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JOHN WESLEY AND THE BIBLE

A tercentenary project exploring John Wesley's concept of "Scriptural Holiness" for the twenty-first century invites an exploration, however briefly, of the adjective in that phrase; and that is what this article attempts¹. Although Wesley is passionate about this fundamental experience of 'holiness without which no one shall see the Lord' (Heb.12:14) and fond of adjectives to qualify the various nouns he uses for it – 'Christian Perfection,' 'Entire Sanctification' and 'Perfect Love' as well as 'Scriptural Holiness' itself – he has left us no comprehensive treatment of what he means by 'Scriptural' or of his understanding of the Bible. He did write a number of theological treatises including, on this holiness theme, the *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*², but his preferred way of writing theology was by the published sermon. As, however, there is no sermon on the Bible itself, Wesley's views on Scripture have largely to be deduced from how he uses it. I gratefully, therefore, take the use of the adjective in 'Scriptural Holiness' as an invitation to explore a little of Wesley's attitude to Scripture, and then to ask if that attitude is sustainable today.

Wesley famously described himself as *homo unius libri*, a 'man of one book'³. Of both his commitment to reading and studying the Bible and

¹ Readers of this journal will not need to be reminded that June 2003 is the tercentenary of John Wesley's birth. To mark that anniversary the European Methodist Council has commissioned its Theological Commission to prepare a study paper on 'Scriptural Holiness for the twenty-first century'. This article is based on a paper presented to the Commission at its meeting in Waiern, Austria, in June 2002.

² Published in 1766, see *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952.

³ cf, 'I want to know one thing - the way to heaven; how to land safe on that happy shore. God Himself has condescended to teach the way; for this end He came from heaven. He hath written it down in a book. O give me that book! At any price give me the book of God! I have it: here is knowledge enough for me. Let me be *homo*

his scholarly ability in so doing, there is little doubt⁴. Any reading of the *Standard Sermons*, however, shows that he was not a reader of only that one book; that he was in fact widely read both in the classic literature one would expect a highly educated gentleman of his day to have read and in the literature of the Church down the ages⁵. Nor did he tell the early Methodists that they should read only that one book, as his production of the 'Christian Library' shows. As he was well and widely read, so he encouraged the Methodists to be the same. He was, therefore, 'a man of one book' only but significantly in the sense that he accorded supreme 'regard' to the Bible⁶ and that for him 'Scripture was the primary rather than the exclusive authority'⁷.

Something of what Wesley thought of the Bible can be seen in this paragraph from the Preface to his *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament* of 1754,

Concerning the Scriptures in general, it may be observed, the word of the living God, which directed the first patriarchs also, was, in the time of Moses, committed to writing. To this were added, in several succeeding generations, the inspired writings of the other prophets. Afterwards, what the Son of God preached, and the Holy Ghost spake by the apostles, the apostles and evangelists wrote. This is what we now style the Holy Scripture: this is that 'word of God which remaineth for ever'; of which, though 'heaven and earth pass away, one jot or tittle shall not pass away.' The Scripture, therefore, of the Old and New Testament is a most solid and precious system of divine truth. Every part thereof is worthy of God; and all together are one

unius libri. Here then I am, far from the busy ways of men. I sit down alone: only God is here. In His presence I open, I read His book; for this end, to find the way to heaven' - *The Standard Sermons of John Wesley*, ed E H Sugden, Epworth Press, London, 1968, vol.1, Preface to the Sermons, paragraph 5, pp31f.

- ⁴ A point amply confirmed and illustrated in J T Clemons, 'Was John Wesley a biblical Literalist?' *Epworth Review*, vol.6 no.3, September 1979, pp61-69, although the article is asking a very specific question. The expectations Wesley had that other ministers would emulate him in this regard, as set out in his *Address to the Clergy* of February 6th 1756, quoted on pp64f, are daunting!
- ⁵ See also S J Jones, *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, Kingswood, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1995, pp34f and 62. For a list of his wide reading see Jones in W S Gunter, S J Jones, T A Campbell, R L Miles and R L Maddox, *Wesley and the Quadrilateral*, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1997, pp41f and p148, note11.
- ⁶ As can be seen from the word 'comparatively' in an aside in *A Plain Account* when he is speaking of the views on Perfection he held in 1730. He describes that year as the year 'when I began to be *homo unius libri*, 'a man of one book' regarding none, comparatively, but the Bible' (p15).
- ⁷ J A Vickers, in ed J A Vickers, *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland*, Epworth Press, Peterborough, 2000, p311.

entire body, wherein is no defect, no excess. It is the fountain of heavenly wisdom, which they who are able to taste prefer to all writings of men, however wise or learned or holy⁸.

Eleven years later he produced the *Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament*, in which he aimed to 'give the direct, literal, meaning of every verse ...sentence ... word in the oracles of God' so that the ordinary reader can 'keep his eye fixed on the naked Bible'⁹. Both *Notes* were adaptations of the work of others, the first of J A Bengel's *Gnomon Novi Testamenti* of 1742¹⁰, and the second of Matthew Henry's famous *Exposition of the Old and New Testaments* of 1708-1710 and, more so, the *Annotations upon the Holy Bible* of Matthew Poole of 1665, with considerably more editing than he had used with Bengel. The *Notes* on the New Testament form part of the 'doctrinal standards' of British Methodism, those on the Old Testament do not¹¹.

Wesley was, of course, a prolific writer and selecting anything from his voluminous works to make any kind of point in a short paper like this is bound to be seen as tendentious. Fortunately, Scott Jones has done the spadework and those who want more detail can read there¹². Here I will simply cite a few details from both sets of *Notes*, the Sermons and, given the project of which this paper is a part, *A Plain Account* to illustrate the fairly obvious point that Wesley is a pre-Enlightenment reader of the Bible - a point I make as a statement of fact and not as a value-judgement on him or his writings.

In the Old Testament *Notes* he calls Moses 'the inspired penman in this history' (ie Genesis)¹³, uses Archbishop Ussher's chronology¹⁴ and thinks

⁸ Paragraph 10 of the Preface to John Wesley, *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*, dated January 4th 1754 at Hotwells, Bristol.

⁹ *Preface to the Old Testament*, from *Wesley's Notes on the Bible*, ed G Roger Schoenhals, published by Francis Asbury Press, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1987, p19.

¹⁰ He acknowledges his dependence in para. 7 of the Preface and para. 10 quoted above is itself heavily dependent on Bengel. In para. 3 he declares that he writes for ordinary people, and in para. 6 that he has omitted scholarly, critical material - 'curious and critical inquiries' - from these *Notes*.

¹¹ Adam Clarke comments: 'The notes on the Old Testament are allowed, on all hands, to be meagre and unsatisfactory' and he blames the printer for using too large a type and so reducing the amount Wesley could write. He adds, 'This account I had from the excellent author himself' (General Preface to vol.1 of his *Bible Commentary* published in 1810).

¹² S J Jones, *op.cit.*

¹³ On Gen 2:8-15.

¹⁴ Noting on Gen. 7:11 that 'the six hundredth year of Noah's life was 1656 years from the creation'.

of David as the author of Ps.103¹⁵. He reads the Old Testament Christologically throughout¹⁶. In the New Testament *Notes* his comment on 2 Tim.3:16 is brief and low-key, 'All scripture is inspired by God – The Spirit of God not only once inspired those who wrote it, but continually inspires, supernaturally assists, those that read it with earnest prayer. Hence it is so profitable for ...' In a sermon, however, after quoting this verse in the form 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God' he adds the heavier note – 'consequently, all Scripture is infallibly true' and reminds the hearers that St Paul is here speaking 'primarily and directly' about the Old Testament¹⁷. On that other proof-text, 2 Pet.1:20-21, he interprets 'being moved by the Holy Ghost' as '*Being moved* – literally, *carried*. They (ie the Bible writers) were purely passive therein'¹⁸. In these *Notes* Wesley offers his own translation from the Greek in which he is prepared to amend the *Authorised Version* and to offer alternative textual readings on the basis of the developments in textual criticism pioneered by Bengel¹⁹. He also regards the Rich Man and Lazarus of Luke 16:19-31 as real people.

¹⁵ I cite this detail because it invites comparison with Adam Clarke's treatment in vol. 4 of his *Commentary*, published in 1822, which dismisses the Davidic authorship of this and other psalms. Clarke retains belief in the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and Ussher's chronology. Arguably Clarke's work represent the first stirrings of critical Old Testament scholarship in Methodism, see my 'Adam Clarke: Methodism's first Old Testament scholar', *Cornish Methodism Association Occasional Paper* no 26, 1994.

¹⁶ See pp21 and pp25ff of W M Arnett, 'A Study in John Wesley's Explanatory Notes upon the Old Testament', *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol. 8, Spring 1973, pp14-32.

¹⁷ Sermon 12, 'The Means of Grace' (1739), paragraphs 3.8 and 3.9. There is an interesting entry on 'infallibility' in the *Journal* for August 24th 1776. Wesley is commenting on a book receiving much attention in the reading classes, written by a writer recently returned to the faith who was promoting it in a way of which Wesley disapproves. Thus Wesley writes, 'I read Mr Jenkyn's admired tract on the Internal Evidence of the Christian Religion...If he is a Christian he betrays his own cause by averring that 'all Scripture is not given by inspiration of God, but the writers of it were sometimes left to themselves and consequently made some mistakes.' Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that Book, it did not come from the God of truth', *Journal of Rev John Wesley*, ed N Curnock, Epworth Press, London, 1909-1916 vol.6, p.117. See also Scott, *Conception and Use*, pp23-31 and p38 of Larry Shelton, 'John Wesley's approach to Scripture in historical perspective', *Wesleyan Theological Journal*, vol.16, no.1, Spring 1981, pp23-50.

¹⁸ All the italics in the quotations from the *Notes* in this paragraph are Wesley's.

¹⁹ See paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Preface to the New Testament *Notes*. Glasson quotes Isaacs as saying that Wesley made 12,000 alterations to the AV and adds that his departure from the Textus Receptus and use of Bengel's *Testament* is radical and noteworthy - F Glasson, 'Wesley's New Testament Reconsidered', *Epworth Review*, vol. 10, no.2, May 1983, pp28-34. Cf Scott, *op cit*, pp208-214.

Jones, paying particular attention to the Sermons, groups Wesley's use of Scripture into five classes²⁰: *textual* – the use of texts as in preaching, *explanatory* – the use of Scripture to explain a doctrine or idea, *definitional* – 'Scripture serves as a sort of authoritative dictionary' settling the meaning and definition of terms²¹, *narrative* – in which stories, characters and events are used as illustrations and *semantic* – 'Scripture can provide the words and phrases to make a point that could easily have been made in other words without a change of meaning' – 'a substitution of words to take advantage of the authority associated with their source'²². He also distils seven rules from him for interpreting Scripture²³: *Speak as the oracles of God* - use scriptural language wherever possible (cf the semantic use of Scripture just noticed), *Use the literal sense unless it contradicts another Scripture or implies an absurdity*, *Interpret the text with regard to its literary context*, *Scripture interprets Scripture according to the Analogy of Faith and by Parallel Passages*, *Commandments are covered promises*, *Interpret literary devices appropriately* and *Seek the most original text and the best translation*. Most of these uses and rules can be seen at work in almost any sermon you care to choose, and most are commonplace in the evangelical/Protestant tradition of Wesley's day. On only one of these does Jones point to a special - unique is perhaps too strong a word - emphasis on Wesley's part, and that is his particular use of 'the analogy of faith' which we shall examine below²⁴. Most of these features can also be seen in *A Plain Account*, which sets out in the form of a diary to track, defend and explain Wesley's preaching of perfection throughout his ministry. Although he admits his debt to other books and other writers, this tract could more accurately be named 'A Scriptural Account...' In it he begins and ends his reasoning from the 'Bible, as the one, the only standard of truth, and the only model of pure religion'²⁵, insists that his understanding of this doctrine is found clearly stated in 'the oracles of God'²⁶, that it is in conformity with 'the whole tenor of the New Testament'²⁷, and that it is provable from 'express texts of Scripture' and with examples from Scripture²⁸. There is therefore no doubt of the importance which Wesley ascribed to Scripture and the facility with which he used it.

Jones examines both Wesley's conception of the Bible and his use of it,

²⁰ *Op.cit* chapter 5.

²¹ *ibid* p134.

²² *ibid* p135.

²³ *ibid* chapter 4.

²⁴ *ibid* pp45-53, 109-205 and *passim*.

²⁵ *A Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, Epworth Press, London, 1952, p6.

²⁶ *ibid* p10.

²⁷ *ibid* p19.

²⁸ *ibid* pp37 and 106.

and concludes that his use of the Bible is largely consonant with what he says about it²⁹. He demonstrates that for Wesley there are five components to religious authority, of which Scripture is hugely primary though all are interdependent³⁰. He shows that for Wesley Scripture functions authoritatively as both source and norm, the place from which basic doctrines are obtained and the court of appeal in all disputes about teaching or behaviour, and that for him there are no doubts about the sufficiency, clarity and wholeness of Scripture. The rationale for Scripture's authority lies in the concepts of revelation, inspiration³¹ and infallibility, about which Wesley uses the commonplace arguments of the time³². He points out that Wesley reads the Bible with one aim in

²⁹ In *John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture*, *passim*.

³⁰ His five, rather than the *Quadrilateral* of four, are: Scripture, Reason, Christian Antiquity, Experience and the Church of England, *op.cit* chapter 3. Cf. 'No one who reads Wesley carefully could possibly miss the primacy of scripture over the others. However the introduction of geometric metaphors is a mistake from the start. For Wesley the elements are defined in such a way that they constitute one locus of authority with five aspects. Christian faith and practice are governed by Scripture, which is reasonable in its claims, exemplified in antiquity, vivified in personal experience and most fully institutionalised in the Church of England' (p64). Jones is indebted in part here to the language of the 1996 *Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, that Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience and confirmed by reason, see pp51 and 80.

³¹ On inspiration there is an undated tract, *A Clear and Concise Demonstration of the Divine Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*, found on p484 of *The Works of John Wesley*, ed T Jackson, Wesleyan Conference Office, London, 1872, vol. 11. It reads: 'There are four grand and powerful arguments which strongly induce us to believe that the Bible must be from God: viz. miracles, prophecies, the goodness of the doctrine and the moral character of the penmen. All the miracles flow from divine power; all the prophecies, from divine understanding; the goodness of the doctrine, from divine goodness; and the moral character of the penmen, from divine holiness. Thus Christianity is built on four grand pillars: viz. the power, understanding, goodness and holiness of God. Divine power is the source of all miracles; divine understanding, of all prophecies; divine goodness, of the goodness of the doctrine; and divine holiness, of the moral character of the penmen. I beg leave to propose a short, clear and strong argument to prove the divine inspiration of the holy Scriptures. The Bible must be the invention either of good men or angels, bad men or devils, or of God. 1. It could not be the invention of good men or angels; for they neither would nor could make a book, and tell lies all the time they were writing it, saying, 'Thus saith the Lord', when it was their own invention. 2. It could not be the invention of bad men or devils; for they would not make a book which commands all duty, forbids all sin, and condemns their souls to hell to all eternity. 3. Therefore, I draw this conclusion, that the Bible must be given by divine inspiration'.

³² Jones concludes that Wesley takes the authority and infallibility of the Bible for granted - 'Wesley has difficulty conceiving of any Christian faith that has questions about the authority and veracity of the Bible', *Conception and Use*, p28. See also

mind, which is to find the way to heaven. And it is clearly this reading, this agenda - his own salvation and the salvation of the individual - which gives Wesley his particular interpretation of the 'analogy of faith' or the 'general tenor of Scripture' by which the whole Bible is read, through which conflicting passages are reconciled and in which the meaning and unity of the whole Bible is seen to subsist³³. The elements of this determining way of reading the Bible are variously listed by Wesley: but the common core element of his key interpretative device - the 'analogy of faith' - is threefold: original sin, justification by faith and sanctification. In effect, therefore, Wesley offers us an example of a 'Personal-Salvationist Reading of Scripture'.

All this, of course, needs to be understood in its context; which is prior to the beginnings of Enlightenment, critical, Biblical scholarship; prior to the debate on the authority and inspiration of the Bible associated with the birth and rise of 'Fundamentalism' in the twentieth century and prior to current debates. It is anachronistic, therefore, for any of the protagonists in these fields today to claim Wesley as 'their man' or their position as 'his'. Methodists do, however, like to say that 'the way in which Wesley used Scripture and his understanding of the nature of its authority are foundational issues' and official formularies of the Church imply as much³⁵. But how the methods and views of someone who inhabited a radically different world than ours can be adopted by us as 'foundational' is a huge question. We can, and Methodists usually do, treat Wesley with respect. We can set him in his historical context, read him as a representative of mainstream interpretative tradition, and explore and appreciate his hermeneutics in a historical study of that discipline and of our own tradition of faith. It is questionable, however, whether we can do any more.

Wesley's reaction to Mr Jenkyns in note 17 and the tract note 31. Wesley's comments there and Jones' statement illustrate beautifully how different Wesley's world is from mine (and I suspect from that of most European Methodists) - I cannot conceive of any Christian faith that does not have such questions.

³³ The phrase 'analogy of faith' is taken from his translation of Romans 12:6, on which see the note in *Explanatory Notes upon the New Testament*. Cf also Clemons, *op cit* and Scott, *op.cit* pp43-53, 199-205 and *passim*.

³⁴ See Shelton, *op.cit*, especially pp38, 40 and 42f. He is particularly insistent that since Wesley is both pre-critical and pre-Fundamentalist in his approach to Scripture (p40), Methodism must refute any suggestion that Wesley's position is nowadays represented most clearly in Fundamentalism. Jones' attempt to say how Wesley might interpret Scripture if he were around today in Gunter *et al* pp58-61 illustrates the unwisdom of the project.

³⁵ The quote is from Shelton, *op.cit*. p23. The statement on the nature of authority in general and that of the Bible in particular in British Methodism in clause 4 of the *Deed of Union* is, however, subtly and to some notoriously, imprecise. See also *A Lamp to my feet and A Light to my Path*, Methodist Conference, 1998.

Jones argues that Wesley is not a pre-Enlightenment figure but that living in the period of transition between pre-Enlightenment and Enlightenment ways of thinking, he offers an 'alternative way into modernity' and a different way of interpreting Scripture³⁶. To justify this view he cites the value Wesley places on 'experience' and his particular understanding and use of the 'analogy of faith' as his key interpretative device. Whilst Jones is right in these observations of Wesley's methodology, the conclusion he draws from his observation is much less secure. And if the arrival of Enlightenment ways of thinking in Biblical Studies is to be recognised by the birth of the, now recently deceased, Historical Critical Method³⁷, as is usually thought, then Wesley must remain a pre-Enlightenment figure because he neither employs even the rudiments of such methodology nor shows any interest in its principal concerns. He may on occasion refer to authors and their settings in life, he may amend the Authorised Version and occasionally employ new text critical insights: but these are minor features of an approach which reads the whole Bible Christologically and soteriologically. He is not interested in any kind of historical investigation. He reads Scripture for one purpose only, 'to find the way to heaven.'³⁸ His reading strategy and agenda, which shapes what he reads and enables him to read the Bible as a whole, see a single message in it and handle contradictory passages, is that the Bible teaches the individual soul the way to heaven. That is, put simply, the 'analogy of faith' or 'general tenor of Scripture' which determines how Wesley reads the Bible, and this is not at all consonant with the Enlightenment or the 'modern' agenda for reading the Bible.

Wesley's reading of Scripture has, of course, resonances with 'post-modern' readings of Scripture, which, among other things, encourage individual readers to read for their own benefit, according to their own experience and for their own fulfilment. And that was certainly part of Wesley's reading strategy and agenda. But before we acclaim Wesley as a postmodern, we need to remember that post-modernity rejects any meta-narrative and every claim to authority, and Wesley would have said that both were essentials, givens, found in and possessed by

³⁶ Jones, *Conception and Use*, p36, adding that as a man of reason in the 'age of reason' Wesley is able to take on board developments in science which seem to be in conflict with Scripture (pp38-41). In his more recent work, which is in many respects a summary of the book (chapter 2 of Gunter et al, see note 6 above) he recognises that new knowledge has 'rendered his views on inspiration and inerrancy untenable today' (p59).

³⁷ Usually associated with the names of the German scholars W M L de Wette (1780-1849) for the Old Testament and F C Baur (1792-1860) for the New.

³⁸ See note 3.

Scripture. Neither modernity nor post-modernity can provide a home for Wesley. He is a pre-Enlightenment reader of the Bible. Despite all his competencies and all that can be learned from him as a reader of Scripture in his particular setting, the hermeneutical problem remains. How can a person who reads the Bible as he does and the method he uses function as an authority for people who live in a different world?

Finally, to that modern invention which seeks to relate the Bible to other sources of authority for Wesley and for Methodism – the *Quadrilateral* of Scripture, Tradition, Reason and Experience³⁹. Wesley privileged the Bible over all other books, and I suspect that few Methodists of any kind would disagree with doing that. Much more controversial, however, is the debate about the true locus of authority in the Faith. This debate has been a violent one throughout the history of the Church and continues in its own little way in Methodism today in differing views of the proper relationship between these four sources of authority in the so-called *Quadrilateral*. Jones' argument against geometric metaphors and for seeing one locus of authority in four aspects (five for Wesley himself) is sound⁴⁰: but debate continues nonetheless with growing use of the slogan of the 'primacy of Scripture'. Despite its popularity, however, this slogan has little substance. It is, for one thing, a hermeneutical impossibility, because in any reading whatever primacy there is lies with the reader. It is the reader who opens the Bible, selects a chosen passage and then quotes and uses it – and without a reader a Bible remains closed and silent. The slogan is also, for another thing, historically anachronistic, for the Bible came on the scene last of the four, the creation of experience and reason in the vortex of the living tradition of the Church. Therefore, if we must talk of any 'primacy' within the *Quadrilateral*, though that is not really a very helpful way of speaking, the only conclusion we can draw in the light of contemporary hermeneutics and of Wesley's own methodology, is that whatever primacy there is lies with the Reader.⁴¹

Wesley's use of the Bible illustrates this contention beautifully. He read Scripture out of a deep personal need – albeit a need in part created by hearing others read Scripture in that way, for hermeneutics is always circular – which provided his reading strategies and his agenda. He sought what he needed in Scripture and found it, and taught others to seek, read and find in the same way. That is how it was for Wesley,

³⁹ See especially Gunter *at al*, *op.cit* and Scott, *Conception and Use* pp62-64.

⁴⁰ See note 30 above.

⁴¹ See my 'The Primacy of Scripture and the Methodist Quadrilateral' in the *Bulletin* of the Fellowship of the Kingdom, Spring 1997, pp1-3, reprinted as an occasional paper of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship, January 1998.

and how it inevitably is for us too, no matter how different our contexts, interests and reading strategies are from his. Recognising this adds yet another complexity to any attempt in Methodism either to establish the meaning of 'doctrinal standards' or to formulate any statement of 'authority' among us. Wesley's use of the Bible might be informative and instructive as Methodism moves on, and not only for reasons of historical interest; but whether many of his exegetical conclusions are able to survive in our age, cultures and contexts is open to much more serious doubt.

Dr STEPHEN B DAWES

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NOTES AND QUERIES

1553 METHODISM AND REVOLUTION

On the Sunday evening of November 16 1817 the Rev. James Bromley, then Superintendent of the Canterbury Circuit, preached a sermon in St. Peter's Street Wesleyan Chapel on what he called 'a great and peculiar national calamity'. The occasion was the death in childbirth of HRH Princess Charlotte, daughter of the Prince of Wales (later King George IV) and therefore 'heir presumptive'. The sermon was subsequently published.

In the course of the sermon Bromley asked questions which anticipated what we now know as the 'Halevy thesis': 'Why did not Great Britain sink in the sanguinary ruins of 1792 and 1794?... Why is it, that in this country, during a period of unparalleled troubles and commotions,... useful arts, true philosophy and pure religion, have obtained an ascendancy unprecedented in any age?' And his answer was impeccably loyal. Having referred to the House of Brunswick as a bulwark against Rome, he continued:

Under the blessing of God, the whole of this has been in a great measure owing to the personal excellencies, the wise councils, and upright administration of our present afflicted but revered Sovereign... The Royal Family of Great Britain has never forgot its obligations to Protestant Dissenters; and has never failed, in return for their loyal attachment, to guard their interests, and protect their worship.

It is interesting to note that Bromley was later expelled from the ministry for refusing to join in the witch-hunt against the authors of the Fly-Sheets.

JOHN A. VICKERS

A WORKING CLASS SUNDAY SCHOOL ?

DIVERGENT views have been expressed about the role of Sunday schools in the nineteenth century; Walter Laqueur (1985) came to the conclusion that in the period 1780-1850 they represented working class values. This view was contested by Patrick Joyce (1982), who examined records for towns in Northern England and came to the view that Sunday schools were more middle class, mainly because the managers and those who financed the schools were from that socio-economic group.

Family interest in one Norwich Sunday school has prompted me to investigate whether Sun Lane Methodist Sunday school, New Catton, Norwich, represented independent working class values in the period 1818 to 1875. New Catton is a district of Norwich approximately three miles north of the city centre.

Between 1811 and 1821 the population of Norwich grew rapidly when the city's textile industry experienced a boom. Migrants, mainly from the surrounding countryside, were attracted to the city creating a demand for housing. New Catton was developed to meet this need, initially as a community of about 1100 people. The main occupation of the residents was that of weaving and the houses in the vicinity of Sun Lane were small, mainly terraced, with a communal pump and privy.

In 1818 a Sunday school began in a cottage wash house in Long Row founded by the Norwich Sunday School Union to serve this newly established poor community. Four years later it was handed over to Calvert Street Wesleyan Methodist Church, the main Wesleyan church in the city, located about two miles from New Catton. In 1827 the Wesleyan Sunday school moved from Long Row to new premises in Sun Lane and thereafter became known as Sun Lane Sunday school or simply 'Sun Lane'.

To determine if Sun Lane Sunday school represented working class values, answers to the following questions were sought :-

1. Were the teachers at Sun Lane working class ? .
2. Was the school financed by working class supporters ?
3. Was the management and teaching indigenously working class ?

Laqueur (1985) claims 'that within two decades of their founding, Sunday schools had become one strand of a uniquely working class constellation'. He challenges the assertion that Sunday schools were agencies of the upper and middle classes which were imposed on the lower orders to encourage behaviour conducive to industrial society .

Using primary sources, such as teachers' meeting minutes, Laquer (1985) concludes that Sunday schools were indigenously working class. Teachers were almost all from the same strata of society as their pupils,

and after 1810 some sixty percent of all teachers had been Sunday school scholars themselves. He found that teachers played the most important part in determining internal school policies and points to a subsequent broadening of financial support which made schools less dependent on benefactors. He also pointed out that Sunday schools flourished in parts of the country unaffected at that stage by industrialisation. Although acknowledging that schools taught the work ethic and precepts of cleanliness and obedience, these traits, he claims, were not distinctive *bourgeoisie* attributes. He does agree that because they were part of the same stage of historical development it was natural that Sunday schools should exhibit some of the characteristics of that time appropriate to factory work, such as discipline.

Joyce's (1982) treatment of Sunday schools is in the context of his study of the factory system. He states his book is 'primarily about the social system to which factory production gave rise in the north after about 1850', His recurring theme is employer hegemony and an evocative phrase 'the now unsmoking chimneys of the factory towns had dominated not only the physical but mental landscape of these years to an extent to which it is now difficult to realise', gives a real flavour of his perspective. From a detailed analysis he deduces that education, leisure, family life, politics and religion were not discrete areas of experience but had their basis in the factory system. He traces connections of northern factory owners of that time to Anglican and Nonconformist churches to show how the employer class extended their power and influence. This included Sunday schools, where, whilst agreeing with Laqueur (1985), that most of the teachers were working class, he stressed that management and funding rested with industrialists and the elite, thus it was they who controlled the schools.

Teachers at Sun Lane Sunday school and their occupations.

Teachers' registers for Sun Lane for the period 1841 to 1856 showed the names of sixty eight men and fifty women teachers over the entire period. At any one time the school appeared to have about forty teachers with about two hundred scholars. The registers do not show teachers' addresses, thus it was quite difficult to trace occupations through the Census enumerators' books for 1841 and 1851. However it was possible to trace with reasonable certainty the occupations of thirty five male teachers (58%) and thirteen females (22%), the lower number for females is partly accounted for by occupations not always being shown in the Census enumerators' books. The following table shows the occupations ascertained:

Table showing occupations of teachers:

Occupation	Males	Females	No.
Weavers	6	Shoebinders	4
Shoemakers	6	Dressmakers	3
Cordwainers	5	Laundress	2
Cabinet makers	2	Winder	1
Clickers	2	Weaver	1
Fellmonger	1	Silkworker (factory)	1
Timber Carter	1	Servant	1
Whitesmith	1		
Smith	1		
Woolcomber	1		
Engineman	1		
Gardener	1		
Coal porter	1		
Porter	1		
Shop worker	1		
Warper	1		
Carpenter	1		
Tailor	1		
Farmers son	1		
Totals	<u>35</u>		<u>13</u>

Although not comprehensive, I believe the sample of occupations is large enough to clearly indicate that the teachers were predominately working class.

Further observations on the occupations of teachers.

The registers indicate that, as one might expect there was a turnover of teachers but a notable feature is the long service of some. One of the most remarkable was Samuel Spauls who became a teacher in 1826, and in 1831 a Joint Superintendent, a post he held for thirty seven years. The 1851 census shows him living about two miles from the school and his occupation is given as a cordwainer, His wife and one daughter were employed as shoebinders, the household also included a nephew and a lodger both of whom were cordwainers. All the adults from his household taught at Sun Lane. A stone erected in memory of Samuel Spauls in Norwich cemetery states 'he continued to follow his trade as a journeyman surrounded by family cares and anxieties, for it was all he could do to obtain food and raiment, and a trifle wherewith to help the cause he had so much at heart...'

Sun Lane Sunday school finance and management.

When the school was established in 1818 under the auspices of the Norwich Sunday School Union, its President was Joseph John Gurney, the Quaker banker and brother of Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer. There are no records showing if he gave financial support in the early days of the school but initially rooms were hired so there would have been little need for capital expenditure. Records show that it was not until 1824 that the teachers decided to build a schoolroom, completed three years later. There is no record of subscribers to the building fund but the evidence points to teachers taking the decision. The earliest financial records which could be traced refer to the formation in 1842 of a committee of teachers to administer a fund called the 'The New Catton Sunday School Benevolent Fund' its purposes were defined as being 'for the relief of sick scholars'. Teachers subscribed one penny per month and if upon visiting a sick child they saw that they were in need they were authorised to give up to sixpence on any one visit. In distressing cases the committee could increase this amount. The minutes show that this fund was later extended to offer relief to sick teachers. The small sums involved and the need to offer relief to sick teachers indicates that they were not in a strong financial position. This is supported by references at the back of teachers' registers which indicate in 1848 that they were supporting the school by regular donations of either sixpence or one shilling.

The Annual report of the Norwich Wesleyan Sunday Schools Committee for the year 1849/50 charts the progress of the six Wesleyan Sunday schools in and around Norwich, including Sun Lane. The report states that they had upward of 1000 scholars, 200 teachers, 70 of whom were once scholars. Disbursements for the year were £33.8.1d., mainly for rent of some schoolrooms, cleaning and books. A list of one hundred and thirty subscribers is given, their contributions totalling a modest £23.11.0d., with the largest single contribution being £2.

The available published reports are intermittent and it must be acknowledged that available records may not tell the full story. Nevertheless a similar subscription pattern emerges in the 1868 and 1869 reports, but by this time there is a 'farthing fund'. So there is no evidence of benefactors making large donations, and financial support was not confined to a few people who could effect control over the schools. The Committee consisted of the superintendents and a representative from each school. The committee treasurers were a bank manager and a printer. However the records fail to give any information about teacher training and what was taught.

With regard to capital expenditure; at Sun Lane when the schoolrooms were extended in 1871 the subscription list towards the total cost of

£601.15.2. showed over 300 subscribers, the largest amount being a donation of £20 from Mr. J. J. Colman of milling and mustard fame, with just two others of £10 from local notables. When in 1880 the premises were extended yet again, J. J. Colman agreed to match every sovereign raised by teachers and scholars by making a five shilling donation. Over five years of fund raising he thus contributed £195. Although he was not directly associated with Sun Lane Sunday school, a memorial service was held there for J. J. Colman upon his death in 1898. A report of the service clearly shows why they were grateful their local Member of Parliament. It records that 'as a staunch non-conformist and broad minded churchman..... in our county there are few churches and schools that have not shared in his liberality'. Although Colman's did fund a day school near to their factory in Carrow, Norwich, this was across the city from Sun Lane and there is no evidence suggesting that his motive in supporting Sun Lane was to influence the behaviour of children to make them more amenable to factory work.

Conclusion.

It seems clear that teachers were working class, certainly up to the mid nineteenth-century. Although J. J. Colman gave some financial support to the school for two building projects, there is insufficient evidence to draw parallels with the situation which Joyce described in the north of England where factory owners through their financial support, in his view endeavoured to exercise control over Sunday schools, because it was in their commercial interest. There was no other evidence showing links with factory owners. Indeed most of the population of New Catton were self employed weavers working from home until about 1860 and then shoemaking on an outworking basis became the main occupation. The first Norwich silk yarn mill was built in 1834 and the first steam powered loom in the city introduced in 1838, so factory production was not so intensive as in the north of England.

Factory production of shoes in Norwich gradually gained momentum from the mid nineteenth century but was initially based on outworkers so even by the turn of the century only half of the 7,500 shoe workers actually worked within factories. It would appear therefore that regional factors may have had some effect because industrialisation in Norwich did not exactly match conditions in the north and the hegemony of factory owners did not apply. Financial support of Sun Lane was on a wide basis with teachers themselves raising funds.

The school does appear to have been 'independent', staffed and mainly financed by local working class people. There is a lack of detailed evidence about what was taught although the most striking aspect of the

primary evidence examined in connection with Sun Lane Sunday School and others in the local group is the repeated emphasis on the 'rescue of infidels'. In describing successes, records give details by name of how sick scholars 'had died happy in God', This was the religious imperative. Even the Benevolent Fund set up in 1842 had in its rules 'that the sick visitor should lose no opportunity for imparting spiritual advice to parents and the child.' 'The salvation of the soul being the principle object of Sabbath school tuition'. So evangelism was the watchword regardless of the socio-economic standing of the school.

Early in the twentieth century Rosebery Road Methodist Church was built alongside Sun lane Sunday School and the church continues today to serve the community of New Catton.

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RONALD COXFORD

(Ronald Coxford is a local preacher in the Diss circuit)

A FURTHER PAWSON LETTER

JOHN PAWSON TO WILLIAM EDEN

Wednsbury May 7th 1769

My very Dear Brother,

That affectionate regard which I feel in my heart for you lays me under a kind of necessity to trouble you with a few lines, which I doubt not but you will receive as from one that sincerely loves you and totally wisheth your spiritual prosperity. I could not but sympathize with you in your trouble occasion'd [by] being hindred from meeting us at Worcester as you desired. I [would] have greatly rejoiced to have seen you along with your [young brother?], if it could have been so order'd, but as your dear Father [(whom) God knows I sincerely love) was not agreeable I hope you fo[und] blessing in bearing the heavy Cross and obeying your F[ather. I] found it no small Tryall to me to part with Brothers Harry [] and now Brother Allen is gone also, and I am left alone, and ye[t] not alone for Jesus is with me. I am just now returned from [pre]aching in the open Air to more People than the House would contain, at a little distance from Wednsbury, this is the first time I have had occasion to Preach abroad this Spring, but I hope shall have many opportunity of the same kind before the Summer is ended. It was with the greatest pleasure that I heard Brother Allen read a few lines which he receiv'd some time since from you. I could heartly [sic] rejoice, and sincearly praise my gracious Lord for his unspeakable goodness, which I know he hath extended to you in that he hath so clearly convinced you of your want of a saveing acquaintance with Jesus the Saviour of Men, the friend of Sinners. O my Billey, what is that light which hath shined, which doth still shine upon your Soul, but the fore-runner of Christ himself, it is sent to prepare his way as John the Baptist was, and depend upon it my dear he himself will most assuredly come and bring Salvation to your heart. Nay I hope he is come already, and that you can exceedingly rejoice and be glad because of his unspeakable goodness which you find by happy experience to be communicated unto you. But if this is not the case with you as yet, I will venter to say in the words of my dear Saviour, 'thou art not far from the Kingdom of God.' No my dear Brother Jesus stands knocking at the Door of your heart, only hear his voice and open to him and he will come in and Sup with you [ac]cording to his word and promise. I hope while you feel your very heart burn with loveing desire after this most inestimable blessing, and that you cannot, that you will not rest till you do indeed possess and enjoy it. But O my Brother, why O why should you be destitute of it for one moment longer, strive to believe on Christ, lay hold, be not afraid to venter your whole Soul upon him, who hath loved, who hath bleed [sic], who hath died to [save] you. Jesus is beyond all doubt Infinitely willing to receive you now, yes he this moment waiteth to be gracious, there is nothing for you to fear, only deliver your Soul into his gracious hand, there is nothing for you to overcome but your unbelief.

I have now finish'd the Labours of this Day, we have had the largest Congregation this night that ever I have seen in Wednsbury at any time, the people were deeply attentive and seemingly much affected, one young Woman

cry'd out aloud almost all the while, I hope that she will never rest, till she find rest in Jesus. I hope our gracious Master will accomplish his own Designs among us and that his Kingdom shall come with power, so that it shall be established in such wise that all the united powers of Earth and Hell, shall not be able to over turn it. This is what my Soul greatly longeth to see, and truly delighteth in. O what abundant reason have we to praise our dearest Lord that he hath cast our lot in this Gospel Day, when we may both hear and receive the glad Tidings of Salvation, my dear Willey let us seek to improve, in a proper manner the great privileges which we are now favour'd with, how long we may enjoy them is quite uncertain, our Enemys are plotting and contriveing our ruin, therefore we will not fear what Man shall do unto us, give my respects to your dear Parents, my kind love to my dear Harry and Tomey, to Lucey and all friends, may our dear Lord and Saviour continually smile upon thy soul my dear Child may he fill thee with all joy and peace in Believing, so prays your ever affectionate

Brother J. Pawson.

[Addressed:] Top Mr. Wm. Eden at Broad-marston near Campdon Glostershire

[Verses written on the same side as the address:]

1. No Glory I court, no Riches I want,
Ambition is nothing to me;
The one thing I beg kind heaven to grant,
is a mind independent and free.
2. With Passion unruffled, untainted with pride,
By reason my life let me Square;
The wants of my Nature are cheaply supply'd
And the rest is but folly and care.
3. The blessings which Providence freely hath lent
I'll justly and gratefully prize,
Whilst sweet meditation & chearfull content
Shall make me both healthy & wise.
4. In the pleasures the great Man's Possessions display
Unenvy'd, I'll challenge my part;
For ev'ry fair Object my Eye can survey
Contributes to gladden my heart.
5. How vainly through infinite trouble & strife
The many their labours employ!
Since all that is truly delightfull in Life
Is what all, if they will, may enjoy.

Read these verses to Harry and Tomey, God bless you, farewell.

Notes:

1. The ms of this letter was found among papers connected with the Rev. Frederick Payne (died 1895) and at present in the possession of a descendant, Dr. Roger Highfield of Merton College, Oxford. Payne was connected with the Eden family through his sister Harriet, who married William Henry Loxdale Eden. It was sent to me by the Rev. John H. Davis, a Supernumerary in Llandudno, with a letter giving the background to it. Was W. H. L. Eden a descendant of the marriage between Thomas Eden and a sister of Ann Loxdale (see WHS. *Proceedings* 51 p.2n)?
2. For the Eden family of Broad Marston, see *The Letters of John Pawson* vol.1 p.6 etc. This is the earliest extant letter to William Eden (and perhaps the first Pawson wrote to him). It both illustrates the intense evangelicalism of Pawson and other early Methodists and may provide the clue to William's persistent silence in the face of Pawson's later letters to him.

J. A. VICKERS

John Wesley Tercentenary Conference at Manchester University

As part of the world-wide celebrations for the 300th anniversary of John Wesley's birth, a major international conference is to take place in Manchester next June. The conference is sponsored by the Manchester University Department of Religions and Theology and enjoys the active support of the British Methodist Church.

Keynote addresses will be given by the following international scholars; Richard Heitzenrater, David Hempton, Ted Campbell, Phyllis Mack and Kenneth Collins. In addition, there will be fifty shorter papers addressing aspects of Wesley's life and legacy.

Other conference events include a tercentenary dinner at which a speech will be given by Lord Roy Hattersley and a service of celebration at the historic St Ann's Church, where Wesley preached in 1738. Associated with the conference, will be a major exhibition at the Portico Library of manuscripts, works of art and printed books documenting Wesley's life and continued significance. The exhibition is a collaborative venture between the John Rylands University Library of Manchester, home of the world's largest collection of Wesley manuscripts, and the Wesley and Methodist Studies Centre of the Westminster Institute of Education, Oxford Brookes University. There will also be opportunities to have guided tours of the world-famous John Rylands Library.

For further information and booking details see <http://www.art.man.ac.uk/wesley/home.htm> or write to Dr Jeremy Gregory of the Department of Religions and Theology, University of Manchester, Oxford Road M13 9PL.

BOOK REVIEWS

Lyrical Reflections on the Transfiguration of Christ by Charles Wesley. Edited by S. T. Kimbrough, Jr. 24pp. (The General Board of Global Ministries, The United Methodist Church, 475 Riverside Drive, New York, NY 10115. ISBN 1-890569-54-2. \$6.00.)

Celestial Anthems. Poems by John Cennick. Edited by Graeme Watson. Reading: Culver Press (33 Palmer Park Avenue, Reading RG6 1DN. Pp.x+114. ISBN 0-9541405-0-8. £8.00.)

The first of these books is a pamphlet containing the hymns which Charles Wesley wrote on the three accounts of the Transfiguration in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They come from *Short Hymns on Select Passages of the Holy Scriptures* (1762), from Osborn's *Poetical Works*, or from the unpublished poetry edited by Kimbrough and Beckerlegge (volume II, 1992). The Transfiguration was so attractive to Charles Wesley, and so pregnant with meaning, that the hymns are radiant with the consciousness of the human ability to glimpse the divine. They are, in the most obvious way, dialogic: entering into a relationship with the Biblical text (predominantly from the Authorized Version) and developing the thought with a disciplined enthusiasm. Wesley remembers always that Peter, James, and John, who were the witnesses of the Transfiguration, were also those who were in the Garden of Gethsemane:

In momentary majesty
my Saviour on the mount I see,
as on his dazzling throne,
but when the glorious God appears,
he still remains the man of tears,
and speaks of death alone.

This 'triumph of ecstatic joy' is to be governed by this thought, which will 'temper the delight'. Wesley's characteristics are all here: his astonishing vocabulary, his acute psychological insight, his ability to hold two texts in juxtaposition to one another, his lightning-quick response to the individuality of a moment or a thought. Thus the account from Mark, which stresses the shining raiment, 'white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them', leads him to the contemplation of 'pure light', the 'illustrious', shining with 'lustre' and 'pure as purity divine.'

This beautifully produced pamphlet contains many such examples. Its cover, taken from an icon of the Transfiguration at a monastery on Mount Athos, is a foretaste of the riches within. It would make a most instructive guide for meditation, and a lovely small present.

John Cennick, the author of the beautiful 'Ere I sleep, for every favour', was a Reading man, and this small (in size) and elegant edition of his hymns

and poems comes appropriately from his native town. He joined the Fetter Lane Society, then Methodist and Moravian, in 1739, became a field preacher and a follower of Whitefield, and then turned Moravian. From 1746 he spent much of his time in evangelistic work in Ireland, until his death in 1755, aged 36. Graeme Watson's excellent introduction quotes liberally from Cennick's fascinating autobiography, and ascribes the fact that he is little known to two factors: the decline of Moravianism, and the low opinion held of hymns (in both of these I think Watson exaggerates somewhat). Cennick's hymns are extraordinarily uneven, often with baroque and even bizarre imagery, and at other times having moments of exquisite beauty:

I have tasted Canaan's Grapes
And now I long to go
Where the Lord his Vineyards keeps,
And where the Clusters grow....

Watson complains that 'Lo, he comes with clouds descending' is ascribed solely to Charles Wesley in *Hymns and Psalms*: 'Cennick really will disappear into complete obscurity if this habit continues.' I agree with him that this would be a pity, though Wesley's version is so much finer than Cennick's extravagant original, and so different from it, that it seems fair enough (the curious can always turn to the complicated account in Julian's *Dictionary of Hymnology*).

Watson has done a fine job in rescuing Cennick from the obscurity which he deplors. His nicely produced and beautifully illustrated book is full of good things, both in prose and in poetry. It should be read with eager interest by Wesley historians and by hymnologists.

J. R. WATSON

Joanna Southcott: The Woman Clothed with the Sun, by Frances Brown (Lutterworth Press, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 352. £17.50, pb. ISBN 0 7188 3018 0)

Joanna Southcott (1750-1814) is one of England's best-known and most controversial visionaries and prophets. A Devon-born farmer's daughter and domestic servant, at the age of forty-two she began to hear an inner voice, claiming that God had chosen her to announce the Second Coming. Over the next twenty-two years her prophecies and her 'sealing' of believers against harm enabled her to build up a very large following in the West Country, Midlands, North and London, before dying at the time of the expected birth of her divine child Shiloh. It is not that long since there has been an authoritative biography in *A Woman to Deliver her People* by James Hopkins (1982), while her life has been studied in *English Messiahs* by

Ronald Matthews (1936), *Past Finding Out* by G.R. Balleine (1956), *The Second Coming* by John Harrison (1979) and *Prophecy in the Cotswolds* by Duncan Derrett (1994). Frances Brown's well-written and illustrated narrative does not seem to add significantly to these earlier accounts in terms of major discoveries or new interpretation, although it does draw upon some primary sources not seen by Hopkins and adds more detail about her family and close associates. The evidence mainly derives from Southcott's canon of sixty-five publications and unpublished material in thirteen British and American archives.

Southcott never ceased to regard herself as a loyal member of the Church of England and found support in a small group of Anglican clergy, although she encountered hostility from the Anglican establishment as a whole and after 1811 sanctioned independent worship by her adherents. However, from the late 1770s she also came into contact with Methodism, even working in a Methodist household until she fell out with her employer and Hugh Sanderson, the one-time itinerant who was a visitor to his home. She attended Methodist services in Exeter and eventually, in 1792, felt she had received a divine command to join John Eastlake's Wesleyan class at Musgrave's Alley chapel. When her revelations began, at the same time, she initially looked for endorsement by the Methodists, but failed to get it and had severed her links with them by 1795, when John Leach proclaimed her visitations to be from the Devil. An increasingly vitriolic relationship ensued, with explicit denunciations of Methodism by Southcott and Southcottian divisions in a number of Wesleyan societies. Several of those expelled from Methodism became notable Southcottian preachers, particularly in Yorkshire. These interactions with Methodism are not systematically studied in Brown's book, whose chronological arrangement inevitably results in the fragmented treatment of topics, for which the M.A. thesis by P. J. Tobin on 'The Southcottians in England, 1782-1895' (University of Manchester, 1978) still needs to be consulted.

CLIVE D. FIELD

Wesley Papers. Presented to the Wesley Fellowship Conference in 2000. Edited by Paul Taylor, (Wesley Fellowship 2002. pp98 available at £10-95 from Paul Taylor, Stonebridge Cottage, Back Lane, Shearsby, nr Lutterworth, Leics. LE 17 6 PN. ISBN 0 9537473 0 1.)

There are four paper in this collection of unequal length and interest to the historian. First comes a 14 page article by the Baptist John E. Cowell, Tutor at Spurgeon's College, 'Offending in many things: A comparison of John Wesley and Thomas Aquinas on the nature of sin in the believer.' This is well noted. Unlike many modern theologians in this country it takes Wesley

seriously as a theologian. He points out the comparison between Wesley and Aquinas on this issue, especially on the 'perfecting in love' to which so many of Wesley's contemporaries objected. Colwell argues that we must take Wesley seriously on this essential Methodist doctrine because it is also truly Christian, for which he cites Augustine as well as Aquinas.

The second and easily the longest paper is by Dr. Bill Graham entitled 'Pupils in the Gospel: The education of John Wesley's Preachers.' It occupies 54 pages (including 20 pages of detailed and informative notes) so is more than half this publication and in itself is worth the price. Graham has an excellent summary of the different categories of preachers (note 62) and also of the sources available for them (too few!), and their problems. Garlick's list (*Mr. Wesley's Preachers*), which he quotes, is also inaccurate and misses most of the Irish preachers, among others. Graham aptly cites Christopher Hopper as the typical preacher. A former teacher, Hopper, best known as Wesley's 'Lord President of the North,' is also significant as the one the preachers chose to preside over them when Wesley was ill at the 1780 Conference. There is a good summary of what was laid down for the preachers at the early Conferences, though he does not mention the importance of Conference for morale building and *esprit de corps*. as brought out by Russell Richey in his *The Methodist Conference in America*. Graham rightly explains the importance of Kingswood and its 'Advanced Course' in Wesley's provision for his preachers. He deals with the Dissenting Academies and matters of discipline. Graham makes the excellent point that Wesley intended many of his publications for his preachers' education, and describes his motives for the publications dealing especially with his Christian Library. However he tends to assume that the preachers were the only audience for the Christian Library, which is not the case. He points to various publications specifically for preachers, which are often passed over and forgotten, such as his *Directions for Pronunciation and Gesture* (1749) and Charles' *Hymns for the Use of the Methodist Preachers* (all seven of them, published 1758.) He points out from Asbury's example how preachers read Wesley partly because they could get his Works free, an advantage when they were so poor. He concludes by asserting the high standards and achievements of the preachers, three of whom wrote leading early nineteenth century commentaries.

The third paper is by the late Bill Parkes and is entitled 'Lorenzo Dow 1777-1834: "The Eccentric Cosmopolite."' Though a relatively brief look at this fascinating figure at the beginning of Primitive Methodism, it has a valuable description of a man who flits in and out of the Primitive Methodist revival, a man difficult to pin down and find material about. From an unusual background he was admitted 'On Trial' in America in 1796, but restricted to near his home. His scathing humour, his 'rousment' and whipping up of artificial excitement meant his Presiding Elder, Jesse Lee, was against his preaching. His District however supported him and the result was he travelled, despite of the authorities, both in America and on this side of the Atlantic. When he arrived in Dublin he knew no-one. His

success there, in England and America, was nevertheless undoubted, despite opposition from Bishop Coke and others. His marriage to Peggy Dow, so humble she always described herself as 'peggy dow' (lower case), and his adventures in buying property are described. His importance in England, however, is as the catalyst that began the Camp Meeting Methodists, better known as the Primitive Methodists. Bourne may have hardly mentioned him, but it was his preaching and advocacy of the camp meeting which caused the early leaders to be expelled by the Wesleyan authorities. He was also important in the early development of the Independent Methodists. However his persistent opposition to the Methodist authorities in all the countries he visited and his last visit to Britain with the former Methodist and Quaker Dorothy Ripley weakened his power. Peggy died in 1820 and he speedily married again. He patented a medicine and settled in South Carolina, joining the local Masonic lodge, dying in 1834.

The final paper by the Baptist Geoffrey Fewkes of the BFBS is entitled 'John Wesley and Reader Harris; stages in salvation.' In 11 pages he looks at the early Pentecostalist Richard Reader Harris (1847-1909) and his spiritual pilgrimage to 'Fourfold Salvation', concluding that he was a true Wesleyan in his theology about the stages of salvation. Fewkes, however, tends to ignore the obvious differences.

Harris' much told "Black bag" story, demonstrating his single-mindedness in pursuit of a goal, is a good one. In 1890 he launched the Pentecostal League of Fire with its journal *Tongues of Fire*. He supported lady workers in positions of leadership (like Wesley at a more difficult time), and advocated British Israel ideas - a definite contrast there! His advocacy of 'Baptism in the Spirit' is another clear difference with Wesley, not brought out by Fewkes. Fewkes assumes that Wesley when he speaks of 'Sanctification' means this. It needs to be pointed out that Wesley when speaking of Christian Perfection never claims it for himself. James Dunn has shown that 'Baptism in the Spirit' is not the same as Wesley's Christian Perfection. Harris was, however, closer to Wesley's position than the Keswick movement of the same period.

JOHN H. LENTON

Love Bade Me Welcome. A British Methodist Perspective on the Church.
by David Carter : (Epworth Press : Peterborough 2002: pp ix +197. £14.95
(pbk). ISBN 0716 20557 2)

David Carter begins his survey of British Methodist ecclesiology with a quotation from the late Albert Outler; 'To the question, "Is there a Wesleyan ecclesiology?" the answer "Yes" says too much, the answer "No" too little.' Mr Carter, however, is sure that the answer to the question should be a much firmer 'Yes', that there is a rich tradition here for modern Methodists to rediscover ('re-receive' in the peculiar jargon of contemporary ecumenics)

and that Methodism has significant ecclesiological gifts to bring to the wider Christian community.

The subtitle of the book modestly offers 'a British Methodist perspective on the Church'. In fact, after the opening chapter on the Wesleys, three perspectives shape much of this study. The first is that of a dozen or so theologians, from Richard Watson via Hugh Price Hughes to Newton Flew (chapters 2 and 3). Alongside the famous names we find less well-known writers, like Alfred Barrett and W. J. Shrewsbury. Perhaps unsurprisingly in the company of such staunch defenders of the 'Pastoral Office' as John Beecham and J. H. Rigg, A.S. Peake stands out as the only non-Wesleyan and the only lay person whose views are considered. The second perspective consists of a careful reading of post-1932 Conference statements, including a close and approving study of *Called to Love and Praise* (1999) which receives a whole chapter (4) to itself. The third perspective is that of the ecumenical movement. Mr Carter is keen to reflect on Methodist answers to ecumenical questions and sometimes to suggest affinities between nineteenth-century Wesleyans and twentieth-century scholars which may strike other historians as a little ambitious (Gregory, Lidgett and John Zizioulas on pages 36 and 91; J. A. Beet and the papal encyclical *Ut Unum Sint* on page 89).

Mr Carter's commitment to ecclesiology and ecumenism shines through this work, as does his enthusiasm to persuade Methodists to make the most of their doctrinal heritage. While applauding the aim, the reviewer does need, however, to register a couple of questions. First, is this history written more from text than contexts? It would be helpful to have more material on the circumstances which called forth these writings. Nineteenth-century Wesleyan ecclesiology, for example, evolved in a highly polemical atmosphere, and it is surprising that the work of David Hempton on the politics of Methodism in the Bunting era was not referred to. Second, does the ecumenical agenda give a slightly Whiggish slant to the historical survey? How representative were the theologians selected for study and how were their views read, understood and 'received' by broader Methodism? Were there other voices and other Methodisms which might be heard?

It is to be hoped that this study will encourage further work on nineteenth and twentieth-century Methodism, and so strengthen 'an enrichment of the Methodist sense of *koinonia* across time' (page 152). Whether this requires 'the sign of the episcopal succession', however, remains to be seen!

MARTIN WELLINGS.

John Wesley's Conception and Use of Scripture by Scott J Jones, (Kingswood Books, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1995, pp. 268 pb. ISBN 0-687-20466-6 \$21)

In the many studies that been published on all aspects of John Wesley's

theological and doctrinal persuasions, this is the first major work that examines Wesley's use of scripture. Dr Jones' title is quite deliberate for he argues that it is one thing for a theologian to say what his understanding of Scripture is but it may be quite another thing when it comes to how he *uses* scripture in his theological formulations. John Wesley clearly thought that the Scriptures were divinely inspired and while he did not argue for any particular mode of inspiration, he was convinced that when scripture speaks it is God speaking. Jones evaluates Wesley's understanding of revelation, inspiration and infallibility and demonstrates that Wesley's main hermeneutical rule was that all scripture is to be understood literally unless the context gives clear indication that this will result in either a contradiction of other passages or a plainly absurd meaning. Jones' argument is particularly well illustrated when he examines how Wesley understood scripture alongside tradition, reason and experience.

Although it is sometimes alleged that John Wesley's eighteenth century view of scripture is obscurantist by the canons of twenty-first century biblical scholarship, yet he was no blind fundamentalist in his persuasions. He reasoned, for example, that if errors could be proved in the genealogical lists used by Matthew and Luke, this reflected, not on the evangelists, but on the records themselves. These records, said Wesley, prove the essential point, viz. 'that Jesus was of the family from which the promised seed was to come' (p. 147). Nor did Wesley think that the Greek texts which lay behind the King James Bible were always the best that existed. In his own 1755 translation of the New Testament, he departed in many places from the traditional Greek texts (the *Textus Receptus*) and followed instead what he believed to be more accurate texts. In this he was guided to some extent by the pioneering work of Johann Bengel and Wesley's departure from the *Textus Receptus* often anticipated the later findings of textual criticism.

Jones's discussion on Wesley's hermeneutical rules is particularly helpful. Wesley argued that in reading the Bible all its commands should be seen as 'covered promises.' That means that God never commands the impossible but with the commandment he gives his people the grace by which it is possible for them to obey the commandment. This was particularly important for Wesley's doctrine of Christian holiness. If God commands his people to be holy in heart and conduct (and Wesley was sure the scriptures taught that) then holy living is possible by the enablement of grace. Wesley also made much use of what he termed the 'analogy of scripture'. Both Anglicans and Puritans in seventeenth-century England had used this method of biblical interpretation. By it they meant, especially the Puritans, that scripture is its own best interpreter. The clear passages of scripture must be consulted to help us to understand the passages that are less clear. John Wesley was very much committed to this hermeneutic but Jones shows that

he gave it his own 'Methodist' interpretation. The 'analogy of scripture' meant for John Wesley that all scripture is to be understood in the light of what he called 'the three grand fundamental doctrines' of the Christian faith; original sin, justification by faith and holiness of life.

Altogether Dr Jones's book is exceptionally well done. Two of its merits make it particularly valuable. First, Jones writes easily and persuasively and handles technical and textual data with expertise. This makes his book not only very informative but equally very absorbing. Second, Jones has referenced every relevant statement found in John Wesley's published writings concerning both his use and conception of the Bible.

H. Mc GONIGLE

NOTES AND QUERIES

1554 AS OTHERS SEE US:

In Anthony Price's novel, *War Game* (Garden City, New York; Doubleday & Co., Inc., for The Crime Club, 1977 [UK copyright, 1976]), p. 66, the investigators delve into local history by reading *The History of the Village and Castles of Standingham*, by The Reverend Horatio Musgrave, B. A., Resident Minister of the Methodist Congregations of Standingham, Worpsgrave and Long Denton. In this fictional title, and its equally fictitious by-line, there are obvious errors: no nineteenth-century chapels of the late Victorian era were 'Methodist,' none of them would admit in print to having a minister for specific congregations (whatever they felt or aspired to!), and no Methodist minister of any Connexion in that period would describe himself as 'resident' (whatever he felt or aspired to!). Anthony Price's research for his novels is meticulous, and little mistakes like these are rare in his books. These are noted here, not to crow over so interesting and conscientious an author, but to exemplify one way in which Methodist history can easily be misread - through the models provided by more familiar traditions, such as Congregationalism.

DAVID TRIPP

1555 REVIVALIST METHODISTS.

In my possession is a hymnbook entitled *Hymns for the use of the Revivalist Methodists*. Unfortunately the title page is missing and so it is not possible to identify when, where and who printed this hymn collection. There are 476 hymns. Were the Revivalist Methodists a distinct Methodist sect, for there is a possibility also of Primitive Methodist links? Information regarding this hymn book would be appreciated.

D. COLIN DEWS

1556 LOCAL PREACHERS TRANSFERS

Although many nineteenth-century local preachers' minutes tend to show that local preachers within the connexion transferring circuits had their credentials transferred, presumably by the tradition of producing the plan of their former circuit with their name on it, or even by means of a letter, to what extent did Methodist local preachers transfer between the various Methodist bodies?

The Leeds United Wesleyan Methodist Association and Reform (later United Methodist Free Churches) Local Preachers Minutes, 1857-1863 show at least in that circuit, and the subsequent Leeds (Lady Lane) Circuit, 1865-1898, there were numerous transfers from other Methodist bodies and after establishing the validity of their credentials were accepted as local preachers in the circuit, subject to the approval of the circuit quarterly meeting. As would be expected, some local preachers transferred from places away from Leeds and others within Leeds.

A number of examples may be cited: In March 1864 W. R. Edgar, now in membership at Lady Lane, formerly a local preacher in the Chester New Connexion Circuit, the local preachers' meeting having been satisfied of his credentials, was accepted 'as a proper person on the plan' subject to the approval of the circuit quarterly meeting. In this case it would be interesting to know why in Leeds he joined the Free Methodists when there was a significant New Connexion Circuit based on Woodhouse Lane Chapel. In November 1886, George Milner transferred from Thirsk to Lady Lane, as there was no Free Methodist work in Thirsk, it must be presumed that he was either a Primitive or Wesleyan Methodist.

The March 1866 local preachers' meeting accepted two local preachers from other non-Free Methodist circuits in Leeds. C. P. Fountain a local preacher in the Leeds (St. Peter's) Wesleyan Methodist Circuit, having become a member at Cross Stamford Street had joined the Free Methodists. It must be presumed that he had moved house but this leaves unanswered why he did not transfer his membership to the nearby Lincoln Fields Wesleyan in the adjacent Leeds (Brunswick) Circuit. L. Jackson, a Primitive Methodist local preacher, having moved to Woodhouse Carr, where there only was a Free Methodist cause, now became a Free Methodist local preacher. Five years later the Primitive Methodists built a small chapel at Woodhouse Carr and whether he would have then joined the Free Methodists must remain an open question. So that it should not be thought the transfers were only one way, in November 1886 R. Hartley, having moved to Morley, joined the Wesleyans, although there was a Free Methodist chapel in the town.

Whether such careful recording of transfers was a Free Methodist characteristic, or simply peculiar to Leeds Free Methodism at this juncture remains inconclusive until further evidence is produced from other parts of the country.

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