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Proceedings

OF THE

Wesley Historical Society

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Volume XLVIII

May 1991

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

(continued from p 10)

5. RECOGNITION OF MEMBERS IN NON-WESLEYAN METHODISM.

NEITHER the Primitive Methodists nor the Methodist New Connexion ever produced liturgical forms for the recognition of new members. The foundation document of the MNC, produced at Leeds in 1797³⁷, set down the procedure for admission of members. After two months 'on Trial' and attending class four times, a list of such candidates is presented to a leaders' meeting, and after their approval, the preacher 'shall receive them into connexion, in the society meeting, the Sunday evening following, by exhortation and prayer.'

Too much should not be made of the phrase 'into connexion', rather than 'into society'. The rule following refers to members being 'excluded from society', and of being 'unworthy of a place in society'. Nothing else suggests that membership was seen as being of any body other than the local society.

³⁷ Minutes of Conversations between Travelling Preachers and delegates from the People Late in Connexion with the Rev Mr Wesley, held in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, in August 1797' reprinted in *HMGB* Vol.4, pp.281-285.

The Primitive Methodist Church published *An Order of Administration of the Sacraments and other Services* towards the end of the nineteenth century. Bowmer³⁸ discusses the orders, noting that of the non-Wesleyan forms, it is 'closest to the BCP.' He suggests that that similarity may have led to it being little used. As it does not contain an order for reception or recognition, it need not be considered further. The only specific suggestions made by the Primitives for such services appear to be a list of suggested hymns in the 1886 Hymnal. Among those listed is Charles Wesley's "Brethren in Christ, and well-beloved."

The original UMFC service book was produced by the direction of the Annual Assembly of 1867. It did not contain an order for recognition. In the preface to the revised book, it was noted that 'A special service for the recognition of members was required.' This revision dates from the end of the century. There is no record of the date on which they were approved, as a consequence of which it is difficult to ascertain the attitude to, and use of, the services in non-Wesleyan Methodism. The UMFC order is of the following form:

TITLE 'A Form for the Recognition of Persons who have been Admitted into Church Fellowship'

The Service may be commenced by singing one of the following hymns: 694, 699, 704-706.

Prayer: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we draw nigh to Thee in the name of Jesus Christ... We bless thee that Thy Gospel is still the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth, and that this is made manifest in the blessed change which thou hast wrought in those whom we now receive into Church fellowship... By grace thou hast saved them, through faith, and now they are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints... Now, O Father, give them thy Holy Spirit that he may dwell in them, guide them into all truth, and show unto them the things of Christ... Amen.

The following portions of scripture may then be read:

1 Thess i.5, ii.13. Col iii.16. Rom xii.1-21. Eph v.11,15,16.
1 Thess v.16-23.

Hymn 703.

Address to the Congregation.

Dearly Beloved, - It is the cause of sincere rejoicing that the life and power of the Gospel are made manifest among you, and that, as branches of the True Vine, you are neither dead nor withered, but are proving your discipleship by fruitfulness and increase... Let it be your endeavour wisely to foster the seed that has taken root in the hearts of these new converts...

³⁸ J. C. Bowmer, 'Some Non-Wesleyan Service Books,' in *Proceedings*, xxxii, pp. 145-152. It would appear that two books were published by the Primitives, not one as Bowmer suggests.

Address to the New Members.

To you who are now admitted to the privileges of this Church, and are taking upon you a share of its responsibilities, we address a few words of loving counsel. The relationship into which you have been brought, through the Gospel, is the closest and highest given to any creature of God.

Eph v.1,2.	Eph vi.13.	Mark xiv.38	1 Cor xvi.13
1 Tim vi.12.	1 John ii.15.	Rom viii.1.	James iv.7
Psalm cxix.105	John v.39.	Col iii.16.	2 Tim ii.21.
Matt xxv.23 2	Peter i.10,11.		

The names shall now be severally read out, and as each Candidate comes forward, the Minister shall give, in the name of the Church, the right hand of fellowship. When deemed expedient, a Card may also be given to each one as a memento of the occasion,

Hymn 704

Prayer: Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, we commend into thy gracious care and keeping those who have confessed the name and have joined the Church of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, Whose salvation, we trust, they have received. We pray for them that their hold on the precious faith... ..Preserve them in the time of temptation... ..Preserve them from all evil... ..As years advance may they continue to bring forth richer fruit... ..May this Church be stronger and holier through their union with thy people... ..The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ...

In contrast to the Wesleyan form, the UMFC order appears to be dependent on no earlier order. Indeed, it is remarkable that of the nineteen passages of scripture which are suggested for use, only one is to be found in the Wesleyan order! The opening prayer emphasises the importance of the new birth in the life of the persons to be recognised, and prays that the Holy Spirit may 'dwell in them, guide them in all truth, and show unto them the things of Christ.' The first set of Scripture readings is dominated by the long passage from Romans, which stresses the role of the individual within the Church.

The prayers and addresses are notable for their use of 'vine' and 'fruit' imagery, and emphasise the importance of being both united to Christ, and to the Church. Both the title of the order, which refers to recognition of those 'received into Church Fellowship', and the concluding prayer ('those who have confessed the name and have joined the Church of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ') use the term 'Church', and are suggestive of an understanding of the service as one recognising a membership with a significance not limited to the local Society alone. At the heart of the service is again the 'Right Hand of Fellowship', but unlike the Wesleyan order, no promises are made by the candidates.

The first *Bible Christian Book of Services* was produced in 1897, with a revised version being published six years later. Both contain an order for

The Recognition of New Members, which are almost identical. We have noted above the resistance which was encountered in Wesleyan Methodism to the introduction of a rite for the recognition of new members, and it must be assumed that such opposition was to be found, perhaps on an even greater scale, in the other Methodist denominations. After publication, such a view would lead to the order being ignored, and there is circumstantial evidence for this in the relative scarcity of Bible Christian service books, which previous writers have noted³⁹ and which the present writer encountered. The Preface to the book notes that an 'order of the Conference' led to its preparation, and states that it was felt that,

there are certain special and solemn occasions in our Church life which ought not to be left entirely to the discretion of the ministers or other presiding brethren.... It is, however, expected that it will be used as a Guide to the kind of service required, rather than slavishly followed.

It would be difficult to assess the use made by the Bible Christians of their book; we should be cautious about assuming too much. Their 1897 order is of the following form:

TITLE: 'The Recognition of New Members'.
Hymn, Scripture 1 Cor xii, Prayer, Hymn 568.

(The Minister here gives a short Address, or he may use the following,)

Dearly Beloved, - The Church of Christ which He hath purchased with his own blood, was left in the world that it might receive additions to its numbers, through the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit. Acts ii, 41,42.

We are assembled here this day that we may publicly receive into fellowship with this Church the following persons, viz. (The names to be here read.)

[There then follow short introductions to various biblical passages:]

In recognition of the new relationship thus formed, we would be found Col i.12

We are reminded of our relationship to Christ and to one another. Jesus said: John xv. 5-7. Romans xii. 5.

Jesus said unto his disciples, Matt xvi. 24. John xv. 14.

As you are desirous of being received as members of this Church, and believing that you have truly repented of your sins, and are trusting in Jesus Christ as your Saviour, and that you will heartily unite in the work of this Church and with your fellow-members in promoting its peace and prosperity, we now give you a hearty welcome.

(The members should then signify their approval,⁴⁰ and the Minister, after having given to each of the new members the right hand of fellowship and the Quarterly Ticket, shall say:)

³⁹ J. C. Bowmer, 'The Bible Christian Service Book', in *Proceedings*, xxxiii, pp. 1-3, and note 1069, p. 106.

⁴⁰ At this point, the 1903 order adds, 'by standing or lifting up the right hand'. This is the only difference between the two Bible Christian orders.

We earnestly pray our Heavenly Father to so defend and sustain you by His grace that you may be preserved blameless to your life's end. The Lord bless you and keep you: the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you: the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Hymn 567.

(If the Sacrament is to be administered it should now proceed, or the service may conclude with an address or the following Scriptures) Jude 24,25. Hebrews xiii. 20,21. 2 Cor xiii, 14.

At the conclusion of the service, the new members should be introduced to as many of those present as practicable.

This Bible Christian order shows some similarities to that of the Wesleysans. The majority of the scripture readings are also to be found in the earlier form; the concluding prayer uses the 'defend-grace' language of the equivalent Wesleyan prayer (and the 1662 BCP prayer), and the concluding three scripture readings are identical to those of 1894. Of the earliest three forms, this order places least emphasis on the work of the Holy Spirit, and that sole reference in the preamble is to the work of the Spirit prior to the baptisms recorded in Acts ii. Together with the right hand of fellowship, we note the giving of the first Quarterly [membership] Ticket, and an emphasis on admission to the local Church as a sequel to personal commitment.

The *United Methodist Church Book of Services* of 1913 was produced as a consequence of the resolution of the 1910 Conference⁴¹. The 1913 Conference agreed to the printing of the new book once it had been approved by the Connexional Committee,⁴² with the consequence that again there is no record of a debate!

The UMC order is of the following form:

TITLE: 'Service for the Recognition of New Members'.

A Hymn having being sung, let an extempore prayer be offered, or the following:

Almighty God, our Father, we draw nigh to Thee through Jesus Christ, and ask the help of Thy Holy Spirit that we may realize Thy presence to illuminate and sanctify us, and may offer Thee acceptable worship... We praise thee for the witness of Thy people in every age to the power of the Gospel to save them that believe, and for the fresh evidence of that power in the renewed hearts and consecrated lives of those whom we now receive into the fellowship of Thy Church. We thank thee that thou hast saved them by grace through faith, that thou hast quickened in them a new life and received them into Thy family, that they are no longer strangers and sojourners but fellow-citizens with the saints and members of the household of God. And now we pray that the Holy Spirit may always abide in their hearts and bring to their remembrance whatsoever Christ has said for their instruction and encouragement. May He lead them into all truth, and perfect them in every virtue and grace... Amen

⁴¹ *UM Minutes*, 1910.

⁴² *UM Minutes*, 1913.

Selections from the following or other suitable passages of Scripture may be read: 1 Cor xii. John xv.5-8 1 Thess v.16-23 1 Cor xiii
Col iii.12-17 Eph ii.19-22 Matt v.13-16 Matt xvi.24-26

The persons who are to be received into Church fellowship being seated together immediately in front of the Minister, the Minister shall say:

We rejoice to welcome to our fellowship today: [Here read over the names.]

Those who are to be admitted shall now stand, and the Minister taking each of them successively by the hand shall say:

In the name of Christ I bid you welcome, and give you the right hand of Christian fellowship.

Then the Minister shall thus address those who have been received into fellowship:

Dear Friends, We rejoice that you have been lead by the Spirit of God to devote your lives to Him. It is our desire that, through your closer association with us in the life and work of the Christian Church, you may be able both to receive much more from us and to give much to us...

After a Hymn has been sung an extempore prayer may be offered, or the following:

O God our Heavenly Father, who workest in us both to will and do those things that are good and acceptable in Thy sight: we make our humble supplication...
...May Thy fatherly hand, we beseech Thee, ever be over them; may Thy Holy Spirit ever be with them; may they grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ... ..Amen.

Jude 24-25. Heb xiii.20,21 2 Cor xiii.14.

As might be expected of the order of a Church which is the result of denominational union, it is clearly textually dependent on earlier orders. Thus, the opening prayer may be seen to be based on that of the UMFC order, the suggested scripture readings are selected from all three earlier orders, and the concluding prayer, 'O God our heavenly Father...' is identical to that found in the Wesleyan service. Finally, the three concluding biblical quotations are identical to those used by the Wesleyans and Bible Christians. The only characteristic worthy of note is that accompanying the right hand of fellowship is neither the optional card of the UMFC order, nor the Bible Christian Quarterly Ticket.

Perhaps because of these various sources, the UMC order is inconsistent in the manner in which it refers to those being recognised. The title refers to 'new members', but the rubric before the act of welcome borrows a phrase from the UMFC title, terming them, 'those who are to be received into Church fellowship'. After the names are read, the rubric refers to

'those who are to be admitted', but later they are called 'those who have been received into fellowship'. Thus, there is ambiguity concerning the purpose of the order; is it to admit or receive, or alternatively to recognise a process that took place prior to the service?

We have seen that the UMFC, BC and UMC orders, although in places textually dependent on the Wesleyan form, exhibit structures which are quite distinct from it. Whilst that of the earliest order, based on the BCP, was seen to be 'Scriptural introduction, Promises, Prayer invoking the Holy Spirit, Collect for those now Recognised', the later forms are far less complex. Omitting the promises of the candidate, and in general placing less emphasis on the work of the Spirit, all three consist of little more than selected scripture readings and prayers placed around the welcome of the right hand of fellowship. The theological emphasis is on the recognition of members who have been received after experiencing personal conversion. Whilst we do find prayers referring to the Holy Spirit, the nearest approach to a direct invocation of the Spirit is found in the UMFC order: 'Now, O Father, give them Thy Holy Spirit that he may dwell in them...'. When modified for the UMC order, the prayer becomes, 'And now we pray that the Holy Spirit may always abide in their hearts...'

In all the orders, there is confusion regarding the point at which the new member is received, and a lack of clarity concerning the organisation into which the new member has been received - the local Church, the particular denomination, or the Church catholic. This last criticism could also be made of the Wesleyan order.

6. METHODIST UNION AND THE 1936 BOOK OF OFFICES.

Following Methodist Union in 1932, joint committees of the uniting Churches were formed to produce a *Book of Offices* for the new Church. Bowmer⁴³ describes the process by which the final form was reached, and the committees involved in its formulation. A draft of the order for the **Recognition of New Members** was brought to the 1934 Conference⁴⁴. Later drafts were presented in 1935⁴⁵ and 1936⁴⁶, the latter being approved for publication and use.

Whilst the 1936 order remains accessible to most readers, its structure is given below so that the development of the order through the three drafts may be readily observed, only the main differences being noted.

TITLE: 'The Order of Service for the Public Reception of New Members'⁴⁷.

⁴³ J. C. Bowmer: 'The Methodist Book of Offices An essay in Liturgical Revision', in *LQHR*, October 1966, pp.268-276.

⁴⁴ *Agenda*, 1934 Conference, pp. 328-335.

⁴⁵ *Agenda*, 1935 Conference, pp. 296-302.

⁴⁶ *Agenda*, 1936 Conference, pp. 308-315.

⁴⁷ 1934 & 1935: 'An Order of Divine Service for the Public *Recognition* of New Members'.

This Office may be used at the close of a shortened service on the Lord's Day...

The Congregation standing, the Minister shall say,

Dearly Beloved, we are about to receive into full communion with the Church of our Lord these persons presently to be named.⁴⁸ Let us hear the words of our Lord Jesus: (Matt xviii : 4:19,20)⁴⁹

Then shall be sung the following Hymn:

'See, Jesu, Thy disciples see, ...' (MHB 719)

Then, the People still standing, the Minister shall say,

Our Lord Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection, gave commandment that His disciples should be baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. He also, after His Ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, united in His Church the multitude of believers...
Within the Christian Church - One Holy, Catholic and Apostolic - the Methodist Church holds and cherishes a true place, having been raised up by God to spread Scriptural Holiness throughout the world. We therefore gather here... ..to seek for the constant renewal of the Holy Spirit, and to take our part in the making of disciples of all the nations.

Minister: Let us pray (There then follows a responsive prayer)

Minister and People: Our Father, which art in heaven...

Here shall be sung this Hymn:

'Christ, from whom all blessings flow ...' (MHB 720)

Here, all still standing, the Minister and People shall say either the Apostles' Creed, or this Scriptural Confession of Faith.

(There then follows a responsive statement of faith.)

Whilst all continue standing, the Minister shall name those who are to be received, and shall say to them⁵⁰.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, we are here present, as children of the one family of God and in his sight, to welcome you into the fellowship of his Holy Church. Forasmuch, however, as the true fellowship of our Lord Jesus Christ

⁴⁸ 1935: there is no 'Statement of Purpose'; the section starts, 'Let us hear...'

⁴⁹ 1934: The opening of the service was quite different, including the Matthean Great Commission, and it continued with an earlier form of the responsive prayers.

⁵⁰ 1934: The Address omits any baptismal reference. It includes this sentence, without obvious parallels in later drafts: 'We believe in a change of heart wrought by the Grace of God; in a new birth; in personal experience of the forgiveness of sins; and in the assurance of this by the witness of the Holy Spirit.'

is given to those who seek to be saved from their sins... ..At your baptism you were received into the congregation of Christ's flock. You have heard the voice of Jesus... ..We believe that you have responded to His call... ..In this high moment, do you now confirm your response to His gracious call, confessing Him before men, taking up your cross, and engaging yourself to continue through good report and ill, to be His faithful soldier and servant to your life's end?

I do so confess Him and pledge myself to Him.

Do you now resolve... ..to hallow your life by prayer and deed... ..and to hasten by your service and sacrifice the coming of his Kingdom throughout the world?

I do so resolve, God being my helper.

In the Name of God, the giver of all grace, we⁵¹ now joyfully welcome you into the fellowship of Christ's Church ...

Then shall the Minister, addressing the Church, say,

Dear Brethren in the Lord, we rejoice together, as members of Christ's Church, in welcoming into her fellowship these who now confess the faith. Let us together with them now dedicate ourselves to the service of God, and holding nothing back, make anew our vows of loyalty to our Lord and Saviour.

Hymn: 'Lord, in the strength of grace,...' (MHB 594)

Minister: Now unto Him that is able...

Here shall follow the Administration of the Lord's Supper, beginning at the words: We do not presume to come to this Thy Table.

We may first note the title 'reception' is used for the first time, rather than 'recognition'. Of the changes which took place during its development, perhaps most significant are the introduction of the reference to Baptism in the address to those about to be received, and the removal from the 1934 draft of the explicit reference to the 'new birth'. Whilst the differences between the drafts are significant, since only the 1936 version was used in Methodist worship, we shall now consider it in the context of earlier orders.

Its use of promises by the candidates, and a responsive confession of faith, mark it as being closer in style to the Wesleyan order than to the others. It is clearly textually dependent on its predecessor in the address after the first hymn, ('Our Lord Jesus Christ, after his Resurrection...'), and in the address to those who are to be received, ('Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ...'). However, the later order avoids the rather ill-focused selection of scripture readings, replacing them with an optional Scriptural

⁵¹ 1934 & 1935: The pronoun used is 'I'.

Confession of Faith. We may note the omission of the Right Hand of Fellowship - a unique feature of this order - and also the requirement that the Lord's Supper shall follow the Service, which may explain the relative brevity of the material after the act of reception.

As to the function and theology of the service, we may observe the following statements in the order itself:

...we are about to receive into full communion with the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ those persons presently to be named.

We therefore gather here to... ..seek for the constant renewal of the Holy Spirit, and to take our part in making disciples...

May it please Thee to enrich with the gifts of Thy Spirit all who have been dedicated to Thee in this place...⁵²

...we are here present... ..to welcome you into the fellowship of His Holy Church.

In the Name of God, the giver of all grace, we now joyfully welcome you into the fellowship of Christ's Church.

When these are considered alongside the statement from the Deed of Union concerning Methodism's place in the Christian Church, it is clear that the emphasis of the service is on the entry of members into 'the Church' and it is Christ's Church that the new members are joining, by means of membership of the Methodist Church. This theology of Church membership had never been explicitly stated in the non-Wesleyan orders. Those in the UMFC had been 'admitted to the privileges of this Church', the Bible Christians had been 'received as members of this Church', and the United Methodists had been 'received into Church Fellowship'. Prior to 1936, only the Wesleys had taken a wider view of membership, and this order can be seen to share that catholic approach.

But it is still not a service which other Communion would recognise as a confirmation rite. (The precise definition of a 'confirmation rite' is a subject for debate. The 1961 report on Church Membership identified two key characteristics, namely that in the service the candidate confirms by public confession 'the membership on which he entered by Baptism', and secondly that prayer is offered that God will confirm, strengthen and increase the gifts and graces which he has already given. In other communions, the episcopal 'laying on of hands' is always the central act.) Whilst there is a prayer for enrichment with the gifts of the Spirit, that another prayer looks for the 'constant renewal of the Holy Spirit' militates against any interpretation of the rite as one that seeks a particular gift from the Holy Spirit for those being received. Thus, the 1936 order may be seen to be one granting membership of the Church catholic, in which this new Methodist Church confidently 'holds and cherishes a true place'.

⁵² From the responsive prayers, before the Lord's Prayer.

7. 'CONFIRMATION' IN BRITISH METHODISM.

In 1961, the Faith and Order Committee produced the first report on the Methodist understanding of Church Membership since 1938.⁵³ In a section on the biblical and historical background there is a most useful summary of the development of the second rite of Christian Initiation, which concludes with a response to the question of the 'completeness' of Infant Baptism:

Thus, while we must always emphasise what God does, it is appropriate that there should be a service to supply that which the service of Infant Baptism necessarily lacks, the candidate's own profession of faith, when also prayer is made that God may in the power of the Holy Spirit both continue to bestow these blessings which he has already granted and also bestow those fresh blessings which are appropriate to one who has professed his faith.⁵⁴

This section also includes a paragraph which summarises succinctly the nature of the changing self-perception of Methodism which is the context of the development of its orders for Recognition or Reception:

When Methodism was a Society within the Church' it was not particularly concerned with this question.⁵⁵ Reception into membership of the Society had originally nothing to do with Confirmation... ..But when Methodism became a Church, then the entry of previously uncommitted persons into the Methodist Society became their entry into the committed membership of Christ's Church.

The report identified the elements 'of great importance' in the Methodist Service for the Reception of New Members: These were:

- (a) personal commitment to Christ as Lord and Saviour and expression of the desire to serve Him in His Church;
- (b) offering of prayer that the gifts and graces which Christ by the Holy Spirit has already given may be continued, confirmed and increased by the same Spirit;
- (c) welcome of the member by the Church upon his entry...

The report was accepted, with the exception of the section headed 'The Name Confirmation'. This briefly stated the meaning of 'Confirmation' in other Churches, as summarised above in relation to the 1936 order. The Rev F. Greeves doubted that it could be so readily defined, commenting,

It was the genius of the Anglicans to avoid precise theological definition.⁵⁶

He proposed, and Conference agreed, that that section should be referred back to the Committee for further consideration. Thus, in 1962, a revised report on 'The use of the term "Confirmation"' was presented to Conference.⁵⁷ The function of a reception service and the meaning of 'Confirmation' are again summarised. The differences between Anglican

⁵³ *Statements of the Methodist Church on Faith and Order 1933-83* (1984), hereafter *FAO*, pp. 75-89.

⁵⁴ *FAO*, p. 79.

⁵⁵ i.e., the purpose of the Confirmation service.

⁵⁶ *Methodist Recorder*, July 13th 1961.

⁵⁷ *FAO*, pp. 89-91.

Confirmation and Methodist Reception are itemised, as are the similarities. The two terms are identified as not being interchangeable, but as referring to 'different aspects of a complex whole' and much more is made of the significance of 'new birth' than in the 1961 Report. The use of the term 'Confirmation' continued to cause much debate.⁵⁸ A member of the Committee, the Rev. Rupert Davies, noted that the main objection was that the use of the term might obscure the Methodist emphasis on personal commitment to Christ. He assured the Conference that,

There is no desire on the part of the [FAO] Committee to erect an ecclesiastical escalator by which a boy or girl could be carried insensibly into the company of the saints.... In our titles and in our liturgy, I trust that we shall preserve our concern that every boy and every girl should personally commit himself or herself to Christ, receive the new birth, and know the experience of personal holiness by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Speakers in the Conference were concerned that since the Anglican Church used the term in a sense which did not stress the significance of 'new birth', so its significance in Methodism might be lessened by the use of that term. The Rev Norman Snaith expressed caution about the use of a word which for 70% of people already had a meaning different to that which was being proposed. 'He warned Conference that it would, in short time, have the same meaning as for the majority', and disapproved of the use of 'Confirmation' in the title of the Reception Service. With a minor amendment, Conference approved the 1962 Report, and thus the future use of the title, 'The Order of Service for the Public Reception into Full Membership, or Confirmation'. This report marks the introduction of the designation 'Full', rather than 'New', to describe those members being received.

8. THE METHODIST SERVICE BOOK, 1975.

At the 1962 Conference, the Rev. Rupert Davies on behalf of the Faith and Order Committee proposed that a new *Book of Offices* should be devised, and this was agreed. The Committee produced a number of draft orders in the late 1960s, those for Baptism and Reception being accepted for experimental use by the 1967 Methodist Conference. After a period of trial, the *Methodist Service Book* was approved by the 1975 Conference. It is instructive to compare it with the draft order published in 1967, and note some minor differences. The title of both orders, in accordance with the 1962 Report, is, **Public Reception into Full Membership, or Confirmation**.⁵⁹ The 1975 General Directions (but not the 1967 ones) note that,

Those who have by Baptism been admitted into the visible community of the Church are constantly to be taught to look forward to their reception into the full membership of the Church....⁶⁰

⁵⁸ *Methodist Recorder*, July 12th, 1962.

⁵⁹ It appears that some editions of the draft forms were printed with 'Recognition' rather than 'Reception' on the cover. This was apparently the result of an oversight during production.

⁶⁰ *MSB*, p.A14.

The two sets of General Directions may also be distinguished by their description of the availability of membership, viz:

Full membership is open to all who sincerely desire to be saved from their sins through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who evidence the same in life and conduct, and who give assurance that they seek fellowship with Christ and his people by taking up the duties and privileges of the Methodist Church. (1967).

All who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and accept the obligation to serve him in the life of the Church and the world are welcome as full members of the Methodist Church. The Pastoral sub-committee shall be satisfied of the sincerity of this desire as shown by evidence of life and conduct... (1975).

Most notable is the removal of the reference to being 'saved from sin', a phrase which, as we have seen, had been used in connection with membership since the General Rules of the United Societies of 1743.⁶¹

The structure of the service is indicated by its section headings, namely 'The Ministry of the Word', 'The Promises and the Profession of Faith', 'The Confirmation and Reception', and 'The Lord's Supper'. This can be seen to be very similar to the Wesleyan and 1936 forms. The first prayer refers to the 'new birth', and seeks to relate it to the rite being observed, praying that the work which God has begun in them,

...may be confirmed by the continued working of your Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

In comparison with the 1936 order, the questions which the MSB requires to be asked of 'those who are to be confirmed' are much simpler:

Do you repent of your sins and renounce all evil?

Do you trust Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

Will you obey Christ and serve him in the Church and in the world?⁶²

The 'Confirmation and Reception' itself offers two alternative forms, with the effect that the laying on of hands is optional. However, whether or not the physical act is performed, the words used are effectively identical. When the Minister does lay his hands on those to be confirmed, the prayer is,

Lord, confirm your servant N. by your Holy Spirit that he may continue to be yours for ever.

Each answers, 'Amen', after which,

All stand, and the Minister says to those who have been confirmed: "We welcome you into the full membership of the Christian Church and the Society in this place." The Minister and another representative member of the Society may give the right hand of fellowship to each of them.

We may note the following developments from the 1936 order: First, each person may be 'treated' individually (although the MSB offers an alternative in which the prayer of Confirmation is said once without

⁶¹ This phrase appeared in the paragraph 'Basis of Membership' in the 1932 *Deed of Union*, until its replacement in 1970 by a form which is echoed in the 1975 'Directions'.

⁶² All quotations are from the 1975 order. The 1967 version is very similar, but addresses God in the 'Thou' form.

When confirmation and reception are combined, a further issue is raised. It is that whilst, except for the classification of membership, the reception into societal membership within Methodism raises no major theological or liturgical issues, the use of 'member' to describe someone who has been confirmed (rather than just 'received') could be seen as weakening the significance of Baptism as the rite which bestows membership of the Church catholic.⁶⁶ Thus, the act of combining two liturgical functions into one service, each of which requires a different understanding of the title 'member', makes more difficult the task of explaining theologically what is 'going on' in such a service. This is an inevitable consequence of uniting what was once a public expression of an earlier administrative process with a rite which in much of Christendom is a sacrament which, although once seen as 'completing' Baptism, is now under close scrutiny as to its purpose.

As long as societal membership remains an integral part of Methodism, then reception rites will continue to provide a liturgical expression of the process of joining the Methodist Church. But, as we have seen, the qualification of the term 'member' tends to obscure the membership conferred at Baptism. One may conjecture about the benefits of a redivision of the two strands of reception and confirmation, so that we may receive into Methodism those who have experienced a 'new birth' without the process bringing into question the sufficiency of Baptism for entry into the Church catholic.

STUART A. BELL

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⁶⁶ We may note that the contemporary Anglican confirmation order (*ASB* pp. 252-257) makes no reference to membership, thus avoiding potential ambiguity.

Only three Methodist chapels are found worthy of inclusion in the *Faber Guide to Victorian Churches*, ed. by Peter Howell and Ian Sutton (1989). These are Newbury (Northbrook Street) 1837-8, York Centenary 1840 and Middleton, Manchester, (Long Street) 1897-1901. Northbrook Street was the subject of a short article in *Proceedings*, xliii pp 25-6. Long Street also has a substantial entry in the *Blue Guide to Churches and Chapels of Northern England* edited by Stephen C. Humphrey.

E.A.R.

A Brother Bereft is a timely study of Samuel Wesley junior in relation to his brother John in this tercentenary year of his birth. The title is from Samuel's last letter to his mother only days before his death 'I am bereft of both my brothers ...'. The author of this 36 page booklet is a minister in the Church of the Nazarene, Rev Allan Longworth, and copies are £1.50 post free from 'Holmesfield', High Street, Morley, Leeds, LS27 9AN.

METHODIST CHAPELS AND THE GOTHIC REVIVAL

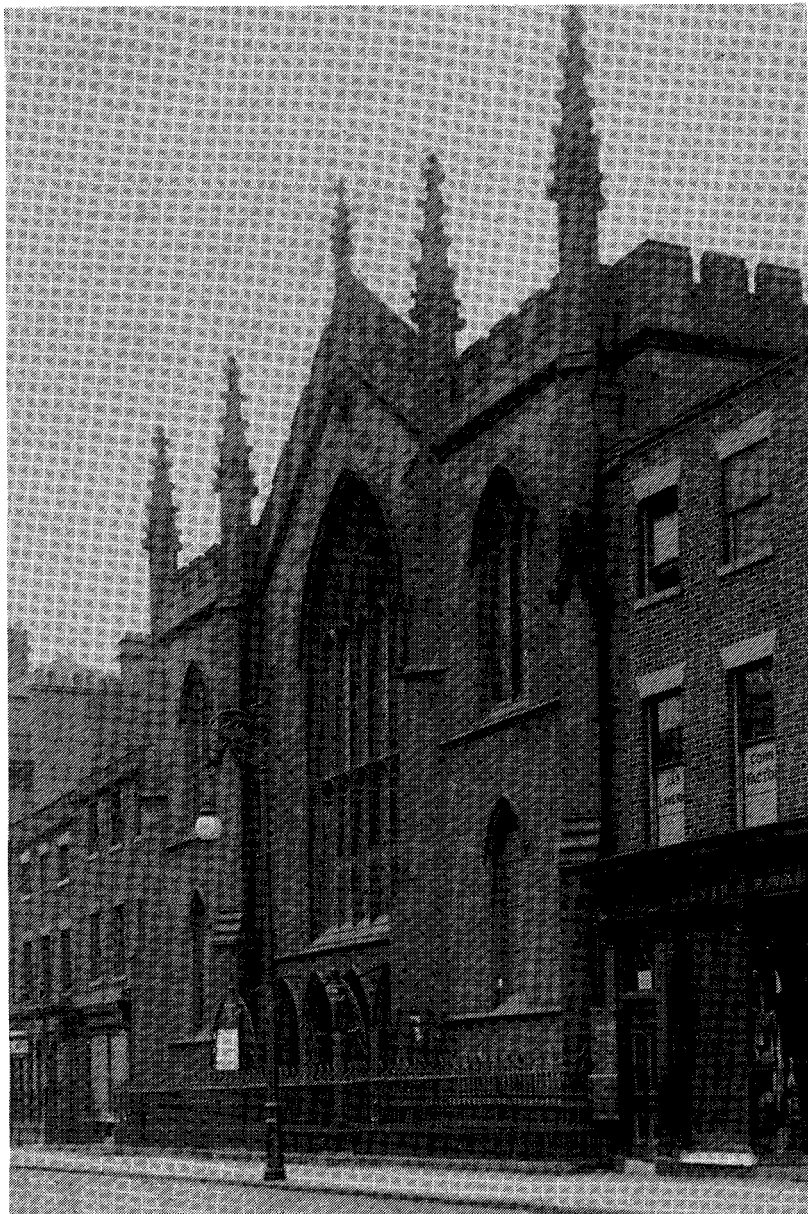
ON May 27th 1888 the congregation gathered to hear the Rev. Robert Newton Young preach the inaugural sermon at morning service in St. John's Wesleyan Methodist Church, Ashbrooke, Sunderland. There was little unusual in this event for up and down the country hardly a week went by without some Methodist church being opened or re-opened, especially in the hectic period of building in the decades following the Religious Census of 1851. Nor was the high cost (£14,000) of the building especially remarkable given that it had been built to serve a prosperous suburban community whose substantial houses were spreading through the leafy spaces of Ashbrooke. What was more striking was the architectural statement made by the church building. It was, and is, fully Gothic in the Anglican pattern. Arcaded nave, deep chancel, transepts and a splendid soaring spire combined to persuade a visitor that he was in an Anglican church, and the use of a shortened form of morning service from the Book of Common Prayer on the first Sunday enhanced that feeling. Perhaps the preacher's insistence on the need for the society to remain true to the beliefs of its forebears and for the church to develop spiritually touched on issues that were not wholly comfortable to some of his hearers.¹

St. John's, Ashbrooke is just one particular response to the complex pressures that must be resolved before a chapel can be built. Yet it represents one strand of architectural thinking and it highlights a tension within Methodism and other Nonconformist churches about their reaction to the revival of Gothic forms in the nineteenth century for most building types and especially for ecclesiastical use. At first sight Methodism does not seem to have been a denomination likely to opt for an architectural form derived from medieval Christendom, enthusiastically championed by Pugin for Roman Catholic use and especially identified with the ecclesiologists of the High Church element within the Church of England.² This paper seeks to look at the way Methodism responded to the Gothic Revival in its chapel building in the nineteenth century using examples taken mainly from north eastern England.

For Methodists and other Nonconformists the adoption of Gothic was not immediately attractive. The identification of Gothic with Catholicism and the emphasis within the buildings on symbolic representations of spiritual ideals did not sit too well with a tradition founded on outdoor evangelism and seeking to bring a direct message to its hearers in a

¹ *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 28 May, 1888, p. 4. See also, G.E. Milburn (ed), *St. John's Ashbrooke 1888-1988*.

² For general accounts of the Gothic Revival see K. Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, (Harmondsworth, 1964); R. Dixon and S. Muthesius, *Victorian Architecture*, (1978).



Fawcett Street Wesleyan Chapel, Sunderland, 1836 by Joseph Potts. Set in a terrace of Georgian houses it is essentially a plain preaching space with Gothic decorative detail applied by a local untrained builder-architect.

straightforward way. And yet in the end any misgivings were overcome. Probably the first Methodist chapel influenced by Gothic design was Oldham Street, Manchester (1781). It had tracery in the windows, a gable end and extraordinary battlements on parapet and gable. It was very much in the 'Gothick' tradition of applying some not very correct or well understood medieval details to a building that in other respects followed the standard building pattern of the time. Certainly by later Victorian standards it would have been seen as the worst sort of mock-Gothic design, yet at the time it represented an attempt to give the chapel a fashionable veneer that would show that this congregation was aware of current architectural developments.³ Oldham Street was an unusually early example; an exception to the prevailing classical tradition. In Sunderland the first Gothic chapel was built much later, in 1836 when the Wesleyans opened Fawcett Street Chapel. Not only was it the first Gothic Nonconformist chapel in the town, it was the first Gothic building in Sunderland designed by a local architect and only the third to be built there after St. Thomas by P. W. Wyatt and St. Mary R.C. by Ignatius Bonomi. The architect was Joseph Potts who was just beginning to emerge as a designer rather than a builder, though he referred to himself all his life as a mason. Strictly the chapel had only a Gothic facade fitted on to a traditional building amidst a terrace of middle class houses, and it was not very accurate Gothic either. A crocketed gable over a Perpendicular window with lancets to the side and four tall and structurally not very necessary buttresses made up the elevation. Inside the oblong space was treated as an auditory church with an oval gallery. Only some Gothic motifs on the panelling carried the new style forward. The plan was fundamentally non-Gothic and the Gothic detail mere window dressing. Although this was an important building for Potts which helped to establish him as a significant local architect (his daughter made a charming sampler of the facade which shows how his family valued it) it caused little stir in the town. The main controversy was not about alien design details, but about the introduction of an organ. This was because the design was clearly intended merely to present a fashionable face in what was a fashionable new area of town; and the Wesleyans who paid for it and worshipped there were themselves showing that they were *au fait* with new ideas. While the decision to build the chapel no doubt reflected sincerely-held Methodist beliefs, its outward form was more intended to represent the wealth and taste of the congregation. There was no real perception of any significant area of debate about as to what message that building might be conveying. It was simply one style chosen rather than any other.⁴ The Wesleyan Methodist Association built a 'tabernacle' in a similar style with a Gothic facade in nearby Brougham Street in 1840-1.⁵

³ G. W. Dolbey, *Architectural Expression of Methodism: The First Hundred Years*, (1964) pp. 78—9, illus. p. 8.

⁴ *Sunderland Herald*, 13 Aug. and 27 Aug. 1836. T. Corfe (ed.), *Buildings of Sunderland, 1814-1914*, (Sunderland, 1984) p. 24.

⁵ *Sunderland Herald*, 12 June 1840, p. 3.

Other denominations were much further ahead with their use of Gothic styles especially the Unitarians and Congregationalists.⁶ They were therefore more quickly into the debate about the desirability of Gothic chapels than Methodists, but Methodism could not avoid that debate. The leading supporter of Gothic was the Rev. Frederick James Jobson D.D. who in 1850 published *Chapel and School Architecture, as Appropriate to the Buildings of Nonconformists, particularly to those of Wesleyan-Methodists, with Practical Directions etc.* after it had appeared in part form in *The Watchman*. Jobson had trained as an architect with the devout Roman Catholic E. J. Willson of Lincoln,⁷ and entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1834. His distinguished career involved service on the Chapel Affairs Committee, the positions of Book Steward and Editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, three terms at the City Road Chapel, and culminated in his election as President of Conference, 1869-70. Jobson was very much an official voice within Wesleyanism and, while he was careful always to make architectural considerations subordinate to the evangelical priorities of Methodism, he argued in favour of Gothic in ways very similar to those of Pugin, Ruskin or the ritualists.⁸

His objections to the 'usual style' were familiar. It was not appropriate to the sacred function of worship because it did not immediately proclaim that the building was a chapel. Buildings that looked like barns or that could be mistaken for warehouses, factories, town halls or even theatres or music halls, had failed the central test of giving architectural expression to the holy work that was undertaken within them. He also argued that the classical frontages, however grand, were shams because they were merely facades that did not reflect the internal structure that they concealed. This language about the truth of building was central to all those who argued for Gothic designs, of whatever denomination. Of course Jobson could not go too far in arguing for the building being symbolic of religious truths without being accused of papist attitudes. It was the excessively symbolic interpretation of Gothic detail that brought the Camden Society and the Ecclesiologists into disrepute. Jobson therefore argued against unnecessary ornament largely on the grounds that the cost would divert funds from the more important task of preaching the Word. Cost was always likely to be a clinching argument in any church busily expanding its activities and devoting more and more resources to buildings. Jobson argued, as did many others, that Gothic was cheaper than Classical because it was capable of being adapted to the requirements of small sites and could be built out

⁶ H. Davies, *Worship and Theology in England, Vol. IV*, (Princeton, 1962) Chap. 2; Dixon & Muthesius, *op. cit.*, pp. 229-33.

⁷ Willson was an eminent Gothicist in both his writings and his buildings. H. M. Colvin, *Biographical Dictionary of British Architects, 1600-1840*, (1978) pp.898-9.

⁸ *School and Chapel Architecture* has been reprinted by the Methodist Publishing House (1991). Discussion of it can be found in Dixon & Muthesius, *op. cit.*, p. 231; H. Davies, *op. cit.*, pp. 58-60. A different sort of discussion can be found in Jobson's obituary, *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1881, pp. 150-57.

of cheaper materials than the stone demanded by pillars and porticos. This notion of adaptation of Gothic designs is again characteristic of dissenters arguing for the 'pointed style'. They were prepared to forgo standard elements of medieval churches like the central passage way, deep chancels and even the arcade of stone piers to define the nave. To many Anglican Goths this adaptation produced architecture that was not genuinely medieval at all and was precisely what Pugin had so roundly condemned; it was at the heart of what Nonconformity understood by Gothic design.⁹

yet ... the architect has not hesitated to adapt the flexible architecture of the fourteenth century to the requirements and uses of modern Nonconformist church service. Hence, iron is adopted in place of stone...¹⁰

Not everyone was happy to accept the ideas that Jobson sought to present. A comprehensive reply to the Gothic position, published anonymously in the *Wesleyan Magazine* in 1859, usefully summarises the main objections.¹¹ Starting from Wesley's practical precepts the author denies that any one style can claim greater appropriateness to Christian buildings than others. Indeed he argues the very attractiveness of Gothic makes it suspect because artistic achievement and regenerating power are not necessarily connected: 'Art has done but little for Italy'. He denies that religious buildings must be aesthetically fine to honour God, because He is looking for contrite spirits. And he argues against the practicality of Gothic. Traceried windows admit only a dim light, Gothic chapels are notoriously cold and draughty, the open roofs make preaching unduly difficult as do arcades of piers, and the cruciform shape divides up the congregation into three parts instead of uniting them into one great whole. The claim of cheapness is not sustainable because cheapness is only to be achieved by reducing ornamentation and it is upon such decoration that Gothic depends for its appeal and effect. And if that decoration is provided at great cost it actually proves disadvantageous: 'Works of art may interfere with the worship of God'. In short the article wishes to see a return to the simplicity of the earlier chapels. At the bottom of its objections is a fear that Wesleyanism is drifting towards Rome, towards an aping of Anglican traditions and away from the basic ideals of Wesley and his desire to make the Gospel known to all:

People cannot pray any better in the weekly prayer meeting, or speak any better at the quarterly love feast, in consequence of 'tessellated floors', 'pointed roofs', 'stained windows', 'polished granite columns', and 'foliated piers'.

⁹ See *Congregational Year Book*, 1847, pp. 164-73; J. Cubitt, *Church Designs for Congregations*, (1870).

¹⁰ *Congregational Year Book*, 1857, describing Broughton Congregational Church, Salford designed by Thomas Oliver of Sunderland and Newcastle. Quoted in C. Binfield, *So Down to Prayers*, (1977), p. 145. His Chapter 7 gives an illuminating account of Dissenting Gothic using mainly Congregational examples.

¹¹ O, 'Methodist Chapels', *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1859, pp. 905-14, 985-91. The editors printed a specific disclaimer disassociating the journal from all the views expressed by the correspondent who takes 'a warm interest in the subject.'

And he is concerned that these fine buildings will discourage the poor from attendance because 'splendour is offensive to them and they are ill at ease in its midst'.

Whilst the commitment of the writer is not in doubt, he does manage to avoid the rancorous tone adopted by other dissenters when confronted by Gothic chapels.¹² This position, at least when stripped of its anti-Catholic trappings, is an honourable one deriving from the Reformation and the early traditions of Dissent. How widespread it was within Methodism in the mid-nineteenth century is difficult to gauge. It would appear that among the Wesleyans at least the desire to build chapels that looked medieval was irresistible for it was only extreme poverty that caused simple non-Gothic buildings to be erected. In other traditions within Methodism there was less eagerness for full-blooded Gothic design even when funds were available. It has been suggested that middle class congregations living in fashionable suburbs would be more likely to seek splendid Gothic chapels and certainly Congregationalists were the leaders in this trend employing some well known architects like Alfred Waterhouse or Paull and Bickerdyke as well as providing a great deal of work for specialists in chapels like John Tarring or James Cubitt.

If we turn from the arguments about architectural form and look at Methodist chapels that were erected after 1851, then it is clear that Gothic styling was increasingly taken to be necessary.

And calmly rise on smoky skies
Of intersecting wires,
The Nonconformist spirelets
And the Church of England spires.¹³

Beijeman exactly describes a familiar urban scene and (allowing for some exceptions) places the chapel in precise relationship to the Anglican Church. Although they are within the same Gothic style, chapels are seen as lacking the full conviction of their ecclesiastical neighbours. This has been perceived as a matter of failing to be really up-to-date in fashion: 'Our buildings are always a generation behind the Anglicans; that is why they are always sniffed at as in bad taste'.¹⁴ It has also been seen as a particular failing of taste and of standards peculiar to Nonconformity, condemning chapels to be largely regarded as architectural calamities. Martin Briggs is severe in his condemnation:

... they proceeded to Gothicise the exteriors of their chapels regardless whether their limited resources and - too often - limited architectural skill were equal to providing an effect which would satisfy informed and discerning critics. It was thus that the starveling spires, the shoddy tracery and the hideous coloured glass of these mid-Victorian chapels came to be derided more bitterly than the solid Georgian classical chapels or the squat and homely 'Little

¹² See J. A. Tabor, *Nonconformist Protest Against the Popery of Modern Dissent as Displayed in Architectural Imitations of Roman Catholic Churches*, (Colchester, 1863)

¹³ John Beijeman, 'South London Sketch 1944', *Collected Poems*, (3rd ed. 1970), pp. 148-9.

¹⁴ B. L. Manning, 'Some Characteristics of Older Dissent', *Congregational Quarterly*, 1927, p. 291.

Bethels' ever had been; for the 'Gothic' examples are manifestly pretentious, and snobbery is much more detestable than simplicity.¹⁵ While not wishing to dispute that there are many unappealing chapels in both town and village, Briggs is too dismissive. He was writing at a time when the proportions of Georgian architecture were in favour and ignores the strong antipathy for that style that existed in Victorian England. He also fails to give full weight to the adaptive nature of Nonconformist Gothic. Of course the Ecclesiological Movement would decry Methodist chapels as being not properly Gothic because they made no attempt to enshrine High Anglican doctrines in architectural form. Religious buildings without chancels, aisles and transepts were to them not proper Gothic and yet adaptations of this sort were crucial to Methodists seeking effective preaching places often for quite small congregations. To condemn chapels for not being Anglican in form is unperceptive because they were not intending to follow that form.

Nor is it entirely fair to assume that Methodists failed to seek architectural advice and skills in designing chapels. The image of a self-built chapel, drawing on the practical skills of members of the congregation, is based upon examples most commonly found in the early period of chapel building and in small isolated communities. The image was fostered by accounts of chapel building in denominational journals which naturally liked to make chapel openings appear to be heroic struggles undertaken by simple folk bolstered only by faith. John Betjeman has given this heroic view wider credence in his sympathetic account of Nonconformist architecture that seeks to present it as a truly vernacular architecture of the people.¹⁶ In terms of the sacrifices made to raise the necessary finance this perception still has value, but in most cases local architects were employed to prepare designs. This was particularly the case in towns where architectural practices were already well established. In smaller communities, and where money was extremely scarce, then builders or local supporters might do the necessary drawings often without seeking a fee. But in the north-east, at least, most architects received some Methodist commissions and some came almost to specialise in chapel architecture.

Not all societies necessarily wanted Gothic buildings and some continued to be built within the classical tradition. Bethel Chapel for the New Connexion in Durham was built in 1853-4 in a Roman Ionic style. It was the first building of E. R. Robson who was later to be the first architect to the London School Board and an authority on school design. When it needed renovating in 1883 the trustees employed William Hill of Leeds, famous for his classical town halls.¹⁷ The Wesleyans in West Hartlepool in 1871-3 opted for a giant Corinthian portico to front their chapel in

¹⁵ M. S. Briggs, *Puritan Architecture and its Future*, (1946), p. 39.

¹⁶ J. Betjeman, *First and Last Loves*, (1960), pp. 95-106.

¹⁷ *Durham Chronicle*, Aug. 18, 1854, p. 8; 18 May 1883, p. 5.

Victoria Road, designed by Hill and Swan,¹⁸ and in Chester-le-Street, as late as 1880, a purely Renaissance Wesleyan Chapel was erected by an unknown architect.¹⁹ But generally Gothic detail was used, and in the chapels which were to head circuits or which were built in the growing suburbs a full blown Gothic effect was sought. John Eltringham designed several Gothic chapels for corner sites in Sunderland, basically to the same design with a four-or five-light traceried window over a centrally placed door and a spirelet placed over the outside angle of the entrance front.²⁰ Eltringham had a mixed practice in the town and no direct connection with Methodism as far as I am aware. Other Sunderland chapels that sought to present a fully Gothic exterior with towers and spires were Thornhill UMFC (now Burn Park) by W. & T. R. Milburn (1903), and Cleveland Road for the Primitives, also by the Milburns (1901). The Milburns were Wesleyans, and ran the dominant architectural practice in Sunderland at the end of the nineteenth century, but they built comparatively few Methodist chapels. For the important Durham Road Chapel the Wesleyans opted for an architectural competition in 1900 which was won by J. Jameson Green of Liverpool with a Gothic design.²¹ He subsequently designed Wesley Hall, Trimdon Street (1902), and the important Ewesley Road Wesleyan (1904)~ which were in the Free Gothic style that emerged in Edwardian times and which used a bright red brick for the first time in Sunderland chapels. These chapels all had clearly Gothic exteriors because they occupied significant sites in the town and were to represent their connexions in a particularly positive way. They also had relatively large budgets. Eltringham at Park Road MNC, for example, had £5,500 in 1887 which was equivalent to the budget of the Anglican churches intended to serve poorer areas of the town. But for that money he had not only to accommodate 700 hearers but to provide a Sunday School, two class rooms and a chapel keeper's cottage.²² Most Methodist chapels both in towns and in the villages were forced to consider much less grandiose schemes than these.

Cost was undoubtedly the primary consideration that determined the design of chapels and the extent of their architectural aspirations. Many of the chapels were very small because the society was very small and to lose the congregation in an over-large building would be disheartening to preacher and hearers alike. The bulk of chapels were built to accommodate from about 150 to about 500 people because the need was to establish a presence in every area of the town, and in each pit village in the county,

¹⁸ N. Pevsner & E. Williamson, *Buildings of England: Co. Durham*, (Harmondsworth, 1983), p. 313.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

²⁰ Two were for the New Connexion: Park Road (1887) and Mount Tabor (1894) One was for the Wesleyans: Roker (1905) .

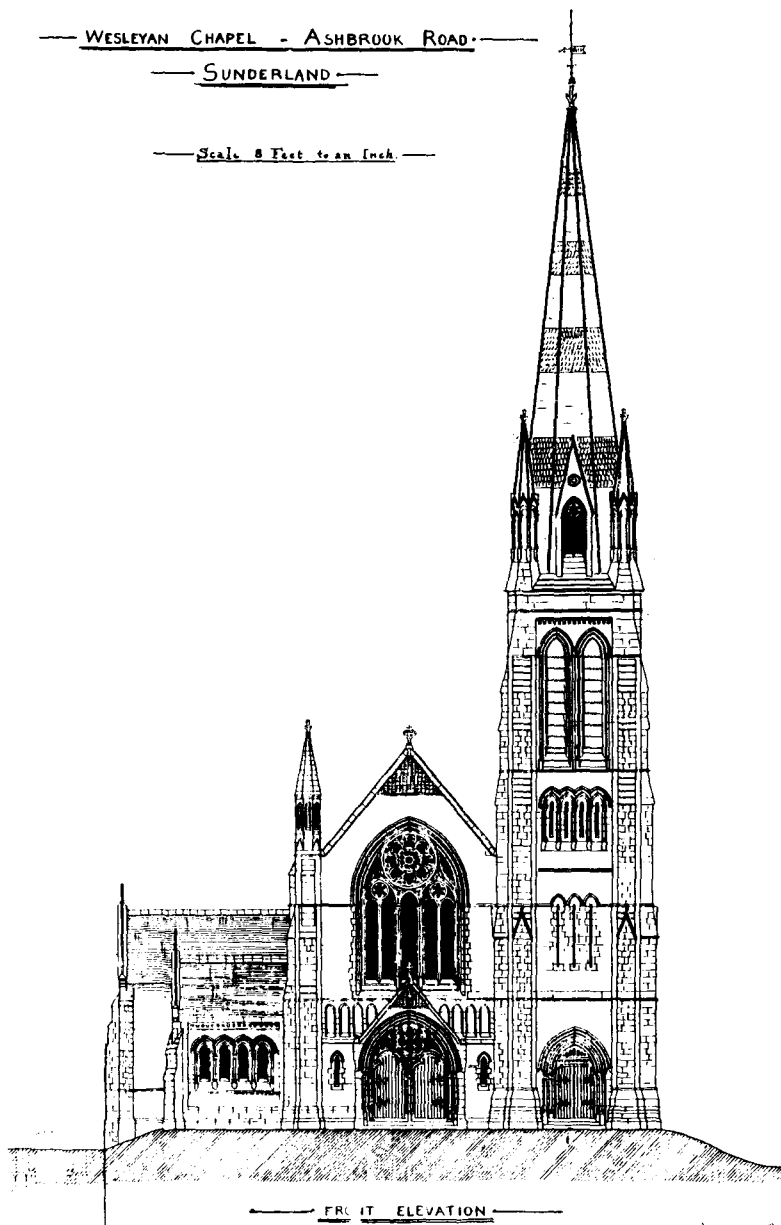
²¹ R. H. Harper, *Victorian Architectural Competitions: an index to British and Irish competitions in 'The Builder', 1843-1900*, (1983) .

²² *Sunderland Times*, 20 May 1887.

rather than to expect the public to travel to large central chapels. The competition between the various strands of Methodism also tended to the provision of several small chapels in each community. For example, in the small mining village of Bearpark three chapels for Wesleyans, Primitives and New Connexion were built within sight of each other and of the colliery in the space of nine years. No architect was likely to be able to make much of these small commissions with budgets of £300 to £500. Anglicans generally reckoned that £10 per sitting was necessary to achieve a building both aesthetically pleasing and fitting for worship. Methodists often struggled to raise sums that would allow £2 per sitting and then wanted ancillary buildings as well within that budget. Small wonder that County Durham was scattered with cheap chapels that attracted descriptive epithets like 'neat', 'plain', 'chaste' and 'commodious' in contemporary accounts to conceal the minimal nature of their design. For some people, of course, this was a positive virtue as it demonstrated commitment to the work of the Lord rather than to worldly ostentation, but by the later years of the nineteenth century more members felt that their chapels should make a positive statement of their religious beliefs. In this respect Gothic detailing was a useful factor. Even if the chapel was just a brick oblong, a steeply pitched roof, a gabled frontage and the use of pointed arches to doors and windows easily gave a direct statement of the building's religious intent. Whether it is fair to call these chapels Gothic, as the contemporary accounts often do, is open to doubt. Even when they opted for classically-derived details like pediments or round headed windows, they contrive to look unmistakably Nonconformist chapels. Far from the original problem of looking like secular buildings, post 1850 buildings look like nothing other than what they are, and they adopt in effect a 'chapel architecture' style.

A large number of these small chapels were designed by architects. In pit villages it might well be the Colliery Engineer who donated the plans, but he would have been designing buildings for his employers. In Sunderland the well-known local architects were perfectly happy to take on these small jobs. John Tillman, the first professionally qualified architect in the town and whose major work was Sunderland Museum, was particularly prolific, with Hood Street UMFC (1867) surviving as an effective design with pairs of red brick arches set in a white brick front. John Eltringham built many small chapels as did Joseph Potts who was favoured by the UMFC. Even the eclectic Frank Caws, whose main practice was shop design, provided one small chapel for £700 which featured a stone front in Norman style and a door way with zig-zag mouldings.²³ Out in the county men like T. E. Oliver, architect to the Hetton Coal Company, John Smith of Shotley Bridge, John Graham of Crook and W. Rutter of Brandon can be found regularly designing entirely routine chapels for all connexions within Methodism. There was always a tendency for Wesleyans

²³ Ballast Hills UMFC (1882) . Demolished.



St. John's Wesleyan Chapel, Ashbrooke, Sunderland, 1888 by Robert Curwen. Curwen's own drawing of the main elevation showing a thoroughly Gothic design with massing, decoration and spire drawn from well-understood medieval precedents. (Source: St. John's Church archives)

to favour full blown Gothic more than other Methodists, but all including the Primitives used Gothic detailing. Even the Christian Lay Church, when it broke away from Primitive Methodism over what they saw as the excessive cost and ostentation of John Tillman's Lombardic Gothic Tatham Street Chapel, used Gothic detailing on their deliberately humble chapels.²⁴

Another commonly suggested idea is that the architects of Methodist chapels come from within Methodism itself. In some cases this was undoubtedly so and these architects came to have a practice largely centred on Methodist commissions. Firms like Howdill and Howdill of Leeds, whose principals were active supporters of Primitive Methodism in Leeds, had an extensive Primitive Methodist practice around the turn of the century.²⁵

So did A. F. Scott (b.1854) in East Anglia whose father was commemorated by the Scott Memorial Primitive Chapel in Norwich (1902) designed by the son.²⁶ In the north east sons of the manse like Joseph Shields (1853-95) son of the Primitive minister Ralph Shields, and F.R.N. Haswell (1834-1912) son of the Wesleyan Partis Haswell, naturally were well equipped to provide appropriate designs for local building committees. Shields provided a spectacular Romanesque design in 1881 to replace the classical Williamson Street Primitive in Sunderland and his Primitive chapel in Langley Park (1884) is an attractive Gothic design using the transepts for the Sunday School.²⁷ Haswell had a general practice, but designed at least 20 Wesleyan chapels including buildings in Bishop Auckland (1866), Blyth (1867) and Tynemouth (1869) all of which were in the classical style.²⁸ The most active Methodist architect in the north east at the turn of the century was T. E. Davidson of Newcastle who claimed to have designed over 400 chapels mainly for the Primitive Methodists including the impressive Bishop Auckland Central Chapel (1903). But many of the commissions must have been much smaller jobs like the school added to South Hylton Primitive Chapel in 1908.²⁹ Despite these particular examples my feeling is that building committees used any architect in whom they had confidence regardless of their religious affiliations. I have no doubt that each region of the country could produce a small group of architects who specialised in Methodist chapels if the necessary research was pursued.

St. John's Ashbrooke is a particularly full-blooded Gothic design that reduces the amount of adaptation of Anglican patterns for Methodist

²⁴ See G. E. Milburn, 'Tensions in Primitive Methodism in the Eighteen Seventies and the Origins of the Christian Lay Churches in the North East,' *Proceedings*, xl, pp. 93-101, 135-145.

²⁵ D. Linstrum, *West Yorkshire: Architects and Architecture*, (1978), p. 378.

²⁶ *P. M. Mag.* (1907), pp. 721-724.

²⁷ Obituaries: *Builder*, 4 Jan. 1896, p. 20. *Sunderland Daily Echo*, 23 Dec. 1895, p. 3.

²⁸ Obituaries: *Builder*, 31 Jan. 1913, p. 161. *R.I.B.A. Journal*, 20, 8 Feb. 1913, p. 231.

²⁹ W. H. Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism*, (1909), p. 233.



St. John's, Sunderland – Chancel and Nave

usage to a minimum. It is therefore an exceptional design resulting from exceptional circumstances. The builders had the money because the congregation was the wealthiest in the town and the expenditure (including later ancillary buildings) of about £17,000 made it the most expensive church in Sunderland to that date. Prior's masterpiece of St. Andrew, Roker (1907) cost only £10,000. But St. John's included a large lecture hall and an extensive range of vestries and classrooms. An intended manse was never built. Designed in Decorated style the 150 ft. spire dominates Ashbrooke and competes successfully with the Anglican Christ Church. Even Jobson would doubtless have felt that too much was spent on ornamentation, especially on the double arched entrance, the carved capitals to the arcade, and the chancel arch. The architect for the scheme was Robert Curwen of London. He was a trained architect who hailed from Liverpool and who became ARIBA in 1879. He began his training with C. O. Ellison in Liverpool who was a designer of Wesleyan chapels in Sussex and Newcastle as well as in his own locality.³⁰ He also had three years in the office of Sir Gilbert Scott, the most important architect of his day, and his ARIBA nomination was signed by Oldrid Scott, Sir Gilbert's son. Curwen was fully conversant with Gothic Revival theory and practice. All the traceable works by Curwen were for the Wesleys like St. John's, Colwyn Bay, St. Mary's Street, Preston (1885), Cotham Chapel, Bristol (1877) and most importantly The Leys School Cambridge, won in a competition of 1877.³¹ This was a restricted competition so he must already have been known in Wesleyan circles. I have been unable to trace any further details of Curwen's religious affiliations or professional activities. Was he from a Wesleyan background? Why, in a career that ran from c1865 to 1909, did he design so few buildings that emerge in the published records of Victorian architecture? Curwen seems to be a clear example of an architect whose career needs fuller investigation and there may well be others whose achievements lie in the neglected field of Methodist building.

Methodist chapel builders did respond to the Gothic Revival because they were bound to. Whatever were the doctrinal, practical or financial objections to using a style with such clear overtones of being anti-protestant, Methodist chapels could not totally resist the trends within the architecture of the day. If Gothic was perceived as having particular relevance to religious architecture Methodism could not ignore it. While the adaptation of Gothic forms would be extensive, particularly because of financial exigencies, a clearly nonconformist Gothic does emerge.

³⁰ D. R. Elleray, *Victorian Churches of Sussex*, (Chichester, 1981), p. 51. *British Architect*, 3, 11 June 1875, p. 331. *I.L.N.*, 43, 20 Aug. 1863,

³¹ I am grateful to Jonathan Franklin of R. I. B. A. Library for a copy of Curwen's A.R.I.B.A. nomination papers and for references to his work in *The Builder*. E. A. Rose kindly provided the reference to St. Mary's Street, Preston: T. R. Flintoff, *Preston Churches and Chapels*, (1985), p. 65. For Colwyn Bay see E. Hubbard, *Buildings of Wales: Clwyd* (Harmondsworth, 1986) p. 136.

Many of the chapels are routine, some are simply ugly, but a few made, and make, a real contribution to the environment in which they exist. St. John's with its grade II listed status is outstanding, but many others deserve sympathetic treatment as the worship needs of the church change and develop. And they all deserve at least to be recorded and analysed as tangible evidences of the Methodist presence in Victorian society.

GRAHAM POTTS

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NOTES AND QUERIES

1445. JOHN WESLEY AND AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO

1. John Wesley 'quoted' Augustine in a letter to Henry Brooke in June 1786, 'I say with St Austin...*Errare possum, haereticus esse nolo*' (*Standard Letters*, vii, pp 133-34). Can some one help me with the source of this Latin sentence? Was Wesley quoting from memory (inexactly maybe) a statement which he had read in Augustine or perhaps picked up secondhand, or was he simply alluding to Augustine's conception of heresy and schism, as he understood it? Can a specific passage upon which Wesley depended, either in Augustine himself or in a secondary source, be identified? If so, I would appreciate the reference.

2. Wesley refers to the last words of Augustine, as repeated by Archbishop Ussher on his death bed: "Lord, forgive me my sins of omission" (*Standard Journal*, iii, pp. 236). Richard Parr, in his life of Ussher (London, 1686), does not identify the source of this remark. I have found no reference to it in the biographies of Augustine which I have consulted. Could this be an apocryphal saying attributed to Augustine? If so, I wonder where Wesley found it.

JOHN ENGLISH

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1446. JOHN FLETCHER'S PERSONAL APPEARANCE

The article in *Proceedings*, xlvii, part 5 (May 1990) about the portraits of John Fletcher makes reference to the dearth of descriptions of his appearance. The following brief extract from *Letters from Bath 1766-1767* by the Rev John Penrose may, therefore, be of interest:

Tuesday April 22 1766 ...to Lady Huntingdon's Chapel... The Preacher is a Swiss, benediced in Shropshire, with a lank Face like Wesley, and true Methodistical hair: in his manner (and he delivered himself off-hand) a mimic of Whitefield.... His Manner theatrical with such vehemence of Voice and Gesture, as was enough to surfeit anyone not infected with Fanaticism or Enthusiasm... His Name Fletcher.

Not much I fear. The diarist was of course prejudiced against all Methodists.

BRUCE D. CROFTS

BOOK REVIEWS

Ranters, Revivalists and Reformers : Primitive Methodism and Rural Society, South Lincolnshire 1817-1875. by R.W. Ambler, (Hull University Press, pp. xii + 165, flexi-cover, illus., 1989, £7.50. ISBN : 0 85958 480 1).

Rod Ambler's book is to be commended as a scholarly study both of rural Primitive Methodism in its most influential period and of the interaction of that movement with the realities of life in the author's selected geographical area, Kesteven and Holland. He is authoritative on both these aspects, and synthesises them admirably in the book's introduction where his main conclusions are to be found. Among them is this: 'Any success which Primitive Methodism achieved was based on its ability to provide a religious experience which was appropriate to the needs of people caught up in this web of [social and economic] change' (pp.3-4).

The 'web of change' is described in chapter one, and then, discounting any fears that the book's emphasis is to be more sociological than religious, there follow four chapters in which the origins, nature, and development of Primitive Methodism in its South Lincolnshire setting, are described. Here Dr Ambler writes with a directness and clarity which will make his book eminently serviceable to those coming to Primitive Methodism with little prior knowledge, while at the same time in his understanding and wealth of illustrative detail there is much to satisfy the *cognoscenti*.

To illustrate his copious and lively use of evidence let me quote two brief examples: first (p.66) the decision of the Boston P.Ms, while building their fine mid-1860s chapel, to borrow £300 'from the club at the Red Cow, if we can have it on note' (no Chapel Aid Association then!); and second, the words of the East Anglian P.M. minister Robert Key (1805-1876) in a horrifying funeral sermon in which the congregation were cajoled into believing that in the after-life 'pious parents will witness against ungodly children ... pious children will witness against their parents ... Families interred in one tomb are separated for ever ... What dreadful cries of despair!' (p.55).

The book is based on Rod Ambler's doctoral thesis (1984) and some of its material may be known to readers from an article in volume 23 of *Studies in Church History (Voluntary Religion)* ed. W.J. Sheils and D. Wood, 1986). That piece's title, 'From Ranters to Chapel Builders' summarises one of the principal strands in the book, and the author illuminates clearly the transition from revivalist origins which shocked the establishment ('organised banditti, vociferating ranters' exploded a curate in 1821) to the more staid and settled character of chapel life several decades later.

Ten black and white photographs illustrate the chapel-building styles of the Fenland Primitives as they evolved from the humble vernacular of Little Hale (1837) to the ambitious Renaissance facade of Boston West Street (1866). There are also four maps. The bibliography, references and index are all most thorough, though occupy far too much space due to the printer's layout.

A final point. It is tempting for research students who publish their work to stick to the chronological limits employed in their theses. There may be good reasons for the end-point of 1875 in Dr Ambler's work, but I think it is a pity that, in the book, he did not take the reader on, if only by way of a general survey, to 1932.

GEOFFREY E. MILBURN

Atonement and Justification, English Evangelical Theology 1640 - 1790 An Evaluation by A. C. Clifford (Clarendon Press, 1990, pp. 256, £27.50 and pb £5.95)

This book is a selective sequel to R.T. Kendall's *Calvin and English Calvinism to 1649* (1979) in that it shows how Calvin differed from his seventeenth century followers, notably John Owen, on atonement and justification. On the other hand, Clifford shows how there are likenesses as well as differences between Calvin, Baxter and (more surprisingly) Tillotson and Wesley.

Calvin, Baxter, Tillotson and Wesley agreed that Christ died for all, or, more precisely, that his atoning work was 'sufficient' for all. In contrast, most seventeenth century 'scholastic' Puritans held that Christ died only for those elect to salvation, a view they (and many Calvinists since) wrongly ascribed to Calvin himself. On justification Clifford is equally revisionist. Protestantism was always dogged by the suspicion that its extreme emphasis on justification by grace through faith alone meant that good works were neglected with the consequent risk of antinomianism (denial of the binding force of the moral law). Mr Clifford rightly says that fear of antinomianism became widespread from the mid-seventeenth century in England and both Calvinists and non-Calvinists laboured to establish the proper role of works in salvation, often by positing a 'second justification' by works to fit those justified by faith for the Last Judgement. Although Clifford claims that they subordinated this second justification to the primary divine work of grace he holds that only Calvin discerned that the root of Christian good works lies in the element of 'faith working by love' in the initial process of justification. Here, as elsewhere, Calvin is seen as more faithful to the true meaning of Scripture than the other theologians discussed. Clifford says they tended to rationalise Scripture to suit their presuppositions, though Tillotson (surprisingly) is seen as least at fault in this regard.

One may say at once that there is much that is compelling in Clifford's argument and it may be added that he expounds some difficult and complex themes with an enviable clarity and sympathy. He rightly emphasises the differences between Calvin and the 'Calvinists' and does welcome justice to Tillotson's theology. Yet one is left with an uneasy sense that the picture of common ground between Calvin, Baxter and, more especially, Tillotson and Wesley is in important respects misleading.

First, the affinity between them can only be sustained on the very limited basis of the subjects Clifford has chosen for his analysis. Certainly they agreed that Christ died for all and not simply for the elect. But this is a relatively minor and technical point of agreement compared with the glaring fact that Calvin and the Calvinists agreed that the atonement was only 'effective' for those already elected to salvation, whereas Tillotson and Wesley believed salvation was a possibility for all. One can see how misleading Clifford's exposition is by the fact that he can quote Charles Wesley's famous 'For all, for all my Saviour died' (p. 242) as a sentiment with which Calvin would have agreed. But Charles was not simply asserting that Christ's atonement was 'sufficient' for all but also (against Calvin and the Calvinists) attacking predestination.

Secondly, although all of Clifford's theologians were concerned to uphold the necessity of good works against antinomians, they differed considerably in their placing of works in the process of salvation. If Tillotson was 'sound' on justification he nevertheless overwhelmingly concentrated on teaching morality. John Wesley was the odd one out in any company by his advocacy of perfection, a central theme for his theology and one shaped more by his 'Catholic' than 'evangelical'

inheritance. (Clifford, significantly, only mentions this doctrine twice in passing as an aberration).

Finally, Clifford adheres to a conservative and neo-Calvinist exegesis of Scripture as a coherent revelation for defining theology. This serves him well for bringing out the more traditional Protestant aspects of the doctrines held in common by his chosen theologians, but it obscures the extent to which Tillotson and Wesley tried to break away from the hairsplitting scholasticism of the past in favour of an appeal to reason, morality and experience. In this respect Wesley stands somewhere between Baxter and Tillotson though in other ways he differs significantly from any of the others discussed in this book.

HENRY D. RACK

East Riding Chapels and Meeting Houses by David and Susan Neave (East Yorkshire Local History Society, 1990, pp72, £4.95 plus 55p postage from Beverley Library, Champney Road, Beverley, HU17 9BQ. ISBN: 900349 44 1).

In the East Riding Dissent was weak and Methodism dominant, the Wesleyans being only slightly stronger than the Primitive Methodists. Out of 600 chapels in the gazetteer, 530 are Methodist. The illustrations reflect the rich variety of these chapels, from the unpretentious to the proud not only in villages but in the market towns and holiday resorts of the East coast. It is perhaps unfortunate that Hull was excluded from this study for so much of East Riding Methodism was influenced by Hull, especially Primitive Methodism which used the port as its base to mission Holderness and the Wolds. Architecturally this decision means that many urban and suburban chapels are omitted.

It has taken fourteen years to undertake the research for this booklet and the result is a very thorough study indeed. Many perceptive points are made, especially when local examples are cited of the influence of F.J. Jobson on Gothic Wesleyan chapels. Indeed, those contemplating similar booklets could well use this as a model, for it includes both a comprehensive gazetteer of chapels 1689 - 1914 and a list of architects with brief biographies. The lack of a map is to be regretted and the gazetteer does not include grid references; nevertheless, this is an important study which deserves a wide sale.

D. C. DEWS.

The Works of John Wesley, Volume 18 *Journals and Diaries I (1735-1738)*. pp. xiv. 577; Volume 19, *Journals and Diaries II (1738—1743)*. pp. xiv. 474. Edited by W. Reginald Ward and Richard P. Heitzenrater. (Abingdon Press, 1988, 1990. \$49.95/£49.95 each. ISBN: 0 687 46221 5; 0 687 46222 3).

Curnock's 'standard' edition of the *Journal* has long stood as a landmark in Wesley studies; yet the mere lapse of time has caused it to recede into the middle distance, enabling us to view his work in perspective. For all that it has served several generations as a quarry from which likenesses (of varying verisimilitude) of Wesley have been carved, a new edition was well overdue and is to be welcomed on several counts. In particular, Curnock's text (especially of the first *Extract*,

covering the Georgian mission) leaves something to be desired. And, since editorial standards and procedures have not stood still in the interval, a more rigorous and scholarly treatment may now be looked for.

On both counts the high quality of the new edition is guaranteed by the choice of editors, and Dr. Heitzenrater's involvement reflects the extent to which serious Wesley scholarship is now an Anglo-American affair. Two of the five volumes (perhaps three by the time this review appears) are now in print and a provisional assessment may be made.

The complex problem of presenting the text of both the *Journal* and the surviving diaries in an accurate but accessible way has been solved by a happy compromise. The core of each volume is the text of the *Journal* "extracts" as published in Wesley's lifetime, with variant readings of any substance recorded in the footnotes. The text of any manuscript *Journals* and diaries covering the same period are then given in an appendix, which (as in Volume I) can be a very sizeable one. The earliest diaries - from Wesley's Oxford years - for which there is no parallel *Journal* text, are to be published later in a separate volume.

The perceptive reader will notice that this still leaves some passages found in Curnock, but missing here because they derive from other sources; e.g. the second paragraph printed in the *Standard Journal* (II, p.278) under the date 16 September 1739, which Curnock introduced from a letter to Charles Wesley. In the new edition this is to be found, quite properly, in the first volume of the *Letters* (Vol. 25, p.687), and despite the editor's clear desire to distance himself from Curnock, a cross reference at that point in the *Journal* would have been helpful. (He has, in fact, provided such cross-references in the case of Wesley's detailed reports to the Fetter Lane society on his activities in the Bristol area in the summer of 1739.)

The superiority of the new edition is clearly visible from the outset. By comparison, Curnock's heavily edited versions of the 'Savannah' and 'Frederica Journals' begin to seem like early sepia photographs slightly out of focus. (Abingdon's fuzzy reproduction of Peter Gordon's 1734 'View of Savannah' is, on the other hand, quite useless, and the early map of Georgia is little better.) But the main contrast, and one which continues into the second volume, is in the editorial matter, where Professor Ward has studiously avoided Curnock's discursive and often irrelevant footnoting. Indeed, as noted above, this sometimes amounts to a kind of academic Puritanism, contrasting with the overwhelming detail of his Introduction. The latter gives perhaps more space than is fully justified to exploring the autobiographical genre to which Wesley's *Journal* belongs, but also examines the process by which it was compiled and published and its treatment by successive editors. A little more on its value and limitations as a historical source would have been welcome here.

Professor Heitzenrater's work on the diaries and the light this has thrown on the Oxford years are already well known. With the aid of a key found in one of Ingham's diaries he has been able to prepare a much more accurate transcript than Curnock's pioneering efforts, omitting only the more repetitive and routine entries. This will serve the needs of Wesley scholars for generations to come, while the general reader concentrates on the more accessible text of the *Journal*.

A more substantial evaluation of the new edition must await its completion. Meanwhile, its use will be one clear indication from now on of any work on Wesley that deserves to be taken seriously.

John Wesley on Religious Affections: his views on experience and emotion and their role in the Christian life and theology by Gregory S. Clapper (The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Metuchen, N.J., and London, 1989, pp xiii, 205, £23.75 ISBN 0-8108-2267-9)

This book, a revision of a Ph.D. dissertation, is No. 1 in a new series, Pietist and Wesleyan Studies, edited by David Bundy and J. Stephen O'Malley, both of Asbury Theological Seminary. The author, who is Assistant Professor of Religion and Philosophy at Westmar College, starts from the American Methodist 'quadrilateral' of Scripture, tradition, experience and reason, but, like John Wesley himself, makes comparatively little use of the rather vague term 'experience'. His main thesis is that Wesley attached crucial importance to emotions, affections, the religion of the heart. He has no difficulty in establishing this by carefully examining Wesley's *Notes*, both on the Old Testament and on the New, the *Sermons*, and other publications, notably his Abridgement of Jonathan Edwards's *Treatise on Religious Affections*. Yet Wesley's affections are not an early version of Schleiermacher's feeling of absolute dependence; they are contingent; we love because God first loved us. Moreover the Bible is the final authority: 'experience' cannot prove what is unscriptural. Right belief, orthodoxy, is also important, as is right action, 'orthopraxis', but they need to be combined with what he terms 'orthokardia', the right heart. Such a sturdy defence of Wesley is still sometimes needed to counter such criticisms as the modern equivalents of the jibe attributed to Pusey that Methodism stands for justification by feeling.

Like many other authors, Dr. Clapper does not seem to me to be clear about the doctrine of Christian Perfection. He draws his comments on it largely from the Sermon 'On Sin in Believers'. Certainly inward sin can remain even in the justified believer, but even this Sermon hints at a further stage, and the Sermon on 'Christian Perfection' makes it clear that those who are strong in the Lord are freed from evil thoughts and tempers. This state also needs to be described with some qualifications, but Dr. Clapper does not clearly distinguish the two stages.

Dr. Clapper speaks only rarely of 'pietism' and wisely does not attempt to define it. Clearly on any view there are pietist elements in Wesleyanism, but there are other strands also as this book indirectly shows; so one might view the title of this new series either with regret that it links them or with satisfaction that it distinguishes them. We wish the series well. This judicious and balanced book gives it a good start.

A. RAYMOND GEORGE

The Bitter Cry Heard and Heeded by J. D. Beasley is a centenary history of the South London mission. The Mission was inaugurated in Bermondsey in 1889 as part of Wesleyan Methodism's response to the 1883 tract 'The Bitter Cry of Outcast London'. The story of the ensuing hundred years' work in a still deprived part of the city is told in detail in the 269 pages of this book. Included is a valuable section of condensed histories of nineteen causes which at one time or another, formed part of the circuit. Particularly to be recommended is the high standard of documentation - including attributions for all the hundred or more illustrations which make this an outstanding contribution to the study of London Methodism. Hardback copies (ISBN 9513276 1 5) are £10 and paperback copies (ISBN 0 9513276 0 7) are £4.75.

Obtainable from Bermondsey Central Hall, London SE1 3UJ

LOCAL HISTORIES

History of Broadstone Methodist Church 1890-1990 by J French and M Fairbrother (54pp): copies, price £3.00 post free, from Mrs Clarke, 30 York Road, Broadstone, Dorset.

The Spark of Grace: 250 Years of Methodism in West Yorkshire 1738-1968 by D C Dews (Yorkshire W H S 1990) (37pp): copies, price £1.30 post free from the author, 4 Lynwood Grove, Leeds LS12 4AU.

The Saints before: a history of the Shoreham Society of Methodists by Norman Davies (1990): copies, price £3.00 post free, from the author, 1 Adur Avenue, Shoreham-by-Sea, Sussex BN43 5NN.

The Building of Wesley [Cambridge] by Janetta Guite: price £1.75 post free, from Wesley Methodist Church, Christ's Pieces, Cambridge CB1 1LB.

John Wesley and Wigan by M. Swindlehurst (32pp): copies, price £3.75 from Owl Books, 27 Queensway, Wigan, WN1 2JA.

Combe St Nicholas (Somerset) Methodist Church 1891-1991 by R F S Thorne (10pp): copies, price 60p post free, from the author at 31 St Mary's Park, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1JA.

THE ANNUAL LECTURE

Will be delivered in

St Helens Road Methodist Church, Bolton on Monday, 24th
June, 1991, at 7.30pm

by Dr John C.English (Baker University, Baldwin, Kansas)
John Wesley and Sir Isaac Newton's 'System of the World'

Chairman: Dr John A.Vickers, BA, BD.

The Lecture will be preceded by TEA for members at 5p.m. and
the ANNUAL MEETING at 6pm.*

* *Those who intend to be present at the Tea should inform Dr. E. Dorothy Graham,
34 Spiceland Road Birmingham, B31 1NJ, by June 12th.*

Travel Directions: St Helens Road Church is on the south side of Bolton.

BY CAR: from the Victoria Hall, go along Knowsley Street, past the bus station continue into Derby Street, which after St Peter's Church on the left becomes St. Helen's Road. The Methodist Church is also on the left immediately after a petrol station and car sales garage. Church car park is just beyond the Church. Distance from Victoria Hall - 2 1/2 miles.

BY BUS: Take a No 582 bus direct to the Church. Bus stop at the Church gate.

We hope to include a review of William Leary's monumental *Directory of Primitive Methodist Ministers and their Circuits* in our next issue but in the meantime Mr Leary would be grateful if readers who detect any errors and/or omissions in the book would send details to him at 17 Charles Avenue, Scotter, Gainsborough, Lincolnshire DN21 3RF so that as many corrections as possible may be incorporated in an Errata sheet which will be sent to all subscribers later this year.