rise.¹⁸ Even more ominous was the narrow margin of profit. In no year did stock and sales together quite fall below the current expenditure, but in most years the profits were not more than two or three per cent of the costs, and even then mostly in the form of moneys owing

¹⁶ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 303-6; *Various Regulations*, 1832, p. 3; Kendall's *History*, ii, pp. 6-7.

¹⁷ For 1841, pp. 1, 11.

¹⁸ The *Various Regulations*, issued annually, contained the Book-Room accounts, but their presentation was irregular and somewhat difficult to interpret. The turn-over rose to a peak of £1,827 3s. 6½d. in 1825, sank to £1,118 7s. 7½d. in 1827, rose to £1,830 4s. 3½d. in 1832, and to £2,888 9s. 1½d. in 1836. Continuing to fluctuate, it passed the £3,000 mark in 1841, but sank to £2,693 9s. 1½d. in 1842.

from the circuits. In 1825 they rose to over 30 per cent, but this was reversed the following year by a loss of over 30 per cent. The accounts for a number of years, indeed, could only be balanced by reference to the stock in hand. True, the evangelistic value of the literature issuing from Bemersley could not be measured in terms of cash profits. Yet the men of affairs who scanned these accounts must have wondered, not only how to ensure prompt settlement by the circuits, but how to turn what seemed a liability into an asset. Was it to be by higher prices, or by lower costs? There were some who inclined to the view that in one way and another, whatever was happening to the connexional book concern, James Bourne himself was making a good thing out of the Book Stewardship, though it was difficult to challenge him.

The Book Steward was in a peculiar position. He not only managed the printing establishment and the Book-Room, but personally owned both, even though he did so in the name of the Connexion. The premises themselves never left his hands, though in later years a rental was paid to him for their use.¹⁹ The capital expenditure on printing equipment, binding tools, etc. which should have been the responsibility of the Book Committee, had also been in fact underwritten by James Bourne. This was first noted—apart from the current accounts—in the *Minutes* for 1823: "To money laid out for Printing Press, Type, and other materials up to May 20, 1823, £373 8s. 10d." To this capital account was added the following year, "New press, types, &c" costing £184 4s. 1d.—a total outlay of £557 12s. 11d. With the stereotyping of the *Small Hymn Book* and the purchase of new type in 1825 the Book-Room debt to Bourne reached £680 11s. 1d. This was partially offset in the 1825 accounts by the handing over of the total Book-room profits to date, though one gathers that some of these were mere paper profits in the form of outstanding debts. For some years the tiny annual profits were thus set against Bourne's capital expenditure. In effect it was a private concern run in the name of a religious organization.

There was something both mysterious and suspicious in all this to many of the "Ranters", and the *Minutes* of the 1828 Conference (at which Clowes was added to the Book Committee) attempted to clarify the position:

BOOK ROOM.

36 Q. What is its situation?

A. It is the general property of the connexion. It has an Editor, Book Steward, and Committee; and it is carried on under the direction of the Conference, for the benefit of all the circuits.

The financial situation remained unchanged, however, except that in the capital account for 1828 the debt to Bourne was shown as "Balance due to Treasurer £249 16s. 3½d." The whole position

¹⁹ The first rental shown, in 1833, is for £34 per annum. With the advent of a new Book Steward, however, in 1838, this was dropped to £11, but raised again in 1840 to £22.

was overhauled by the Conference of 1832, obviously to meet the charge that this was a private concern in all but name :

9 Q. How shall the Book Room be made sure to the Connexion ?

A. Let it be settled on Trustees for the benefit of the Connexion. And that Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, Wm. Clowes, and John Hancock, be a Committee, to take due measures, and prepare the draft of a deed for settling the same ; and if possible, let the draft of such deed be presented to the next Conference for their examination.

A note followed, pointing out that the 1821 Conference had in fact appointed trustees for just this purpose, but that owing to their inability to act James Bourne had taken the whole responsibility on his own shoulders, but had settled the Book-Room upon the Connexion by will. The note added that with the appointment of the new trustees "there is now a prospect of its being settled during J. Bourne's life".²⁰

The *Various Regulations* for 1833 still reported a "Balance due to Treasurer" of £213 5s. 9½d., but for the first time there was an itemized list of expenses. A note was appended by James Bourne :

If any of the Brethren should discover any error in any of the accounts, they are requested to make it known to the Book Room, by means of the Circuit-book Steward, in order that such error may be duly corrected.

In the great press of business an error may occur, although great care has been taken.

By 1834, however, the situation was tidied up considerably. A special committee met at Leeds on 13th November 1833, and decided that the best thing to do was to hand over the press to Bourne, and let him run it as a private venture on contract from the Connexion, such contract to be back-dated to 1st January 1833. The types and presses to be set against the Book-Room's debt to him were independently valued at £244, and thus at last became by deed as well as in fact his personal property. James Bourne was now in the happy position of being an independent printer on a monopolistic contract with a rising denomination, and was his own supervisor to boot!²¹

The Primitive Methodist Book-Room itself, however, was by no means out of trouble. On the eve of Good Friday 1834 the building caught fire, the suspected cause being the bursting into flame of sheets drying before the fire.²² To set things right, £1,900 was borrowed at five per cent interest from the "Preachers' Fund". An appeal went out to the circuits not only to pay the £895 13s. 3½d. representing their outstanding debts, but to send contributions towards the loss by fire. The 1835 Conference turned this request into a levy :

22. What shall be done in regard of the cross providence at the Book-room ?

²⁰ *Various Regulations*, 1832, p. 3.

²¹ *ibid.*, 1833, pp. 10-11 ; 1835, p. 7.

²² Information supplied by the Rev. J. T. Wilkinson from Hallam's Journals.

A. A collection to the amount of one penny a member must be raised towards that part of the loss by fire, which was Connexion property, and this must be continued yearly till that part is paid off.

* * * This embraces no part of the property that belonged to James Bourne.

The subscriptions of the circuits already paid in, must be reckoned to them as a part of such collection.²³

The appeal for help sent out by the 1834 Conference had been signed by John Hallam as Secretary, and we are thus introduced to the one who after gaining the confidence of the Bournes was gradually to undermine their control of the Book-Room (and of Primitive Methodism) from within. Hallam was ailing physically, so that the 1834 Conference suggested that he might "be employed in General Committee business". In effect that meant that he should join the Bemersley household. This proved a welcome idea to Hugh Bourne, since he himself would thereby be freed for more itinerant evangelism, but it was accepted with some reluctance by James. Between them the two brothers paid for his board. Hallam became, says John Walford, the "major-domo, not only in the Bourne family at Bemersley, but in the counsels and official courts of the Primitive Methodist Connexion". In 1836 he was officially appointed "Assistant Editor". In 1838 he replaced James Bourne as Book Steward. Thus at last was corrected the anomalous situation whereby James Bourne as Book Steward ensured that James Bourne as official printer carried out his contract satisfactorily.²⁴

The long list of duties for the new Book Steward approved by the Conference included one item which surely implied a hint of dissatisfaction about his predecessor :

3. By what method will the Connexion be best assured of the fidelity of the General Book Steward, in taking care of the immovable property of the Book Room ?

A. By two similar Inventories of that property being made; one to be held by the Steward for his own satisfaction, and the other to be held by W. Clowes for the satisfaction of the Connexion.²⁵

James Bourne's personal accounts remained entangled with those of the Book-Room, however. The 1839 statement revealed "Book-room balances in the hands of Mr. J. Bourne, £463 10s. 3¼d.", for which he paid interest at five per cent. He managed to repay £270

²³ *Various Regulations*, 1835, pp. 7-8; *Minutes*, 1835, p. 11. James Bourne would not accept the proffered help towards his personal loss. (See Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 303-4.) Actually the levy, on a membership of 56,649, amounted to only £236, and was merely a palliative measure. The generosity of some circuits went far beyond this, however, and by 1837 almost £500 had come in. Other circuits were less generous, and in spite of being blacklisted, when by 1844 over £1,000 had been raised there were still ten circuits who between them owed £28 os. 10½d. Not until 1841 was the £1,900 paid back to the "Preachers' Fund".

²⁴ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 288-9; *Minutes*, 1836, 1838. Although in the appointments listed in the *Various Regulations* for 1838 "James Bourne printer" precedes "John Hallam book steward", Bourne's name disappears completely from the official "Stations" as given in the 1838 *Minutes*.

²⁵ *Various Regulations*, 1838, p. 2.

of this amount in 1841, continuing to pay interest on the remainder. Faulty book-keeping had led to errors on the other side also, and in 1841 the Book Steward refunded Bourne £24 18s. 7½d. due to him from an error in 1838, while in the following year Bourne received interest on some of the "old outstanding debts".

Unfortunately the book-keeping remained in a muddle for some years. One unpleasant item for Hallam's attention was the question of defaulting circuits—"Outstanding Debts turned over to the New Book Steward, May 18, 1838, are £1,375 13s. 6d.". John Hallam, however, was not the man to straighten these things out. At first glance he seems to have been a providential visitor to the Bemersley household from a connexional standpoint; yet his sojourn was not an unmixed blessing. For John Hallam, while an excellent circuit minister, was (according to the testimony of Hugh Bourne) practically useless as an editor, and (as even H. B. Kendall admits) worse than useless as a book steward.²⁶

Though demoted from his chief office, James Bourne remained a member of the Book Committee, the General Committee, and the Missionary Committee. He even continued to serve as treasurer to the latter, and in 1841 was listed as "Connexional Treasurer". Yet in effect he was out of the saddle, and attention could be turned to his brother. By the Conference of 1842 Hugh Bourne had just reached the age of seventy, and it was urged on him that he should retire from his editorial duties, and let a younger man take over. (It should be noted that William Clowes also was superannuated by this same Conference, though he was only sixty-two; the rising generation was intent on taking control.) John Walford, Bourne's brother-in-law, waxed very indignant over his unwilling "retirement" by vote of Conference, and urged that he might at least have been continued in office with a younger assistant. He was turned out of office completely, however, and left "to exercise his own judgment, and employ his time in the Connexion as he thought best".²⁷

However hard for Hugh Bourne personally, this was in the long run of tremendous benefit to the Connexion as a whole. For John Flesher replaced Bourne as Editor, and thus he too was introduced

²⁶ When Thomas Holliday was appointed assistant Book Steward to Hallam in 1843, he refused to take over until a new book-keeping system had been introduced. Holliday succeeded at length in proving to Hallam that he had made an error in his own favour of £241 2s. 9½d. Careful scrutiny led to the discovery of similar errors. Hallam died on 8th September 1845, with a number of queries still unresolved, though he had previously arranged in his will that the Connexion should be reimbursed in full. A four-page folder prepared for the 1846 Conference shows that actually Hallam owed the Connexion over £800. H. B. Kendall pleads powerfully that there was no shadow of guilt hanging over him, and William Antliff had earlier summed it up by stating that he was "thoroughly honest and sincere, but decidedly incompetent". See *Various Regulations*, 1846, p. 13; "To the Book-Stewards, the Stewards of our Circuits, Branches, and Missions, and to the Delegates who shall attend the Conference of 1846, and to them only", 8vo, pp. 4; Kendall's *History*, ii, pp. 390-1; Walford's *Bourne*, ii, p. 290n.

²⁷ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 276-7, 288-95. Cf. Wilkinson's *Bourne*, pp. 154-5.

to the Bemersley household. Flesher was a man of greater stature than Hallam—more robust both physically and temperamentally. The details of his experiences at Bemersley during a very unpleasant but very fruitful fifteen months, as preserved in his unpublished memoranda, will be given in a later article. Suffice it to say now that he became convinced that for years James Bourne's finances had been entangled with those of the Connexion, and that both were being endangered in doubtful business speculations. Other leading Tunstall Methodists were also involved with James Bourne.

Flesher's investigations, possibly aided by the death of John Hancock, provided the long-sought lever which further released the Tunstall strangehold on connexional finance.²⁸ The 1843 Conference took away the printing contract from James Bourne, though they allowed him a somewhat grudging opportunity to bid for the binding:

14. As Mr. J. Bourne has engaged to execute the connexional binding at any of the prices which have been submitted by the three London binders, and to deliver them, free of carriage, at the Book-room, he shall have the binding as heretofore; but he shall be deprived of it if it be not executed to the satisfaction of the Book Committee.²⁹

After the Conference Hugh Bourne went on an extensive preaching tour in the Midlands and the South, appearing particularly in his new character as advocate of teetotalism. Altogether he was away from home about seven months. Though well over seventy, and really not fit for extensive travel, he undoubtedly sought in these unremitting exertions some forgetfulness of his brother's shame. Perhaps a few months more, and the pain would be eased.

Worse was to come, however. The storm broke over the head of James Bourne towards the end of the year. The public climax came with the following notice in the *London Gazette* for Friday, 20th October:

Whereas a Fiat in Bankruptcy, bearing date the 16th day of October 1843, is awarded and issued forth against James Bourne of Bemmersley, in the parish of Norton in the Moors, in the County of Stafford, Printer, Dealer and Chapman, and he being declared a bankrupt is hereby required to surrender himself to Edmund Robert Daniell, Esq., one of Her Majesty's Commissioners of the Birmingham District Court of Bankruptcy, holden at Birmingham, on the 2nd day of November next, at twelve o'clock at noon, and on the 27th day of the same month, at half past eleven of the clock in the forenoon, and make a full discovery and disclosure of his estate and effects; when and where the creditors are to come prepared to prove their debts, and at the first sitting to choose assignees, and at the last sitting the said bankrupt is required to finish his examination. All persons indebted to the said bankrupt, or that have any of his effects, are not to pay or deliver the same but to Mr. Thomas Bittleston, the Official Assignee, Waterloo-street, Birmingham, whom the commissioner has appointed; and give notice to Mr.

²⁸ See Thomas Bateman's Journal for 13th June 1844, quoted in Kendall's *History*, ii, p. 393. Hancock died 2nd January 1843; see Kendall, *op. cit.*, ii,

p. 5.

²⁹ *General Minutes* (Consolidated), 1836, p. 47; *Various Regulations*, 1843,

p. 4.

W. E. Twigg, Solicitor, Burslem, Staffordshire, or to Mr. John Smith, Solicitor, Waterloo-street, Birmingham.⁸⁰

The full details of the sad affair are not known, nor does it seem necessary to dig them out. The main facts are clear enough. Walford gives a revealing glimpse of the situation :

James Bourne . . . became entangled, infatuated, and linked in with the potters ; and truly they made his a tale of woe ; thousands were engulfed in the vortex of ruin by them ; even in one instance which came under our own observation, one of these manufacturing gentlemen became indebted to James Bourne to the amount of near *six thousand pounds*, and all was lost.⁸¹

When eventually Hugh Bourne returned from his journeyings in February 1844, it was to enter in its journal : " Friday, 16th : to Bemersley,—all in desolation and distress. Lord, undertake for us. No arm but thine can do it." On the 25th he wrote : " Troubles have come upon me through the conduct of others, until my life has become almost a burden."⁸² So ready had he been to sign his name at his brother's mere word, without troubling to inquire what it was all about, that Hugh Bourne was not only distressed emotionally : he was implicated financially.

The great stature of Hugh Bourne was revealed in these dark days. He went far beyond any legal obligations in standing by his brother and insisting on a lifelong attempt to put things straight. His small annuity from the Conference was swallowed up in succouring James, and in making payments to creditors of the Burslem chapel, which was also drawn into the maelstrom. In 1847 he was so embarrassed financially that he faced the prospect of imprisonment. To the very end his *Journal* continued to record payments large and small to C. J. Abraham, to his elder brother John Bourne, to Mr. Twigg, the Burslem solicitor, and to others.⁸³

Both brothers tried to hold their heads up, but only Hugh really succeeded. Both attended the Conference at Lyme Regis in June 1844, as they had attended practically every previous Conference. At that Conference, however, Hugh Bourne went into something

⁸⁰ *London Gazette*, 1843, p. 3420. Extract kindly made by the research staff of the National Central Library at the instance of the Chief Librarian, Kingston upon Hull.

⁸¹ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, p. 304. One of the men involved with Bourne in these pottery speculations was almost certainly Hancock, a foundation-member of the Book Committee, who figures in Flesher's *Memoranda*. Another was Charles John Abraham, also a foundation-member of the Book Committee, and a trustee of the ill-fated Burslem chapel, with whose affairs those of James Bourne became "hopelessly involved". (Kendall's *History*, ii, p. 5.) (Cf. Wilkinson's *Bourne*, pp. 169-70.)

⁸² Walford, op. cit., ii, pp. 304-5, though he wrongly gives the date as 1843, instead of 1844. Confirmation of the year is given by the combination of the dates with the days of the week. Cf. Wilkinson's *Bourne*, p. 159.

⁸³ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 306-11, 328, 336, 349-50. Cf. Wilkinson's *Bourne*, pp. 169-70. Long after the liquidation of James Bourne's assets the press and types were bought by a good Primitive Methodist, Mr. Joseph Lovatt, and they were still serviceable. (A. Wilkes and J. Lovatt's *Mow Cop and the Camp Meeting Movement*, p. 46.) They are now in the Hanley Museum.

like exile in America, and James Bourne was stripped of all his offices. The Conference of 1836 had laid it down that "no person who has been insolvent, shall be suffered to hold any office in the Connexion without the previous sanction of the general committee", though it was stressed that "if, upon due examination, they find it to have arisen from misfortune only, they must send their sanction". James Bourne's case, however, admitted of no relaxation. His name was removed from all the committees on which he had so long been a ruling member—the General or Connexional Committee, the General Missionary Committee, the Book Committee, even the Building Committee of the Tunstall District. For James Bourne the Lyme Regis Conference was the end. He had forfeited the confidence and the respect of everyone except his brother. Hugh Bourne spoke of James as "unfortunate", and not only pleaded with the Conference to pay James his own annuity while he was away in America, but shortly afterwards confirmed his 1819 will, whereby James Bourne was made his sole legatee and executor, even of his by now considerable literary property.³⁴

Hugh Bourne did re-establish himself in Primitive Methodism. He died in 1852 to a fanfare of trumpets, and twenty thousand people shared in the cortège that accompanied him eleven miles to the burial-ground of the chapel at Englesea Brook. Even on this occasion, however, the old scores against James Bourne led to the misinterpretation by some people of his motives in attempting to save his brother by taking him to the North Staffordshire Infirmary.

James Bourne himself died on 15th January 1860, aged seventy-eight, and among the obituary notices in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* for 21st January appeared the following: "A few days ago at Bemersley near Tunstall Mr. James Bourne at an advanced age. For some years Mr. Bourne was the printer for the Primitive Methodist Connexion." James also was taken for burial to Englesea Brook, like his brother Hugh in 1852, and his own wife Sarah in 1853.³⁵ There were no thronging thousands to follow the coffin on this occasion, however.³⁶ Indeed there was little sign that Primitive Methodism in general was aware of his passing, save that the connexional funds were no longer charged with the 6s. per week granted him from 1850, which had been doubled by the Jubilee Conference of 1857.

The Primitive Methodist Conference of 1860 could hardly overlook completely the death of its sole surviving Deed Poll member, but confessed itself "constrained to acknowledge the obligation of the Connexion to the late Mr. James Bourne, on account of the great

³⁴ *General Minutes*, 1843, pp. 14-15; 1844, pp. 14-15; 1846, p. 6; Walford's *Bourne*, ii, pp. 309-13; Wilkinson's *Bourne*, pp. 187-8.

³⁵ The entry in the Death Register of the Leek Registration District states that Bourne died on 15th January, but the burial register at Englesea Brook records that he was buried on that day, presumably giving the date of his death in error.

³⁶ James Jack's *History of the Church and Parish of Norton-in-the-Moors*, p. 67.

efforts put forth by him in its behalf during the early part of its history". The Conference resolved that Thomas Bateman and Philip Pugh should prepare "a respectful notice of his life" for the magazine.⁸⁷ For some reason, however, this never appeared. No biography or memoir is to be found in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* for 1860, nor was the omission remedied in later issues. When John Petty prepared the second edition of his *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, however, he tried to summarize James Bourne's life in carefully-chosen but kindly phrases :

In the decline of life . . . he unhappily experienced serious reverses in his temporal circumstances, and from that period he took no active part in the affairs of the connexion. But he continued to attend the means of grace when convenient, and was present at the Jubilee camp-meeting held on Mow Hill in May, 1857. He was then a feeble old man, and his appearance presented a striking contrast to that of his manly and commanding figure in the vigour of his days. For some years he received a small annuity from the connexional funds, as a testimony of the gratitude and respect felt for his former services, and in order to provide for his comfort under the infirmities of age. He gradually declined in strength, but lingered till January, 1860, when he died at Bemersley, in the seventy-ninth year of his age. It is believed he departed in peace, in the faith and hope of the gospel.⁸⁸ FRANK BAKER.

⁸⁷ *General Minutes*, 1860, pp. 31-2, and cf. p. 42. The record in the Conference Journal, the Book Steward informs me, is word for word as in the *Minutes*.

⁸⁸ Walford's *Bourne*, ii, p. 369; Wilkinson's *Bourne*, p. 178; Petty's *History*, ed. J. Macpherson, 1880, pp. 564-5.

The story of Bethel chapel in the Derbyshire village of Hayfield, by Fred Leech (pp. 16, from Mr. E. Howard, Clynnog, Birch Vale, via Stockport, Ches.) is perhaps unique in that it was written at the request of the trustees to celebrate (if that is the right word) the closing of the chapel in March 1956 after 120 years of witness and worship. The cause was Wesleyan Association in its origin, and the echoes of distant controversies are heard in the pages of this little booklet, which we have read with great interest and commend as a splendid example of local historical research. The chapel was once called "Redemption Chapel", and was licensed under that name: is that also unique?

Dr. H. F. Mathews writes: *A Short History of Station Road Methodist Church, Biddulph, 1856-1956* has just been published as a centenary handbook. The Rev. John B. Peet is to be congratulated on bringing together an interesting account of a cause which was first a preaching-place in the "Manchester Round", and which has produced through the years some notable preachers and leaders. In his researches, Mr. Peet has come across some hitherto unknown records of Leek Methodism which may be expected to yield further information. The booklet is attractively produced with some good illustrations. It is unfortunate that three errors were missed at the proof stage and have had to be rectified in ink; and on page 7 Arnold Bennett has obviously influenced either the compiler or the compositor, for there is a reference to "The Year Book of the Bursley [sic] Quarterly Meeting", which will intrigue researchers of a future generation. But these are small blemishes in a useful piece of local Methodist history. The booklet can be obtained from the Rev. John B. Peet, Epworth House, Hall's Road, Biddulph, Staffs.

TREWINT

MR. STANLEY SOWTON'S article "A Trewint Picture" (*Proceedings*, xxx, p. 93) provides more evidence of his indefatigable zeal in putting Trewint on the map. It seems, however, that the historian's pitfall of romanticism and sentimentalization is beginning to appear at Trewint.

The three Trewint paintings commissioned by the Trewint trustees have now been reproduced as coloured postcards, and it is on these that some comment must be made. The first painting is of Digory Isbell's cottage, the second depicts John Nelson and John Downes requesting refreshment from Elizabeth Isbell, and the third shows John Wesley standing outside the cottage and preaching to Cornish tin-miners. The first painting passes without any serious criticism, but the two which presume to depict actual events must be subjected to a critical analysis. Such an analysis leads to a feeling of regret that the artist or those who advised him did not pay more attention to historical accuracy, for it is the historic and not the romantic element that should be the *raison d'être* for preserving Trewint as a Methodist shrine.

The painting which depicts John Nelson and John Downes asking refreshment from Elizabeth Isbell is inconsistent with the records in at least two important details. The first concerns Nelson's dress. The artist portrays him in black riding-coat, brown gaiters, white cravat, and cocked hat, but we have Nelson's own account of his dress at the time :

After I had laboured in Yorkshire awhile longer, Mr John Wesley sent for me to London : but by this time I had almost worn out my clothes, and did not know where the next should come from : my wife said I was not fit to go anywhere as I was. . . . Two days afterwards, a Tradesman in our Parish, that did not belong to our Society, came to my house, and brought me a piece of *blue* cloth for a coat, and a piece of *black* cloth for a waistcoat and breeches.¹

Immediately after this he went to London, where he stayed a few days, then set out for Bristol and Cornwall. It was on this journey into Cornwall that the now famous Trewint episode took place. Is it supposing too much to believe that a penniless preacher should still be wearing clothes that were only a few weeks old, and which were in fact the only decent clothes he had ? This, then, is the first error committed by the artist.

The second inconsistency concerns the harness worn by the horse. The Methodist preachers of Wesley's day were famous for the saddle-bags which contained their scant personal belongings and, most important, the books and pamphlets for sale. It is therefore lamentable that in the painting this important and distinctive feature is absent.

The colour of Nelson's coat and the absence of saddle-bags are small details, but if the painting is intended to be an historical record it is a pity that detail has not been observed.

¹ John Nelson's *Journal*, 1795, p. 53. (Italics mine.)

The painting which shows John Wesley preaching to the tanners is also inconsistent with the known facts. The postcard reproduction dates the event with the following words :

John Wesley preaching to Cornish "tanners" at Trewint. He wrote in his journal that night, (15th July 1745), "I never remember so great an awakening . . . from Trewint quite to the seaside."

The light and shade of the painting suggests that Wesley preached in the middle of the day, but his *Journal* (iii, p. 194) makes it quite clear that he preached at Trewint on that day between four and five in the *morning*—more or less at dawn. Furthermore, we are told that the painting shows Wesley preaching to the tanners, but the crowd portrayed is well dressed and respectable, and not at all in accord with descriptions of the miners of that district and time, who were poor, inebriate, and often of violent behaviour. If Wesley was preaching to tanners, let us see tanners, and not a crowd who appear to have been lifted directly from fashionable Bath.

Concerning the insertion of Wesley's words "I never remember so great an awakening . . . from Trewint quite to the seaside", the unsuspecting reader will presume that they are Wesley's comment on the preaching of that day. The fact is that although he wrote them after his preaching at Trewint, when read in their context they refer not to his preaching but to the work in Cornwall of Francis Walker.

So much for the paintings ; but one more observation needs to be made. It may be the same temptation to romanticize that has given rise to the belief that Digory and Elizabeth Isbell were the first to entertain the Methodist preachers in Cornwall, although this belief may be due to the fact that such a statement is made on the Isbell grave at Altarnun church : "They were the first who entertained the Methodist preachers in this county." It would appear, however, that this assertion is incorrect. The first hospitality offered by the Isbells was in August 1743, but earlier in the year Thomas Williams and William Shepherd, two lay preachers, were sent to Cornwall from Bristol in response to the encouraging report on St. Ives by Captain Joseph Turner, a member of the Bristol society. On 13th July 1743 Charles Wesley set out from Bristol for Cornwall and eventually reached St. Ives, where he stayed at the house of John Nance in Street an Garrow.² In 1745, replying to inquiries made by his bishop as to the number of dissenters in the parish, the incumbent of St. Ives replied : "Many people called Methodists . . . frequently assemble in the house of Mr John Nance, at unseasonable hours."³

From these facts alone it can be assumed that John Nance was one of the first Methodists in St. Ives ; that Charles Wesley stayed in his house in July 1743, and consequently that John Nance was the first person on record to have entertained a Methodist preacher

² Cf. Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, p. 140.

³ Quoted in the *Western Morning News*, 12th July 1921.

in Cornwall. Added to this assumption is the weight of Curnock, who, in a footnote to page 88 of volume iii of John Wesley's *Journal*, wrote: "Charles had visited St. Ives on July 16 and was met by Mr. Shepherd and entertained by Mr. Nance."

Although it is regrettable to have to disprove this part of the Trewint story, I trust that these comments on the first Cornish host to the Methodist preachers, and on the Trewint paintings, will serve as an indication of the dangers to historical record that exist when romanticism and sentimentalization are allowed to creep in.

HERBERT W. WHITE.

[Dr. Frank Baker and I agree that Mr. White's criticisms of the details in the Trewint pictures are substantially correct, and we feel justified, therefore, in publishing them in the *Proceedings*. We do not, however, attach quite so much importance to the inaccuracies as does Mr. White, though like him we regret them; and we hope that the publication of the article will not diminish the sale of these colourful artistic reproductions, one of which, through the generosity of Mr. Sowton, appeared as an illustration in our last issue.—EDITOR.]

The supply of local histories, largely inspired by centenary or jubilee celebrations, is like the widow's cruse of oil, and this is all to the good. The centenary of Wesley Chapel, York, has called forth an eight-page historical sketch (obtainable from Mr. A. S. Page, 34, Green Lane, Acomb, York) which chronicles an "unfinished story" of achievement, witness and amalgamation in a city where Methodism may rightly claim the adjective "historic". . . . The commemorative jubilee handbook of the Richmond-Shearbridge Methodist church, Bradford (pp. 24, 2s. 6d. from Mr. G. R. Walker, 128, Clayton Road, Bradford, 7) is a well-illustrated history of the former Shearbridge Road M.N.C. chapel, with which the Richmond Terrace ex-Wesleyan society amalgamated in 1939. Not the least interesting section of this booklet is that which sketches the development of the Methodist New Connexion in Bradford. . . . We have commented before on the Rev. Thomas Shaw's ingenious method of overcoming printing difficulties by inserting a cyclostyled booklet inside neatly-printed covers. His *Methodism in Pancrasweek* (pp. 22, 1s. 6d. from the author at 9, Fore Street, Pool, Redruth, Cornwall) is another example of this art, and the contents manifest the thoroughness and care which have characterized his contributions to the *Proceedings* and the indexes to our volumes. Methodism in this Devon hamlet has found a worthy pen to give it immortality. . . . The Shirley Methodist church, Croydon, has recently celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary, and a full account of its origins and growth is given in a souvenir brochure (pp. 24, 2s. 6d. from Mr. S. G. Smith, 67, Shirley Avenue, Croydon, Surrey). This attractively-produced booklet with its excellent illustrations will be invaluable to future historians when Shirley comes to its centenary. Would that our fathers had been as wise in their generation!

The 1956 volume of *Bathafarn*, the Journal of the Historical Society of the Methodist Church in Wales, is doubtless full of interest to those who can read Welsh. Fortunately for some of us, the longest article, by the Editor, Mr. A. H. Williams, is in English, and consists largely of extracts from the Journal of the Rev. John Hughes, who was one of the two missionaries sent by the Conference to establish the Welsh Mission in North Wales in 1800.

THE ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE

Business Meeting

AFTER once again partaking of tea provided by the generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert Ibberson, members assembled at Ladywood Road Methodist church, Roundhay, Leeds, for the Annual Meeting. The Rev. John T. Wilkinson, M.A., B.D. was elected to the chair, and prayer was offered by the Rev. John C. Bowmer, M.A., B.D.

The Meeting was overshadowed by the loss of the President (the Rev. F. F. Bretherton, B.A.), and it was decided to insert in the Minutes a special record of his unique services to the Society. Standing tribute was paid to his memory, with that of other members who had died during the year, including the Rev. Edgar T. Selby (Warden of the New Room, Bristol) and Mr. H. W. Mansfield, an expert on London topography. Warm thanks were conveyed to the late Mr. Bretherton's family (three members of which were present) for the gift of the bulk of his Methodist library (over 2,000 volumes) to serve as a nucleus for the Wesley Historical Society Library.

The Secretary pointed out that as a result of this large and valuable accession the Wesley Historical Society Library had become easily the best *lending* library in existence for students of British Methodist history, and ranked with the handful of specialized Methodist reference libraries. The problem of accommodation, however, had become acute. The Annual Meeting gratefully accepted the offer of the Minister and Trustees of Wesley's Chapel, London, to make available a large area in the crypt, rent free. In order to meet the remaining financial problem of enclosing this space, and providing adequate shelving, lighting and furnishing, together with the issuing of catalogues and similar expenditures on maintenance, the Meeting decided to inaugurate a "Francis Fletcher Bretherton Memorial Fund". More will be heard of this in the near future.

The Meeting arranged for future lectures as follows: 1957, the Rev. Dr. O. A. Beckerlegge on "The United Methodist Free Churches"; 1958, the Rev. A. Wesley Hill, B.A., M.B., B.Ch., on "John Wesley, Physician". It was agreed to publish as soon as practicable a Master Index to the thirty volumes of *Proceedings* issued by the Society since 1898. Tribute was paid to the high quality maintained by the quarterly *Proceedings*, and it was urged that an invitation should be offered to more Methodists to avail themselves of the privileges of membership.

The Rev. W. Lamplough Doughty, B.A., B.D. was unanimously elected President, and all the other officers were thanked and re-appointed.

Nearly sixty members of the Society were present at the Meeting—easily the largest attendance on record. Many aspects of our work were discussed which are not reported here, and there was a general feeling of optimism about the future of the Society.

The Annual Lecture

A large and appreciative audience gathered to hear from the Book Steward (the Rev. Frank H. Cumbers, B.A., B.D.) the story of the growth and development of one of John Wesley's most far-sighted experiments in evangelism—the Book-Room. Dr. Arthur R. Hill presided, and devotions were led by the minister of the church (the Rev. Wesley F. Swift).

Announcing "I believe in dates", Mr. Cumbers first provided the historical framework in which the various elements of the story were to be set, from Wesley's first publication in 1733 to the present century, when the Epworth Press stands as the "glad inheritor of five glorious traditions"

BOOK NOTICES

The Passionate Sisters, by Dot Allan. (Robert Hale, pp. 192, 9s. 6d.)

There is no more difficult book for the historian to review than the historical novel. His mind is caught in a vortex between fact and fancy, and the resulting whirlpool of doubt makes it impossible to judge the quality of the book which has come to his notice. Miss Dot Allan in her tale of *The Passionate Sisters* has tried to escape from this difficulty by a note to the reader in which she says that dates do not exist for the lives of the Wesley sisters, and that she has chosen Kezia as her heroine because nothing is known of her. She says that the girl died in her early twenties, after she went to live with her married sister Mrs. Hall. At once we begin to refute mistakes in fact here, before ever we begin to read the book, for we know the dates of these unfortunate women of Epworth from Stevenson's researches, and that Kezia was thirty-three when she died in 1741. She left the Halls, and went to live at Stanton Harold and with Mr. and Mrs. Piers at Bexley until her death. We have some of her letters, and in them a different character is seen from the picture which Miss Allan paints in this book.

This is fair enough in fiction, but the instability of fact has a way of underpinning even that structure, for we are so made as to resent Mary Wesley's "jetty eyes" being here described as blue, and we know that if Charles Wesley wrote "Hark! the herald angels sing" before his conversion, he began it with other words in "Hark how all the welkin rings", as first printed in 1739. Also, we know in actual fact that Matthew Wesley ridiculed his precious nephews, John and Charles, to Oglethorpe, whereas in this book he reverences them, which confusion comes about from Miss Allan writing her story as before the Wesleys sailed to America, and yet bringing in the two evangelists only as they appeared after the Whitsuntide crisis of 1738. The very title of this book is as misleading, for the passion of the sisters, as here depicted, seems to have little to do with elemental emotion. But, in reality, the Wesley passion, when transfigured with celestial light, was capable of raising a whirlwind of religious revival in England, whereas Miss Allan's style of the thing could not have animated a modest *zephyr*. G. ELSIE HARRISON.

Selected Letters of John Wesley, edited by F. C. Gill. (Epworth Press, pp. 244, 15s.)

There are probably numbers of admirers of John Wesley ready to welcome a more intimate acquaintance with him through his letters, but who have been deterred hitherto by the bulk—and the consequent price—of the eight-volume Standard Edition. To these people Mr. Gill has rendered a service deserving their appreciation and gratitude. It could have been no light task to select from more than 2,500 letters a suitable and representative number—275—for this attractively-produced volume, but the editor has done well in his choice. The letters here gathered together cover every period of Wesley's life from the age of eighteen to within a few days of his death. They shed light upon his mental and spiritual development, and on his many interests and activities and his personal relations with men and women, alike of high and of low estate.

Mr. Gill tells us that his aim as editor has been "to present a cross-section of the correspondence, keeping as far as possible to what is personal and vital, yet preserving a fair representation and balance of the whole", and therein he has succeeded.

In the all-too-short Introduction he indicates, in a helpful way, the kind of man that Wesley was, and how varied was that correspondence which throughout exhibits his clear, direct style. In his references to the letters Mr. Gill betrays the strength of their appeal to him, and how revealing he has found them to be: "his letters still live". So readers of this volume will discover, as it draws them nearer to "the living Wesley". Very heartily do we commend this book, and congratulate its editor on a piece of work worthily accomplished.

W. L. DOUGHTY.

The Book Room, by Frank H. Cumbers. The Wesley Historical Society Lectures, No. 22. (Epworth Press, pp. xii. 135, 10s. 6d.)

The Lecture this year is *The Book Room*, and is written by the Rev. Frank H. Cumbers, B.A., B.D. It has six sections—Wesley and Literature, The Growth of the Book Rooms, Methodist Literature through the years, The Book Room and its Money, The Conference and the Book Room, Book Stewards and Editors—and it is provided with sixteen excellent illustrations. In the first section Wesley is seen not as an eminent author but as an omnivorous reader who wrote, copied, abridged and adapted three hundred and seventy-one volumes. He was the pioneer of popular religious literature, using the tract as well as the tome. His habits did not allow very close attention to any branch of study, but he got to the heart of things, using short words and sentences. The growth of the Book-Rooms shows that each branch of Methodism inherited his passion for knowledge as well as faith. Beginning at the Foundry, Wesley went on to the New Chapel, where he had a book-room, which by stages has developed into the Epworth Press of today. Primitive Methodism started from the farmhouse at Bemersley and went on to Holborn Hall; the Bible Christians moved from Stoke Damarel to Paternoster Row, the United Methodists from Ludgate Hill to Farringdon Avenue and included the Magnet Printing Press, which was extended. Throughout the years Methodist literature has provided all its family, from the youngest to the oldest, from the least to the learned, with monthly magazines and quarterlies.

The money made at the Book-Room varies with the official volumes it has to issue. Suffice it to say that to Wesleyan Methodism its Book-Room has given £250,000 in the last fifty years, and that Primitive Methodism received from its Book-Room £167,000 in sixty-five years. The question is whether service or profits are expected of the ventures. The Conference has a report from the Book-Room as a department, and appoints a committee, lay and ministerial, for its oversight. The book concludes with reminiscences and facts of the work of successive book stewards and editors in each of the Churches, and an appraisal of the worth of each to the work in hand. Appendices of the names and dates of stewards and editors, and of the magazines published by the Book-Rooms, with a Bibliography and Index, complete an effective and painstaking survey of the colourful history of the Book-Room.

J. HENRY MARTIN.

Hymns as Poetry, compiled by Tom Ingram and Douglas Newton. (Constable, pp. xiii. 315, 25s.)

Even allowing for the fact that no two compilers would make the same choice, our impression is that this is a strange selection to shelter under the title of *Hymns as Poetry*. It is, of course, a matter for much discussion as to when a poem is a hymn and vice versa, nor would everyone agree with Wesley that poetry should keep its place as the handmaid of piety. No one will dispute the right of place to Charles Wesley's "Wrestling

Jacob", for it is both a great poem and an inspiring hymn; but such pieces as "The Spiritual Railway" belong rather to what Dr. Erik Routley calls "the folk-songs of the Christian faith" than to poetry.

There is a very readable introduction, though it is not always accurate, as, for example, when it credits Wesley with the phrase "Why should the devil have all the good tunes?": surely Wesley did not say that! For their choice of Charles Wesley (about twenty pieces are included) the compilers have gone into the by-ways of the *Poetical Works*, and have given us such forgotten lines as "For one in pain", "On the sight of a corpse" and "For a child cutting his teeth". We would venture to suggest that Charles Wesley wrote hymns which are much better poetry than these.

One of the most surprising features of the book is the omission of the great translations—those of John Wesley, John Mason Neale, Catherine Winkworth—which are of undoubted merit, both as poems and as hymns. Further, we are surprised to find that not one of Whittier's hymns appears, for these were written originally as poems.

The compilers have given us, as far as possible, all the hymns in their original versions—a point which adds to the value of the book.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

The Prayers of Susanna Wesley, edited and arranged by W. L. Doughty. (Epworth Press, pp. 63, 5s.)

Old London Churches, by Elizabeth and Wayland Young. (Faber & Faber, pp. 332, 63s.)

A good deal of research has gone into the little volume of Susanna Wesley's prayers which has been compiled by the new President of our Society. Between an admirable historical introduction at the beginning and a list of sources at the end, there are gathered forty prayers, to each of which are prefixed appropriate verses selected by Mr. Doughty from the 3rd and 8th editions of the 1780 *Collection of Hymns*. The prayers are adapted from Susanna Wesley's written records of the two hours which she daily devoted to private prayer. They are not without spiritual profit for the modern reader, but their chief value lies in the insight they give into the inner life of one of the most remarkable women of all time.

Old London Churches is a handsome volume, profusely and beautifully illustrated, which every lover of London churches will crave to put upon his shelves. It gives a full historical and architectural description of every church in the County of London—Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Nonconformist—which was built before 1830 and is either still standing or, though destroyed, has been succeeded by another church on the same site, and a good many others besides. A few Methodist chapels, notably, of course, Wesley's Chapel, are included. There is also an interesting reference, quoted from *Londinium Redivivum* (1807), to the enthusiasm with which the crowds greeted the early Methodist preaching: "When . . . the late well-known methodist Mr Gunn was preacher in it [St. Mary Somerset] on certain days, the trampled and dirty state of the church will not be wondered at." A lengthy introduction gives an admirable survey of architectural developments in church-building. Those who can afford this expensive book will find that they have acquired a treasure-house of information which will give countless hours of delight. Both the Londoner—notoriously ignorant of his own city—and his country cousin will be encouraged to go on pilgrimage with an encyclopædic and unflinching guide.

WESLEY F. SWIFT.

NOTES AND QUERIES

972. THE SUNDERLAND THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION.

With reference to the article in *Proceedings*, xxx, pp. 117-19, may I add a footnote of tribute.

The Rev. SAMUEL ROBERT ANTLIFF, born Liverpool, 21st August 1851; died Southport, 21st July 1927; son of Dr. William: began to preach among the Primitive Methodists at the age of fourteen (after which age it is claimed that he "never cost his father a penny . . . All his college fees he paid himself"). Became a student for the Congregational ministry at Lancashire Independent College, Manchester (1870-5), and subsequently ministered at Oak Street, Accrington (1875-9), Cannon Street, Preston (1879-85), Ramsden Street, Huddersfield (1885-91). In July 1891 he launched the Congregational Insurance Co. Ltd., of which he was Secretary 1891-1923 and Managing Director 1923-7. This company was, at least in part, inspired by his father's interest in the Primitive Methodist Insurance Company, and in the following years it has provided valuable service to Congregational churches and societies, not merely in cover given but by the allocation of its profits by way of benevolent grants for the training and maintenance of the ministry, superannuation and widows' funds, and so forth. By the time of Antliff's death in 1927 it had met claims totalling £76,374 and made grants of £18,400. The comparable figures for last year (1955) were: claims £200,876, benevolences £69,793.

It is bare justice that Congregationalism should acknowledge its debt to Dr. William Antliff through his son.

CHARLES E. SURMAN (Research Secretary of the Congregational Historical Society).

973. A CASE OF MISTAKEN IDENTITY.

When I went to Weardale I was naturally interested in the account of the Weardale Revival contained in Kendall's *Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, ii, pp. 142ff. I was, however, somewhat puzzled by the picture purporting to be of Westgate chapel, built in 1824. The present chapel was built in 1870-1, and I had reason to believe that the earlier chapel had been partly retained in the present adjoining school-room. But it took a considerable flight of imagination to fit the picture to the site. Then one day I saw a calendar bearing the picture issued by our Gilmore chapel at Stanhope, and I realized at once that this must be the very block which Kendall had used, and that it was not Westgate chapel at all but Stanhope chapel, built in 1876. And I had been visiting the latter for quite a long time before the "penny dropped" and I was confronted with the obvious solution to the puzzle!

A. JOHN WIFFEN.

974. JOHN WESLEY IN CHESTER CATHEDRAL.

Among the stained-glass figures around the cloisters of Chester Cathedral there is one of John Wesley at the east end of the south cloister. He is in the immediate company of William Sancroft, John Pearson and John Cosin. On the window-ledge under these figures one finds short accounts of their lives set out in small framed inscriptions about nine inches by eight inches. The inscription under the Wesley figure reads as follows:

John Wesley (1703-1791) who with his brother Charles was the

founder of Methodism was the grandson of John Wesley, a minister ejected under the Act of Uniformity in 1662. John himself, however, was ordained in the Church of England. In 1729 he became a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, and it was in Oxford there came together the little group who made it their object to attend the weekly Eucharist at the Cathedral. Of Wesley's amazing power as a preacher there is no need to speak: he was undoubtedly the greatest religious influence in eighteenth century England at a time when the Church was singularly dead, and it was a disaster for English religion that his followers became separated from the Church. Anglicans will be willing to allow that a considerable part of the blame belongs to the Church, and reunion must be the object of the prayers and aspirations of all.

In the background of the window is Lincoln College.

Methodists must feel that this is an inaccurate and misleading piece of writing. Why is there mention of John Wesley's grandfather and none of his parents, especially of his mother? Is it that the grandfather's non-conformity is being suggested as a possible explanation of the errancy of the founder of Methodism? In passing, the inaccuracy of 1729 as the year in which Wesley became Fellow of Lincoln College is to be noted. We are in complete agreement with the testimony to John's power as a preacher and to his being "the greatest religious influence in eighteenth century England at a time when the Church was singularly dead"; but what is one to make of the statement that "it was a disaster for English religion that his followers became separated from the Church"? One wants to make several exclamation marks after the word "disaster", and a big interrogation mark after the word "Church" both in this and in the succeeding sentence.

Supposing we could persuade the cathedral authorities to alter this inscription, what should we offer them in its place and within the same compass of some 150 words? Would any one of the readers of this journal venture on a composition as a possible substitute for the one at present on that cloister window-ledge? This could form a pleasurable competition—with or without a prize as the Editor thought wise—if the Editor would act as adjudicator.

A. WESLEY HILL.

[Dr. Hill himself generously offers a prize of one guinea.—EDITOR.]

Our editorial files show that this matter cropped up in the correspondence columns of the *Methodist Recorder* in 1938. As a result the late Rev. Frank S. Button made some inquiries, which elicited the following information from Dr. F. S. M. Bennett, formerly Dean of Chester, in February 1939:

When between 1920 and 1930 we restored the windows in the cloister, we filled them with the Church's *Kalendar of Saints*. . . . We had some 25 lights left over and we decided to fill them with post-reformation worthies. . . . We all agreed that John Wesley should be one of them. The picture in the window is from a portrait and was executed by Mr. Archibald K. Nicholson (since deceased). The little account of John Wesley was written either by my son or by myself. I always told people that I looked forward to the day when the Wesleyans and the Church of England would become one body, and that when that day arrived our Wesleyan brethren would find John waiting for them in the cathedral cloister!

EDITOR.