



THE BEND IN THE ROAD.—Entering Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire, where William Cowper lived for a time.

Week's Book Caserise

Furthering the Gospel

THE second volume of Dr. Wade Crawford Barclay's work on the history of American Methodist Missions has followed quickly on the heels of the first, and carries the story to 1844, which is the close of the period of Early American Methodism. This book is called To Reform the Nation, and students of Methodism will recognize the phrase.

At his first Conference, in June, 1744, Wesley asked what was God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists. After long debate, the answer was given: "To reform the nation, particularly the Church; to spread scriptural holiness throughout the land." And when the American Methodist Episcopal Church was organized at the Conference in Baltimore in 1784, the same question was asked, and the same answer was given, with the substitution of "continent" for "nation."

Methodism was neither mere emotionalism nor harsh restriction. It proclaimed the gospel which sets man free from his sins, and brings him to righteous living, and, more than any other cause, whether in America or in England, it created a new social conscience and was the begueter of social reform. Sunday schools began philanthropy for the children of the poor. The growth of civic and political responsibility, the campaign for temperance, the fight against gambling, the reform of prisons, the improvement of conditions of labour, the emancipation of women in the work of the Church, had their principal origin and inspiration in it.

The record on slavery is unhappily not so good. The battle in the Church between the North and the South, which neither was blameless, led to the "separate tragedy" of the division into two Churches in 1844, and Dr. Barclay holds that it was one contributory cause of the Civil War, and greatly weakened missionary effort in the Americas. But his conclusions, and especially after the organization in 1819 of the Missionary Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the work among the Indians began to grow. It was sorely hindered by the "missionary" life in the white settlements, and by unscrupulous white traders who flooded the Indian country with whisky. But the most terrible story is that of the merciless uprooting of the Indians from their territory, and the slaughter of thousands in military expeditions. But if the Indian work did not have all the success that was hoped, there was solid achievement to report, not least in the raising of the general standards of life, both physically and spiritually.

One-third of this volume is a broad survey of three subjects—The Methodist Way, The Methodist Message, and Men with a Mission. The first of these is concerned with the life of Methodism from conversion to Conference, as it might be put, and there is no doubt left about it beginning with conversion. Such an account could be dull, and often has been, but not here. The discussion on Conversion is enlivened with personal and moving accounts which remind one of the Lives of the Early Methodist Preachers. But indeed it is one of the outstanding features of this history that its people, and not abstractions, are always in the forefront of the picture.

description of a valley of dry bones. They have flesh upon them; they stand on their feet and testify. The Methodist Message is shown to be that of universal redemption, of regeneration, the witness of the Spirit, and perfect love—the familiar message, indeed, set out with freshness and vitality. The Men with a Mission are for the most part the Circuit Riders, who might have made St. Paul's words their own, had modestly permitted it: "in journeyings often, in perils of rivers, in perils of the wilderness, in labour and travail, in cold and nakedness." But nothing mattered to them if only Christ could be preached and glorified.

The REV. W. J. NOBLE Reviews

TO REFORM THE NATION, by Dr. Wade Crawford Barclay (Board of Missions and Church Extension of the Methodist Church, \$3.50).

THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL, by R. W. MOORE; THE TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL, by Dr. G. B. CAIRD (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, 6s. 6d. each, School Edition, 5s. each).

NO FAITH OF MY OWN, by the Rev. Dr. J. V. LANGMEAD CASSERLEY (Longmans Green, 9s. 6d.; paper, 6s. 6d. net).

AFRICA ANGELUS, by the Rev. Mervyn M. Temple (Corgate Press, 2s. 6d.).

LOOKING AT INDIA, by Joyce Reason (Corgate Press, 2s.).

Their contribution to the development of the life of the American people has never been adequately recognised, though there is a wonderful tribute to them quoted from Theodore Roosevelt, that this history will do much to restore the balance. It bears the same marks of wide and detailed study, carefully planned arrangement, profound understanding both of the gospel and of early Methodism, and of a true fellowship of spirit with the men who carried the Word of God right across the continent, enduring hardship as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.

UNDER the general title, "A Primer of Christianity," two further books have been issued by the Oxford University Press. They are intended primarily for the upper forms of school, but they are of value also to the general reader. The Furtherance of the Gospel, by R. W. Moore, is the story of Christianity from the beginning until now, written in language clear and free from theological or other jargon. A subject so vast demands compression in a small book, but Mr. Moore has overcome this difficulty in the main, though there are omissions which different readers would no doubt like to supply. The contribution of the Free Churches, and of the Churches of America, to the furtherance of the gospel, might have had rather more extended reference. But the book will serve a useful purpose both for general readers and also for schools in the hands of a competent teacher.

The Truth of the Gospel, by Dr. G. B. Caird, fulfils the purpose of its title. All its arguments, and its deductions from Scriptural references, are set on an equal level, but within its compass is an excellent guide to the knowledge of the Christian faith and the Christian life. Dr. Caird meets critics fairly and fully, and with no evasions, and his book holds the attention to the end.

NO FAITH OF MY OWN, by the Rev. Dr. J. V. Langmead Casserley, is written by one who grew up in complete isolation from the Christian faith, as a member of a family which had entirely abandoned both the profession and practice of religion. He travelled the hard way to discipleship, and this lends additional value to his comments and criticisms on rationalism, for he knows it from the inside, and has found it to be false and worthless.

The book sets out the author's view of what Christians believe, and how they try to live, and in the course of this it examines and demolishes a good deal of erroneous opinion. But its chief contribution is the positive statement, expressed vividly and powerfully. It makes good the claim that modern unbelief is a misunderstanding of history, science, reason, civilisation, and humanism, and its conclusion is that "God is in Christ, and the world's only hope is in God." This is a strong, sincere book which is to be commended, even though all of it will not find complete acceptance.

As internal evidence shows, Dr. Casserley writes from the standpoint of an Anglo-Catholic, and commits himself to the view that the twelve apostles "exercised their power to hand on their authority to others... thus St. Matthias and St. Paul became apostles." This, if the New Testament is to be believed, would be news to St. Paul. And when Dr. Casserley speaks of the Church he means the "Catholic" Church, in which he includes the Roman, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican, and he has rather a "short" with dissenters, about whom he could know more with advantage. Free Churchmen must bear with him as gently as they can in this and in his doctrine of the Holy Communion, for it is a doubly convincing of the Christian faith against unbelievers.

TWO small books for the close—small, but how enriching! The Rev. Mervyn M. Temple has written Africa Angelus out of his knowledge of Rhodesia and his love for its people. It consists of twenty-seven short sketches, illustrated by admirable drawings, and each followed by a prayer. There is a quality about this book that sets it apart; for one thing, a fine choice and control of words; for another, a delicate sensitiveness; more than all, the seeing eye and the understanding heart. Some of the stories of the everyday world; some of the human soul groping for the light; some of sorrow or tragedy or disappointment; all interesting, some almost unbearably poignant; each one a cameo cut by one who is already a craftsman. They will open the reader's eyes; they should send him to his knees.

In contrast, Joyce Reason's Looking at India is an excellent introductory book, into which is compressed a great amount of information about its people—India setting out on its new road with the crippling handicap of division, its religions and castes, its poverty and ignorance and suffering; and the story of the Christian Church in India, its service to the people and its preaching of the Cross by which India is being redeemed. Not only for leaders of young people, for whom the book is specially designed, but for everyone who would understand India, this is a very good and well-written book.

William Clowes BY THE REV. FRANK BAKER

AMERICAN Methodism has its bishops. Two men in British Methodism have been accorded the courtesy archidiaconal title of "The Venerable." One was Hugh Bourne, the organising genius of that wonderful nineteenth century movement of the Holy Spirit known as Primitive Methodism. The other was his colleague, the roaming evangelist of the movement, William Clowes.

Clowes's early background did not seem very propitious as a preparation for his brief but brilliant career as a "travelling preacher." Brought into the home of a working Burslem potter on March 12, 1780, at ten he was apprenticed to his maternal uncle—one of the famous Wedgwood family. He had inherited his father's careless ways, however, and though he speedily learned his trade he was incurably restless. When at length he was able to earn £1 a day he could not settle down to regular work but roamed the country, seeking still better employment, spending his money as quickly as it came, and leaving a trail of debts behind him.

Adventurous and ambitious by nature, with a powerful, stocky figure, he was by turns pugilist, athlete, and even a dancing champion. In many wild pranks he was ringleader but suddenly sobered by a narrow escape from the clutches of a press gang in Hull.

Clowes fled home to Burslem, cut down his drinking to a mere half-pint of ale a day, and ventured into the Methodist chapel. Evading Methodist discipline by using a borrowed class ticket, he even engineered a visit to a lovefeast. The deep impression made here was sealed at a prayer meeting the following morning, January 20, 1805, when he thus described his experience:

"This is what the Methodists mean by being converted. This is God is converting my soul. In an agony of prayer I believed God would save me—then I believed He was saving me—then I believed He had saved me; and it was so."

SOON Clowes's Burslem home—he had married in 1800—was a centre of Methodist hospitality and worship. He himself became a class leader in the Methodist village of Kidsgrove, and was the means of converting many rough miners. Various forms of Christian activity claimed him. He led a Sunday observance society, distributed Testaments and tracts, conducted in his home protracted prayer meetings and a Saturday evening study circle for local preachers. Soon he himself became an "auxiliary" preacher.

When on May 31, 1807 the first English Camp Meeting was held on Mow Cop William Clowes was still a beginner in spiritual things, however—an enthusiastic Methodist class leader of twenty-seven who was gradually feeling his way to more extended evangelistic labours. Hugh Bourne was eight years his senior, and an established man of affairs as well as a much more experienced Christian worker—though without Clowes's self-confidence and bonhomie. At that first Camp Meeting arranged by Bourne young Clowes was present, and even mounted the stand to give his testimony and deliver an exhortation. Wholeheartedly he threw himself into the formidable spiritual expedition that long and awe-inspiring day, singing, praying, exhorting with hardly a break.

At the second Mow Cop Camp Meeting on July 30, Clowes was again present, but this time only as a sympathetic spectator, for Wesleyan officialdom in Burslem had frowned on the meeting. A few days later the Wesleyan Conference declared that such gatherings were "highly improper in England, and likely to be productive of considerable mischief." Clowes loyally avoided the crucial third Camp Meeting held at Norton on August 23, which led to the eventual expulsion of Hugh Bourne from the Wesleyan Society. His friendship with the "Camp-Meetings" continued, however, and he defended them against the many critics.

Over a year later Clowes seems at last to have reached a decision about the conflicting claims of his circuit and his conscience. He accompanied Bourne to the first two Camp Meetings held at Ramoor, in September and October, 1808, meantime taking counsel with that rough-hewn saint of the forest of Delamere, James Crawford. In June, 1810, following his attendance at the fourth Ramoor Camp Meeting, his name was omitted from the Burslem preachers' plan, and in the September his class ticket was withheld. He was told by the minister (at the meeting of his own class at Kidsgrove) that a promise to forsake Camp Meetings would reinstate him in membership. Upon this, said Clowes: "I therefore delivered up my class-ticket and became unchurched." The members of the class refused to forsake Clowes, however, even when he pressed them to find a new leader. Soon he found himself leading a new Methodist group, which was speedily linked up with similar groups led by James Steele and the brothers Hugh and James Bourne. On May 30, 1811,

Hugh Bourne issued separate class tickets for the new denomination, and on February 13, 1812, they took the name of The Society of the Primitive Methodists.

TWO men were chosen by the infant connexion to be their "travelling preachers"—James Crawford and William Clowes. Their salaries were 14s. a week, and their circuit the whole country. Clowes travelled extensively in the Midlands. Crowds would gather around him in the streets or fields, attracted by his powerful and pleasing voice singing Gospel hymns to popular song-tunes. In pointed but picturesque language he would then press home his message of a present and a full salvation, often quelling his antagonists by the magnetism of his glowing eyes.

Clowes formed and strengthened societies by the score, made converts by the hundred and eventually by thousands. He had no settled plan of campaign, however, for he was a man believing firmly in spiritual intuition and the power of prayer. He simply waited for the openings of Providence and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. By 1814 the evangelism of Clowes and others had brought such an expansion to the work of the "Ranters" that a period of consolidation followed.

Clowes continued his missionary labours, which led him along the course of the Trent and its tributaries through the Midlands until the revival of 1817-18 led him to Hull, the centre for his greatest triumphs. Accepting an old cloth factory in North Street as his headquarters in January, 1819, he soon had two classes formed and a steward appointed. Rioting led him to ask for legal protection, and Wesleyan opposition for a time created difficulties, but somehow nothing could long withstand his earnestness. He began touring the East Riding, forming more societies wherever he went. In March he returned to Nottingham to plead successfully for more preachers.

TO Primitive Methodism's first Yorkshire lovefeast on March 7, 1819, came hundreds from twenty-five around. The first Camp Meeting on May 30, brought thousands together. Before the year was out a chapel was built and opened. Almost overnight Hull became a rival to the Potteries as the main area for Primitive Methodist expansion. And the centre of it all was William Clowes. From Hull he and his helpers went forth to "open" Leeds, York, Newcastle, and a hundred towns and villages in between. From Hull he went to stabilise the work in London, which was for many years a mission controlled from the provinces, and to a more satisfying evangelistic tour in Cornwall.

To Hull Clowes returned in 1827, worn out in body, and relieved by Conference of circuit responsibility, yet by no means destined to "sit down." It was Clowes who superintended the Primitive Methodist Mission sent out from Hull to the U.S.A. in 1829, and he continued to make extensive preaching tours throughout the country in addition to strengthening the hands of the societies in Hull, who affectionately knew him as "Father Clowes."

In 1842 both Clowes and Bourne were officially superannuated, yet even after the event Clowes was chosen President of the Conference for three years in succession, 1844-6. During his last twenty years, however, Clowes had been but a shadowy figure, if not in size. His effective career can be said to have ended in 1827, but in less than twenty years he had accomplished more than most men do in a lifetime.

Sixty years to the day after the death of John Wesley, on March 2, 1851, William Clowes went to his reward, and was buried in the "Primitive Corner" of the Spring Bank Cemetery, Hull, where a granite obelisk marks his resting place. The same year there was opened in the centre of the city a new chapel bearing his name. Yet neither the column over his grave nor the now forsaken Clowes Chapel constitute his true memorial. This is to be found in the emphasis on fervent prayer, on robust spiritual song, and on enthusiastic evangelism which he implanted in the hearts of Primitive Methodists, and which they have brought over (albeit somewhat attenuated) into the larger Methodism.

Beauty in the Churchyard

"The Time of the Singing of Birds is come." A GARDEN OF GARDENS in the West End of the Spring Bank Cemetery, Hull, where a granite obelisk marks his resting place. The same year there was opened in the centre of the city a new chapel bearing his name. Yet neither the column over his grave nor the now forsaken Clowes Chapel constitute his true memorial. This is to be found in the emphasis on fervent prayer, on robust spiritual song, and on enthusiastic evangelism which he implanted in the hearts of Primitive Methodists, and which they have brought over (albeit somewhat attenuated) into the larger Methodism.

“William Clowes.” *Methodist Recorder* (March 1, 1951): 9.

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By the Rev. Frank Baker