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Proceedings

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THE HOLINESS MOVEMENTS IN BRITISH AND CANADIAN METHODISM IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

The Wesley Historical Society Lecture 1996

ONE of the most distinctive legacies of John Wesley to nineteenth-century Methodism was his teaching on holiness. A century after his death it was still widely believed that the Christian, after conversion, should press on to a further decisive experience of perfect love, full salvation or entire sanctification. The holiness movements were the groups that took up the cause with particular zeal. Two Wesleyan ministers who founded, in 1872, a monthly periodical called *The King's Highway* announced in its first issue that it had the single purpose of spreading the doctrine and experience of scriptural holiness. Their meaning by that term, they explained, was 'full consecration of heart and life to God, purity of nature effected by the Holy Spirit through the atonement - perfect love to God and man'.¹ From 1885 the annual Southport Convention propagated the same message.² In the 1890s the Primitive Methodists had their own Association for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness.³ The Wesleyan evangelist, Thomas Cook, summed up the teaching of these agencies in his small but classic work of 1902, *New Testament Holiness*: 'while inability to sin does not belong to Christian experience, to be able not to sin does.'⁴ Or, as an enthusiastic Primitive Methodist put it in speaking of the

¹ *The King's Highway* [hereafter KH], January 1872, p.1.

² *To the Uttermost: commemorating the Diamond Jubilee of the Southport Methodist Holiness Convention, 1885-1945* (1945)

³ KH, 1893, p.268.

⁴ Thomas Cook, *New Testament Holiness*, (1902), p.21.

relationship of faith to full salvation, 'It is like a man under a shower-bath. He pulls the chain and down comes the water'.⁵ There was a deeply cherished hope in the late Victorian years that the former glories of entire sanctification would be restored to British Methodism.

Across the Atlantic in the newly confederated Dominion of Canada there were equivalent developments. The editors of *The King's Highway* received letters from readers in Canada, as in other parts of the world, thanking them for help received.⁶ *The Expositor of Holiness*, a journal published in Toronto, won approving notice in *The King's Highway*, as did *A Manual of Holiness* by its editor. 'Our friends in Canada', the reviewer commented, 'are in earnest about full salvation.'⁷ *The Expositor of Holiness* was the organ of the Canada Holiness Association, established in 1879, which promoted conventions with a host of speakers in the manner of Southport. The association was launched with the purpose of reviving the teaching of Wesley, John Fletcher and Adam Clarke on the subject of entire sanctification and so to take the same stand as what its leader called 'the modern holiness movement' in England as well as the United States.⁸ From 1892 there was an entirely separate Eastern Ontario Holiness Association, also designed to propagate 'scriptural and Wesleyan' instruction.⁹ These organisations were self-consciously part of an international impulse to rediscover the source of early Methodist power. Because they were contemporary and shared identical objectives, the movements in Britain and Canada are well worth scrutiny in relation to each other. An analysis taking in the United States would also be highly instructive, but the American bodies were so large and so numerous as to entail more thorough coverage than is possible here.¹⁰ Confining ourselves to Britain and Canada, we can explore first the similarities between the two countries and then the contrasts. It is hoped that a systematic comparison will reveal more than might emerge from a study of one country by itself.

The exploration of common ground can usefully begin with the

⁵ J[ohn] Stephenson, *The Man of Faith and Fire, or, the life and work of the Rev. G. Warner*, (1902), p. 157.

⁶ *KH*, 1884, p. 3.

⁷ *KH*, 1884, p. 142.

⁸ Nelson Burns, *Divine Guidance or the Holy Guest*, Brantford, Ont., 1889, p. 260.

⁹ J. McD. Kerr to editor, *The Christian Guardian* [hereafter CG] 25 Jan 1893, p. 52.

¹⁰ For the American holiness movement, see Melvin E. Dieter, *The Holiness Revival of the Nineteenth Century*, Metuchen, N. J. 1980. 2nd ed. 1996.

association of holiness and revivalism. In England the leading Wesleyan connexional evangelists of the 1880s, Thomas Cook, Thomas Waugh and Edward Davidson, were all preachers of entire sanctification. Cook had been led to the experience following a visit to his home town of Middlesbrough by the burly dalesman Joshua Dawson, from St. John's Chapel in Weardale, who was later to become his father-in-law. Dawson is an example of a lay revivalist who also proclaimed full salvation.¹¹ Such men saw their distinctive message as the key to evangelistic success. 'The question of the Church's purity', wrote J. C. Greaves in *The King's Highway*, 'involves the question of saving millions of men; while we talk about our weakness, and argue and hesitate, men are passing from our midst to eternal flames ... would that upon the whole Church might come a baptism of ... self-consuming love!'¹² The spread of their brand of holiness they believed would stimulate revival. In Canada there was the same connection between entire sanctification and a burning zeal for souls. Edward Crossley, one of Canadian Methodism's chief evangelists of the closing years of the nineteenth century, might see over three hundred seekers of salvation during a three-week mission conducted with a colleague. He taught perfect love in every town where he preached.¹³ J. McDermott Kerr, who was set aside by the Toronto Conference for evangelistic work for part of his ministerial career, wrote extensively in the *International Holiness Bureau* from 1890, spoke at the convention at Smith's Falls that launched the Eastern Ontario Holiness Association and subsequently defended the new body in the denominational newspaper.¹⁴ Ralph Horner, the animating spirit of this organisation, possessed a passionate sense of vocation to evangelistic ministry: his marriage to a woman helping with revival services took place during a journey from one of them to another so that, as he explained, 'there was no time lost from soul-winning on account of it'.¹⁵ At a four-week mission in his 'Gospel Tent' at Wilton, near Kingston, Ontario, in 1891, there were three services daily, about a hundred sinners converted and a number of believers

¹¹ Henry T. Smart, *The Life of Thomas Cook*, (1913), pp. 56, 39-40, 90. J. I. Brice, *The Crowd for Christ*, (1934), p. 57.

¹² *KH*, 1872, p. 364.

¹³ *CG*, 30 Sept 1891, p. 612. Kevin B. Kee, 'The Heavenly Railroad: Ernest Crossley, John Hunter and Canadian Methodist Revivalism, 1884-1910', Queen's University, Kingston, M.A. thesis, 1994, p. 115.

¹⁴ *CG*, 17 Oct 1894, p.660; 19 Oct 1892, p.660; J. McD. Kerr to editor, 25 Jan 1893, p. 52.

¹⁵ *Ralph C. Horner, Evangelist*, Brockville, Ontario, [1926?], p. 125.

sanctified. 'Brother Horner's messages', it was reported, 'were largely to the Church, reasoning that if the Church will only get baptised with the Holy Ghost, sinners will be converted'.¹⁶ The dynamic released by the experience of perfect love would mobilise Methodists for mission.

The reference to the baptism with the Holy Ghost points to a second feature shared by the British and Canadian movements, forms of language anticipating the Pentecostalism of the following century. Thomas Cook and his close friend, the layman James Wood, both spoke of the crisis of sanctification as baptism of or with the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ Likewise, testimonies might recall an experience of 'the full baptism of the Holy Spirit'.¹⁸ In Canada there was also talk of 'the Baptism of the Holy Ghost', with calls to emphasise the credal formula of belief in the Holy Ghost and even, in the Canada Holiness Association, rather extravagant language that caused some alarm about 'the supremacy and universal rule of the Holy Ghost'.¹⁹ William Arthur's *Tongue of Fire* (1856) has been credited with introducing a greater stress on themes associated with Pentecost,²⁰ and certainly the term 'Pentecostal' was much bandied about on both sides of the Atlantic. The evangelist, Thomas Waugh, spoke in England of a 'personal Pentecost' and in Canada the leading figures of the holiness organisations, Nelson Burns and Ralph Horner, referred respectively to 'full-orbed Pentecostal experience' and 'a Pentecostal flame'.²¹ Some began to lay claim to decisive experiences beyond entire consecration. In the very first issue of *The King's Highway* in 1872 a minister who had already enjoyed cleansing from all unrighteousness claimed to have received a 'richer baptism' that intensified his entire consecration.²² In the following year the editor put his imprimatur on a quest for another crisis after the two stages of conversion and redemption from sin, 'a Pentecostal baptism of the Holy Ghost'.²³ Hugh Price Hughes might repudiate from the

¹⁶ CG, 30 Sept 1891, p. 612.

¹⁷ Smart, Cook, p. 284. Eliza A. Wood, *Memorials of James Wood, LL.D., J.P., of Grove House, Southport*, (1902), p.270.

¹⁸ KH, 1882. p. 229 (E. W.).

¹⁹ Probationer to editor, CG 7 Mar 1894, p. 147; B. Sherlock to editor CG, 21 April 1880, p. 126; B. Sherlock to editor, CG, 11 January 1893, p. 20.

²⁰ Donald W. Dayton, 'The Doctrine of the Baptism in the Holy Spirit: its emergence and significance', *Wesleyan Theology Journal*, 13, 1978, p. 118.

²¹ Thomas Waugh, *Twenty-Three Years a Missioner*, (n.d.), p. 142; Burns, *Divine Guidance*, p. 116. Horner, p. 107.

²² KH, 1872, p. 8.

²³ KH, 1873, p. 38.

Southport platform such expectation of a third blessing, but others were recounting how they had been given the Holy Spirit in power long after receiving a clean heart.²⁴ The same rising tide of expectation marked the Canadian movement. At a holiness meeting attended by Nelson Burns some young men hailed the descent of 'the baptism of power' beyond entire sanctification, though he himself deprecated such ideas; and Ralph Horner avowed an 'extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost for soul-winning' that qualified him 'to do wonders and miracles in the name of the Lord'.²⁵ It was not a long step from such third blessings to the baptism of the Holy Spirit as understood by Pentecostals, and that step was soon to be taken by some in international holiness circles. For the time being, however, this intense spirituality formed another transatlantic bond within Methodism.

Already both British and Canadian holiness enthusiasts had remodelled the inheritance from Wesl y. The movements of the two countries loudly claimed to be reviving the outlook of early Methodism, but in reality the version they propagated was more derived from the American Phoebe Palmer. Since the 1830s Mrs. Palmer had taught a genteel style of holiness through fashionable Tuesday afternoon meetings in her New York drawing room and a large output of popular literature. From 1859 to 1864 Mrs. Palmer travelled in Britain with her husband, injecting her new approach into Methodism, and she also visited Canada.²⁶ In 1873, for instance, the couple worked in Toronto, where Morley Punshon, then president of the Canadian Wesleyan Conference, confided to his diary that he could not interpret scripture about holiness as they did.²⁷ Some leaders of the holiness movement, such as John Brash in England, were conscious of putting the subject in a different way from older Methodists such as Punshon.²⁸ In Canada Nelson Burns was acutely aware of the change in sanctification teaching brought about by Phoebe Palmer. 'The improvement she made' he wrote in his autobiography, 'was to make the seeking and obtaining of a definite experience easier of securement'.²⁹ Traditional Methodists

²⁴ KH, 1886, pp. 317-18; 1884, p. 405 (S. G.)

²⁵ Burns, *Divine Guidance*, p. 205. Horner, pp. 13, 15.

²⁶ Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, chap. 2.

²⁷ F. W. Macdonald, *The Life of William Morley Punshon, L.L.D.*, (1887), p. 384 (2 February 1873).

²⁸ I. E. Page, ed., *John Brash: memorials and correspondence*, (1912) p. 37.

²⁹ [Albert Truax, ed.] *Autobiography of the late Rev. Nelson Burns, B.A.: a new study of the Christlife, etc.*, Toronto, n.d. p. 87.

had commonly expected to wait for days, months or years until the blessing should be granted. Mrs. Palmer, by contrast, announced that there was no need to tarry. The believer could claim the state of sanctification, confess that the claim had been made and then, without any need for evidence, be assured that the reality had come. The change was willed and instantaneous. The new teaching was what set the holiness people apart from more sober Methodists. 'In the various Methodist churches', wrote Brash in 1882, 'at least there are probably no pulpits from which the doctrine of entire sanctification is not preached in some form; and yet, there are scarcely any congregations that are not somewhat startled when it is pressed upon them as a grace they may receive before leaving their seats'.³⁰ Repeatedly testimonies to full salvation in Britain recorded a debt to the writings of Mrs. Palmer;³¹ similarly in Canada her periodical, the *Guide to Holiness*, exerted a deep influence.³² The 'shorter way' to holiness stemming from Phoebe Palmer was the common property of the two countries.

If ideology was substantially the same, so was much behaviour. Holiness people all wanted to avoid the snares of the world, and so there were similar lists of prohibited activities in the mother country and the dominion. In Britain Thomas Waugh was typical in denouncing questionable amusements such as gambling and dancing. A spirit-filled church, as he put it, is 'world-emptied'.³³ The principle of avoiding popular forms of entertainment was widespread in Evangelicalism as a whole, but holiness zealots could apply it particularly sternly. Thus George Warner, the leading holiness preacher among the Primitive Methodists, always regarded simple musical services as dangerous; and a Sunday school teacher who had been hindered from receiving the blessing by reading religious novels subsequently developed a distaste for any periodicals containing fiction.³⁴ Perhaps the most challenging of the campaigns against worldliness was the one against smoking. *The King's Highway* carried in 1882 an article from an American counterpart urging the abandonment of tobacco³⁵ and Warner frequently denounced its use. The tobacco habit and appetite were alike inconsistent with holiness, he insisted; he himself had

³⁰ *KH*, 1882, pp. 181-2.

³¹ E.g. *KH*, 1872, p. 5; 1872, pp. 44, 67.

³² E.g. *CG*, 11 Feb 1880, p. 47; J. W. Totten to editor, 16 Sept 1891, p. 579.

³³ Waugh, *Twenty-Three Years*, p. 141.

³⁴ Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 66. *KH*, 1882, p. 414.

³⁵ *KH*, 1882, pp. 349-50.

renounced the habit and God had destroyed the appetite. In several of Warner's missions smokers abandoned their pipes, one local preacher giving it up during the singing of 'My all is on the altar'.³⁶ The same prohibitions were current in the Eastern Ontario Holiness Association, whose president reported that the members standardly abstained from tobacco, snuff and drama. They were also, he pointed out, notable for their religious observance. Many held family prayer three times a day and but for them many church prayer meetings would die out.³⁷ After a mission by Horner a Methodist church held three prayer meetings weekly, one of them for young people, and after one of the association's conventions another church held a regular Saturday night holiness meeting and organised a praying band to assist the pastor.³⁸ In a similar way an English convention at Hull was followed by daily holiness meetings and a mission at Leominster by a weekly series.³⁹ So on both sides of the Atlantic energy was diverted from various secular forms of leisure pursuit into distinctly sacred channels.

A further intriguing common feature was the prominence of women. It was Phoebe Palmer's public speaking that inspired Catherine Booth to assert the right of women to take their place alongside men in Christian ministry, and Palmer's example, together with that of other female preachers of the 1860s, seems to have encouraged a higher profile for women in the holiness movement.⁴⁰ In 1872 an American visitor found it strange that no sister should speak at the first holiness public meeting held during a Wesleyan Conference, but there was no principled objection to their participation⁴¹ and subsequently they fulfilled many roles in the English movement. There were numerous female testimonies, often from married women, in *The King's Highway*;⁴² a young woman secured eighty subscribers for the magazine during its first year;⁴³ and Warner's missions in Hull were accompanied once or twice by 'a woman's crusade' in the streets.⁴⁴ Some towns had weekday

³⁶ Stephenson, *Warner*, pp. 191, 207, 162.

³⁷ J. Ferguson to editor, *CG*, 15 February 1893, p. 99.

³⁸ *CG*, 30 Sept 1891, p. 612; J Ferguson to editor, *CG*, 16 Jan 1895, p. 36.

³⁹ Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 196. *KH*, August 1884, p. 286.

⁴⁰ Olive Anderson, 'Women Preachers in Mid-Victorian Britain: some reflexions on feminism, popular religion and social change, *The Historical Journal*, 12, 1969.

⁴¹ *KH*, 1872, p. 338.

⁴² E.g. *KH*, 1884, p. 51; 1884, p. 266.

⁴³ *KH*, 1873, p. iv.

⁴⁴ Stephenson, *Warner*, p.161.

holiness meetings in imitation of Mrs. Palmer.⁴⁵ At Southport during the day there was an exclusively female choir, but that is hardly surprising since the menfolk would be at work. What is striking is that several women taught from the convention's platform.⁴⁶ In similar fashion women were to the fore in Canada. The Free Methodists, an American denomination that had seceded from the Methodist Episcopal Church in order to stoke up the flames of holiness, were served, apparently uniquely in Canada, by a large proportion of female lay preachers,⁴⁷ and in general it seems that there were few reservations about women's ministry. An early meeting of the Eastern Ontario Holiness Association was attended by 'a number of lady evangelists' and at a subsequent convention two of the instructors were women, though both were wives of male speakers.⁴⁸ The most striking instance of high female status, however, comes from England. Sophia Chambers passed through the Primitives and Wesleyans in Maidstone before concentrating on holiness work and, from 1882, organising a separate Holiness Church with congregations in Kent, London and Yorkshire. 'Our leader, Mrs. Chambers' held undisputed authority over the whole organisation until her early death in 1887.⁴⁹ Women could rise to great things through teaching full salvation.

A final shared characteristic was a propensity towards interdenominationalism and even ecumenical comprehension. During the 1890s *The King's Highway* was interdenominational in the sense that its editorial council represented five Methodist denominations, but this tendency went far beyond the limits of Methodism. From the start of the magazine many from other denominations subscribed.⁵⁰ In its first year a Baptist minister reported devouring the copies that reached him.⁵¹ A Congregationalist lay preacher was fully sanctified in 1876 under Warner's preaching at Harrogate.⁵² In 1882 a Presbyterian minister, James Muir, was actually a speaker at a holiness convention at Waterloo near Liverpool organised by W. H. Tindall, the Wesleyan minister responsible for the Southport Convention, and it was reported that Christians from various sections of the church were

⁴⁵ KH, 1884, pp. 206-7.

⁴⁶ *To the Uttermost*, p. 16, 21.

⁴⁷ R. Wayne Kleinstuber, *Coming of Age: the making of a Canadian Free Methodist Church* n.p., (1980), p. 15.

⁴⁸ CG, 7 Dec 1892, p. 771; 16 Jan 1895, p. 36.

⁴⁹ *Holiness Advocate* [hereafter HA], 1887, pp. 33-7; 1884, p. 44.

⁵⁰ Page, ed; *Brash*, pp. 144, 148.

⁵¹ KH, 1872, p. 186.

⁵² Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 169.

present.⁵³ At a Good Friday consecration meeting in George Street Chapel, Hulme, Manchester, in 1884, there were Methodists apart from Congregationalists, Churchmen and others.⁵⁴ In Canada the same drawing in of non-Methodists was, if anything, even more marked. Although *The Expositor of Holiness* was to circulate chiefly among Methodists, it described itself at its launch in 1882 as 'Thoroughly Wesleyan in Doctrine, yet not Sectarian - hence suitable to the Lovers of Holiness in every Denomination'. In the rather more fluid state of denominational allegiance prevailing in rural Canada, the message took root for a while during 1887-88 in the Presbyterian Knox Church in the small town of Galt under the influence of J. K. Cranston, who had originally been converted years before in a Methodist revival.⁵⁵ Likewise Horner's body in Eastern Ontario was strictly non-denominational, allowed a Presbyterian and a Congregationalist to preach under its auspices, heard testimonies from a Lutheran, an Anglican and an ex-Catholic and was edified by another speaker remarking that 'I am a Baptist, but I have got the water out of my eyes'.⁵⁶ Horner's organisation was in fact moving towards emerging as a distinct denomination, which was constituted in 1900 as the Holiness Movement Church in Canada.⁵⁷ It paralleled Sophia Chambers's Holiness Church across the Atlantic, but, doing better than its British counterpart, it was to become permanent. The holiness impulse, drawing adherents from outside Methodism, eventually led some of its keenest friends into entirely fresh denominational structures.

So it is clear that the holiness movements of the two countries had a great deal in common. Yet it has already become apparent that there were differences, and they need to be explored more thoroughly. Leadership may be taken first. The two initiators of *The King's Highway*, John Brash and I. E. Page, were close friends in the Wesleyan ministry, exchanging letters every week, but so different temperamentally - according to Brash, he was indolent while his friend had a spirit of restless activity - that they were able to check

⁵³ KH, 1882, p. 283.

⁵⁴ KH, 1884, p. 212.

⁵⁵ Nelson Burns to editor, CG, 25 Jan 1893, p. 51. Ron Sawatsky, 'Unholy Contentions about Holiness': the Canada Holiness Association and the Methodist Church; Canadian Society of Church History Papers, 1982, pp. 13, 2. Burns, *Divine Guidance*, pp. 284-6.

⁵⁶ J. Ferguson to editor, CG, 7 Dec 1892, p. 771. J. Ferguson to editor, CG, 7 Feb 1894, p. 84. J. Ferguson to editor, 16 Jan 1895, p. 36.

⁵⁷ Brian R. Ross, 'Ralph Cecil Horner: a Methodist sectarian', *Methodist History*, 16, 1977, p. 31.

each other's vagaries. Brash majored on ideas while Page supplied the organizational drive behind the magazine. Brash was forty-one at its launch in 1872, had been accepted for the ministry fifteen years before, gaining the confidence (for example) of the respected manufacturer Isaac Holden, who was his circuit steward at Keighley, and of William Arthur, who became a friend while Brash was stationed at Hammersmith.⁵⁸ Page, nine years Brash's junior, had entered the ministry in 1859 and so had over twelve years of travelling behind him when the magazine first appeared.⁵⁹ Both men had long knowledge of perfect love, Brash having entered the state in his first circuit and Page having wrestled with the teaching from his youth, in Wesley Chapel, Nottingham, though not attaining the experience in a settled way until 1870.⁶⁰ Together with two other Wesleyan ministers, J. Clapham Greaves and W. G. Pascoe, they produced a series of twelve tracts, later bound together as *Scriptural Holiness*, and began issuing a small-scale magazine, *The Guide to Holiness*, the prelude to *The King's Highway*.⁶¹ This gang of four consisted of eminently sane and balanced Methodist ministers. Page was to become co-editor of *The Local Preacher's Magazine* for fourteen years from 1895, an indication both of his own connexional loyalty and of others' trust in him.⁶² Likewise W. H. Tindall, the founder of Southport, arranged that all the speakers at the first convention should be Wesleyan ministers in good standing, and himself remained at the helm as president until 1908.⁶³ Although George Warner, the leading Primitive advocate of holiness, was thought brusque and eccentric,⁶⁴ the Wesleyan leadership showed moderation as well as energy.

In Canada the two sections of the organised holiness movement were led by men who displayed very different qualities. From its inception in 1879, the Canada Holiness Association was led by Nelson Burns, then forty-five years old, a quixotic figure who experienced dreams, practised mesmerism and believed that authority over the organisation was his divinely-given prerogative. When on one occasion he was tempted to surrender office in the association, he had the sensation of 'being sandbagged', receiving a

⁵⁸ Page, ed., *Brash*, pp. 1, 6, 15, 17.

⁵⁹ I. E. Page, *A Long Pilgrimage with some Guides and Fellow Travellers*, (1914), pp. 11, 63.

⁶⁰ Page, ed., *Brash*, p. 26. Page *Long Pilgrimage*, pp. 145, 3.

⁶¹ Page, ed., *Brash*, pp. 2, 3, 146. Page *Long Pilgrimage*, p. 196. *KH*, 1872, p. 1.

⁶² Page, *Long Pilgrimage*, p. 198.

⁶³ *To the Uttermost*, pp. 15, 20.

⁶⁴ Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 273

stunning blow on the head; on another occasion he had a vision of Christ congratulating him on his victory in a leadership struggle.⁶⁵ He justly claimed in his autobiography 'to have inherited an unusual amount of sensitiveness'⁶⁶ and was not a success in the Methodist ministry, which he had entered in 1862. He alternated between circuits and school-teaching, which does not seem to have brought him any sense of achievement either. Eventually, in the early 1880s when the Holiness Association was already under way, he was refused permission to return to the ministry and came to rely on *The Expositor of Holiness* for his whole income.⁶⁷ Burns possessed the type of nervous and erratic temperament that created problems with other people. His first vice-president, James Harris, was to withdraw entirely from the association in 1888 and eventually, in 1894, was to propose a resolution that Burns was guilty of a charge that had been preferred against him at Conference.⁶⁸ His vice-president by that time, Albert Truax, who had entered the ministry only in 1883, was a scrupulous soul who allowed himself to be swayed by Burns's distinctive views, offering little by way of checks or balances.⁶⁹ The leading light associated with the Eastern Ontario Holiness Association, Ralph Horner, was a very different personality from Burns but nevertheless another stormy petrel. Thirty-eight at the association's foundation, he was not one of its officers but rather the eager firebrand who spread 'flaming revival' in its area.⁷⁰ Although the president of the body, John Ferguson, circumspectly urged keeping true to the Bible and the Methodist Church,⁷¹ from 1890 onwards Horner was so insistent on his calling as a roving evangelist that he was constantly in trouble with the denominational authorities for refusing circuit appointments or intruding into the jurisdiction of other ministers. He began to see Methodist officialdom as under the malign influence of 'Bolandists', followers of the Southern Methodist preacher Dr J. M. Boland who entirely denied a second work of grace, and so felt justified in taking his own increasingly independent course.⁷² Eventually, in 1894-95, all three Canadian holiness leaders,

⁶⁵ *Autobiography of Burns*, pp. 96, 100, 14, 68, 96.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 72, 82.

⁶⁸ Phyllis D. Airhart, *Serving the Present Age: revivalism, progressivism and the Methodist tradition in Canada*, Montreal & Kingston, 1992, p. 51. CG, 6 June 1894, p. 361.

⁶⁹ Burns, *Divine Guidance*, pp. 281-4. Sawatsky, 'Unholy Contentions', p. 20.

⁷⁰ Horner, p. 84.

⁷¹ J. Ferguson to editor, CG, 15 Feb 1893, p. 99.

⁷² Horner, pp. xiii, 113. R. C. Horner, *Notes on Boland*, Boston, 1893.

Burns, Truax and Horner, were removed from the ministry.⁷³ The waywardness of the Canadian leadership stands in stark contrast with the restraint of its British counterpart.

There was also a difference between the teachings on holiness given in the two countries. Despite the common terminology and debt to Phoebe Palmer that have already been considered, the British message of holiness was much broader than its equivalents in Canada. In 1882 *The King's Highway* carried a review of the biography of the recently deceased American Evangelical Episcopalian Bishop McIlvaine, a disciple of the great Charles Simeon of Cambridge and so at some remove, especially in his views on the path to holiness, from Methodism. The reviewer was delighted with the account of the inner life of the bishop, drawing the conclusion that 'the essentials of full consecration and full sanctification are sometimes found in those who do not employ these terms in speaking of their experience'.⁷⁴ In accordance with that principle the first year's issues of the magazine had commended the writings of Jeremy Taylor, Thomas á Kempis, St. Bernard and William Law.⁷⁵ Readers were cautioned against 'being too desirous for rigidly defined views of this experience'.⁷⁶ John Brash was conscious of holding a different view, that a person filled with the Spirit may fall short of the glory of God, from his friend J. C. Greaves, but such variety of opinion within the holiness leadership occasioned no qualms.⁷⁷ The movement's platform was open to the evangelist Thomas Champness, even though he taught that perfection was a matter of growth rather than instantaneous reception,⁷⁸ and to the redoubtable Hugh Price Hughes, who was willing to declare that the Oxford idealist philosopher T. H. Green had taught perfect love.⁷⁹ This remarkable degree of catholicity was not matched in Canada. Burns led his followers into steadily narrower views as his mind became preoccupied with the notion of guidance by the Holy Ghost. Our position, he explained in 1889, was that 'the Holy Spirit, as guide into all truth, would supersede all laws, whether human or Divine, and be to each and every one, so

⁷³ Sawatsky, 'Unholy Contentions', pp. 21-5. Ross, 'Homer', pp. 28-30.

⁷⁴ *KH*, 1882, p. 62.

⁷⁵ *KH*, 1872, p. 303; 1872, p. 52; 1872, p. 117; 1872, p. 916.

⁷⁶ *KH*, 1873, p. 354.

⁷⁷ Page, ed., *Brash*, p. 35.

⁷⁸ *KH*, 1882, p. 317. Smart, *Cook*, p. 280.

⁷⁹ *KH*, 1886, pp. 292-318. H. P. Hughes, *Social Christianity*, (1889) p. 97.

receiving him, the law of God, written on his heart....'.⁸⁰ This peculiar and antinomian conviction became the unvarying orthodoxy of Burns's movement. The other Canadian body, in eastern Ontario, remained a vehicle for popular revivalist attitudes rather than the opinions of one man, yet it was equally circumscribed. Its president, John Ferguson, had received little education,⁸¹ and the movement consistently taught a form of perfect love unsullied by the wider world of thought. The Canadian versions of holiness teaching, though differing markedly from each other, were narrow in comparison with the British equivalent.

This contrast in the sphere of thought was paralleled by another in the sphere of behaviour. In this field the Canadians call for attention first. In the dominions there was a widespread desire in holiness circles for outward marks of separation from the world. Thus Horner called for abstention from secret societies and life insurance societies, the latter a symptom of lack of faith in divine provision.⁸² But the most obvious area for self-denial was in the area of dress. In 1900 the Eastern Ontario Conference of the Free Methodists denounced 'neck-ties, stud-buttons, pins ... big sleeves, puffed shoulders, vice-like corsets, peculiar shaped hats ... lace curtains and collars ... indecently long mustaches and beards ... gold rimmed spectacles'.⁸³ Similar attitudes were upheld among holiness zealots within official Methodism. Ferguson reported in 1893 that the members of his association in the same region 'abstain from all superfluities of dress'.⁸⁴ During his missions Horner arranged a 'stripping room' where those newly sanctified could get rid of their ornaments and undue dress. 'Holiness and jewellery', he remarked, 'do not go together'.⁸⁵ Advocates of a strict dress code had appeared at the first camp meeting of the Canada Holiness Association in 1884, and, although Nelson Burns had resisted their attempt to impose 'rules and regulations' on those who should be led by the Spirit, the issue was an enduring one within his organisation.⁸⁶ In the mother country, by contrast, the question of suitable clothing for the fully consecrated simply did not arise. Even total abstinence

⁸⁰ Burns, *Divine Guidance*, p. 33.

⁸¹ Minutes of Montreal Conference, 1909, in Biofile on John Ferguson, Archives of the United Church of Canada, Toronto.

⁸² Horner, p. 156.

⁸³ Kleinstuber, *Coming of Age*, p. 36.

⁸⁴ J. Ferguson to editor, *CG*, 15 Feb 1893, p. 99.

⁸⁵ Horner, pp. 127, 122.

⁸⁶ *Autobiography of Burns*, p. 80. Burns, *Divine Guidance*, pp. 188-201.

from alcohol, a growing cause in the late Victorian years, was defined by I. E. Page in 1872 as a matter for personal decision.⁸⁷ The rationale was that separation from the world meant only avoidance of what was an intrinsic moral evil. 'If we be asked', wrote Page the following year, 'Are we required, for His sake, to give up energy in business, joyousness in social life, the pleasures of literature, the researches of science, pleasant books and pictures, and all that breaks the dull routine of everyday life? We answer, *No!*'⁸⁸ The British movement was once more much broader because less committed to radical shifts in behaviour for the sanctified élite.

A similar contrast is evident in the field of unusual religious behaviour. Here again the situation in Canada warrants initial scrutiny. Horner's protracted mission at Wilton in 1891 was reported to the Methodist press by the circuit minister:

- A peculiar feature of our meetings was the number who were prostrated. Sometimes as many as twelve were unable to rise from the altar of prayer, being overcome by the power of God. Some of them were shouting, some praying to God for their unconverted friends and companions; some praising God in a quiet whisper for his great salvation, and others lay motionless as if in death. But in every instance when they revived they praised God with all their heart.⁸⁹

Horner recalled in his autobiography that such episodes were common. People prayed for would fall over at once, so that, on one occasion, sixty or seventy littered the floor; parents became alarmed when their children lay about as if dead; and a man recalled falling over in the woods, his physical strength suspended. Others danced or shook with uncontrollable fits of laughter; there was even an instance of a man roaring like a lion.⁹⁰ Likewise Burns, though personally averse to such behaviour, came on incidents of shouting and prostrations in the vicinity of Toronto.⁹¹ When criticism arose, as during 1892 and at the Montreal Conference in 1893, Horner's defence was that he never deliberately encouraged physical manifestations, but that 'under the mighty outpouring of the Holy Ghost such scenes would follow'.⁹² He issued a pamphlet to

⁸⁷ *KH*, 1872, p. 195.

⁸⁸ *KH*, 1873, p. 183.

⁸⁹ *CG*, 30 Sept 1891, p. 612.

⁹⁰ *Horner*, pp. 82, 137, 40, 139, 51.

⁹¹ Burns, *Divine Guidance*, pp. 202-11.

⁹² *Minutes of the Proceedings of the 10th Session of the Montreal Annual Conference of the Methodist Church*, Toronto, 1893, p. 72. *Horner*, p. xiv.

demonstrate that such happenings had marked the career of Wesley.⁹³ The phenomena of Ontario were much rarer in Britain. Some of them did occur, as when, in 1874, the Primitive Methodist George Warner was preaching in Walworth Chapel, London, and a woman fell as if dead before returning to consciousness with praise for full salvation on her lips.⁹⁴ There was to be a comparable incident of prostration in the early history of Cliff College under Thomas Cook, but that was classified as a case of students becoming unruly.⁹⁵ In general it is fair to say that, at least in the Victorian period, physical prostrations and all that went with them were far more common in Ontario than in England.

One of the reasons for the greater likelihood of manifestations in Canada was the predominantly rural character of life there. Ontario alone covered a territory larger than France, so that settlement, even in the most developed areas, was often sparse and society still retained the unsophistication of the backwoods. In 1893 the centres of holiness strength in eastern Ontario were in certain rural circuits around Kingston and Brockville - Battersea, Inverary and Lyn - and in several particularly isolated circuits of the Ottawa Valley - Ashton, Clayton, Fitzroy Harbor and Richmond.⁹⁶ Horner thought it remarkable that God was willing to pour out his Spirit in a city mission as well as in the countryside. 'It was somewhat amusing', he commented, 'to see the look of the city preacher when the people would fall to the floor under the power of God'.⁹⁷ Although a number of prominent Canada Holiness Association figures moved into Toronto, in 1893 that organisation too was said to have its popular bastions in the rural areas, in its case in Western Ontario.⁹⁸ The holiness movements harboured suspicions of stylish church buildings and urban fashionability in general. What Horner called 'demonstrative services' did not fit into that ethos.⁹⁹ In Britain holiness teaching was sometimes spread through village missions,¹⁰⁰ but, partly because the land was already predominantly urbanised, the message tended to become focused in cities and large towns.

⁹³ R. C. Horner, *Wesley on Prostration, etc.*, Toronto, n.d.

⁹⁴ Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 144.

⁹⁵ Smart, *Cook*, p. 245.

⁹⁶ J. Ferguson to editor, *CG*, 22 Nov 1893, p. 740. 'Lye' seems to be a misprint for 'Lyn'.

⁹⁷ *Horner*, p. 87

⁹⁸ Burns, *Divine Guidance* pp. 269, 278. *Autobiography of Burns*, pp. 70-1. *Toronto Globe*, 6 June 1893, cited by Sawatsky, 'Unholy Contentions', p. 21.

⁹⁹ B. Sherlock to editor, *CG*, 24 Mar 1880, p. 94. *Horner*, p. 91.

¹⁰⁰ E.g. *KH*, 1884, p. 91; 1884, p. 161.

Leeds was one of the chief centres. A holiness convention held there in 1884 was said to have drawn its congregation from all parts of the city; Jabez Woolley, who lived at Garforth on the edge of Leeds and who, with Joshua Dawson, was the leading lay holiness revivalist in Wesleyanism, actively fostered the movement there, and it was in Leeds that the separatist Holiness Church planted its strongest congregation, the only one in 1887 able to sustain a full-time worker.¹⁰¹ The British holiness movement was undoubtedly weakened by lacking the backwoods dimension of its Canadian counterpart, but it is equally clear that it was able to command a significant following in urban areas. That, in turn, helps explain the more respectable - we might say the more urbane - tone of the holiness cause in British Methodism.

One rural practice in particular was crucial in marking a contrast between the two countries: the camp meeting. This style of open-air religious exercise, sustained over several days, was indigenous to North America, and, although it had been taken up with enthusiasm in Britain by the early Primitives, it was in marked decline by the 1870s. In Canada camp meetings were still part of the essential rhythm of Methodist life. At the Simcoe District camp meeting in 1879, for instance, a farmer gave 'glad testimony to the power of Christ to save to the uttermost'.¹⁰² Camp meetings had helped to sustain the vibrancy of rural Methodism and, in particular, the tradition of entire sanctification. That is partly why it could be claimed with justice in 1893 that in the rank and file of Canadian Methodism outside the active holiness groups there were thousands of believers in the second work of grace.¹⁰³ A British visitor had likewise noticed in 1872 a marked fidelity among Methodists to the old Wesleyan teaching.¹⁰⁴ In Britain, on the other hand, the second half of the century was filled with laments that the tradition was in decay. 'This great doctrine', it was said as early as 1857, 'in most places has nearly left our pulpits for years ...'.¹⁰⁵ When Thomas Cook, as a candidate for the ministry, avowed at Synod in about 1880 that the blood of Christ had cleansed him from all sin, the claim to entire sanctification was so unusual as to cause great surprise.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ KH, 1884, p. 393. W. McDonald and John E. Searles, *The Life of the Rev. John Inskip*, Boston, Mass., (1885), p. 320. *Holiness Advocate*, August 1887, p. 114.

¹⁰² CG, 11 Feb 1880, p. 47 (Alvin Woolley).

¹⁰³ John R. Strickland to editor, CG, 18 Oct 1893, p. 559.

¹⁰⁴ KH, 1873, p. 52 (Cuthbert Bainbridge).

¹⁰⁵ *The Revivalist*, May 1857, p. 73.

¹⁰⁶ Smart, *Cook*, pp. 33-4.

Some Wesleyan exponents, while formally adhering to the principle, were toning it down. Thus *Thoughts on Holiness* (1883) by Mark Guy Pearse, for all the 'charming freshness' noted in *The King's Highway* review, was criticised for being less than definite.¹⁰⁷ The decline of the tradition was evident in the other branches of Methodism. Although in 1880 Primitive Methodists welcomed the American holiness preacher John Inskip much more readily than Wesleyans, there were signs of declension among them such as a superintendent minister actually preaching against entire sanctification.¹⁰⁸ In a published death-roll of the Primitive Methodist ministry for 1888-89, none of the twenty-seven obituaries alludes to the subject.¹⁰⁹ In a similar way, with one notable and possibly a second exception, a collection of sixty-six biographical sketches of recently deceased Bible Christians published in 1906 contains no claimants to the experience.¹¹⁰ Perhaps strangely, the United Methodist Free Churches, though born at mid-century out of sympathy for holiness revivalism against the Wesleyan authorities, no longer nurtured full salvation on a significant scale in later years. Out of forty one obituary notices in their magazine for the first half of 1877, there is only one instance of the experience.¹¹¹ The commitment of the Methodist New Connexion to entire sanctification had probably been weak for the longest time.¹¹² It appears that no branch of fragmented British Methodism retained the holiness legacy of Wesley to the extent of Canadian Methodism. With a smaller reservoir of adherents of the traditional teaching to draw on, the activists in Britain faced a harder task.

Nevertheless, and rather paradoxically, the British holiness movement received more endorsement from prominent ministers than its counterparts in Canada. In 1882 George Osborn, then the first man among the Wesleyans, preached an official sermon before their Conference endorsing a mild form of entire sanctification, and

¹⁰⁷ *KH*, 1884, p. 33.

¹⁰⁸ Stephenson, *Warner*, p. 165.

¹⁰⁹ W. J. Brownson *et al.*, *Heroic Men: the death roll of the Primitive Methodist ministry, (1889)*

¹¹⁰ W. J. Michell, *Brief Biographical Sketches of Bible Christian Ministers and Laymen*, Vol. 1 (Jersey), 1906. The exceptions are Arthur Hancock (definitely) and Richard Spratling (possibly) (pp. 248-9, 267).

¹¹¹ *The U.M.F.C. Magazine*, 1887. The exception is John Broadbent (March 1877, pp. 183-4).

¹¹² D. W. Bebbington, 'Holiness in Nineteenth-Century British Methodism', in W. M. Jacob and Nigel Yates, ed., *Crown and Mitre: religion and society in northern Europe since the Reformation*, (Woodbridge, Suffolk, 1993) p. 173.

W. B. Pope, the connexional theologian *par excellence*, once went further by offering (though not actually supplying) an article for *The King's Highway*.¹¹³ Alexander M'Aulay, soon to be secretary of the Home Missions Department and so responsible for appointing holiness evangelists such as Cook to roving commissions, actually spoke of his entire surrender to Christ at the holiness public meeting during the 1872 Conference, and at the equivalent meeting the following year Benjamin Gregory, one of the connexional editors, testified to his experience of full salvation.¹¹⁴ That year the president of Conference, Frederick Jobson, who had issued a tract encouraging perfect love a decade earlier, sent his commendation to the meeting, and the next year William Arthur, a secretary of the Missionary Society and the celebrated author of *The Tongue of Fire*, occupied the chair.¹¹⁵ Thus the movement, especially in its earlier years, received a succession of endorsements from high Wesleyan authorities. Likewise the Primitives, in their 1873 annual address to the societies, urged an insistence on entire sanctification; the president of Conference in 1884, George Lamb, deserted its chair in order to testify at a holiness meeting; and in 1893 the president of the Scriptural Holiness Association was also president of Conference.¹¹⁶ In Canada, by contrast, the denominational leadership kept its distance. Although Albert Carman, general superintendent of Canadian Methodism from its merger in 1884, was a keen exponent of perfect love, E. H. Dewart, the editor of the denominational newspaper, avoided espousing the traditional Wesleyan doctrine, evidently doubting whether sanctification could be instantaneous.¹¹⁷ The most respected preacher of perfect love, John Carroll, probably represented other leaders when in 1880 he denounced the newly formed Canada Holiness Association as 'a very small coterie of *illuminati*, who pique themselves on a terminology peculiar to themselves'.¹¹⁸ His gravest fear, well founded as it turned out, was that the new body would follow the American Free Methodists into separation.¹¹⁹ Even before the formation of the Eastern Ontario

¹¹³ KH, 1882, pp. 379 - 382. Page, *Long Pilgrimage*, p. 182.

¹¹⁴ KH, 1872, p. 338; 1873, p. 347.

¹¹⁵ KH, 1873, p. 346. Frederick J. Jobson, *Perfect Love for Christian Believers*, (1864). KH, 1874, p. 349.

¹¹⁶ KH, 1873, p. 358. CG, 13 Aug 1884, p. 267. KH, 1893, p. 273.

¹¹⁷ Albert Carman, 'Holiness our Hope', *The Canadian Methodist Magazine*, July 1884, pp. 82-5. CG, 10 Mar 1880, p. 76; 7 Apr 1880, p. 10; 25 Jan 1893, p. 56.

¹¹⁸ John Carroll to editor, CG, 14 Jan 1880, p. 14. Cf. J. W. Grant, ed., *Salvation! O the joyful sound: the selected works of John Carroll*, Toronto, 1967.

¹¹⁹ John Carroll to editor, CG, 11 Feb 1880, p. 46.

Holiness Association, Horner had become a disciplinary headache. So in Canada, unlike Britain, the holiness movements received scant official benediction.

There was a parallel relationship between the movements and prosperous laymen. In Britain a crucial figure was Cuthbert Bainbridge, the son of a Wesleyan draper in Newcastle who had established what may have been the first department store in Europe. Serious illness brought Cuthbert to an enjoyment of complete salvation in about 1869 and it was he who, apart from inviting the American evangelist Dwight L. Moody to Britain, organised the first holiness public meeting during the 1872 Conference and paid for the launch of *The King's Highway*. 'If you will find the brains', he told the magazine's promoters, 'I will find the money'.¹²⁰ Similarly Cuthbert's brother Thomas supported the ministry of Thomas Cook.¹²¹ At Halifax George Clegg, a quarry worker who had risen to become a millowner, and his brother-in-law J. H. Greenwood, were mainstays of evangelistic work with a holiness colouring. It was the teaching of holiness, Clegg assured the Wesleyan Conference in 1886, that brought conversions every Sunday at the mission room he ran in his home town.¹²² Edward Holden, a Keighley manufacturer who was the father of Greaves's early society steward, was another wealthy backer of the holiness cause,¹²³ as was his relation by marriage James Wood, a Liverpool iron-founder who lived at Southport. It was Wood who provided the site for the convention there and became its treasurer until his death in 1898.¹²⁴ Even in Primitive Methodism, a much poorer denomination, a benefactor named T. Jones gave £100 to inaugurate George Warner's career as a holiness evangelist.¹²⁵ In Canada, by contrast, there is no sign of special financial support for Horner's ministry in eastern Ontario, and further west only one businessman, Isaac Anderson, who had made money in oil and led a small holiness meeting in Toronto, is reported as having contributed significantly, in his case by giving Burns a home and paying the expenses of *The Expositor of Holiness*.¹²⁶ Without Anderson, Burns's

¹²⁰ T. H. Bainbridge, *Reminiscences*, ed. Gerald France, (1913) pp. 55-6, 67. *KH*, 1873, p. 346. 1884, p. 3.

¹²¹ Smart, *Cook*, pp. 82-3.

¹²² Page, *Long Pilgrimage*, pp. 237-8. *KH*, 1886, p. 326.

¹²³ *To the Uttermost*, p. 15.

¹²⁴ Wood, *J. Wood* pp. 43, 95, 279. *To the Uttermost*, p. 20.

¹²⁵ Stephenson, *Warner*, pp. 142, 247.

¹²⁶ Burns, *Divine Guidance*, pp. 269, 271. *Autobiography of Burns*, pp. 70-1, 73, 116.

whole enterprise would probably have collapsed; yet his financial input was a faint shadow of the resources poured into the British holiness cause by men of commerce and industry in the north of England.

A further contrast lay in the extent of American influence. Until 1884 much of Ontario Methodism was a branch of the Methodist Episcopal Church of the northern United States, and so American literature and personnel circulated particularly freely. American Methodism, as became apparent at the ecumenical conference of 1891, tended on balance to be more doctrinally conservative than its transatlantic counterpart,¹²⁷ and so the effect of the influences from the United States was normally to reinforce received teaching on sanctification. When the Free Methodists established themselves in Canada during the 1870s and 1880s, they harvested adherents of the former Methodist Episcopal congregations. The holiness movement, it seems, was able to do the same.¹²⁸ It was natural, furthermore, for Canada to imitate the efforts of the National Holiness Camp Meeting Association in the United States. Since 1867 this body had been holding immensely successful camp meetings differing from the traditional variety in being devoted solely to entire sanctification. They constituted the chief agency responsible for the creation of the vast holiness movement of the United States.¹²⁹ From 1884 the Canada Holiness Association launched its own series of camp meetings. Several of the leaders, including J. McDermott Kerr and James Harris, tried to keep the Canadian organisation on American lines, and, although Burns fought them off by imposing his own authority, much of the popular impetus behind his movement sprang from the United States.¹³⁰ In Britain, however, distance limited the impact of the American example. The work of the National Camp Meeting Association was praised, but not copied.¹³¹ The writings of Asa Mahan and W. E. Boardman, holiness teachers from the United States who took up residence in Britain, were read and appreciated, while the American J. A. Wood's *Perfect Love* was recommended as the best aid to preaching the subject.¹³² Yet when John Inskip of the American organisation ran some

¹²⁷ CG, 18 Nov 1891, p. 128.

¹²⁸ R. Wayne Kleinstuber, *More than a Memory: the renewal of Methodism in Canada*, (n. p. 1984), p. 83.

¹²⁹ Dieter, *Holiness Revival*, chap. 3.

¹³⁰ *Autobiography of Burns*, pp. 79-121.

¹³¹ KH, 1872, pp. 364-72.

¹³² Page, *Long Pilgrimage*, pp. 193, 149. KH, 1882, p. 321.

missions in Britain in 1880, he recognised that 'when a regular National Camp-meeting gale is on hand' some Americanisms came out.¹³³ 'His style', commented *The King's Highway* after his death four years later, 'was hardly such as to make the same impression on English congregations as he witnessed in his own land'.¹³⁴ There was evidently a cultural gulf that Inskip could not bridge. The farmers of the dominion were more receptive to the American approach than the more sophisticated city-dwellers of the homeland.

A different influence, however, exercised more sway in Britain. The Keswick movement, though deriving from the ethos of the National Camp Meeting Association through the American Robert Pearsall Smith, carried a distinctive version of the message. Sanctification came by faith, as in Methodist belief, but sin, according to Keswick, was repressed rather than removed, a conviction that was acceptable to Christians with a Calvinist background, especially in the Church of England.¹³⁵ The holiness advocates in British Methodism were closely associated with the emergent Keswick teaching. Page attended the preliminary Oxford meetings addressed by Pearsall Smith in 1874, and, though he found the instruction superficial, he concluded that, with the spread of scriptural holiness beyond his own denomination, a new era had begun.¹³⁶ At the annual Keswick conventions held in the Lakeland resort from 1875 a number of Methodists, including crucially W. H. Tindall, entered the experience of perfect rest that was taught there.¹³⁷ Tindall began to hold similar mini-conventions and then established the annual Methodist gathering at Southport. Hence the decorous upper middle-class ethos of Keswick was transplanted to Southport. 'The absence of disorder and noisy excitement throughout the week', it was said of the first one, 'was largely due to the calm, kind, and judicious censorship of the chairman, who called upon all who led the devotions or spoke'.¹³⁸ The Keswick influence affected the content as well as the tone of Methodist teaching. John Brash, who became a Keswick speaker, privately rejected the traditional Wesleyan view that sin can be eradicated in the

¹³³ McDonald and Searles, *Inskip*, p. 321.

¹³⁴ *KH*, 1884, p. 180.

¹³⁵ D. W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: a history from the 1730s to the 1980s*, (1989) chap. 5.

¹³⁶ *KH*, 1874, pp. 367-80; 1874 p. iii.

¹³⁷ *KH*, 1882, p. 413; 1884, p. 92; 1884, p. 176. Smart, *Cook*, p. 170.

¹³⁸ *KH*, 1885, p. 303.

believer.¹³⁹ Keswick did impinge on Canada, but only from 1893, when a trio of speakers brought the message to Toronto. Although it made a significant recruit in Benjamin Sherlock, hitherto the leading spokesman for the Canada Holiness Association,¹⁴⁰ the lateness of its arrival meant that it could exert no shaping power over the Canadian holiness movements. Whereas the British version of Methodist holiness was moderated by Keswick, Canadian Methodism experienced no comparable restraint.

The resulting difference of ethos affected the potential for disruption on the two sides of the Atlantic. In the early 1880s the holiness movements in both countries made Methodism particularly vulnerable to secessions to the Salvation Army. The Canada Holiness Association undertook joint ventures with the newly arrived Army in 1884, but it soon became necessary for Methodists to mount counter-attractions against the Army's enthusiastic appeal.¹⁴¹ The pages of *The King's Highway* for the same period are peppered with testimonies from those who found the blessing of sanctification only in the Salvation Army.¹⁴² 'What is the reason', lamented Thomas Champness in 1886, 'why so many of our good men have gone into the Salvation Army?'¹⁴³ The Holiness Church, organised under Sophia Chambers in 1882, played a similar role during the same years. At Scarborough, for instance, both the Wesleyans and the Primitives lost members to a congregation of the Holiness Church set up in October 1882.¹⁴⁴ The lure of holiness, however, exerted a far more powerful draw away from Methodism in Canada. There around 1890 the followers of Burns turned upside down two or three circuits in the very rural Norwich district of western Ontario. They refused fellowship with ordinary Methodists, declined to contribute funds and spurned the conventional prayer meetings. They claimed to have been purged from the rota of Sunday school teachers, but held their own holiness meetings in a private home.¹⁴⁵ In his earlier ministry Burns had

¹³⁹ Page, ed *Brash*, pp. 19, 33-4.

¹⁴⁰ R. N. Burns to editor, *CG*, 19 Apr 1893, p. 244; 3 May 1893, p. 281; B. Sherlock to editor, 24 May 1893, p. 323.

¹⁴¹ *KH*, 1886, pp. 268-71. *Autobiography of Burns*, p. 120. Airhart, *Serving the Present Age*, pp. 72-4.

¹⁴² E.g. *KH*, 1882, pp. 225, 227; 1882, p. 276; 1882, p. 321.

¹⁴³ Eliza M Champness, *The Life-Story of Thomas Champness*, (1907), p. 230-1.

¹⁴⁴ *HA*, February 1884, p. 20; August 1884, p. 88.

¹⁴⁵ A Methodist Minister to editor, *CG*, 22 July 1891, p. 451; William Morris to editor, 5 August 1891, p. 484.

earned the title 'circuit smasher'¹⁴⁶ and now his views were more extreme and idiosyncratic. He taught a Quaker-like understanding of guidance in which the impressions of the Holy Spirit had to be followed implicitly. The editor of the denominational paper charged him with making every Christian 'an infallible oracle'.¹⁴⁷ Soon Unitarian opinions found expression in Burns's *Expositor of Holiness* and he was arraigned for making Christ's divinity non-essential.¹⁴⁸ Horner's supporters did not lapse into heresy, but among them, as amongst the Burnsites, there was 'a censorious spirit' against mere Methodist pew-fillers.¹⁴⁹ By 1894, when Horner was suspended from the ministry, he had acquired a former Baptist church building in Ottawa to be the headquarters of his work and he was clearly heading for separation.¹⁵⁰ By 1920, when he was still alive, his followers had divided into three distinct denominations, the Holiness Movement Church, the Gospel Workers Church and the Standard Church of America.¹⁵¹ Holiness had an explosive power in both countries, but it was in Canada, rather than Britain, that it dynamited the even course of Methodist life.

That contrast was reinforced - and in some measure caused - by the different organisational patterns adopted in the two countries. The Canada Association for the Promotion of Holiness, to give the full title, originally in 1879 bound its members to pray for its work every Friday at noon, recommended the formation of local associations and planned a series of conventions.¹⁵² Because the local associations do not seem to have materialised, the conventions every few months formed the chief activity, supplemented by the publication of *The Expositor of Holiness* from 1882 and the holding of camp meetings from two years later. Boasting officers from the start, the movement was embodied in an institution outside normal Methodist structures. The Holiness Association of Eastern Ontario, again to provide the precise official title, was similarly beyond the control of the denominational authorities. Although Ferguson as president insisted that it would work in harmony with the

¹⁴⁶ *Autobiography of Burns*, pp. 58-9.

¹⁴⁷ CG, 12 Oct 1892, p. 644.

¹⁴⁸ Thomas Mason to editor, CG, 18 Jan 1893, p. 34; 6 June 1894, p. 361.

¹⁴⁹ *10th Session of the Montreal Conference*, p. 73.

¹⁵⁰ Ross, 'Horner', p. 28.

¹⁵¹ Marilyn F. Whiteley, 'Cyclones of Power/Noisy Display: the Holiness conflict in the Methodist Church', p. 12. I am grateful to Marilyn Whiteley for her help with this paper.

¹⁵² CG, 14 Jan 1880, p. 14.

Methodist ministers of any area, it was a permanent organisation with its committee and Horner's 'Gospel tent' at its disposal.¹⁵³ The very existence of the body, though operating only within the bounds of the Montreal Conference, one of several into which Canadian Methodism was divided, posed a threat to the discipline of the denomination. In Britain there was a similar tendency of holiness enthusiasts to form a 'Church within a Church', but that was a disposition that Brash and his fellow-leaders, as loyal Methodists, were determined to check.¹⁵⁴ It is true that the Primitives ran a denominational Association for the Promotion of Scriptural Holiness that possessed its own officers, but its chief business was to hold an annual conference that moved around the country from year to year and it showed no separatist inclinations.¹⁵⁵ The Wesleyans possessed no equivalent body. One was actually proposed at a conference in Wakefield on 5 October 1874 to which eighty ministers and laymen of known sympathy had been invited, but it was agreed there that 'it would be unwise to form anything like an organisation in Methodism for the spread of holiness'.¹⁵⁶ The promoters of *The King's Highway* preferred to concentrate on encouraging local weekly meetings for full consecration together with public meetings at Conference and elsewhere. They deliberately chose informal networking rather than a high degree of institutionalisation. There was therefore no major vehicle in Britain to carry the holiness people from within Methodism to a position beyond its bounds.

The similarities and the differences between the holiness movements call for overall evaluation. It is clear that Britain and Canada shared the same essential dynamic: the rooting in revivalism, the semi-Pentecostal language, the stress on instant reception and the intensity of commitment arising from prohibited alternative activities. In addition the mobilisation of women and the drawing of strength from outside Methodism reinforced the impact of the movements in both countries. The differences, however, were also highly significant. British leaders were Methodist ministers in good standing rather than erratic figures; their teaching was broad, not narrow; their behavioural code was less stringent than in Canada; and they rarely witnessed physical manifestations. The Canadian movements flourished in rural backwaters by contrast with the urban holiness centres of Britain and appealed to a stronger

¹⁵³ CG, 7 Dec 1892, p. 771; 19 Oct 1892, p. 660.

¹⁵⁴ Page, ed., *Brash*, pp. 146-7.

¹⁵⁵ KH, 1893, pp. 268-80.

¹⁵⁶ Page, ed., *Brash*, p. 159. KH, 1874, p. 391.

surviving tradition of entire sanctification; yet they lacked the backing of the denominational authorities and wealthy laymen that was so important in Britain. Canada felt the external influence of America rather than of Keswick, experienced greater disruption and, crucially, created holiness organisations outside official Methodist control. The two Canadian groups, the Burnsites in the west of Ontario and the Hornerites in the east, contrasted markedly with each other, but it emerges that both, in their different ways, tended to be more extreme than their British counterparts. The Burnsites talked about themselves as 'New Lights', meaning that they had a fresh understanding of divine guidance,¹⁵⁷ and that was to align themselves with earlier populist Evangelicals in Canadian history. The late George Rawlyk has suggested that, stemming from Henry Alline's followers in the Maritimes in the late eighteenth century who used the same self-description, there was a powerful radical strand in Canadian Evangelical history.¹⁵⁸ The 'Canada fire' that he portrays seems to have burned anew in the Methodist holiness movements. The equivalent across the Atlantic, for all its similarities, was more moderate and sober, better adapted to the respectable standards of late Victorian Britain.¹⁵⁹

The contrast had its consequences for the twentieth century. Because the Canadian holiness movements were so ebullient they broke the mould of Methodism, whereas their milder British counterpart remained substantially within its parent denominations. Some small holiness groups, it is true, led an independent existence until they coalesced in the Church of the Nazarene in 1952.¹⁶⁰ But the popular holiness tradition turned into a sustained if marginal feature of twentieth-century Methodism. Cliff College under Thomas Cook and his successor Samuel Chadwick became its bastion and *Joyful News* its messenger. In the 1930s the outposts of Cliff stood as a reminder to the young Gordon Wakefield of a spirituality concerned centrally with soul-saving and the second blessing.¹⁶¹ If the teaching of entire sanctification was no longer advancing, it had nevertheless been handed on as a rich continuing

¹⁵⁷ CG, 22 July 1891, p. 451.

¹⁵⁸ G. A. Rawlyk, *The Canada Fire: radical Evangelicalism in British North America, 1775 - 1812*, (Kingston & Montreal, 1994).

¹⁵⁹ Bebbington, 'Holiness in Nineteenth-Century British Methodism', p. 170.

¹⁶⁰ Jack Ford, *In the Steps of John Wesley: the Church of Nazarene in Britain*, (Kansas City, Mo, 1966).

¹⁶¹ G. S. Wakefield, *Methodist Devotion: the spiritual life in the Methodist tradition*, (1966), p. 21.

option that some delighted to explore. In W. E. Sangster the tradition found a fresh and persuasive exponent.¹⁶² Meanwhile the Southport Convention continued to sustain the faith of those committed to the quest for perfect love. Cook and Chadwick were still names to conjure with at Southport in 1995, although by that year the raised hands of the worshipping congregation bore witness to the confluence of charismatic renewal with the holiness stream.¹⁶³ The late Victorian holiness movement had done its work well in Britain. Even if there was no mass holiness revival, its relatively restrained tone ensured that its spiritual resources were safely transmitted to subsequent generations of Methodists.

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¹⁶² Paul Sangster, *Doctor Sangster*, (1962) chap. 17.

¹⁶³ *Methodist Recorder*, 10 Aug 1995, p. 17.

The Wesley Fellowship has arranged a second conference to be held at Cliff College, Derbyshire from 13-15 May 1997. Details and booking forms can be obtained from Paul Taylor, Stonebridge Cottage, Back Lane, Shearsby, Nr Lutterworth, LE17 6PN, tel: 0116 247 8679

A Biographical Dictionary of Methodist Missionaries to Japan: 1873-1993 by John W. Krummel is a hardback bi-lingual dictionary with more than 1500 entries for persons who served in Japan under the various American Methodist Churches and the Methodist Church of Canada. It can be obtained from the Cokesbury Order Dept, 201 Eighth Avenue South, P O Box 80L, Nashville, TN 37202-0801, USA, price \$88.00.

Roger Thorne's '*Our Providential Way*' is a detailed and comprehensive bibliography of the history of Dissent in Devon. It is an offprint from the *Transactions of the Devonshire Association* and will be indispensable to all serious students of Methodism in the county, let alone those who wish to explore Old Dissent. Copies are available from the author at 31 St Mary's Park, Ottery St Mary, Devon, EX11 1JA, price £3.00.

JOHN WESLEY: FOUNDER OF A MISSIONARY CHURCH?

(continued from p. 170)

Wesley's Evangelistic Vision: 'His' World or the Whole World?

METHODIST missionary enthusiasts of post-Wesley days did not hesitate to quote Wesley's 'world-parish' sentiment as evidence that world missionary activity was inherent in the Wesleyan calling. Barnabas Shaw brought it into his 1815 missionary sermon on the 'Great Commission':

The command in our text ..., is equally binding upon every preacher of the gospel at the present day. It is not his business merely to preach so many times, and in so many places, ..., but to rush into every open door of usefulness -- to look upon 'the whole world as his parish,' and to use all his influence in bringing sinners to the 'knowledge of truth,' nor can he justly suppose that he has acted his part till he has either carried the gospel to the ends of the earth himself, or exerted all his influence in sending it by others.³³

In 1890 Albert Clayton asserted:

There may be difference of opinion as to administration, but no difference as to the policy, 'The world our parish'. Nothing less than the world to be brought to the feet of Christ. That is the Methodism of to-day, and Methodism, as long as it deserves its name, can only be faithful to that policy, 'The world for Christ'.³⁴

But was all this 'world' missionary talk what Wesley had in mind when he first made that famous assertion about the 'world as my parish'? Is that what the context of it expresses or implies? Wesley wrote those words in answer to a complaint against his preaching in other ministers' parishes in Britain. The famous words in their context read:

God in Scripture commands me, according to my power, to instruct the ignorant, Man forbids me to do this in another's parish: that is, in effect, to do it at all; seeing I have now no parish of my own, nor probably ever shall But where shall I preach it, upon the principles you mention? Why, not in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America; not in any

³³ Barnabas Shaw, *A Missionary Sermon, Preached at Flambro', June 14, and Kilham, June 26* (Hull: B. Shaw, 1815), p. 46.

³⁴ Albert Clayton in *Wesleyan Missionary Notices*, (July 1890), p. 148.

of the Christian parts, at least, of the habitable earth. For all these are, after a sort, divided into parishes....

Suffer me now to tell you my principles in this matter. I look upon all the world as my parish; thus far I mean, that, in whatever part of it I am, I judge it meet, right, and my bounden duty to declare unto all that are willing to hear the glad tidings of salvation. This is the work which I know God has called me to: and sure I am that His blessing attends it. Great encouragement have I, therefore, to be fulfilling the work He hath given me to do.³⁵

While Wesley did refer to a 'world parish', there was no missionary implication connected with those words. Wesley expressed no sense of calling to 'go into the world'. but only a calling to preach to those who were in the part of the world in which he found himself.

This was a far cry from Shaw's exhortation to carry 'the gospel to the ends of the earth' or to exert all one's influence 'in sending it by others'. Wesley was not defending his right to go somewhere, but rather his right to preach in that place where he already was. In fact, he used the 'parish' argument to suggest that there was no part of the world where human decision would make it any easier to carry out his calling than it was in England. In defending his right to preach in his corner of the world, Wesley dismissed the other 'world' fields from his field. Yes, earlier in the letter he did say 'I am ready now (God being my helper) to go to Abyssinia or China, or whithersoever it shall please God, by conviction, to call me,'³⁶ but the whole point of the letter was to state that the parishes of England, not some far-away land, were the field of his calling and ministry. The 'world parish' of this letter is not God's wide world, but Wesley's narrow world of Britain, the world where he found himself useful in preaching the gospel and bringing many to repentance. He had tried preaching in that wider world (Georgia) just a few short years earlier, but was not well-received or heard or singularly used of God there. The place where Wesley experienced the blessing of God on his ministry was Britain. That was Wesley's 'parish'; that was Wesley's 'world' as far as this letter was concerned.

The Conference Minutes reflected a similarly narrow view of the field of Methodism:

Q. 3. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?

³⁵ *Standard Journal*, ii: pp. 217-218.

³⁶ *Standard Journal*, ii: p. 217.

A. Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.³⁷

The focus here was clearly on Britain. Here Wesley saw his own ministry and that of Methodism within the work of the Evangelical Revival in Great Britain. It was not a small vision, this vision of reforming the nation and the Church, of spreading scriptural holiness, all without forming a new sect. It was not a small vision, but it was not a world vision. It was a national vision.

In his Fernley Lecture of 1890 on the 'Mission of Methodism' Richard Green reflected on this statement in the *Minutes*,

...I have no intention of suggesting that Wesley was indifferent to the condition of foreign nations, or to any efforts that might be suggested to alleviate that condition; but solely that he did not at that time hold it to be a part of the calling and obligation of Methodism to undertake missions to the heathen.³⁸

Green continued,

He saw and keenly felt the deep necessities of his own country, and he was thoroughly convinced of the suitability of his means to meet these necessities in a very large degree. His words, however, are far from indicating that in his view Methodism could reach the entire need even of this nation, and he was too practical to spend time or thought on mere speculations in regard to other lands.³⁹

It is hard to conclude otherwise than that Wesley's hesitancy to embrace a Methodist world mission and that his jealousy with the resources of Methodism were expressions of the 'limitations' of his own vision for Methodism. Methodism was called to evangelize and revive Britain and Ireland; it could not afford to lose that sense of focus, or so it must have seemed to its founder.

Green made this observation:

But if he did not recognize any claim on his Societies to undertake missions to the heathen, he could not have better prepared the way for such missions, or have done a greater service to the world, than by

³⁷ 'Minutes of Several Conversations', p. 299.

³⁸ Richard Green, 'The Mission of Methodism, being the Twentieth Fernley Lecture delivered... August 4th, 1890, 'Lectures on the Foundation of J. Fernley, Esq. delivered in the years 1889-1892, (1892), IV: p. 112.

³⁹ *loc. cit.*

rendering the service to his own country he was permitted and honoured to render.⁴⁰

Wesley's vision for his own mission may not have easily stretched beyond the borders of his homeland, but his passion in fulfilling that mission sparked the fire in others that enabled them to grasp an even broader vision than his own.

Wesley's initial vision was not small. While most clergymen of his time were finding it difficult to include their whole parishes in their visions, Wesley was able to include his whole nation. And, under growing pressure from the missionary forces in his Connexion, his vision stretched to include British territories in North America and the West Indies. Taggart commented,

The geographical focus of Wesley's work was extraordinarily wide by eighteenth-century standards, and his indirect influence on foreign missions was enormous. This was expressed chiefly through the theological truths he affirmed, the contacts he made, his commissioning of Thomas Coke as the Superintendent of Methodist missions, and his acceptance of the need for American Methodism to plot its own course. His own experiences in Georgia, the special interest he took in Blacks, and his concern for the termination of slavery, were all important elements in helping to shape the pattern of Methodism's missionary response.⁴¹

Wesley's own vision for his ministry and Methodism, large for its time, enabled those who followed after him to embrace even larger visions. His vision turned out not to be the mature tree of Methodism, but only its seed.

He seemed in later years to catch a glimpse of that truth, writing in his *Journal*,

I was considering how strangely the grain of mustard seed, planted about fifty years ago, has grown up. It has spread through all Great Britain and Ireland; the Isle of Wight and the Isle of Man; then to America from the Leeward Islands, through the whole continent, into Canada and Newfoundland.⁴²

It was hard for Wesley to yield up the human and financial resources of his Connexion to support such expansion, yet he could not help but rejoice that the expansion was somehow beginning.

⁴⁰ *loc. cit.*

⁴¹ Taggart, p. 161.

⁴² Taggart, p. 162.

Wesley's 1783 sermon 'The General Spread of the Gospel' gives insights into both Wesley's joy over the expansion of Christ's kingdom and his own understanding of how that expansion would happen. He declared,

All unprejudiced persons may see with their eyes that he is already renewing the face of the earth. And we have strong reason to hope the work he hath begun he will carry on unto the day of his Lord Jesus.⁴³

He traced the spread of the evangelical revival from Oxford, through Britain, Ireland and North America and exclaimed,

Now in the same manner as God *has* converted so many to himself without destroying their liberty, he *can* undoubtedly convert whole nations, or the whole world. And it is as easy to him to convert a world as one individual soul.⁴⁴

Wesley's vision for the Evangelical Revival, for the Kingdom of Christ, was clearly larger than his vision for his own ministry and Connexion. In this sermon he envisaged a day when all would know the Lord.⁴⁵

But how would this miraculous expansion of the Kingdom happen? 'Silently...from heart to heart, from house to house, from town to town, from one kingdom to another.'⁴⁶ The course of the Revival as he envisaged it would be,

first through the remaining provinces, then through the isles of North America And at the same time from England to Holland, ... Probably it will spread from these to the Protestants in France to the Roman Catholics ... to ... the various provinces of Turkey, ... yea, and the remotest parts, not only of Europe, but of Asia, Africa, and America.⁴⁷

Nominal Christians would be won by the witness of true Christians, 'Mohamotans' would then be won by the Spirit-filled and loving lives of the true Christians and finally the 'heathen nations' would be won to Christ.⁴⁸ The first 'heathen' to be won would be those near to or in frequent communication with Christian nations and Christians, then those more distant ones 'with whom the Christians

⁴³ 'The General Spread of the Gospel', *The Works of John Wesley*, Vol 2, Sermons II, Bicentennial edition, Albert Outler, ed., (Nashville: 1985), p. 499.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 490.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, p. 494.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, p. 493.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, p. 493.

⁴⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 496-497.

trade'.⁴⁹ Gradually, from these initial contacts, God would send his messengers into the hinterlands of the 'heathen' nations.⁵⁰ Finally would remain the 'heathens' with no Christian contacts, such as the South Pacific islanders. It was here, at last, that Wesley envisaged God sending messengers 'as he sent Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch'.⁵¹ Wesley, perhaps due to what he had witnessed up to that point, envisaged a spontaneous worldwide spread of the Gospel, something that bore little resemblance to the organized missionary efforts that soon did carry the gospel to the ends of the earth. This was not so much a missionary sermon as an eschatological sermon, inspired by early missionary successes. The vision contained therein, though universal, required no organized sending of men and money to far-away lands. Instead, it required mostly just normal human intercourse in politics, in trade, in society, missionaries not included. The concept of a strongly centralized world - evangelizing organization such as the Methodist Connexion he had shaped for the British work was entirely missing from Wesley's vision for world missions as described in this sermon.

Wesley's vision for Methodism was not narrow, but it was limited, at first to Britain and Ireland, and then stretched to include North America and the West Indies. He did envisage the spread of the gospel over the earth, but it seemed beyond him to see the active part Methodism would be called to take in that spread. He could see the hand of God at work, but he seemed unable to clearly discern the human part in the great universal work of God. Wesley's vision was still stretching and growing when he died, leaving behind in Methodism the seeds of a much larger vision.

In 1836 James Dixon addressed the Exeter Hall Meeting of Wesleyan Methodists:

If we abandon the missionary cause in any degree, we abandon the principles of our founder -- the principles of our best fathers, We return to the littleness of a sect... my greatest delight in my Methodism is that it is not sectarian, that it is universal, that it contemplates the conversion of the whole world; and I should be extremely sorry to see the day arrive when Wesleyan Methodism existed simply as United Societies. We may exist as united societies, but with the noble purpose of extending beyond our frontier the Christianity we own. We were formed for this purpose; and if we abandon our principles, I do think God will abandon us.⁵²

⁴⁹ Ibid, p. 497.

⁵⁰ Ibid, p. 497.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 497.

⁵² Notes and Transcripts p. 59, Special Series, W.M.M.S. archives, School of Oriental and African Studies (London).

Already, just forty-five years after Wesley's death, the movement he had founded had grown into a denomination with a universal sense of identity and a missionary focus. Could Wesley have said, 'Amen,' to this speech? Was this missionary denomination the Methodism John Wesley had envisaged or intended? Would he have been surprised or unhappy to see the path his societies had taken in this world missionary enterprise? Was this missionary identity of Methodism a late child of the genius of John Wesley or had it been grafted in by some other hand?

Certainly, when he started out, Wesley intended nothing more than the revival of Britain and Ireland through the organization of united religious societies tied to the Church of England. But in the latter years of his life he began to get a glimpse of the missionary Methodism that was to be, of the larger field of work which was yet ahead for his movement. He resisted it to some degree, as it was not a part of his original plan or vision, but he also facilitated it through the missionary appointments and ordinations which he took part in and through his use of Coke's missionary energies in truly missionary work. Findlay and Holdsworth wrote, 'When... he ordained Coke and his companions for America, he sacrificed reluctantly his Church prejudices to his missionary instincts'.⁵³

It doesn't seem that Wesley intended a world mission for his movement, but in the end, he followed what he saw to be the providences of God and those providences appeared to be leading in an overseas direction (e.g. the successes of spontaneously planted Methodism in North America and the West Indies). His work was the salvation of the lost, and though his vision was largely limited to Britain, he could not help but rejoice in the expansion of God's kingdom beyond those shores. He could even find a way to lay down his 'Church prejudices' in order to place that expansion on a firm footing. A Wesley who could do that probably would also have eventually accepted the necessity of his Connexion separating into a denomination to continue its mission.

World missionary enthusiasm, though not apparent, was latent in the heart of Wesley's teaching and leadership. When the British world began to extend into far dominions in travel, commerce and government, it was not, then, unnatural for Wesley's heirs to draw the conclusion that world mission was their special calling, that the Methodist world was meant to expand along with the British world. Could Methodism, by rejecting the call to world mission have remained more faithful to the calling that Wesley heard for it, 'to

⁵³ *History of the W.M.M.S.* I: p. 32. See also Rack, p. 72.

seek and save that which is lost'? In the changing world order, it is hard to imagine that it could have. Surely John Wesley would have rejoiced to see the day when preachers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church carried the gospel from Britain to all the inhabited continents of the world.

CHRISTI-AN C. BENNETT

Book Review

Charles Wesley, Man with the Dancing Heart, by T. Crichton Mitchell, (Kansas City, Missouri, Beacon Hill Press, 1994; pp. 279, pb ISBN 083-411-4496; available in UK from Beacon Hill Books, Vera Packard, 5 Latham Road, Southport, Lancs., PR9 0JA, no price stated).

Dr. Mitchell, professor at the Nazarene Bible College at Colorado Springs, whose work on hymn interpretation has already contributed substantially to the new collaboration among the Methodist/Wesleyan communities, now offers a theological biography, at once affectionate and realistic, in which Charles's life and creative work take (in human terms) centre stage. Big Brother John has a walking-on part! Eight chapters and a coda trace the life, using hymn excerpts to hint at the spiritual content of crucial passages. Sources are fully drawn on: the one surprising omission is J. R. Tyson's "Charles Wesley, Evangelist: the Unpublished New Castle [*sic*] Journal," *Methodist History* XXV/1 (October 1986) 41-60. The other seven chapters examine the hymns as catechetical instruments, with special reference to sanctification, sacraments, the Christian Year and the Christian's biography. As with Ken Bible's selection, *Wesley Hymns* (Kansas City, Lillenas Publg Co., 1982), edification and intellectual effort are expected to co-inhere, and familiarity with theological debates, at least those current among evangelical Christians, is assumed. Mitchell's study will especially benefit preachers and spiritual directors.

DAVID TRIPP

AN INDEPENDENT METHODIST BICENTENARY

THE Independent Methodists have the distinction of being the longest lasting division of British Methodism. Others have disappeared as Methodism's various branches have united over a period of time, but this year sees the Independent Methodists of Warrington marking the 200th Anniversary of their first church, Friars Green, which began in 1796 - a year before Alexander Kilham's activities led to the formation of the Methodist New Connexion. However, the founding of the first church was not simultaneous with the founding of a denomination and ten years would pass before the group of churches which formed the embryonic Independent Methodist Connexion came together for an inaugural meeting. Unlike other branches of Methodism, the Independent Methodists did not break away from the parent body at single point in time or even over a single issue. They were actually several breakaway groups, bearing different names, and originating in varied circumstances and for different reasons.

In 1792, the Warrington Methodist Society was transferred to the newly-formed Northwich Circuit, whose itinerant preacher lived at Northwich and visited Warrington at intervals, along with the rest of the societies under his care. Inevitably, his visits were infrequent, which meant that the Warrington society had to rely upon its local preachers for leadership. Some of them began to hold cottage meetings for worship, prayer, testimony, Bible reading and preaching. Four years later, possibly aware that the members at Bank Street Chapel were experiencing an unusual degree of local autonomy, Conference proposed to give Warrington an itinerant of its own. The leaders at Bank Street responded to this by saying that they already had gifted local preachers, so an itinerant was unnecessary. In any event, they claimed, they were too poor to pay for his services. Conference evidently accepted this response and it was not until 1812 that an itinerant preacher was eventually stationed in the town.

The story of what happened subsequently is drawn entirely from accounts which were written down long afterwards by those who chose to break away from the parent Methodist body, so it tells one side of the story only. Seemingly, attempts to bring Warrington under more direct discipline took another turn in 1796, when the Northwich itinerant, who was still responsible for the pastoral oversight of the Warrington Society, gave instructions that the cottage meetings which were led by the local preachers should be discontinued and that all meetings should take place in the church premises under his supervision. Four local preachers felt in conscience that they could not do so and withdrew from the church, quietly and without fuss. They formed the nucleus of what was to become the first Independent Methodist Church.

The most significant leader to emerge in the new group only came to prominence several years later. Peter Phillips, a young chairmaker, was

only 18 years old at the time of the split. His father was the town crier of Warrington and frequently drunk and violent, so, at an early age his mother placed him in the home of a nearby Quaker couple Thomas and Mary Watt, who were to prove a formative influence in his life. Another mentor was his elder brother, John, later a long-serving itinerant, who took him to Bank Street Chapel where, as a boy, he heard the aged John Wesley preach. This group of dissident Methodists built its first chapel in 1802 but existed alone until 1806, apparently without outside contact. In the event, it was the arrival of the American evangelist **Lorenzo Dow** at the end of 1805 proved the necessary catalyst to bring together the various revivalist groups. He first met Peter Phillips in Liverpool and received an immediate invitation to stay at his home in Warrington.¹ For the whole of his stay in England, the Phillips home became his main base.

Dow's travels served to identify other groups similar to the one at Warrington. He travelled to Macclesfield and Stockport, where he found groups of revivalist character who had left the Methodist New Connexion.² He went to Manchester and met the 'Bandroom Methodists', who had operated in breach of Methodist discipline and who were therefore required to leave the Methodist body.³ He went to Preston and found a group whom he described as 'Free Gospellers'.⁴ In Oldham, he came across a newly formed body using the name 'Independent Methodist' - probably the first church to do so.⁵ Dow noticed the factors which were common to these groups and termed them the 'Third Division' of Methodists: the Wesleys being the first and Alexander Kilham's Methodist New Connexion the second.

On 23 July 1806, Dow left Oldham on foot for Leeds and recorded his observations about these new groups. He concluded: 'Though most of these societies had no particular intercourse or communion together, I suppose I was the first preacher who made them a general visit.' He then added, significantly: 'They called a conference some weeks ago to know each other's minds, and see how near they could come towards the outlines of a general union.'⁶ In such an informal way did the early Independent Methodists first meet together; this is the only surviving information about this meeting, but it is sufficient to show clearly when the denomination began. 1796 was Friars Green's date of origin but the Connexion of Churches is dated properly from the meeting of 1806 which Lorenzo Dow mentions.

Despite the common characteristics of the churches which came together, the Warrington group was unique in one sense. In addition to its Methodist

¹ *Zion's Trumpet*, April 1855.

² Lorenzo Dow, *Dealings of God, Man and the Devil*, Applegate & Co, Cincinnati, 1860, p. 123.

³ Dow, pp. 118, 124.

⁴ Dow, p. 120

⁵ *Centenary Souvenir of Independent Methodism in Oldham*, 1916.

⁶ Dow, p. 124.

founders, its ranks had been augmented by disaffected Quakers. This must have made for a curious mixture. On the one hand there were the Methodists, followers of John Wesley, who steadfastly refused to leave the Church of England and remained one of its clergy to the end of his life; on the other hand there were the Quakers, followers of George Fox, who had nothing good to say about the established church and who initiated the most radical nonconformity of all!

The early influences of the Quaker home in which Peter Phillips lived must have played a significant part, through him, in the new church's development. But not all Quakers had the spiritual vitality of the Watt family. During the eighteenth century most Quaker groups had either retreated into quietism or had absorbed the rationalism of the Enlightenment. Quakerism had begun as religion of immediacy, with a strong sense of the direct guidance of God to the individual believer, without any clerical leadership or oversight, but now it had lost much of its initial passion (and many of its members).

Now, in Warrington, there was a new group which must have appeared to have so much that concerned Quakers valued, including a great evangelistic vitality. Thus, members from two distinct and very different traditions came together and formed a church which had characteristics of both. Hence, Friars Green did not initially use the name 'Independent Methodist', but 'Quaker Methodist'. Like the Quakers, they were non-sacramental at first - hence their early registers were 'Births and Namings' Registers, rather than registers of baptisms. However, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the sacraments came to be 'celebrated' as in other Independent Methodist Churches.

The decision of the Methodist dissidents to have no paid ministry had an obvious appeal to the former Quakers who had long eschewed the idea of separation of clergy from laity. The two strands of thought coalesced and the new church operated on the basis of the equality of all members. At first, this may have been due to the poverty of the Bank Street members, who said that they were too poor to pay an itinerant, but it eventually became a matter of principle. The Independent Methodists, like other groups with a 'free gospel' emphasis, tended to claim the moral high ground in their rejection of clericalism and payment, much as the Quakers had claimed it over a century before. But this was not simply the making of a rather negative point; it was also an affirmation of their belief that every believer was equal before God and each had a contribution to make to the total ministry of the church.

A further influence was the great friendship which grew up between Hugh Bourne and the Quaker Methodists of Warrington. He worked closely with Peter Phillips and for a time it looked as though their paths lay together in a single movement. However, by 1811, Bourne and his followers felt that they could no longer, in conscience, stay with the pattern of unpaid ministry which had become an inviolable principle of the Independent Methodists. This was a significant split for both parties and set them on

different courses, though personal friendship and some degree of mutual support remained for a long time. The Primitive Methodists grew rapidly; the Independent Methodists did not, and records show that many of them felt a sense of frustration with a system which offered such limited scope for expansion. By the 1830s this would see many Independent Methodist churches switch to other branches of Methodism for this very reason.

But how adamant were the early Independent Methodists about the unpaid system? Peter Phillips was firm in his belief that local church ministry should be unpaid, but refused to join in any verbal attacks on ministers who worked on a stipendiary basis.⁷ This was at least a charitable approach, which is more than can be said for his successors, some of whom were quite vitriolic in their anti-clerical rhetoric. In fact, when Phillips was, in 1814, offered the paid pastorate of a church, he did not immediately dismiss it but gave it careful consideration and finally declined it courteously.⁸

A study of the life of Peter Phillips brings to light a man of diverse interests - education, temperance and the relief of poverty - to name but three. He served as the denomination's President on nine occasions and was, invariably, the one who was contacted by other churches for help and advice. Peter Phillips was also something of an ecumenist before his time. This was possibly born of his own mixed background - he was fully aware that he was debtor to Anglicans, Methodists, Quakers - and possibly others too. He believed strongly that Christians of all denominations should work together, whilst his temperance interests showed he would work with people of other persuasions and possibly none for the benefit of others. Perhaps it is no coincidence that when the Free Church Federal Council and British Council of Churches came into being during the present century, the Independent Methodists reflected something of the outlook of their early leader by becoming founder members of both bodies.

Taking his lead from St. Paul's tentmaking ministry at Corinth, Phillips aimed to show that a minister could sustain himself and his family without charge to his church. He led Friars Green Church for 50 years, but the Independent Methodist system of plural, unpaid ministry meant that others were in place to continue his work after he died. Whether any had his personal charisma was another matter. He died on May 11, 1853, deeply respected and dubbed the 'founder' of Independent Methodism, not so much on the basis of his initial work at the time of its origins, but on account of his unrivalled contribution to the denomination's growth and development in its early decades.

To mark Friars Green's 200th Anniversary, the denomination went back (geographically) to its roots by holding its 1996 Annual Meeting (Conference) in the town. The church itself has organised several commemorative events which will continue through the present year.

JOHN A. DOLAN

⁷ *Zion's Trumpet*, April 1855

⁸ *Zion's Trumpet*, April 1855

6: F. W. Bourne's "The Bible Christians. Their Origin and History (1815 - 1900)"¹

We pray that the Lord Jesus Christ may ever have you in His precious keeping and give you to see the accomplishment of the important work you have recently taken in hand, namely, the writing of the History of the Church you love so well.' These words were in the address from the Bible Christian Conference of 1900 to Frederick William Bourne in the jubilee year of his ministry.² Bourne did see the hoped-for accomplishment but on the day before his death.³

Frederick William Bourne was born in 1830 and entered the Bible Christian Ministry in 1850 although untypically none of his fifty-five years of ministry were in a rural circuit and equally untypically the last twenty eight years were in London stations. Bourne's ministry overlapped that of James Thorne by twenty two years and he was the commanding figure in his small denomination for the second half of its existence. He was three times President and held key connexional offices, such as being Connexional Treasurer from 1866 until the year before his death. In the 1900 *Minutes* eleven ministers were senior to him in length of service but his knowledge of the past and present of his denomination was unique. Union was fast approaching and if a history of the denomination was to be written, Bourne was the obvious, perhaps only, candidate and, in the words quoted above, the 1900 Conference endorsed his proposal to do this. It could hardly refuse as it was receiving the profits from Bourne's *Billy Bray, The King's Son* which was selling by the hundred thousand.⁴

The new century was encouraging Methodist people of all persuasions to be optimistic about the future and union and it was not the best time for an ageing minister to set about a chronicle of the past of one worthy but small Methodist denomination. On the other hand it was obvious that if it were not published while the Bible Christian Book Room still existed it would never be published at all.

Bourne set about writing his history which was to be published in nine monthly parts but he was a sick man and his 'important work' became a publisher's nightmare!⁵ Beginning with September 1901, five sixpenny

¹ Bourne, Frederick William, Sept 1901 to July 1905. *The Bible Christians. Their Origin and History (1815 - 1900)*. (Bible Christian Book Room, London) Parts I - IX in wrappers with binding case as issued, 568p. illus. index errata.

Ibid. 1905. *The Bible Christians. Their Origin and History (1815 - 1900)*. (Bible Christian Book Room London). 568p. illus. index errata.

² *BC Minutes* 1900. p. 40.

³ Luke, W. B., *Memorials of Frederick William Bourne*. (1906) p. 217.

⁴ Ibid p. 117.

⁵ The nine parts are dated in this sequence:- Sept 1901, Oct 1901, Nov 1901, Dec 1901, Jan 1902, Sept 1904, Oct 1904, April 1905, July 1905.

parts up to January 1902 appeared in wrappers, with text sometimes ending in mid-sentence, but there followed a heart-stopping hiatus due to his breakdown in health before part six appeared in September 1904. Part seven came the following month and by this time Bourne was very ill. 'Day after day he struggled, more and more feebly, but with dogged perseverance, to complete the last "part" of his history. But the pen, once so swift and sure, was now lightly grasped in a hand about which the Angel of Death almost visibly hovered. His eldest daughter helped him as an amanuensis, and her husband prepared the index which was almost, but not quite, all that now remained to be done. Sentence by sentence, with incredible slowness, the final passages were shaped by his trembling lips...'⁶

Part eight was delayed to April 1905 and the last appeared in July 1905. On July 25 1905, his seventy fifth birthday and the day before his death, 'He took in his hand the first hastily-bound copy of the *History* that had been his main pre-occupation for the last three years, but it stirred only a languid and transient interest'.⁷ The public now faced a choice. Anyone who had bought and kept all the parts could buy a cover for local binding for sixpence or a bound volume at five shillings in cloth or seven and six if half bound with gilt edges. The book was still being advertised several years later and cannot have been profitable. It might almost be described as an exercise in vanity publishing by an old minister, knowing that the younger generation was impatient of the past and who could not bear that his memories should disappear with his death. Copies are not now plentiful and seldom appear for sale but battered copies do survive across the south west and no doubt in the other places in the south that were colonised by the Bible Christians. No locally bound copies have been seen by the present writer. He possesses a bound copy and also unbound parts with a cover; both were once owned by Bible Christian ministers.

What did Bourne achieve in his 568 pages? In his biography of Bourne, published only a year after his death, W. B. Luke expressed a remarkably frank appraisal. 'The first chapters of the *History* are an almost unsurpassed narrative of ardent, self-sacrificing and wonderfully successful evangelism. These alone give the book an enduring value. The story is told with vividness and power. ... The later chapters have not the same interest or literary merit. The historian's materials were more abundant in quantity, but the quality was not so good. There was not the succession of dramatic episodes and striking personalities; the necessary condensation of recurring incidents tended to monotony, and a history dwindled into a chronicle.'⁸ Ninety years later this appraisal cannot be improved upon although it must be extended, for example the four-page general index is abysmal but is partly redeemed by the three-page index of illustrations. The illustrations are particularly valuable as they include views of forty chapels many of which have been demolished or altered.

The whole work is a chronicle with each chapter after the first covering a decade and each page is headed with the year in question. The first five

⁶ Luke, *op. cit.*, p. 216.

⁷ *Ibid.* p. 217.

⁸ *Ibid.* pp. 208 - 9.

years occupy ninety one pages but the decade up to 1900 only takes thirty-six. Clearly a great deal of later material is summarised from the *Minutes* but is certainly not without value and even the concluding laboured pages include insights and details. Generally there are no references to sources anywhere in the book. About the earlier days Bourne writes with especial authority, if not from his own experience at least from having heard directly from the protagonists or from access to manuscript material such as journals and letters which are now lost. Frustratingly he discusses and adds a little to the sparse information available about the schism of 1829 but allows his pastoral instincts to prevail, 'many things were said on both sides which there is no necessity to reproduce'.⁹

Bourne brought together a great deal of information and arranged it in chronological order but, in the absence of a proper index, finding information requires effort. It is by no means a history of the Bible Christian denomination, for that reference must be made to Thomas Shaw's published W. H. S. Lecture¹⁰, but 'Bourne' will never be replaced as a quarry for detail and illustration.

ROGER THORNE

⁹ Bourne, 1905, pp. 190-4

¹⁰ Shaw, T., *The Bible Christians. 1815 - 1907.*

A special commemorative booklet has been produced to give a fuller account of the origins of the Independent Methodists of Warrington: *Peter's People* by John Dolan, (A5, 21 pp.) Copies from the Independent Methodist Resource Centre, Fleet Street, Pemberton, Wigan, WN5 0DA, price £1 plus 30 pence p. & p.

The sixth Chapel Aid Lecture, delivered at Englesea Brook Museum of Primitive Methodism in May 1996, is an exploration of 'How Primitive was Primitive Methodism?' by Dr Henry D. Rack. He considers open-air preaching, attitudes to the supernatural and the use of women preachers and asks how distinctive these characteristics were. Copies, price £2 plus postage, from K. Spibey, Waneshill, Church Road, Aston-juxta-Mondrum, Nantwich, Cheshire, CW5 6DR.

The year 1996 marks the Centenary of both these *Proceedings* and the Wesley Guild. It is fitting, therefore, that our own William Leary has written a short and attractively illustrated history of the Guild's first hundred years. About half the text covers the launch and early years, but all aspects of the movement are touched upon.

Annual Meeting and Lecture

Over 40 people thoroughly appreciated the excellent tea of ham salad, trifle and cake at Park Street Methodist Church, Lytham, as the guests of the North Lancs Branch of the W.H.S. to whom grateful thanks were accorded.

The Annual Meeting accepted the Minutes of the 1995 meeting, remembered members who had died during the year and appointed the Officers for 1996/7. This year saw several changes - our President, the Rev. A. Raymond George, and Librarian, Mrs. Joyce Banks, had decided to retire. The General Secretary thanked Mr. George for his constant support, wise counsel and guidance over the years and Mr. George paid grateful tribute to Mrs. Banks for all her work first as Assistant Librarian and then as Librarian, remarking in particular that she had coped most efficiently with difficulties while the Library was at Southlands, overseen its re-location at Westminster College, followed by redevelopment and building work there. The following elections were agreed - the Rev. A. Raymond George to join the Rev. Dr. John C. Bowmer as a President Emeritus; the Rev. Dr. John A. Newton to be President; Dr. John A. Vickers to act as Librarian until an appointment, preferably of someone living in the Oxford area, be made and as he is now also W.H.M.S. (British Section) Secretary Mr. John H. Lenton, having retired from that post, becomes a co-opted member of The Executive Committee.

Reports were presented and accepted with the following special points being made: The Treasurer's report and budget (see p. 245) was accepted. The Library Appeal has raised just over £2,000 so far, but there was still a long way to go to reach the target of £10,000 - please send any contributions to the Treasurer. The Rev. Donald Ryan reported that there were now 820 members, but as membership gains are just about keeping pace with losses, it is important to try to encourage others to join. Mrs. Banks gave details on developments at the library including the extension of the grant to facilitate electronic cataloguing. She stated that the Appeal money was being used for urgent binding and necessary conservation work. In the absence of the Rev. Colin Smith, the Rev. Tim Macquiban commented on the very successful W.H.S./W.M.H.S Conference held at Hartley Hall, Manchester from 9 - 12 April 1996.

The 'special resolution' proposed by Dr. J. A. Vickers last year, having been endorsed by the Executive Committee and published in the *Proceedings*, was accepted. Mr. Roger R. S. Thorne, J.P., C. Eng., MICE, FSA will give the 1997 Lecture.

Dr. David Bebbington, (Reader in History, Stirling University) delivered a most illuminating lecture, printed in this issue.

E. D. G.

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY — FINANCIAL STATEMENTS, 1995

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year ended 31st December 1995

INCOME.	£
Subscriptions (Note 1)	5,398
Donations	34
Irish Branch	709
Sales of <i>Proceedings</i> (back numbers)	115
„ other Publications, etc. ...	107
Library—Tickets, Donations, Sales	13
Annual Lecture Collection	38
Advertisements	81
Bank and Building Society Interest	304
War Stock Dividend	8
	6,807
EXPENDITURE.	£
<i>Proceedings</i> and distribution	3,981
Other Printing	52
Library	1,372
Annual Lecture	40
World Methodist Historical Soc.	97
Administration Expenses	598
Advertising	50
Subscriptions and Donations	5
	6,195
Excess of Income over Expenditure	£612

Balance Sheet as at 31st December 1995

ASSETS EMPLOYED (Note 2)	£
£200 3½% War Stock (at cost) (Note 3)	225
Current Assets—	£
Sundry Debtors	181
Income Tax recoverable	782
Leeds & Holbeck Bld. Soc.	7,795
T.S.B.—Conference Sec.	1,121
Midland Bank (Current A/c)	1,444
Cash in hand	211
	11,534
Current Liabilities—	
Sundry Creditors	166
Subscriber's paid in advance	5,734
Conf'nce Fees	140
	6,040
Net Current Assets	5,494
	£5,719
REPRESENTED BY	
Balance at 1st January 1995 ...	2,865
Add Excess Income over Expenditure	612
	3,477
Conference Fund Surplus	981
Library Appeal Fund	1,261
(Signed) RALPH WILKINSON,	£5,719
<i>Honorary Treasurer.</i>	

Notes to the Accounts

1—SUBSCRIPTIONS	£	£
Unexpired Subscriptions at 1st January 1995—		
Ordinary Members	6,050	
Life Members (estimated)	200	
		6,250
Received during year*		4,632
Income Tax recoverable		250
		11,132
Less Unexpired Subscriptions at 31st December—		
Ordinary Members	5,554	
Life Members (estimated)	180	
		5,734
		£5,398

*No account has been taken of subscriptions in arrears at 31st December 1994, whether or not recovered since, but any previous arrears recovered during the year are included in the above figures.

2—ASSETS EMPLOYED
The Library and stocks of Publications have not been valued, and are not included in these financial statements.

3—WAR STOCK
Market value at Balance Sheet date .. £88

AUDITOR'S REPORT—I have audited the financial statements in accordance with approved auditing standards. The amount of subscriptions paid in advance by members includes estimates based upon a reasonable interpretation of the available data. No account has been taken of possible arrears of subscriptions. Other assets and liabilities have been independently verified.

Subject to the matters mentioned above, in my opinion the financial statements give a true and fair view on an historical cost basis of the state of affairs of the Society as at 31st December 1995, and of its overall surplus for the year then ended.

York, 19th June 1996.

(Signed) J. R. L. HUDSON,
Chartered Accountant.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Dissenters. Vol. 2: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity, 1791-1859.
By Michael R. Watts (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995, pp. xxiv, 911. £75.00.
ISBN: 0 19 822968 2)

When the first volume of Michael Watts's *Dissenters* appeared nearly twenty years ago it was clear that he could not compass the nineteenth century by the methods which had led to the production of the denominational compendium he had there achieved; and so the result has proved. He claims to have tried to apply the same research techniques as in the first volume, but the new blockbuster not only does not get as far as the second Reform Act, it has to take a substantially different, and, in my view, better, shape. The new volume is composed of a series of long essays on the expansion of dissent, the community of dissent, the politics of dissent and so forth, which give him the opportunity to bring out the extent to which the Protestant Dissenters (the Catholics are still excluded) have a common history, as well as the way the old Dissent declined sharply at a time when the new Dissent was advancing by leaps and bounds. The upshot is a book which (like the first volume) will prove of indispensable assistance to students working in this as well as cognate fields for a long time to come. The author lays under contribution an enormous amount of source material as well as modern scholarship both published and unpublished; and though he is given to swatting other students as though they were rather tiresome flies, his own comment is never negligible. Any criticism of the work must not obscure the fact that it is a first-class achievement and needs to be judged by the best standards.

For there are a number of points at which the viewpoint of the book seems not quite satisfactory. The attempt made in the first volume to explain the outbreak of the evangelical revival as the outcome of patient work by the Church establishment in the field of education was always too insular to be a really plausible explanation of a phenomenon breaking out over much of the Protestant world. However, he restates it here, only to intensify the discomfort it creates by maintaining that dissent was characteristic of the most ignorant and superstitious parts of the country, i.e. those least affected by education of any kind. His preference is for solid explanations springing from the denominational literature rather than social speculations built upon statistical coincidences which he is apt to dismiss as not evidence; but his method gives rather establishmentarian results. Thus he glosses over the fact that all the connexional policies (at home and abroad) of Jabez Bunting's mature years failed and that the only fig-leaf for his nakedness was an impossible exaggeration of the doctrine of the Pastoral Office. What might have helped Watts's broader argument would have been to admit that one of the Bunting clique's less admirable features was an extraordinary animosity towards preachers with literary pretensions,

perhaps because they were liable to seek relief from the labours of the itinerant life. At any rate the feuds which began with Adam Clarke ended with a feud with James Everett, who so far from being 'an unlikely rebel' (p. 618) was one of the most likely rebels of all. And the Methodist reform secessions of the middle of the nineteenth century illustrate one side of the unease created by Mr Watts's use of statistics. The claim of the connexional management was that the Reformers had done incalculable religious damage by tempting away 100,000 members and organising less than half of them; what actually seems to have happened is that they tempted off about half that number and organised almost all of them, and at the same time delivered such a blow to official morale that for a while normal recruiting fell below par and doubled the membership loss. A movement like the Wesleyan movement which had to recruit furiously the whole time to counterbalance losses due to death, ceasing to meet, and transfer to other churches, would quickly show the results of failure to recruit. But the outcome justified the criticisms of the Reformers that for twenty years the old connexion had been losing its impact on a wider society, even though the restoration of morale made it possible to replace the immediate losses quickly. On the other hand the author has expended enormous labour in creating a statistical sledgehammer to crack a social nut. He is absolutely determined to put an end to allegations of the middle-class character of dissent, and will make many of us blush at incautious phrases used to indicate who was making the running in a denomination, which might be taken to appear that the working class were not there at all. Mr. Watts and his team have laboured mightily upon baptismal and wedding records to show that this was not the case, and his rejigging of the very imprecise indications contained in those records is a very interesting and sensible though still arbitrary exercise. More to the point, it is an unnecessary exercise. It is quite clear that since the nineteenth-century social pyramid, though very tall in terms of disparity of incomes, was very flat in terms of numbers above the base, the Dissenters could not have recruited the numbers they did had they not acquired a substantial working-class following. Moreover the nature of the nonconformist constituency (which differed from that of the Church or the Roman Catholics) would have become clearer if Mr. Watts had been a bit less ecclesiastical and given more attention to Sunday schools and to the statistics of the registration of cottage meetings.

At the other end of the social scale, the reader who has ploughed through Mr. Watts's millennium of pages is entitled to ask why nothing is said about the theology of the Dissenters, apart from a thumbnail sketch of the evangelical plan of salvation which is used to explain why evangelicals invested in unprofitable chapels rather than in profitable businesses like Quakers and Unitarians. This is not quite good enough, since in the eighteenth century Dissenters had been major exporters of biblical criticism and the philosophy of religion to the continent. The probability is that they became absorbers rather than creators of most branches of theology other

than biblical studies (and in this respect became more like the church establishment). But what they absorbed and what they did not is a matter of some importance which the author does not address.

Still, to note what Mr. Watts's vast tomes do not contain is not to close one's eyes to the vast amount of red meat they do contain. This will provide sustenance for years to come. May he complete his enterprise before the world of Dissent is sucked uncomplainingly into the ecumenical Hoover.

W. R. WARD

The Letters of John Pawson (Methodist Itinerant 1762 - 1806) 3 vols., edited by John C. Bowmer and John A. Vickers (W.M.H.S. Publications, 1994-95, pp. vi + 175, vi + 168, vi + 165; £15 each volume, £35 the set. ISBN 1 85852 018 5; 1 85852 036 3; 1 85852 045 2).

Much of the more intimate and human detail and inner history of early Methodism lies hidden in the unpublished correspondence of the itinerant preachers and it is good to see what is probably the most informative collection of all in print. Although the bulk of the material is deposited in the Methodist Archives at Manchester, the editors have located some items or copies elsewhere to complete the collection. Many of them, and among the most candid, are those to Pawson's young protégé Charles Atmore, who also benefitted from Pawson's extensive knowledge of former (and often delinquent!) preachers for his *Methodist Memorial* collection of biographies.

The letters are valuable and illuminating in a number of different directions. Most conspicuously, they give an insider's view of the tensions and disagreements already building up in the decade before Wesley's death and erupting in the 1790s. The list is familiar - Methodist ordinations, sacraments and services in church hours; control of chapels and pulpits by trustees or the itinerants; the government of the Connexion, especially between Conferences; and running through all this, the question of the relationship between the Church of England and the Methodists and the threat or promise of separation.

Pawson's view of all this is particularly valuable because he cannot be classified in any simple way either as a 'Church' or 'separatist' Methodist. Though deploring Kilham's attacks on the hierarchy he conceded privately that much was amiss in financial administration; and he was opposed to the rigidities of those 'Church Methodists' who claimed that the 'old' or 'Mr Wesley's' plan was to avoid all ordinations, sacraments and services in church hours. He rightly claimed to be true to Wesley's real 'plan' (such as it was) of varying from the Church so far as it was necessary to hold Methodism together and to promote the gospel, in obedience to providential guidance. Like Wesley, too, in his attitude to female preaching, he countenanced the providential call of Mary Barritt to be a preacher. Rather more than Wesley, perhaps, he would have liked to allow the people

to decide locally to receive the sacraments, and distrusted the Plan of Pacification because it threatened to give the Trustees a *de facto* veto. But above all he counselled compromise to gain peace and unity which led to many clashes with people like Benson, Thompson and Mather.

Another of Pawson's preoccupations was the lack of 'government' in Methodism, especially between Conferences. This was his main reason for supporting the notorious 'Lichfield Plan' which for him was less about 'bishops' than a means for filling the executive gap left by Wesley's death.

Through and alongside Pawson's arguments on connexional policy we are given a mass of detail about the conduct of individuals which throws a sometimes unflattering light on the itinerants and some of the local preachers and other laity, along with vignettes of humble Methodist saints. Here we can see some of the mundane realities lying behind the advance of Methodism as well as the fears for its spiritual health which often seem to dominate Pawson's later years. (One recalls rather similar concerns in Wesley's late sermons). Indeed it is interesting to find Pawson on several occasions from 1794 appealing to the spirit of 'primitive Methodism' - a term clearly not new when adopted for the connexion of that name in 1812. Pawson was, it may be felt, an austere, humourless moralist, who had much to say about excessive expense and luxury, too many preachers going to Conference and expecting too much to eat when they arrived! He was also suspicious of people like Adam Clarke who pursued knowledge (he thought) not useful for the ministry. No doubt he exaggerated and judged the tastes of others by his own - even Wesley, he thought, needed a serious friend to keep his conversation on an edifying track! Yet one cannot but be impressed by his dedicated concern for the good of Methodism and its 'primitive' simplicity and dedication. This comes out especially well in an address to younger itinerants (printed here in an appendix).

Finally, one catches many glimpses of the more personal lives of the preachers, their problems and family lives (including advice on the ideal preacher's wife). Here Pawson's more human side shows through - his concern for his family and his prizing of 'Christian friendship'; and, like Dr. Johnson, he worked hard to keep old friendships in good repair. If not the last word on what was happening to Methodism in the crucial years of transition into a new denomination, it is certainly an indispensable witness to be read, perhaps, alongside the autobiographies of early preachers by those who wish to see Methodism portrayed to the life. The editors have done an excellent job of transcription, introduction and annotation plus a full index and deserve to be congratulated on a valuable and welcome contribution to Methodist history.

HENRY D. RACK

NOTES AND QUERIES

1496 SAMUEL WESLEY (1766-1837)

I am preparing an edition of the collected letters of the composer and organist Samuel Wesley (1766-1837), the son of Charles Wesley and nephew of John Wesley.

Although I think I have now traced all letters by Samuel Wesley in public collections, there must be many letters in private hands of which I am unaware. I would be most grateful to hear from anyone who either owns or knows of any Samuel Wesley letters in private ownership. All information will be gratefully received and acknowledged in the edition.

I would also be most interested to hear of any relevant letters in private ownership either to or from other members of his immediate family. These include his father Charles Wesley, his mother Sarah Gwynne Wesley, his sister Sarah (Sally) Wesley, his brother Charles Wesley, his wife Charlotte Louisa Wesley (née Martin), his common-law wife Sarah Suter, and his numerous children: Charles, John William, Emma Frances, Samuel Sebastian, Rosalind, Eliza, John, Matthias Erasmus, Thomasine, and Robert Glenn.

PHILIP OLLESON

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1497 TENT METHODISTS

I am researching the history of this group which was active in the Bristol area, Manchester, Liverpool and the east end of London at various times between 1814 and about 1830. In a biography of John Pyer, one of the founders, written by a daughter in 1865, there is reference to *The Tent Methodist Magazine* for 1824 and a book entitled *History of the Itinerant Temple*. I have, so far, failed to locate a copy of either and I would be most grateful if any reader can help. The other founder of the group was a George Pocock (1774-1843), well-known in Bristol for his ownership of an Academy, an inventor of some note, and the grandfather of W. G. Grace, the famous England cricketer. I am lacking knowledge of Mr Pocock's life and work after about 1820 and, once again, if any reader has information I would be glad to hear from them.

JOHN LANDER

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