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Cover Illustration:

John Russell, *Martha Gumley*, pastel on paper, 85.7 x 73.7 cm (oval), signed and dated 1777
(Edinburgh, Scottish National Gallery, inv. D NG 1525)

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Martha Gumley (1711-87) and her Portrait by John Russell

A striking portrait at ‘The Intimate Portrait’ exhibition at the British Museum in 2008¹ was a pastel by John Russell of the mysterious Mrs Gumley,² about whom no information was offered save that she did not appear to be connected with the glass-making family of Isleworth, and that her connection with the Nisbet family (who gave the pastel to the National Galleries of Scotland in 1921) was unknown. Also unknown by implication was why the sitter’s identity was relevant to the study of John Russell’s œuvre. Some immediate connections which I suggested led to a partial expansion in Stephen Lloyd’s 2012 review,³ but the full story, and the closing of numerous false leads, needs now to be told, not least because of Martha Gumley’s intimate acquaintance with the Wesley brothers, founders of the religious movement of which John Russell was so fervent a supporter.

Almost the only facts about Martha Gumley that can easily be found are that she befriended the Wesleys and was the aunt of Lady Robert Manners, whose maiden name is usually given as Mary Digges. From this a spurious connection with the Digges family of Chilham Castle has been inferred.⁴ In fact (as emerges as the only possibility from a thorough review of the documents cited below) she was a member of the Degge family of Staffordshire, probably completely unrelated (although spellings of both names are so aleatory as to make any such claim hazardous). She was the great-granddaughter of Sir Simon Degge (1612–1703), a lawyer who had fought on the royalist side in the Civil War. He subsequently became a judge, was high sheriff of Derbyshire in 1674–75 and spent his retirement as an antiquary. His

¹ *The Intimate Portraits: Drawings, Miniatures and Pastels from Ramsay to Lawrence*, Edinburgh, Scottish National Portrait Gallery, 25 October 2008 – 1 February 2009; London, British Museum, 5 March – 31 May 2009. Catalogue: Stephen Lloyd & Kim Sloan, no. 43.

² Pastel on paper, 85.7 x 73.7 cm (oval), signed and dated, lower right, ‘J. Russell pinxt/1777’. Edinburgh, National Galleries of Scotland, inv. D NG 1525. Provenance: sitter’s niece and heir, Lady Robert Manners, née Mary Degge (1737–1829); her daughter Mary, Mrs William Nisbet of Dirleton; her daughter, Countess of Elgin, née Mary Hamilton Nisbet (1777–1855); her daughter, Lady Mary Nisbet-Hamilton, née Bruce (–1883); her daughter, Mrs Henry Thomas Nisbet Hamilton Ogilvy of Biel, née Constance Nisbet Hamilton (1842–1920); legacy 1921.

³ Stephen Lloyd, ‘English in Edinburgh’, *Apollo* (January, 2012), 91, fig. 2, reviewing Christopher Baker, *English Drawings and Watercolours, 1600–1900: National Gallery of Scotland* (Edinburgh: National Galleries of Scotland, 2011), p. 272.

⁴ Reliable sources identify her as the daughter and heiress of Colonel Thomas Digges. See Alastair Smart, *Allan Ramsay* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 155. In fact her parents’ names, William and Catherine, are given in the baptismal record mentioned below (available online on the International Genealogical Index), and Colonel William Degge left his Irish property to his widow Mary, née Rice, and his English property to his brother John (will, National Archives, PROB 11/724).

grandson, also Simon, married twice; of the three sons of the first bed,⁵ William concerns us principally, while his half sisters included Martha, the subject of the pastel (her birth and baptismal records have not survived, but the date – 1711 – may be inferred from the inscription in Grosvenor Chapel noted below) and Dorothy, who was born in Derbyshire in 1710 and married, in 1746, Dr Robert Wilmot. Notwithstanding her advanced years Dorothy produced at least six children, the subject of a series of oil portraits by Joseph Wright of Derby.⁶

Martha's half-brother William was born in 1698 and joined the army as ensign in 1716. He progressed through the ranks to reach, in 1739, the level of lieutenant-colonel of General Nevill's regiment Dragoons in Ireland, and was aide-de-camp to the Duke of Devonshire, lord-lieutenant of Ireland. He was a founder member of the Society of Dilettanti (he was in Rome in 1732 with George Knappton)⁷, being present at the inaugural meeting in the Bedford Head Tavern, Covent Garden on 6 March 1736.⁸ Around this time he was married, to Catherine Meighen, the daughter of Francis Meighen of Berkeley Square.⁹ A daughter, Mary, was born and christened in August 1737 at St James', Westminster, and plays an important part in this story. Catherine died soon after giving birth, and William Degge was remarried soon after, to Mary Rice of Dublin (in 1739). Two years later William himself died, leaving his daughter an orphan. Mary Rice remarried several times within the Irish aristocracy, and seems to have had nothing to do with her stepdaughter, who was brought up by her aunt Martha.

Martha Degge herself seems to have married quite late. Her first husband was an Irishman, Robert Colvill (1702–49), grandson of Sir Robert Colvill (1625–97), of Newtown, Co. Down. His father Hugh died at the age of 25, his widow marrying Brabazon Ponsonby, later 1st Earl of Bessborough (1679–1758) (father of Liotard's patron). Bessborough managed his step-son's affairs even after his majority, as Colvill seems to have been mentally unstable with suicidal tendencies, 'wild and indecent' in

⁵ Matters concerning the inheritance of the Degge estates after Simon's death in 1717 were complicated by a law suit in 1720 in which his widow Jane sued the executors and the heir, her eldest stepson, also called Simon; he was later declared a lunatic by a commission and inquisition, 13 March 1739 (National Archives, ref C/211/7D30). Under Simon's will (PROB 11/926), made in 1727, his brothers John and William were his heirs and executors; there were complicated rules for the succession between John and William's children; Simon also recorded his 'positive Will and Desire being that it may not descend to the posterity of the aforesaid Widow of my late father'. However when probate was given, on 17 March 1767, both John and William had predeceased the testator, and Dorothy Wilmot was appointed as executor being next of kin. This family dispute explains why there is no mention of Martha is unsurprising. Simon Degge's will also mentions his friend Thomas Anson with whom he made the Grand Tour. See John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 289.

⁶ See Benedict Nicholson, *Joseph Wright of Derby* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p. 225.

⁷ Ingamells, *Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy*, p. 981.

⁸ See Lionel Cust, *A History of the Society of Dilettanti* (London: Macmillan, 1898), *passim*.

⁹ The only clue to this I have found is the abstract of Robert Colvill's will. P. Beryl Eustace (ed.), *Registry of Deeds Dublin: Abstract of Wills* (Dublin: Stationery Office, 1956), vol. II, p. 25. See below, read in the context of the other documents cited here.

his conversation and ‘disordered in his understanding’.¹⁰ This did not prevent him becoming, at the age of 17, MP for Killybegs (a seat he retained until 1727 when he was succeeded by Henry, Earl Conyngham) and Antrim (1727–49). Colvill sold his ancestral property at Newtown¹¹ to Alexander Stewart¹² of Belfast, and in 1721 he made a will bequeathing his property in Co. Down to Bessborough’s second son John.¹³ But by 1744 he had fallen under the influence of a mistress, a certain Martha Launders, who turned him against the Ponsonby family; he sold the estate he had intended for John, and retreated to London where (it seems) he married Martha Degge, and died shortly after, in 1749.¹⁴

Was Martha Launders his future wife? There is nothing (other than the absence of a clear trail) to suggest that Martha Degge was illegitimate or had any reason to go by a pseudonym, and the name was not uncommon at the time. What is clear (and the starting point for establishing her identity) is that Martha Gumley was Robert Colvill’s wife: the inscription in Grosvenor Chapel provides vital evidence: ‘Robert Colvill, Esq., of the Kingdom of Ireland, d. Mar. 20, 1748/9, a. 47 y. 2 m. Martha, his wid., d. April 4, 1787, a. 76’.¹⁵ Taken together with the other documents below and the abstract of Colvill’s will, in which Mrs Martha Colvill of Grosvenor Square is formally made guardian of Mary Degge during her minority, her identity seems clear.¹⁶

The house at Grosvenor Square was no. 37 (subsequently no. 42), later recorded in the name of Martha’s second husband.¹⁷ Although John Gilbert, Archbishop of York, is recorded as living there between 1758 and 1761, Martha Gumley retained the

¹⁰ A. P. W. Malcomson, ‘The Newtown Act of 1748: revision and reconstruction’, *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 18, no. 71 (March, 1973), 313–44.

¹¹ John Wesley called it ‘dreary Newtown’ when he visited it again on 15 June 1773: ‘Even in Ireland I hardly see anywhere such heaps of ruins as here’. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (third edn., London: John Mason, 1829), vol. 3, p. 484.

¹² Progenitor of the Castlereagh/Londonderry family.

¹³ Then an infant. He was to marry the daughter of the 3rd Duke of Devonshire, the lord lieutenant to whom Colonel Degge was aide-de-camp.

¹⁴ ‘The Colvill family’, *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 6 (1900), 14.

¹⁵ ‘Inscriptions in Grosvenor Chapel, South Audley Street’, *Notes & Queries*, vol. 135 (1917), 183, no. 12.

¹⁶ ‘COLVILLE, ROBERT, formerly of Newtown, Co. Down, and late of parish of St. George near Hannover Square, Middlesex. Testator was son and heir at law of Hugh Colvill late of Newtown, Esq., deceased, and grandson and heir at law of Sir Robert Colvill, late of Newtown, Knt., deceased. 4 Dec. 1746. Narrate 2J pp. 10 June 1749. Sir Cecil Bishop, Berkeley Square, said parish of St. George, Bart., Hutchison Mure, Saxham, Suffolk, Esq., and George Draper, parish of St. Paul’s, Covent Garden, apothecary, trustees. Mrs Martha Colvill of Grosvenor Square in said parish of St. George to have care during her minority of Miss Mary Degg, daughter of Col. Wm Degg and Catherine his wife both deceased, and grand-daughter of Catherine Meighen of Berkeley Square aforesaid, widow of Francis Meighen, gent., deceased. Said Catherine Meighan. His sister Alice Moore otherwise Colvill then wife of Stephen Moore of Killworth, Co. Cork. Hon. Wm. Ponsonby commonly called Wm. Ponsonby commonly called Lord Viscount Duncannon. Miss Mary Bishop, daughter of Sir Cecil Bishop. His real and personal estate. Witnesses: Robt. Talbot, Peter Hemet, junr., and Samuel Baldwin, all of liberty of Westminster.’ Eustace, *Registry of Deeds Dublin*, vol. 2, p. 25.

¹⁷ See F. H. W. Sheppard (ed.), *Survey of London* (London: Greater London Council, 1980), vol. 40, pp. 117–66.

property, allowing her niece and her husband to live there until they inherited after her death. Many years later (1858–72) Lord Londonderry lived there, but this is unlikely to have any connection with the Newtownards sale.

Two and a half years after Robert Colvill's death, on 10 September 1751 Martha married Samuel Gumley (c.1698–1763), lieutenant-colonel, 1st Foot Guards, MP for Hedon 1746–47.¹⁸ He was indeed connected with the plate glass factory at Isleworth, being the third son of the proprietor John Gumley. His grandfather was a cabinet-maker at St Clement Danes, but Samuel's sister Anna Maria (c.1696–1758) attracted the eye of William Pulteney, later 1st Earl of Bath who married her in 1714 and promoted her family relentlessly.¹⁹ John Gumley became commissary-general to the army as well as supplying furniture, mirrors etc. to the royal household, often at inflated prices. A letter from Scrope to the Duke of Montagu (23 December 1729) notified him that Gumley would not in future be employed as cabinet-maker for the Wardrobe on account of his 'notorious impositions'.²⁰ This enabled him to accumulate wealth on a scale that trumped his origins in trade. Thus Samuel pursued an army career normally reserved for the aristocracy: commissioned in 1718, becoming captain-lieutenant in the Coldstream Guards in 1721, rising to be lieutenant-colonel in the 1st Foot Guards in 1742 and an army colonel in 1749. He took part in the battles of Dettingen and Fontenoy, and fought a duel with General Braddock in which his good humour attracted the notice of Horace Walpole, although we may detect arrogance mixed with undeniable sang-froid. 'Braddock,' he is reputed to have said before they engaged, 'you are a poor dog! Here, take my purse; if you kill me, you will be forced to run away, and then you will not have a shilling to support you'.²¹ The Earl of Bath arranged for his brother-in-law to be elected MP for Hedon in 1746, but he was unseated for bribery (the petition alleged that Gumley employed 'illegal, arbitrary and corrupt methods' to secure a majority of one vote),²² and failed to win the seat at the elections of 1747 and 1754.

The first documented connection with Methodism arises in a letter on 7 May 1748, when Dr John Byrom reported: 'I dined yesterday with Colonel Gumley and Charles Wesley, and went with them to the Methodist church, English Common Prayers'.²³ On 19 June 1748, John Wesley preached at Moorfields; not having recovered his strength

¹⁸ Romney Sedgwick, *The House of Commons 1715–1754* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), vol. II, p. 91 provides an epitome of his career.

¹⁹ Pope's, *The Looking-Glass* satirises 'charming Gumley's' arrogance, reminding us of her origins in wishing that her father could produce 'one faithful mirror for his daughter's use'. She was previously the mistress of Lord Bolingbroke, and was described by Goldsmith as 'the most expensive prostitute in the kingdom'. Oliver Goldsmith, *Life of Bolingbroke* (London: T. Davies, 1770), p. 8.

²⁰ 'Declared accounts: Civil List', in William A. Shaw and F. H. Slingsby (eds), *Calendar of Treasury Books*, vol. 32: 1718 (London: Public Record Office, 1962), pp. clxxxviii–ccxli.

²¹ Letters to George Montagu, 3 September 1748; Sir Horace Mann, 28 August 1755, in Peter Cunningham (ed.), *The Letters of Horace Walpole, Earl of Orford* (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1861), vol. II, pp. 126, 461.

²² Laid by Luke Robinson, who was elected instead. *Journal of the House of Commons* (11 December 1746), vol. XXV, 210.

²³ John Telford, *Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley* (London: Wesleyan Methodist Book Room, 1900), p. 167.

by the evening, ‘Colonel Gumley carried me in his chair to Brentford’.²⁴ Several months later, as Gumley set off for Eindhoven (13 October 1748, the rendezvous²⁵ for his regiment and the Dutch and Hanoverian forces planning to combat Löwendahl at Maastricht), he wrote to John Wesley a deeply religious letter, in terms so extravagant that a cynic might suspect insincerity.²⁶ Another in similar vein was annotated by Wesley: ‘A pattern of Christian simplicity!’²⁷ Soon after Gumley’s safe return (the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle which brought an end to hostilities was signed days after his departure),²⁸ Charles Wesley (then in London) writing to his future wife Sarah Gwynne on 28 March 1749 was able to record that Colonel Gumley ‘was admitted & filled with the presence of divine love’.²⁹ Some, such as Philip Doddridge, were astonished by the conversion of this ‘man notorious for his profligate character’.³⁰ Independently Martha Colvill had become involved with the movement: in addition to Grosvenor Square, Mrs Colvill owned a house on St Ann’s Hill, Chertsey, Surrey, and it was there on 14 June 1750 that a James Waller directed a letter to Sarah Wesley who was staying with Mrs Colvil [sic].³¹ On 23 February 1751 Marmaduke Gwynne, Sarah’s father, wrote to Charles Wesley who was staying at Mrs Colvill’s house in London.³² There followed an extensive correspondence over many years which it is not necessary to itemise in full. Martha’s niece Mary Degge also engaged in the correspondence, writing to Charles Wesley on 31 August 1752 asking when he expected to arrive at Chertsey, and discussing also her grandmother’s (Mrs Meighen) health.³³ Her aunt, by now Mrs Gumley, was evidently something of a hypochondriac, benefitting from the waters at Scarborough although Mary felt ‘her distemper IS MORE IN HER MIND than is suspected’.³⁴ Mary became the particular friend of Sarah Wesley, enjoying the sort of intimacy in which an unfortunately worded letter required counsel from Charles Wesley as to its likely effects (1 May 1753).³⁵

On 1 January 1756, at Roehampton in Surrey, Charles Wesley married Mary Degge to Lord Robert Manners (1718–82), a son of the 2nd Duke of Rutland and

²⁴ Nehemiah Curnock (ed.), *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* (London: Charles H. Kelly, n.d. [1916]), vol. 3, p. 356.

²⁵ See Sir F. W. Hamilton, *The Origin and History of the First or Grenadier Guards* (London: John Murray, 1874), vol. II, pp. 146ff.

²⁶ Frank Baker (ed.), *The Works of John Wesley, vol. 26: Letters II, 1740–1755* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1981), pp. 334ff.

²⁷ *ibid.*

²⁸ The British troops faced greater hazard from the storm on the return journey to England. See Lee McCardell, *Ill-starred General: Braddock of the Coldstream Guards* (Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1958), p. 105.

²⁹ The John Rylands University Library (JRUL), Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/5/45, Charles Wesley to Sarah Gwynne, 28 March 1749.

³⁰ James Macauley, *Whitefield Anecdotes* (London: Religious Tract Society, 1886), p. 106.

³¹ JRUL, Wesley Family Papers, MS. DDWes/4/73, James Waller to Sarah Wesley, 14 June 1750.

³² JRUL, Wesley Family Papers, MS. DDWes/7/8A, Marmaduke Gwynne to Charles Wesley, 23 February 1751.

³³ JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/2/1, Mary Degge to Charles Wesley, 31 August 1752.

³⁴ *ibid.*

³⁵ JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/6/38, Charles Wesley to Sarah Wesley, 1 May 1753.

colonel in Gumley's regiment of the 1st Foot Guards since 1747.³⁶ He had a distinguished career, serving in Flanders during the war of the Austrian succession, becoming a general officer in 1771.³⁷ Perhaps through the influence of his brother-in-law Pelham, he was elected MP for Kingston upon Hull, a seat he retained for some 35 years. There were to be three sons as well as two daughters, Lucy and Mary, the latter marrying the officer, MP and collector William Nisbet (1747–1802) of Dirleton, one of the wealthiest lairds in Scotland.³⁸ The Russell pastel descended through the Nisbet family, passing to the Countess of Elgin, wife of the collector of the marbles (until their divorce in 1808), before being left by her granddaughter to the National Gallery of Scotland in 1921. The provenance is shared by the gorgeous painting by Allan Ramsay of Lady Robert Manners, executed probably c.1767,³⁹ as well as by the distinguished Sir Thomas Lawrence portrait of a much older Lady Robert Manners (1826).⁴⁰ Separated by half a century, there is nevertheless an unmistakable echo of the Russell portrait of her aunt.

The relationship between Martha and her niece Mary was evidently extremely close. Charles Wesley, in a letter of 3 January 1760, had dinner with Mrs Gumley and 'her daughter' [sic], although he found the conversation trifling and tedious.⁴¹ However, when Lady Robert had a miscarriage, 'it was pity that Mrs Gumley was not in attendance' (15 February 1760).⁴² She was not above matchmaking, and Wesley wrote to his wife on 2 March 1760 describing the unsuccessful courtship between Samuel Lloyd and Miss Darby: '[Mrs Gumley] is a clever woman but quite overreached herself on that particular occasion and spoiled her own plan with her intriguing'.⁴³

It may have been Samuel's 'good humour and wit' that attracted Martha, but at some stage relations between the couple became strained.⁴⁴ Acting through Lord Robert Manners, she issued proceedings in February 1761 against 'Samuel Gumley,

³⁶ For a useful summary, see Romney Sedgwick (ed.), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1715–1754* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1970), vol. II, p. 241.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ L. Namier and J. Brooke (eds), *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1754–1790* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1964), vol. II, p. 202. Apart from the 28 paintings bequeathed by his descendant to the National Gallery of Scotland, Nisbet owned the Caravaggio 'Taking of Christ' now in the National Gallery of Ireland.

³⁹ Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, inv. NG 1523; Smart, *op. cit.*, no. 351, fig. 595.

⁴⁰ Edinburgh, National Gallery of Scotland, inv. NG 1522. Discussed by Sir Michael Levey, *Thomas Lawrence* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 269ff, fig. 145.

⁴¹ JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/5/106, Charles Wesley to Sarah Wesley, 3 January 1760.

⁴² JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/7/22, Charles Wesley to Sarah Wesley, 15 February 1760.

⁴³ JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/7/57, Charles Wesley to Sarah Wesley, 2 March 1760.

⁴⁴ Perhaps his suddenly acquired piety lapsed into the behaviour for which he had earlier been known. No explanation is found in Samuel's will, a very brief affair made in 1753 in which he bequeathed everything to his 'dear wife Martha'. It was proved on 7 May 1763. National Archives, PRO 11/887.

Esq. and others', reported in the *London Gazette*.⁴⁵ The multiplicity of defendants suggests that this was not merely a divorce petition, but no sequel seems to have survived. Two years later Gumley died at Spa, apparently having evaded justice, but under even more mysterious circumstances: according to the *London Chronicle*: 'An account is come from the German Spa [sic], of the death of Colonel Gumley, by assassination, as he was returning to his lodgings from an entertainment'.⁴⁶

Mrs Gumley nevertheless continued to use her married name, and maintained her support for the Wesleys.⁴⁷ A letter of 27 July 1766 records Charles Wesley's meeting with Dr Martin Madan of the Lock Hospital.⁴⁸ Wesley spent an hour with the singers, and the next day breakfasted with Mrs Gumley who renewed her offer of the living of Drayton in Oxfordshire. The manor of Drayton Beauchamp had belonged to the Cheynes, but was acquired in about 1730 by John Gumley, passed to his son and remained with Mrs Gumley, before passing to her niece and then her daughter Lucy Manners.⁴⁹

By 1771 the offer of the house at 1 Chesterfield Street, Marylebone,⁵⁰ was under discussion in the correspondence. She insisted on the Wesleys taking the property, which remained their London residence until Charles Wesley's death and for some years after. They were responsible only for the ground rent payable to the Duke of Portland on the remaining twenty years of the lease; Mrs Gumley's largesse included furniture, all the essentials for housekeeping and even a supply of small beer. The house had a music room, equipped with two organs, a harpsichord and sufficient room for the Wesleys to be able to hold a series of concerts there. Mrs Gumley subscribed to the first season in 1779, but did not attend.⁵¹ Martha Gumley died in her house at Grosvenor Square on 4 April 1787, aged 76. In her will, made on 4 January 1786 and

⁴⁵ 'Monday the 16th Day of February, in the First Year of the Reign of His Majesty King George the Third, 1761, between Martha Gumley, Wife of Samuel Gumley, by the Right Honourable Lord Robert Manners, her next Friend, Plaintiff; the said Samuel Gumley, Esq; and others, Defendants: upon the humble Petition of the Plaintiff Martha Gumley, this Day preferred to the Right Hon. the Master of the Rolls, for the Reasons therein, and in the Certificate and Affidavit therein mentioned contained; and upon reading the said Certificate and Affidavit, it is ordered, That the said Defendant Samuel Gumley do appear to the Plaintiff's Bill on or before the first Day of the next Term'. *London Gazette*, no. 10080 (17–21 February 1761), 3.

⁴⁶ *London Chronicle* (29–31 March 1763), 310.

⁴⁷ Among her charitable donations, 5 guineas is recorded for the Magdalen Charity in 1766. Anon. [William Dodd], *An Account of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Magdalen Charity* (London: W. Faden, 1766), p. 237.

⁴⁸ An institution with which numerous Russell subjects were associated; Russell himself was converted by Madan, recording in his diary, written in the third person, 'John Russell converted September 30, 1764, ætat. 19, about half an hour after seven in the evening'. Quoted in George C. Williamson, *John Russell, R.A.* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1894), p. 9.

⁴⁹ 'Parishes: Drayton Beauchamp', William Page (ed.), *A History of the County of Buckingham* (London: St Catherine Press, 1925), vol. 3, pp. 341–45.

⁵⁰ Subsequently renamed Wheatley Street; the house has since been demolished.

⁵¹ Alyson McLamore, "'By the will and order of Providence': the Wesley family concerts, 1779–1787", *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, vol. 37 (2004), 75, 103.

proved 9 May 1788, apart from a couple of minor bequests to servants she left everything to her niece, by now a widow.⁵²



By John Russell, here identified as study for *Martha Gumley*, pastel on paper
(London, Victoria & Albert Museum)

⁵² National Archives, PRO 11/1152.

This was the Martha Gumley of whom in 1777 Russell was to make his portrait. The scale of it, and ambition of the composition, emphasize its importance in his œuvre. The rural setting may well be St Ann's Hill, Chertsey. Russell was still at the early stage of his career, and it is evident that he took every possible care in preparing this work. It is therefore not surprising that he made a preparatory study (*above*), which survives, hitherto unidentified, in the group of drawings collected by Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence and now in the Victoria & Albert Museum.

In 1770 Russell went to hear Wesley preach Whitefield's funeral sermon, 'very fine and impressive' according to his diary.⁵³ In 1771 he did an oil bust of Charles Wesley with his hand on the Bible (Mrs Gumley too holds a book, perhaps a volume of sermons or even verse). In 1776 Russell executed a set of four pastels of musicians (Boyce, Corelli, Handel and Kelway) to be presented by George III to Samuel Wesley,⁵⁴ but these had been made by copying existing oil portraits (that of Kelway, harpsichord master to Queen Charlotte and a particular friend of Wesley, was copied after Andrea Soldi). According to a letter of Charles Wesley (30 March 1770): 'The last time Charles junior [(1757–1834)] was with [Joseph Kelway], the boy played one of his Kelway's sonatas so perfectly that the older man bowed and declared that no music master in London could have played it better'.⁵⁵ Mrs Gumley was the boy's godmother, and gave him a handsome sum of money for a new harpsichord.⁵⁶ Russell was engaged now to portray Charles's brother Samuel (1766–1837), as a boy, standing by an organ holding his oratorio 'Ruth' (written at the age of eight; Dr Boyce nevertheless considered the airs 'some of the prettiest I have seen').⁵⁷ The large oil was exhibited in the Royal Academy in 1777.⁵⁸ Dr Boyce, in crayons, was also shown. It is perfectly possible, and satisfying to believe, that 'Mrs Gumley' was also in the 1777 Royal Academy exhibition, as one of the four oval pastels of unnamed ladies.

NEIL JEFFARES

⁵³ Quoted in Williamson, *John Russell R.A.*, p. 44, where more details (but by no means a complete account) will be found of Russell's Methodist connections. See also Antje Matthews, 'John Russell's mysterious moon: An emblem of the church', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, vol. 55, no. 6 (2006), 252–58, as well as the various entries in my *Dictionary of Pastellists before 1800*, (London: Unicorn Press, 2006).

⁵⁴ See John Ingamells, *National Portrait Gallery: Mid-Georgian Portraits, 1760–1790* (London: National Portrait Gallery, 2004), pp. 66 & passim.

⁵⁵ JRUL, Charles Wesley Papers, MS. DDCW/7/29, Charles Wesley to Sarah Wesley, 30 March 1770.

⁵⁶ Telford, *Life of Charles Wesley*, p. 262.

⁵⁷ Quoted in James Thomas Lightwood, *Samuel Wesley, Musician* (London: Epworth Press, 1937), p. 22. Twelve years Russell's Royal Academy diploma piece was on the same theme, Ruth and Naomi.

⁵⁸ 175x114 cm. It is curious that the Wesleys seem to have preferred Russell to work in oils. Perhaps they shared the common prejudice that pastel was too ephemeral or frivolous a medium for the serious purpose of recording their faces.

Adam Clarke's Ape: a Theory Abused Over Two Centuries

Adam Clarke was a central figure in the second generation of Methodists in the United Kingdom. Having been pressed into the ministry in his later teens by John Wesley himself, Clarke's literary brilliance ensured that his numerous writings were quickly published and dispersed while he continued to work for decades as an evangelist throughout the British Isles. Clarke's best-known and most impressive publication came in the form of his biblical commentaries,¹ in which he evinced 'a warm, evangelical Arminianism'.² The commentaries have been reprinted innumerable times in the English-speaking world (with an abridged version appearing in 1997)³ and continue to be found in minister's libraries to this day. The first volume, originally published in 1810, covered the first 25 chapters of Genesis, and immediately drew interest from clergy, scholars, and laypeople alike. The suggestion by Clarke that the traditional serpent of Genesis 3, in the account of the Garden of Eden, should be translated 'ape', drew more attention than any of his other comments in the first volume. This article will consider 'Clarke's ape', specifically the reactions to it, the potential reasons for the theory, and some of the later uses of Clarke's arguments in racial propaganda.

Clarke's Commentary on Genesis 3

Clarke provided his comments as a running commentary with the text of the King James Version. He considered the account in Genesis 3 to be 'one of the most difficult, as well as most important narratives in the whole book of God'.⁴ The import of the story lies in the fact that it documents how humankind went from 'perfection and felicity' in the previous chapter to the fallen state, which is evident throughout history even up to modern times. In a lengthy commentary on verse 1, Clarke devoted considerable effort to explaining his displeasure with the translation of *nachash* (נחש) as 'serpent', which was found in all English versions. He began his argument by referencing Old Testament occurrences of *nachash* that seemed to describe a non-serpent-like animal, perhaps a whale or hippopotamus (Job 26:13), or crocodile or

¹ Though commonly referred to as *Clarke's Commentaries*, each volume bore the title, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments: the Text Carefully Printed from the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorized Translation, Including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts With a Commentary and Critical Notes Designed as a Help to the Better Understanding of the Sacred Writings* (8 vols, London: Caxton Press by Henry Fischer, 1810-24).

² Ian Sellers, 'Clarke, Adam (1762–1832)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford University Press, 2004).

³ *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible*, abridged by Ralph Earle (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1997).

⁴ *Clarke's Commentary* on Genesis 3:1. Unfortunately, the commentaries did not include page numbers. Because sets of *Clarke's Commentaries* have been reprinted in various numbers of volumes (as many as 8, as few as 2), usually without page numbers, this article provides references to the biblical chapter and verse upon which Clarke commented to avoid confusing editions and volumes.

alligator (Isaiah 27:1; Amos 4:3) and he ultimately determined that *nachash* was simply a 'general term, confined to no one sense'. The traditional belief that a serpent was intended in Genesis 3:1 was the result of the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament) mistranslation of *nachash* as ὄφις, which means serpent. But how could one determine the type of creature described in Genesis 3 if the Septuagint was wrong and 'serpent' was not intended? Clarke appealed to the Arabic words *akhnas*, *khanasa*, or *khanoos*, all of which refer to the ape. These terms come from the root *chanas*, which means 'he departed or drew away'. To Clarke, the verbal similarities between the Hebrew *nachash* and the Arabic terms were obvious. The connection to Arabic had further appeal because the term *khanas* in Arabic, which comes from the same root, means devil, 'because he draws men off from righteousness'. He asked: 'Is it not strange that the devil and the ape should have the same name, derived from the same root, and that root so very similar to the word (*nachash*) in the text?' As evidence that the context called for an ape instead of a serpent, Clarke pointed to the description of the creature as having wisdom ('more subtle than any beast of the field'), walking erect (inferred from the punishment of crawling on the belly) and being endowed with the gifts of speech and reason (and thus able to tempt Eve), none of which startled Eve. Clarke observed that these descriptions could never have described a serpent. Serpents have no vocal abilities beyond hissing, and legends of two-footed and four-footed snakes 'are justly exploded by every judicious naturalist'. While Clarke admitted that the Old Testament documents the occasion of a donkey speaking, such an occurrence was clearly miraculous. However, in the Genesis 3 account, no other agent was described as acting through the *nachash*, a wise and reasoning creature. Clarke opined that the tradition of the serpent's wisdom was based on the Septuagint's mistranslation of *nachash* in Genesis 3, and thus flimsy evidence for the supposed wisdom of serpents. Clarke then offered more specificity that an 'ape or ouran outang' (orangutan) was meant. In a puzzling explanation that seemed to contradict Clarke's argument that no agent was implied to be working through the *nachash* in Genesis 3, Clarke suggested: 'Satan made use of this creature as the most proper instrument for the accomplishment of his murderous purposes against the life and soul of man'. The ape was a natural choice for Satan's purpose because of its reasoning and speaking capabilities.

But how did an ape or orangutan fit the description of the creature in Genesis 3 any more than a serpent? Clarke offered the observation that the form of the ape, including its bone and muscle structure, appear to have been constructed so that it might walk erect, with the odd result that a creature with *hands* (and not *paws*) must place them on the ground to walk on all fours. In addition, apes have shown themselves to be cunning creatures that perform 'endlessly varied pranks and tricks,' and thus, even now, are wiser than all other animals besides humans. Having been condemned to walk on all fours, which was Clarke's interpretation of the 'upon thy belly thou shalt go', the ape had to gather its food from the ground and literally 'eat dust'. The fact that apes now chatter and babble meaninglessly is a relic of their former gift of

speech, from which they were apparently deprived as part of their punishment.⁵ Clarke's failure to demonstrate any mention of the loss of speech as punishment from the text of Genesis 3 was conspicuous.

Clarke's apology for his theory was strained at times, especially in his explanation of the use of 'serpent' (ὄφις) in the New Testament when referring to the creature of Genesis 3 (2 Corinthians 11:3; Revelation 12:9). He even admitted that it is 'very probable that our Lord alludes to this very place when he exhorts his disciples to be wise - prudent or intelligent, as serpents' (Matthew 10:16). No error was implied on behalf of the New Testament writers, however, because they 'seem to lose sight of the animal or instrument used on the occasion, and speak only of Satan himself, as the cause of the transgression, and the instrument of all evil.' And while his linguistic connection of the Hebrew *nachash* with *khanasa* and its cognates in Arabic offered some hermeneutical (how could a simple animal such as a serpent have ever spoken or reasoned?) and scientific (science confirms that snakes have never had legs) advantages for solving some of the major difficulties of the narrative, he failed to acknowledge the many others it introduced – linguistically, hermeneutically, and scientifically – which his critics soon pointed out.

Clarke concluded the argument for his unique translation and interpretation with this caveat:

If, however, any person should choose to differ from the opinion stated above, he is at perfect liberty so to do; I make it no article of faith, nor of Christian communion; I crave the same liberty to judge for myself that I give to others, to which every man has an indisputable right; and I hope no man will call me a heretic for departing in this respect from the common opinion, which appears to me to be so embarrassed as to be altogether unintelligible.⁶

Thus, Clarke showed an evangelical concern for his readers' sensibilities, allowing that his theory was not a matter of faith, and expressing his desire that his unconventional ideas not be considered heretical, but without denying his opinion that elements of the traditional story of the Fall were embarrassing and unintelligible.

⁵ In his comments on Genesis 3:14, Clarke explained his reckoning of the ape's punishment. The *nachash*, whom I suppose to have been at the head of all the inferior animals, and in a sort of society and intimacy with man, is to be greatly degraded, entirely banished from human society, and deprived of the gift of speech. Cursed art thou above all cattle, and above every beast of the field - thou shalt be considered the most contemptible of animals; upon thy belly shalt thou go - thou shalt no longer walk erect, but mark the ground equally with thy hands and feet; and dust shalt thou eat - though formerly possessed of the faculty to distinguish, choose, and cleanse thy food, thou shalt feed henceforth like the most stupid and abject quadruped, all the days of thy life - through all the innumerable generations of thy species. God saw meet to manifest his displeasure against the agent employed in this melancholy business; and perhaps this is founded on the part which the intelligent and subtle *nachash* took in the seduction of our first parents. We see that he was capable of it, and have some reason to believe that he became a willing instrument.

⁶ Final comments on the *nachash* of Genesis 3:1.

Reactions to Clarke's Theory

Criticism of 'Clarke's Ape,' as his theory came to be called, was swift and widespread. John Bellamy offered a stinging rebuke of Clarke in his booklet, *Ophion: Or the Theology of the Serpent* (1811). He chastised Clarke for ignoring thousands of years of solid tradition, from the rabbis to the early church fathers and the later reformers, with his translation of *nachash*. First, Bellamy argued that the notion of a *monkey* (Bellamy's term) tempting Eve was a ludicrous one that would certainly cause Deists to ridicule the Bible.⁷ Second, disputing Clarke, he showed how various cultures and religions of antiquity revered the serpent for its wisdom.⁸ Third, Bellamy discussed the characteristics of monkeys to show that such creatures did not fit the context of the narrative.⁹ He observed that the notion of a monkey biting a man's heel or a man bruising a monkey's head (cf. Genesis 3:15) was absurd, especially when the natural explanation of a serpent biting a man's foot and the man bruising its head was well-suited to the details of the narrative.¹⁰ Ultimately, Bellamy determined that Clarke's attempt to interpret the narrative in Genesis 3 literally, when the passage was intended as an allegory, was Clarke's biggest mistake.¹¹

A letter to the editor of *The Christian Guardian* in April 1811 expressed deep concern that Clarke's interpretation called into question the inspiration of the scriptures. Was not Clarke implying that the New Testament writers were mistaken when they called Eve's tempter a serpent, based on the faulty translation in the Septuagint? How could an inspired author rely on the authority of 'an uninspired version' and call the animal a serpent when it was in reality an orangutan?¹² Further, the correspondent wondered, if Clarke's conjecture that the ape once had reasoning abilities were true, did that not also imply that it originally had a soul? Though Clarke had hoped to avoid offending other Christians with his commentary on chapter 3, it became clear he was not totally successful. The correspondent went further and opined that someday 'Dr. Clarke will be sorry, on cool reflection, that he has written what is calculated to shake the simple belief . . . in the book of God'.¹³

A later popular science writer, John Ellor Taylor, himself a Methodist, described the comments on Genesis 3 as Clarke's wasting of ink on 'a quibble, cuttle-fish like', which was to be regretted because of Clarke's vast knowledge and sharp mind. Taylor observed that Clarke was perhaps attempting to incorporate 'modern science' into his commentary, based on the fact that the orangutan had only recently been 'introduced to the notice of Europe'. While Taylor considered the arguments for the theory to be weak, he applauded Clarke for his efforts to take science seriously in his commentary.

⁷ John Bellamy, *Ophion, Or the Theology of the Serpent* (London: A. J. Valpy, 1811), pp. 5-6.

⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 11-28.

⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 29-84.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 75-77.

¹¹ *ibid.*, pp. 85-126.

¹² J. S. 'On Dr. Clarke's Interpretation of Gen iii. 1', *The Christian Guardian*, vol. 3 (April, 1811), 120.

¹³ *ibid.*, 121.

Taylor advised Clarke's 'evangelical brethren' to adopt the same spirit so that there would be 'less open hostility between theological and scientific thought'.¹⁴

Though there were some writers in later decades that defended Clarke's arguments, even if they weren't completely persuaded,¹⁵ the bulk of criticism aimed at Clarke's ape was simple ridicule. Within months of the commentary's publication, one author opined that Clarke had 'out Heroded Herod' and that, as a 'monkey-monger,' he had 'thrown Lord Monboddo completely to the back ground'.¹⁶ This Lord Mondobbo was James Burnett, a Scottish deist philosopher of the eighteenth century famous for his proposition that humans had descended from anthropoidal apes. Clarke faced the same kind of sneers that Burnett encountered. Daniel C. Eddy related the story, which was reported to have taken place many years earlier at Andover Theological College in Massachusetts, of a divinity student who asked his professor, in the middle of class, what he thought of Clarke's theory. The professor replied, 'Be careful, young man, that Adam Clarke's monkey don't catch you!'¹⁷ John W. Thomas mockingly said that Clarke's theory 'resembles the serpent – not the monkey; – it has not one leg to stand on'.¹⁸ The renowned Baptist preacher from a generation later, Charles Haddon Spurgeon, wrote on his copy of volume 6 of Clarke's commentaries: 'Adam Clarke is as immortal as his monkey'.¹⁹ Even Clarke's friends made sport of his unorthodox theory. Richard Reece, an admirer of Clarke, penned the following short poem, which apparently targeted Clarke and Clarke's critics:

The Rev. Doctor Adam Clarke asserts,
It could not be a serpent tempted Eve,
But a gay monkey, whose fine mimic arts
And fopperies, were most likely to deceive.
Dogmatic commentators still hold out,
A serpent, not a monkey, tempted madam;
And which shall we believe? Without a doubt
None knows so well who tempted Eve as Adam.²⁰

¹⁴ John Ellor Taylor, 'John Wesley's Cosmogony', *Westminster Review*, 94 (October, 1870), 316.

¹⁵ See, for example, James Garner, *A Series of Dissertations on the Doctrines of the Bible* (Liverpool: Simpkin, Marshall & Co., 1859), p. 255.

¹⁶ Charles Colton, *Hypocrisy: A Satire, in Three Books; Book the First* (London: T. Smith, 1812), p. 86.

¹⁷ Daniel C. Eddy, *Europa: or, Scenes and Society in England, France, Italy and Switzerland* (Boston: Ira Bradley & Co., 1852), p. 134. A similar story was told by Moncure Daniel Conway, where he mentioned his father's story of a preacher who warned the congregation, 'If you don't repent, Dr. Clarke's ape will catch you!' See M. D. Conway, *Autobiography, Memories and Experiences* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), p. 32.

¹⁸ J. W. Thomas, *Byron and the Times; or an Apology for 'Don Juan'* (London: Elliot Stock, 1867), p. 134.

¹⁹ C. H. Spurgeon, *The Autobiography of Charles H. Spurgeon, Compiled from his Diary, Letters, and Records by his Wife and his Private Secretary* (Chicago: Curtis & Jennings, 1900), vol. 4, p. 301.

²⁰ P. Douglass Gorrie, *The Lives of Eminent Methodist Ministers; Containing Biographical Sketches, Incidents, Anecdotes, Records of Travel, Reflections, etc.* (Auburn, NY: Derby & Miller, 1852), p. 129.

Potential Motivations for Clarke's Theory

The motivations behind Clarke's unique theory are a matter of intrigue. Why would a respected, conservative biblical scholar feel the need to offer a bizarre interpretation of one of the most well-known and beloved biblical narratives? Clarke stated that he preferred his theory to the traditional 'serpent' story because it answered all the difficulties of the text. He did not, however, state exactly which difficulties he sought to resolve, and certainly did not acknowledge any new problems he may have introduced. One apparent difficulty which Clarke sought to resolve was the traditional interpretation's lack of a proper scientific explanation of the events related in Genesis 3. Although Clarke was criticized far and wide for his ape, he apparently took the time to answer only one specific critic in print.²¹ In a rejoinder to an anonymous critic, Clarke's concern for scientific accuracy was clear. His critic had posited a four-legged tree-dwelling reptile for the *nacash* in Genesis 3:1, a creature that was subsequently punished with the loss of its legs, thus having to slither upon the ground. Clarke responded by chastising his critic for confusing scientific classifications by equating *reptilia* with *serpentes*, a mistake which revealed the critic's lack of familiarity with the relatively new Linnean Taxonomical system. Such a bungled scientific description would be completely rejected by any European 'naturalists' of his day, said Clarke. However, some members of the scientific community were less than impressed with Clarke's supposedly more scientific arguments, mainly because they felt that no scientific explanation of the narrative of Genesis 3 could be made!²²

Clarke's friend and biographer, James Everett, offered another potential contributing factor to the 'ape' theory, that of Clarke's fascination with simians. Everett recounted an interesting story of Clarke's correspondence with a friend after Clarke's pet monkey, Jack, had died. Clarke told of the animal's suffering and death, and then remarked:

I buried him in the garden, under a good piece of English marble, and made an epitaph for him! – which has been much esteemed by the knowing ones! I do

²¹ Clarke's comments are preserved in a footnote in the article T.W., 'On the Mysteries of Eleusis', *The Classical Journal*, 79 (September, 1829), 67. The footnote describes Clarke's rejoinder to an unnamed critic which appeared in *The Classical Journal*, but without further description. Unfortunately, that issue of *The Classical Journal* was unknown when this manuscript was prepared. Clarke provided a more general rebuttal to his critics in his commentary on 2 Corinthians 11:2, as seen below.

²² One of the editors of *The American Journal of Science and Arts* (most likely Wolcott Gibbs) wrote: 'If indeed the laws of the science of Animated Nature formed part of the preliminary studies of the theologian (*sic*), the futility of such attempts to expound the third chapter of Genesis, viewed as a simple narration of facts would be better appreciated by him; and if he should still be prompted to append his thoughts as so many lamps by the side of the second text, he would most probably restrict himself to the attempt to elucidate its symbolical signification'. *The American Journal of Science and Arts*, vol. XI (May, 1851), 282.

assure you, I was sorry for the poor fellow's sufferings and death, and never think of him but with regret.²³

It may be that Clarke's fascination with monkeys led him to postulate another simian for Genesis 3, but there is reason to question this speculation. Clarke himself rejected the description of *monkey* for the creature of his theory, after many commentators had used that term to describe and deride it. In 1817, in his commentary on 2 Corinthians 11:3, Clarke defended his theory again, maintaining that he was more convinced of it at that time than in 1810. He claimed that he could provide many more arguments in favour of his theory, but declined to do so because he continued to consider the subject 'not a matter of faith'. He also included a barb to those critics who considered themselves 'wise and witty' by pointing them to Nehemiah 6:3.²⁴

Clarke's Theory and Racial Propaganda

In addition to the scorn and criticism that Clarke's theory received along linguistic, scientific, and hermeneutical grounds, endorsement of it came from an unintended source: white supremacists in the United States. Samuel Cartwright was a physician in New Orleans who published many articles on health issues in the mid-1800s, with a particular emphasis on the diseases prevalent among the black population. Based on purported scientific arguments, such as the notion that communities of free blacks were more disease-prone and unhealthy than slaves, he attempted to show that black people needed the superintendence of whites to bolster the pro-slavery stance in the antebellum South.²⁵ Cartwright invoked Clarke's theory in his arguments for the inferiority of black people to bolster the popular caricature of blacks as ape-like.²⁶ He wrote:

²³ The epitaph on the gravestone was actually composed in Latin, and it read, 'JUCUNDI CERCOPITHECI, QUI MULTIS FLEBILIS OBIIT NOVEMBRIS NONO CALENDAS, ANNO HUMANAЕ SALUTIS MDCCCIX; HOC MARMOR ADAMUS CLERICUS DOMINUS EJUS INTENTUS ET AMICUS CHARUS MAERENS POSUIT. IN SECURITATE IMPERTURBATA SINE POENIS, SINE CONVICIIS, ANIMAL MEUM PARVULUM, MITTISSIMUM (*sic*), ET JUCUNDISSIMUM TUI GENERIS, HOMINUM INEPTIARUM INNOCUUS IMITATOR, IN AETERNUM QUIESCE', which may be translated, 'Pleasant monkey, who died, to the sorrow of many, on November 9th in the year of man's redemption, 1809; This marble, Adam Clarke, his attentive master and loving friend, erected. In undisturbed calm, without punishment, without reproaches, my little animal, most gentle and pleasant of your race, of silly humans a harmless imitator, in eternity rest'. James Everett, *Adam Clarke Portrayed*, vol. II (London: Hamilton, Adams, & Co., 1844), p. 329.

²⁴ 'I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: Why should the work cease while I leave it and come down to you?'

²⁵ See, for example, his articles, 'A Report on the Diseases and Peculiarities of the Negro Race', *DeBow's Review*, VII (1850-1), 691-715; VIII (1851-2), 187-94.

²⁶ Such a caricature seemed to be given credibility by European scientists of the nineteenth century, such as Georges Cuvier, an eminent French biologist of the early nineteenth century, who argued that African features are similar to 'the monkey tribe'. See Georges Cuvier, *The Animal Kingdom, Arranged in Conformity with Its Organization*, trans. H.M. McMurtrie (New York: G. & C. & H. Carvill, 1832), p. 50.

Fifty years ago, Dr. Adam Clarke, the learned commentator of the Bible, from deep reading in the Hebrew, Arabic, and Coptic languages, was forced to the conclusion that the creature which beguiled Eve was an animal formed like man, walked erect, and had the gift of speech and reason. He believed it was an orang-outang and not a serpent. If he had lived in Louisiana, instead of England, he would have recognized the negro gardener.²⁷

Of course, Cartwright failed to provide any of Clarke's arguments that the ape of Genesis 3 was punished with the loss of speech and the ability to walk erect (and thus unlike any race of human). The same convenient tendency to ignore the essence of Clarke's theory but cling to the apish character was evidenced by another white propagandist a half-century later, Charles Carroll, in his appallingly titled book, *The Negro a Beast*.²⁸ Carroll began his arguments for black inferiority by citing Clarke's theory, stating:

Dr. Adam Clark (*sic*) in commenting on this subject, combats the absurd idea that the tempter of Eve was of the serpent species . . . The Bible plainly teaches that there was in the Garden of Eden a beast that could reason, dispute and walk erect. And when we appeal to science to identify this creature, she points us to the Negro, as the highest grade of ape and the only creature among the lower kinds of flesh that possesses these characteristics.²⁹

Like Cartwright, Carroll argued that his arguments were based on scientific inquiry, but in reality, both men used pseudo-scientific approaches.³⁰ Unfortunately, because racist authors made selective use of Clarke's theory, at times Clarke has been grouped with the white supremacists, both in Carroll's day and in modern times. When a fellow Southerner, W. S. Armistead, offered his rebuttal to Carroll in 1903, he mistakenly attributed Carroll's statement, 'the ape was the negro', to Clarke.³¹ An equally egregious mistake was made in 1994 by Michael Barkun, who not only incorrectly identified Clarke as Scottish, but also implied that Clarke suggested some kind of sexual encounter took place between Eve and the negro-like *nachash*.³² The fact that some have associated Clarke with white supremacists, as well as the notion that his theory would later be used for racist propaganda, would almost certainly have saddened, if not angered, the Methodist father.

²⁷ Samuel Cartwright, 'Unity of the Human Race Disproved by the Hebrew Bible', *DeBow's Review*, 29 (August, 1860), 130.

²⁸ Charles Carroll, *The Negro a Beast* (St. Louis, MO: American Book and Bible House, 1900).

²⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 98-9.

³⁰ For example, see Carroll, *The Negro a Beast*, pp. 57-8, for the use of medical and scientific jargon when making preposterous claims.

³¹ W. S. Armistead, *The Negro is a Man: A Reply to Professor Charles Carroll's Book* (Tifton, GA: Armistead & Vickers, 1903), p. 31.

³² Michael Barkun, *Religion and the Racist Right: The Origins of the Christian Identity Movement* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994), p. 160.

Clarke and Slavery

Though Clarke considered Africans ‘sons of Ham’, he avoided demeaning descriptions of black people. In fact, he frequently appealed to the plight of blacks as an example of cruelty, even emphasizing the need for whites to learn from their black brothers.³³ Clarke’s was an especially strong voice in England in his day against slavery. A few examples from his commentaries can serve to illustrate his disapproval of Christian involvement in the slave trade.

1. Comments on Ephesians 6:5 – ‘In heathen countries slavery was in some sort excusable; among Christians it is an enormity and a crime for which perdition has scarcely an adequate state of punishment’.

2. Comments on 1 Corinthians 7:23 – ‘But slavery, and all buying and selling of the bodies and souls of men, no matter what colour or complexion, is a high offense against the holy and just God, and a gross and unprincipled attack on the liberty and rights of our fellow creatures’.

3. Concluding comments on 1 Corinthians 7 – ‘I here register my testimony against the unprincipled, inhuman, anti-christian, and diabolic Slave Trade, with all its authors, promoters, abettors, and sacrilegious gains, as well as against the Great Devil, the father of it and them’.

4. Comments on Isaiah 58:6 – ‘How can any nation pretend to fast or worship God at all, or dare to profess that they believe in the existence of such a Being, while they carry on the slave trade, and traffic in the souls, blood, and bodies of men! O ye most flagitious of knaves, and worst of hypocrites, cast off at once the mask of your religion; and deepen not your endless perdition by professing the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, while ye continue in this traffic’!

5. Comments on Micah 4:10 – ‘I do not know a text more applicable than this to *slave-dealers*; or to any who have *made their fortunes* by such wrongs as affect the *life* of man; the former who by the gains of this diabolic traffic have *built houses &c.*, for, following up the prophet’s *metaphor*, the *timbers*, &c., are the bones of the hapless Africans; and the *mortar*, the blood of the progeny of Ham. What an account must all who have any hand in or profit from this detestable, degrading, and inhuman traffic, give to Him who shortly judge the quick and dead’!

Clarke became a vocal abolitionist in his later years. In 1830, when the Wesleyan Conference passed a resolution to appeal to Parliament to put a halt to the slave trade in all British colonies, Clarke included his wholehearted endorsement of the appeal. In a letter to some friends, the Forshaws, he wrote:

³³ See his comments on Mark 10:50.

There is no time now for trifling, or half measures. We have put our hands to the work, and by the help of God, we will do it with our might! Knowing that this will give pleasure to that benevolent heart which has long, and indeed successfully, laboured, to redress the great mass of wrong done to Africa, I send one of these to-night to Mr. Wilberforce.³⁴

Clarke received a personal letter of thanks from Wilberforce later that year for his support of the abolitionist cause.³⁵

Conclusion

Though Clarke faced ridicule, derision, and misrepresentation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for his comments on Genesis 3, and though his theory was misappropriated for racist purposes after his death, his reputation today has likely not suffered in the eyes of most modern students of the Bible. While Clarke's particular translation of 'ape' has not gained any modern adherents, several commentators posit a non-reptile creature for the *nachash* of Genesis 3:1.³⁶ It is unfortunate that later propagandists used Clarke's theory for purposes he could never have foreseen, but perhaps their perversions of it can give modern admirers of Clarke an opportunity to inform others of his vocal stance against the evils of slavery.

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³⁴ J. B. B., Clarke (ed.) *An Account of the Infancy, Religious and Literary Life of Adam Clarke*, vol. 3 (London: T.S. Clarke, 1833), p. 248.

³⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 248-50.

³⁶ See, for example, Arno C. Gaebelien, *The Annotated Bible: Volume 1* (New York, 1913), p. 23, as an example from the early twentieth century. For a modern example, see the remarks of the Director of the Dead Sea Scrolls Project at Princeton, James H. Charlesworth in his *The Good and Evil Serpent: How a Universal Symbol became Christianized* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 313-14.

Colin Campbell M'Kechnie (1821–96)

Colin Campbell M'Kechnie was born in Paisley in 1821, into a Presbyterian family. He was one of ten children, six sons and four daughters. His mother, a Highlander, was his guiding star. Her forebears, like many of the West Highlands peasants, had been driven by force of social changes to the manufacturing districts of Renfrewshire. Indeed, M'Kechnie consistently referred to himself as a Highlander and spoke Gaelic. On Sunday evenings his mother read Bible stories to the family. His brother Daniel became a Primitive Methodist so they were visited regularly by the travelling preacher.¹

In 1831 Carlisle sent the charismatic James Johnson to conduct mission work in Paisley, and in that year Colin, aged thirteen, joined the Primitive Methodist Sunday School,² influenced by the family's housemaid, Bella McNair. M'Kechnie wrote:

‘Bella McNair was a thorough Primitive – devout, zealous and with an excellent voice for singing’. ‘Aware of her rare gift of song, and of its power as an instrument of usefulness, she often – I might say incessantly – used it in singing the charming hymns so commonly sung by our people in those days. Some of them were very touching – so at least I thought and felt. They acted upon my religious nature like the quickening influences of Spring and evoked in my heart strong yearnings after God and goodness. I was led to talk to Bella about her pretty hymns and the kirk to which she belonged, and she very warmly and earnestly invited me to the services.’³

Bella was a Sunday School teacher and Colin went with her, shortly becoming a member of the Paisley branch and a Sunday School teacher too.

He was thirsty for knowledge, but discovered that reading was not greatly favoured by the membership at Paisley, apart from the Bible. He acquired a copy of Thomas a Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, but it depressed him. He got on no better with some of John Wesley's sermons, though he found pleasure in John Fletcher's *Checks to Antinomianism* (1771-4). He was probably at that time not ready for heavy theology, but discovered that Isaac Watts' *Improvement of the Mind* (1741) helped him to enjoy abstract thought. His qualities of leadership, far beyond his years, so impressed the Paisley members that he was made the leader of a society class at the age of fifteen.⁴

The travelling preacher appointed to Paisley in 1837, W. Eckersall, recognised these gifts and at the Quarterly Meeting in March 1838 he obtained its permission to recommend him to any circuit in need of a minister. There were no examinations to pass at that time; what was required were, in Wesley's words, ‘Gifts, grace and fruits’

¹ *The Primitive Methodist Magazine (PMM)*, (1897), 133, 385.

² W. M., Patterson, *Northern Primitive Methodism* (London, 1909), p. 127.

³ *ibid.*, p. 128.

⁴ *PMM*, (1897), 386.

which M'Kechnie, then only sixteen, had clearly demonstrated. 'His friends at Paisley improvised an ordination service, at which Mr Eckersall addressed him 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, they set him apart and sent him forth to be a minister of the gospel of Christ'.⁵ This raw, hopeful youth was sent to Sunderland, because Scotland was included in the enormous and influential Sunderland District, where M'Kechnie remained for the rest of his life.

When he preached at Harrogate a local squire, two of whose servants were Primitive Methodists, arranged for preachers to lodge at his hall, set aside two rooms for their use and gave them the full liberty of his library. Here M'Kechnie found a copy of Bishop Butler's *The Analogy of Religion* (1736), a defence of revealed religion against Deism. The squire lent him the book. It quickened his mind; nothing of an intellectual nature either in books or in intercourse with men, influenced him so powerfully for good as this book.⁶

In the early days of Primitive Methodism, women, usually in Scotland the wives of preachers, were accepted as preachers too, but not in the M'Kechnie household, where his wife 'judged that by lessening the cares, soothing the anxieties and fortifying the resolution of her husband, thus preparing him to go forth into the spiritual vineyard with renewed vigour, she was fulfilling the primary duties of her position'.⁷

M'Kechnie was convinced that the ministers must be better educated, and that developments in secular education must be matched by theological education and so in 1850 he founded the Sunderland District Preachers' Association which met for three days a year, after the District Meeting in May. To help the younger preachers, he paired each of them with an experienced preacher.⁸

At this time the Conference asked John Flesher, who had been the Connexional editor for ten years, to produce a new hymn book, which he compiled from the *Small* (1818) and *Large Hymn Books* (1825) of Hugh Bourne. M'Kechnie lost his temper with its sloppiness. Geoffrey Milburn tells the story: 'The entry on "Methodist Hymnody" in the magisterial *Dictionary of Hymnody* edited by John Julian in 1892 reads: "This book, issued in 1854 may be safely described as the worst edited and severely mutilated collection of hymns ever published". M'Kechnie was one of its severest critics. He stirred up such animosity towards it as to threaten a major disruption within the Connexion had not John Petty and other moderates wisely intervened'.⁹

The papers read after the May meeting were published in *The Christian Ambassador*, which became the *PM Quarterly Review*, and later the *Holborn Review*, of which M'Kechnie was the editor until 1887. This meeting was most useful, but not

⁵ J. Atkinson, *Life of Colin C. M'Kechnie* (London, 1898), pp. 19–26.

⁶ J. Ritson, *The Centenary of Glasgow Primitive Methodism* (Leominster, 1926), p. 42.

⁷ *PMM* (1848), 70.

⁸ *PMM* (1859), 5.

⁹ G. E. Milburn, *Primitive Methodism* (Peterborough, 2000), pp. 67–8.

sufficient, because it did not teach the Primitive Methodist system. It was clear to M^rKechnie that a theological college would equip students for leadership in all matters regarding circuit work before they were appointed to one. With other leaders of the Connexion, he also believed that ministers needed to be teachers as well as evangelists, which could only be brought about by a college training,¹⁰ and for these two reasons they persuaded the PM Conference of its necessity. It was founded, based in the old Sunderland Infirmary, in 1868.

In an article ‘Recollections of C. C. M^rKechnie’, Henry Kendall remembered ‘his enthusiastic work in North Shields – he went through the circuit like a knife, the intellectual knife that he was. Although most of his life was spent in England, he was a true Scotsman, and had in him a strain of the *perfervidum* [heatedness] attributed to Scots. He well remembered Scottish customs, and when he saw a statue of Sir Walter Scott with the plaid over his right [instead of his left] shoulder he said “the sculptor could not have been a Scotsman.” He did not enjoy the metrical versions of the Psalms so loved by Scots and said “Why do they sing that barbarous version of the psalms?” A friend reminded him of the beautiful rendering of Psalms 121, 23 and others, and he replied “Yes, yes, I know the good ones, but there’s neither poetry nor reverence in many of them.”’¹¹

In August 1861 he told Henry Kendall that he was ‘kept busy with proofs and suchlike’, and that ‘he would have preferred work like mine where he had to create; he had all his life been a sort of midwife, helping other people to give birth to their ideas’.¹² A year later he said: ‘I’ve had a wonderful life’.¹³

As PM Connexional Editor from 1876 until 1887 he produced both the magazine *Springtime* (1886-) and the new *PM Hymnal* (1887).¹⁴ In the later 1860s and 1870s, the Connexion became anxious to show itself abreast of other denominations in building impressive chapels, which required exhausting efforts by preachers and members to pay for them. M^rKechnie saw a downside in this. It was the fall, it seemed to him, of interest in the essence of the local society. ‘The spiritual tone of the Connexion has somewhat lowered in late years’, he wrote, ‘the prayer meeting, the class meeting, the Lord’s Supper – are undervalued and neglected’. His efforts must have seemed to have turned back on him: ‘We may become more intellectual, more learned, more orderly, our numbers may increase, our finances multiply, our civil and political influence extend’, he reflected, ‘but in so far as we fall short in spirituality of heart and life, our prosperity is a mockery in the sight of heaven’.¹⁵

M^rKechnie died at Darlington on 6 September 1896. For almost half a century he had principally helped to direct the course of Primitive Methodism and the development of its ministry. His work weighted the travelling preachers, since by the 1850s always called ministers, with an authority which the first generation did not

¹⁰ *PMM* (1864), 466.

¹¹ Ritson, *The Centenary of Glasgow Primitive Methodism*, pp. 895–7.

¹² *PMM* (1897), 52.

¹³ *PMM* (1897), 133.

¹⁴ John A. Vickers (ed.), *A Dictionary of Methodism in Britain and Ireland* (Peterborough, 2000), p. 218.

¹⁵ *PMM* (1872), 4.

have. 'To him our Church is indebted for the educational facilities of the ministry, and for the first real movement towards ministerial culture, for the College, and for the higher literature of the Connexion. He edited the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* for eleven years, was elected Vice-President in 1879 and by a unanimous vote, President in 1880'.

Margaret Batty

Notes and Queries

1596 METHODISM IN NORTHERN HAMPSHIRE

I am doing an MPhil degree at Chester University on the establishment of Methodism in northern Hampshire c.1740-1860, especially in the Newbury, Andover, Basingstoke and Silchester Circuits. This story has, as far as I am aware, never before been told. There is often someone with connections to a church or circuit who is seriously interested in its history. My contact with such persons might yield a great deal of mutual benefit, and I would be grateful if any such would contact me at:

David M. Young, 11 Ffordd Môn, Rhosddu, Wrexham, LL11 2LL or by email at davidmartinyoung@yahoo.co.uk.

1597 MINISTERS WHO LEFT AND THE PRINTED MINUTES OF CONFERENCE

I have for a long time been compiling information on ministers who left the Wesleyan Methodist ministry before 1932 and the Methodist ministry after 1932. I received much help from the late Frank Baker, and from Ken Garlick's papers now stored in the WHS Library. On the early preachers my conclusions have now been printed.¹ For those who entered the ministry after 1791 I have been working on two separate databases, one for the Wesleyans who entered between 1791 and 1932, the other for those Methodists who entered the ministry from 1932. The databases include those who left for whatever reason, whether they returned or not, and includes those who transferred to other Conferences. At the moment the first has over 1600 names, the second almost 1000. I do not imagine that either is yet complete. They include ministers of the Irish Conference and all missionaries in connexion with the British or

¹ John Lenton, *John Wesley's Preachers* (Carlisle, 2009), especially chapters 15 to 17.

Irish Conferences. So far as the second database is concerned I am aware of the sensibilities of those concerned and do not intend to publish names or details.

I have received much help already from many readers of these Proceedings, notably Albert Mosley on missionaries and Robin Roddie on ministers in Ireland, but would appreciate some more help in two areas. First the general: anyone who is, knows of, or is investigating a minister who left in any of these categories, please get in touch with me. I'm sure we can help each other.

Second: I am particularly interested in and intending to write an article on the changing ways in which Methodism, through the Conference Minutes and the Conference Journal, has recorded such individuals and their movements. For long periods, and indeed at any time, ministers have simply 'disappeared' from the stations. Under Wesley it was most often they 'disappeared', though sometimes a few would be listed as 'desisting'. Today (and since 1990) they appear again as 'having resigned' from the ministry or 'Ceased to be recognised as in Full Connexion'. This repeats the pattern for the nineteenth century when ministers 'desisted' often for health reasons, or were even expelled (always relatively rare) and it was usually reported in the printed Minutes of Conference. The change apparently comes between the 1911 and 1912 Conferences. In 1911 J. Sidmouth Cooper and R. Harris Lloyd² are reporting as having 'voluntarily retired', while Archibald J. Andrews has 'ceased to be recognised'. Next year in reply to the same question the answer appears for the first time: 'Their names are recorded in our Journals' and silence in the printed Minutes descends on the answer until 1990, except in the manuscript Conference Journals. Probationers, especially if still in college, were even more likely not to be mentioned. In all periods many probationers have not progressed from their period 'On Trial' to being in Full Connexion.

Can anyone throw light on the different ways in which the Conference has treated this question and particularly why Conference changed its policy either in 1912 or 1990, or indeed at other times? There is, for example, the interesting change in the late 1960s and after.³ Before then ministers were not allowed to become social workers or teachers in secondary schools. If they did this, it was treated as resignation. Afterwards it was regarded as a possible 'sector ministry', later classed as 'Other Appointments' and could be allowed. Many ministers, who had previously left, returned, some to a circuit ministry.

John Lenton

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² Sidmouth Cooper joined the Church of England. Lloyd, who was relatively wealthy and came from Newtown, seems to have had a problem with the three year rule. Andrews, who had married during his probation and so lost two years, seems to have retired on health grounds.

³ See G. T. Brake, *Policy and Politics in British Methodism, 1932-1982* (London: Edsell, 1982), especially chapter 7. Brake was someone who himself had left the ministry and returned.

BOOK REVIEWS

Historians and Theologians in Dialogue, by John Munsey Turner (Oldham: Church in the Market Place Publications, 2011, pp. 210. Paperback. £9.95 plus £2.50 postage from Revd Robert Davies, 38 Sands Avenue, Chadderton, Oldham OL9 0NU. ISBN 978-1-899147-84-7).

In an article reviewing a century of British Methodist historical scholarship published in the *Epworth Review* in 1993 to commemorate the centenary of the Wesley Historical Society, the Revd John Munsey Turner recalled having once been dismayed by the ‘antiquarian’ pre-occupation of some of the articles published in the *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*. He cited ‘an obsession with early Wesleyan class tickets’ and an article on ‘Wesley’s use of the asterisk’ as examples of the sort of minutiae brought randomly under scrutiny in the mid-1950s before Dr John Bowmer gradually brought the journal into much closer editorial synergy with post-war historical scholarship. This characteristically trenchant, probing centennial essay is one of sixteen journal articles published by John Turner over the last thirty years which might have escaped the radar of some readers but which are here brought together for the first time in a conveniently accessible book format. They appear appropriately under the title *Historians and Theologians in Dialogue*, reflecting the dual interests of their author, who perhaps, more than any living Methodist scholar, has sought to stimulate debate both within and between these disciplines.

It needs to be recognised at the outset that John Turner’s output in both spheres has been prodigious for a Methodist minister who has been actively engaged for most of his life in demanding teaching and challenging circuit ministries. In addition to a substantial study of Methodism and Ecumenism in England from the early eighteenth to the late twentieth century and several introductory studies for the general reader on a variety of aspects of Methodist history, he has contributed innumerable pithy articles and reviews to a variety of historical and theological journals and religious newspapers, commemorating significant anniversaries in Methodist history and providing rapid assessment of the significance of a wide range of new works as they have appeared hot off the presses. His engaging erudition, the product of wide reading and a fertile mind, mediated through his experience as pastor, preacher and teacher, has imbued this collection of essays with profound theological insights. Moreover, they are infused throughout with an irrepressible vitality as inspiring and stimulating on the printed page as in their spoken delivery, but all subordinated ultimately in a deep sense of humility to the lordship of Christ.

An admirer of Sir Herbert Butterfield, one of his teachers at Cambridge, long before it became fashionable to be so, who above all else taught him to ‘hold to Christ and for the rest to be totally uncommitted’, it is not surprising therefore that one of a cluster of essays in this collection assessing the work of other scholars focuses on the

Yorkshire Methodist local preacher's distinctive Christian contribution to the study of history. Indeed, it is a quotation from Butterfield in the opening sentence of the book contrasting 'the bright empire of the theologians' with 'the rather more mundane domain of the historians' which establishes the context for this collection of essays. Moreover, Butterfield also has virtually the last word on the subject in Turner's epilogue where he is invoked, with Gordon Rupp to affirm not only 'the value and indeed the necessity of the enlightenment', historically, after the devastating religious wars of the seventeenth century, but also in the historiographical context of an increasingly 'post-modernist' cultural climate in the late twentieth century.

If Butterfield was influential in the formation of John Turner as an empirical historian, it was a sermon by the Revd Professor Gordon Rupp, John Turner reveals, which 'clinched his call to the Christian presbyterate'. Unsurprisingly, Rupp is also the subject of a dedicated chapter, which views the study of the Reformation through the prism of Rupp's considerably under-rated work. Other scholars rarely remembered today but re-assessed by John Turner in dedicated chapters in this collection include J.N. Figgis, whom he considers still worth reading on the topical issue of faith schools; P.T. Forsyth, whom he considers 'the greatest Free Church theologian at the beginning of the twentieth century'; Henry Bett, 'who wrote on medieval philosophy and nursery rhymes with equal fervour' and R.F. Wearmouth, 'one of the most notable products of the last phase of Primitive Methodism' who became 'one of the foremost historians of the religious side of working-class consciousness'. All provide fascinating glimpses into the interface between history and theology.

Another of the essays published in this collection reminds us that John Turner may well be the only Methodist historian-theologian to have engaged directly in dialogue with one of the most controversial interpreters of Methodism's role in modern British social history at a regional conference to mark the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of *The Making of the English Working Class* in 1988 in Halifax, where Thompson's controversial challenge to conventional representations of Methodism was originally penned. As superintendent minister of the Halifax Methodist Circuit, he ventured courageously, like Daniel into the lions' den, boldly proclaiming in his introduction that 'a dose of healthy scepticism of all embracing theses will not come amiss'. His characteristically fair-minded address recognising that Thompson's classic tour de force was 'without peer in its subject' elicited a distinctly conciliatory response from Thompson, notwithstanding Turner's identification of Thompson as 'a modern Cobbett', which might not have been considered an entirely appropriate analogy given the divergences as well as the similarities in their political stances. His essay, nevertheless, sparkled with humour and wit, even challenging Thompson's claim that 'the idea of a passionate Methodist lover in these days is ludicrous' by referring to Jabez Bunting, his illustrious predecessor as Halifax superintendent minister, contemplating a degree of pre-marital intimacy with his fiancée in the back of a horse-drawn carriage on a dreary road journey.

The historical theme which Turner himself has explored with originality and insight has been that of Methodism's ecumenical inter-relationships, including the

complex relationship between Methodism and Roman Catholicism. Encouraged by Professor Norman Sykes to research Anglican-Methodist relations, John Turner discerned the roots of Methodism in the Lutheran reformation and his chapter on 'Salvation and Church History: Insights into the Reformation' raises some pertinent questions about Luther's model of salvation in the context of the challenges facing the church today. Reflecting on a later era of church history, he expresses regret that Wesleyan theology and the theology of the Oxford Movement 'never really entered into any meaningful dialogue', despite the centrality of the concept of the 'second journey' in the Christian experience of both Wesley and Newman. An ecumenist at heart, Turner confesses that he has 'never given up the belief in the need for union, even if it tragically failed in England, save for the creation of the United Reformed Church'.

Every phase of John Turner's life has yielded memorable experiential anecdotes relating to different facets of Methodism in its various manifestations, which are woven into his historical writing as they feature in his preaching and his theological discourses. This remains vividly apparent whether it be the recollections of his nonagenarian Welsh grandfather of Hugh Price Hughes, Mark Guy Pearse and John Scott Lidgett as the great preachers he recalled from the turn of the twentieth century; or the Wolverhampton of his adolescence where his head teacher was the Methodist historian Ernest Taylor and where 'it was the preaching of the cross in an ordinary Methodist Church' that enabled him 'to see the heart of the matter'; or his undergraduate years at Cambridge, where he sat at the feet of Herbert Butterfield, J.H. Plumb and George Kitson Clark; or Leeds, where he preached the last sermon at the historic Brunswick chapel before its closure; or Queen's College, Birmingham, where he won the respect of his ecumenical colleagues, among them a future Archbishop of York; or Halifax where he connected with the history of Methodism in one of its historic northern heartlands following Romany into the pulpit at King Cross Methodist Church; or finally Bolton, the erstwhile 'Geneva of the north', which emerged as a vibrant centre of Methodism's forward movement in the Victorian and Edwardian eras, where he has spent his retirement. His work consequently resonates with Methodist history at the grass roots and its relationship with particular places. Criticised overly harshly by some historians for his penchant for anecdotal history, many of the anecdotes he employs are recognisably grounded within their specific historical provenance and invariably graphically illuminate some aspect of historical or theological truth.

His wit also abounds, some of it with his tongue firmly in his cheek. He is as ready to cite from the warm up routine of a Liverpool stand-up comic, Ken Dodd, as from the eschatology of the Congregational minister who succeeded A.S. Peake as Rylands professor of biblical criticism and exegesis at Manchester, C.H. Dodd, in order to clinch his points. He speculates somewhat irreverently that John Wesley might have noticed 'the false bosoms and cork bottoms' increasingly in evidence in eighteenth century London. His comments on the Anglican priest J.N. Flew's absent-mindedness, stirring his jam instead of his tea and being unable to differentiate between a bull and

a cow, are hilarious. His quip that the Halifax Chartist preacher William Thornton ‘couldn’t wait for the millennium and emigrated to America!’ is typically mischievous. His oft cited references to a ‘Dad’s Army of Local Preachers’ sadly contain enough resemblance to reality as to be perhaps beyond mirth, though his description of Primitive Methodist camp meetings as ‘religious pop festivals’ smacks rather too much of tabloid journalism.

More seriously, however, his historical judgments cannot be ignored: John Wesley’s theology is defined as ‘inspired pragmatism’; ‘W.B. Pope is pronounced Methodism’s ‘greatest systematic theologian’; Nehemiah Curnock is identified as the ‘inspired amateur’ Methodist historian ‘who dominated the WHS’; George Thompson Brake, is judged somewhat harshly as an ‘exhaustive if also somewhat exhausting’ historian of twentieth-century Methodism; Donald English is generously appraised as ‘a preacher unequalled in the twentieth century’ and Geoffrey Wainwright very deliberately deemed to have been the scholar who has come nearest in his hexagonal model to defining the essence of Wesleyan theology in our own time. Nor can those aspects of his agenda for future historical research yet to be realised be ignored, notably his plea for specific studies of the evolution of Methodist worship, preaching and scholarship, more broadly defined to include Methodism’s ‘lay theologians’ specialising in non-theological disciplines. Thankfully his call in 1993 for an updated history of Methodist overseas missions is soon to be realised. He might perhaps have added to his desiderata list the urgent need for a history of the Methodist movement extending into the twenty-first century, which reflects its regional and local diversity.

There is inevitably some duplication of argument, evidence and illustration (the notion that in Methodism ‘nobodies could become somebodies’, for example, appears in more than one essay) in a composite volume of this kind, which faithfully adheres to the original texts of the author’s articles. There are also a few unfortunate typographical errors for example Lord ‘Action’ for ‘Acton’ (p. 67); ‘Cannardine’ for Cannadine (p. 92); ‘Howarth’ for ‘Haworth’ (p. 100); ‘histiography’ for ‘historiography’ (pp. 116 and 118) and ‘working class conscientiousness’ should surely read working class consciousness in the context of Marxism (p. 99). An occasional factual error also has been allowed to slip through: Jonathan Saville, for example, stood in for Jabez Bunting as preacher at a Luddite memorial service rather than at a Luddite funeral and the ‘New Dictionary of National Biography’ was ultimately published as the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. An index might also have enhanced the book’s utility.

However, the author provides study questions where appropriate, together with updates of significant literature appearing since his articles were first published and a new epilogue allowing him to reflect on more recent developments in theology and history. Moreover, the A4 format book is sturdily bound with an attractively designed cover and features a generous-sized print throughout. It is exceptionally good value and the Revd Robert Davies is to be congratulated for his commitment to making this stimulating collection of essays more widely available. For John Munsey Turner, theological reflection has been an intrinsic dimension of his ‘doing history’ and this

valuable collection of essays serves as a model of good practice. It is also essential reading for anyone seeking to understand how both historical and theological enquiry have shaped Methodist identity and is warmly commended.

JOHN A. HARGREAVES

David Bebbington, *Victorian Religious Revivals: Culture and Piety in Local and Global Contexts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012, pp. xii + 307, hardback, £60, ISBN 978-0-19-957548-0) and David Bebbington, *Victorian Nonconformity* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 2011, pp. ix + 70, paperback, £15.25, ISBN 978-0-7188-9269-2)

Revivalism has often been studied from the top down, particularly for the nineteenth century, when the abiding impression is of a religious scene dominated by American evangelists such as James Caughey, Charles Finney, and Dwight Moody who travelled the length and breadth of the land. There has certainly been no shortage of such macro-level analysis of revivalism in Britain during this period, including significant books by John Kent, *Holding the Fort* (London: Epworth Press, 1978), Richard Carwardine, *Trans-Atlantic Revivalism* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1978), Janice Holmes, *Religious Revivals in Britain and Ireland* (Dublin: Irish Academic Press, 2000), and Nigel Scotland, *Apostles of the Spirit and Fire* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2009). In his *Victorian Religious Revivals*, David Bebbington (Professor of History at the University of Stirling) offers us an alternative, micro-level perspective, ‘a celebration of the particular’, but still set in an international context. The book’s core (chapters 3-9) comprises a series of seven free-standing case studies of community- and mostly congregational-based revivals between 1841 and 1880, ‘chosen because sufficiently full contemporary accounts of them survive’ (it would have been interesting to know which other revivals were shortlisted for inclusion but rejected on evidential grounds). These are framed by two introductory chapters dedicated, respectively, to the typology and historiography (disproportionately American) of revivals. Bebbington is critical of much of this previous literature for being over-generalized, both the promoters and ‘academic despisers’ of revivals being preoccupied with ‘the discovery of normative patterns’ and ‘standard characteristics’, which have overshadowed the distinctiveness of individual awakenings.

Three of the case studies are of Britain, three from North America (Washington-on-the-Brazos in Texas, Union Church in North Carolina, and Westport and Freeport in Nova Scotia), and one from Australia (Moonta, South Australia). The British chapters concern: the Wesleyan Methodist revival in Penzance, Newlyn, and Mousehole, Cornwall in 1849 (a topic previously covered by Bebbington in *Studies in Church History*, vol. 44, 2008); the Primitive Methodist revival in Stanhope, County Durham in 1851; and the revival in Ferryden, Forfarshire in 1859. The Moonta revival was also substantially Methodist, as befitted a copper-mining area settled predominantly by Cornish immigrants, although its final phase was more interdenominational. Methodist revivals tended to be characterized by involvement of

the laity alongside ministers, greater exuberance, and an emphasis on instantaneous conversion and entire sanctification. The revivals in Texas and Nova Scotia were Baptist and those in Forfarshire and North Carolina associated with Presbyterians (who are credited with ‘inventing’ revivals in the modern sense in the seventeenth century).

Each revival is carefully analysed in terms of its secular and religious background, triggers, chronology, attributes, and short-term impact, each chapter being clearly structured and signposted and with its own conclusion. The final chapter (10) is summative and cross-cutting, revealing that, notwithstanding the diverse topography and denominationalism of the case studies, and the particularities of these local and small-scale awakenings, they exhibited certain common (albeit not universal) features. These included a shared evangelicalism, international connections, an economy dominated by a single occupation, apprehension about mortality, centrality of prayer, commitment to the temperance movement, music and singing, a large measure of spontaneity tempered by some planning, preceding internal church dissensions, opposition from ‘rough culture’, respect for learning and ideas, participation by laity (including women), a gender balance among converts, and the importance of family ties. At the same time, changes were afoot, with the progressive erosion of specific denominational models of revival and their replacement by large-scale and more urban-focused interdenominational activity.

Victorian Religious Revivals is an excellent piece of scholarship, well researched, well written, and insightful in its interpretation. Bebbington is clearly empathetic to (evangelical) faith, emphasizing piety as one of his two unifying concepts (culture being the other), yet he succeeds in rising above simplistic Providential explanations of causation to demonstrate the complexity of local conditions. Of course, he would be the first to admit that he has drawn the parameters of his book fairly tightly, and that it does not pretend to present the whole picture of Victorian revivalism. The omissions obviously need to be borne in mind, without detracting from Bebbington’s impressive achievements. His focus is on Nonconformity, to the exclusion of evangelical Anglican, Anglo-Catholic, and Roman Catholic experiences of revival. He is considering the English-speaking world, not foreign evangelical awakenings. He does not discuss the late-Victorian era in any detail, nor the revivals of the early nineteenth century (despite the existence, at least for Methodism, of secondary literature which has comparative potential). His case studies are relatively non-urban, Penzance being the largest of his communities. The links between local revivalism of the 1840s to 1870s and the contemporaneous (certainly in British Methodism) development of denominational strategies and structures for evangelism and home mission work are not explored. Neither is the relative importance of revivals to church growth, from the perspective of membership stocks and flows, and factoring in the inevitable post-revival backsliding.

The other book under review, *Victorian Nonconformity*, is a reissue of Bebbington’s 1992 title in the now defunct series of Headstart History Papers, conceived as ‘distillations of the research of distinguished scholars in a form

appropriate to students and the general reader'. Regrettably, the opportunity has not been seized fully to revise the account in the light of the published outputs of the past two decades, although an index has been added; bibliographical references updated (especially in the guide to further reading), albeit selectively; and 'a small number of minor revisions' (unspecified) made. In many respects, therefore, the work still retains the look and feel of the state of research at the start of the 1990s (for example, in the chapter on the Helmstadter Thesis). Insufficient care has also been taken by the publisher in reformatting the pre-existing text, which presumably explains the curious hyphenation of words and the failure to run on a line on page 12.

The continuing value and appeal of *Victorian Nonconformity* will particularly be to undergraduates and taught postgraduates, Bebbington covering a huge amount of ground in limited space and combining pithy and judicious assessments with telling illustrations, revealing how 'Victorian Nonconformity formed a vibrant Christian counter-culture', thereby tempering the movement's historically negative image. However, he is fairly weak on statistics, which mattered greatly to many Victorian Nonconformists and might have constituted a useful appendix. Apart from the chapter on diversity and co-operation, the approach is largely (and sensibly) topical rather than denominational, so readers of these *Proceedings* will search in vain for any holistic treatment of Methodism, even though there are interspersed mentions. If any intend to buy the book, they should be advised that the American edition (from Cascade Books) is available in the UK at approximately half the price of Lutterworth's imprint. A Kindle edition can also be purchased. A useful (but expensive) companion volume is Bebbington's *Protestant Nonconformist Texts, Volume 3: The Nineteenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), a compilation of primary documents with introduction and commentary.

CLIVE D. FIELD

The Elect Methodists: Calvinistic Methodism in England and Wales, 1735 to 1811, by David Ceri Jones, Boyd Stanley Schlenther and Eryn Mant White. (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2012, pp. xvii + 307. Hardback, £55. ISBN 978-0-7083-2051-8).

Methodism in the Wesleyan tradition is too often considered in isolation from the wider Methodist movement, both geographically and theologically. John Wesley is partly responsible for this because he was crystal clear in his Journal that, in 1738, 'God began his great work in England'. The Welsh revival was well under way before 1738 and as the late Professor W. R. Ward has shown there were many links between the evangelical revival and events in Europe in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. 'Methodism' was not and is not restricted to England and Wales or even the United Kingdom. It spanned many parts of Europe and the American colonies. The different parts were linked by a frequent exchange of letters sharing and comparing religious experience. This fascinating book, along with a previous volume

by one of the contributors, David Ceri Jones, sets the English and Welsh revivals firmly within the context of the international evangelical movement.

The Methodist movement in England and Wales was by no means only Arminian/Wesleyan in its theology. The issues of predestination, perfection and assurance were considerable stumbling blocks in the way of the unity of both its leaders and its members. Calvinism was a very strong strand in the movement and was certainly predominant in Wales. It was the basic reason for the splintering of the early Methodist consensus in England. The Calvinists and Arminians could not agree on these issues, particularly double predestination (which Charles Wesley characterised in one of his hymns as ‘the horrible decree’). John Wesley’s sermon on ‘Free Grace’, supported eloquently by Charles Wesley’s hymns drove a wedge between John Wesley and George Whitefield (and other Calvinist leaders). This resulted in the final split between Wesley and Whitefield in 1741 and the emergence of Calvinistic Methodism as a separate entity. There was some continuing co-operation between some of the other leaders, particularly Howel Harris. There were moderate as well as extreme Calvinists and many gradations and emphases within Calvinism – some of them highly divisive. Theology was taken very seriously and theological issues were considered to be of the greatest importance.

Howel Harris was once described as ‘perhaps the greatest leader of Welsh Methodism’ by Dr John Walsh. He made considerable contributions to (Calvinistic) Methodism in both England and Wales and his failure to agree and work with George Whitefield and other leaders in England, and later with Daniel Rowland and William Williams in Wales, greatly weakened the movements in both countries. English Calvinism similarly suffered from the long absences of George Whitefield in the American colonies and his unwillingness to give clear leadership and to be interested in the hands-on administration of the movement he had created. Selina, Countess of Huntingdon was, like John Wesley, very much a hands-on leader.

George Whitefield ‘never acquired a taste for organisation and administration and after his death all chapels in his ‘Connexion’ soon went their own way, most joining the Independents (Congregationalists)’. Whitefield did form societies after evangelical preaching and used small groups but unlike John Wesley he lacked an appreciation of the importance of the vital tasks of pastoral care and organisation. Whitefield substantiated this in a letter. He wrote ‘My brother Wesley acted wisely. The souls he awakened under his ministry he joined in class, and thus preserved the fruit of his labours. This I neglected and my people are a rope of sand’. Howel Harris had the gifts of administration and pastoral care and did sterling work in establishing structures in both England and Wales. His organisational skill was missed when he was expelled from the Association in 1750, but the structures he had put in place remained and proved sufficiently strong to survive his absence. Harris did lead a rival association before eventually withdrawing to his community at Trefeca. Eventually there was reconciliation between Howel Harris on the one side and Daniel Rowland and William Williams on the other, and the work went forward with a new revival in Wales in 1762.

There is a most interesting chapter in the book on the birth and growth of the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, between 1770 and 1791. The crucial division with the Church of England came with the ordinations by the Connexion in 1783, parallel with John Wesley's ordinations and indeed with Welsh Calvinistic Methodism's ordinations in 1811. A 'Plan of Association' for the Connexion failed and all the Countess could do with the seven chapels 'in connexion with her' was, on her death, to leave them in the care of four trustees. The Connexion did not survive and flourish as Wesley's and the Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Connexion (eventually to become the Presbyterian Church of Wales in 1928) did.

In the period between 1780 and 1791 Welsh Calvinistic Methodism spread substantially in the north of Wales. Thomas Charles of Bala, with his deep interest in the formation of Sunday Schools, and publishing, especially new editions of the Bible, was a very effective leader at this time. Daniel Rowland proclaimed that Thomas Charles was 'the Lord's gift to the north'. There was also considerable growth in the industrialised communities in the south of Wales. The Calvinistic chapels were more adaptable in the use of either the English or Welsh language as required in particular communities. The bishop of St Davids admitted in 1811 that 'the Welsh language is, with the sectarians, a powerful means of seduction from the church'. Calvinistic Methodism was also able to strike roots amongst migrants from the west of Wales and other areas, 'who frequently felt dislocated and adrift in their new surroundings'. Methodism gave them a sense of belonging and worth, much as John H. S. Kent argued in reference to Wesleyan Methodism in his *Wesley and the Wesleys: Religion in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (2002).

Howel Harris proved to be a bridge-builder and a seeker after reconciliation. He has recently been described as being committed to an 'evangelical ecumenicity' and sought to work with people of varying convictions, even though he was at times somewhat prickly in his personal relationships. In 1772 John Wesley described Harris as his 'old friend'. The evangelical revival transcended doctrinal and national boundaries but some theological differences were beyond human resolution. The issue of Calvinism versus Arminianism frustrated the formation of a united evangelical 'popular front'.

The period between 1791 and 1811 witnessed a decline in Calvinistic Methodism in England due to a lack of effective leadership. By contrast Calvinistic Methodism in Wales went from strength to strength, especially after its secession from the Church of England in 1811. By the time of the 1851 religious census Calvinistic Methodists represented 25% of the worshipping population of Wales and had 'embedded themselves as an indispensable part of nineteenth century Welsh identity' (p 240). This was a considerable achievement. I gladly commend this excellent and illuminating book.

DONALD G. KNIGHTON

**WESLEY HISTORICAL SOCIETY ANNUAL MEETING
AT EPWORTH MEMORIAL CHURCH SATURDAY 29 JUNE 2013**

The Wesley Historical Society returns to its roots in 2013 to celebrate the 120th anniversary of its foundation in 1893 with a full programme of activities at Epworth, the childhood home of John and Charles Wesley. Members and friends are invited to visit Epworth for the whole day on Saturday 29 June 2013, including the Annual Lecture by the Revd Margaret Jones, and to re-visit Epworth to join the congregation of Epworth Memorial Church for a service of thanksgiving on Sunday 30 June at 10.45 a.m. Coffee and tea available from 10.00 -10.30

- Wesley Historical Society Annual General Meeting 12.45 in the Memorial Church.
- 2.30 Annual lecture in the Memorial Church: Revd Margaret Jones: Grand-daughters to Susanna: women's discipleship in Wesleyan Methodism 1800-1850'.

We are pleased to welcome the following new Members:

Revd Desmond Parker	Gorham, Maine USA
Rev Bernard W. Blanchard	Chirnside.
Dr Gerard Charmley	Leeds
Dr Jill Barber	Crewe