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# Proceedings OF THE Wesley Historical Society

Editor : E. ALAN ROSE, B.A.

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## THE MANTLE OF ELIJAH Nineteenth-century Primitive Methodism and Twentieth-century Pentecostalism

[This article is based on a lecture delivered to the Lincolnshire Methodist History Society at Sleaford on 10th October 1980. Many of the references are to places and events in Lincolnshire, but the author has little reason to believe that Primitive Methodism in Lincolnshire was so unique as to render these references useless to readers in other parts of Britain.]

**M**Y concern in this article (hence its title) is to pose the question: Has the spirit of nineteenth-century Primitive Methodism come to rest on twentieth-century Pentecostalism? Not that one would want to be suspected of suggesting that Primitive Methodism has been taken up by a whirlwind into heaven! But it does seem that something of the spirit of the one has been taken up by the other. I must go on to say that I am in no sense suggesting a theological comparison. In some ways the two movements seem quite close in their theological bases, but that is not the point of the comparison I wish to make. Clearly their particular beliefs about the Holy Spirit lead Pentecostals to assess the Spirit's gifts differently, giving them a dominant concern to seek and give evidence of the more spectacular gifts, notably that of speaking in tongues. This emphasis is quite different from that of Primitive Methodism—although I should be very interested to know whether Pentecostal-type manifestations accompanied early Primitive Methodism. So my concern is not to draw theological parallels. Rather I perceive the sense in which the mantle of Primitive Methodism has fallen to Pentecostalism to be more sociological: the kind of parallel to be discovered by asking, What did these two movements do for their followers? There, I feel, we shall discover connexions; and we shall discover also that the overt and theological differences are not so important as at first sight appears.

Let me say here a word about sources. For Primitive Methodism I have drawn heavily on *Religion and Rural Society*, a study of

South Lindsey between 1825 and 1875, by James Obelkevich (Oxford University Press, 1976). For Pentecostalism the definitive work is *The Pentecostals*, by Walter J. Hollenweger (SCM Press, 1972). To those who would argue that I am likely to be guilty of using incompatible sources to produce invalid comparisons I would answer that Obelkevich is not narrowly confined to South Lindsey in the conclusions he draws about Primitive Methodism, and that Hollenweger is not too general to avoid saying something of value to our part of the world.

### Primitive Methodism

I shall be pointing to a number of features of Primitive Methodist life and practice and seeking to draw conclusions from them, and therefore should state what stage of Primitive Methodism I am concerned to describe. Obelkevich considers that Primitive Methodism underwent a fairly rapid internal development which had important effects upon its character.

Beginning as a conversionist sect, it proceeded to lose much of its fervour and intensity, and by the 1870s had taken on the character of a denomination. Three stages . . . can be identified: a "heroic age" of missionary expansion from 1820 to 1840, then two decades of revivalism and consolidation, and after 1860 a third period of slackening energies, introversion and denominationalism.<sup>1</sup>

It is with Primitive Methodism up to about 1860 that I am mainly concerned.

In its structure, Primitive Methodism was in many ways similar to the Wesleyan body, having the same array of local, circuit, District and connexional officials and committees. However, Primitive Methodism was more democratic and decentralized, and tended to favour the laity. Primitive Methodism also gave in general more authority to the circuit (later the circuit and the District), whereas Wesleyanism was dominated by the Conference.

Although there was a family resemblance between Primitive and Wesleyan Methodism, there was in Lincolnshire (and, I suspect, in many other places also) a great difference between their social bases. The poverty of the Primitives left its mark, especially where congregations were not content to carry on worshipping in "secular" premises (as 18 out of 43 congregations had done in South Lindsey on "Census" Sunday, 1851). Many congregations built chapels that they could not really afford, and found themselves for years raising money to pay off the debts. I would contend that this chapel-building had some effect in draining spiritual resources and transforming Primitive Methodism's relations with the local communities. Whereas once the Primitives were eager for their neighbours' souls, latterly they were more eager for their pennies to help reduce or liquidate the chapel debt.

Primitive Methodist ministers, compared with their Wesleyan counterparts, were less well educated and often rather obscure. They

<sup>1</sup> J. Obelkevich : *Religion and Rural Society*, p. 220 f.

were more likely to be at one with their congregations (in the better situations) or dominated by them (in less happy cases). They were less sharply distinguished from the local preachers, and were less set apart in economic terms. For example, in the Gainsborough circuit in 1852 the superintendent received £62 12s., and the second minister £36—about as much as a farm labourer. Ministers did not receive formal academic training until 1871.

In its general structure, Primitive Methodism was a democratic, lay-orientated movement, with its social base among the poorer members of society. We turn now to the Primitive Methodists' activities.

Of the "means of grace", the most familiar was the Sunday preaching-service. With its extempore prayers, its rousing hymns, and its direct style of preaching, it aimed at conversions. Enthusiasm would be the predominant atmosphere. Perhaps a composite picture would reveal a hot, crowded chapel, a collective mood subject to swift change from tension to excitement to exultation—with a good deal of noise from the spontaneous shouts and cries of the congregation. Preaching was of paramount importance, and for ministers and local preachers alike it was their main task. Their aim was to save souls, and their message was stripped to its essentials. They preached "the three Rs"—ruin, repentance, redemption—and the appropriate style was "plain, pithy, pointed and practical". At their best they preached with "liberty", "power", "unction"; and since they were not separated from their congregations in social and educational ways, they freely entered into the enthusiasm and excitement they generated. Of the atmosphere of services, one minister wrote in his diary: "Legbourne. Many people. Flashing, thrilling, and transforming glory."<sup>2</sup> Another service was

a very, *very* mighty time; two persons fell to the floor during the sermon; in fact the whole congregation was broken down. One obtained liberty.<sup>3</sup>

The phenomena of enthusiasm were consistently reported from the beginning until the 1850s, when they began to be replaced by decorum, respectability, and "worship". The classic Primitive Methodist Sunday service gave everyone an opportunity to express themselves with gusto and enter into something vital with unselfconscious enthusiasm.

For the more spiritually-aware, the prayer meeting was a cherished time of devotion. Often held after the last public service of the day, it featured extempore prayer by designated "prayer-leaders" and by members of the congregation. The prayer meeting, like the Sunday service, gave opportunity for all to express themselves and contribute to the building-up of the body of Christ. When a person was converted, he of course became a member of a class, and attendance at the class meeting was a condition of continued membership of society. The atmosphere here was one of spontaneous testimony and mutual

<sup>2, 3</sup> *ibid.*, p. 225.

confession, and as well as answering the leader's questions about their spiritual experience the members would join in hymns and extempore prayers. Here was a group in which was the mutual acceptance and mutual openness which has always characterized the Church at its best.

More occasional exercises were the protracted meeting and the camp meeting. The protracted meeting was an instrument of the revivalism of the post-1840 period, and involved a series of nightly meetings in a particular chapel lasting a week or longer and with a different preacher or preachers each night. Usually held in December or January in rural areas when agricultural work was lighter, these meetings were largely intended to revive the lukewarm piety of those already "in", although they did succeed in bringing in outsiders and led to conversions. Sometimes, too, they ran away with themselves, continuing far beyond the planned span of nights. One at Springthorpe in 1845 lasted for fifty-eight days and yielded twelve conversions! By the mid-nineteenth century the camp meeting had become rather domesticated in character. The programme comprised outdoor preaching and praying, a procession round the village singing hymns, more preaching and praying—the whole starting on a Sunday morning and ending at tea-time, sometimes followed by a lovefeast in the evening. A summer event, the camp meeting would be planned for societies once a year.

I have referred to the lovefeast, and this was an important means of grace. Descended from the *agapé* meals of the early Christians, it involved for Methodists the sharing of common elements of food and drink and also the sharing of testimonies, with hymns and extempore prayer. The testimonies were intended to build up the faith of existing members, but they did sometimes lead to conversions and to scenes of considerable excitement. At a lovefeast at Tetford in 1837

The Spirit of God went through the congregation like a fire. The speaking was with great liberty; and, behold, a shaking and a cry for mercy: and after a long and hard struggle, the Lord converted five souls. And at a late hour we returned home, weary in body, but rejoicing in spirit.<sup>4</sup>

All these activities, plus the various anniversaries for chapel and Sunday school, combined to produce a regular cycle of weekly Sunday services, prayer meeting and class meetings; a fortnightly cycle of weeknight preaching-services; then a variety of annual events—missionary anniversary, protracted meeting, Sunday-school anniversary, camp meeting and lovefeast, chapel anniversary, "sacrament" (in many places in South Lindsey at least only celebrated annually), and so on. It was a very Methodist cycle of events which provided on the one hand occasions in which local people felt at home and accepted (for they were very much in the idiom of local culture) and on the other hand a respectable alternative to the unrespectable

<sup>4</sup> *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1838, p. 70, quoted in Obelkevich, op. cit., p. 227.

village culture. They provided hymns, Sunday school and tea-meetings (for example) in competition with lewd folk-songs, beer-drinking, and crude village feasts.

From the Primitive Methodists' activities I move to their spirituality. As well as the public means of grace which a member was expected to attend, there was also the expectation that each member would seek a deepening of his religious experience and faith—that he would have a spiritual career. Primitive Methodism was essentially a religion of the heart. This was what Methodism required, and what villagers were happy to supply. They wanted religion to be "experimental", and one woman aptly said that she "did not wish to skim on the surface of religion but to dive into the full ocean of His love". Religion of the heart, enthusiasm, feeling—all these are of a piece, and they provided something much needed by people at a time when the Church of England all but condemned the expression of feeling.

Conversion, followed by growth in grace, was meant to lead toward the ultimate goal of entire sanctification. Among the more dedicated, this was a matter of extreme seriousness and emotional intensity. The framework was provided for people to explore their religious consciousness and find the meeting of their emotional and religious needs.

Implicit in all I have presented of Primitive Methodist activities and spirituality is the degree of lay domination and lay participation, the degree of "for the people and by the people". In the Sunday services it was their preaching, praying, singing, shouting; in the prayer meetings and lovefeasts it was their testimonies and prayers; even if a minister were preaching it was their interjections that mattered as much as the sermon. Uncouth and undignified it may have been, but all this gave to the poor a voice and a place where they were significant and accepted at a time when they were silenced in the established Church.

As well as providing a place for voices to be heard and people accepted, Primitive Methodism gave a measure of discipline and self-respect at a time when the rural poor needed it. Discipline was strong in Primitive Methodism, especially in the case of the self-scrutiny by the preachers. But discipline over ordinary members was not lacking. The Horncastle circuit Quarterly Meeting minutes for 1857 record:

James and Harriott Brown be informed that they cannot be considered members of our society unless they give satisfaction that she is his lawful wife.<sup>5</sup>

The effects of belonging to such a disciplined society were to encourage self-discipline and self-respect—qualities much needed in contrast to the old labourers' life with its degrading drunkenness and violence.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Obelkevich, *op. cit.*, p. 246 f.

With its lay orientation and its multitude of officers, Methodism—and especially Primitive Methodism—also unconsciously provided a school in the arts of public speaking and administration such as the poorer members of society could have found nowhere else. And these arts were well used outside the Church in the struggle for social justice through the trade union movement. In Lincolnshire and East Anglia the Methodist contribution to agricultural unionism was especially important, and is finely dealt with by Nigel Scotland in *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field*.

I do not pretend that this account has exhaustively described or analysed the phenomena of Primitive Methodism. I have tried to point to a church which met the needs of the poorer members of the community at large. Obelkevich comments that in the second quarter of the nineteenth century there were serious social upheavals during which the traditional village social pattern was broken and the labouring poor had to find a way of coming to terms with the changes. At this time Primitive Methodism provided personal values that equipped its members for the new society, and also created communities that answered the need for social solidarity.

Both the content of Primitive Methodism—damnation and salvation, sinners and saints—and its style—spontaneous, passionate, direct—suited the mood of the poor in their time of need . . .<sup>6</sup>

Primitive Methodism created a counter culture, with its own values, activities and community, that offered a response and an alternative not only to the new social order, but also to the older village culture and to the Established Church.<sup>7</sup>

### **Pentecostalism**

So far I have tried to picture the "mantle of Elijah": we now turn to look at twentieth-century Pentecostalism and to inquire whether, and to what extent, it has taken up that mantle.

Pentecostalism has been the fastest-growing Christian movement of the twentieth century, and it has produced a bewildering variety of churches, sects and groups in many parts of the world. The study of Pentecostalist history is a fascinating one, since one can see in a relatively short space of time so many of the developments in the story of the Church taking place all over again: the first-generation "purity" and enthusiasm; the second-generation hardening and codifying; the dissension and fragmentation, later followed by some attempts at reconciliation between different groups; the move towards respectability, and the looking askance at some of the phenomena of the early days. All these can be discerned in the short history of Pentecostalism thus far. One has only to think of the broad trends of Methodist history to find parallels with all this, albeit played out over a longer span of time. The Pentecostalist movement contains many different understandings of the Church, ranging from the extremely world-denying to those which lead to Christian activity in the political struggle for social justice. Here I shall

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>7</sup> *ibid.*, p. 257.

confine myself to the type of Pentecostalism mainly found in Britain: a conversionist sect, like Primitive Methodism, perhaps now moving through the stage of revivalism and heading for the stage of denominationalism.

I shall take the line that Pentecostalism has met the needs of particular types of people in a real way, and shall cite examples which will seek to show in what way Pentecostalism has been significant in meeting those needs.

The meeting of the needs of those who feel themselves to be in some way disadvantaged has been the reason for Pentecostalism's drawing in of such diverse people. According to Charles S. Snyder, jun., North American workers were lost to the Presbyterian Church, and attracted to Pentecostalism, not for theological reasons, but because their "educational and social disadvantages have eliminated them from Presbyterian membership for many generations".<sup>8</sup> And as early as 1929 Reinhold Niebuhr identified the reasons for the rise of Pentecostalism as the rejection of the intellectual and liturgically fixed services of the traditional church and a preference for a spontaneous form of worship, quite often of a primitive kind.<sup>9</sup> We may say that the function of the Pentecostalist movement has been to restore the power of expression to people without identity and powers of speech, and to heal them from the terror of loss of speech.

Hollenweger cites instances of people who could not cope with the system of bureaucracy finding direct and immediate help in a Pentecostal group, plus the assurance that Jesus could help them, plus the acceptance of a group where they received understanding. He comments:

Disadvantaged people cannot bear people laughing at their disadvantages. But when they can express their disadvantages "liturgically", they need not fear mockery. When they find themselves in the meeting with persons who suffer the same disadvantages, they find the courage to express their concrete difficulties.<sup>10</sup>

In Pentecostal worship and the general Pentecostalist milieu people have found welcome, acceptance, and a voice. A French pastor, Daniel Maurer, writing in 1947, describes a meeting in a back-street mission hall in a working-class district of Paris:

The room is almost always full . . . Most of those present come from the working class district where we are: workmen and persons with small independent incomes, all together: equal numbers of men and of women. There is a warm atmosphere of friendliness and fellowship. There is nothing that recalls the unbreakable ice of churches and chapels. As newcomers we were picked out and greeted. . . One person speaks, but a hundred people vibrate in unison with his prophetic appeals. A wave of Hallelujahs and Amens, the expression of a spiritual

<sup>8</sup> "Presbyterian Survey", summarized by C. M. O'Guin, *The Pentecostal Messenger*, October 1964, p. 4 f., quoted in W. J. Hollenweger: *The Pentecostals*, p. 458.

<sup>9</sup> H. R. Niebuhr: *Social Sources of Denominationalism*, p. 30, quoted in Hollenweger, op. cit., p. 458 f.

<sup>10</sup> Hollenweger, op. cit., p. 459.

whirlpool rising up from the very depths of faith . . . The deacon makes an incisive call for immediate conversion. Some hands are raised.<sup>11</sup>

Does not this remind us in important ways of the kind of Primitive Methodism we have examined?

There is evidence that Pentecostalism is meeting not only the needs of the working classes and the inarticulate: it is meeting the needs of intellectual people who are searching for a dimension of religious experience which offers more to the emotional aspect of man than the often sterile, exclusively intellectual worship of the mainstream traditional churches. People like these, disappointed with the kind of worship which adds the problems of the theologian to their own, and longing for direct prayer and a simplification of religious faith in the form of spontaneous and personal relationships, find in Pentecostal worship exactly what they need. For it does not teach people to think, but to believe and live.

The awareness that exclusively intellectual worship causes distress to uneducated and educated alike, because it leaves a whole dimension of personality uncatered for, plus an increasing frustration with established churches which seem to multiply bureaucracy and to exist simply to perpetuate the institution, has led many pastors and ordinands to drift towards the Pentecostal movement. Hollenweger asserts that in a sample of four hundred leading Pentecostalist pastors, no fewer than 105 (26.2 per cent) had been ministers in other denominations, including 19 who had formerly been Methodist ministers.<sup>12</sup>

The central point of the whole movement is found in the Pentecostalist service—in the sphere of liturgy and worship:

An astonishing degree of communication, never achieved in other churches, takes place in these services. In Pentecostal worship—which only a casual observer could describe as unstructured and unliturgical—everyone can express himself with the means of speech at his own disposal. The criterion is not conceptual clarity but communicability. A good Pentecostal pastor does not preach a sermon. The written text of theological or exegetical preparation does not come between him and his congregation . . . He is never at a loss for words . . . Gesture and speech form a unity . . . He does not speak in an exaggerated or parsonical voice. He allows the social background of his hearers to "put him off" and in fact these play a great part in determining the form and content of what he says . . . he has a genius for communication; his preaching is not a lecture but a dialogue. It is here, in the sphere of liturgy and preaching, that the Pentecostal movement seems to me to have made its most important contribution, and not in the sphere of pneumatology, as is constantly and quite wrongly supposed.<sup>13</sup>

Here is the same relationship between preacher and congregation as was noted in Primitive Methodism.

<sup>11</sup> D. Maurer, *Réforme*, 31st May 1947, quoted in Hollenweger, op. cit., p. 459 f.

<sup>12</sup> Hollenweger, op. cit., pp. 474 ff.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, p. 466.

### Conclusions

"The mantle of Elijah": has it been taken up in our day by the Pentecostalists? In a different kind of society from the significantly agricultural nineteenth century, in a very different complex of social changes and pressures, is Pentecostalism doing for people today what Primitive Methodism did in its "classic" period last century?

I believe that to a large extent it is. I add the rider because I feel that Pentecostalism is not as comprehensive in what it is doing for people as Primitive Methodism was. Thus, although Pentecostalism provides a place where people can find warmth, acceptance and significance, there is not the same stress on discipline (in terms of attendance at the "means of grace") and the growth of self-respect as we found in Primitive Methodism. The Pentecostal congregation is much more pastor-centred than its Primitive Methodist equivalent: this must be so, since the ecclesiological structures of the two movements are so different. The result for Pentecostalists, however, is that there is not the same opportunity for the development of lay skills and lay ministries, nor is there the same opportunity of a school in public speaking and the management of affairs. And perhaps it should be said that in catering for the emotional aspects of personality Pentecostalism leaves other aspects uncatered for. Hollenweger's dedication of his book says a great deal in this direction:

To my friends and teachers in the Pentecostal Movement who taught me to love the Bible, and to my teachers and friends in the Presbyterian Church who taught me to understand it.

There needs to be a balance between the influences of heart and head, and I feel that Primitive Methodism achieved this more satisfactorily, not necessarily in its Sunday services alone, but taking its activities as a whole. There is, however, something of a new strand emerging in some parts of the Pentecostal movement—a new tendency towards discipline, discipleship, and lay ministries.<sup>14</sup>

In the final analysis, however, I am convinced that no other Christian group has come as near as the Pentecostalists to taking up Elijah's mantle.

JOHN E. MINOR.

[The Rev. John E. Minor, M.A. is a minister in the Market Rasen and Caistor circuit.]

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, Juan Carlos Ortiz: *Disciple* (Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1975). Its importance lies not so much in what is being said as in who is saying it, and to whom.

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We have received two publications by Pamela Horn which may be of interest to members: *The Tithe War in Pembrokeshire* (pp. 24), price 75p., and *A Georgian Parson and his Village: The story of David Davies (1742-1819)* (pp. 90), price £2 80p. Davies was for many years rector of Barkham (Berks), and had some affinities with Methodism in his pastoral work. Pre-paid copies will be sent post free from Beacon Publications, 11, Harwell Road, Sutton Courtenay, Abingdon, Oxon, OX14 4BN.

**SIR ISAAC HOLDEN, Bart. (1807-97)****His place in the Wesleyan Connexion***(Continued from page 126)***Activities in the United Kingdom, 1861-71**

As a layman Isaac Holden played a full part in Wesleyan affairs from 1861 to 1871. Invited officially to join the Eastbrook Methodist society at Bradford in 1860 as "an influence for good" and as one whose support would "conduce most materially to the work of God in the circuit",<sup>42</sup> he presided over the 1862 celebrations at St. George's Hall in that city. In his address he campaigned for "a free church in a free state"—a foretaste of the battles he was later to fight in the political arena.

In 1863, as a member of the Methodist deputation to the Jubilee missionary meetings, he visited Manchester, Leeds, Halifax and Bradford. Later that year the deputation toured Ireland, visiting Dublin, Cork and Belfast. Holden made "a munificent donation" to the Irish Jubilee Fund of £300.<sup>43</sup>

The year 1864 saw a further round of anniversary meetings in Edinburgh, York, Pontefract, Selby, Bristol and London. Generous with gifts to the Fund, as a careful businessman he queried the handling of the Mission banking account. The London steward assured him that his £100 gift to them would go to "its proper destination", and that all moneys would attract 5 to 5½ per cent interest.<sup>44</sup>

By May 1864 he was physically exhausted, and was told you really must curtail your labours, or we may be deprived of them too soon altogether . . . we have few men in the Wesleyan connexion like yourself and we ought as a sacred duty [to] try and keep you strong and hearty as long as we can.<sup>45</sup>

He recovered sufficiently to join the Jubilee deputation to Guernsey, and later to preside at the London missionary meeting at City Road.

During that decade Holden was deluged with requests from chapels and preachers throughout Britain for gifts, subscriptions, and loans. He was asked to preside at meetings, open bazaars, lay foundation-stones, and serve on Wesleyan committees. Everyone presumed on his generosity of person and purpose. A few, in thanking him, admit, as did the preacher of Ketton (Rutland) chapel: "Your gift dr. sir I value much—as I am unknown to you, and Ketton has no claim upon you that I am aware of."<sup>46</sup>

<sup>42</sup> Circuit Stewards, Eastbrook, Bradford, to I. and S. Holden, 30th September 1860.

<sup>43</sup> McMillan to I. Holden, 5th February 1864. H.P.L. Box 8/5.

<sup>44</sup> J. Heald to I. Holden, 26th April 1864. *ibid.*, Box 8/5.

<sup>45</sup> T. West to I. Holden, 6th May 1864. *ibid.*, Box 8/5.

<sup>46</sup> T. Chapman to I. Holden, 26th October 1865. *ibid.*, Box 8/5.

### Isaac Holden and the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund

One problem confronting the Wesleyan Connexion by 1860 was that of the "inner city", especially London. A flight to the outer suburbs by wealthier Wesleyan families had begun by 1855, and financial support for the rapidly growing working-class congregations in the city itself was needed. To deal with the problem the Metropolitan Chapel Building Fund was set up in 1861, and by 1885 had built seventy-eight chapels. Holden as a wealthy lay member promised £50 for every chapel built in London with 1,000 sittings, on condition that it was a simple building, not "Gothic" by design, nor with stained glass windows. He offered a further £50 if the trust deed contained a clause "excluding forever the use of Liturgy".<sup>47</sup>

Holden's reason for specifying non-Gothic designs was that "high open-roofed" ceilings and expensive architecture were alien to the needs of Methodism. They "must have chapels where a feeble voice has a chance to be heard, and an ordinary voice to be heard with ease".<sup>48</sup> These specifications were the outcome of his own chapel experience. "Fervour and spontaneity he loved and admired in religious worship."<sup>49</sup> He soon discovered that his offer was open to abuse. A member at Ealing confessed that his chapel was Gothic—"but simple, and as fully adapted to Methodist uses and purposes as a Gothic building can be", and with a population of 14,000 growing rapidly, they needed to hold up "the banner of Evangelical truth".<sup>50</sup>

Holden felt that the custom of reading a liturgy was keeping the masses from attending church. The secretary of Richmond chapel reported to him that in their service not only was the Prayer Book used, but the Commandments, the Epistle and the Gospel had been added and the Magnificat sung. He said: "We want no better book of praise than the Wesleyan hymn book."<sup>51</sup>

By 1871 he had begun to reconsider his generosity, which by that date amounted to £3,900.<sup>52</sup> Some chapels, he heard, had a clause in the deeds "making the reading of prayers compulsory at all times", and he required "a similar clause of just the contrary

<sup>47</sup> Rev. J. Mayer to I. Holden, 10th January 1866. *ibid.*, Box 8/5.

<sup>48</sup> I. Holden to A. McAuley, 5th January 1871. Letter Book, H.P.B. 47.

<sup>49</sup> *Holden-Illingworth Letters*, p. 462.

<sup>50</sup> W. Green to I. Holden, 28th August 1869. H.P.B. 7B.

<sup>51</sup> R. Gascoyne to I. Holden, 27th June 1869. *ibid.*, 7B.

<sup>52</sup> Grants to Metropolitan Chapel Funds, 1864-76 (*ibid.*, 83):

1864-5	24 London chapels .. ..	1,800
1864	Metropolitan Building Fund	1,000
1871	Westminster new chapel ..	500
1871	2 East London chapels ..	100
1871	Mile End Road chapel ..	500
		£3,900

nature".<sup>53</sup> He decided that in London "in reference to chapel building and ritual" they had gone wrong, as it was "in feeble imitation of the Establishment". To seize the masses, which was their mission, he favoured small "meeting houses", and would give £100 to "each such new place for less than 1,000 sittings". He felt too that with the rapidly growing towns in Yorkshire "crying for help", and with claims coming from France, he could give no further aid to London.<sup>54</sup>

This decision was reinforced by his son, Angus Holden. Whereas Isaac himself had never paused to estimate the size of financial aid given, Angus presented the total bill to date, and announced that it was no longer possible to contribute any more cash. This statement drew forth an angry, critical response from the Fund's chairman, Sir Francis Lycett, who saw no reason why Holden should stop short of the £5,000 offered, now that the losses suffered by the Holden mills in France as a result of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1 were £40,000 less than estimated.<sup>55</sup> He added brusquely that the time was past for building small chapels, and no grant would be given for any with less than 1,000 places, and that Holden should resume his contributions.<sup>56</sup> The "mahogany age" of Methodist chapel-building, well launched on its course, was not to be deflected.

Holden's polite but effective reply to Sir Francis ran as follows :

There are near me large towns and small towns for which I feel more nearly responsible than ever for London ; such as Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Keighley, Bingley, Shipley, Skipton, and Huddersfield, in which the growth of population is at the rate mostly of some 40% in a decade, and in which the Christian provision for their spiritual needs and morals is lamentably low, and every year falling farther and farther behind. Thus the educational and humanity claims of these crowding populations I cannot ignore. If I could make a bit of London and of its Methodism I could render you effective help, but I really cannot conscientiously [sic] do more or differently to what I promised.<sup>57</sup>

Holden, ever a realist, decided to use his talents and resources to better effect in the West Riding, where by 1871, as a result of adding a large new mill in Bradford to his French concerns, and through his career as Liberal Member of Parliament for Knaresborough from 1865 to 1868, he felt he had a stake in Yorkshire's prosperity.

The contretemps with the London Building Committee was one aspect of a growing disillusionment with the Wesleyan hierarchy. He had attended Conference as a lay member who expected his views to be heard and approved. In 1871 he informed Sir Francis Lycett that it was not his intention to attend the preparatory

<sup>53</sup> I. Holden to W. McAuley, 5th January 1871. *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>54</sup> I. Holden to W. McArthur, 28th June 1871. *Letter Book, ibid.*, 47.

<sup>55</sup> Sir F. Lycett to I. Holden, 6th June 1871. *Holden-Illingworth Letters*.

<sup>56</sup> Sir F. Lycett to I. Holden, 29th June 1871. *H.P.B.* 8b.

<sup>57</sup> I. Holden to Sir F. Lycett, 19th July 1871. *ibid.*, 8b.

committees for the next Conference, as he had been "very ill-used" in 1870, the committees were not useful, and "certainly ineffective".<sup>58</sup>

In 1871 Isaac Holden gave his support to a proposal to set up a Methodist Fire Insurance Company. The need arose by reason of the number of new chapels built; in 1866 he had in fact been asked for a contribution to replace a chapel destroyed by fire and without funds to rebuild.<sup>59</sup> As an astute businessman he saw that if the society funded its own insurance company, as it had in the case of the Building Fund, all profits could be returned as bonuses to the trustees insuring with it, and it could work on equal terms of competition with other companies. He offered £100 towards an office and preliminary expenses. Conference decided on a joint stock company, as many chapels were insured with commercial companies and "would be aggrieved by a Connexional Co. undercutting them". Opponents to his scheme said it was unseemly for a religious body to carry on a trade and apply the profits for religious work. Holden replied that the Connexion already had a trade in books and a Book-room, "so why not openly run an insurance fund?"<sup>60</sup> In 1873 a compromise was reached. The "Wesleyan Methodist Trust Assurance Coy. Ltd." was brought into being, and Holden took 100 shares therein for £50.

#### Holden M.P.: A Methodist in Politics

It is interesting to note that the invitations to stand for Parliament as a Liberal came initially from Methodist groups. The first invitation originated from Pontefract in 1864, when he took the chair at the Jubilee meeting there, but negotiations fell through because, according to him, he declared his views "so unequivocally on church and state". One of the main planks in the Liberal-Radical platform at that period was the need for disestablishment of the Church of England. Holden had taken an active part in the Society for the Liberation of Religion from State Patronage and Control as early as 1861. He remained faithful throughout his political career to the Liberation Society, and presided at its annual meeting in London in 1871. He supported its cause in Parliament, and was a munificent contributor.

A second invitation to stand as a Liberal candidate came from the Wesleyan society in Knaresborough, and he was one of the two members returned by that constituency (the other being a Tory) at the election of 1865. In this capacity he served until 1868, and was one of the 87 nonconformist Liberal and Radical businessmen who were to form a strong pressure-group at Westminster. They were able to force the majority of Anglican Liberals to accept their views on the abolition of Church Rates and on other measures. In return, they provided the Liberal alliance not merely with moral

<sup>58</sup> I. Holden to Sir F. Lycett, 19th July 1871. *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>59</sup> Hon. Sec., Rickmansworth chapel to I. Holden, 28th June 1866. *ibid.*, 3A.

<sup>60</sup> I. Holden to J. Baslow, 15th December 1871. *ibid.*, 47.

fervour, but with votes and party discipline. They represented the "Nonconformist conscience".

Holden's primary allegiance was to the Methodists; and William Arthur outlined the duties expected when he wrote: "I earnestly trust that you may have grace to be a wise, firm, free legislator, Christian without crotchets, a Methodist without antipathies."<sup>61</sup> In Knaresborough his generosity was unbounded. A local comment was to the effect that it was unprecedented for a gentleman and a Wesleyan to give "to those not of his own communion."<sup>62</sup> The poor and the sick, the "Humane Funeral Brief Society" and the infant school, were helped. Each Wesleyan minister was to be provided by the local tailor with a suit of clothes and double-breasted frock-coats. Recipients of his generosity thanked him for his "liberal Christian philanthropy."<sup>63</sup>

Upon his entry into Parliament he expected favourable reports of his work on behalf of Methodism to figure in the connexional newspapers. They were a vital platform for the presentation of the views of MPs and progressive laymen alike. The old-fashioned *Watchman* "belaboured the radical schismatics" and the Liberal views held by such as Holden. The *Methodist Recorder*, founded in 1861, reported both clerical and lay views in an impartial manner.

By 1870 the *Recorder* was monopolizing accounts of the working of the Book-room, the Chapel Committee, Foreign Missions, and the theological colleges, but the need for a "thorough Liberal paper" to represent the "Radical section of Wesleyans" had not been met. A strong proposal came from the Rev. H. W. Holland of Leeds. He said that neither of the papers represented the opinions of the majority in the Wesleyan Connexion, since they favoured "Conservatives, Liberal conservatives and details of Methodist news". He castigated both papers for their attitude to Liberals:

At present a Methodist layman may help Methodism as much as he likes, but when he goes to contest a Borough he is left helpless without a backer or a friend as far as the Methodist press is concerned.<sup>64</sup>

Holland's views were more than the Holdens could stomach, and they withdrew their names as subscribers to his proposed paper.

However, the need was supplied when in 1873 a newspaper to be called *The Methodist*, mooted by J. Bond and F. E. Toyne of Birmingham, said to be "in the direction of Methodist Liberalism", sought sponsorship.<sup>65</sup> It appeared from 1st January 1874 to 27th December 1884. Holden took out shares, which he held until the paper's liquidation in 1886.<sup>66</sup> According to reports sent by Bond

<sup>61</sup> Rev. W. Arthur to I. Holden, — July 1865. *ibid.*, 9A.

<sup>62</sup> Rev. M. Lord to I. Holden, n.d. H.P.L. Box 4.

<sup>63</sup> I. D'Ewes to I. Holden, 26th October 1869. H.P.B. 7B.

<sup>64</sup> Rev. H. W. Holland to I. Holden, 7th March 1873. H.P.L. Box 10/3.

<sup>65</sup> *The Methodist News* (?) Broadsheet, 23rd January 1873. *ibid.*, Box 9/1.

<sup>66</sup> Champness & Co. to I. Holden, 8th September 1866. *ibid.*, Box 9/9.

to Holden in 1880, it had a chequered existence. Circulation was around 5,000 per week, but attempts at promoting a more extensive sale were vetoed by the co-directors. The balance sheet for 1879 and for 1880 was not satisfactory, as an increase in income of £300 per annum was needed for solvency. The paper had defended and sustained "the Liberalism of the body both in secular and ecclesiastical matters", but it had been dogged by a succession of unsatisfactory managers. Bond reported that

Our manager at the beginning of the year turned out a drunkard, a liar and a thief. Our second manager was with us for 6 months, he was honest, sober etc. but one of the slowest men I ever met. Our third, the one we have at present is a good one but too rash<sup>67</sup>

Bond asked Holden for his views, as they had always been strongly sympathetic, but shareholders' money could not be spent without their consent. Holden's support for *The Methodist* came only after an appeal to J. H. Rigg, editor of *The Watchman*, in 1866 to liberalize its tone,<sup>68</sup> and a like plea to the *Recorder* with a letter commending W. E. Gladstone's 1867 proposals for the extension of the franchise, with which it had disagreed.<sup>69</sup>

The advance of Liberalism caused both papers to give grudging support, but changing attitudes within the Connexion forced the closure of *The Watchman* in 1883 and *The Methodist* in 1884. January 1885 saw the appearance of a new radical journal, *The Methodist Times*, under the dynamic leadership of Hugh Price Hughes. This paper brought a democratic viewpoint and social awareness to the problems of the late nineteenth century; and from 1885 may be dated the entry of Liberalism as the secular creed of the Methodist Church.

### Holden's views on State Education

Probably the deepest and most radical breach with the Wesleyan hierarchy came from the discussions leading up to the Forster Education Act of 1870. Holden was a member of the Methodist Education Committee which in 1867 mapped out their policy with regard to compulsory elementary education. Holden's view was that if the Wesleyans had joined the "great body of Nonconformists [they would not have] a church system in national education".<sup>70</sup>

From his experience of parliamentary procedure, he objected to the conduct of Wesleyan committees. He felt that there should be rules of debate, and that laymen should be the chief speakers. Where finance was concerned, as with Home and Foreign Missions, schools, institutions, chapel-building and education, lay opinion should be allowed. In vain he pressed for a full discussion and vote on the education question at the 1869 Conference, and again at the committee meeting in November 1870. If, as he suggested,

<sup>67</sup> J. Bond to I. Holden, 17th February 1880. *ibid.*, Box 2.

<sup>68</sup> R. Martin to I. Holden, 4th June 1866. *ibid.*, Box 8/7.

<sup>69</sup> I. Holden to Editor, *The Methodist Recorder*, 27th April 1866.

<sup>70</sup> I. Holden to G. W. Oliver, 5th July 1870. Letter Book, H.P.B. 47.

a vote had been taken, it could well have been that the Government would not have brought in "the measure which all but extinguished Methodism in the rural parishes".<sup>71</sup> In 1871 he resigned from the Education Committee, writing that the meetings

are a farce, and their decisions are nil in effect on our Connexional action. The exhibitions of bad temper among the ex-presidents and of rudeness is too much for me . . . The connexion seems resolved to carry out [Dr. Rigg's] bad educational policy.<sup>72</sup>

Far from sulking in his tent, at the rebuff to his views, when the 1870 Act was put into operation Holden continued his fight. On public platforms he pressed for free, compulsory and unsectarian schooling. By 1872 he had realized that "denominational schools will [not] bear the competition of board schools", and that money given to Wesleyan day-schools would be "purely thrown away".<sup>73</sup> He was to be proved right on the superiority of the Board schools, but ironically his plea for secular education with the teaching of religion based solely on church, chapel or Sunday school has never been realized. Compulsory religious worship was formally enshrined in the 1944 Education Act. However, his plea for lay representation in Conference was conceded in 1877.

#### Benefactions to Methodist institutions

In other areas of Methodist affairs Holden played a more satisfying role. He took a great interest in the Methodist movement in Ireland. He found in 1863 that as a result of a revival begun in 1859 there were in Irish Methodism 38,201 members, who had raised £5,000 for the Missionary Anniversary Fund. An appeal was launched for a Wesleyan grammar school in Belfast. Holden gave £500, and was present at the opening of Methodist College in 1868.<sup>74</sup> The Rev. William Arthur was appointed Principal of the school and chairman of its management.<sup>75</sup>

His interest in the educational responsibilities of the Connexion led to support for the theological colleges at Leeds, Richmond, and Didsbury (where in 1861 he was made a member of the management committee). To all these he gave generous grants for the teaching of elocution through "voice lectures". Many students wrote to thank him. One of them put it: "We cannot but wish that all our brethren in the ministry could be sharers in the advantages your liberality has provided for us".<sup>76</sup> To Didsbury College he also made a grant for the purchase of the "best works on the History, Etymology, Grammar, construction, style, criticism, definition and pronunciation of the English language".<sup>77</sup>

<sup>71</sup> I. Holden to W. M. Arthur, 7th August 1871. Letter Book, *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>72</sup> I. Holden to W. McArthur, M.P., 19th July 1871. Letter Book, *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>73</sup> I. Holden to S. Hopkinson, 25th June 1872. Letter Book, *ibid.*, 47.

<sup>74</sup> Rev. W. Arthur to I. Holden, 1870. *ibid.*, 8b.

<sup>75</sup> R. Marshall: *Methodist College, Belfast* (W. G. Baird, Belfast, 1967).

<sup>76</sup> J. S. Spencer to I. Holden, 14th February 1873. H.P.L. Box 9/1.

<sup>77</sup> I. Holden to W. Jackson, 29th [sic] February 1869. H.P.B. 7b.

As a wealthy man living in a society without adequate provision for the poor, sick, or unemployed, he was besieged by requests for help for co-religionists. One such plea came from the Wesleyan chapel at Tredegar, where a long strike in the South Wales iron-works in 1873 had brought destitution. The Rev. David Evans wrote: "R.C. priests and C. of E. clergy are helped by rich members of their respective churches to give relief to their poor", but funds were not available for Wesleyan workmen.<sup>78</sup>

The position in nonconformist churches was neatly underlined by Holden in reply to a request from a Church of England clergyman for money:

It is as well you have Queen Anne's bounty to fall back upon—You are aware that we noncoms, are obliged to do all ourselves, and nearly all are poor. One of the evils of a favoured (established) religious test is that its prestige and privilege entice away the wealthy from us, so that the few like myself who remain have too heavy a burden to carry to be able to assist the more wealthy establishment.<sup>79</sup>

The drain on Holden's resources decided his son to set up a charity account based on 10 per cent of the firm's profits each year. Once that was exhausted, no further grants would be forthcoming. In 1870, inundated by applications from Methodist chapels, Angus Holden requested his father to send all begging letters to him, to relieve his father's mind "of the anxiety and bother".<sup>80</sup> It was decided to give to local bodies only, but in 1878 a contemporary writer said that his gifts were not confined to Wesleyans alone, and that nonconformist churches in the Keighley area benefited from his generosity.<sup>81</sup>

Isaac and Sarah Holden remained personally committed to the Wesleyan chapel at Oakworth, where they lived, until their deaths. During parliamentary sessions—and Holden remained at Westminster as the first MP for Keighley from 1885 to 1895—he worshipped at Wesley's Chapel, City Road, and spoke there as late as 1884. He enjoyed fellowship with the Wesleyan group in Parliament, and dined with William McArthur, MP for Middlesex, who had been knighted and made High Sheriff of London in 1870 and was Lord Mayor in 1880. (By this time the Victorian establishment had accepted wealthy Methodists into their ranks, to share with them on equal terms the burdens and distinctions of public office.)

In 1886 Holden was asked to present to W. E. Gladstone, the then Prime Minister, a petition signed by four hundred Wesleyan ministers, in which support was affirmed for his policy of Home Rule for Ireland. Receiving this, Mr. Gladstone sent Holden his grateful thanks.

<sup>78</sup> Rev. D. Evans to I. Holden, 13th February 1873. H.P.L. Box 9/1.

<sup>79</sup> I. Holden to Rev. J. B. Grant, 25th June 1871. Letter Book, H.P.B. 47.

<sup>80</sup> A. Holden to I. Holden, 18th June 1869. *ibid.*, 13.

<sup>81</sup> Hodgson, *op. cit.*

As a Liberal MP from 1865 to 1868 and again from 1882 to 1895, Holden, along with other rich Wesleyan laymen, was respected by all. No other church possessed a more liberal and active body of laymen who used their wealth, intelligence and zeal to forward their cause. Isaac Holden made his own contribution to the liberalization of the Connexion. In 1894 the *Methodist Times* produced an encomium on "Methodism's Grand Old Man"—a Methodist coal-miner's son who became a millionaire, yet maintained his loyalty to his church and to his political principles throughout his long life.<sup>82</sup> More modestly, Holden himself said that, brought up in a Wesleyan Methodist family, he had remained "more or less" within the fold.<sup>83</sup>

ELIZABETH JENNINGS.

[I am indebted to Mr. John H. Lenton for background information on Methodism in Europe; to Mr. E. A. Rose for information concerning *The Methodist* newspaper, and to Dr. J. Kincaid (Headmaster, Methodist College, Belfast) for information about the College.—E.J.]

<sup>82</sup> *Methodist Times*, 1st February 1894.    <sup>83</sup> *Drapery World*, 21st August 1897.

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## THE ANNUAL LECTURE

in connexion with the Middlesbrough Conference, 1983,

WILL BE DELIVERED IN

**Yarm Methodist Chapel**

**On Monday, 27th June, at 7-30 p.m.**

BY

**Mr. GEOFFREY E. MILBURN, M.A.**

*Subject:*

**"PIETY, PROFIT AND PATERNALISM: METHODISTS IN BUSINESS".**

The chair will be taken by MRS. MARGARET BATTY, M.A., B.D.

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**The Annual Meeting** of the Society will be held in the same chapel at **5-30 p.m.**

Mr. and Mrs. Rowland C. Swift kindly invite members of the Society to **Tea** in the schoolroom at **4-30 p.m.** It is desirable that all those who intend to be present at the Tea should send their names to the Rev. Geoffrey T. Bruce, B.A., B.D., 625, Yarm Road, Eaglescliffe, Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, TS16 9BS (Tel. 0642 782147) not later than June 25th.

The historic Yarm Octagon is just off the High Street, near the clock tower. Motorists should proceed from Middlesbrough to Stockton, and thence 4 miles into Yarm. There is a frequent train service from Middlesbrough (to Darlington). Alight at Eaglescliffe, and take bus 10 or 10A from Yarm Road bus stop to Yarm—or walk the 1¼ miles.

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**An Exhibition** depicting Methodist history in the North-East will be on view at the Dorman Museum, Linthorpe Road, Middlesbrough, during the period of the Conference.

## DOWN LAMBETH WAY

THERE has been a long-standing tradition in Lambeth—that Methodism was established there in September 1739, when John Wesley preached on Kennington Common and on three successive Sunday afternoons then visited a society at Lambeth Marsh. This is firmly declared in an (anonymous) history of Lambeth chapel dated 1885, mentioned in the notes on page 218 of the *Standard Journal*, volume vi, with an allusion to an article in the *Methodist Recorder* of 4th December 1913 to the same effect. I have found both sources to be full of fallacies. When Thomas Tiplady was superintendent of the Lambeth Mission (1922-54), he made much of this supposed origin of the church in his appeals for public support.

When one comes, however, to examine Wesley's *Journal* and diary more closely, quite a different picture emerges. He records that he preached at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 17th June 1739 on Kennington Common, and adds in his diary that he was back at Fetter Lane for women's bands at 7.<sup>1</sup> Upon his return from Bristol on 2nd September that year, he went again to Kennington and preached, he says, to eight or ten thousand people, and in his diary adds that he "went with Sir Isaac Chard, etc. *igitur*" (i.e. immediately afterwards).<sup>2</sup> Is that significant? He makes no reference to a society at Lambeth Marsh until the following Sunday, 9th September, when, again in company with his mother, he went from Kennington to a society at Lambeth at 7 o'clock: "singing, etc.". He commented:

The house being filled, the rest stood in the garden. The deep attention they showed gave me a good hope that they will not all be forgetful hearers.<sup>3</sup>

These could not have been new Methodists, as the good folk at Lambeth have always asserted, because Wesley did not form a society of his own until the end of that year, upon his acquisition of the Foundery.<sup>4</sup>

I am of the opinion that this reference is to a religious society connected with the Church of England, in the parish of St. Mary's, Lambeth. The Moravians tell me that it is unlikely to have been one of theirs, and they can find no record of a society at that place. Josiah Woodward in his description of this movement said that there were about forty such societies connected with parish churches in and around London about that time, usually meeting in private houses.<sup>5</sup> Wesley visited many of them (about twenty are mentioned in his diary). I suggest that he visited this one at the invitation of Sir Isaac Chard, whom he had met the previous Sunday, and who lived in the parish of St. Mary's, Lambeth. This local worthy had been appointed Sheriff of Surrey in 1707 and knighted the following

<sup>1</sup> *Journal*, ii, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 266 f.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 273.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 316 n. Also see *Proceedings*, iii, pp. 166-72.

<sup>5</sup> J. Woodward: *Religious Societies in the City of London, etc.* (4th edn., 1712) (ed. D. E. Jenkins, 1935), p. 56.

year. He is mentioned in the deeds of transfer of an estate at Peckham owned by his daughter, Mrs. Martha Hill, who conveyed the manor to her brother, Isaac Tacatus Chard, upon his marriage in 1735.<sup>6</sup> Sir Isaac Chard died on 22nd December 1739, and is buried in St. Giles, Camberwell.<sup>7</sup> As John went away in his company directly from Kennington Common the Sunday before, I suggest that it was then that he was asked to preach at the local religious society on the Sunday following, 9th September, in Sir Isaac's house, and that his visit was so publicized that a larger group than usual attended. Maps of the period show several good-sized houses at Lambeth Marsh (then a rural retreat), which would have opened on to gardens. I can find no reference to such a religious society in St. Mary's parish records in the archives of the Greater London Council, but this is not surprising, as by their very nature such groups were informal, except within their own discipline, and indeed were often ephemeral.

John wrote to Charles on 21st September that year, telling him that on the previous Sunday (16th) he had preached again on Kennington Common:

Hence I went to Lambeth, where I found our congregation considerably increased; and exhorted them to cry mightily to our Lord, that He might say unto them, as unto the sick of the palsy, "Be of good cheer; thy sins are forgiven thee."<sup>8</sup>

In his diary he adds "singing, etc.". They might have sung psalms, as they often did at meetings of religious societies, or he might have taught them, to their surprise, some hymns he had translated from the German, expressive of his theological emphasis. The last time he visited that society was on the following Sunday, 23rd September, again after preaching on the Common:

Thence I went to Lambeth, and showed (to the amazement, it seemed, of many who were present) how "he that is born of God doth not commit sin".<sup>9</sup>

There was more singing. Each record he makes of visits to this house at Lambeth, on three Sundays in September 1739, includes an indication that he was hoping for acceptance, but this last comment on his reception seems to lead us to infer that this was one of the places where he was invited no more. He does not go there again. They were amazed at his doctrine—so much so that when Wesley returned to preach on Kennington Common the following year, as he did ten or eleven times during that summer, he did not go to Lambeth. If the group continued to meet, he was obviously not welcome. And he ceased to preach at Kennington after 1740, although he continued to do so at Moorfields until 1777, when it became built over. Incidentally, a large contemporary engraving shows George Whitefield preaching to the crowd at Kennington

<sup>6</sup> Southwark Archives, Deposit 25.

<sup>7</sup> W. H. Blanch: *The Parish of Camberwell*, p. 179.

<sup>8</sup> *Journal*, ii, pp. 277 n., 278.

<sup>9</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 281.

Common on 29th April 1739, with rotting corpses on a gibbet in the background. The common is still an open space, now Kennington Park, near to The Oval. There are many undulations of ground, similar, one supposes, to the "mount" from which John Wesley preached.<sup>10</sup>

Lambeth is not on the London preaching plan of 1754.<sup>11</sup> Wesley's sermon-register records that he preached at Lambeth in January 1757, so there might have been a society there then, but he says nothing of it in his *Journal* or diary.<sup>12</sup> He does mention, however, two dying women he went to see at Lambeth—one in 1751,<sup>13</sup> and the other in 1770.<sup>14</sup> The earliest London preaching plans extant—dated October 1786 to January 1787 and January to April 1791—show a preaching-place at Lambeth—the small chapel where Wesley preached on Friday, 11th December 1778, "newly provided by Mr. Edwards",<sup>15</sup> in whose home Methodist services had previously been held. This John Edwards (not to be confused, as he seems to be by Lambeth's 1885 historian, with the Irish preacher of the same name who relinquished the itinerancy in 1753)<sup>16</sup> appears to have been the true founder of Methodism in Lambeth. He was born in Hampshire in 1740, became a Methodist, and moved to London in 1762, where soon afterwards he was appointed a regular local preacher by John Wesley.<sup>17</sup> He prospered in business, and in 1772 settled in Lambeth, where he opened his house to the Methodists. His wife had a boarding-school for girls, which Edwards then allowed to be used as a chapel. The earliest reference to him is in St. Mary's Rates Register of 1773.<sup>18</sup> He had property worth £30 per annum, and therefore of goodly size. He was a popular preacher, both in the Home Counties and in London, where according to the 1791 plan he preached most Sundays, often twice, and has more Sunday appointments than any other preacher, including services at West Street and City Road. He died in 1803, just five years before the great and graceful Regency chapel was built at the corner of Lambeth Road and Kennington Road—to be destroyed by enemy action in the second World War.

On the front of the 1951 replacement of that building, an inscription on the foundation-stone informs the passer-by that the church there was founded in 1739. I submit that this statement cannot possibly be true—indeed that John Wesley was rejected at Lambeth at that time—and that it was not until long afterwards that a Methodist society met at Lambeth, not large enough to have its own small and borrowed chapel until 1778. This mistake is due to the casual assumption, from references in Wesley's *Journal*, that the society he visited in 1739 was his own foundation. Similarly today, "John

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, ii, p. 388.

<sup>11</sup> G. J. Stevenson: *City Road Chapel* (1872), p. 258.

<sup>12</sup> *Journal*, viii, p. 221.

<sup>13</sup> *ibid.*, v, p. 352.

<sup>14</sup> *ibid.*, iv, pp. 67 n., 95 n.

<sup>17</sup> *Methodist Magazine*, 1803, pp. 289-96.

<sup>18</sup> Borough of Lambeth Archives.

<sup>15</sup> *ibid.*, iii, p. 540.

<sup>16</sup> *ibid.*, vi, p. 218.

Wesley's chair" is shown to visitors to the Lambeth Mission, who are thrilled to sit on it. But when I asked an authority on antiques, Mr. Patrick Mackenzie, to examine it, he pronounced it mid-Victorian.

But one thing about Wesley and Lambeth is certain. It was there that on 17th February 1791 he caught cold, could not finish writing tickets for about forty members, and was taken home. Although he determinedly went on preaching and visiting, he did not recover, and he died on 2nd March of that year.<sup>19</sup>

LESLIE FARMER.

[The Rev. Leslie G. Farmer, B.A. lives in retirement in Dulwich after a ministry spent mostly in London Mission centres. He was for eleven years superintendent of the Bow Mission, of which he has written the history.]

<sup>19</sup> *Journal*, viii, p. 133 n.

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### MORE LOCAL HISTORIES

The following are some of the handbooks and brochures which have recently been received, and for which we express our thanks to the senders.

*Wigginton (Oxon) Methodist Church, 1883-1983*, by Ralph Mann (pp. 32): copies, price 25p. plus postage, from Mr. John Cherry, Withycombe Barn Farm, Wigginton Heath, Banbury, Oxon.

*Early Methodism in Healing, 1880-1936 (1982)*, by P. P. Cufflin and E. K. Coates (pp. 19): copies, price £1, from Mrs. P. P. Cufflin, 13, Meadow Drive, Healing, South Humberside.

*The People called Methodists at Knowle Green, Bollington*, by Jean M. Wright, published for the 175th anniversary of Bollington Methodist church, 1808-1983 (pp. 60): copies, price £1, from the author at 35, Henshall Road, Bollington, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK10 5DN.

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*A View of Arkengarthdale*, by Margaret Batty (pp. 62), which has been published to celebrate the centenary of the present Methodist chapel in Arkengarthdale, is a history of both the dale and its Methodism written with insight and affection. Copies are £1 50p. from The Manse, Reeth, Richmond, North Yorks, DL11 6SN.

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### Bicentenary at Highgate

JOHN WESLEY recorded that on 29th November 1782: "I preached at Highgate, in the palace built in the last century by that wretched Duke of Lauderdale; now one of the most elegant boarding-houses in England."

Some sixty members of the present Highgate and London Mission (North and Central) circuits held a commemorative evening exactly two hundred years later in the same Long Room of Lauderdale House, the historic seventeenth-century mansion now used by the Lauderdale House Society, a local residents' social centre. The Rev. Dr. John A. Newton outlined Wesley's evangelical mission in the open air and in houses and rooms of all types. Wesley preached at Highgate on at least four occasions between 1782 and 1788, when he was in his eighties. JOHN S. ELLIS.

# A CANADIAN BIBLE CHRISTIAN SERVICE - BOOK

IN the library of the Methodist Archives and Research Centre there is a Bible Christian *Digest of Rules and Regulations* which was published in Ontario, Canada, in 1876. Certain Orders of Service appear as Appendices, and a brief note on these will form a useful addition to the two articles on Bible Christian liturgy which have already appeared in the *Proceedings*.<sup>1</sup> In this Canadian book there are seven Orders of Service :

- I. Laying the corner-stone of a Church
- II. Dedication of a Church
- III. Reception of members into the Church
- IV. Infant Baptism and Adults' Baptism
- V. The Lord's Supper
- VI. Solemnization of Marriage
- VII. Burial Service.

These are all of the simplest form, and appear to have no kinship with the orders to be found in the Bible Christian service-books in use in Great Britain.

## *I. Stone-laying*

This consists simply of an exhortation by the minister, followed by a psalm and words accompanying the laying of the stone :

that the house to be built thereon may be consecrated by the Divine presence, and owned by Almighty God for the spread of the Everlasting Gospel through the ministry of the Bible Christian Church.

## *II. Dedication of a Church*

This consists merely of an exhortation and words of dedication interspersed with hymns, readings and extemporary prayer.

## *III. Reception of Members*

After an exhortation by the minister, the candidates promise that they will "fulfil the duties of a member of Christ's Church". They are presented with a card of admission, and given the right hand of fellowship. The minister gives an address to the Church, and the Lord's Supper concludes the service.

## *IV (i). Infant Baptism*

The parents are reminded of their duty to see that the child is taught, as soon as he is able, the meaning of this sacrament, and encouraged to attend public worship. Baptism is said to "represent unto us that inward purity which disposeth us to follow the example of our Saviour Christ" (whatever that may mean!). After a reading from St. Mark's Gospel, the child is baptized by either sprinkling or pouring. Two prayers follow—one for the child and the other for the parents. Nowhere in the service is baptism referred to as the rite of initiation into the household of God.

<sup>1</sup> See xxxiii, pp. 1 ff., 106.

IV (ii). *Adult Baptism*

An exhortation prays that the candidate

being baptized with water may also be baptized with the Holy Spirit and, being received into Christ's Holy Church [in contrast with the absence of this idea in infant baptism] may continue a living member of the same.

He promises to "renounce the devil and all his works", and baptism is performed by sprinkling or pouring. The prayers are based on those in the Book of Common Prayer. The final prayer is that the baptized "may receive the fulness of Thy grace, and ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children".

V. *The Lord's Supper*

The order of service consists solely of two verses of Comfortable Words, confession of sin, a prayer for forgiveness, and the Prayer of Humble Access—all based on the Book of Common Prayer. In the last prayer the text reads:

. . . Grant us therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat by faith the flesh of Thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink His blood, that we may live and grow thereby . . .

The service ends with the rubric: *Then shall the minister receive and administer the Ordinance.* There are no words of Institution or Consecration, and no post-Communion prayers.

The orders of service for the Solemnization of Marriage and the Burial of the Dead call for no comment. JOHN C. BOWMER.

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The February 1982 issue of *History* carries an article by Dr. David Hempton entitled "Thomas Allan and Methodist Politics, 1800-1840". This is of considerable importance to all who are interested in the history of Wesleyan Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century, for Thomas Allan was a London-based solicitor, largely forgotten by historians, but who emerges, according to Dr. Hempton, as "the most important layman in the connexion in the critical years between 1800 and 1830". Dr. Hempton draws on the vast collection of Allan papers in the Methodist Archives. As the Connexion's solicitor, Allan became involved in the affairs of the Committee of Privileges, Lord Sidmouth's Bill, Catholic Emancipation, Methodist rights in the West Indies, etc.—important issues, all of them!

Readers will recall Dr. Hempton's valuable contribution to these *Proceedings* (xlii, pp. 2 ff.) in an article entitled "*The Watchman* and 'Religious Politics' in the 1830s". J.C.B.

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### Subscriptions

For many years our subscription rates have been held at a very low level, but your Executive Committee now consider that it is necessary to adjust this to a more realistic basis, taking effect as from 1st January 1983. Details of the new rates are given on the inside front cover of the present issue.