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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

Editor: REV. JOHN C. BOWMER, M.A., B.D.

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EDITORIAL

MEMBERS who read carefully the report of the last Annual Meeting of the Society¹ will not be unprepared for this, the first of the "three-per-annum" issues of the *Proceedings*. To repeat briefly what was said there, the *Proceedings* will, in future, be issued in February, June and October, but the total number of pages per volume will be maintained as at present. Readers will not, therefore, regard this as a retrograde step.

With this issue we start a new volume. When it is completed it will mark seventy-two years of continuous publication. In 1897, when the first number appeared, there were still men in the ministry who could recall the "Fly-sheets" agitation. The admission of laymen to the Wesleyan Conference was but of recent memory. Nowadays, these events have receded far enough into the past for them to have become not memories, but history. That is why nineteenth-century Methodism, in all its branches, is now receiving an increasing amount of attention.

If the Editor's experience as Connexional Archivist, in charge of our Methodist Research Centre in London, is any guide, not only students of religion but also sociologists and secular historians are all turning their attention to the rather turbulent but nevertheless intriguing history of our Church. Reflecting the same trend is the number of articles we are receiving on this period—as is indicated by the selection offered in this issue. In other words, the field of research into Methodist history is no longer merely Wesley and his period, but is now extended at least to the Union of 1932.

* * *

We gratefully note the activities of our Branches—now twelve in number—for we regard this as the most significant development of our movement since its inception. There are still areas which are not covered by a local branch; where this is so, the need is for an energetic and enterprising member to start one!

¹ *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 169.

DANIEL ISAAC AND JABEZ BUNTING

IN an earlier volume of these *Proceedings*,¹ the late Rev. W. L. Doughty wrote on "Daniel Isaac and his Condemned Book", drawing on manuscript letters of Robert Melson to illustrate this intriguing incident in Wesleyan Methodism. Mr. Doughty gives a brief account of what happened, but for the benefit of readers who do not possess his article, a "re-cap" may not be out of place.

Daniel Isaac was a Wesleyan minister who, in 1816, published a book on the Christian Ministry to which the Conference took exception, condemning it in the following terms:

That the Conference approve of the conduct of their Book Committee in London in having refused to facilitate the circulation of a book on "Ecclesiastical Claims", which was printed in Scotland and published by a member of our Connexion, and deem it a public duty to declare, in the fear of God, their most decided disapprobation of various passages contained in that book, as well as of the general spirit and style of it, which the Conference believe to be unbecoming and unchristian.²

In 1816 Jabez Bunting, Secretary of the Conference since 1814, was a rising star in the Methodist firmament, and he undoubtedly played some part in this reprimand; though, in fairness, it ought to be said that Conference emphasized that they condemned the work and not the man—a strange distinction of which Isaac did not fail to take advantage, and which was attributed to Bunting.

James Everett, in the third edition of his biography of Isaac, does not hesitate to lay the full blame for the censure upon the shoulders of Bunting:

Jabez was at the beginning as a cause; in the middle, to keep up the flame and at the close to scorch by censure.³

This sentence is not in the first edition, which was written when Everett was still *persona grata* with the Wesleyans. Appearing in the third edition (1867), it surprises no one, for Everett could then look back upon his expulsion from the Wesleyan Conference in 1849 in the following terms:

The majority of 1849 . . . expelled three of their brethren without charge, without *accuser*, without *witness*, without *evidence*.⁴

What, exactly, was the relationship between Isaac and Bunting? In an attempt to answer that question, we have access to data which in part—especially the correspondence between the two men—was either unknown to or ignored by Everett. In the Methodist Archives there is to be found the correspondence which passed between Isaac and the President on the one hand and between Isaac and Bunting on the other. These exchanges at least help us to read between the lines of the story as it is generally told.

¹ xxxiii, pp. 49 ff.

² *Minutes*, iv, p. 237 (1817).

³ *The Polemic Divine, or Memoirs of the Life, Writings and Opinions of the Rev. D. Isaac*, by James Everett (London: 3rd edn., 1867), p. 156. (The first edition appeared in 1839, and the second in 1851.)

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 106.

Everett rightly points out that as Isaac was not a member of the Conference he could not personally defend himself, but he continues: "How he would have acquitted himself on the occasion can only be a matter of conjecture."⁵ We would have shared Everett's ignorance had it not been for the fact that we have before us a four-page memorandum from Isaac to the President which constitutes his defence.

Isaac's contention is that "early in the winter" he had requested Thomas Blanshard (Book Steward, 1808-23) to advertise the book on the cover of the *Methodist Magazine* and to sell it. Blanshard promised to do so, and ordered 200 copies. When the magazine appeared there was no advertisement, and Isaac naturally asked "Why?". The Book Steward's reply was:

Some members of our committee have interdicted your book from appearing in our magazine; yet they all seem to admire the general argument of it. A few levities and sarcasms upon the clergy are what they object to.

This exposed the Book Steward to a barrage of queries. Who were the "some"? Was the interdict expressed at a formally convened meeting of the Book Committee? As this met monthly, were the "some" a majority? Blanshard hedged; he *believed* the judgments of the London preachers were hostile to the work, and he suggested that if Isaac was still dissatisfied he should take the matter to Conference. He confessed that he could not recollect at what meeting the book was "mentioned", but "several brethren say that it was at a regular meeting of the committee". To this we can add our own testimony that we have examined the minutes of the Book Committee at the Methodist Archives and can find no reference to this case therein.

Isaac then turned to the 1806 Rules governing the Book Committee, which, *inter alia*, said:

All advertisements for the cover of the Magazine shall be brought to [the Book Steward] but if any doubtful ones should be brought him, he shall refer them to the Committee.

Blanshard's defence was that Isaac had never sent an advertisement,⁶ but only requested the Book Steward to get one done. Isaac thought such a request to be sufficient, because (a) the title only was to be advertised, and the Book Steward had that information on the books he had received, and (b) Blanshard had promised to do it. Isaac's second line of attack was to ask the Book Steward whether he had discussed the request for an advertisement with the full committee in a regularly convened meeting, and whether the "some" in Blanshard's own statement who disliked the book were a majority of such a meeting or not. As no satisfactory answer was forthcoming, Isaac concluded:

⁵ *ibid.*, p. 77 f.

⁶ This contradicts Everett's statement that "Isaac sent an advertisement of the work to the Wesleyan Book Steward to be inserted on the cover of the Magazine . . ." (*op. cit.*, p. 77).

4 PROCEEDINGS OF THE WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

. . . this was a casual meeting of two or three of the Preachers who had a desultory conversation about my book; they talked hard against it; Mr. Blanshard concluded it ought not to be advertised, and sent to me the *sense*, as he calls it, but more properly the *nonsense* of the brethren in the form of an ecclesiastical interdict.

Isaac next pressed for a precise date of the meeting, as he suspected that "there have been meetings of the Committee in which my book has been condemned *since* Mr. Blanshard informed me of the interdict". Blanshard is further quoted as reporting a meeting on 19th July that condemned the book, but this only confuses the issue, as it leaves it open to doubt whether the meeting was or was not a formal meeting and what was the precise relationship between the "disapproval" of the 19th and the "interdict" of a previous date.

Isaac was seeking "an honest account of the meeting which first issued the interdict"—and this is what was never forthcoming. He further complained that by this official condemnation profits on the book would be reduced and his own reputation as a writer considerably damaged. His final paragraph sums up his position:

My charge, then, is two-fold: 1. against the "some members" who "interdicted" my book because they did not form a legal meeting . . . the Rule requiring that every member should attend. This cannot be evaded unless it can be shewn that the absent members were "absolutely incapacitated" from attending. 2. Against the Committee for confirming this interdict of a lawless faction and for not managing the Book Concerns according to the Rules of Conference.

On 29th July the Conference assembled. It is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain what was said and done in that ministerial conclave. No records of debate were kept or published. The annual *Minutes* and *Journals* record only the bare facts and findings. All we know is that Conference confirmed the interdict of the Book Committee in the terms quoted at the beginning of this article.

What was the part played by Bunting in all this? Was he the alleged despot? Was he the "hostile witness supreme", as Everett later declared him to be? Again, two unpublished letters in the Methodist Archives help us to understand a little more clearly what passed between these two men during this contentious period.

The Conference over, the interdict confirmed, Isaac decided to publish a "Defence". This can be found in Everett's book *The Polemic Divine*. Before writing this Defence, however, Isaac wrote to Bunting to confirm (or otherwise) reports of what had been said in Conference. It had been reported to Isaac that Bunting had read certain objectionable passages from *Ecclesiastical Claims*, but had alleged that others were so obnoxious as to be blasphemous. He charged Isaac with denying the extraordinary call to the ministry "and maintaining that no special influence of the Holy Ghost is granted to those who are called to the ministry". In fairness to Bunting, we would regard this as a not unnatural deduction from Isaac's book. Bunting compared Isaac's style with that of Voltaire

and of certain Wesleyan rebels whose reputation was well known to members of Conference. It was also reported that Bunting feared that the book might "give offence to His Majesty's government", and in an emergency "the minutes could be appealed to in exculpation of the Connexion from the sentiments of disloyalty".⁷ Finally, it was said that Bunting distinguished between the book and the man, and as the latter was not impugned he need not be called in defence. Isaac interpreted the latter as a subtle move to keep him out of Conference.

The substance of Isaac's letter to Bunting is expressed in the following words:

If I am *substantially* wrong in any of the above particulars, I hope you will have the goodness to drop me a line and set me right. If you do not condescend to notice this letter, you cannot justly complain that I have misrepresented you.

Fair enough!—but what was Bunting to do? To divulge what had been said in Conference would have been a breach of confidence; silence would have left him open to misrepresentation.

On the Archives copy of the letter just quoted, the following message is written in pencil:

I think it wrong of him to make any such enquiries, unless it were in the Conference. You can hardly tell at this time what words you used in the debate referred to—and you should be very careful what you write lest you be entangled. Were I in *your place*, I would promise if he will bring forward his informers at the approaching Conference, I should *then* be ready to answer.

J.E.

I fear he is set on mischief.

Who was "J.E."? Three names qualify for those initials: Jonathan Edmondson, who was to be President of Conference in 1818, Joseph Entwisle, who had been President in 1812, and James Everett. It could hardly have been Everett without a strange switch of allegiance, for although at this time he was in good standing with the Conference, there is no evidence that he was so much "on the side of the angels". That leaves us with Jonathan Edmondson and Joseph Entwisle, and a comparison of handwritings favours the latter.

In any case, Bunting acted on the advice of this pencilled note (Entwisle was a highly-esteemed elder brother, having entered the ministry under Wesley in 1787), and wrote to Isaac on 16th November. A copy of this letter also is preserved in the Archives. Bunting begins by pointing out that Isaac is acting as if he were defendant, whereas he is really the accuser and the Book Committee the defendant. An expression of opinion on any book is *not* persecution. His third point was that Isaac was wrong in saying that in any defence he would have to deal principally with him (Bunting): his controversy was with Conference as a whole, of which Bunting was but one member and one speaker. In a more positive vein, Bunting denies the accuracy of the information Isaac had received:

⁷ A wily, but very illuminating argument (if true!)

... of the eight articles which it includes, there are only one or two which are not substantially or materially incorrect; some of them contain the grossest of falsehoods.

He concluded by saying that if Isaac wished for further enlightenment, and would raise the matter constitutionally at the next Conference, he would "with the leave of that body" give it. If, however (continues Bunting), Isaac cannot wait until then, and proceeds to publish his reply, "you will accompany your informer's assertions with my positive denials of their conformity to truth". He ends with a denial of any "personal hostility" to Isaac and an affirmation of his (as always) high regard for Isaac's "talents and general character".

Nothing daunted, Isaac pressed on with his "Defence". Initially it was issued only as a private circular to superintendents,⁸ but he employed all the arguments and reports which Bunting refused to confirm.

The Conference of 1817 was duly held, but there does not seem to be any echo of the controversy; there is no evidence that Isaac was present to raise the matter. There was a fear among his friends that he would leave the Connexion after the censure, but he remained, a colourful if somewhat eccentric personality. In a letter dated 5th February 1817 to his friend and supporter Robert Melson, he justifies both his "Defence" and his refusal to leave Methodism:

My friends need be under no apprehension that I shall voluntarily leave the Methodist Connexion. If I should be *driven out*, I shall go with a clear conscience. The reason of my writing the "Remarks" is simply this: I look upon the Minute as containing a most virulent attack on my moral character. When a minister has lost his character, his usefulness is at an end. I was, therefore, obliged either to resign my ministry or defend myself. I could not, in conscience, do the former, and consequently had no course left but the latter.⁹

Benjamin Gregory, in his *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism*,¹⁰ tells us that when Isaac died in 1834, Jabez Bunting was one of many who paid tribute to his qualities when his obituary was considered at the Conference.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

⁸ Everett, op. cit. (ed. cit.), p. 95.

⁹ *Proceedings*, xxxiii, p. 52.

¹⁰ p. 142.

We acknowledge, with many thanks, the following journals, some of which are received on a reciprocal basis with our *Proceedings*.

Cirplan, Vol. iii, No. 7.

The Amateur Historian, Vol. vii, No. 4.

Methodist History, October 1966 and January 1967.

The Baptist Quarterly, October 1966 and January 1967.

The Journal of the Historical Society of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, December 1966.

Bathafarn (the Welsh Methodist historical journal), 1966.

Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society, October 1966.

Journal and Proceedings of the Australasian Methodist Historical Society (Sydney), October 1966.

THE FIRST METHODIST NEW CONNEXION CHAPELS

THIS article is an attempt to examine the origins of the Methodist New Connexion through a study of the chapels in their possession by September 1797. These buildings fall into two categories: (a) chapels which before 1797 were in an irregular position *vis-à-vis* the Conference or were already independent of it; (b) chapels which passed over from the "Old" to the New Connexion at the division. We shall examine these groups in turn.

(1) SHEFFIELD

Thomas Bryant led one of the first Methodist secessions, and his followers built Scotland Street chapel, Sheffield, in 1765, as an Independent Methodist chapel.¹ It was given to Bryant by the subscribers, and became his property. Bryant was still preaching regularly when Alexander Kilham preached twice at Scotland Street during a visit in February 1797.² Clearly Bryant sympathized with the young rebel, and although disabled by a stroke in May, he again allowed Kilham to preach in the chapel on 10th or 11th August 1797.³ On this occasion Kilham had left the first informal conference of his supporters in Leeds and hastened to Sheffield to rally support. During this visit he apparently obtained a written agreement from Bryant for the use of the chapel, and when Kilham returned after the conference, having had himself appointed to Sheffield, Scotland Street became the local headquarters of the New Connexion in the town. The more Calvinistic section of Bryant's congregation left to form a new cause, but some remained to join the large number of seceders from Mulberry Street.⁴

In this way the New Connexion obtained in Sheffield a large chapel seating 1,500⁵ which presumably became connexional property after the death of Bryant in 1804. The first plan of the New Connexion in Sheffield shows preaching also at Lea Croft. This was a hired building in the town which was soon abandoned, and all the Sheffield work was then concentrated at Scotland Street.

(2) NORTH SHIELDS

The story of the building of the two chapels at Shields and of Wesley's subsequent withdrawal of preachers from Milburn Place because of the trustees' refusal to settle it on the Conference Deed has already been told.⁶ Here again, by 1790, was an independent Methodist cause. Apart from occasional visits from John Atlay, no regular pulpit supply could be obtained, so it is not surprising that as soon as the news of Kilham's expulsion spread, the "managers"

¹ W. Parkes: *Thomas Bryant—Independent Methodist* (1963), p. 15.

² J. Grundell and R. Hall: *Life of Alexander Kilham* (1799), p. 136.

³ Parkes, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴ *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁵ J. Blackwell: *Life of Kilham* (1838), p. 344.

⁶ *Proceedings*, iv, pp. 223 ff.

invited him to be their resident minister.⁷ Kilham declined the offer, but the leading member of the society, Edward Coates, apparently attended the first MNC Conference in Leeds in 1797, and as a result Milburn Place joined the New Connexion as the strongest society in the Newcastle circuit.⁸

(3) CHESTER

In 1765 the Octagon chapel was opened, and in 1776 a second preaching-place in the city was secured in the shape of a room in Commonhall Lane.⁹ This room was not connexionally settled, and after the death of Wesley became the headquarters of the "liberal" section of the Chester society, who were allowed the Sacraments and held services during "Church" hours. Their dispute with the Octagon trustees, however, dated back to 1789, when an attempt was made to get them to give up their preaching.¹⁰

Matters came to a head in 1793, when a Leaders' Meeting agreed that the two o'clock preaching should be transferred to the Octagon. Although a majority of the society seemed in favour of this step, the District Meeting refused to allow it in the face of opposition from the high-church Octagon trustees. A second District Meeting on 30th October 1793 upheld this decision, and the liberals then separated. According to their own account

... we took the field ourselves, and determined that we would no longer maintain our union with those Trustees, neither would we pay class-money or quarterage towards the support of the preachers under their superintendence, until some sort of justice should be done to our cause ... we accordingly formed ourselves into a society at Commonhall lane ... since 30th October 1793 the local preachers have ... preached for us ...¹¹

Class money was offered to the preachers if they would preach at the room, but this was refused. Soon afterwards the Methodists were turned out of Commonhall Lane by the proprietor, who appointed a Baptist minister to preach at the same hours (10-30 a.m. and 2-30 p.m.).¹² A site was obtained in Trinity Lane, three-quarters of a mile from the Octagon, and a chapel built there "for preaching and sacraments" at a cost of £871, of which £183 was subscribed. The chapel was probably completed early in 1795.¹³

For a year or so the situation seems to have been confused. An application was made to Conference in 1795 for services in church hours and the Sacrament. Conference suggested preaching at 9 or 9-30 a.m. and 1-30 p.m., with the Sacrament from a neighbouring "assistant". The Trinity Lane party appear to have accepted this for a time, and with the arrival of new preachers a temporary *modus vivendi* seems to have been reached. However, recriminations about

⁷ Blackwell, op. cit., p. 303.

⁸ MNC Magazine, 1812, p. 219.

⁹ F. F. Bretherton: *Early Methodism in and around Chester* (1903), p. 116.

¹⁰ *An Address to the people called Methodists*, Chester, 26th December 1793.

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² MS. note, dated July 1795, on copy of the *Address* in Hobill Collection.

¹³ Bretherton, op. cit., p. 158.

the cost of the new chapel soon ensued, and relations between the preachers and the Trinity Lane society became as bad as ever. The issue at stake was stated succinctly by a later MNC writer :

When . . . application was made to Conference for the Lord's Supper to be given therein the preachers objected to issue directions to that effect . . . until it should be made over to Conference. The Trustees did not feel disposed so to invest the premises, knowing . . . that they should be entirely deprived of all power and might possibly be prevented from enjoying those privileges for which the chapel was expressly built.¹⁴

The Conference of 1796 ordered a letter to be sent to the trustees of the "new chapel", but the superintendent declared that "writing to the Trustees of the New Chapel would signify nothing, unless they had what they desired".¹⁵ The committee then considered them "as not under our care at present", and on their return from Conference the preachers refused to preach at Trinity Lane. Matters now came to a head, and from this date the liberals can be said to have separated from the Connexion. Like Milburn Place, they had the problem of supplying the pulpit, but after a few weeks during which the services were conducted by local preachers, they linked up with a similar group in Wigan and "a few small societies in Yorkshire" to form a circuit staffed by three circuit preachers, all former itinerants.¹⁶ It was written at the time :

. . . we agreed to employ them till the conference, on condition that they should frequently change, and have no power to prevent us from allowing any person to preach in the chapel, which we have reason to believe is called of GOD to the ministry, and is approved by us.¹⁷

At the division in 1797 the Trinity Lane society joined the New Connexion, and the chapel became the centre of their work in Chester until replaced by Pepper Street chapel in 1835.

(4) LEEDS

The situation at Chester was largely repeated at Leeds. About 1793 the liberal element hired a large room, seating about 500, in order to have services in church hours. At first, however, relations with the preachers were amicable, and they preached regularly there when in town. In 1794 Joseph Benson was appointed superintendent, and, not approving of this irregular arrangement, first he and later his colleagues refused to preach in the room. Local preachers then filled the pulpit, and by 1796 were also administering the Lord's Supper each month.¹⁸ Almost certainly, Leeds joined the independent circuit which had been set up by Chester in the autumn of 1796, and so had the services of a travelling preacher on Sundays. The room (known as Bethel) became too small for the Sunday congregations, and early in 1797 it was possible to buy a chapel from the

¹⁴ Blackwell, *op. cit.*, p. 308 n.

¹⁶ *MNC Magazine*, 1829, p. 398.

¹⁷ Bretherton, *op. cit.*, p. 164, quoting *Methodist Monitor*, i, supplement, p. 4.

¹⁸ A. Kilham: *Substance of a Sermon preached at the Opening of Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds . . . 1797*, Preface.

¹⁵ *Minutes*, i (1812), p. 346.

Particular Baptists. The Ebenezer chapel, Leeds, was opened as an independent Methodist chapel on 7th May 1797 by Alexander Kilham. Three months later the first Conference of the new community was held within its walls. It was eventually replaced as head of the Leeds MNC circuit by Woodhouse Lane chapel.

(5) LIVERPOOL

Mount Pleasant chapel, built in 1790, was the second Methodist chapel in Liverpool, and from 1791 services were held here in church hours.¹⁹ Thomas Taylor, the superintendent, even celebrated the Lord's Supper here for a time during 1791-2. The Lord's Supper was not resumed until after the Conference of 1794, when it was celebrated by John Pawson and Adam Clarke. The high-church party then left, and hired a room in Marble Street.²⁰

Kilham's pamphlets produced further friction, especially in January 1796, when his sympathizers accused the preacher of suppressing a parcel of Kilhamite literature; and when Kilham appeared in the town in November the situation became explosive. After a fracas during which Kilham was nailed in the pulpit of Mount Pleasant to prevent forcible ejection by his opponents,²¹ a Leaders' Meeting was summoned by the superintendent, Henry Moore, and it was announced that peace had been restored. When Kilham's supporters denied this reconciliation, Moore expelled them all (probably about forty in number) in December 1796.²²

Strangely enough, they took over the high-church party's room in Marble Street, and they also joined similar dissident groups in Chester, Leeds, etc.²³ Numbers grew, and in March a member wrote to Kilham: ". . . we are going on comfortably, only want a larger place to worship in."²⁴ This was supplied by the erection of a small chapel in Maguire Street, which must have been occupied in April 1797. This is made clear in the following letter written to Kilham by Isaac Wolfe, one of those expelled by Henry Moore:

May 9 1797

. . . we are not looking to Conference, we have no more to do with Conference than with the Inquisition in Spain. We are now going on our way peaceably . . . We the Trustees have taken possession of our New Chapel in Maguire St for our preacher to preach in. . . . We are now out of connexion with them . . .²⁵

Maguire Street chapel was much smaller than those at Chester and Leeds, and was replaced in 1800 or 1801 by Zion, Murray Street.

* * *

Sheffield apart, in all the above cases the division had taken place before the formal establishment of the New Connexion in August

¹⁹ *Lives of Early Methodist Preachers*, v, pp. 69 ff. ²⁰ *ibid.*, iv, p. 61.

²¹ Grundell and Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 128; *An Address to the Methodist Connexion*, Liverpool, March 1797, p. 398.

²² *Liverpool Address*.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ Lionel Speciall to Alexander Kilham, 31st March 1797 (MS. letter).

²⁵ Isaac Wolfe to Alexander Kilham, 9th May 1797 (MS. letter).

1797, and separate buildings had been obtained. Now we turn to those chapels which changed hands immediately after the formation of the new body.

(6) NOTTINGHAM (Hockley)

Hockley chapel was the only Methodist place of worship in the town, and in 1797, out of 600 members, "320 of the most influential" joined Kilham, leaving 280 "poorer brethren" as Wesleyans.²⁶ The Kilhamites included most of the trustees, and so the building was held for the New Connexion. The Wesleyan preachers continued to occupy the preachers' houses until 1st March 1798, when they decamped during the night with most of the furniture.²⁷

The Wesleyans at length commenced proceedings for the recovery of the premises, and they were handed back in January 1816.²⁸ The New Connexion then built Parliament Street chapel, which was opened in 1817.

(7) STAPLEFORD (Wesley Place), Nottingham Circuit

About forty of the members united with the New Connexion at the division, leaving only four with the Wesleyans. Most of the trustees joined the New Connexion, and "as a matter of course they took possession of the chapel". The position was reversed in February 1806 when "an unprincipled trustee" was able to deprive the New Connexion of the chapel and return it to the Wesleyans. The Nottingham Kilhamites came to the rescue, and a small new chapel was opened in September 1806.²⁹ It is interesting to note that Wesley Place was again lost to the Wesleyans, this time not to be recovered, when it was taken over by the Reformers in 1849.

(8) BASFORD, Nottingham Circuit

A chapel was built here in 1795 or 1796 by Robert Hall, a prominent Methodist, for his workpeople. Hall was a personal friend of Kilham, and made his chapel available to the New Connexion in 1797. It was handed over to the Connexion by the Hall family in 1840.³⁰

(9) HUDDERSFIELD

Bank chapel, Huddersfield, was, with Hockley chapel, Nottingham, the most severe loss sustained by the Wesleyans in 1797. The following Conference authorized a collection to be made throughout the Connexion for the two chapels as "places of the greatest importance".³¹ Most of the leaders and members at Huddersfield joined the New Connexion, so that at the end of the year not a single officer of any kind was left in the society.³² The few members who remained loyal were expelled from the chapel. The trustees locked

²⁶ A. Strachan: *Recollections of the Rev. G. Lowe* (1848), p. 216.

²⁷ Robert Hall to Alexander Kilham, 3rd March 1798 (MS. letter).

²⁸ *MNC Magazine*, 1840, p. 76 f.

³⁰ *Heralds of the Cross* (1926), p. 90.

²⁹ *ibid.*, 1834, pp. 238-9.

³¹ *Minutes*, i, p. 418.

³² J. F. Wilkinson: . . . *Methodist Movement in . . . West Yorkshire . . .* (unpublished M.A. thesis, 1964), p. 115.

the chapel against the Wesleyan superintendent, and after a year's dispute the preachers' houses were also given up.³³ The New Connexion enjoyed possession until 2nd January 1814, when the buildings were restored to the Wesleyans following an application from the Conference solicitor.³⁴ The New Connexion then built High Street chapel, which was opened in 1815.

(10) SHELLEY, Huddersfield Circuit

Shelley chapel was built in 1785. The trust deed contained a prophetic clause:

If after the death of Mr Wesley, there should be two Conferences, the trustees shall choose from which conference they will be served with preachers . . .³⁵

Out of 117 members in 1797, only nine were Wesleyans two years later.³⁶ The chapel was never recovered by the Wesleyans, and still stands—the oldest remaining New Connexion chapel—although twelve years older than the Connexion itself. The terms of the trust deed may have inhibited Wesleyan attempts to recover the building, but another factor was that the chapel could only be reached by a private approach which was owned by an MNC member.

(11) LINDLEY, Huddersfield Circuit

Lindley was the third chapel in the Huddersfield circuit to change sides. Here the Wesleyan membership fell from 46 in 1797 to 19 in 1799.³⁷ The chapel remained in New Connexion occupation until 1810, when the Wesleyans made a claim to the building. For the next two years it was shared, being used by "Old" and New Connexions on alternate Sundays. Friction developed, however, and in 1812 the MNC members withdrew, although three or four times as numerous as the Wesleyans. Almost immediately a chapel was begun, which was opened in the following year.³⁸

(12) BRIGHOUSE, Halifax Circuit

A dispute arose during the building of the chapel in 1795, between the treasurer, John Sharp, and the remaining trustees. A majority of the trustees sympathized with Kilham and excluded the Wesleyan preachers, who met the remnants of the society at John Sharp's home. Several attempts were made to regain the chapel, until at length Sharp filed a bill in the Court of Chancery. The case was heard on 5th March 1810, and judgement was given in favour of the "Old" Conference.³⁹ The Wesleyans recovered possession soon afterwards, and the New Connexion built a new chapel in 1811. The Brighouse chapel case was a test case, and it was followed by Conference action to recover some (but not all) of the disputed chapels.

³³ A. Colbeck: *Methodist New Connexion in Huddersfield* . . . (c. 1890), p. 8.

³⁴ J. H. Mallinson: *Methodism in Huddersfield* (1898), p. 53.

³⁵ *ibid.*, p. 31.

³⁶ *ibid.*, p. 47.

³⁷ Mallinson, *loc. cit.*

³⁹ J. U. Walker: *History of Wesleyan Methodism in Halifax* (1836), p. 231. See also *A Statement of the Facts relating to Brighouse Chapel* (1809).

(13) ILLINGWORTH (Bradshaw), Halifax Circuit

Illingworth was the chief centre of agitation in the Halifax circuit. A "fearful disturbance" broke out when news of Kilham's expulsion arrived, and the following year all but fifteen members of the society seceded.⁴⁰ No regular trust deed existed, so the seceders bought the land on which the chapel stood, and locked out the Wesleyan preachers:

Strong guards were placed every Sunday at the chapel doors, to prevent the Methodists entering and thus the usurpers not only obtained but retained the place of worship.⁴¹

Like the chapel at Shelley, this building was never recovered by the Wesleyans.

(14) ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, Stockport Circuit

All the principal members of the Ashton society united with the New Connexion in 1797, and the one loyal trustee resigned, so that again the Wesleyan preachers were locked out. Out of a membership of 110, only 25 remained Wesleyan a year later.⁴² In 1799 a new chapel was built on a different site and the old one offered to the Wesleyans—who, needless to say, refused it!

(15) RED HALL, AUDENSHAW, Stockport Circuit

Red Hall chapel was built in 1783, and followed Ashton into the New Connexion fourteen years later. It became a small country chapel similar to Shelley, and until 1876, when the chapel and surrounding cottages were flooded in order to provide a storage reservoir for the city of Manchester, it was the oldest MNC chapel. The Wesleyans made a half-hearted attempt to recover it in 1811, and for some years after that it appeared on the Wesleyan stations as "Stockport Circuit and our chapel at Redhall".

(16) MOSSLEY, Oldham Circuit

This was the third chapel in the Ashton area to change hands.⁴³ The Wesleyan cause was wrecked, and although they laid claim to it on the stations in a similar way to the case of Red Hall and others, it remained with the New Connexion. In 1835 the society moved to the present Market Place chapel.

(17) THORNE, Epworth Circuit

As Alexander Kilham had been born in Epworth, it is not surprising that his expulsion in 1796 had a considerable effect in his home circuit. In an earlier volume of these *Proceedings* the late Rev. F. F. Bretherton stated that Thorne chapel was in MNC hands until 1803, then it was shared for a time.⁴⁴ The account in the *MNC Magazine*, however, states that the chapel was shared from the first.⁴⁵

⁴⁰ Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

⁴² MS. Membership Rolls, Stockport circuit.

⁴³ *MNC Magazine*, 1836, p. 35 f.

⁴⁵ *MNC Magazine*, 1833, p. 279.

⁴¹ *ibid.*, *loc. cit.*

⁴⁴ *Proceedings*, xi, p. 94.

Early in 1817 the Wesleyan superintendent obtained the key and denied the others further use of the chapel. "In the space of a few weeks a neat commodious chapel was built for the use of the New Connexion."⁴⁶

(18) WIGAN

We have been unable to discover many details about Wigan, but three facts emerge: (1) The chapel oscillated between Wesleyans and New Connexion over the period 1794-1808. At one point the number of loyal Wigan members dropped to nine, and they had to worship in a rented room.⁴⁷ (2) Wigan formed part of the Chester-Liverpool-Yorkshire circuit in 1796.⁴⁸ (3) In January 1798 Wigan was in the Bolton MNC circuit, and 32 members were reported.⁴⁹

* * *

There were also at least two chapels which were shared by the two parties until the New Connexion members withdrew.

(19) FAILSWORTH, Oldham circuit

Failsworth was near enough to Ashton-under-Lyne to be affected by the agitation there, and at the division a strong Kilhamite section appeared. The two connexions preached alternately Sunday by Sunday, and relations for once seem to have been good. In 1808 the New Connexion supporters withdrew "peaceably", thinking that a separate existence would be to their advantage, and after three years spent in a room, a new chapel was opened in August 1811.⁵⁰

(20) EPWORTH

Kilham's family were attached to Epworth chapel, and out of seven trustees, five were Kilhamite sympathizers.⁵¹ As a result the chapel was shared, probably each party providing the preachers on alternate Sundays.⁵² On 20th April 1798 Kilham wrote to Robert Hall, enclosing the Epworth deeds, and asking him to show them to the attorney who was advising on the Nottingham situation in the hope that it might be possible for the friendly trustees to transfer the premises to the New Connexion.⁵³ Evidently this was not done, since the chapel continued to be used by both groups until about 1803, when "the use of the chapel . . . was refused to the New Connexion".⁵⁴ After a spell in the house of Simon Kilham (the father of Alexander), a chapel was opened on 11th September 1804. It

⁴⁶ MNC *Maganine*, 1833, p. 279.

⁴⁷ C. Deane Little: *150 Years of Wigan Methodism* (1933), pp. 15, 21.

⁴⁸ *Liverpool Address*, 1797.

⁴⁹ G. Matthewson to Alexander Kilham, 5th January 1798 (MS. letter).

⁵⁰ MNC *Magazine*, 1811, p. 483.

⁵¹ Summary of letter from Simon Kilham to Alexander Kilham, 21st August 1797, in MS. Index to Hobill Letters.

⁵² MNC *Magazine*, 1833, p. 279.

⁵³ Alexander Kilham to Robert Hall, 20th or 28th April 1798 (MS. letter).

⁵⁴ MNC *Magazine*, loc. cit.

was enlarged in 1820, and replaced in 1860 by the present Kilham Memorial chapel.

* * *

Every effort has been used to make the above list exhaustive, but when dealing with such information from a variety of localities it is not easy to be certain that nothing has been missed. It is possible that the chapel at Hatfield Woodhouse, near Thorne, was for a time shared between the two parties, since it was a society in the Epworth MNC circuit in 1797, and in 1813 is bracketed with Thorne on the Wesleyan stations:

207. Doncaster, and Thorne Chapel and Hatfield Woodhouse.

It is just possible, also, that one or two small chapels in the Leeds area changed hands. Although the New Connexion was strong in the Potteries, no building was secured in 1797. At Hanley, where the Wesleyan society was almost extinguished, the trustees lived at Burslem and retained the chapel but not the congregation. The recently-published Volume 8 of the *Victoria County History of Staffordshire* three times states⁵⁵ that Mount Tabor chapel, Lane Delph (i.e. Fenton) went over to the New Connexion, but this is incorrect. Lane Delph is not among the original eight societies at the first Quarterly Meeting of the Hanley MNC circuit,⁵⁶ and the report of the opening of the Fenton chapel in 1811⁵⁷ makes it clear that the society began in 1799 and took over a chapel formerly occupied by Independents.

There were about 650 chapels in England in 1797, so that fifteen or so does not represent a very high proportion. More striking is the fact that all but one lie in four areas—Nottingham, Epworth, Ashton-under-Lyne, and Huddersfield—Halifax.

Although around Hanley the New Connexion made rapid progress without any original chapel, it could be argued that here sociological factors (e.g. the influence of the Ridgeway family) were unusually propitious. In less favourable areas the possession of a chapel perhaps ensured the survival of the New Connexion in the difficult period after the death of Kilham in 1798. A nucleus of some twenty chapels must have gone a long way to sustain the new denomination against the difficulties of finding preachers and working vast circuits. The fact that many of the chapels had eventually to be handed back to the Wesleyan Conference was not of any great consequence, as the rapid erection of alternative premises shows. After thirteen years the Methodist New Connexion had become established, and was able to go forward without the help of ex-Wesleyan chapels.

E. A. ROSE.

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⁵⁵ pp. 277, 288, 293.

⁵⁶ Hanley MNC circuit MS. minute book at Bethesda chapel, Hanley.

⁵⁷ MNC *Magazine*, 1811, p. 569.

THE RESIGNATION OF JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS

JOSEPH RAYNER STEPHENS (1805-79) had a strangely disjointed career. A Wesleyan minister until 1834, he resigned after a famous Conference trial for advocating Disestablishment; after 1834 he became an independent minister, an ardent factory reformer, and a Chartist. His subsequent treatment by historians has been equally disjointed, for he belongs both to Methodist and to English history. Secular historians underestimated or misunderstood his Methodist background; Methodist historians from George Smith to Rupert Davies have denied any Methodist responsibility for his post-1834 activities. Yet the consistent motive of Stephens's fantastic career was a Christian faith which had been moulded in Wesleyan Methodism, and a balanced appraisal of his life is still lacking.

Recent studies of Stephens still concentrate upon one period or the other of his ministry. Dr. J. T. Ward¹ has written a detailed account of his life, with the emphasis upon the post-Methodist phase. Mr. David Gowland² concentrates upon the events of 1834, and endeavours to show that the later thought of Stephens developed from ideas he held when he was a Wesleyan minister in the Ashton-under-Lyne circuit in 1832-4.³ Although these studies throw much light upon Stephens, they still echo the nineteenth-century view that the resignation of Stephens from Wesleyan Methodism was in some sense bound up with his later proletarian sympathies. This is also asserted, with far less caution, by the Rev. Rupert Davies, in his *Methodism* (1963). It is therefore an issue that is worth some consideration.

It was the view of nineteenth-century secular historians that the underlying cause of the resignation of Stephens in 1834 was political. Thus Stephens's only biographer, George Jacob Holyoake,⁴ made Stephens advocate Disestablishment in the cause of social justice:

His attention had been drawn to the condition of factory operatives. Ministers of the Established Church were not friendly to the agitation on their behalf, which Mr. Stephens conceived was owing to the connexion of that Church with the State. He regarded that union as the source of power to those whom he then considered practical enemies of the people—and he shortly became the subject of a "case" at the hands of his Methodist brethren.⁵

Similarly, political prejudice was held to be the Conference's motive

¹ "Revolutionary Tory: the Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens of Ashton-under-Lyne (1805-1879)", by J. T. Ward, M.A., Ph.D. (*Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, vol. 68 (1958), pp. 93-116.)

² D. A. Gowland: *Political Religion and Religious Politics in South East Lancashire, 1834-5* (1963). (Unpublished thesis.)

³ There is also a Ph.D. thesis on the speeches of Stephens from 1836 to 1839 being completed by M. Taylor of the University of California.

⁴ G. J. Holyoake: *The Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens, Preacher and Political Orator* (1881).

⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 46-7.

in its unfavourable conclusion on the case. Gammage, the historian of Chartism,⁶ wrote :

Because Stephens had been guilty of the unpardonable crime of denouncing the laws of the factory for their cruel oppression of the poor, he was soon marked out for persecution, the ground of that persecution being that contrary to his duties as a minister of the gospel, he interfered and mixed himself up with political questions . . .⁷

It is now generally agreed that the Wesleyan Conference can be acquitted of political partisanship in the Stephens case. The very full account of the trial in Benjamin Gregory's *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism* clearly establishes this. Moreover, this account agrees closely with that of the contemporary *Christian Advocate* newspaper, which was strongly pro-Stephens and edited by his brother, John Stephens. Holyoake himself reproduced a letter from the *Advocate's* editors to Stephens, in which they said :

Whatever may be alleged as the ostensible crime, we are quite sure that the real ground of this movement against you is your recent advocacy of the cause of religious liberty.⁸

The failure of the *Advocate* to charge the Conference with political prejudice (as distinct from religious prejudice) is conclusive, especially as it later supported Stephens's first activities for factory reform ; his brother would never have missed such a chance to attack his arch-enemy, Jabez Bunting. The Wesleyan Conference can only be accused of "politics" in the sense that it held Disestablishment itself to be a political rather than a spiritual issue.

It was in this sense that Jabez Bunting wrote to his friend Edmund Grindrod on 14th March 1834 :

Joseph Stephens' Ashton doings fill me with indignation. It is plain he wants us to exclude him. The thing cannot be tolerated. I incline to think that considering it in connection with the violent and wholly unmethodistic character of the Resolutions at the formation of the Society of which he is now an officer and agent, a Special District Meeting should *immediately* be called, and give him reproof and admonition, as well as refer the case to Conference for final adjudication. Perhaps he would take warning and withdraw from the Secretaryship.⁹

Here Bunting is concerned wholly with the Church Separation Society, and makes no mention of political radicalism. (It should also be noted that although Grindrod drew up the charges against Stephens at the District Meeting, he did not carry out all Bunting's demands, as the case was heard at the ordinary District Meeting at the normal time.)

It is more difficult to determine the question of Stephens's own motives. Did he support Disestablishment on politico-social or on religious grounds? Most writers imply a mixture of the two. Dr.

⁶ R. C. Gammage : *History of the Chartist Movement* (1894 edition).

⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 55-6.

⁸ Holyoake, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-9.

⁹ Letter in the Methodist Archives, London.

Ward, after mentioning Stephens's friendship with the Moravian factory-owner and moderate reformer Charles Hindley, writes:

In addition to disapproval earned by associating with the factory reformers, Stephens provoked further censure by becoming the Secretary of the Ashton Church Separation Society in January 1834.¹⁰

Mr. Gowland, although he notes the absence of factory themes from the 1834 trial, maintains that the link between them and Disestablishment was already in the thought of Stephens in his Methodist days.

In many ways, the direction of his career after 1834 was due to the incoherent ideas formed between 1832 and his retirement from the Wesleyan Connexion. There developed within his personality a philosophy of life which stretched much further than support of disestablishment and mild factory reform.¹¹

Rupert Davies has no such reservations.

He mingled his advocacy of disestablishment with yet more drastic social policies, and introduced his views on all such subjects into his sermons and his conduct of Church life. He was asked to desist from such things, and resigned from the ministry to give his full time to Chartist agitation.¹²

Stephens's speeches at the Ashton Church Separation Society do not confirm such interpretations. He never mentioned social injustice; there is no trace of proletarian sympathy in them. He argued his case on scriptural and doctrinal grounds. Factory operatives do not appear to have predominated in his audiences. It was reported on 27th January 1834:

Those whom he was addressing were gentlemen of commerce—men of the world, acquainted with the world . . .¹³

Disestablishment was not simply the cause of later working-class movements such as Chartism; it was also the respectable platform of middle-class Dissenters in the growing anti-Church movement of the 1830s. If Stephens thought an Established Church buttressed social oppression, he kept it to himself in 1834.

What is the evidence for asserting that Stephens was a factory-reformer in his Wesleyan Methodist days? It appears to be a single undated letter, reproduced by Holyoake, which Stephens wrote to his father, the Rev. John Stephens, an ex-President of the Wesleyan Conference. It is said to have been written "a year or two" after a letter written from Cheltenham in 1830 or 1831. Holyoake placed it before his account of the 1834 resignation; the obvious inference is that it was written before 1834. Its relevant portions are as follows:

Dear Father,

I take advantage of one of Mr. Hindley's last franks to write a few lines . . .

¹⁰ Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

¹¹ Gowland, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹² Rupert E. Davies: *Methodism* (Pelican edn., 1963), p. 152.

¹³ "The Case of the Rev. J. R. Stephens, Wesleyan Methodist Minister, collected from the *Christian Advocate* Newspaper, 1834", p. 4.

... The societies with which I am connected are peaceful and prosperous. There is mutual confidence and esteem betwixt us. I have never yet had reason to regret having settled here—but rather to be thankful. We often wish you were with us for a few months. It would be Elizabeth's pride to look after your little wants and make you comfortable... Do try sometime in the summer, or at the next Leeds Conference...

... I saw many of your old friends at Newcastle. The factory system is at present enjoying a good deal of the time and attention of

Your affectionate son,

JOSEPH R. STEPHENS.¹⁴

This letter was written after Stephens's retirement from Wesleyan Methodism. It was sent in a cover franked by Hindley because the letters of a Member of Parliament were free of postage; yet Hindley only became an M.P. in 1835. "Elizabeth" is Mrs. Stephens, who was married only in 1835. The reference to "the next Leeds Conference" is also revealing: there was no Wesleyan Conference at Leeds between 1830 and 1837. The "prosperous" societies must be his own "Stephensites", not Wesleyan societies. They were no longer so prosperous by September 1836, when Stephens wrote to his father that he had lost five out of seven of them by his part in the factory agitation¹⁵—(yet another indication, incidentally, that his original followers in 1834 had little sympathy for social radicalism). On the other hand, the Quarterly Meeting of the Lord Street society in Oldham (a "Stephensite" society) reported an increase of 50 members in December 1835¹⁶—a clear sign of prosperity, suggesting that this letter may have been written early in 1836. The reference to Newcastle can be explained on this basis, for Stephens lectured on Church reform in Newcastle from 14th to 16th January 1836.¹⁷ His first appearance on a Ten Hours Factory Act platform was on 19th January 1836. All the indications point to a date late in January or early in February of that year, and the letter cannot be used to support a pre-1834 interest in factory conditions. Either Holyoake was misled by the lack of a date or, more likely, he deliberately gave the impression that his friend's resignation from Wesleyan Methodism was bound up with his later social interests.¹⁸

Stephens himself never linked his proletarian sympathies to his transitory interest in Disestablishment; indeed, his later "Tory Radicalism" made him an ardent supporter of the Church of England, earning him on one occasion the epithet "Puseyite Tory". On various occasions he attributed his factory-reform interests to his study of the Bible, his friendships with local mill-owners, and his pastoral work in Ashton.¹⁹ He was eventually arrested for disturbing

¹⁴ Holyoake, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-6.

¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 56.

¹⁶ *Christian Advocate*, 11th January 1836, p. 13.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 14.

¹⁸ Holyoake is generally considered a bad biography. See also J. C. Gill: *The Ten Hours Parson* (1959), p. 186, for deliberate misrepresentation by Holyoake.

¹⁹ Holyoake, *op. cit.*, pp. 226, 166; *Northern Star*, 11th May 1839.

the peace by his violent speeches, and tried at Chester Assizes on 15th August 1839. In his lengthy defence he said:

Gentlemen, it is because five years ago I took up the question of the . . . factory labourers . . . and the Poor Law Amendment Act that I stand before you today . . .²⁰

This dates his later interests from 1834 itself. In view of what has already been said, it is best to understand this in a post-Methodist context. If Stephens was strictly accurate about "five years ago", it may well mean that the shock of his resignation from Wesleyan Methodism stimulated his thinking along fresh paths. Yet his first appearance on a factory-reform platform was not until January 1836.

There are two other suggestive incidents in the pre-1834 period. In October 1833 Stephens was invited to speak at the recently re-opened Ashton Mechanics' Institute.²¹ In December 1832 he had made a speech in favour of the defeated candidate in the Ashton election.²² This candidate was Charles Hindley, who was also the patron of the Mechanics' Institute. Both incidents express the friendship of Stephens and Hindley at the time; it was not to last, for although he was a moderate factory-reformer, Hindley rarely forgot that he was also a cotton-master. This friendship could not mean more than a general agreement of Stephens with Hindley's capitalist liberal-radicalism; many Wesleyans shared such a view. Stephens was also friendly with other local factory-owners, such as Messrs. Ashton and Howard.²³ None of this seems to be conclusive evidence of a radical social outlook; the only interesting point is Stephens's gift for making friendships outside the usual Methodist circles. Only when the framework of traditional Wesleyan activities had been removed were the eyes of Stephens opened to the plight of the factory operative.

It is safe to conclude that neither Stephens nor the Wesleyan Conference was concerned with wider political and social ideas in the events leading up to the resignation in 1834. Stephens did not urge Disestablishment on the grounds of social justice; Conference did not decide against him out of political prejudice. The sole issue at stake was Disestablishment. Stephens argued in its favour from his Dissenting principles; Conference rejected it because it was "directly at variance with the general sentiments of Mr. Wesley and the Conference". Conference required Stephens to give up the secretaryship of the Church Separation Society and to refrain from agitation; Stephens refused, and resigned. Later controversies have been imposed upon the facts, obscuring the original issue. All that

²⁰ Holyoake, op. cit., p. 166.

²¹ M. Tylecote: *The Mechanics' Institutes of Lancashire and Yorkshire before 1851* (1957), p. 251.

²² Anon.: *The Circular to Wesleyan Methodists* (1833). I am indebted to Mr. Gowland for information from this source.

²³ Holyoake, op. cit., p. 166.

can be said about the later social question is that if the most radically-inclined minister produced by Wesleyan Methodism in the nineteenth century was himself indifferent to it in his Wesleyan years, it is scarcely surprising that the Wesleyan ministry generally failed to support the Factory Movement. MICHAEL S. EDWARDS.

[The Rev. Michael S. Edwards, M.A. is a minister in the Penzance circuit and secretary of the Cornish Methodist Historical Association; he is also a member of the Archives Committee. His interest in Joseph Rayner Stephens was aroused through his study for the Eayrs Prize Essay (1965) on "Methodism and the Chartist Movement".]

Several years ago Dr. Oliver Beckerlegge compiled a list of ministers who served in the various branches of Methodism contributing to the formation in 1907 of the United Methodist Church. As it existed in manuscript only, this useful record has not been available outside the Archives or the Wesley Historical Society Library. The Epworth Press are now willing to publish it, provided they can be assured of guaranteed sales. This is a tool which no Methodist historian ought to be without, and we invite members of our Society to place an advance order. The price will be 50s., and orders should be sent to The Epworth Press, 25-35, City Road, London, E.C.1. This is more than a "Hill's Arrangement", for it lists men who, leaving the ministry, do not appear in later records.

The Lancashire and Cheshire Branch have published a useful pamphlet on the Warrenite Controversy of 1834-5 (pp. 15, foolscap). It is part of a Librarianship exercise, the full title of which is "The History of Methodism in Manchester and Salford to 1932". The author is Georgina Mary Madden, who writes a lucid introduction to the bibliographical section which forms the main part of the work. Copies, price 2s. each post free, can be obtained from Dr. H. Andrews, 11, Fernlea Close, Hadfield, Hyde, Cheshire.

We were much regret to report the resignation of our Librarian, Mr. L. E. S. Gutteridge, who has left the service of the Epworth Press. His going, however, must not be without a word in sincere appreciation of the work he has done for the Society. He did much to give shape and order to the Library at its inception eight years ago, and has been its guardian ever since. His attention to the needs of borrowers has always been prompt and courteous, and his specialized knowledge of books and manuscripts has always been at the Society's disposal. In this respect alone he will be greatly missed. However, our loss is someone's gain, and we wish him every success in his new post.

Many of our members will have heard with regret of the death on 12th February of Mrs. Gladys Mary Swift, the widow of our late Editor, the Rev. Wesley F. Swift. Though in indifferent health since the death of her husband, Mrs. Swift maintained a keen interest in our Society's welfare, and continued to attend the Annual Meeting if it was within her reach. She will be sadly missed by a wide circle of friends. We extend our sincere sympathy to her daughter and other relatives. The funeral service took place on Thursday, 16th February, in our Fairhaven chapel, Lytham St. Annes, where Mr. Swift was the minister from 1956 to 1961.

A HISTORY OF THE ORIGINAL METHODISTS

(Continued from volume xxxv, page 195)

III—CONTINUED

TOWARDS the end of 1822 and during the first few months of 1823 several rows of colliery houses were built at Bleak Hall, an outlying hamlet of Kirkby-in-Ashfield in Nottinghamshire. Almost immediately Primitive Methodism made its impact on the colliers of this little settlement, and in 1827 a neat, compact chapel, capable of seating about a hundred and fifty worshippers, was built at the end of one of these rows of houses.

The society continued to prosper, and very soon a large Sunday School was built up. However, quarrels soon broke out when George Herod became superintendent of the Mansfield circuit. Herod had previously enforced his strict discipline in Leicester (1833-6), and, according to Kendall, "his hand was felt to be too heavy for some who were brought under discipline".¹ His actions certainly resulted in the "Denmanite" split of 1834, but it was more than a mere lack of tact which aroused the intense dislike of the Bleak Hall Methodists for this minister. Though the Bleak Hall community undoubtedly found Herod a strict disciplinarian, the real cause of their breaking away as a Free Gospel society in 1838 (i.e. a year before the Original Methodists began their separate activities) must be sought for in his despotic behaviour. By 1843 this society at Bleak Hall noted with pleasure the headway made by the Original Methodists, whom they requested to include their society in the recently-formed "Selston circuit".

William Osborne, a senior local preacher and class leader, tells how the Bleak Hall society seceded from the Primitive Methodists. The writer has many sermons of this greatly-respected man, and it is characteristic of him that he should mention no names in his account of what happened.

The inhabitants of Bleak Hall first commenced their Sunday School in the chapel by collecting five pounds with Christmas singing; they purchased a quantity of books, and established a good school. After some time there were anniversary sermons preached for the school. The travelling preacher told the teachers if they would give him the money collected upon the occasion, he would lay it out for them in books, and such other things as were wanted. Expecting him to be a "good man and true", they acceded to his proposal. He came to Bleak Hall again and again, but instead of bringing books, he brought excuses from time to time. Either he had not been to the place where he intended to purchase, or they had not just then the articles he wanted. So after repeated evasions of this sort, the teachers, seeing they were duped, shut up the school, informing the children that if they would come on the following Sunday morning, the old books should be divided amongst

¹ H. B. Kendall: *History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, i, p. 333.

them. But when they came together at the time appointed, both the books and the desk in which they were kept, were removed. The books were sold at Mansfield by the travelling preacher,—who resided there; and after considerable trouble, the desk was recovered; but the school and society were wrecked.

In 1846 the North Street chapel, Radford (Nottingham) was included in the Original Methodists' circuit. The circumstances of that society's separation from the Primitive Methodists are narrated in the *Record* by one of its senior members, Isaiah Rhodes:

For a considerable time previous to the division or separation, much anxiety had been felt by the trustees and leaders of the various societies, on account of certain Conference regulations, by which it was required that all class-money, and the money collected at the love-feasts, sacraments, and quarterly collections, should all be paid to the quarter-day board, at Nottingham, and the class papers be also submitted to that board for examination. Now as such a rule, if carried into effect, would have placed every member at once entirely at the disposal of the travelling preacher for the time being, and also have left the trustees of the chapels without the means of paying expenses, it could not be expected that it should be submitted to without remonstrance; accordingly, complaints were made . . . and at length the conference agent at the general committee, held at Nottingham, in the winter of 1834-'35, declared the Nottingham circuit "broken up"; the design of which act was—to rid Conference of all opposers, and thereby enable it quietly to rivet the people's chains. By this act about thirty active and laborious preachers were dismembered; but an opportunity was given them of joining again upon Conference terms. Contrary to expectation, however, the local brethren remained with the people; and, although in some other of the societies a number returned and submitted to the yoke, the Radford people, members, leaders, and preachers, to a man . . . stood firm. Overtures were, however, made to gain a settlement of the question in dispute, by both parties, but as neither was disposed to sacrifice, without success. The travelling preachers then requested the class papers, and were denied. The keys of the Radford chapel were then demanded, and refused; and finally, the travelling preachers committed a breach of the public peace, by forcibly and illegally entering the chapel and placing padlocks on the doors; for which the trustees sought redress at the hands of the County Magistrates, and obtained it; and to rid themselves at once of all such tyrannical doings, the chapel was sold by auction, and the debt paid off; since which time the chapel has been held at an annual rent.²

Although dissident parties had been active in Nottingham as early as 1821, if not earlier, it is unlikely that a secession of such magnitude would have taken place towards the end of 1834 had not the Rev. F. N. Jersey been appointed superintendent minister of the circuit. Petty must surely be correct when he states that

Mr. Jersey had been very useful in missionary labours, but was not well qualified to superintend a large circuit in difficult circumstances.³

² *Original Methodists' Record*, October 1852.

³ Petty: *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, p. 376; see also *Proceedings*, xxxv, p. 59.

Among the local preachers who left the PM connexion at this time were Thomas Simmons, J. Burrows, E. Severn, J. Rhodes, T. Dunkley, W. Bailey and W. Brown. These men were outstanding preachers, their services being in great demand throughout the district. Thomas Simmons in particular was hardly the kind of man to leave a connexion in which he had played such an important rôle unless Jersey's tactlessness and infirmities of temper had made his position unbearable.

Thomas Simmons was converted by a sermon which he heard preached by an old Wesleyan preacher in the Unitarian chapel at Nottingham, which had been lent to the Wesleyans. He was then thirteen years old. A year later he became a member of the Wesleyan society. He continued amongst the Wesleyans for about twenty years, after which time he joined himself to the Primitive Methodists, who were then first commencing their cause at Nottingham. Simmons felt that his union with them would open a door for more extended usefulness. Space would not permit to recount the great blessings experienced by people under his ministry as he laboured amongst them in what was called "The Old Room" in Broad Marsh, previous to the erection of Canaan Street chapel. He took a very active part in the building of Canaan Street, contributing liberally himself and spending much time in encouraging others to give as they felt able.

Simmons's exertions were not confined to the town, however. He took a very extensive circuit, being one of the first preachers to visit the villages and to commence a cause, in connexion with the Primitive Methodists, at Bulwell, Hucknall, Sutton-in-Ashfield and Mansfield. It was generally his practice to preach in the open air, and he frequently had to suffer much persecution from the mob, from the magistrates, and from clergymen of the established Church. The first time he preached at Mansfield, the bellman went round the town, announcing that a "Ranter" preacher would preach in the market place at six at the evening. The chief magistrate and the clergyman issued a notice that whoever stood up to preach at that time would at once be taken to prison. Undaunted by these threats, Simmons took his stand at the appointed hour and commenced the service. The magistrate and clergyman came, but instead of taking the preacher into custody they stood to listen while he prayed fervently for clergymen and magistrates, and they remained amongst the crowd during the greater part of the service.

Thomas Simmons was at the Preparatory Meeting in Nottingham on 10th August 1819 as an official delegate from Nottingham. He was a man of an independent principle but of a catholic spirit: he would never submit to an undue assumption of power on the part of anyone. He held that a local preacher was fully entitled to administer the sacraments and to exercise the discipline of the church, in conjunction with the leaders; and so it was that, once he had united himself with the Free Gospelers, no entreaty from any travelling

preacher ever succeeded in regaining his allegiance for the Primitive Methodist cause.

Nor were his labours confined to his own people. He regularly preached for the Baptists, the Wesleyan Association, and the Independent Primitive Methodists, in the Vale of Belvoir. All recognized his charity, Christian simplicity, humility and unabating zeal. The last sermon he preached was in the Wesleyan Association chapel at Carlton, six weeks before his death on 9th May 1851 at the age of 66.

So in 1846 the Original Methodists made their greatest "capture". Their preaching staff improved in quality and quantity; the Radford society contained over sixty enthusiastic members, and their Sunday school numbered over one hundred and twenty boys and girls. This society was later to become the head of a new branch society; but further mention of Radford must wait until a later chapter.

John Wesley had a number of devoted followers at Somercotes, near Alfreton. For years these Wesleyans held their services and class meetings in a farmhouse on Somercotes Hill belonging to the Burton family. The "cottage church" increased in membership until it became necessary to seek a large room, and through the kindness of Mr. John Brough, the landlord of the Royal Tiger Inn, the spacious clubroom connected with the public-house was used for Sunday services. The congregation continued to increase, and by the late 1840s the Wesleyans had bought a site not far from the market place for the building of a chapel. Here the first Wesleyan chapel in Somercotes was erected, the opening taking place on Monday, 9th April 1849.

However, troublesome times lay ahead, for 1849 was of course the year when three ministers—James Everett, Samuel Dunn and William Griffith—were expelled from the Wesleyan body. No sooner had the expulsion of William Griffith, who was then the superintendent of the Ripley Wesleyan circuit, taken place than the society at Somercotes, like several others in this district, determined to take action against the decisions of Conference. Other Wesleyan ministers, together with a number of local preachers, began denouncing the people from the pulpit for sympathizing with the expelled ministers, and so vituperative were some of their addresses that many people left the chapel.

Separate services in private houses were soon started by the Reformers, and the newly-built chapel had to be closed for want of a congregation. There was a debt on the property of £450. A trustees' meeting was called, and it was decided to put up the property for sale. The Conference authorities were determined not to let the Reformers buy back their own chapel, even though many of them had made great sacrifices out of their hard-earned wages to build it, and to the surprise of the society and neighbourhood the building was sold for £400 to the Church of England. This move completely

disgusted the people of Somercotes, the greater part of whom regarded it as most unjust. In 1854 the Anglicans started to worship in the chapel, and it is used by them to this day. The addition of a chancel and a porch converted the former Wesleyan chapel into St. Thomas's Church, Somercotes.

It was a heavy blow to the Reformers to be virtually turned out from the chapel for which they had worked and given so liberally; and yet they sustained the loss. Separate services in private houses were continued, and by this method the members were kept together.

At the same time the Reformers became familiar with another dissenting sect—the Original Methodists of Somercotes and neighbouring Birchwood. These people had broken away from their PM brethren of Somercotes during the early 1840s, and by 1849 their numbers had so increased that they had found it necessary to have two meeting-places. It is unlikely that the Original Methodist secession seriously weakened the Somercotes PM society, since by 1852 they were able to make extensions to their chapel, which had been erected in 1837. The Original Methodists of Birchwood held the Wesleyan Reformers in great respect, believing them to be fellow-victims of a like ministerial despotism; and the respect was mutual. Interchange of preachers was the rule, and "specials" in the programme of either society received the support of both.⁴

In the course of time the Reformers heard of the generosity of Mr. John Smedley of Lea Mills, near Matlock. This gentleman was later to become even more widely known after the building in 1862 of Ryber Castle, referred to locally for many years as "Smedley's Folly". This factory-owner was a very wealthy man, and strongly inclined towards Reformist and Free Gospel principles. When the Reformers heard that he had promised to build a chapel at his own cost in the neighbourhood of Holloway, they felt that, if appealed to, he might assist them to build a chapel on the piece of land they had obtained in Birchwood Lane.

Mr. Smedley was approached accordingly, and he was so favourably impressed with their request and the circumstances which brought it about that he paid a visit to Birchwood, selected a site, purchased it, and had a chapel and schoolroom erected, with land sufficient for a burial-ground. Thus the Reformers found that the loss of one chapel had been their gain, for their former building was not to be compared with the new chapel, with its towering steeple, bell and Gothic windows. The new chapel was opened on 3rd April 1853.

The Original Methodists were most impressed. One of their meeting-places immediately closed, and by the late summer of the same year the other had ceased to exist. Their October plan makes

⁴ See Matthew Wheeler: *The Collier's Spurgeon: The Life of Matthew Hayes*, for an account of the effects of the Wesleyan Reformers on Methodism in Somercotes.

no mention of the society. They appear to have been extremely happy in fellowship with their Reformist brethren.

Space has not permitted the writer to deal at length with every society which associated itself with the Original Methodists' Connexion in its early years. No mention has been made of Ironville, a very early recruit, or of Mansfield Woodhouse, where George Herod had sowed the seeds of discontent shortly before his departure for another circuit, thereby causing a harvest of bitterness and rancour to be reaped by his successor, who failed to avert a split in the society. At this stage, however, we must turn to other landmarks in the Connexion's history.

DONALD M. GRUNDY.

(To be continued)

We are pleased to report having received copies of the undermentioned local histories.

Methodism in Roseland (pp. 68), by Dr. Oliver A. Beckerlegge : copies from the author at The Manse, St. Mawes, Truro, Cornwall, post free 2s. 10d.

Splendid the Heritage (pp. 24)—Belmont church, Sutton, Surrey, by the Rev. C. Leslie Craig : copies from the author at 27, Great Tattenhams, Epsom Downs, Surrey, post free 2s. 10d.

West Road church, Prudhoe, Northumberland, Centenary Handbook (pp. 24) : copies from Miss Margaret Glendinning, 50, Hillcrest, Prudhoe-on-Tyne, Northumberland, post free 2s. 10d.

Northallerton circuit Centenary Souvenir Brochure (pp. 4) : copies from the Rev. Laurence Larter, Wesley Manse, Brompton Road, Northallerton, Yorks, post free 1s. 3d.

Living Flame (pp. 54), celebrating the 150th anniversary of Methodism in Rickmansworth : copies from Mr. S. E. Weeden, 46, Talbot Road, Rickmansworth, Herts, post free 5s. 7d.

Sileby King Street Centenary Handbook (pp. 16) : copies from Mr. A. Marston, 24, Swan Street, Sileby, Loughborough, post free 3s. 3d.

Netherton (Huddersfield) Centenary Brochure (pp. 20) : copies from Mr. G. Norman Sykes, Cherry Croft, 55, Church Lane, South Crossland, Huddersfield ; no price stated.

Three publications, each of which is of interest to our readers, have come our way recently.

Methodism and the World Church, by Dr. Maldwyn L. Edwards, is published by *Tidings*, 1908, Grand Avenue, Nashville, Tenn., 37203 (pp. 62, no price stated). . . . *The Rev. James Buller*, by Bernard Gadd, is published by the Wesley Historical Society of New Zealand. No price is stated, but for copies apply to the Rev. Leslie R. M. Gilmore, 64, Station Road, Otahuhu, Auckland, S.E.7, New Zealand. . . . *Homing* is the new handbook of Methodist Homes for the Aged, and takes the form of a guide to places of Methodist interest near these Homes. It is illustrated by excellent line drawings. For copies, apply to the Rev. Richard J. Connell, 1, Central Buildings, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

NEWS FROM OUR BRANCHES

BULLETIN No. 1 of the **Bristol** Branch has been received, reporting fully the address of Dr. Maldwyn Edwards on Francis Asbury.

Secretary : Mr. G. E. Roberts, 21, Ormerod Road, Stoke Bishop, Bristol, 9.

FROM the **Cornish** Branch we have received Journal II.6 (October 1966).

On 2nd July 1966 members visited Traboe Cross, and on 12th September Trewint. In Laneast Church they saw the pulpit from which Wesley preached.

Secretary : Rev. Baynard P. Evans, The Manse, St. Keverne, Helston,
Cornwall.

THE **East Anglian** Branch held its autumn meeting on Saturday, 15th October in our chapel at Stowmarket (Suffolk). The lecture, on "John Wesley and his Travels" (which touched on brother Charles also) was given by Alderman L. E. Dansie, J.P., F.S.A. and his daughter, Miss J. V. Dansie, of Colchester, and was illustrated by coloured photographs taken during a tour of 8,000 miles. These, and the running commentary, combined to make a fascinating and informative travelogue from which no student of the Wesleys could fail to profit.

The next meeting will be held at Wesley House, Cambridge, on Saturday, 27th May.

Bulletin No. 16 has been received.

Secretary : Mr. W. A. Green, 60, Brian Avenue, Norwich, Norfolk,
(Please note new address.) NOR. 28 C.

BULLETIN No. 5 of the Journal of the **Lancashire and Cheshire** Branch has been received, reporting a healthy state of affairs. Excellent work is being done in recording local history in and around Manchester, and the branch's archives are building up very well.

The Connexional Archivist spoke at the autumn meeting in the Albert Hall, Manchester, on Saturday, 15th October.

The spring meeting for 1967 is to be held at Baillie Street, Rochdale, on Saturday, 22nd April, at 2-30 p.m. Mrs. E. V. Chapman will speak on "William Darney and Early Methodism in East Lancashire".

Secretary : Mr. E. A. Rose, 18, Glenthorne Drive, Ashton-under Lyne,
Lancs.

THE **Lincolnshire** Branch met at Nettleham on Saturday, 10th September. Sir Francis Hill lectured on "Georgian Lincoln", with special reference to Nonconformity in the city.

The next meeting is to be at Louth on Saturday, 8th April.

Journal Vol. I Part 7 has been received.

Secretary : Mr. William Leary, Woodlands, Riseholme Lane, Riseholme,
Lincoln.

THE autumn meeting of the **London** Branch took the form of a visit to the Archives and Research Centre, where the Archivist had arranged a representative display of Wesleyana, and conducted the party through the rooms.

The spring meeting, on a date yet to be fixed, will be held at Richmond College.

We are sorry to be losing the services of our secretary, the Rev. Brian Galliers, who will be leaving the London South-East District in August. We welcome Mr. Penry Morris as his successor.

Bulletin No. 5 has been received.

Secretary : Mr. J. A. Penry Morris, 8, Moresby Avenue, Surbiton, Surrey.

WE are glad to see another Bulletin, No. 8, from the **North-East** Branch. As over twelve months had elapsed since the previous issue, several meetings are reported. Autumn 1965 saw a visit from Dr. Maldwyn Edwards, and the spring 1966 outing took members to Westbourne chapel, West Hartlepool, with the Rev. Leslie D. Cox speaking on Methodism in that locality.

The autumn 1966 meeting was overshadowed by a car accident to the speaker, the Rev. Arthur D. Cummings, en route for Sunderland. However, the Connexional Archivist happened to be in the neighbourhood at the time, and intending to be present at the meeting, so he presented his slides which he had with him in preparation for his visit to the Lancashire and Cheshire branch the following day, and talked about the Archives.

The spring 1967 meeting will be addressed by the Rev. Rupert E. Davies—at North Shields on Saturday, 20th May.

Secretary : Mr. C. Norman Wallwork, College of Education,
Ryhope Road, Sunderland, Co. Durham.

THE **South Wales** Branch met at Fonmon Castle on 7th May 1966 under the guidance of Sir Hugo Boothby.

Secretary : Rev. W. Islwyn Morgan, 5, King Edward Road, Brynmawr,
Brecon.

FROM the **West Midlands** Branch we have received Bulletin No. 5, which reports the visit of the Connexional Archivist to the autumn meeting on Saturday, 29th October. Other contributions to this Bulletin deal with letters of John Fletcher and notes on places of Methodist interest in the area served by the branch.

The spring meeting, to be held on Saturday, 10th June, is to take the form of a visit to the Cotswold villages of Stanton, Buckland and Broadway—all haunts of John Wesley in his Oxford days.

Secretary : Mrs. E. D. Graham, B.A., B.D., 34, Spiceland Road,
Northfield, Birmingham, 31.

CURES FOR THE ITCH

An Unpublished Wesley Letter

THE following letter to Andrew Wilson, M.D. (1718-92), of whom John Wesley wrote "A more skilful man, I suppose, is not in England",¹ has recently come to light. The original is in the Methodist Archives, London.

JOHN WESLEY TO DR. ANDREW WILSON

Hull

July 8. 1774

Dear Sir

I received much satisfaction from the tract you favoured me with, concerning the Circulation of the Blood.² It seems to me, that you have not only disproved the vulgar Hypothesis but have pointed out the real Cause of its motion, a Cause adequate to the Effect.

But to one Sentiment which occurs toward the close of that tract, I cou'd not so readily agree. I know indeed that the Scurvy puts on many Shapes, & that there are various Species of it. And it is very possible that one species of it may bear a near resemblance to the Itch. But I cannot say I have found that Species yet, either in the Highlands of Scotland or the North of Ireland. In all the Hundreds or thousands that I have observed, I found one & the same distemper. On any part of the skin where they said it itched much, presently a small watery pimple arose, under which if it was laid open with a fine needle, a small animal was always found, not only discernible with a microscope, but frequently with the naked eye. I know one, who has an hundred times taken it out on the point of a needle. If he finds three or four of those pimples on his own hand, he constantly does so. And there is an end. So he cures himself in the beginning of the infection.

I suppose, within these forty years, I have caught the Itch more than an hundred times. Most frequently by shaking hands with infected persons: sometimes by lying in the same bed. When I observe one of the Pimples or ten, or 20, I touch them with Rum, if it be at hand. In less than a minute it kills the animal, & the disorder is at an end. But when I am in Ulster, I usually carry my Antidote, Flour of Sulphur, with me. And it suffices to rub a little twice or thrice on the pimples. I then find no more of the disorder.

Where it has continued long, so that the whole Body is overspread, I have generally recommended Dr. Willis's Remedy, the Shirt or Shift impregnated with Brimstone. And I can aver two things: the first, That I never knew it do the least hurt to man, woman or child; the second, That I never knew it fail to cure, no not in one single instance: Altho I never advised any Internals whatever; not so much as a purge.

Wishing all Happiness to you & yours, I am,

Dear Sir,

Your Affectionate Servant,

JOHN WESLEY.

The letter is addressed:

To / Dr. Wilson / in Newcastle upon Tyne

¹ For a note on Dr. Wilson, see *Standard Letters*, v, p. 205.

² See *Journal*, vi, p. 28.

BOOK NOTICES

A Rapture of Praise, by H. A. Hodges and A. M. Allchin. (Hodder & Stoughton, pp. 160, 30s.)

If this book is a sign that at last Anglicans are realizing that Charles Wesley was one of them, it is most welcome. We have always maintained that the hymns of Charles Wesley are as much a phase in the development of Anglican hymnody as a product of the Methodist Revival, and the neglect of them by the editors of Anglican hymn-books is as surprising as it is lamentable. Some of Wesley's hymns—especially those written for the intimacy and rapture of the class meeting—do not, perhaps, fit naturally into the climate of parish church worship; but this cannot be said of his hymns for the Christian festivals or, more particularly, of his hymns for the Lord's Supper. Those on Christian holiness are the most catholic of all.

On these grounds we welcome this book; but apart from that, it is excellent in itself. In fact, the two essays which form the introduction to the selection of 140 hymns which make up the body of the book are worthy of publication on their own. Hodges writes on "Methodism and the Spiritual Life", and Allchin on "The Ordinances and the Creed". It is usually interesting to read what non-Methodists say about us, but in this book we have two Anglicans writing with an insight into the spiritual life which makes us alarmed and sad at our neglect of our own heritage. It is well known that one of the tragedies of nineteenth-century Methodism was the fade-out of Wesley's teaching on holiness, and it may take some rapprochement with catholic thought and churchmanship to revive this early Methodist emphasis of which, to our impoverishment, we have largely lost sight.

Hodges' interpretation of evangelical conversion and Christian perfection and Allchin's appreciation of Wesley's hymns on the sacraments are such that we commend this book to the attention of all our readers.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

Here is Methodism, by Leonard P. Barnett. (Epworth Press, pp. 128, 5s.)

This is an excellent introduction to Methodism, written in a lively style that will commend it to young people seeking to know what Methodism is and how it works—and there are many such young people in our midst today! For those who are doing projects at school or college this book could provide a starting-point for further reading, and we hope it will have a wide circulation.

JOHN C. BOWMER.

Members attending Conference at Middlesbrough in July this year, and others who are able to be present at our Society's Annual Meeting and Lecture, to be held on Wednesday, July 12th, will look forward to gathering together at the historic octagon chapel at Yarm, continuously in use as a Methodist preaching-house since 1764.

The lecturer on this occasion will be the Rev. Frederick Hunter, M.A., B.D., and his subject "The Wesleys and Catholicity". The chair will be taken by Mr. John I. Miller.

A fuller announcement will appear in our June number.

NOTES AND QUERIES

1161. SAMUEL WESLEY'S FIRST RESIDENCE IN LINCOLNSHIRE.

An anonymous correspondent writes :

Further to Mr. William Leary's interesting note in *Proceedings*, xxxv, page 178, on Samuel Wesley's first residence in Lincolnshire, I have the following information from the Rev. P. H. E. Goodrich, the present rector of the South Ormesby group of churches.

Mr. Goodrich affirms that Samuel Wesley, sen. was rector of South Ormesby from 1691 to 1695. His signature is to be found several times in the registers, as also are the christenings of four and the burials of three of his children. It is a mistake to say that John Sheffield, Marquis of Normanby presented Wesley to the living, as the record of his institution in the bishop's register proves that he was presented by Burrell Massingberd and Ann Lady Massingberd his mother. Burrell was not yet twenty-one, so his mother assisted him. The Massingberds had bought South Ormesby Hall in 1638, but it was let to Viscount Castleton during Burrell's minority. Castleton may well have suggested Wesley for the living, but he did not legally present him.

The nobleman who is said to have been living with his lady-friend at the Hall may have been the said George Saunderson, Viscount Castleton. The Hall was never let to Sheffield, and it has never been explained how he ever came into the story.

1162. PIRATED EDITIONS OF WESLEY'S HYMNS.

Mr. Leary's note in *Proceedings*, xxxv, page 196 on the Wride papers in the Methodist Archives quoted his reference to two unauthorized hymn-books in use in the Methodist societies of Yorkshire and Lincolnshire in John Wesley's later years. One of these, which Wride calls "Mr. Spence's", is one of the cut-price editions of Wesley's hymns published by Robert Spence at York. I have not been able to discover any reference to "Mr. Robinson's".

Two other passages in the same memorandum are worth noting. Wride's reason for wanting to eradicate these pirated books is that

The sale of such Books must proportionably lessen the sale of Mr. Wesley's, and render Mr. Wesley less able to help such, as for years past have been helped by the profit of the Books sold for Mr. W.

Secondly, Wride suggests that Wesley should produce an official book to rival Spence's :

I think it would answere a good End to Publish a little Hymn-Book suppose about the size of Kempis . . . If a reasonable small letter be used, and the lines moderately close : A sufficient Number of Hymns may be inserted to please a Reasonable purchaser at a Shilling, (bound in Sheep;) Fourteen pence with Clasps, and Eighteen Pence Plain Calf and Clasps.

This Wesley did in 1787, when he published *A Pocket Hymn Book, For the Use of Christians of all Denominations*, which was sold for one shilling. Wride's memorandum (which appears to have been written in 1784) may well have first suggested this course to him.

PETER W. GRANT.