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Proceedings

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Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.

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METHODISTS AND BAPTISTS IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BRISTOL

LET me begin by indicating my reasons for choosing the subject of this paper. The first one is purely personal. I am the result of what might be called "Methodist/Baptist relationships at the turn of the present century"! My mother and father met in the context of the University College of Bristol, in 1900. My father was a student in the Baptist College in Bristol, preparing for the Baptist ministry. My mother came from Four Oaks in Warwickshire and was of staunch Methodist stock. My maternal grandmother, Adeline, was the daughter of a Methodist minister, George Francis White. My great grandmother, Mary White, was a member of a distinguished Methodist family from Bath, whose ancestry can be traced back into the eighteenth century. The family bore the name Shum. Undoubtedly they originated in Germany and came to England in the Hanoverian Period. Because of my mother's pride in her Methodist connections, I bear as one of my Christian names, the name now spelt Schumm! My grandmother, Adeline White, shared her wedding day in 1872 with her sister Agnes, who married a Methodist minister, the Reverend Joseph Howard. Their fourth child was Wilbert Francis Howard, who came to be a distinguished and scholarly Methodist leader. So far as relationships are concerned, I think it makes Dr. Howard my second cousin!

The second reason is rather more important, namely that if one asks who the personalities were on the Baptist side in the centre of Bristol in the eighteenth century, and that basically means Broadmead Baptist Church then it has to be said that they were my own predecessors as Principals of the Bristol Baptist College. For in eighteenth century Bristol, the Principal of the Baptist College was also the minister, either on his own or with another, of the Broadmead Baptist Chapel. Therefore I am to a large extent writing, so far as the Baptists are concerned, of predecessors of my own.

To begin with I remind you of the Baptist position in Bristol in the mid eighteenth century. When John Wesley came first to Bristol on

March 31st 1739, the Baptist fellowship in Broadmead was very nearly 100 years old and the Baptist College was precisely 60 years old. The College dates its foundation from June 3rd 1679, when Edward Terrill, a wealthy Bristolian and elder of Broadmead Baptist Church, signed a Deed of Gift in favour of the church. It was to be used, after his death, for the support of a minister of Broadmead who was "well skilled in the tongues of Hebrew and Greek", and whose chief task would be that of preparing young men for ministry among the Baptist churches of the land.

The initial years of the College's life are shrouded in some mystery, and there are all too few records until early in the eighteenth century. Where the College records effectively begin is with the arrival of Bernard Foskett in 1720 to be the assistant minister of Broadmead. In 1727, when the minister of Broadmead died, Foskett became the chief minister of that church. In 1730, there came to Broadmead a young man of 18 years of age, whose name was Hugh Evans. He was a Welshman, and came to Bristol for medical advice concerning a lame foot, and stayed with his aunt who was a member of Broadmead. He was a well educated young man, gifted in the classical languages, and during his time in Bristol, studied under Foskett, who baptised him, and who recognised his potential as a minister. In the years that followed, he developed a very great preaching gift, and was called to be minister of a number of churches. However, he was quite unable to tear himself away from Broadmead. So, in 1739, in accordance with normal procedure, the Broadmead Church called Hugh Evans to the office of teaching elder and he was ordained. By this time he had married Sarah Brown, also a member of Broadmead.

The College was housed in North Street, in two houses which had been given to the church in Broadmead. North Street is just off Stokes Croft, not far from the New Room, and the remnants of North Street still remains after the re-planning—if that be the word—of Central Bristol. The location of the two houses, long since demolished, is best remembered by historians by the location of the one ancient building which still remains in Stokes Croft—namely the Full Moon Public House! Hugh Evans was a warm person, with characteristic Welsh vivacity, and a lively preacher. He shared with Foskett not only in Broadmead, but also in the life of the College.

The Baptists at this time were very much aware of the need for sound doctrine. The reason for this was that a number of their churches, particularly those of the General Baptist persuasion—often described as Arminian—had lapsed into Unitarianism. There is a letter extant from the Broadmead Church written in 1737 to the Association of Baptists in the West of England, meeting at Tiverton, inviting a further Association meeting to be held in Broadmead, and emphasising that attendance should be limited to those who accepted the Baptist Confession of 1688 in the form of the third edition of 1699. This was a conscious attempt by Baptists to establish their doctrinal

soundness. The date of the first edition of that Confession, i.e. 1688, is the very year in which there was anticipated the Act of Toleration which would release dissenters from the harassment which had been only too evident in the reign of Charles II. Thus, when Wesley arrived, in Bristol, on March 31st 1739, there was in Bristol a firmly established Baptist cause in Broadmead, a College that was beginning to find itself as an entity, housed in North Street, and a strong doctrinal consciousness which was strengthened by the apprehension of the danger that many Baptists were feeling concerning Unitarianism. It is not without significance to our subject that it was the General Baptists—the so-called Arminians—that were tending to move into the Unitarian doctrine.

I will not deal at length, with the arrival of Wesley in Bristol. His Journal records that on March 31st 1739:

in the evening I reached Bristol, and met Mr. Whitefield there. I could scarce reconcile myself at first to this strange way of preaching in the fields, of which he set me an example on Sunday, having been all my life, (till very lately), so tenacious at every point relating to decency and order, that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.¹

Like all of us Wesley at that point still had much to learn! The impact of Wesley's arrival in Bristol was, of course, tremendous. People flocked in their hundreds to hear him.

The effect of Wesley's preaching was soon felt by the Baptists. We find within the Broadmead Minute Book the following note dated Thursday September 9th 1742. "It was appointed that Brother Samuel Woodman, and Brother Joseph Llewellyn, should visit Thomas Davies and his wife, and sister Elizabeth King, to reprove them for going frequently to hear John and Charles Wesley and by converse with them, to learn whether they had imbibed there his corrupt notions." The outcome of this visit to these erring folk was scarcely satisfactory for we read that "On Thursday October 7th 1742 our messengers informed the church that Brother Davies and his wife had fallen into the errors of General Redemption, falling from grace, and sinless perfection in this life."

Further messengers were appointed "to let them know that the church was very sorry to hear that they had imbibed such corrupt notions, to admonish them to read the scriptures, to attend the preaching of the truth with us, and not where such principles are taught, that they might be brought to the knowledge of the truth, and that we should not have received them to our communion, if they had professed such principles at first." The Minute continues "such notions are inconsistent with the honour that should be given to Christ at his own table. They should forebear coming to it till they were more careful of their walk, and better principles."

¹ The Journal of John Wesley, ed. N. Curnock, London, Vol II, p. 167

The outcome of this further visit was no more satisfactory than the last. After a considerable period had elapsed, there is appended a note to the Minutes to the effect that "on January 9th 1746, Brother Davies and his wife were taken off the roll for the above reasons, and also it was thought that they took the Lord's Supper elsewhere". Slight though this evidence is, it indicates that the Baptists were being affected by the preaching of Wesley, and that the strong reaction against his preaching stems, in part, at least, from Baptist problems relating to the Arminian question. The doctrines that Brother Davies and his wife were accused of holding seem to have been Wesley's understanding of general redemption and his emphasis on holiness.

In 1758 Bernard Foskett died, and Broadmead was left without a senior minister. At this point it had 129 members, and was therefore a large and reputable church. Hugh Evans became the Senior Minister, and because of the Terrill money the church was able to afford a second minister and after considerable consideration they invited Hugh's son, Caleb, to be that assistant. It must be extremely rare in the history of any church, certainly a Baptist church, for a father and son to be co-pastors of one church. Yet for 23 years Hugh and Caleb exercised a joint ministry at Broadmead and also developed the work of the College. It says something about the character of both that they worked harmoniously and so effectively for so long. One of their students, who subsequently became well known in the Baptist denomination, John Rippon, wrote of them "the influence of the father was apostolic, the popularity of the son was proverbial".²

Caleb was the son of Hugh by his first wife Sarah Brown, who died when Caleb was 14. Hugh subsequently married another lady from Broadmead, Mrs Anne Ward. Caleb, like his father, was a fine preacher, and was given what Hugh was not able to have, the opportunities of a wide education. He became a good and fluent writer. His work gained for him recognition, for he received an honorary D.D. from Aberdeen University and from Brown University in Rhode Island, the University which a former Baptist College student, Morgan Edwards, had shared in founding. Together, the Evans laid down the aims of the Baptist College which they defined as "not merely to form substantial scholars, but as far as within us lies to be desirous of being an instrument in God's hand of forming them into able, evangelical, lively, zealous ministers of the Gospel."³

It was, in 1763, during the joint ministry of the Evans, that another event occurred in Broadmead which can scarcely have helped the relationship between the Methodists and the Broadmead fellowship. It had to do with George Whitefield, and the ordination of Andrew Kinsman. Kinsman was one of Whitefield's own spiritual children. He became a preacher among his own neighbours at Plymouth, and

² Quoted from John Rippon in *Education for Ministry*, N. S. Moon, Bristol 1979, p. 10

³ Moon op. cit. p. 23

finally built the Tabernacle at Devonport. The sacramental difficulty in the West was felt very keenly and the separatist spirit at last became so pronounced in Devonport that, in 1763, Kinsman formed the Society into an independent church. The question then arose as to the validity of Kinsman's ministry. He sought ordination and was ordained at Broadmead Chapel here in Bristol by a number of ministers, some Baptist and some Congregational. Unfortunately we do not know much more about this from the Bristol end. But it is significant that presumably amongst the ministers officiating in Broadmead will have been Hugh and Caleb Evans, and, of course, the Calvinistic theology of Whitefield and his followers would be acceptable to them. It also reflects the traditional broadmindedness within the Broadmead church, concerning the issue of baptism. Whitefield was not himself present at the ordination, but his acquiescence was shown, by the fact that shortly afterwards Kinsman was appointed to officiate at the London Chapels. Clearly this ordination of a Calvinistic Methodist minister was a somewhat startling and revolutionary step for Broadmead. It is significant that the Baptists were part of this development.

The most significant event of the Methodist/Baptist relationship in Bristol, however, was the confrontation between John Wesley and Caleb Evans on the issue of the American War of Independence. Wesley was a Royalist and a Tory but his social conscience moved him to support the early pleas of the Colonists for liberty and for justice. In fairness to John Wesley it is important to note the position that he holds concerning this revolt in the American Colonies and to recognise why he tends, apparently, to change his attitude. On March 1st 1775, John wrote to his brother Charles on the American matter, "As to the public affair, I wish you to be like minded with me. I am of neither side, and yet of both; on the side of New England and of Old. Private Christians are excused, exempted, privileged, to take no part in civil troubles. We love all, and pray for all with a sincere and impartial love. Faults there may be on both sides; but such as neither you nor I can remedy; therefore let us and all our children give ourselves unto prayer and so stand still and see the salvation of God."⁴ The position concerning the Methodists in America was very difficult for Wesley and his supporters in these particular circumstances.

The matter of the revolt in America was very much to the fore in Wesley's mind during June 1775. The significant dates when he was specifically concerned in writing certain letters and at the same time probably was finishing the preparation for publication of a pamphlet on the American issue, were the days between June 13th and June 16th. During this time he was also sickening for an illness which finally laid him low at the end of that same week, in Ireland. On June 14th, when he was on the way to Dublin, he wrote a letter to the Earl of Dartmouth who was Secretary of State for the Colonies, and sent that

⁴ The letters of John Wesley, ed. J. Telford, London 1931, Vol. VI, p. 143

which was very nearly a copy of it to Lord North who was First Lord of the Treasury. The letter to the Earl of Dartmouth is a fascinating letter: He was arguing very much against use of force:

All my prejudices are against the Americans. For I am a High Churchman, the son of a High Churchman, bred up from my childhood in the highest notions of passive obedience and non resistance, and yet, in spite of all my rooted prejudices, I cannot avoid thinking (if I think at all) that an oppressed people ask for nothing more than their rights, and that in the most modest and inoffensive manner which the nature of the thing would allow . . . But waiving this, waiving all considerations of right and wrong, I ask, is it common sense to use force toward the Americans?⁵

He goes on to argue that there is a considerable danger of a large loss of life.⁶ Perhaps closer to the heart of the issue are three other points that Wesley makes within this letter. The first is the very clear apprehension that he has of Republicanism. He talks about his travels in which he covers four or five thousand miles each year, and says that from his experience within the country there are those, and a growing number, who are inflaming the situation. He refers back to the year 1640 and likens the situation then to what he finds in England in the 1770s. Speaking of the 1640s he says, "hereby the bulk of the people were effectually cured of all love and reverence for the King; so that, first despising, then hating him, they were just ripe for open rebellion. And I assure your Lordship so they are now; they want nothing but a leader." Whether this is an exaggeration or not, and remembering the situation in the rest of Europe, it is surely this fear of Republicanism and the way in which he believes that its sympathisers were encouraging support for the American War of Independence that causes Wesley to come down so firmly against the American rebels.

Two other issues are also mentioned in this letter. Wesley writes,

Two circumstances more deserve to be considered: the one that there was at that time (i.e. 1640) a general decay of trade almost throughout the kingdom; the other that there was an uncommon dearthness of provisions. The case is the same in both respects at this day. So that even now there are multitudes of people that, having nothing to do and nothing to eat, are ready for the first bidder; and that, without inquiring into the merits of the cause, would flock to any that would give them bread.⁷

It was in the same summer of 1775 that Wesley published the pamphlet entitled *A Calm Address to the American Colonies*.⁸ Within it he follows the argument of his friend, Dr. Johnson in a pamphlet already published by Johnson entitled *Taxation no Tyranny*. The probability is that the publication of *The Calm Address* was with Johnson's consent. It is significant that in February 1776 Johnson not

⁵ *ibid.* p. 156

⁶ *ibid.* p. 157

⁷ *ibid.* p. 159

⁸ *A Calm Address to our American Colonies* by John Wesley M.A., Bristol. William Pine in Wine Street 1795

only refrained from accusing Wesley of plagiarism, but wrote a word of thanks for Wesley's support to his own argument. *The Calm Address* produced something of a sensation. In three weeks forty thousand copies were sold and a hurricane of abuse had broken upon Wesley's head. It is important to note the letter quoted above to the Earl of Dartmouth and the one to Lord North. For these were written very nearly coincidentally with *The Calm Address*.

In *The Calm Address* Wesley clearly expresses his fear that the plea for liberty on behalf of the colonists in America had really turned to independence and this means he feels it essential now to change his mind. Whilst the parallel is by no means exact and should not be pressed, one can understand Wesley's point of view, just as one can begin to understand Martin Luther's point of view when 250 years earlier he had changed his own mind concerning his attitude towards the workers in Germany. Wesley argues that there was no tyranny in the British Government imposing taxes on the colonists in America, who had accepted the British Charter, even though they had no representative in the Houses of Parliament. The issue really was the relationship between representation and taxation. He argued that the Americans inherited all the privileges of their ancestors who emigrated, but they cannot inherit more than that. He pointed out that their ancestors left the country, i.e. England, where representatives of the people were elected by people who held qualifications to vote. "You are the descendants of men who either had no votes or resigned them by emigration. You have therefore exactly what your ancestors left you; not a vote in making laws, nor in choosing legislators, but the happiness of being protected by laws, and the duty of obeying them. Your ancestors did not bring with them, nor have you their descendants required, the right to vote."⁹

Wesley argues from history that the Charter of Pennsylvania had a clause admitting in express terms taxation by Parliament. "If such a clause be not inserted in other charters it must be assumed as omitted, as not necessary because it is manifestly implied in the very nature of subordinate government; all countries which are subject to laws, being liable to taxes."¹⁰

He goes on to say that "it is true that the first settlers in Massachussetts Bay were promised an exemption from taxes for seven years but surely does this very exemption not imply that they were to pay them afterwards? If there is in the charter of any colony a clause exempting them from taxes for ever, then undoubtedly they have a right to be so exempted, but if there is no such clause, then the English Parliament has the same right to tax them as to tax any other English subjects."¹¹

⁹ *ibid.* p. 9

¹⁰ *ibid.* p. 11

¹¹ *ibid.* p. 12

Yet the root of Wesley's position probably lies elsewhere. He writes thus in *The Calm Address*:

I will tell you my opinion freely. I speak the more freely because I am unbiased: I have nothing to hope or fear from either side. I gain nothing either by the government or by the Americans and probably never shall. And I have no prejudice to any man in America: I love you as my brethren and countrymen. My opinion is this. We have a few men in England who are determined enemies to monarchy. Whether they hate his present Majesty on any other grounds than because he is King I do not know. But they cordially hate his office and for some years have been undermining it. They hope to erect their grand idol, their dear Commonwealth, upon its ruins. I believe that they have let very few into their design, but they are steadily pursuing it as by various other means so in particular by inflammatory papers dispersed throughout the town and country by this method they have already brought thousands of people even to the pitch of madness. By the same, only varied according to your circumstances, they have likewise inflamed America. I make no doubt but that the very men are the original cause of the present breach between England and the Colonies. They are still pouring oil into the flame . . . So that although the Americans in general love the English and the English in general love the Americans yet the rupture is growing wider every day and none can tell where it will end. These good men hope it will end in the total defection of North America from England . . . But would this be of any advantage to you? Can you hope for a more desirable form of government either in England or in America than that which you can enjoy?¹²

He continues,

Would this being independent of England make you more free? Far, very far, from it. It would hardly be possible for you to steer clear between anarchy and tyranny. But suppose, after numberless dangers, you should settle into one or more Republics, would a Republican Government give you more liberty, either religious or civil? By no means, no governments under heaven are so despotic as the Republican. No subjects are governed in so arbitrary a manner as those of a Commonwealth.¹³

Amongst those who responded vehemently to Wesley was Caleb Evans. He published a reply under the pen name of "Americanus". Evans argued that taxation and representation are inseparable. He does not believe that there should be a taxation of people who have no representation in the parliament that governs them. "Taxation and representation are inseparable. This position is founded in the laws and statutes going back to the reign of Edward I. Forty shillings a year freehold gives an Englishman a voice in the legislation of the country, and why should we deprive of this privilege our fellow citizens in America?"¹⁴

Caleb's argument was very simple. A vote is the right of anybody who is English, a freehold vote, and therefore if the Americas are to

¹² *ibid.* pp. 13-15

¹³ *ibid.* pp. 16-17

¹⁴ *A letter to the Rev. John Wesley occasioned by his Calm Address to the American Colonies* printed by William Pine 1775, p. 7

remain English they should not be subject to disenfranchisement. If they are, they should not be taxed. He further argued against some of the facts in Wesley's pamphlet, claiming, for example, that the Massachusetts seven years exemption had nothing to do with the taxes which were the subject of the present argument. But, he says, "I am credibly informed that it has no reference at all to what we commonly mean by taxes, but rather Quit Rents for the land occupied by them. An exemption from the payment of which for a certain number of years is commonly granted to the first settlers in every new colony."¹⁵

Caleb Evans was, however, not a Republican. His radicalism remained within loyalty to the Crown. It has to be remembered that Caleb Evans was in the Baptist tradition of dissent and was still involved in seeking to claim rights for his own people, including, of course, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. From the contexts of the two men, we can, perhaps, see why they took different points of view.

Wesley in a subsequent letter to Caleb Evans of December 9th 1775 agrees that he has changed his mind and that "whereas as once he did strongly recommend the book entitled *An Argument for the Exclusive Right of the Colonies to Tax Themselves* by Mr. Parker, he no longer endorses it."¹⁶ The fact of the matter is that Caleb Evans himself probably used the arguments from Parker's book to support his own.

There are a number of sub-plots within the story of the confrontation between Caleb Evans and John Wesley on this issue. One is an argument as to whether Wesley himself denied recommending Parker's particular book, and it does seem that he probably forgot that he had done so. This certainly appears to be the gist of his own argument in his letter to Caleb Evans. Related to this matter is his break with the Bristol publisher, William Pine, who published *The Calm Address* in 1775 and then found himself involved in a controversy with Wesley, not simply because, as writers seem to suggest, of his casualness in the actual printing of Wesley's material, but rather because of Wesley's denial that he had seen the book by Parker. Pine had published already a statement not only that Wesley had seen it but that he had also recommended it.

Fletcher of Madeley, deeply devoted to Methodism, entered into the dispute and there is a further sub-plot with a fair amount of correspondence concerning Fletcher's vindication of Wesley's *Calm Address* and Caleb Evans' own reply to that vindication. As the matter proceeded it has to be said, the epithets became rather clearer than the arguments. There is the further question as to whether *The Calm Address* was "government inspired". This does not seem likely. There is some evidence that Fletcher's support of Wesley was noted in high

¹⁵ *ibid.* p. 18

¹⁶ Letters of John Wesley ed. Telford *op. cit.*, Vol VI, p. 194

places, and that Fletcher was offered some high honour, and he seems to have indicated that he required nothing rather than more grace!

In conclusion, I glean one or two more facts relating to the relationship between Methodists and Baptists in the 18th century. All of these are positive. The first has to do with hymn singing. The Baptist College in Bristol has had some significant part in the development of Baptist hymnody in this country. In 1769 Caleb Evans and John Ashe, who was minister of the Pershore Baptist Church, published a collection of hymns adapted for public worship.¹⁷ This was the first Baptist hymn book, as we understand that term, that is a compilation of hymns from various sources. It was made available to the Baptist churches with a wide choice of hymns—more than 400 in all. In the advertisement to this book, Caleb Evans speaks of Psalmody as one of the most elevating parts of divine worship, and recommends singing without reading line by line, which was then the common practice. He suggests that as many as could do so should bring books to worship and look on the words as they sing. Amongst the hymns chosen by Evans and Ashe are hymns by Watts and Doddridge, and five by Charles Wesley himself. In 1787, a former student of the Baptist College, John Rippon, produced another collection of hymns¹⁸ and his hymn book quickly became popular in England and in America. Rippon was extremely comprehensive and catholic in his choice, including hymns by Addison, Newton, Toplady and many by Charles Wesley.

John Wesley and Caleb Evans were on the same side in their opposition to the Slave Trade, though there is no evidence of direct cooperation. Wesley used his influence in London and Evans worked in Bristol. To support abolition of slavery was an unpopular cause in Bristol. Manufactured goods left Bristol for West Africa where they were used for purchasing negroes who were then shipped across the Atlantic in appalling conditions. The third leg of the journey included carrying cargoes of tobacco and sugar from the West Indies back to Bristol. We know that there was a local committee set up on which Caleb Evans served, and which was in conflict with the Bristol merchants. Caleb Evans died in the same year as John Wesley, 1791, otherwise no doubt his influence would have grown more and more as the opposition to the Slave Trade itself grew. It is worthwhile commenting that the successor to Caleb Evans at the Baptist College and at Broadmead was John Ryland who was a doughty protagonist for the abolitionist cause and was himself in correspondence with Wilberforce and others on the issue. It was Ryland also who received the first request from Jamaica in the West Indies that a student from Bristol should go out to help the growing Baptist cause there. Ryland responded positively and there is a remarkable story which can be told of the involvement of students from the College in Bristol and

¹⁷ *A Collection of Hymns adapted to Public Worship*, W. Pine, Bristol 1769

¹⁸ *A Selection of Hymns from the best Authors intended as an Appendix to Dr. Watts' Psalms and Hymns*. London 1787

members of the church in Broadmead functioning in Jamaica as leaders of the slaves who successfully sought freedom.

Finally, the last scattered ear to be gleaned. On August 2nd 1797, the Baptist College Annual Meeting was to be held. The Broadmead Meeting House was under repair and the College Annual Meeting was held in none other place than Mr. Wesley's room at Broadmead. Perhaps we may say that this reflects a happy ending to relationships in the eighteenth century between Baptists and Methodists. It is an ending which marked a beginning for the relationship has remained cordial ever since.

W.M.S.WEST

[The Rev. Dr. Morris West is Principal of Bristol Baptist College. The above is the text of a lecture delivered at the New Room, Bristol in May 1983.]

ALFRED A. TABERER — AN APPRECIATION

All members of the Wesley Historical Society will be sad to learn that Alfred A. Taberer had very reluctantly to cease publication of the *Proceedings* at the beginning of this year. A severe operation and consequent long period of convalescence has forced him to reduce his work load, something alien to his nature, but accepted with a sure hope that he can serve the Society within the limits of his strength.

Alfred has had a long association with the Society, his own membership dating back to the early 1940s, and his printing contribution dating back to 1955. Thirty years of printing has meant he has come to know hundreds of members, many personally, and at each Annual Meeting when deaths are reported, he has been able to speak a personal word about most of them, a tribute to his concern and interest in those whom he had known and in many instances had loved.

But the production of the *Proceedings* was the best tribute to his excellent workmanship. His meticulous care and almost fastidious concern for accuracy (he could detect a full stop which was upside down or the absence of a space) meant that on many occasions he sent out a perfect issue. It was not surprising that his memory of articles and writers enabled him to make reference so readily to past copy and keep us all alert to what had gone before.

We are grateful beyond words to Alfred for these years of service to the Society and truly hope that he will be spared more years to help in the production of future *Proceedings*. Nor do we overlook that behind his achievements is Phyllis, his wife, who has made her own vital contribution to the work. We wish them both God's richest blessing.

W.L.

Members who have their *Proceedings* bound should note that the index and titlepage to volume 44 will be sent out with volume 45 Part 1.

“YR EURGRAWN WESLEYAIDD”

THE WELSH WESLEYAN METHODIST MAGAZINE 1809 — 1983

WHEN the “Welch Mission” was inaugurated in 1800, the primary object of the pioneers, Owen Davies, John Hughes, and Edward Jones (Bathafarn), inspired and encouraged by Thomas Coke, was the liberalisation of the people of benighted Wales from the bondage of Calvinism. But much of the credit for the early success of the Mission must go to John Bryan who, unlike Davies and Hughes was a fluent Welshman, and who can be described, not inaptly, as a fervent evangelist.

To say that many of their early converts were the mere flotsam and jetsam of other denominations is a grave injustice to these men who, regarding themselves as the custodians of Methodist theology and strategy, were quick to realise the full potential of the Mission. That they stood four-square for the proclamation of a salvation that embraced the whole of mankind goes without saying, and despite the variable gusts of abuse from pulpit and platform, not to mention a measure of persecution, these early Welsh Wesleyan Methodists displayed an amazing robustness and eventually succeeded in exercising a pervasive influence over the Calvinistic hard-liners.

With the aid of hindsight it is not difficult to discern the gradual emergence of a certain pattern in the policy of these pioneers, not the least important part of which was their belief in the power of the written word. Hence the publication of at least two hymn-books between 1802-5, much of the credit for which was due to John Bryan who, with his knowledge of Welsh and English hymnology, made a praiseworthy attempt at translating some of Charles Wesley’s hymns into good idiomatic Welsh. But, proud as they were of their hymn-books, these evangelists were not content until, at the Synod of 1808, they decided to launch a Magazine, an ill-conceived venture in such unpromising times and circumstances, one might think. Yet, these fearless crusaders, without such modern aids as a feasibility study and beset with the cares of their widely scattered Societies, many of whose members would have been illiterate, set their minds to the task of translating their vision into hard reality, with the result that the first number of the monthly Magazine, *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, appeared on the first day of January, 1809, and thereby set an example which other denominations eventually followed. In his Foreword to the first volume in 1809 the Editor expressed the hope that the Magazine would bring satisfaction to its readers and be a boon to those of an enquiring mind. It closed with an appeal to the critics not to be too heavy-handed. During its long life as the oldest surviving Welsh denominational organ it has certainly had its critics, but no one can deny that it has

been an inestimable boon not only to thousands of its readers but to the denomination as well. One is compelled to admire the enterprising spirit of the Welsh Wesleyan 'Fathers', especially when one considers that the membership was a mere 5,218, scattered in small societies throughout the length and breadth of Wales.

It would be well-nigh impossible, in such a short article, to produce a break-down of the thousands of articles which flowed from the ready quills of these old Wesleyan ministers, most of whom, during the first half of the century, lacked the advantages of a training at either Didsbury or Richmond, a fact which goes some way towards explaining the inclusion in the Welsh monthly of some of the less readable effusions and the translation of others from *The Methodist Magazine*. For many years, part of the format was the inclusion as a frontispiece, of portraits of the more eminent English Wesleyan Preachers.

As one might expect, included in the first issues are biographies of Wesley and Fletcher; moreover, despite her theological disputations with Wesley, Selina, Countess of Huntingdon, is given a prominent place, and a fair minded assessment of her forceful personality. The characters and activities of Thomas Coke and Thomas Olivers are delineated with a justifiable measure of pride and a superfluity of adjectives, not merely on account of their herculean labours, but because of their Welsh connections.

During the late 1820s, a series of articles on the origin and progress of Welsh Wesleyanism, with a list of the chapels erected since the inception of the Mission, was published by the Editor, the Rev. John Williams (2), and has proved invaluable as a primary source to every historian of Welsh Methodism. In 1834, we are led step by step in the wake of Wesley's journeys through Wales by the Rev. John Davies, whose rather pedestrian style is probably the result of his literal translation of Wesley's *Journal*. Some years later, we are given an insight into the character of the Rev. John Hughes by the Rev. William Rowlands (*Gwilym Lleyn*). Hughes, a scholarly product of Christ College, Brecon and of the town's Methodism, was one of the first two Missionaries to the Principality. It was he who wrote the Introduction to the first volume of the Welsh Magazine and who, within a fortnight of the formation of "The Welch Mission", began to collect material for the first hymn book. He received scant gratitude at the hands of some of his Welsh brethren, and in his *Journal*, after his appointment to the Dewsbury Circuit, he complains that he had been "frustrated by the narrow views & weak jealousies of my Brethren". Later issues saw the publication of a number of outstanding biographies, such as those of William Rowlands, whose name will be forever associated, not with his foibles and idiosyncrasies, nor his almost ascetic life-style, and his fierce fulminations against drink and smoking, but with a monumental piece of research, *Llyfryddiaeth y Cymry* (The Bibliography of the Welsh People); Isaac Jenkins, one of the first students of Hoxton, a gentle soul, whose attainments both as Chairman of the South Wales

District and as a scholar and preacher, fell below his potential and Henry Wilcox, the maternal grandfather of Dr. H. Maldwyn Hughes, was a regular contributor to the pages of *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd*, and exercised a successful ministry both in country circuits and in the industrial valleys of South Wales. The next century saw the publication of the biographies of Dr. Hugh Jones and Henry Pritchard, and as we read we are afforded genuine pleasure as the authors manifest their vivid perceptions of the genuine evangelical piety, the oddities and peculiarities of some of the characters depicted. And let it not be thought that these biographies are confined to the comparatively wealthy, of whom there are but few examples. The passing of the ordinary member of a Society was given a prominent place in the obituary columns; there are references to tradesmen, tailors, glove-makers, shipbuilders, carpenters, excisemen, a guard of the Mail Coach, and a certain tinsman of Merthyr, who took a pardonable pride in the fact that, during his sojourn in Liverpool, he had received his first class-ticket at the hands of Dr. Adam Clarke. Were it not for the Welsh Wesleyan monthly Magazine, these worthies of humble origin would have been cast into unremembered graves. As one reads these obituaries, one can almost visualise the lugubriously mournful faces of the bereaved; much eloquence is lavished on the deathbed scene, and the uplifting utterances of the departed are recorded for the edification of the living and, doubtless, as proof of Wesley's dictum, "Our people die well".

For the first fifty years of its existence, the Magazine reflects the conservatism of the parent Body, and the Welsh Wesleyan Preachers, in common with their English brethren, sought to impress upon their Societies the simple virtues of honesty, sobriety and thrift, virtues which sprang from Wesley's evangelical teaching as embodied in his Sermons and Works. But there are only brief references to the political economic and social questions of the day. The Reform Act of 1832, for example, was given a lukewarm reception, and the Poor Law Act of 1834 met with a similar fate, but while it reacted strongly to Sir James Graham's Factory Act of 1834, the Magazine gave its wholehearted support to the scheme, proposed by Hugh Owen, the Welsh Educationist, to establish British Schools in Wales. The sad truth is that, during this period, the Welsh Wesleyans were generally regarded by the Old Dissenters as a reactionary Body and were roundly criticised as such during the uproar caused by Everett, Dunn and Griffith.

Another factor contributed to their unpopularity. Apart from the Anglican Church, the Baptists, Congregationalists and Calvinistic Methodists were well established in Wales before the creation of the "Mission". In their eyes, the Wesleyans were a numerically weak and "foreign" importation into Wales who were poaching upon their preserves, and that seemed to justify their tendency to overlook the Wesleyans in any consultation on matters of public importance, while the Wesleyans, on the other hand, conscious as they were of their

numerical weakness, sought refuge in a conservatism which must have been utterly foreign to the best amongst them. They were eventually to become more liberal in their political and social philosophy, a fact which created not only a state of peaceful co-existence, but hearty co-operation with the stronger denominations. By 1887, *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd* was emphasising the fact the Gospel was the means whereby society could be redeemed as well as souls saved, and urged that the principles of citizenship, both national and local, should be taught and fostered in every Wesleyan Society; it even went further by suggesting that the social concerns of the Gospel should be paramount in the outreach of the local Society, through membership of the Boards of Guardians, Board Schools, Local Councils, and even Parliament. Such work, according to the Magazine, should be undertaken by committed Christians and not left to atheists or men of disreputable character. The Welsh Wesleyans had come a long way!

The Magazine was also concerned about some aspects of Welsh Wesleyanism: Some societies, it maintained, were quick to take advantage of the benefits of the Connexion in the form of grants and loans, yet, in other respects there was an alarming tendency to ignore the Connexional principle. Some circuits demanded the right to retain for local use the contributions to various Connexional Funds — an impracticable attempt at a compromise between Connexionalism and Congregationalism.

Yet, by and large, there was a growing understanding between ministers and laymen, the latter of whom were gradually becoming aware of their responsibilities. Whereas in the past, the various offices at local and Synod level had been left to the ministers, who assumed, in some cases, an unwarranted authority, and had caused some disharmony in a few Societies, laymen were becoming more willing to undertake the responsibilities of the offices open to them; there was a growing awareness of the value of Sunday Schools, and while the Magazine expressed its appreciation of the preaching of men like Thomas Aubrey, Rowland Hughes, William Owen, and William Davies, it was aware that even the best of sermons was only evanescent in its influence. Hence the need for rooting and grounding converts in the Faith by means of the Sunday School. In a word, *Yr Eurgrawn Wesleyaidd* had through the years made an impact upon its readers, and the "Fathers" of 1808 had "buildd better than they knew".

In any objective appraisal of the value of the Magazine, and its influence on the Wesleyanism of its day, one must take account of the personalities and ideas of the various Editors, some of whom must have found it difficult to accommodate themselves to the changing pattern of the "post-Wesleyan Reform" period. Samuel Davies (2), twice Editor, Secretary and later Chairman of the North Wales District, made his contribution in a novel way by writing for *Yr Eurgrawn*, under the title, "The Column of the Jubilee", a series of articles in which he gave his contemporaries, and future Methodist historians, a

factual report of the deliberations and resolutions of his Synod. This most entertaining and palatable account of the old Synods is made all the more interesting by Davies's portrait gallery of some of the more outstanding ministers of the past. But Davies was bound by the conventions of the Wesleyanism of his day, and it is in vain that we look for the liberal consensus which characterised his brethren of the succeeding generation, and, as a result, Davies maintained what can fairly be described as the stodgy pattern of his predecessors.

Dr William Davies was a protagonist who wielded his ready pen as a double-edged sword in his defence of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism. When a denominational Magazine accused Methodism of conservatism in political and social questions, he could only remind his readers and critics of the successful intervention of the Wesleyan Conference in the matter of Lord Sidmouth's Bill (1811), and likened the protests of the other branches of Nonconformity to "the squeakings of a mouse" engulfed by the thunderous roar of Niagara Falls, a slick piece of sarcasm in which he conveniently ignored the contributions of the Welsh Congregationalists and Baptists to the public questions of the day. His exposition of Forster's Education Act of 1870 reveals his expertise in analysing the significance of the Act for the working-classes of his day. The slightest attack on Wesleyan Methodism drew from him a vigorous and striking defence, but his articles, despite their polemic character, were appreciated by a wide circle, and were unflinchingly readable and interesting. It would, however, be a mistake to over-emphasise the fact that his only contributions to the Magazine were in defence of his Church. He evaluated appreciatively the poems of the literary men of his day, and wrote in a fresh, simple, and delightful style, so manifestly different from the bombastic outpourings of some of his contemporaries, Wesleyan and others.

When, towards the end of the 'nineties, John Hughes (Dr. H. Maldwyn Hughes's father) was appointed to the Editorial chair, a change ensued imperceptible, perhaps, at the beginning, but a change nevertheless. It remained a theological Magazine, but the literary articles added a new and wider dimension. Readers were invited to express their views, while Hughes himself, with a few colleagues, published a series of articles dealing with public and religious affairs. He was a poet of some merit, and was acknowledged as a literary critic; a man of sterling worth and strong convictions, he was always ready to defend Welsh Wesleyanism, and with Dr. Hugh Jones and T. Jones Humphreys and others, joined in the battle for the Disestablishment of the Anglican Church in Wales. His anti-British leading articles on the South African War earned for him the enmity of the anti-Boer partisans, and more than once he defended Welsh Methodism on the Conference floor. During the Centenary Year of Welsh Wesleyan Methodism in 1900, he wrote for the Magazine a series of potted biographies of the Pioneers of 1800. He succeeded in attracting contributions of a literary nature from notabilities of other denominations. One can only mention Hugh Jones, Thomas Hughes

(B), the architect of a scheme whereby Welsh candidates, with the necessary qualifications, could proceed to one of the constituent colleges of the University of Wales for a degree, and O. Madoc Roberts, all of whom by the diversity of their gifts, earned for the Magazine a place of honour, and it is a measure of their success that *Yr Eurgrawn* and *Y Winllan* (the children's Magazine), were amongst the first to recognise and publish the work of a younger colleague, E. Tegla Davies, before he received national acclaim as a brilliant man of letters.

With the appointment of David Tecwyn Evans, John Wesley Felix, David Llewelyn Jones, and Gwilym R. Tilsley (the last Editor), we come to a period when the graduates of the University of Wales and Wesley House catered, not only for the ordinary reader but also for the intellectual. Tecwyn, as he was affectionately known, stands forth in solitary grandeur. He was a student in the halcyon days of the famous Professor of the Welsh Language, John Morris Jones (later Sir), who taught him the intricacies of the Welsh Language, until a badly-constructed sentence or a faulty mutation was, in Tecwyn's judgement, to be numbered among the cardinal sins. Yet, he was a kindly mentor to a young writer, and any errors in the script would be corrected with an old-world courtesy, which earned for him a warm niche in their hearts. His lengthy and invariably interesting Editorial Notes were always informative and up-to-date in matters theological and political.

D. Llewelyn Jones deserves an honourable mention for his encouragement of young and inexperienced authors. Any passage that savoured of "waffle" was deleted with impunity, and the author corrected with a soothing phrase which obscured the directness of the underlying rebuke. Much the same can be said of his predecessor, J. Wesley Felix, for both maintained the high literary standard set by Tecwyn.

Sad to relate, because of a fall in circulation and increasing costs of publication, Gwilym R. Tilsley was destined to be the last of a long line. As a Chaired Bard of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, a former Archdruid and a Welsh scholar, he brought his wide knowledge of Welsh literature, old and new, to bear upon his work, and as his Editorials testify, he stood closer to the centre of Welsh public affairs than many of his predecessors.

The *Eurgrawn* has survived industrial disputes and commercial depressions, and two World Wars. During those years, 1809 to 1983, the Welsh Magazine, *Yr Eurgrawn*, to quote Charles Wesley's hymn, called into being for one specific purpose, "to serve the present age" has been faithful to its calling. And many will be saddened by its demise.

W. ISLWYN MORGAN

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A PROPOSED DISABLING BILL OF 1800

JOHN Pawson, in his letters,¹ tells of an abortive attempt to penalise the Methodists, just twelve years before Lord Sidmouth's famous bill of 1812.

Information had come from Melville Horne that the Lord Chancellor, the Elder Pitt and the Bishop of Lincoln were drafting a bill to curb the powers of Dissenters about whose increase the Cabinet were said to be concerned. However, some Lords and Commoners objected to it on the grounds that it infringed the liberties of the people. So a modified bill was to be produced.

As a result of this, a certain Mr. Taylor, a sympathiser with Dissent, designed to forestall the Bishops' bill by bringing in one of his own which would treat the Dissenters much more kindly. The Methodists—perhaps for the first time—were included in the ranks of Dissent. Says Pawson:

The Methodists who have been looked upon as an insignificant company of enthusiasts, are now considered as a numerous and respectable body of people.¹

Pawson then makes his own suggestions as to how Methodism could help in dealing with the situation. First of all, a loyal address should be sent to the king and some approach made by the Methodists themselves to establish beyond doubt not only their absolute loyalty, but also their unique position between Dissent and the Establishment. He says:

. . . We should engage that no one should be received among us as a preacher till he is 22 or 23 years old. That no-one should preach among us till approved by competent judges, and that our neighbours should not be disturbed by noisy prayer meetings. I suppose that complaint has been made to some men in power respecting the above particulars . . .²

During the 1791-1797 controversies, Pawson was very much in favour of administering the sacraments in any Methodist Chapel where the people asked for them; under the new circumstances, he was prepared to renounce this privilege and even to forego services in Church hours rather than risk the wrath of a disabling bill:

. . . if the Methodists were to come forward and propose something to the Government, it might prevent them taking measures against us . . . Would it not (as Mr. Pitt said respecting the income tax) be far better for us to give up a little, than to lose all? Would it not be better for us to give up all preaching in Church Hours and the Sacrament, than that we should be obliged to give up that which is our glory and upon which, under God, the prosperity of our work depends.

¹ Pawson to Joseph Benson, 15th April 1800 (Methodist Archives)

² Ibid.

Was the Government to enact that as the Methodists stand distinguished from every other religious body of people in the land and profess themselves members of the Established Church, they shall not therefore have public service in any of their Chapels between the hours of 10 and 12 o'clock in the forenoon, nor between the hours of 3 and 4 o'clock in the afternoon on the Lord's Day. Nor shall they be suffered to administer the Sacraments.³

In another letter:

... as the people called Methodists consider'd as a body, profess themselves members of the established church they shall not in any part of His Majesty's dominions have public service in those hours in which the Church of England commonly celebrate public worship, viz: between 10 and 12 o'clock in the forenoon, and between 3 and 4 in the afternoon, neither shall they administer the Sacraments; and let all descriptions of people who follow the Itinerant Plan come under the same law. This, I suppose, 49 out of 50 of our people would not think it any great hardship.⁴

Pawson thinks this would be beneficial in two directions:

1. Would not this give us what we have long wished for? Would it not legalise us and make us something in law? so that all our chapels might be secured, and

2. Would it not put an end to all our disputes respecting the Sacraments? Our bounds would then be prescribed. Hitherto shall ye go, but no farther.⁵

In an optimistic mood, he says that had it not been for the wickedness and ignorance of the clergy, "there would never have been such a people as the Methodists in this nation". Nor would there be any need for the Methodists if:

[they would] only fill all the Churches with pious lively Ministers, and let them do as we now do . . . [but] so many of the gospel ministers in the Church are Calvinists, men of but very small gifts and in general, enemies to us.⁶

In May 1800, Pawson was relieved to hear that the proposed bill had been withdrawn, but there can be no doubt that while it threatened, he was very anxious. He saw in it a grave danger to the Connexion. As it never actually came before the Commons it is not mentioned, as far as I know, in any standard history of Methodism; but we can imagine the serious results for Methodism if it had become law, for the Methodists were, at that time, ill-equipped to defend themselves.

In 1812, when Lord Sidmouth produced a bill which would have similarly crippled the work of the Itinerant Preachers, Methodism was much better equipped to meet the challenge. The Committee of

³ Ibid.

⁴ Pawson to Joseph Benson, 7th April 1800 (Methodist Archives)

⁵ Pawson to Benson, 15th April 1800

⁶ Pawson to Benson, 7th April 1800

Privileges was by then well established, led by such ministers as Dr. Coke and Adam Clarke, together with two laymen, Joseph Butterworth and Thomas Thompson.⁷

Pawson's letters are, in themselves, very revealing. Apart from the light they shed on this "bill that never was", they show that in 1800 links between Methodism and the Church of England were still very real. Rightly or wrongly, he was of the opinion that a high percentage of Methodists would not mind avoiding Church hours and foregoing the Sacraments *if the law demanded it*. How far this represented the feelings of the rank and file Methodists, and how they would have reacted is a debatable point.

Since writing the above article, I have found a reference to this incident in Dr. David Hempton's *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750—1850* (1984) which directs readers to *The Life of Wilberforce* by R. I. and S. Wilberforce vol. 2, pp. 360-5 and *Wilberforce* by John Pollock, p. 179. The bill was evidently promoted by a certain Michael Angelo Taylor, MP for Durham, after a personal encounter with an "ignorant and forward" preacher. However, when the government were for taking it up, Taylor withdrew the bill and Wilberforce dissuaded Pitt from doing anything about it on account of the trouble it might stir up, as Hempton says, "restricting English Protestant Dissent while attempting to emancipate Irish Catholics."

JOHN C. BOWMER.

⁷ See the present writer's article in *The Preachers Handbook* No. 9 (1965), p. 3—*"The Local Preacher in Methodism, 1791-1964"*.

Methodism in the South-West. An historical bibliography by Roger Thorne, 56pp. (Copies from the author at 11 Station Road, Topsham, Exeter, price £1.50 post free)

This is a list of printed material about Methodism in the area of the present Plymouth and Exeter District—that is Devon, East Cornwall, West Somerset and West Dorset. It includes articles, leaflets, pamphlets and books and a few items in manuscript, largely arranged by parish. It represents the fruit of many years collecting and research and will be indispensable to both Methodist and local historians of this area. It also serves as a useful model for those contemplating similar lists for other regions.

Together Travel On by Cyril Davey and Hugh Thomas tells the story of the contribution of women to the missionary work of all the branches of British Methodism. It is published by our Overseas Division, price 45p.

Yonder Country is Ours by W. M. Kilby, 40pp., is an illustrated account of the origins of Primitive Methodism in parts of Berkshire and Hampshire. Copies are £1.00 plus post from Gage Postal Books, PO Box 105, Westcliffe-on-Sea, Essex.

E.A.R.

BOOK NOTICES

The English Churches in a Secular Society: Lambeth 1870-1930, by Jeffrey Cox. (Oxford University Press (1982): pp. xiii, 322, £22.50).

This handsomely produced, elegantly written and unquestionably important volume, a revision of the author's 1978 Harvard University Ph.D. dissertation, comprises, in effect, two books within a single set of covers, a circumstance which seems to be reflected in the price that the publishers have put upon it! On the one hand, we are offered a straight empirical study of organised religion in the London borough of Lambeth, an ethnically homogeneous but socially diverse urban corridor with a population of approximately three hundred thousand, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries; this employs both quantitative and qualitative techniques and, notwithstanding its many points of originality, stands firmly in a vigorous tradition of local ecclesiastical history writing which now extends from Edward Wickham's portrait of Sheffield in 1957 to David Clark's of Staithes in 1982. On the other, we are treated to a spirited assault on the sociological theory of secularisation which is dismissed at the outset as "a substitute for serious scholarly inquiry . . . that . . . obscures as much as it illuminates" and is ultimately replaced by "a new view of the decline of religion" which emphasises the persistence of a significant "diffusive Christianity", increasingly separated from its institutional counterpart and latterly sustained by a religious presence in the nation's school and broadcasting systems, at the same time as "the emergence of new philanthropic, administrative and educational bureaucracies" was undermining the basis and appeal of "church work" and destroying its "claims to social utility"—a process of "functional differentiation" which, we are told, left the Churches "with little to do and even less to say" and thus incapable of recruiting "from outside of the dwindling band of the faithful"; this argument is supported by Lambeth examples whenever possible but freely draws upon national evidence and secondary literature when the former are not readily to hand.

The book exhibits deficiencies in each of these aspects. As a community study, three limitations are particularly noticeable. Chronologically, the coverage is extremely uneven, focussing principally upon the later 1890s and early 1900s (for which years plentiful data are provided by Charles Booth's survey of *Life and Labour of the People in London*, the *Daily News* census of religious attendance, autobiographies and local newspapers) and badly neglecting the period 1910—30 the examination of which could have been facilitated by recourse to oral history methods whose potential, although explicitly recognised in one footnote, is never exploited. Denominationally, Anglicans, Baptists and Congregationalists seem to receive a disproportionate amount of attention at the expense of other bodies, and readers of these *Proceedings* will certainly be disappointed that Methodists in all their varieties (who constituted one sixth of Lambeth's church-goers in December 1902) do not feature as prominently as they might and that several fairly obvious sources such as the extensive manuscript and printed records of the now London Committee, *Wesleyan Methodism in the Brixton Hill Circuit* (1898), Maurice Partridge's *Our Home at Waterloo* (1907) and, dare one say it, this reviewer's own doctoral thesis of 1974 do not appear to have been consulted. Thematically, the range of topics that are discussed (chiefly public worship, philanthropy and popular religion) is surprisingly narrow given that the author has selected a district which is sufficiently small to permit saturation

treatment; manpower, plant, finance, membership, home and chapel life, theology, evangelism and ecumenical contacts are amongst the issues which are dealt with inadequately or not at all.

As a contribution to sociological theory the volume may be faulted in terms of its overall approach and the actual ideas expressed. So far as the former is concerned, it is a pity that Professor Cox has felt the need to be quite so harsh in many of his judgements (is it really true that "by their close association with the churches, the Scouts merely strengthened the growing conviction that religion is not a serious matter"?), to undervalue (whether through outright criticism or, more commonly, omission) the research of fellow academics such as Hugh McLeod, to indulge so repeatedly in special pleading, and to exaggerate the novelty of his philosophical alternative to secularisation. With respect to the latter, it is difficult to embrace whole-heartedly any explanation of religious decline which displays so little understanding of the spiritual and transcendental, which pays such scant regard to theological and intellectual causes, which fails to assess the influence of the First World War, which can find no niche for Roman Catholicism, and which generalises so rashly from a solitary, perhaps atypical, local experience. In the final analysis, one cannot help but think that a monograph which concentrated rather more on "Lambeth" and somewhat less on "The English Churches" would have better served the requirements of scholarship and the author's own professional reputation.

CLIVE D. FIELD.

Garlick's Methodist Registry 1983 (Edsall of London, (1983) pp. 373 plus Appendices, £17.50 post free).

This volume suffers from a kind of crisis of identity; its three main sections seem designed for different groups of readers, so that it is hard to believe that anyone actually sat down to ask themselves what clientele they had in mind. No explicit rationale of its make-up is offered. Certainly, if it is aimed at the Methodist ministry, then Wesley's "rules of a Helper" are as outmoded as the Book of Leviticus. The plush format suggests the executive desk rather than the coffee table, despite some curiously amateurish features. (The list of abbreviations and a glossary are tucked away separately towards the end of the book; the pagination is quirky and the lengthy appendices are unhelpfully arranged.)

If the anonymous "Exordium" is intended to suggest a similarity with Crockford's any such comparison is misleading. As a work of reference, the *Register* has serious limitations and defects. In particular the unacknowledged omission of at least 20 per cent of names from the ministerial lists—presumably because they refrained from replying to the questionnaire—is a major defect about which the publishers might at least have been honest. If ministers known to me are a typical cross-section, then the biographical information provided is curiously uneven; in fact, in some cases what is left out has more significance and is more revealing than what is given. British ministers serving overseas appear to be omitted entirely, and those serving in other appointments are seriously under-represented. As a result, the work is a potential hazard for unsuspecting future students of Methodism.

The Exordium itself says a number of pertinent things (perhaps too many for a single sermon) and deserves much wider circulation than its present setting seems likely to offer. Finally, we have a "brief survey of Methodist history",

useful as an outline—but to whom? Except in its treatment of one or two of the minor offshoots, it is too brief for anyone with a working knowledge of the main outline of Methodist history; while for those looking for a “primer” this account is in places telescoped to the point of being misleading.

The unwary will be left with the impression of continuity between the “Oxford Methodists” and the first “Methodist Societies”, (p. 27). The failure of Wesley’s Georgia ministry is glossed over (p. 28) and his other defects ignored entirely. Eighteenth century Methodism is treated as an entirely “Wesleyan” affair, with Whitefield mentioned only in passing and relegated to a purely supporting role, while other Calvinistic Methodists do not even get a mention. Wesley’s “lay preachers” are treated as the forerunners of the ministry, without even a passing glance at the continuing role of the local preacher. Even in a summary of this length, these are avoidable defects.

The offshoots and secessions of the years following Wesley’s death are given fuller treatment and this is particularly welcome in the case of such minor movements as the Band Room Methodists and Tent Methodists, so often ignored, though the connection between the former and the Independent Methodists is not brought out. The Union of 1907 gets only a passing nod, while we are left with the impression that the Methodist Church Act of 1976 is the only thing that has happened to Methodism since 1932. There are a few errors along the way. Charles Delamotte was never a member of the Holy Club (p. 27); “William Thorn” (p. 31) should be “Thom”; and it is only partially true that “ordination was by the imposition of hands” only from 1836 on (p. 30).

With much of the information already out of date, it is not clear whether the publishers intend to issue new editions at regular intervals or see it as a one-off production. Either way, it is in no sense a sequel to “Hill’s Arrangement” and as such is to be regretted.

JOHN A. VICKERS.

A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain, volume 3, edited by Rupert Davies, A. Raymond George and Gordon Rupp. London, Epworth Press, 1983. pp. ix + 404. £20.

With this third volume, the history of the Methodist Church in Great Britain is brought up to the union of 1932 and, indeed, with the help of a final chapter by Rupert Davies, right up to the Methodist Church Act of 1976. Unlike the preceding two volumes in the series, this one casts its net much wider than the English heartland of Methodism: not only are there chapters on Wales, Scotland and Ireland, but a long first chapter by N. Allen Birtwhistle discusses Methodist missions from Britain to the rest of the world.

Such an ambitious volume, employing the talents of many different writers—some of whom are able to work as historians only in their spare time—has evidently caused many problems and may account for the somewhat loose editorial control which has been exerted over the various contributions. Most space in the book is quite rightly given to Wesleyanism, so it is a pity that the rather bare factual summary of non-Wesleyan missions in chapter 1 should have been repeated at the same level in John T. Wilkinson’s otherwise useful chapter on Non-Wesleyan Traditions. It is also rather strange to find the chapter on Wales ending in 1900, while the chapter on Ireland has its centre of gravity in the twentieth century. Champions of women’s history will also be

misled by the index: the sole entry under women refers to a late point made by Rupert Davies about the church's neglect of women; and yet Birtwhistle's chapter has some excellent material on the origins of Women's Work unacknowledged in the index.

Nevertheless, given the size and scope of this volume and its predecessors, the editors are to be congratulated on having done splendid work. Here as earlier, individual authors have produced some little gems of historical writing. Allen Birtwhistle is both instructive and moving in his account of Thomas Birch Freeman's work in West Africa; Henry Rack and J. M. Turner display great historical sensitivity and judgement in their outlines of the mainstream between 1849 and 1932; Eric Gallagher and Rupert Davies provide a great deal on Ireland and England respectively which is not so much history as invaluable personal testimony for use by historians in the future. All the contributors in various ways add to our knowledge and understanding. If there is one general criticism it is that many of the writers seem rather too forgiving of the sins of their forefathers and too harsh when dealing with themselves. Such a standpoint is perhaps an occupational hazard among clerical historians.

Historians of all religious views and none will find this volume a worthy sequel to the earlier volumes and an indispensable addition to the literature on Methodism. But I hope ordinary Methodists will also read it. Not only will it tell them where they have been and how they got where they are; it should also inspire them to think about where they should go next. Meanwhile scholars await volume 4, the documents—and hope it will not be too long coming.

EDWARD ROYLE.

The Works of John Wesley volume 7: A Collection of Hymns for the Use of the People called Methodists, edited by Franz Hildebrandt and O. A. Beckerlegge. (1984). Clarendon Press, Oxford. £45.

The publication of this volume is a significant event in the continuous recording of Methodist history. That the Collection of Hymns of 1780 should find a place for the first time in the Works of John Wesley, inevitable and unquestionably right though it may be, remains an anomaly—if none the worse for that. No hymns in the 14 volumes of 1829! Oliver Beckerlegge states the facts clearly in Section 6 of the Introduction. The decision to include both the 'Collection' and the Eucharistic Hymns of 1745 in a new Oxford edition of the Works was, in fact, taken in the sixties by a group of American scholars, including Franz Hildebrandt. And the inclusion implies not simply that John Wesley was Charles' leader and a skilful Editor. It means also that Charles is to be remembered among the greatest of the theologian-evangelists. In his brother's hymns John found a medium potentially more effective than all else in carrying his gospel to the heart and understanding especially of plain unlettered men and through them to the world.

This volume, a beautiful example of book-making, and a product of devoted scholarship and long preparation, cannot but prove a stimulus to future students. Intended, presumably, in the first place to aid library research, it is to be welcomed also by any Christian reader as a persuasive restatement of what the Editorial Board (in an opening advertisement), described as Wesley's "contribution to catholic and evangelical Christianity". Dr. Hildebrandt's name for it, thirty years ago, was "Christianity according

to the Wesleys"—the title he gave to his Franklin Rall lectures, in which he claimed that as a Methodist Confession of Faith the authority of the hymns is hardly second to that of the Notes and Sermons. The truth of the claim is made even more evident by the present editors. The central aim and design of the whole critique is clearly disclosed in Dr. Hildebrandt's invaluable opening essay—a summary defence of Wesley's description of a "Little Body of Experimental and Practical Divinity". And in hymn after hymn (many of them blessedly familiar) new light is cast upon the real *experience* of present "Divinity" which is the core of the Wesleys' "contribution", revealing the so-called "Works" of John Wesley not as the collected *oeuvre* of the greatest of 18th century divines, but as the very Work of God. Which, after all, is what—in "Behold, the servant . . ." and elsewhere—he and his followers prayed that their work might be.

The volume is a desirable one, but costly! A brief look at its well-ordered contents may encourage the hesitant purchaser. The 525 hymns, with near-complete scriptural allusions in the wide margins and full editorial comment below, are spaciouly accommodated between a 75-page Introduction and 126 pages containing Bibliography, Indexes and ten Appendices. It is significant that no fewer than seven of these relate to the *singing* of hymns. They include—(in addition to Wesley's prefaces to the tune-books of 1753 and 1761, and the famous "Directions for singing")—an important Essay written in 1779 in which he reveals a strong, intuitive belief in the "power of music" certainly not less than that of either Luther or his brother Charles. Two pamphlets of technical instruction, designed for singers of little or no musical knowledge, are also given in photographic facsimile. More generally useful—if of no greater interest to the specialist—than these documents is the alphabetical list of 104 tunes selected in 1780 by John Wesley for his Collection, and fully annotated here by Dr. Beckerlegge and Dr. Frank Baker. In his closing Essay on the Hymn-book in Methodist worship, Beckerlegge has shown how indispensable devout singing became—and in some measure remains—to Wesley's followers. Of the remaining Appendices:—C repeats, with additional references to Scripture, the notes given in the main text on "With glorious clouds . . ." and four more of the greatest hymns. Appendix B lists, in three categories, all the Collection's primary sources; and in Appendix A Dr. Beckerlegge and Dr. Frank Baker together complete the tale of Wesley's selection and use of them, which Beckerlegge has already discussed at length in the Introduction. Appendices and Introduction together provide a full—perhaps the definitive—statement of both the principles and the practice of Wesley's literary editing. Two pieces of strictly literary criticism are included. Dr. James Dale briefly illustrates Charles Wesley's debt to Milton, Dryden, Prior and Pope; and Dr. Beckerlegge after paying tribute to Henry Bett, J. E. Rattenbury, Newton Flew and others discusses all the well-known characteristics of Wesley's verse. But when all is said, the real worth of Charles Wesley's hymns is not to be gauged by canons of literary criticism. Only as we come to realise what they are actually saying does the exact truth emerge of what John wrote in his brother's obituary—that "his least praise was his talent for poetry"—words too easily accepted as mere eulogistic figure of speech. Apart from the occasional miraculous felicities of language, which need no quoting here, the talent for poetry shows itself in hymn after hymn, not, in the main, as creative imagination, but rather as a natural and sometimes exuberant delight in words and their rhythms, a delight put constantly to one use only—the expression of personal faith, in metres of unprecedented variety and in the language of King James' Bible. Poetry, yes; but maybe we should call it the poetry of a craftsman rather than an artist. And if so, this matters

not at all. What does matter supremely is that in singing these hymns the Methodists of 1780 found "pardon and holiness and heaven"—the essence of Dr. Hildebrandt's "Christianity according to the Wesleys".

Both parts of the Editors' work — annotation and scriptural reference— while very thorough, have had to be limited by a suitable allocation of space and frequent cross-reference. The order for every hymn is, first, the *space lectiones* with dates, and differing centos and conflation of verses, followed by documented comments of varied interest, designed expressly for "him who runs" as well as for the Wesley scholar. "Experimental and practical divinity" is throughout Wesley's first concern. Thus "How can a sinner know" can be described by Hildebrandt, in an extended interpretation, as no less than "a concise summary of Wesley's teaching". To help the student, the editors have chosen one hymn from each of his "proper heads" of Christian experience to illustrate its main theme: e.g. "Author of faith" for "Inward Religion", and "Jesus my truth my way" for "Believers Saved". One measure of the extent to which these hymns are saturated with Scripture is shown by an Index whose 6000 entries must come as a surprise to any reader unfamiliar with previous Methodist collections. Dr. Hildebrandt, in a footnote in the Introduction, offers us a list of 120 key texts from 34 books of the Bible which provide a "basis for the *summa* of Charles Wesley's theology." Lists and aggregations may not be of great importance, whether compiled by computer or theologian— though we are indebted to both. But what should move us is very clear: the knowledge, namely, that in these hymns the Holy Spirit so opened the Scriptures to unlearned men and women that they "proved and knew the things of God". To read them now after 200 years, as an aid both to prayer and to the searching of holy Scripture, is to share a realisation of the Communion of saints. Furthermore, any Christian believer to-day, of whatever tradition, who remembers some of the insights vouchsafed in recent years to Church Synods and Commissions—new light upon the problems; signs of converging movements and slackening tensions; above all, the increase of forbearance and charity—can hardly fail to be struck by the timeliness of the new presentation of the Wesleys and their works. If Bernard Manning (whom both our editors quote repeatedly) was obviously right when in 1932 he urged Methodists to "preserve the (1780) Collection *for the use of the faithful till that day when we are all one*", the events of the succeeding half-century in the world and in Christendom have given, and continue to add, strong justification of his appeal. To-day nothing is clearer than that "catholic" and "evangelical" Christianity—if, indeed, we ought not now to cease (by faith) from observing the distinction—both stand in constant need of the inspired witness of the Wesley brothers, a witness to an "inward religion" which is also obedient in thought and action to the authority of revealed truth. The Editors' new presentation of a long established means of grace calls for warm approval and the widest possible response.

A. S. GREGORY.

Nancy, Nancy by John Banks; The story of Ann Bolton, the friend and confidante of John Wesley, from her unpublished Journal and letters. pp. (viii) 151, Penwork (Leeds) Ltd., £5.95

One's first reaction in picking up this book could well be, "Not another book on John Wesley and women!"—well, it is just that, but much else besides. Basically it is a study of Wesley's correspondence with a certain Ann Bolton of Witney in Oxfordshire. When Telford compiled his *Standard*

edition of the Letters of John Wesley, many letters to Miss Bolton were known; what was not known at the time was that many more were lying, along with her Journal, in the keeping of her descendants, the Bolton family, still living in Oxfordshire. Through the willing co-operation of Sir Frederic Bolton and other members of the family, John Banks has been able to gain access to this material and so, together with what was already available in the published Letters and Journals of John Wesley, he has presented us with his findings and comments in this interesting volume. It has not been a straightforward task, for, as he tells us, "The Journal is written in notebooks of various sizes, and on scraps of paper. Much of it is not clearly dated and it is hard to make the story consecutive". However, from this time-consuming and painstaking work there has emerged a fascinating insight into Wesley as a spiritual director and, we repeat, much else besides. This "much else" includes eighteenth-century manners and customs, "problems with the harvest, violent thunder storms, bad winter journeys by stage coach, the price of cheese, the gift of salmon and the persecution of the Methodists".

Of special interest to us, however, is the fact that still, when we thought surely there are no more to come, a further batch of unpublished Wesley letters has come to light. Incidentally, John Banks informs me that Frank Baker has been hot on the scent, so they are likely to appear in the new edition of Wesley's Works.

Mr. Banks begins his first chapter with the question, "What was it made a man of sixty 'go overboard' for a girl of barely twenty years?"—a pertinent question, often asked in general terms of Wesley's relationship with women and examined by Dr. Maldwyn Edwards in his book *My Dear Sister* (a book which led John Banks to the papers of Ann Bolton), and one on which this latest study sheds considerable light. Certainly, Wesley wrote to his lady friends in terms which would raise many an eyebrow today, but fundamentally he was an inveterate arranger of other people's lives. Not only did he set himself as Ann's spiritual director, but he also advised her on matters relating to her health and in no uncertain fashion prevented her marrying someone whom he judged to be unsuitable for her. A certain naïvety behind his endearing, if forthright, words precludes any ulterior motives or feelings on Wesley's part, but one wonders whether underneath it all there was the desire for warmth and friendship which proved so hard to come by in the lonely life of the leader.

The story as Mr. Banks tells it, does not cease with Wesley's death. With Wesley gone and his advice and guiding hand no more restraining her, Ann married—happily, we learn. Whether Wesley, looking down from "his mansion in the sky", approved or not we shall never know, nor did it matter! Unfortunately, in seven years Ann was a widow but remained true to her beloved Methodism, a friend of those gracious ladies, Elizabeth Ritchie and Mary Fletcher. She died in June 1822, remembered in the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine* as "an old friend and correspondent of the Rev. J. Wesley". Mr. Banks aptly remarks, "that is how she would have wished to be remembered."

There are a couple of dozen helpful illustrations, including some pages from Ann Bolton's Journal and scenes and people referred to in the text.

This is a rewarding book, delightful to read, and deserving of a wide circulation among our readers. Just a couple of slips need mentioning—on p. 8 for "Jackson" read "Telford" (it is obvious that Telford's edition of Wesley's Letters had been used) and on p. 151 for "Arminian" read "Wesleyan Methodist".

JOHN C. BOWMER.

ROWLAND COOK SWIFT

With the sudden and unexpected death of Rowland Swift, the Society has lost a long-standing and devoted member. He was a dyed-in-the-wool Methodist, the grandson of the Rev. F. Birdsall Swift and brother of our one-time editor, the Rev. Wesley F. Swift. He himself had been a Local Preacher for 57 years. He had been a member of this Society for many years and at the time of his death was our Treasurer and Registrar. In business life he was a director of the Italian firm CIRIO and to his work for the Society he brought all the acumen that such a post engendered. Always courteous and efficient, he graced our committee meetings with a puckish wit which never failed to enliven our discussions. As Treasurer he, along with his wife, provided the tea at our Annual Meeting; for their generosity in this respect we were ever grateful.

He was an occasional contributor to *Proceedings*, his most recent article being on the old Hockley Chapel, Nottingham (vol. xlii, 123). His publications included studies of Methodism in Warlingham (1978), Purley (1980) and Nottingham (1979 and 1982). The climax to his historical work was a study of Methodism in Sussex, for which he has been awarded the posthumous degree of M.Litt. by the University of Sussex.

He will be greatly missed in many circles but in none more than in our Society. To Joyce his widow, and to his two daughters by his first marriage we tender our sincerest sympathies, fully assured that their loved one and our colleague and friend has merited the call, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

J.C.B.

