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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

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

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Volume XLII

December 1980

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### EDITORIAL

OUR readers are accustomed to finding an Editorial at the beginning of a volume; here is one at the end, for this is where I vacate the editorial chair. It will be recalled that I was elected to fill the vacancy created by the sudden death of my predecessor, the Rev. Wesley F. Swift. That was in 1962, nineteen years ago. I might have continued for another year to make the round twenty, but that would have meant changing horses in mid-stream, so I thought it best to serve until the present volume was completed, then to hand over to a younger person.

I am happy in the knowledge that my successor is to be Mr. Alan Rose, who comes to the office with a wide experience of editorial work, for he has served our Lancashire and Cheshire Branch as organizer, publisher and local historian, and has an intimate knowledge of the workings of the parent Society—both its problems and its pleasures. We pray that he will be given wit and wisdom to serve us for many years to come—twenty years at least, to bring us into the twenty-first century!

My thanks go to all who have helped to make these *Proceedings* a worthy publication, in content as well as in presentation. A debt which never can be repaid is owing to Mr. Alfred Taberer, who is more than printer and publisher—in fact an eagle-eyed sub-editor, time and time again smoothing out infelicitous expressions or correcting errors which have escaped my attention. Then there are those who by their contributions have happily managed to strike a balance, not easy to achieve, between the scholarly and the popular. May our journal long continue to encourage the on-going research into Methodist history and present its findings in a language “understandable of the people”!

For myself, I ask you to forgive the personal tone of this Editorial; but one thing is sure. I shall look forward with keen anticipation to the arrival of each issue of the *Proceedings*, for I shall not know its contents until I get it—a pleasurable surprise which has been denied me for the last nineteen years.

J.C.B.

## BIBLICAL IMAGERY AND RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE IN THE HYMNS OF THE WESLEYS

[The following article is the English translation of a paper read in French at a colloquium on the subject of religious minorities in Great Britain which took place on 27th May 1978 at the University of Paris, Creteil. The communications at this colloquium are to be published in book form by Desclée et Cie. The editor of the Symposium, Mdlle. Christiane d'Hausay, Head of the Department of English in the University of Paris XII, has kindly given permission for the reproduction of this paper as an article in these *Proceedings*.

The biblical quotations are from the Authorized (i.e. the "King James") Version as the one which was familiar to John and Charles Wesley.—EDITOR.]

**I**N the Preface to his 1780 hymn-book, John Wesley said, concerning the doctrinal and theological import of the collection, "... this book is, in effect, a little body of experimental and practical divinity." This statement will serve as a framework for our own approach in the exposition which follows. In the first part, we shall consider the poetic art of Charles Wesley, and show how biblical images are its primary source of inspiration. In the second part, we shall raise a question relating rather to doctrine, and examine the relationship between the biblical images of the hymns and the conception of religious experience proper to the evangelical spirituality of the Wesley brothers.

To make it easier to illustrate these points with precise examples, we shall take, in its entirety, the hymn "See, sinners, in the gospel glass", the text of which appears on the opposite page.<sup>1</sup>

### I—Biblical images and poetry

Scripture dominates the compositions of Charles Wesley as the main source of inspiration of his poetic images. Nothing demonstrates this more clearly than that the majority of his hymns reveal themselves to be an intricate web of biblical quotations. One continually finds verses in which each line contains at least one quotation—sometimes several—from the Bible.

The hymn "See, sinners, in the gospel glass" is a good example. Let us take the six lines of the second verse. The first two quote John i. 29: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world!" The third line is an allusion to St. Paul's epistle to the Philippians, ii. 7: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant". In writing "form", Charles keeps close to the meaning of the original Greek *μορφήν*, and the

<sup>1</sup> No. 31 in the 1780 hymn-book. In the 1876 edition the eight verses of the hymn are divided into two parts, to become Nos. 31 and 32. In the *Methodist Hymn-Book* of 1904, and in the present book (1933), the hymn is reduced to three verses only (1904, No. 283; 1933, No. 312), the verses printed being the second, third and fifth of the original.

## SEE, SINNERS, IN THE GOSPEL GLASS

SEE, sinners, in the gospel glass,  
 The friend and Saviour of mankind !  
 Not one of the apostate race  
 But may in him salvation find !  
 His thoughts, and words, and actions prove,  
 His life and death—that God is love !

Behold the Lamb of God who bears  
 The sins of all the world away !  
 A servant's form he meekly wears,  
 He sojourns in a house of clay,  
 His glory is no longer seen,  
 But God with God is man with men.

See where the God incarnate stands,  
 And calls his wandering creatures home,  
 He all day long spreads out his hands,  
 'Come weary souls, to Jesus come !  
 Ye all may hide you in my breast,  
 Believe, and I will give you rest.

Ah ! do not of my goodness doubt ;  
 My saving grace for all is free ;  
 I will in no wise cast him out  
 That comes a sinner unto me ;  
 I can to none myself deny,  
 Why, sinners, will ye perish, why ? '

Sinners, believe the gospel word,  
 Jesus is come your souls to save !  
 Jesus is come, your common Lord ;  
 Pardon ye all through him may have,  
 May now be saved whoever will ;  
 This man receiveth sinners still.

See where the lame, the halt, the blind,  
 The deaf, the dumb, the sick, the poor,  
 Flock to the friend of human kind,  
 And freely all accept their cure ;  
 To whom did he his help deny ?  
 Whom in his days of flesh pass by ?

Did not his word the fiends expel,  
 The lepers cleanse, and raise the dead ?  
 Did he not all their sickness heal,  
 And satisfy their every need ?  
 Did he reject his helpless clay,  
 Or send them sorrowful away ?

Nay, but his bowels yearned to see  
 The people hungry, scattered, faint ;  
 Nay, but he uttered over thee,  
 Jerusalem, a true complaint ;  
 Jerusalem, who shedd'st his blood,  
 That, with his tears, for thee hath flowed.

use of "servant" links the words of St. Paul with the "suffering servant" poems in the book of Deutero-Isaiah. "He sojourns in a house of clay" reflects Job iv. 19: "How much less in them that dwell in houses of clay, whose generation is in the dust". The fifth line transforms an affirmation of St. John into a negation. The reference is to a main clause of John i. 14: "... we beheld his glory" (that is, the glory of the incarnate Son). The last line echoes the beginning of St. John's prologue: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

This verse can therefore be regarded as a meditation on the theme of the "suffering servant". For it is more than a series of quotations of biblical texts following one after another. The allusions are woven together in such a way that they form, in the imagination of the reader, a unified picture around a dominant image. The quotation from Job in the fourth line speaks of the weakness of man, formed from the dust of the earth. It reinforces St. Paul's affirmation concerning the degree of abasement accepted by Jesus in order to reach us who are but mortal clay. At the same time, it enriches the image of the Lamb, introduced in the first line, which, in its turn, recalls the "suffering servant" poems, and particularly Isaiah liii. 7: "... he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." The reference to Isaiah throws into relief the word "bears". This word evokes an image of laborious effort in carrying a heavy burden. For this reason, the author writes "bears away" and not "taketh away" as given in the Authorized Version. "Taketh" adequately translates the Greek *αἶψω*, but "bears" is more in keeping with the vigour of the image of the servant crushed under the weight of our sins (Isaiah liii. 4). The contrast between "bears", which connotes the crushing weight, and "away", which signifies the final triumph of the Lamb, is deliberately emphasized by the separation of the two words—a separation not found in the gospel text. The reader is now prepared to grasp the significance of the unexpected negation in the fifth line: "His glory is no longer seen". Even if the object of the Incarnation is to reveal the glory of God, as affirmed by St. John in i. 14, this glory is in fact hidden on account of the abasement which the Incarnation entails. The last line represents the culmination of this cascade of images. The two phrases juxtaposed—"God with God" and "man with men"—bring to a climax this paradox to which we are brought by the Son's lowering Himself out of love for us. It remains only to contemplate a mystery which lies beyond images. That is why this simple statement of the doctrine of the Incarnation is no longer an image.

Discreet allusions and delicate touches bring about a mutual interpenetration of the images. The last phrase of the third verse—"I will give you rest"—recalls Matthew xi. 28-30, where Jesus invites those who are overburdened to find their rest in Him. But the word "weary", at the beginning of the second part of the verse, also

evokes the weariness of the crowds which moves Jesus to compassion in Matthew ix. 36. The first syllable of the word is both stressed and long-drawn-out; one cannot but linger over it: "w-e-a-r-y". It aptly conveys the meaning of the original Greek—*ἔσकुλμενοι*, completely exhausted. But in the eighth verse we find the word "faint" instead of "weary", and before "faint", "scattered". The word *ἔσकुλμενοι* in Matthew ix. 36 is followed by *ἔρριμμενοι*, the meaning of which is "scattered" or "dispersed". Therefore it is not only the image from Matthew xi. 28-30 which reveals what Wesley<sup>3</sup> felt when he used the word "weary". The image in Matthew ix. 36, which is clearly expressed in the eighth verse, is already present in the second verse, but fused with the image in Matthew xi. 28-30, and then only hinted at by a veiled allusion. Similarly, the word "bowels" is an evocation of Matthew ix. 36, which the Authorized Version translates as "... he was moved with compassion". The Greek word is *ἔσπλαγγνισθη*. The *σπλαγγνα* are the intestines. The evangelist wants to say (and Wesley with him) that Jesus was so upset by the distress of the crowds that He was affected in the whole of His physical make-up.

We thus come across another characteristic of Wesley's biblical poetry—its realism, which is none other than the realism of the Bible itself. In his conception of the redemption which dominates the whole of his evangelical spirituality, he is very far from the substitutionism of a certain kind of Protestant theology which is content to present the relationship between the saving act of Jesus and ourselves in juridical terms. In spite of the reference of some hymns to the cross of Jesus as assuaging the anger of God, the act by which Jesus shed His blood for us is quite definitely not reduced by Wesley to an act of substitution—a punishment suffered on our behalf. Much rather is it an intensely human and vivid revelation of that which constitutes God in His intimate nature: love—"Thy nature and Thy name is Love".<sup>8</sup> As God's act of love for man, the saving act of Jesus goes out to the poorest and the most wretched of men, in order to attain to a real—even a physical—contact with them. For Jesus really is incarnate, that is He really does possess a human body. In Him the invisible love of the Father speaks to man with all the visible strength and visible tenderness—the one inseparable from the other—of which He alone is capable, as man who is God and God who is man.

O that our faith may never move,  
But stand unshaken as Thy love!  
Sure evidence of things unseen.  
Now let us pass the years between,  
And view Thee bleeding on the tree,  
My God who dies for me.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> i.e. Charles Wesley (as henceforward throughout this article).

<sup>8</sup> See Charles Wesley's masterpiece, "Come, O Thou Traveller unknown" (MHB 339).

<sup>4</sup> *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, No. 45, v. 3.

Unshaken love is a love that is strong and virile, whilst at the same time the repetition "for me, for me" expresses the indissolubly human and divine tenderness of Jesus towards us, to which we cannot remain insensitive. But it is not enough only to look at Jesus on the cross; we must make direct contact with His wounded body:

Turn to Jesus crucified,  
Fly to those dear wounds of His.<sup>5</sup>

We must allow ourselves to be sprinkled with the blood which flows from those wounds:

All the sprinkled blood receive,<sup>6</sup>  
immerse ourselves in His blood:

Sink into the cleansing flood;  
Rise into the life of God.<sup>7</sup>

Finally, we must enter right into the wound in His side:

His bleeding heart shall make you room,  
His open side shall take you in.<sup>8</sup>

In this way, we become one flesh with Christ, just as His spouse the Church is one flesh with Him; just as Eve was united with Adam or as man is united with woman in every marriage.

And will He not His purchase take,  
Who died to make us all His own,  
Our spirit with Himself to make,  
Flesh of His flesh, bone of His bone?<sup>9</sup>

How can we have this kind of intimate relationship with Jesus now that He is no longer visible to our bodily eyes? Wesley's reply is clear: this relationship is established sacramentally through the Eucharist. This is quite clearly why he expresses himself in a way which comes very close to the eucharistic realism of the Catholic faith:

To every faithful soul appear,  
And show Thy real presence here.<sup>10</sup>

Are we, therefore, to object that this kind of realism is in bad taste? We might just as well say the same of the Bible itself! As Bernard Manning has pertinently remarked,

You cannot tinker with the stupendous things; you must take them or leave them. If the Catholic and Evangelical doctrine of atonement by the blood of Christ be true, no expression of it can be too strong; all on the contrary must be too weak.<sup>11</sup>

In the last resort, Wesley avoids bad taste for the same reason that it is avoided by the word of God in the Bible. In the same way as the Bible, with images of tenderness denoting a real, quasi-physical contact with the manhood of Jesus making His whole person so close to our human condition, Wesley mingles other images in a vein

<sup>5</sup> MHB 319, v. 1.

<sup>6</sup> *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, No. 16, v. 2.

<sup>7</sup> MHB 319, v. 1 (originally "purple flood" instead of "cleansing flood").

<sup>8</sup> *ibid.*, 361, v. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, No. 114, v. 6.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, No. 116, v. 5; MHB 771, v. 3.

<sup>11</sup> B. L. Manning: *The Hymns of Wesley and Watts* (Epworth Press, 1942), p. 126.

rather more reminiscent of the Old Testament, emphasizing both the strength of God in His almighty power and His complete "otherness" in transcendence. Of Jesus on the cross Wesley can write that He

Tears the graves and mountains up  
By His expiring groan.  
Lo! the powers of heaven He shakes :  
Nature in convulsions lies,  
Earth's profoundest centre quakes,  
The great *Jehovah* dies!<sup>12</sup>

We are thus invited to unite to our loving response to God's tenderness towards us that filial awe which becomes us in the face of a divine transcendence which is the very source of the tenderness. John Wesley had this balance in mind when, referring to his brother's hymns, he wrote :

Now would not every sober Christian sincerely desire constantly to experience such love to his Redeemer (seeing he is God as well as man) as is mingled with angelic fear?<sup>13</sup>

## II—Biblical images and religious experience

The preceding brief analysis has attempted to highlight two literary devices which represent the translation into poetic terms of two complementary aspects of Charles Wesley's religious thought. In the first place, his hymns introduce us to a veritable network of biblical images which burgeon in every direction. Whichever image one begins with, one cannot grasp its overtones without entering into the whole web of images which constitute a hymn in its poetic unity. Secondly, enough examples have already been given to suggest that this burgeoning is not a chaotic growth; it is moulded into a definite form by the predominance of one—or more than one—key image. The examples also suggest (complete proof would require many more) that the inner coherence resulting from the regulating effect of key images characterizes not only individual hymns, but the hymnological production of Wesley taken as a whole. In particular, we have noted the frequent reiteration of the theme of the tender love of Jesus towards sinners. It would seem that this theme not only dominates a large number of individual hymns, but constitutes the central insight of the whole of Wesley's religious thought.

We must go even further: in the evangelical spirituality proper to Methodism, the doctrinal theme of the tender and loving saving act accomplished by Jesus on the cross must be correlated with Wesley's personal faith and with his conception of religious experience. In other words, this theme dominates his religious poetry because it dominates his personal life of faith, giving a unique quality to his religious experience.

Three days after the spiritual renewal which he described as his conversion, he wrote :

<sup>12</sup> *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, No. 21, v. 4.

<sup>13</sup> In a sermon entitled "On Knowing Christ after the Flesh" (John Wesley's *Works* (ed. T. Jackson), vii, pp. 295-6).



Where shall my wondering soul begin?  
How shall I all to heaven aspire?<sup>14</sup>

In the same hymn, he finds the answer in the blood of Jesus poured out for him:

For you the purple current flowed,  
In pardons from his wounded side.<sup>15</sup>

The note of tenderness which is conveyed by the repetition "for me, for me" in the hymn quoted above<sup>16</sup> reveals the influence on Wesley of Luther's commentary on St. Paul's epistle to the Galatians. Luther himself was much moved by the note of tenderness which St. Paul intimates in that repetition of which he is the author: ". . . the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians ii. 20). This realization of Jesus's tenderness towards the sinner becomes a burning desire for the intimate union of his whole being with Him:

Take me now, possess me whole,  
Who for me, for me, hast died.<sup>17</sup>

His evangelical spirituality, with its insistence on the necessity for conversion in the recognition of one's sinfulness, develops into a mysticism from which Luther, for his part, drew back.

Must we conclude, then, that Wesley's ability to weave biblical images into one coherent whole stems from a religious experience which inclines to subjectivism? Surely not! What is at stake is not subjectivism but an intensely-lived personal faith. This personal faith is wholly dependent on the objective revelation of the word of God in the Bible, which, when assimilated in this uniquely personal way, gives birth in the mind of Wesley to profound spiritual insights. In particular, it makes possible a grasp of the biblical data, especially the content of the New Testament which, as Wesley so well understood, is the culmination of the partial unveiling effected by the images of the Old, not as a mass of disparate historico-literary problems, in the manner of scientific exegesis, but as a living whole, of which the unity of the poetic images of the hymns is the direct literary consequence and counterpart.

Let us once again take the example of the hymn which we looked at earlier. The very beginning—that is, the two halves of the first line: "See, sinners" and "gospel glass"—supplies the controlling insights giving unity to the whole composition. It is for this reason that our attention is drawn to them by the use of assonance—the two s's and the two g's, and by the use of chiasmus—"See" corresponds to "glass", because we must look into a mirror in order to see; "sinners" corresponds to "gospel", because it is to sinners that the gospel is proclaimed. Our attention is drawn at the same time to "See" by the irregularity of stress which the imperative form of the

<sup>14</sup> MHB 361, v. 1.

<sup>15</sup> This verse is not in MHB. See *The Poetical Works of John and Charles Wesley* (ed. G. Osborn, 1868), i, p. 93.

<sup>16</sup> *Hymns on the Lord's Supper*, No. 45, v. 3 (see note 4 above).

<sup>17</sup> MHB 97, v. 1.

verb introduces: "S-e-e!" What are we to s-e-e! with such insistence and urgency? In the first place, the "glass" is the mirror in which we can only dimly see the things of God: ". . . now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face" (1 Corinthians xiii. 12). But there is also the word "gospel". What is this gospel? The answer is the whole of the hymn. The gospel is the very person of Jesus.<sup>18</sup> It is because of Jesus's self-lowering that our contact with Him in faith is a grasping in the dark, which contrasts with the light of the vision face-to-face. This is true of the whole of His earthly life: His human thoughts, actions, and words, reaching their climax in His death (see the end of the first verse). More important still, it is above all for sinners that this grasping of the reality of Jesus as a man who is also very God takes the form of an act of faith in darkness. As the opposite of love, as refusal to love, sin paradoxically brings about the mystery of self-abasement which is the cause of our salvation. Because of our sin, Jesus has come so near to us, He has touched us; because of our sin, He remains so hidden. Thus the last verse says:

Jerusalem, who shedd'st his blood,  
That, with his tears, for thee hath flowed

—so deepening the regulating insight of the first line of the first verse and giving to the whole hymn a profound unity and coherence. We should also notice the irregularity of stress introduced twice by "Nay". This irregularity, by abruptly interrupting the flow of the rhythm, obliges us to pause—to pause in spirit, so inviting us to enter by silence into the depth of the mystery which our inattentiveness and superficiality habitually hide from us. Finally, the unexpected negative in the second verse—"His glory is no longer seen"—unveils to us the deeper meaning which it must have had in the mind of its author. It is for our sakes—sinners who have been redeemed—that the glory of Jesus is thus hidden: He must needs test our love by the purifying trial of a faith held in darkness. Yet love rightly longs to tear the veil: ". . . While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians iv. 18).

Wesley's whole aim in composing hymns is aptly expressed in this quotation from St. Paul. As we have already suggested, Wesley does not want us to stop at the images. He wants to lead us to a culminating point—a peak from which, like Moses, we can catch sight of the promised land—or, better still, he wants us to take to heart the words which Jesus addressed to Philip: "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (John xiv. 9).

In the last resort, the biblical foundation for the religious experience which inspires Wesley's hymns is none other than the very person of Jesus. Originating in Him, the perfect ikon or image of the Father, the images in the hymns carry with them a dynamism

<sup>18</sup> See, e.g., Acts viii. 35.

which makes us pass from the visible to the invisible. Wesley, the poet, sees in Jesus the perfect ποιησις of the Father.<sup>19</sup>

\* \* \*

In the spirit of ecumenism, I conclude by drawing attention to a point of comparison between the work of Charles Wesley and the movement for renewal in the spirit of the gospel which has been affecting the Roman Catholic Church since the recent Vatican Council. A priest in Lille has remarked that an outstanding spiritual figure of contemporary French Catholicism, Charles de Foucauld, in contrast to professional theologians who speak *about* God in the third person, always speaks *to* God in the second person: in his writings it is always a personal relationship with God in Jesus that he invites us to enter. Could it not be for a similar reason (and he would not have been mistaken in this) that John Wesley saw in his brother's hymns one of his most precious aids in his work of evangelization of the poor and the illiterate? Charles Wesley, like Charles de Foucauld, has something to say to contemporary man, who is secularized, and tends to consider himself merely as an object to be studied and analysed by the human sciences. He reminds him that he will come to terms with what is deepest in himself only if, as a personal subject, he accepts a personal God, who has created and redeemed him, and who calls him by his name in order to reveal that personal uniqueness to him.

FRANCIS FROST.

[The Rev. Dr. Francis Frost is a Roman Catholic priest, a Licencié ès Lettres (Philosophie) of Lille and a Doctor of Theology of the Fédération Universitaire et Polytechnique de Lille. He has had experience of parish work in England, and for four years was Lecturer in Divinity at Christ College of Education in Liverpool. He is now "Professeur Titulaire" at Lille, and frequently lectures in this country at Ushaw College, near Durham.]

<sup>19</sup> See note <sup>4</sup> above.

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## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Norwich Conference, 1981,  
WILL BE DELIVERED IN

The Octagon Chapel, Colegate, Norwich,

On Monday, 6th July, at 7-30 p.m.,

BY

Dr. JOHN D. WALSH, M.A. (Jesus College, Oxford).

*Subject*: "JOHN WESLEY AND THE POOR".

The chair will be taken by MR. ROY W. BURROUGHS (Retford).

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The Annual Meeting of the Society will be held, also at the Octagon Chapel, at 5-30 p.m.

Buffet Teas will be provided at the Conference Refreshments Room, Princess Road URC, opposite the Conference Hall (St. Andrew's Hall).

From the Conference Hall proceed along St. George Street, turn right into Colegate, and the Octagon Chapel will be seen on the left.

# THE LAVINGTON CORRESPONDENCE

*(Continued from page 149)*

We have already seen hints of the criticism of the qualifications of the Methodist preachers, whether travelling or lay: they are "runnagate" and "vagrant"; one was "bred a barber", and so on. This type of criticism was a favourite mode of attack, and is echoed here by William Cullow, the charity schoolmaster of Bos-sinney. Cullow seems to have belonged to a local family, for Cullows were in Tintagel from as early as the reign of King Henry VIII. According to him, the preachers are but "poor mechanicks" (one wonders that a schoolmaster did not call them "rude mechanicals!"). Whilst he is somewhat inconsistent in his complaints—it is clearly pointless that he should complain that the Methodists exclaim "against the ministers of our Church as being remiss and negligent" when he himself points out that divine worship "is often omitted in our parish"—he at any rate has a practical proposition to make, namely that he himself be admitted into deacon's orders, in order that services might be held more regularly. It would be interesting to know how his request was received.

## WILLIAM CULLOW TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

Right Reverend Lord, I humbly beg leave with the greatest submission to lay before Your Grace my humble petition (as followeth (viz.) There is A Sect of People in our County of Cornwall distinguished by the Name of Methodist, who are very Industrious in propa[ga]ting their new doctrine (or rather heresie) professing Self Denial and Sanctity of life. In So Strict A manner that they have driven many Ignorant to despair of Mercy; withall exclaiming against the Ministers of our Church as being remiss and Negligent in the performance of their duty, and generally Assemble together at such times and places where there is no Service in the Church then perform'd: withall Informing Their auditors that they have Receiv'd the holy Ghost and are Inspired with supernaturall gifts; the most of their teachers Are poor Mechanicks and Ignorant of true Orthodox Doctrine having neither Sence nor Coherence in their discourse. May it please Yr. Lordship to give me leave to Inform you That our Parish of Tintagell together with the Borough of Bosiney lying within the same (for which I have been liciened [sic] for keeping A Charity School more than [sic] Twenty years) is very full of Inhabitants and most truly affected to the Church (except A few who have been seduced by this New Sect) and are Constant attendants on divine Service when there is prayers at Church, which is often omitted in our Parish our Minister living sixteen Miles from us and his Curate keeps A School at Camelford five Miles distant from our Church we have seldom prayers more than once every Lord's day, for which Reason the Rest of the day is often spent at ale-houses or In Idle and unprofitable discourse, to prevent which I most humbly Desire yr Honr. would please to admit me Into Deacon's orders Thereby to authorise me to Read the publick Service of the Church which I would (by God's blessing) never omit that part of the Lord's Day when the Curate did not attend: and if Yr Lordship please to Require A Certificate of my life and Conversation and please To Condescend to my humble request I will humbly wait on you when you please to Command

me with the same under the hands of our Mayor, Churchwardens, and principall inhabitants of our sd Parish, So humbly submitting the same to your Grace's Good Pleasure I Conclude with the greatest submission

Yr Hnr's most humble dutifull and obedient Sert.

WILLIAM CULLOW.

Tintagell near Camelford, Cornwall. March 24th 1747/8

[Endorsed:] Wm. Cullow / Schoolmaster, concerning / Tintagel, & Methodists.

That appeal was made in March 1748. The previous May, two J.P.s—J. D. Birkhead and J. Tremayne, magistrates for the St. Austell neighbourhood—had written to Lavington for advice on a legal point; were Methodists who adhered to the liturgy of the Church of England subject to the provisions of the penal legislation of the Restoration? For the two gentlemen were concerned at the spread of the “new” faith in their own parish of St. Ewe, and in West Cornwall generally, the preacher in St. Ewe being “a mean illiterate tinner”; moreover, some of their leaders had been “notoriously wicked”. In spite of their presumable education, the two writers seem ignorant of the fact that the best argument for the Christian faith is a converted sinner! Whether women were in fact preachers, as they claimed, is another story—perhaps only gossip; but in view of the use made of women by the Bible Christians eighty years later, it would be surprising if Cornwall did not produce some women who were acceptable locally. Richard Potts (in the *Catalogue*, pp. 6-7) draws our attention to a passage in Wesley's *Journal* for 7th August 1750:

I went to St. Ewe. There was much struggling here at first; but the two gentlemen who occasioned it are now removed—one to London, the other into eternity.<sup>84</sup>

and wonders, “Were these writers the two gentlemen to whom Wesley referred?”

As for the quoted strictures by the Methodists on the clergy, whilst allowing for popular “exaggeration” on the theme of fox-hunting parsons, there is abundant evidence of sheer neglect and non-interest from the fact of the widespread absenteeism. Luney, from where this letter was written, lies 1½ miles south of Hewas Water, and was perhaps Birkhead's home, for Heligan, between Mevagissey and St. Ewe, was the seat of the Tremaynes.

J. D. BIRKHEAD AND J. TREMAYNE TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

My Lord /

Though we have not the honour to be personally known to your Lordship, yet as the County of Cornwall is in your Dioces [sic], we have taken the liberty to trouble you with an affair which we apprehend may be of dangerous consequence to this Nation both in Church & State, if some means are not taken to prevent it.

<sup>84</sup> *Journal*, iii, p. 489.

A set of people who stile themselves Methodists have infus'd their enthusiastick notions into the minds of vast numbers of the meaner sort of people in the Western part of this County, & they are very strenuously endeavouring to propagate them all over it: several have assembled frequently within this fortnight in the Parish of Saint Ewe in which we live; & the Preacher they are so very fond of, is no better than a mean illiterate Tinner, & what is more surprizing, but a boy of nineteen years old.

Doubtless your Lordship has heard much of these poor deluded creatures in other parts of the Kingdom, & therefore we shall not trespass on your time by enlarging on the tenets of their leaders, who for the most part are ignorant men, & have been notoriously wicked, but now under pretence of being both reform'd & inspired, they, & even women of the same stamp are adored Preachers: it is sufficient to say that many poor wretches have been drove to despair thro' their means, & multitudes of his Majesties subjects have been made useless in every station of life, by being persuaded, that unless they are Drones & Cowards they cannot be saved.

As we are in the Commission of the Peace, we have endeavour'd to convince them of their errors by reason: which not having the least effect, we told them that we must put the Laws in force against them, to which they replied, that they did not differ from the Church of England as by Law establish'd & therefore were not guilty of any crime; we then ask'd them if they agreed with the Church, for what reason they exclaim'd in their meetings against the Clergy, by saying they were generally very wicked men, & that provided they received their tithes, (which they wou'd take care to be paid to the utmost farthing) that was all they regarded, & their flock might be as debauch'd as they pleased; then they insolently declar'd it was too true, & they all affirm that they knew nothing of God or religion from any information they receiv'd at Church, before they were instructed by these Preachers, which they say are become so by miracles.

We can not help thinking that by these & other means they are endeavouring to undermine the Church, that they may be at full liberty to effect their schemes, whatever they are, & tho' the Administration has hitherto with great wisdom wink'd at their proceedings, thro' a belief that if they were not taken notice off [sic], the affair was so ridiculous in its own nature that it must fall to the ground of itself yet we beg leave to submit it to your Lordship's consideration whether as the affair now stands, it may not be of dangerous consequence to permit them to assemble in this manner without the least restraint.

The Methodists insist that they are not prohibited from these meetings by the 22d. of Cha: 2d. c. the 1st. because they say they are according to the liturgy of the Church of England; but whether they are not subject to the penalties of that Act, by the Statute of the 1st. of W. & M. chap. the 18th. Sec. 19, which says that no congregation for religious worship shall be allow'd untill the place of meeting is certified & register'd as the Act directs: is a point we shou'd be glad to be fully inform'd off, for tho' we shou'd very readily do our duty as Protestants & Magistrates without the least mixture pf persecution, yet we wou'd not willingly thro' an indiscreet zeal do any act which might be productive of greater mischiefs, therefore

your Lordship's opinion & advice will be acknowledg'd as a great favour by my Lord your

Most Dutyfull  
&  
Most Obedt. Servts.  
JO. D. BIRKHEAD  
J. TREMAYNE.  
Luney May 23. 1747

Following this, and presumably similar letters, Lavington evidently made further discreet inquiries in the neighbourhood over the next few months. One of his correspondents was Thomas Hext of Trenarren (near St. Ewe and St. Mewan),<sup>35</sup> who contrasts favourably with many of Lavington's informants in that he is unwilling to retail mere gossip. But he has the same judgement to pass on both preachers and people, sharing with Birkhead and Tremayne the typical squirearchy's contempt for the tanners and farm-labourers.

THOMAS HEXT TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

Trenarren Feb. 23d. 1748

My Lord!

I had the honour of your letter last Friday with Querys relating to the Methodists in this neighbourhood, they are mostly Inhabitants of St. Ewe & St. Mewan, & are pretty many in Number.

I shou'd have been very glad to inform your Lordship more particularly, but as I never had conversation with any of them, I'm unable to give so satisfactory an Answer as I cou'd wish, & the more, as it's not in my power to prove for Fact, what I receive only by report.

It appears impracticable to get anything out of them by confession, as I'm just now inform'd by a Person who ask'd one of them some Questions lately to very little purpose.

The Preacher, I'm told, is a Young Fellow, a Tinner bold & illiterate, who holds forth on Wensdays at St. Ewe & Sundays at St. Mewan, his followers are people of the lowest degree & meanest capacities, & as they have not any encouragement from the Gentlemen of this Neighbourhood, it's to be hoped that the Number of them is at the highest, & may rather lessen than encrease.

I shall observe your Lordship's Directions in keeping your letter a Secret; &

I am,  
My Lord,  
with the greatest regard,  
Yr most Dutiful  
& most Obedt. hmble Servant,  
THO HEXT.

Three months later, another correspondent (whose letter, though not written to Lavington, is among the Lavington papers) describes the situation in Port Isaac and in Endellion and St. Kew parishes. James Read writes from St. Kew (was he the vicar?—the *Cornwall Register*, p. 149, names the vicar from 1737 to 1760 as "Bread",

<sup>35</sup> Trenarren is now the home of the Cornish historian Dr. A. L. Rowse.

possibly a misprint) to Charles Vivian, the newly-appointed rector of Withiel (1748-61), but here the ground of complaint is only to a minor degree the supposed lack of qualifications of the Methodist preachers and leaders, but rather the support given to the sect by certain evangelical clergy—George Thomson of St. Gennys and the venerable John Bennet, whom we have already met. William Philp, also castigated, was later curate of St. Agnes (1758-62), but died a young man. Referring regularly to him in the *Journal* as “Phelps”, John Wesley had a high opinion of his work. Who the Irishman is—and here again we have the characteristic criticism, he is “said to be a dancing master”—is doubtful; it may be Charles Skelton, one of the earliest preachers, and perhaps the first Irishman to become such, who was received as a preacher at the 1748 Conference—only two months after the date of this letter.

JAMES READ TO “THE REVD. MR. CHARLES VYVYAN”

Dear Sir,

I won't make any apology for troubling you with a Line or two, as it comes under a cover, & you know that I use no Compliments. I am sincerely glad to hear yt all is well, & am longing to induct you into your little Rectory;—but wish, if some kind of opportunity wd put it in yr Power, you wd endeavr. to do our unhappy neighborhood a Piece of service before you leave London, by intimating, if you can seasonably to his Lordship, what evils are brought upon us by Mr. Thomson's & Bennet's unwarrantable disorderly Conduct. They have erected at Port Isaac a Pulpit, as I'm told, in Richard Crabb's house, where Mr. Thomson meets a multitude of People generally once a fortnight, & after two or three Days' stay, recommends them to an Irishman, an entire stranger to ym all, & said to be a dancing Master. Mr. Thomson was there last Friday & Saturday. The Irishman att ye Beginning of ye week. — Poor Wm Philp continues in a very bad condition still, & I'm affraid by ye People he chooses to converse wth, will not soon be better. I have but two or three besides yt go near ym; but Endellyon is falling off very fast . . . If 'tis not Jesuitical I'm much mistaken.

JAMES READ.

St. Kew April ye 5th 48.

Another incumbent who was concerned at his colleagues who were sympathetic to Methodism was John Collins, rector of Redruth from 1734 to 1775. For a single year, in 1747, his curate was Thomas Vivian; and whilst Collins was not basically hostile to Wesley (he had been a contemporary in their Oxford days, and it was no doubt “for old time's sake” that he came to Wesley's rescue at Wendron in 1745—see the *Journal* for 4th July), he was undoubtedly concerned at the spread of Methodism, and at his curate's sympathy if not assistance. By the time of this letter, Vivian had left Redruth and was vicar of Cornwood, near Plympton (Devon), where he remained until 1793. Clearly Collins's opening paragraph refers to some supposed Methodist scandal, which, upon further inquiry, he had been unable to substantiate.



## JOHN COLLINS TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

Redruth, Sept. 16. 49

My Lord,

The Nature of yr. Lordsp's Letter gave me an im[m]ediate suspicion, yt I must have been deceived in ye Relation of wh. I had writ You: and having enquired particularly into the affair, so I find it. tho' ye Church wardens and Several of our Principal men together asserted it to me with such Confidence, as left me at that time no Room for doubting. That He was presented, I knew; but yt he has been been [sic] cited proves false: and it is my Duty to let you know it lest you should give yr self any further Trouble.

With regard to this Sect, they decline upon many falling off from their assemblys, & John Westly, so far as I can find, growing more indifferent towards them. And had it not been for Mr. Vivian, whom I take to be a falsehearted Brother, ye Sect had never increased as it did, in this Parish. This I mention to give yr Lordsp an Idea of the man. I am

My Lord, yr dutifull humble

Servt. JOHN COLLINS.

Thomas Vivian's own relation to the Methodists is well illustrated in two letters to Lavington preserved among the papers; unfortunately the first one is incomplete, being perished towards the end. Vivian is clearly not only far better informed than any other correspondent, but exercises far more judgement than most. He admits that there are contradictions in what he hears, and he realizes that those popularly dubbed Methodists include those who are in fact members of society, those who are serious hearers, and those who, very much on the fringe, bring discredit on the Methodists and are disowned by them.

There is little with which one would quarrel in his summary of Methodist doctrine, discipline and practice. It is significant that he notes that "they are much readier to cast out than to receive in"—so much for the accusations of immorality! Significant also is his remark that other clergymen have been stirred to a holy jealousy by the labours and character of the Methodists, which has been a rebuke to the clergy's general "carelessness and supineness". His own attitude is clearly not persecution, but an intention to build upon Methodist foundations.

It would be good to know who were the two "laymen that are at present stationed in the west of Cornwall": no stations appear in the earliest *Minutes*. Was one of them perhaps Peter Jaco?

## THOMAS VIVIAN TO BISHOP LAVINGTON (i)

Redruth Aug. 27th 1747

My Lord,

I have not yet finish'd the Collection of Samples of ore, which your Lordship desir's, but will send it very soon.

Your Lordship desir'd me too to send an Account of the methodists in this neighbourhood; but I have long been considering in what manner this can best be done. Should I write all I hear of them, it would be a confus'd Medley of Contradictions. I shall therefore, confine myself to those things wch I know to be fact.

When I first Came to Redruth I sent for some of the principal persons among them, & took all opportunities of asking questions of others. I found them all very free and open in declaring *what God had done for their souls; that he had let them see the sinfull State they were in, and had recover'd them out of darkness into his marvellous light.* This is the Manner they express themselves.

In order to form a better judgment of them, I generally took down Minutes of what they said; and had some thoughts of sending your Lordship an abstract of these, as the most effectual Method of informing your Lordship of their Sentiments. But this I thought would be too long and tedious for your Lordship to read, & have therefore omitted it.

The following particulars your Lorship may depend upon.

## 1

With Regard to their opinions.

1. They profess they can live without *committing* sin, though not without sin *remaining* in them. The former, they say, supposes a Concurrence of the *Will.* the latter is involuntary, and the remains of the *Old Man.*
2. They hope to be *justified* by *Faith alone,* but such faith as is Necessarily followed by all good works; otherwise it is not *Saving Faith* but the *Faith of Devils.*
3. *Their distinguishing principle,* & the only one wherein they say they differ from the rest of the Church is what they call *Sensible justification.* Some declare *they are waiting for the promise which they see afar off.* Others that God has been gracious to them, given them remission of their sins, & such a sense of his Love towards them as is always accompanied with great peace & sometimes with joy.

This comfortable sense of God's favour, they say, usually follows a great sorrowing under convictions of sin; and they receive it at once.

There other Notions are just the same as are found in Mr. Wesley's works.

## 2

With Regard to their practice.

1. They are *to all appearance* persons of great Sanctity of life, Avoiding Strictly not only gross sins but every approach to evil.
2. They never frequent any sports, revels, diversions, &c, & sigh and grieve to see others do so; calling them the *Devil's Snares whereby he entraps unwary souls.*
3. Besides that wch is spent in labour & sleep they pass their time usually in walking together, talking on Religious Subjects, reading, singing hymns, and praying.
4. They frequently affront people by reproving them for *singing idle songs,* talking of *worldly matters* in going or coming from Church, being Angry, irregularly merry &c.
5. If they see any person drunk, swearing, or the like, they reprove him, and are apt to tell him he is in the way to Damnation.
6. They call each other *Brother & Sister,* seem to be linkt together in the strictest friendship, and make it an invariable rule to tell each other if they think or suspect anything to be amiss.
7. In their devotions they sometimes make use of the collects of the Church, but usually extempore prayer.

8. In their private devotions I'm told they have been sometimes overheard to make use of rapturous expressions, & seem'd to be in a kind of extasy.

9. In publick prayer I hear they frequently shed tears especially in singing their hymns.

10. They are very Constant attendants at Church & the Sacrament, & when there seem very attentive & much affected.

11. The dangers I apprehend them most liable to are spiritual pride, & presumption. Against these I take all opportunities to Caution them, & they seem very thankfull.

With regard to pride, some have confess'd to me this was the greatest enemy they had to struggle with. And as to presumption, they allow there have been some among them that *deceiv'd themselves* imagining they were in a State of Grace when really they were not, as appear'd to others by their actions.

With regard to their discipline.

They very strictly follow those rules that are found in two pamphlets; One entitled *Rules of the United Societies*; the other *Rules of the Bands*.

1. A *Society* is all those that meet together in one house call'd *the society House*. That which is near this town consists of between 200 or 300 *subscribers*, besides perhaps three times that number which usually attend.

They meet every Wednesday & Sunday evening to pray & sing hymns or psalms, & hear a discourse from one of those two laymen that are at present station'd in the West of Cornwall.

Every Friday is a fast-day when those that can meet & pray for all mankind which they call the intercession.

They say they Contribute 2d, 3d, 6d or 1s pr week, & some nothing according to their ability, which money is expended in maintaining the preachers, building a society house, & charitable uses, & is managed by the stewards appointed.

2. A *Class* is between 12 & 20 persons of any age or sex that live near each other, who meet together to sing & pray with their leader once or twice a week.

The leader of the class examines each person with respect to the the [sic] state of their soul, gives some short admonition, & makes a report to the preacher of the society, & he, if they do not testify a very . . . crimes they are charg'd with, turns them out of the society.

3. When they have made some considerable advancement, & have, as they express it, receiv'd justifying Faith, They are United into Bands.

A *Band* is 5 or 6 such persons of the same age & sex, which when they meet together are more unreserv'd, & declare, as they say, the inmost secrets of their hearts.

The preachers are frequently remov'd, & I'm told Mr. Wesley goes all round England once or twice a year.

There is one person in this parish who preaches sometimes, or (as he would rather call it) *exhorts*; whom I can by no means persuade to desist from so irregular & dangerous an undertaking. His arguments are that whosoever is gifted, & God blesses with success, must be effectually call'd to preach the Gospel.

When I represent to them the danger of making a schism, they say they cannot leave what they have experienc'd to be so great a means of Grace,

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JOHN A. VICKERS.

[We express our thanks to Mr. Vickers for his careful work in the compilation of another comprehensive Index.—EDITOR.]

& declare the greatest abhorrence of seperating [sic] from the Church. When I would enter farther into the irregularity of the thing, They refer me to Mr. Wesley's appeal.

This, My Lord, is the best Account I can give You of these people, & as your Lordship will perceive, that amongst their irregularities there is something very Commendable in them. This I endeavour to promote, & at the same time draw them off from every thing that is irregular by the softest methods I am capable. Having observ'd that those Clergymen that . . . drive (—) them from them and contri[bute] . . .

the same time I am griev'd to see  
[per]sons in danger of seperating from  
t lay in my power to restore, and  
tho' I do not  
great difficulty  
in receiving

THOMAS VIVIAN TO BISHOP LAVINGTON (ii)

Redruth, Feb. 20th 1747/8

My Lord,

I have received Your Lordship's favour with leave to rebuild the Vicarage house at Cornwood, & to tarry here, till it is finished, for which I humbly thank you.

I know nothing more of Consequence, relating to the Methodists in those parts: but I see every day more reasons to confirm me in the opinion I had of them when I writ Your Lordship before.

The Very different & Contradictory Accounts that are spread of them, I believe, proceed chiefly from this. There are two sorts of people usually stil'd Methodists: Those that have given in their names and belong to some society & constantly attend all their meetings; and those that attend only sometimes, without regularly belonging to them.

Of the latter sort some, I know, walk very orderly & uprightly, but thro' the influence of friends or perhaps some objection to the irregularity of their preaching or meetings will not join their names to them tho' they are United in heart and affection. But others tho' they like to hear them & have made some improvements, yet as their change is but partial, what ever irregularities in conduct they are guilty of are charg'd upon the Methodists in general, tho' these disown that they belong to them.

The former sort, as far as I can discover by observing, conversing with, & enquiring about them, are the most pious Christians in heart & life I ever knew, & seem to have little blameable in them besides their irregular Meetings. If any among them are guilty of slip; none are more ready to observe it than themselves; and unless they are indeed very earnest penitents, they are immediately turn'd out of the society. For I observe, they are much readier to cast out than to receive in.

Now as their Character is thus mix'd, It is my earnest endeavour to promote in them what is good, & let them see their [sic] is no necessity for the irregular part. And to have others like them in Piety without joining with them in seperating [sic] into private Societies.

With this View as I am obliged by Covenant to Catechize the Children & read prayers on Saturdays: I endeavour likewise to explain the Catechism to the Children & expound upon it somewhat more largely to the grown persons yt attend frequently, & none more Constantly than the Methodists. For they declare, they would rather receive instruction from

their own parish-minister than any other if he would take the pains. And they are indeed of a very docile disposition.

They usually meet once or twice a week very early or late before or after work to pray & sing & hear their preacher. Now as the weekly prayers here, / besides those on Saturdays / are only on Wednesdays, and that at eleven o'clock, at which time the labouring people cannot attend; I have some thought of reading prayers early in the morning once or twice a week during the summer, & join a psalm in the same manner as at the Cathedral in Exeter.

One effect of this, I believe, would be drawing the Methodists from their other meetings, & join with others in a regular manner. But this intention I mention to your Lordship that if You think it improper I may Correct it.

If Your Lordship please to prescribe any other method I should be glad to obey your Commands.

There are several Clergymen in these parts that seems desirous of promoting & regulating the spirit of Religion that is among us. But we are all unwilling to do anything without your Lordship's direction. And we are sensible that the Piety that has spread in this irregular manner should be an awakening to our carelessness & supineness.

I have lately seen two or three Treatises written by one<sup>36</sup> Mr. Edwards minister of Northampton in New England, especially one entitled *Some thoughts on the the* [sic] *Present Revival of Religion in New England*, which I think, (excepting only a few particulars) differs very little from what I have seen in Cornwall.

I am, My Lord, with the sincerest gratitud[e] for your great Favours,  
Yr Lordship's

Most Dutifull Son  
& Humble Servant

T. VIVIAN.

But the most typical Anglican Evangelical attitude was that taken by the famous Samuel Walker, who was curate of Truro from 1746 until 1761, the year of his death. Left in sole charge by his absentee rector, he began his ministry after the fashion of the day, thoroughly enjoying the social life of the town. Conversation with George Conon, the headmaster of the Grammar School, led to his conversion, and thenceforward followed a vigorous evangelical ministry which neither his rector nor his bishop could curtail. He founded his Clerical Club about 1750, and among its leading members were Thomas Michel of Veryan, Thomas Vivian of Cornwood, John Penrose of Penryn (whom we meet in the following letter), and James Vowler of St. Agnes. This letter shows Walker's scrupulousness in handling the funeral of a notorious evil-liver, and his anxiety to be cleared of any suspicion of being a Methodist. This perhaps is explained by Wesley's comment in his *Journal* (4th September 1766):

I was in hopes, when Mr. Walker died, the enmity in those who were called his people would have died also. But it is not so; they still look upon us as rank heretics, and will have no fellowship with us.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> "by one" written twice, and the second time crossed out.

<sup>37</sup> *Journal*, v, p. 185.

Walker's Calvinism, which he shared with most of the Anglican Evangelicals (and with most Anglican Evangelicals today), including, later, George Thomson, was no doubt the cause of the lack of sympathy.

SAMUEL WALKER TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

My Lord,

Your Lordship, as I am informed, either is or will be applide to upon occasion of another Person's Death in this Place the last Week. It is my Duty to represent the whole Truth of the Matter to your Lordship. The man has distinguished himself by an uncommonly ill Conduct; and his Death was so circumstanced, that I could not prevail on myself to use those words of the Burial Office, "as our Hope is this our Brother doth", in his Case. I saw I had taken an unwarrantable Step in omitting them on the former Occasion; therefore determined I could not bury him; and accordingly recommended to those who had the Care of that Business to procure some other Clergyman. In the mean Time Mr. Penrose accidentally came to Town; & word was repeatedly sent that he was ready to do the Office. But he was not permitted; tho the Persons who had the Care of the Funeral insisted he should perform it. So some of the dead Person's Acquaintance carried him to Kenwyn, where he was buried.

My Lord, I am very sensible of the Confusion that is the Consequence of such a Conduct, which gives me the greatest Concern. Yet I knew not how to avoid it. I dared not do it contrary to my Conscience, while yet as Minister of the Parish it lay upon me. I am drove, my Lord, into the greatest Strait, being unwilling to decline my Office on the one Part, & yet not knowing what to do in this Case, which may occur again, on the other. I am strongly inclined to hope I am under some great Mistake, as so many excellent Men in the Church must needs have acted another Part in the same Circumstance. Wherefore, as I fully determined to be Occasion of no more Trouble this Way hereafter, I think it my Duty to consult personally the most sensible & experienced of the Clergy upon a Point which lies so heavy upon me; & with this View humbly beg Leave to have Admission to your Lordship.

Meantime, my Lord, I am very sorry to have fallen under your Lordship's Displeasure; & gladly take Hold of this Opportunity to declare that I am no Methodist. I approve of the Church of England on the maturest Consideration, & from the clearest Convictions of my own Mind. I had never a Thought of leaving it; & however I may have been represented, do both dissent from Mr. Wesley's principles, nor can justify his Proceedings. Those who know me best acquit me of all Imputation of Methodism; among whom I beg Leave to mention my neighbour Dr. Stackhouse. I am ready to open myself without Reserve upon any Questions & Inquiries your Lordship may see fit to demand of me; being desirous to be esteemed by your Lordship, what indeed I am

Your Lordship's very dutiful & most humble Servt.

SAML. WALKER.

Truro Oct. 10. 1757

Samuel Walker's brother James, vicar of St. Agnes with Perranzabuloe for the long period of sixty-three years (1730-93), was clearly in difficulties. A succession of his curates were awakened men—we have seen James Read's criticism of one of them, William Philp, who seems to have actively supported the Methodists; Vowler was

a leading member of the Clerical Club, as the vicar himself may have been. In this parish we have thus Anglican Evangelicals, Anglican Methodists (if we may so term them), a growing Methodist community, and a Church attempt to take legal action. The poor man must have felt himself hard pressed!

JAMES WALKER TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

My Lord,

Mr. Westley & Followers, who have been buisy for some years past in these Parts of your Lordship's Diocese, having lately come within my Parish of St. Agnes, and John Westley himself being now amongst them, I have thought myself obliged (in Consequence of the Opinion of my Friends the Clergy in this Neighbourhood) to request your Lordship's advice in so momentous a Concern.

The Number of Converts already made, I believe, is not above fifty, but from the great Number of Inhabitants (being not much less than three Thousand) a much greater Increase is to be feared.

I may assure your Lordship, I have made use of all the prudent Methods in my Power to prevent their Progress, & have been much pressed, by the sober part of my Congregation, to call in the civil Majestrate to suppress them, wch I have not chosen to comply with, without your Lordship's direction.

Mr. Westley has instill'd a notion into his Disciples, that he has his Majesties Approbation & Sanction for his Proceedings, as I am informed by a Methodist, at whose house their Meeting is sometimes held.

I am your Lordship's most Dutiful  
and Obedient Servant

JAMES WALKER.

St. Agnes (near Truro)  
July 6th. 1747.

A last glance at the embarrassing situation in which Anglican Evangelicals found themselves is provided by the two brief letters in which George Thomson of St. Gennys and his protégé (and possible relative) R. Elliot seek the latter's ordination. Lavington refused to ordain Elliot, possibly because he was befriended by the Countess of Huntingdon; was it also a roundabout way of "getting at" Thomson? For the latter wanted Elliot ordained to take his place during one of his missionary tours, of which Lavington would certainly disapprove. If he had no curate to supply for him, Thomson's evangelistic trip might very well be prevented. It would be interesting to know the outcome. It would be interesting, too, to know the identity of Mr. Kennedy<sup>38</sup> (Elliot's and Thomson's correspondent), Mr. Geare (or Gayer,<sup>39</sup> also mentioned above in Edmund Herring's letter), and Messrs. Kennaway, Gales, and Bastard. This list, together with Thomson's final words of greeting, is reminiscent of the tantalizing closing passages of Paul's epistles.

<sup>38</sup> Was he perhaps the patron of the living?

<sup>39</sup> A James Gayer was at the time rector of nearby Marhamchurch.



## R. ELLIOT TO MR. KENNEDY

St. Gennys near Camelford, Cornw:

May 22 1752

Dear Sir,

I have inclos'd my L—— to desire you would yourself so far as to get Mr. —— the Regist: to endorse it to St. Gennys in Cornw: that I may be a licensed Curate of the same according to Mr. Thomson's desire. And if you please pay Mr. Geare his Fee which by some means or other will I trust be again soon repaid you. Excuse me Dr. Sr. this Liberty and forgive the freedom that I take with you herein. but I am persuaded you willingly wou'd oblige your sincere & affectionate

Friend &amp; Servt. in Christ Jesus

R. ELLIOT.

P.S. I desire my kind love to Mrs. Kennedy and all your Family: as also to Mr. Kennaway, Mr. Gales & wife, Mr. Bastard and all Christian Friends. An answer as soon as possible will be acceptable.

## GEORGE THOMSON TO MR. KENNEDY

Dr. Sr.,

I am oblig'd to be abroad great part of the Summer, & that my Parish may be well served in my Absence, I have made choice of Mr. Elliot to supply<sup>40</sup> for me, till I return.

Be pleas'd to ascertain Mr. Gayer of this my choice, & request him to qualify the Gentleman for such Service.

My wife salutes you & good Mrs. Kennedy much in the Lord. I join with her in most cordial salutations, & am Dr. Sr. your

Affect. Friend &amp; oblig'd humble Servt.

G. THOMSON.

We close this selection from the Lavington papers<sup>41</sup> with a letter of a different kind. This is signed "A.Z."—clearly a disguise—and takes the form of a rebuke to Lavington for encouraging the Exeter playhouse, even though it is Lavington's wife and daughter rather than himself who frequent it. This may seem unduly puritanical in this permissive age, when a "Christian" minister can be found to defend any vice; but the stage of 1748 had a bad reputation: humour and plots were alike lewd, and worse was still to come with the plays of the Cornishman Samuel Foote. Perhaps the most telling commentary on the contemporary situation is the fact that the preaching of the evangelical Samuel Walker led to the closure of the Truro cock-pit and theatre. "A.Z." was right, after all.

## "A.Z." TO BISHOP LAVINGTON

Exon the 1st March 1748

My Lord,

The Devil's agents are now settled here, without the least opposition from the Clergy whose Duty it is to oppose them much more than the

<sup>40</sup> "my" written after "supply", then crossed out.

<sup>41</sup> The papers also contain two unrelated letters of John Wesley—one to his brother Samuel, the other to Henry Rimius—both printed in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, pp. 101, 103.

civil magistrate for they do not call in question the tittle [sic] of King George but the doctrine of our blessed redeemer and the Satyr of the stage upon the Clergy is very particular. We are indeed become a very Polite City and where Politeness prevails to a great degree Christianity goes out of fashion. We had not formerly beggerly Italians nor Germans to increase our poverty but were satsfied but were satisfied [sic] with the performance of our own Countrymen neither had we formerly such a constant blessing of consorts, assembly's, &c, &c, &c, and if all those meetings (?) shoud not be productive of fruit I shall impute it to want of ability rather than to inclination and endeavour.

St. Paul tells us: A bishop must be blameless. I wish your Lordship were so one that ruleth well his own house. I wish cou'd be said of yr Lordship but your permitting your Wife and daughter to go to the playhouse demonstrate you do not, and if a man know not how to rule his own house how shall he take care of the Church of God.

St. Paul tells us also: he must have a good report of them that are without. Your Lordship's encouragement of the Devil's agents hath contracted it very much and very much griev'd many people and 'tis deem'd an original act of an Exeter Bishop's Lady. St. Paul says further, thier [sic] wives must be sober, grave. Some people think where there [sic] virtues are predominant the person do not contribute to the throng of the Playhouse, and whose conscience will not permit her to give her money for men to curse and swear and talk Bawdy, a pretty entertainment for a Bishop's Lady and to see foul representations, impudent language and gestures.

We see 'tis to little purpose for our Mayor and Aldm to oppose a thing that your Lordship and the dignified Clergymen are resolved to encourage. Your Lordship know they are not licensed and that what they do is contrary to law; and others do know 'tis contrary to the Gospel. Your Lordship knows they have been condemn'd by fathers and Councils and States. My Lord, and to be serious, Shoud an Apostle rise from the Dead and converse with us how woud he wonder to see the face and complexion of Christianity altered [from] what it was in his days and were it not for the name and the title which we bear would sooner guess us to be anything than Christians for so universal a depravation is there among us that we have scarce any thing left to distinguish us from the most barbarous people but a better name and worse vices. I am your Lordship's most obedient humble Servant and honest (?) well wisher both to you and to your family, both in time and to eternity.

A. Z.

[Addressed:] For the Rt. Revd. / Doctor Lavington / Bishop of Exeter.

[Endorsed:] Methodist's Letter of the Play-house.

The writer described himself as Lavington's "well-wisher both to you and to your family, both in time and to eternity", which reminds one that on 29th August 1762 John Wesley was "well pleased to partake of the Lord's Supper with my old opponent Bishop Lavington. Oh may we sit down together in the kingdom of our Father!"<sup>42</sup> Lavington died a fortnight later.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGÉ.

[See Notes and Queries No. 1337 on page 189.]

<sup>42</sup> *Journal*, iv, p. 527.

## CHARLES WESLEY IN 1739

By Joseph Williams of Kidderminster

THE passage which follows is an extract from the manuscript journal of Joseph Williams (1692-1755) of Kidderminster, which is preserved in the Congregational Library, London. *Extracts* from the journal, edited by Williams's minister, Benjamin Fawcett, were published at Shrewsbury in 1779, and an *Enlarged Series of Extracts*, edited by Williams's great-grandson, Benjamin Hanbury, appeared in 1815; but in neither of these volumes, nor in a third edition, entitled *The Christian Merchant* (1853), was the present passage included.

Williams is of interest as a minor figure of the Evangelical Revival, a layman in touch with many of the leaders. He was in correspondence with Doddridge and Lady Huntingdon; with Whitefield and Howell Harris, each of whom visited him at Kidderminster; and with the Cornish Evangelical Samuel Walker. Another visitor to Kidderminster was the "Star of the West", Risdon Darracott, a pupil of Doddridge, as was Williams's own minister, Fawcett. The *Abridgment* (1748) of the journal for 1745-6 of the missionary to the Indians, David Brainerd, to which Doddridge contributed a commendatory epistle, was anonymously edited by Williams. The devotional entries in Williams's journal following the administration of the Lord's Supper bear interesting comparison with those in Doddridge's journal. His account of his meeting with Charles Wesley in 1739, and of the effect on him of Wesley's preaching and devout spirit, is valuable evidence of the deep unity that could be felt at this date between Wesley and a Calvinist Dissenter. It is also a vivid piece of writing, penned soon after the event it describes.

One immediate effect was to prompt Williams to send Wesley an account of the occasion, for submission, if Wesley and his brother approved, to the *Gentleman's Magazine*. Either Wesley or the editor did not approve; probably the former, for the account, which did not appear in the *Magazine*, was found, with a covering letter, among Wesley's papers. By the kindness of his daughter Sarah it was published in the year of her death (1828) in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, lvii, pp. 383-5,<sup>1</sup> together with the covering letter and an earlier letter from Williams to Wesley; whence a considerable portion was reprinted, without acknowledgement of the source, by Thomas Jackson in his *Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley* (1841), i, pp. 195-7. With minor variants,<sup>2</sup> Williams clearly copied, for the

<sup>1</sup> For drawing my attention to this, I am grateful to Mr. D. W. Riley, of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, who informs me that, to the best of his knowledge, the material is not among the manuscripts now preserved in that Library.

<sup>2</sup> The variants indicate that the two short passages printed in [A. C. H. Seymour:] *Life and Times of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon* (1839-40), ii, pp. 365-6, were taken from the manuscript, not from the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*.

extract designed for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, much of the passage given below, which he wrote first and for his own eye only. It includes an additional and highly interesting paragraph describing the "moderate Repast" provided for Wesley "after so laborious an Exercise", and the devout thankfulness with which this was accepted.

Charles Wesley's own account of the occasion runs as follows :

I . . . published the word of reconciliation at the brick-yard. God in Christ was with us of a truth. I never spoke more clearly. The same power was in the Society. Mr. Williams, of Kidderminster, was much edified among us. He followed a letter he wrote, inviting me thither. Of what denomination he is, I know not, nor is it material; for he has the mind which was in Jesus. I met my brother, just returned from London.<sup>3</sup>

GEOFFREY F. NUTTALL.

[The Rev. Dr. Geoffrey F. Nuttall, who is a minister (now retired) of the United Reformed Church, was lecturer in Church History at New College, London, and a recognized teacher in the University of London. He was also a visiting professor at King's College, London. He is the author of many books and articles, particularly on Philip Doddridge, Howell Harris and the world of Trevecka.]

#### Extract from the Journal of Joseph Williams of Kidderminster

ON Monday, Sep. 17. 1739, I set out for my Southern Circuit by way of London, had a wet Journey, to my great Grief saw (I suppose) many thousand Acres of Lent-Tillage, chiefly Barly, either lying in Despair, or standing, in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Barkshire, &c. In many Places, particularly Wiltshire, they seemed to be but in the midst of their Barly Harvest in the middle of October. The best Barly was sold at Warminster at 4s. 3d. the Bushel, & many feared that it would have been very scarce & dear in general, but Blessed be God there soon appeared Signs of considerable Plenty, & the Market fell almost as fast as it had risen. But the most memorable Incident in the whole Journey concerns the Methodists; a Sect lately sprung up among us.

The Revd. Mr. Whitefield, who seems to be the Father of that Sect, has travelled from Place to Place, preaching Christ, much in the old puritanicall Strain, divers years, as may be seen at large in his printed Journals; but especially at Bristol & London. Since him, several others have, with unparallelled Zeal, & indefatigable Industry, engaged in the same Design, & much in the same manner; of which the principal are the Revd. Mr. John Wesley, Mr. Cha. Wesley, two Brothers; Mr. Ingham,<sup>4</sup> & Mr. Rogers.<sup>5</sup> The common People every where flock to hear them, & in most places hear them gladly, but they meet with great Opposition from the Clergy, who in most places, & almost every where, deny them the Use of their Churches, for which reason they generally preach in the open Fields. They commonly preach once or twice every Day, if there be Opportunity, & expound the Scriptures in the Evening

<sup>3</sup> Charles Wesley's *Journal* (ed. T. Jackson), i, p. 187, 8th October 1739; cf. John Wesley's *Journal* (Standard edn.), ii, p. 288, for the same date: ". . . in the evening came to Bristol."

<sup>4</sup> For Benjamin Ingham (1712-73), see *D.N.B.*; R. W. Thompson: *Benjamin Ingham* (Kendal, 1958).

<sup>5</sup> For Jacob Rogers (d. 1779), curate of St. Paul's, Bedford, and later a Moravian minister, see John D. Walsh, in *Christian Spirituality* (ed. P. Brooks, 1975), pp. 257-8, 262-3, 273-4.

to religious Societys, who have their Society Rooms for that purpose. I had long & earnestly wished for an Opportunity of hearing one or more of these Methodists, & the rather, because even among good men there is a great Diversity of Opinions concerning them, & various Reflections made on their Doctrine & Practice. I therefore the rather took Bath & Bristol in my Way home, at the former of which places I arrived on Saturday Night, Octo. 6. & on the morrow with great Pleasure heard Dr. Stephenson<sup>6</sup> in the morning, & had leave to join in Communion with his People at the Lord's Supper, thro' the Mediation of the Revd. Mr. Pyke<sup>7</sup> of Tiverton, my Bro. Pearsall's<sup>8</sup> Predecessor at Warminster, to whom I made my Self known. It was a very delightfull, profitable Opportunity, as I have often observed such Seasons are, when they occur to me on a Journy, more than generally when I am at home, which I chiefly attribute, so far as respects external Causes, to the Scarcity of religious Advantages while I am travelling, which, like Abstinence from corporeal Food, whets the Appetite.

Next day I came to Bristol; & hearing, in the afternoon, that Mr. Cha. Wesley was preaching in the Brick-field, (so I think they called it,) I got a Guide, & went to hear him. I found him standing on a Table-Board, in an erect Posture, with his Hands & Eyes lifted up to Heaven in Prayer, surrounded by, I guess, more than a thousand People; some few of them fashionable Persons, both Men & Women, but most of them of the lower Rank of Mankind. I know not how long he had been engaged in that Service before my coming, after which he continued therein scarce a quarter of an Hour, during which time he prayed with uncommon fervency, fluency & variety of proper Expression. He then preached about an Hour in such a manner as I have scarce ever heard any man preach: i.e. though I have heard many a finer Sermon, according to the common Taste, or Acceptation, of Sermons, yet, I think, I never heard any man discover such evident Signs of a vehement Desire, or labour so earnestly, to convince his Hearers that they were all by Nature in a sinfull, lost, undone, damnable State; that, notwithstanding, there was a possibility of their Salvation, thro' Faith in Christ; that for this End our Sins were imputed to him, or he was made Sin for us, tho' he knew no Sin, i.e. had no Sin of his own, & this in order that his Righteousness might be imputed, as it certainly will, to as many as believe on him; and that none are excepted, but such as refuse to come to him as lost, perishing, yea as damned Sinners, & trust in him alone, i.e. in his meritorious Righteousness, & atoning Sacrifice, for Pardon, & Salvation; that this is the method Infinite Wisdom hath chosen for reconciling the World unto himself, & that whosoever believeth in him shall certainly receive Remission of Sins, & an Inheritance among them that are sanctified. All this he backed with many Texts of Scripture, which he explained & illustrated, & then by a Variety of the most forcible Motives, Arguments and Expostulations, did he invite, allure, quicken & labour, if it were possible, to compel all, & every of his Hearers, to

<sup>6</sup> For Bennet Stevenson (d. 1756), minister at Trim Street, Bath, see *Funeral Sermon* by John Frank.

<sup>7</sup> For Joseph Pyke, minister at Common Close, Warminster, 1720-6, and at Tiverton, 1730-42, see [H. M. Gunn:] *History of Nonconformity in Warminster* (1853), p. 39, and W. P. Authers: *Tiverton Congregational Church, 1660-1960* (Bideford, [1960]), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> For Richard Pearsall (1698-1762), Williams's brother-in-law, minister at Warminster, 1731-47, and at Taunton, 1747-62, see *D.N.B.*

believe in Christ for Salvation. He shewed how great a Change such a Faith in Christ would produce in the whole man, or, at least, would accompany it; that every Man who is in Christ, i.e. believes in him unto Salvation, is a new Creature; hath a thorough Change wrought upon all his Powers, and Faculties: He is not the same Man he was. His Will is under a new Direction, & his Affections run in quite different Channels. He now loves God above all, to whom by Nature he had a rooted Aversion,<sup>9</sup> &c. Nor did he fail to inform them how ineffectual their Faith would be to justify them, unless it wrought by Love, purified their Hearts, & were productive of good Works, even all the Fruits of Obedience. For tho' he cautioned them with the utmost Care, not to attribute any Merit to their own Performances, nor in the least Degree rest upon any Works of their own, yet he thoroughly apprized them, that that is but a dead Faith which is not operative, & productive of all the Good in their power, in Obedience to God.

This, as I remember was the Scope of his Discourse, wherein, with uncommon Fervour, he acquitted himself as an Embassadour of Christ, beseeching them in his Name, & praying them in his Stead, to be reconciled to God.<sup>10</sup> And although he used no Notes, nor had anything in his Hand but a Bible, yet he delivered his Thoughts in a rich, copious Variety of Expression, & with so much Propriety, that I could not observe any thing incoherent, or inaccurate thro' the whole Performance; which he concluded with Singing, Prayer, & the usual Benediction.

Afterwards I waited on him at Mr. Norman's, & did not wonder to find him, after so laborious an Exercise, somewhat tired, & reclined on a Couch, while a moderate Repast of Bread & Butter, & Tea, was provided for him. He received me in a very friendly manner, & we quickly enter'd into a very free Conversation; in which he let me know that Count Zinzendorff, lately a Grandee of Poland, now an eminent Minister of Christ, would not admit any lower Degree of justifying Faith than such as was attended with a good Hope of the Remission of Sins thro' him; the Orthodoxy of which we debated a while, till he brought me in some measure into his way of thinking. Before he would take any bodily Refreshment he with a few Friends that waited on him, sung an Hymn, & then prayed for a Blessing as at Set-Meals; after the Tea we sung another Hymn. I could not fall in with their way of Singing in the Field, for they sung German Tunes, keeping very quick time; but in the House, after a Stanza or two, I fell in readily enough, & with great Elevation of Soul; to which the lively Devotion of those I joined with seemed not a little to contribute. Indeed they sung with sensible Marks of Melody in their Hearts.

Afterwards, though I had made an Appointment to meet a Person with whom I had Concerns of considerable Importance, yet at Mr. Wesley's earnest Invitation I went with them to the religious Society, & found the Place so thronged that it was with great Difficulty we got to the Center of it, where was a convenient Place provided for Mr. Wesley either to stand or sit on. We found them singing an Hymn which ceased upon his appearing in his Place. He first prayed; then expounded good part of the 12. chap. of John, in a most sweet, savoury, spiritual manner; then sung an Hymn, then proceeded a while further in the

<sup>9</sup> i.e. aversion; see *O.E.D.* (archaic).

<sup>10</sup> The printed account gives 2 Corinthians v. 17-21 as the text.

Exposition then sung again; then prayed over a great number of Bills<sup>11</sup> which were put up by the Society, about 20 of which (for I read them all, and bro't them away with me) respected spiritual Cases, & then concluded with a Blessing; in all which he took up near two Hours. But never, sure, did I hear such praying: Never did I see or hear such evident Marks of Fervency in the Service of God. At the Close of every Petition a serious AMEN, like a gentle, rushing Sound of Waters, run thro' the whole Audience, with such a solemn Air as quite distinguished it from whatever of that Nature I have heard attending the Responses in the Church-Service. It is impossible for any meer Man to try the Hearts of others; but thus much I will venture to say; Such evident Marks of a lively fervent Devotion I was never Witness to before. If there be such a thing as Heavenly Musick upon Earth, I heard it there: If there be such an Enjoyment, such an Attainment, as Heaven upon Earth, Numbers in that Society seemed to possess it. As for my own part I do not remember my Heart to have been so elevated in Divine Love & Praise as it was there & then for many years past if ever; and an affecting Sense & Savour thereof abode on my Mind many Weeks after.

I found upon Inquiry that great Numbers in & about Bristol by attending on these religious Exercises have been reformed from a vitious Course, &, without neglecting the Duties of their Callings, as has been invidiously suggested, made Religion their chief Business; & particularly, that this was remarkably the Case with a great Number of the Colliers in Kingswood whose Wickedness a few years since was notorious. One Man in particular told me that his Wife with whom till of late he had lived very unhappily, who used daily to curse him, by attending Mr. Wesley's Ministry was now become the best of Wives, which was the Occasion of his joining himself to his Followers.

From all which, notwithstanding some Errors which, as meer Men, they may be liable to, I cannot but hope & believe, that God is with them of a Truth, & hath raised them up in this Day of so general Defection from Gospel-Purity, Simplicity, & Zeal, for signal Service & Usefulness in his Church.

<sup>11</sup> i.e. announcements to be read publicly during the prayers of the congregation; see *O.E.D.* (obsolete).

We gratefully acknowledge receipt of copies of the following periodicals, some on a reciprocal basis with our own *Proceedings*.

*Methodist History*, October 1980.

*The Local Historian*, Vol. 14, No. 4.

*The Baptist Quarterly*, October 1980.

*The Congregational Historical Circle Magazine*, November 1980.

*The Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, Vol. 53, No. 128, November 1980; also the Fifty-ninth Annual Report.

*Cirplan*, Michaelmas 1980; also a Jubilee issue (1955-80), containing choice articles which have appeared between 1955 and 1970, price 50p.

We have received an offprint from *Catholicisme*, ix, pp. 48-71, containing an article on Methodism. It is in French, and written by Fr. Francis Frost of the Institut Catholique de Lille. Fr. Frost's study of Charles Wesley's hymns on pages 158-66 of this issue reveals a unique insight into Methodism and its message.

## BOOK NOTICES

- I. *Die Wesleyanische Methodisten-Gemeinschaft in Deutschland.*  
 II. *Ein Methodistischer Beitrag am Anfang der Mutterhaus-Diakonie in Deutschland*, by Karl-Heinz Voigt. (Bremen, 1978: pp. 50, cyclostyled.)

Incomparable in output and import, these two essays, published as a composite work by the Society for Historical Studies of the Evangelical Methodist Church, have at least two things in common. Both are surprise packages. Both enfold extensive research by a Methodist church historian who grows amain.

Given this evaluation, the title of the first essay—*The Wesleyan Methodist Society in Germany*—gives no inkling of the surprise in store, which is in the small print: *A Sketch of its history with special reference to its becoming a Church*. For, as unfolded by Voigt, Wesleyan history in Germany up to union with the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1897 falls into three distinct parts. Phase one was the period (1831-48) when Württemberg Wesleyanism was pioneered and pastored by C. G. Müller (1785-1858), a German layman appointed in 1831 by the Missionary Society. During this time German Wesleyans were in effect a Pietist society tinged with Methodism and contained within the (Lutheran) state church. There followed a period of prolonged uncertainty (1848-59), during which Wesleyan Methodists were a lay movement unsure of their future. This crisis of confidence, ushered in by the Revolution of 1848 and its repercussions, deepened with the coming of the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1849 and the Evangelical Association in early 1851. It was compounded by Müller's debilitating asthma and eventual death. Throughout, the way ahead was far from clear to the Wesleyan Methodist community. Should they continue as a religious society within the established church? Should they unite with the MEC? Or was their "providential way" separate from both?

Phase three was the period (1859-97) when German Wesleyanism was transformed from a religious society in a muddle into a free church with a mission. This period opened with the Missionary Society finally sending an ordained minister, Dr. John Lyth, who during his term (1859-65) infused fresh vigour and introduced a distinctively Methodist life-style into the confused societies. Then came John Barratt, under whose statesmanlike superintendency (1865-92) Wesleyan Methodism, in the early '70s, became the first free church in German history, and with that was renewed for mission and service.

As Voigt himself expressly admits, other historians (notably E. Sommer and L. Rott) have stated the fact that Wesleyan Methodists formed the first German free church. In making this fact and its significance a matter for comprehensive and consequential treatment, however, Voigt both sheds fresh light on church history and (so he urges) points the way to renewal for the established church in Germany today.

The second essay—*A Methodist contribution in the early days of the Deaconess Order in Germany. Ecumenical ministry in pre-ecumenical times*—brings to light another surprising and significant fact: of the first three women accepted into the Order on 3rd October 1839 by its Lutheran founder Theodor Fliedner (1800-64), two—Marie Schärffner and Agnes Mayer—belonged to the Methodist society at Winnenden led by C. G. Müller. To this bare fact Voigt, drawing from previously untapped sources, gives historical background and biographical interest. From its



consequences he urges a radical re-thinking and ecclesial reintegration of the modern Diaconate.

In short, Voigt's forays yield one surprise after another!

DENIS INMAN.

*My Dear Sister: The Story of John Wesley and the Women in his life*, by Maldwyn Edwards. (Obtainable from the Rev. John Banks, 224, Wilbraham Road, Manchester, M16 8GN, £3.)

Our late President's posthumous work will find a ready sale among our members. Dr. Edwards was not only "a devoted champion of the Wesleys", as Dr. Kenneth Greet says in a foreword to this book, but, after long years of study, almost an intimate of that family and many of their acquaintances. He wrote and lectured on them as one who knew them well.

The women in Wesley's life have had some degree of fascination for the onlooker ever since James Hutton noted at the beginning of the revival that several young women in the societies were in love with both John and Charles Wesley, and Alexander Knox asserted many years later that the brothers had "an irresistible fascination for the female sex". Yet it was not until 1937 that Elsie Harrison began to assemble a word portrait-gallery of some of them in her *Son to Susanna*. In that book she framed them in separate chapters—"Susanna Wesley", "Emily Wesley", "Varanese", "Aspasia", "Miss Sophy", "Grace", and "Molly". What Dr. Edwards has done is to enlarge that gallery by the inclusion of more of Wesley's female friends—many of them, such as Jane Hilton, Nancy Bolton, Sarah Ryan and Mary Bishop, his long-standing correspondents whom he addressed as "My Dear Sister". It is round this extensive portrait-gallery that Dr. Edwards expertly conducts us, giving us his overall judgement that

John Wesley had a great fondness for women . . . He was keenly susceptible to their beauty and more so if it was combined with wit and sparkle . . . [but] most of all he rose instinctively to a woman of unaffected goodness.

Wesley's inhibited and unsure approaches to matrimony and his final disastrous descent into that state were compounded with errors of judgement and sometimes insensitivity, but despite all his "openness" (a word he favoured) with women, neither Molly Wesley nor anyone else ever found him guilty of any impropriety. Throughout his life, says Dr. Edwards, Wesley was rich in friendships, "and among them the varied company of women".

THOMAS SHAW.

*A Methodist Guide to London and the South-East*, by John Vickers and Betty Young. (World Methodist Historical Society (British Section), 1980, 60p. Available from WMHS Publications, 87, Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, 16p. extra for postage. Special terms for bulk orders, e.g. 10 copies £4 plus postage.)

When and where was the first Covenant Service held? When and why did John Wesley first preach without notes? Which preacher had to interrupt his first sermon at the Westminster Central Hall to announce the commencement of World War II? Who was the chief model for James Hilton's *Mr. Chips*? The answers to such questions, along with an abundance of other information, can be found in this excellently-conceived publication, which will surely give delight and instruction to a great many readers. It is of course aimed primarily at tourists and visitors to London and the South-East (the area covered by the four London Methodist Districts), but will enjoy—and deserves—a wider general readership.



## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1337. THE LAVINGTON CORRESPONDENCE.

I am indebted to Dr. C. Edwin Welch, late of Churchill College, Cambridge, who has sent to me from Ottawa the following note respecting the letter of Thomas Salmon appearing on pages 140-1 of the last issue of these *Proceedings* :

I feel sure that the "Son, an Inhabitant of Plymouth" is Andrew Kinsman, founder of the Plymouth Tabernacle, about whom I wrote some years ago in the *Devonshire Association Transactions* (vol. 97). This is confirmed by the appearance of Mary Kinsman's name in the footnote to the same letter. Andrew's father's re-marriage would coincide with Andrew's removal from Tavistock to Plymouth. This has been traditionally ascribed to Andrew's disgust at the treatment of George Whitefield in Tavistock, but the appearance of a step-mother (even without the suggested scandal) might be a better reason.

OLIVER A. BECKERLEGGE.

### 1338. THE CASE OF THE WHITEHAVEN "CROWN".

While working on the several secessions in Cumbrian Wesleyan circuits during the nineteenth century, I came across a strange dispute which divided the Whitehaven Wesleyans in 1827. The matter first surfaced in the editorial comment of the Tory *Cumberland Pacquet* (of Whitehaven) of 30th January 1827 :

On the morning of the 22nd a contemptible feat, of a truly radical description, was perpetrated in the Methodist chapel in this town, by some worthless characters who carried away part of the mourning furniture (a Crown) from the front of the pulpit. Our informant says the guilty individuals are two respectable tradesmen, whose names are well known to him. If this be the fact, we think he has sadly prostituted the word respectable by applying it to any person who could be capable of such a petty act of vandalism.

What is a "Crown"? This I have been unable to discover, and now seek a wider audience for help with the query. The crown had been placed in the chapel by the trustees, and it was seen as a symbol of the authority of the trust and Conference which was immediately attacked by officials and members of a "radical" turn of mind. Joseph Dutton and other trustees stoutly defended the Conference and Methodism against attacks in the press from both within and without Methodist ranks. The newspaper editor encouraged both sides in the argument, but favoured the "defenders" of religious liberty and order, i.e. Dutton, the ministers and their allies, and eventually ended the discussion because the "Letters" column was inundated with the "Crown Affair" for months almost to the exclusion of all else. It was alleged that the Primitive Methodists were encouraging trouble in Wesleyan ranks, and that a Leeds-style secession was being planned, with the removal of the crown as signal for the revolt. This did not happen, but seven years later the Association dispute ruined the circuit.

Help with unravelling the mystery about the "Crown" would be much appreciated, particularly as it appears to be so central to the happenings of the year 1827; and any readers having relevant information are invited to write to me at 106, Lowry Hill Road, Carlisle, Cumbria.

JOHN BURGESS.

## 1339. WESLEY'S "CHRISTIAN LIBRARY" AT QUEEN'S COLLEGE.

The Rev. D. Alan Keighley, M.A., B.D. writes from The Queen's College, Somerset Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2QH :

The Queen's College is fortunate to have both first and second editions of John Wesley's "Christian Library". Although the second is incomplete, the volumes of the first run consecutively from 1 to 50, and have a rather agreeable leather binding. On examination, however, this set also proves to be incomplete, and the details of its incompleteness raise tantalizing questions.

Despite the uniform binding, six volumes have had their contents totally substituted. The following are the actual contents of these six volumes, with their dates of printing, which are of course not always those of the first edition :

**Volume 29.** (a) John Wesley's *Farther Appeal* (1745); (b) Wesley's Sermon on Laying the Foundation of City Road Chapel (1777); (c) *An Extract from the Life and Death of Mr. Thomas Haliburton* (1747).

**Volume 36.** *The Natural Man's Case Stated or, An Exact Map of the Little World of Man . . .*, by Christopher Love, with his funeral sermon by Thomas Manton (1652).

**Volume 40.** *The Mute Christian under the Smarting Rod . . .*, by Thomas Brooks (1776).

**Volume 42.** (a) Wesley's *Popery Calmly Considered* (1779); (b) Wesley's *Plain Account of Christian Perfection* (1794); (c) *A Treatise Concerning the Life of God in the Soul of Man* (1723) (i.e. by Henry Scougal).

**Volume 46.** (a) *An Answer to Aspasio Vindicated . . .*, by a Country Clergyman (1767); (b) *An Extract of Letters by Mrs. L . . .*, etc. (1769); (c) Wesley's *Extract from the Life of M. de Renty . . .* (1760); (d) Wesley's *Answer to Mr. Rowland Hill's Tract entitled Imposture Detected* (1777).

**Volume 47.** *A Defence of God's Sovereignty against the Impious and Horrible Aspersions cast upon it by Elisha Coles . . .* (1770).

There are also two incomplete volumes :

**Volume 24.** Missing are the general title-page, the title-page of the first extract, the final extract, and the index which normally concludes each volume. This seems innocent enough—it simply amounts to the beginning and end of the book.

**Volume 38.** Missing are the general title-page, pp. 1-92 of the *Devotional Tracts mostly Translated from the French*, and pp. 247-94, the *Extract from Molinos's "Spiritual Guide"*.

In due course I hope to write on the implications of this intriguing discovery. Basic information about the above publications and their authors can, of course, be found in the normal sources. I should like at this preliminary stage to ask :

- (a) Whether any reader already knew of the above changes ?
- (b) If so, whether any explanation of them is already available ?
- (c) Whether any other set of the "Christian Library", or any comparable set of volumes, is known to have been similarly treated, and why ?
- (d) This set of the "Christian Library" was given to Handsworth College by the Fernley Trustees. Does anyone know *when*—or have any other information about this gift ?
- (e) Can any reader offer information about the following names ? (The original set bears no names or inscriptions, so far as I have seen.)
  - (i) The last page of Wesley's Sermon on laying the foundation at

City Road bears the inscription "John Ravenscroft his Book". (ii) The title-page of *Popery Calmly Considered* has in manuscript "Tho Eade". (iii) The title-page of the *Extract of Letters by Mrs. L . . .* bears a faintly-written name, which looks like "T. Vaughn" or perhaps "T. Naughton".

### 1340. ADAM CLARKE AND THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

The Rev. Dr. John T. Watson writes :

The Methodist Conference which met in Liverpool in 1807 is noteworthy for a number of reasons ; but for one who for half his active ministry was "lent by Conference" to the British and Foreign Bible Society (as I was) it has two special points of interest. First, I notice in the Conference *Minutes* this paragraph, interpolated in the "Stations" after the names of the preachers appointed to the London, New Chapel circuit :

[N. B. Brother Clarke is returned to London, at the unanimous request of the Committee of the *British and Foreign Bible Society* ; from whose respectful and polite Request, transmitted to the Conference, we learn that brother Clarke's assistance is indispensably necessary to the accomplishment of several plans, which that most respectable Society has entered on, for furnishing various heathen and Mohammedan nations with the Holy Scriptures in their respective languages.]<sup>1</sup>

"Brother Clarke" was of course none other than the famous Dr. Adam Clarke, immediate past President of the Conference, and a distinguished scholar and theologian. (His story, incidentally, has been admirably re-told by the Rev. Robert H. Gallagher under the title *Adam Clarke, Saint and Scholar*.)<sup>2</sup>

Adam Clarke was a member of the General Committee of the recently-formed Bible Society, and because of his encyclopædic knowledge of a number of languages (and these included Greek and Hebrew, for he had already translated the whole Bible so as to be able to prepare an adequate commentary on it!) he was most useful particularly on the Society's Translations Sub-committee. Mr. Gallagher comments in the book I have referred to :

His work in the Society was mostly in advancing the publication of the Scriptures in Oriental languages, especially Arabic. The publication of the New Testament in the Calmuc dialect entailed the preparation of new types and . . . these . . . were executed by Mr. Clarke.<sup>3</sup>

The second point of interest which I find quite remarkable is the following (also taken from the Liverpool *Minutes*): the question was asked, on the Agenda,

How can the Conference of the Methodist Connexion best testify the lively interest which they, in common with the whole Christian world, cannot but feel for the success of the BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, lately established in London?<sup>4</sup>

To which Conference gave the following forthright answer :

Let a public collection be made in all our principal congregations through all the Circuits in Great Britain, for the support of that excellent Institution, and transmitted to brother Clarke.<sup>5</sup>

Methodism in 1807 was quick to see the relevancy of Bible Society work,

<sup>1</sup> *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, ii, p. 382.

<sup>2</sup> Also by Drs. Maldwyn Edwards and Ian Sellers in WHS Lectures.—EDITOR.

<sup>3</sup> R. H. Gallagher: *Adam Clarke* (published by the Irish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society), p. 54.

<sup>4, 5</sup> *Minutes*, ii, p. 404.

and was prepared to support it with both men and money—and, be it remembered, when it was itself already committed to missionary work in North America and in the West Indies, and when it faced major difficulties inside its own organization, not to mention the quite exceptional circumstances prevailing in the country at large in that first decade of the nineteenth century.

Someone, some day, should write the story of Methodism's continuing contact with the Bible Society movement; the line of devoted scholars, administrators, translators—not to forget fund-raisers—is a long one, and it continues today. But when one comes to evaluate this it is not surprising, for I would contend that the Bible Society movement was one of the fruits of the Evangelical Revival; and the aims and objects of the two movements were the same—"to spread scriptural holiness" not only throughout the land, but throughout the earth.

#### 1341. GEORGE WHITEFIELD AND THE "WORLD PARISH".

With regard to the Rev. Thomas Shaw's review of *The Works of John Wesley*, vol. 25, edited by Frank Baker (see *Proceedings*, xlii, pp. 150-1), the reference to the Whitefield version of the "world parish" statement is *The Works of George Whitefield* (London, 1771), vol. i. On page 105 there is a letter to "The Rev. R.D.", dated Philadelphia, 10th November 1739, presumably written on the voyage, containing the passage "The whole world is now my parish. Wherever my Master calls me, I am ready to go and preach his everlasting Gospel". Another instance of Whitefield's use of the phrase occurs in *Eighteen Sermons* (1771), page 310, Sermon XIII: "All the world is my parish and I will preach wherever God gives me an opportunity" (probable date, about 1765). Tyerman (*The Life of the Rev. George Whitefield*, i, p. 316) claims that the phrase "was not peculiar to Wesley, but common among Oxford Methodists", but gives no evidence. Is there any? It is, of course, used on the Wesley memorial tablet in Westminster Abbey. J. MUNSEY TURNER.

#### 1342. "THE WORLD IS MY PARISH".

The Rev. Dr. Frank Baker writes:

I appreciated the review of the first volume of Wesley's Letters (vol. 25 of the Oxford edition of Wesley's *Works*) by the Rev. Thomas Shaw in the last issue of *Proceedings*, but it seems desirable to clarify a point about Whitefield's use of the sentence "The whole world is now my parish" some seven months after Wesley's famous utterance. I quoted it as a parallel, and was unduly economical in not giving the fullest reference to the source. Whitefield's letter of 10th November 1739 was not addressed to Wesley, as Mr. Shaw assumed, but to "the Revd. Mr. R.D.", i.e. probably Risdon Darracott. I really should have had greater pity upon my readers, for volume i of Whitefield's *Works*, edited by Dr. John Gillies (1771) contains no fewer than fifty-nine letters dated "Philadelphia, Nov. 10, 1739", most of them written during the long weeks at sea en route to America (pp. 65-126). This particular letter is on pages 105-6.

**THE ANNUAL LECTURE: A Correction.** Subsequent to the printing of the notice on page 166, it has been possible to make improved arrangements for the Tea, and the following should now be substituted at the foot of the page.

The Tea will be at the Princes Road United Reformed Church opposite the Conference Hall (St. Andrew's Hall). It is **essential this year** for members who wish to accept Mr. and Mrs. R. C. Swift's invitation to tea to **apply to the General Secretary for a ticket**—not later than 27th June.