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Proceedings
OF THE
Wesley Historical Society

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Volume XLVII

February 1990

**THE TRAINING OF THE METHODIST
MINISTRY, 1932-73**

A personal account

METHODIST people, by and large, take a great interest in the training of their ministers and in the colleges where this mostly happens - more so, perhaps, than members of some other churches. This is not only because they know that in due course some of the men and women involved will be caring for them as their pastors - this applies to every denomination; but also because, traditionally, ordained ministers arise from their own midst, serve them as local preachers, and are adjudged by their Circuit Meeting as suitable 'candidates for the ministry'. They are local products, local boys and girls who, they hope, will make good.

But although they have this great interest, and make suitable contributions to the financial upkeep of the colleges, Methodists often do not have very accurate information about what happens inside them. This ignorance may be slightly due to a failure in the proper sort of publicity on the part of the church authorities; but much more to a tendency, common among ministers but not limited to them, to suppose that nothing has changed in the college in which they were trained since they left - coupled with a slight resentment at any change which is reported to them, even if they wished for such a change while they were there. The people, as a result, can be ten years, or even up to forty years, out-of-date in their knowledge of college life.

Many legends are therefore current. One is that young and promising men and women, full of evangelistic zeal, are corrupted and deadened by college tutors who seduce them into modernistic and rationalistic ways of thinking. This legend, however, is rampant only in certain conservative evangelical circles, and may be dying out. More baleful in its consequences is the legend that the colleges are 'ivory towers' (the term most commonly found), cut off from 'the real world' (a term of obscure significance), and lacking any interest in it.

It is time, therefore, for the truth to be known, and I will do my part in bringing this about by describing recent and fairly recent events, since only if we know something of the past can we reach a sound judgment of the present or make sensible plans for the future.¹

In the middle thirties the theological colleges of Methodism, all of them, by Methodist constitution, under the control of Conference, but allowed much individual liberty, were; Didsbury College and Hartley Victoria College in Manchester, Richmond College in Surrey, Wesley College in Headingley, Leeds, Handsworth College in Birmingham and Wesley House in Cambridge. In Richmond College each student was entered for either a degree or a diploma in the University of London, in Wesley House for a Cambridge degree. In these two colleges the curriculum was virtually dictated by the university requirements, and there was little time for anything else, even pastoral studies. Other colleges were freer to develop their own syllabuses (although some of their members also took university courses).

There was an underlying pattern throughout all the colleges, though the academic standard reached varied considerably. Everyone was expected to learn some Hebrew (unless it was demonstrably impossible for him to do so), more Greek, systematic theology and church history, with as much pastoral theory and practice as could be fitted in. Psychology and philosophy were in the London University courses for Richmond, and taught in other colleges also, most notably in Hartley Victoria. Each student was required at least once to lead a service for the whole college, deliver a sermon, and submit to criticism by staff and students afterwards. From Tuesday to Friday lectures were more or less incessant in the mornings; Saturdays and Monday mornings were free for study and essay-writing, except when a student had to travel a long way to his weekend preaching appointment.

It is clear that such a curriculum demanded a very strict temporal regimen, especially as many students spent long hours memorizing Hebrew and Greek vocabularies, Hebrew roots and Greek irregular verbs. Therefore a timetable was imposed, certain hours were prescribed

¹ For a succinct narrative of events from the beginning, see 'One Hundred and Fifty Years of Ministerial Training', by Trevor Rowe, in *Epworth Review*, Vol. 12, No. 1. pp 22 ff. There are appreciations of Methodist scholars, now departed, who taught in the Colleges, in subsequent issues of the *Epworth Review*.

for study, and weekday absences from the college severely limited. The community was celibate, and visits by members of the other sex not encouraged, with some concessions to fiancées (but there were not very many of them, since the students were not allowed to marry until at least two, and usually four years after leaving college). Three years was the usual length of a college course.

The entirely laudable object of this prolonged exercise, in the minds of the teachers, was to bring the ordinands, often from a non-academic background and without many educational qualifications, to a level of theological knowledge and understanding which entitled them to enter a moderately learned ministry. (It was often compared favourably with the brevity of Anglican theological training.) And it was successful in doing this to a remarkable degree for the average student, besides uncovering and developing the talents of several men who later achieved scholastic success undreamed of in their youth. The tutors at Handsworth College - W. F. Lofthouse, H. Bett, W. F. Howard and C. R. North - were widely held in honour for what they had done in this regard.

But from the point of view of most Methodist people the prime purpose of the colleges was to turn out Methodist ministers who would fit well into the Methodist system. This purpose was bound to operate, even if unconsciously, in the minds of those responsible for teaching and 'forming' the students. This was a further reason for the somewhat authoritarian regime in which everyone's activities were prescribed and enforced, and for the rigid discipline which acted in restraint of normal human and social contacts (and resulted in the sometimes childish practices and jokes which gave an outlet to youthful exuberance). The authoritarianism was no doubt on the whole accepted, though those who rebelled (inwardly if not outwardly) were often the ablest students, destined to hold responsible offices in the church later on (and sometimes themselves to continue the authoritarian tradition). But it tended to the suppression of the right sort of individuality, and to the emergence at a later stage in a man's ministry of previously hidden problems.

And the whole structure of the training, because of the desire for good, sound, biblically and theologically equipped Methodist ministers, had a stereotyping effect. A Methodist minister was expected to be, and, after his training, usually was, an evangelical preacher with good illustrations, an efficient administrator, a good chairman of committees, able to make a speech of introduction or thanks at the drop of a hat, a man with the regular habit of studying or preparing a sermon in the morning, visiting the sick and the healthy in the afternoon, and attending at least one meeting or service in one of his churches every evening, a man who devoted his whole time and energy to his church and circuit, sociable, with a friendly smile for everyone, always available on the telephone (especially at mealtimes), willing to please as many people as possible and to do any jobs that he could not persuade anyone

else to do, married to a wife (approved by the authorities) who had given up any career of her own to support her husband's, to bring up children (with not much help from him) as models of virtue, and to give the rest of her time to attending church functions and keeping an eye on the women's activities sponsored by the church.

Many (not every one) of these qualities are admirable, but the combination of all of them, or nearly all, in one person marked out a Methodist minister from other people, and, to some extent, from ministers of other denominations. He was a valuable, reliable and recognizable member of the Christian community wherever he was stationed for the time being.

The Second World War gradually dissolved the colleges, and many other traditional institutions and habits at the same time (though this was not all noticed immediately). When the colleges were re-constituted after the war, Didsbury had moved to Bristol, for the good reason that it was not sensible to have two colleges in Manchester and none in the West Country. It was accommodated for the time being in a handsome mansion on the outskirts of the city, acquired with the help of the Bishop of Bristol, with extensive grounds on which the new college building for residence, chapel, library, dining hall and common room was to be built; teaching was still to take place in the 'old building'.

Like the other colleges, Didsbury (of which I must now speak in particular) was filled with men returning from the armed services. They were, of course, older than the students of the past; and their wartime experiences had given them a maturity in advance of their years; several of them were married. It was impossible, and the attempt was not made, to impose the old system in its entirety on them. Some rules were scrapped, some were retained (these latter were often welcomed, because they helped to re-establish the discipline of study). The courses of study had to be short and intensive, and they were enlivened and lighted up by the imaginative exposition of the Gospels by Alex Findlay. The men were keen to 'get on with the job', after the non-productive years.

When they had departed for their circuits and were replaced by younger men, it was no doubt expected by many that the old régime would be quickly re-established in its entirety. It may have been attempted in other colleges - I am not sure. At Didsbury it was quickly seen by Frederic Greeves, the new principal, and his colleagues, Stanley Frost and Kenneth Grayston² that the whole matter had to be re-thought in the new and still-changing conditions of the time.

I joined the staff in 1952 when the new order was taking shape and the new building was almost complete. The old curriculum was greatly modified. The study of the Hebrew language was restricted to those

² Later the first Professor of Theology in the University of Bristol, and always a great helper of the College.

who needed it for the university course, but the importance of understanding the Old Testament was strongly emphasized. The amount of Greek required of the non-university students was diminished, but the meaning and theology of the New Testament were expounded more positively, perhaps, than ever before. It was for me to revive interest in the history of the church and its doctrines. Fred Greeves, though his major published work was on the meaning of sin, dealt with that subject only in the light of divine grace, and so put the doctrine of God in the centre of theological understanding. There was now time and space in the college course for other subjects, and pastoral lectures took their proper place, with an admixture of psychology and philosophy, taught as subjects of not merely academic interest. Each student was required to research and produce a 'project' on a subject of special interest to him, and chosen by him. A tutorial system, based on the Oxford model, was introduced. Those qualified to study for a university degree could take only a limited part in all this because of their exacting syllabus, but systematic theology and pastoralia were always included.

The customary three years of theological training were thus fully occupied. But although every student took services on several Sundays a term in local and sometimes distant churches, the provision for contact with Methodist life at circuit level was not adequate. So we persuaded the church to add a fourth year to the course for as many students as was possible in their personal circumstances; and this year was spent partly in pursuing special subjects of lasting importance, partly in 'circuit practice' - residence and immersion in the actual life of a circuit under the supervision of a carefully-selected superintendent.

All this now seems obvious and ordinary. But then it was new. The emphasis was strongly on the development in a closely knit community of individual gifts: the projects and tutorials often brought those out in a pleasantly surprising way. There was the same emphasis in the gradual revision of the college day and week. Previously - not to put too fine a point on it - adults had been treated as adolescents, regrettably liable to be lazy or unruly; now they began to be treated as the adults they were, with a proper measure of freedom. And if some of them did not come up to scratch - well, that was a sign that they were not well fitted for a ministerial calling, or at least that they needed to think about it very carefully.

The next step forward was taken when Conference at last, in 1955, allowed married men to be accepted for the ministry. The full importance of this was not at once recognized; the difficulties created were at first more obvious than the advantages, since each married student and his wife had to decide where to live, and in what way the wife could continue to earn the money which was often essential for both of them. One thing, however, soon clarified itself. If married men could be admitted, how could those already in college be refused permission to marry?

They *were* still refused at first, but soon the refusal was lifted, and the college principals were given the sensitive task of deciding in each case, with such help from colleagues and staff wives as they called upon, whether the President of the Conference should be recommended to grant permission.

But it gradually became clear to some of us that in addition to this, almost involuntarily, something invaluable and irreversible had been set on foot. It had now been conceded - very belatedly, as some of us thought - that if theological students could be trusted with the responsibilities of marriage and a family, they could surely be trusted with the lesser responsibility of ordering their times of private devotion, of work and of leisure, so long as they took a full part in the corporate life of the college and did not limit the freedom of others. The implications of all this were not fully realized during the principalship of Fred Greeves: there was a natural reluctance to jettison all the customs which were thought to have proved their worth in the past.

During his time the wives of his colleagues, as well as the wives and fiancées of the students, though they were all treated in the most friendly way, were not quite certain of their position in college life. The wives of the staff came into the college for Holy Communion and on special occasions; otherwise they did not feel themselves welcome except on a purely personal level. The students were not sure how much time they were allowed to give to their families, and their wives did not know what they could reasonably expect. This was a large grey area of college life.

There was, indeed, a certain paternalism at work throughout the college. Fred Greeves, in virtue of his great gift of caring for and understanding each individual student (and very few of them denied this) was, by common consent, the Father of the College. The students invested great loyalty in him; and probably many of them refrained from rebelling, and from doing what they wished to do, out of sheer affection for him, and for his wife Frances.

Nearly every institution in church and state came under attack during the sixties, and theological colleges were not immune. The publication of John Robinson's *Honest to God* in 1964 undoubtedly fostered fundamental questioning in the minds of thinking people, partly because the church's teachers had allowed them to suppose that they were required to believe that God was 'up there'. Many of them did not believe it anyway, and were now relieved to find that they were not required to do so; but others did believe it, and were disturbed. The book, with its confusions, contradictions, and insights, did not so much create as bring out into the open many uncertainties about God, Christ, prayer and the church which had been seething underground. On a quite different level much preaching and writing in the recent past had emphasized that the mission of the church (the 'frozen people of God', as it was charged with being) was to be carried out in the world, and not

within its own walls, and thus raised the question whether ordained ministers were needed at all, and, if so, what their role was: was it not better 'to serve Christ in the world'?

For these and other reasons there was a sharp fall in the number of ordinands in all the churches. This fall coincided with a recurrence of financial stringency, so that every church was faced with the choice of maintaining half empty colleges in an uneconomical manner, or of cutting down the number of colleges in order to fill those that remained.

I do not wish to evoke the shades of 'old, unhappy things, and battles long ago', but some narrative of the painful period that ensued is necessary. Not everything was painful, of course. The first casualty of the crisis in Methodism was Wesley College, Headingley, which was required, and agreed with good grace, to remove itself to Bristol and be amalgamated with Didsbury College there, to form Wesley College.³ This was in 1967, when Fred Greeves retired, and I became principal of the united college.

No-one should underestimate the sadness caused by the departure from Leeds, and the fear of losing a precious corporate identity which was entailed. Vincent Parkin came with the students, and joined David Stacey, John Newton, Bernard Jones, and me. The union was successfully consummated, though of course there was argument between the students of the two uniting colleges as to which were the better traditions to continue. Such questions were satisfactorily resolved, and we were able to settle down to the development of the new community on the lines prepared in both colleges before the union. A new building to house the lecture rooms and the new chapel (which could also be used for other purposes) was planned, while the old chapel, the acoustics of which, in spite of its attractiveness, were remarkably poor, was transformed into an excellent library to house the increase of books from Headingley, and many thousands of books still to come. This whole scheme was completed in 1970; and plans for the building of residential flats on the campus were sanctioned by the appropriate committees.

Meanwhile the curriculum was partially revised, and emphasis in the teaching of theology was firmly laid on the need for every student to base his own pattern of belief not simply on the deliverances of the past or the utterances of modern theologians (though not without them), but on the relation of scripture and received doctrines to his own experience and to the realities of the world in which he lived. Students were placed for a period in surrounding circuits in order to take a full part in their life; the ordeal of preaching before the entire college and the fear of harsh criticism were replaced by the discussion of sermons delivered in the local circuit by the pastoral group to which the student belonged. Written examinations, which had caused alarming stress in

³ The name 'Didsbury College' was dropped by a gentleman's agreement between the uniting Colleges, and the name 'Wesley College' used to signify the union.

the past to those who lacked an academic background, were virtually abandoned in favour of regular assessment.

A few weeks after the beginning of the first term a student who had come from Headingly told me that he was about to go with a party to Vietnam in order to try to stop the war there, and that he was going whether I allowed him to do so or not. The statement broke all the rules that I had ever heard of. My colleagues and I, after consulting the President of the Conference and informing him of what we proposed to do (which he did not forbid), agreed to take note of the fact that the student was going to the Far East in term time, without officially authorizing him to do so, and to accept his assurance that on his return he would make up all the work that he had missed. This assurance he faithfully carried out, and the matter was closed. Unfortunately, he had not been able to get any further than Cambodia, and the war went on.

This unprecedented event alerted us to the fact that extremely radical ideas were in the college's air. These increased in number and forcefulness in the following years. 1968 was the year of student revolt worldwide from Berkeley, California to the Sorbonne in Paris (where the government itself was rocked); there were several repercussions in Bristol and other British universities. It was the year of the murder of Martin Luther King, the radicalization of the black movement in the United States, and the proclamation of liberation theology by the Latin American bishops. It was the year of the World Council of Churches' meeting in Uppsala, Sweden, where the oppression of Third World peoples seized a high place on the agenda.

Radicalism in Wesley College (and many others) took three main forms. The first was the assertion of the rights of underprivileged people, especially blacks, everywhere. With this assertion all members of the staff were in wholehearted agreement. The second was the assertion of students' rights and of the rights of theological students in particular. This also was taken seriously, and many of them granted, sometimes before they were requested, so far as they could be within the framework of the Methodist Church - and the college became more democratic than ever before in Methodist history. This was a necessary step towards making complete the recognition of the students as responsible Christian adults (and very few of them betrayed the trust thus placed in them). The college was thus preserved from the wrangling and bitterness to be found elsewhere, and proceeded on its path peacefully.

The third was basic criticism of the church - the whole church - and its doctrines, sometimes going as far as the 'Christian atheism' recommended by the Americans Altizer and Hamilton, and often leading to the reduction of the faith, within a general but vague belief in God, to the acceptance of Jesus as the champion of the oppressed and the pioneer of 'social justice'. These were not settled ideas in people's

minds, but they were held by some very able students, and needed careful, prolonged and sympathetic discussion. I can say with conviction that this is what they obtained from the whole staff, and if it was David Stacey and I who received the brunt of it, that is what we learned to expect and in many ways enjoyed, and from which we learned a great deal.

Then, the position of women in the college was at last recognized and clarified. The wives of the staff members were invited to play a full part in the worship and social life of the community; so were the students' wives (about half the students were married men). Margaret, my wife, like Frances Greeves and Alison Grayston, met the students' wives regularly. She led the full and frank discussion of the intention of many of them to pursue their own careers, while others wished to be 'ministers' wives' on the traditional model.

So we were on our way to building a real community of men, women and children, expressing itself in scholarship, devotion and outreach, and in mutual respect and understanding. Thus each student was encouraged to develop his own gifts and his own personality within the varied ministry of the church - to be *himself*. All that was missing was the presence of women students for the ministry, but we knew that this was bound to come fairly soon.

In the years 1967-9 the time was approaching for a decision on the Anglican-Methodist Scheme for Christian Unity. The college was therefore in close touch with the Anglican Theological College in Wells, 20 miles away, by means of exchanges of students and teachers. These proved to be so productive, and the atmosphere of Anglican-Methodist rapprochement so conducive, that the principal of Wells, Tom Baker, and I, with the full support of our colleagues, drew up a plan for the fusion of our two colleges on the Bristol site. Such a fusion - with separate buildings for the Anglican students - would greatly enrich both bodies of students, we were sure, and give to the Anglicans, as an additional benefit, access to the University of Bristol and its Department of Theology. The scheme was made ready for presentation to the Anglican and Methodist authorities.

But meanwhile the Methodist church's crisis in ministerial training was deepening, and a commission was set up to examine all aspects of the matter. To our astonishment in Bristol, in view of the money just spent there by the church and all that was being done there, its report included a proposal that Wesley College should no longer be used for the training of ordinands, but for other forms of adult education. A second commission reported that if Hartley Victoria College in Manchester continued, as the first report proposed, and even if Richmond College in Surrey was closed, as was also proposed, Wesley College would cease to exist and its buildings and land would be sold.

This placed us in Bristol on the horns of a dreadful dilemma. We knew with virtual certainty, on figures accurately assembled by Cedric

Sandford, Professor of Economics in the University of Bath, that to close Wesley College, with its new and purpose-built premises, and its excess land which could be profitably sold for re-development, and to retain Hartley Victoria College, most of it built nearly a century ago and needing a very large expense of money for its repair and modernization, would be an act of financial irresponsibility. We also knew that to take this course would be to jettison a way of corporate life which was very valuable to the whole church, though we could not argue this in public, lest we seemed to disparage the corporate life of other colleges, which we had no wish to do. On the other hand, we knew that for us to oppose the proposal would cause conflict and some bitterness, in view of the strength of feeling in North of England Methodism, and perhaps in the minds of those who felt that Hartley Victoria College in some way preserved the Primitive Methodist tradition. And we knew, of course, that Hartley Victoria College could, and would, put up a strong case for its retention.

The salient fact was that the Conference had not so far debated the issue of the retention of Wesley College or Hartley Victoria College. As matters had developed, various ad hoc decisions had been made by the Conference which had the effect of gradually squeezing Wesley College out of existence, without a statement of the full case for retaining it. Therefore we decided to use the constitutional means of bringing the matter before the Conference which were open to us. In 1971 on our motion the Conference asked the newly created President's Council to consider and report on the matter. In order to diminish the personal element in the controversy, on the advice of Margaret and others, I made it known that I did not intend to remain as principal if the college survived. Meanwhile many Methodists came to Bristol to see what the church was in danger of losing.

The President's Council recommended to the Conference of 1972, by a majority vote, that Hartley Victoria College be retained, and Wesley College closed. Professor Sandford moved an amendment to reverse this, and at the end of a long debate, in which all the arguments were deployed, the amendment was carried, after a recount, by a narrow majority.

While this matter was in long contention, one good thing and three bad things happened. The good thing was the union in 1970 of Handsworth College, the Methodist college in Birmingham, and Queen's College, the Anglican college there, to form an ecumenical institution - the first and still the only example in this country. If there had been more such, the ecumenical situation in this country would be very different now.

One bad thing was that the Anglican-Methodist Scheme was rejected twice, in 1969 and 1972, by the Church of England, whose governing body could not gain a large enough majority to pass it through. Clearly a change in the ecumenical atmosphere was likely.

Another bad thing was that the scheme to unite Wesley College and Wells Theological College was dropped. The blame for this must be equally shared by both Churches. The Church of England, like the Methodist Church, was in great uncertainty as to which of its colleges should be retained, and opted for joining the college in Wells with the one in Salisbury - which was not, at first, a very successful solution. And the Methodist Church was, at the time, so doubtful about the future of Wesley College that it could not object to the Anglican decision.

The third bad thing was that Richmond College in Surrey, in spite of all its magnificent missionary traditions, and its close connection with London University, was closed in 1971. Raymond George, who had been principal of the college in Headingley, had been transferred to the principalship of Richmond College, and on its closure was invited to join the staff of Wesley College. He came, but he may well have thought that he was about to be present on the deck of yet another sinking ship.

Happily, this was not to be the case, and he stayed on the Wesley College staff when it was re-constituted under John Newton in 1973, and tutors from Hartley Victoria College, as was just and fair, formed half of it.

At this point my personal experience of Wesley College ceased. But I know that, as things settled down, a backlash of conservative evangelicalism among the students transformed the theological atmosphere from the radicalism which was familiar to me into something which made life difficult for those with broader views. The plans for students' flats had been laid aside, of course, to be taken up in an improved form several years later. But after the troublous years, in due course the college resumed its progress.

During the time of uncertainty it was suggested that if Hartley Victoria was closed, a number of Methodist students might well be welcomed by the Northern Baptist College, which was known to have space for them. The suggestion was rejected out of hand at the time; but after the Conference's final decision it was in fact carried out, and Hartley Victoria College lived again in a small group of students working in ecumenical co-operation at the Baptist college.

It is ironical that seventeen years later the Methodist Church has now more ordinands to train than it can accommodate in the remaining colleges. What a pity that we did not fill the vacant rooms in the seventies with non-theological students - as had been done, fruitfully, in the past - until better times came! This would have saved much trouble and disappointment. But we did not think then that the number of candidates for the ministry would ever be restored to its proper level.

The whole series of events, together with declining numbers, was bound to depress the morale of the colleges; the students tended to think that they were being used as pawns in an ecclesiastical game. I pay tribute to the students for whom I was responsible; they continued steadily with their work in spite of everything.

Yet the whole story, combined with the not dissimilar record of the Anglican colleges, points inescapably to the conclusion that no church in modern British society can deal satisfactorily on its own with the emergencies that are bound to arise. We can carry on fairly well, with constant appeals for money and man - and woman-power, while things proceed normally. But when a major crisis, such as the crisis of ministerial training just described, comes along, we lack the resources, and perhaps the wisdom, to deal with it by ourselves. If the machinery had then existed, or could have been created, for dealing with both the Anglican and the Methodist theological colleges (others, too, if they were willing to join) together, there would have been difficulties, of course, largely stemming from the degree of autonomy possessed by the Anglican colleges and by Wesley House, Cambridge. But these could have been overcome, granted ecumenical goodwill and the magnitude of the crisis, and an overall plan produced (with different applications in different places), which was a better solution than those reached by any of the churches in isolation. The success of Queen's College, Birmingham, and of the later Federation of Cambridge Colleges, is good evidence for this.

Meanwhile we soldier on, with reasonable success, alone.

RUPERT E. DAVIES

The Summer 1989 issue of the *Bulletin* of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester contains a lucid and carefully detailed article by Clive Field which describes the Library's resources for the study of Protestant Nonconformity - some 360,000 manuscript and printed items in all. A major part of the article is devoted to the Methodist Archives and this is now the best short guide to its contents. It is available as an offprint, price £3 post free, from the Audio-Visual Services Office, JRULM, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PP.

John Vickers has now revised his Reader's Guide, *Methodism and the Wesleys* (noted in *Proceedings*, xlvii, p. 69) to take account of books published since mid-1988. It lists 52 titles, all but eleven of which are in print or forthcoming. It is available from the Methodist Publishing House, price 35p plus postage. Dr Vickers has also re-indexed *Conflict and Reconciliation* by J.M. Turner, (Epworth, 1985). Copies are 50p post free from 87 Marshall Avenue, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO21 2TW.

Susanna Wesley, Mother of Methodism by Mary Greetham (ISBN: 0 - 946550-20-4) provides a straightforward short biography along with a family tree and a guide to further reading. It costs £1.50 from the Methodist Publishing House.

To mark the 40th Anniversary of Mutual Aid Homes, LPMA have produced a 56-page illustrated history, *More Precious than Rubies* by A.J. Gilliver, a lively account of a still-evolving ministry of care for the elderly. Copies are £1.30 post free from LPMA, Head Office, Chorleywood Close, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 4EG.

'REASONABLE ENTHUSIAST'

Reasonable Enthusiast. John Wesley and the rise of Methodism, by Henry D. Rack. (Epworth Press: London, 1989, pp.xvi + 656. £25. ISBN 0-7162-0448-7)

This vast, but terse, book - it is slight beside the blockbusters of Simon or Tyerman - not merely invites, but challenges, being chewed over in detail; but nothing which occurs in this predigestive process ought to obscure one luminous simplicity, that it is, by a long margin, the best life of a hero grossly over-exposed to biographers. Members of this society should purchase it if they can, and, if not, make sure that their public library does; and they should give it their whole attention in small doses. This is eased by the fact that the construction of the book, as distinct from its contents, does not differ greatly from that of many of Wesley's oldest biographers, including the egregious Coke and Moore. By the same token, the Epworth Press is to be congratulated on producing a major work of scholarship at what is, these days, a reasonable price; and this notwithstanding that they have made two important mistakes which it is to be hoped they will avoid the next time a work of this kind comes their way. Such subediting as the volume has received has not preserved it from a few sentences which offend against grammar or syntax and from at least one incomplete footnote (p.597 n.21); more importantly the footnotes are consigned to the end. This is particularly damaging in a work which is a labour of reinterpretation as well as of research, a work in which almost every sentence contains a judgement, and every judgement is based on the entire corpus of primary and secondary sources. It is indispensable to the reader to know what material the author is using as he goes along, and how many of the surprises he springs are due to the fact that he has read more widely than his readers. This commentary is available only at the price of undoing his work in the careful organization of his chapters and pages.

The general tone of the book, as is the way with the scientific treatment of church history these days, is negative. This is partly a consequence of Mr. Rack's determined and successful attempt to set early Methodism in its social context. There was nothing in Wesley or in early Methodism which produced the opportunities created by the population explosion of the second half of the eighteenth century; and while early Methodism accepted some of those opportunities, it contributed relatively little to the solution of the problems that went with them. It is the same with the intricate question of causation in the early revival. To Mr. Rack, Wesley is the great cannibalizer, the man who entered into the labours of earlier pioneers in the midlands and north (and, he might have added, of declining dissenting meetings without a pastor), a modest violet only in Wales. And he knows, though it is beyond his main purview, that at this time, revival was breaking out all round the Protestant world, sometimes, as in Livonia, much more dramatically than in Britain; and sometimes (what Mr. Rack tends to discount) the work of heavily pressed dissenters, such as the Protestant minorities in the Habsburg lands. The author (as a sensible man) is committed to the tricky argument that Wesley's position in this mêlée was distinctive, but not singular. Wesleyan ecclesiology, which comes in for some well-justified excoriation, was supported by at least a few fragments of the wider view.

It is the same with Wesley's conversion. The contents rather than the preface of the book explain why it did not appear in time for the celebrations of 1988; Mr. Rack thinks there was not much to celebrate. The 'warmed heart' was one of Wesley's many disappointed Moravian aspirations; he remained a cold fish, to the end a tutor with pupils but no friends, a man who dealt with opposition by logic-chopping (it was in this sense that he was a 'reasonable' enthusiast) or by walking out. A man of limited foresight, he got by with a combination of 'tight discipline and canny concessions' (p.285), and with arguments to suit his turn drawn from authors who would not have recognized the use he made of them. Indeed it could all have been a lot worse. Mr. Rack will please American Methodist readers, still smarting under feelings of inferiority and injury at the way New England Calvinism persistently steals the limelight in American historiography, by giving central emphasis to Wesley's aspirations to Christian perfection; and he has some well-chosen words on the way Wesley not only shaped, but was shaped by, the Methodist people. What he forbears to say is that it was the Methodist people, and especially the non-members, who made sure that Methodism would not be a holiness sect. When this is added to the irrefutable indictments that Wesley failed to sanctify either Church or nation from within, one wonders what is left. Mercifully Mr. Rack stops short of saying, 'one more mistake for the ecumenical movement to remedy'.

In a work in which evidence is marshalled on the scale it is here, mistakes inevitably occur. They are few and do not much affect the argument; but they are significantly concentrated in the wider setting of the story. The Salzbergers were not Pietist (p.110), though their Halesian pastors were; and the MS. reports of the latter in Berlin give a good independent view of Wesley in Georgia, including a strenuous attempt to put him wise to Spangenberg. Bengel, who spent much of his life trying to put Zinzendorf down by bookish means, must be turning in his grave to be described as a Moravian (p.347). Whatever his Journal may say, Wesley did not witness a Moravian consecration to the episcopate in Georgia (p.121), for no such consecration took place. The Union with Scotland is misdated by a decade (p.226). Was the support of the upper crust of society denied to Wesley? He went for it hard in Ireland, and, with less success, in Scotland. And it may be that a wider view might yield a somewhat different Wesley. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Orthodox parties, triumphant in the Protestant churches everywhere, had shown to the dispassionate eye (and not least to realistic statesmen) that they were promising goods they could not deliver; and to states which everywhere still had work for their churches to do, this was a serious matter. Revival was only one of a number of new options, and it was an awkward one to manage; like the other new options it failed to displace the Orthodox parties, but it helped to create a situation of theological and religious pluralism, which was the minimum condition of any sort of progress, and it did best in America where the old ecclesiastical models were least appropriate to the job to be done. That Wesley was able to enter into this new sphere was due to a conversion experience which, though not instantaneous, was in the end radical enough to make something of a strenuous pharisee far gone into middle age. This was the more important because of the context in which it happened. Mr. Rack, in the modern manner, discounts much nineteenth-century criticism of the eighteenth-century Church from evangelical and anglo-catholic sources as the outcome of changes in taste. Sooner or later, however, it will have to be admitted that, although in the early

eighteenth century the reputation of the Church of England among Protestant churches stood higher than it had ever done before or has ever done since, that church had, on a comparative view, already entered upon a damaging course as a church of low achievement. Too often has English nonconformity assumed that to do better than the Church is to do well enough. The real failure of the English revival was to yield before complacency of this kind; but at least its American counterpart saved that great country from becoming the first ecclesiastical Australia of the modern world.

The comparative approach may, however, be applied in more ways than one. *Reasonable Enthusiast* is in some sense an essay in exorcism, the effort of a liberal theologian to come to terms with an evangelical heritage, and shake off evangelical myth-making. Those by grace spared a Wesleyan pedigree, not to mention the business of preparing candidates for the ministry and the blinkers of ecclesiastical history as understood in England, may need the exorcism less, but will note that private enterprise and liberal rationalism have produced a triumphantly credible picture of Wesley. Coming so soon after two disasters, that produced by connexional planning in the *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* and that produced by a catholicising Methodism in Gordon Rupp's *Religion in England 1688-1791*, *Reasonable Enthusiast* could hardly have rubbed in the moral for Methodists more sharply.

W.R.WARD.

LOCAL HISTORIES

Methodism in Heworth [York] by Edward Royle (24pp): copies from the author at The University of York, Department of History, Heslington, York, YO1 5DD, price £1.50 post free.

A Short History of Methodism In Pelynt by P.M.Bowden (18pp): copies from Mrs Bowden, Hall Gate Cottage, Pelynt, Looe, Cornwall, PL13 2LG, price £1.50 plus postage.

Wesley, Southbank Road Methodist Church, Southport, Centenary 1888-1988 : copies from R. N. Carver, 22 Balfour Road, Southport, price £1.50 post free.

Our Methodist Heritage, a complete account of the Methodist Church and People of Misterton. Part 1 from Origins to 1878 by Tony Bilton (24pp): copies from the author, 40 High Street, Misterton, Doncaster DN10 4BU, price £1.75 post free.

History of a Village Methodist Church [Etherley, Co Durham] by Don Jude: copies from the author at 38 Bankwell Drive, High Etherley, Bishop Auckland, Co Durham price £3.00 post free.

From Chapel to Church: 150 Years of Methodism in Harborne by M.W.Allen (33pp): copies from the author at 28 Berberry Close, Birmingham, B30 1TB, price £1.50 post free.

Methodism in Poundstock by R.H. Rowland (24pp): copies from Mrs. J. Smeeth, Churchstown, Poundstock, Bude, Cornwall, price £1.50.

Peverell Road Methodist Church, Porthleven 1863-1988 by Phyllis Arthur *et al* (88pp): copies from Rev. T. Shaw, 14 Lanmoor, Lanner, Redruth, TR16 6HN, price £3.50

THE CHARLES WESLEY PUBLICATION COLLOQUITUM 1989

ANYONE familiar with the magnitude of the 33-volume bicentennial edition of the *Works* of John Wesley now appearing at the rate of one volume a year, will understand some of the excitement and also the apprehension of people invited to consider what could be done to publish some or all of the work of Charles.

Largely through the efforts of American scholar and musician, S.T. Kimbrough, an international group of scholars and publishers met in September in the Center for Theological Enquiry at Princeton Theological Seminary, New Jersey. Named the 'Charles Wesley Publication Colloquium', it also attracted a group of Wesley students who on the first day of the conference attended lectures on Charles Wesley as theologian and poet.

Tom Langford of Duke University spoke on the theological importance of Charles, while Horton Davies of Princeton (a Presbyterian Seminary) gave an entertaining lecture: 'Charles Wesley and the Reform Tradition', having particular fun with Charles' anti-Calvinist polemic yet also -surprisingly to some - finding points of agreement in theology. Biblical interpretation was explored by S.T. Kimbrough, preaching and liturgical renewal by Lawrence Stookey of Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington, D.C. and the day ended with a talk on Charles as poet by Kenneth Shields of Southern Methodist University, Dallas.

On the second and third days, the twenty-seven invited participants got down to the serious task of considering a) whether a critical edition of the works of Charles Wesley would be desirable and b) how this might be accomplished. One depressing reality is the huge rise in the cost of scholarly publishing in the last few years - the John Wesley project would probably never have been considered under present circumstances - and the state of flux in the publishing scene, with mergers of publishing houses and an almost perverse difficulty in establishing transatlantic agreements.¹

Of course, most members of the Colloquium - being Charles Wesley enthusiasts - had no doubt in their hearts that Charles is long overdue for a proper edition, for all the available texts are woefully inadequate. Such an edition would be of value not just for Methodists but for scholars of music and literature also. Even so, a closer, reasoned approach is needed if money and time are to be spent on such a project. So it was that we heard from Frank Baker, general editor of the John Wesley project, of how he had prepared 600 letters of Charles in anticipation of a critical edition over forty years ago (see his introduction to *Charles Wesley as Revealed by his Letters* (1948)). And they are still awaiting publication. Richard Heitzenrater, another contributor to the John Wesley project, elaborated on some of the editorial problems presented by Charles, while Tom Albin, who with Oliver Beckerlegge has already published some of Charles' sermons (WHS 1987) told of his work on Charles' other prose writings: the Journal written for the faithful, not for the public as John's had been - the sermons and the tracts. Lastly among the papers on 'content', Oliver Beckerlegge, holding up English scholarship in the field, and already well-known in North America for his work on the critical edition of the 1780 hymn book, offered his informed opinion on the 9,000 or so items in the poetical corpus of Charles.

As in many gatherings, much of the real work was done in the gaps between the formal papers. People never stopped talking; there was so much to discover about each others' special areas and the different ways of using texts in England and America. At mealtimes and coffee breaks, at the tour of the Benson Hymn Collection in the Seminary Library and when walking between buildings, little groups of two or three would be totally absorbed in some aspect of the work of Charles. How appropriate that at least one of the group - Beryl Ingram Ward - is a practising United Methodist Minister so that we were reminded that ordinary congregational members are important too. How odd, and how pleasant to hear the word "Wesley", and for once have it refer to Charles rather than John. How good to start most sessions with a Wesley hymn even though there were some transatlantic differences of opinion about which was the proper tune. And this brought up the whole question of a proper record of hymn tunes being necessary if we were ever to imagine how the hymns were sung in the eighteenth century. Musician, Robin Leaver, regularly pressed for such an authentic record, while Jim Dale of MacMaster University in Canada - another contributor to the critical edition of the 1780 hymn book - urged that we provide a critical text of the poetry for scholars of English literature. At present, anthologies give very poor representation to Wesley.

With all this enthusiasm, what is to be done? Present at the Colloquium were representatives from the various Methodist publishing houses in the States and also church historian, Kenneth Rowe from Drew University, with a special concern for the preservation of the eighteenth-century texts in some form too. Costs of traditional publishing being prohibitive and markets uncertain, in the end we looked to the computer expertise of Richard Whittaker, who has for some years been involved in a Hebrew Lexicon project involving computerized texts. If we could gradually compile an accurate computer data base of the Charles Wesley corpus, fed in by scholars all over the world, then perhaps we could draw from that relatively inexpensive hard copy texts as needed. The idea seemed the most attractive of those previously presented but a lot of thinking still has to be done.

Before we left, a three-person working group was created, plus an English representative in the person of your editor, Alan Rose. This group will continue to plan and report back to Colloquium members. Finally there was a strong feeling that somehow, somewhere we ought to all meet again. A real fellowship had developed in those three days - many transatlantic links had been made and others renewed after many years of absence. How long it will be before this can happen is not yet clear, but what is clear is our commitment to doing justice to the works of the younger brother of John - at last.

ELIZABETH HART

(Elizabeth Hart is librarian of the Vancouver School of Theology)

¹ See 'Serious Theological Publishing: Problems and Prospects' by John Bowden in *Bulletin of the Association of Theological and Philosophical Libraries* vol 2 no 5, June 1989, pp3-6.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Social History of the Nonconformist Ministry in England and Wales, 1800-1930. by Kenneth D. Brown. (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1988, ppxi + 244, £25. ISBN: 0-19- 822763-9)

Nonconformity in the nineteenth century claimed the allegiance of approaching half the churchgoing population, of whom most belonged to the Baptist, Congregationalist and various Methodist denominations. Yet we have hitherto known very little of the men who led their respective flocks in the Bethels, Bethesdas, Providences and other chapels of England and Wales between the close of the first great generation of evangelical revivalists at the end of the eighteenth century and the retirements and deaths of the last generation of Victorians in about 1930. Dr. Brown has set out to remedy this situation with a prosopographical study of some 2,554 individuals in five main denominations - Baptist, Congregationalist, Wesleyan, Primitive and United Methodist (as defined in 1907). His major source is the obituary notices in the various official publications of the denominations, supplemented by ministerial college archives, autobiographies, personal correspondence and biographical works of reference.

Remarkably, Dr. Brown has hit upon one of those rare areas in Methodist history in which the official statistics - even those of the Wesleyans! - are deficient. He is nevertheless able to construct statistical profiles of denominational ministries which, whilst sometimes rather thin, nevertheless suggest an overall picture of comparative characteristics and trends which is both informative and important to an understanding of Nonconformity. In particular, he brings out the way in which itinerancy set the Methodist experience apart from that of the other denominations. Though he does not specifically refer to the "Worn-Out Preachers' Fund", he certainly shows the validity of the name. In forty-two separate tables of figures he approaches the lives of his nonconformist ministers from every possible angle: social structure by previous and paternal occupation; geographical origin; conversion age; proportion formally trained; student drop-out rates; experience of higher education; pay scales; length of pastorate; marriage rates; number of children; premature retirements and deaths; other activities in the community; and overall age profile of the profession. College principals are given special attention.

This bombardment with figures is both necessary and well-done, although it can sometimes be confusing to the reader - and perhaps also to the author when he writes (p. 44), "Wales made a disproportionately large contribution to the Wesleyan ministry. It produced rather more than a tenth of the connexion's ministers over a period when Welsh Wesleyan membership represented only about a sixth of the total." Despite this slip, the strength of the book generally lies in the judicious use of sometimes inadequate statistics and the carefully interpreted conclusions which are derived from them. One of the most interesting topics approached by this method concerns the private lives of these public men and the effect of their ministries on their families. To be a minister's wife was both a vocation and a life sentence. How good to see them rescued from obscurity!

The overall conclusion is rather sad. The nonconformist clergy were not particularly intellectually distinguished, well-trained or adequately paid. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, with the social base of recruitment narrowing,

the average age of the ministry rising and its public esteem falling, Nonconformity was looking increasingly vulnerable to decline. The late-Victorians and Edwardians did not read the signs but the First World War dealt all the denominations a severe blow which exacerbated the trends. The passionate evangelist of 1800 was becoming - in words written by the freethinker, J. M. Robertson and apt to Dr. Brown's conclusion although not quoted by him: "The average cleric, it is avowed, is neither an intellectual nor a typically religious man. He is a 'social organizer,' a manager of gatherings and 'collections,' often a diligent visitor of the sick, but at the same time a promoter of whist drives." That so much faith and energy should have resulted so often in so little must give pause for thought.

EDWARD ROYLE

A Methodist Pilgrimage in France. The Journal of Matthew Gallienne. 1877. ed. John Waller (Loughborough: University of Technology, Ashby Road, Loughborough, LE11 3TU. pp.vii + 96, £4.95 post free, ISBN: 0-902761-21-8)

This book is essentially the journal of a six-week "Holiday" of travel, undertaken by Gallienne and his wife in 1877, primarily to visit their two sons Matthew and Edward, both ministers in the south of France, and to revisit places where Matthew senior had ministered from 1835 to 1847 and from 1852 to 1859.

Dedicated to his wife, Gallienne's journal is thus in part an exercise in free-flowing nostalgia, in which personal and place names play a vital part. On May 31st, for example, he writes:

Reminded on the way of my first walks, in 1836, and remembered every turning of the roads and lanes visited at Codognan; Benoit, Dumas, Sagnier, Cotton, Morin - and the girl who first taught Matthew his letters - Delphine Benoit (p.41).

He is of course particularly interested in the spiritual and material state of the Methodist churches which he visits; most of them have financial crises, some aggravated by one of the periodic attacks of vine-destroying phylloxera. His "Holiday" includes preaching (3rd June "on Philip and the Ethiopian with some liberty and great perspiration", p.44), scripture distribution, and keen observation of the world around him, both in its negative aspects:

Sunday 10th June. This is the Lord's day; but how different to [*sic*] one in our favoured England ... Shops open, business going on and the streets being swept; no appearance in them of rest or of worship ... [In an outdoor mass for the feast of Corpus Christi] at the elevation of the host, a band - struck up an opera air, and at this sound, people fell down to worship the wafer-God! pp.48f.)

- but also with appreciation of the creature comforts which France had to offer, "a capital 'diner' ... at 2, with wines to correspond" p.47): "the 'diner' (of 6 courses) over-abundant; the kindness of our hosts adding to the tastyness of the meal", followed by a service at 3 with a storm brewing, but "not one sleeping!" p.55).

It is easier to begin quoting than to know where to stop; but space must be kept to acknowledge the editor's labour of love in rescuing the journal from obscurity, and in providing a comprehensive range of "reader's helps", including illustrations, maps and plans; a biographical sketch; a note on Britain, France and the Channel Islands in 1877; Gallienne's own foot-notes, printed as addenda, the editor's own invaluable "foot-notes" (unfortunately endnotes); and a bibliographical note. A not so little gem.

PAUL ELLINGWORTH

The Bedford Moravian Church in the Eighteenth Century ed. Edwin Welch (Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, 68, 1989, pp 283, £12, BHRS Publications, c/o County Record Office, County Hall, Bedford MK42 9AP).

Comparatively little has been published in English about the eighteenth-century Moravian Church, and much of it is very inadequate, creating and perpetuating a misleading picture. The publication of this collection of documents from the Bedford Congregation Archive is therefore particularly important, since it allows English Moravians of the 1740s and 1750s to speak for themselves.

Those familiar with the uniquely voluminous Moravian archives will appreciate the magnitude of Edwin Welch's achievement in selecting and transcribing these documents. The book provides samples of most of the wide range of types of material preserved in a typical Moravian congregation archive. Together with a full set of illustrations, they convey something of life in a Moravian congregation. Some individual letters and memoirs are of considerable significance for the wider history of the English Moravians and of the Evangelical Revival.

For those who will need to refer to this book regularly, replacement of the German days symbols with M, T, W, etc (rather than simple omission) and a list of the individual letters and papers would have been helpful. The opportunity might have been taken to re-unite parts of documents separated when bound according to page size. Fuller notes might have explained to non-specialists the significance of cryptic or seemingly unimportant entries.

Edwin Welch's introduction successfully supplies the general reader with the context in the history of the Moravian Church and the Revival. If his presentation of 'Moravianism' is dominated by its prehistory in the Church of the Bohemian Brethren - Zinzendorf, for example, was not 'converted ... to Moravianism by 1727' (p.2) - in this he merely reflects the mistaken perception fostered by most of the English literature.

The introduction also contributes helpful new information about the origins of the Bedford revival, which, amongst other things, casts doubt upon the 'legend of the smallpox epidemic'. False as it may be, however, the statement that over sixty people died in one week is not a fantasy of later historians, but occurs in a report written by one of the leading Moravians in England just four years after the events. The later supposition that Benjamin Ingham was summoned to help because of an exodus of ministers' is rightly dismissed, but for both the 1742 report and the memoir of Ann Okely the significance of the epidemic was that by it 'all the Town and County were divinely prepared to be serious' (p.219). The latter document, incidentally, does *not* state that Ingham's first contact with Bedford was in the summer of 1738 (when he was in Germany); his visit actually took place in late December.

Unfortunately the Introduction contains a number of errors. Bedford was one of the few early congregations and settlements in England, and provides a very good example of Moravian life, but it was neither England's second Moravian congregation, nor its first Moravian settlement, and did not provide 'a pattern for future developments'. Its archive is not the most extensive in England. Nevertheless, this is a very useful publication of an important collection of documents, which should do much to increase understanding of the Moravians in England at the time of the Revival.

C. J. PODMORE

Evangelicalism in Modern Britain. A history from the 1730s to the 1980s by D. W. Bebbington (Unwin Hyman, 1988, pp xi + 364, £35 hardback, £11.95 paperback, ISBN:0-04-941018-0)

How does one attempt a history of British Evangelicalism over the past 250 years? A movement which bestraddles denominational barriers, whose adherents have varying degrees of loyalty to their respective churches, a swirling mass of the theological pressure groups, Conventions, Leagues, Unions, Alliances and study circles, some quietist, some mightily belligerent, dying old sects and thriving new ones, quickly becomes the church historian's nightmare. How for example does he embrace the likes of Wesley and Toplady, Archbishop Sumner and Hugh Bourne, Hugh Price Hughes and Hudson Taylor, all of them most decidedly evangelicals, within the pages of a single volume? David Bebbington believes it is just about possible, and uses two guiding themes to hold these disparate tendencies, groups and individuals together. One is what he defines as the four evangelical fundamentals to which all who claim the name must adhere: biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism. The other is his own distinctive (some would say obtrusive) philosophy of history which is a species of cultural determinism, for he sees eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth century evangelicalism as successive expressions of the Enlightenment, Romantic and (with apologies for not being able to find a less confusing word) Modernist ideologies of the times. Even so it soon becomes apparent that David is giving his readers not a chronological history but a series of thematic studies, which treatment is the only feasible one in the circumstances but suggests that a more appropriate title for his book could have been *Essays in Modern British Evangelicalism*. As one would expect from the quality of the author's previous works these are all of a high order. Particularly thorough and enlightening are the accounts of the influences moulding John Wesley's spirituality, the roots and fruits of Irvingism, the various strands of nineteenth century millenarian speculation, the origins and impact of Keswick holiness teaching, the diverging of liberal and conservative evangelicalism in the present century and the background to the charismatic movement. To have all these themes treated so learnedly within the compass of a single volume makes this book essential reading for the church historian: it will be particularly useful for undergraduate courses and in ministerial training.

If the reader soon becomes aware that there are significant omissions in the present volume, that is not so much grounds for complaint as for suggesting that a complementary book of essays would help to redress the balance. First there is a marked preoccupation here with the upper echelons of society: popular evangelicalism is virtually excluded. The Primitive Methodists are hardly mentioned at all (and even then only to show how rapidly they underwent embourgeoisement), nor are the Churches of Christ, the Salvation Army and, perhaps most surprisingly of all in view of the space devoted to the charismatic movement, the classical Pentecostals. Second, there is little mention of that most characteristic feature of evangelicalism, its hymnody, yet David's time span begins with Wesley's and Watts' hymnic expressions of the great doctrines of the faith and ends with contemporary Anglican evangelicalism's like endeavours in the lyrics of Dudley-Smith, Baughen, Saward *et al*. Third, in David's haste to get to grips with Renewal and Restorationism, the Calvinist revival of the twentieth century is seriously underplayed: from the decades after 1914 when the Sovereign Grace Union (not mentioned here) was the sole focus

in England of Calvinist sentiment to the burgeoning of hard-line Calvinism in the 50s and 60s. Baptists were particularly affected, yet the author, himself a Baptist, does not mention the severe tensions within the denomination (which others have not experienced to the same extent) between the sterner conservatives ('Reformed Baptists') and the bubblier charismatics. Finally when David dons the prophet's mantle and predicts (p247) that charismatic Christianity will become the 'prevailing form of Protestantism in twenty first century Britain', a prospect which will thrill or chill according to one's own predilections, he should really try to assess the strength of conservative sentiment within the main-line churches. This cannot be gleaned in regard to Methodism from scanty references to MRF or CEIM (Headway is not mentioned at all), nor in respect of the URC from a single reference to the Group for Evangelism and Renewal (GEAR). Yet it is, strangely, in this most liberalised of all the denominations, 'the great desert with an occasional oasis', as one evangelical unkindly described it in the 70s, that the current leadership is most acutely aware of the growing challenge from the religious right. Another essay (it would be a controversial one) seems to be called for. *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* is wonderfully informative and provocative in that readers are left asking for more. The author, whose own conservative commitment is enlivened by a nice sense of humour and strengthened by a remarkably wide grasp of his source material is clearly the man to provide a second helping.

IAN SELLERS

The Unacceptable Face. The Modern Church in the Eyes of the Historian, by J.H.S.Kent (SCM Press, 1987 pp.256, £12.50 ISBN: 0-334-01712-2).

This intriguingly titled work is really a revised and expanded version of the author's contribution to Volume Two of the *Pelican Guide to Modern Theology* published in 1969. The latter has been a boon to teachers and students alike: the new book will be no less useful. The present reviewer has already found the summaries of recent writing on German pietism and its political attitudes, the origins of Methodism, Victorian Catholicism and Catholic Modernism particularly succinct and enlightening. This is vintage Kent—irreverent, cynical, humorous and acerbic in turn, and with many a pithy summing-up. 'Was there anything like the English Reformation?' Was there indeed? As for the now notorious apocalyptic final paragraph where the author looks out over a darkening Christian Europe with the enemies gathering at the gates, the identity of these latter-day barbarians is a conundrum for us all: are they soulless secularisers or assorted fundamentalist fanatics? At this point the smile on John's face becomes even more wry: he enjoys our puzzlement and he is not telling.

I.SELLERS

Chosen by God: A list of the Female Travelling Preachers of Early Primitive Methodism by E. Dorothy Graham (W.H.S. Publishing Office, pp. iv + 31, 1989, £3, ISBN: 0-900798-12-2)

Readers will no doubt be familiar with the photographs in the older Primitive Methodist histories of a few of the women itinerants who served the connexion in its early decades - the formidable Elizabeth Bultitude in her poke bonnet, the

kindly Mary Porteous (looking rather like a favourite aunt), and the arthritic and drooping Sarah Kirkland. These photographs can mislead us. They show their subjects in advanced years, not in their splendid prime; and they may suggest that there was only a handful of P.M. full time women itinerants, like themselves. However Wesley Swift pointed out as long ago as 1953 that he had identified something like forty but felt there must be many more, and now our Secretary has put us all in her debt by producing this biographical list containing the names of ninety-three women itinerants whose names appeared on the stations printed in the *P.M. Minutes*, with a supplementary list of another thirty-one who worked as itinerants before stationing lists were published, or who worked full time but locally as hired local preachers or some such arrangement.

Perhaps Dr. Graham has been too strict in her distinction between the two groups, as Sarah Kirkland and Mary Hawkesley (the first two of all the female travelling preachers employed by the Primitive Methodists), are confined to the Additional List when surely they should be in among their fellow pioneers in the major grouping. This is a small quibble in what is a very valuable tool. Dr. Graham has gone to very considerable pains to track down and identify her subjects who, because of the sparseness of evidence, are often the most shadowy and fleeting of figures. She sets down in brief what is known of them, lists the circuits in which they served, and quotes all the references in each case. The descriptive accounts sometimes run to fairly substantial paragraphs with colourful detail, but in many cases can only tell us that nothing is known of a preacher beyond the bare stationing details or, for example, that she did not receive her full stipend, or (in one or two cases) that she caused trouble!

Behind all this summarised data there lies a fascinating story of how and why the P.Ms came to use women as travelling preachers, what their impact was, and why they were no longer welcomed as the Connexion ran into its middle years and settled down into a more institutional form. Dr Graham told this story in her doctoral thesis, and we look forward to having it made widely known in published form at some future date.

G. E. MILBURN

The Cocker Connection by Mark Dalby (London: Regency Press, 1989, pp 160, £4.95. ISBN:0-7212-0784-7)

The author, an Anglican priest, has produced a readable history of an 'ordinary' Methodist family who became established in widely scattered locations. Benjamin Cocker (1785-1867), an Almondbury weaver and Wesleyan preacher typifies in many ways the early nineteenth-century West Riding Methodist. In the next generation four of the five sons emigrated - Benjamin II settled in Michigan, becoming an Episcopal Methodist minister and university professor; in Tasmania, David became an active Methodist and businessman; Joshua was the first British Consul in Tonga (did his Methodism help?) and William, after a banking career and membership of the Vancouver House of Assembly, vanished in Mexico, possibly murdered. Only Joseph stayed at home, becoming a bank manager in Dewsbury, where he was a member of Centenary chapel and active in public life. More than thirty family letters are reproduced, two of which provide useful comments on the fortunes of the Wesleyan Reformers around Huddersfield.

D.C.DEWS

NOTES AND QUERIES

1426. JOHN SMEDLEY'S HOLLOWAY CHAPEL

I can add something to David Barton's information on the UMFC Holloway Chapel (Note 1418), through my research on a biography of my grandfather, who was the UMFC minister in charge of the Cromford and Matlock circuits from 1870 to 1874. In 1851 about half the membership of the Cromford Wesleyan Circuit had split off to form two Reform groups. The larger group met in a large room, progressively converted into a chapel, in Scarthing Row in Cromford (later to be demolished and replaced by custom-built Mount Tabor Chapel). In 1863 it was led by Edwin Orme, who had joined the Wesleyan Church in 1839 and was a Wesleyan local preacher in the Cromford Wesleyan Circuit in 1845. He joined the Reform movement in 1850, and was engaged in 1855 by John Smedley as a missionary among his workpeople in Lea Mills, close to the hamlet of Holloway.

Edwin Orme served with such zeal that a revival broke out among the factory hands. For the next nine years he continued his evangelism, with the full backing of John Smedley, who provided the money to build the six chapels, which constituted the Cromford Wesleyan Reform Circuit. Of the six, Matlock Bank was the finest, with its nave, tower and spire, and was situated in the grounds of John Smedley's Hydro.

Under Orme's leadership this circuit joined the UMFC in 1864 to become the UMFC Cromford Circuit, with Richard Collinson as its first minister, Edwin Orme being moved to the UMFC Nottingham circuit as a probationary minister. James Cleave followed, and was succeeded by my grandfather in 1870. He was probably instrumental in 1872 in making Matlock Bank the principal chapel of the circuit, the name of which was changed to Matlock.

John Smedley may have worshipped in this chapel, but more likely he used the Holloway Chapel, which was nearer his home, Riber Castle, built to his own design in 1862. He was a remarkable character, rebelling against the Anglicans and the Matlock "establishment" to such an extent that he became *persona non grata* with them.

The *High Peak News*, which covered activities in the area, completely ignored Smedley, and with him the Matlock UMFC because of their close links. It did not even report his death in 1874, despite that he had brought national fame and prosperity to Matlock Bank through his development of the hydros; despite that 5,000 people thronged the lanes from Riber Castle to Holloway Chapel, to watch his funeral cortege pass; despite that only 500 of them were able to squeeze inside the chapel for the service; and despite that the *Wirksworth and Matlock Advertiser* considered the occasion so important, that it devoted nearly all of one issue to it.

The funeral service in the UMFC Holloway Chapel was conducted according to Smedley's private liturgy, by George Barker, said to have been a Wesleyan local preacher, who had worked for John Smedley for thirty five years. The graveside service was performed by Rev. S. Dyall, the chaplain of Smedley's Hydro. My grandfather had just left Matlock to take up his appointment at Lincoln, and was probably on holiday at the time; but Rev. H.J. Weatherhead, the second minister of the UMFC Matlock Circuit attended. A few years later my grandfather returned to Matlock, to give a lecture to the Holloway congregation on a tour he had made round Mont Blanc - and would no doubt have paid his tribute to John Smedley on that occasion.

JOHN B. MATTHEWS

1427. EDMUND GOSSE AND THE TORQUAY METHODISTS

In English literature the most celebrated Meeting Room of the Plymouth Brethren must be that in the erstwhile village of St Marychurch near Torquay. Here the young Edmund Gosse (1849- 1928) spent tedious hours under his father's ministrations and later poured out his resentments in *Father and Son*, published in 1907.

His father, Philip Henry died on 23rd August 1888 leaving his second wife a widow. At this time the Wesleyan Methodists of the recently formed Torquay Wesley circuit were making efforts to open missions in the surrounding area and with almost indecent haste after the elder Gosse's death the Superintendent Minister, J.H.Hodson, made enquiries of Edmund about the "Room", which was private property. The letter of response is mounted in the circuit's quarterly meeting minute book :

Sandhurst,
St Marychurch
Torquay
3.9.88

Rev and Dear Sir

If it rested with me I should be very glad indeed to meet your wishes with regard to the Meeting Room in this village. But my Mother retains authority over it during her life time and she is not, at all events at present, inclined to make any alteration in existing conditions,

Believe me to be, yours very faithfully,
Edmund Gosse.

Rev J.H. Hodson

This refusal was noted in the minutes for 24th September 1888 which also noted that a room might be available at Coffinswell but nothing was to be done for the present. At a later date the Brethren built a larger chapel in the main street but this was demolished recently.

ROGER THORNE

1428. 'PROPHETIC SONS AND DAUGHTERS'

In her review of Deborah Valenze's *Prophetic Sons and Daughters*, (*Proceedings*, xlvi, p,192) Dorothy Graham kindly suggests that Valenze relied heavily on my work and advice for her section on Ann Carr. This may be an understandable conclusion in view of my own published work on the Leeds revivalist, but in this case the suggestion is unfounded. Valenze had begun her study of Ann Carr before contacting me and was unaware of my parallel researches. At no time did she have access to my material and the only help given was to suggest potential sources. As we were both undertaking postgraduate research at the time this seemed to be the best way of mutually protecting ourselves.

D. COLIN DEWS

1429. THOMAS STOKES

A Charles Wesley manuscript, MS Miscellaneous Hymns, which contains items covering the years between 1747 and 1756 contains a hymn entitled 'Thanksgiving for One narrowly escaped Assassination, Mr. Thomas Stokes'.

Neither John Wesley's *Journal*, the Standard *Letters*, nor Charles Wesley's *Journal* contains any reference to Stokes. As I am in the midst of preparing an edition of Charles Wesley's hitherto unpublished poems, I should be grateful for any information any member can give me concerning him.

O. A. BECKERLEGE

1430. PLAQUE ON SITE OF JOHN WESLEY'S FIRST OPEN AIR SERMON

On April 2nd 1989 at 4pm, a plaque was unveiled on a wall at the corner of Old Bread Street and New Kingsley Road, Bristol, as near as possible to the site of the brickfield. It has John Wesley's head in profile, and underneath it reads:

NEAR THIS PLACE
ON APRIL 2nd 1739
JOHN WESLEY
PREACHED IN THE OPEN AIR
FOR THE FIRST TIME
IN THIS COUNTRY

ISAIAH 61.1
LUKE 4:18-19

The Warden of the New Room, Rev A. Raymond George, read from the *Journal* and preached very briefly on Luke 4: 18-19. Bishop Reuben Job of Iowa, who was present with seventy Americans, led in prayer, and the Chairman of the Bristol District, Rev Ian T.White, unveiled and dedicated the plaque.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

1431. 'WESLEY BONES'

The 'Wesley Bone' at the Museum of London (Note 1423) may depict Thomas Coke, and is certainly more like him than John Wesley. But I do not think we can be categorical about the matter and I have still to be convinced that these examples of folk art were intended to depict any specific individual, rather than just 'a clergyman preaching'. There are two further examples on display in the Castle Museum at York.

JOHN A. VICKERS

1432. TWO STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS — FROM BRISTOL?

Dr. A. Lutton, of Newholme, Queen's Road, Oswestry, Salop, has in his possession two stained-glass windows, each measuring 33ft. by 10ft., reputed to have come from a Methodist chapel in the neighbourhood of Bristol. The inscriptions read: (i) 'Given by Jane Westmacott in memory of her father and mother'; (ii) 'To the memory of Ann Lutton, who died August 1881'. Dr. Lutton also has a book entitled *Memories of a Consecrated Life* [i.e. the life of Ann Lutton], written by Jane Westmacott. If anyone has any information as to where these windows were originally sited, or regarding any of the names above-mentioned, he would much appreciate hearing from them. It is known that the Luttons were a Whitchurch (Salop) family, and supporters of Wesleyan Methodism in Whitchurch at the time that the present chapel (St. John's) was erected (1879).

EDITOR

1433. WILLIAM ARTHUR

I am engaged in gathering material on Rev William Arthur (1819-1901) and would welcome information on his place of birth, his childhood and his early family connections. Although one source refers to his place of birth as Glendun near Cushendall in County Antrim and another speaks of Letterkenny in County Donegal, there are good reasons for believing that he was born at Kells or Connor, adjacent villages in County Antrim near Ballymena. Because of 'family misfortunes' the Arthurs moved to Newport in County Mayo around 1830. Can anyone throw light on the Arthur home and family in Kells, Connor or elsewhere and on why the family had to leave the north of Ireland for the west? Comments should be sent to me at 5 Ashcroft Close, Lower Ballinerry, Lisburn, BT28 2AZ, Northern Ireland.

NORMAN W. TAGGART

1434. ELIZABETH SMITH, PRIMITIVE METHODIST PREACHER AND HER PORTRAIT

In my review of Deborah Valenze's *Prophetic Sons and Daughters* (*Proceedings*, xlv, p. 192) I stated that I had read the work in thesis form only. I have now seen the book and was intrigued to find an illustration of 'Elizabeth Smith (1803-1836), Primitive Methodist preacher' between pages 176-7 - incidentally this reference is wrongly given in the list of illustrations on page xiii as 'following p. 192'. When I was engaged upon my research I had not been able to find an illustration of Elizabeth, so on a recent visit to Methodist Archives I took the opportunity to see the one reproduced in Valenze's book and the accompanying article. Both refer to an Elizabeth Smith who had no connection whatsoever with Primitive Methodism. This Elizabeth Smith was born in December 1776 at B—— in County Durham, where her parents then lived in affluence and she had a sheltered upbringing until her father's bank failed and the family became penniless. Thereafter she had no fixed home but lived with friends in various parts of the country. Having caught a cold in the summer of 1805 Elizabeth died on 7th August 1806. Her chief claim to fame seems to have been her reaction to adversity! (*Memoirs of eminently pious women of the British Empire* (revised and enlarged by Samuel Burder), 3 vols, 1823, vol III facing p. 146).

A mistake of such a nature seems very inept and might result in a major error being perpetuated. It could have been avoided with a brief scanning of the above article. In fact the illustration itself might have raised suspicion as it depicts a very elegant, daintily dressed young lady, who, one feels, would hardly have been at home as a Primitive Methodist preacher!

E.DOROTHY GRAHAM

1435. METHODISM AND THE OUTBREAK OF WORLD WAR I

The following extract is from the *Spalding Free Press* of 4th August, 1914: Holbeach. A Church's Telegram to Sir Edward Grey. At the conclusion of service at the United Methodist Church on Sunday, the pastor, the Rev. J. Jay, moved a proposition that they send a telegram to Sir Edward Grey expressing a wish for a position of neutrality in the European crisis. "I protest against war from the standpoint of humanity and Christianity," he said, after dealing with its evils. The proposition was seconded by Mr. R. Merry, J.P., who thought the only Christian course was one of neutrality. All in favour then signified by standing, and the motion was carried unanimously. The service was conducted by Mr. Franks of Gedney.

I should be interested to know of efforts made by other Methodist Churches to prevent the outbreak of the First World War.

NORMAN LEVERITT

1436. METHODIST MALFEASANTS

The canon of Methodist criminals is, fortunately, a slight one. Offhand, I can only think of Rev. George Dyson, the unfortunate Wesleyan accessory before the fact in the Adelaide Bartlett murder case of 1868 and William Gardiner, the Primitive Methodist Sunday school superintendant accused of the murder of Rose Harsent at Peasenhall, Suffolk in 1902 but released after two juries failed to agree. Now it transpires that Norman Thorne, who was executed for the murder of Elsie Cameron in 1925 was a Wesleyan as was his unfortunate victim. Not only that but Thorne's poultry farm where the murder took place was called Wesley Poultry Farm., Crowborough, Sussex. This information is contained in the *The Murder Club Guide to South East England*, edited by Brian Lane. Harrap. 1988. (0-245-54685-5). We do not know which church Thorne and Elsie Cameron attended but Elsie's address at the time was 86 Clifford Gardens, Kensal Rise so perhaps local members may be able to hazard a guess. They were both keen members of the Band of Hope there.

DAVID A. BARTON

An illustrated guidebook to Englesea Brook chapel and museum of Primitive Methodism is available at 60p plus postage from Mr. K. R. Spibey, Waneshill, Church Road, Aston-juxta-Mondrum, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DR.

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