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Proceedings  
OF THE  
Wesley Historical Society  
*Editor: E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.*

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**RECEPTION INTO FULL MEMBERSHIP:  
A Study of the development of liturgical forms in  
British Methodism**

**1. INTRODUCTION.**

**W**HEN a member joined a Methodist Society such as that at Bristol in the early 1740s, what was taking place was the admission of one person into a Society. The emphasis was quite clearly on the acceptance by the new member of the Rules of that Society, and the rite of admission is not suggestive of an understanding of the nature of that Society which would view it as being a Church.

When a member joins the Methodist Church in 1991, the concept of societal membership remains, but the new member is welcomed, 'into the full membership of the Christian Church and the Society in this place.'<sup>1</sup> Much greater emphasis is placed on the work of God, the service may optionally include the laying-on of hands, and the word 'Confirmation' now appears in the title of the rite and within the order itself.

This article traces the developments of those rites in British Methodism given titles such as 'Public Recognition of New Members'.

<sup>1</sup> 'Public Reception into Full Membership, or Confirmation', *Methodist Service Book 1975*, (hereafter 'MSB'), p.A24.

## 2. JOHN WESLEY AND CONFIRMATION.

Those who have examined *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*<sup>2</sup>, printed in 1784, and its immediate successors, have invariably focused on Wesley's theology of the Sacraments. In passing, they note the total absence of an Order for confirmation, and describe it variously as 'baffling'<sup>3</sup>, 'striking'<sup>4</sup> or as "the one great omission ... that has not been sufficiently noticed."<sup>5</sup>

We know that Wesley wrote very little on this issue, and that he did not believe it to be a sacrament. In 'A Roman Catechism ... with a reply thereto'<sup>6</sup>, the comment on the Roman Catholic affirmative answer to the question, "Is confirmation a sacrament?" is,

The Roman Catechism saith, that sacraments cannot be instituted by any but God .... And yet the great Schoolman, Alex Ales saith, 'Christ did not institute nor declare confirmation to be a sacrament.' So by their own confession it is none.

Whilst Borgen<sup>7</sup> shows the work to be that of John Williams, Bishop of Chichester, first published in 1686, that Wesley reprinted it under his own name with only very minor changes suggests that he was in full agreement with the views expressed. In his address to the Conference of 1755, 'Ought we to separate from the Church of England?'<sup>8</sup> Wesley comments,

Nay, there are some things in the Common Prayer Book itself which we do not undertake to defend: as in ... The Office of Confirmation ...

It is perhaps indicative of his views that Wesley makes little reference to confirmation in his Journal. We may note that Charles Wesley records one discussion on this topic, whilst visiting Selby in 1743.<sup>9</sup> Asked if "there was any good in confirmation", he replies,

No, nor in baptism, nor in the Lord's Supper, or any outward thing, unless you are in Christ a new creature.

That Charles links together confirmation and the Lord's Supper, and yet shared with his brother a very high regard for the latter should make us cautious of concluding that the Wesleys totally rejected confirmation.

<sup>2</sup> reprinted by Quarterly Review, with an Introduction by James F. White, UM Publishing House, (Nashville, 1984)

<sup>3</sup> White, *ibid* p.20

<sup>4</sup> A.R. George, 'The People Called Methodists - 4. The Means of Grace,' in *History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain* (hereafter *HMGB*) vol 1 p.261

<sup>5</sup> N.B. Harmon, 'John Wesley's Sunday Service and its American Revisions', *Proceedings*, xxxix, pp.137-144.

<sup>6</sup> *Works* (3rd ed. 1829-31) vol. 10, pp. 86ff, esp pp.116-117

<sup>7</sup> O.E. Borgen, *John Wesley on the Sacraments*, (Zurich, 1972) p.26

<sup>8</sup> Most accessible in F. Baker, *John Wesley and the Church of England*, (1970) Appendix, pp.326ff.

<sup>9</sup> C. Wesley, *Journal*, ed. T. Jackson, (1849) vol. I, p.318

<sup>10</sup> B.G. Holland, *Baptism in Early Methodism*, (1970) esp pp.100-101.

<sup>11</sup> J.C. Bowmer, *The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in Early Methodism*, (1951) esp pp.103ff.

John was convinced that it is not a sacrament, and the quotation from Charles' Journal suggests that he sought alongside confirmation evidence of the 'new birth' on the part of the candidate. In their respective works on the sacraments in early Methodism, both Holland<sup>10</sup> and Bowmer,<sup>11</sup> conclude from the evidence of Wesley's practices that in his eyes people were fully received into the Church by Baptism without the requirement for confirmation, and that Baptism was sufficient qualification for admission to Holy Communion.

But perhaps the most significant reason for Wesley's antipathy towards confirmation is that to stress its importance would have been contrary to one of the primary emphases of the Methodist movement, namely the importance of salvation and personal commitment on the part of the individual. We may summarise Wesley's beliefs as being that adult baptism is a powerful means of grace, its effects dependent on the spiritual state of the candidate,<sup>12</sup> and that infant baptism brings regeneration, but that inevitable post-baptismal sin leads to a need for a conscious decision and expression of faith once someone reaches the age of perhaps ten years. The remission of sins then required is received from God in the experience of 'new birth'. Whilst grace may be received by the unbaptised convert in adult baptism, Wesley saw no value in confirmation and thus on theological grounds, it could have no place in the practices of the people called Methodists. Further, when one considers the clear if not overwhelming evidence that the actual practice of Anglican confirmation in eighteenth-century England left much to be desired, with ill-organised large-scale confirmations being performed by Bishops burdened by parliamentary duties and large dioceses to and in which travel was impossible outside the summer months<sup>13</sup>, one may conclude that it would have been the inclusion of confirmation in the *Sunday Service* which would have been more surprising than its omission.

### 3. MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.

The Fetter Lane Religious Society, founded on 1st May 1738, has been shown to be the prototype for the later Methodist Societies. Podmore has recently presented evidence<sup>14</sup> to show that the Society was much more Moravian in nature and under the leadership of the Wesleys to a far less extent than earlier work has suggested, but comparison of the operation and rules of the Society with later Methodist societies shows indisputable similarities. Further, this society and those founded by the Wesleys share two common characteristics which distinguish them from those which

<sup>12</sup> Holland draws attention to Wesley's *Journal*, 25th Jan 1739, vol.ii, p.135, where he describes various responses.

<sup>13</sup> See, for example, N. Sykes, *Church and State in England in the 18th Century*, (Cambridge, 1934) ch.3.

<sup>14</sup> C. J. Podmore, 'The Fetter Lane Society, 1738,' in *Proceedings*, xxxvi, pp.125-153.

operated under the aegis of the Church of England. The first of these is the purpose of the Society, stated in the first of the two rules agreed on May 1st:

1. That they will meet together once a Week to confess their Faults one to another, and to pray for one another that they may be healed.<sup>15</sup>

Second, on May 29th the third rule agreed defined the familiar societal structure:

3. That Persons desirous to meet together for that Purpose, be divided into several Bands, or little Societies.

In his Journal, Wesley listed those rules which he believed to be 'fundamental'.<sup>16</sup> Relevant to later developments are:

21. That any who desire to be admitted into this Society be asked, What are your Reasons for desiring this? Will you be entirely open, using no kind of Reserve, least of all in the Case of Love or Courtship? Will you strive against the Desire of ruling ... .. Will you submit to be placed in what Band the Leaders shall choose for you? Have you any objections to any of our Orders? ...

22. That those who answer these Questions in the Affirmative, be proposed every fourth Wednesday.

25. That those against whom no reasonable Objection appears or remains, be, in order for their Trial, formed into distinct Bands, and some Person agreed to assist them.

26. That if no new Objection then appear, they be, after two<sup>17</sup> Month's Trial, admitted into Society.

When Wesley drew up the 'Rules of the Band Societies'<sup>18</sup>, he included a long list of questions to be put to every would-be member, but did not specify further details of the admission procedure. Neither do such rules appear in 'The Nature, Design and General Rules of the United Societies' of 1743.<sup>19</sup> The Conference of 1744 agreed:

The preachers are instructed - 1. To give tickets to none, till they are recommended by a leader with whom they have met three months on trial. 2. To give notes to none but those who are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met three or four times. 3. Give them the rules the first time they meet.<sup>20</sup>

That same Conference also moved the day of reception from a mid-week general meeting of the society to a Sunday. At the Conference held on May 15th 1746, a consideration of the method of admitting members was recorded in the following manner:

Q.3. How can we add a proper solemnity to the admission of new members into the Bands, or the united Society?

<sup>15</sup> The Rules are reprinted (in their two forms) in W.M. Trousdale, 'The Moravian Society, Fetter Lane - London,' *Proceedings*, xvii, pp.29-36. The numbering shown here is that of the version given in D. Benham. *Memoirs of James Hutton*, (1856).

<sup>16</sup> *Standard Journal*, i, pp. 458-9. Curnock's note that those Rules in the Journal are Wesley's original draft, later expanded by the Moravians, must now be doubted.

<sup>17</sup> The manuscript version here reads, " a Month's Trial."

<sup>18</sup> *Works* (3rd ed. 1829-31) vol.8, pp.272-4. Reprinted *HMGB* Vol 4, pp. 23-24. The rules are dated 25th December 1738, but Podmore suggests that they date from late 1739 when Wesley began a separate Society in London.

<sup>19</sup> *Works* (3rd ed.) vol. 8, pp.269-71. Reprinted in *HMGB* Vol. 4, pp. 55-61.

<sup>20</sup> *1744 Minutes*, (1812 ed) vol. i, p. 12.

A. 1. Admit new members into the bands at London, Bristol and Newcastle, only once a quarter at the general Lovefeast. 2. Read the names of the men to be admitted on the Wednesday, of the women on the Sunday, before. 3. Admit into the Society only on the Sunday or Thursday following the Quarterly Visitation of the Classes. 4. Read the names of those to be admitted on the Tuesday, or Thursday or Sunday evening before. 5. The first time that anyone (on trial) meets a class, let the Rules of the Society be given him, 6. And let them be publicly read on the Thursday or Sunday after every admission of new members.<sup>21</sup>

The rules are describing nothing beyond the admission of a person into a Religious Society. This is entirely consistent with Wesley's view of Methodism's relationship to the Church of England. Further, since Wesley saw Baptism as being all that is required for entry into the Church and admission to Holy Communion, what was looked for was a personal 'new birth' in the life of the candidate. There is little to suggest that the Society meetings at which new members were admitted differed in any significant way from the usual weekly meetings. Most likely, the questioning of new members and their admission would be added to the usual diet of prayer, hymn-singing and exhortation. Simon<sup>22</sup> observes that in May 1741; Wesley spent the most of one morning in Bristol 'in speaking with the new members of the Society.'<sup>23</sup> He further notes a hymn in *Hymns and Sacred Poems* of 1740 written by Charles Wesley which starts 'Brethren in Christ and well-beloved,' and which is subtitled 'On the Admission of any Person into the Society.' Verse three of the hymn reads,

Welcome from earth! lo! the right hand  
Of fellowship to thee we give:  
With open arms and hearts we stand,  
And thee in Jesu's name receive.<sup>24</sup>

Of particular interest is the reference to the 'right hand of fellowship'.<sup>25</sup> In his Journal, John Valton, one of the leading Methodist preachers of the late eighteenth century, describes the admission of new members on 31st December 1780:<sup>26</sup>

This day I received in several new members that had been upon trial. I had them all in front of the congregation, and read the substance of the Rules to them. Gave them a suitable exhortation and finished the ceremony with a hymn and prayer adapted to the occasion, and God made it a gracious season indeed.

During this period, developments in the admission procedure were confined to administrative details, rather than to any changes which

<sup>21</sup> 1746 *Minutes* (1812 ed) vol. i.

<sup>22</sup> J.S. Simon, *John Wesley and the Methodist Societies*, (1923) p. 51.

<sup>23</sup> *Standard Journal*, ii, p.458.

<sup>24</sup> This hymn appeared in a slightly modified form as 710 of the 1933 *MHB*, with the quoted verse as v.2. In that form, it is 'hearts and hands' which are open.

<sup>25</sup> We find the biblical precedent for this in Gal. 2:9, when James, Cephas and John give Paul and Barnabas 'dexas koinonias'. Modern translations such as 'shook hands upon it' (NEB) rather obscure this derivation.

<sup>26</sup> From an extract reprinted in *Proceedings*, viii, p.21.

might, even in the loosest sense, be described as liturgical. It would appear that the maintenance of proper procedures for the admission of members continued to trouble the Conference, for in both 1796<sup>27</sup>, when attention was drawn to the 1744 rules, and in 1797<sup>28</sup>, when the right of the leaders' meeting to veto the admission of a member was affirmed, instructions about membership were issued.

#### 4. RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS IN WESLEYAN METHODISM.

There is no reason to believe that Wesleyan Methodist practice in the first half of the nineteenth century was significantly different from that described above. The 1878 motion approved at Conference (see below) suggests that there existed a variety of practice concerning the recognition of members who had been received by the leaders' meeting of the local Church. In some cases, it would appear, recognition took place in a society meeting or Public Worship. In other situations, it is likely that there was no liturgical or 'devotional' recognition alongside the administrative procedures involved in reception into membership.

In the last quarter of the century, the issue of membership came to be of increasing concern to the Wesleyan Methodists. Although membership figures in general rose during this period, the relationship of attendance at class meetings to membership, and consequently, the position within Wesleyan Methodism of those who worshipped regularly but whose refusal to attend classes barred them from membership, was repeatedly raised. Rack<sup>29</sup> discusses the issues on which this debate focused, particularly the problem of the extent to which it was reasonable to require attendance at one particular 'means of grace' as a condition of what was increasingly being understood as Church - as opposed to purely Society - membership. He notes also that the class meetings themselves, often characterised as monotonous, lacking in inspiration and in effective lay leadership, were being subjected to growing criticism. The 1889 Conference<sup>30</sup> found a compromise between the view that class meetings were integral to Wesleyan Methodism and the opposing position which held that Church membership should be dependent on Church attendance, attendance at class meetings becoming optional. Against the background of this debate, the Wesleyan Methodists were the first British Methodist denomination to approve an order for the Recognition of New Members. Prior to the acceptance of a liturgical form, the 1878 Conference had resolved:

<sup>27</sup> *Minutes*, (1812 ed) 1796, vol. i, p. 348.

<sup>28</sup> *Minutes*, (1812 ed) 1797, vol. i, p. 375.

<sup>29</sup> H.D. Rack, 'The Decline of the Class Meeting and the problems of Church Membership in Nineteenth-Century Methodism.' in *Proceedings*, xxxix, pp.12-20. Rack cites much of the contemporary literature, which illustrates the fervour with which the debate was conducted. See also by the same author, 'Wesleyan Methodism 1849-1902', in *HMGB* Vol. 3, pp. 119-166.

<sup>30</sup> *Minutes*, 1889, p. 404ff.

1. That it is very desirable to adopt some more public and formal mode of admitting new members into Society;- (i.) Because such a practice is in accordance with early Methodist usage, and is, indeed, prescribed in our recognised Form of Discipline (see Large Minutes, p.18). (ii.) Because it is of the highest importance to give all possible impressiveness to a member's entrance into the fellowship with the Church of Christ...<sup>31</sup>

The duality of terminology, showing that membership of Society brought the member into 'fellowship with the Church of Christ', again illustrates the self-perception of late nineteenth-century Wesleyanism as being a Church, *de facto* if not yet by formal resolution.<sup>32</sup> The Order suggested that the Service might be associated with the Lord's Supper,

or it might be found expedient to recognise New members at a Society Meeting after the Quarterly Visitation of the Classes; or, in villages, a Recognition Service might take the place of a week-evening service.

It directed that such services be held 'from time to time', 'as far as practicable' in every circuit, 'subject to the discretion of the Superintendent as to the frequency and exact nature of such meetings.' The option for the recognition to take place in the Society Meeting suggests that a non-liturgical form was envisaged by those drafting the Order. After several years of debate, the 1893 Conference considered a proposed form, and agreed that:

The Conference refers the proposed Form of Service to a Committee for revision; and directs that the Form, when revised, shall be submitted to the Annual District Synods. The Committee shall receive the Suggestions of the Synods thereupon, and present a revised form, with the suggestions, to the next Conference.<sup>33</sup>

The revised draft was duly presented to the 1894 Conference,<sup>34</sup> for approval. The *Methodist Recorder* reported on the response of the Synods, and the Conference debate.<sup>35</sup> The Districts varied in their attitude to the draft. Some of them proposed minor amendments which are difficult to discuss without sight of the apparently no-longer extant first draft. However, the majority of the comments centred on the optional nature of the service. Several Districts wanted a clearer statement in the preamble that the use of the service should be optional, whilst the Channel Islands considered the form of service 'wholly unnecessary'<sup>36</sup>, and North Wales opposed the order, 'owing to the aversion to the use of all Forms of Service which largely prevails amongst Welsh Methodists'. Edinburgh and Aberdeen approved, 'provided that its use shall be discretionary, and especially so in Scotland.'

In the debate, the Rev W. Bradfield attacked the 'Churchy language' of

<sup>31</sup> *Minutes*, 1878, p. 186.

<sup>32</sup> In 1891, the Conference formally approved the use of the title 'Wesleyan Methodist Church' for the first time. From that date, it appears on various publications and on Class Tickets from 1893.

<sup>33</sup> *Minutes*, 1893, p. 225.

<sup>34</sup> *Agenda*, 1894 Conference.

<sup>35</sup> *Methodist Recorder*, August 2nd, 1894.

<sup>36</sup> District responses are printed in the *Agenda*, 1894.



the proposed order, and commented to the effect that, the service entirely ignored their own historic position, the way in which God had raised up Methodism. He submitted that at a time when they were making a new service they ought to make it plain to those whom they were receiving, what Church it was into which they were being welcomed.

He recognised the need for such a service, but proposed that in its current form it not be accepted. The report of the speech of his seconder, the Rev H.A. Scott, concludes,

His own feeling was that Infant Baptism in itself was not sufficient. It was in no sense the baptismal regeneration that some other people held. They must instruct their children that that was an outward ordinance, and that the time arrived when they must for themselves confirm everything that was done. He did hope that when dealing with this service they did have something which should be in a more distinct sense a Confirmation Service.

The proposal that the order not be accepted, and that the Committee be instructed to produce a new order, was lost 'by a large majority.' After discussion of minor textual amendments, the issue of its optional nature was discussed. After a rather legalistic debate on this point, the Committee's report, including the order, was approved by a 'large majority'.

It is difficult to gauge the strength of opposition to the order from the *Methodist Recorder* report alone. Twenty-two of the Districts had approved the order without significant amendment, and five more had merely proposed changes to the Introduction. Whilst the scale of opposition within Wesleyan Methodism should not be overstated, neither should it be assumed that the order was introduced without objections, nor that it immediately received universal approval and widespread use.

The Wesleyan Order is of the following form:

**TITLE:** 'A Form of Service for the Public Recognition Of New Members'

The use of this form, whether in whole or part, shall be optional.

The Service shall begin with a suitable Hymn and Prayer, after which those who are to be recognised, being introduced by name by their respective Leaders, shall be placed in order before the Church assembled.

Then the Minister shall say,

Dearly beloved, the Lord Jesus Christ, after his resurrection, gave commandments to his apostles and the brethren ... In his name, therefore, we assembled here this day, that we may publicly acknowledge as members of the brotherhood of Christ's disciples these persons who have already, according to our rule and order, been received into fellowship with the Church ...

Then shall the Congregation, standing, repeat audibly after the Minister, the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God...**

A selection from the following Scriptures shall then be read:

Deuteronomy xxvi. 16-18.	John xiii. 34,35.	Psalm cxvi. 12, 13, 18, 19.
Psalm ciii. 1-4, 10-13.	Isaiah xii.	1 Peter i. 3-9.
Luke ix. 23, 24.	John xv. 5-7.	Acts ii. 41-42.
Romans xii. 5.	Ephesians ii. 19-22.	Colossians i. 12-14.
2 Timothy ii. 19.	1 John i. 7.	Revelation iii. 21.
Revelation xxi. 23,27		

The Minister shall then address those about to be recognised as follows:

Dearly beloved, forasmuch as the true fellowship of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ is given to those only who seek to be saved from their sins, and who trust in him as their Saviour, it is meet that you who desire to live in that fellowship should here profess your faith in the same Lord Jesus Christ, and engage yourselves, by the help of God, to renounce all evil, and diligently to pursue that which is acceptable to God.

Do you now desire to confess your faith in Christ crucified, and valiantly to fight under his banner against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants unto your lives' end?

Answer: **I do so earnestly desire.**

Do you now, in the presence of God and his people here assembled, resolve ... .. avoid and abstain from evil ... .. doing good to all men ... .. search the Scriptures ... .. to join with his people in Christian fellowship and Christian work and to love and serve your brethren after Christ's example?

Answer: **I do, God being my helper.**

The following sentences shall then be recited by the Minister and the people:

Our help is in the name of the Lord,	<b>Who made heaven and earth:</b>
Blessed be the name of the Lord,	<b>Who only doeth wondrous things.</b>
This God is our God for ever and ever:	<b>He will be our guide even unto death.</b>

Let us pray.

The people shall join audibly with the Minister in the following prayer:  
**Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who through thy Son Jesus Christ hast promised forgiveness of sins .... We give thee thanks that these thy servants have been drawn unto thee by thy grace ..... Strengthen them with might by thy Spirit in the inner man; daily increase in them thy manifold gifts of grace; fill them with the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness, now and for evermore, Amen.**

Then, all standing, the Minister, having given to each of the newly received Members the RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP, shall say:

We joyfully welcome you, beloved, into the fellowship of the Church, and pray our God and Father so to defend you with his heavenly grace that you may be his for ever; that through his Holy Spirit you may daily increase in the knowledge and love of our Lord Jesus Christ, until you come into his heavenly kingdom.

The Lord bless you and keep you ...

Let us pray,

O God, our heavenly Father, who workest in us both to will and do those things that be good and acceptable in thy sight: ... .. may thy Holy Spirit ever be with them ...

Here may follow exhortation or extempore prayer, or both.

When the Recognition is to be followed by the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, the latter Service shall be here commenced.

In conclusion the Minister shall say:

(Jude 24, 25                      Hebrews xiii. 20, 21.                      2 Cor xiii. 14.)

This 1894 Wesleyan order might best be described as comprising a scriptural preamble followed by a heavily modified version of the 1662 BCP Confirmation rite. The minister's opening words state the purpose of

the service, relating it to the missionary work of the early Church. The structure of the service after the readings is clearly derived from that of the BCP, and may be characterised as 'Promises, Prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, Collect for those now Recognised.' Whilst the questions asked of the candidates differ quite significantly from those of the BCP, the phrase 'Do you now, in the presence of God and his people here assembled, resolve with the help of the Lord ...' is sufficiently close to the start of the Bishop's exhortation in the BCP order for textual dependence to be assumed.

Similarly, the first half of the versicle and responses which start 'Our help is in the name of the Lord' is in common. The prayer which in the BCP is offered by the Bishop immediately prior to the act of Confirmation is in the Wesleyan order said by Minister and people together. Whilst there is no Confirmation prayer as such, the prayer offered after the right hand of fellowship includes the phrase 'defend you with his heavenly grace', which may be compared with, 'Defend, O Lord, this thy child, with thy heavenly Grace' of the BCP. Finally, the prayer, 'O God, our heavenly Father ...' is clearly based on the BCP post-Confirmation collect. The use of the Right Hand of Fellowship follows a practice of Methodism which, as we have observed, dates from 1740 or earlier.

Whilst the textual similarities are clear, and may have been the basis of complaints of 'Churchy language' in the 1894 Conference debate, it should be noted that this order in no way purports to be an order of Confirmation. Except for the reading from Acts, and the preamble, there is no Baptismal reference, and certainly no mention of the candidates' own Baptism. Added to the BCP order are references to personal conversion, as in 'We give thee thanks that these thy servants have been drawn unto thee by thy grace.' Nevertheless, whilst the rubrics and prayers make it clear that here is a service of Recognition of New Members, the 1894 Wesleyan order's similarities to the BCP Confirmation rite, in terms both of structure and its emphasis on prayers for the Spirit's presence in the lives of the candidates, set it apart from the other early Methodist forms.

(to be continued)

STUART A. BELL

(The Rev Stuart A. Bell BSc, BA, is a minister in the Brighton (Dome Mission) circuit. This article is an abridgement of a paper produced as part of his probationer's studies in 1988 under the guidance of the Rev A Raymond George.)

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*Cobbett Confounded? The Impact of Primitive Methodism on Agricultural Labourers in Hampshire* is the fruit of a sabbatical by the Rev David Sharp. Copies of the typescript can be obtained for £1.00 plus postage (32p) from 2a St Marks Road, Worle, Weston-super-Mare, Avon, BS22 0PW.

## THE CHARLES WESLEY SOCIETY

**T**HE founding meeting of the Charles Wesley Society took place at Princeton, New Jersey, from October 19th - 20th, 1990, with participants from England, Canada and the USA. A short account of the proceedings may be found in the *Methodist Recorder*, January 3rd 1991 and an account of its 1989 precursor was published in *Proceedings* in February 1990.

The Society is divided into six sections and the reports of their initial discussions are summarised below. This will give a good idea of the scope and intended activities of this newcomer to Wesley studies.

### 1. *Text*

(a) Dr. Frank Baker will prepare an annotated summary of extant Charles Wesley letters which will be made available to CWS members.

(b) It was moved and approved that a reprint of *The Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord* of C. Wesley be published by CWS. Dr. Baker will supply copies of all editions; and notes from same and a brief introduction will be prepared by Dr. Oliver A. Beckerlegge.

(c) It was recommended that CWS explore the possibilities of a reprint series.

(d) The Section urged CWS to consider the importance of a new edition of Charles Wesley's *Journal*.

(e) It was moved and approved that the elected Board of Directors function at present as an Editorial Board, to explore and approve publication projects.

### 2. *Music and Text*

(a) It was moved and approved that the Music and Text Section explore a project involving the C. Wesley texts in the *United Methodist Hymnal* and *Hymns and Psalms* as a possible project involving all Sections of CWS, and that Robin Leaver compile said texts for distribution to CWS. It is proposed that such a project result in a publication with the following features:

(1) the texts as received in UMH and HP with additional editorial work where necessary;

(2) literary and theological commentary;

(3) a structure to be determined by the Community of Faith Section;

(4) a minimum of two tunes for each text;

(5) commentary on texts (with consideration of originals) and tunes.

(b) It was suggested that CWS consider a facsimile reproduction of one or more of the early Methodist tune books.

### 3. *History*

(a) It was suggested that CWS consider a new annotated edition of C. Wesley's *Journal*, with introduction, which would include all extant short-hand sections.

(b) CWS is encouraged to consider both the scholarly and pastoral implications and dimension of its work with the C. Wesley texts.

4. *Theology*

- (a) It was suggested that CWS consider a selection of hymn texts for theological reflection;
- (b) that a theological commentary on hymns in current hymnals be prepared;
- (c) that an exegetical concordance to C. Wesley hymns be considered, perhaps in relation to the lectionary.
- (d) Dr. Teresa Berger's book, *Theologie in Hymnen*, was mentioned with the hope that it may soon be translated by CWS member, Timothy E. Kimbrough.

5. *Community of Faith*

- (a) In order to implement the pastoral task of CWS, the Section urged the gathering of all extant resources which encompass the area of pastoral care.
- (b) It was suggested that a seasonal devotional booklet of C. Wesley texts be prepared;
- (c) that a theological wordbook of terms with appended hymn texts be prepared. Beryl Ingram - Ward will begin working on this project.
- (d) It was suggested that C. Wesley text contributions to a worship book be prepared. Dr. Kendall McCabe is working on such a project.
- (e) It was reported that Elizabeth Hart has begun a project with a selection of C. Wesley texts through the year.

6. *English Literature*

- (a) The role of the Section in supporting and amplifying the work of the other Sections was emphasized.
- (b) The need for a functional anthology of C. Wesley verse was stressed. There is a need for an anthology from a literary point of view which would emphasize:

- (1) the hymn as a literary genre,
- (2) how musical settings influenced C. Wesley's poetry,
- (3) C. Wesley's use of literary conventions of the eighteenth century,
- (4) C. Wesley and metaphysical wit,
- (5) literary judgments of C. Wesley's work,
- (6) reader/singer response,
- (7) the use of biblical language,
- (8) death hymns and graveyard poetry of the eighteenth century.

Concluding discussions of the plenary session addressed the following issues:

- (a) the importance of CWS having a description of each member's computer facilities;
- (b) communication to CWS by members regarding specific projects in C. Wesley studies on which they are working;
- (c) the need of a CWS Newsletter;
- (d) the importance of an annual bibliography of publications related to C. Wesley;

- (e) the need to communicate with societies with related interests;
- (f) the importance of communicating with CWS office regarding funding possibilities from individuals, organizations, or foundations.

THE OFFICIAL ADDRESS OF THE CHARLES WESLEY SOCIETY IS AS FOLLOWS:

*Until April 1, 1991*  
 The Charles Wesley Society  
 Center of Theological Inquiry  
 50 Stockton St.  
 Princeton, New Jersey 08540

*After April 1, 1991*  
 The Charles Wesley Society  
 Archives and History Center  
 The United Methodist Church  
 Drew University  
 Madison, New Jersey 07940

SUBSCRIPTIONS FOR 1991:

£12.50 £7.50 from students and the retired.

These may be sent to

E.A. Rose, 26 Roe Cross Green, Mottram, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 6LP.

S.T. KIMBROUGH JR.

(Dr. S. T. Kimbrough is the President of the Charles Wesley Society and co-editor, with Oliver Beckerlegge, of *The Unpublished Verse of Charles Wesley*.)

## WMHS/WHS Residential Conference

at

Westminster College, Oxford, 2 – 5 April 1991

**Theme:** Methodism and Society  
**Speakers:** John Kent, David Bebbington,  
 Hugh Mcleod, J. Munsey Turner  
 and others.  
**Cost:** £75

For further details please write to Rev T. Macquiban,  
 Wesley College, College Park Drive, Henbury Road,  
 Bristol BS10 7QD.

## NEW SOURCES FOR METHODIST WOMEN'S HISTORY

FROM modest beginnings in the 1960s, the history of women and women's studies in general have become major fields of scholarly inquiry. One of the happy results of this development has been the publication of an increasing number of reference works and anthologies devoted to the lives and works of women in past eras. Since historians of Methodism probably do not, as a rule, survey new publications in these areas, it may be useful to point out some of the contents of these works.

Probably of greatest interest is Janet Todd, ed., *A Dictionary of British and American Women Writers 1660-1800* (Totowa, NJ, 1985). In addition to various references to Methodism in her introduction (pp. 4, 9, 14, 22), she has included entries on no fewer than seven Methodist women: Susanna Wesley (p. 319), Mehetabel Wesley Wright (pp. 334-5), the Countess of Huntingdon (p. 171), Hannah Ball (p. 36), Judith Cowper Madan (pp. 206-7), Elizabeth Johnson (p. 180), and Eliza Day (pp. 99-100). The first four, of course, are quite well known. The entries on them serve to provide short, up-to-date biographies with occasional new insights. The next two women are less familiar figures. Madan is of interest because she maintained friendships with both John Wesley and the Countess of Huntingdon and because of her relationship to the poet William Cowper (she was his aunt). The entry of Johnson is bound to attract attention because of its conclusion that "her writings reveal both a deep self-hatred and an intense sexual longing."

Eliza Day (1734? - ?) is probably quite unfamiliar to historians of Methodism. She was the wife of Thomas Day, who was possibly the same man that H.F. Foster wrote about early in the twentieth century ("Religious Societies in Southwark in the Letters of Thomas Day," *Proceedings*, vii, pp. 106-111). Among other things she wrote a poem entitled, "On John Wesley's Recovery from a Serious Illness." By 1814, however, she was beginning to stray from the Wesleyan fold, saying that "she is now divided in 'nonessentials' from the creed and cannot approve all Wesley's 'sentiments.'" As such, she represents the growing number of Methodist women (and men) who were looking for new inspiration in the generation or so after the death of Wesley. Whether she finally parted company with the Wesleys is unknown, but the fact that her obituary does not appear in the *Methodist Magazine* suggests that she might have.

In addition, there are entries on two evangelicals who never formally embraced Methodism (Maria Cowper and Hill Boothby); on four women who were both evangelicals and anti-Methodists (Anne Dutton, Charlotte MacCarthy, Catharine Phillips, and Hannah More); and on a sometime Methodist-turned-millennialist (Joanna Southcott).

The collection is not without its flaws, however. No mention at all is made of two of the most famous and widely read of the female Methodist authors, Mary Bosanquet Fletcher and Hester Ann Roe Rogers. And the entry on Mary Pendarves Delaney does not discuss her romantic correspondence with John Wesley and her interest in the texts of his sermons.

Much more comprehensive is Gwenn Davis and Beverly A. Joyce, comps., *Personal Writings by Women to 1900: A Bibliography of American and British Writers* (London, 1989). As its title implies, it includes female writers who have left published autobiographies, diaries, and collections of letters, and also women who have been the subjects of biographical works that quote heavily from their "personal writings." Among its nearly five thousand annotated entries, there are works by or about at least two dozen British Methodist women, including many of the famous names of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Fletcher, Rogers, Pawson, Johnson, Mary Taft, Elizabeth Ritchie Mortimer, Lady Maxwell). There are also some Methodist women who are only moderately familiar (for example, Ann Broadbelt, Mary Cryer, Mary Gilbert, Mary Tims, Ann Warren, and Mary Titherton - who must certainly be Mary Titherington); and others whose names will be new to most researchers (like Mary Bingham, Sarah Budgett, Elizabeth Harper, Susan Lynn, Elizabeth Rhodes, and Ann Tomes).

The index entries under "Methodists" in Davis and Joyce include both British and American women as well as Methodist missionaries, but users of this work will be rewarded if they cast an even wider net. Hannah Kilham, for instance, merits an entry but is not included among the Methodists at all. John Wesley's influence is noted in the case of Mrs. Lefevre but not in the case of Jane Cooper. Ann Freeman's and Dorothy Ripley's links to the Methodists go unacknowledged - both are simply identified as Quakers, which is incorrect in the case of Ripley.

Apart from reference works of these types, there are many new anthologies of women writers. One of the best is Roger Lonsdale, ed., *Eighteenth Century Women Poets: An Oxford Anthology* (Oxford, 1989). It provides scholars interested in Methodism and the wider Evangelical Movement with some of the best poems of Mehetabel Wesley Wright (pp. 110-5), Judith Madan (pp. 93-6), Maria Cowper (pp. 269-72), and Hannah More (pp. 323-335). Because of its comprehensiveness and general excellence, it will surely be widely available for a long time to come.

ROBERT GLEN

The Rev William Johnson entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1879 and served in ten circuits before retiring in 1922. After his death, his two daughters jointly prepared their reminiscences which provide a valuable manse-eye view of provincial and Scottish Methodism in the years before Methodist Union. The 'diary' has been published in a modest format by the Rev Eric Dykes under the title 'Daughters of the Manse' and a limited number of copies are available, price £2.50 post free, from Mr Dykes at 4 The Serpentine, Lytham, Lancs, FY8 5NW.

Our West Midlands branch has celebrated its Silver Jubilee with a lively collection of essays on a variety of local themes. Edited by Paul Bolitho, contributions include John M Turner on Henry Bett, 'the last of the Wesleyans', Geoffrey Robson on Birmingham popular evangelicalism, a piece by the editor on Wesley in Warwickshire and some reflections on the early Primitive Methodist female itinerants by Dorothy Graham. This is a worthwhile and impressive collection, with something for all tastes. *Silver Jubilee Miscellany* is £3.25 post paid from the editor at 17 Oken Court, Theatre Street, Warwick, CV34 4DF.



## THE BICENTENARY OF METHODISM IN FRANCE

**I**N 1991 will be commemorated the bicentenary of the death of John Wesley, who departed this life on 2nd March 1791 at his home in City Road, London. There is another lesser-known bicentenary to commemorate. In the summer of 1791, through the pioneer work of Channel Islanders John Angel, William Mahy, and Jean de Quetteville, there began the Methodist mission in France. There is a connection. Though not incontrovertible, Wesley correspondence in the late 1780s, his own visit to Guernsey and Jersey in 1787, and the stationing of Clarke and Brackenbury, lend substance to the assertion of Matthew Lelièvre that mission to France was in Wesley's mind.<sup>1</sup> Certainly, Thomas Coke was committed. 'Coke was improving his French, with the possibility of a mission to France in mind, as early as 1786. He looked upon the work in the Channel Islands as a preparation for an eventual "invasion" of the mainland.'<sup>2</sup>

The actual circumstance of the beginning of the mission was entirely unforeseen. Oft-stated, notably in the pages of Matthew Lelièvre and Théophile Roux, it bears repeating. In the summer of 1791, John Angel, a zealous Methodist layman from Guernsey, landed in the course of his business at Courseulles, a small fishing village, not far from Caen. He attended Sunday worship with the small, neglected Protestant congregation, spoke to them of the Good Samaritan, listened to them, and promised them help. On his return to Guernsey, he shared this concern with his friends. A young local preacher, William Mahy, departed immediately to begin a mission beginning from Courseulles and extending into neighbouring villages of Normandy. Thomas Coke, too, played a significant role in the events of 1791. His own evangelistic venture, accompanied by Jean de Quetteville, in October to Paris was a failure. He did, however, before arrival in the capital, commission William Mahy and Jean de Quetteville for work in Normandy. The name of Mahy was inscribed on the list of stations, 'France, William Mahy', at the Manchester Conference in the summer of 1791. Throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic periods, the burden of the work fell on his shoulders. Mahy (1763-1813) was a fervent evangelist but also a poignant figure, who sustained much suffering and isolation until his retirement to Guernsey in 1812. He died in a nursing home near Manchester. Jean de Quetteville (1761-1843) played a much smaller part in the French mission, most of his ministry being spent in the Channel Islands.

There are other names that can be cited from these early days, including those of Armand de Kerpezdrion, Pierre du Pontavice, and William Toase. During the early nineteenth century, the name of Charles Cook comes to the fore as does Matthew Lelièvre towards the close. We are indebted to Lelièvre for classic biographies and to Théophile Roux for the detailed survey, *Le Méthodisme en France*, which carries the story forward to 1940. Today, there are two Methodist communities in France. One, based in Paris, Nîmes and the Cévennes, is in direct line of succession from the pioneers mentioned. The other, based in Alsace-Lorraine, originates largely from the work of the American Evangelical United Brethren.

JOHN WALLER

1. M. Lelièvre, *Pierre du Pontavice: Un Précurseur du Réveil* (Paris, 1904), p.11.

2. J.A. Vickers, *Thomas Coke, Apostle of Methodism* (1969), p.311.

## BOOK REVIEWS

*The Works of John Wesley*. Volume 9. *The Methodist Societies, History, Nature and Design*. ed. by Rupert E. Davies. (Abingdon, Nashville 1989. pp xvi, 607. \$49.95 ISBN: 0 687 46214 2)

This welcome volume reveals John Wesley shaping and defending his societies which were to become the Wesleyan Connexion with 72,476 members in Great Britain in 1791.

The introduction is concise, judicious and clear showing the development of bands, societies, classes and the legal undergirding quickly needed to maintain 'close-knit companies of ordinary men and women who were committed to the pursuit of holiness, bound together by a common discipline and engaged in the loving service of their fellows' (p.ix). Conference will be featured in Volume 10 but its significance is briefly sketched. Mr Davies sees Methodism through Wesley's eyes as a Society seeking holiness within the Church of England. 'I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it' (11th Dec. 1789). Yet right to the end Wesley boasts that his societies are open to all who seek 'the way to Heaven' and were never entirely Anglican. (e.g. pp. 536-7).

The extracts set out the classical Wesley position but I hazard more than a suspicion that there were sectarian undertones in early Methodism. Not all Methodists were as churchly as John Wesley who 'cannibalized' (to use Henry Rack's phrase) not a few groups like the Darney societies in Calderdale who were never entirely under his thumb. Comparison with other 'connexions' in the eighteenth century (including the Roman Catholics) would have been helpful. We certainly, too, need a full scale modern treatment of Moravianism in England during this period. Wesley's correspondents and opponents, as this volume shows, constantly refer to his alignments and disagreements with them (e.g. pp.81ff).

The editing of this volume, which includes Wesley's replies to formidable opponents like Josiah Tucker and Thomas Church as well as scurrilous religious pamphleteers like Rowland Hill and the *Short History of the People called Methodists* (1781) is meticulous, as we would expect, with innumerable classical and literary quotations tracked down. When ill in 1775 Wesley could not forbear to describe his hostess nursing him: 'She sat like patience on a monument smiling at grief'.

Wesley was the supreme pragmatist but the continuities are notable too. In 1786(pp.527-530) the call to holiness is as clear as ever, so is the oft-repeated nostrum on the use of money. 'We ought not to forbid people to be diligent and frugal. We *must* exhort all Christians to gain all they can and to save all they can—that is, in effect to grow rich! What way then ( I ask again) can we take that our money may not sink us to the nethermost hell? There is one way and there is no other under heaven. If those who *gain all they can* and *save all they can* will likewise *give all they can*, then the more they gain, the more they will grow in grace and the more treasure they will lay up in heaven.'

Wesley's extraordinary skill in organization is shown in the fact that so much of it still remains as the skeleton of Methodist polity. The Society (Connexion) has developed into the church (denomination) and the problems of that development are with us still when we declare members as 'having ceased to meet', a matter before Conference in 1990!

As with other volumes in the Bicentennial edition the book is beautifully produced and a pleasure to handle not least the footnotes which make scholarly reading a delight.

JOHN MUNSEY TURNER.

*Mirror and Memory: Reflections on Early Methodism* by Richard P. Heitzenrater, (Abingdon Press, 1989, pp.286 \$15.95 ISBN: 0 687 27069 3).

This collection of studies includes articles hitherto available only in academic periodicals, papers presented on various occasions but hitherto unpublished, and a chapter from a doctoral dissertation. It is good to have them in more accessible form and furnished with new or extended documentation. The book is a harvesting of two decades of research by one of the outstanding Wesley scholars of the day, though falling short of the major work that we may still look for from his pen (or word processor).

It would be wrong to look for complete cohesion and overall coherence in such a collection of 'occasional' papers and inevitably there is overlapping between some of them. But the treatment of the various topics is as thorough and authoritative as we have come to expect from this author, and is supported by a wealth of primary evidence. The extensive footnotes are a rich quarry for further research.

The opening paper traces the theological pedigree of the term 'Methodist' (of which Wesley himself appears to have been far from clear) and then examines its use by Wesley and his followers. By the late seventeenth century it was already being applied to 'those who in one form or another proclaimed universal grace, allowed some place for human free will ... and challenged double predestination', in other words, to Arminians (p.22). The essential issue, long before the Calvinistic controversies of the eighteenth century, 'was, for one side, the central reality of divine sovereignty and for the other side, the essential nature of human responsibility' (p.25).

Chapter 2 deals with the Anglican background, with particular reference to the religious societies, which serve as a reminder that the church was not quite as spiritually moribund as it has sometimes been described. But an age 'paralyzed by fear of extremism' was bound to produce 'moral and spiritual lethargy' on the one hand and its antidote 'enthusiasm' on the other. The religious societies were a more measured response to the needs of the time from within the Anglican fold, stressing nurture rather than conversion. Wesley himself was led 'to tie together the perfectionism of the Pietists, the moralism of the Puritans, and the devotionalism of the Mystics' (p.45) - an elaboration and refocusing, perhaps, of George Croft Cell's famous dictum.

Chapter 3 is an extract from the author's *The Elusive Mr. Wesley*, but with documentation added, and supplemented in the final chapter of the book by a well-informed and perceptive survey of recent Wesley studies. There are useful reminders of the pitfalls to be avoided in interpreting even the more familiar and seemingly reliable sources, such as Wesley's own *Journal*, and a plea, still very much needed, that popular works be firmly based on the best and most recent scholarship.

Then follow two chapters on the 'first rise of Methodism' at Oxford. Here the author is on territory he has made especially his own through his work on deciphering and editing the Oxford diaries. He exposes Wesley's 'tendency to exaggerate and to generalize' and, specifically, 'to portray [the Holy Club] with more uniformity of purpose and pattern than was the case' (p.63). There is a

wealth of fresh details and insight here, so that it matters little or nothing if we find that the question 'Who was the first Methodist?' turns out to be not only unanswerable, but possibly meaningless.

With only a passing consideration of the Georgia interlude, we move on to a detailed consideration of the Aldersgate Street experience and its place in Wesley's spiritual and theological development. Here is an important and useful distinction between, on the one hand, his 'quest for certainty' and the events of his life from 1739 on, and on the other hand and parallel with that, his 'new view of religion' - the 'shift in his definition of salvation' to include 'the striving for inward holiness' (which Heitzenrater points out as having been as much a concern of his Oxford days as of the post-Aldersgate years). Like Outler, Heitzenrater stresses that Wesley's evangelical theology was not fixed and static; on the contrary, 'it took [him] several years to work out not only the finer distinctions between justification and sanctification, but also the various nuances of his own doctrines of faith and Christian perfection' (p.126). And he concludes that the paucity of Wesley's later references to his experience at Aldersgate Street reflects the extent to which he found it necessary to abandon many of the 'great expectations' he had cherished while under Moravian influence.

The substance of the chapter on the Wesleys' early sermons first appeared in the pages of this journal. It is followed by a more general appraisal of John Wesley as preacher, which reaches the conclusion that his 'oral preaching does not seem to be radically different from the form and content of his published sermons'. This in turn is supplemented by two chapters on the sermons as doctrinal standards, a topic related only tangentially to the rest of the book. (This is particularly true of the second, where the focus is on *American Methodism*, making it look, from a British point of view, suspiciously like a makeweight.)

No one seriously interested in Wesley and early Methodism can ignore the rich vein of ore in this book. Along with the new edition of Wesley's Works and Henry Rack's biography, it must be the starting point for continuing investigation into Methodist origins.

JOHN A. VICKERS

*People Count. A History of the General Register Office* by M. Nissel, (HMSO, 1987, pp.157 wrappers £5.75)

*Church and chapel in Oxfordshire 1851. The return of the census of religious worship*; ed. by K. Tiller (The Oxfordshire Record Society Vol, 55, 1987 pp.1 + 126, wrappers £9.00)

*Religion in Victorian Nottinghamshire. The religious census of 1851 (In two volumes)*; ed. by M. Watts (University of Nottingham, Department of Adult Education, Centre for Local History, Record Series No. 7 1988 Vol. 1 pp x1 +105. Vol 2 pp 211 wrappers £8.95 ISBN: 1 85041 020 8)

*The religious census of Sussex 1851* ed. by J.A. Vickers (Sussex Record Society Vol 75 1989 pp. xxvii, 211 £17.50. ISBN: 0 85445 036 X)

*Devon in the religious census of 1851* ed. by M.J.L. Wickes (Author, 1990, pp 157 wrappers, £20.00 from Author, 30 One End Stree, Appledore, Bideford, EX39 1PN)

Despite Scripture (Numbers 1:49), Church and State meet on common ground in the recording of the people. On the State side the result is a vast and growing archive - at St Catherine's House in London over 260 million records are kept and half a million people visit the search room annually. Miss Nissel's book

about the history and work of the Office of Population Censuses was 'designed' (not merely printed) and has 2 $\frac{1}{2}$  inch margins (containing caption and odds and ends) but it is readable, instructive and well worth buying. In its small compass it can be neither systematic nor comprehensive but it is a popular account illustrated with maps, pictures and extracts from contemporary documents. Facts and statistics pop up on every page although the inadequate index makes finding them a matter of some luck.

1851 has especial interest because that year saw the much argued-over Ecclesiastical Census. (Social conditions should not be forgotten and Miss Nissel notes that the ordinary Census for 1851 reveals that many tailors died before the age of 45.) The House of Lords had insisted that the Ecclesiastical Census was to be voluntary but there were few refusals, or at least not many forms the enumerators could not get filled in by somebody. The printed Report which sold 21,000 copies expressed alarm that so many citizens did not attend divine worship and commented that about 45 per cent of attenders frequented chapel and not church. The Ecclesiastical Census was never repeated. The original returns for individual places of worship have survived and can be consulted now that the century-long embargo has ended. Sadly the information resulting from the parallel census of Schools in 1851 was never properly published and the returns have not survived.

The returns to the Ecclesiastical Census can be considered in two ways, individually or *en masse*. The printed Report of 1853 deals with them *en masse*, with copious tables and statistics. These do not always allow for errors, omissions and anomalies in the returns but they give a broad guide to denominational distribution and strength mid-century. The smallest area for which information is given is the District (or Poor Law Union) which could include up to a dozen, or even many more, civil parishes. Although details of the occasional solitary congregation can be deduced even from such wide areas, almost always there is no information relating to individual returns in the printed Report. However, it is the individual returns, some with ingenuous explanations for particularly low attendances at worship on 30th March 1851, that are needed for local research. Now, nearly 40 years after the returns were made available, some of them are being transcribed and printed. Happy the local historian interested in Devonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire or Sussex for the returns for these counties have been recently added to the small number of published returns.

Editing is an art leaving much to personal judgement. The approach and format of these four editions show this - two are published by Record Societies, one by a University Department and one privately by its Editor. Two Editors are members of this Society. Two preserve carefully the original arrangement of the returns and one abandons it completely. These returns, which are at first sight so simple, are in reality far from easy to reproduce on the printed page since so many contain notes and comments. Very often the handwriting of these notes and the way they are written on the form is significant but are lost in the transcription.

The reviewer must declare an interest in the **Devon** volume in the form of his rather complimentary preface to the privately produced book. It is in an A4 landscape format with the entries themselves reduced to two A5 pages per sheet. Unfortunately the text is rather faint, although always readable, a consequence of its reproduction from a word-processed master. There are over 1300 returns arranged under Districts and parishes with excellent indexes but without the original reference numbers. The role of Devonshire in the foundation of

nineteenth-century religious movement is illustrated by the entries for the Bible Christians, Plymouth Brethren and Free Church of England. The 1851 Returns throw up enigmas across the country; just one example is the "Meternite Independent Chapel" at Ottery St. Mary.

The **Nottingham** edition comes unnecessarily in two substantial A4 volumes. Its lay-out attempts to reflect the original returns and the entries are arranged and numbered under the Districts and Sub-Districts of the Census but the result makes it ridiculously difficult to find a particular entry or even a parish and unforgivably, *there is no index*. It looks as if it was typed on a word processor with no variety of type face and the whole could have been reduced to A5 page size with great benefit. Obviously the editor knew his way around his own layout, having been immersed in the records, but the result is baffling to everyone else. Nottingham residents will just have to become familiar with their sub-districts or make their own index. Unless Nottinghamshire is the home of the "Whistling Methodists", the entry under Kneeton parish of "Whesling Meathodist" clearly needs an editorial comment in square brackets "[Wesleyan]".

The **Oxford** volume has 507 immaculately printed entries returns in one compact volume with excellent maps and introduction and is probably the easiest edition in which to look-up a particular chapel. However this is at the cost of losing sight of the original arrangement, for the entries are arranged neither under District nor parish but alphabetically under place name which may be sub-parochial. Cross references have to be followed up to get the complete picture of one parish. The browser will probably turn to Oxford City's entries 325 to 354, the last being Ward's Boatmen's Chapel with a congregation of 35 in the afternoon and 25 children.

John Vickers' volume on **Sussex** is an excellent case-bound volume in dust jacket. The 602 returns are arranged under Districts and parishes giving the original reference numbers and reproducing, as a valuable addition, the District summaries that appeared in the printed Report. Where the Bible Christians strayed from the South West to distant places like Sussex, conventional wisdom is that they established small, often back-street causes completely overshadowed by the mighty Wesleys. At Chichester their Bethel Chapel had 75 seats and 59 worshippers but the Wesleys in the Centenary Chapel had not more than 207 seats and 118 adult worshippers.

This illustrated volume is a model for future editions but all those reviewed are essential reading for many purposes, not least the looking-up of familiar buildings. Let John Vickers have the last word, " ... on its own merits the Census of Religious Worship of 1851 provides us with ample material for historical investigation at whatever level we may choose to use it".

ROGER THORNE

*A Scholar's Guide to Academic Journals in Religion* by James Marshall Dawsey (American Theological Library Association Bibliography Series, No. 23, Scarecrow Press, Metuchen & London, 1988, pp.xxiii, 290, \$32.50 ISBN: 0810821354)

This is a writer's and not a reader's guide, Dawsey's aim being to provide a range of information which will enable prospective authors to choose the right journal to which to send their work and to submit it in a form most likely to elicit a favourable response from editors and referees. Data collection was very largely by means of a standard questionnaire sent to the editor of each periodical, and the ground covered is evident from a comparison of the responses by the two leading serials devoted to Methodist historical studies:

	<i>Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society</i>	<i>Methodist History</i>
frequency of publication	3 a year	4 a year
annual subscription	\$10	\$10
subject matter	Methodist history chiefly in Britain	Methodist history
readership	professors, students, laity	professors, students laity, clergy
language of submission	English	English
acceptance of unsolicited articles	yes	yes
acceptance of unsolicited reviews	no	no
acceptance of dot-matrix printing	yes	no
acceptance of simultaneous submissions	no	no
acceptance of research notes	yes	yes
acceptance of review articles	yes	yes
acceptance of book advertising	yes	yes
copies of manuscript required	1	1
maximum article length	10,000 words	6,500 words
minimum article length	1,000 words	none
response time	1 month	2-3 months
proportion of articles accepted for publication	75 per cent	50 per cent
number of indexing services covering the journal	1	5

Not all editors provided answers to all the questions (hence the variation in the length of the main descriptions between two and thirty-three lines), but quite a few volunteered additional information (even, in a handful of cases, about fees payable to contributors - \$100 seems to be the maximum). Two topics which one might have thought would have been of interest to many authors and not on Dawsey's checklist are date of first publication and circulation.

The guide covers 531 journals arranged alphabetically within thirty-three broad subject divisions and with appropriate cross-referencing between them. They include 229 published in the the United States, 40 in Great Britain, 31 in West Germany, 25 in Italy, 22 in France, 18 in India, 16 in Spain, 14 each in Belgium, Switzerland and Canada, 13 in the Netherlands, 10 in Australia, and

85 in 33 other countries. Given the strength of religious publishing worldwide, and the fact that no directly equivalent volume seems to have been produced before, no single list of titles could ever hope to be totally comprehensive, even for Christianity (there is no more than a token representation of other faiths), and most users are likely to find Dawsey's coverage wanting in one aspect or another. United Kingdom readers, for example, will be wondering why established journals such as *Church Monuments*, *Journal of Welsh Ecclesiastical History*, *Modern Theology*, *Records of the Scottish Church History Society*, and *Scottish Journal of Religious Studies* fail to get a mention or why certain denominational periodicals such as *Baptist Quarterly*, *United Reformed Church History Society Journal*, and *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society* are included but not *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, *Proceedings of the Huguenot Society of London*, and *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*. Similarly, continental scholars will doubtless wish to know what criteria justify the omission of core academic titles such as *Archives de Sciences Sociales des Religions*, *Archiv für Reformationsgeschichte*, *Pietismus und Neuzeit*, and *Social Compass*. Despite such limitations, however, the volume remains an impressive achievement and should prove of incalculable value to every aspiring author in the religious studies area.

CLIVE D. FIELD

*Papers of British Churchmen 1780-1940* (HMSO, 1987, pp [viii], 96, £7.95. ISBN: 0 11 440212 4)

This is the sixth volume in the *Guides to Sources* series prepared by the Royal Commission on Historical Manuscripts. Like its predecessors, it seeks to locate and describe in summary the surviving papers of a group of historical figures - in this case, 807 leading churchmen and women active between 1780 and 1940. Missionaries have been excluded, unless of British significance. As the introduction makes clear, the main focus is on the papers of the ordained clergy; this is certainly true of the 55 Methodists who are included, although some lay people will have entries in other volumes, published or projected, in the series. Even so, there are some notable Methodist omissions - Ladies Huntingdon and Glenorchy, Thomas Coke, John Pawson, Thomas Allen, for example, all of whom left papers in significant quantities. Also, a number of important Methodist depositories are not covered including the New Room, Drew University and Southern Methodist University, Texas.

Some slips ought to be corrected in any future edition: In the Alexander Kilham entry, 'Samuel Eversfield' should read 'Stephen Eversfield' and 'James Hannam' should be 'Thomas Hannam', while it is difficult to believe that Kilham was a correspondent of John Hannah (1792-1867). Despite these qualifications, most church historians will find this a helpful guide, particularly if they remember that it is not necessarily evidence of the non-existence of certain records.

E. A. ROSE

*Lincolnshire Methodism* by W. Leary (Buckingham, Barracuda Books, 1988, pp. 136. £15. 95 ISBN: 0 86023 421 5)

This handsomely produced large format volume tells the story of Methodism in Lincolnshire in a series of short thematic chapters, each followed by several pages of varied illustrations. As we would expect William Leary is an expert and sure-footed guide to the many-sided achievements of Methodism in his native county,



but it is the range and exuberance of the illustrations that remain in the memory - a magnificent cornucopia of plans, photographs, prints, posters, handbills, certificates, class-tickets, hymnsheets and maps. Collectively they encapsulate as nothing else could, the confidence and vigour of chapel life in past days. Not to be missed is Thomas Knutsey's poster advertising his 'Conference Crow Bar' for breaking open 'any Wesleyan Methodist Reform Chapel' (p.85) and the Rules of the Wesleyan Mission Coffee House String Band (p.93). This is a delightful book to be enjoyed by Methodists in Lincolnshire and well beyond.

E. A. ROSE

## NOTES AND QUERIES

### 1443. WESLEY AND EASTERN ORTHODOXY

The Twenty-Sixth Annual Meeting of the Wesleyan Theological Society was held at Nazarene Theological Seminary (Kansas City, MO) on November 2-3, 1990. The theme of the meeting was "Wesley and Eastern Orthodoxy: Theological Influences, Convergences, and Implications."

The keynote address was brought by Canon A.M. Allchin, Director of the St. Theosevia Centre for Christian Spirituality, Oxford, England. Canon Allchin is a central participant in Anglican-Eastern Orthodox dialogues, and one of the early voices suggesting affinities between John and Charles Wesley and the characteristic theological emphases of the Eastern Orthodox tradition. He developed this suggestion in an address entitled 'The Epworth-Canterbury-Constantinople Axis.' Several other papers also explored possible convergences in theological commitments between the Wesleys and Orthodoxy.

The focal purpose of this conference was to forward a research agenda suggested by the late Albert C. Outler. However, it also proved to be fortuitous in light of the recent proposal to undertake an active dialogue between Eastern Orthodoxy and Methodism. A highlight of the meeting was a special presentation to Mildred Bangs Wynkoop honouring her pioneering work and creative contributions to the field of Wesley Studies.

RANDY L. MADDOX

### 1444. BEAMISH METHODIST CHAPEL, COUNTY DURHAM

In 1990, Beamish, the North of England Open Air Museum opened its newest exhibit, the former Wesleyan Methodist chapel which was situated in Beamish village about two miles from the museum site. The original chapel served the community from 1854 to 1985 when it closed due to a declining membership and structural problems. It was given to Beamish Museum and was taken down stone by stone in 1987. The whole operation took about ten weeks.

It was reconstructed on the colliery site at the museum by a team of craftsmen and women who worked hard to reproduce even the smallest details. The museum will use the chapel to interpret the impact of Methodism on Durham mining communities before 1914.

The museum is currently experimenting with a range of activities to assist in interpreting the chapel for the museum visitor. Regular hymn singing, for example, takes place and the general response of visitors has been very positive. An audio-visual programme using a replica magic lantern will be used to explain aspects of chapel life.

LLOYD LANGLEY