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A table of contents for the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* can be found here:

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# Proceedings

OF THE

## Wesley Historical Society

*Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.*

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### JOHN WESLEY'S DEATHBED : Sarah Wesley's Account

**T**HE death of John Wesley is an iconic moment in Methodist history and was commemorated as such in Marshall Claxton's famous Victorian picture of the scene.<sup>1</sup> If 24 May 1738 had signified a fresh start in Wesley's ministry, 2 March 1791 marked a triumphal closure. It was a classical evangelical death-bed, as closely observed and reverentially recorded as that of some medieval saint. It must have come as a relief to his household that he had escaped the traumas and indignities of a painful exit. John Pawson's comment would have been echoed by many: 'I am glad that the dear good old man did not outlive his usefulness; that he did not lay down any length of time and therefore [did] not suffer very much. That he fell asleep at his own [house?] among his oldest and best friends, and above all that [he] died happy in the enjoyment of God.'<sup>2</sup> Wesley had departed serene and triumphant, proclaiming his trust in the atoning merits of Christ. When the body was put on public display at City Road observers noted his seraphic smile. A huge crowd turned out to see him, variously

<sup>1</sup> A copy of Claxton's painting in the form of an engraving is reproduced in *The Journal of John Wesley* [henceforth *JWJ*], ed. Nehemiah Curnock (1938) 8 pp. 140-1. See the comments of Peter Forsaith, *John Wesley - religious Hero? A Brand plucked as from burning*, (Oxford Applied Theology Press, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> *The Letters of John Pawson*, ed. John C. Bowmer and John A. Vickers (1994). According to Thomas Jackson, Charles made a more anxious departure than his brother: "All his prayer was 'patience and an easy death!' He bade every one who visited him to supplicate for this, often repeating, 'an easy death!' . . . The extreme physical exhaustion in which he lay for several days rendered Mr. Wesley incapable of those rapturous joys with which some persons have been indulged in their last hours." However, in Jackson's view he would probably have concealed such consolations had they been granted him; *The Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley* (2 vols. 1841) 2 pp. 443,447.

estimated at 10,000 and 40-50,000 people.<sup>3</sup>

The preachers in London lost no time in communicating an *Account* of the deathbed to the Connexion at large. Elizabeth Ritchie from Otley, who was close to Wesley and helped to tend him during the last two months of his life, was commissioned to write a narrative which was rapidly dispatched to the preachers and read from Methodist pulpits. It remains the fullest description of the event and will be familiar to readers of Curnock's edition of the *Journal*, in which it is reprinted as an appendix to volume 8.<sup>4</sup>

The two letters printed below provide a far less detailed picture of the deathbed than the Ritchie version, and understandably so, since they were written not for public edification but as items in a private correspondence between Sarah 'Sally' Wesley, Charles' daughter, and the Hon. Penelope Maitland between 1787 and 1794. They are held in the Bodleian Library of Oxford University and are reproduced by the kind permission of the Keeper of Western Manuscripts there.<sup>5</sup>

Sarah (1759-1828) was quite a well-known figure in London and Bristol society, thanks partly to the reflected celebrity not only of her father and uncle John, but of her brothers Samuel and Charles, infant musical prodigies of Mozartian precocity. Though rather retiring (a trait perhaps accentuated by disfiguring small-pox in childhood?), she was cultivated, intellectually lively and highly literate, with a talent for versifying and caricature drawing. There was a touch of the blue-stocking about her, and in her prime she was acquainted with literary figures like Dr. Johnson, Hannah More and Mrs Barbauld. 'Sally' was a prop to her two brothers, and helped to raise Samuel's son, Charles. In later years she and her brother Charles lived with their widowed mother until she died, and then kept home together. Though not a major personage in Methodist history she is an attractive, rather poignant figure, and her life at the interface between the literary and the religious worlds at the turn of the century might repay more scholarly attention.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> George J. Stevenson, *City Road Chapel, London* (1872) p. 113; James Lackington, *Memoirs* (7th edn. 1794) p. 174.

<sup>4</sup> *JWJ*, 8 pp. 131-144. Additional details can be found in *Proc. W.H.S.* 36 pp. 155-6. For comparison see the description by Henry Moore (also an eyewitness) in his *Life of the Rev. John Wesley*, (2 vols. 1824-5) 2 pp. 387-394.

<sup>5</sup> Bodleian Library *MS Eng. Misc.* c 502 fols, 62-3 and 64-69.

<sup>6</sup> Information on Sarah can be found in Thomas Jackson's *Recollections of My Own Life and Times* (1873) and George J. Stevenson's *Memorials of the Wesley Family* (1876). Three recent works list some relevant sources; Philip Olleson's *The Letters of Samuel Wesley. Professional and Social Correspondence* (2001) and *Samuel Wesley: the Man and his Music* (2003); Michael Kessler and P. Olleson, *Samuel Wesley 1766-1837. A Source Book* (2001). For interesting details of Sarah's role in Wesley family life see Gareth Lloyd, 'Charles Wesley Junior; Prodigal Child, Unfulfilled Adult' *Proceedings of the Charles Wesley Society* 5 (1998) pp. 23-35.

Her correspondent Penelope Maitland (1730-1805) came from a family with close connections to the Court and to government.<sup>7</sup> Her father was Col. Martin Madan, M.P. and an Equerry to Prince Frederick. Her mother Judith came from the Cowper family, and was the aunt of William Cowper the poet. In 1749 she came under Methodist influence and became well known to John Wesley and Lady Huntingdon. Her daughter Penelope married a distinguished soldier, the Hon. Alexander Maitland, who achieved a baronetcy soon after her death. Penelope too was linked to the world of the Revival, not only through her mother but through one of her brothers, Martin Madan, who was godfather to Charles Wesley junior. Madan was a converted lawyer who became a prominent Evangelical cleric and author, and for some years was honorary chaplain to the Lock Chapel for venereal diseases, in London. His unfortunate publication of *Thelyphthora* (1780) - which urged the polygamous marriage of wedded seducers to those whom they seduced - scandalised his fellow evangelicals and brought down much ridicule on the author.<sup>8</sup> Intensely musical himself, Madan was blamed by some for showing off his godson Charles and his brother Samuel to London society as musical prodigies, and introducing them into dangerously worldly company. As a convinced Calvinist he was drawn into the controversy which broke out over the 1770 Minutes of Conference, a stance which must have led to some degree of estrangement from the Wesleys, though it did not cut him off completely from his godson.<sup>9</sup> Judging by a delicate allusion in one of Sarah's letters Penelope Maitland may have shared her brother's predestinarian views, but she maintained cordial relations with Charles Wesley's family, especially his wife, his sister Mrs Martha Hall, and Sarah herself.

Despite their brevity, the two letters from Sarah to Penelope Maitland add details of Wesley's death which are not to be found elsewhere. Composed soon after the event, they have the note of authenticity. According to G. J. Stevenson, Sarah 'was not present with him when he died', but this is contradicted by her own account, and by that of James Rogers, who listed her among those who were kneeling round the bed as

<sup>7</sup> Falconer Madan, *The Madan Family*, (1933 ) is the essential source here.

<sup>8</sup> For the *Thelyphthora* affair see V. N. Paananen, 'Martin Madan and the Limits of Evangelical Philanthropy', *Proc. WHS* 40 pp 57-68

<sup>9</sup> Madan's *Thoughts on Christian Perfection*, (1764) showed his divergence from Wesley. Later he and friends showed the Minutes to a Benedictine monk who pronounced them 'too near Pelagianism', enabling them to conclude that 'Popery is about the midway between Protestantism and Mr. John Wesley.', *A Conversation between Richard Hill, Esq; the Rev. Mr. Madan, and Father Walsh, Superior of a Convent of English Benedictine Monks at Paris* (1771) pp. 11, 14-15.

Wesley, 'without a lingering groan, gathered up his feet in the presence of his children' and expired.<sup>10</sup> Her brother Samuel, who was knocking at the front door for admittance, missed the moment by minutes and came in as the hymn of release was being sung.<sup>11</sup>

'Sally' was a favourite of her uncle John and admired him greatly. Having nursed her father devotedly through his final illness, she was glad to attend her uncle in his last hours, and she helped to provide some of the feminine tenderness he needed. When she appeared, he embraced her affectionately. Towards the end, when he could not see her, he asked whether she had a zeal for God, adding (in characteristic Wesley style) 'Do you rise as early as you used to do'<sup>12</sup> As one of the letters shows, Sarah had sufficient sensitivity to put some restraint on the spiritual interrogation which could make an evangelical deathbed stressful.

To her chagrin she and 'the Family' were not able to be present at the interment, which took place at 5 a.m. in order to avoid an unruly crowd like that which had surrounded City Road chapel the day before. She also disliked the way her uncle's body was dressed up for exhibition to the public: her objection was based on grounds of propriety, but she may also have thought it contrary to Wesley's firmly expressed desire for a simple and unostentatious burial.<sup>13</sup> At all events, when her aunt Martha Hall died some four months later on 19 July 1791, as sole executrix, Sarah made sure that the funeral was carried out according to her own orders and was 'very plain.'<sup>14</sup> Maybe there was some discrepancy between the expectations of John Wesley's natural and spiritual families at this solemn time. In her letter of 14 March Sarah disavowed any hope that the family would profit significantly from John Wesley's estate, but this does not seem to have been the attitude of her brother Samuel, who thought himself hard done by.<sup>15</sup> Sarah mourned Wesley as her wise and beloved

<sup>10</sup> Stevenson, *Memorials* p. 482. Oddly, on p. 113 of his *City Road Chapel* Stevenson states that Sarah was present.

<sup>11</sup> Stevenson, *Memorials* p. 353.

<sup>12</sup> *Proc. WHS*, 36 p. 156.

<sup>13</sup> In his will (reprinted in JWJ, 8 pp 342-4) Wesley emphasised 'I particularly desire that there may be no... pomp, except the tears of them that loved me.' In a symbolic gesture he laid down that his body was to be carried to the grave by six poor men. In a similarly symbolic gesture Charles ordered that his pall-bearers should be six clergymen of the Church of England; Jackson, *Charles Wesley*, 2 p. 445.

<sup>14</sup> Sarah Wesley to Penelope Maitland, 21 July 1791, Bodleian Library MS Eng. misc. c 502 fols. 73-4.

<sup>15</sup> Samuel later complained 'It is somewhat extraordinary that he should have left the whole of his property to the Methodist Society and no part whatever to any of his relatives. At his death he left but a few legacies, and the principal bulk of his property to his Society,' William Winter, *An Account of the Remarkable Musical Talents of Several Members of the Wesley Family* (1814) pp. 64-5. Jackson vigorously denied that Charles' family was left impoverished; *Charles Wesley*, 2 pp.452-3. See too Lloyd, 'Charles Wesley Junior' pp.30,33

uncle, but the Methodist household at City Road also regarded themselves as members of John Wesley's spiritual 'family' bonded to him not by ties of blood but of religious kinship. Thus Elizabeth Ritchie describes Wesley as 'my spiritual father' 'our dear Father', 'our dying father', and calls Thomas Broadbent his 'most affectionate son,' (a phrase omitted from the printed *Account*).<sup>16</sup> Yet as Sarah's letter shows, there is no doubting her sense of affectionate solidarity with those gathered at this intensely emotional and uplifting occasion.<sup>17</sup>

JOHN WALSH  
(Jesus College, Oxford)

<sup>16</sup> *JWJ*, 8 pp. 135-8, 143.

<sup>17</sup> See *The Experience and Labours of James Rogers*, (Bristol 1796) p. 49 ; 'The weight of glory which seemed to rest on the dying countenance of our beloved Pastor, Father, and Friend, as he entered the joy of his Lord, filled our hearts with holy dread, mixed with ineffable sweetness.'

## I

**Sarah Wesley to Lady Penelope Maitland, undated.**

Dear Madam,

By the time this Letter reaches you it is probable my beloved Uncle will have joined the Society of blessed Spirits : He was seized with Fever , and general debility some time ago, but exerted himself as usual, and so much so last Friday that a fatal Relapse took place.

There is no human hope of recovery, but great cause of spiritual rejoicing - His Soul is already in Heaven, and his Conversation (whether in delirium or perfect intellectual power) evinces it. His speech frequently fails, but we distinguish the frame of his Spirit. :

'And oh this life of Mercies Crown  
With a triumphant End !'

At another time he said, "There is no entering Heaven but thro' the blood of the Covenant - thro' Jesus" !

A little after

'I the chief of Sinners am  
But Jesus died for me'

He suffers no pain - receives all in a sweet and thankful Manner - and, on finding great difficulty in speaking, began a Prayer "Lord Thou dost all Things well - thou givest strength to those who can speak, and to those who cannot." Then feebly he attempted to sing - but could only repeat audibly that favourite Hymn of his

'Till praise my Maker whils't I've breath  
And when my Voice is lost in Death  
Praise shall employ my nobler powers ;  
My Days of Praise shall ne'er be Past  
Whils't Life or Thought or Being last  
Or Immortality endures' !

I have not time to add many other striking and consoling Particulars - having the delightful privilege of attending his last hours - and indeed am now writing in his Chamber - knowing your Esteem for this excellent and extraordinary Man, induces me my dear Madam to send this incoherent account - besides the Respect I bear you, and the Gratitude I feel for the many kind condescending marks of your Attention toward

Yours truly indebted  
and affectionate Servant

S Wesley

I have borne a sympathising part in several Events of your amiable Family - and I should have written, but frequent Indisposition, and many anxieties have kept me silent.

MS Eng. misc. c 502 fols. 62-3, Bodleian Library, Oxford

## II

**Sarah Wesley to Lady Penelope Maitland, 14 March 1791.**

I did design to have addressed my dear honor'd Friend before - to have thanked her for her Sympathy - her Letters, and her kind Consolements, but such has been the distracted State of my mind - of my situation and of everything around me, that even at this moment I am ill qualified to give the account which particularly induces me to write -

The Thursday before my beloved Uncle died, was I believe the day I sent my letter to Totteridge : in the afternoon he gave orders for his Burial- that it might be in Woollen, his Body laid in the Chapel, and all the Money which he had about him given to the Stewards for the Poor, which was done in his presence.

He then called up the Family to prayers; one of the Preachers prayed earnestly, and he pronounced the Amen with great energy, after every interesting [?] petition :

When it was ended he took each person in the Room by the Hand, and affectionately bid them Farewell.

My Mother came to visit him in the Evening and cried 'You will soon be with your dear Brother, at rest - he answer'd 'He giveth his Servants rest ' -

His faithful attendant, Miss Ritchie, (an excellent Woman from the North of England) had, at his desire, spent the Winter in London for this purpose; She was with us by his Bed-side, and brought him a spoonful of orange Juice; (the only thing he seemed to sip with pleasure) upon which he solemnly gave out his usual Grace 'We thank Thee Lord for these and all Thy mercies, bless the Church and King, and grant us Truth and Peace for Christ's sake!'

Soon after he said - 'The Heavens drop fatness! - he causeth his Servants to lie down in safety - The God of Jacob is our refuge!'

At another time, 'God is with us!' - he repeated it again ; and the third lifted us his feeble hand and shouted 'God is with us!'

He dosed the greater part of the night; but interruptedly - spoke often, and once clasped his hands as if in fervent prayer, but we could not distinguish the words, indeed the fear of putting him to the least pain, prevented dear Miss Richie [*sic*] and myself from asking him much that we long'd to hear; for he would kindly attempt to answer, disregarding his own Ease in Death as he did in Life.

Wednesday Morning about eight o'clock, he drew his Breath shorter, but without struggle.

A little noise in his throat, but not loud enough to be call' d the Rattles, intermixed with all he now spoke, for he continued in striving to utter something for his Divine Master.

We could just distinguish, 'Lord' at another time, 'I'll 'praise' -

His restlessness abated towards nine, his Speech nearly failing;



Once I thought he thanked me - feebly endeavoured to press my Hand - and said to a favourite Preacher, Farewell.

After this, we could no longer distinguish any Words tho' his Lips continued to move, and we all imagined he began his usual Hymn - I'll praise my Maker whilst I've breath!

His hands and feet continued warm, but the paleness of Death overspread his dear Countenance; without one convulsion, struggle or groan, he gently sighed out his beloved Soul into his Redeemer's Bosom!

This about twenty minutes before ten Wednesday Mornng,

Many of his pious Children surrounded his Bed at this moment; and one of the Preachers gave out

Happy Soul, thy days are ended  
All thy toilsome days below!  
Go, by Angel Guards attended  
To the sight of Jesus go!  
Waiting to receive thy spirit  
Lo the Saviour stands above. -

Here his voice falter'd and Fortitude gave way to Grief -

But I believe every person in the Chamber felt the divine influence -

It was a great Consolation to me, to be 'in the Assemblies of the Saints on Earth,' at such a time - and to receive sweet testimonies of their sympathising Love!

The Family were to have attended the Funeral; and I looked forward with mournful pleasure to this discharge of the last Duty: but by the Injudiciousness of some well-meaning people, who gave public notice that the Body might be viewed, the Crowds were so large, mixed, and tumultuous that They feared disturbance in the last solemn rite, and inter'd him by five o'clock in the Morning.

Forty thousand People were computed to have surrounded the Chapel Monday - Tuesday - nothing was ever like it excepting Wilkes' Mob - and if the happy Spirit could have been grieved by anything on Earth, I am sure this public exhibition and indecent Rabble would have grieved it - To add to the impropriety of the whole, they dressed up the poor Body in his Gown and Bands.

In respect of temporal matters, my dear Uncle has died as he lived -

His Plan, his Profession, and his Conduct prove, he did not make a gain of the Gospel of Christ, nor enrich his Family with any part of the immense Sums which passed thro' his hands -

None of his Chapels would he so accept that they could ever be called private Property; they are all [filed?] in the hands of Trustees for the

continuance of the Work of God - he never did receive the least Emolument from them himself, and immediately put them out of his own power .

The interest of a small debt arising from my Father's Books, is (and I speak it to his Honor) all that he has left to us - and 40 pounds to my Aunt Hall. She bears the Loss like one about to join him soon without Lamentation, Tears, or Regret, She views him (as she told me just after he expired) not as a departed Friend but as a blessed Saint, and gently chides every appearance of Grief in those who profess the same supporting Faith. But her Fortitude is constitutionally great, - She desires me to join with my Mother's her respectful Love and Christian Salutations - mentions with great pleasure former conversations with dear Mrs Maitland, and doubts not of renewing the Intercourse in (she told me just after he expired) not as a departed Friend but as a blessed Saint, and gently chides every appearance of Grief in those who profess the same supporting Faith. But her Fortitude is constitutionally great, - She desires me to join with my Mother's her respectful Love and Christian Salutations - mentions with great pleasure former conversations with dear Mrs Maitland, and doubts not of renewing the Intercourse in a better World.

To me the Loss is most heavy; I had the honor of being distinguished by him in the kindest manner, oft'nest enjoyed his Society - chiefly indebted to his Tenderness! - When we lose a dear Friend, it is no small aggravation of Grief to recollect, every act towards ourselves was Love! But my Soul acquiesces! And when I consider the Everlasting Friend the support of the Desolate, is the God of my Fathers - it seems a consolation beyond my words to express!

To you my dear Madam, I will not apologise for the length of this; I thought you would wish the particulars which I endeavour' d to collect, and shall send as soon as I can obtain another, a printed account; it is not written so perspicuously as I could have desired, but the state of Mind which Miss R was in when she sent it to the Press, is excuse sufficient. . . With much affectionate Gratitude and distinctive Respect I must ever subscribe your indebted Friend,

S Wesley.

The hair I could not obtain.

(Eng misc. c502 fols 64-69 Bodleian)

## THE MAKING OF A BIBLE CHRISTIAN ITINERANT JAMES BARTLETT, 1816-1881

**D**URING the winter and early spring of 1855 the Bible Christian itinerant minister, James Bartlett, wrote thirty-three autobiographical letters to his young wife Elizabeth. He had by then worked for almost fifteen years as an itinerant in seven circuits and missions in five different English and Welsh counties. For almost ten of those fifteen years he had been a single man earning ten guineas a year during his first four years as a probationer minister and twelve after his reception into 'full connexion' in 1844. His survival on such a minuscule salary had been due to the fact that as a single man he had received, in addition to his salary, free board and lodgings. This had been a mixed blessing. Though some Bible Christian households had provided him with excellent hospitality others were so poor that he had been lucky if he was fed potatoes and hard white cheese. His account of his experiences as a lodger in a number of Bible Christian households throws valuable light on the diverse character and nature of the denomination and on those who made up its membership.

It was not until he was thirty-three that he married Elizabeth Rendell, a labourer's daughter from West Coker near Yeovil. Elizabeth earned her living as a glover and was a minor at the time of her marriage. Though she evidently could read by the time her husband wrote his letters, all she was capable of doing at the time of her wedding was to make her mark in the marriage register. West Coker was within the territory of the poverty-stricken Chard and Crewkerne Bible Christian Mission where Bartlett was then stationed and where he and his fellow preachers endured constant privation. His bride had grown up in the area but she knew little about his life before she married him. It was in response to her request to know more about his own personal history that he wrote his autobiographical letters to give her 'a plain, unvarnished narrative' of his antecedents, education, conversion, and life as an itinerant minister both before and after their marriage. Fortunately for posterity he copied the letters into a notebook which survives in the Lewis Court Bible Christian Collection in John Rylands University Library, Manchester.<sup>1</sup> The letters give a unique insight into the self-education and life-style of a Bible Christian itinerant minister in the middle years of the nineteenth century.

<sup>1</sup> MAW Ms. 91. 14.

Bartlett was born on Good Friday, 12 April, 1816, the sixth and youngest child of James and Elizabeth Bartlett of Somerton, Somerset. As the only one of their four sons to survive childhood, more love and care were lavished on him than would, perhaps, otherwise have been the case. Twice he was snatched from a fiery death, and once just saved from drowning.<sup>2</sup> Though he was acutely conscious of his deficiencies he received an education, as he himself recognised, 'much superior to most' of his 'fellow labourers' in the Bible Christian ministry. From five to thirteen he attended both Sunday school and day school, and during his last year of schooling was one of twelve boys who received free schooling at the Somerton Free School. Taught to 'calculate cube roots and to cipher' he left school a good arithmetician but, to his great regret, a poor writer. Had his teachers, he later said, spent more time on teaching writing, History and Geography, his education would have been much more useful. 'I know nothing at all of Grammar, Logic or Rhetorick' he self-deprecatingly informed his wife in the first of his letters written at Beer Hill, Sampford Courtenay, on 31 January 1855.

Bartlett's father was a poor but industrious husbandman who eked out a livelihood by working as a labourer for gentry and gentleman farmers. Though poor himself many of his forebears had been respectable and comparatively wealthy members of South Somerset's agricultural community. It was only when he reached the grand old age of ninety that he inherited from one of his uncles a small plot of land three miles from his home in Somerton. There was dissenting blood in his veins and one of his ancestors had been an Independent minister at Martock,<sup>3</sup> but he himself was 'a churchman of the old school' who thought that regular attendance at the parish church was 'the sum-total of religion' Highly respected by his neighbours for his industry, honesty and integrity, he was an indulgent father who scarcely ever corrected his son. It was to his mother that James Bartlett felt indebted for his moral training.

Elizabeth Bartlett (*née* Taverner) was 'a kind and tender-hearted woman, greatly attached to the Wesleyan Methodists' and such was her commitment to Wesleyan Methodism that she ensured that James was baptised in the Wesleyan chapel and taken to Methodist services as a small child. She had earlier been married to a farmer called Haggett by whom she had had one child. Her family and relatives were tradesmen and she may well have brought a little property into the marriage because when James was given a year's free education at the Free School in Somerton some of their neighbours complained

<sup>2</sup> *Minutes of the Bible Christian Conference, 1881*, p.10.

<sup>3</sup> Now Bower Hinton URC

because they said his parents had a little property.

Leaving school at the age of 13 in 1829, James began a seven-year apprenticeship to a shoemaker. His leisure hours, however, were devoted to bowls, fives, dancing and the other pursuits of his peer group, despite his Methodist upbringing. Two years before his apprenticeship came to an end in 1836 he began to attend Bible Christian meetings. The Bible Christians had been active in the area since 1823, and by 1830 had over two hundred members in their Somerton circuit. On 9 June 1836, the day his apprenticeship came to an end, Bartlett was received into Bible Christian membership, having earlier in the year given up the leisure activities in which he had come to excel. The following December he began to pray in public, and a little later he resolved to give himself wholly to 'Jehovah's service'. To prepare himself for a career as a preacher he set out to hear as many preachers of different persuasions as he could, Independent ministers and evangelical clergymen as well as Bible Christian itinerants and local preachers, in places as far afield as Glastonbury and Langport, South Petherton and Martock. Within two years he had filled a notebook with a record of over 300 sermons he had listened to which contained the preacher's name, his text and the bare bones of his sermon. He also began a systematic course of reading, purchasing a four-volume edition of John Wesley's sermons, Wood's *Bible Dictionary*, and a one volume edition of Josephus' works. He also became a regular reader of the *Bible Christian Magazine* and, whenever he could obtain a copy, of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*. He also made a habit of retiring to his room three or four times a day to pray, and of praying at his work when trade was slack.

In 1838 he became a class leader, and a year later in January 1839 a local preacher. Even before his conversion the young James Bartlett had shown signs of leadership, and when in January 1840 he took up the teetotal cause he had little difficulty in persuading four of his workmates to follow his example. That same year, when he was twenty-four, he candidated for the itinerant ministry, a candidature which entailed considerable personal sacrifice on his part. A few months earlier his prospects as a young shoemaker had been greatly enhanced when he had obtained a position in a workshop in Langport which catered for the wealthiest clientele in the town. Furthermore, his employer, William Nott, was a congenial and well-connected Wesleyan Methodist who had married a daughter of John Moon, one of Wesley's preachers. Nott entertained his young employee with anecdotes about Samuel Bradburn, to whom before his death in 1816, he had been 'intimately attached'

In August 1840 with a sovereign his father had given him in his pocket, he left for the Monmouth Mission, his first assignment as an itinerant preacher. The mission had been founded in 1823 but its growth had been so slow that by 1840 it had only one hundred members. It had failed to establish itself in any of the county's towns and its four chapels and twelve other preaching place were all in country areas. Its survival was to a very large extent due to the support of one family, the Moxleys of Porthcasseg a mile or so from the river Wye not far from Tintern Abbey, and it was in their home that James Bartleli lodged for much of the two years he spent in the Mission. It was here that he was taken under the wing of an experienced and highly-regarded, former itinerant preacher, James Moxley, who, after a period of twelve years as an itinerant, had temporarily abandoned the itineracy to return home to run the family farm after his father's death in 1838. Not only was he given access to Moxley's library, but he also benefited from his tutoring in such things as pronunciation and grammar, and the interpretation of Scriptures.

Though Bartlett's upbringing had been in the most modest of circumstances he was taken aback by the poverty of many of the Monmouthshire Bible Christians who entertained him. There were a small number who lived in 'pretty good circumstances' and were able to entertain the preachers comfortably, but the majority were so poor that all they could do was to provide visiting preachers. with 'fare and beds of the humblest description'.

After six months in Mission he was ordered to travel to Cwm Avon in South Glamorgan to begin work amongst the Bible Christians from Devon who had gone there In search of work. Four Devonians invited him to preach in their cottages but they and their English-speaking workmates were such a tiny minority in a predominantly Welsh-speaking community that Bartlett despaired of making much progress in the area. Having preached in five other places including Britton Ferry, Porthcawl and Bagland and also in the open air to audiences which dwindled to seven or eight or even fewer because they could not understand him, he concluded that South Glamorgan did not provide a favourable opening for Bible Christian preaching.

Other counsels prevailed and he was obliged to remain there from February to August 1841 when he was allowed to return to the Monmouth Mission. During the two years, 1840-1842, he was attached to the Mission membership doubled and a new preaching place was established near Tintern Abbey.

With at least seven or eight services a week to conduct and considerable distances to be traversed on foot to reach his appointments, there was little spare time to devote to his own interests. What little time he had to himself he spent in reading. It was at this stage in his career that he read and re-read Wesley's Sermons, Fletcher's Checks, Finney's *Lectures on Revivals* Ford's *Decapolis*, James Young's *Young Man from Home* Law's *Serious Call*, Stephenstone's *Christ on the Cross*, and lives of John Wesley, Whitefield, Bramwell, Smith and Stoner. His reading was not restricted to theology and devotional works. He also read books on geography and grammar, and devoured the contents of dictionaries. He generally rose early to have plenty of time for his studies.

The 1842 Bible Christian Conference posted him to the Northlew Mission in West Devon. Until 1840 the mission had been part of the large and unwieldy Shebbear circuit so it had only been a separate mission for just over a year when Bartlett arrived on the scene. Two preachers had been stationed in the mission during the previous year but he had to work it on his own. That, he soon realised, had its compensations. Though he was only a probationer, he was his own boss, being obliged not only to attend all Elders [Leaders] Meetings and Quarterly Meetings but also to be responsible for drawing up the plan, dealing with the Magazine, and attending to chapel business. Though he recorded that his studies suffered he had time to read Dwight's *Systems of Divinity*, Ford's *Damascus and Chorazin*, Thornton's *Responsibility*, and Richard Watson's *Institutes*. His only major worry was the contentious stance adopted by local Baptists who tried to engage him in controversy. This led him to read works on Immersion and Infant Baptism in order to clarify his own thoughts.

The mission consisted of eight chapels in six different parishes and another three preaching places in farmhouses and cottages. It was small in comparison with the Monmouth Mission, only stretching ten miles from north to south, from Chilla in the parish of Black Torrington to the north to Boasley (formerly in Brentor Circuit) in the parish of Bratton Clovelly to the south. Journeys were therefore comparatively short and he seldom had to walk more than twenty miles a week. If he was in a hurry, he said, there were plenty of kind and good friends to lend him their ponies. Hospitality was of a much more lavish kind than he had experienced in Monmouthshire, and many of his flock were 'respectable' farmers, their wives, sons and daughters. Only a smaller proportion were mechanics and labourers. The mission was near enough Shebbear, 'the metropolis of our Connexion' as he called it, for him to make frequent visits to collect parcels of books from the book room and plans from the printing office. It enabled him to attend Conference and District meetings

and to hear such 'famous preachers in the connexion' as James Thorne and William Reed.

In Monmouthshire he had stayed with a former itinerant minister. At Northlew he made his home with two experienced local preachers, Emmanuel Smale and his wife of Higher Whiddon, who, like James Moxley, had a small library of their own to which he was given access. They had already retired from business and lived in what Bartlett described as 'an excellent house'.

There were others in the mission with a strong commitment to the Bible Christian cause. At Southweek in the parish of Germansweek the Bible Christian society worshipped in a farmhouse with the farmer's household which consisted of seventeen people, the master and mistress of the house, the master's aged mother, three sons, one daughter and ten servants. Even three of the servants were fully-fledged members. Bartlett described the household as one of the happiest families he had ever come across. A revival at the end of the year added thirteen or fourteen new members to the society at Southweek.

In 1843 Conference decided that he should go to the Breage circuit in the West of Cornwall where the Bible Christian cause had prospered for more than two decades. It was a small circuit bounded by the Bristol Channel to the north and the English Channel to the south. From almost every place in the circuit it was possible to see the sea, and it was small enough for preachers to return home to their own beds at night. There were four hired or 'circuit' beds which had to be paid for if preachers had to stay over night. Three households provided free accommodation for preachers but as most of their members were miners or mechanics who were in the habit of taking in lodgers, few of them had any free rooms available for preachers' use. The circuit had eleven chapels and one preaching place, a cottage in the parish of St Erth where they also had a chapel. Four of the chapels were in the parish of Breage, and several were larger and more beautiful than any he had hitherto seen as a Bible Christian itinerant.

Bartlett lived with the pastor [superintendent minister] at Leeds Town in Crowan parish but his relationship with him was not without its problems. Charles Symmons had entered the ministry in 1835 and had already spent two years in the Breage circuit. Just before Bartlett's arrival he had written to the *Bible Christian Magazine* reporting in a self-serving way a revival which had recently taken place in the circuit. 'Things had worn a discouraging aspect for a long time past' he said, but having just issued 241 notes of admittance this,



he believed was 'only the beginning of good days.'<sup>4</sup> Anxious to remain in the same circuit, Symmons persuaded a young man to write a letter to the District Superintendent, purporting to come from one of the circuit stewards, stating that nineteen out of twenty in the circuit wanted him to remain for a third year. Conference kept him in the Breage circuit, but his action caused dissension and led eventually to the 1844 Conference censuring him and posting him to the Tawstock and Torrington circuit in North Devon as second minister. Two years later he was expelled from the itineracy for a different offence.

It was at that same 1844 Conference in St Austell that Bartlett was received into full connexion. Together with five others they were examined privately by the President of the Conference and other leading members of the connexion respecting their experience, knowledge of Divinity, health and habits, and 'usefulness' Having been told that they had acquitted themselves well in their oral examination, the same evening they, each in turn, gave a brief account to the whole Conference of their Christian experience and call to the ministry. When Conference was asked to give its approval to their ordination, Bartlett said "up went a forest of hands. . . which seemed to say 'Go on in the good work [in which] you have been engaged for the last four years'." Their reception into full connexion was followed by an address, the charge given by the ex-President, Paul Robins.

His early years as a minister illustrate how easy it was for his superiors at district and circuit level to frustrate the wishes of the connexional leadership. In 1844 a request was received from Northamptonshire to send missionaries<sup>5</sup>. Bartlett had already proved his worth as a missionary in South Wales but when in 1845 the connexion's [Home] Missionary Committee asked him to go and open a mission there the pastor of the circuit [superintendent], Matthew Robins, intervened to persuade the Committee not to send him. Two years later in 1847 the President of the Conference asked him to return to his roots to fill a sudden vacancy in the Somerton circuit, but J.H.Prior, the District Superintendent, and the pastor [superintendent] of the Luxulyan circuit, where he was then stationed, opposed the move so he remained in Cornwall. 'There is too much selfishness amongst ministers as well as private Christians' he told his wife in one of his letters. 'My Superintendent. . . and Mr. J.H.Prior combined to defeat the designs of the President [M. Robins] and they succeeded.. What pure selfishness ... I was in my second year ... I think I ought to have been allowed to go,

<sup>4</sup> *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1842, p. 168.

<sup>5</sup> *Bible Christian Conference Journal*, John Rylands University Library, MAW Ms 817, p. 276

else what good are committees or Presidential authorities.'

The Luxulyan circuit was one of the more prosperous of Bible Christian circuits. It was not large, just six miles from north to south and eight miles from east to west, but it had eleven chapels and five preaching places. If the chapels were not quite so imposing as those in the Breage circuit, the societies which used them were large and were 'alive to God'. Many of their members were 'wealthy' and some of the chapels were a good size. The two years he was in the circuit saw a number of revivals. Sometimes 500 or 600 people would assemble night after night in one or other of the chapels. At Ebenezer Chapel in the parish of Luxulyan there were one hundred converts, and in the space of six weeks two hundred notes of admittance were given out.

The 1847 Conference appointed him to the Chard Mission which occupied a large area in the South of Somerset and took in the northern extremity of Dorset and the most easterly corner of Devon. It was 30 miles long and eleven or twelve miles wide. Although the Bible Christians had preached in the area for twenty-five years their cause was very weak. This was largely because they drew their support, in the main, from the poorest strata of society. Bible Christian fortunes would have been very different, Bartlett reflected, if only the grace of God had taken hold of the farmers and mechanics in the area" Such was the poverty of their members that as he moved around the Mission he often only saw bread and butter for days on end. Meat was a rare luxury, and he thought himself lucky when he was fed potatoes and hard cheese. Thirteen of the Bible Christian societies in the Mission worshipped in cottages, barns, carpenters' workshops or rented rooms, and in the whole Mission there were only two small chapels at Stoke and Churchill.

He had some assistance from a supernumerary minister, John Adams (1784-1863), and from Richard Phillips, a young man he had known as a local preacher in the Monmouth mission whom he described as 'very weak' and who made him wonder why he had been allowed to enter the itineracy 'with such very small abilities'. He was not, however, altogether dismissive of his young colleague because he admitted that 'poor Dick's ... thundering away' made some converts, and there was something 'heartily, lively and devoted about him. When Phillips was later pressured into resigning from the itineracy he felt the connexion had not dealt fairly with a man whom he thought could have become a satisfactory 'second or third preacher' in a circuit.

His sojourn in the mission had one happy outcome. Between 1842 and 1848 he had courted by correspondence a farmer's daughter in the

Monmouth mission but in 1848, apparently at her instigation, her brother wrote to Bartlett saying that she was too delicate to marry him and that her parents were not happy about her living so far from their Monmouthshire home. The engagement was broken off and the lady married a widower with several children. That same year Bartlett met Elizabeth Rendell of Coker Hill, and after a courtship of sixteen months married her in Yeovil's South Street Baptist Chapel on 3 December 1849. They began their married life in a rented house in Pitway Street, South Petherton, not far from the chapel in the same street which had been opened earlier in the year.

The following year conference posted him to the 'plum' circuit of Kilkhampton which straddled the Devon and Cornwall border. It was by far and away the most important circuit he had until then worked in, being in one of the first areas to be evangelised by William O'Bryan and his preachers. It had about five hundred members in seventeen different societies most of which had prospered since the earliest days of the connexion. There were good friends everywhere, and wherever he went he was provided with excellent food and accommodation. It was, however, in a very thinly populated area of the country where rural depopulation was making serious inroads into Bible Christian strength. Losses as a result of emigration and removals could only be made good by the systematic recruitment of new members so Bartlett and his colleague, William Bray, spent much of their time and energy trying to trigger revivals. They met with some success, and in practically all the societies at least five or six converts were added to the membership. During the second year he was stationed in the circuit in both Bradworthy and Clovelly there were about eighty converts.

He was invited to stay for a third year but he declined the invitation. His aged father was still alive and he wished to be a little nearer to Somerton and he believed that most societies profited from seeing a fresh face. Furthermore, their house at Eastcott in the parish of Morwenstow left much to be desired.

In 1852 he was posted to the Winkleigh Mission in an area of Devon where Wesleyans, Baptists, Plymouth Brethren and Bible Christians vied with one another but without meeting with any great success. It included Hatherleigh where the evangelical clergyman, Cradock Glascott, had filled the parish church during his long ministry between 1782 and 1831, and North Tawton where Wesley had preached, but apparently with little effect. The mission had long been an expensive one, and little progress had been made despite the fact that the area had a population of 12,000. Some of its parishes had been missioned as early as 1817 but the denomination had failed to flourish in many of them. It may be that the

rural evangelicalism of the Bible Christians was unattractive to communities which had folk memories of the early eighteenth-century heyday of historic dissent and a prosperous textile industry. Though they had built a number of chapels, their cause remained weak. Iddesleigh, for instance, had long had a chapel, but by 1852 the society was dead and the congregation small. At Bondleigh the chapel had to compete with the Plymouth Brethren, and at North Tawton, a market town with a population of 2,000, the cause had been at a low ebb for many years. At Petrockstow the Bible Christians met with strong competition from the Wesleyans. The only bright spot was Merton where 'many respectable people' had come on to the Lord's side' In 1845 a Bible Christian minister had attributed the Mission's decline to 'the disorderly walk' of some of their members, the backsliding of others, and the opposition of the Winkleigh clergyman who complained that the Bible Christian preachers were 'a set of run-about fellows' who prevented him from sleeping in his bed at night!<sup>6</sup>

The mission was in territory near the epicentre of the Connexion but despite its proximity to Shebbear, the Bible Christian cause had not put down deep roots. It had made phenomenal progress in the 1830s, growing from a membership of 27 in 1835 to 223 in 1838, but had thereafter suffered a decline and had become a drain on the resources of the denomination. Much was in marked contrast with the neighbouring Northlew mission where Bartlett had been so happy ten years earlier. There were very few households, for instance, prepared to entertain the preachers, and at some the preachers had to pay for their board and lodgings. Furthermore, his young assistant, Hatton Goodman, the grandson of the Rattenburys of Milton Damarel who had played such a prominent part in the early days of William O'Bryan's mission to North Devon, was 'not a very efficient preacher' and had, at the end of his second year, married and retired from the itineracy.

As he came near to the end of his account Bartlett surveyed the fourteen to fifteen years he had spent as an itinerant and the more than sixteen years as a preacher. In May 1855 he calculated that he had preached five thousand one hundred and seventeen times in seven different counties, and had addressed congregations in one hundred and fifty-two Bible Christian chapels, one hundred rented rooms, farmhouses and cottages, and seventeen places of worship belonging to other denominations. Although he had ridden in coaches, vans and waggons on four hundred and thirteen occasions and had made four hundred and thirteen journeys by train and twenty-two by boat, he had, in the course of his work walked more than twenty-two thousand miles

<sup>6</sup> *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1845, p. 178.

to keep his appointments!

In the last but one of his letters he proudly listed the titles of the ninety-three books he had in his possession and the one hundred and ninety-eight he had read since he began to prepare himself for the life of an itinerant. They included many of the standard works of nineteenth century evangelical Christianity, and also books on grammar as well as dictionaries and encyclopedias. Like so many of his fellow preachers his thirst for knowledge and his determination to succeed in the craft of preaching had led him to spend a good proportion of his income on self-education and self improvement. One volume had cost him eighteen shillings and another seventeen shillings and sixpence. If they were forced to sell the collection, he told his wife, they would raise not far short of twelve pounds!

Bartlett went on to serve in seven more circuits in the Isle of Wight, Hampshire, Dorset, Devon and Somerset. He retired from the active ministry in 1878 and died three years later in 1881. His obituary in the 1881 *Minutes of the Bible Christian Conference* described him 'a loving and lovable' man - who excelled as a pastor. He was as a preacher, it said, most in his element when a revival was going on. Almost always hopeful and happy, his 'unwonted deference', it implied, had cheated him of the highest office in the connexion.

DAVID SHORNEY

(Dr. Sharney taught history at Neville's Cross College and Avery Hill College, London, and is now retired.)

## Geoffrey E. Milburn 1930 - 2006

The WHS has suffered a great loss through the death of Geoffrey Milburn, who died on Christmas Eve after a prolonged illness. A native of Hutton Rudby most of his professional life was spent as lecturer in Victorian Studies at Sunderland Polytechnic (later to become the University). He was a frequent contributor to the *Proceedings* on a wide range of Methodist related subjects. He gave the 1993 WHS Conference Lecture on 'Piety, profit and paternalism: Methodists in business in the North East'. published in *Proceedings* 44, pp 45-92. His last work was on Primitive Methodism in the 'Exploring Methodism' series published by Epworth Press in 2002.

Throughout the years his meticulous research and gifted pen yielded a whole range of publications. These included: *The Christian Lay Churches, A School for Prophets*; the origins of ministerial education in the Primitive Methodist Church, *Unique in Methodism: 100 years of Chapel Aid* and he was joint editor with Margaret Batty of *Workaday Preachers: the story of Methodist local preaching. Sunderland: River Town and People from 1780* was a joint work with his colleague, Stuart Miller and will remain a definitive history. His *Travelling Preacher: John Wesley in the North East 1742-1790* received with great acclaim. He was invited by Radio Newcastle to use this for a series of broadcasts and through this medium he often spoke to a wider public on our Methodist heritage. He also edited the diary of John Young for the Surtees Society in 1983.

Geoffrey was a local preacher for over 40 years. He was proud of his Primitive Methodist home background but chenshed everything to do with the Wesleys. Always in his wider works he would illustrate with reference to people and events from the North East that he knew and loved so well. Many local communities benefited from his research and writings and he brought many forgotten personalities to the notice of a wider audience. This he was able to do through his many years as editor of the WHS North East Branch *Bulletin*.

He took a delight in painting, bird watching, literature, music and art appreciation. He was a very gracious person, a true family man, influencing and encouraging many in the way of faith and scholarship. In all his devotions, reading and in all his pursuits there was a catholic and ecumenical dimension. Throughout his life he was wonderfully supported by Mary, his wife and family and we share with them thanksgiving for a true man of God.

ERIC W. DYKES

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Osborns and Rydal Mount School (1885-1915): 'A promising place in the North'* by Peter Watkinson (Colwyn Bay: Rydal Penrhos School, 2004), 96 pp. no price given, no ISBN.

Thomas George Osborn (or TGO as he was normally addressed by contemporaries) was a Methodist layman and an outstandingly able and energetic Victorian schoolmaster. This work traces his life and work as Headmaster of Kingswood and then founder, owner and Headmaster of Rydal Mount. The story is extended to include the short period during which his son succeeded him as Headmaster of Rydal.

Born in 1843 a member of the influential Osborn family TGO was educated at Wesley College, Sheffield, then the best school for the sons of Methodist laymen and a direct antecedent of the present King Edward VII School, which in the twentieth century was a notable grammar school. There is, incidentally, an interesting chapter entitled 'A palace for the children of the King of Kings' in the recent centenary history, *King Ted's a biography of King Edward VII School Sheffield 1905-2005* by John Cornwell (The School, 2005), which the history of Wesley College in the nineteenth century and highlights some of the issues which also faced the Methodist schools discussed in this book. From Wesley College TGO went on to read mathematics at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, becoming one of a very select band of Methodist undergraduates in the university.

Following the passage of Gladstone's University Test Acts TGO felt able to accept the offer of a college fellowship which he had previously refused on the grounds that it would compromise his Methodism. However, at the age of 23 he was persuaded to accept appointment as Headmaster of Kingswood, a post which he filled for nineteen years during which he transformed the reputation of the school and increased the number of boys attending from 120 to 297. His resignation in 1885 was the result of his long-standing dissatisfaction with the dual system of management by which the Headmaster and his staff exercised a purely teaching role and worked under the direct control of the Governor, who was invariably an ordained minister. When in 1885 Conference voted to get rid of the dual system it only did so with the proviso that the single Head or Principal should be a minister. TGO immediately resigned and announced his intention to found a new private boarding school for boys in Colwyn Bay.

Rydal Mount was opened in September 1885 with 14 boys. Although TGO relied heavily on his Methodist connections, the school was not confined to children of Methodist parents. Urged on and assisted by the indefatigable Rev. Frederick Payne TGO acquired land and buildings at an astonishing rate. By the end of the century the school was attracting over 100 new boys a year. However, for a variety of reasons this was not maintained. In 1905 the continuation of the school's Methodist character was ensured when was sold

to the recently created Wesleyan Board of Management. When TGO died in 1910 intake was down to 58 and the decline continued under the headmastership of his son George F. A. Osborn. On his resignation in 1915 the governors made an inspired choice in the appointment of the Rev. Alfred J. Costain who quickly revived the school's fortunes.

It is clear that TGO's success at Rydal Mount owed much to two people. One was his faithful deputy, James Deaville, with whom he had worked in a happy partnership at Kingswood. The other was his wife, Jessie Emma who, in addition to raising a family of seven children, oversaw all the domestic arrangements, prepared accounts and helped with correspondence. It is a sad comment on male chauvinism that when she died in 1932 Costain, who knew her well, marked her death in his column in the *North Wales Weekly* by extolling the achievements of her husband.

In an interesting preface the author discusses the sources that were available to him. Significant material appears to have disappeared, though it is not certain whether this was due to the bombing of City Road or to a garage fire in Abersoch where the school's third headmaster retired. Because TGO was the owner of Rydal Mount for its first two decades he was not required to have committee meetings or to produce minutes or reports. This lack of documentary evidence means that any assessment of the man relies fairly heavily on the records of his time at Kingswood.

The author of this book is a former Headmaster of Rydal. The story is interestingly told in well-organised short chapters and is very readable. The book has been carefully proof-read and is well printed with good reproductions of black and white photographs. In addition to the 14 chapters there are appendices giving the numbers of new boys annually between 1885 and 1917, analyses of where the boys came from and their parents' occupations, and a timetable showing the order of the school day in 1912.

Given that this is a work of original research I must register two regrets. One is the absence of references, particularly to identify sources of quotations. The other is the lack of an index which is an essential aid both when reading a book for the first time and when checking it for information thereafter.

LIONEL MADDEN

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*Authority and Order. John Wesley and his Preachers by Adrian Burdon.*  
(Ashgate, 2005, pp. 117. £40. ISBN 0 7546 5454 0).

Connexional developments and ecumenical dialogue have encouraged Methodists to spend time recently reflecting on their understanding of presbyteral ministry (although there is little evidence to suggest that the term 'presbyter' has caught on in Methodism yet!). The conversations leading up to the signing of the covenant between the Methodist Church of Great Britain and the Church of England explored our respective theologies of ministry;



the interim report of the Joint Implementation Commission under the covenant, *In the spirit of the Covenant* (2005), devoted a chapter to the interchangeability of ordained ministries; and the Conference of 2002 adopted the report 'What is a Presbyterian?'. These discussions offer a context for Adrian Burdon's study of John Wesley and his preachers, *Authority and Order*.

Dr Burdon's title is important. This is not a study of Wesley's relationships with his preachers, interesting and helpful though that would be. The focus here is much more precise: the work concentrates on Wesley's theology of ministry, on the processes by which he was brought to authorise and then to ordain preachers, and on the explicit and implicit rationalisations Wesley offered for these actions. The thesis is advanced that Wesley was driven by a sense of urgency to save souls and that he sought to revive the Church of England by exercising an 'extraordinary' ministry through which he and his assistants might provoke the settled clergy to jealousy and thus to renewal. Wesley's sense of evangelistic urgency co-existed with an oft-professed loyalty to the Church of England which Dr Burdon suggests came close to 'the fixation of a psychotic' (page 6). Evangelistic necessity and concern for order were reconciled, it is suggested, by deploring separation from the Church and by evolving a theory according to which Wesley exercised absolute authority over the Methodists as their 'scriptural episcopos', appointing, authorising and (eventually) ordaining preachers to their extraordinary work. Wesley, it is claimed, was not ordaining Anglican presbyters, but Methodist preachers to serve a temporary community which he expected to see absorbed into a renewed Church of England.

In developing his case Dr Burdon makes extensive use of the standard printed authorities, drawing on Wesley's Works in their various editions, on the older studies by Tyerman and Telford and on the best of the modern historians - Albert Outler, Frank Baker, Henry Rack, Richard Heitzenrater and Ted Campbell. Effective use is also made of the WHS *Proceedings*. Given the nature of the study, it is possible to proceed without extensive primary research in manuscript sources.

Besides the inevitable proof-reading errors ('Hilderbrandt' for Hildebrandt, 'Clark' for Clarke, 'Lacey' for Lacy), there are one or two curious slips. Samuel Wesley, junior, was the eldest of the Wesley brothers (born in 1690), and therefore was not 'John's younger brother' (page 13). Bishop Jewel's dates are given incorrectly on page 10. It is not the case that there are no printed Minutes of Conferences before 1749 (page 37). But what of the general thesis? The attempt to map Wesley's mind, understand his motivation and read between the lines of his self-justifying prose is impressive, but I wonder if Wesley's much-vaulted consistency is taken too much at face value, and whether more weight should be given to the pressure placed on Wesley by the movement he led, but could not control. Dr Burdon quotes Joseph Beaumont's famous dictum that Wesley, 'like a good oarsman-looked one way and rowed another' (page 4); whatever the actions and intentions of the oarsman attention always needs to be paid to the current and the tide.

MARTIN WELLINGS

*Born in Song: Methodist Worship in Britain* by David M. Chapman  
(Church in the Market Place Publications, 2006 £9.99 pb. pp. x +355. ISBN 1 89914756 x).

David Chapman has done us a great service by providing the train-spotters' guide to Methodist worship. The title is somewhat misleading because apart from the chapter on the Preaching Service and the one on Hymnody and Music the book is primarily a very helpful guide to Wesleyan, non-Wesleyan and post-Methodist Union service books and liturgical texts. Like most similarly detailed studies there is a huge amount to be gleaned from the end-notes to each chapter. Throughout the book there is an honesty about Methodist ambiguity towards Anglican worship including Wesley's realisation that most of his followers did not attend their parish church. Then, as now, the printed liturgy tradition didn't stand much of a chance in the context of revivalism and frontier worship. In a culture that began with lining-out hymns other liturgical texts were not going to appeal. Even in Wesleyan Methodism there were conflicting attitudes to the use of printed liturgies. The 1882 Book of *Public Prayers and Services* was an attempt to bring together both strands among the more liturgically minded Wesleyans which had always been divided between the Book of Common Prayer and Wesley's 'Abridgement' of it - *The Sunday Service of the Methodists*. The author is wholly correct in assigning the seismic shift in Methodist appreciation of the eucharist and liturgical principles to the 1975 *Methodist Service Book* even though, as he says, the 1999 *Methodist Worship Book* has more far reaching implications than any of its predecessors.

One of the joys of this current study is the bringing together in one place of the contents of the non Wesleyan service books, namely the 1860 and 1890 Primitive Methodist books, the UMFC books of c.1870 and c.1890, the 1899 MNC Handbook, the two versions of the Bible Christian service book and the UM service book of 1913. The study contains a welcome chapter on Love-feasts, Watch-nights and Camp Meetings and reminds us that for many Methodists the Love-feast was a domesticated, democratised folk sacrament. The section on Methodist architecture is useful but stops short of dealing with the current trend of domesticating Methodist chapels and turning them into front rooms with carpets and comfy seats.

Alas, there are a number of inaccuracies throughout the book. The time of Wesley's daily preaching services varied between summer and winter (page 40-41). There is a failure to grasp the various arguments over the origins, and content of Wesley's early preaching services. There is a perpetuation of the myth that J.E.Rattenbury was the founder of the Methodist Sacramental Fellowship (page 58). *Divine Worship* (1935) is given the wrong title (page 58). Wesley's omission of the Nicene Creed from his communion order and its restoration by the Wesleyans in 1882 stems from the fact that for Wesley the fore-noon service consisted of Morning Prayer followed immediately by the Lord's Supper. He couldn't see the point of two creeds so he omitted the longer and more involved of the two in his quest for brevity.

By 1882 for both Anglicans and Methodists Morning Prayer and Holy Communion had become services held at different times. In the 1936 *Book of Offices* it was the Commandments of the Lord Jesus that were offered as an alternative to the Ten Commandments and not the other way round! (page 80). The issue of questions before or after baptism of an infant was not new in the 1999 *Methodist Worship Book* (page 111). Wesley had omitted the questions altogether! The word 'Confirmation', in brackets (page 129) was only added to the 1936 *Book of Offices* in 1965 by Rupert Davies and the Faith and Order Committee, during the Anglican-Methodist Conversations. The section dealing with the 1975 *Covenant Service* is very misleading. The radical overhaul of Wesley's *Covenant Service* took place much earlier than is suggested. It was G.B. Robson's major revision of 1922 and its derivative - the Wesleyan 'Blue Cover Order' (c. 1930) - that created the pattern and participatory elements with which we are now familiar.

All these slips apart, no serious student of Methodist worship can afford to be without this book which brings together knowledge and references which hitherto could only be found in many different places. What we now need is a two volume work (with commentary) containing all the Wesleyan liturgical texts and all the non-Wesleyan services, copies of the latter being extremely scarce.

NORMAN WALLWORK

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*The Churches of Liverpool* by David Lewis, (Liverpool, Bluecoat Press, 2001, pp. 175 ISBN 1572568 76 9) ; *Liverpool: Pevsner Architectural Series*, by Joseph Sharples (New Haven & London, Yale University Press, 2004, pp.xi,332. £9.99 ISBN 0 300 10258 5)

Lewis' beautifully illustrated book captures the rich, architectural and artistic religious culture of Liverpool, reflecting especially the nineteenth-century wealth generated by the port, with a great religious cultural heritage ranging from Welsh Calvinistic Methodists and Scottish Presbyterianism, *via* Irish Roman Catholicism and Old Dissent to Methodism. The author concentrates on the larger buildings, many already lost with many others threatened, the price of inner city economic decline and depopulation, as well as a lessening religious observance. There is a supportive text of variable quality which would have been much improved by greater original research, rather than perhaps an over dependency on Picton and Pevnsner; to illustrate, St. Peter's Wesleyan (p.52) is described as early twentieth-century gothic when it is by C.O. Ellison, 1877-8. One error is that Billy Lidel, Liverpool and Scotland

footballer, was a member at Court Hey Methodist (p.104) but never its minister or in fact even a local preacher. There are gaps, such as an under representation of the Primitive Methodist chapels, many of which are illustrated in Kendall. For those unfamiliar with Liverpool the provision of a map showing the location of the churches would have helped, as also an index. Regrettably the book is now out of print but is a welcome addition to the architectural history of Liverpool to which Sharples makes an excellent further contribution, capturing the remarkable range of public, commercial, industrial and domestic buildings, as well as places of worship, often associated with wealthy families, such as Tate & Lyle, the sugar refiners with links to Ullet Road Unitarian, 1896-9.

D COLIN DEWS

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*Nonconformity in Hertfordshire: A Guide to Sources for Family and Local Historians* by Alan Ruston (Herts Family History Society, 2005 pp64, £6.00 post free from 24 Ashurst Road, Barnet, Herts, EN4 9LF)

As a working tool for genealogists in Hertfordshire, it is difficult to see how this booklet could be bettered: the coverage is comprehensive and accurate, the different sources are carefully explained, the examples of obituaries are well chosen and the bibliography is up to date. Methodism is well covered - for instance, the list of chapel histories on pp 37-51 includes over 20 in the Methodist Archives in Manchester as well as others elsewhere. The cover shows a stone plaque on the outside of 25 Castle Street, Hertford, now a private house '... John Wesley preached here between 1763-1778' Only the architectural descriptions in the Wesleyan Chapel Reports seem to have been overlooked. Readers with no interest in Hertfordshire can still learn much from Alan Ruston's compilation. It stands as a model hopefully to be copied for other counties.

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*A Methodist Guide to Cornwall* by Thomas Shaw, updated by Colin Short. (MPH 2005, ppv,73. £2.99. ISBN 1 85852 284 6)

The late Tom Shaw's *Guide* appeared in 1991 and quickly established itself as a uniquely comprehensive gazetteer of sites in this most Methodist of counties Colin Short has made an excellent job of updating the entries and adding other helpful notes, for example on Cornish items in the Methodist Archives. The booklet is attractively produced and very good value.

*Newbiggin Chapel: its Continuing Place in History* by Mary Lowes and Lorne Tallentine (2005, 1 pp 45)

Newbiggin in Teesdale chapel was opened in 1759 and is the oldest Methodist chapel anywhere in continuous use. This pamphlet is a revision of an account first published in 1990. It has been expanded to include John Wesley's visit to Teesdale, details of local families, an account of twenty first-century outreach, several illustrations and a bibliography.

E. A. ROSE

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## NOTES AND QUERIES

1575 W.T. CRANFIELD (aka Denis Crane)

According to Leary's *Primitive Methodist Ministers* (1990) the Rev. W. T. Cranfield served in its ministry from 1897 to 1905, his circuits being Plymouth (1897-1900), Surrey Chapel, London (1900-1), Clay Cross (1901-4) and finally Upton Park (1904-5). It is known that in 1905 he became a freelance journalist in Fleet Street and the only book published under his own name, he being the editor, *Journalism as a Career: plain counsels by leading journalists* (London, 1930), reflects change of vocation. Rowe gives the year of his birth as 1874 but only notes two titles by him. From other sources it is known that he wrote under the pseudonym 'Denis Crane' and the British Library catalogue gives his full name as William Thomas Cranfield. Of the nine titles that can so far be attributed to him, only one was not written under his pseudonym.

His earliest title is a biography of the Rev. James Flanagan (1851-1918) published in 1906, soon after he ceased itinerating. Flanagan was in Southwark (1892-1905) and so no doubt Cranfield knew him when he was at the nearby Surrey Chapel. Could he have met his wife when at Surrey Chapel? He also wrote a biography about John Clifford, the Baptist, which was published in 1908 as one of the Primitive Methodist 'Leaders of Men' series. Later he would write another, published 1909 by Robert Culley, on Sir Robert Perks (1849-1934), the Wesleyan Liberal Unionist, whom he may have met at Surrey Chapel.

There is a slight possibility that during the war years he may have been in Canada as his *The Boys Book of Canada* was published c 1916, the year after his *John Bull's Surplus Children*, which includes material on the Salvation Army's then policy of resettling children in Canada. His literary output also included *Ashes to Ashes* (Cremation Society of England, 1912). That he was also fluent in French is suggested by his translation of Marcelle Vioux, *The Mills of Man: L'Ephemere* (London, [1926]).

Little else is known about Cranfield. Why did he leave the Primitive Methodist ministry and did he remain a Primitive Methodist? Did he cease to itinerate simply to become a journalist or were there other factors in this?

Further information on W.T. Cranfield would be most welcome.

D COLIN DEWS  
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## 1576 'THE WESLEYAN METHODIST HYMN BOOK.'

Only one book has borne this exact title. That is *The Wesleyan Methodist Hymn Book: comprising the Collection by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., with Miscellaneous Hymns, Suitable for Occasional Services*. The preface, dated from the General Wesleyan Reform Committee Room, Exeter Hall, London, July 1st, 1853, records that the work was edited, at the request of the Wesleyan Delegates gathered in Sheffield in April, 1852, by James Everett. Of the several editions (or impressions), there survive those of 1853, 1854, 1855 (Duke), 1856, 1857 (British Library and UM Archives at Drew), 1860, 1862, 1863 (UM Archives at Drew), 1864, 1869, 1871, 1872, 1874, 1876 (Bridwell Library, Perkins), 1888, 1892 (private hands), and 1897. Unless otherwise noted, copies of each are held in the Methodist Archives collection at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. The editions of 1871, 1872 and 1888 are with *Exeter Hall Revival Hymns*, those of 1876 and 1892 with the 'new Supplement' prepared for the Wesleyan Methodist Conference. The book was used by the Wesleyan Reform Union until that church shared in the preparation of the 1904 *Methodist Hymn-Book*, as we are informed in the preface to that latter book.

The 1853 book was not retained by the United Methodist Free Churches, who avoided 'the Wesleyan Methodist' terminology when they commissioned James Everett again, now together with Matthew Baxter, at the Annual Assembly of July and August, 1859, to edit another, differently amplified, version of the 1780 Collection. The editors, in their preface of October 1860, report that a book differing from both the Wesleyan Reform Union and Wesleyan Association books was called for, to bear the title: *Hymn Book of the United Methodist Free Churches, comprising the Collection of Hymns by the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., sometime Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, with Miscellaneous Hymns Suited for Occasional Services*.

The use, in several recent publications, of the title 'Wesleyan Methodist Hymn Book' to refer to the 1904 Methodist Hymn-Book, while obviously a convenient short-hand method for distinguishing it from its 1933 successor, is unfortunate. It confuses bibliographical searches, and is at odds with the clear statement of that book's preface that it was prepared jointly by and for the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the Methodist New Connexion and the Wesleyan Reform Union, with Methodists from Australia assisting by correspondence. The only copies not entitled simply 'Methodist Hymn-Book' were those printed for the Methodist New Connexion (*The Methodist Hymn-Book for use in the Churches of the Methodist New Connexion founded 1797, London, Methodist New Connexion Book Room. n. d.*) - this title page survived into the life of the United Methodist Church after the union of 1907, those for the Wesleyan Reform Union) *The Methodist Hymn Book for Use in the Churches of the Wesleyan Reform Union.* (Sheffield, Wesleyan Reform Book Rom 1904; copy in the UM Archives, Drew); and some for the United Methodist Church as *'The United Methodist Hymn-Book'*. No copies identifying the book

as Wesleyan, on title page or spine or front cover, can be traced.

No less regrettable is the use of the term, "Wesleyan Methodist School Hymnal" to refer to the School Hymnal of 1911, another joint production, in this case from the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the United Methodist Church and the Wesleyan Reform Union. United Methodist imprints bear the title, *United Methodist School Hymnal*, but the impressions published by the Wesleyan Methodist Sunday School Department are simply, *The Methodist School Hymnal*.

Librarians will wish to know that, in reference to the 'Wesleyan Methodist Hymn book,' additional 'subject Headings' should mention first 'Wesleyan Reform Union,' since this is a distinct denomination, and remains so to this day, and only secondarily, if at all, the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

Generous advice has been provided during the search for these data by Gareth Lloyd, Peter Nockles and Jennifer Woodruff Tait.

DAVID TRIPP

1577 'THE MAKING OF AN EARLY BIBLE CHRISTIAN CIRCUIT'

This was the title of an article by the late Dr Oliver Beckerlegge about the manuscript circuit book of the former Bible Christian Weare circuit in Somerset. It appeared in three parts in *Proceedings* 52. Thanks to the kindness of the Beckerlegge family this book, covering the period 1822 to 1853, is now deposited in the Somerset Record Office, Taunton (reference D\N\wre/4/3/1). It appears that its starting date is earlier than any similar surviving Bible Christian book.

ROGER THORNE

(Archivist, Plymouth and Exeter District)

1578 EXPELLED WESLEYAN MINISTERS

How many Wesleyan ministers were there expelled for supporting the Wesleyan Reformers from 1849? The expulsion of Samuel Dunn, James Everett and William Griffith in 1849, followed by James Bromley in the following year, is well documented. Writing the history of Highfield Methodist Church, Wortley, Leeds, whose origins go back to 1854 when the society seceded from the Wesleys to join the Wesleyan Reformers, has raised an interesting question. In July 1855 the opening services were held for the Reformers' new chapel. A surviving printed bill shows services being taken, amongst others, by Everett, who earlier had itinerated in the Bramley Circuit and had opened the adjacent Wesleyan chapel in 1847, and Griffith. In August another preacher was the 'Rev. G. Southern (an expelled Wesleyan minister), from Wedensbury'

(sic). Southern does not appear in Beckerlegge and so it must be presumed that he did not subsequently join the United Methodist Free Churches itinerancy. Assuming that the description is accurate, and he was not simply an expelled Wesleyan local preacher, when and where was he expelled, in what circumstances, and were there others?

D COLIN DEWS

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#### 1579 'RESIGNED' AND 'DISAPPEARED' BIBLE CHRISTIAN MINISTERS

In Oliver Beckerlegge's *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits* many Bible Christian ministers are noted as resigned or disappearing and no further reference or biographical information is available. The recent re-emergence of the final volume of *Local Preachers Meeting Minutes for the Bible Christian Breage/ Porthleven/ Porthleven & St.Ives/ Porthleven Circuit (1880-1907)* in west Cornwall enables a couple more gaps to be filled, some corrections to be made - and a query raised.

##### **Boase, John Charles** (Beckerlegge p25)

Entered the ministry 1869; at St.Ives in 1880 - but disappears.

LP Minutes Sept 23 1890 - the first meeting after the chapels of the St.Ives Mission merged with the former Porthleven Circuit - a resolution:

'That Bro. J.H.[sic] Boase having travelled as a minister in the connexion, his name appear number three on the plan in future.'

[That year Conference had been at High Street, Penzance, and in the official *Plan of Public Services* ... 'Boase, J.C. St Ives' is listed as a visitor.]

##### **Caddy, T.** (not in Beckerlegge)

This name does not appear in Beckerlegge, nor in the *Bible Christian Minutes of Conference*, nor in the *President's Circulars*.

However, the LP Minutes Sept 25 1896 read...

'That Bro. T.Caddy having left for College, we in dropping his name place on record our appreciation of the willing service he has rendered us and express the hope that he will prove a successful minister of Jesus Christ.'

The only obvious conclusion is that Bro. Caddy went into the ministry of another denomination. Might this then have been the Wesleyan Thomas H.Caddy who trained at Richmond and went with the Methodist Missionary Society to Honduras District in 1899 (*Hill's 1926*) ? The years correspond.

##### **Carter, John** (Beckerlegge p41)

John Carter of Herland Cross (Godolphin today) was the first Bible Christian worker to die in China and his biography is by D.Murley, his first Superintendent, and first signatory of the LP Minutes.

A few details might be corrected from the LP Minutes. His name first



appears in the Minutes on 27 December 1882, the same year as he was converted, effectively 'On Note'. The date given by Murley and quoted by Beckerlegge as his acceptance as a Local Preacher (July 1883 [although Beckerlegge misprints it as '33]) represents in effect his 'On Trial'/date, and it was in March 1884 that he was 'received on the approved list of local preachers'. Carter was a regular attender of the Meeting, but his name last appears in March 1887.

### **Roberts, George (Beckerlegge p197)**

In 1887 Roberts was stationed at Somerton, Somerset, but in 1888 he is noted as resigned; Beckerlegge's reference is merely to the fact, and no reason is given.

A George Roberts appears in the LP Minutes at the same time as John Carter. A pencil note in the Minutes (made I think by the late Rev. Tom Darlington when he was minister, and historian, in the circuit, 1954-9) allocates him to Herland Cross; converted at the same time as Carter? His progress parallels Carter, although his name is always given first; was he older? He was not so regular at the meetings, but there is no further reference to him after December 1886.

As he entered the ministry in the same year as Carter, the suggestion offered is that the George Roberts who resigned in his first year of ministry was from Herland Cross in the Porthleven Circuit. If he returned to the circuit he is unmentioned in the LP Minutes.

COLIN C. SHORT

### **ANNUAL MEETING & LECTURE 2007**

The lecture and AGM this year will not form part of Conference. Outline details are as follows: the event will take place on **Saturday 30 June 2007** at the Nazarene Theological College, Dene Road, Didsbury, Manchester M20 2 GU. Facilities will be available at the College for those who wish to eat their own lunch from 12 noon. The Annual Meeting will begin at 2.45, to conclude no later than 2.15pm. The Annual Lecture will begin at 2.30pm to be given by Rev Dr Kenneth Newport, subject '**Charles Wesley, "warts and all": the evidence of the Prose Works**'. Fuller details and transport directions will appear in the May *Proceedings*.

The Wesley Fellowship are holding a Charles Wesley Tercentenary Conference at The Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Derbyshire from Tuesday April 3 to Thursday April 5, 2007. The main speakers are Rev Dr John Newton and Rev Dr Herbert McGonigle. Further details from Paul Taylor MA, Stonebridge Cottage, Back Lane, Shearsby, Lutterworth, LE17 6PN. e-mail [pt@wesfel.freeserve.co.uk](mailto:pt@wesfel.freeserve.co.uk)