The application of business experience and expertise to the administration of non-Wesleyan Methodism in the period 1797- 1850.

John H. Anderson

Thesis submitted for the degree of M.Phil.

Keele University March 2000

ABSTRACT

A characteristic feature of Methodism in the post Wesley era was the high degree of lay participation in the administration of the new Methodist movements which came into being from the 1790s onwards. In some cases, this was the very reason for their separate existence from the parent body, Wesleyan Methodism suffering a series of divisive disputes and schisms until finally conceding fuller lay participation at the highest levels in 1878, when laymen were allowed to become representatives to the annual Conference.

The object of this study is to examine the business and experience of the non- Wesleyan Methodist leadership and of the expertise and resources thereby gained to the administration and development of the newly emerging denominations. The contrast between Wesleyanism and Primitive Methodism, for instance, is, in this context, the contrast between John Wesley and Hugh Bourne. Wesley, the son of a parson whose social class was that of the minor gentry, was destined from the outset for Oxbridge and the ordained ministry, and whilst he did make money from writing and publishing, as did many clergymen of his day, he had no other career. Hugh Bourne, on the other hand, was in his thirties before he was engaged full time evangelism, and his background was in engineering and farming.

This comparative study attempts to discover the extent to which the early careers and education, and the commercial, administrative and legal experience acquired affected the contribution that the Bourne family made to Primitive Methodism, the Thornes to the Bible Christians, and the Ridgways to the Methodist New Connexion, and the

consequent effect on the development of these respective denominations and the formation of their Connexional polity. The career of Joseph Barker provides a sidelight a sidelight on some of the issues raised and the New Connexion in particular.

ABBREVIATIONS

H.R.L.	Horace Berks Library [Hanley Reference Library]
J.H.A.	John H. Anderson
M.C.A.	Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester
MSS.	Manuscript
S.R.O.	Staffordshire Record Office, Stafford
W.H.S.Proc.	Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Margaret Batty, in the foreword to her published doctoral thesis, drew attention to the fact that whilst there had been a number of recent important studies of nineteenth-century Methodist history showing how Methodists influenced and were influenced by national and international tides in political, economic and social life, none of them was principally concerned with the part played by the lay officials.[1] Her study sought to rectify this omission at least in relation to Wesleyan Methodism. The experience of non-Wesleyan Methodism, not covered in her thesis, was different in that from the outset far greater prominence was given to lay leadership, and indeed in the origins of some of the movements entirely so. Lay participation at all levels was integral to their systems, whereas in Wesleyan Methodism it was only grudgingly acceded to over a long and often fraught period with many casualties along the way, a process which in itself gave rise, in part, to the movements under discussion.

Religious histories and biographies of individuals often stress the influence of religion on business and industry or on the careers of the individuals concerned. In crude terms this was often reduced to the material advantages accruing from the Protestant work ethic, which on an individual level, has been used classically to illustrate the progression from wretchedness to salvation, for example *From Workhouse to Lord Mayor, From Street Arab to Evangelist, From Crow-Scaring to Westminster*, etc..[2] A more sophisticated attempt to analyse the influence of religion on a social class was made by Wayne Johnson in his doctoral thesis *"In Triumph of Faith": Primitive Methodism and the*

Labouring People of the North Midlands, 1812-1862.[3] In an essay on the Ridgways, *The Radical Saints of Shelton*, John Briggs examined how the religious involvement of the Ridgways informed their commercial, political, and social activities.[4]

The object of this study is to enquire into the extent to which the business experience and expertise acquired by the early non-Wesleyan Methodist denominational leaders in the course of their secular education and careers could be, and, indeed, was applied by them to the development of their respective denominations. The careers of the brothers Hugh and James Bourne of Bemersley in relation to Primitive Methodism, James and Samuel Thorne of Shebbear in relation to the Bible Christians, and John and William Ridgway of Hanley in relation to the Methodist New Connexion are explored to ascertain the extent to which they were able to apply their talents and resources in the furtherance of their respective causes and the degree of influence that this had, if any, on the direction of Connexional policy. The talents and resources so applied could be transferable skills, for instance entrepreneurial, legal, or administrative flair, useful contacts in the business or civic establishment, or material resources.

The major part of this study examines the careers of the brothers Hugh and James Bourne. They were controversial figures even in their own movements, particularly in the latter part of their lives. The early biographies, upon which much later writing has been based, were, therefore, coloured by the prejudices of their contemporaries, and those of Hugh Bourne himself as revealed in his own writings, and often resound with the sound of grinding axes. There has been no modern, detailed academic assessment of Hugh Bourne, except possibly

Wilkinson's biography published in 1952, which is more of a chronicle of events than a critical analysis.[5] James Bourne has been more or less written out of Primitive Methodist history because of the disgrace of his bankruptcy. The most comprehensive recent thesis on Primitive Methodism, the doctoral thesis of Stephen Hatcher, largely confines itself, as the title would suggest, to William Clowes's side of the movement based upon Hull[6] and the time is probably overdue for a study based on the Bournes' perspective and a reassessment of the their contribution. If Primitive Methodism was one of the catalysts in the reordering of a society dislocated by rapid industrial and agrarian change, and in so far as it was a creature of its founders, such reassessment is clearly a useful exercise, not least in dispelling some of the myths and prejudices on the one hand, and in correcting the hagiographies on the other, which have distorted the Bournes' true role and significance in the history of the movement. Many attempts to set Primitive Methodism and Primitive Methodists in a wider social context have been, if not flawed, at least distorted by romantic notions, sometimes fostered by Primitive Methodists themselves, as to the origins of the movement and the "humble" background of its founders.

Any examination of the origin and early development of the Bible Christian movement and the role of the Thorne family is handicapped both by the paucity of source material and by the fact that much of such material emanates either directly or indirectly from the pens of the Thornes themselves, who controlled the media. James was Connexional editor and Samuel owned the press. F.W.Bourne, the Eusebius of the denomination as he has been called, relied heavily on the Thorne accounts for the early history of the movement.[7] However, having

entered the Bible Christian ministry in 1850, his career and those of James and Samuel Thorne overlapped by about twenty years, and he was, therefore, able to form his own opinion as to their character and influence from his own observation.[8]

The Methodist New Connexion differed in nature from the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians in that, being a schism rather than a revival movement, it emerged rather more fully fledged than if it had begun completely from scratch. The point of departure from the Old Connexion was the demand for greater lay participation and democracy and hence there was plenty of scope for powerful lay families, such as the Ridgways, to play a leading and influential role. Whilst the Ridgways were not denominational founders in the sense that the Bournes and the Thornes were, they were nonetheless very influential both locally and Connexionally and there are parallels. John Ridgway held key Connexional offices. As Book Steward and Editor for a number of years he controlled the Book Room and his counsel was often sought in the drafting of Connexional polity.

A chapter on Joseph Barker is included because he provides an interesting sidelight on the administration of the Methodist New Connexion, and in particular on the conduct of its Connexional Book Room. He highlights the tension between the differing and sometimes conflicting priorities, in the case of the Book Room the accumulation of capital and profits for the benefit of funds for the support of the Connexion on the one hand, and the dissemination of cheap, informative and educational literature on the other.

The questions this study seeks to answer are:

1. What were the backgrounds, education, training, experience and resources of the families and individuals under examination and what was the impact upon them of contemporary economic, social, and political developments?

2. What practical application did such training and experience have to their religious activities, and what was the impact upon denominational development and the contribution that the families were thereby able to make to the organisation, administration, and financial control of their respective denominations?

3. To what extent, in so far as the families could be said to be the products of their background and environment, could their respective denominations be said to be the creatures of their founders?

Notes

1. Margaret Batty, *Stages in the development and control of Wesleyan lay leadership 1791 - 1878* (1988) p.6
She cited as examples the important studies by J.C.Bowmer, R.Currie, D.Gowland, J.H.S.Kent, R.Moore, B.Semmel, J.M.Turner, and W.R.Ward, and the official History of Methodism in Great Britain, edited by R.E.Davies, A.R.George, and E.G.Rupp.

2. George H.Barber, *From Workhouse to Lord Mayor* (Tunstall, 1937); Albert Shakesby, *From Street Arab to Evangelist* (Hull, 1910); George Edwards, *From Crow-Scaring to Westminster* (1922)

3. Wayne Johnson, ""In Triumph of Faith": Primitive Methodism and the Labouring People of the North Midlands, 1812-1862"
(Unpublished University of Keele Ph.D. thesis, 1989)

4. J.H.Y. Briggs, *The Radical Saints of Shelton* (Keele, 1988)

5. John T.Wilkinson, *Hugh Bourne 1772 - 1852* (1952)

6. S.G.Hatcher, "The Origin and Expansion of Primitive Methodism in the Hull Circuit, 1819-1851" (Unpublished University of Manchester Ph.D. thesis 1993)

7. T.Shaw, "The Historians of the Bible Christians", in *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXXV (1965) p.39

8. F.W.Bourne, *Centenary Life of James Thorne* (1895); Ibid., *The Bible Christians, their Origin and History* (1905)

CHAPTER 2

Methodism and Business: The Political, Economic, and Social Context, 1790-1850

The period covering the last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth century was one of great change and transition in many fields of human endeavour and each area of activity interacted with and had a knock-on effect on every other. The application of science to technological developments brought about rapid advances in industry and agriculture, which in due course affected the way in which society was organised and inevitably impacted upon politics and religion. The word revolutions has been liberally applied to such developments. The term has been extended beyond its political use, in the American and French Revolutions, to other fields so that we refer to the Industrial Revolution, the Agrarian Revolution, and even "The Methodist Revolution".[1] Social historians have tended look at these "revolutions" from the point of view of those perceived to be the victims of industrial and social change and have often approached the history of religious movements in this way. The result has been a tendency to allow this perspective, Marxist in its more extreme manifestations, to colour the approach to such movements, particular those, such as Primitive Methodism, which are perceived to have had fashionably working-class origins. E.P.Thompson, who famously portrayed Methodism as "the chiliasm of the defeated and hopeless" was noticeably more sympathetic to the Primitive Methodists.

> Bunting looked down upon the workers from the heights of connexional intrigue; Bourne and Clowes were of the working people. Bunting was intent upon ushering Methodism to a seat on the right hand of the Establishment; the Primitives still lived in the world of hardship and the persecution of Wesleyanism's origin.[2]

This theme is still followed. In a recent lecture Dr.Stephen Hatcher, betraying his socialist bias, gave as a motive for Primitive Methodist Chapel building that "it gave some standing in society to many who in other ways had been dispossessed" having lost their land through enclosure or their jobs as new technology replaced old jobs. "The Primitive Methodists built their chapels in a world in which they felt uncertain and insecure".[3] Whilst there may have been some truth in this, chapel building was an expensive enterprise usually indicative of some degree of settled prosperity in a community. How expensive may be indicated by two Primitive Methodist examples, one urban and one rural. In Congleton, a chapel seating 500 was built in 1821 just off Lawton Street in the centre of the town on land leased to the society for 999 years at a nominal ground rent by a wealthy benefactor, John Andrew. The total cost was £700, of which £200 was raised by donations and collections, including £50 from Andrew. The remaining debt of £500 was secured by a mortgage of the property by the trustees of whom Andrew was also one. The interest on the loan would have been covered, inter alia, by letting pews. In 1879, the interest on the then outstanding loan of £115, £5 15s., was almost covered by pew rents of £5 7s 10d.[4] At Threapwood Head, a small village about two miles from Cheadle, Staffordshire, a chapel was opened on 2 August, 1835. Twenty-four feet by eighteen, with eight rising pews at the south end, it seated 100, of which 40 were lettable pews and 60 free seats. The total cost was £100, which was raised by collections at the opening service of £13, donations of £37, and a loan of £50 which would have been serviced by the letting of pews, which by February, 1836 were "all let".[5]

The prosperity facilitating such expenditure often resulted from

industrial and technological advance and the employment opportunities arising therefrom. Although Mow Cop was the scene of the first English camp meeting, it was not until the expansion of deep mining and in particular the opening of Tower Hill Colliery that the first Methodist Chapels, Primitive and Wesleyan, were opened on the hill in 1841-2. All but one of the first trustees of the Wesleyan Chapel were described as "colliers",[6] and the same was probably true for those of the Primitive Methodist Chapel. The chapel building not only arose from the influx of population, but also from rising prosperity resulting from industrial change which contemporaries acknowledged.[7] In fact the early leaders of the non-Wesleyan Methodist movements far from being the victims of industrial change were in many cases among the engineers of such change, in the case of Hugh Bourne literally so. Their constituency may have been the displaced and those on the margins of society, particularly amongst the Primitive Methodists, but among their leaders were those who had worked at the forefront of scientific and technological innovation, or at the very least were aware of and took a keen interest in these developments.

In the wake of E.P.Thompson most liberal, secular minded historians have regarded Methodism as a reactionary movement, anti-intellectual in its outlook. There is undoubtedly evidence to support this view. Joseph Barker whilst stationed in Newcastle-under-Lyme in 1831-2 incurred the disapproval of his Superintendent to his reading matter.

> T[homas] W[aterhouse], objected to his books as being of "an objectionable character"-Byron, Shakespeare, and some of a theological character - he should have nothing to do with any books , but those that would qualify [him] for teaching, inculcating, and defending Methodistical doctrines, and for exercising Methodistical discipline in the Societies.[8]

At a more mundane level there have undoubtedly been barely literate local preachers who have stubbornly maintained to be people of one book, the Bible, and stories of illiterate Primitive Methodist Sunday school teachers may not be entirely apocryphal. However, this may be taken not so much as a protest against the Enlightenment and reason, as just plain ignorance! Leaders such as the Bournes and the Thornes took great care over their own education and had a lifelong commitment to the education of others. Hugh Bourne actively pursued his own rational study of matters scientific, philosophical, and religious, and highly esteemed such learning in others. In 1802 he found true companionship with the junior travelling preacher in the Burslem circuit, John Grant, who "conversed well on almost every subject, scientific, religious, or literary."[9]

Sociologically Methodism was a product of the sustained "take off" of economic enterprise and the increase of population which accompanied it.[10] It was in turn to give a powerful new impetus to that Puritan ethic which tended to foster the very characteristics which fostered success in business. John Wesley's approach to making money is to be found in his printed Sermons, particularly his Sermon on the Use of Money with its famous exhortation to "Gain all you can... Save all you can... Give all you can."

> "... it is the bounden duty of all, who are engaged in worldly business, to observe that first and great rule of Christian wisdom, with respect to money, "Gain all you can." Gain all you can by honest industry: Use all possible diligence in your calling...
> ... Gain all you can, by common sense, by using in your business all the understanding God has given you. It is amazing how few do this: how men run on in the same dull track with their forefathers... You should be continually learning, from the experience of others, or from your own experience, reading, and reflection, to do every thing you have to do, better to-day than you did yesterday..."[11]

Wesley was also acutely aware of the paradox outlined in the first paragraph and of the dangers accompanying accumulated wealth - hence "give all you can". Wesley found an answer to these contradictions in Matthew c.19, the subject of his Sermon on Riches.[12] In a letter to George Merryweather of Yarm, referring to another rich man of that town, Wesley wrote:

> Even the rich may enter the kingdom; for with God all things are possible.[13]

Joseph Barker writing in the 1830's also grappled with the problems presented by business life and the accumulation of riches. Barker was "a religious weathercock"[14] - Wesleyan, New Connexion, Unitarian, Freethinker, Chartist by turns, ending up as a Primitive Methodist. In his *Gospel Triumphant*, published in 1839 whilst he was a Methodist New Connexion minister he writes

> "Numbers of individuals, who, previous to their conversion to Christ had neither comfortable homes, nor decent clothes, nor a sufficiency of food, have, since their conversion, been put in full possession of all these things. I have known numbers myself who had utterly beggared themselves by their ill conduct, who, in consequence of having been led to embrace the religion of Christ, have been enabled not only to obtain plenty of all things needful for themselves and their families, but also to do something towards supplying the wants of their needy fellow-men.
>
> The Gospel forbids no exercise of any of our powers which is conducive to health; nor does it prohibit any indulgence of our natural appetites and inclinations that is really calculated to promote our welfare. It leaves us free to use all the bounties of providence without respect to any restrictions, except such as enlightened benevolence may lay upon us.
>
> ... My plan would be to follow no business but with a view to the good of my fellow-men; and I should therefore try to furnish every thing as cheap as possible... "But if you were dependent on your trade for your living, how then?" I answer, I have no anxiety about a living: so long as I seek to please God, by doing good to mankind, I cannot doubt but I shall obtain sufficient to support me. It is selfishness that makes it so hard for people to get a living, not benevolence...

> ... I never saw a man, or heard or read of a man, that was ruined by acting on the principles of Christian benevolence, and I do not believe I ever shall. "The liberal soul deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things shall he stand.""[15]

Methodists had to face inevitable compromise in accepting the fruits of business enterprise to pay the ever increasing expense of building chapels and supporting the itinerancy and showed little inhibition in lauding economic success when applied to such purposes. In *The Successful Merchant*, a celebration of the life of Samuel Budgett, William Arthur said of commerce that

> It is the first material bond of human society. By it, the best fruits of a skill possessed by one alone are distributed throughout the community; and the one, in serving the community, is advancing himself.[16]

Such views were not confined to Wesleyan grandees like William Arthur. In 1919 the members of the Primitive Methodist Conference assembled at Grimsby applauded J.R.Clapham, the Primitive Methodist rope-maker of Yarm, when he told them that he had set out in life to make money, and had made it.[17] In this instance the goodwill was helped by the revelation that Clapham was the anonymous donor of £10,000 to the Itinerant Preachers' Friendly Society.

Although Wesleyan Methodism in the period 1791-1878 was dominated and largely controlled by its pastorate, it was, as Margaret Batty has demonstrated, not immune from business influences and, indeed and of necessity, ready to take advantage of the skills and expertise of prominent laymen with business experience.[18] In formulating its attitude towards politics and the state it had to take cognizance of the views of the prosperous laymen upon whom, and upon whose patronage, it increasingly came to depend.

Wesley admired successful and religious businessmen and recruited them to his cause. In the period following his death the consolidation of the High Wesleyan doctrine of the pastoral office severely restricted the role of the laity at the connexional level within Wesleyan Methodism. However, although Conference representation was consistently denied, as well as other key areas such as control of the Book Room, out of necessity lay members were invited on to connexional committees and the success of these committees encouraged the leadership "to think that by applying the principles of efficiency learnt in the business world, sanctified by good will and salted by a little competitiveness, the temporal problems of the connexion could be solved."[19]

Jabez Bunting was the dominant personality in Wesleyan Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century.[20] He was sometime Secretary of Conference, four times President of Conference, and held almost every high office in the Connexion in the course of his career; but his official status was as nothing compared with his personal influence and power. The "iron, menacing, shackling, browbeating, reign of Jabez Bunting"[21] drew its strength from his administrative ability. He rationalised the administrative procedures and finances of Wesleyan Methodism. His administrative capabilities were already in evidence in his early ministry in the Macclesfield Circuit (1801-1803) where his correspondence reveals schemes for reorganizing the circuit to make it one of the most eligible in the connexion.[22] His talent was recognised by his appointment to London with special responsibility for sorting out the muddled accounts of the foreign missions and the connexional Book Room. A rather more sympathetic biographer than Everett, J H.Rigg, said of Bunting that

> "His training... had been, in fact, a training in the principles and equities of public business. His experience of confusion and embarrassment in the affairs of the Book-Room and of the mission field had taught him the necessity of applying to the Connexional affairs of Methodism the principles and business methods which ruled in the management of great secular undertakings. He saw how far and wide, as Methodism developed into a great Church, this demand for the application of business principles to Connexional developments of church work and agency would lead."[23]

Bunting was to rule Methodism with the ruthless efficiency, almost without regard to those lost along the way as the Leeds Organ dispute and the "Flysheet" controversy would later demonstrate.

Bunting respected lay advice on items of departmental business though not on fundamental questions of policy. Indeed, it was his initiative to "encourage the co-operation of our lay brethren" by inviting them on to Connexional Committees. The lay members of these committees were nominees of the Conference - nominees, not delegates - an important distinction as Gregory noted.[24] "Methodism", Bunting famously declared, "hates democracy as much as it hates sin."[25] They were usually wealthy businessmen, often Londoners, often closely related to the ministers. The names of laymen such as Farmer, Pocock, Chubb, Heald, Burton, Reece, Walker and Vanner, along with Bunting's own son, Percy, remained on the lists for decades, in company with Bunting, Scott, Hannah, Keeling and Alder, for example, on the Ministerial side.[26] This "inbreeding" gave rise to Everett's jibe:

> Some hundred rich men... by their wealth and by their liberal issue of it, became the ruling power that ruled the Clique, that ruled the Conference, that ruled the people.[27]

However, it was at district and local level that business influence was to have the greatest impact within Wesleyan Methodism. Finance was the

key factor. In 1801, two years before the first mixed committee, the Conference decided that Circuit stewards should attend the District meeting to "advise on financial matters". The reasons were made clear in the Conference address that year

> We consider it our duty to lay before you with perfect impartiality and disinterestedness the state of our finances. After all our collections have been disposed of, we are in debt about £2000 notwithstanding above £200 have been subscribed by the travelling Preachers towards defraying the debt...
> ... We have employed many days in considering the ways and means to extricate the Connexion out of its present difficulties-, we say, the Connexion, for the cause is common both to Preachers and People."[28]

Men of substance and business experience were always needed at the local level. Few chapels were opened free of debt and the Trustees shouldered the responsibility and relied on their wealthier brethren to underwrite it. The problem of chapel debt was a constant worry and could easily get out of hand. The Conference of 1810 sought to tackle the problem, but it did not go away. In 1852, the Secretary to the Chapel Building Committee, William Kelk, published *Our Chapel Debts, A Contribution towards Wesleyan Economical Reform* in response to a resolution of the Conference of 1851 that

> The Conference having been requested by the Committees of the General Chapel and other Connexional funds, to appoint a Committee to consider the state of their affairs: The President of Conference is hereby authorised to call a meeting of such members of such committees and other friends, as he may select, to be held at such time and place as he shall direct; who are requested to take a comprehensive survey of the state and prospects of our various Connexional Funds, as well as of our Chapel Trusts, and to endeavour to devise means to relieve them from pecuniary embarrassment."[29]

The printed list of subscriptions towards the liquidation of the debt on the Tunstall Wesleyan Methodist Chapel, dated 20 Jan. 1851, included the names of pottery manufacturers such as Daniel Spilsbury, Enoch

Wedgwood, and Jabez James Hancock. Many were active Methodists as well as being prominent in local affairs. Indeed Methodism, commerce and the evolving local government in this rapidly developing pottery town were to become inexorably intertwined, with each one inevitably influencing the others. William Cooper, whose name heads the list, influential Tunstall lawyer and sometime chairman of the Improvement Commissioners, was a prominent Wesleyan, and used his "exceptional business capabilities" in addition to his financial resources for the benefit of the chapel and Sunday school. As treasurer, 1841-4, and superintendent, 1863-4, of the Sunday school "he did perhaps more than anyone to set the school in good working order".[30]

Joseph Sutcliffe, in about 1811, may have been worrying about the chances of salvation for sleek grocers occupying the pews in the pillared chapels of "modern" Methodism, but financial expediency necessitated them being kept on board.[31] Those who held the purse strings to pay the piper could often call the tune and such influence sometimes had far reaching consequences. Shortly after his conversion, William Clowes became an ardent supporter of "the Association for the Suppression of Sabbath Breaking", composed of persons resident in Burslem and Tunstall, which sought to promote the correct observance of Sunday and curtail Sunday trading through the use of the magistrates.[32] In retaliation the Sunday traders boycotted their supplier, a wine and spirit merchant who was the Burslem Circuit Steward. When the steward's vested interests were attacked, so too were those of the Circuit Superintendent, John Riles, who, thinking of his quarterly cheque, withdrew his support from the association, took the steward's side, and threatened Clowes publicly with expulsion from Wesleyan

Methodist membership if he persisted in his activities.[33] This was part of the increasing hostility to the revivalists and of a chain of events leading to those who were to become the Primitive Methodists having to go their separate way.

The support of wealthy patrons, be they pottery manufacturers or prosperous Lancashire and Yorkshire millowners, or the fear of alienating such support, lay behind the conservatism, indeed the Toryism of early nineteenth-century Methodism. Jabez Bunting may have been the son of a radical Manchester tailor, but any radicalism he inherited was lost when confronted with the realities of circuit life. He firmly nailed his colours to the mast when appointed superintendent of the Halifax Circuit in 1811, vehemently opposing the Luddites and incurring their wrath as a result. Their anger increased the following year when he refused to conduct the funeral in the Methodist Chapel at Cleckheaton of Samuel Hartley, a Luddite shot in a riot at Rawfolds.[34]

Methodism was ever ready to proclaim its loyalty to the crown and to the government of the day. Wesley had declared himself convinced that the republican spirit was injurious to Methodism. He said that most fallen Methodists and perhaps some who were not fallen were republicans.[35] This profession of loyalty was most publicly demonstrated in the naming of some large town chapels "Brunswick" and "Hanover".[36] Official Methodism in the first half of the nineteenth century consistently sought to distance itself from political agitation. In an address to the king published in the Methodist Magazine and the London Gazette, the Conference of 1800 pledged that

> We humbly desire to express to your Majesty that we have, in conjunction with the People under your Care, upon several occasions, united with others of your Majesty's loyal

> Subjects, in testifying our sincere Respect for and Attachment to your Majesty's Person and Government, and our Detestation of all Sedition and Rebellion... "[37]

The 1819 Conference again returned to the subject extending sympathy to those "dear Brethren, who, from the pressure of the times, and the suspension of active commerce, are, in common with thousands of your countrymen, involved in deep afflictions". They are warned against those who would compel them into joining "political parties and associations" and exhorted to follow their "occupations and duties in life in peaceful seclusion from all strife and tumults."[38] At the Conference of 1826 the preachers were "happy to notice the absence of all political strife or disaffection" although "unexampled distress had plunged so many thousands of the labouring classes into penury and want."[39]

There were local exceptions to this detachment from political controversy. In 1825, the Wesleyan minister in Daventry, Thomas H.Walker, was prepared to lend his support to those working in the boot and shoe industry in the town in their claim for higher wages. A handbill dated 13 March 1825 and addressed to "To the Friends of the LABOURING MANUFACTURER. A Case of Benevolence" respectfully informs the public that a sermon will be preached in the Wesleyan Chapel, Daventry:

> ... in consideration of the reasonableness of the advance in the price of labor[sic], which is at present by the operative Boot measure to which is at present solicited by the operative Boot and Shoe Makers, and the distress in which many are involved in consequence of the measure to which they have necessarily been obliged to have recourse in order to obtain a redress of their grievance... [40]

Nonetheless official Wesleyan policy was to distance itself from political agitation and to ensure that the rank and file did likewise. Thus the ministers of the Bath District at their District Synod in May, 1839, resolved that

> ...any member of the Methodist Connexion who should join himself with the Chartists should be removed from membership.[41]

The Primitive Methodists, in spite of, or perhaps because of their often poorer constituency, also found themselves beholden to more prosperous, and, in some cases, wealthy patrons. The subscription list for the Primitive Methodist Sunday School, Pittshill near Tunstall, was, from 1830 - 1852, headed by J.H.Clive, pottery manufacturer and mine owner. A social historian might well ask, indeed has asked, what was in it for him or for that matter other local magnates such as Smith Child and William Adams whose names also appear.[42] The answer is probably a question of social control. It would clearly be in the interests of these industrialists to lend their support to an institution on their doorstep dedicated to producing a compliant, passive, industrious and well-behaved workforce. The Primitive Methodists were therefore also under pressure, in monetary terms at least, not to alien alienate such valuable support.

Hugh Bourne's conservatism was not surprising in a moorland farmer, and "the idea of anyone introducing politics into his preaching was as dreadful to him as the preaching of "flat Popery" was to Oliver Cromwell."[43] However, his political neutrality was born out of the same fear of alienating authority, and influential support, as that of Wesleyan Methodism. Bourne stood out against political radicalism at the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1821, to which, owing to an oversight, he was not appointed a delegate. He was, however, able to gain admission as the Tunstall chapel, in which it was held, was the personal property of the Bourne brothers. He soon disapproved of the proceedings and sought the expulsion of one of the delegates, accusing him of being "a speeching radical".[44] In justification he referred to

Sidmouth's Bill of 1811, which, if enacted in its original form, would have pole-axed the Methodist Itinerancy and outlawed the camp meetings. Some have claimed without any evidence that "the speeching radical" was Joseph Capper,[45] later notorious for his Chartist activities. However, Walford, quoting Bourne himself, is silent as to the name. According to Charles Shaw, whose family were close neighbours in Tunstall, Capper had been converted at the Mow Cop Camp Meeting in 1807.[46] He was a Primitive Methodist local preacher by 1822, and a member of the Tunstall circuit committee from 1827 to 1831.[47] His name was still on the plan in 1831, but had been removed by 1833, presumably because of his involvement with the Reform Bill agitation of 1831-32.[48] Unfortunately the surviving Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Minutes only date from 1836, but these do seem to confirm that his name was not reinstated.[49]

The Primitive Methodist Conference of 1835, in a rule reinforced in 1836, banned the use of chapels for political meetings

> The Conference of 1835, in order more fully to guard the course of piety, made a Minute that none of our chapels or preaching rooms be lent on any account, for either political or religious agitation; has this been duly attended to?
> A. It has, with the exception of two or three instances, in which we are sorry to say, piety has suffered; but our brethren regret it, and we hope there will be more firmness in future.[50]

Probably mindful of this resolution, the Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Meeting on the 15th March, 1839 resolved

> That the Trustees of our Chapels be strongly recommended not to lend any of our chapels for Mr. Joseph Stephens or any of his party to hold meetings in.[51]

Joseph Rayner Stephens was a minister who broke away from Wesleyan Methodism because of his involvement with a wide range of nineteenth-

century social and political issues. Commonly regarded as a Chartist, he always refused to be counted as a member of the movement, despite his support for some of its aims.[52] The meeting was chaired on that occasion by John Hancock, engraver and pottery manufacturer, a close associate of the Bournes, being a member of the General Committee and for a time in partnership with James Bourne in pottery manufacturing. On the 28 June 1841, at the time of the Chartist troubles in the pottery towns, the Tunstall Circuit meeting, chaired on this occasion by James Bourne, confirmed the Conference rule resolving

> That none of our chapels be lent for agitation either public or private.[53]

In the light of this resolution it seems curious that in 1842 a Barkerite preacher was allowed to preach in the Tunstall circuit. In 1841 Joseph Barker had been expelled from the Methodist New Connexion for unorthodoxy,[54] differences which would have equally offended the Primitives who did not differ from the New connexion on doctrine. He caused considerable disruption in the New Connexion and was certainly engaged in "religious agitation" if not "political agitation" at that stage. Nonetheless the Tunstall Circuit meeting resolved

> That a young man who is a preacher amongst the Barker Society at Hanley be allowed to go to Biddulph Moor next Lords day May 15th and preach instead of George Barnett.[55]

Generally, the no politics rule was, within Primitive Methodism, enforced only as far as Hugh Bourne could reach. However, this was not as far as County Durham, where, on the 10th March 1839, there were Chartist sermons and collections in the Thornley and South Hetton Primitive chapels. The sermon was by George Binns for Rev.J.R.Stephens:

> Great credit is due to the trustees of this [Thornley] chapel in so generously offering the use of the building. There is many a religious sinner who would have placed the chapel

> under lock and key, as a Radical Reformer approached. We trust the men of Thornley will know how to appreciate, the liberality of the patriotic proprietors.[56]

The justification for the 1835/6 rules in protecting the image of Primitive Methodism was demonstrated in 1836 when a gentlemen in Yorkshire, who had been told that the Primitive Methodist break with the Wesleyans had occurred "because of something of a political nature", was only persuaded to contribute £5 toward the building of a Primitive Methodist chapel in Wakefield after he was shown a copy of he Conference minutes forbidding itinerants to engage in politics. The addition of his name to the list of subscribers also "proved of service unto" the cause in encouraging others to assist.[57] The rules clearly had a mercenary aspect as well as guarding "the course of piety" and whereas financial pressures and business influence were the key to increasing lay power in Wesleyan Methodism, in lay dominated Primitive Methodism similar pressures and influences acted as a constraint.

The common perception of the Primitive Methodists was, and is, that their appeal was to the lowest stratum of society. This was clearly the opinion of John Angell James viewing the world from the patrician heights of the fashionable Carrs Lane Congregational chapel in Birmingham.

> It is neither slander, nor intentional insult, nor deprecation, to say that their members are generally poor. They feel it to be their vocation to go out into the highways and hedges, and to labour on the great waste of ignorance, poverty, and crime, whose moral cultivation is, to a considerable extent, neglected by others.[58]

However, Dr. A. D. Gilbert concluded that while the Primitive Methodists could claim to be "a distinct denomination" in the sense of having a special mission to "the lowly working classes of English society", such a claim was inspired more by a rhetorical goal and denominational

strategy than a desire to describe social reality.[59] An analysis of the social structure of Wesleyan and Primitive Methodists in the North Midlands, based on baptismal registers in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, confirmed that a much higher proportion of Primitives than Wesleyans were unskilled labourers - 55.1 % as opposed to 24.4 %. Nonetheless 10 % of the Primitives came in the middle, professional and lower-middle classes and 27.9 % in the skilled class.[60] But even to effect a strategy of reaching out to the poor and dispossessed required material as well as spiritual resources. From the beginning the Primitive Methodists came to depend on the support of business people be they tradesmen, farmers, manufacturers or whatever, whose patronage and business skills could assist the cause, and as has already been demonstrated with regard to political agitation, this could influence local and connexional policy.

Reporting on the opening of the new Primitive Methodist chapel in Congleton in 1891, replacing a chapel of 1821, the *Macclesfield Courier and Herald* echoed John Angell James in describing the Primitive Methodists as reaching the parts that others did not reach. The report said of the old building that it

> ... did duty for want of a more seemly and spacious one from the date of its erection in 1821; and during its seventy years existence has unquestionably been of no small service both to the Connexion and to the town and neighbourhood in the promotion of the cause of religion, and civilisation amongst a class of honest industrious folk, who would have been cared for in earlier days by no other beneficent agency.[61]

As already noted, the building of the old chapel had been made possible by the gift of land and substantial financial assistance from a wealthy rope-manufacturer, John Andrew, who followed his children into Primitive Methodism, becoming a local preacher. On his death in 1825

he left £100 to the British and Foreign Bible Society; £100 to the Wesleyan Missionary Society; and £100 to the Primitive Methodist Missions.[62] His daughter, E.[?Ellen], also a local preacher, married Thomas Steele, son of James Steele, himself a man of substance and as the first Primitive Methodist Circuit Steward, one of the architects of the infant connexion.[63] The names of all four are listed as preachers on the Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Plan for July/Oct.1825. His son, John Andrew, jun., was until 1826 on the Book Committee, and the Tunstall General Committee, and was twice mayor of Congleton, 1840 and 1848,[64] but had probably by then left the Primitives for the Wesleyans. There was financial backing for Primitive Methodism in Hull, from where, under the leadership of William Clowes, they missioned the eastern side of the country. A substantial chapel was erected in Mill Street in 1819, £1,438.2s.9d. being secured as loans from four of the chapel's first trustees.[65] The major part of this loan was from Edward Taylor, a wealthy rag merchant. He held connexional as well as local office being one of the earliest members of the Hull branch of of the General Managing Committee and a representative of Hull Circuit at the Preparatory Meeting at Nottingham, August 1819, and at the first Primitive Methodist Conference, 1820, held in Hull.[66]

At Englesea Brook, an early Primitive Methodist base in rural Cheshire, the chapel of 1828 was financed and supported by two prosperous farming families, the Salmons, who gave the land on which it was built, and the Hardings. Nieces of James Bourne married into both families. The chapel was enlarged in 1832 by the addition of a gallery to accommodate box pews, which were let to better off families, not perhaps Sutcliffe's "sleek grocers", but nonetheless somewhat above the

labouring poor, literally so in their gallery above the free seats below.[67] The leading layman in Cheshire Primitive Methodism was Thomas Bateman of Chorley, 1799-1897, wealthy farmer and land surveyor, sometime vice-chairman of Nantwich Board of Guardians, and twice President of the Primitive Methodist Conference.[68]

J.C.C.Probert writing about Cornish Primitive Methodism took a dim view of their financial capabilities concluding that the most distinctive feature of all must have been their complete lack of business sense. He cited cases of several chapels which continually teetered on the verge of bankruptcy and the attempt by the St.Austell Circuit to mission North East Cornwall, South East Cornwall, Plymouth, Exeter and North Devon all at the same period, so overstretching resources that all the missions ceased and the St.Austell Circuit became weaker than before.[69] In 1843 it asked the Redruth Circuit to take it over and five years later a similar request was sent to the Tunstall and Burland Circuits. Eventually it was taken over by the Connexional Missionary Committee. In mitigation he pointed out, that given the scarcity of middle-class members who could have provided much-needed money and a stabilising leadership and their occupational structure, the Primitive Methodists were very susceptible to economic depression. The closure of a mine could result in the end of a chapel.[70] The reaction of the Tunstall circuit to the St.Austell request indicates that such problems were not confined to Cornwall. Their meeting on 11 September 1848 resolved

> That the depressed financial condition of this Circuit prevents us from taking up the St.Austell Circuit as a Branch of this Circuit.[71]

The Primitive Methodists' primary concern was, of course, with matters spiritual rather than temporal, the saving of souls. Distractions were

to be avoided, be they politics, popular recreations, or even some of the early activities of the teetotallers (which were regarded as too secular), or apparently innocent pastimes such as going to see the railway on a Sunday with one's wife.[72] However, financial constraints could not be ignored. Before there were chapel buildings to be funded, preachers had to be paid.[73] In March 1846 the Tunstall circuit was able to report with satisfaction

> That we consider the Circuit prosperous in Spirituals and temporals both in the regular currency of the Circuit and its chapel matters.[74]

The Bible Christians' appeal was to a similar constituency to the Primitives, though geographically largely confined to Devon and Cornwall. An analysis of the baptismal registers of the two Shebbear circuits for the period 1818-1840 revealed in the proportion of yeomen to labourers that in this predominantly rural area of North Devon the Bible Christians enjoyed the support of a respectable local yeomanry.[75] A report on the opening of a chapel at Bradford in the Shebbear circuit in 1839 speaks of the "praiseworthy conduct of the Yeomen in the neighbourhood, that they drew nearly all the materials free of expense, to the amount of £24".[76] It was from such stock that their founders sprang. Politically the Bible Christians helped lay the foundations of the Liberalism that is a feature of the West Country to this day. At the Bodmin district meeting of the Bible Christians in 1878, a speaker assumed that his hearers would be Liberals, though he conceded that a Christian might conceivably be a Conservative.[77]

The Methodist New Connexion was an urban church, the most urban of all the Methodist bodies,[78] and its appeal was to the rising middle class.[79] The Methodist New Connexion came into being in the age of Tom

Paine and the French Revolution. Its founder, Alexander Kilham, freely drew upon *The Rights of Man* for much of his rhetoric, and this was echoed by subsequent writers,

> If there be any analogy between secular and ecclesiastical government-between the rights and privileges of a citizen and the rights and privileges of a member of a Christian Church, then the question as to whether equity and safety be on the side of spiritual despotism or a popular and representative government, may be regarded as settled.[80]

The dynamic new potters of Hanley who built Bethesda Chapel and whose monuments line its walls, the Ridgways, Hicks, Meighs, and Clementsons, also laid the foundations of Hanley as the commercial and political heart of the rising pottery towns. An enemy of the Ridgways, James Amphlet, editor of the *Pottery Gazette*, in an article published on 10 July 1824 dubbed them "The Radical Saints of Shelton". The Methodist New Connexion was imbued with a Liberal tradition. Charles Shaw (1832-1906), born in Tunstall and sometime New Connexion minister, took an active part in Liberal politics[81] and contributed leaders to the strongly Liberal *Oldham Express.* His book, *When I was a Child,* published in 1903 and giving a vivid account of his childhood experiences in the workhouse and the pottery trade, is in many ways a Liberal tract.

In the agitation leading up to the formation of the Methodist New Connexion, one of the key areas where a greater degree of control was sought was in the running of the Book-Room. This was more than just a question of harnessing the power of the press. At a meeting of delegates from the different circuits held in Leeds in 1797 it was resolved

> That it is necessary, in order to restore and preserve peace in the Connexion, that two or three delegates from each

> district should in future be at liberty to attend the Conference every year; and that the delegates should have voices in making or altering the rules of the Methodist Societies, and in the appropriation of the money in the hands of the preachers on account of the Kingswood School, Yearly Collection, and the Book-Room.[82]

The Book Room was clearly seen as an important source of connexional funds and therefore control of the Book Room was one of the key elements in the financial control of the Connexion. Wesley discovered at an early stage that publishing could be a profitable enterprise and said, in 1780, that

> Two and forty years ago I wrote many small tracts, generally a penny a piece; some of these had such a sale as I never thought of, and by this means I became rich.[83].

In his lifetime Wesley regarded the Book Room as his private property, nonetheless he ploughed back all the profits into the cause.[84]

The Methodist system involves an elaborate administration at all levels - society (chapel), circuit, district, and conference - and all branches of Methodism adopted this system. The connexional book rooms provided a unifying force, a stamp of authority, and a sense of connexional identity.[85] This was particularly the case with the Primitive Methodists, the least centralised of the Methodist denominations with power concentrated at district level. This was the significance of the Bournes' winning the Book Room for Bemersley against stiff competition from Hull in 1821. This enabled the Bournes to maintain some sort of, albeit diminishing control, over the connexion until finally overwhelmed by James Bourne's bankruptcy in the 1840's.[86] Similarly the Thornes of Shebbear exercised their Connexional authority through their control of the Bible Christian Book-Room.[87]

Robert Currie noted that most of the leaders of what he termed the

offshoots from Wesleyan Methodism were men of property, and that such divisions occurred when some relatively prosperous and determined lay leader came along who was able to articulate discontent.[88] Hugh Bourne had sufficient means to build chapels, employ a missionary, and later to run a press. William O'Bryan, founder of the Bible Christians, had a farm which enabled him to spend "hundreds of pounds in his efforts to extend Methodism".[89] George Pocock, founder of the Tent Methodists, financed the movement for several years, employed one or more missionaries, and built a chapel a year for seven years, at least one of which remained his private property for nearly a quarter of a century.[90]

Writing from within the Established Church, the author of a tract of 1805 from which the following paragraph is taken, had a cynical view of the pecuniary advantages accruing from "the formation of new sects.

> The formation of new sects certainly does often originate in the mercenary and interested views of individuals, as well as in their fanaticism and errors. All who are conversant with the character and proceedings of those who take out licenses for preaching, or become leaders of religious parties, are sensible of this; conventicles also are sometimes erected under the influence merely of those who derive a profit from the construction of the building, and the author of this address himself has witnessed the establishment of one congregation in a large market-town, which was first collected at the house of a joiner, who was afterwards employed to build a tabernacle for the assembly which he had gathered together.[91]

Notes

I. Bernard Semmel, *The Methodist Revolution* (1973)

2. E.P.Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (1968) p.436.

3. Stephen Hatcher, *God is building a house* (Englesea Brook, 1999)

4. John Andrew, "Memoir of the late Mr.John Andrew", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1826, p.77; J.H.A. [Photocopy. Original in private hands] MSS.Lease dated 9 May, 1822, made between John Andrew(1), William Booth(2), and Hugh Bourne(3); J.H.A.[Pending deposit at M.C.A.] MSS.Primitive Methodist Tunstall District Chapel Schedules, 1879.

5. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, pp.230-2.

6. J.H.A. MSS.Conveyance dated 12 July, 1842, and made between George Harding(1) and The Trustees of an intended Chapel at Mow Cop.

7. John Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Late Venerable Hugh Bourne*, Vol.I (1855-6) p.50.

8. *The Life of Joseph Barker, written by himself* (1880) p.116.

9. M.C.A., DDHB2/1, Hugh Bourne, MSS.Autobiography, A Text, f127.

10. Rev.J.M.Turner, *After Thompson - Methodism and the English Working Class, An Essay in Historiography* (Halifax, 1989) p.59.

11. John Wesley, *Sermons, on Several Occasions* (Leeds, 1825) Sermon LIII, *On the Use of Money.*

12. Ibid., Sermon CXIII, *On Riches.*

13. Ed. John Telford, *The Letters of John Wesley,* Ed.John Telford (1931) Vol.IV, p83.

14. E.A.Rose - Bookseller, *Catalogue No.12, Church History* (Mottram, n.d.) p.2.

15. Joseph Barker, *The Gospel Triumphant: or, A Defence of Christianity against the Attacks of the Socialists; and an Exposure of the infidel Character and mischievous tendency of the Social System of R.Owen* (Newcastle, 1839) pp.285 & 395.

16. William Arthur, *The Successful Merchant: Sketches of the Life of Mr.Samuel Budget* (3rd.Ed.,1852) p.19.

17. Geoffrey E.Milburn, "Piety, Profit and Paternalism: Methodists in Business in the North-East of England, c1760-1920", in *W.H.S.Proc.* Vol.XLIV (Dec.1983),p57.

18. Margaret Batty, *Stages in the Development and Control of Wesleyan Lay Leadership 1791-1878* (1988)

19. Ibid., p.115.

20. Maldwyn Edwards, *After Wesley* (1935) p.151.

21. James Everett, *Methodism As It Is*, (1863) Vol.I, p.87.

22. M.C.A. MSS. letter of Jabez Bunting to George Marsden, June 10, 1803; T.P.Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting* (1859) Vol.I, pp.143-7.

23. J.H.Rigg, *Jabez Bunting, A Great Methodist Leader* (n.d.) p.87.

24. Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism* (1899) p.188.

25. Quoted with relish by E.P.Thompson in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963)

26. *Wesleyan Methodist Minutes of Conference* 1803-1878.

27. James Everett, *Methodism As It Is* (1863) Vol.1, p.216.

28. *Methodist Magazine*, 1801, p.536.

29. *Minutes of Conference*, 1851, p183.

30. *Wesley Place Sunday School Tunstall - Centenary Souvenir - 1799-1899* (Tunstall, 1899).

31. Julia Stewart Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (Wisconsin, 1984) p.77.
Joseph Sutcliffe was stationed in the Burslem Circuit form 1811-1813.

32. *The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) p.48.

This was part of a wider campaign for "The Reformation of Morals", reactivated when Wilberforce persuaded George III to issue a "Proclamation" against Vice and Immorality, 1787. In the same year David Simpson, the Evangelical incumbent of Christ Church Macclesfield with Methodist sympathies, lent his support with an address entitled *A Discourse on the Royal Proclamation for the suppression of Vice: with a Letter to the Magistrates of the Borough of Macclesfield.*, 1787.

33. Stephen Hatcher, *William Clowes and the Decade of Evangelism* (Englesea Brook, 1993) p.3.

34. Robert F.Wearmouth, *Methodism and the Working-Class Movements of England 1880-1850* (1937) pp.43-4.; Maldwyn Edwards, *After Wesley* (1935) p.37, and Robert Reid, *Land of Lost Content, The Luddite Revolt, 1812* (1986) p.118.

35. *Arminian Magazine*, 1789, p.49.

36. For example Brunswick Wesleyan Chapel, Macclesfield, built in 1823, and Brunswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1820-21.

37. *Methodist Magazine* 1800, p.479.

38. *Wesleyan Conference Minutes*, 1818.

39. *Methodist Magazine* 1826, p.689.

40. Thomas H.Walker was a controversial figure. A handbill dated 29 May 1824 was issued to counter "base and malignant insinuation which have been propagated against the character of the Rev.T.H.Walker." The signatories engaged "to aid in a legal prosecution as soon as it can be instituted against any person or persons concerned in the above iniquitous transaction".

41. *Halifax Express*, 25 May, 1839 (Quoted from *The Bath Post*).

42. J.H.A.[pending deposit at S.R.O.] MSS.Account book of Pittshill Primitive Methodist Sunday School 1830-1873

43. William Antliffe, *The Life of the Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1872) p.228.

44. John Walford, *Memoirs of the Life... of... Hugh Bourne* (1855-6) Vol.II, p.101.

45. Frederick Hodgkinson under the nom de plume Frederick Harper, *Joseph Capper* (1962).

The writer has Hodgkinson's copies of Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903) and Arthur Wilkes and Joseph Lovatt, *Mow Cop and the Camp Meeting Movement* (Leominster, 1942), his principal sources for Capper, and William Antliff, *The Life of the Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1872), his principal source for this incident, none of which name Capper as "the speeching radical".(Antliff was the editor of Walford from which his *Life* is derived.) Tom Meadley in his review of *Joseph Capper* in the Methodist recorder 28 June, 1962, challenged Hodgkinson on this point, and cited the then most recent biography, *Hugh Bourne*, John T.Wilkinson, 1952, in support of his view that the identity of "the speeching radical" was not known. In an unconvincing reply, *Methodist Recorder*, 3 August, 1962, Hodgkinson repeated his claim that it was Capper, but without producing further evidence.

46. Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903) p.142.

47. S.R.O., D3015, Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit, Tunstall Branch, Plans Jan./April 1822, (No.26 J.Cappur[sic]), July/Oct.1827, July/Oct. 1831 (No.19 J.Capper)and Jan./April 1833

Arthur Wilkes, op.cit., p.156, claimed to have seen a framed plan for 1836 in the vestry of the now demolished Jubilee Chapel in Tunstall showing Capper's name at No.18. However a surviving Tunstall plan for April/July 1836 [S.C.R.O.] does not list Capper's name, but a plan for July/Oct.1830 [J.H.S.] does at No.18. It is almost certain that this last plan is the one which Wilkes saw and it must be assumed that either Wilkes or his printer could not read his writing mistaking an "0" for a "6". The significance of all this is that it has been commonly supposed that Capper's name was removed from the plan because of his alleged involvement with the Chartist riots in 1842, and in particular his subsequent imprisonment. In fact as can be seen from the surviving Primitive Methodist records, his name was removed ten years earlier.

48. Charles Shaw, op.cit., p.147.

49. J.H.A.[pending deposit at S.R.O] MSS.Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Minutes 1836-1842 and 1842-1854

50. *Minutes of the seventeenth Annual Conference of the Primitive Methodist Connexion...* 1836

51. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes.

52. Michael S.Edwards, *Purge This Realm: A Life of Joseph Rayner Stephens* (1994) p.89.

53. Tunstall P.M. Circuit Minutes.

54. E.A.Rose, "The Methodist New Connexion 1797-1907", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XLVII (Oct.1990) p.247.

55. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes.

56. *Northern Liberator*, 16 March 1839, quoted in Robert Collis, *The Pitmen of the Northern Coalfield* (1987) p.159.

57. *Primitive Methodist Magazine* 1840, p330.
The rule forbade political activity by the itinerants (local preachers were "strongly recommended to desist")

58. John Angell James, *Protestant Nonconformity: A sketch of its general history, with an account of the rise and present state of its various denominations in the Town of Birmingham* (1849) p.223.

59. A.D.Gilbert, *Religion and Society in England* (1976) p.62.

60. K.D.M.Snell, *Church and Chapel in the North Midlands: Religious Observance in the Nineteenth Century* (Leicester, 1991) p.44.

61. *Macclesfield Courier and Herald*, 18 April 1891.

62. Obituary in *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1826, pp.73-81.

63. H.B.Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, Vol.I, (c.1905) pp.156 & 541-2; *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1827.

James Steele's name appears in the list of subscribers, in shares of £25 each, to the cost of erecting Tunstall Courthouse in 1816 - John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent* (1843) Appendix IX.

64. Robert Head, *Congleton Past and Present* (1887) p.54.

65. Stephen Hatcher op.cit., p4.

66. H.B.Kendall, op. cit., p.378.

67. *The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) p.323.

The letting of pews was the usual way in which chapels secured a

regular income for maintenance, heating and lighting, and, most importantly, the servicing of the loans taken out to build or extend the chapel. Some chapels were financed by the issue of shares, the Free Methodists in particular favouring this system. At Redruth, in 1839, 670 £1 shares were sold by the reformers and a chapel erected. The prospectus issued at Liskard in 1837 stated that the shareholders would enjoy any dividends which might accrue at the end of the year, i.e. any balance after the trust accounts had been settled for the year.[Thomas Shaw, *A History of Methodism in Cornwall* (Truro, 1967) p.39.] The Royal Crescent chapel, Jersey, opened in 1869 and described as "the finest Chapel in the Bible Christian Connexion", issued bank notes. A surviving note has a vignette of the fine colonnaded chapel, surrounded by the name, followed by "I promise to pay the Bearer on demand One Pound British Sterling, value received. Under the guarantee of the Trustees of the above Church. Payable at..." with a line for the treasurer's signature. [Oliver A.Beckerlegge, "A Methodist Bank Note", in *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XLVII (Oct.1989), p.112.]

68. *Reprints of Reports of Presentations to Mr.Thomas Bateman of Chorley* (Nantwich, 1871 and Hanley, 1883)

69. c.f. Hull where prosperous members of the Hull chapel helped to finance and organise the extensive missionary activity of the Hull circuit.[S.G.Hatcher, *The Origin and Expansion of Primitive Methodism in the Hull Circuit, 1819 - 1851* (University of Manchester Ph.D.thesis 1993)]

70. J.C.C.Probert, *Primitive Methodism in Cornwall* (n.d.) p.109.

71. Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Minutes.

72. Ibid., 18 Sept.1837.

73. In December 1810, James Nixon and Thomas Woodnorth were "moved in their minds" to support William Clowes as a full time preacher by each giving him five shillings a week out of their wages.[*The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) p.87.]

74. Tunstall Circuit Minutes, 15 March 1847.

75.Michael J.L.Wickes, *The West Country Preachers: A new history of the Bible Christian Church 1815 - 1907* (Bideford, 1987) p.73.

76. *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1839, p.193.

77. Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (Truro, 1967) p.100.

78. E.A.Rose, op.cit., p252.

79. The upward mobility of some took them from the Methodist New Connexion to the Wesleyans. In the 1870's the Berisford family, ribbon manufacturers of Congleton, transferred from the comparatively humble Queen Street M.N.C. chapel to the grander Wagg Street Wesleyan chapel. One should not necessarily assume, as some have done, that religion was the "midwife of class". Chapels were very much the product of the society in which they were set.

80. William Cooke, *Methodist Reform and its Originator*, (1850) p.69. William Cooke, 1806-1884, was born in Burslem, Staffordshire, and rose to considerable prominence in the Methodist New Connexion. In 1843-6 he was stationed in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, where he began writing his major theological work, *Christian Theology*, in answer to the ideas being promulgated at the time by Joseph Barker, whom he engaged in public debate.
[*The Authentic Report of the Theological Discussion between Rev.W.Cooke and Mr.Jos.Barker, held during ten nights in Newcastle* (London 1845)]

81. Walker, William, *Builders of Zion: The Story of Zion Chapel, Lees, near Oldham...* , (1919) p.143.

82. [John Ridgway], *An Appology for the Methodists of the New Connexion... by a Trustee and a Layman* (Hanley, 1815) p.9

83. Quoted in Frank Cumbers, *The Book Room* (1956) p.78.

84. Details of Wesley's income and expenditure are given in L.Tyerman, *The Life and Times of Rev.John Wesley*, Vol.III (1872) pp.615-616.

85. All, including the smallest e.g. the Tent Methodists, issued connexional magazines, which were extensively used to disseminate the party line - see E.Alan Rose, *A Checklist of British Methodist Periodicals* (1981).

86. Frank Baker, "James Bourne (1781-1860) and the Bemersley Book-Room", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX (Sept.1956) pp.138-150.

87. Thomas Shaw, *The Bible Christians 1815-1907*, p.62.

88. Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided* (1968) p.55.

89. F.W.Bourne, *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History, 1815-1900* (1905) pp.18 & 20.

90. George Eayrs, *Wesley, Kingswood and its Free Churches* (Bristol, 1911) pp.215-16; K.P.Russell, *Memoirs of the Rev.John Pyer* (1965) p.56; George Pocock, *A Statement of Facts Connected with the Ejectment of Certain Ministers from the Society of Wesleyan Methodists in the City of Bristol, in February and March, 1820* (Bristol, 1820)

91. *A Serious Address to Seceders and Sectarists of Every Description who exist in Separation from the Church of England...* 1805
(in *Religious Tracts dispersed by the S.P.C.K. in twelve volumes*, Vol.III., 1811.)

CHAPTER 3

The Bournes and Primitive Methodism

Writers of histories of Primitive Methodism from John Petty, who traced the development of the movement from its birth to the Conference of 1859,[1] to Julia Stewart Werner, who claimed her account to be the first not by a Primitive Methodist preacher,[2] have all acknowledged Hugh Bourne, 1772-1852, and William Clowes, 1780-1851, as "the two principal founders of the Primitive Methodist Church".[3] Hugh's brother James, 1781-1860, also played a major role in the development of the movement. However, the scandal of his bankruptcy in 1843 soured the Connexion's appreciation of his contribution and he has almost been written out of Primitive Methodist history. Even his obituary in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* devoted nearly as many column inches to the bankruptcy as to rest of his career.[4]

Amongst the pottery produced as souvenirs for the celebrations commemorating the centenary of the first camp meeting in 1907 are two plates illustrated with lithographs of Bourne and Clowes and with the inscriptions "Hugh Bourne ORGANISER" and "William Clowes EVANGELIST".[5] These epigrams neatly epitomise the popular perception of their respective contributions to the movement they are said to have founded. Albert Birchenhough, for instance, writing in 1907, described Hugh Bourne as "a born organiser and ecclesiastical administrator... a man of method and detail, and ... thoroughly at home in the ecclesiastical councils of the Church". He described William Clowes as "a man of commanding presence... of flaming speech, and an earnest evangelist".[6]

Although in a centenary article in the connexional magazine,

Rev.W.Mottram said of Bourne that

> ...Full justice has not been done to him [Hugh Bourne] as yet... I hold that the man, Hugh Bourne, is a striking spiritual phenomenon, a rare character, a great evangelist, one of the most potent Christian workers of the first half of the nineteenth century, and a forerunner of the aggressive and philanthropic evangelism of the present day.[7]

John Petty, an early official historian of Primitive Methodism, was probably nearer the mark in his assessment

> In pulpit and platform efforts, Mr.Clowes was incomparably superior to Mr.Bourne; in legislative or administrative ability he was immeasurably inferior.

He does, however, note that

> Mr.Bourne's influence was exercised with more apparent authority and occasional harshness and severity; Mr.Clowes' with more paternal kindness, and a winning sweetness of disposition and manner.[8]

This somewhat acid comment may reflect that, at the time Petty was compiling his History, the air may still have been laden with the sound of grinding axes. However, even Thomas Bateman and John Walford, who would have counted themselves among Bourne's friends and family,[9] acknowledged that

> Mr.Bourne... had his *failings!*... From his father [he] inherited a temper, impetuous, hasty, and overbearing... [10]

What were the elements in the background of Hugh Bourne that prepared him, with his brother James, to take responsibility for laying the foundations of the organisation and administrative structure of the Primitive Methodist Church? A popular perception of Hugh Bourne was of an unsophisticated rustic from moorland peasant stock

> who, despite the obscurity of his birth and training began early to study history, science, literature, and the learned languages, so that in the meridian of life he became fitted for editorial, literary, and legislative work.[11]

In the 1870s, when the Primitive Methodist Church felt that its

distinctive identity was being subsumed in the the upward social mobility of its members[12] and that there was a danger of alienating its true constituency, the working classes, its Conference claimed as "simply a matter of [historical] fact" that

> Wesleyan Methodism has sprung from the bosom of the Church of England; the leading Nonconformists of our country have sprung from Puritan forefathers, who also came form the bosom of the same Church. But Primitive Methodism has no ecclesiatical pedigree of which to boast. It has sprung from a root out of a dry ground - the lowly working classes of English society. The other churches of our country have been, and are, more or less identified with the upper or middle classes of society. Among the sons of toil we see the rock whence we were hewn, and the hole of the pit whence we were digged.[13]

The impression of Hugh Bourne as a country rustic was reinforced by his appearance. Thomas Bateman in his memoir of Hugh Bourne published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* described their first meeting in 1819.

> ...he presented no great set off in his apparel. His hat, although it might have seen better days, had never been "rounded in dandy style." He had a blue coat, on which the winds of a former winter had possibly blown; velveteen small clothes, reaching but just below the knees, blue stockings, and a pair of strong shoes. Now, however this dress might comport within the moorlands of Staffordshire, it was not exactly suited to the taste of this part of Cheshire... [14]

John Ward somewhat patronisingly described leaders, James Steele,[15] Hugh Bourne, and his brother James as "men of humble station and acquirements, though above the rank of working people"[16] James Steele was, in fact, a person of some standing and substance in Tunstall, not only within Methodism, being a class leader and trustee of the Wesleyan chapel before his involvement in Primitive Methodism, but also in the town. He married into an old Cheshire family,[17] and entered into business as a china manufacturer.[18] He was an active participant in the development of the town, his name appearing one the list of shareholders in the Tunstall court-house and market erected in 1816.[19]

Hugh Bourne would probably have thought of himself in similar terms to his description of the twelve apostles in his Ecclesiastical History:

> Our Lord's twelve messengers or apostles were, it appears, selected from the middle walks of life, and it would seem that they were diligent, industrious, and intelligent men. Matthew, from his situation as a publican, or collector of taxes, must have been rather higher.[20]

The Bourne family also were not without means or social standing in their local community, having been farmers and businessmen in the locality for a number of generations. Joseph Bourne, father of Hugh and James, was churhwarden of Norton in 1797 as was his eldest son John in 1803. Joseph was also churchwarden of Stoke, the mother church of the district, in 1772, the year of Hugh's birth.[21] An eyewitness, who resided at Bemersley in 1841, described James Bourne as a "genial person, attentive to the amenities of life", whose appearance was "that of a robust English farmer" who travelled about the neighbourhood in "an ordinary country farmer's gig."[22]

John Bourne, 1697-1760,[23] grandfather of Hugh and James, as well as being a farmer,[24] was engaged in the wheelwrighting and timber trades. A man of great industry and prudent in the management of his farm and other businesses, he accumulated wealth and was able to place his children on farms, or in trades, that "put them on a level with the respectable yeomen of the neighbourhood".[25] At the time of his marriage in January 1763. Joseph Bourne,[26] the father of Hugh and James, was employed in his father's business.[27] He then took advantage of the rapidly expanding pottery trade[28] to travel in pottery, moving to Greenock, at the end of 1763 or the beginning of 1764.[29] The travelling in pottery proved remunerative[30] and having made money, he returned to Abbey Farm in about 1767.[31] He then took Ford Hays Farm, probably by

March, 1768. He resumed his father's business of wheelwright and timber dealer. However, there is evidence that the Bourne enterprise had developed from wheelwrighting into technological advances in flint milling, and, through John Bourne's son-in-law William Sherratt, from millwrighting into even more sophisticated advances in engineering and technology in the field of pumping and steam engines.[32] It is possible that the transition from wheelwrighting to millwrighting was made by John Bourne, or by John working with his son Joseph, and possibly also with his future son-in-law William Sherratt.

There is evidence that James Brindley, the famous engineer, also wheelwright and millwright, may have been associated with the Bournes. Simeon Shaw, who had spoken with Joseph Bourne and his sons on the subject, jointly credits Joseph Bourne, with John Gallemore, James Brindley and Edward Bedson, with inventing the method of grinding flint in water,[33] a vital development for health of the operatives in that industry. The invention of this process is attributed to Thomas Benson, who patented his ideas in 1726 and 1732[34] being first developed by him at Ivy House Mill, Hanley.[35] Important improvements to the design of flint milling machinery were made by James Brindley, with whom Joseph Bourne was apparently on intimate terms, in about 1756, and, according to Shaw, by Joseph Bourne,[36] who "constructed the mill-work for grinding the flints, both at Cookshut Green,[37] and the Ivy House Mills."[38] From entries in his notebook, 1755-8, James Brindley is known to have worked at "Mr.John Baddles"[Baddeley's] Flint Mill [possibly referring to Ivy House] Abbey Hulton Mill [corn] and Bucknall Flint Mill,[39] all of which were a short distance of Abbey Farm, the home of the Bournes and with whom, according to Shaw, he collaborated.

The farm at Bemersley, to which the Bourne family moved in 1788, was a substantial holding by the standard of the time. In 1840, Hugh and James Bourne tenanted one hundred and eleven acres, including the farmhouse and a substantial range of buildings, at an annual rent of one hundred and twenty pounds,[40] and in the long term, it was the farm which underpinned the family finances and much of their Methodist activity. The 1851 Census Return, eight years after James Bourne's bankruptcy, described him as a farmer of ninety seven acres, and that of 1861 as a farmer of ninety one acres. There are, however, indications that as the Primitive Methodist Connexion developed, other Primitive Methodists became suspicious of the Bournes' business activities. At a time of financial stringency in the 1840s the Tunstall circuit preachers' meeting resolved

> That this preachers meeting disapproves of Bro.Hugh Bourne receiving a salary as Editor and at the same time being a partner with his brother in the farm at Bemersley.[41]

Ellen Bourne gave her children the rudiments of an education, including Hugh, whom she taught to read and write and gave him "an acquaintance with the first rules of arithmetic."[42] He displayed early evidence of an enquiring mind, taking "great delight in reading, especially the historical parts of the bible, often interrogating his mother on any difficult passage that caught his attention."[43] At the age of seven, he was sent to a school at Werrington taken by a Mr.Samuel Cooper, a self taught scholar. Bourne wrote in his manuscript autobiography

> I well remember writing "1779" in my copy-book as the year of our Lord, so that I was then only seven years of age... Here I had to tug at arithmetic and at the grammar and dictionary, and learning the meaning of words in the dictionary took my fancy considerably.

It was suggested to Hugh's father that he should be "brought up for a parson" and he was removed from Mr.Cooper and sent to Bucknall endowed school. Hugh described the master, Thomas Harrison as "a great scholar, but not quite a capital teacher".[44] Harrison was succeeded by W.Bennison, whom Bourne found to be an excellent teacher and under whom he made rapid progress. In an early display of leadership qualities he soon became head scholar.[45] However, at the age of twelve or thirteen Bourne's father withdrew him from the school to employ him in the family business. This caused deep resentment in Hugh and may have been one of the reasons for his harsh view of his father. He nonetheless continued and extended his studies in any spare time he had.

> When quite taken from school my zeal for reading and study was intense. I went through arithmetic afresh, with geometry. I also paid attention to astronomy and natural philosophy, and made progress in history and geography: but my chief study was the Bible and religion; often redeeming a few minutes from mealtimes, and frequently after the hard day's work, I continued reading till midnight, when the family were in bed.[46]

On moving to Bemersley in 1788, a larger farm than Ford Hayes, Joseph Bourne gave up his other trades and "principally employed himself in farming pursuits".[47] Hugh, now sixteen, was apprenticed to his uncle, William Sherratt,[48] a celebrated millwright and engineer. This gave Hugh the opportunity to pursue further his thirst for scientific knowledge. William Sherratt, who called himself a "millwright", was a "very ingenious and able engineer"[49] and has been favourably compared to James Brindley,[50] with whom he may have been associated.[51] An early example of his work was a water engine erected at Keele Hall in 1771 to pump water for the domestic water system.[52] He progressed to steam engines and in about 1776 completed a steam engine

for Josiah Spode at Stoke.[53] There is a reference in Brindley's notebook, which may indicate collaboration with James Brindley on the building of a steam engine at Little Fenton in 1756. Under the heading " Fire ingen Letle Fenton 1756" the entry reads

> March 15. With Sharit to saw pump staff at Kniprsly 2 days 0 6 0[54]

In 1788 Sherratt formed a partnership with James Bateman who had a foundry in Salford and they established a considerable business in the late eighteenth century supplying many of the steam engines that powered the early Lancashire cotton industry and those used in the mines.[55] Sherratt retained close links with North Staffordshire where he supplied a number of engines to collieries in the area.[56]. For Hugh Bourne working for his uncle opened up whole new horizons both in terms of his technical education and literally in the travelling that the business involved as he later acknowledged.

> I was a good deal employed in engineering, millwrighting, and machinery with my uncle, Mr.William Sherratt of Milton, about three miles from Bemersley, and this ... gave me an extensive knowledge of the surrounding country, for in those employments we moved about a good deal.[57]

Whilst working for his father, Hugh's "acquaintance with men and things" had been confined to the locality around the isolated farmstead at Ford Hayes. The circle of William Sherratt's acquaintance and business was large and extensive and this gave Hugh the opportunity of seeing and familiarising himself with different parts of the country. Working for his uncle opened Hugh's way to

> an acquaintance with various branches of natural philosophy, such as mechanics, hydrostatics, hydraulics, pneumatics, optics, and various applications of wind, water, and steam, to the purposes of mills, engines, and machinery in general.[58]

Walford said of Bourne that

> theories studied in private were in his business reduced to practice... so that he soon became proficient in engineering, and of great assistance to his uncle.[59]

Bateman concluded from various drawings and remarks in Bourne's writings that "it seems he principally followed the theory of Desaguliers"[60] Desaguliers was an advocate of the application of scientific method to technology whose ideas were taken up by distinguished engineers such as John Smeaton, 1724-1792, who said that mills were made not of opinion, but of calculation. Whether or not Hugh Bourne attended any of the public lectures given in Manchester and the north-west by John Banks on mechanics and natural philosophy, he could well have read his *Treatise on Mills* (1795), which was subscribed to by many scientists and engineers including William Sherratt.[61]

Primitive Methodism originated in a period of rapid scientific and technological advance and it is evident that Hugh Bourne and his family were at the cutting edge of these developments. John Walford, Hugh Bourne's nephew, literary executor, and biographer, fully recognised this context and pointed up the parallels between the improvements brought about by technologic and spiritual progress. Surveying the countryside around Mow Cop in 1855, he reflected that

> The primary cause of [the] great improvements in the moral and social condition of this district, was the introduction of gospel truths in simplicity of style among the people at the beginning of the present century... In considering other causes, we may name science, which has made gigantic strides here, as elsewhere, especially in the application of steam to machinery and railroads... The small and the monster engines are lifting water, coal, and iron-stone from the bowels of the earth... The great increase in the staple trade of this locality, without doubt, has bettered the temporal condition of the people; but this, without the aid of the higher and better motives and principles that flow from the gospel, has a tendency in many instances to demoralize rather than improve the morals and habits of men. Happily for these

> natives and residents of the mountain, the daystar from on high had visited them: Hugh Bourne had lifted aloft the blazing torch of divine revelation among them in the open air, so that when providence turned the tide of prosperity upon the neighbourhood, they were prepared to receive the abundance of wealth poured upon them.[62]

Unfortunately the drawings to which Bateman refers are now lost and there are only a few oblique references to contracts which Hugh Bourne worked on with his uncle. These include a bark crushing mill for tannery "in a distant part of Cheshire"[63] and a windmill in Hanley built in 1795.[64] These travels occasionally brought him into contact with Methodists. Travelling through Macclesfield on a Sunday, he saw people on their way to the Methodist Chapel[65] whom he perceived to "have real religion".[66] Unfortunately, although he found the Methodist clerk of works at Hanley windmill a kind, steady, and respectable man, he was, to his disappointment, an example of "real religion."[67]

Following his conversion, which typically for him came about largely as a result of private study, Hugh Bourne's business activities brought him into contact with the colliers of Harriseahead and district. The settlements rapidly springing up around newly sunk deep mines would have had much of the atmosphere of gold rush towns, with, in the eyes of Bourne, all the attendant vice and iniquity associated with such places, and the area around Harriseahead duly provided his first field of evangelistic activity. This contact began with the purchase of growing timber on a farm at Dales Green. This in itself would only have led to a brief sojourn in this "moral desert"[68] had he not been engaged by the manager of Stonetrough Colliery, probably to undertake engineering work. The precise nature of the work at the colliery, which was just being opened up at that time, is not entirely clear. Bourne in

Notices of the early life, published in 1834, merely refers to doing "some work there".[69] In his later manuscript autobiography, written c.1844, he writes that "the Stonetrough manager employed him to do wood-work for that colliery." However, Frank Baker may be correct in referring to "an engineering contract at Stonetrough Colliery",[70] perhaps even working on the steam engines referred to in a later sale advertisement.[71] This may be the reason for Bourne's association with the blacksmith Thomas Maxfield. Some years later, in a deed dated 11 June, 1811, Hugh is described as a "carpenter" and his brother, James, as a "farmer".[72]

Hugh Bourne referred to Stonetrough as being on the edge of "an estate belonging to a gentleman farmer, who was related to the family".[73] This was probably William Handley, c.1772-1842, whose name later appears in an advertisement for the letting of Stonetrough Colliery in 1828.[74] In about the year 1800, Hugh Bourne, together with his cousin and first convert, Daniel Shufflebottom, and William Handley undertook the building of a small chapel at Harriseahead on land given by Shufflebottom "for a small consideration".[75] Bourne supplied timber and materials to the value of about fifty pounds. The land was conveyed to Hugh Bourne, William Handley, Joseph Pointon and Joseph Mayer. When the building was put on Methodist trusts in 1803[76] William Handley continued as a trustee and also witnessed the petition registering the chapel on 13 September, 1805.[77] In the revival of 1804, prayer meetings were also held in Stonetrough House, adjoining the colliery, "being large and convenient".[78] Bourne noted in his journal in 1805

> Sunday, March 24th. - At Stonetrough, Joseph Hancock was converted, and others were in distress. The revival goes on. Glory to God.[79]

Hugh Bourne was not entering entirely virgin territory when he commenced his evangelistic activity around Harriseahead. Aaron Leese traced Methodist preaching in Harriseahead and Mow Cop back to the conversion of Thomas Mores about 1777 and refers to the formation of the first Methodist class in the area in the 1780's.[80] Bourne challenged Leese's version in a series of pamphlets[81] and claimed that in 1800 he "never knew of preaching or prayer meeting at Harriseahead" and that the only Methodist was "a respectable, though poor and persecuted woman - the late old Jane Hall". However, a class is listed in Burslem Circuit class lists for 1796 and 1797 which includes a number of the names mentioned by Leese.[82] The explanation of Bourne's view, apart from his increasing paranoia as he grew older about the significance of his role in origins of the movement, may have been that the class and preaching had been removed to Joseph Pointon's farm, near the summit of Mow Cop, later the site of the first camp meeting. Nonetheless the building of the chapel at Harriseahead, supported by Bourne's business and family contacts and his own resources, gave the Harriseahead society a permanence it might otherwise have lacked, and laid the foundations for further development.[83]

James Bourne became a Methodist shortly after his elder brother, Hugh, and from 1799, with Hugh and their mother attended the Methodist preaching services at Stanley Fields Farm, Ridgway, near to Bemersley.[84] According to his obituary, the only account of his early life and training, his education was much neglected in his youth, and , unlike his brother, he did not appear to possess a strong desire for mental improvement. However, he was, nonetheless, well read, particularly in ancient and modern history and sacred history and

geography, being encouraged by his elder brother who

> ...took James under his special superintendency, and by brotherly tuition instilled into his youthful mind a knowledge of the deep things of God.[85]

From as early as 1801 he was engaged in evangelical activity with his brother. In the early years, like his brother, he had to "make religious excursions when he could suit his business to allow of the time".[86] Thomas Russell was once told by an old servant of the Bournes

> ... that Mr.James Bourne has risen early on Saturday morning and laboured hard on the farm till noon, then set off to walk to Warrington, and sleep, which was thirty miles; then rise early on Sunday and go to Risley in Lancashire, preach three times, besides other services, return into Cheshire to sleep; then start home early on Monday and go to hoe potatoes in the heigh-fields in the afternoon.[87]

In 1808, Hugh resolved to devote most of his time and energies to his religious activities having "for some time been deeply impressed with the thought of having to relinquish his business, labour at large in promoting religion, and trust in the Lord for a living",[88] which in reality meant relying more and more on his brother to carry on the family business which was subsidising the evangelistic enterprise. For the period of about fifteen years up to 1824, when the Conference granted him a salary as Connexional Editor, Hugh relied almost entirely on his brother James for support in addition to the general financial support given to the cause and other practical help.[89] As the infant Connexion grew "James Bourne ardently engaged in procuring land for chapels at Tunstall, Talk-o'-th'-Hill, Rocester, and other places".[90] In many cases he continued to bear responsibility for these chapels as principal trustee. By 1810, Hugh reckoned that the brothers were "laying out upwards of thirty pounds a year in the support of their cause or connexion."[91] In addition to which they bore the expenses

connected with chapel building, for example the fifty pounds worth of building material given for Harriseahead Chapel, and the first camp meetings.

James Bourne was stationed as a travelling preacher, i.e. technically a full time paid Itinerant Preacher, in the Tunstall circuit from 1819, the first year lists of stations were published, until his appointment as Connexional Book Steward in 1824. In fact, as his brother from about 1808 "began by degrees to give up his business, and did not allow his business to interfere with his religious excursions"[92] James concentrated on his businesses, while at the same time maintaining his active involvement with circuit and connexional affairs.[93] In spite of doubts expressed by later writers as to his capabilities, writing with the benefit of hindsight coloured by the bankruptcy in 1843, his business activities, until overtaken by that debacle, seem to have met with a degree of success.

> Mr. Bourne at one time was a man of great commercial credit to the Staffordshire potteries. His name, affixed to a bill, was considered a sufficient guarantee for the repayment of thousands of pounds; and it is said that at one time his rent-roll amounted to £1,000 a year.[94]

By a Conveyance dated 3 February, 1803, the completed Harriseahead Chapel, which the Bournes had built with materials provided by themselves, was transferred to a body of eighteen Methodist trustees, including Hugh and James Bourne.[95] Harriseahead became a base for further evangelistic labours. In 1809, three men from Harriseahead "came into the lanes about Gratton",[96] where a house was registered on 29 August, 1809, the witnesses to the petition being inter alia Hugh and James Bourne.[97]

Harriseahead Chapel was followed by other building projects for the Wesleyans. In 1805 Hugh Bourne was involved in building a chapel at Norton for a society formed by him in 1801, and, with John Brindley, solicited donations in the area for this project[98] He recorded in his journal

> Wednesday, March 20th. - This day, at Mrs. David Leak's, we concluded on the size of a chapel for Norton. At this meeting we subscribed £25 5s..[99]

The chapel was registered on 8 Nov. 1805[100] and settled on Wesleyan trusts, the trustees including Hugh and James Bourne. A further chapel built in 1805 was at Brown Edge, with which Hugh Bourne had been associated from about 1803, when "Harriseahead, Norton, Brown Edge, Whitfield, Woodhouse Lane, Ridgway, and other places, were taken on his own private week-night plan".[101] Hugh and James Bourne witnessed the petition for the registration of "a chapel" at Brown Edge on 14 Dec., 1805[102] and continued a close association until 1811. He recorded in his journal that he preached in the chapel on Sunday 21 July, 1811 and on the following Wednesday, but it would appear that by October that year the Burslem Wesleyan Circuit had finally taken possession. In 1807/8 Hugh Bourne was directly involved in building a chapel at Market Drayton for a society which had existed from at least as early as 1796, installing the light fittings.[103]

Throughout this period, it is evident that the Bourne brothers were meticulous in attending to the legal formalities of registration and trusteeship of the preaching rooms and chapels with which they were associated. Hugh Bourne would have been as aware as the Methodist superintendents of the political threats to the Methodist system and system of itinerant preachers in the opening years of the nineteenth

century. In the period following the French Revolution, the governing classes were ever vigilant of the possiblity of potential political and social unrest, there was suspicion that itinerant preachers could be spreading sedition from place to place. This fear was fuelled by anti-Methodist propaganda, for example a pamphlet issued by the clergy of the Diocese of Lincoln referring to Methodists

> ...who attend and encourage a wandering tribe of fanatical teachers, mostly taken from the lowest and most illiterate classes of Society, among whom are to be found raving enthusiasts, pretending to divine impulses, of various and extraordinary kinds, practising exorcisms, and many other sorts of impostures and delusions, and obtaining thereby an unlimited sway over the minds of the ignorant multitude.[104]

Such itinerant preachers

> ... abuse the protection of their Meetings for purposes highly injurious to Church and State.

This attack, launched by George Pretyman-Tomline, Bishop of Lincoln, and Pitt's adviser on ecclesiastical patronage, was intended to smooth the way for the introduction of legislative restraints on Methodism. Although a bill introduced in 1800 was dropped, the threat continued to hang over Methodism until the defeat of Sidmouth's bill in 1811 and a New Toleration Act in 1812 effectively legalised the itinerancy. Official Methodism's hostility to what were perceived as the more extreme activities of various groups of revivalists may be seen, at least in part, as an attempt to counter this threat. The Methodist Conference of 1800 not only sought to enforce the strict observance of "order and regularity" but issued a loyal address, published in the London Gazette, expressing

> ... our sincere Respect for and Attachment to your Majesty's Person and Government, and our Detestation of all Sedition and Rebellion...
> ... We are determined to obey the Sacred injunctions of the God whom we serve, to pray for Kings and for all that are in Authority; to be subject to every ordinance of Man for the

> Lord's sake; to obey Magistrates; to be ready for every good Work; and to lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Godliness and Honesty.[105]

John Ward wrote of the Primitive Methodists that "the members are generally distinguished by the most peaceable demeanour, indifference to worldly politics, and inoffensive character.[106] Ward's experience was of North Staffordshire Primitive Methodism, still dominated at the time he was writing, c.1840, by the Bournes. Hugh Bourne, whilst resisting attempts to quench the revivalist fires, was nonetheless by background and inclination "fundamentally conservative"[107] and sought to keep within the law. He not only saw radical politics as a distraction from the saving of souls, but learnt in this early period the danger that if mere suspicion of political agitation could lead to government repression, overt agitation could lead to dire consequences. This was the reasoning behind his ejection of the "speeching radical" from the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1821 lest the government restrict the "liberty of conscience and worship" which it had extended in 1812, and even take "measures... to stop our camp meetings".[108] Bourne circulated a copy of the 1812 Act with other material issued for the guidance of the Primitive Methodist itinerants.[109]

The first English camp meetings presented a particular problem for Wesleyan Methodism, being held at a time when invasion scares and fears of Jacobinism were still rife. Reports of American camp meetings had been favourably received and published by the *Methodist Magazine* up to 1806,[110] but attitudes changed with the holding of the first English camp meeting on Mow Cop on May 31, 1807. It was even "gravely hinted" that Bourne himself was "disaffected towards his majesty's government and that these meetings were got up for political purposes."[111] Bourne

was only too well aware of the damage that such allegations could do to Methodism and sought to refute them in an account published immediately after the first camp meeting, at the instigation of his brother, James, in order to "prevent untrue reports" and in which he cited the example of an Irishman at the meeting who "exhorted all to pray for our gracious king, who was worthy, because he had granted liberty of conscience."[112] Nonetheless official Methodism took fright and the Methodist Conference held in July/August, 1807, prompted by the Burslem Circuit superintendent, John Riles resolved that

> It is our judgment, that even supposing [camp] meetings to be allowable in America, they are highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief: and we disclaim all connexion with them.

Back in Burslem Riles issued a handbill warning off his flock from associating with the camp meetings

> We are sorry that the Methodist Connexion has been charged as patronising such irregularity and disorder...
>
> This business was reconsidered by the Leaders and Stewards of the Burslem Society on Monday evening, July 6th, and they were unanimously of opinion, that the plan proposed by the Local Preachers, &c. on the Quarter-day [June 29], ought to be carried into effect, that the public might be informed that the official members are not accountable for the irregular proceedings of a few individuals; and after they have taken every step, that reason and prudence can suggest, they conceive, that no odium can justly attach to the Methodist Connexion on this account.[113]

Riles later confided to Bourne that he was motivated by fear of political repression.

> At the Methodist Conference which met July 27th, Mr. Riles got a sort of minute made against Camp Meetings. And after this, in conversation with Hugh Bourne, he expressed a fear lest such meetings should alarm the government. But H. Bourne saw no cause for such fear; and on Mr. R. further pressing it, he referred him to the power of God, which was able to protect.[114]

Hugh Bourne was a product of his own background, and his characteristic

reaction was to keep the camp meetings within the law and to attempt to ensure that all grounds for complaint were removed. Advertising two further meetings, Bourne assured his readers that in future steps would be taken

> To get the ground regularly licensed under the Toleration Act, that all interruption, or misbehaviour, in the time of meeting, may be prevented, or else punished as the law directs.[115]

Application was duly made to the Bishop's court at Lichfield to license open common near the top of Mow Cop for a second Mow Cop camp meeting, for which permission had been obtained from a freeholder. When this was refused for lack of a building, the Bourne brothers at their own expense duly erected a large wooden structure, together with three tents in the manner of American camp meetings, and a license was duly obtained by post.[116] As a further precaution both Hugh and James Bourne obtained licenses to preach from Stafford Quarter Sessions.[117] Such precautions proved to be prescient. A challenge to the legality of the second Mow Cop camp meeting by "Mr.Stevenson and another master potter"[118] was successfully warned off by the display of the notice of the license pinned to a board on the site, as Bourne noted in his journal with evident satisfaction

> I rather think with a fear lest I should take the law on them, under the Toleration Act, for disturbing the public worship.[119]

On Monday, 27 June 1808, the Burslem circuit meeting expelled Hugh and James Bourne "without [their] being summoned to a hearing, or being officially informed of the charge.[120] Bourne, whose private studies had included "the British Constitution, and the principles of jurisprudence",[121] was well aware of his right to a proper hearing.

> ...in addition to being a private member, I was a chapel trustee, which by rule entitled me to a hearing before expulsion.[122]

He claimed that he remained in the dark respecting the real charge or charges.[123] Antliff attributed the expulsions to the Bourne's "insubordination to the ant-camp-meeting law". Indeed the Burslem Circuit steward, a Mr.Walker, apparently later told Bourne that he understood that the expulsion was "for going to a camp meeting upon Mow."[124] Writing in 1836 from first hand knowledge of the event William Clowes said that

> I was at the Quarter Day at Burslem when H.B. was put out of Society as a private member, and the charge that was brought against him was for not attending his class. The leader said he had not been at his class for a long time, and they put him away.[125]

It is interesting to note that whereas the Wesleyan Methodist rules only refer to absence from meeting in class in general terms,

> The far greater number of those that are separated from us exclude themselves, by neglecting to meet in Class, and to use the other means of grace, and so gradually forsake us.[126]

The Primitive Methodists, in rules largely drafted by Hugh Bourne, adopted a far more specific regulation, although allowing for extenuating circumstances. The Primitive Methodist rule was that

> If a member be absent from class four weeks successively, without assigning any sufficient reason, such will be considered as no longer a member.[127]

Indeed the strictness of Primitive Methodist discipline in this matter was later manifested when Hugh Bourne's membership was withdrawn in 1848 "for non-attendance".[128]

Hugh Bourne, no doubt, considered his evangelistic labours "sufficient reason" for his absence in 1808. However, he was not strictly correct in his claim that he had "broken no rule or law of Wesleyan Methodism". Apart from any circuit prohibition of camp meetings, based on the Conference resolution, there was the question of the Bournes having taken out preaching licences. Whilst the expulsion of a member could

only be effected at a Leaders' or Trustees' meeting (Bourne was a trustee), according to a rule of 1803, "If any members of the Methodist Society apply to the Quarter Sessions for a licence to preach, without being approved as a Preacher by the Quarterly Meeting... such persons shall be expelled the Society." The Methodist Conference of 1803 had taken this step, following the lead of the London Circuit, to ban the practice of local preachers claiming exemption from the militia by taking out licences and thereby to prevent improper persons from becoming preachers or teachers solely for this purpose.[129] As with the camp meetings, this was another area where Methodism needed to be circumspect to avoid any possible ground for official censure, as was demonstrated when the Home Secretary, Lord Sidmouth, stated on 1 June 1809 that he believed licences were being taken out for this reason. However, unlike Sidmouth, who on presenting his Bill in 1811, noted that the list of people taking oaths included "cobblers, tailors, pig-drovers and chimney sweepers"[130] the Conference would not have considered have considered that such were per se unsuitable persons to preach, providing that their motives were proper.[131]

Hugh Bourne later had to confront a similar problem, that of materialistic rather than religious motivation, which threatened to undermine Primitive Methodism in the mid 1820s, a period of rapid expansion which led to less care in the selection of travelling preachers.

> The demands for missionaries was so great, that sufficient numbers possessing the requisite qualifications could not be obtained, and too little care was exercised in the selection. Unsuitable persons were thus introduced into the regular ministry, who proved to be a burden, and in some instances, a curse rather than a blessing.[132]

In a period which was "one of great commercial distress in the

manufacturing districts" when "thousands upon thousands were thrown out of employment, and suffered incredible hardships and privations" there were those to whom even the meagre allowance of a Primitive Methodist itinerant was a sufficiently tempting alternative to starvation or the workhouse. The result was an influx of incompetent preachers, who, in Bourne's words, were "running out" circuits, i.e. failing to recruit enough paid up members to support them and therefore running the circuits into debt and threatening the Connexion with ruin. Bourne tackled the problem with almost Buntingite ruthlessness "driving out the drones... living upon useful men's labours"[133] by pushing through the Conference of 1826 "Regulations to preserve the Connexion".[134]

Professor Ward has questioned whether the Methodist Conference was primarily politically motivated in condemning the camp meetings. He points out that the Mow Cop meeting had no political significance, that 1807 was a year of low social tension, and that in any event political animosity, as demonstrated by the attempted legislation in 1800 and Sidmouth's Bill, was directed against the regular itinerancy.[135] Henry Rack sees the camp meetings as a symptom of the general conflict over popular evangelism and rival policies of aggressive evangelism or pastoral consolidation.[136] Bourne's expulsion was, therefore, a response to internal pressures with Wesleyan Methodism as well as a reaction to external threats. It can be seen in the context of the discomfort in official Wesleyanism at revivalist excesses over which it had little control. The Conference of 1803 sought to tighten Methodist discipline by requiring that persons should not "be allowed to hold lovefeast or band meetings without the permission of the Superintendent Preacher of the circuit". Bourne said that the Burslem Superintendent,

John Riles, later acknowledged that the real reason for his expulsion was his tendency to set up other than ordinary worship.

> Being in Mr. Riles' company, in regard to trustee business, I remarked on his having put me out. He intimated about my having a tendency to setting up other places of worship. Of course I was not conscious of such a tendency. He might, it is true, have Mr.Smith's kitchen in his view... [137]

Late in 1807, John Smith, a prominent Tunstall Methodist, had allowed the revivalists the use of his kitchen for meetings annoyed at Riles' arbitrary behaviour in refusing Mrs.Mary Dunnel permission to preach in the chapel, having allowed her to do so only a few weeks before.[138] Bourne "took up the place and got it licensed in the Bishop's Court, and it was settled for preachings on Friday evening."[139]

It was for, allegedly, attending a lovefeast in Mr.Smith's kitchen on Good Friday, 12 April 1811, conducted by William Clowes, that James Steele was expelled from the Tunstall Methodist Society, thereby triggering a chain of events leading to the building of the first Primitive Methodist chapel and the establishment of a separate Connexion.[140] Steele, in Clowes' words, was "a very influential person, a member of twenty four years standing, a leader of two classes, a Chapel steward, and superintendent of a large Sunday school."[141] In this last capacity, that of Sunday school superintendent, Steele had been associated with revivalist activity at Harriseahead and the camp meetings for a number of years, and therefore with those who were increasingly becoming a thorn in the flesh of Wesleyan pastoral authority. However, as Sunday school superintendent he was also at the heart of another challenge to that authority, in a dispute over the teaching of secular subjects, i.e. writing on the Sabbath.[142] It is a moot point whether this dispute came to a head as the result of his

expulsion or was the cause of it, or indeed the two merely coincided.[143] In any event, the unauthorised lovefeast would have been contrary to the Conference rule of 1803, and would in itself have given the superintendent, John Aikenhead, a pretext to exert his authority by expelling Steele as it had done in 1808, for Riles, on his own later admission, for expelling the Bournes. In asserting their authority both Riles and Aikenhead demonstrated that they shared Bunting's high doctrine of pastoral office of the ministry and the authority of the Superintendents. Bunting, in a speech in a debate relating to the Leeds Organ case made "the supreme authority of the Pastorate the one essential principle of ecclesiastical polity, which, being secured, all other things were mere details and matters of expediency and easiest working"[144] Riles demonstrated throughout his career that he shared and supported Bunting's views. When asked by the Leader's Meeting in Liverpool "What did we come here for, if we have no voice in the business?", he replied "To hear what I have to say, and to do what I bid as your Pastor."[145]

Jabez Bunting and Hugh Bourne were in one sense at opposite ends of the spectrum. However, there were parallels in their respective careers as they faced not dissimilar problems in the need for orderly administration, problems which Bourne was capable of confronting with Buntingite ruthlessness, as demonstrated in the crisis of 1826 already referred to. Ward has claimed that it would be no exaggeration to say that the Methodism of Bunting's boyhood was almost without government and that it was his achievement to turn Methodism into a very actively governed community.[146] Bunting, the son of a radical Manchester tailor, began as a revivalist and his first public ministry was exercised in

Manchester cottage prayer meetings. However, he appears to have been put off by their irregularities[147] His experiences in Macclesfield confirmed his opinion that revivalist excesses were inimical to good order and discipline and to the future of Methodism as expressed in his much quoted letters to Richard Reece.

> The people in this Town are tired of parties and divisions: and divisions: and in general equally tired of the rant and extravagances of what is called revivalism.
>
> ... Divisions from the church, though awful are perhaps after all less to be dreaded than divisions in the Church, which I fear, would behave been perpetuated, if these men had remained among us... Revivalism, as of late professed and practised was [likely if] not checked to have gradually ruined genuine Methodism. I am glad, however, that they have been the first to draw the sword. But as they have drawn it, I earnestly wish that our Preachers would take the opportunity of returning fully to the spirit and discipline of ancient Methodism and with that resolve to stand or fall.[148]

Hugh Bourne's and Jabez Bunting's paths appear to have crossed early in their careers on at least one occasion, when Bunting was stationed in the Macclesfield circuit, 1801-3,[149] in a confrontation characteristic of both men. J.B.Dyson, who recorded the incident many years later, and was well aware of its significance, thought it characteristic of Bunting's regard for good order and propriety

> On one occasion, [Bunting] came in his usual appointment to the Lime-kilns, but on his arrival was taken so unwell to be obliged to retire to bed. The congregation assembled at the proper time for service, and after waiting a short period, H.B__, (then a young man, and afterwards notorious in Methodism as the leader of an extensive, but perhaps the most useful, off-shoot from the parent stem, the first scion of which was broken off and planted on the adjoining hill,) unsolicited by Mr.Bunting, commenced worship by singing and prayer. In the latter exercise he made special reference to himself, and prayed in a strain which clearly indicated his intention to go through the service and preach to the people. This was too much for Mr.Bunting, who could hear all that passed, there only being a boarded floor between himself and the speaker. He immediately rose, and in a very significant manner said to a friend who sat by the bed-side, "Charles,

> I'll preach, I am better now." Ill as he was he carried out his resolution, and preached to the great satisfaction of the congregation.[150]

The process of developing a stable system of government for Methodism following Wesley's death, was, in part, that of keeping under rational control that enthusiasm which was its essential characteristic. Wesley was himself, in Henry Rack's phrase, the *Reasonable Enthusiast.*[151] There was an ever present danger that "headstrong and impudent persons, who have far more zeal than discretion," could bring Methodist into disrepute, which could prove particularly damaging in politically unsettled times. In 1800, the Bishop of Llandaff told Pitt that the Church of England needed urgent reform if English religion was to be saved from "miserable effusions of enthusiastic ignorance."[152] The Bill of 1800 to tighten up the law on licences for Dissenting preachers, referred to above, was proposed by Michael Angelo Taylor, M.P.for Durham, as a result of a personal confrontation with an "ignorant and forward preacher".[153] John Pawson, who had been President of the Methodist Conference in 1793, watched with alarm the progress of the Bill and in May 1800 was relieved to hear that it had been withdrawn. He advocated the maintenance of good order and wrote of Alexander Mather that

> Mr.Mather, having had large experience of the different ways in which the Lord generally carries on his work, acted with wonderful prudence, and as he was a man that would use his authority, when occasion required, he resolutely, insisted upon proper order being kept in those prayer meetings, which were well attended, and in which much good was done. By this means he preserved the work from that reproach and contempt, which, in some other places, were brought upon it, where decorum and regularity were not maintained.[154]

What John Munsey Turner has characterised as "the perennial tension between order and ardour"[155] was not just to define the relationship

between Wesleyan Methodism and the schismatic revivalist groups but was to reoccur within those groups. The conflict was apparent within Primitive Methodism both at the macro level as the movement developed from cottage meetings, camp meetings and class groups to an orderly and stable denominational structure, and at the micro level of the prayer meeting. Mr.John Smith, in whose house the Tunstall revivalists were meeting following the expulsion of Bourne and Clowes, concerned at the noisy and disorderly manner in which the meetings were being conducted, sought to introduce regulations to rectify matters. To add a degree of formality he converted a chest of drawers into a makeshift pulpit. However, the revivalists would not be constrained.[156]

Joseph Nightingale cast the Christian Revivalists of Macclesfield in a more sympathetic light than Bunting.

> The Revivalists are those Methodists who are more particularly partial to noisy meetings... They are a simple harmless, and well-meaning body; but enthusiastic to an ungovernable degree.[157]

John Ward, the Staffordshire historian, said of the Tunstall revivalists that

> ...their religious services were characterised by a boisterous fervour and extravagance which greatly fascinated the understandings of the peasantry who flocked to these assemblies.[158]

Nightingale attributed the opposition the Macclesfield revivalists encountered to the fact that

> Many of the preachers, however, of the present day, having drunk a little into the spirit of the world, that is, having become ashamed of the conduct of some of their brethren who have encouraged noisy meetings, are led to deprive their people of their Christian liberty, and consequently to check all extravagances of this nature whenever they perceive them beginning to break out.[159]

Bourne contrasted the deadness of "modern Methodism" with the success

of "Primitive Methodism".[160] In 1820, Joseph Sutcliffe, who had taken a conciliatory attitude to the Primitive Methodists and worried about the chances for salvation for sleek grocers occupying the pews in the pillared chapels of "modern" Methodism,[161] wrote to Bunting from Bristol that he felt

> ...much at home in Bristol. Primitive[i.e.in contrast to "modern"] Methodism still exists here; and I hope will ever exist. The bands, both body and select, meet as well perhaps as in Mr.Wesley's time.[162]

Whilst stationed in Burslem in 1811-12, he "laboured and struggled" to heal the "serious schism" in the Burslem Circuit, confiding that "I cannot wholly requit my predecessors of haste or inexperience in that business". He persuaded his stewards and leaders to invite the Primitive Methodists back, but not the Primitive Methodists who resolved "that we should remain as we were."[163] By this time the rudiments of a Methodist system of administration were already in place, quarterly meetings, printed preaching plans, class tickets and so on, and on 13 February, 1812, the name "The Society of Primitive Methodists" was formerly adopted. By the time of Sutcliffe's overtures, the die was already cast.[164]

The form and substance of the new denomination, of which Hugh Bourne has been acknowledged as the chief architect,[165] gave it endurance and success, which eluded some of the other revivalist groups with whom, for a while at least, the Primitive Methodists were fellow travellers. Julia Stuart Werner has placed the origins of Primitive Methodism firmly in the context of the wave of revivalism which swept the West Riding in 1793 and 1795 and then beyond, largely under the influence of William Bramwell.[166] The revivalists spread in to Cheshire, with groups at Stockport and Macclesfield, and it was with these groups that Bourne

made contact.

> Cheshire had Wesleyans called revivalists; and Mr.J.Clarke, blacksmith, at Congleton, at his own expense, fetched some of them about twenty miles to his house, to attend the September lovefeast, in the Congleton Wesleyan chapel; and a number of us Staffordshire Methodists, at his instance, attended the lovefeast.[167]

Clarke was a leading Congleton Methodist on whom Wesley had called on his last visit in 1790.[168] As a blacksmith, Bourne had possibly come into contact in working on one of the new textile mills in Congleton with his uncle, William Sherratt. On Christmas day, 1804, the Staffordshire revivalists again met the Stockport group at a lovefeast at Congleton and in the following week, at a lovefeast at Harriseahead, James Steele and others from Tunstall "were converted into revivalists". Within a short while William Clowes, Thomas Woodnorth, James Nixon, William Morris and other significant figures joined.[169]

Hugh Bourne's first contact with the Macclesfield revivalists appears to have been in about 1799, when, passing through Macclesfield on business, he noticed some people, who, he learnt, were on their way to the Methodist Chapel and "it was impressed on [his] mind, these have real religion."[170] In 1806 the Christian Revivalists in Macclesfield, led by John Berisford, a cotton manufacturer, purchased land in Parsonage Street and built a chapel "for persons of the Independent Interest dissenting from the established Church of England upon old Methodistical principles and called "the Christian Revivalists". That year they, in association with other groups, took the name Independent Methodists. The purchase deed is evidence of the interaction between business, family and religious contacts. The land was acquired from the devisees of Matthew Andrew being, inter alia, his son John Andrew,

described in the deed as a grocer, but who was also a rope manufacturer.[171] John Andrew's uncle was the Congleton blacksmith, James Clarke, under whose influence he became a Methodist in 1798. There may well have been business links between the cotton manufacturer, blacksmith, rope manufacturer, and Hugh Bourne, the millwright. John Andrew later gave the site for a Primitive Methodist chapel in Congleton in May, 1822, having in April, 1822, "cast his lot" among them. In his will, he left the then substantial sum of £100 to Primitive Methodist Missions.[172]

Bourne was a frequent guest in John Berisford's home between 1807 to 1813. Revivalists from Macclesfield participated in the 1807 Mow Cop camp meeting[173] He attended the Independent Methodist Conferences held in Macclesfield in 1807 and 1808 and for a time included the Macclesfield chapel on the Primitive Methodist preaching plan.[174] At the 1808 Conference the controversy about women's ministry was discussed and as a result Bourne produced a tract, *Remarks on the ministry of women*, which he dedicated to John Berisford.[175] Mary Dunnel, who itinerated until 1811 for the Primitive Methodists, had been among the Macclesfield Revivalists, and earlier Macclesfield Methodism had been under the influence of Ann Cutler and Mary Barritt, later married to Zecharia Taft, author of *Biographical Sketches of the Lives and Public Ministry of Various Holy Women.*[176]

The liberal attitude to women preaching also reflected the Quaker influence on Independent Methodism, particularly from Warrington. For a while, Bourne worked closely with the Independent Methodists, also called Quaker Methodists, of Warrington, led by the chair maker, Peter Phillips. Of the five places named on the Lancashire and Cheshire

section of Bourne's preaching plan of 1810, at least five were almost certainly Independent Methodist societies.[177]

One of the keys to bringing together the various revival groups was the arrival of the American evangelist of Lorenzo Dow late in 1805. He stayed at the home of Peter Phillips in Warrington and from there visited groups in Lancashire and Cheshire. He initiated the Independent Methodist societies at Risley and Stocton Heath, the latter of which became for a while one of Bourne's main centres of operation. At Congleton, late in 1806, Dow met Clowes and Hugh and James Bourne who purchased camp meeting tracts from him.[178] Probably included among Bourne's purchases was *A Collection of Spiritual Songs used at Camp meetings in the great Revival in the United States of America*, published by Dow in Dublin, 1806, which formed the basis of Bourne's *General Collection...* , published in 1809.[179]

The Warrington revivalists had been much influenced by two Quaker evangelists, Dorothy Ripley, and Dr.Paul Johnson of Dublin, the latter having some influence on Bourne and whose name occurs in his manuscript journal.[180] Bourne said of Johnson that "He honestly tried to convert me to Quakerism, but could not succeed." There were nonetheless elements of Quaker influence in early Primitive Methodism, for example in the acceptance of women preachers and the reluctance on the part of some to give up free gospelism. The similarity of the earliest surviving Primitive Methodist Chapel at Cloud and its contemporary furnishings of 1815 to a Quaker meeting house is probably not entirely coincidental.

Free gospelism became the point of departure with the Independent

Methodists. It had arisen in part as a reaction to the economic pressures on Wesleyan Methodism and the means taken to deal with them. The Independent Methodists of Warrington, where Quaker influence was also a factor, agreed to send their unpaid preachers to Bolton, where the Wesleyan circuit had told local leaders, "You do not deserve any preaching; you send us no money."[181] However, it was increasingly clear to Bourne and his followers that rigid adherence to the pattern of unpaid ministry, which became an inviolable principle of the Independent Methodists, was becoming increasingly restrictive. As the work expanded, temporal and religious duties would inevitably come into conflict to the benefit of neither. As Bourne noted

> "Six days shalt thou labour", was the command of God and if the religious services were allowed to interfere with this, it would be attempting to make one part clash with the other.[182]

As time went on Bourne "gradually withdrew from much of his worldly business" before, on 21 May, 1808

> I had an admonition from heaven to bring my manual labours to a close, to give myself up to the work of the ministry, and to trust the Lord for food and raiment.[183]

The first paid preacher was James Crawford, whom, in 1809, Bourne agreed to pay " ten shillings a week till lady-day, to labour in the vineyard." However, Bourne appears to have been motivated by charity to tide Crawford over the winter, when "as a farm labourer... he could get no employment".[184] In December, 1810, Thomas Woodnorth, Clowes's brother-in-law, and James Nixon volunteered to pay Clowes ten shillings a week to enable him to work full time as a travelling preacher, a considerable financial sacrifice both for them and Clowes, who had been earning £1.2s.[185] By 1811 it was recognised that "the community, for want of properly established financial arrangements, could not exert

its energies, nor extend its borders as it otherwise would have done". The work had extended beyond the means of a few benevolent individuals to support it. Nixon and Woodnorth were working potters and the fluctuations of trade at that time meant that they were unable to meet their subscriptions.[186] The Bourne brothers were "laying out upwards of thirty pounds a year in the support of their cause or connexion."[187] Pressure for change also came from the rank and file. With the introduction of class tickets in May, 1811, many wanted to pay ticket money, as was the normal Methodist custom. According to Bourne, people wished to assist "but hitherto they had no opportunity of regularly subscribing to the support of the cause." Apparently "on this account, some had refused to join"[188] At a meeting in Tunstall in July, 1811, the free gospel principle was formerly abandoned and

> It was proposed that the circumstances should be mentioned to the people, and what they voluntary gave to be collected by proper persons and to be paid into the hands of a Steward; and what fell short to be made out by private subscription.[189]

James Steele became the first Circuit Steward. This split set the Independent Methodists and the Primitive Methodists on different courses. As those who had advocated change, albeit in some cases, including Bourne, with great reluctance, had foreseen, whereas the Primitive Methodists grew rapidly, the Independent Methodists did not, and records show that many of the latter became frustrated with a system which offered such limited scope for expansion. By the 1830s this resulted in many Independent Methodist churches switching to other branches of Methodism.[190]

David Hempton has said of Jabez Bunting and his supporters that, far from debasing virginal Methodism, they performed the unpleasant but

necessary task of giving structure and a sense of coherence to Wesleyanism as a national connexion.[191] It could be said of Hugh Bourne that he performed a similar role within Primitive Methodism. As with Bunting, problems and controversies were encountered, though, with the possible exception of the crisis of 1826, were not so much the result of ecclesiastical heavy handedness, as the inevitable consequence of a difficult transitional period. Thomas Bateman, in the first, and in places very frank, biography of Bourne, describes him as "a man of integrity, firmness, and decision of character", who in pursuit of what he saw as his duty was prepared to sacrifice "the friendship of friends, the civilities and courtesy of the rich, and the applause of many." Bateman could not, however, ignore "a temper, impetuous, hasty, and overbearing" inherited from his father, and went so far as to say that "there is a degree of insanity hovering about many, if not most great minds, when greatly affected by something in which they feel a deep interest."[192] However, apart from his short temper, until age and increasing paranoia began to overtake him, Bourne seems to have been particularly well fitted for his task. Walford said of him

> There were some of the fathers that could surpass him in the pulpit, in producing an immediate effect on an audience; but in pastoral duties, and church government, or in superintending society affairs, we believe he had no equal in the camp meeting community. Rule and discipline, in the common transactions of daily life, he had habituated himself to from an early age [so that he was well prepared] to take a prominent part in the management and oversight of... Primitive Methodism... Hugh Bourne believed that by order and good management a revival of religion may be perpetuated.[193]

By 1813 the infant Connexion had acquired much administrative paraphernalia: regular quarterly meetings, printed plans and class tickets, a quarterly collection, stewards and class leaders, and, from

1811, chapels were built. It largely fell to Hugh Bourne to draft the rules to formalise the structure. As befitted his scientific training he thoroughly researched the subject:

> By dint of close study, much reading, frequent prayer, strong faith, and unwearied perseverance, he had already made himself, to a considerable extent, acquainted with the forms of church government by which the different sections of the Christian church are governed."[194]

In what amounted to a consultation exercise, October 1813 quarterly meeting ordered that the draft rules should be read to every society and "all objections and improvements suggested by the various societies, should be brought in writing to the next quarter day. In January 1814 the rules were approved in their improved state and sent to the printer.[195] The same meeting appointed Bourne superintendent.

The rules set the seal on the high degree of lay control which characterised Primitive Methodism. For example

> At any of the meetings for discipline, a President may be chosen to conduct the business, and also a Secretary if needful.
>
> No one is to claim pre-eminence.

If chaos was not to ensue it was clearly important that the business meetings should be conducted in due form, and for people with little experience in such matters some guidance was necessary. Bourne observed the manner in which James Steele chaired a meeting in Tunstall, in which "he put each item of business in the form of a question". He learnt the system from it, and , having mastered it, wrote a treatise on it. This was adopted by the first conference held in May, 1820, and was published in the *Magazine* as "A Treatise on Discipline chiefly as

it respects meetings for business" and subsequently republished as a pamphlet, *On Chairmaning...*[196] Walford's claim that this was the first treatise on chairmanship was reinforced by Bourne's "Address" which forms the preface

> On one occasion, while writing on meetings for business, to assist a committee of management, newly formed, the thought struck me that if something of the kind were put in print, it would save both me a deal of time, and be more useful to the people.... ...A few years ago, such a treatise would have been of great use to me; and I trust... it will be useful to the society. The increasing state of religion calls... , among other things, for an increasing acquaintance with discipline and management.

It was a feature of Primitive Methodist practice that the chairman was appointed by the particular meeting and was usually lay. Skills learnt in conducting meetings in Methodism were transferable into other fields, be they friendly societies, trade unions, or politics, and Bourne's treatise would have been equally applicable and helpful in these spheres.[197]

Hugh Bourne published many other articles and pamphlets giving guidance on a wide range of topics from the theological and spiritual to many on more mundane and practical matters. These articles were published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazines* and the *Primitive Methodist Preachers' Magazine,* also edited by him as Connexional Editor, which was published from 1827 to 1832. While part of the latter was devoted to theological and pastoral matters, it also contained a substantial amount of practical advice.

For articles on chapel building, Bourne was able to draw on his own professional training and his hands-on experience of building a number of chapels, for example Harriseahead(1801), Norton(1805), Brown Edge(1808), Tunstall and Boylestone(1811), and Talke

O'th'Hill(1813).[198] A list of basic instructions "On Chapels" appeared in the *Magazine* of 1825.[199] These ranged from general guidance on the layout down to such minutiae as the dimensions of the bible-board.

> The size of a pulpit for a small chapel is one yard wide each way. And a pulpit should never be more than one yard deep. Some pulpits are made quite square. But pulpits of the best shape have the corners cut off until the breast is only about two feet six inches wide. The bible board should be ten or eleven inches broad; and not less than two feet long... If it be too steep it is unpleasant.[200]

Relatively unaltered early Primitive Methodist chapels are very rare and surviving early fixtures and fittings are scarcer still, making it difficult to gauge the extent to which these recommendations were followed, but a photograph published in 1907 of the Tunstall pulpit of the 1820s shows that it appears to have complied with them.[201]

Bourne's scientific attention to detail is apparent in his stress on the requirement of good ventilation, particularly important where chapels were lit by candles or gas. He noted he had once been in crowded chapel where the candles began to burn low and he had to open open some of the shutters fearing for the health of the congregation. The instructions and advice were expanded upon in subsequent articles over the next twenty years.[202] By 1840 Bourne was emphasising measures to avoid damp and dry rot.[203]

Legal formalities, to which Bourne had always paid careful attention,[204] were not overlooked. In the *Preachers' Magazine* for 1828, he published an article "On taking instructions for a title deed."[205] Based on the deed of the chapel at Englesea Brook, built in 1828, this sets out the information to be given to a lawyer to enable him to draw up a deed. It is a carefully thought out document, evidencing a thorough understanding of the subject, including matters often

overlooked in such deeds such as "the privilege of ladder and scaffold room... for building or repairing" where a wall of the building abuts the boundary of the site.

Hugh Bourne's drafting and legislative skills were called upon in the preparation of the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll, for which he was largely responsible.[206] This document, which gave legal identity to the Primitive Methodist Connexion, was signed on 5 February, 1830. and enrolled in Chancery. Legal advice was given "by several eminent lawyers", including Mr.John Wilks of London, who, after examining Bourne's draft of the document, paid tribute to "his strong mind and great legislative talents".[207]

From about 1838 a number of documents and pamphlets bearing the Bemersley imprint were bound together in a pouch forming, in effect, a pocket manual for the travelling preachers. Included were: *Abstract of an Act of Parliament to enlarge the Privileges of Religious Worship*[1812]; *On Chairmaning... ; Rules... for Sunday Schools; Forms of Title Deeds; Deed Poll; Rules... for the Societies of the Primitive Methodist Connexion; General Minutes of the Conferences.*

Chapel building had always been an expensive undertaking and as more and more came to be built, chapel debt became an increasing problem for all sections of Methodism, from time to time reaching crisis proportions. Many articles in and correspondence to the denominational literature, together with separately published pamphlets, touched on the topic and proposed solutions.[208] In the 1840s Bourne was recommending what he called the "Golden System", a system for paying off chapel debt which he found being practised at Wootten Bassett.[209]

The normal practice once a chapel was opened was "to drop all further exertions, and trust to seat lettings, and anniversary collections" to service and/or pay off the outstanding debt. The "Golden System" involved a number of persons putting their names down to raise specific sums over the year, either by begging for the chapel, or from their own resources, and thereby, in effect, underwrite the following year's anniversary collection, an idea which many modern churches have taken up and called "Christian Stewardship".

The chapels Bourne had been involved with before 1811, Norton, Harriseahead, and Brown Edge, and of at least one of which, Harriseahead, he was a trustee, continued as Wesleyan and he would, therefore, have been well aware of the financial crisis facing Wesleyan Methodism in this period. He noted in his journal on 8 July, 1814, that

> I was with James Bourne at Burslem, We were among the Old Methodists. They are almost overthrown with extravagance in building chapels and maintaining preachers. It was proposed to sell Norton Chapel.

This was a matter of personal concern to Bourne. Not only was he to remain a trustee of the Harriseahead chapel, and therefore potentially personally liable for any loss, until the trust was reconstituted in 1829, but he had to wait until then to be repaid the money he had sunk into building the chapel.[210]

When the first Primitive Methodist Chapel was built in Tunstall in 1811, Bourne adopted a cautious approach

> A building was... got up, sixteen yards long by eight wide, inside, and galleried half way... It was finished in a plain manner, the walls were not coated, and it had no ceiling. It was much approved of, on account of its plainness and appearance. In the erection of it, the house form was chosen in preference to the chapel form: so that, if not wanted, it would just form four houses, according to the plan on which houses are usually built at Tunstall.[211]

The site had been purchased by Hugh and James Bourne for £42 and the building remained their personal property.[212] As Tunstall was rapidly growing at that time, and was being developed by people investing in small blocks of terraced cottages, this could be looked at as an investment opportunity. Although the investment potential was not the Bournes' primary motive at the time, and Hugh, writing of 1821, says that he "had been distressed for over nine years, on account of myself and my brother having to find our Tunstall people a chapel, this may have been in the back of their mind. In the event, the building was completed as four cottages after the completion of a larger chapel on the opposite side of the street. James Bourne invested in other property in Tunstall. The Wolstanton Rate Book of 1822 lists seven properties in Wellington Place: six houses, whose tenants include the Primitive Methodists, James Nixon, and Joseph Capper, blacksmith and later Chartist, and the engraver's shop of another prominent Primitive Methodist, John Hancock. The Bournes had purchased further land comprising what was to become the remainder of the south side of Wellington Place in August, 1815.[213] The chapel of 1821 was built on part of this, and was transferred to Primitive Methodist trustees in 1833.[214] Four cottages on the remainder were mortgaged by James Bourne to the Primitive Methodist Preachers' Fund in 1827 to secure a loan of £350 at 5%.[215] From at least 1837 until his bankruptcy in 1843, the Circuit was renting one of James Bourne's Wellington Street houses for one of the Travelling Preachers. A minute of 1842 refers to the payment of £5 to James Bourne towards the rent.[216] James Bourne's obituarists noted "It was said that at one time that his rent- roll amounted to £1000 a year.[217]

Subsequent chapels were usually conveyed to Primitive Methodist trustees, but it was some time before the form was standardised. The site of the Talke chapel of 1813-14 was conveyed into the names of Hugh and James Bourne, but with "a clause limiting the said Hugh and James Bourne to convey the same to William Clowes and others in trust for the [Primitive Methodist] Connexion". The chapel was conveyed to Clowes and nine other trustees in 1825, until when the Bournes alone would have carried any liability.[218]

The financial viability of a proposed chapel was matter for careful calculation, which could include a commercial element thereby calling into play business acumen. In his journal for December, 1819, Bourne sets out a scheme for the building of a preaching room at Macclesfield at a cost of £300. The detailed statement shows that the annual expenditure of £22 (£15 interest on £300 and £7 ground rent) was to be met by £3 10s rent from the Sunday School, £3 10s from preaching, and the balance of £15 to be raised by letting the room to five silk-twisters at £3 each. Bourne added that "This it is thought might be accomplished: but it must be 26 yards long inside or else it would not do for the silk-twisters."

In Burslem, in 1822, Hugh Bourne negotiated the purchase for £169 of "land with the crate shop (now used as a place of worship) and other buildings... containing 473 square yards, and now in the holding of Charles John Abraham and others."[219] Abraham, a druggist in Burslem and Congleton, was a prominent Primitive Methodist whose financial affairs were to become hopelessly involved with those of James Bourne.[220] The land was conveyed to Hugh and James Bourne and eight other trustees, including Abraham and Thomas Steele, son of James Steele. It was

developed, in what amounted to a speculative venture, with a chapel seating 250, and six cottages, three to the side of the chapel and three smaller to the rear, with the intention that the rents would pay off the debt.[221] How the scheme was to have worked was demonstrated in the details of a similar scheme at Nantwich in 1840, which were published in the *Magazine* of 1842, with a balance sheet showing that by means of the cottage rents the debt would be reduced by £30-£35 per annum, or so it was hoped.[222]

The Burslem scheme was not a success. With the exception of Tunstall, Primitive Methodism did not do particularly well in the pottery towns. At Hanley, where the chapel faced deep financial problems in the 1840s, and Longton, where in 1835 Thomas Russell found only about 30 out of 112 sittings let, people were attracted to more eligible chapels, particularly those of the Methodist New Connection, which had a strong, and earlier, presence in these towns.[223] The same was true in Burslem where, in 1824, William Lea found

> The society in Burslem was very low. It was greatly inconvenienced by the Chapel it then had, though nearly new. In its erection more zeal than wisdom had been employed; it was much too large; elevated for galleries and near square, so as to admit of galleries all round; But alas, it never got them. It never possessed a sufficient congregation to warrant that farther outlay of money. And from the first it was painfully unpleasant to both minister and people by the vibration of sound... And so deadly was the effect of this state of things, that the society connected with it became dwarfed and remained small and feeble for years; and the trustees of the chapel were subjected to much trouble and loss therein.[224]

Ward, in 1841, confirmed that the chapel "built on a larger scale in 1823" was "afterwards found more than sufficient for the wants of the Society".[225] However, in a Statutory Declaration dated 19 January, 1847, James Bourne claimed that

> ... of late years the members residing in Burslem or within one mile thereof, have so increased that a larger chapel was required for their accommodation, and accordingly one situate in Nile Street was purchased.[226]

Zoar Chapel was purchased in 1842 for £340 and for two years was let for other purposes until the old chapel was sold for the sum of £800 to Abraham. However, following the sale a considerable deficit came to light. Philip Pugh, who was stationed in the Circuit in 1845, launched an investigation including having a copy prepared of the accounts of the treasurer, Abraham, for the whole period from the building of the chapel in 1822 to 1845. This copy, which survives, indicates an accumulating deficit more or less through the whole period. At the time of the sale, two of the three front cottages were unlet. Furthermore in respect of the monies listed as being borrowed on note, Pugh ominously comments that

> By looking at the accounts of this book over you will see that Mr. Abraham has not debited himself with several of [those listed]. Of course if they are due on note, they have been received, and should have been acknowledged as such.[227]

Whilst "negligence and mismanagement by some in whom [Hugh Bourne] had placed the most implicit confidence",[228] including Abraham, who was also close business associate of James Bourne, undoubtedly contributed to the Burslem crisis, other Primitive Methodist chapels in the Potteries were in dire straits at that time. In August 1844 the Tunstall Circuit sent a letter to other circuits "representing the distressed state of Burslem, Hanley, and Brown Edge Chapels" while at the same time trying to keep themselves clear of liability noting

> That as R.Jukes has in his official capacity forewarned the trustees of Burslem Old Chapel respecting signing any new deed which may be made, we deem ourselves free from any blame which may fall out with respect to that premises.[229]

The Bournes as trustees were liable when the payment due on the

promissory notes, including money due to their brother, John Bourne, could not be met. Matters were made worse in 1846 when Abraham, "through some private misfortune", had been compelled to execute a Deed of Assignment".[230] Hugh Bourne made strenuous efforts to pay the debt off, his own difficulties being made worse by his brother's bankruptcy in 1843. On his departure for Canada in 1844, he arranged with Conference that his annuities, he had superannuated in 1842, should be applied to liquidate the Burslem Chapel debts.[231] On his return he continued to make payments as his Journal entries show

> [1846... July]23rd... I paid 27 pounds to John Bourne, due on note on Burslem chapel... Friday, 25th, I paid six pounds, which settles the account with regard to Burslem chapel, with John Bourne.

On 28 September, 1846, Bourne was relieved to receive a letter from John Flesher informing him that Flesher had "settled all the Burslem chapel matters" having successfully arranged with every claimant on the Navigation Road chapel. Walford, himself a chapel trustee, was sympathetic to Bourne's plight as at the time of writing he too was "suffering to this day a dead loss of near four hundred pounds on a Primitive Methodist chapel, which was sold some fifteen years ago".[232]

Until 1838 the reins of the Primitive Methodist Connexion were firmly in the hands of Hugh and James Bourne, and did not finally pass on to the next generation until 1842. The key to their power base lay in the control of the press and the siting of the connexional Book-Room and headquarters in their farm at Bemersley.[233]

The first steps to establishing a Connexional Book-Room were taken at Tunstall in January, 1818, followed by Bourne undertaking the produce a connexional magazine, at first intended to be quarterly. At this stage

this was undertaken as a private venture, Bourne obtaining an estimate for the printing from John Tregortha in Burslem, who printed the first issue, albeit with some delay, and which Bourne himself distributed[234] A second number appeared late in July, but the venture was not a success and Bourne bore the loss. A second attempt was made to launch a magazine was tried the following year, this time printed in Leicester, which after eight issues proved little more successful than the first. However, at the first Conference, held in 1820, Bourne was appointed Connexional Editor, a position he was to hold until 1838, and the *Magazine* was launched again with the issue of June, 1820, "intended as a substitute for September 1819"

In his "Introductory Address" to the first Magazine, which was issued in April, 1818, Bourne wrote that

> A magazine of this description will be suited to the present infant state of the body; and if it can be supported, is likely to be useful in several respects. It will circulate a large portion of religious intelligence, with much useful information of various kinds.

The *Magazine* for 1819, completed in 1820 when relaunched, contained, inter alia, an article on "Education", Bourne's "Treatise on Discipline chiefly as it respects meetings for business" and the "General Minutes" of the Preparatory Meeting (i.e for the first Conference the following year) at Nottingham, as well as reports from the circuits, preachers' journals, obituaries and so on.

The Conference of 1821 resolved that

> James Steele, James Bourne, Hugh Bourne, Charles James Abraham, and John Hancock, are elected to act as a book committee, to manage the concerns for the ensuing year. These are to receive and examine all matters to be inserted in the magazine, and all other matters which it may be necessary to print. H.Bourne is appointed editor, and J.Bourne book steward... The committee are empowered to establish a general book room, and a printing press, for the use of the connexion.[235]

By the end of 1821 James Bourne had acquired a printing press, and commenced his career as Book Steward, printing the Magazine for December, 1821. The Bemersley press issued the first edition of *A Collection of Hymns, for Camp Meetings, Revivals, &c. For the use of the Primitive Methodists. Edited by Hugh Bourne.* The imprint on this volume, "Printed at the office of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, by J.Bourne. 1821", which continued to be the official imprint, indicates that the remote Bemersley farmstead was not only the editorial office, printing press, and warehouse for the Primitive Methodist Book Concern, but was also the de facto connexional headquarters.

James Bourne is recorded in the printed records as President of the Primitive Methodist Conference in 1826 and 1829 with Hugh as Secretary, and in 1842. The manuscript Conference journal indicates that for most of the years when no name is recorded in the printed record, i.e. 1821-4, 1827-8, and 1830-41, James was President and Hugh Secretary. Between Conferences overall responsibility for connexional affairs lay with the General Committee. In 1823 there were two General Committees, one based at Hull with Clowes, and the other at Tunstall, i.e. Bemersley, comprising James Steele, C.J.Abraham, John Hancock, James Bourne, Hugh Bourne, James Nixon, William Barker and the superintendent of the home branch of the Tunstall Circuit with James Bourne as "corresponding member".[236] By 1825 the General Committee was solely based at Tunstall. The Book Committee then comprised James Steele, C.J.Abraham, J.Hancock, and Hugh and James Bourne as Editor and Book Steward, and the General Committee the same group plus J.Andrew, Jun., T.Steele, son of James, and the Tunstall Circuit travelling Preachers.[237] Most of the Connexional activities were therefore to revolve around Bemersley and a

small group of associates some of whose business activities also became entwined with the Bournes, and, some suspected, with Connexional affairs.

Detailed arrangements were made for the distribution of books to the circuits, by road and canal, and for regular payment. The preachers were allowed ten per cent discount on their orders, but were expected to bear their own costs.[238] However, from the first balance sheet presented to the 1823 Conference covering the period 1820-3 it is clear that the Book-Room was far from paying its way. The annual turn-over fluctuated considerably throughout the twenty year Bemersley period, and although there was a gradual overall rise, the profit margin was narrow. Whilst in no year did stock and sales together quite fall below the current expenditure, in most years the profits were not more than two or three per cent of the costs.[239] However, it could be argued that there were other than merely cash benefits to be considered in such an operation.

There were probably some who thought that however the connexional book concern was doing, James Bourne himself was making a good thing out of the Book Stewardship. The Book Steward was not only managing the printing establishment and the Book-Room, but personally owned both, even though he did so in the name of the Connexion, which in later years did pay rent for the use of the premises.[240] The capital expenditure on printing equipment was underwritten by James Bourne and by 1825 the Book-Room debt to him was £680 12s.11d. In 1825 the profits to date were handed over partially to offset this and for some years the small profits were set against Bourne's capital expenditure. In effect "it was a private concern run in the name of a religious

organisation".[241] The position was regularised by a special committee meeting at Leeds on 13 November, 1833, which decided to hand the press to James Bourne and let him run it as a private venture on a contract from the Connexion, the types and presses, independently valued at £244, being set against the Book-Room's debt to him. He was now in the position of being an independent printer on a monopolistic contract with a rising denomination, and his own supervisor.[242]

The operation at Bemersley became quite a substantial establishment with printing and bookbinding being undertaken. In addition to the printing of religious books, pamphlets, tracts, Sunday school materials, and official publications, hymn books, the *Magazines* and *Children's Magazines* for the Connexion, there was printing work for the local circuits (plans, handbills etc.). Bourne was also, presumably on his own account, printing secular material including, surprisingly perhaps, *The Housekeeper's Assistant or Whole Art of Cookery with new and infallible rules for Pickling, Preserving, Brewing and making English Wines.*[243] A terrace of six cottages was built at Bemersley by James Bourne in 1829 to house the growing community, one of the cottages being adapted as a chapel and Sunday school.[244]

James Bourne's business activities extended beyond the farm at Bemersley, the printing establishment and the investment properties. In 1830, in partnership with James Nixon, potter, and John Hancock, engraver, both members of the General and Book Committees, and William Lees, potter, all of Tunstall he purchased a pottery factory in Tunstall from Messrs.Smith & Hitchen for the sum of £2425.[245] The letter to the vendors' solicitors, dated 6 March, 1830, which suggests Hugh as an additional trustee if required. The letter indicates that

they have a mortgage, but that they "do not expect to be ready with the whole of the money until Midsummer."[246] They also indicate that they have the keys and therefore would, presumably have commenced production. Simeon Shaw's, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries*, published in 1829, refers to, under "Tunstall", "other manufactories of considerable extent, belonging to [inter alia] Bourne, Nixon, & Co.". One of the known products of the factory is a Primitive Methodist commemorative plate, which may have been produced as much to celebrate the acquisition of the factory as the success of Primitive Methodism. The plate, decorated with transfer portraits of Hugh Bourne, William Clowes, and James Bourne, carries the inscription "TUNSTALL: Published March 4 1830 by and for BOURNE NIXON & CO Entered at Stationers Hall." It appears that the factory eventually came into the sole ownership of John Hancock, who "was for years connected with the manufacture of china and earthenware, in connection with others; and about two years previous to his death[2 January, 1843], became the sole proprietor of a manufactury."[247]

Evidence of commercial links between James Bourne and another Committee member, Charles John Abraham, is provided by an advertisement which appeared in the *Staffordshire Advertiser* on 12 December, 1831 for

> ABRAHAM'S CHOLERIEUS - the most effective medicine known to give immediate relief and completely cure CHOLERA MORBUS, DIARRHEA, DYSENTRY[sic] and every other disorder resulting form vitiated bile...
> Prepared only by C.J.Abraham...

The advertisement, which coincided with reports in the same paper of outbreaks of cholera in Sunderland and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, and a letter from the Board of Health warning of the spread of cholera to Russia, Warsaw, Berlin , and Hamburg, carried an endorsement by "James

Bourne, of Bemersley, Printer to the Society of Primitive Methodists" who "having taken Mr.Abraham's Cholerieus at various times for many years ... have proved it to be the best medicine I have ever used... "

In 1834 there was a disastrous fire at the Bemersley Book-Room causing serious losses to the Bournes. Appeals and a levy issued by Conference in 1835 were to cover the loss of Connexional property, but not that "part of the property that belonged to James Bourne" who would not accept help towards his personal loss.[248]

In 1838 John Hallam, an ailing former lead miner, replaced James Bourne as Book Steward. His list of duties approved by Conference included a hint of dissatisfaction with his predecessor's conduct

> 3. By what method will the Connexion be best assured of the fidelity of the General Book Steward, in taking care of the immovable property of the Book Room?
>
> 4. By two similar Inventories of that property being made; one to be held by the Steward for his own satisfaction, and the other to be held by W.Clowes for the satisfaction of the Connexion.[249]

Nonetheless James Bourne's personal accounts remained entangled with those of the Book-Room. The 1839 statement showed "Book-room balances in the hands of Mr.J.Bourne, £463 10s.3d", for which he paid 5% interest. He repaid £270 in 1841, continuing to pay interest on the remainder. There is, however, evidence of some muddled book keeping. Though demoted, James Bourne remained on the Book Committee, the General Committee, and the Missionary Committee, and continued to play a prominent role in Connexional and local circuit affairs, being listed Connexional treasurer in 1841. Hugh Bourne, then aged seventy, and although Walford disagreed, declining "in natural and mental powers", and William Clowes were superannuated by the Conference of 1842.

Notwithstanding his unwillingness to retire, Bourne was turned out of office completely and left "to exercise his own judgment, and employ his time in the Connexion as he thought best".[250]

John Flesher replaced Hugh Bourne as Editor and thus introduced to the Bemersley household launched into an investigation by which he became convinced that for years James Bourne's finances had become entangled with those of the Connexion, and that dubious business speculations were endangering both.[251]

Late in his life John Flesher destroyed his papers, collecting "all his manuscripts and memoranda" and making "a big fire of them."[252] However, fourteen octavo pages of "Memorandums of certain things which transpired at Bemersley and neighbourhood beginning on Sept.10/1842" have survived.[253] Flesher's "Memorandums" reveal a catalogue of incompetence and shady dealing, and a climate of suspicion surrounding James Bourne's business affairs. His criticism of Hugh Bourne abilities was a little unfair particularly as the Connexional *Hymn Book* produced under Flesher's editorship was described as "the worst edited and most severely mutilated collection of hymns ever published."[254]

The accusations of financial irregularity involved John Hancock. Hancock, who died in January, 1843, was a leading layman in the Tunstall Circuit, "Corresponding Member" of the General Committee, and one of the seven layman chosen as "Deed Poll members" of the Conference. He was an engraver by trade, and, and has already been noted, became involved with James Bourne in pottery speculations. Hancock's biographer was defensive with regard to the mounting suspicion surrounding his subject.

> The commercial affairs of Mr.H. were always conducted with the greatest regularity... His affairs at his decease were perfectly straight, and the much to be lamented derangement which has taken place, may be attributed to subsequent causes, for which not the slightest blame can be attributed to Mr.H. For be it known to the world, that none can justly censure him, or attempt consistently to derogate from the uprightness of his mind.[255]

Flesher found a number of matters that gave cause for concern. He was astonished to learn from Hallam that he had "without conferential or other connexional sanction lent five hundred pounds (or some such sum) belonging to the Book-Room to Mr.Hancock on a note." When appointed "to value the property to be given by J.Hancock in Mortgage for the £900 lent by the last yearly meeting of the Preachers' Friendly Society", the same source from which James Bourne had borrowed money for a similar purpose in 1829, found not only that "a considerable of those houses were only just begun to be built", but that "the note which Brother Hallam had received when he let J.Hancock have the £900 was merely on blank paper as a simple testimony that J.Hancock had received the money." Significantly, and, perhaps, not surprisingly, Flesher concluded that "as a connexion we have no business to have our money in business, especially the fund money which has no right to be there".

Flesher heard from Thomas Burndred and George Bagley in Hanley bad reports of James Bourne's business conduct that "his general character is that of a selfish man, who uses crafty means of amassing wealth". However, the Hanley people had a particular axe to grind. Apparently, Bourne knowing of £100 to lend, and that the Hanley trustees, of whom James was one, wished to borrow such a sum, instead of borrowing it for the chapel, borrowed in his own name on note, leaving the chapel still in dire straits.

> Also [Bourne] had applied to a person to lend him a

> thousand pounds. The person asked Burndred if he would lend him that sum were he applied to and were able. Burndred replied no. Also Burndred a few days since fell in with a gentleman who had been at a Bank which refused to cash J.Bourne's Bills -he asked Burndred whether he knew if J.Bourne's circumstances were in difficulty. Burndred replied he knew little about them...

Within a year of the date of this memorandum. 28 November, 1842, James Bourne was bankrupt.

With regard to the printing contract, Flesher concluded that

> ... the Connexion [is losing] hundreds a year through having its printing executed dearer than the printing of any other connexion in the kingdom while all its other establishments are wrought on the severest economy. My firm belief is that J.Bourne in printing alone is gaining hundreds yearly by the connexion which he ought not to have...

In other words, apart from the criticism of Bourne, it no longer made sound business sense to have the printing done at a remote Staffordshire farmstead, where, in defence of Bourne, it can be said that his costs were inflated by heavy carriage costs and the uneconomic use of poor equipment. This was reflected in estimates obtained from London printers, which were about half Bourne's. The Conference of 1843 accordingly took away the printing contract from James Bourne, though they allowed him to bid for the binding.[256] Thomas Bateman, a relative by marriage and friend of the Bournes, nonetheless commented favourably on the move.

> June 13th[1844] Some very important steps have been taken by direction of last Conference which were now found to promise much... The Book-Room was moved from Bemersley to London. This has been long desired, but there were obstacles in the way. Now Mr.J.B.'s affairs having taken a strange and unexpected turn to the surprise of everybody, the way was open, and although it had only been moved a few months, it promises well, the Stewards having sent between One and two Hundred pounds to for the Mission Fund.[257]

Torward the end of 1843, James Bourne became bankrupt, notice of a

"Fiat in bankruptcy, bearing date the 16th day of October, 1843," being published in the *London Gazette*, Friday, 20 October. Walford declared himself

> ... fully satisfied, that had James Bourne confined his labours to farming and printing his name would never have appeared in the *Gazette*... But he became entangled, infatuated, and linked in with the potters; and truly they made his a tale of woe, thousands were engulfed in the vortex of ruin by them; even in one instance which came under our own observation, one of these manufacturing gentlemen became indebted to James Bourne to the amount of near six thousand pounds, and all was lost.[258]

Bateman, in his "Biography" of James Bourne in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, also attributes Bourne's downfall to unwise investments, but goes into more detail.

> Out of the many who failed to redeem their promises we will select three cases. The first was a go-a-head manufacturer, poor and ignorant, who, with his bland manner, succeeded in obtaining a loan of £6000. This man knew no bounds to his extravagance. He rode the finest hunters, drove his carriage, and lived in the first style. Mr.Bourne all this time found him money to pay the wages of his men. The second was a young man versed in the science of chemistry, as applied to the manufacture of earthenware... Mr.Bourne... took this young man under his patronage. By his persuasion land was bought and new chemical works were erected for the making of borax. In the process of time, Mr.Bourne sent his protege to America, as his agent, to get orders for earthenware. It is said, that goods to the amount of £7000 were sent out, for which only a few hundreds were received in return. In a short time this youth died; and nearly every shilling was lost. The third was in connection with a glass and china depot, in London... James Bourne... thought he... found [a trustworthy manager] in... a working potter in a very distressed condition. He and his wife were... sent to London. Here they lived in extravagance, until the concern sank in ruin, and involved a large sacrifice.[259]

The "go-a-head manufacturer" can be identified as George Hood, for whom the young Charles Shaw worked after his release from Chell Workhouse, and who by that time had fallen on hard times. Shaw "remembered seeing him, before his trouble came, on his white horse".

> He was considered a good horseman, and he was to be seen daily about the town. He had then an earthenware manufactory,

> and was, in what was then considered, a very large way of business. George H. was a man everyone liked, gentle, and simple. He had a breezy heartiness, and a "hail-fellow-well-met" air always about him. He was a conspicuous figure among "the gentlemen" who used to attend the bowling green of "the Highgate Inn." That green was sacredly reserved for "the gentry".[260]

Thomas Baron, who sojourned at Bemersley in 1840, summed up the limits of James Bourne's capabilities.

> James Bourne, in addition to the printing department and farm, had business connections with some of the manufacturers in the Potteries, and dealt in china, which he exported to Canada. Some of his friends considered this to be a mistake, for though honest to the core in intention, neither his business habits nor experience adapted him for extended and complicated commercial undertakings. He lacked the sharp eye which is attentive to every detail of business, and which watches against all avoidable leakage. He could do fairly well with a regular and settled business.[261]

A lack of attention to detail was demonstrated when Bourne tried to prove a debt of £6000 in George Hood's bankruptcy proceedings in May and June, 1843, having originally only submitted a claim for £1000. After an investigation by a Mr.Kettle, a Burslem accountant, it was found impossible to produce "a specific account of dates and figures, with every information necessary" to prove the larger amount.[262]

The bankruptcy caused even his friend and obituarist, Thomas Bateman, to go further than his previous remarks in censuring James Bourne, though the remarks may be, at least in part, attributable to the co-signatory to the obituary, Philip Pugh, who had investigated the Burslem Chapel affair. They wrote

> We do not intend by the foregoing remarks to exculpate him in the affair of his bankruptcy. We think that he is open to serious censure as to the manner in which he conducted his business, as a commercial man; and the requirements of justice demand that we should say that, in certain things in connection with this lamentable affair, we fear that he had not absolutely pure hands.[263]

Within Primitive Methodism the consequences of the bankruptcy for James Bourne were clear.

> No person who has been insolvent, shall be suffered to hold any office in the Connexion without the previous sanction of the general committee.[264]

He was summoned to the Tunstall Circuit Meeting "to meet his case of insolvency and on 18 December, 1843, his name was "taken from the preachers plan he being insolvent".[265] The bankruptcy caused problems for some of those chapels of which James was a trustee. The circuit experienced some difficulty in wresting from him the deeds to Lask Edge and Brown Edge Chapels. More seriously, the bankruptcy may have been the reason why Thomas Goodfellow called in the mortgage on Longton chapel on 10 November,1843. Goodfellow was a Tunstall earthenware manufacturer. The Tunstall Circuit, on 18 March, reported a decline in circuit membership, but attributed this to "the failure of J.Bourne giving up a class of 20 members at Butt Lane and a failure of the cause at Bemersley.

In November, 1843, the "Assignees of James Bourne, a bankrupt" instructed a Mr.Johnson to auction "The Valuable Printing Establishment, including Printing Presses, Type, Books, Printing Paper etc.; Household, Furniture; Live and Dead Stock, comprising Horses, Cows, Hay, Wheat, Oats, Potatoes and Complements of Husbandry etc.etc."[266] With the printing establishment gone, the community dispersed, the chapel, or cottage meeting room, closed, as already noted, leaving James to continue farming, the family eventually leaving Bemersley in the 1870s after an outbreak of foot and mouth disease. Henry Wedgwood wrote that

> Bemersley had... gone back to its rural appearance... the horses and the cattle have been restored once more to the stables, and the printing gone for ever.[267]

With, to modern eyes, crass insensitivity, the Tunstall Circuit Meeting, 18 December, 1843, "disapproved of Br. H. Bourne receiving profits from the farm at Bemersley while receiving an annuity from the Connexion. Biographers have sought to distance Hugh Bourne from blame for the Bemersley debacle. Frank Baker said that he "consistently deferred business decisions to his younger brother.[268] The example cited refers to the Burslem Old Chapel debts and chapel trustee business.

> When [a] cause was established, Hugh Bourne wished to be freed from the trammels of trusteeship; and as far as was practicable he pursued the plan of non-interference; but his name generally remained on old securities; and hence when it was necessary to renew any of the notes... interrogations something like these would in quick succession be proposed by him:-"What's this, James Bourne? James is it necessary for me to sign? Is it right, James Bourne that I should sign? And on his brother answering in the affirmative, the notes would be signed.[269]

Less easy for the Connexion to forgive was Hugh Bourne's bitterness toward William Clowes, which from time to time erupted into open abuse in public debate and led eventually to Bourne being censured by Conference. This resulted, in part, from Bourne's increasing paranoia about his role as denominational founder, which is manifested in his writings, and as he advanced into old age, his declining mental powers as evidenced by the A, B, and C Texts of his manuscript autobiography. These obsessions may have either have been the cause of, or the result of, "that degree of insanity" to which Bateman refers in his "Biography" of Bourne in the *Magazine*.[270]

The end of the Bemersley era brought to an end the sometimes bitter rivalry between Tunstall and Clowes's base at Hull, which either caused, or resulted from Bourne's attitude to Clowes.[271] More

importantly the move away from the remote farmhouse at Bemersley marked a significant point in the development of Primitive Methodism, which had now passed from the founders to a new generation, from, as some would see it, the romantic, heroic era of open air preachers facing mobs and occasionally wild bulls, and cottage meetings to a settled, and increasingly sophisticated, denomination. Despite their ultimate business failure, the business life of the Bournes played an important part in process of development and fashioned Hugh, to use Frank Baker's phrase, into Primitive Methodism's "chief architect".[272] However, the business failure would have confirmed many in John Flesher's opinion that

> ... as a connexion we have no business to have our money in business.[273]

Notes

1. John Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion from its origin to the Conference of 1859* (1860)

2. Julia Stewart Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion: Its Background and Early History* (Wisconsin 1984)

3. Albert A. Birchenhough, *The Centenary of Primitive Methodism* (Congleton 1907) p.8.

4. *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (1862) p.513.

Frank Baker ["James Bourne (1781-1860) and the Bemersley Book-Room", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX, p.138] went so far as to say that "for a century" there seemed to be "almost a conspiracy of silence about James Bourne". He did not, however, find the obituary referred to above and was, therefore, mistaken in his belief that the resolution of the Primitive Methodist Conference of 1860 that Thomas Bateman and Philip Pugh should prepare "a respectful notice of his life" for the magazine was not carried into effect. The failure to produce this earlier may have been because Philip Pugh, as Tunstall Circuit superintendent would have been preoccupied in 1860 with arrangements for celebrating the jubilee of the connexion and rebuilding the Tunstall chapel, or perhaps, as he had been had been superintendent of the Tunstall circuit before, in 1845-8, in the aftermath of the bankruptcy there was a reluctance to rake over old ground again.

5. Donald H.Ryan, *A brand plucked from the burning - John Wesley, A Potteries Portrait*, [the catalogue of an exhibition of commemorative ceramics at Stoke-on-Trent City Museum, 1988], exhibits E12A and E12B.

The plates are now in the Horace Hird Collection of Methodist ceramics now housed at Mount Zion Methodist Chapel, Ogden, Halifax.

6. Birchenhough, op.cit., p.8-9.

7.Rev.W.Mottram, "Our Centenary - Hugh Bourne, Seth Bede, and Dinah Morris", *The Aldersgate-Primitive Methodist Magazine* (1907) p.206

8. Petty, op.cit., p.438.

9. Walford was married to a niece, Bateman to a great niece.

10. Thomas Bateman, "A Sketch of the Life and Labours of the Venerable Hugh Bourne", *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (1853) p.712.

11. Jesse Ashworth, *The Life of the Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1888) pp.130-131.

12. In 1872, the Primitive Methodist Conference noted that "intelligence, wealth and respectability are becoming increasingly characteristic of us as a community."
["Address to the Societies", *Minutes of the Primitive Methodist Conference*, 1872, p.79.]
c.f. Joseph Sutcliffe, the Wesleyan superintendent of Burslem Circuit who in 1811 worried about the chances of salvation for sleek grocers occupying pews in the pillared chapels of "modern" Methodism.
[Werner, op.cit., p.77.]

13. Minutes of the *Primitive Methodist Conference*, 1875, pp.92-3.

14. Thomas Bateman, op.cit., p.647.

15. James Steele, 1764-1827, was the first Primitive Methodist Circuit Steward.

16. John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent* (1843) p.98.

17. Mary Alsager.

18. John Chappell, "James Steele, Apostle and Directeur[sic] of early Primitive Methodism", *Primitive Methodist Magazine* (1903) p.521.

19. John Ward, op.cit., Appendix IX.

20. Hugh Bourne, *An Ecclesiastical History, from the Creation to the 18th Century, A.D.*[rev.William Antliffe] (1865) p.351.
[First published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine* from 1825-1842]

21. James Jack, *The History of the Church and Parish of Norton-in-the-Moors* (1953) pp.55 and 115.

22. T.Baron, "Reminiscences of a Residence at Bemersley", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1900, p.752.

23. Baptised Norton 27 March, 1697. His probate was granted at Lichfield is dated 30 October, 1760, and thus the John Bourne buried 29 August, 1763, *Burslem Par.Reg.*, cited by John T.Wilkinson, *Hugh Bourne* (1952) p.13, is clearly not the same person.

24. Bridge End, later called Abbey Farm, Milton.

"The ancient order for the choosing of Churchwardens for the Parish of Burslem, and Hulton Lordship, copied out of the old Book, 1657, by me, JOHN STEVENSON, Curate." reproduced in John Ward, op.cit., Appendix XIV, lists under the occupiers, Hulton Lordship, 1742: John Bourne - Bridge End Tenement.

See also Keele University, Sneyd MSS, S1937, Rent Accounts for 1755 and later.

On John Bourne's death in 1760, his widow Mary inherited the lease of the farm under the terms of his will [see probate supra n.20]. The last payment of rent from her was on Lady Day, 1772.

25. John Walford, *Memoirs of the Life and Labours of the Late Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1855-6) Vol.I, p.1.

26. Baptised Norton 21 April, 1733, died June, 1825 [*Norton Par.Reg.*]

27. *Burslem Par.Reg.*, 24 January, 1763, Joseph Bourne, Wheelwright, and Ellen Steele, of Cheadle.

28. At that time "science was beginning to develop new and important resources in the manufacturing of earthenware in the Staffordshire Potteries",[Walford, p2] developments to which the Bournes were to make their own contribution in the field of flint milling.
[see Simeon Shaw, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries* (1829) p.143, and below]

29. Joseph's eldest son John was born in Scotland [Walford, op.cit., p.2] and his gravestone in Norton churchyard records that he died on 25 May, 1849, aged 85.

30. c.f.Charles Shaw's grandfather, Charles Shaw, c.1761-c.1849, "a general dealer in china and earthenware, buying the productions of manufacturers and selling them in warehouses in Liverpool and Birmingham" and who "commanded more ready money than any man... in the Potteries."
[Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903) pp.86-7.]

31. Walford, op.cit., p.2.
His daughter Mary was baptised at Bucknall, 6 March, 1768 [*Bucknall Par.Reg.*]

32. A.E.Musson and Eric Robinson, *Science and Technology in the*

Industrial Revolution (1969) p.65, indicate that this was a natural progression for such a business to take. They point out that "a similar transition is uniquely illustrated in Pyne's *Microcosm* of 1808, where we see how the making of wooden cart wheels metamorphosed into the construction of wooden "wheel machinery" (spur wheels, crown wheels, pinions, etc.) for the early mills." They cite the example of James Brindley, who was such a wheelright and millwright, and also of Rennie, who brought the centrifugal governor for steam engines from his millright practice in windmills.

33. Simeon Shaw, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries* (Hanley 1829) p.143.

34. R.Copeland, "Cheddleton Flint Mill and the history of pottery milling", *North Staffordshire Journal of Field Studies*, Vol.9 (1969) p.53.

35. Simeon Shaw, op.cit., p.144, deriving his information from a memorandum of William Sherratt.

36. Ibid., p.146.
"Brindley applied the Crown wheel to the upright shaft; and Bourne suggested the carriers on the shaft"

37. W.White, *Directory of Staffordshire* (1834) p.664, lists at Bemersley J.Brindley, Stubbs and Taylor, Flint Grinders, Cock's head. J.Brindley is possibly John Brindley who assists Hugh Bourne in soliciting subscriptions for a chapel at Norton - see below.

38. Simeon Shaw, op.cit., p.144.

39. Brindley's notebook, 1755-8, photographic slides of which are in the North Staffs. Field Club library at Hanley Library and transcript at William Salt Library, Stafford, both by A.R.L.Saul.

40. H.R.L., SP192 015.AC/150J2/25: *An Act for authorizing the exchange of Parts of the lands and estates settled by the Will of the late Charles Bowyer Adderley Esquire, and the Sale of other Parts thereof.* 3 & 4 Victoriae, Cap.36.

41. Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minutes, 18 March, 1844

42. Bateman, op.cit., p.518
c.f.John Wesley, who similarly received elementary education from his mother, Susanna.
[L.Tyerman, *The life and times of the Rev.John Wesley* (1870-71) Vol.I, pp.17-18.]

43. Walford, op.cit., p.18.

44. William Shawcross of Uttoxeter by his will dated 25 May, 1719, bequeathed a yearly rentcharge of five pounds for a schoolmaster to teach twelve poor children in Bucknall parish. A school house was built

adjacent to the churchyard.
[George Griffiths, *The Free Schools and Endowments of Staffordshire* (1860) p.506]

45. Walford, op.cit., p.19-20.

46. Bourne *MSS Auto.*, A and C Texts.

47. Bateman, op.cit., p.519.

48. William Sherratt was married to Joseph Bourne's sister.

49. John Aikin, *A Description of the Country from thirty to forty miles round Manchester* (1795) p.176.

50. Peter Lead, "The Beginning of Industrialisation: Coal, Iron and Related Concerns", in *The Potteries: Continuity and Change in a Staffordshire Conurbation*, ed.A.D.M.Phillips (1993) p.91.

51. Supra, p.4 and p.99, n.39

52. Keele University Library, Sneyd MSS, S 1667: drawing and description and S 1441: contract for supply of cast iron pipes, dated 27 July, 1771, and witnessed by William Sherratt.

53. Peter Lead and John Robey, *Steam Power in North Staffordshire*, 1750-1850 [Typescript H.R.L., c.1980]

54. Arthur Raistrick, *Dynasty of Ironfounders* (1953) quotes a letter from a Mr.Speeding of Whitehaven to William Brown a Tyneside engineer, describing the Little Fenton engine

> The Pumps are 8 ins. Bore and are all made by the coopers of staves of wood and hooped with iron...

55. Aikin, op.cit., p.178.

56. Lead and Robey, op.cit..
The surviving Bateman and Sherratt steam engine now at Etruria Industrial Museum was originally built for a Lancashire Textile mill in the 1820s.

57. Hugh Bourne, MSS Autobiography, A Text, c1844, p.11.

c.f. William Clowes who found work as a potter in Warrington and Hull, and who would have come into contact with other potters from various centres of pottery manufacture. For example a workmate from Hull, who had settled in Liverpool, visited Clowes in Tunstall for spiritual guidance. (*The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) p.37.)

58. Ibid., p.11

59. Walford, op.cit., p.22.

60. Bateman, op.cit., p.519.
Dr.John Theophilus Desaguliers, F.R.S., 1683-1744, lectured on "mechanical and experimental philosophy", the application of scientific method to technology.

61. Musson and Robinson, op.cit., p.109.

62. Walford, op.cit., p.50.

63. Walford, op.cit., p.24.

64. Ibid., p29, and Barry Job, *Staffordshire Windmills* (Birmingham 1985) p.26.

65. Built in Sunderland Street in 1779.

66. Walford, op.cit., p.28.

67. Ibid., p.29.
A tower mill dating from about 1795 which stood close to Bucknall Old Road, Hanley. [Barry Job, op.cit., p.26]

68. Walford, op.cit., p48.

69. *Notices of the early life of Hugh Bourne, No.1*, (James Bourne, Bemersley, 1834) p.8.

70. Frank Baker, "The Sacrificial Life and Witness of Hugh Bourne", in *The Methodist Recorder Hugh Bourne Centenary Supplement*, 9 Oct.1952, p.ii.

71. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 2 Feb.1828

72. An Indenture made [11 June, 1811] between John Tomlinson [1] Enoch Keeling[2] Hugh Bourne of Bemersley... Carpenter [3] and James Bourne... Farmer [4].
[This was the conveyance of the site of the first PM chapel in Tunstall. The document was with the deeds of the site of Jublilee Methodist Church, Calver St., Tunstall, purchased by the City of Stoke-on-Trent in 1971 and was photographed by J.H.A.]

73. *Notices of the early life of Hugh Bourne*, No.1, pp.7-8.

74. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 18 Oct., 1828 - "apply Mr.William Handley, Hollinhouse Farm, near the colliery". William's son, Ralph Handley, was a coal an iron master owning collieries in the south of the Potteries.[*People of the Potteries*, ed. Denis Stuart (Keele 1985) p.112]

75. H.R.L., Local Pamplets, Vol.32: Aaron Leese, *The Introduction and Progress of Wesleyan Methodism in the Tunstall Circuit* (1842) p.20.

76. Conveyances dated 20 August, 1801, and 3 February, 1803.

77. Barbara Donaldson, *The Registration of Dissenting Chapels and Meeting Houses in Staffordshire, 1689 - 1852*, in *Collections for a*

History of Staffordshire, Fourth Series, Vol.III (1960) p.7, No.119.
"A chapel at Harriseahead, parish of Wolstanton, registered for Protestant Dissenters by William Handley on 13 Sept. 1805."
The witnesses to the petition are given as William Handley, William Hancock, Maria Handley, James Bourne and Hugh Bourne.

William Handley was listed as a Trustee of Mow Cop Wesleyan Chapel in 1842, by then described as "gentleman of Thursfield Cottage".
[J.H.A.: Conveyance dated 11 July, 1842] Handley, however, did not sign the deed and died on 11 October, 1842.[*Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*, 1842, p.157.]

William's son Ralph Handley (born 1799/1800, died before 1862) was a trustee of Newchapel Wesleyan Chapel erected and opened in 1847.[Anon., *Newchapel Methodist Church Centenary 1873-1973*]
By 1851 he was living in Duke Street, Fenton, and listed as coalmaster, Railway Colliery, Fenton. By 1853 he also worked Wetley Colliery, Caverswall.[Ed. Denis Stuart, *People of the Potteries* (1985) p.112.]

78. Walford, op.cit., p.113.

79 Extract given in Walford, op.cit., p.108. The manuscript journal from 15 Aug.1804 -24 Feb.1808 is missing.

80. Aaron Leese. op.cit., p.16.

81. Hugh Bourne, *Letters to Mr.Aaron Leese of Tunstall, 1 & 2* (James Bourne, Bemersley, 1842)

82. Class lists kept at Burslem Methodist Mission, Swan Bank, Burslem. The names are Abram. Lindap[sic], Benj.Lindap, Elen Lindap, Jos.Pointon, Cornelius Bailey, Jams.Hitchinson, Sara Hitchinson, and Jane Hall.

83. c.f. The class at Standley, which was traditionally regarded by Primitive Methodists as their first society, but which did not have a chapel building and which had long died out and become almost forgotten in the area by 1876.
[J.B., *A Trip to Standley* in *The Christian Messenger*, 1879, pp.107-9]

84. Walford, op.cit., p.39.

Hugh Bourne recorded the conversion of another younger brother, William, in a journal entry for 17 Feb., 1803. William joined the Society of Friends, which had also greatly influenced Hugh, emigrated to America in 1811, and there became a travelling minister.

85. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, p.513
The personal details would have been supplied by Bateman, who was related by marriage, and who had known the Bourne family from about 1819. Bateman's wife and James Bourne's daughter-in-law were daughters of William Salmon of Englesea Brook.

86. H.Bourne, "On the origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, with

notices of the origin of the Wesleyan Connexion", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p.421

87. Thomas Russell, *The Two Brothers their love for and help to each other; being an Epitome of Primitive Methodism* (Dover 1869) p.7

88. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p.421

89. Thomas Russell, op.cit., p.10

90. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, p.514.
For many years the Tunstall and Talke chapels remained the Bournes' private property. The Talke chapel, opened in 1814, was transferred to Conexional trusts by a deed dated 21 December, 1826.

Wayne Johnson incorrectly cites Talke as an example of the late survival of a cottage meeting. In fact Talke was one of the earliest Primitive Methodist chapels, dated 1813. A full account of the development of Talke chapel is given in the *Primitive Methodist Magazines*, a source much quarried by Johnson for the obituaries which form the basis of his thesis. [Wayne J.Johnson, *"In Triumph of Faith": Primitive Methodism and the Labouring People of the North Midlands, 1812-1862* (University of Keele Ph.D.thesis, 1989)]

91. Hugh Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodists* (First American Ed., 1833) cVII.

92. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p.421

93. He presided at the annual Conference on many occasions, Hugh taking the roll of secretary.

94. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1863, p.515

95. The Trustees were to act under the Trusts of Wesley's Deed Poll of 28th February 1784. The Bournes remained trustees of Harriseahead chapel for over twenty years after his exclusion from the Burslem Wesleyan society in 1808, retiring from the trust only when it was reconstituted on 21st June 1829.
[Leonard Brown, "The Origins of Primitive Methodism", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXXIV (1963-4) pp.86 and 124. Brown was able to examine the deeds of the Harriseahead Chapel then in Methodist hands.]

96. J.B.Dyson, *A Brief History of the Rise and Progress of Wesleyan Methodism in the Leek Circuit* (1853) pp.82-3.

97. Donaldson, op.cit., pp.18-19.

98. Walford, op.cit., p.126.
John Brindley may have been the Brindley for whom the Bournes had erected a flint mill at Cockshead. [see supra n.37]

99. Walford, op.cit., p.108

100. Barbara Donaldson, op.cit., p.7, no.120.
The witnesses to the petition are Hugh Bourne, James Bourne, James Scarlet, William Scarlet, James Scarlet, junr..

101. Walford, op.cit., p.97.

102. Barbara Donaldson, op.cit., p.8.

The Conveyance of the land from Richard Leake, or at least the bill for this, is dated May 1808. The deed seems to have combined both the transfer of the site and the trust deed as there is a reference to "Drawing same by which the expense of two deeds was avoided." [*The Old Road to Endon*, Ed.Robert Speake (Keele, 1974) p.64]

103. *Market Drayton A Town and its People,* Ed.B.C.Pitt (1977) p.66.

104. Quoted in Joseph Benson, *A Vindication of the People called Methodists, in answer to a "Report from the Clergy in the Diocese of Lincoln", in a Letter to Thomas Thompson, Esq. Banker, in Hull* (1805) p.13.

105. *Methodist Magazine*, 1800, pp.479-480.

106. John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent* (1843) p.99.

107. Werner, op.ct., p.62.

108. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.101.

109. J.H.A.: *Abstract of An Act of Parliament to Enlarge the Privileges of Religious Worship*, Bemersley, 1838.

110. *Methodist Magazine*, 1806, p.94.

111. Walford, op.cit., p.147, in a reference to opposition to the camp meetings in Macclesfield where the Wesleyan ministers had posted large bills disclaiming all connection with the camp meetings.

112. Hugh Bourne, *Observations on Camp Meetings, with an Account of a camp Meeting held on Sunday 31st.May, 1807, at Mow Cop, near Harriseahead*, reproduced in Walford, op.cit., p.119.

Later camp meetings were from time to time mistaken for political gatherings

> Soon after our people missioned Macclesfield, a camp meeting was appointed to be held at Gawsworth, in 1826, in a field belonging to [Amos] Slater... By some means it got currently reported that the meeting was to be a political one, and, therefore, some gentlemen from Macclesfield came on horseback about the middle of the forenoon; upon their arrival, the Brother who was appointed to preach, desired Mr.H.Bourne would preach in his stead. He did so, from John iii.3. The gentlemen heard with attention, and went away when the sermon was ended, apparently approving of what they heard.

[Thomas Russell, "Deliverance from trouble connected to a camp meeting", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p.153]

113. John Riles, *Camp Meeting - An Address to the Methodists*, Burslem July 8th, 1807.
[H.R.L. photocopy of the original which is in an album containing a "Collection of items relating to Burslem" made by Enoch Wood. The album is at the Potteries Museum, Hanley. An index of the album's contents forms Appendix B to Frank Falkner, *The Wood Family of Burslem* (1912)]

114. Hugh Bourne, "On the Origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion", in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1835, p.418.

115. Hugh Bourne, *Observations on Camp Meetings* etc.

116. The registration was dated 7 June 1807 and the witnesses to the petition were Hugh Bourne, Joseph Pointon, and James Bourne. (Donaldson, op.cit., p.11.)

The first camp meeting had been on Joseph Pointon's farm which was in Cheshire and of which Pointon would have been the tenant. The wooden hut need only have been a few yards away to have been over the border in Staffordshire. The license cost 14s. and the wooden building £30.

117. Hugh Bourne, *On the Origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, and Walford, op.cit., p.146.
Thereafter Hugh Bourne described himself in documents as "Licensed Teacher".

118. Possibly Ralph Stevenson, 1776-1853, pottery manufacturer of Cobridge.
[Ed.Denis Stuart, *People of the Potteries* (Keele 1985) p.201.]

119. Walford, op.cit., p.150

120. M.C.A., DDHB 2/2: Hugh Bourne MSS.Autobiography, B Text, f.61.

121. Walford, op.cit., p.25
"...hence the aptitude for rule and law-making for the Primitive Methodist Community, for which he was by providence raised up as if to be a legislator and governor."

122. Hugh Bourne MSS.Autobiography, B Text, f.62.

123. ibid., f.63.

124. Walford, op.cit., p.180; Bourne MSS Auto., B Text.

125. Manuscript Notebooks of William Clowes, 1836 - 1838, quoted in H.B.Kendall, *The Origin and History of the Primitive Methodist Church* (1906) p.88

126. *Minutes of Several Conversations between the Rev.John Wesley, A.M., and the Preachers in Connexion with him containing the Form of Discipline established among the Preachers and People in the Methodist Societies*, 1797, reprinted 1850, p18.

127. J.H.A.: *Rules and Regulations for the Societies of the Primitive Methodist Connexion, from the Conference Minutes* (Bemersley nd.) p.3.

128 Tunstall Circuit Quarterly Meeting Minutes: 11 Dec.1848 and 8 June 1849.

The meeting noted "that Hugh Bourne has not been a proper member of this circuit since his return from America."

129. *Minutes of the Methodist Conference*, Vol.II.

The 1803 Conference resolved that "If any members of the Methodist Society apply to the Quarter Sessions for a licence to preach, without being approved as a Preacher by the Quarterly Meeting... such persons shall be expelled the Society."

130. *Hansard*, 1st series, XIX, c.1130.

131. The Methodist Conference of 1803 opined
> "that the regularly appointed Local Preachers, or persons who preach occasionally and follow trades or other callings, are a very useful and valuable body of men; but as they are not set apart for the work of the ministry, it is not considered to be consistent with the spirit of the Toleration Acts, that they should claim any advantages from the licenses in question. This meeting[the Wesleyan Conference was exclusively ministerial until 1878], however, has such confidence in the good sense and uprightness of Local Preachers, as to render it unnecessary to pass any penal resolutions with regard to their conduct upon this business.

c.f. William Clowes who was a soldier in a volunteer corps commanded by his master potter.
He chose to withdraw following his conversion in 1805 giving as his reasons:
> 1. The danger of being drawn into sin, by the example or solicitations of the men with whom [he was] associated; and,
> 2. [He] thought [he] could be more profitably employ [his] time in religious labours than in military exercises.

[*The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) p.24.]

132. John Petty, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion* (1860) p.205.

133. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.166.

134. *Minutes of the Seventh General Conference of the Primitive Methodists*, 1826, pp.5-7.
Conference resolved, inter alia, that "no circuit must be allowed to run into debt, and therefore, if any circuit cannot afford to pay or allow to the travelling preacher or preachers the before mentioned salaries and allowances, then such travelling preacher shall not have any more than the circuit can pay without being run into debt. And in all cases where the circuit shall so fall short, the travelling preachers and each of them shall be paid in regular proportions."

135. W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850*, 1972, p.76 The weight of contemporary evidence does, however, point to the perceived political threat as being a motivation.

136. Henry D.Rack, *How Primitive was Primitive Methodism?* (The Chapel Aid Lecture, Englesea Brook, 1996) p.7.

137. Ibid., p.180.

138. J.H.Anderson, *The Tunstall Methodists 1783-1975* (Tunstall, 1975) p.5. Riles' motive on the first occasion was to prevent her form attending the Norton Camp Meeting. His reason for barring her on the second occasion was the Conference directive of that year against preaching by women.

In fact, Mrs.Dunnel herself reinforced the prejudice against female preaching when she was subsequently exposed as a fraud.

> Fanatical impostors have from time to time endeavoured to mislead the ignorant and unwary in this town. About eight years ago, a Mrs.Dunnel, as she called herself, actually mounted the rostrum, and preached to a few credulous persons in Macclesfield, and afterwards at Tunstall in Staffordshire. But the apparent female saint eventually proved a frail and sinful daughter of Eve, and so great was her love for the confraternity, that it was discovered that she had three husbands living. Her short career terminated infamously, and so must that of every worldling or sensualist, who presumes to make the sacred scriptures instrumental to the acquisition of money, or fame.

[John Corry, *History of Macclesfield* (1817) pp.76-7]

139. Hugh Bourne, MSS Autobiography, A Text, f.227.
Barbara Donaldson, op.cit., does not list the registration of a house with John Smith as occupier. However, on 18 February, 1808, Hugh Bourne registered two houses in Tunstall giving William Clowes, on one, and Hugh Wood, on other, as occupiers.[Donaldson, op.cit.,p.13]

140. J.H.Anderson, op.cit., pp.6-7.

141. *The Journals of William Clowes, A Primitive Methodist Preacher* (1844) p.92

142. J.H.A.: Handbill for *The Annual Sermons For the Methodist Sunday School, Tunstall... 2d June, 1811*

> ... The Managers of this School... state... they have met with much opposition from some of those who were Teachers; that these teachers were not *expelled*, (as they declare,) but separated themselves from us, taking with them a large proportion of the Scholars, and also of the books &c. properly belonging to the ORIGINAL METHODIST SUNDAY-SCHOOL; and have established a School in opposition.
>
> Firmly persuaded that this most excellent Institution has been awfully abused, by appropriating a portion of the

LORD's DAY, to teaching the Elements of WRITING and ARITHMETIC, because inconsistent with the religious observation of that Day, they... have laid aside the practice... which affords more time fro reading, and religious Instruction, and have set apart two Evenings in each week for the purpose of teaching writing &c. to those of the Children who merit such a privilege.

143. The Sunday writing issue was a regular cause of friction in the running and control of Methodist Sunday schools in the first half of the 19th century, the most notorious example in North Staffordshire being the secession of the Burslem Sunday School from the Wesleyan control, in 1836. Burslem Sunday School saw itself as resisting the usurpation of power by the Wesleyan authorities.
[*Hill Top Centenary - The Story of Our Church and School*, H.J.Watts (1937)]

144. Benjamin Gregory, *Sidelights on the Conflict of Methodism, 1827-1852* (1899) p.496.
Contemporary observers expected the storm in Leeds to break over the question of the supervision of the Sunday schools rather than the organ controversy. In any event both issues were elements of a rebellion against pastoral authority and control.

145. W.R.Ward, *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820-1829* (1972) p.4.

146. Letter J.Riles to J.Bunting 11 October, 1825
W.R.Ward, op.cit., pp.124-8.

In his previous circuit before Liverpool, Manchester (Irwell Street), 1824, Riles had lent support to asserting Wesleyan authority over the Sunday schools, complaining that the Sunday school party was "doing more evil than good. The children are trained up without any regard to God's public worship; and reverence for the sanctity of the Sabbath, or any respect for the Ministers of the Gospel"
[Letter J.Riles to J.Bunting 12 January 1824. Ward, op.cit., p94]
The policy was pursued further during Bunting's superintendence of Manchester (Grosvenor Street) circuit, 1824-6.
[D.A.Gowland, *Methodist Secessions, The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire Towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester 1979) p.142]

147. T.P.Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting*, Vol.I, (1859) p.97.

148. M.C.A.: MSS.Letter Jabez Bunting to Richard Reece, 11 June and 15 July 1803.

149. *Hall's Circuits and Ministers... from 1765-1912*, p.342.

150. J.B.Dyson, *The History of Wesleyan Methodism in the Congleton Circuit* (1856)
The "Charles" referred to was a Charles Shaw in whose house the preaching took place. He was probably the source of the story. Neither Bourne nor Bunting mention the incident.

151. Henry Rack, *Reasonable Enthusiast: John Wesley and the Rise of Methodism* (1989)

152. David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (1984) p.79.

153. John C.Bowmer, "A Proposed Disabling Bill of 1800", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XLIV(1984), p.174-6; David Hempton, op.cit., p.78.

154. John Pawson, "An Account of Mr.Alexander Mather", *Methodist Magazine*, 1801, p.114

155. John Munsey Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation: Studies in Methodism and Ecumenism in England, 1740-1982* (1985) p.84.

156. *The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) pp.52-7
The chest of drawers pulpit was preserved for many years at the Primitive Methodist Chapel in Tunstall as a relic of the early years of the movement and is now at the Museum of Primitive Methodism, Englesea Brook.

157. Joseph Nightingale, *A Portraiture of Methodism* (1807) p.489

158. John Ward, op.cit., p.98.

159. ibid., p.210
Nightingale drafted *Rules* for the Christian Revivalists at Macclesfield, who took the name Independent Methodists in 1806.

160. Hugh Bourne MSS Auto quoted in Walford, op.cit., p.87.

161. Werner, op.cit., p.77.

162. Joseph Sutcliffe to Jabez Bunting, Bristol, Oct.31, 1820, in W.R.Ward, *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting 1820-1829* (1972) p.54.

163. Werner, op.cit., p.77.

164 *The Journals of William Clowes* (1844) pp.98-100; Hugh Bourne, MSS Journal, 13 Feb.,1812.

165. Frank Baker, "The Bournes and the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll: Some Unpublished Documents", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXVIII, 1952, p.138.

166. Werner, op.cit., pp.34-39.

167. Hugh Bourne MSS Auto., quoted in Walford op.cit., pp.97-8.

168. Dyson, op.cit., p.106.
On his last visit to Congleton, on 30 March, 1790, Wesley, "called as he passed at the door of... James Clarke... "

169. Bourne MSS Auto., C Text, f.67, quoted in Walford, op.cit., p.98.

Revivalism in Stockport had manifested itself in 1794, when the superintendent of the Stockport circuit, John Pritchard, expressed concern at the conduct at lovefeasts

> My mind was grieved at the noise and disorderly behaviour of some well-meaning persons,... who with their loud *Amens*, knocking, &c., greatly disturbed the congregation."

[Werner, op.cit., p.48]

Some, under the leadership of Gamaliel Swindells, had for a time been associated with the Methodist New Connexion. Others left the Wesleyan Circuit in 1805, and at the Independent Methodist Conference of 1808, Swindells and Peter Ashley, represented a society of sixty-three members.
[Ibid., p.27]

170. Hugh Bourne, MSS Auto., A Text, f.14.

171. An Indenture dated 23 June, 1806 made between William Broadhurst and John Andrew(1), James Hall and Elizabeth Buckley(2), and John Berisford, Amos Slater, and James Harding(3) as reproduced in an Abstract of the Title to Messrs Coppock, Mellor and others to the Parsonage Street Chapel (n.d.)[J.H.A.photocopy. Original in private hands.] See also Nightingale, op.cit., p.489.
"At [Macclesfield, the Revivalists] have lately erected a neat chapel, having long been separated from their brethren of the old connexion."

172. An Indenture dated 9 May,1822 and made between John Andrew, rope maker,(1) William Booth(2) and Hugh Bourne(3)[Photocopied by J.H.A.when property was still in Methodist hands.]
"Memoir of the late John Andrew", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1826, pp.73-81.

173. Walford, op.cit., p.149.

174. James Vickers, *History of Independent Methodism* (1920) p.9.
Hugh Bourne, MSS Journal, June 12, 1808 For the preaching plan for March, 1810, Walford, op.cit., p.270.

175. Walford, op.cit., pp.172-8. Walford reproduces the tract in full.

176. Zacharias Taft, Biographical Sketches of the Lives and Public Ministry of Various Holy Women, Vol.I (1825) Vol.II (Leeds 1828)

177. Walford, p.270, and John Dolan, *From Barn to Chapel* (1989) p.25.

178. Lorenzo Dow, *The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil, as exemplified in the life, experience, and travels of Lorenzo Dow* (Norwich 1833) p.254; Hugh Bourne, MSS Auto., B Text, f.30.

179. Hugh Bourne, *General Collection of Hymns and Spiritual Songs for Camp Meetings, Revivals, &c.* (Newcastle 1809)

180. John Dolan, *Peter's People* (Wigan 1996) p.6.

181. Stephen Rothwell, *Memorials of the Independent Methodist Chapel, Folds Road, Bolton* (Bolton 1887) p.81.

182. Hugh Bourne, "On the Origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p.223.

183. William Antliff, *The Life of the Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1872) p.117; Hugh Bourne, "On the Origin of the Primitive Methodist Connexion", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, p.421.

184. Walford, op.cit., p.235.

185. Hugh Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodists*, 1823 and 1835, ch.IX;
[First published in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1821 and 1822]
The Journals of William Clowes (1844) p.87.

186. Walford, op.cit.,pp.324-325.

187. Hugh Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodists*, ch.VII.

188. Ibid., ch.XIII.

189. Hugh Bourne, MSS Journal, 26 July, 1811.

190. John Dolan, *Peter's People* (Wigan 1996) p.12.
In the later nineteenth century in some places there was a reverse process whereby some PM Societies seceded to the Independent Methodists usually over disputes about payment of the circuit assessment.[see W Parkes, ""Independent" Methodist Societies, A Checklist", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.33, pp.5-10, and G.E.Milburn, *The Christian Lay Churches* (Sunderland 1977)] 191. David Hempton, *Religion and political culture in Britain and Ireland* (1996) p.28.

192. Thomas Bateman, "A Sketch of the Life and Labours of the Venerable Hugh Bourne", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1853, pp.711-12.

193. Walford, op.cit., p.310.

194. Ibid., p.397.

195. Hugh Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodists*, in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1835, pp.28-30 and 53-7, where the rules are set out in full.

196. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.55; *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1819[published June, 1820], p.193; Hugh Bourne: *On Chairmaning...*, Bemersley, nd.

197. Many of the leaders of the agricultural unions in East Anglia, for example, were Primitive Methodists.
["Biographical Index of Agricultural Union Leaders in Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk 1872-92, in Nigel Scotland, *Methodism and the Revolt of the Field* (1981) pp.182-266]

198. Hugh Bourne MSS, Auto.A Text, f.95; Walford, op.cit., p.126; Robert Speake(Ed.), *The Old Road to Endon* (Keele,1974); Bourne MSS Journal, June, 1811; *Primitive Methodist Church and Schools, Talke-O'-Th'-Hill Centenary Celebrations Souvenir* (Talke 1914)

199. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1825, pp.101-3.

200. *Primitive Methodist Preachers' Magazine*, 1828, p.20.

201. *Christian Messenger*, 1907, p.86.
The ground plan of the Nelson Street Chapel, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, published with approval in the *Primitive Methodist Methodist Magazine*, 1840, p.236, shows a pulpit of similar design.

202. e.g. *Primitive Methodist Preachers Magazine*, 1827, pp.5, 7-10, 1828, pp.17-18; *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1839, pp.63-4, 174.

203. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1840, pp.113-5.

204. For example the registration of the chapels from Harriseahead onwards, and the camp ground at Mow Cop.

205. *Primitive Methodist Preachers' Magazine*, 1828, pp.37-40.

206. Frank Baker, "The Bournes and the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll: Some Unpublished Documents", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXVIII, 1952, p.139.

207. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.178.
John Wilks, ?1765-1854, solicitor and radical M.P. for Boston, Lincolnshire, 1830-7, had been recommended to William Clowes.
[*Dictionary of National Biography*, Index and Epitome, Ed.Sidney Lee (1903) p.1407]

208. For example: J.C.Edwards, "A Plan for Liquidating Chapel Debts", *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1839, pp.134-8; "Methodist New Connexion Chapel Debts", *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, 1844, pp.318-9; William Kelk, *Our Chapel Debts: A Contribution to Wesleyan Economical Reform* (Manchester 1852).

209. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1841, pp.32-7, 56-60.
This was followed up with accounts of where the system had been successfully adopted.
In reality the chapel debt was to grow much worse as the nineteenth century progressed. In the end it was Primitive Methodism that came up with the most imaginative solution to the problem with the setting up of the Primitive Methodist, now Methodist, Chapel Aid Association in 1890, which was a building society for chapels.
[Geoffrey E.Milburn, *Unique in Methodism: 100 Years of Chapel Aid* (Englesea Brook 1990)]

210. Leonard Brown, "The Origins of Primitive Methodism", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXXIV, 1963, p.79; J.H.A.: MSS Schedule of deeds relating to land[the former chapel] at Harriseahead, 1965.

Brown was able to examine the deeds when still in possession of the Methodist Church. The building was sold in 1965 and has subsequently been demolished.

211. Hugh Bourne, *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, ch.XI

212. MSS Indenture dated 11 June, 1811, and made between John Tomlinson(1), Enoch Keeling(2), Hugh Bourne(3), and James Bourne(4).

When in 1821 Bourne found that as a result of a mistake he was not a member of the Conference meeting at Tunstall, he was able to gain entry and eject "the speeching radical" "on account of its being private property; and that [my brother] and I were the proprietors of it."[Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p100]

213. Indenture dated 28 August, 1815, and made between John Tomlinson(1), Enoch Keeling(2), James Bourne(3), and Hugh Bourne(4) recited in the Indenture referred to in n.215 below.

214. Conveyance dated 2 April, 1833, made between Hugh Bourne and James Bourne(1) and Primitive Methodist Trustees(2) referred to in a Schedule of Deeds and Documents relating to Jubilee Methodist Church, Tunstall, prepared on its sale to the City of Stoke-on-Trent in 1971.[J.H.A.]

215. J.H.A.[Photocopy. Original in private hands]: MSS.completed draft of an Indenture dated 1 June 1827 made between James Bourne(1) and William Clowes and Thomas King (two of the acting members or Stewards of the P.M.Preachers' Fund)(2).

Such a mortgage would have been a legitimate investment for the Fund, but a loan to James Bourne would appear unethical, or at least suspicious. However, there could be said to be a degree of arms length as the Fund was under the control of Clowes at Hull and not the Bournes at Bemersley.

216. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes, 24 June, 1842.

There are references in the minutes, which only survive from 1836, to repairs from 1837. It is minuted on 5 April, 1844, "That the Trustees be recommended to build a good house adjoining the chapel."

217. Philip Pugh and Thomas Bateman, "Biography", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, p.515.

218. J.H.A.[pending deposit at S.R.O.], Indenture dated 21 December 1825 made between Hugh Bourne and James Bourne(1) and the Trustees(2) which recites the purchase deed dated 2 February, 1814.

219. J.W.Chappell, *In the Power of God* (Burslem 1901) pp.18-19.

220. W.White, *Directory of Staffordshire* (1834) p.584.

221. There is a photograph of the chapel, by then an ale-house, and the three adjoining cottages in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1906, p.224

222. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1842, pp.256-7.

223. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes for the 1840s; Thomas Russell, "On Chapel Management", *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1836, pp.34-5.

224. *Autobiography of the Reverend William Lea 1800-1870* (Annotated by Sheila Gibbs) (Nolisement Publications 1996) p.24.

225. John Ward, op.cit., p.246.

226. J.W.Chappell, op.cit., p.25.

227. J.H.A.[pending deposit at H.R.L.] MSS.Copy of Burslem Old Chapel Accounts, 1822-1845, prepared by Philip Pugh c.1846.

228. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.32.

229. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes, 30 August, 1844.

230. J.W.Chappell, op.cit., p.27.

231. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.310.

232. Ibid., p.306.
Walford was a trustee of the Longton chapel in respect of a loan of £300 secured by a mortgage of 5 March, 1836, was called in by the mortgagee on 5 September, 1843.
[MSS Abstract of a Mortgage from the trustees of the Primitive Methodist Chapel and Premises at Longton etc. to Mr.Thomas Goodfellow for securing £300 and interest]

233. Frank Baker, "James Bourne (1781-1860) and the Bemersley Book-Room", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX, p.139.

234. Hugh Bourne, MSS Journal, 7 and 23 January and 26 March, 1818
John Tregortha, born in Cornwall, travelled as a Methodist preacher up to 1795, when he settled in Burslem as a printer and bookseller.
[Rupert Simms, *Biblioteca Staffordiensis* (Lichfield 1894) p.463.

235. *General Minutes*, 1821, pp.13-14.

236. *Minutes*, 1823.

237. *Minutes*, 1825.

238. "Regulations of the Book Room", *Minutes*, 1822.

239. Frank Baker, op.cit., p.142.
The figures are taken from the Book-Room accounts as published annually in the *Various Regulations*, the presentation of which was irregular and difficult to interpret.

240. A rental of £38 is shown in 1833.
241. Frank Baker, op.cit., p143.
An Atlas printing press of about 1823, one of only four Known to survive, used at Bemersley is now housed at The Museum of Primitive Methodism, Englesea Brook.

242. *Various Regulations*, 1833, pp10-11; 1835, p.7.

243. Naomi Bates, "Food for Thought: A Staffordshire Cookery Book and its Background", *Staffordshire History*, Vol.3,, 1985, pp.1-6.

244. Tunstall Quarterly Meeting Minutes.
The cottages and date tablet were photographed by the author prior to demolition c.1970.

245. It is possible that Smith of Smith and Hitchen, may have been John Smith the son of John Smith in whose kitchen the Tunstall revivalists met and brother of Joseph Smith, in who entertained the first Tunstall Methodists in the same house in the 1780s, though the evidence is only circumstantial. Joseph Smith's name appears as owning a pottery in the Tunstall Jurors' book in 1784 and 1796, The factory was announced for sale or to let in 1802. [*Staffs.Advertiser* 3 July]
Smith & Steele appears in Holden's Directory, 1805-7. The Primitive Methodist James Steele was steward to the Smiths and had been one of those first Tunstall Methodist and is known to have owned a pottery factory.
[John W.Chappell, "James Steele", *P.M.Mag.*, 1903, p.521]
By 1841, John Smith was living at Tatnall, Cheshire [John Ward, op.cit., p.88] and Smith and Hitchen had a Cheshire solicitor.

246. H.R.L., SP192 BOURNE, MSS letter dated 6 March, 1830, from Bourne, Nixon & Co. to Mr.Hostage, Solicitor, Northwich, Cheshire.

247. Frederick Brown, *Memoir of Mr.John Hancock* (Tunstall 1843) p.13

248. *Various Regulations*, 1835, pp.7-8; *Minutes*,1835, p.11; Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.303-4.

248. *Various Regulations*, 1835, pp.7-8; *Minutes*,1835, p.11; Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.303-4.

249. *Various Regulations*, 1838, p.2.

250. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, pp.292 & 295.

251. The more recent muddled book keeping at the Book-Room was largely the fault of John Hallam, whom William Antliff, in an editorial note to Walford [Vol.II, p.290] described as "thoroughly honest and sincere, but decidedly incompetent". When Thomas Holliday was appointed assistant Book Steward to Hallam in 1843, he proved that Hallam had made an error in his favour of £241 2s.9d. together with further errors. Hallam died in 1845 having arranged in his will that the Connexion be reimbursed in full. A report prepared for the Conference of 1846 showed that Hallam owed the Connexion over £800.
[*Various Regulations*, 1846, p.13]

252. W.J.Robson, *Silsden Primitive Methodism* (Silsden 1910) pp.34-5.

253. Frank Baker, "John Flesher and the Bemersley", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX (1956) pp.172-8, includes a transcript of Flesher's "Memorandums".

254. John Julian, *Dictionary of Hymnology* (1892) p.730.

255. Frederick Brown, op.cit., p.13.

256. Frank Baker, op.cit., *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX (1956) p.176 [the estimates]; *Various Regulations*, 1843, p.4.

257. H.B.Kendall, *The History of the Primitive Methodist Church*, Vol.II (nd. but c1905) p.393.

258. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.304.

259. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, pp.515-516.

260. Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903) p.119.

261. Rev.T.Baron, "Reminiscences of a Residence at Bemersley", *Aldersgate Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1900, p.752.

262. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 27 May and 24 June, 1843.

263. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1862, p.516.

264. *General Minutes of the Conferences of the P.M.Connexion Consolidated* (Bemersley 1836) p.47.

265. Tunstall P.M.Circuit Minutes, 8 and 18 Dec., 1843.

266. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 11 and 18 Nov., 1843

267. Henry Allen Wedgwood, "Bemersley", *People of the Potteries* (1970) p.112, originally published as part of a series in the *Staffordshire Sentinel* in the 1870s.

268. Frank Baker, "James Bourne 1781-1860) and the Bemersley Book-Room", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX, 1956, p.139.

269. Walford, op.cit., Vol.II, p.305.

270. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1853, p.712.

271. This has been fully explored in Stephen Hatcher's doctoral thesis, "The Origin and Expansion of Primitive Methodism in the Hull Circuit 1819=1851", University of Manchester, 1993.

272. Frank Baker, "The Bournes and the Primitive Methodist Deed Poll: Some Unpublished Documents", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXVIII (1952) p.138.

273. John Flesher, "Memorandums... ", Sept.28, 1842. [Frank Baker, "John Flesher and the Bemersley", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX (1956) p.174.

CHAPTER 4

The Thornes and the Bible Christians

A.D.Gilbert noted that nonconformity tended to thrive in areas away from nucleated, landlord dominated villages, i.e. in areas of dispersed farmsteads, smallholdings, and a dearth of resident landlords.[1] In Devon it was from the scattered farmsteads that the Bible Christians drew a substantial proportion of their recruits. A number of families of yeoman farmers, such as the Reeds of Holwell Farm, Buckland Brewer, and the Thornes of Lake Farm, Shebbear, underpinned the connexion. At a meeting at Lake Farm on 9 October 1815 William O'Bryan enrolled a class of twenty-two members, including the brothers James and Samuel Thorne, traditionally regarded as the birth of the Bible Christians.[2]

John Thorne, born in 1762, had moved to Shebbear by 15 July 1789 when he married Mary Ley, the daughter of Samuel and Mary Ley of Rightdown Farm, Bradford (about two miles from Shebbear). It is the opinion of at least one local historian that it was Mary's family that was the source of the wealth that set the Thornes up in business.[3] They commenced married life at North Furze Farm, Shebbear, where they had five children including two who were to play a prominent role in the development of the Bible Christian Connexion, James, born 21 September 1795, and Samuel, born 9 June 1798. John Thorne's father died shortly after his birth and by the age of sixteen he was engaged in business with his mother. He was said to have been an inventive man "of considerable enlightenment and enterprise"[4] in a part of the country not noted for these qualities at that time. It was a tradition in the Thorne family "that he brought home the first wheeled carriage seen in the parish for use in farming operations". Writing of his father in

1842, his son said: "He conducted his business with so much punctuality and exactness that he obtained the character of an honest, upright man, all through the long period of his life."[5] The family moved to Lake Farm, Shebbear, in 1809 or 1810.

John Thorne played his full part in the affairs of the parish and was Overseer for the Poor in 1811. His social status was to stand the sons in good stead in their preaching activities. F.W.Bourne tells of incident when James Thorne was preaching to a house full of people in the village of Beaford, c.1817. Two churchwardens, an overseer of the poor, and a constable put in an appearance and demanded James Thorne's license. He asked what authority they had for making this request and the conversation went as follows:

> Gentlemen... the law does not require us to show our license except to the proper authorities." "What authority do you want?" "The authority of a magistrate." "Then we shall apply to Mr.B." "Give my compliments to him; he knows my father";

on which the intruders left.[6]

John Thorne donated the land for Lake Chapel in 1817, and on the departure of the evangelical curate, Daniel Evans, from the parish, threw in his lot with the Bible Christians. His younger sons, James and Samuel, both itinerated for the Bible Christians - James from 1816 and Samuel from 1819, Samuel resigning in 1824 to concentrate on his printing activities.[7] It would appear that the family farm at Lake subsidised the brothers James's and Samuel's Bible Christian activities. James Thorne drew on family resources to help to defray the costs of chapel building. for instance bearing single handed the financial responsibility of the chapel at Sheerness, in Kent, built in 1821.[8] A letter to him from his mother, Mary Thorne, dated "Lake, 12th

June, 1820", is revealing on this point.

> You asked your father in your last if he had any money to lay out for a chapel... We have only a few pounds by us at present. I was willing to have had your father call in the money we have, to have laid it out in the cause of the Lord as believing it the best way we could do with it; perhaps he might not be able to do this very quickly, but he he did not say that he would do it. When you come home you can talk to him more about it... "[9]

When the separation of William O'Bryan came in 1829, it was necessary to free him from pecuniary liabilities with respect to chapel matters and the book room affairs, and in the process James Thorne took on himself financial burdens from which he was never fully relieved.

> To carry on Connexional operations, for many a long year he had to pledge his credit for large amounts. His friends freely gave him their assistance in this way, and their confidence was never abused.[10]

James Thorne was by all accounts a forceful personality, and probably difficult to refuse. John Thorne senior died in 1842, and whilst leaving substantial bequests to his other children, only left James five shillings, presumably because he had already received his patrimony in the form of subsidies for his evangelistic career long before his father's death. The decision to set up a Bible Christian book room seems to have been made largely because of difficulties experienced in obtaining supplies of the Methodist hymn book from the Wesleyan Book Room, and the "trifling discount"[11] being offered. This led to the compilation of their own hymn book, and, under the "mistaken anticipation of realising a profit from the operation"[12], the establishment of a connexional book room, and the production of that most important component of denominational life and identity, the connexional magazine, without which no Methodist denomination, however small, would have been complete. As James Thorne was later to maintain:

> "A denominational periodical should be at once cheap, useful and attractive; it should mirror the ability, record the doings, and advocate the claims of the denomination in whose interests it is published; and at the same time be conducted upon enlightened and Catholic principles."[13]

and in one of a series of regular pleas for increased circulation he wrote:

> "... the more a connexional organ circulates, the wider is the influence it exerts... UNITED EFFORTS in a cause designed to promote the glory of God and the welfare of immortal souls, are sure to be crowned with ultimate success, if consistently persevered in. A connexional organ should be found in every family belonging to the denomination... "[14]

In 1822 James Thorne was appointed to Plymouth Dock to assist O'Bryan in his duties of editor and set about setting up the connexional press. In August of that year he travelled from Kent via London where he met George Warren, whom he engaged as printer, and ordered a fount of types. Warren "appeared minded to draw back through the persuasions of Mr.Cordeaux and Mr.Roche."[15] Thomas Cordeaux was the printer at the Wesleyan book room, and it may have been that Warren was being poached from there. Thorne went on to purchase types and a press, and a connexional publishing house, of which William O'Bryan and the brothers James and Samuel Thorne were the chief promoters, was thus begun.[16].

The printing office was set up by Samuel Thorne at Stoke Damarel, Plymouth, and appears de facto to have operated as a private concern. The book concern commenced without capital, and in consequence had large sums to pay for interest. On the break with O'Bryan, the Thornes paid him out and Samuel became proprietor of the printing concern. The business therefore passed into private hands "as presenting the best means to save the credit of the Connexion." In the process the brothers incurred debts from which they were never able to free themselves

completely and the transaction therefore "only proved to be a shifting of the burden, under which the bearers groaned for the rest of their lives."[17] Samuel Thorne and his wife, Mary, the daughter of William O'Bryan, managed the printing business from their home at Mill Pleasant, Stoke Damarel until March 1829, when they moved to Shebbear[18], transferring the business to a printing office, then just being completed, on the borders of his father's Lake estate. The cover of the June number of the *Bible Christian Magazine* stated that it was published at Prospect Place, Shebbear.[19]

The brothers James and Samuel Thorne controlled the Bible Christian Book Room from the withdrawal of William O'Bryan in 1827 until the 1860s. Samuel combined his position as printer to the Connexion with the office of Book Steward in the years 1822-4 and 1827-36. James was Assistant Editor 1822-3, Book Steward 1837-47, Editor and Book Steward 1848-68. as well as holding many other key connexional offices being particularly involved in financial management.[20]

In the early years sales were low and several of the publications probably unremunerative. In 1833 the Conference was told "our Book affairs are in a very improving state, and we anticipate with great pleasure the time when from its profits a sum will annually be devoted to help forward the work of our Church". It was in reality many years before the undertaking was on a sound footing. The low circulation of the connexional magazine was perhaps inevitable in a comparatively small denomination with a correspondingly small book buying constituency. Repeated efforts were made to set and achieve better targets for circulation of the connexional magazine and to reach the goal that a "copy of the connexional organ should be found in every

family belonging to the denomination".[21] In 1840 a more modest goal "that one, at least, will be circulated among every society in the Connexion".[22] In 1847 it had been the editor's (James Thorne's) "anxious wish to have raised [the] monthly circulation to 3000", but he blamed "the pressure of the times" for the failure to reach this target.[23] By 1848 stock was a trouble, and the 1850 Conference, in order to get rid of it, directed the sale of stock at any prices possible.

By July 1860 the Book Room business had righted itself, and the whole of the then stock and book debts, after making a grant of £91 7s.3d. to the Educational Fund, formed a free capital, with the exception of £43 0s.4d. then owing.[24] By an agreement dated 18 January 1861 between the Book Committee and Samuel Thorne, the latter was given an exclusive printing contract until 1 December 1869 in return for which he assigned to the Book committee his copyrights in the *Bible Christian Magazine*, the *Youth's Miscellany*, the *Child's Halfpenny Magazine*, and the hymnbook. The agreement went on to state that Samuel was indebted to James in the sum of £2,200, and that this sum plus interest ("after deducting the sum to be allowed out of the purchase money on the purchase of the dwellinghouse, offices and premises at Prospect Place"[by then having been transferred to the Connexion as part of Shebbear College]) was to be paid direct to James over the eight years out of monies due to Samuel under the agreement.[25] There was, therefore, "an engagement to pay Samuel Thorne a fixed price for printing magazines and hymn books to compensate him to the extent of £242 5s. per year for losses he had previously sustained".[26] It would appear that as a result no further profits were available for

connexional purposes in this period and none were made, although the value of stock and book debts increased. In 1862 £100 was voted to Samuel Thorne "in consideration of his disastrous fire".[27]

Samuel Thorne and Mary Thorne removed to Plymouth in 1861 and transferred the printing business, setting up the Octagon Printing Office in Union Street. F.W.Bourne replaced James Thorne as Editor[28] and Book Steward in 1869 and the following year the Book Room was transferred to London. Samuel Thorne continued to do the printing until this was transferred to London printers in 1873.[29]

Samuel Thorne attended the day school at Langtree, and after 1815, he apparently built on the foundation he had received there: language, history, mathematics, theology, general literature, jurisprudence and politics.[30] His journal in 1825 shows him reading Knox's *Moral Essays*, Locke's *Essay on the Understanding*, and Gillie's *Historical Collections.* He seems quite early on to have had the idea of establishing a school at Shebbear. In 1820, he wrote to "Friend Chapple", who had a school at Burrington.

> Dear Brother,
> This is to acquaint thee a little about the things which thou desirest me, viz., 1st. We much want a good school at Shebbear. 2nd. But there seem to be a few difficulties in the way. One with regard to the school-room. The chapel is large enough, but then it is cold, is it not? Another is, thou art not sure of having a larger number of children than thou hast now, though I rather think thou wouldest. I should like to have a school in this parish kept by a man who feared God, and would keep the children under subjection, and if thou art willing to try I will gladly do all I can to promote it.[31]

By 1825, when he resigned from the ministry to concentrate on the connexional printing activities, he had shelved the idea for a school, or at least put it in ice. The printing office quickly proved

uneconomic and the Connexion being unable to sustain the losses de facto privatised the operation in Samuel Thorne's hands. On their move to Shebbear in March 1829 Samuel Thorne's family lived at Lake farmhouse until January 1830 when they were able to move into Prospect Place, a substantial house built by Samuel on the edge of Lake Farm. Samuel again took up the idea of establishing a school. His wife, Mary Thorne wrote of the proposal and of her husband's expanding little business empire:

> At the Conference of 1831, William Reed was stationed in this circuit and fully concurred in my husband's views of opening a school at Lady-day following. My husband was desirous of refreshing his memory with the Latin he had previously learnt, and of having sight into a branch or two of Mathematics; he therefore spent several weeks of the winter in Devonport, for the benefit of private tuition... We began our school at Lady-day 1832, and had more pupils than we ever expected... Shortly after conference, which was again at our house, our harvest began; some of it had a week's rain after it was reaped before it was carried. I was obliged to be continually in the school, that my husband might attend to the harvest, and he was helping his brother John... January 13th 1833... our school began again last Monday, after a fortnight's holiday. The number of scholars is not diminished; I am in the school continually. My husband talks of taking boarding scholars; I do not desire it much at present... besides the printing office and binding business, we keep a stationer's and druggist's shop, and Samuel has just begun a circulating library.[32]

The reference to John is to the older brother of James and Samuel, John Thorne. John left Shebbear with his family in 1838 to take on a tenant farm at Broadwoodwidger, near Launceston, Samuel taking over the running of Lake. Whilst not as active in Bible Christian affairs as his brothers, John nonetheless gave his full support to the cause and "while at Broadwood, chiefly through Mr.John Thorne, a chapel was built and a Society formed there."[33] John was left with the ownership of Lake Farm on his mother's death in 1843 but did not return to Shebbear, emigrating to America in 1845. The Shebbear Tithe Apportionment dated

11 July 1846[34] gives the size of Lake Farm. Samuel Thorne is described as the freeholder of Lake, about 72 acres, and Prospect, about 2 acres, and also as the tenant of another 19 acres of arable elsewhere in the parish called "Part of Churchland". By 1857 Samuel Thorne is listed as "Printer and Bookseller, Lake", "Farmer", and "Sub Master, Post Office, Prospect Place".[35] In 1861, Samuel was described as a farmer of 181 acres, his daughter Susanna, was the local postmistress, and five other children, and two of James's children, were working within the printing business.[36]

The Bible Christian Conference of 1840 agreed that a proprietary grammar school, run by and for the church, was desirable, but could see no prospect of being able to establish one, at least for many years to come. The conference would, however, "patronise" one if run on approved lines.[37] An invitation to take up shares was issued, with the promise "of an Institution conducted on strictly religious principles, in which all the traditions of a sound English Education might be acquired: and, if practicable, some of the more usually studied of the Learned Languages".

In the Spring of 1841, Samuel Thorne and his family moved back into Lake Farmhouse, leaving the school and printing business at Prospect Place. The school was floated as a company, the funds for the venture to be raised by the issue of shares, a maximum of 60 at £5 each, to interested friends. The rules and regulations of the *Bible Christian Proprietary Grammar School* compiled at a meeting of shareholders, held at Prospect Place on 20 January 1841, provided that the shareholders should be repaid their shares "when the clear proceeds of the Institution will admit of it, with lawful interest paid annually",[38]

Any surplus would be applied "to building and repairing suitable premises, establishing a library, lessening the charge for education, especially to Itinerant Preachers' children, or in any way to benefit the Institution". At the first meeting of the shareholders it was resolved "that as we have obtained the promise of eight Pupils with the prospect of more, and several day Pupils, and about 35 shares, we consider we are authorised... to take all... steps necessary to establish the School at Lady-day next"[25 March 1841].[39] Some of the preachers and a number of leading members subscribed £150. However, the venture was not a financial success, probably not helped by the death of the death of the first master about a year after his appointment. He was Rev.H.C.O'Donnoghue, M.A. Cantab., who had been one of William IV's chaplains, and whose appointment had been, no doubt, intended to bring prestige to the institution. By this time the school was heavily in debt and it was clear that the shareholders were to get "no dividend beyond the satisfaction of doing good".[40] By 1844 the position had become so serious that the committee asked that James Thorne, then resident in Bideford, remove to Shebbear to exercise general control with his wife, Catherine Thorne, as matron.

In 1846 the Bible Christian Conference "reluctantly agreed to relieve the shareholders of their responsibility, but it never took kindly to its new obligations."[41] The motives of the Conference in taking this initiative, officially at least, went beyond merely bailing the school out of its financial problems. James Thorne had written of "establishing a school for the sons of the more affluent of our friends" - by and large yeoman farmers like the Thornes themselves in various parts of Devon and Cornwall, boys who would return to their

father's farms and in due course inherit them. Richard Kinsman, who had presided at the first meeting of the shareholders in 1841, clearly set out the original aims of the school in a letter to the *Bible Christian Magazine* dated 13 February 1847

> ... The more respectable among the middle classes in various parts of the West of England... could obtain no education, but a short time ago, in which this defect [grammatical studies] was not found to exist, unless they were privileged to live in some of the large towns, or could obtain admission to places where persons were prepared for college life...
>
> ... such was the state of education in the West of England, and especially in the North-west of Devon, and the North-east of Cornwall, previous to the founding of the Shebbear Proprietary Boarding-school (The Wesleyan Proprietary School at Taunton was not then established) and to better this state of things, and to improve our position in the Church of Christ, that Institution originated... [42]

Another factor was the perceived danger of government interference in education, in particular by way of grants to National Schools thereby making "all Schoolmasters subservient subordinates of Government, and throw an incalculable amount of influence into the hands of the clergy of the Established Church."[43] These concerns no doubt influenced Conference in its decision to take over the school at Shebbear. In the words of the editor of the Magazine:

> If we will preserve our Sunday Schools from the efforts which are making to drain them by the offer of low-priced day school education, to such as will consent to send their children to church on Sundays, we must establish day schools in many places;[44] and it is therefore of importance that the denomination should have a school where persons can obtain such education as will fit them to fill the useful station of teachers of day schools.[45]

The Bible Christian Conference saw with the editor of the *Magazine* that "education will be necessary for... the rising ministry who may be said to be set for the defence of the gospel" against well educated Jesuits and the Tractarian party, as well as engaging in "Theological

controversy against others of great learning and considerable connexional influence".[46] The Conference of 1847 reported that there were "for the present"

> ... no funds to appropriate to promote the education of young men for the ministry... yet we cannot entertain a doubt but funds will be provided for such laudable and important purposes. We hope our friends in general will liberally contribute to the annual collection appointed to be made for the purpose of promoting these objects, and that those who are more wealthy will present donations or annual subscriptions, to aid this increasingly important department of the good work.[47]

Unlike other Methodist denominations, the Bible Christians had no college for the specific training of its ministers. It adopted the practice, as planned by the Conference of 1847, of sending some of its accepted candidates to Shebbear, where they received a course of instruction adapted to their needs.[48] The management of the School remained in the hands of James Thorne. Undaunted by a constantly recurring deficit he "had the pleasure of seeing it turned into a surplus."[49]

James Thorne was in many ways the architect of the Bible Christian Connexion, particularly after the departure of O'Bryan in 1829. It was claimed that he saved the Bible Christian movement from collapse as a result of the separation crisis:

> It was owing to James Thorne's skilful leadership at this crisis, to his cool head and warm heart, to his great sagacity and unfailing patience, and above all to his invincible faith and undaunted courage, that greater mischief did not result.[50]

He was the de facto leader of the Connexion from 1829 until his death in 1872, and as editor, 1829-1866, was in a position to exercise his command.[51] It was James Thorne who was credited with most of the responsibility for drafting of the Deed Poll, signed and accepted in

1831, the purpose of which was to declare and give legal status to the identity of the Bible Christian Conference.[52]

James Thorne has received his due share of the eulogies that are an inevitable part of the process of canonisation which befalls the founders of religious movements or worthy causes. Richard Pyke is typical describing Thorne as "A Prince in Israel"[53] and stating that "as preacher, editor, theologian, controversialist, and statesman, he was worthy of a place in the front rank."[54] Pyke wrote of his practical qualities as "an excellent man of business" and his memorial in Lake Chapel, Shebbear, states that

> He became widely known for his unswerving integrity and consistency of life; his attachment to the principles of civil and religious liberty and indefatigable labours in every holy cause.

Pyke emphasises Thorne's dominant role in the development of the Connexion:

> He was its main pillar; and without his courage, wisdom and endurance it is doubtful if the denomination would have attained a stable organisation, and that a resolute will to conquer which sustained it in the troubles and persecution that lay ahead.[55]

There is rather more candour in his obituary notice which reveals more of the character that might be expected in an independently minded son of the soil.

> It was too much to expect that he and his brethren in the Ministry would always see eye to eye; but such was their respect entertained for his judgement, that those who could not agree with him scarcely cared to differ, and often suspected the correctness of their own views when these were not in harmony with his... For the last few years he appeared to pay more deference to the views and opinions of his brethren.[56]

It would not surprising if, after such a long period of service, he would find difficult to keep in full touch with the younger men of the

ministry, a feature he had in common with Hugh Bourne. Although a strong, even robust, personality, Thorne was probably a more equable character than Bourne, nonetheless both men came from similar backgrounds and there are clear parallels between the operations at Shebbear and Bemersley.

The fathers of the Thorne and Bourne brothers were of some social standing in their respective localities. John Thorne played a prominent role in part in the affairs of the parish and was Overseer for the Poor. Joseph Bourne was churchwarden in Norton parish in 1797.[57] Both farmed what were, for the time, reasonably substantial holdings of about 100 acres, Joseph as tenant, John as freeholder. Both were enterprising businessmen. Within the confines of remote, rural Devon, John Thorne's enterprise and initiative had led him to adopt modern farming methods. Farmers' sons on small or medium holdings, or on less than top grade land, which cannot support more than one family, often have to diversify into other businesses until they can inherit (which may be never if there are several sons). In the developing industrial areas such diversification would be into the new industries, for example in North Staffordshire pottery. At the time of Joseph Bourne's marriage in 1763[58] new developments were taking place in the pottery industry and many farmers' sons, including Joseph, became travellers or hawkers of pottery. He also commenced business as a wheelwright and dealer in timber,[59] and appears to have been an innovative millwright and engineer,[60] a profession taken up by his son, Hugh.

Both the Thorne and the Bourne brothers inherited their respective father's business initiative and as younger sons, although they were to inherit the farms in due course, needed to diversify. They chose to

exercise their business skills and enterprise in the field of evangelical religion. With its itinerancy and strong reliance on lay preaching, a system that was dynamic rather than static, Methodism had an obvious appeal to such people. As with many revivalists they found their initiative too constrained within the Wesleyan Methodism of the immediate post Wesley era. Joseph Nightingale described the Revivalists as "a simple, harmless, and well-meaning body; but enthusiastic and ungovernable to an extraordinary degree".[61] James Thorne and Hugh Bourne both endeavoured to ensure that their respective denominations though "enthusiastic" were not "ungovernable".

Hugh Bourne and the Thorne brothers were deeply concerned with education, both of themselves and of others. Towards the end of 1802 "having a desire to be acquainted with the Hebrew and Greek languages" Bourne "undertook to teach a school (a thing much needed) in the chapel [at Harriseahead] for "about twelve month[s]".[62] He continued to give his occupation in deeds as "Licensed Teacher".[63] He and James Thorne were enthusiastic promoters of Sunday Schools. Very early on Bourne established Sunday schools at Harriseahead and Norton and prepared materials, later to be printed at Bemersley. He even took time off from other duties to smooth and cut slates for the Sunday school at Abbots Bromley, which task he found relaxing being "an easy thing after regulating some other matters".[64] James Thorne was often during his long career called upon to preach the "annual" or "anniversary" sermons to aid Sunday school funds.[65]

The most obvious parallel between Shebbear and Bemersley is that both were from the early 1820's the base for the respective denominational book rooms and printing operations, the latter in both cases being more

or less privatised. The Bible Christians kept their Book Room in Devon for longer, moving to London in 1870 and two years later using a London printer. The Primitive Methodist Book Room was moved to London in 1843 and the printing contract taken away from James Bourne and awarded to London printers. Whilst the Primitive Methodist move was precipitated by the financial shambles leading to James Bourne's bankruptcy in 1844, it was perhaps inevitable that the maturing denominations should require a base in the capital. The Methodist New Connexion Book Room was transferred from Manchester to London in 1844, with the anticipation that such a move would "produce more than double the profits of either of the last three years".[66]

Notes

1. A.D.Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (1976) p.104.

2. Thomas Shaw points out that in fact it was at Week St.Mary in Cornwall that O'Bryan had formed a separate Methodist denomination. Two days later he enrolled ten members at Shernick, in Launcells. [Thomas Shaw, *A History of Cornish Methodism* (1967) p.90] Shaw attributes the incorrect and often-repeated statement that the Bible Christian denomination began at a class meeting at Lake Farm, Shebbear, to the fact that so much Bible Christian history was written by the Thornes. Shaw takes O'Bryan's account, which appeared in *The Arminian Magazine* [Bible Christian], 1823 1827, as being the correct version of events.[Thomas Shaw, *The Historians of the Bible Christians*, *W.H.S.Proc.* Vol.XXXV, 1965, p.40.]

William O'Bryan inherited his father's farm in Luxulyan, Cornwall, and was appointed in his place as one of the parish officers; he also served the parish as churchwarden, waywarden, and overseer of the poor. In 1808 he began to engage in tours of personal evangelism, during which he would gather little groups of people in potential Methodist classes, while on Sundays he took appointments on the circuit plan. In 1810 he was expelled from Methodist membership in the chapel at Gunwen, which he had helped to build on land he had given, officially for not attending his class meeting.

3. Ted Lott of Rowden Farm, Shebbear.

4. John Thorne, *James Thorne of Shebbear, A Memoir: compiled from his Diary and Letters by his Son* (1873) p.5. (Much quarried by later writers, the original materials from which it was compiled now apparently lost)
As Roger Thorne (appropriately named, but not related to the Shebbear Thornes) has pointed out most historians of the Bible Christians have been Methodist ministers and/or called Thorne. [In a review in *W.H.S.Proc.*, 1988, Vol.XLVI, p.159.] As with much Primitive Methodist history such writing has a tendency to be incestuous.

5. *James Thorne of Shebbear*, p.4.

6. F.W.Bourne, *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History* (1905) pp.58-9.

7. O.A.Beckerlegge, *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits* (1968) pp.234 & 235.

8. F.W.Bourne, *The Centenary Life of James Thorne* (1895) p.80.

9. Ibid., p.178, where the original letter is copied out in full.

10. Quoted in *The Centenary Life...* , pp.92-3.
O'Bryan had become authoritarian and dictatorial and had reached the point that if they were not going to play his way he would pack up and take his ball home, which is in fact what happened in 1828-9.

11. *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History*, p.122.

12. *James Thorne of Shebbear...*, p.178.

13. *The Centenary Life...* , pp.94-5.

14. *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847, p.79.

15. *James Thorne of Shebbear...*, p.179.

16. In 1826, £110 was borrowed on behalf of the Connexion by James and Samuel Thorne to pay out monies laid out by O'Bryan on the book concern.

17. *James Thorne of Shebbear...*, p.178.
c.f.The Wesleyan printing office. In 1825 it was decided, after a lengthy debate, to close the Wesleyan printing office on the basis that money could be saved, the growing business streamlined, the capital released put to better use, and that "the printing will generally be better if done in a regular office".[Frank Cumbers, *The Book Room* (1956) pp.18-19, and the Minutes of the Conference of 1825 in *Minutes of the Methodist Conferences*, Volume VI, 1833, p.56.]

18. S.L.Thorne, *The Maiden Preacher* (1889) p.96.

19. *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History*, p.196.

20. *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits*, pp.234 & 235.

21. See note 14.
If the survival rate of copies is anything like a reliable indication of the original sales, the circulation of other Bible Christian periodicals was even poorer. The writer has what he believes to be the only known surviving copy of *The Child's Magazine*, 1837.
[No copy for 1837 listed in E.A.Rose, *A Checklist of British Methodist Periodicals*, 1981, or O.A.Beckerlegge, *A Bibliography of the Bible Christians*, 1988.]

22. Preface to *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1840.

23. Preface to *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847.

24. The Book Room Report for 1880-1 forming part of the *Bible Christian Minutes of Conference*, 1881, p.53.

25. Shebbear College Archive: MSS. Agreement dated 18 January 1861 made between Matthew Robins.... President of the Bible Christian Conference (on behalf of the Conference and the Book Committee)(1) Samuel Thorne(2) and James Thorne(3).

26. *Minutes*, 1881, p.53.

27. Ibid.. Was this the fire that destroyed part of Lake Farmhouse in 1854, as recorded by Mary Thorne in her journals, although the "tenement occupied by my husband's father once" was saved, or a later fire? [*The Maiden Preacher*, p.128.]

28. Bourne was Assistant Editor from 1861 and Associate Editor 1866-9. [*United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits*, p.27.]

29. See imprints of the *Bible Christian Magazine*, 1861, 1870, and 1873.

30. The French in which he occasionally wrote to his future wife, Mary O'Bryan, was somewhat eccentric!

31. Tony Fairchild, *A School Apart: A History of Shebbear College* (Shebbear, n.d.[c.1987]) p.20.

32. *The Maiden Preacher*, pp.99-100.

33. *The Maiden Preacher*, p.126.

34. Michael J.L.Wickes, The West Country Preachers (Hartland, 1987) p.19 .

35. M.Billings, *Directory and Gazetteer of Devon* (1857)

36. *Census*, 7 April 1861.

37. *Bible Christian Conference Manuscript Journal*, p.198.

38. *A School Apart*, p.22.
Fairchild says that "It has been written that Samuel Thorne received £1150 for Prospect Place."

39. R.Pyke, *The Golden Chain* (c1915) p.122.

40. *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History*, p.263.

41. *The Centenary Life*, p.102

42. *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847, p.142.
The Wesleyan Proprietary Grammar School, Taunton, was established in 1843 [Douglas S.Hubery, *The Methodist Contribution to Education in England* (1977) Appendix C.]

43. *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847, p.123 - editorial comment by James Thorne.

44. In the words of the Annual Teachers Conference meeting at Shebbear in 1845 "education on a cheap and liberal scale".

45. *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847, p.32.

46. Ibid., p.37.
Had James Thorne in mind the Barkerite troubles which had afflicted the Methodist New Connexion in 1841-2 and the great debate between William Cooke, the Methodist New Connexion editor, and Joseph Barker in Newcastle upon Tyne in 1845? [*The Authentic Report of the Theological Discussion between Rev.W.Cooke and Mr.Jos.Barker, held during twelve nights in Newcastle* (1845)]

47. *The Bible Christian Magazine*, 1847, p.352.

48. W.Bardsley Brash, *The Story of our Colleges* (1935) p.155.

49. *The Centenary Life*, p.102.

50. *The Bible Christians: Their Origin and History*, p.194.

51. James Thorne was, inter alia, President 1831, 1835, 1842, 1857, & 1865, and Connexional Secretary 1819-30, 1832-4, 1849-50, & 1857. [*United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits*, p.234.]

52. *The Centenary Life*, p.93.
Bourne claimed "that Methodist Union in Canada in 1883 was consummated on a basis which virtually followed the constitution adopted, chiefly at Mr.Thorne's suggestion, by the Bible Christian Conference more than sixty years before."

53. c.f. J.Stacey's similar designation of John Ridgway in *A Prince in Israel or Sketches of the Life of John Ridgway, Esq.* (1862)

54. *The Golden Chain*, p.31.

55. R.Pyke, *The Early Bible Christians* (1941) p.34.

56. *Bible Christian Minutes of Conference* (1872) p.9.

57. James Jack, *The History of Norton Parish* (c.1953) p.115
The same source states that Joseph Bourne was warden of Stoke-upon-Trent Parish in 1772. His eldest son, John, was warden of Norton parish in 1803. A John Bourne was warden in 1759 and a William Bourne in 1712, possibly Joseph's father and grandfather.

58. *Burslem Parish Register* wherein he is described as a "wheelwright".

59. J.Walford, *Memoirs of the Life... of... Hugh Bourne*, Vol.I, 1855, p.2.

60. Simeon Shaw, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries* (1829) pp.143-4.

61. Joseph Nightingale, *A Portraiture of Methodism* (1807) p.489

62. Hugh Bourne's Manuscript Autobiography, A Text, 1844, f.127.
He notes in his journal (8 November 1803) that he purchased a copy of Lancaster's *Improvements on Education.*

63. e.g. the trust deed of Talke Chapel dated 21 December 1826.[J.H.A.pending deposit at S.R.O.]

64. Hugh Bourne's Manuscript Journal, 12 July 1814.

65. A vivid account of such an event at Zion Chapel, Langtree, appears in *The Child's Magazine*, 1837, p.161.

66. *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, 1844, p.436

CHAPTER 5

Joseph Barker, 1806 - 1875

Joseph Barker was a religious gadfly - Wesleyan, Methodist New Connexion, Unitarian, Freethinker, Chartist, secularist, and finally Primitive Methodist. Charles Shaw, famous for his account of his own childhood in the Potteries of the "Hungry Forties",[1] said of him that

> He was gripped by no convictions of his own, and so he never gripped any loyal body of followers. He could scatter "silly sheep", yet he was no wolf... He was an incarnation of waywardness, eccentricity, and recklessness... [2]

The more charitable may regard him as sincere, if somewhat changeable, a religious weathercock as Alan Rose has described him.[3] Throughout his career, he exploited to the full the power of the press, particularly the religious press, He had his own very definite views on how book dealing should be conducted and his attacks on the Methodist New Connexion Book Room, and its response, provide an illuminating insight into the management philosophy of that institution, and by implication the other Methodist publishing houses.

Joseph Barker was born 11 May 1806 at Bramley, near Leeds, where several generations of his ancestors had been farmers and manufacturers. The first mill in the town to adopt steam power had been built by his grandfather, his grandfather's nephew, and a John Lister, in about 1798.[4] The family appear to have fallen on hard times and during much of Barker's youth were in somewhat straitened circumstances though he does say that his parent's "last years were spent in comfort and independence".[5]

Barker's parents had, under the influence of the revivalist, William Bramwell, become Methodists, and he in due course joined the Methodist

Society. He read widely and, like Samuel Thorne, enjoyed reading extracts from Gillie's *Historical Collections.* He became a local preacher, in which sphere his talents were soon recognised and he was invited to "travel for the Old Connexion", i.e. to enter the ministry. However he declined because he

1. Did not wish to be sent to foreign parts.

2. Could not subscribe to the doctrine of Eternal Sonship, as taught by Richard Watson and Jabez Bunting, in opposition to Adam Clarke.

At this point he came into contact with the Methodist New Connexion and read a volume of the *Methodist New Connexion Magazine* in which "there was a rather full account of the history and constitution of the New Connexion, with a lengthy and laboured defence of its principles of Church government".[7] Bound up with the volume was a discourse by Thomas Allin,[8] and some other articles on the same subject. He joined and was invited to preach for the New Connexion.

As might be expected not everything in the New Connexion met with Barker's approval, though some of his comments in his autobiography, the original version of which was published in 1846 after his acrimonious split with the New Connexion, may have the added gloss of hindsight. In particular, he "found in the Connexion a complete division between the rich members and the poor members.[9]

He entered the New Connexion ministry and was stationed first in the Hanley Circuit, 1829-30.[10] He soon fell out with his Superintendent, Thomas Waterhouse, who objected to his books deeming them to be of "an objectionable character" - Byron, Shakespeare, and some of a theological character. Barker, however, ignored his insistence that "he should have nothing to do with any books, but those that would

qualify him for teaching, inculcating, and defending Methodistical doctrines, and for exercising Methodistical discipline in the Societies."[11]

While stationed in the Hanley Circuit and lodging at Newcastle, Barker met his future wife, a Miss Salt, from "a respectable and well educated Staffordshire family" of Betley. On the death of her parents she "became possessed of a small independency",[12] which no doubt proved useful to Barker in his future career.

In 1837, while stationed in the Mossley Circuit, Barker began publishing a weekly periodical called the *Evangelical Reformer*[13] as a vehicle for propagating his increasingly controversial views. He had found the editor of of the *Methodist New Connexion Magazine* "a very disagreeable man",[14] who, apparently, would not publish his articles without heavy editing. Barker used his own periodical to publish articles on, inter alia, temperance, marriage, trade and education, dress, diet, religious parties, books and reading, the use of money, the duty of the Church to support its poor members, and on toleration and human creeds,[15]

In 1837 Barker took up the cause of Sunday writing lessons in Sunday Schools, a perennial hot potato with Sabbatarians from Bunting onwards. Following a debate with a local clergyman on the subject, he published a pamphlet, with the full title *Mercy Triumphant, or teaching the Children of the Poor to write on the Sabbath Day; proved to be in perfect Agreement with the Oracles of God; with plain and full Answers to all Objections urged against the Practice, by J.A.James, of Birmingham; W.Nunn, St.Clement's Church, Manchester; and by the*

Wesleyan Methodist Conference.[16] Both *The Evangelical Reformer* and this pamphlet were favourably commented on in the first volume of the *Wesleyan Association Magazine.*[17] This is hardly surprising as a number of pro Sunday writing Sunday Schools defected to the Wesleyan Methodist Association rather than submit to Wesleyan authority.[18] Barker claimed that some of his brethren denounced the pamphlet as heretical,[19] and also noted that the editor of the *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, William Shuttleworth, informed his readers that Barker's views were not necessarily those of the Connexion.[20]

When stationed in Gateshead in 1839, Barker took up the cudgels against Socialists, one of whom he engaged in public debate in Newcastle. Barker was subsequently released from some of his Circuit duties to lecture on Christianity and Socialism in many northern towns as far south as the Staffordshire Potteries.[21] A few years earlier, he seems to have been involved in organising non-unionists during the Potteries strike of 1836/7. During the strike the non-unionists had organised themselves under the description of "Independent Workmen" and had appointed Joseph Barker to be the secretary.[22] What appears to have been the decisive meeting in settling the dispute, was in part engineered by the "Independent Workmen". Representatives of the "Independent Workmen", the Union, and the employers, led by John and William Ridgway, met at Betley on 30 December 1836 to broker a settlement.[23] Barker was stationed in the Chester Circuit at this time,[24] but he had strong connections through his wife's family with Betley. He was, of course, be well known to the Ridgways, and to other manufacturers who had links with the New Connexion. Barker's denunciation of the "infidel character" of socialism culminated in the

publication of his book *The Gospel Triumphant* in 1839.[25]

In the Appendix to *The Gospel Triumphant* Barker set out his views on bookselling

> If you were a bookseller, would you like people to undersell you?"
> Ans. If I were a bookseller, I should sell for the public good, and I should be glad if another were to serve the public better than myself. I should wish the public to have good books as cheaply as possible; and I should be unwilling that any one should prefer my prosperity in business, to the interests of the public.[26]

It followed that the main function of a Connexional book room, as he saw it, was to ensure the supply of "a cheap and plentiful supply of useful publications." He was heavily critical of the management of the New Connexion Book Room:

> ...Our magazines and our book-room, which ought to be the means of exciting an appetite for religious knowledge, and of furnishing, in the shape of useful books and pamphlets, the means of knowledge... are doing... next to nothing.
>
> [The Magazine's] leading articles generally are amongst the dullest and most useless things that ever came from the press... The magazine altogether is one of the feeblest and humblest publications in existence.[27]

Much of this may, of course, be attributed to sour grapes, resulting from the editor's treatment of his articles and critical reviews of his publications. However, Barker goes on to criticise a management policy which he perceives to be more concerned with the accumulation of capital than with the provision of a service to the readership.

> A religious book-room, with four thousand pounds capital, and an agency and returns such as ours has, ought to issue thirty or forty new works every year, and have a stock of books almost equal in number to any moderate bookshop in the country; and yet it is a rare thing for our book-room to issue any work at all of any importance: and as for the stock of books, such as the wants of the Connexion and the wants of the country at large require, we have nothing at all of the kind.[28]

Officially, whilst acknowledging that there was always room for the

improvement of the *Magazine*,[29] the regime was regarded as successful. A review of the Book Room some years later, after the dust had settled, claimed that under William Shuttleworth[30] the Book Room had risen to a degree of prosperity it had never before attained.[31]

> Under the careful management of Rev.W.Shuttleworth, the Book-room became a source of advantage to Connexional funds. In 1827 when Mr.Shuttleworth entered on the office of Book-steward, the capital amounted to £1305 17s 2d, and the annual profits to £113 13s 9d. Five years after the removal of the Establishment to Manchester [i.e.1837],[32] the capital was £2500 and the profits a little more than £500.[33]

Under the influence of men such as John and William Ridgway,[34] master potters, it is hardly surprising that the Book Committee should adopt a capitalist approach.[35] The Book Committee saw an important part of their role as generating profits which could be used to subsidise various Connexional funds. Out of the profits of £365.27 in 1841, £200 was paid to the Yearly Collection and £120 to the Benefit Society.[36] This hardly impressed Barker, who opposed the Beneficent Fund,[37] one of the chief beneficiaries.

For obvious reasons Barker's proposed solution to what he saw as the deficiencies of the Book Room, to publish a new connexional periodical and establish an additional Book Room, did not find favour.[38] In any event the M.N.C.Conference in 1841 expelled him for his unorthodox views on baptism. The Conference deemed it unnecessary to proceed with the charge against Barker of persisting with the establishment of a rival Book Room and periodical, but they nonetheless took the opportunity to make known "their anxious desire to extend the usefulness of the present concern by every prudential means."[39] Barker claimed a large circulation for his periodical and other publications compared with the *M.N.C Magazine*. Undoubtedly the

Barkerite troubles caused serious disruption in the Connexion, particularly following his expulsion in 1841. It was said that he took with him some 29 churches and 4348 members.[40] In 1841-6 the membership declined from 20,506 to 15,610 and by 1856 had only recovered to 18,380.[41]. This decline would in itself hit the business of the Book Room. Economic factors may also have affected the membership and the Book Room sales. The early 1840s was a period of economic depression and political unrest,[42] particularly in the industrial heartlands of the New Connexion, the Staffordshire Potteries and the northern mill towns. All this was reflected in the Book Room Report in 1844:

> Reluctant as we are to refer to events, the recollection of which must be painful to every real friend of the Connexion, it is nevertheless necessary that you should be fully impressed with the fact that the efforts which were made some years ago by an individual to destroy the character and check the circulation of our periodicals, was but too extensively successful. A serious diminution in the sales was the consequence of the influence thus exerted, which was further aided by the deep and general depression in commerce which immediately followed. Our profits were, of course, proportionately diminished; and although some improvement has of late been manifest, yet from the shock sustained from the causes just adverted to, our Book Room has never recovered.[43]

They saw a way of increasing profits by removing the Book Room from Manchester to London, which they believed would double the profits, with further increases from the savings in the cost of printing and binding. This was born out by the Book Room accounts published in the Conference minutes. Book Room profits of £365 in 1841 declined to £180 in 1842 and £164 in 1843, but then began to recover to £249 in 1844 and £310 in 1845. By 1846, by which time the costs of the removal to London would have worked through the system, the profits had increased to £600.[44]

Following his expulsion from the Methodist New Connexion, Barker was

free to put into practice his ideas on Christian book dealing and, with a subsidy of £30 from a Darlington Quaker, Elizabeth Pease, equipped his own printing office. He commenced a new periodical *The Christian*,[45] and published a multitude of pamphlets including one on *The Hired Ministry*.[46] He had hoped that his printing works would be able to support his family without the aid of the church. However, it was some years before the operation made a profit.

In 1845, Barker preached in Unitarian chapels in London and elsewhere, and Unitarians helped him to set up a larger printing establishment at Wortley, a suburb of Leeds. On 6 July, 1846, a steam printing press, provided at a cost of £600, was publicly presented to him by Dr.(later Sir John) Bowring, then M.P. for Bolton.[48] He was then able to carry into effect a proposal he had issued some months previously for "a new library of three hundred volumes, the cheapest collection of works ever published". The volumes were issued weekly under the title of the *Barker Library* at such a low price that "their printer and publisher may be regarded as the pioneer and first originator of cheap literature in this country."[49] In addition to his other printing activities, he commenced a weekly periodical, *The People*, to propagate his opinions, which reached a circulation of more than 20,OOO.[50] This took him deeper into the realm of politics, including Chartist agitation.[51]

Following a period in America, 1851-60, Barker returned to England, and, under the influence of William Cooke, to orthodox Christianity. He preached for the Wesleyan Reformers in Wolverhampton and for the Primitive Methodists in Bilston and Tunstall, and was accepted by the Tunstall Primitive Methodist Circuit as a local preacher. He returned to America in 1868, where he died in 1875.[52]

Notes

1. Charles Shaw, *When I was a Child* (1903)

2. J.Young, *After A Hundred Years, Bethel, Burslem, and the Circuit* (1903) p.106.

3. E.A.Rose, *Catalogue No..12, Church History.*

4. *The Life of Joseph Barker, written by himself* (1880) p.2.

5. Ibid., p.23.

6. Ibid., p.57.

7. Ibid., p.103.
Probably *An Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion...* , by a Trustee and Layman [John Ridgway], which was first published as a series of articles in the first four numbers of the *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, 1815.

8. Possibly Thomas Allin, *An Address delivered in Ebenezer Chapel... explaining the Methodist New Connexion...* (1819). Thomas Allin, who was twice President of the Methodist New Connexion Conference, had been apprenticed at the Bell pottery, Shelton, to George Ridgway. Alfred Huntbach [*Hanley* (1910) p.132] believed that it was probably part of the indenture that he should attend Bethesda M.N.C.Sunday School. However, this seems unlikely. The biographer of John Ridgway, George's nephew, wrote of his workforce that "Not a few of them were members of the same church as he, though the only influence used on his part to make them so was the influence of that true-hearted piety which ever desires the salvation of those who are near to us."
[J.Stacey, *A Prince in Israel:... The Life of John Ridgway* (1862) p.68; see also J.H.Y.Briggs, "The Radical Saints of Shelton", in *Business and Religion in Britain*, ed.D.J.Jeremy (1988)]

9. *The life of Joseph Barker*, p.108.

10. O.A.Beckerlegge, *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits* (1968) p.13.

11. *The Life of Joseph Barker*, p.116.
Not all Methodist ministers had such a narrow view of suitable literature. Rev.John Wesley Thomas, Wesleyan, found time in the midst of his ministerial duties to translate Dante's *Inferno*, *Purgatorio*, and *Paradisio*, *Purgatorio* being published in 1862 whilst he was stationed in the Leek Circuit.

12. *The Life of Joseph Barker*, p.133.

13. *The Evangelical Reformer and Young man's Guide* was published weekly from 30 December 1837 and fortnightly from 29 June 1839 - 30 May 1840. This appears to have been followed by *The Christian Investigator and Evangelical Reformer*, J.Barker and others, irregular, July 1841 -?1843.
[E.A.Rose, *A Checklist of British Methodist Periodicals* (1981)]

The Evangelical Reformer was favourably "noticed" in the *Wesleyan Association Magazine*, Vol.I, 1838,[March] p.120

> It is evidently the Author's great desire to promote the the spread of knowledge and temperance, of freedom and plenty, of godliness and peace throughout the world, and to these objects alone the work in question is devoted.

14. William Shuttleworth, Editor 1827-1841.

15. His article on "Toleration and the Human Creeds" was found by some of his colleagues to be "highly objectionable and dangerous" and was brought before the M.N.C.Conference in 1839.

16. John Angell James, minister of Carrs Lane Congregational Chapel, Birmingham, had set out his objections to Sunday writing in the 3rd Appendix to *The Sunday School Teacher's Guide* (4th Edition, 1817) pp.209-218.

17. *Wesleyan Association Magazine*, Vol.I, 1838,[March] p.120.

18. e.g. The Burslem Sunday School, which separated from the Wesleyans in 1836 and formerly joined the Association in 1849.

19. This was not the universal opinion of the M.N.C. In Congleton, for instance, in 1837 the pro Sunday writers in the Wesleyan Sunday School found refuge in the M.N.C.
[J.B.Dyson, *The History of Wesleyan Methodisn in the Congleton Circuit* (1856) pp.159-160]

20. It is perhaps odd, therefore, that first edition of the pamphlet was "Published by Shuttleworth, Manchester", i.e. the M.N.C. Book Room according to the advertisement in the *Wesleyan Association Magazine.*

21. *Life of Joseph Barker*, p.248.

22. F.Burchill and R.Ross, *A History of the Potters' Union* (Keele,1977) p.72.

23. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 31 December 1836 and 7 January 1837.

24. Beckerlegge, op.cit., p.13.

25. J.Barker, *The Gospel Triumphant: or, A Defence of Christianity against the Attacks of the Socialists; and an Exposure of the infidel Character and mischievous Tendency of the Social System of R.Owen* (1839).

According to J.F.C.Harrison, *Robert Owen and the Owenites in Britain and America* (1969) p.210, the Potteries was one of the four main areas of Owenite strength in Britain, particularly following Owen's visits to the area in the autumn of 1833. Nevertheless Owen's correspondents in the Potteries, Thomas P.Simpson and Henry Pratt, reported substantial opposition to Owenism. "There is great hue and cry against you, all the

religious world, so called, are opposed to you. This is very natural, and I fear will do us much more mischief than any other subject."wrote Simpson, the secretary of the Union, on 20 October 1833; Henry Pratt on 12 November, identified the opposition as emanating from the Methodists, "with all their sectarian bigotry", reporting that many warehousemen had withheld their union subscriptions until they received reassurance that their money was not going to be used to finance Owenite schemes.
[W.H.Warburton, *The History of Trade Union Organisation in the North Staffordshire Potteries*, pp.256-7]
Notwithstanding, at least one co-operative manufacturing venture was tried, a factory in Burslem set up with the support of the Union in 1834. The writer has a jug marked "Operatives Manufactory, High Street, Burslem". The failure of such ventures has been attributed to the antagonism of the working potters to the hostility of Robert Owen.
[J.H.Y.Briggs, *A History of Longton* (Keele,1982) p.90]

26, *The Gospel Triumphant*, p.395.

27. Joseph Barker, *The Church and the Press: or the duty of Christians to make a more liberal use of the unbounded powers which God, by the means of the printing press, has put into their hands; Exhibited in a Correspondence between Joseph Barker and the Annual Committee of the Methodist New Connexion* (c.1841) p.3.

28. Ibid.
Over one hundred years later the potential conflict between service and profit continued to be a live issue. In his review of *The Book Room*, by Frank H.Cumbers, J.Henry Martin notes that the question is whether service or profits are expected from these ventures.[*W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XXX, 1956, p.157]

29. Letter from Thomas Allin, a leading member of the Connexional Committee and hostile critique of Barker, quoted in *The Church and the Press*, p.38.

30. William Shuttleworth was Editor, 1832-40, and Book Steward, 1832-43.[Beckerlegge, op.cit., p.215.]

31. *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, 1870, p.60.

32. The move to Manchester in 1832 resulted in an immediate reduction in printing costs (from £488 18s in 1831/2 to £455 2s in 1832/3, and a consequent increase in profits in these years from £200 19s 2d to £250 9s 11d) [*M.N.C.Minutes*, 1832 and 1833.]

33. T.Allin, W.Cooke, and P.J.Wright, *The Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion* (1848) pp.345-6.

34. John Ridgway. Treasurer of the Book Committee, 1821-34, would have been mindful that that in his time as Book Steward, 1811-16, the Book Room was hampered by the inadequacy of its capital. It is clear from his *Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion* (1815) that he felt strongly that the Connexion and its institutions needed a sound business basis.

35. Such an approach was not unique to the M.N.C.. The Book Room Report in the *Bible Christian Minutes*, 1881, outlines the history of Bible Christian Book Room in terms of the building up of the capital and profits, with no mention of the quality of the output.

36. *Methodist New Connexion Minutes*, 1841.

37. Barker's opposition to the Beneficent Fund, and indeed to benefit societies generally, was not likely to endear him to his ministerial colleagues, for whose benefit it was established, and was one of the charges brought against him at the Halifax Conference, 1841, at which he was expelled.
[*M.N.C.Minutes*, 1841.]

38. *The Church and the Press*, p.4.

39. *M.N.C.Minutes*, 1841, Resolution 32.

40. W.Baggaly, *A Digest of the Minutes, Institutions, Polity, Doctrines, Ordinances, and Literature of the Methodist New Connexion* (1862) p.113.

41. A.D.Gilbert, *Religion and Society in Industrial England* (1976) table on p.31 giving membership figures at five yearly intervals.

42. Heavy losses in the pottery industry contributed to James Bourne's bankruptcy in 1843.
In April 1848, problems with his American trade led to William Ridgway being declared bankrupt.
[Briggs, op.cit..]

43. *Methodist New Connexion Magazine*, 1844, p.437.

44. *M.N.C.Minutes*, 1841-6.
The *Magazine* for July 1844 was printed in Manchester, August in London.

45. *The Christian*, Nos.1-24, 1844.
[O.A.Beckerlegge and E.A.Rose, *A Bibliography of the Methodist New Connexion* (1988)]

46. Barker had come to the view that the ministry should be self supporting and not *hirelings* remunerated by the church. William Cooke, on behalf of the M.N.C., countered this argument in his pamphlet *The Christian Ministry and Obligation of the Churches to its Support* (c.1845). The *M.N.C.Magazine*, 1844, p.30, gave notice of Cooke's tract *A Few Facts Exemplifying the Sincerity, Integrity, and Wisdom of Joseph Barker, and showing his high qualifications as a Reformer of the Doctrines and Morals of all Christian Denominations* with the comment that

> ... circumstances rendered the publication imperative. It became requisite that the Connexion should be vindicated against the slanderous attacks which were being continually hurled against it.

47. *Life of Joseph Barker*, pp.274-7.

48. Ibid., p.283-4.
This benefactor also purchased the first load of coal.

49. Ibid., p.285.

50. The first few volumes of *The Sunday School Penny Magazine* (Vol.I, 1848), the organ of the Manchester District Sunday School Association (Unitarian), were printed by, among others, J.Barker, Wortley.

51. *Dictionary of National Biography*, Vol.III, 1885, p.205.

52. *Life of Joseph Barker*, pp.353-4, 360, and 383; *D.N.B.*, op.cit., p.206.

CHAPTER 6

The Ridgways and the Methodist New Connexion

Whilst there are demonstrable parallels between the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians, and between the respective roles of the Bourne and Thorne families in the development of these denominations, such parallels are harder to find in the case of the Methodist New Connexion and the role played by the Ridgway family.

There were fundamental differences between the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians on the one hand and the Methodist New Connexion on the other, both in character and in the manner in which the respective denominations came into being. John Wesley's death in 1791 left Methodism with unresolved problems as to the nature of its organisation and its relationship to the Established Church. Fundamental questions had to be addressed. How was Methodism to be governed? How was power to be apportioned among the major interest groups within Methodist polity - Preachers, trustees, and people? What was to be the relationship between Methodism and the Church of England? There were those who were, in the words of a sympathetic commentator, "expecting then to have a more liberal form of government established" but who "found themselves quite neglected; they saw themselves left out in all the new regulations that were made, and they were treated with the greatest contempt."[1]

The Methodist New Connexion was born in 1797 out of the turmoil that the debates about these issues created. Those seeking a radical solution found their spokesman in Alexander Kilham. Throughout the 1790s he published pamphlets, *Martin Luther, Aquila and Priscilla, Paul*

and Silas, Trueman and Freeman, and *The Progress Of Liberty among the People called Methodists*, which, in J.M.Turner's words, used "the cliches of the age"[2], and called for Methodist Reform in the rhetoric of Tom Paine and the French Revolution. His demand for services in church hours, even for the sacrament, was "couched in terms more Paineite than Biblical."[3]

In the *Jubilee* volume of the New Connexion, the demands of the reformers were summarised thus

> The Methodist New Connexion was originated by a contest for the establishment of the following important and scriptural principles:
>
> 1. The right of the people to hold their public religious worship at such hours as were most convenient, without their being restricted to the mere intervals of the hours appointed for the service in the Established Church.
>
> 2. The right of the people to receive the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from the hands of their own ministers, and in their own places of worship.
>
> 3. The right of the people to a representation in the District Meetings, and in the Annual conference, and thereby to participate in the government of the community and in the appropriation of its funds.
>
> 4. The right of the church to have a voice, through its local business meetings, in the reception and expulsion of members, the choice of local officers, and in the calling out of candidates for the ministry.[4]

The emphasis on constitutional government dominated New Connexion thinking. A later New Connexion theologian, William Cooke, wrote that

> Organisation implies law, order, and government; and in every organisation of human beings, whether social or religious, the government must reside somewhere... the question is, Whether the organised body shall be governed by such a constitution as admits the voice and influence of its members to operate throughout the whole economy; or whether the government shall be absolutely transferred to one class of functionaries... In the Church, as well as in the State, the design of government is in the good of the community, not in the aggrandizement of individuals.[5]

Kilham's *Progress of Liberty amongst the People called Methodists* was published in the Autumn of 1795. In seeking more power for the laity in all aspects of connexional government, and less opportunity for preachers to exploit the people for financial gain, Kilham employed rhetoric about the inalienable rights of Methodist societies against oppression and tyranny. The ministerial conservatism of the preachers, who had no intention, both for theological and social reasons, of yielding to democratic control, was reinforced when "gentlemen of rank" made it known to Methodist leaders in London that the government was concerned about the constitutional loyalty of provincial Methodists. The result was to unite divergent elements within the Connexion to deal "a fatal blow to Methodist Jacobinism".[6]

E.R.Taylor called attention to what he considered the great Liberal assertion, "Ever considering that the cool dispassionate voice of the people is the voice of God", in the pamphlet *Outlines of a Constitution* in which, after asserting the Pauline doctrine that we should "call no man master save Christ", Kilham drew the conclusion that "We all have an equal right to vote in these matters as we are all redeemed by Christ, and have each a soul to save, equally precious in the sight of God... ."[7]

Both ecclesiastically and politically the New Connexion Methodists could claim to be "Liberal Methodists".[8] The appeal of the Methodist New Connexion was to the rising middle classes. Never strong in the large cities, and almost absent from rural areas, it was in the medium sized industrial towns, especially of the north, which were dominated by such a class, self-made businessmen, politically Liberal, that New Connexion was most at home - in places such as Hanley, Halifax, Batley,

and Ashton-under-Lyne, "where the central chapels were often considered as "Mayor's Nests"."[9] The list of "places... desirous of supporting a new itinerancy" reported to the first New Connexion Conference in 1797 included parts of the Sheffield, Nottingham, Banbury, Burslem, Macclesfield, Chester, Liverpool, Wigan, Bolton, Blackburn, Manchester, Oldham, Huddersfield, Leeds, and other circuits. As Taylor noted, considering the character of many of these places and the composition of their Societies, the fact that they were the birth-places of a new and more liberal Methodism need cause little surprise.[10] Kilham had a sympathetic reception in Hanley

> At Hanley I had the pleasure of spending several days with some valuable friends; I preached to large congregations in the chapels and out of doors. We had a good opening in these parts. If the preachers will not accede to the measures of the friends, they are determined to separate, and build two or three chapels for us in the neighbourhood.[11]

In Hanley there was an underlying social conflict between the rising new generation of Hanley potters, including Job and George Ridgway, and the more conservative potters of Burslem who constituted most of the trustees, "the majority... being high Churchmen".[12] The Burslem trustees were of a class characterised by David Hempton as being wealthier and socially more disposed to the Established Church than the majority of laymen and preachers, and who would have been nervous about separatist tendencies and alarmed already by the publication of Paine's *Rights of Man* and by the riots against Dissenters in Birmingham.[13] John Ward, writing in 1843, noted that

> The schism occurred at a period when the fever of politics, occasioned by the events of the French revolution, ran high in England; and the charge against the seceders was, that they were reformers in political as well as religious institutions

This charge was "said to have retarded their increase and popularity,

except in some populous", and, he could have added, newly expanding industrial, "towns and districts" such as the Staffordshire Potteries, Ashton-under-Lyne, Huddersfield, and so on. He went on to comment favourably that

> Many members of this body, lay as well as clerical, are men of considerable talent and attainments [with] a readiness in public speaking calculated to enlarge their influence, which is further promoted by the bounty and liberality dispensed by some of the more opulent members among their dependents and less-favoured neighbours; so that democratic principles, which in politics as in religion, characterise their system, receive no small encouragement, and have obtained the ascendant in Hanley and Shelton.[14]

Julia Stewart Werner has noted that the "the more opulent members" formed a middle-class oligarchy which dominated the Connexion and this meant that "the equal voice accorded to Kilhamites was soon speaking in the distinctly middle-class accents of a propertied few"[15] She characterised the leading New Connexion laymen as "prototypes of Smilesian success".[16] They were zealous patrons of mutual improvement societies, Sunday schools, free libraries, reading clubs, and benefit societies, and played a prominent role in civic affairs in the new industrial towns, such as Halifax and Hanley.[17]

The New Connexion was radical, but radical as defined by promoting the interests of the social class which formed its governing elite. Representative Government was "the Palladium of our liberty and well being". Free Trade was applauded as an example of "The law of liberty, founded on the principle of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us" prevailing "in the commerce of the world." After the victory over Free Trade, separation of the Church from the State was the next on the agenda as "Monopoly of religion cannot long co-exist with freedom of trade". Hand in hand with the above went "freedom of

thought... Science will adorn and enrich religion; and religion will ennoble and sanctify science." The attitude to the lower orders was paternalistic.

> The working classes are remembered for good. While their duties and responsibilities are explained, their rights are acknowledged; their sentiments are listened to with thoughtful attention; their sympathies are held sacred; and manifold efforts are made to improve their earthly allotment.[18]

Political agitation by the poorer classes was to be shunned. The Conference "Address" in 1820 admonished members who had become involved in the "warmth of political discussion and the general agitation" of the previous year.[19] As Werner has noted, for the New Connexion leadership by 1820 popular appeal had been irrevocably sacrificed on the altar of respectability. Theirs would be the Methodism not of labouring men, but of Anti-Corn Law Leaguers.[20]

In Hanley, the Ridgway family were leading members of such an oligarchy of "more opulent members". Job Ridgway's son John, was an "enlightened if paternalistic employer",[21] who had "for those under him... a more than ordinary concern for their welfare."[22] His biographer asserted that

> ... his workpeople thought of him... in that affectionate regard... which manifested itself not only in their fidelity as servants, but in an identification with his interests so complete as to give them a personal share in all that publicly concerned him.

Conditions of work at his Cauldon Place factory were good for the time and generally no children under twelve were employed.

> The rooms are lofty and spacious, and in all respects clean and healthy; the children and people generally are orderly, regular in their work, and respectful.[23]

He "built a chapel, and a school-room (Sunday) attached, entirely for the use of his people", but, in accordance with his liberal principles,

"the only influence used on his part to make them [members of the same church as he] was the influence of true-hearted piety which ever desires the salvation of those that are near to us."[24]

John Ridgway and his brother William held progressive political opinions, supporting the anti-slavery movement,[25] the repeal of the corn laws, and Parliamentary reform. In 1820 John Tomlinson, solicitor of Cliffe Vale, Stoke, reported to the Home Secretary that certain manufacturers had contracted the dangerous habit of taking their workpeople to public meetings, paying them their wages for so doing. These employers belonged "chiefly to the New Connexion of Methodists... who I am sorry to observe, appear to act in a body and in common concert on these occasions".[26]

In which direction the influence between business and political activity and religious affairs operated was not easily distinguishable. John Ridgway writing in 1815 as "A Trustee and a Layman" set out what he saw as the justification for formation of the New Connexion

> [A] Conference [consisting of] all preachers, and none of the people... was a state of things so foreign to British custom, so unscriptural, arbitrary, and dangerous, that the whole Connexion seemed pervaded with one sentiment on the subject, and that was the necessity of a modification in the system. Men knowing the value of *civil* liberty and of a good constitution, were not insensible to the advantages, or to their inherent right of *scriptural* liberty.
>
> The people demanded a participation in this power... According to every maxim of good government, *power* emanates from the people...
>
> ... it was not on matters of *doctrine*, that the separation took place... nor was it altogether on *matters of discipline*... No; the grand cause of separation was that of CHURCH GOVERNMENT; a question... of vital importance; and a regard to which will ever be of paramount importance.[27]

The Methodist New Connexion was radical rather than revivalist; in Alan

Rose's words "well organised rather than exuberant".[28] At Stockport and Macclesfield some of the Revivalists who separated from the Methodist Societies initially linked up with the Methodist New Connexion on its formation in 1797, but soon found that though "they shared to the full Kilham's desire for freedom... the organisation shaped by him, though having democratic features, did not fully satisfy their zeal for revivalism".[29] However, when in due course the zeal waned and the revivalist fires burned low, some, such as those in Macclesfield, looked to the resources, and stable organisation of the new Connexion to bail them out.

Stockport and Macclesfield were listed among " the most important places in which friends declared for the New Itinerancy" on its formation in 1797 and James Mort was stationed in the Manchester, Stockport, and Macclesfield Circuit.[30] Jeremiah Bretell, who was stationed in the Stockport Methodist Circuit from 1795 to 1797, noted on leaving that

> We had considerable trials from those who were degenerated by Jacobinical politics, and zeal for a new system of religious government; and felt the unpleasant effects of their opposition in various places. I observed that persons of irregular conduct, and some that had been excluded from the Society, became active agents of this new system of opposition. Every effort was made, by pamphlets and misrepresentations, to alienate the Preachers and people from each other. But, not being able to change the government of the Methodist body, all who have adopted the new system soon left us.[31]

However, apart from the "Jacobinical politics" there was also a revivalist element. At Stockport Gamaliel Swindells led the first class at whose meetings "souls were wonderfully revived." Worship was held in Swindells' warehouse and in three houses.[32] However, with the opening of Mount Tabor Chapel in 1798, built at a cost of £2450, and whose Trustees included Muslin manufacturers, a liquor merchant, and a

currier, the Revivalists found themselves denied "the freedom to work with red-hot revivalist zeal" and left.[33] When Dow preached in Stockport in 1806, he described his hearers as a band of Free Gospellers or Revivalists who had been "driven out from the Kilhamites."[34]

Similarly, the Revivalists in Macclesfield, seem to have initially seceded to the New Connexion. However, as at Stockport, the New Connexion... did not retain them".[35] In 1806, John Berisford, a cotton manufacturer, Amos Slater, a grocer, and James Harding, a manufacturer of cotton goods, acquired land in Parsonage Street on which to build a chapel for themselves and other "persons of the Independent Interest dissenting from the established Church of England upon old Methodistical principles and called "the Christian Revivalists".[36] Nightingale, who reputedly drafted their Rules, noted the freedom of their worship

> They claim, as a Christian privilege, a right to indulge their propensities to prayer and praise, at all times, and on all occasions. This liberty they will take during the time the minister is engaged in preaching; and indeed at any other time they think themselves called upon by the motions of the Spirit of God. They are a simple, harmless, and well-meaning body; but enthusiastic and ungovernable to an extraordinary degree.[37]

However, the American revivalist Lorenzo Dow noted with disapproval tendencies in the Parsonage Street Chapel which, nonetheless, reflected the bourgeois tastes of such as those named in the 1806 deed, and which were, perhaps, more suited to the New Connexion, which they had left behind.

> We went to Knutsford - thence to Macclesfield, where I preached the dedicatory sermon of the New chapel, belonging to the *Free Gospellers* or *Revivalists;* instrumental music was introduced here in form, to draw the more people together, to get money to defray the expenses of the house; I believe they

> got less money by doing so, than they would otherwise, and of course it is a foolish thing to take the devil's tools to do the Lord's work with; it is an evil practice, and you cannot deny it...
>
> There is instrumental music in most of the leading chapels in England. But for a lad to start up and sing away in form like a *hero*, yet have no more sense of divine worship than a parrot that speaks a borrowed song, I ask how God is glorified in that? If mechanism was in such perfection as to have a machine by steam to speak words in form of sentences, and so *say* a prayer, repeat a sermon, and play the music, and say amen.-Would this be divine worship? No! there is no divinity about it: and of course it is only but mechanism; and hence if we have not the Spirit of God, our worship is not divine. Consequently, it is only *form*: and *form* without *power*, is but a sham.[38]

Within a few years, the Macclesfield Christian Revivalists "yielded to the attractions of a settled paid ministry" and went back into the Methodist New Connexion.[39] In 1814, the Parsonage Street Chapel was offered to and accepted by the Methodist New Connexion Conference, sitting in Hanley, to which John Berisford was a delegate.

There is evidence of at least one other group of revivalists who in times of difficulty looked to the more soundly based organisation and perceived greater resources of the Methodist New Connexion for succour. In 1828 an application was made to the to the Hanley New Connexion Circuit "from a Circuit of Revivalist Methodists at Dawley Green to know if it were possible that Conference would receive them as a circuit of the New Connexion."[40] The Dawley Green Revivalist Circuit was one of a number which had originated in a schism from the Primitive Methodists early in 1819 led by Robert Winfield. Winfield's career provides a revealing sidelights on the characteristics of revivalist groups, on Primitive Methodism and its leaders, particularly Hugh Bourne sought to impose order and stability, and on the nature of the Methodist New Connexion.

Robert Winfield, of Amberston, near Derby, was converted in 1797 and joined the Methodists. Later that year a New Connexion Society was formed at Breason and Winfield "inquired into their principles, approved of their conduct, and heartily espoused their cause". However, in 1800 he was "compelled as a matter of temporal convenience" [i.e. road impassable in winter] to return to the Wesleyan Society, where he became a local preacher on the same plan as the influential female revivalist preacher, Mary Barritt. In 1814, Winfield, having already crossed swords with the Superintendent of the Derby Circuit over the latter's "determination to make each of the local preachers submit implicitly to his authority, invited William Clowes to preach at Amberston, following which the superintendent wrote to him charging him with allowing a person to preach in his house who was not a member of their community; and warning him that expulsion would be the consequence of any similar act of indiscretion by which his sympathy for these parties might be indicated". Expelled for attending a Primitive Methodist camp meeting, Winfield operated independently at first gathering a following of "397 persons... organised into societies", with which he soon joined the Primitive Methodists.[41]

For four years Winfield travelled for the Primitive Methodists, organising societies, erecting chapels, and forming circuits. Probably owing to the influence of Mary Barritt, he, like John Berisford in Macclesfield, saw the possibilities of female preaching, and encouraged Sarah Kirkland, the first female primitive Methodist Itinerant, accompanied by Winfield and his daughter to preach to the framework knitters of Nottingham in 1815.[42] By 1818 the rapid development of Primitive Methodism began to overstretch the as yet rudimentary

organisation which led to a crisis of management and potentially lax order and discipline.

> It appears... that at this time the vessel was without an anchor, and ill-prepared to brave a storm. Discipline was wanting in the Church. There were too many pilots.[43]

With Winfield's track record, it was inevitable that as Hugh Bourne tried to impose greater order and discipline, a clash of personalities and a parting of the ways should occur. At the Nottingham Circuit Quarterly Meeting in December, 1818, Bourne preferred a series of charges against Winfield. He separated from the Primitive Methodists, taking with him thousands of members in Leicestershire, which he gathered into a new sect of Winfieldites, with their own chapels and travelling preachers including his daughter.[44] In 1826 they were described as follows

> This connexion is perhaps the smallest of any and is chiefly under the superintendency of Mr.Robert Winfield of Amberston near Derby. The Revivalists approximate in discipline and institutions to the Primitives, being also like them distinguished by extraordinary zeal and by encouraging field and female preaching. They have societies in various parts of the kingdom, particularly in Shropshire, Staffordshire, Leicestershire, etc. their first Conference was held at Northampton in 1821 and in 1823 they had 13 circuits, 25 travelling preachers and 71 local preachers.[45]

However, Winfield's "gift for converting sinners was much greater than his gift for governing saints".[46] His obituarist, Rev.James Maughan of the Derby Methodist New Connexion Circuit, and therefore writing from the perspective of one well versed in what he would have seen as the good order and government of that body, noted Winfield's weaknesses in that when

> Legislative authority was required... it became apparent that he who had been so well qualified to build the house was less qualified to govern the family - that he who had been the means of giving such a rapid and vigorous existence to the Church was less qualified to administer its discipline and manage its internal affairs.

With mounting debts and responsibilities arising from the building of chapels and the state of affairs becoming desperate, and Winfield recommended his followers as a body to join the Methodist New Connexion and a request to this effect although sent to the superintendent of the Nottingham Circuit, was not passed on to Conference. Winfield's connexion broke up, many societies united with the Primitive Methodists, several with the Wesleyans, some with the New Connexion and some remained independent. Winfield eventually returned to the New Connexion as a local preacher in the Derby Circuit.[47]

As noted above, the Winfieldite Circuit at Dawley Green applied to Hanley to be received as a New Connexion Circuit. One of the Hanley ministers was to be dispatched to conduct an investigation to be arranged by a committee comprising Messrs.William Ridgway, Allbut, and Lutterworth, a significant choice of personel.[48] William Ridgway and Thomas Allbut were not only leading members of the Methodist New Connexion, holding at various times both local and Connexional office, but were also prominent local businessmen, Ridgway in pottery manufacture and Allbut in printing and publishing. They were, therefore, well qualified, not only in the words of the minute "to ascertain the real state of feeling and views of the people at Dawley Green", but also to assess the state of affairs and potential viability of the circuit, which was duly accepted by the New Connexion at the Conference of 1829.[49] The formerly Revivalist Circuit took on the characteristics of its adopted parent including a concern for musical excellence. The prices charged for a concert of works by Handel and Haydn at Brand Lee Chapel, and the fact that it was in aid of the new organ, indicate a social status and style far removed from its

revivalist roots, but reflecting that of Hanley, Bethesda, whose trustees, in 1819, were of "the opinion... that an organ [was] absolutely needful for the new chapel".[50]

Bethesda Chapel, Hanley, was a large, sophisticated, urban chapel, archetypal of the chapels of the New Connexion not only in its building, but in the composition of its membership.[51] Its leading members in the first half of the nineteenth century were mostly rising pottery manufacturers such as the Ridgways, William Smith, Job Meigh, Richard Hicks, and Joseph Clementson, now memorialised in marble round its walls, who formed a close knit ruling oligarchy, and whose dominant influence was not only felt in the chapel, circuit, and Connexion, but also in the commercial, social, and civic life of Hanley as it rapidly developed into the commercial heart of the pottery towns.[52] In particular, two generations of the Ridgway family played an influential role in the birth and evolution of the Methodist New Connexion at Connexional and local level bringing to bear on their religious activities their considerable business and administrative skills and thereby, with others of a similar ilk, moulding the denomination in their own image.

Job Ridgway, was born in Chell in 1759, the son of a potter, Ralph Ridgway, the family moving in search of work to Swansea and then Leeds where he became a Methodist in 1781. Later that year he moved back to North Staffordshire and became a leading member of the Methodist society in Hanley. In 1792 he started his own factory, taking first his brother George and then in 1795 a Methodist friend, William Smith into a partnership which duly prospered. Shortly after this conflict broke out amongst the Methodists of North Staffordshire, part of a wider

struggle within Methodism for greater lay participation in the government of the church. To begin with, the Hanley society wanted the Lord's supper ministered to them and preaching at more convenient hours than the majority of the trustees, based in Burslem and "High Churchmen", would allow. As elsewhere, these demands soon expanded into a more comprehensive list of democratic reforms to be presented to the Burslem Circuit Quarterly Quarterly Meeting by William Smith. In the event, Smith, together with Job Ridgway and John Mort, were locked out of the Quarterly Meeting on the presiding preacher's orders, and were refused appeal to the district meeting.[53] In August 1797, Smith attended the Methodist Conference as a trustee representative, and "finding the preachers determined to hold fast, and exercise absolute power, he united with the friends of as liberal constitution, in forming the Methodist New Connexion".[54]

> Thus we were turned out of our chapel, dismissed from our offices, and expelled the connexion, after doing so much to promote its interest, and without any one having charged us with having done a single action contrary to the gospel.[55]

Although the Hanley Wesleyan Society was almost extinguished by the split the trustees retained the chapel, and the New Connexion services were held at Smith's house in Shelton until a coach house in Albion Street was obtained and fitted upon for worship. By 1798 a six hundred seat chapel had been built on the site of the coach house.

Job Ridgway, "possessed of an abundance of wealth, resting in a house reared by his own earnings, with an extensive manufactory, and a master of [his] trade", using his skills and resources had, with William Smith, played a critical part in the reforms in Hanley and had contributed to the birth of the New Connexion, which, with his elder brother George, he continued to serve as a member of its Conference,

some time Connexional Treasurer, and a local preacher.[56] His comments on the building of his model factory and house at Cauldon Place, in 1802-4, reveal his approach to the inter-relationship of his business activity and religious commitment.

> I now reflected with much pleasure that I had built a house for the Lord before I laid a brick in my own; this was the purpose which the Lord put into my heart, and the accomplishment of it rejoiced my soul. With humility I can say, that, by the grace of God, from the time I began business to the present, I never suffered it to interfere with my duty in the Church, or in my family, being convinced that diligence in business must be joined with fervency of spirit, in order to secure the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come.[57]

In 1808, Job Ridgway's sons, John, born 1785, and William, became equal partners with their father at Cauldon Place, and that year the Ridgways went into the production of china. Both prospered in the industry building on their father's success, the background to which being his arrival in Hanley at "a unique period of commercial growth".[58] The brothers traded in partnership until 1830, when the partnership was amicably dissolved and William took the Bell Works, which they had inherited from their uncle, and John retained Cauldon Place. By 1841 the latter was one of the largest factories in the Potteries employing five hundred people towards whom John was an enlightened, if paternalistic employer.[59] In addition John had interest in a number of other factories and businesses. William had interests in a number of companies, employing about a thousand hands at his heyday and "his group of companies made him a figure to be counted with in the industry".[60] However difficulties in the American marked led to him being declared bankrupt April 1848 followed by the sale of his assets[61] A gift from his brother enabled him to recommence manufacturing, but after a second collapse in 1854 he emigrated to Calfornia.

Both John and William Ridgway followed their father in taking leading roles in the Methodist New Connexion at both local and connexional level. They also had wide ranging philanthropic, political, civic, and social interests. Their progressive political opinions, which led the to be dubbed, in a hostile newspaper article, "the radical saints of Hanley",[62] have already been discussed. For many years John devoted much of his time to local government. He was a founder member of the Hanley Watching and Lighting Commissioners in 1825, and chief bailiff in 1827, William was chief bailiff in 1830. In 1830, John was elected a Hanley market trustee, a body whose membership was dominated by his friends, relations and associates at Bethesda Chapel. He was appointed a J.P. in 1853 and served as a deputy lieutenant for the county. In 1857 he was elected the first mayor of the new borough of Hanley.[63]

The philanthropy of the Ridgways was considerable in addition to their generous support to the New Connexion. They were founder members of the Hanley Auxiliary of the British and Foreign Bible Society and vocal advocates of the Anti-Slavery movement. William improved the area around his house, Prospect Place Northwood, clearing away unsightly cottages and building new houses including "neat almshouses for decayed widows and a school for poor children", whereby "the whole of the vicinity [was] converted from a rude and demoralized part of Hanley, into a beautiful, cleanly, well ordered hamlet".[64] John Ridgway was a keen promoter of the Pottery Central Savings Bank, and a generous patron of the North Staffordshire Infirmary.[65] He actively supported the British School in Hanley and was its treasurer from its foundation in 1818.[66] John and William were among the founding members, and John sometime secretary, of the Pottery Philosophical Society, a non-

political society whose object was to promote useful knowledge and to illustrate the beneficence of the Creator. Other members included Job Meigh and Richard Hicks, also members of Bethesda.[67]

As with their father, John and William Ridgway clearly felt it their Christian duty to place their business and administrative skills at the service of their denomination. In a series of articles in the Connexional *Magazine*, reprinted as *An Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion* in 1815, John Ridgway, defending the institution of the New Connexion, argued that it was a mistaken policy of the Old Connexion to exclude the ordinary members from participating in church government as

> The people possessed as great an interest in the support of Methodism as their rulers. They had a talent and zeal with which to promote it. They were experienced and conversant with local circumstances, men and business; and their co-operation in the general management of things, might have been esteemed a valuable acquisition.[68]

He was particularly concerned to secure the legality of the New Connexion and its rules of procedure were very much his personal legacy. He contended that for the Connexion to advance it needed a sound business basis, especially since a growing denomination had to handle ever-increasing funds and liabilities, and a legal constitution. To those who contended that his proposals reinforced the very centralising bureaucracy from which they had just freed themselves he replied that

> I am very far from agreeing that in the opinions of those who would leave the concerns of a religious community to fluctuation and uncertainty; for besides the constant disadvantages attending upon mutable and inconstant measures, much danger is to be apprehended from disunion on the one hand, and still more from declension on the other. On this principle it is, that we make rules, and establish a discipline calculated to give them the proper effect.[69]

In any event, he argued that the problem of dictatorial central authority was checked by lay participation in church government.

> An arbitrary hierarchy will rarely reform itself... But if the system be a mixed one, wherein the people have a proper participation, it will correct its errors, and reform its abuses.[70]

John Ridgway thus applied his "eminently political and administrative" mind to the development of the Connexion and his biographer, who had personally witnessed his contribution, affirmed that "To no other single individual, assuredly to no other layman, does the Connexion owe so much."[71] He was industrious and orderly and a formidable debater as well as being a diplomat and reconciler. His biographer had before him his "memorandum books... containing the prospective business of many Conferences; of some... the entire order of business, of others the matters of greatest... interest, with suggestions and sketches for their consideration and disposal."

> He was seldom seen, whether in committee or open Conference, without a bundle of papers, folded lengthwise, and neatly tied with red tape - filled from top to bottom in his broad, decisive, but sprawling hand - with preamble and recommendations intended to meet and cover the whole question which most were just beginning to think of for the first time.[72]

Thus he helped to shape the denomination's administration with experience rooted in industrial management and a manufacturer's involvement in local politics.

John Ridgway was able to apply his business and management skills to the operation of the Connexional Book Room, based in Hanley from 1808 to 1832. Ridgway served as Book Steward and Editor from 1812 to 1816, and as Treasurer to the Book Room Committee from 1821 to 1834, during which time it was put on a sounder financial footing, although Joseph Barker was later to criticise a management policy which he perceived to

be more concerned with the accumulation of capital than with serving the readership.[73]

The Ridgways did not have the same relationship to the Connexional Book Room as either the Primitive Methodist Bournes or the Bible Christian Thornes, families who established their respective connexional book rooms and who either actually, or de facto, owned the connexional press. Nonetheless John Ridgway was Connexional Book Steward and then Treasurer to the Book Committee during a period when the Book Room was located at Hanley and the printing done by an associate at Bethesda Chapel, Thomas Allbut, the latter being Editor from 1816 to 1827. This gave him a vehicle, as it had for Hugh Bourne and James Thorne, to promote his views and put his stamp on how the Connexion should be organised.

It could be said that John and William Ridgway were the driving force behind the expansion of the New Connexion in North Staffordshire in the first half of the nineteenth century. They contributed not only time and energy, but also financial resources, contributing substantially not only to Hanley (Bethesda), but to chapels in Tunstall (Mount Tabor), Burslem (Bethel), Fenton (Mount Tabor), and others, in many instances also acting as trustees.[74]

The scale of the Ridgways' benefactions may be seen by their contributions to the cost of the rebuilding of Bethesda, Hanley, in 1819. Initially, the Trustees resolved to give the following sums to the project: John Ridgway, £100; William Ridgway, £75; Hicks & Meigh, £100; and the others lesser, but nonetheless substantial amounts. In addition, five principal trustees, including John and William Ridgway,

each advanced £100. They also pledged to advance £20 each towards the cost of an organ. By 1824 the total debt on the premises had reached £7900 (including £1975 carried over from the old chapel) with interest at £348 per year. At a Trustees' Meeting held at John Ridgway's house on 20 February, 1829, it was agreed to pay off the accumulated deficit in the chapel accounts by donations from the trustees including payments of £109 3s from William and £125 from John Ridgway. The Trustees also agreed to contribute an annual sum of £600 to make up the annual deficiency and to clear the debt, of which John's, contribution was £135 and William's £115.[75]

The Ridgways were typical of the self-made businessmen, although in the case of John and William with the advantage of a substantial inheritance, who exercised wide influence within the New Connexion, and largely set its middle-class tone. The Connexion's elite saw themselves closer to the Wesleyans, albeit with a reformed, more democratic constitution, than to the more charismatic varieties of Methodism.

Largely urban based and dominated by an evolving middle-class oligarchy, the New Connexion had a much narrower social base than the Primitive Methodists, whose preachers spoke and dressed like the farm labourers, miners, and stockingers who came to hear them. Lacking also the revivalist element it is perhaps not surprising that their membership was soon outstripped by that of the Primitive Methodists by eight to one.[76] The leaders of the New Connexion, in its *Jubilee* volume of 1848, acknowledged the success of the Primitive Methodists, who, led by plain and earnest men, preached the gospel with great fidelity and success, raising up societies "consisting of converts from the humblest and the most profligate portions of society."

> Doubtless they have conveyed a large amount of religious instruction and moral benefit to numbers who had lived, from their youth up, in brutish ignorance and sensuality.

However, they questioned whether the Primitive Methodist Connexion was "adapted for perpetuity" when two-thirds of its Conference were laymen from such a background. The writer of the section, concluded revealingly that "it cannot be wise and good for one sect to consist mainly of the rich, and another sect almost entirely of the poor."[77]

Notes

1. Joseph Nightingale, *A Portraiture of Methodism* (1807) p.475.

2. J.M.Turner, *Conflict and Reconciliation* (1985) p.118.

3. W.R.Ward, *Religion and Society in England 1790-1850* (1972) p.29.

4. T.Allin, W.Cooke, S.Hulme, P.J.Wright, *The Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion*, 1848, pp.56-57.

5. William Cooke, *Methodist Reform, and its Originator* (1850) pp.66 & 69.

6. M.C.A., MSS.Letter, Thomas Coke to Joseph Benson, 21 Dec.1795, and Thomas Coke to Joseph Benson, 6 February, 1796; D.Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society 1750-1850* (1984, 1987) p.69.

7. E.R.Taylor, *Methodism and Politics 1791-1851* (1935) pp.78-79.

8. Taylor, op.cit., p.87, citing Watts, J.C., *Liberal Methodism Vindicated: With special reference to the Methodist New Connexion. A Reply to Rev.J.H.Rigg DD...* (c.1887).

9. E.A.Rose, "The Methodist New Connexion 1797-1907", *W.H.S.Proc.*, Vol.XLVII (1990) p.253.

10. Taylor, op.cit., p.82.

11. John Grundell, and Robert Hall, *The Life of Mr.Alexander Kilham* (Nottingham, 1799) p.151.

12. "Memoir of Job Ridgway" in *New Methodist Magazine* 1814, pp.399-400.

13. Hempton, op.cit., p.61.

14. John Ward, *The Borough of Stoke-upon-Trent* (1843) p.399.

15. Julia Stewart Werner, *The Primitive Methodist Connexion Its Background and Early History* (1984) p.23.

16 Ibid., p.24.

17. E.V.Chapman, *John Wesley & Co. (Halifax)* (Halifax, 1952) p.48; A.Huntbach, *Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent* (Stafford, 1910) summarises the careers of a number of leading Hanley M.N.C.laymen e.g. John Ridgway, pp.122-3, Joseph Clementson, p.126, and Thomas Allbut, pp.131-2.

18. T.Allin et al., op.cit., pp.384-386.

19. *Minutes of....Methodist New Connexion* (Hanley, 1820) pp.35-6.

20. Werner, op.cit., p.25.

21. Denis Stuart (Ed.), *People of the Potteries* (Keele, 1985) p.180.

22. J.Stacey, *A Prince in Israel* (1862) pp.67-8.

23. *Report by Samuel Scriven, Esq., on the Employment of Children and Young Persons in the District of the Staffordshire Potteries* (1841).

24. Ibid., p.68.

25. On 13 Oct., 1830, the Hanley Bethesda M.N.C.Circuit Meeting resolved

> That this meeting participating in that benevolent and Christian feeling which pervades the various religious societies throughout this Empire relative to Colonial slavery recommends that congregational petitions be sent from every society and congregation connected with us in this Circuit earnestly calling upon both Houses of Parliament to put a speedy and utter end to slavery in our West India Colonies...

[H.R.L. MSS.Hanley Bethesda Methodist New Connexion Minutes]

26. Quoted in J.H.Y.Briggs, *The Radical Saints of Shelton* (Keele, 1988) pp.27-8.

27. A Trustee and Layman [John Ridgway], *An Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion* (Hanley, Conference Office, 1815) pp.8, 18-19, & 22.

28. Rose, op.cit., p.253

29. James Vickers, *History of Independent Methodism* (1920) p.11.

30. Allin et al., op.cit., pp.110-111; Oliver A. Beckerlegge, *United Methodist Ministers and their Circuits* (1968) p.165.

Letter from Sam Heginbottom to Alexander Kilham, 12 Jan., 1798
"A standard was fixed for the New Connexion in Macclesfield last Sunday by Thos.Heginbottom and others and 23 joined to make a new beginning and a large room [?procured]"

31. Thomas Percival Bunting, *The Life of Jabez Bunting*, Vol.I., (1859) p.132.

32. W.H.Lockley, *The Story of the Stockport Circuit* (Stockport, 1909) p.6.

33. Ibid., pp.7-8; Vickers, op.cit., p.18.

34. Lorenzo Dow, *The Dealings of God, Man, and the Devil, As Exemplified in the Life, Experience, and Travels of Lorenzo Dow...* (Cincinnati, 1860) p.124.

35. Vickers, op.cit., p.11.

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51. Alan Rose has calculated that in 1901, only 12% of New Connexion chapels could be considered rural, compared to 70% for the Primitive Methodists and 81% for the Bible Christians and that in 1905 the average M.N.C. chapel seated 360, the average Wesleyan chapel 261 and the average Bible Christian Chapel 250.
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52. In the second half of the century these were replaced by a members representative of new category of rising entrepreneurs, such as the owners of department stores, Oliver Dyke and Michael Huntbach, and the flour miller, George Ridgway.

53. "Memoir of Mr.Job Ridgway... Written by Himself" in the *New Methodist Magazine* reproduced in G.Godden, *The Illustrated Guide to Ridgway Porcelains*, p.200ff.

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61. *Particulars... of Dwelling-Houses, Potworks, Flint Mills... late belonging to Mr.Wm.Ridgway, a Bankrupt... to be sold by Public Auction... on... 20 September, 1848* (Newcastle, 1848).

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64. Ward, op.cit., p.382; Simeon Shaw, *History of the Staffordshire Potteries* (Hanley, 1829, p.43.

65. *Staffordshire Advertiser*, 20 June, 1812; *Pottery Mercury*, 16 October, 1830.

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67. The Pottery Philosophical Society Minute Book 1819-1835 (In the library of the North Staffs.Field Club in Hanley Library).

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69. Ibid., p.35.

70. Ibid., p.37.

71. Stacey, op.cit., pp. 93-4.

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74. Smith and Beard, op.cit.; John Young, *After a Hundred Years... A Sketch of the... Churches in the Burslem Circuit of the Methodist New Connexion* (Burslem, 1903); Trust deeds of Fenton (Mount Tabor), Longton (Zion), and Congleton Methodist New Connexion Chapels.

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75. Werner, op.cit., p.25.

76. Allin et al., op.cit., p.381.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The three denominations under consideration, the Primitive Methodists, Bible Christians, and Methodist New Connexion, whilst having differences in emphasis and organisation, all had basic characteristics in common. All were Methodist, deriving their doctrine and theology from the same parent body. From the parent body they also inherited Methodist structures: paid itinerant and voluntary local preachers, a membership grouped in classes, circuits of societies/chapels, circuits grouped in districts, and all under an annual conference. The point of departure for the new movements was either constitutional, as with the Methodist New Connexion whose supporters sought a greater say in church government at national and local level, or revivalist, as with the Primitive Methodists and Bible Christians, whose supporters' revivalist fervour could not be easily contained within the parent body, and whose activities threatened its stability, good order, and respectability, in a delicate political period. Each saw themselves as having reformed the system they inherited to include a much greater degree of lay involvement in church affairs at all levels, and consequently much greater opportunities for lay initiative and enterprise.

The movements, particularly the Primitive Methodists and the Bible Christians, faced a difficult transition from their early "heroic" and fluid missionary stage to more settled and established religious communities, from revival movements to institutional Churches, with increasingly complex problems of finance and administration. The payment of the itinerancy, the financing of chapel building, and the

servicing of chapel debt, as well as a more general need for good order and a settled constitution, all made great demands upon the administrative and business skills and resources of the early leaders. At the beginning their chapels may have been, in Hugh Bourne's words "the coal-pit banks, or any other place", but congregations required more permanent buildings, sooner rather than later if a Sunday school was to be accommodated.

There were striking parallels between the Bourne brothers and the Thornes. Their operational bases were their family farms. Both family enterprises were innovative and were in key with the latest technological progress of their times, in the case of the Bournes in millwrighting and engineering and in the case of the Thornes in agriculture. Their family farms became de facto denominational headquarters, and home to the denominational book rooms and printing establishments. Both Hugh Bourne and James Thorne took a keen interest in education and set up schools.

The Ridgways were major pottery manufacturers in North Staffordshire. John Ridgway pioneered new decorative processes, including the application of photography, and in 1840 took out the first patent for a machine to make pottery. Whilst influential at Connexional level, they did not play a dominant role in the way that the Bournes and Thornes did except, perhaps, locally. In so far as they had a power base it was their chapel, Bethesda, and the Hanley circuit. They nonetheless were able to apply their considerable business and administrative expertise, gained in the commercial world as leading pottery manufacturers, to the affairs of the Methodist New Connexion as well as to their civic duties.

Both Hugh Bourne and James Thorne came to devote their full time to the affairs of their respective Connexions and both were able to bring to bear legal and administrative abilities, if, on occasions, exercised in an autocratic manner, and, with their brothers, entrepreneurial skills, together with, particularly at the beginning, financial resources. Hugh Bourne was able to apply the empirical approach to problem solving acquired in his scientific and technical training to church government and the drafting of connexional legislation, and to practical advice on many routine matters.

In contrast to the Thornes and the Ridgways, who had radical, but not extreme, and liberal political sympathies, Hugh Bourne was apolitical, and his writings are almost devoid of comments on contemporary issues. His denunciation of the "speeching radical" at the 1821 Conference was not so much evidence of his conservative views, which he probably held, but of his fear of a hostile and damaging political reaction to Methodism born out of the experience of the early 1800s. His principle objection to politics was, however, that it was a distraction from the more important priority of converting sinners, a view encapsulated in an anonymous piece in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1834, under the heading "An Anecdote on Politics"

> A local preacher... when speaking of religious people needlessly involving themselves in politics, gave an account of his own experience... :
>
> My mind was got into politics, and I was full of zeal for the separation of Church from the State. But one of our travelling preachers, preached me out of it. He remarked, that if it were the will of Providence to make such separation, then that Providence could find instruments for that purpose...
>
> The work of converting sinners to God needed instruments also...

> I was struck with his remarks... as I knew from my own experience that politics would draw my mind from converting work. So I gave up politics at once.[1]

Joseph Barker seems originally to have held to this view, but, as so often in his career, changed tack and decided it was better to tackle "corrupt institutions" on their own ground.

> Formerly I thought it wrong for Christians to meddle in political matters. Formerly I thought it the duty of Christians to unite themselves together in churches... and to confine their labours to the government of their kingdom and to the increase of the numbers of its subjects. I now think differently. I have no faith in church organisations. I believe it my duty to ... move in the world at large; to battle with evil wherever I see it, and to aim at the annihilation of all corrupt institutions and at the establishment of all good, and generous, and useful institutions in their places.[2]

Notwithstanding Bourne's "sanction being given to the regulations of the Connexion in which political action was so much discouraged",[3] many Primitive Methodists in fact engaged in radical politics, enabled by skills acquired as lay preachers and, with Bourne's guidance, in conducting church meetings,[4] and as the movement matured and entered the second half of the nineteenth century, this became accepted as a legitimate field of activity. Antliffe writing in 1870 still added a cautionary note

> If our recent legislation has become of a more liberal order, all the greater need is there that we take heed that our liberty degenerate not into licentious or latitudinarianism.[5]

In his revision of Antliff's work in 1892, Colin McKechnie represented the positive attitude of official Primitive Methodism towards political involvement in his day by revising this passage to remove the note of caution.

> Our recent legislation in reference to political matters is much more liberal.[6]

By the end of the century, Primitive Methodist trade union leaders and politicians were being lauded by the Connexion.

The financial management of the Bournes which contributed to the successful growth and ultimate stability of the Connexion was, however, seriously called into question by the debacle of James Bourne's bankruptcy, whether or not this was brought about by causes beyond his, or his brother's, control. The result was seen as a dire warning of the dangers of risks involved in business ventures and led a leader of the next generation, John Flesher, to declare that "as a connexion we have no business to have our money in business".[7] "The chief business of Primitive Methodism", he wrote in 1849, "is to cultivate personal religion, and to seek the salvation of souls."[8]

The problem of finance did not go away. By the latter half of the nineteenth century, the problem of accumulating chapel debt threatened to overwhelm the Connexion, and it was a successful business entrepreneur, the Aintree jam manufacturer, William, later Sir William, Hartley, who came up with a business solution, the Primitive Methodist Chapel Aid Association, which was registered as a limited company in 1890. In effect a form of building society, it was formed on commercial lines for borrowing money at a reasonable rate of interest and lending it to chapels at a more moderate rate of interest than the high rates then being paid by hard pressed trustees. The Association was made possible by Hartley's energy, sound commercial instincts, devotion to primitive Methodism, and his financial credibility. It was his desire to bring a more business-like spirit into the general financial working of the Connexion, and to encourage the practices of thrift and sound investment among ordinary Primitive Methodists.[9] That it took time to persuade Conference that such a frankly commercial scheme was both acceptable, and could work successfully, was possibly a

legacy of the events of fifty years before.

The Methodist New Connexion, because of the nature of its origins and the character of its leading laymen such as the Ridgways developed almost a fetish about what it perceived to be its system of democratic government and business-like approach to its institutions such as the Connexional Book Room and Chapel affairs. Acres of print were devoted to its democratic principles and good order. The differing emphases of the Primitive Methodists and the New Connexion are revealed in their early official histories. Petty's *History of the Primitive Methodist Connexion*, published for their jubilee in 1860, is a saga of heroic deeds, revivalist fervour, and missionary effort. Large sections of *The Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion*, published in 1848, comprise a treatise on orderly, representative church government, under headings such as "The Distinctive Principles of the new Connexion", "The Application of these Principles", and "The Influence of the New Connexion upon the Politics of Methodism in General". Hugh Bourne's insistence on good order and discipline may be seen as a process of harnessing the revivalist fervour at the heart of his movement, in order that what could have disintegrated into a disorganised rabble, and in some critical periods threatened to do so, became an effective force. The free gospellism espoused by the Independent Methodists offered them little scope for expansion. Lacking the broad social base of the Primitive Methodists and their revivalist spirit, by the middle of the nineteenth century, the New Connexion was outnumbered by those whom it would have regarded as its poor relations by eight to one.

With leading New Connexion families, such as the Ridgways the worlds of chapel, business, civic and social life were reciprocally influenced

by the mores of a paternalistic, liberal, rising middle class oligarchy. They were not without their critics, such as Joseph Barker who

> found in the Connexion a complete division between the rich members and poor members. The rich were a class, or caste to themselves, and the poor were another class or caste. The rich along with the travelling preachers, formed one world, the poor, left all alone, formed another world; and between the two there seemed to be a great gulf fixed... The rich met at each others' houses; they had their regular parties... while the poor were completely lost sight of, as though they belonged to another race of beings.[10]

Some of the preachers complained that the power of the lay patricians, particularly the chapel trustees, had a paralysing effect on ministerial zeal. In 1840 Samuel Hulme complained of the spirit which

> betrayed itself in withholding from ministers that respect to which their character and office scripturally entitled them. The authority of a pastor, as the ruler of the church, has been reduced to a mere name; he has often been left to struggle alone; or thwarted and dispirited, he has sunk into indifference.[11]

Hulme was stationed in Hanley at that time. Whether he intended his remarks to refer to the Bethesda trustees, including the Ridgways, presumably did not occur to the publisher of the *Address*, Thomas Allbut, himself a Bethesda trustee.

Demonstrably the background, education, training, experience and resources of the families examined in this study were major factors in the nature of the contribution they were able to make to the development of their respective denominations particularly in matters of organisation, administration, and financial control. The fact that they operated at a key stage in their early development meant that such a contribution inevitably had effects on the longer term direction that their denominations took.

When, in 1855, John Walford surveyed the industrial scene from the

heights of Mow Cop, he observed not a brutalised and exploited population occupying a ravaged and scarred landscape, but rising prosperity and improving conditions.[12] He saw industrial progress as a civilising process, in which Methodism played an integral part.

Notes

1. *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1834, pp.436-7.

2. Quoted in H.U.Faulkner, *Chartism and the Churches*, 2nd Ed. 1970) p.27.

3. William Antliffe, *The Life of the Venerable Hugh Bourne* (1872) p.229.

4. Bourne, Hugh, *On Chairmaning...* (Bemersley, nd.)

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6. Colin C.Mckechnie, *The Life of Hugh Bourne*, A New Edition, Revised (1892) p.160.

7. John Flesher, Memorandums of certain things which transpired at Bemersley and the neighbourhood beginning on Sept.10/1842 Sept.28.

8. In the editorial introduction in the *Primitive Methodist Magazine*, 1849, p.iii.

9. Geoffrey E.Milburn, *Unique in Methodism: 100 Years of Chapel Aid* (Englesea brook, 1990) p.5.

10. *The Life of Joseph Barker, written by himself* (1880) p.108.

11. Samuel Hulme, *An Address to the Members of the Methodist New Connexion* (Hanley, 1840)

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