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PRIMITIVE METHODISM IN SCOTLAND 1826-1932

The Wesley Historical Society Lecture for 2006

MY intention in this lecture is to try to show some of the flavour of Primitive Methodism in Scotland, from the energetic, earnest early days, through the developing aspiration toward weightiness and prestige in the community, to the weariness induced by creeping bureaucracy and the attitudes toward Methodist Union in 1932.

Beginnings

The Primitive Methodists saw themselves as missionaries with the message of a free, full and present salvation for all. Their work in Scotland originated in a sense of missionary responsibility - in Sunderland for Edinburgh and in Carlisle for Glasgow. Some Sunderland members feared that the noisy style of Primitive Methodism would be unacceptable among the stiff Edinburghers and that they had no one to send capable of standing up to Scottish intellect. Young Thomas Oliver would do, but he couldn't sing, so Jonathan Clewer who could was appointed to go with him to Edinburgh. They walked and arrived there in April 1826. To quote 'Its magnificence cast a damp over their spirits' - and, in fact, so did the fear of offending the touchy Scots.

After three days' reconnaissance they decided to risk preaching in the Grassmarket. Clewer urged Oliver to begin, and Oliver asked Clewer to try. 'Both of us were backward, so we cast lots. The lot fell on myself. I desired Clewer to borrow a chair. His timidity prevailed. I applied for one, but was refused. Some flagstones had been piled on the spot where the martyrs were burned. They became my pulpit.' He preached from 2 Kings ix 11, "Is all well? Wherefore came this mad fellow to thee?" It would be interesting to know how he worked this cloak-and-dagger tale

into the message of hope; but daily after that he and Clewer repeated the story of the Cross to the sick and distressed poor in the rookeries of the Old Town.

Clewer was shortly replaced by the energetic Nathaniel West. In the closes off the Grassmarket, he and Oliver visited fifty families a week, half of them unemployed and a quarter Irish. They found starving, ragged, sick and degraded people in loathsome dwellings but the better-off subscribed about £100 to help. So they rented a disused weaving factory and soon there were nearly one hundred in society. But after a quarrel with the Sunderland Quarterly Meeting, West was told by the Conference of 1827 to go to South Shields. He refused. The majority of the society supported him and took possession of the preaching room. Worse, the man sent to replace West joined him, and together they set up another independent mission in Bingham, a few miles outside the town. So two years after its hopeful beginning, the Edinburgh Primitive Methodism mission was wrecked.¹

After an earlier failure in Dumfriesshire, in March 1826 the Carlisle Circuit sent James Johnson, a hatter, to begin Primitive work in Glasgow, where he became a riveting open-air preacher. The people were 'much taken with the singing'. Johnson progressed from the open air, to a cottage, to a small room, then a larger one, where he reported 'a shaking among the dry bones.' By October an even larger rented room holding about 700 people was already too small.²

Leaving Glasgow Primitive Methodism established, Johnson set up a successful mission in Paisley in 1827. By 1831 it was strong enough to become a separate circuit. The Leaders rented the Philosophical Hall in 1834, but it was still a tight squeeze, and 'Brother Smith' was appointed 'to pack the people in.'³ Meanwhile Johnson had gone to build up Primitive Methodism in Dundee, which was reportedly 'in a prosperous state' in 1836, but when some unspecified trouble occurred in 1837 Johnson seceded from the Connexion and drew along with him about 60 members. The Dundee society never recovered, and though they struggled on for two years, the mission was abandoned.⁴

In Primitive Methodism the source of authority for the society was the Leaders' Meeting, and for the circuit it was the Quarterly Meeting composed of all the Leaders, the stewards and the travelling preachers. It had enough power to stop flogging a dead horse. If a

¹ *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (henceforward *PMM*) 1826, p.160 and 1878, pp.627-631 from Thomas Oliver's Journal; J. Petty, *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (1860) (henceforward Petty), pp.201-2.

² *PMM* 1827, pp.99-107

³ A. Leitch, *Paisley Central Hall, a History* (Paisley 1983); J. Ritson, *Centenary of Glasgow Primitive Methodism* (1926), (henceforward Ritson) p.30

⁴ Petty, p.311

mission did not succeed they abandoned it without repining. It was the Leaders' responsibility to keep discipline tight by pruning the membership roll. At Edinburgh in 1831 Ann MacDonald was put out for being drunk, and John Graham for 'breaking the windows of the Evening Post newspaper office.' In 1832 James Ross was 'examined relative to certain things he said about and to Bro Bell [the missionary] and the aspersions he cast on the society.'⁵

At Glasgow, which had become prosperous through 'close heart-searching preaching and strictly enforced discipline', unrest developed in 1832 from a few men who were 'keeping the society in continual turmoil', and the Leaders' Meeting blamed itself for not vetting the members rigorously enough.⁶ The Leaders had to ensure that the Prayer Meetings were properly conducted. At Edinburgh in 1841 they discussed 'the injury being done in the prayer meetings by the practice of one contradicting in his prayers what another brother had previously uttered'. Two weeks later there were 'complaints respecting Bro Charles Murray's use of many high-sounding words both in his discourses and prayers which were not understood by the people. He was asked to alter his manner of public approach to God, and to use no words but such as were generally understood'. He resigned.⁷

Current theological debate impinged on the society in 1842, when it was reported that David McLean had 'turned Unitarian'. The Meeting recorded his expulsion, as well as the letter he had sent to them: 'I have been dissatisfied with the doctrines you hold - namely hereditary depravity, the Deity of Christ, eternal torments, the atonement and others; all of which I consider in their nature and tendency to be unjust, opposed to reason, not in harmony with nature nor in strict agreement with the Scriptures. The first two I beseech you as the Stewards of God to look into narrowly, or you will labour in vain and spend your wretched strength for nought.'⁸

A weighty responsibility of the Quarterly Meeting was to oversee the quality of men selected to become travelling preachers. There were no examinations in the early days, but the qualifications looked for in a preacher, in Wesley's words, were gifts, grace, and fruit. Given these, any circuit could recommend a person for the ministry. In 1838 'Friends at Paisley improvised an ordination service at which Mr Eckersall, (the missionary) addressed [Colin Campbell M'Kechnie] with some wise counsel and encouragement, and then he with the elders of the church laid their hands on the youth's head and with a solemnity that no stately ceremonial could have exceeded,

⁵ Edinburgh Primitive Methodism Leaders' Meeting, (henceforward EdPMLM), 1827-1831, National Archives of Scotland, CH11/16/1.

⁶ PMM 1835, p.314

⁷ EdPMLM CH11/16/2

⁸ EdPMLM CH11/16/2

they set him apart and sent him forth as a minister of the Gospel of Christ.' ⁹ He never served in Scotland but in Northern England for the rest of his life; a deprivation of ability which Scotland could ill afford.

The Meeting also had to keep a close eye on the travelling preachers, particularly the probationers, and could request their daily Journal for the last quarter to be read out. For the whole of Primitive Methodism's existence, Scotland seems to have been the place where probationers were sent to cut their teeth. In the early days this was without training. All they had, apart from their calling, were the Rules of the Primitive Methodist Connexion and the daily guidance of a series of wise 'watchwords', such as 'exercise faith in silence', 'look well after the children', 'be prepared for spiritual conflicts', and to modern ears a startling warning, 'no sex in church work.' ¹⁰ This was a reminder that women could be missionaries or local preachers, though it was fairly unusual in Scotland. There were notable exceptions such as in Glasgow in 1847; 'after a very impressive sermon by Mrs Hallam [the missionary's wife], by order of the Quarterly Meeting she commenced a new class meeting. There were soon 36 names on the class-paper. After that she took charge of the week-night meetings leaving her husband free to open new work.' ¹¹

The Leaders gave unvarnished opinions regarding every travelling preacher and issued or withheld his 'credentials' before he could move to another circuit. For example, the Edinburgh man in 1846 had a good report for administration and personal behaviour and was 'not a long preacher' but he and his wife left the house dirty. The Leaders asked his successor 'to keep it to himself because the church has suffered from such things before.' ¹²

After 22 years' Primitive Methodist work in Scotland, there were only 188 members. This lack of progress could not be overlooked, even though, as was noted, Wesleyan Methodists were doing no better. Fortunately, soon after the half-century there was some success in the west of Scotland, directly linked to rising employment opportunities. The new hot-blast process for smelting the plentiful local blackband ironstone had revolutionised iron manufacture in the Glasgow area and with it a demand for coal. Then in 1848 the Carlisle to Glasgow Railway was opened, making manufacture more profitable, so industry sprang up along the route, and with it Primitive Methodism. Three examples must suffice.

At Calderbank the new Ironwork Company attracted experienced iron workers from the Midlands. A number of them were Primitive Methodists, and they asked for preachers to establish regular religious

⁹ J. Atkinson *Life of C. C. M'Kechnie* (1898) pp.1-26

¹⁰ H. B. Kendall, *History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, revised edn., (1919) p.51

¹¹ *PMM* 1848, Missionary Notes, Nov. 1847, pp.2-3

¹² EdPMLM CH11/16/2

services. A visiting Primitive Methodist reported, 'Openings for usefulness are numerous, and if any local preachers and Sunday School teachers employed in iron works, should remove to Scotland [they would find that] workmen here have privileges equal to any . . . in similar establishments in other parts of the country.' 'The works are extensive, giving employment to upwards of 5,000 men, consisting of English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh.' The company had an education scheme for children and adults costing two pence a week. There were reading rooms too. They also gave £26 annually to the support of a Primitive Methodist missionary besides providing him with a house, coals and rooms to preach in, all rent free.¹³

Calderbank missioned Motherwell, where the Iron Company, thanks to the Primitive Methodist manager, Thomas Morton, built and supplied, rent free, a place to worship. Morton became Provost of Motherwell and eventually chief official in the circuit. His successor as manager was Thomas Robinson, another Primitive Methodist. The company then gave the land and £50 towards building a Connexional chapel.¹⁴ Motherwell missioned Wishaw, where the iron works had attracted more Primitive Methodist men from Staffordshire and Shropshire, so a society was quickly set up, and the Wishaw missionary's salary was guaranteed by Motherwell 'for a limited period.' Wishaw Borough magistrates provided the room, which the members furnished.

In 1857 there occurred the only instance of violent opposition to Primitive Methodism in Scotland. This was at Carfin, a colliery settlement close to Wishaw, with an immigrant Irish Catholic population determined to resist any Primitive Methodist preachers. Joseph Buckle the young missionary told how when he and some supporters went there, a band of ferocious howling Catholics armed with stones, brickbats, and sticks, threatened them. When he had finished preaching, the Primitive Methodists had to run to escape their fury, and were threatened with death if they came back. Undeterred, Buckle and friends went again and again until five or six villagers became Primitive Methodist members at Motherwell. Buckle ended his report to the Primitive Methodist Magazine with a rebuke: 'Could our brethren in England fully realise our position and prospects, the Scotch stations would have more of their sympathy, instead of this "land of heather and of flood" being looked down upon as scarcely worth a place on our Connexional map.'¹⁵ Probably feeling he'd had enough of heather and flood, a month or two later he went to a Primitive Methodist mission in Australia.

¹³ *PMM* 1848, p.244

¹⁴ *PMM* 1854, p.740 At the opening, 'our respected parish minister, Rev. J. Loudon, preached in the afternoon.'

¹⁵ *PMM* 1857, pp.101-2

1861-1895

A selection of topics from the Minutes of the Motherwell Quarterly Meeting between 1861 and 1864 bring us a little closer to their varied concerns, such as:

Shall we allow a member's illegitimate grandchild to be baptised? No, then two weeks later, yes, but at home;

The missionary has asked to stay another year, so we request his wife 'to visit a little as supplementary to his usefulness' - he decided to go earlier;

Is so-and-so to go on trial as a local preacher? Yes, if he provides us with satisfactory documents of Doctrine;

Shall another young man come on the plan? Yes, as a star [indicating a beginner];

When shall we fix a camp-meeting? (One senses a certain half-heartedness in Scotland possibly because of the weather and anyway the Primitive Methodist work was in built-up industrial areas. Still, it was recognised as a duty.) One was planned for Motherwell and one for Wishaw, and the missionaries would preach 'if they conveniently could' otherwise it would be left to the local preachers.

There was an ancient rivalry as well as more recent Primitive Methodist irritation between Motherwell and Wishaw, where the probationer Thomas Cariss was stationed. The Quarterly Meeting proposed 'we give up Wishaw to the General Missionary Committee and have nothing more to do with it.' The Committee was not satisfied and asked for details from the probationer's Journal.

When and where had he preached? Whom had he visited (between August 10th and Dec 6th)? How many were converted?

The next Quarterly Meeting replied that for example 'on Sep 10th he did not preach at Rumbling Sykes that night but was at a party at the Morton's in Motherwell,' and that 'it is the opinion of this meeting that his statements are invidious and nothing but representations.' This was signed by the Superintendent, as president of the Quarterly Meeting, and Thomas Morton as secretary. However, when the Superintendent wanted to move after a year, two Leaders were asked to check the manse

furniture 'and if they find things right they sign his credentials.' There was something not right and by March 1864 the Meeting recorded that 'the cause of our decrease is the misconduct of our late minister'. (Notice the word 'minister'; in Scotland the title 'travelling preacher' made no sense.) This probationer Thomas Cariss also went to Australia where he had a distinguished ministry. The Superintendent disappeared from the Minutes. After a row one of the Leaders wished to move but he was 'informed that we could not credential him and dismembered him for insubordination at Quarter Day.' A fate not so serious as it sounds today. ¹⁶

Scotland's lack of success was a continuing grief to the Connexion. With hindsight, it was thought the early missionaries should have provided a home for the converts. Until 1864 Glasgow were still using 'unsuitable and high-rented Halls, from which they often had to remove at short notice. Congregations had been scattered and hundreds lost to the Connexion for the want of a permanent place of worship.' But that year they built a solid new chapel at St Rollox, with stone walls, good light, seats and ventilation. It cost £522 (£26,100) towards which in the first year they raised £ 224 (£11,200). ¹⁷

But what about ailing Edinburgh? In 1861 a confident young man, John Vaughan, just out of probation, was sent from Gravesend to do something about it. A few days later a house fell down in the High Street and on the next Sunday he preached beside it in gaslight. This made his name and later he was asked to preach at a service in the Free Church Assembly Hall. He was invited to exchange pulpits with ministers of other denominations.

In articles for the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* from his arrival in 1861 when there were 58 members meeting in a rented hall, he reported emotional conversions, tears over lost conditions, success in setting up weeknight meetings and increases in membership. The climax of these reports came in 1866 with Edinburgh's newly-built chapel, schoolroom and minister's house in Victoria Terrace, 'one of the best situations in the city. Italian style of architecture, reclining panelled back benches . . . platform, two galleries, neat vestry fitted up for a study . . . Organ . . . powerful 2 star gas lights . . . windows best crown glass, with ruby borders and a white flower on front windows.' And so on. As preachers at the Mission Anniversary, he got the great Thomas Guthrie, Moderator of the FC General Assembly, followed by ministers of the Independent, Baptist, and Free Church. 'This,' wrote Vaughan, was 'considered by our people to be the best missionary anniversary ever held in this city. We give God the glory' and J Vaughan too by the sound of it. ¹⁸ Primitive Methodist ministers in Scotland could not afford to be overly modest:

¹⁶ Motherwell Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1862, CH11/31/1 PMM 1864, p.236

¹⁷ PMM 1864, p.236

¹⁸ PMM 1863, p.237, p.751; 1866, p.433

they had to send reports of cheering progress to the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* to encourage financial support. Rather differently from the new chapel in Glasgow, it cost £1500 (£75,000) of which £930 (£46,000) had been raised. Of that, he said £377 (nearly £9,000) had been collected by the members, 'chiefly the writer'. There were addresses by seven ministers over the opening week; two United Presbyterians, one Free Church, two Primitive Methodists, one Wesleyan Methodist, one Independent, ending with a lecture on 'Death-bed Scenes'. A few weeks later, Vaughan wrote 'The chapel is not large enough, has been crowded ever since the opening.'¹⁹

The same success story came from Paisley, with a mixture of other denominations' ministers at their Mission Anniversary in 1864. There again 'The friends say this is the best missionary anniversary they ever had, and there has never been as much money raised on this station before.'²⁰

As the demand for coal continued, the mines in the West were gradually depleted and the old mines in Fife and the Lothians were expanded, bringing in miners of all denominations, including many Irish Catholics from the West. So once again Primitive Methodists followed industry, and took their chance in East Lothian, with mixed fortunes. Elphinstone, founded in 1867, crept along for 34 years until mining no longer prospered, and the mine overseer, a deeply religious man and inspirer of the Primitive Methodist society, moved away. As a result, many miners and others connected with the mine, ceased to attend. When there was only one member left, the chapel was sold to the Church of Scotland.²¹ Tranent, built in 1870, also depended on the state of mining and on incoming Primitive Methodist miners, many of whom moved away in the recession of 1873.²²

Two miles away was Cockenzie, fortunately different in ethos from Tranent or Elphinstone. It is a fishing village, and at that time had a settled and increasing population. Herring was then plentiful and deep-sea trawling successful. All that held the Quarterly Meeting back was the debt on Tranent, but Cockenzie raised the money themselves and built a chapel in 1878.²³

Paisley remained buoyant largely through a windfall. In 1874 they bought premises in Canal Street for £200 (£8,800) and sold them in 1884 for £2,250 (£107,000) to the Railway authorities. This helped them eventually to buy good premises in James Street where they remained until 1960.²⁴ By 1873 Glasgow was doing well. There were now three

¹⁹ *PMM* 1862, p.237, p.363, p.751; 1863, p.51; 1866, p.433

²⁰ *PMM* 1864, p.115

²¹ Elphinstone Trustees' Meeting Minutes 1867-1901, CH11/66/1, and N.H. Marshall *Emerging to Life*, (n.d. but 1995). pp.18-19

²² Tranent Quarterly Meeting Minutes CH11/9/7

²³ *Ibid*

circuits, and then in 1877 Glasgow II was divided into St Rollox and Suffolk Street, making four. This happy state fell under a shadow soon after. First, the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank caused many industrial and personal bankruptcies and led to unemployment and departures from the area. Second, scientific progress had begun to impinge on Primitive Methodism, at least at the Connexional level. In 1875 the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* said 'By the light of geological science we re-read the first chapter of Genesis and were led to conclusions relative to the order of God's creative work and the time of its accomplishment, which startled many Christian scholars . . . and shook the ashes of the theological fathers . . . many of our scriptural ideas have been changed or modified by the revelations of science'. As a consequence, a 'fault line' began to open at Primitive Methodist local level. One effect of this was that many Scots Primitive Methodists and Wesleyan Methodists who could not accept any change in attitude to the veracity of Genesis found a home among the Plymouth Brethren who by then were spreading among the Cocksie Primitive Methodists, who lost 'many' including local preachers.²⁵ Another attraction of the Plymouth Brethren was that they were completely lay-based.

Edinburgh's request in 1878 for the minister to stay a fourth year was refused and resulted in a large decrease of members.²⁶ Its decline continued. New suburbs drew away the better-off and the running costs and continuing debt on the grand building discouraged new members and new officials.

1895-1932

In a desperate attempt to revive Edinburgh, the District Meeting asked for the Conference to be held there in 1895. According to the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* 'It was a surprise to many of the delegates . . . Methodism has so slender a footing north of the Tweed, that it was regarded by not a few as an unwise step.' Well, it went ahead in the Free Church Assembly Hall. For most of the delegates it was a miserable failure because 'In Edinburgh we are a feeble folk. We have to be content with a degree of patronage and accept any notice that may be taken of us kindly . . . Our position is one of ecclesiastical inferiority . . . the local press gave scant accounts of Conference proceedings . . . the public took comparatively little notice' and unsurprisingly, 'The summary of the year's work was not altogether a pleasant task.'²⁷ By 1898 Edinburgh

²⁴ A. Leitch, 'Primitive Methodism in Paisley' *Journal of the Scottish Branch of the Wesley Historical Society* (SJ) 1994, p.8

²⁵ *PMM* 1875, p.319; Tranent Quarterly Meeting Minutes 1882, CH11/9/7

²⁶ North British Primitive Methodist District Minutes, (DM), 1877, 1879, Methodist Church Activities, MAB/D/282.5

²⁷ *PMM* 1894, p.560.; 1895, p.629

was asking to be put on the list of needy stations and just have a probationer.²⁸

At the end of the nineteenth century, in spite of a rise in membership, there was a pervasive pessimism among circuit officials in Scottish Primitive Methodism. One of the effects was a slackness in filling connexionally-required forms, a weariness with the traditional means of expansion and a distaste for the constant pressure to raise funds.²⁹ Still, according to a piece in the *Magazine* in 1900, 'there is room for a Methodist Church in Scotland where there is a population of 10,000 or more. There are always a few people in a town who like Methodist fervour and Methodist forms of worship better than the national Presbyterianism, and for the most part Presbyterians are not only tolerant but prepared to render practical help to Methodist Churches.' The experience at Blantyre supports this view. It was a developing mining town of 15,000 to 16,000, including a considerable number of Catholics. Primitive Methodism arrived in 1893. By 1900 they had eighty members and a rented hall, the property of the principal employer. 'A fine band of young men and women' provided the dynamic.³⁰ Alas, not for long.

At Cockenzie the debt was nearly paid off, open air services were held and, said the minister, the church was doing well spiritually. At Whiteinch, a 'pretty' church had just been built. Greatly helped by Thomas Robinson JP, the debt was reduced from £2,700 (£13,500) to £800 (£4,000). Motherwell had missioned a society at New Stevenson.

'Evidently' chirped the reporter, 'Primitive Methodism north of the Tweed is a lusty and enterprising child.'³¹ Not at Edinburgh. Depressed by the failure of the 1895 Conference to raise its profile, in 1900 the society asked to be 'downgraded'. The Conference refused, and took an energetic minister, Samuel Horton, out of his station in Hull to rescue it.³² This he did by selling the grand chapel and buying Livingstone Hall in South Clerk Street. Relieved from its financial burden, under Horton's leadership the society began to look up. A debt of £275 (£1,375) on the old chapel was paid off. A home for Friendless Girls was established in 1903, which in its first year alone looked after 380 girls. By 1907 there were 180 members, 90 youngsters in the Band of Hope, about 110 in the Men's Meeting, 20 poor children had been given a day in the country, and 40 poor persons had been supplied with clothes and necessities, of whom fifteen had been helped to find work.³³ Horton's pastorate showed, as did others, that Scots adhere to their minister rather than their building. The Conference proposal in 1900 to replace city circuits with pastorates

²⁸ *PMM* 1896, p.629, DM 1898

²⁹ DM 1879, 1888, 1895, 1896, 1898.

³⁰ *PMM* 1900, p.794

³¹ *PMM* 1903, p.583

³² *PMM* 1900, p.715

³³ *PMM* 1907, p.496

had already been effected in Scotland, by allowing yearly extensions, as in the case of Walter Stott at Wishaw, first stationed there in 1883.

By this time (1907) the District Meeting had to spend more and more deadening time on Reports from the committees, namely: General, District, Building, Missionary, Sunday School, College, Orphanage, Temperance, Christian Endeavour, Local Preachers, and District Candidates Examinations, before Reports from each station. They heard that there were large numbers of removals, many because of emigration. The District was 'suffering from abnormal trade depression' which by 1909 was 'prevalent and persistent', and worst at Greenock. Still, youth work, they reported, 'inspires us for the future.'

The Primitive Methodist system held ministers responsible for decreases in their circuit's membership, unless 'exonerated from blame' by a special resolution. Delegates at the District Meeting of May 1914 pointed out that naming a minister and holding him responsible for decreases, then exonerating him because of removals, was ridiculous in the face of the exodus for employment. And if a minister was guilty of gross neglect or of inefficiency, that should have been dealt with when each minister's character was being considered. The second important topic at this 1914 Meeting was 'What shall be done to amend the basis of membership?' The Class Meeting had long been a source of irritation and worse in both Primitive and Wesleyan Methodism in Scotland. The District wanted to remove it as the criterion because it was an 'anomaly', 'not really required and not generally observed.' The Wesleyan Methodists in Scotland had got over this hurdle by the device of allowing believing adherents to communicate, but the Primitive Methodists wanted rid of it altogether. The criterion of membership should be a public declaration of faith before the Lord's Supper. The Sacrament should replace the class meeting as the central means of Christian fellowship and spiritual communion.³⁴

In the twenty years before the war, the District came out of the Primitive closet and increased its social concerns. It supported the shipbuilding unions against a sort of cabal between the Clyde and Belfast owners in 1895; the Government's Local Options Bill on Public House Licences and the Sunday Closing Bill. They asked the directors of the Scottish Railway Companies to abandon the proposal to introduce Sunday train excursions from Glasgow, and steamer trips down the Clyde, as desecrating to the Sabbath. They objected to the Scottish Education Department's proposal to centralise Higher Grade and Secondary Schools in towns, as 'detrimental to the education interests of rural districts from which in the past Scotland has drawn many of her brilliant sons,' and sent these views to their Local Members of Parliament.³⁵

³⁴ DM 1914, MAB/D/283.7

³⁵ *PMM* 1895, p.953; DM 1896, *PMM* 1908, 1909, 1914

At the first District Meeting after the war, held in May 1919 they said 'We win no trophy, we gain no territory, we recede.' In 1914 there were 2,613 members; in 1919 there were 2,559 - not such a great decrease except that men who were still in the Forces were counted on the 1919 roll. Parkhead (Glasgow) Leaders Meeting was rebuked for the same reason as a hundred years earlier; they had not been cautious enough in admitting members, and were reminded to be careful not to hand 'the honour and good name of Jesus Christ to the custody of those who hold lightly so great an obligation.'

The new societies at Blantyre and Hamilton were in debt and could not even pay the interest. In each of these cases building had been commenced before the members, mainly young people who had probably gone into the Forces anyway, had raised a due proportion of the cost. They had had help from the Church Extension Fund, on conditions which were never fulfilled. Hamilton remained in trouble. The District Meeting recorded its (politely expressed) anger when the minister they hoped would rescue it had been removed by the General Committee after the Conference had re-stationed him there, without giving the District the chance to put its case. Then three years later an even deeper industrial depression brought Hamilton's short life to an end. The church was closed and the society transferred to Burnbank, thereby losing 62 members out of 110, and 138 Sunday School children out of 197. A brighter spot was the deputation from the Wesleyan Synod, and the 'growing spirit of fellowship' between the ministers of both Districts brought about by S. Wilcox Stocker, the Wesleyan Chairman.

The great Depression affecting industry in the west of Scotland showed in the 1929 Reports at the District Meeting. At Edinburgh, which by then had no local preachers, people were moving to the suburbs where they had joined or were expected to join any nearby church. Paisley was down after 'a purge of nominal members' but some young men had come in. Motherwell was handicapped by industrial depression and consequent removals. Glasgow, Wishaw and Greenock more or less kept up. Social concerns were prominent in the District Meeting, which said that miners' conditions were 'an outrage to moral sense.' They set up a Miners' Relief Fund to which £136, raised to £325 in 1931, was quickly contributed.

They urged the Prime Minister to deal with unemployment, wretched living conditions and the need for new houses, by giving jobs in slum clearance and house building to the unemployed, many of whom had returned after war service in the armed forces. They urged the Secretary of State for Scotland to bring in universal secondary education and raise the school-leaving age to 15, which would have the further effect of reducing unemployment. They asked Scots Methodists to support parliamentary candidates who renounced war as policy, and the Government to support the principles of the League of Nations. Betting

and gambling had become 'a national mania' so they pressed the Board of Education to put this subject on the school syllabus.

In 1932, at the last Primitive Methodist District Meeting before Methodist union, the Reports of the Stations showed attendance down again. The reasons given were economic stress, depression and discontent among working people, anxiety in businessmen and employers, and a 'new paganism' threatening our civilisation and insinuating itself deep into our churches. Gambling was cutting the nerve of common honesty.

Superficiality was being nourished by the cinema, press and not a few pulpits. So the Secretary of State for Scotland was asked to establish a departmental Committee for film censorship. Primitive Methodists were urged to form local vigilance committees to protest to cinema managers, proprietors and licensing authorities against films which were anti-Christian.

On Temperance they asked the Government to amend the Temperance (Scotland) Act of 1913 to bring clubs and wholesale liquor dealers as well as pubs under the No-Licence Resolution. They asked for the Means Test to be amended and in the meantime administered sympathetically.

As to Methodist Union, the Meeting reported the development of Area Committees, the Glasgow and District Methodist Councils, united Rallies, and noticed 'a deepening faith in our distinctive Methodist witness. Perhaps Union in Scotland would have a Scottish hue, but the hope of progress lay in being true to Methodist fundamentals . . . 'Amid profound social, political and economic changes, this questing age has a desire for a social order in keeping the ethic of Jesus. People are groping for new principles of thought and action, so the Good News must be carried to all.'

Did Scots Primitive Methodists have the stamina for this? Had they the distinctive spiritual energy, the impulsion to share the joy of salvation which had characterised the earlier societies? They had largely settled for more ministerial responsibility and an approximation to the ways of the other free churches. Meanwhile the Salvation Army had stepped into the streets with a lively urgent demand on hearers.

The Revd Joseph Ritson, who had had a long Primitive Methodist ministry in Scotland, argued for union. 'In Scotland . . . even today a Methodist is a 'Methody' which carries with it a certain indefinable brand of ecclesiastical inferiority. Hence leaders [by whom he meant ministers, I think] [are] required whose character and gifts should give prestige to their fellow religionists.' 'In a land where we are in a hopeless minority and so far from the main currents of Methodist life, the union of two separate denominations should make for strength.'³⁶ All six Scottish delegates to the final Primitive Methodist Conference were in favour of the Union in 1932.

³⁶ Ritson, p.55

So what had been features of 106 years of Primitive Methodism in Scotland?

1. Apart from the RC's at Carfin, other denominations never opposed Primitive Methodist work as Wesleyan Methodism had been opposed, because Primitive Methodism did not fight them on doctrine and was not seen as a threat, rather as a help; a minister in Glasgow said that 'nearly all his officials and members had been converted through the Primitive Methodist ministers.'³⁷

2. First and second generation Scots Primitive Methodism was generously supported by industry. This of course also secured for industry incoming skilled workpeople who were Primitive Methodists.

3. Long term, successful circuits were led (one might even say controlled) by a layman who was influential outside as well as inside church life; men like Thomas Morton, the iron works manager, or a government official like John Faid of Greenock. One thinks of wealthy men in business or industry like James McDougall of Glasgow, Thomas Robinson JP of Paisley, Sir George Green JP of Whiteinch and Bailie Gray of Pollokshaws; all generous leaders. There had been nobody of this standing to help Edinburgh. Of course, for employers like Morton or Robinson who managed many workpeople, the line between a man as a Primitive Methodist official and as an employer sometimes became blurred.

4. Later, particularly in periods of trade depression, ministers of pastorates succeeded influential laymen in the task of protecting and upholding Primitive Methodism where circuits fallen on poor times. This was especially true where ministers were allowed yearly extensions, like Walter Stott who had been the minister of Wishaw Primitive Methodist church for 35 years.

Unfortunately, this was at the cost of local preachers who were not then needed. In Ritson's view, 'Experience shows that the English circuit system cannot be worked in Scotland. The Local Preacher, except in a few brilliant exceptions, is at a discount. And in the nature of things this must become worse. With few pulpits open to him the local preacher lacks the practice without which he loses efficiency and interest.' That was Ritson's epitaph on the movement of the Spirit in Scotland, totally inspired, begun, supported and led by laymen.³⁸

Finally, though without any documentary or verbatim evidence, but from conversations with former Primitive Methodists or their children, my impression is that ordinary Scots Primitive Methodists did not feel

³⁷ *PMM* 1848 Missionary Notices, Nov 1847, p.3

³⁸ Ritson, p.85

this alleged 'inferiority'. Not all were glad to see how Primitive Methodism had 'gone up in the world' and become an institutionalised Church with a central policy-making body, a tightening Conference hold on the Districts and the circuits, the end of the local freedom to start or wind up work anywhere, the change in attitude to the Bible, and the developing ministerial ritual of the Sacrament replacing the original extempore, lay-led Lord's Supper. They were proud of the support given to the trades unions and the better lives they had succeeded in offering to working people.

MARGARET BATTY

(Dr Batty is the editor of the Scottish branch of the WHS)

LOCAL HISTORIES

North Chingford Methodist Church: 100 Years of Service by J. H. Boyes (32pp) 2005. Copies from the author at 129 Endlebury Road, Chingford, London, E4 6PX, no price stated.

Chapels Around the Green Woodchurch, Kent by Paul Burnham 2005. Copies from the author at 24 Chequers Park, Wye, Ashford, Kent TN25 5BB, no price stated.

Ovingham Northumberland Methodist Church Centenary 1906-2006. Copies (donation requested) from Mr. K. Husband, 2 Castle View, Ovingham, Prudhoe, NE42 6DN.

Two hundred and fifty years of Methodism in Woodhouse, Leeds 1756-2006 by D. Colin Dews (52pp) 2006. Copies, £3 post free, from the author at 1, Dragon Drive, Leeds, LS12 4AS.

JOHN RUSSELL'S MYSTERIOUS MOON: AN EMBLEM OF THE CHURCH ¹

During his lifetime, John Russell (1745-1806) was the leading British painter of pastel portraits and fancy pictures. A conservative member of the Royal Academy, Russell 's colourful and emotional likenesses were fashionable with the middle class and the royal family. At the beginning of his career he converted to Methodism and for the rest of his life he belonged to the Evangelical Revival, which formed his main clientele.²

IN the 1790s, John Russell spent his days working on portraits and his nights observing and painting the moon. While it was not unusual for a late eighteenth century gentleman to show an interest in natural philosophy, the energy and time invested in these lunar studies is remarkable for an amateur. Russell's colleague at the Royal Academy of Arts in London, the diarist Joseph Farington (1747-1821), wrote that he was 'highly gratified by seeing the different representations' which Russell had made of the moon. He further recalls the painter's claim that he had spent, since the beginning of the undertaking in the mid 1780s, '6 Hours out of 24 calculating an average number, in experiments, in drawing or in making calculations'³ Farington relates that the artist made 'very singular' use of his working hours, which were adjusted to night work.⁴ His dedicated labour yielded unprecedented results, which are now at the Birmingham Museum and Art Galleries and at the Museum of the History of Science in Oxford. In the two centuries following the painter's death, neither historians of science, nor historians of art knew why the portrait painter had created photorealistic pastels of the waxing and waning moon.

¹ This article is based on the doctoral thesis: A. Matthews: *John Russell (1745-1806) and the Impact of Evangelicalism and Natural Theology on Artistic Practice* (Leicester 2005).

² The main secondary sources on Russell are G.C. Williamson: *John Russell (1894)*; C. Monkhouse: 'John Russell,' in: *DNB, R.R.M.* See: *English Pastels 1750-1830* (London, Derby 1911); E.K. Stone: 'Note on a Crayon Drawing of the Moon by John Russell R.A. at the Radcliffe Observatory, Oxford' in *MNRAS*, 56 (1895) pp.88-95, (hereafter HOR); W.F. Ryan: 'John Russell, R.A., and Early Lunar Mapping' in *The Smithsonian Journal of History*, 1 (1966); I.C. Rhodes: *John Russell R.A.* (Guildford 1986); R.J.M. Olson and J.M.Pasachoff: *Fire in the Sky. Comets and Meteors, the decisive Centuries, in British Art and Science* (Cambridge 1998) esp. pp.78, 106; *Ibid.*: 'Moon-Struck: Artists rediscover Nature and Observe' in *Earth, Moon and Planets*, 85-86 (2001) esp. pp.334-336; N. Jeffares: *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800* (2006) pp.445-476.

³ J. Farington; K. Cave; K. Garlick; A. Macintyre: *The Diary of Joseph Farington*, 16 volumes (New Haven, London 1978-84) (hereafter FD) Vo1.1, 9 December 1793, p.110.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol.8, 15 October 1806, p.2887.

A first clue to explain these mysterious moon images is found in Russell's diary. Here the young artist noted, 'Contemplation on seeing the Moon to night was with Satisfaction as it Enliv'ned my faith and Prayer has been at Night with Power.'⁵ Although this remark predates Russell's first serious moon studies by twenty years, it contains the key to an understanding of his lunar images. The association of the moon with a renewal of faith was very likely one of the motivations for Russell to spend many years in close study of the moon. From his conversion to Methodism at the age of nineteen till his death, Russell remained a convinced follower of George Whitefield.⁶ Having given himself 'without any Reserve up unto thy divine Majestys Service'⁷ all branches of Russell's oeuvre reflect his keen interest in the promotion of religious values. Among his sitters were the leading Evangelicals of his time and their extended families. When asked to give up painting in order to become a preacher, Russell did not hesitate, however, to dismiss this suggestion. In his diary he justified his decision, writing, 'I am apprehensive I can have an opportunity of doing more good in the way I am in ever since I have been awakened.'⁸ For Russell, painting was the most effective way of spreading Evangelical values. Notions of benevolence and compassion towards the deserving poor penetrate his portraits. He portrayed children learning Christian values from their animal companions: dogs, cats, rabbits, and lambs. Russell's gleeful children are happy under the Divinely instated, tender authority of their parents.⁹

Russell's work also contains numerous hints of his fascination with nature, which he observed for clues of the Divine Creator. Among Russell's anatomical studies, next to a drawing of a skull, he noted that the 'God of Nature' had purposefully created the muscles around the skull in such away that they could be most effective.¹⁰ As well as contemplating the body's designer whilst working on anatomical drawings, Russell recorded that he found himself 'indulged with the works of the God of nature'¹¹ when looking at landscapes. His diary shows that he reflected on God's presence in very different

⁵ J. Russell: Diaries, 8 volumes, 1766-1802, manuscripts, National Art Library, London (hereafter RD), Vol.1,p.210, 9 October 1766.

⁶ Ibid., title page, unnumbered, 6 July 1766.

⁷ Ibid., p.2, 6 July 1766.

⁸ RD, Vol. 2, p.185, 23 September 1768.

⁹ Matthews, 2005, pp.60-94.

¹⁰ Russell's Sketchbooks, 1760s-1801, partly undated, 12 volumes, BMAG, Vol.1, no.6. The inscription is in pencil and opposite the skull drawing.

¹¹ RD, Vol.8, p.11, 12 August 1780.

circumstances, and any subject could spark off this contemplation. The night sky was a particularly strong inspiration. 'Tonight being in the Street I had a sight of the Stars that God was pleas'd to preach to me from, and I had my Soul filled with the Hopes of [. . .] Immortality. O! what a Spiritual thing did I discover Religion to be I found that the End of it was to conform the Soul to Gods Image.'¹²

Russell shared this devotional interest in understanding the ingenious design behind nature with numerous contemporaries and the topic featured in many publications of the time. In 1793 and 1794 the *Evangelical Magazine* printed a series of essays on 'Christian Philosophy' which explains the significance of the moon to the Christian observer. 'The moon is an opaque body, having no light of her own, but reflecting that of the sun; - a lively emblem of the church, illuminated indeed, and illuminating others, but only by reflecting the rays of Jesus, the 'Sun of Righteousness'.¹³ The publication of this metaphor, which presents the order of the Christian Church reflected in the natural order of the solar system, coincides with Russell's production of his moon pastels. George Williamson, Russell's biographer, even suggested that Russell himself was the author of the anonymously published *Christian Philosophy*.¹⁴ Indeed, Russell made extensive use of religious light and dark symbolism in his diary. When he was feeling bad he wrote, 'I have been in darkness from a sense of falling into the sad abuse of things harmful'.¹⁵ When his circumstances bettered he recorded that he 'walked in the Light of the Lord'¹⁶ or that he 'found at times [. . .] sweet returns of the Shines of the Sun of Righteousness'.¹⁷ The theme reappeared throughout the artist's life, and in 1801 Russell still recorded having 'experienced more bright beams [...] shining from the sun of righteousness'¹⁸ The *Evangelical Magazine* continues to discuss the light metaphor. 'How extensive is the divine goodness in the beneficial rays of the Sun, which visit alike the just and the unjust, the saint and the sinner! How cogent an argument this to induce disciples of Jesus to love their enemies! Let us resemble our heavenly Father by diffusing, as widely as possible, the benefits of that knowledge which we receive from the great Fountain of Intelligence.'¹⁹ The author regarded moon and sun alike as potent metaphors for

¹² *Ibid.*, Vol.2, p.120, 2 May 1768.

¹³ *Evangelical Magazine* (hereafter *EM*) 1794, Vol.2, p.67..

¹⁴ Williamson, 1894, p.95.

¹⁵ *RD*, Vol.5, p.94, 26. February 1772.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.99, 14 March 1772.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.100, 21 March 1772.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, Vol.D, p.4, 7 October 1801.

¹⁹ *EM*, 1793, September issue, p.118.

Christian behaviour, because one or other of them was usually present to remind the sinner of the ideal for which he should strive.

Whether or not Russell composed those words on Christian philosophy, the religious metaphor seems a valuable starting point for the interpretation of his moon pastels. If the pastels are considered from the viewpoints of both the historian of science and the historian of art, then their religious significance materialises.²⁰ Indeed, one of the most puzzling aspects of the interpretation of Russell's moon images, and the reason why they have never yet been explained, is that they resist explicit categorisation as either astronomical or artistic objects. There can be no doubt that Russell was a keen astronomer. He owned a telescope and borrowed such an instrument from William Herschel (1738-1822). Russell even constructed equipment himself.²¹ Savilian Professor of Astronomy in Oxford, Stephen Peter Rigaud (1774-1839), claimed that the eminent patron of natural philosophy, Sir Joseph Banks, P.R.S. (1743-1820), played a role in the commencement of the pastel painter's lunar studies. Rigaud wrote in his notebook, 'The origin of his [Russell] applying himself to drawing the Moon was from a conversation at Sir Joseph Banks in which he was pressed to undertake it [i.e. drawing the moon] by some men of Science, who would not let him rest till he had promised to comply with their wishes.'²² Banks' involvement in this unusual undertaking is further indicated by Russell's portrait of him holding one of the artist's own lunar studies.²³ However, in spite of these connections, and in spite of the painter's familiarity with historical and contemporary lunar maps,²⁴ Russell never produced a map himself. His pastels, and even the engravings and globes, which followed, display neither grids, nor legends. These technical features had, by the late eighteenth century, become indispensable in standard maps. Russell's images were therefore unusable for astronomical work. Since Russell's depictions of the moon did not pass as astronomical images, they might, instead, be considered objects of art. During the artist's lifetime the moon frequently featured in

²⁰ Ryan, 1966, pp.27-48, considered Russell's astronomical work entirely separately from religion or indeed the artist's main work. Olson and Pasachoff, 2001, pp.304, 326-329, for the first time recognised this combination.

²¹ HOR, p.94.

²² S.P. Rigaud: Notes on Russell's Drawing of the Moon, Notes by Professor Rigaud copied from the M.S. obligingly lent by his son Major General Rigaud by R. Main, 1824-5, manuscript, Museum of the History of Science, Oxford, 16 December 1824, pp.2-3.

²³ Williamson, 1894, p.118. Russell's portrait of Banks dates from 1788 and is in the private collection of Lord Braebourne.

²⁴ In his *Lunar Planispheres* (published posthumously in 1809) Russell gives an account of the development of lunar cartography. This list is published in Ryan, 1966, pp.43-44.

painting and poetry as part of the popular genre of the pastoral landscape at night. Painters from Joseph Wright of Derby (1734-97) to Atkinson Grimshaw (1836-93) commonly depicted the moon as a circular disc which contained no realistic characterisation of the lunar surface features. The simplified full moon tended to function as a light source and to enhance the atmospheric mood of the paintings. Russell's surviving lunar images did not fit the established genre of the nocturnal pastoral landscape. Instead of employing the moon as part of a composed landscape, Russell painted the object of his study and devotion in the featureless emptiness of space. He took the moon out of its context and, uniquely, made it the actual subject of a pastel painting. In a letter to the astronomer Thomas Hornsby (1733-1810) Russell stated that he wanted to approach as near as may be to perfection'.²⁵ Combining his knowledge of the particular with the artistic eye for beauty, Russell succeeded in his ambition to produce an unsurpassed, convincing lunar image. The artist meticulously studied the lunar surface features only to abandon the detail, which he had gathered over years, in the final pastels. The images come to life through an imitation of a certain blurriness with which the moon is seen with the naked eye. Russell was in the position to produce the most accurate lunar map of his time, but he chose to produce the most beautiful portrait of the moon instead.

The fusion of empirical fact with artistic idealisation is a central characteristic of Russell's oeuvre. In his own textbook on pastel painting, *Elements of Painting with Crayons* (1772), he reminds the young painter that the basis of good portraiture was a sound understanding of anatomy, but that the actual art was the improvement of the observed particularities through generalisation. Russell argued that such an approach would not result in untruthfulness as it portrayed the blueprint of Creation which underlay every faulty particular. Beautification, in Russell's philosophy, was the only way of exciting the viewers' interest and admiration. He wrote, as 'few Necks are too long, it may be necessary to give some addition to the stem, a fault on the other side being quite unpardonable, nothing being more ungraceful than a short Neck.'²⁶ The same rules apply to the moon images. After Russell had observed the moon carefully, he presented not the most accurate, but the most effective image. When he wrote about his first viewings of the moon, he noticed that the effect of the full moon was less startling than that of a waxing or waning moon because of the lack of dramatic shadowing. He wrote to Hornsby that he preferred the latter, in which 'the boldness and the expressive elevations' of the main craters 'and some others near the

²⁵ HOR, p.94.

²⁶ J. Russell: *Elements of Painting*, (second ed 1777) pp.35-36.

Boundary of the Line of illumination, convey so distinct an Idea of these parts opposed to those situated near the centre of the Moon which very faintly express their character, compared to the former, as they are nearly lost in the general Blaze of Light.'²⁷ Russell's painted moon bears a strong resemblance to the real object but it is slightly retouched, in the same way that Russell had smoothed out some of the less advantageous aspects in his portraits. Keenly interested in understanding the way the Creator had made the world, Russell saw himself, more than anything, commissioned to display the beauty inherent in Creation, whether in the ideal neck or in the moon, because that was the window through which he could communicate religion.

Russell preached, often quietly and unnoticed, through the idealised representation of empirically observed nature. His devotional interest in natural philosophy was considered blasphemous by William Blake (1757-1817). When Robert John Thornton (1768-1837), biologist and editor of the illustrious *Temple of Flora*, stated that the Creator and His Creation could be better appreciated, if better telescopes were available, Blake rejected this as an attempt to turn 'god into the Goddess Nature'.²⁸ Blake, as Geoffrey Grigson put it, 'was not fond of nature worshippers'²⁹ Russell would have been on Thornton's side. To him, and to many of his Evangelical friends and acquaintances, the intricate marvels of nature were the clearest expression of God's presence. The poet Kirke White (1785-1806) commented on Russell as 'a pious man, and a great astronomer, but in manner and appearance a complete artist'.³⁰ This shows that the painter could still live in a manifold capacity, just as his medical acquaintances Henry Peckwell (1747-87) and William Hey (1736-1819) could actively spread their religion at the same time as working in the medical profession.³¹

The ability, displayed by Russell, to combine religion with interests in painting and natural philosophy disappeared with that painter's generation. His son, William Russell (1780-1870), a Methodist as convinced as his father, had a different attitude. A promising painter, he exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1805 until 1809, when he swore an oath never to paint again because he feared that painting might interfere with his religious duties.³² John Russell was still very much an

²⁷ HOR, p.92.

²⁸ G. Grigson: *Thornton's Temple of Flora* with Plates faithfully reproduced from the original Engravings (1972) p.7.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Williamson, 1894, p.83.

³¹ Matthews, 2005, pp.112-120.

³² Williamson, 1894, p.99.

eighteenth-century man, who saw no contradiction in the combination of his interests, and who lived a god-fearing and religiously active life as a painter. His son, who went on to become Rector of Shepperton, could not reconcile what he considered indecision between half-hearted activities with his Methodist conscience. A similar change from one generation to the next occurred in the family of Russell's close friend, the sculptor John Bacon, R.A. (1740-99). Bacon's son, John Bacon the younger (1777-1859), became a sculptor like his father. Holding 'pronounced evangelical views' he retired early from his artistic career in order to devote himself to the Bible.³³ The change is one from a late eighteenth-century combination of interests towards the increasing specialisation of the nineteenth century. While John Russell regarded his becoming a preacher as a temptation to do a disservice to God, the opposite approach seems to have been the only truly God-fearing option for his son. These different decisions made by fathers and their sons illustrate the great change which took place in the way religion was interpreted. But it was not only the Victorians who rejected the mingled approach of earlier generations. This change in religious practice has also been misunderstood by art historians who, until now, did not connect Russell's art with his religion. However, after considering his complex philosophy, it is clear that Russell's main motivation was religion, that, indeed, he was a religious artist, who worked in a two-fold capacity.

ANTJE MATTHEWS

(Antje Matthews was born and raised in East Germany. The Fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 enabled her to study for an MA in history and art history at Freie Universitaet Berlin. She continued her studies at the University of Leicester. Her PhD focuses on the religious background of John Russell's work.)

³³ G. Bacon: *The Record of an Aeronaut. Being the Life of John M. Bacon* (1907) p.21; A. Saunders: *John Bacon, R.A., 1740-1799* (1961) p.28.

ANNUAL MEETING AND LECTURE 2006

The Wesley Historical Society Tea, Annual Meeting and Lecture was held on 26 June 2006 at Nicolson Square Methodist Church, Edinburgh. The opening devotions were led by the Rev. Terence Hurst, deputizing for the President, the Rev. Dr. John A. Newton. The Minutes of the 2005 meeting, were signed as a correct record; the Executive Committee was appointed, with Dr John A. Hargreaves, being appointed as Assistant General Secretary . There is a vacancy for a Marketing Officer and offers would be welcomed.

The usual reports were received with the Treasurer (MrNicholas J. Page) in presenting the accounts, (printed on p.261) explaining that the recommendation of a rise in the subscription rate was due to four factors a) the Irish Branch's changes; b) the alteration in postage rates being made by the Royal Mail; c) the cost of the residential conference; d) the cost of replacing *Proceedings* lost in the US post. The new rates proposed and agreed from January 2007 were:

<u>Subscriptions:</u>	British personal	£12 annual
		£44 for 4 years
	British institutions	£16 annual
	Overseas personal	£16; \$32; euro25 annual
		£58; \$116; euro90 for 4 years
	Overseas institutions	£22; \$44; euro35

Mr Page hoped these would be maintained for several years. He indicated that he intended to step down as Treasurer in two years' time and would be glad to receive any offers to replace him. Mrs Sheila Himworth (Conferences Secretary) announced that the next residential conference would be held from 1-4th April 2008 at Sarum College, Salisbury. 40 places have been reserved and full details would be available in due course.

The General Secretary presented reports from (1) The Registrar (Rev. Donald H. Ryan), which showed the present membership to be 597. Following the acceptance of the Registrar' s report there was a discussion about publicity, which might lead to an increase in membership; (2) the Editor (Mr. E. A. Rose) which stated that he hoped to produce three 'themed' issues in 2007 covering United Methodism (February); Primitive Methodism (May) and Charles Wesley (October) and expressed gratitude to the Rev Gilbert Braithwaite, (Reviews Editor); (3) the Librarian (Mr. John H. Lenton), which gave details of conservation work, especially of 16 valuable letters and the cuttings files; improvements to the search room; cataloguing and accessioning; research enquiries and the availability of a list of books the Library wished to acquire; Dr Vickers (Assistant Librarian) added that the major reshelving had meant improved access and he expressed thanks to Mrs Himsworth for her expert advice and help; (4) the Marketing Officer (Dr Peter Forsaith), which emphasised the vacancy for Marketing Officer to replace him; (5) the Publications Manager (Mrs Virgoe), stated that she hoped to publish 'William O'Bryan and the 1824 Bible Christian Hymn Book' (Colin Short); (6) Mr Thome's report stated that, although some of the older branches were finding difficulty

in replacing officers, on the whole, the branches were in good heart; the Yorkshire Branch Library had been re-located to the University of Huddersfield; the North-East Branch Library at the Literary and Philosophical Society had been catalogued onto a floppy disk, which could be obtained from the Rev Terence Hurst. Finally Dr Graham said that considerable interest had been shown in the WHS Website (www.wesleyhistoricalsociety.org.uk), maintained by Mr. Ryan.

Annual Meeting & Lecture in future: Dr Graham outlined problems of keeping it 'connected' with Conference and the Executive Committee's discussions over the past few years, including suggestions of holding it in areas with strong WHS local branches and/or Methodist connections. She presented proposals from the 2006 Executive Committee that the 2007 Annual Meeting and Lecture be held in the Manchester area on Saturday 30 June. It was agreed that the experiment be tried for three years and then reviewed.

Future Lectures: 2007 - Rev Prof Kenneth Newport; 2008 - Prof Edward Royle. 2009 - Rev. Dr. Martin Wellings

Annual Lecture 2006

The Annual Lecture, chaired by Dr John A. Vickers, was given by Dr Margaret Batty on 'Primitive Methodism in Scotland'. This was most appropriate as it was the first time the lecture had been held in Scotland and Dr Batty was a member at the host church. The lecture is published in this issue of the *Proceedings*.

DOROTHY GRAHAM

WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS 2005

The Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2005 were presented to the 2006 Annual Meeting. Following is a summary of the audited accounts. A copy of the full Report and Accounts (which also includes the 'WHS Publications', Conference Fund and Library Appeal accounts), together with the Auditor's certificate, is available on request from the Treasurer.

General Income & Expenditure Account: Year to 31 December 2005

INCOME	2005	2004
Subscriptions	5,781.00	6,023
Sales of Publications*	-	770
Advertisements	111.04	167
Bank and Deposit Interest	601.80	525
Legacy	-	1,000
Gift Aid	810.01	908
Other Income	<u>573.39</u>	<u>914</u>
	£7,877.24	£10,307
EXPENDITURE		
<i>Proceedings</i> and Distribution	4,182.12	5,144
Other Printing	890.85	704
Library	1,734.14	1,765
Administration	470.88	1,005
Advertising	-	60
Transfer of legacy to Library Appeal	1,000.00	-
Other Expenditure	<u>417.15</u>	<u>580</u>
	£8,698.14	£9,258
Excess of Income over Expenditure	-£820.90	£1,049

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2005

ASSETS EMPLOYED	2005	2004
Investments	225.00	225
CURRENT ASSETS		
Sundry Debtors	-	13
Bank & Deposit Accounts	<u>17,545.98</u>	<u>18,970</u>
	17,545.98	18,983
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Sundry Creditors	-	215
Subscriptions received in advance	<u>7,028.19</u>	<u>7,099</u>
	7,028.19	7,314
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REPRESENTED BY		
General Fund (unrestricted)	8,686.45	9,507
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BOOK REVIEWS

Methodism. Empire of the Spirit by David Hempton (Yale University Press 2005, pp. xiii, 278, illus. hb £19.95, ISBN 0-300-10614-9).

Professor Hempton has already placed us greatly in his debt in earlier works on Methodism and politics, popular religion and Ireland. The present work is more wide-ranging, ambitious and highly original. The problem he is attempting to resolve is how Methodism emerged from 'its unpromising origin among the flotsam and jetsam of religious societies and quirky personalities in England in the 1730s to a major international religious movement some hundred and fifty years later' as perhaps 'the most important Protestant religious development since the Reformation' (p.2) . Instead of recounting its development in terms of the chronology and geography of institutional expansion, he has chosen a more demanding but more illuminating method. This is to attempt to penetrate the nature of Methodism and the world in which it grew with varying degrees of success by concentrating on eight important themes. Methodism he sees as being animated by the 'energy unleashed by dialectical friction' - for example by discipline along with ecstasy. So the chosen themes are organized around parallel or conflicting concepts. Case studies from both sides of the Atlantic root the analysis in the lived experience of Methodists.

'Competition and Symbiosis' borrows a metaphor from evolutionary biology to show how Methodism spread and flourished across the North Atlantic world, especially where it 'forged a symbiotic relationship with its host environment'.

'Enlightenment and Enthusiasm' argues that Methodism combined elements of two eighteenth century attitudes often portrayed as starkly contrasting and so reaped some of the benefits of both.

'The Medium and the Message' .probes the heart of the Methodist message as found not in theological treatises but as heard and experienced by ordinary members from conversion to death through hymns, sermons and social gatherings.

'Opposition and Conflict' shows not only the kind of movement Methodism was but also how it interacted with the communities in which it took root. Internal Methodist tensions also reflected wider social conflicts. 'Money and Power' demonstrates how changing methods of raising money in a voluntary organization reveal where power lay, how its location changed and how British and American Methodism differed.

'Borders and Margins' explores why Methodism recruited so well among the lower orders', women and African Americans. This was not (as has often been claimed) simply used as a means of social control or a way of coping with social change, but a matter of choice by these underprivileged groups. The implication of the predominantly female composition of Methodism for the movement's character is strongly asserted as something we have hardly begun

to understand. 'Mapping and Mission' shows Methodism's globalization in the nineteenth century on the back of British and American military, commercial and imperial expansion. At the same time it adapted to different environments, sometimes with conflicts echoing those already experienced at home including those between central and local control and cultural clashes.

'Consolidation and Decline' shows how, as a populist religious movement became a settled denomination, it began to experience declining growth rates and then absolute decline. Was this the inevitable product of transition to a settled church or had the leadership espoused the wrong policies? In discussing this Prof. Hempton relates Methodist decline to past and current debates on secularization and what used to be seen as its irreversible inevitability. Maybe the original Methodist holiness quest lives on in the expansion of Pentecostalism.

This bare survey cannot do justice to a book packed with stimulating analysis, penetrating insights and fascinating vignettes of individuals and communities. For many readers, including the present reviewer, the book also provides a welcome vehicle for updating one's understanding of current modes of analysing religious movements in their historical and social context. Awareness of the contribution of American scholars to the development of 'Wesleyan' theology is here handsomely supplemented by Professor Hempton's extensive use of sophisticated studies of America's Methodist history. While reflecting the differences between the history of American and British Methodism there is much to learn here for approaches to Methodist history generally.

Apart from the detailed information and variety of interpretative strategies displayed here, what is particularly welcome is Professor Hempton's insistence that Methodism was shaped by its reaction to a variety of environments which also helped to determine its varying success. This also helps to explain why there were many 'Methodisms' even though they shared a common inheritance from the original Wesley ideal. But it is equally important that throughout Prof. Hempton resists the reductionism of some social interpretations of religious history. For him the relationship of Methodism to its environment is symbiotic throughout: it influenced as well as being influenced by its context in time and place. His emphasis, too, on the evidence of Methodist life-stories (many of which survive) is surely likely to become a major focus for future research for its revelations of the inner springs of the movement. Further, if he is right - and this is perhaps controversial - about the extent of women's influence in shaping Methodism, then this points to a fundamental reassessment of its history.

Fizzing with ideas, vivid in detail and lively in style, this book is arguably the most important as well as the most original study of Methodism to appear for many years. It is likely to set much of the agenda for research in the subject for a long time to come.

Cliff: More than a College, by G. Howard Mellor. (Cliff College Publishing, 2005, pp. xiii, 562. price? ISBN 1 898362 35 1)

When Thomas Cook (1859-1912), Wesleyan Methodism's first Connexional Evangelist, was appointed to succeed those sanctified entrepreneurs Thomas and Eliza Champness at the head of the Joyful News Training Home and Mission, he faced an immediate and major challenge. The Mission, which began in 1884 with two young men taken into the Champnesses' Bolton manse to train as village evangelists, had a staff of fifty eight by the time of Cook's appointment in 1903, but was also about to lose its base at Castleton Hall. A solution was found in the purchase of Hulme Cliff College, a substantial property in the Peak District which had been a training college for preachers and missionaries since 1871, serving the various enterprises of Henry Grattan Guinness. The Wesleyan Home Mission Department used some of the proceeds of the Twentieth Century Fund to buy the college; Cook and the Joyful News Mission moved there in March 1904; and Cliff College was born as a unique institution for the training of lay evangelists in the Methodist Church.

Howard Mellor's centenary history, *Cliff: More than a College*, is a big book about an important subject. Dr Mellor writes with an insider's knowledge of Cliff, having studied there as a student in the 1960s and having served subsequently as a tutor and as Principal until 2004. He draws extensively on the college's rich but hitherto under-used archives, and the book is illustrated by a splendid collection of photographs and other artefacts: we see not only the formal portraits of the staff, in frock-coats and whiskers, but also students engaged in the compulsory 'manual' (the timetabled afternoons of practical labour in the grounds and on the farms), 'trekkers' hauling the famous carts on their evangelistic expeditions, a rain-soaked Billy Graham at the 1954 Anniversary (Cliff's greatest advertising coup), Gospel Cars painted with Scripture texts, architects' plans for extensions real, intended and imagined, and 'decision' cards used by Cliff evangelists. The illustrations add colour and depth to an already engaging narrative.

Having traced in considerable detail the origins of the Cliff building and told the quite separate story of the Joyful News mission and the newspaper which was responsible for its name and early funding, Dr Mellor follows a broadly thematic approach. He describes the development of the premises, the Cliff emphases (or 'charisms' - p. xi) in holiness and evangelism, the pattern of the college year, the evolution of the curriculum, the flavour of student life and the personalities of the Principals who shaped the college. Inevitably Thomas Cook and Samuel Chadwick loom large, and it is salutary to remember that it is three quarters of a century since Chadwick's death. Although a real effort is made to give weight to the contributions of Principals since 1932 (and with some success), the emphasis on the 'back story' of Champness and Chadwick is very much in line with Cliff tradition. Dr Mellor clearly has considerable respect and affection for Cook and for J. A. Broadbelt; perhaps this work will stimulate a reappraisal of their very

significant ministries before as well as during their appointments at Cliff.

The subtitle, 'more than a college', is aptly chosen. The reader has covered nearly two hundred of the five hundred and more pages before Cook arrives at Cliff, and there are times when some pruning would not have gone amiss: the summary of models of theological education going back to Clement of Alexandria (pp. 188-91), for instance, seemed a little unnecessary to this reader! Fascinating as the earlier material is, the balance of the book might allow unwary readers to overlook the massive changes which have taken place in the last twenty five to thirty years, from the admission of women students to the explosion of new courses at all levels of further and higher education. Those whose subconscious image of Cliff still comprises young men in long shorts training to be Local Preachers need to read this book with care and attention.

At several points Dr Mellor mentions misunderstandings or tensions between Cliff and other strands of Methodism: critical voices in Conference towards the end of Chadwick's life, murmurings on the Home Mission Committee in the 1940s, disputes with the Division of Ministries over the accreditation of courses in the 1980s and 1990s. The college might sometimes have been prickly in defending its particular 'charisms' and emphases, but it was surely right to detect an implicit (sometimes explicit) hostility on the part of liberals elsewhere in the Connexion. Although this is not an aspect of the story that the institutional historian may wish to emphasise, I think that there is room for more work on Cliff's role (and that of *Joyful News*) in legitimating, maintaining and nurturing a continuing conservative evangelical presence in Methodism in the twentieth century. To do this would place the story of Cliff more firmly in the broader contexts of Methodist and evangelical history. Another fruitful investigation might explore the later careers of Cliff students, some of whom remained evangelical but left Methodism, or vice-versa.

In a work of this length there are inevitably some idiosyncrasies of spelling and some eccentricities of detail: John Fletcher of Madeley becomes 'Jonathan' on p. 488, the *Methodist Recorder* turns from a weekly newspaper into a quarterly magazine on p. 94 (wishful thinking, perhaps, or confusion with the *London Quarterly Review?*), and the Fernley Lecture is amalgamated with its Primitive Methodist Hartley rival twenty one years before Methodist Union on p. 437. I wondered whether the friendly 'William Wakinson' on p. 77 was the cheerful William Wakinshaw or the acerbic W.L. Watkinson. These are small points; more serious, and most regrettable in a book full of character vignettes and fascinating details, is the lack of an index. These quibbles notwithstanding, Dr Mellor is to be congratulated on producing a history that is at once informative, suggestive, inspiring and eminently readable.

MARTIN WELLINGS

Saved to Serve. The Story of the Wesley Deaconess Order 1890-1978. by E Dorothy Graham. (Epworth Press 2002 pp478 £19.95 ISBN 1 85852 224 2)

Dr Graham has contributed a major study to a neglected area of Methodist history. The deaconess order was created by Dr Thomas Stephenson who also gave life to the National Children's Home. He was anxious to develop women's ministry at a time when the ordained ministry was open to men only and the ethos of the church did not promote women local preachers. Taking the example of the Lutheran church in Germany and anxious to avoid the Roman Catholic monastic model, he proposed an Order of Women Deaconesses on the Kaiserworth model.

The order began its life in London in 1890. The number of recruits grew and when Stephenson moved to Ilkley, the order followed, so from 1902-1968, Ilkley was the training venue for members of the order. Subsequent moves were made to Handsworth and Queens College, Birmingham. Stephenson did not desire a distinctive uniform at first, but ultimately a uniform was established. A chapter is included on this which also looks at the uniform regulations of the United Methodist Church and changes after 1932.

The opening chapters introduce us to the great variety of the deaconesses' work, particularly in the many areas of pastoral need. The effect of two world wars is described and a wide sample of personal stories is included. There are two sections dealing with the wardens of the order who succeeded Stephenson and whose influence was crucial to the development of the order.

A great deal of this large volume is taken up with the overseas service of the deaconess movement which included nursing, teaching and organising training courses. The chapters are divided into three areas- Africa/Asia/ the rest of the world, but the coverage varies considerably. Sri Lanka (Ceylon) is given 26 pages, whereas Burma and Indonesia are given ½ page together. Personal reflections and reports to the deaconess and missionary publications proliferate. Most seem designed to encourage home support for overseas work but there are times of reported loneliness, danger and disease. Relations with other churches and eastern religions are given space but relations with other churches before 1935 are at a minimum. How important was Convocation, a body which held together the order in supporting the work ?

The book, although concentrating on the Wesleyan Methodist Church, also has a chapter on the Unltd Methodist Church - particularly the training and influence of the United Methodist Free Churches. The emphasis in the United Methodist Church was more on the evangelistic line. The Primitive Methodists were less tightly structured. Relations between the connexionally organised orders and the sisterhoods usually associated with city missions are given fleeting coverage. The work beyond 1932 is incorporated into the account of each theme. Considerable attention is given to the developing training methods and the work of Dorothy Farrar, among others is duly recognised.

There is little questioning of what the deaconesses were doing and the text as a whole tends to give the impression of euphoria about their work. It would

seem that funding was always on the agenda and financial rewards for the deaconesses were understandably small.

The work ends with the closure of recruitment to the order in 1978. There is an undercurrent debate about the role of women's ministry and the opening of ordination to the presbyterate in 1975 was crucial. The opening of a new phase of the diaconate in 1986 completes the work.

A vast amount of research into sources has been undertaken and included in the volume, but the photographic illustrations are somewhat small and some readers will require a magnifying glass. The interested reader will discover a helpful survey and the researcher will find an abundance of source material. The splendid index can only add to the usefulness of this important work.

GILBERT D. BRAITHWAITE

Thomas Thomas, 1817-88, the first national architect of Wales, by Stephen Hughes, (reprinted from *Archaeologia Cambrenis* 152 (2003), pp.69-166. £5 plus £1 p&p from Book Sales, Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, Plas Crug, Aberystwyth, SY23 1NJ)

The Welsh chapel is a form of folk art that continues to make a contribution both to that country's landscape and culture, and of all the Welsh chapel architects, the Rev. Thomas Thomas was probably the greatest. A Welsh Independent pastor-cum-artisan architect, he was a major exponent of the style where an arch is set into the pediment. Of approximately nine hundred chapels claimed to be by Thomas, only about a fifth have been identified and along with some domestic work, are listed in an excellent gazetteer which would have been even better if grid references had also been provided. Essentially the denominational architect for the Welsh Independents, at least until he moved to English-speaking Congregationalism, nevertheless he produced a small number of chapels for the Bible Christians, Primitive and Wesleyan Methodists in Wales. Following recent publications on both James Cubitt and John Humphrey, this is a further welcome contribution to the growing research on Nonconformist chapel architecture. The reviewer's one reservation is with the structure and suggests that if it had been in two parts, the first providing a biographical account and the second an analysis of Thomas' chapels, this would have led to an easier reading and saved some textual repetition. There is an appropriate but limited selection of illustrations.... if only there could have been more!

D COLIN DEWS

NOTES AND QUERIES

1574 REV CHARLES MANNING AND FAMILY

In the 1903 copy of *Proceedings*, iv page 34f George Lester correctly quotes from the marble memorial to the Rev Charles Manning in St Mary the Virgin Hayes, Middlesex that he was the vicar from 1738 to 1756. The same dates are also given in the new Bicentennial edition of the Works of John Wesley Volume 20, Journal and Diaries III (1743-1756). In note 16 on page 263 the editors have presumably however, copied the reference in *Proceedings*. New research gives the dates of the incumbency of Charles Manning as 1739 - 1757.

In the Lambeth Palace Library files I have found the following entries:

CHARLES MANNING, on the death of James Baker, on the presentation of George Cooke of the Inner Temple Ref AA/V/H/2/21/11 date 13 July 1739.
ANTHONY HILTON, on the resignation of Charles Manning, on the presentation of Edward Jennings of the Inner Temple. Ref AA/V/H/2/21/12 date 8 February 1757.

In the 2006-reprinted guide to St Mary the Virgin the dates for Charles Manning as vicar are given as 1739 to 1757. The marble bust, which surmounts the memorial, was carved by Charles Manning's grandson Samuel Manning the elder and exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1743.

During my researches into the life and ministry of Charles Manning I have been unable to find reference as to where he went after 1757. Also I have not been able to trace where he or his wife Elizabeth are buried. Charles Manning died in 1799 and Elizabeth died in 1796. Samuel Manning the younger carved a memorial and a bust of his grandfather John Manning the elder (the son of Charles and Elizabeth Manning and a godson of John Wesley). He died around 1743-5. Also Samuel Manning carved a bust and a memorial to his father Samuel Manning the elder who died in 1742.

Any information as to the location of the busts, graves or tombs of any Charles Manning, the elder, Charles Manning the younger died 1812, Samuel Manning the elder and John Manning the younger who died around 1842 would greatly assist the research into the Manning Family.

DONALD H. RYAN

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